

Report: Region of North Africa y Middle East

Date: December 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2010

Location: Ulysses Guimarães Convention Center, Room 4

Participants: representatives of 9 countries in the MENA region (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Libya, Lebanon, Sudan and Tunisia), a representative of Brazil and a NGO representative in France (National Council of Social Action)

Coordinator: **Maria Pimentel**, Brazil

Moderator: **Hani SIRAG**, Egypt

Rapporteurs: **Boubker EL Yacoubi; Aziz Khorsi; Boutaina Falsy**, Morocco

Introduction

The thematic working group in the region of North Africa and the Middle East, composed of representatives from nine countries in the MENA region (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Libya, Lebanon, Sudan and Tunisia), wishes to express its sincere thanks to the organizers of the First World Conference on the Development of Universal Social Security Systems for the quality of the reception and organization of work, and welcomes the level of talks and debates.

The group believes that this meeting constitutes a privileged space for dialogue between representatives of governments and civil society to build a new social security system – one that is more effective and considerate with regard to the wishes of the population.

Thus, the group noted the experiences of different countries in the region in the development of social security systems.

The discussions that followed highlighted the achievements, as well as the weaknesses and limitation of these systems. Hence the need to rethink the existing order to ensure universal social coverage based on equity, solidarity and social justice.

1- Reasons and opportunities for establishing a universal system of social security

- In spite of efforts on economic and social development and growth opportunities, poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, the restrictions of geographical accessibility and social-economic and social inequalities persist;
- The generalization of Social Security always comes up sharply in the region;
- The adopted social policy does not always guarantee quality, equitable and fair coverage to all citizens;
- The exclusion of informal sector workers of any type of coverage;

- State responsibility with regard to the issue and the financial sustainability of social protection systems and of governance of management institutions;
- The still visible impact of the years of structural adjustment that have seen the social regulator role of the state decline in detriment of social justice.

2- Challenges and opportunities for the future:

- Constitutionally endorse the right to social security as a fundamental human right;
- The State is primarily responsible for building a universal and equitable social security system through its public policies;
- Working for the unification of social security systems, ensuring greater equity and quality in the access to universally recognized economic and social rights;
- Increase participation of civil society and social partners in the construction of this universal system, through a national dialogue on social policies;
- Propose the creation of a national consultation council on the future of social security, with regional coordination;
- Ensure good synergy between the policies of social protection, health and economic development to promote solidarity and social cohesion at the national level;
- Work for the effectiveness and efficiency of public policies on social security, focusing on the poorest and populations with special needs;
- Propose the next decade as a period of universal systems of social security, taking into account the consolidation of achievements, demographic and epidemiological transition and the limitations intrinsic to each country, preserving the principles of universality;
- Promote experiences and good regional practices on social security;
- Ensure the sustainability of the social welfare and social security system with respect to the principles of good governance, including transparency;
- Develop policies to encourage the integration of the informal sector in the sphere of regulation of the economy.