**“Cash transfers and social safety nets as part of the 2030-agenda”**

**Norad Policy Forum**

**Time: 3 May 2018, 9:30-11:30**

**Location: Norad’s office, 5th floor**

The event will be held in English.

Sign up for the seminar on norad.no.

**Background**

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 is to *end poverty in all its forms everywhere*. Global poverty has shrunk rapidly over the last decades. Several factors point to a slowdown or even a reversal of this trend, maybe within the next five years. By then, the vast pools of extreme poverty in Asia will largely be drained, while pockets of poverty in economically, geographically or ethnically isolated areas will remain. At the same time, poverty may continue to rise in many countries where the challenges are most severe, mainly in Africa and fragile states. Technical projections of poverty rates by the United Nations point to nearly 35 % of the population in Least Developed Countries being left in extreme poverty by 2030. This projection is based on high growth without redistribution. The main required change in the developmental path, is more job-intensive growth. At the same time, redistributive polices will also be necessary.

Target 1.3 under goal 1 seeks to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.” The *leave no one behind* principle underpins all 17 development goals. Social safety nets, including cash transfers, is a tool relevant for reaching several of the 17 goals.

There is an increasing global focus on social protection. A growing number of developing countries are investing in social safety nets, to improve the lives and livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people. Social safety net programmes include cash and in-kind transfers targeted to poor and vulnerable households, with the goal of protecting families from the impact of economic shocks, natural disasters, and other crises.

The number of developing countries with social safety nets doubled in the last two decades from 72 to 149 countries, according to the World Bank (2017[[1]](#footnote-1)). This means that almost every developing country in the world has social safety net programs. Yet around 55 percent of the world’s poor, or 773 million people with acute needs, still lack safety net coverage, especially in lower-income countries and in urban areas[[2]](#footnote-2). Globally, low-income countries face the greatest coverage gap in reaching the poorest people.

**Purpose of the meeting**

In this policy forum, we will explore the opportunities and challenges related to social safety nets, with a focus on cash transfers. Key questions to be explored are:

* Should cash transfers be a prioritized tool in the efforts to achieve the SDG 1 and especially reaching those left most behind?
* Which modalities are better and why: universal coverage among certain demographic groups, or targeting at household/individual level, based on needs? Should there be conditions attached to receiving the transfer or not?
* How can countries cover the costs of the scale of social safety nets envisioned in SDG 1? Which role can and should development partners play?

**Programme**

9:30 – 9:40 Opening remarks by Jon Lomøy, Director General of Norad

9:40 – 10:00 **Facts and figures, by Stephen Kidd**, CEO of Development Pathways, UK

* Poverty and vulnerability; Key trends and outlooks towards 2030
* Historical trends and approaches to social safety nets in low- and middle income countries. Scale of use today.
* Key terms and definitions: targeted versus universal, with and without conditions, with and without restrictions in use.
* Main lessons from studies of existing cash transfer schemes. Effectiveness of cash transfer schemes in poverty reduction and in reaching sector-specific objectives. Which modalities are better considering the leave no one behind agenda?

10:00 – 10:20 **Cash transfers as part of social safety nets in Africa, a country example (the Tanzania example), by Trine Lunde**, Development Economist, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (previously UN Development Programme, Tanzania and Assistant Director, Norad)

10:20 – 10:40 **Cash transfers in a broader development context – more than just redistribution? By Karl Ove (Kalle) Moene**, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Oslo

UBS: A proposal for a universal basic share. How to cover the costs of social safety nets? What is realistic for least development countries? Is there a tradeoff between redistribution and investing in infrastructure or education? What is more cost efficient, universal coverage of cash transfers or targeted modalities, and what is more effective in reducing poverty? The role of tax systems versus aid.

10:40 – 11:00 **Panel debate** with the presenters – moderated by Eva Bratholm, Norad

11:00 – 11:30 **Plenary session** with discussion and questions - moderated by Eva Bratholm, Norad

1. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/811281494500586712/pdf/114866-WP-PUBLIC-10-5-2017-10-41-8-ClosingtheGapBrochure.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/safetynets [↑](#footnote-ref-2)