

Promoting decent work, reducing insecurity: towards a renewed consensus for social development

Side event – HLPF 2025

Wednesday, 16 July, 13:15-14:30

Conference Room E

Background

The world has seen extraordinary social and economic progress over recent decades. Unprecedented gains in reducing extreme poverty and improvements in material well-being have demonstrated the transformative potential of collective action.

As the *World Social Report 2025* shows, these achievements have not been matched by progress in promoting decent work or reducing employment insecurity. Progress on employment-related targets under Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8)—such as youth employment, informality, labour rights, and child labour—has stagnated or regressed. Informal employment remains the most prevalent form of labour market participation in low- and middle-income countries. Job instability and precarious work are rising worldwide, even in the formal sector.

This widespread insecurity in the world of work fuels broader economic instability. It erodes the relationship between workers, employers, and governments, and weakens people's trust in institutions. It is also a key driver of persistently high levels of inequality.

Inequality is not limited to wages, working conditions or the labour market at large. Many people—particularly women and youth—find themselves excluded from the labour market altogether. Much of the domestic and care work, disproportionately performed by women, is unpaid and thus unrecognized as an economic activity. Meanwhile, a growing number of young people are not in employment, education or training.

A different path is possible. Some countries have succeeded in promoting decent work and reduce inequality, prioritizing the well-being of workers and families, even amid rising global competition. A renewed vision for social development must build on these lessons. Social investments, strong labour market institutions and macroeconomic and industrial policies geared towards the creation of decent work and the reduction of inequality are key ingredients of success.

Objectives

As the international community prepares for the Second World Summit for Social Development, this side event aims to advance dialogue on the policies and institutions needed to promote full employment and decent work for all—one of the three main objectives of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development—reduce economic insecurity, and tackle inequality.

Following a presentation of key findings from the UN *World Social Report 2025: A new policy consensus for social progress*, the event will offer reflections on national experiences—particularly those of Portugal, Mexico and Colombia.

Programme

13:15 Welcome on behalf of the co-organizers

Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, UN DESA

13:20 Panel discussion

Promoting decent work, reducing insecurity and tackling inequality: Key messages from the United Nations *World Social Report 2025*

Ms. Marta Roig, Chief, Emerging Issues and Trends in Development Section, UN DESA

Efforts to achieve SDGs 8 and 10 at the national level in Portugal through policies that promote social development

H.E. Ambassador Rui Vinhas, Permanent Representative of Portugal

The experience of Mexico

H.E. Ambassador Héctor Vasconcelos, Permanent Representative of Mexico

The experience of Colombia

H.E. Ambassador Raúl Sánchez, Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia

Re-anchoring social development in decent work and social justice

Mr. Yasin Samatar, Senior Multilateral Cooperation Specialist, International Labour Organization Office to the United Nations

14:00 Interactive discussion with audience

14:30 Closing