

**STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND BRAINSTORMING WORKSHOP ON
SOCIAL PROTECTION IN JORDAN**

December 17, 2020 – (Virtual Meeting)
17:00-19:00 Amman time

CONTEXT

What is social protection and what does it seek to achieve? Jordan's vision for social protection is that "All Jordanians enjoy a dignified living, decent work opportunities and empowering social services." Contributory and non-contributory pensions, cash transfers, unemployment insurance, provisions for maternity and other leaves, minimum wages, livelihood support, health care, and subsidies for energy or food are all part of the landscape of social protection. The design and coverage of such programs is a critical question for the government and civil society, as it impacts the wellbeing and vulnerability of families and individuals. The importance of a strong social protection system has been underlined by the recent COVID-19 challenges. Research can support understanding and improving social protection – but only if it asks the right questions.

The goal of this workshop is to understand from civil society and experts in social protection what the pressing questions, debates, and issues are in social protection for Jordan.

This workshop is the first activity of a project which aims to produce policy relevant research for Jordan to support action on pressing social protection issues. The project is led by a team from the Economic Research Forum, a regional network dedicated to promoting high quality economic research to contribute to sustainable development. The work is fully funded by The Ford Foundation. Early papers in the project will provide an overview of the social protection system and later papers tackle specific issues, such as expanding social insurance to informal workers. All papers will produce accompanying policy briefs.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the consultation and brainstorming workshop is to hear from civil society organizations and experts on social protection issues in Jordan, in order to inform the scope and focus of the analytic work. The specific objectives of the workshop are to:

1. To reflect on the scope of social protection in Jordan for both the Jordanian national and Syrian refugee populations and the current key challenges for leaving no one behind in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic
2. To discuss and agree on the priorities to be addressed and which this project can focus on.

The workshop will convene for two hours, which includes three sessions that will provide ample time for civil society organizations and experts to discuss key issues. The format of the consultation will be open discussion with a moderator who will introduce the topic and manage the discussion.

AGENDA

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17:00 – 17:10 **Welcome Remarks**

Ragui Assaad; *University of Minnesota and ERF*
Mary Kawar; *Former Minister of Planning*
Ahmad Awad; *Phenix Center*

17:10 – 17:20 **Introductions**
Areas of focus in social protection

17:20-17:50 **Session 1: Formal/Contributory Social Protection System**

This session will discuss matters related to job, income and pension security for those registered in the Social Security Corporation and how they can be expanded/improved. Some of the suggested issues to be discussed are:

- Pensions
- Unemployment Insurance
- Maternity benefit
- Minimum wages
- SSC's response to Impact of COVID-19

Moderator: Ahmad Awad

17:50-18:20

Session 2: Non-Contributory Social Protection

This session will discuss social assistance provision for those outside the labour market and the vulnerable. Some suggested issues to be discussed are:

- An assessment of existing social assistance programs (NAF Zakat Fund and any other form of social safety nets in terms of impact and targeting)
- Access to public services (health, education, housing, school feeding etc.)
- Assessment of international cash assistance programmes to Syrian refugees in Jordan
- Government response to COVID-19

Moderator: Mary Kawar

18:20 - 18:50

Session 3: Expanding Social Protection

This session will discuss those that fall out of the existing current protection mechanisms and how social protection can be expanded to include everyone living in in Jordan. Some suggested topics to be discussed:

- Expanding social protection to include informal enterprises and different categories of informal workers
- The provision of social protection policies and programmes to specific excluded groups such as migrant workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers or any other group
- The concept of the social protection floor as a means for poverty alleviation and inclusive social protection

Moderator: Ahmad Awad

18:50 – 19:00

Closing Remarks & Way Forward

Moderator: Mary Kawar