❶ What is social protection?

1.1 Definitions

Social protection is concerned with protecting and helping those who are poor, vulnerable, marginalised or dealing with risks. The risks can be idiosyncratic, affecting individuals or households, and can be associated with life cycle stages. Or they can be covariate (large-scale), affecting communities or regions due to climate, conflict or other stresses and shocks. Vulnerable groups helped by social protection include poor children, women, older people, and people living with disabilities, as well as the displaced, the unemployed, and the sick.

Social protection is commonly understood as 'all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups' (**Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004**: i). This definition is in line with usage in international development and may be different from social policy definitions in high-income countries. Social protection consists of 'a set of nationally-owned policies and programmes' (**UNDP, 2016**: 12), usually provided by the state (through domestic resources, either contributions or tax finance), with support from international donors in particular for least developed and lower middle-income countries (**UN DESA, 2018**: 6). Social protection is theoretically conceived as part of the 'state–citizen' contract, in which states and citizens have rights and responsibilities to each other (**Harvey et al., 2007**).

There are ongoing debates about which interventions constitute social protection, as there can be some overlapping with a number of livelihoods, human capital and food security interventions (**ibid**.). Moreover, while there is wide agreement on the desirability of social protection provision in general, there is significant variation on what this means in practice in low- and middle-income countries – in terms of 'for whom it should be provided, and how and in what form' (**McCord, 2013**: vii).

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of social protection vary widely, from reducing poverty and vulnerability, building human capital, empowering women and girls, improving livelihoods, and responding to economic and other shocks. As a result, there is a great deal of variation in social protection approach, composition, and implementation (**UNDP, 2016**: 14).

Typical short-term objectives are to help people meet basic needs, smooth consumption and mitigate the immediate impact of shocks. Programmes can support a basic level of income for people living in poverty or prevent people from falling into poverty, or deeper into poverty, when they are affected by illness or drought, for example.

Other social protection objectives focus on longer-term development and supporting people to move permanently or stay out of poverty (**Babajanian et al., 2014**). Longer-term goals include improving opportunities for inclusive growth, human capital development, and social stability. Some social protection programmes intend to be transformative, supporting equity, empowerment and human rights. The potential of social protection to achieve social justice outcomes for marginalised social groups is increasingly recognised (**Jones & Shahrokh, 2013**: 1).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include social protection targets under Goals 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10 (see Table 1). Moreover, social protection is 'a critical tool to simultaneously achieve progress in many fundamentally interlinked Goals and Targets', as social protection has the potential to act on the multiple drivers of exclusion and deprivation (**UNDP, 2016**: 8–9).

1.3 Analytical concepts

There are several different conceptual approaches for framing social protection objectives. These have developed over time and have been taken up and promoted by different countries and international organisations. Each conceptualises potential impacts in different ways, including a focus on transformation, human capital formation, reduction of vulnerability, and securing human rights. Approaches often combine a variety of these elements but differ in primary focus.

Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler (2004) provide a most commonly used conceptual framework, which describes four social protection functions:

- **Protective:** providing relief from deprivation (e.g. income benefits, state pensions)
- **Preventative:** averting deprivation (e.g. social insurance, savings clubs)
- **Promotive:** enhancing incomes and capabilities (e.g. inputs, public works)
- **Transformative:** social equity and inclusion, empowerment and rights (e.g. labour laws).

Table 1. Social protection and the Sustainable Development Goals

1 No poverty	**1.3** Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
3 Good health and wellbeing	**3.8** Achieve universal health-care coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.
5 Gender equality	**5.4** Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
8 Decent work and economic growth	**8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
10 Reduced inequalities	**10.4** Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.
In addition social protection makes a direct contribution to:	
1 No poverty	**1.5** By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.
2 Zero hunger	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition.
4 Quality education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.
13 Climate action	**13.1** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

Source: **BMZ (2017)**, adapted by DFID; **UN (2015)**.

The first three functions (the three Ps) were originally conceptualised by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The addition of the transformative element positions social protection as a policy instrument that seeks to address structural causes of poverty by helping to rebalance unequal power relations, which cause vulnerabilities. In practice, social protection interventions usually cover multiple functions and objectives.

Another common framework is that social protection **reduces vulnerability and risk** by providing protection against shocks. This assumes that vulnerability to hazards constrains human and economic development (**Barrientos & Hulme, 2009**) and that risk management stabilises income and consumption, and is an investment in poverty reduction (**Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2007**). The World Bank's Social Risk Management framework first conceptualised the role of social protection in relation to risk (**Holzmann & Jørgensen, 2000**; updated **Jorgensen & Siegel, 2019**).

Social protection can also be conceptualised as an **investment in human capital** which increases capacities and the accumulation of productive assets (**Barrientos, 2010**), breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Promotion of opportunities is one of three overarching goals for social protection in the World Bank's 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy, highlighting social protection's role in human capital formation (**World Bank, 2012**). Social protection contributes to human capital either directly, by providing food, skills and services, or indirectly, by providing cash and access, which enable households to invest in their own development.

The recognition that social protection can **promote and protect human rights** is now widespread[1] (**UNDP, 2016:** 11). Social security (see **Section 2** for an explanation of the types of social protection) is a human right, as set out in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (**Sepúlveda & Nyst, 2012**). A human

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[1] Social security is explicitly mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Whether or not social protection is a human right is debated, as it is often defined more broadly; some agencies and stakeholders (such as the ILO) make explicit references to social protection as a human right while others refrain from doing so. In cases where social protection is referred to as a human right, it is reported as such in this report. Otherwise we understand social security is a human right, and social protection to stand in support of human rights.

rights-based approach underpins the United Nations' **Social Protection Floor Initiative** and forms the basis for the development of social protection systems in many low- and middle-income countries.

Most countries in Europe, Northern America and Latin America have established legal social protection entitlements for every citizen (**UN DESA, 2018**: 8). In many countries in Africa and Asia, 'legal coverage

is limited to a few areas and only a minority of the population has access to social protection schemes anchored in national legislation' (**UN DESA, 2018**: 9). There are exceptions in these regions: for example, India and South Africa recognise social protection as a human right and an entitlement (**UN DESA 2018**: 9; **UNRISD, 2016**; also see **UNRISD Social Protection and Human Rights Platform – resource on domestic legislation**).

BOX 1

Social protection in international rights agreements

Universal Declaration of Human Rights *(bold added)*

- Article 22: 'Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to **social security** and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.'

- Article 23: 'Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of **social protection.**'

- Article 25: 'Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same **social protection**.'

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights *(bold added)*

- Article 9: 'The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to **social security**, including social insurance.'

- 'In General Comment No. 19 on the right to social security, the [Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights] spells out the key features of this right and the content of States' obligations. According to the Committee, the right to social security implies two predominant categories of measures: *social insurance* schemes, where beneficiaries are requested to contribute financially; and *social assistance* schemes, non-contributory and typically taxation-funded measures which are designed to transfer resources to groups deemed eligible due to vulnerability or deprivation' (**Sepúlveda & Nyst, 2012**: 20).

Other relevant international human rights instruments are: (first three summarised in **UNRISD, 2016**: 2)

- *__Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women__* *(adopted 1979) (CEDAW)*: Governments to introduce social benefits during maternity leave (Article 11) and ensure rural women receive social protection (Article 14).

- *__Convention on the Rights of the Child__* *(adopted 1989) (CRC)*: Recognises every child's right to an adequate living standard for physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (Article 27).

- *__Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities__* *(adopted 2006) (CRPD)*: Requires States recognise persons with disabilities' right to social protection without discrimination on the basis of ability (Article 28).

- *__Convention relating to the Status of Refugees__* *(adopted 1951)*: Requires States to provide refugees and nationals the same treatment with respect to (for example): elementary education (Article 22); rationing where it exists (Article 20); and public relief and assistance (Article 23); among other provisions.

Moreover, social protection systems have the potential to contribute to the realisation of other economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to education, health and an adequate standard of living (food, clothing and housing) (**Sepúlveda and Nyst, 2012**: 23).

Table 2 summarises recent approaches to social protection and offers critiques.

Table 2. Analytical approaches to social protection

Approach	Critique
'In the early 2000s, the **"Social Risk Management"** framework provided a more coherent way of analysing risks and formulating appropriate "reduction", "mitigation", or "coping" responses' (**HLPE, 2012**: 25).	It was critiqued for 'ignoring social risks and structural causes of poverty and food insecurity – and a definition of vulnerability suggesting a bias to people at risk of future poverty, rather than those already living in poverty' (**HLPE, 2012**: 25).
Transformative Social Protection 'sees poverty and vulnerability as symptoms of social injustice and argues social protection should address their structural causes – including social risks such as discrimination and disempowerment – by transforming social and political conditions generating poverty and vulnerability (**Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004**). Transformative social protection has been adapted by numerous agencies and governments for their social protection strategies and policies...' (**HLPE, 2012**: 25)	It has been criticised for 'extending the boundaries of social protection into broader development policy arenas' (**HLPE, 2012**: 25), potentially undermining the effectiveness of the core objectives of poverty reduction and risk management.
Launched in 2009, the **Social Protection Floor** 'is an initiative led by the United Nations that is the first systematic attempt to operationalise a rights-based approach to social protection.… Like "transformative social protection", the "social protection floor" is predicated on the normative belief that social protection should reflect a social contract between governments as duty-bearers and citizens or residents as rights-holders' (**HLPE, 2012**: 25–26). The **2012 ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202)** provides guidance to members on establishing and maintaining nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees. The focus on floors (plural) refers to national adaptations of the global approach to country-specific circumstance (**ILO, 2011**: 6).	It has been critiqued for applying a 'one-size-fits-all' model and pushing an agenda of universality that overlooks fiscal and political considerations at country level: '[T]he staircase model proposes as sole option for expanding the system an obligatory sequence of mandatory social insurance followed by voluntary insurance, whereas in fact alternative approaches for expanding the system and including better-off members of society (e.g. taxation) could be explored, depending on the country's particular situation' (**Ulrichs & White-Kaba, 2019**: 9).
In 2015 the ILO and the World Bank released a **joint statement** promoting **universal social protection**, followed in 2016 by the launch of the **Universal Social Protection 2030 Initiative** by the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection (ILO, World Bank and broader membership including other bilateral and multilateral agencies). Universal social protection (USP) refers to 'a nationally defined system of policies and programmes that provide equitable access to all people and protect them throughout their lives against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and well-being'.[2] The USP 2030 initiative calls for a global push towards achieving universal social protection by 2030, which encompasses but is not exclusive to social protection floors. Shared fundamental characteristics of country pathways to USP are: 'equitable access to comprehensive risk coverage through a coherent system' (the goal); 'nationally led and tailored to the population's specific needs' (the approach); and 'capacity for adjustment and expansion' (the design) (**Ulrichs & White-Kaba, 2019**: 4).	Although many governments and development partners agree with the principle of achieving USP by 2030, the initiative may be considered highly aspirational given fiscal and other constraints in many countries.

Source: Summarised and adapted from **HLPE (2012**: 25-26); updated with **Ulrichs and White-Kaba (2019**: 4).

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[2] **https://www.usp2030.org/gimi /USP2030.action** (Accessed 4 March 2019).

Key texts

> Ulrichs, M. & White-Kaba, M. (2019). *A systems perspective on Universal Social Protection – Towards life-long equitable access to comprehensive social protection for all*. Bonn & Berlin: BMZ.
This discussion paper details how USP focuses on how to establish 'one coherent, comprehensive social protection system that covers all people for all risks' (p. 5). It charts how USP emerged as an initiative and sets out a systems perspective to enablers for and approaches to USP. It concludes with a set of key questions, which include asking whether the USP2030 goal (SDG 1.3) is realistic, how USP can be provided in low- and middle-income countries to informal workers, and if having the official shared USP2030 agenda has improved development partner coordination (among others).

> McCord, A. (2013). *The public pursuit of secure welfare: Background paper on international development institutions, social protection & developing countries*. London: ODI.
This paper sets out the post-MDG debate, providing an overview of the historical, institutional and political factors that helped shape the future development goals and the role of social protection within them. It summarises how key international development institutions' conceptual framework for social protection programming and policy developed.

> HLPE. (2012). *Social protection for food security.* A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.
This report provides a clear framework for the range of social protection responses to food insecurity. It reviews evidence and experience, proposing recommendations for using social protection more effectively to protect and promote food security.

> Devereux, S. & Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2004). *Transformative social protection*. (IDS Working Paper 232). Brighton: IDS.
This paper outlines the transformative framework for social protection, which can achieve any of the four objectives: Protective: providing relief from deprivation; Preventative: averting deprivation; Promotive: enhancing incomes and capabilities; Transformative: social equity and inclusion, empowerment and rights. It argues against the welfarist approach to social protection and posits that social protection can achieve more than economic security.

See also:

> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (2018). *Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection. Report on the World Social Situation 2018*. United Nations.

> UNDP. (2016). *Leaving no one behind. A social protection primer for practitioners*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

> White, P. (2016). *Social protection systems*. (GSDRC Professional Development Reading Pack 49). Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

> UNRISD. (2016). *The human rights-based approach to social protection*. (Issue Brief 02). United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

> Sepúlveda, M., & Nyst, C. (2012). *The human rights approach to social protection*. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Finland).

Other resources

USP 2030 website

Extending social protection in Asia and the Pacific. (2018). UN ESCAP. (2m:36)

Why do we need social protection? (2018). UN ESCAP. (3m:04)

Social protection in East Africa – Harnessing the future. East African challenges and an overview of social protection objectives. (2017). Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Union, & Government of Finland. (2m:22)

'Building social protection floors together with development partners'. (2017). ILO. (2m:51)

'The human rights-based approach to social protection'. (2013). UNRISD. (36m:55)

1.4 Selected development partner positions

Development partners – bilateral donors and multilateral agencies, including United Nations agencies and multilateral financial institutions – engage in social protection in different ways, applying different emphases that reflect their individual mandate (Devereux & Roelen, 2016: 1). For instance, 'the World Bank focuses on social protection as a means of reducing poverty and enhancing pro-poor economic growth, UNICEF sees it as a tool for achieving child wellbeing and children's rights, while the ILO emphasises the right to social security and extending coverage to all' (ibid.). For an explanation of the terms used in this section for the different types of social protection – see Section 2: Types of social protection.

Multilaterals

European Union (EU)

The EU promotes a basic level of social protection, as a right for all, and especially for children, vulnerable persons in active working age, and the elderly.[3] The European Commission views social protection as helping reduce poverty and vulnerability and underpinning inclusive and sustainable development. The EU is committed to supporting nationally owned social protection policies, and to working with civil society and the private sector as well as the government in its partner countries (**Devereux & Roelen, 2016**: 3–4). In 2017, the Council of the EU adopted conclusions recognising the connections between sustainable development, humanitarian action, and conflict prevention and peace-building. The conclusions highlight the importance of coordinating humanitarian and development actions to 'address the underlying root causes of vulnerability, fragility and conflict while simultaneously meeting humanitarian needs and strengthening resilience' (**Council of the EU, 2017**: 2).

- Council of the European Union. (2017). *Operationalising the humanitarian-development Nexus – Council conclusions* (19 May 2017). Brussels.

- EC. (2012). *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions: Social protection in European Union Development Cooperation*. Brussels: European Commission.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Social protection is a core pillar of the ILO mandate on social justice and decent work. The ILO's Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and other **international social security standards** are at the heart of the UN's work of supporting countries to turn the **human right to social protection** into reality. As the UN agency with the mandate to work on social protection, the ILO is (co-) leading several multi-partner initiatives, including the **Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection (USP2030)**, the **Social Protection Floors Initiative**, the **Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board** (SPIAC-B), and the **Interagency Social Protection Assessment tools** (ISPA tools). Through its **World Social Protection Database**, the ILO tracks country progress towards SDG 1.3, whereby countries committed to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors. The **ILO World Social Protection Report 2017–19** provides a comprehensive analysis of country progress in building their social protection systems, including floors, and to ensure effective access to adequate social protection for all.

- Flagship report: ILO. (2017). *World social protection report 2017–19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. Geneva: ILO.

- Strategy document: ILO. (2012). *Social security for all: Building social protection floors and comprehensive social security systems*. Geneva: ILO.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The IMF did not engage directly with social protection until recently (**Barrientos & Hulme, 2009**). In the wake of the global financial crisis, it has supported spending on social safety nets in select countries (**IMF, 2019**). The IMF approaches social protection from the lens of it being an 'important contributor to macroeconomic stability', as 'maintaining social and political support for sustainable macroeconomic policies can depend crucially on avoiding excessive stress on vulnerable groups' (Independent Evaluation Office (**IEO), 2017**: 1). In 2018, it produced a guidance note on IMF engagement on social safeguards in low-income countries in both programme and surveillance contexts. Social safeguards comprise: (i) commitments to social (education, health, social protection) and other priority spending that supports national poverty reduction and growth strategies; and (ii) 'Specific reforms designed to protect poor and vulnerable groups, for instance by strengthening social safety nets and improving the tracking and monitoring of spending on such groups' (**IMF, 2018**: 3).

- IMF. (2018). *Guidance note on IMF engagement on social safeguards in low-income countries*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund.

- IEO. (2017). *The IMF and social protection*. Independent Evaluation Office of the International Monetary Fund.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP views social protection as a key tool to transform its strategic vision 'to help countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion' into reality, as stated in its Strategic Plan 2014–2017 (**UNDP, 2014**: 11). UNDP defines social protection as 'a set of nationally owned policies and instruments that provide income support and facilitate access to goods and services by all households and individuals at least at minimally

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[3] **https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-development/social-protection_en** (Accessed 25 February 2019).

accepted levels, to protect them from deprivation and social exclusion, particularly during periods of insufficient income, incapacity or inability to work' (**UNDP, 2016**: 12). **UNDP (2016**: 21) sets out six guiding principles for social protection: protect and promote human rights; ensure non-discrimination; foster gender equality and women's empowerment; be risk-informed and sensitive to environmental concerns; provide a continuum of protection; and promote universality.

- UNDP. (2016). *Leaving no one behind: A social protection primer for practitioners*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

- UNDP. (2014). *Changing with the world: UNDP Strategic Plan 2014–17*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF's first global social protection framework (2012) made the case for child-sensitive social protection, arguing for the expansion of inclusive, integrated social protection systems. **UNICEF has recently updated this framework (2019)**. Its work on social protection builds from the reality that children are significantly more likely to live in poverty than adults and face a range of additional vulnerabilities, with huge implications for children themselves but also societies more broadly. With the growing body of evidence on the impacts of social protection on children, UNICEF's objective regarding social protection is to address child poverty and vulnerability, and ultimately transform the lives of children and families. For UNICEF, focusing on economic vulnerability is insufficient and its work includes a strong focus on social vulnerabilities, particularly children who are socially and economically vulnerable at the same time. The updated framework outlines an overall rights-based approach to child-sensitive social protection with a foundation of evidence at policy level (policy, legislation and financing); programme level (social transfers; social insurance; labour and jobs; social service workforce); and administrative level (administration and integrated service delivery). Across all of these levels, UNICEF is increasingly recognising that social protection has a vital role to play in supporting children living in fragile and humanitarian contexts and ensuring systems are shock responsive.

- UNICEF. (2019a). *UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework*, New York: UNICEF.

- UNICEF. (2019b). *A companion guidance to UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework*, New York: UNICEF

- UNICEF. (2012). *Integrated social protection systems: Enhancing equity for children – UNICEF Social Protection Strategic Framework*. New York: UNICEF.

World Bank

The World Bank's 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy has the main objective of helping countries move from fragmented approaches to harmonised systems. The overarching goals of the strategy are to help improve resilience to shocks, improve equity by reducing poverty and promoting equality of opportunities, and promote opportunity by building human capital, assets, and access to jobs for people in low- and middle-income countries (**World Bank, 2012**: 1). The World Bank regards social protection as a poverty reduction tool, consistently linking social protection to labour markets and pro-poor employment (**Devereux & Roelen, 2016**: 2).

In 2019, the World Bank issued an update to its Social Risk Management (SRM) conceptual framework – the foundation of the World Bank's first Social Protection Sector Strategy in 2001 (**Jorgensen & Siegel, 2019**). This update identifies that the 'increasingly risky and uncertain world' with disruptions driven by technology, markets and climate change among others, requires 'a greater focus on asset and livelihood building programs in addition to traditional poverty alleviation and risk sharing programs, better integration between rights-based and risk-based approaches, more inclusive targeting, and consideration of global social protection' (**ibid**.: abstract).

- Jorgensen, S. L., & Siegel, P. B. (2019). *Social protection in an era of increasing uncertainty and disruption: Social Risk Management 2.0 (English)* (Social Protection & Jobs Discussion Paper 1930). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

- World Bank. (2012). *Resilience, equity, and opportunity: The World Bank's social protection and labor strategy 2012–2022 (English)*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Bilaterals

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (Australian government)

Social protection is identified as one of the six priorities for the Australian aid programme, as part of its focus on building resilience (**DFAT, 2015**). The Australian government primarily supports work on social assistance as its focus 'is normally on the poor and vulnerable' (**ibid**.: 3). Australian investment focuses on helping 'improve partner government systems to more effectively distribute their own funds' (**ibid**.: 2). DFAT's three strategic objectives are to: '(1) improve social protection coverage in the Indo-Pacific, (2) improve the quality of social protection systems, and (3) enhance partner governments' ability to make their own informed choices about social protection options' (**ibid**.).

- **DFAT. (2015).** *Strategy for Australia's aid investments in social protection*. Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Department for International Development (DFID) (UK government)

DFID's work on social protection helps deliver its strategic objectives to 'Tackle extreme poverty and help the world's most vulnerable' and 'Strengthen resilience and response to crises' (**DFID 2019**). DFID works with governments to build inclusive and sustainable social protection systems, with a primary focus on social assistance. Priorities are: investing in systems to increase their coverage, quality and sustainability; building systems that strengthen resilience and can respond to crises; and building more inclusive systems, focusing particularly on girls and women, people with disabilities, and the poorest and most vulnerable in protracted crises and in fragile states (**DFID 2016**).

- **DFID. (2019).** *Department for International Development single departmental plan*.

- **DFID. (2016).** *Rising to the challenge of ending poverty: The bilateral development review 2016*. Department for International Development.

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (German government)

BMZ promotes social protection as a human right, to reduce poverty and inequality. It focuses on building 'strong systems that reach everyone, including the most vulnerable... strengthening their resilience and

their capacity to help themselves' (**BMZ, 2017**: 3). Social protection is seen as an investment that benefits society at large, fostering sustainable economic development (**ibid**.). Germany's social protection work focuses on three areas: '(1) social assistance to reduce or prevent poverty and eradicate hunger; (2) social health protection to prevent impoverishment and foster health; and (3) insurance schemes to improve preparedness and cope with new challenges such as extreme weather events caused by climate change' (**ibid**.: 5).

- **BMZ. (2017).** *Social protection for equitable development* (BMZ Position Paper). Bonn & Berlin: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Irish Aid

Irish Aid is committed to supporting social protection as 'a key instrument for reducing poverty and inequality while achieving inclusive growth' (**Irish Aid, 2017**: 6). Irish Aid's 2017 Social Protection Strategy identifies three principles for its work on social protection, to: strengthen social protection as an important and effective policy instrument; provide long-term system building support; and promote supportive policies and programmes (**ibid**.: 26).

- **Irish Aid. (2017).** *Social Protection Strategy*.

See also:

- **Devereux, S., & Roelen, K. (2016).** *Agency positions on social protection* (SDC-IDS Briefing Note 2). Brighton: IDS.