

APSP and GCAP brought together civil society organizations, government and UN representatives on the 25th January 2022 for the Side Event, ‘Extending Social Protection and Food Security in Africa’.

The right to social protection is integral to citizens’ rights to food security and the right to food. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that countries with an existing social protection system in place have been able to tackle better the pandemic’s impact of food insecurity. Participants agreed that social protection is integral to the achievement of Africa 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, and fundamental to eradicating poverty and hunger, expressed in Goals 1 (end poverty) and Goal 2 (end hunger).

Best practice examples are needed on social protection and food security from elsewhere in the world to emphasise the value of multistakeholder collaboration - including civil society, grassroots organizations, trades unions, UN agencies, governments, and the private sector. We commended countries that have made strides towards the realization of their commitments to the 2030 SDGs goals and the 2063 Agenda. We recognised how social protection tackles the interlinked challenges of disease burden; poor basic infrastructure and social services; inadequate health care and services; poor access to basic education and training; high illiteracy rates; gender inequality; youth marginalization; and political instability in some countries. We recognized that without investment, innovation, technology, and digitalization of agri-food systems, we cannot achieve more inclusive development. Therefore, faster progress is needed on social protection for the full realization of the integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa for which we crave.

Our Call to Action for African Governments and Development Partners:

1. African governments to take concrete steps as duty bearers to deliver and to finance the rights to social protection and to food enshrined in regional and international frameworks, essential for better living standards of their people, implementation of which to be done in full collaboration with civil society in all its diversity.
2. All African governments to ratify the AU Protocol on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection as well as fully implement these commitments into national legislation and provide budgetary allocation, as a priority for a sustainable COVID-19 recovery.
3. All governments and development partners to redouble efforts to establish a global financing mechanism for social protection, through the principle of national and global solidarity, to support countries to design, implement and, in specific cases, provide temporary co-financing for national social protection floors as described in ILO recommendation 202, as a necessary prerequisite to for the achievement of the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda goals.
4. African governments to make special efforts to ensure an effective and sustainable COVID-19 recovery by means of legislation and budgetary allocation for social protection and food security for all, and adapting their social protection policies to include measures tailored to the needs of people whose livelihoods depend on agriculture as well as technical and resource allocation to support legislation and policies to overcome poverty and social inclusion, deliver health, decent employment and accessible education for all.
5. Accountable and transparent policy processes to demonstrate how they reach those left behind, including rural population, persons with disabilities, women, children, youth, indigenous peoples and older persons and how they engage and include civil society in all its diversity, including faith groups, women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities in the design and implementation of adaptive shock responsive social protection systems that ensures progressive realization of full coverage, is comprehensive and adequate.
6. African governments to report back on their progress in implementing and financing universal social protection coverage in 2023 to the 9th Africa Forum on Sustainable Development and to successive High Level Political Forums (HLPF) through their Voluntary National Reports, with full involvement of civil society in all its diversity.