



# Social Protection for Food Security, Nutrition and Rural Development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Awareness Raising Event

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

25 and 26 April 2017

Concept Note

## Context

**Eradicating world hunger sustainably in the next fifteen years will require investments in rural and urban areas including commitment to social protection to ensure that those living in poverty are able to access food and improve their livelihoods.**<sup>1</sup> Social protection is a critical strategy to accelerate progress in the fight against hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty: While it is widely recognized as instrumental in poverty eradication and framed within the SDGs, the role of social protection in ending hunger and malnutrition has only recently been explored (including by the CFS in 2012; FAO 2013<sup>2</sup> and 2015). The 2015 State of Food and Agriculture shows the clear and consistent contribution of social protection to ensuring access to food, and also highlights its role across the other three dimensions of food security and nutrition (FSN): availability, stability and utilization at household level. In addition, FAO has made a fundamental contribution to generating evidence on how social protection can transform people's lives by allowing them to engage in more productive farm and off-farm activities. This evidence also make an economic case for investing in expanding the coverage of social protection.

**Worldwide as well as in post-soviet countries, the majority of the food insecure and poor lives in rural areas – the part of the population most in need and lacking social protection.** The latest World Social Protection Report shows that only 27 per cent of the global population enjoy access to comprehensive social protection systems, whereas 73 per cent are not adequately covered. However, evidence suggests that in areas where livelihoods predominantly depend on agriculture and rural labour markets, social protection also has the potential to influence the productive dimension directly: cash transfers, for example, have been shown to increase the use of agricultural inputs and ownership of livestock, amongst other economic impacts.<sup>3</sup>

**FAO is therefore committed to expanding coverage of social protection systems to the poor, most food insecure and vulnerable living in rural areas,** in line with the Agenda 2030 that commits countries to expand coverage of nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030. For this purpose, FAO can bring together its expertise on FSN and social protection interventions (e.g. school food and nutrition), its rural and agricultural development work shown to serve both protective and promotive social protection functions, as well as using instruments that it has been applying in emergency and disaster risk reduction.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO (2015). *Achieving Zero Hunger: The Critical Role of Investments in Social Protection and Agriculture* available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> FAO (2013). *FAO's work in Social Protection*. FAO CL 148/12 available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> FAO (2014). *From Protection to Production: The Role of Cash Transfer Programmes in Fostering Broad-Based Economic Development in sub-Saharan Africa* available [here](#).



## Rationale and Objectives

**Countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia differ significantly from other parts of the world in terms of priorities and needs of the rural population** due to their historic transition from relatively high coverage of social insurance to more targeted and mostly categorical social assistance programmes.<sup>4</sup> FAO, therefore, has a particular role to play in ensuring that social protection programmes in the region are: (1) expanded to better reach the poorest and most vulnerable living in rural areas; (2) linked to agricultural and rural development programmes that further support rural populations where relevant; and (3) made more *nutrition-sensitive*, in line with the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

In order to adequately position FAO in this context and tailor technical assistance to the different countries, the Raising Awareness Event aims to:

- Within the context of the SDGs, raise awareness among the different government stakeholders of **social protection for rural populations along with FAO's contribution to the agenda**;
- Present and discuss examples of **existing work in social protection** in Eastern Europe and Central Asia of where linkages between social protection, food security and nutrition and rural development are addressed;
- Identify **priorities on social protection of participating governments and development partners** and potential areas of work.

## Expected outcomes

- Country and regional stakeholders are aware of the role that social protection for rural populations can play in achieving the SDGs (especially SDG1 and SDG2).
- Potential areas for collaboration in social protection with Governments and development partners are identified.

## Participants

Approximately 40 participants (to be confirmed upon funding availability), including FAO staff from Country Offices and the Regional/Sub-regional Offices as well as government officials from priority countries representing the different relevant sectors:

- Participants (FAO-Representation or other relevant FAO Staff) from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
- Technical officers from Regional office and Sub-regional offices
- FAO organising team (REU, ESP, SP3)
- Government officials from the above countries representing the Ministry of Social Affairs or equivalent and the Ministries of Agriculture.
- Main development partners involved in social protection agendas such as UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, ADB, World Bank, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> REU (forthcoming). Social protection and rural population: the case of the post-soviet countries.



## Preliminary Agenda

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Item</b>
9:30 – 10:00	Opening Remarks
10:00 – 10:30	Social and economic trends in rural areas in Eastern Europe and Central Asia
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 11:15	State of Social Protection in Rural Areas in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia
11:15 – 11:45	The Kyrgyzstan social protection experience
11:45 – 12:00	Q&A - Plenary discussion
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:00	FAO's role in Social Protection – How can FAO support extension of coverage to rural areas and linkages Social Protection, Agriculture, and FSN
14:00 – 15:00	UN partners work on social protection in Eastern Europe and Central Asia
15:00 – 15:15	Q&A - Plenary discussion
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00	Group session: Mapping of priorities, policies and programmes at country level
17:00 – 17:15	Wrap up session
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Item</b>
9:00 – 9:30	Synthesis of previous day's work
9:30 – 10:30	Group presentations – 5 min each
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 11:45	Facilitated Plenary discussion
11:45 – 12:00	Wrap up
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:30	Strengthening Social Protection in Rural Areas
14:30 – 15:00	Closing remarks