

# Social Protection and Climate Change:

## What?

WFP in collaboration with Oxford Policy Management developed this think piece to understand how social protection can support households in the context of climate change, considering the distinctiveness that climate change brings to social protection programming, in contrast with other disasters and shocks.

It is NOT a new framework, but a vision to understand the potential role that social protection could play in advancing climate change adaptation.

## Why?

Given the uncertainty around the impacts of climate change, social protection represents a key form of 'low regrets' investment, where it balances the dual role of supporting poverty alleviation, while also addressing vulnerability to climate change, drawing from a perspective of social justice.

## How?

Social protection has the potential to improve or support households' adaptation to climate change, if programme planning, design and implementation follow these principles:

- I. **Recognise climate change uncertainty.**
- II. **Prioritise food security and nutrition considerations.**
- III. **Support households' long-term adaptation strategies.**
- IV. **Avoid the risk of maladaptation.**
- V. **Understand trade-offs.**
- VI. **Define resilience objectives in the theory of change.**
- VII. **Consider unintended spill- over effects on the environment.**
- VIII. **Adjust programmes to context.**
- IX. **Acknowledge even small contributions from individual interventions.**
- X. **Work across disciplines.** Especially linking with climate change activities.

## KEY CLIMATE ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE LINKED TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

**Climate change projections and models** can inform vulnerability assessments, including effects on food security and malnutrition. They can also inform better targeting and programme options, taking into account different future scenarios, and avoid maladaptation.

**Early Warning Systems (EWS)** can help to build resilience by responding to crises before they occur.

If properly linked with national social protection systems, **forecast based financing** has the potential to not only help smooth climate-related shocks, avoiding set-backs in development, but also to enable poor and vulnerable people to manage climate risks more effectively and in a proactive manner.

**Climate risk insurance** could play an important protection role to poor households exposed to climate risk, protecting people from different types of shocks and levels of vulnerability and enabling people to boost their productivity.

**Social Behavioural Change and Communication interventions (SBCC)** can be linked to social protection programmes with the purpose of addressing some of the values, preferences and social norms that influence a behavior, including maladaptation.



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WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean's vision to advance climate change adaptation through social protection

## DIFFERENTIAL DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION FEATURES TO SUPPORT ADAPTATION IN SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMING

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there are very few examples of social protection programmes which have considered climate change adaptation as an objective.

Even so, some experiences in standalone social protection provision provide a good entry point from which to support climate change adaptation and resilience:

- **Social transfers** should be predictable and flexible and the value and duration should be sufficient to protect and promote livelihood diversification.
- **Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programmes** can provide a platform for delivering other services and reaching schoolchildren, promoting knowledge and innovations, and strengthening relevant capacities of households and communities, and help to advance successful outcomes for climate change adaptation.
- **Asset-creation programmes** can improve food security and boost income among the poorest people. However, in terms of climate change, there is a trade-off in some of these types of programmes, as there is a high carbon 'hoofprint' of livestock production, so improving livestock feeding is crucial.
- **Public-works programmes** should be regular rather than seen as temporary safety-nets. Community assets should address key challenges to livelihoods, be relevant to local needs and should support environmental rehabilitation and conservation in order to achieve longer-term impacts. Follow-up maintenance must take place to ensure ongoing functionality.
- **Integrated programmes, including cash plus programmes**, can support adaptation through the promotion of income-generating activities, livelihood diversification and financial inclusion, promoting opportunities and strategies to deal with future risks.



## WFP technical assistance to governments

WFP can then engage in the provision of technical assistance and policy support, as well as facilitate dialogue among different institutions and partners to support more climate adaptive social protection programmes.

Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Given that this is an emerging area, a priority is to raise awareness. Workshops, field visits, technical exchanges and regional South-South cooperation initiatives are likely also to be useful. The focus is to increase knowledge about social protection through specific examples.</li></ul>
Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess needs and identify entry points to strengthen key aspects of the national social protection system (e.g. key programmes, targeting and information systems, coordination, financing).</li><li>• Identify key climate change activities and find innovative ways to link them to social protection.</li></ul>
Roadmap development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government agrees on entry points and options of how social protection programmes can be strengthened to deliver adaptation outcomes.</li><li>• Develop tools and guidance materials to enable the support of climate change adaptation through social protection at country level.</li><li>• Facilitate dialogue and coordinate social protection and climate actors.</li></ul>
Programme implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Backstopping and strengthening climate analysis, targeting, data management and information systems, identify pilots, etc.</li><li>• Support governments to access climate financing and join forces with partners to submit proposals to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund or other.</li></ul>

For more information please refer to the WFP [Occasional Paper No. 26 on Social Protection and Climate Change](#). You can also access the full paper scanning the following QR code:

