



24 March 2014

Dear Colleagues,

In April 2009, the UN System's Chief Executives Board for Co-ordination (CEB) launched the Social Protection Floor Initiative. Endorsed by UN Member States at the Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development, and supported by the G20 and many other fora, the Initiative garnered significant attention and momentum.

UN-wide implementation was given a boost in June 2012 when governments, employers, and workers adopted the path-breaking [ILO Recommendation Concerning National Floors of Social Protection \(No. 202\)](#) by consensus at the 101<sup>st</sup> ILC session, on 14 Jun 2012, in Geneva.

Social Protection Floors (SPFs) comprise at least basic social security guarantees for health care, and also for income security for children, older persons, and for those unable to work - in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity, and disability. The ILO Recommendation and UN follow up helped lead to the establishment of Social Protection Floors (SPFs) in a number of countries.

We write to encourage you to maintain momentum behind this important work.

The need remains enormous: more than 76 per cent of the world's population continues to live without adequate social protection coverage. Expanding people's access to social protection is both a way to advance human rights and a sound economic policy. Well-designed social protection systems support household incomes and domestic consumption; build human capital; and increase productivity.

In the face of an uncertain global recovery and lower demand, the adoption of a social protection floor is an opportunity to help stabilize economies, generate inclusive growth, and build political stability. Social Protection Floors are an indispensable tool for helping countries to reduce poverty, curb inequality, strengthen resilience, and lay the ground for sustainable human development.

For this reason we ask Resident Co-ordinators and UNCTs to consider a number of specific steps to advance this work, which could include;

1. building, or where they already exist, strengthening **One UN national social protection floor teams**, which should include committed UN organization representatives, relevant national stakeholders, and development partners.

2. supporting national dialogues, including within Governments, on potential options for designing and implementing locally appropriate SPFs, consistent with relevant provisions in the ILO Recommendation, and related initiatives - such as WHO's work on universal health coverage and existing national development priorities and strategies.
3. assisting countries to undertake analysis of social protection needs and gaps, optional measures which would close these gaps, tools to monitor progress, and possible sources of financing, with the hope of increasing floors over time.
4. in the context of preparing United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), promoting SPFs as instruments to advance inclusive and sustainable development.
5. working with national statistical offices to strengthen their ability to collect the data needed to analyse social protection needs and existing provisions, disaggregated by factors such as gender, age, and geographical locality. Promote an efficient and co-ordinated UNCT approach to data collection and capacity support.

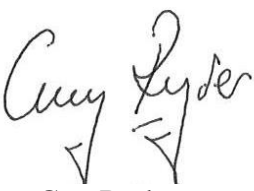
The "Manual on the Strategic Framework for Joint SPF UN Country Operations" sent to UN Country Teams in 2009 remains a useful guide for your efforts to undertake these or other steps. As well, a set of complementary tools is being developed (to be circulated shortly). It can be used to help governments assess the cost and the design of SPFs.

The undg will shortly be publishing an Issue Brief on SPFs which lays out a joint UN position, helps guide the work of UNCTs, and highlights entry points and concrete examples of UNCT support. The note builds on the successful experience of undg Asia-Pacific in this area.

Strong and concerted UN support has played a role in helping countries across regions to formulate national Social Protection Floors. The leadership and guidance of Resident Coordinators can play an important role. We ask, therefore that you consider, within your country context, the steps which could be taken to help make social protection a reality for all.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Clark  
Chair  
United Nations Development Group



Guy Ryder  
Director-General  
International Labour Office