**Panel 7: Social Work and Social Protection Systems: enhancing PSI sectoral work in social services**

# Background

Just over one quarter of the global population have adequate social security, despite universal social protection being recognised as a human right and a state responsibility. Women, unemployed workers and people with disabilities are most affected. “Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice” is impossible without establishing robust universal social protection systems.

The role of social workers towards the provision of social protection for all, through the life cycle, and building solidarity between people, cannot be overemphasized. By helping to promote the sustainability and wellbeing of the population, strong social services also constitute an important democratic fortification against the introduction of top-down social protection systems based on targeted alleviation of individual poverty and harm reduction.

Advocacy for social protection has always been an important element of PSI’s work over the years. PSI was a founding member of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors and we are at an incipient stage of collaboration with the ILO Social Protection Floors global flagship programme (SOCPRO).

A significant number of ffiliates, particularly in the Global North, have strong traditions of organising in social services and the representation of social workers. But, there are gaps in PSI’s international work in this regard, including aiding affiliates whose competences and orientation towards organising in social care need bolstering.

Austerity measures have also meant onslaughts on the rights of social care workers in countries which have had a history of strong social protection systems, including increasing precarity of work. This require a strategic approach in defence of social services and social care workers.

Thus, the 30th World Congress resolved that our Health and Social Services sectoral work include, the development of “clear plans to address social care services as part of the sector, including largely unorganized homecare workers who are often miscategorised as domestic staff” {PoA, Section 7.2.14(g)}.

Towards elaborating such clear plans, the panel will involve: sharing experiences of unions’ work in the social services; presentation of perspectives on how we could enhance organising and representation of social workers; exploring how we strengthen the linkages of social work, social protection and universal health coverage for policy advocacy and; deepen collaboration with the ILO SOCPRO.

**Panellists:**

Valerie SCHMIDT (ILO SOCPRO)\*, Mathias MUNCHER (EPSU, HSS Policy Officer) and Jorge YAKBOWSKI (FESPOSA, Argentina).

**For background information:**

<http://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/policy-development-and-applied-research/social-protection-floor/lang--en/index.htm>

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R202>

<http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_604882/lang--en/index.htm>

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/strike-france-defence-quality-elderly-care>

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/un-commission-social-development>

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/public-services-international-responds-world-bank-vision-universal-health-coverage>

<http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/>

<http://ifsw.org/policies/the-role-of-social-work-in-social-protection-systems-the-universal-right-to-social-protection/>

\* *to be confirmed*.