

RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP

“Toward an Intersectoral Focus on Social Protection in the Americas:
Labor, Social Development and Social Security”

Mexico City / December 10 - 12, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The need to advance toward comprehensive social protection systems, building social protection floors, employment generation and labor formalization are issues of utmost importance for the region. They are, jointly, essential elements in the fight against poverty and inequity and guide national, subregional and hemispheric social development agendas.

By adopting a comprehensive **social protection concept that incorporates** both universal and focused policies and programs aimed at supporting people facing diverse risks with which they are confronted over the course of their lives, we must approach it from an **INTERSECTORAL** and **INTERAGENCY** perspective.

This workshop was organized acknowledging the above. It brought together officials from at least three areas of public administration: social development, labor and social security, with the objective of sharing and discussing experiences and challenges in intersectoral coordination in the area of social protection. Furthermore, the Workshop brought to the table other international organizations and cooperation mechanisms that play a key role in this field, such as: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank, Eurosocial, and the Global Alliance for Social Protection Program from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

The workshop was jointly organized by the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) and the Government of Mexico, through its Secretariats of Social Development (SEDESOL) and Labor and Social Welfare (STPS), with financial support from the Global Alliance for Social Protection Program from the German Agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

PARTICIPANTS

- ▶ 21 countries
- ▶ 3 sectors
- ▶ International Organizations and Agencies
- ▶ Workers and employers' representatives



RESULTS / HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from the plenary sessions, the study visit, and the results of group discussions are summarized below:

CHALLENGES

- ▶ There are still major challenges in terms of intersectoral coordination in the area of social protection, and in some cases a fragmented provision of public services can be seen. The existence of a culture of working in “silos” among state institutions or a sector-based view of their work implies that these institutions are not communicating on an ongoing manner. This yields a logic based more on grouping sectors together rather than on true intersectorality.
- ▶ The difficulties of intersectoral coordination are encountered among various sectors of government (horizontally), different levels of government (vertically), and with other non-governmental institutions.
- ▶ Compliance with legal frameworks regulating coordination among sectors and agencies. Numerous participants mentioned that these frameworks already exist, but that the political will to implement them does not. Furthermore, a small group of countries noted that they lack this type of legal framework.
- ▶ Labor market conditions are a challenge in themselves, given the high rate of informality in the region, thus resulting in large portions of the population being excluded from social security programs. Aggravated by the existence of new forms of hiring and contracting and the difficulty of achieving full compliance with labor legislation.

- ▶ Funding and sustainability of integrated social protection systems.
- ▶ Difficulty in defining social protection actors to be coordinated, given the amount of incentives and programs implemented by several institutions (including ministries of development, labor, education, health, and institutions focused on children, youth and other groups, among others).
- ▶ General lack of knowledge regarding social security benefits and absence of a savings culture in our societies.
- ▶ Addressing migrant populations: how to guarantee social security and social protection coverage for those who migrate within or among countries?
- ▶ Need to guarantee the right to work for rural workers.



LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ Recognition of the irreplaceable role of the State as the social protection regulator and provider, and of citizens as right holders, not as beneficiaries or privilege recipients. Various countries build and redesign social policy mechanisms and instruments adopting a rights-based perspective in social protection.
- ▶ Given the responsibility of the State as a provider, Ministries of Social Development have a central role in coordinating with other sectors to promote labor and social security policies (among others) that effectively address the needs of groups in vulnerable situations.

- ▶ Incorporation of a life-cycle perspective within social protection. Given that social protection integrates social policies to promote and empower people throughout the course of their lives, the various expressions of social protection which support human development, such as education, housing, food security, decent work and health, should be promoted and sustained from an intersectoral approach.
- ▶ The continuity of programs and policies is fundamental to transcending and achieving sought-after objectives. Hence also the importance of the political will to make changes. Political will must be seen as an investment in these programs, not only in terms of funding, but also in terms of adding wills.
- ▶ The contribution of non-governmental actors, with complementary actions to those of the State, is also recognized. Local actors, not only governmental but also workers' and employers' organizations, contribute to the development of social protection systems given their knowledge regarding the varying local needs of populations in vulnerable situations.
- ▶ Social protection should strengthen links with productive inclusion and employment generation. To do this, traditional targeting instruments (centered on poverty indicators) should be complemented with information on productive profiles or productive capacities.
- ▶ Discussion of salaries (and minimum wages specifically) is central within discussions on social protection.
- ▶ The need to strengthen the relation between social protection policies and economic policies (Ministries of Finance) and educational policies. Ministries of Social Development, Ministries of Labor, Ministries of Education and Ministries of Finance should be involved, among others.
- ▶ In addressing migrant populations, there should be more cautious intersectoral coordination. Mechanisms should be established that allow for the portability of benefits and facilitate ongoing compliance by this population with their obligations and enable them to receive their benefits.
- ▶ The social protection floor initiative presents a comprehensive approach to social protection, securing access to essential goods and services and, as such, sustains and promotes intersectoral coordination.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Understand social protection policies as state policies, so that they transcend government terms of office and assure continuity of action.
- ▶ Promote and implement a life-cycle approach for coordinating diverse sectors related to social protection involving actions at every stage of life, and include a rights-based approach as a pillar for institutional coordination. This focus on rights requires adjusting the design of programs, such as the responsibilities and functions of the various institutions involved.
- ▶ Establish a commitment and shared responsibility: Social protection, employment and the eradication of poverty require everyone's commitment. This requires building a Pact at the national level that includes consolidating comprehensive social protection systems and an understanding that these topics require a shared responsibility among governments, employers, workers and civil society.
- ▶ Include more sectors and relevant actors, such as ministries of finance, education and actors from civil society, in discussions on intersectoral coordination in the area of social protection.
- ▶ Continue institutionalizing social dialogue among governments, workers, employers and civil society related to the development of comprehensive social protection systems.
- ▶ Educate and train businesses and trade unions and the users of social services on the rights and obligations associated with social benefits.
- ▶ Some specific recommendations to facilitate coordination:
 - Clearly determine the commitments and functions of each institution and actor within comprehensive social protection systems.
 - Promote actions to raise awareness regarding legal frameworks that regulate coordination, as well as of the concrete benefits that stem from ongoing coordination and communication among agencies

SOME MECHANISMS AND TOOLS FOR COOPERATION

There are various mechanisms and tools for intersectoral coordination in the area of social protection, such as binding laws and legal frameworks, budgets, information systems, and various institutional set-ups such as Social Cabinets, Ministerial Councils, and Coordinating Ministries.

HIGHLIGHTED STRATEGIES

There are various examples in the region of countries that have adopted an intersectoral approach in the conception of their poverty-reduction strategies and/or programs; such is the case with the National Crusade against Hunger of Mexico, a national strategy based on the principle of coordination among different federal administration institutions and civil society and the private sector. Other examples include the “Prospera” social inclusion program (Mexico), the “Brazil without Extreme Poverty” plan, the National Strategy for Good Living (Ecuador), the “Unidos” Network of Colombia (Red Unidos) and the National Strategy for Social Development and Inclusion: Inclusion for Growth (Peru).

and sectors for the effective implementation of social protection and employment policies.

- Design and strengthen guidelines -in a consensual manner- that organically establish coordination objectives—both vertical and horizontal and with third parties—and the most efficient and effective means to put them into practice.
- Establish, more than communications channels, systems for effective communication that allow information to be shared in an opportune and efficient manner among the various actors involved.
- Develop and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems that allow all institutions involved in providing social services to manage users' cases in an exhaustive and effective manner. For example: that in a same system, Ministries of Education report assistance provided to children within conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs, Ministries of Health report attendance at check-ups with the required frequency, etc., in a way that all involved parties can have a holistic vision of each case and take, in a coordinated manner, the steps necessary to avoid coverage gaps.
- Design monitoring and evaluation systems that include indicators and goals as incentives for coordination among agencies.



- Develop and implement comprehensive social protection policies and programs based on the principle of solidarity. Funding and sustainability of social protection systems should be guaranteed and the fact that everyone in society is contributing to it should be made clear. It is important to highlight that all contribute in some way and that those who have less are contributing proportionally more through consumption taxes.

- ▶ Provide mechanisms that make it easier for users to access different services and benefits and comply with their obligations. To do this, technology should be used and leveraged (unified databases, mobile applications, web pages), along with using one-stop shops and broadening their geographic coverage.



- ▶ Make regional efforts on social security (agreements) in addition to efforts and initiatives at the bilateral level, with the goal of facilitating the portability of pension rights.
- ▶ Complement the traditional actions of CCTs and other actions directed toward populations in vulnerable situations with psycho-social support to individuals and families.
- ▶ Strengthen the linkage of CCT programs with productive inclusion initiatives, training and education, as well as employment services, to coordinate targeted actions with universal policies. Involve training institutions in social policy.
- ▶ Continue sharing experiences of intersectoral coordination to identify useful aspects that others can adopt.
- ▶ Recommend that the OAS and CISS, in partnership with ECLAC, ILO, World Bank, Eurosocial and GIZ, continue to facilitate spaces for exchange to analyze and share experiences in this area.
- ▶ Create a portfolio of best practices that collects experiences (both successful and unsuccessful) from countries in the Hemisphere in terms of intersectoral coordination in its various aspects: communication, design of strategies and mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation, etc.