 

**Human Rights Council 51st session**

**Side event sponsored by Portugal, OHCHR and ILO**

***Challenges and good practices in upholding the right to social protection***

*Concept note*

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| **Date and venue:** | **4 October, Room XXV, Palais des Nations from 14.00 to 15.00** |
| **Objective:** | The side event will aim at identifying challenges and best practices in the realization of the right to social security for persons in situation of higher marginalization including informal workers, women, girls and boys, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and refugees, LGBTI+ persons and ethnic and racial minorities. It will provide an opportunity for an inclusive and interactive debate among States, United Nations agencies, special procedures and as well as civil society, including organizations representing right-holders. The side event will further examine how the normative content of the right to social security and the corresponding State’s human rights obligations could guide policy making at the national and international levels in advancing the enjoyment of this right. Finally, in the current challenging fiscal circumstances, the side event will address how to expand fiscal space and anchor social security firmly at the heart of the new social contract. |
| **Speakers** | **H.E. Mr. Rui Macieira, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva**  **Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights**  **H.E. Ms. Lurdes Bessa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva**  **Mr. Luis Rodrigo Morales, Senior Adviser at the International Organization of Employers**  **Ms. Evelyn Astor, Advisor on Economic and Social Policy at the International Trade Union Confederation**  **Ms. Shahra Razavi, Director Social Protection Department, ILO**  **Ms. Manuela Tomei, Director Conditions of Work and Equality Department, ILO**  **Mr. Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights**  **OHCHR on East Timor joint project with ILO** |

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| **Background:** | The right to social security is recognized in numerous human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 22) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (arts. 9 and 10)[[1]](#footnote-1). According to general comment No. 19 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, social security is central to guaranteeing a life in dignity for all. It aims to provide income security and support for all persons across their life cycle, particularly to those in most marginalized situations. Such support, whether in cash or kind, is provided without discrimination in order to secure protection from (a) lack of work-related income caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, or death of a family member; (b) unaffordable access to health services ; (c) insufficient family support, particularly for children and adult dependents.  Despite a strong normative foundation in international human rights law, and progress in the extension of social protection system in many parts of the world, the human right to social security is not yet a reality for the majority of the world’s population. The COVID-19 crisis has made realizing this right even more pressing and urgent. The pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of a social and economic systems that have neglected to invest sufficiently in fundamental public services such as social protection and health care, unveiling gaps in coverage, inadequacy of social protection benefits and exacerbating deep-seated inequalities. In building forward better from the pandemic, it is essential that countries pursue a robust, rights-based social protection strategy to secure a human-centred recovery and an inclusive future. |
| **Background documents:** | * Report of the Secretary-General on the question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights ([A/HRC/49/28](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/49/28), February 2022) * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on economic, social and cultural rights to the Economic and Social Council ([E/2020/63](https://undocs.org/e/2020/63), June 2021) * Report of the Secretary-General on the question of the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in all countries: the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights ([A/HRC/46/43](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/46/43), January 2021) * Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [General Comment 19](https://undocs.org/E/C.12/GC/19) * [OHCHR webpage on the right to social security](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/RightSocialSecurity/Pages/SocialSecurity.aspx) * Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights: Non-take-up of rights in the context of social protection ([A/HRC/50/38](https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5038-non-take-rights-context-social-protection-report-special), March 2022) * [Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_821167/lang--en/index.htm) * [ILO World Social Protection Report 2020-22](https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2020-22/lang--en/index.htm) * [ILC.109/Record No. 7A](https://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/109/reports/provisional-records/WCMS_804457/lang--en/index.htm): Reports of the Recurrent Discussion Committee: Social protection (social security): Proposed resolution and conclusions submitted to the Conference for adoption * [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_711674.pdf) * [Conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection, ILC 2021](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_804457.pdf) |

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women restates the right to social security for women, especially in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, old age or other incapacity (art. 11). The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of the child to social security and social insurance (art. 26). The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families sets out the right of all migrant workers to social security on an equal footing with nationals, as well as to reimbursement of contributions if they cannot access benefits (art. 27). The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reaffirms the right of persons with disabilities to social protection without discrimination on the basis of disability and enumerates steps to be taken by States to safeguard and promote the realization of this right (art. 28). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)