



**Social protection
in post-2015**

SPEECH (Free Translation to EN)

**By Claire Courteille, Director ILO Office for the EU and the
Benelux**

at

the Conference on “Social Protection in the post-2015 UN Agenda”

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Minister De Block, Head of Cabinet Behrndt, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues

It is an honour for the International Labour Organization to cooperate with the Federal Public Service Social Security and Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, who have organised this important conference concerning social protection in the post-2015 United Nations agenda on development, which will be adopted in September this year.

The commitment of the Belgian government for this programme, that included the adoption of sustainable development goals on decent work, deserves to be underlined and embraced.

Social protection is an essential component of development, and should be placed at the heart of the new programme that seeks to be ambitious, universal and transformative.

In its report on the determination of possible sustainable development goals, the Open Working Group has also adopted three proposals related to social protection. This concerns the proposals for the targets on the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities and gender equality.

If the benefits of social protection on the wellbeing of individuals are well known and acknowledged, the economic advantages that States could have cannot be underestimated. In fact, several recent studies have shown that social protection promotes equal chances, improves work productivity, contributes to reinforcing purchasing power, thus triggering a process of inclusive growth.

However, as has been said, and according to a recent study of ILO, 77% of the world population has insufficient protection. This result makes of the extension of coverage a worldwide priority.

ILO promotes an approach founded on the right that everyone should be protected against the uncertainties of life, like disease, old-age or maternity, against the cycles and shocks of the economy and against environmental phenomena that seem to occur more frequently.

Imagine the happiness of parents who are certain that their children will not be hungry and will be taken care of when they are ill. Imagine the serenity of knowing that a basic pension will be granted to you when you are no longer able to work; Imagine the relief of a young mother who does not have to leave the day after giving birth to search for some money to feed herself.

Everything we take for granted in Europe, is still a dream for millions of men and women in the world.

Acknowledging the need for an instrument to promote the extension of social protection for those who need it, in 2012, workers' and employers' organizations together with the member governments of the ILO have adopted a Recommendation on the Social Protection Floors.

If it is up to each country to define its system and its ambitions on social protection, this Recommendation invites all the states and its social partners to go beyond the minimalist approach and gradually move – depending on the capacity of each country – towards universality in access to health care and minimum income security to cope with these hazards in life.

The question of the financing of social protection remains a big challenge and will be the subject of debates at this Conference. I will therefore limit myself in mentioning that a certain number of countries – including those among the least wealthy of the planet – have managed in the last years, to finance the implementation of social protection floors, even if they are modest.

To conclude, I would like to thank again the Minister and her team for organising this very important and timely conference, and for involving the International Labour Organization.

I am convinced that our debates will be productive and that this will be taken into account when approaching the General Assembly in September.

Thank you for your attention.