



Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) First session, Addis Ababa, 22-26 July 2024

***Statement by Chantal Mutamuriza from Save the Children delivered on behalf of the CS FfD Mechanism during the Multi-Stakeholder Round Table Discussion on “Cross-cutting Issues” Wednesday, 24 July 2024, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.***

Thank you Mr./Madam President for giving me the floor. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism and my own organization, Save the Children.

Social protection is globally recognized as an effective tool for alleviating poverty, enhancing household income security, fostering human capital development, building resilience, and mitigating the impacts of climate-related and other shocks. It is also a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other internationally ratified agreements.

Social protection, particularly child-sensitive and gender-responsive social protection, is also a means-proven tool that can contribute to gains across multiple Sustainable Development Goals, including those on health, hunger and nutrition, education, gender equality, addressing inequalities and ending violence. Shock-responsive universal social protection systems, such as universal child benefits or UCBs, can form a critical component of disaster-risk management, climate adaptation and justice. For instance, had UCBs been widely in place prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it would have been possible to rapidly reach two-thirds of households globally with critical financial support and links to services.

Despite this recognition and the commitments made through Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the UN outcomes and agreements, to the progressive realization of universal social protection, **less than half of the global population is covered by basic social protection.**<sup>1</sup> While a

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<sup>1</sup> [wcms\\_817572.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

number of countries expanded social protection coverage and mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of those policies were temporary or have been reversed.

Social protection coverage for children, in particular, remains very low **with over 1.77 billion out of 2.4 billion children around the world having no access to social protection leaving them particularly vulnerable and at risk to the irreversible and long-lasting impacts of poverty, stunting and wasting, inadequate access to health and education services on human capability development. Significant regional disparities persist, ranging from 82.3% of children covered in Europe and Central Asia, to just 12.6% in Africa.**<sup>2</sup> Only a small proportion of public spending globally is allocated towards social protection for children, ranging from just 0.1% of GDP in low-income countries to 1.2% in high-income countries.<sup>3</sup>

To realize the commitment to universal social protection in all countries, the outcome of the Fourth International Financing for Development Conference must contribute to increased fiscal space and scaled up international cooperation. This requires taking immediate action to address inequities in the international financial architecture, including by:

- 1) Establishing a multilateral legal framework under the auspices of the UN that would comprehensively address unsustainable and illegitimate debt.
- 2) Providing support and political momentum towards agreement on a UN Framework convention on International Tax Cooperation.
- 3) Accelerating implementation of the official development assistance (ODA) commitments to fulfil and exceed the 0.7% target for ODA, with .15-.20% allocated to least developed countries, and full implementation of aid effectiveness principles.

Governments must also significantly increase their political will to prioritize investment in the progressive realization of universal social protection. Governments can take different pathways towards this based on their starting points and coverage can be gradually expanded as resources become available.

Finally, Governments should consider the establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection to assist countries to address gaps in their social protection coverage. Such a fund could provide temporary financing to a small number of countries that would commit to gradually expanding their own national financial contributions to social protection schemes over time, as government revenues allow.

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<sup>2</sup> [More than a billion reasons: The urgent need to build universal social protection.pdf. \(unicef.org\).](#)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.