



Minutes of the final ERD 2010 Preparatory Conference

"Moving towards the European Report on Development 2010: Presentation of the Draft Report"

*Hotel Silken Berlaymont Brussels, 11-19 Boulevard Charlemagne, 1000 Brussels
Thursday 4th November 2010*

Concluding this year's ERD preparatory process (which focuses on social protection in Africa), the European Commission held a final preparatory conference in Brussels on November 4th 2010, with the aim to present and discuss the consolidated ERD draft. The conference was organized in two main sessions, followed each by an open discussion: (1) presentation of the rationale, structure and main analytical findings of the draft report; (2) presentation of the draft policy conclusions and recommendations. Participants included researchers from Europe and abroad (including Sub Saharan Africa) as well as representatives from the EU Member States, Commission services, international organisations and civil society (around 80 participants).

Session 1: presentation of the rationale, structure and main analytical findings

Françoise Moreau, Director ad interim at the Directorate A (EU development policy: horizontal issues) of DG Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States (DG DEV), opened the conference with an introductory note providing a brief overview of the rationale of the ERD initiative as well as explaining why social protection has been chosen as the central topic of the second ERD edition. She also explained how social protection is currently mainstreamed into EU development policy and what the European Commission currently does in that area.

Giorgia Giovannetti, ERD Team Leader – European University Institute, introduced the ERD research team and explained the preparatory process carried out so far, before handing out the presentation of the draft report by explaining its theoretical/conceptual framework, the research questions that guided the elaboration process and its main draft findings. Key questions addressed by the report are: (1) Does social protection matter for African development? (2) Is there a demand for social protection in Africa? (3) Is social protection affordable and feasible in Africa? (4) What role do donors have to play? (5) What are the priorities for the EU?

Stefan Dercon, ERD team member – Oxford University, took participants through the first two chapters of the draft report. In his presentation, he elucidated the momentum for social protection in Africa and discussed how social protection is defined in the report as well as the various instruments, design and delivery methods, including innovative ones, in that field. **Giorgia Giovannetti** presented then the next two chapters related to the necessary conditions underlying successful SP programmes and to the lessons to be learnt from existing schemes in

Africa and in other developing regions (Latin America and Asia) in terms of design, preconditions for success and impact.

Before starting to moderate the debate, **Thierry Verdier**, ERD team member – Paris School of Economics, summed up the main lessons learnt from existing social protection programs and experiences in various contexts, in particular the importance of political will and ownership, financial sustainability, administrative capacity, possible incentive constraints, feasibility of scaling up, gender dimension and local context.

The draft report was overall positively received by all participants who praised the impressive improvements in comparison with the previous draft presented in Florence in September. However, some issues, both related to the content of the draft and to the general ERD initiative, were raised and discussed during the open debate, such as: the need to involve African researchers in future ERD research teams and to win political support from African leaders as regard this report; the importance of taking well into account the African conception of social protection in the report (including social insurance schemes), and to embed it into the broader context of an African social policy agenda; the lack of references to some important African regional instruments in the field of social protection (such as the social charter for the Southern African region); the importance of political will/engagement for successful social protection systems and how to maintain a positive political momentum in the long run; the lack of examples from French-speaking African countries in the report; the need to improve the analysis of the affordability challenge; the need to develop more the employment and decent work-related aspects of social protection; the consumption/assets "dilemma" related to the effects of social protection; the risks of drawing lessons from middle-income countries' successful experiences and applying them to Sub-Saharan Africa's low income and fragile situation contexts; the possible combinations/linkages between insurance and assistance features of social protection; as well as the need for clearer/stronger evidence on the effects of social protection on growth, on human capital and on social cohesion and the building of a State-citizen social contract (while being aware of the methodological difficulties in demonstrating measurable cause-effect relations in this complex context).

Sessions 2: presentation of the policy conclusions and recommendations

After the lunch, **Giorgia Giovannetti** and **Pascal Vennesson**, ERD team member – European University Institute -, presented the chapters 5 and 6 of the draft report, mainly related to the role of international donors, and in particular of the EU, in supporting social protection in Africa. In essence, they discussed the potential EU's comparative advantage over other donors, provided a critical analysis of what the EU currently does in the area of social protection and summarized the six main policy recommendations/priorities for the way forward, namely:

- 1) Promote and support domestic processes
- 2) Provide appropriate financial support
- 3) Tailor approaches to specific contexts and needs
- 4) Build knowledge and share lessons
- 5) Improve the coherence of EU actions
- 6) Ensure EU commitment in the long run

Before starting to moderate the second round of public debate on the policy aspects, **Francois Bourguignon**, Scientific Advisor for the European Commission on the ERD initiative – Director of the Paris School of Economics, highlighted some critical issues, in particular the importance of not trying to export "EU models" to Africa, the challenge related to delivery and to administrative capacity and the need for monitoring and auditing as regards budget support. During the debate, several key points were raised by participants, such as the need to make the current ERD policy recommendations "punchier" and more "to the point", the need for long term commitments (predictability of support) and comprehensive approach ("mainstreaming"), the case for monitoring impact and showing results of social protection programmes and the importance of building political sustainability in partner countries and to integrate programmes into government structures when scaling up pilot projects and programmes. The consultations around the Green Paper on EU development policy were highlighted as a good opportunity to make the case for social protection as a key mechanism within the EU development toolbox to foster inclusive growth.

The final ERD will be officially launched at the European Development Days in Brussels on December 7th 2010.

The ERD Secretariat