Group Exercise – Weaving the Social Safety Net
Assessing the Balancing through Indicators of Performance
Social Safety Net Core Course
Washington D.C. – May 1, 2018

Objective
Using data to inform social protection policies

Agenda
1. Introduction to exercise
2. Group work
3. Presentations

Background

Balancing between different objectives of Social safety nets and choosing appropriate instruments is a process that requires using evidence and data. One of the main tools is to use the set of indicators that reveal the performance of the system in different domains and then compare across countries or over time to assess whether the goals are being reached.

This exercise mimics the process of such an assessment. For the purposes of the work we will focus on 4 performance criteria: inclusiveness, adequacy, and sustainability. Below are definitions of these criteria and indicators we are going to use to assess the performance in these domains

Inclusiveness: The SSN system should guarantee that everyone is protected along the life cycle. This entails ensuring non-discrimination, gender equality, availability of and accessibility (e.g. distance, literacy, information awareness, transaction costs) to everyone in need as well as designing schemes and programs to respond to the special needs of persons with different characteristics, circumstances and vulnerabilities. The goal is to eliminate coverage gaps and secure the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable. The indicator that we are going to use is the coverage of the bottom quintile of the population (the poorest in each country).

Adequacy: The programs and schemes that make up the system provide regular and predictable benefits and quality services that are adequate to meet needs of the population. Benefits should contribute to poverty reduction, equity and promote productive economic activity. The indicator we are going to use is the benefits ratio to the consumption of the poor beneficiaries, the value of benefits in dollar terms (converted to international PPP corrected levels (levels of benefits) and the overall impact of benefits on poverty reduction.

Sustainability: Systems are in place to implement existing programs with the minimum resources required to achieve the desired impact, minimizing duplications and overlap. The indicator we are going to use is the overall cost of the system and individual programs (as a share of GDP).

All of you have a copy of State of SSN reports, and were already introduced to them, including what kind of information can be found there. The exercise is based on reading tables or graphs in the report,
comparing information from different tables and making a collective choice across multiple conflicting criteria (focused on coverage/adequacy vs cost). It will also use information from the annex to discuss the complexity of SSNs in a country.

**Set-up**

The session lead introduces the exercise and reminds about main criteria for assessing how well SSN work (focusing on inclusiveness – adequacy – cost efficiency/sustainability and appropriateness above all).

In the State of SSN 2018 there is a rich set of indicators that reflect performance in various domains. The report and its rich annexes (as well as the ASPIRE web site) can be used to see how different countries SSNs are balancing across objective of high coverage, adequate benefit and low cost. The session lead shows an example of how to pick “the winners” or “find the closest neighbor”. And then the groups are going to undertake the following assignment:

1. In all countries covered by the State of SSN 2018 find a country that achieves in your view the optimal balance between inclusiveness- adequacy-and cost-efficiency/sustainability based on the report. Your group will have to provide 3 arguments why you have selected a specific country as the “best”. After selecting your “star” performer, you will have to discover how it is achieved- which instruments are used, is this driven by a large flagship program or a combination of programs. Each table will have 2 minutes to tell which country the team considers as the most balanced, best woven SSN system. What was your main criteria and how this country achieves that balance, through which program?

2. Then the group focuses which country represents the best woven SSNs that could be closest “model” for your country to study (mixed tables composed of multiple countries will need to start by selecting their “reference country”). Most likely we will not have time to listen to this part, as the session needs to be shorter to allow the group to move to MC.

- Each table is one group:
  - That has a moderator
  - Rapporteur

- Prepare a presentation using:
  - State of SSN report, or www.worldbank.org/aspire
  - Performance assessment criteria
  - You knowledge of your country situation

- A representative from each group will present their choice of “champion” and “their best model”

**Always support your arguments with data from indicators!**