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PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MAS)

# Background Paper

## Round Table (2)



**Developmental Dimensions of Activating  
the National Social Registry**

April 2023



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Developmental Dimensions of Activating the National Social Registry

Prepared by: Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

Background Paper  
Roundtable (2)  
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## 1. Introduction

Governments around the world are investing in social protection, in order to reduce poverty and protect their populations from risks and shocks. Given the wide variety of social protection systems and typically uncoordinated arrangements for their management, ensuring that the right type of support reaches the right people - at the right time - is a major challenge.

Digital information systems that integrate and manage large amounts of data can greatly improve the targeting of social assistance. These systems often rely on records that contain demographic and socioeconomic information on citizens who are already receiving social assistance (recipient records), or who may be eligible in the future (social records). Since these registries contain valid, qualitative data, they can act as a facilitator for poverty alleviation through categorized targeting.<sup>(1)</sup>

Conceptually, social registries can be viewed as social policy tools that provide a gateway to potential inclusion in a governmental social protection program, in addition to operating as information systems with operational and functional advantages. As a system of social inclusion, social records have evolved in their scope and inclusivity over time. However, coverage of social records varies across countries. In some countries such as Pakistan and Chile, social records cover a large segment of the population. In other countries such as Montenegro, Indonesia and Turkey, coverage extends to a third or a half of the population (Azad 2020).

However, the admission and registration of new applicants faces numerous challenges, such as potential beneficiaries' low levels of literacy, the costs and design complications of outreach programs, building admission and registration mechanisms in resource-poor environments, non-availability of fiscal space and conflicting political priorities (Ibid).

In Palestine, the Social Protection Sector Strategy for 2021-23 adopted numerous principles: from relief to development, rights-based approaches, concepts of multidimensional poverty and case-management methodologies. The vision of the social development sector was as follows: "A strong, solidified, productive and creative Palestinian society that affords a decent and sustainable life for all families and individuals, liberating their energies and promoting rights, equality, justice, partnership and inclusion."<sup>(2)</sup> Three basic objectives emerged from this vision, namely: reducing poverty across its various dimensions, comprehensive and effective social protection measures, specialized and responsive social development institutions relevant to the needs of society, and promoting social accountability.

In order to realize the above, the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development announced its intention to launch the unified, National Social Registry, approved by the Council of Ministers at the end of 2021.<sup>(3)</sup> This Registry falls within a comprehensive plan of action adopted by the Ministry of Social Development to build a unified social protection network in Palestine, capable of challenging poverty across its multiple dimensions. The Ministry aims to launch this Registry to secure access to the services it provides, in line with the principle of justice and equality. It also ensures the unification of work methods across all programs provided by the Ministry, to all target groups. The Ministry began working on the Registry at the end of 2019, as part of the social protection program funded by the World Bank, commencing in 2017. The Registry serves as a base - or basic infrastructure - for achieving the vision of the Ministry of Social Development, by shifting from relief work to development, while adopting the concept of multidimensional poverty.

Registries in all their forms are indispensable to the implementation of social protection schemes and systems. In this paper, we explore the developmental dimensions of the unified, National Social Registry, a type of Registry that is increasingly utilized in low- and middle-income countries to implement poverty-targeted social protection programs. Although this type of Registry is rarely discussed, it is another technical issue in social protection that is deeply political, affecting the degree to which large numbers of men and women, girls and boys, are included or excluded from social protection. We believe that this issue should not be left to technical experts to solve or debate - it needs the full participation of policy-makers.

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(1) <https://health.bmz.de/social-protection/registries-and-targeting/>

(2) Office of the Prime Minister / National Development Plan 2021-2023. Sectoral strategy for social development 2021-2023. <https://bit.ly/3JWqH16>

(3) [www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/Decree/Details/fe13e8cb-cb5b48-a5-9d67-046d52a3156a](http://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/Decree/Details/fe13e8cb-cb5b48-a5-9d67-046d52a3156a)

## 2. The importance and objectives of the unified National Social Registrar

The World Bank defines a National Social Registry as an information system that ensures access, uploading, registration and identification of potential eligibility for one or more social protection program. Social records play a role in governmental social policy, in terms of their contribution to ensuring the comprehensiveness of policies, as well as fulfilling an operational role as an information system. Such Registries are dynamic, functioning according to the principle of ensuring that citizens can register continuously, where any citizen is entitled to apply for social protection by registering on this Registry. This contributes to achieving comprehensive social protection.<sup>(4)</sup>

The significance of the National Social Registry is that it serves the Ministry of Social Development as a tool to organize the work of various actors, directing their interventions to further the Ministry's vision for the social development sector, ensuring that it fulfills its leadership responsibilities. On a practical level, the need for such a Registry emerged during the Corona pandemic, which fully revealed the fragility of the economic and social conditions of large numbers of citizens. They fell into poverty, as a result of the government's preventive measures to control the spread of the virus.

The Palestinian government, especially the ministries of Social Development and Labor, faced numerous obstacles in the process of counting and identifying those eligible for support. At that time, those who applied for assistance to the "Wakfet Izz" Fund faced real problems, although significant numbers were deemed ineligible for support. The absence of a unified, National Social Registry was a major factor causing numerous errors in the aid distribution process, noting that the Ministry of Social Development has a database of families benefiting from its cash transfer program (and others). However, the Corona pandemic saw more individuals and families enter the cycle of poverty, especially manual laborers and those without employment contracts. They ceased working, without receiving any dues or salaries.

According to the Ministry of Social Development, the goals of the Registry are to afford equal opportunities for all service seekers, to assess their priorities and unify outreach methods in programs and assistance provided directly by the Ministry, or by partner institutions. The resulting system is expected to give the Ministry of Social Development the ability to identify the poorest and most marginalized individuals and families from among those seeking assistance, according to indicators of multidimensional poverty.

It is envisioned that the Registry will help the Ministry of Social Development reach a wider segment of those who are most in need of social development services. Thus, it contributes to the management of a system of services, provided in an integrated and comprehensive manner, by the Ministry of Social Development itself or in partnership with financiers and other service providers.

## 3. International experiences

The world's first social Registry - Ficha CAS - was established in Chile in the 1980s. In 1992, India adopted a social Registry to introduce a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card, distributed to those judged to be living below the poverty line, with a view to determining their eligibility for poverty programs. Brazil created the Cadastro Unico database in 2001 (Kidd et al 2021).

In recent decades, the developing world has seen an expansion of social assistance programs. Despite the gradual institutionalization process, social protection systems remain fragmented. However, the trend towards the integration of the various stages of the social assistance delivery chain is increasing (Azad 2020).

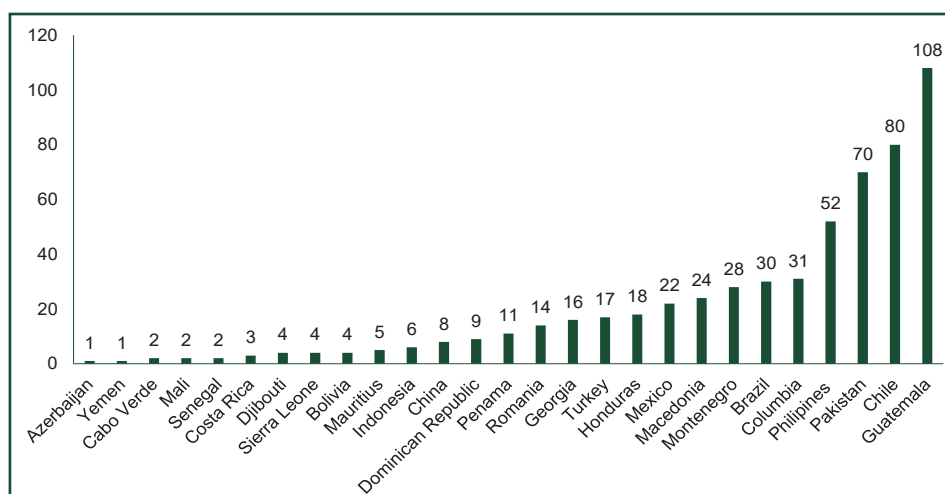
One authoritative study found different patterns of social Registries in the 20 countries they examined (Leite P et al, 2017). The main distinguishing feature of social Registries is the primary method of uploading and registration. This can be facilitated through mass registration, where a census/survey-style registration method is used after a specified period. Alternatively, it can be facilitated via an admissions and registration process, involving open and ongoing applications and enrollment.

Many systems use a combination of 'on demand' and 'en masse' methods. In the study of 20 countries, there was an even split between countries using on-demand registration and mass registration. For example, Pakistan falls into the grouping category while Chile, Colombia and China are classified as dynamic.

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(4) <https://bit.ly/3IJCCKZ>

**Figure 1: Number of programs using social Registries in selected countries <sup>(5)</sup>**



A notable experience in the development of a unified National Social Registry is that of the Kingdom of Morocco, where a law was issued in 2021 that regulates and defines the Registry, its mechanisms, and the formula used to calculate each family's entitlement to assistance. The situation in the Kingdom of Morocco is similar to the reality of Palestine, in terms of the absence of a unified database for all beneficiaries of governmental (or other) subsidies. It is also difficult to access accurate data on income, and all of the family's financial resources.

The system operates through two databases: the first is the unified National Social Registry, and the second is the Population Registry. The former is responsible for registering the social status of the family. The latter records individual data on Moroccan citizens or residents in Morocco, covering both.

A mobile phone is used to register through a specialized website, using a phone number or email address to create a private account and directly input data. In terms of verifying the personal information recorded by individuals, the Directorate requests confirmation of this information (water and electricity bills, rent payments, birth/death certificates and others) and a personal passport picture (the face and iris). This can be linked to police data, such as fingerprints. The entire family is registered in the unified Social Registry through the head of the family, and not on an individual basis. One person can register, should he/she live alone. The Registry includes information about the family's social status, answering questions asked by the online form on housing conditions, property ownership, health coverage, bills for utilities (water, electricity, gas and phone) and others.

It should be noted that Morocco adopted expenditures as the basis for determining the social status of families and not their income, as there are great difficulties in disclosing income data, and fear of taxation. The law also fines anyone who provides false information in bad faith. The government cooperates with service providers to verify provided information (the verification process takes 1-2 days). Based on this, the extent to which an applicant needs assistance and/or benefits is determined. Enrollment in either Registry is still optional, but necessary for obtaining this type of assistance.

#### **4. How the Registry works, its key constituents and beneficiary groups**

The unified, National Social Registry is a computerized registry that can be accessed by a designated website, or by going in-person to the relevant directorate to obtain the assistance of employees of the Ministry of Social Development. As a first stage, all current recipients of the Ministry of Social Development's services - whether in the cash transfer program or any other program offered by the Ministry - will be added automatically to the National Registry. For this purpose, since the end of 2021, the Ministry of Social Development's staff, and its trained researchers, have carried out field visits to update data on 142,000 families previously registered with the Ministry of Development.

(5) <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Social-registries-a-short-history-of-abstract-failure-June.pdf>

The Registry allows anyone who feels the need to obtain any form of assistance or services from the Ministry of Social Development to apply for such assistance, by registering on the unified National Social Registry. Following this, eligibility and priorities are examined, and a decision is made regarding whether or not to grant assistance. All service requests are registered, irrespective of whether or not the requestor is entitled to assistance.<sup>(6)</sup> The Registry is characterized by the ability to follow-up on the application, as well as the ability to file an appeal or objection in the event that an application is rejected, or the appropriate assistance is not obtained in line with the family's situation. Moreover, the registration process is always available and not limited to a specific timeframe. That is, it is a dynamic record, which qualifies it to overcome the problems of static records, in which information becomes obsolete with the passage of time.

After an examination of his/her eligibility, the applicant enters the Registrar's database and is directed, through the case manager, to the appropriate party from which to obtain the requested assistance. Through the Registry, a national referral system allows the case manager (or any of the Ministry of Social Development's researchers) to refer an eligible beneficiary to a service provider within the national referral program. These are partner organizations (governmental and non-governmental agencies, or service providers from the private sector) who have signed memorandums of understanding with the Ministry. Their information is readily available to the case manager through the online system, through which the referral is made. The transfer may be internal, i.e. services provided directly by the Ministry of Social Development, or external, i.e. through third-party service providers.

## **5. Screening process for eligibility and prioritization, with simplified process for requesting assistance**

The registration process consists of two stages. The first is submitting a simple request for assistance. In this case, the head of the family submits a request for assistance, the aim of which is to examine whether the family's needs can be met through the interventions of the Ministry of Social Development and its partners. A trained social worker (case manager) conducts a visit and develops an appropriate intervention plan to help the family.

The second stage is to fill out the National Social Registry form. The head of the family fills out a detailed form by inputting family data. The family data covers different dimensions of poverty and not just material poverty. It is important to note that the National Social Registry functions on the basis that the family is a unit formed of individuals who share a place of residence, i.e. it includes the extended family (such as grandparents), and any other members who share the accommodation (both males and females over the age of 18). Moreover, the head of the family specifically refers to the mother/father, as a large percentage of poor families are female-headed ones.

This form is typically completed when specialized researchers conduct a field survey, which is expensive, hence the need to facilitate this process through an electronic form. Resorting to electronic solutions reduces costs, but it deprives those who cannot read and write, and those who do not know how to use electronic devices and the internet, from access. Secondly, this matter affects the accuracy and credibility of data. It complicates the stages of examination and confirmation later.

Following the registration process described in the two parts above, the quality of data is checked and its validity is then confirmed by the applicant. The Directorate conducts a visit to his/her place of residence to conduct a personal interview, and to check the accuracy of provided information and verify its validity.

## **6. Dimensions of social protection in the unified National Social Registry and its relevance to sustainable development goals**

The unified, National Social Registry includes a comprehensive social protection package covering both economic and social dimensions, in line with the concept of multidimensional poverty. According to information from the Ministry of Social Development, the multidimensional poverty equation includes more than 40 variables that cover various indicators measuring levels of social deprivation. Each indicator is assigned a mathematical coefficient, according to

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(6) All data related to the unified, National Social Registry was obtained during a personal interview with Dr. Ziyada Farraj and Mr. Qais Hassiba at the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development, on March 22, 2023.

its anticipated impact. Added to this is the material poverty equation, based on variables of the Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey. That is, the equation is based on household spending on consumption. Through social and economic profiling, the level of household spending and the family's entitlement to support are determined, with reference to the national poverty line, while noting that the disclosure of income data is, to a large extent, inaccurate.

The Registry includes an aid package that covers various dimensions of social protection, in addition to cash and food assistance. It includes health insurance, access to health services, rehabilitation services for the disabled, school exemptions, and protection and rehabilitation for those who have been subjected to violence, whether women or children.

Activating the Registry contributes to achieving several of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This includes the 1st goal - poverty eradication, the 3rd - good health and well-being, the 5th goal - gender equality, the 8th goal - decent work and economic growth, the 10th goal - reducing inequalities, and the 17th goal - establishing partnerships to achieve these goals. The activation of the Registry will reach larger numbers of beneficiaries within social protection services, in addition to expanding their scope by adopting the concept of multidimensional poverty. The Registry also contributes to a better management of social protection systems, by standardizing and updating data and assuring its quality. This strengthens the social protection system and its response to shocks, driving progress to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

## **7. Regulating the unified National Social Registry through a specialized law**

In some international experiences, the National Social Registry is institutionalized through a specialized law, as is the case of Morocco, for example. This law defines mechanisms and areas for utilizing data and preserving privacy, in addition to specific penalties for any manipulation of data in submitted forms, attached documents and other verification mechanisms. The formula for calculating poverty is also published within the law, with an explanation of all variables and mathematical computations. <sup>(7)</sup>

Locally, the unified, National Social Registry was approved by a decision of the Council of Ministers on 22 November, 2021. A law defining the National Social Registry is not yet in place or under discussion. However, according to the Project Officer, Dr. Ziyada Farraj, there is a need for such a law to be in place at the time of the Registrar's activation. The law regulates the process of collecting and using data, while preserving the privacy of families that provide such data. It also regulates the relationship between various ministries, in addition to other needs that may arise. Moreover, such a law acts as a deterrence to violations from any party involved in the services' chain.

## **8. Opportunities in applying the unified National Social Registry and its benefits**

- The rollout of the Registry will create significant opportunities in advancing social protection in the Palestinian territories, helping to achieve the goals of the Ministry of Social Development in terms of activating its role as the leader of the social development sector, and not just a service provider. Moreover, the Registry will ensure more comprehensive access to all beneficiaries of the Ministry's services, or other governmental and non-governmental partners, according to a specific formula that guarantees justice, equality, and aid according to fair entitlement.
- The Registry will ensure quick, easy and effective access to services by those who are eligible, reducing effort and human intervention required to access this assistance, by utilizing a computerized system linking the various providers of social protection services.
- In addition to mapping needs, the Registry provides a roadmap for service providers, and efforts to link service providers and networks with beneficiaries will become more transparent and clearer.
- In an interview with Dr. Ziyada Farraj, the World Bank-appointed Project Officer at the Ministry of Social Development, he indicated that activating the Registry will create new opportunities for financing through a better identification of needs. This creates better opportunities for financing, enhancing donors' confidence in the performance of the Ministry of Social Development in the field of social protection. Setting clear priorities may encourage international and local financiers to contribute to supporting the social protection system, each according to its specialization and financing agenda.

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(7) The Kingdom of Morocco. Official Gazette: Issue 7011.29. Those in Need 1442 (August 9, 2021). [http://www.sgg.gov.ma/Portals/1/BO/2021/BO\\_7011\\_Ar.pdf](http://www.sgg.gov.ma/Portals/1/BO/2021/BO_7011_Ar.pdf)



## 9. Challenges in activating the unified National Social Registry

- The application and activation of the unified, National Social Registry places financial obligations on the Palestinian government and the Ministry of Social Development, in terms of their response to the increasing needs of the poor, and in light of the deterioration in their financial capabilities and the decrease in funding. This issue relates to the availability of funding in the budget of the Palestinian Authority, and the allocations of ministries who extend services to poor groups, such as health, education and social development.
- The Registry will face technical challenges, and it will need permanent maintenance and development. This requires capable human resources and adequate financing.
- There are challenges in technical coordination across ministries, as each ministry has a special protocol for providing assistance. Although 13 ministries have signed memorandums of understanding, they still need more time to amend their systems such that they are compatible with the National Social Registry.
- Human resources are limited in terms of efficiency and size (230 social sector researchers), and only a small percentage are qualified as case managers. The Ministry of Social Development needs more personnel. In addition, managing the Registry and managing its technical aspects needs more support, and HR training.
- The infrastructure of the directorates of the Ministry of Social Development at the governorates is still not qualified to meet the needs of citizens (especially their need for privacy) when registering for the National Social Registry.

## 10. Critical opinions

Despite the widespread promotion of social records by the World Bank and numerous donor agencies and institutions, some researchers and development centers have strongly criticized social records, especially non-dynamic ones. Some argue that despite recent attempts to classify social Registries as “integration systems” that support universal social protection and human rights, they are deeply rooted in a particular worldview and ideology. It is largely derived from a neoliberal vision of social security, which calls for a small state, low taxes, and low-cost programs for the poor (Kidd et al 2021). They cite the emergence of social records for the first time under Pinochet in Chile, the darling of the ideology of structural adjustment and the politics of the Washington Consensus. In fact, Chile’s Social Registry - Ficha CAS - was “part of an overall effort to provide targeted social services to the poor” (Grosh and Baker 1995). In fact, the only meaningful function this social Registry is to identify beneficiaries of low-cost, poverty-targeted programs.

As explained earlier, social Registries are intended to be national databases and, ideally, they should cover all households within a country. The lower the rate of household coverage in the social Registry, the more likely that households will be excluded - incorrectly - from poverty reduction programs. Indeed, if we take seriously the World Bank’s argument that social registries are “totalitarian” systems, then we must ensure that every household is included.

In fact, no country has succeeded in achieving the full coverage of households in social records. The highest coverage is 89% of households in Rwanda, while only five countries have coverage over 70%. Overall, of the 52 countries for which data is available, 43 have coverage of less than 50% and 26 have coverage of less than 20% (Kidd et al, 2021). These low levels of coverage mean that social registries are unable to perform effectively, as many excluded families are certainly among the poorest nationally. While social registries and their supporters consider such low coverage rates as a challenge that requires them to redouble their efforts, critics interpret them as indicative of weak governmental support for social registries. In fact, in many countries, the only reason that coverage by social registries exists is that donors have promoted and funded them. Without their advocacy and funding, governments are likely to be unwilling to fund social registries themselves, given their high cost and limited effectiveness.

Moreover, critics of social registries have argued that poverty-targeted programs that use social registries are designed to exclude the majority of the population (i.e. presumably not the poor), even though the vast majority of people in the Global South live on low and insecure incomes.

The effectiveness of social registries can be assessed by examining the targeting accuracy of poverty relief mechanisms used to select beneficiaries. Analysis by Kidd and Ithas (2020) showed that exclusion errors range from 44% in Brazil to over 90% in other countries. If similar mistakes are repeated across other poverty-targeted programs (using the same type of social records as these countries), most of the poorest families will miss out on not just on one - but multiple - social aid programs. To a large extent, social registries should be seen as rationing mechanisms rather than targeting ones. They are used to distribute - albeit inaccurately - underfunded social programs, to a small percentage of families who really need such support.

One of the main failures of social records, as viewed by critics, is that they posit a static world in which families never or rarely change. However, in reality, families change rapidly over short time-periods. One reason for the inaccuracy of social records is the assumption that households do not change, since data is rarely updated across several years. Other causes of inaccuracy are high design errors, the poor quality of historical social surveys, and the falsification of information by respondents. For example, the Covid-19 crisis has reduced the usefulness of all social records, as the relative well-being of families across all societies has changed dramatically since early 2020. That is, the information that social records collected before the pandemic is now almost worthless.

In addition, the financial costs of social records can be very high, which is one reason that information is not updated frequently. There are also ethical questions surrounding access to vast amounts of information on citizens by their governments that, in many cases, is not adequately protected.

Critics draw the harsh conclusion that social records have no role to play in modern, social security systems. If governments want to transform their societies and support national recovery from Covid-19, they should, instead, focus on building comprehensive systems of universal social security, along with other comprehensive public services such as health and education.

## 11. Conclusion

In conclusion, the programs of the Ministry of Social Development that are dedicated to social protection in the Palestinian territories are still limited in scope and targeting, as they operate through multiple platforms. The first is the cash transfer program for the poor, in addition to emergency aid, food aid, and the economic empowerment program, all of which are intended for low-income families. The second covers programs for children, women, the elderly and finally, the disabled. Each of these programs is a separate one, and each has a different work methodology and special, pre-defined interventions. While there are databases of families to whom the prescribed cash transfers are paid, those in need of other interventions by the Ministry of Social Development apply through the Social Development directorates, and receive services according to their needs.

The Ministry of Social Development has a database of families who benefit from the cash transfer program, in addition to cases of intervention across various programs, based on requests they received for assistance. It does not include all those who need the interventions of these programs. However, since the government adopted the concept of multidimensional poverty, the interventions of the Ministry of Social Development in addressing poverty have expanded in a developmental context, utilizing a different formula for calculating poverty that depends on other aspects of deprivation, other than material poverty. It is necessary to implement long-term, comprehensive and transparent social protection programs that can be accessed by all families suffering from any form of deprivation, or a decrease in their standard of living.

In addition, work is performed through a case manager, responsible for diagnosing the physical and social realities of families, and identifying the appropriate referral. The matter may become easier with the existence of a National Social Registry, as by partnership with other ministries, governmental units and non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Social Development can expend less time and administrative work on facilitating transfers, reducing the costs of providing services.

It will also make it easier for citizens to access social protection services that they require without the need for numerous approvals and papers, in addition to visiting several ministries and offices. It will also prevent duplication in the provision of services, as these will appear to all partners through the website, outlining all services provided to each family. A unified, dynamic, National Social Registry that is open to all reaches a wider segment of beneficiaries of social protection services and interventions. Looking at the numbers of current beneficiaries of social development programs, the annual report of the Ministry of Social Development shows that 85.8% of beneficiaries of the cash transfer program fall under extreme poverty, 7.7% are between the extreme poverty line and the national poverty line, and 6.5% are above the national poverty line.<sup>(8)</sup>

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(8) Ministry of Social Development. 2022. Annual Statistical Report. Ramallah, Palestine.

The data that is currently available does not illustrate the comprehensiveness of services provided to all the poor in Palestine, nor their percentage according to multidimensional poverty. This cannot be determined without registering the entire population in the Social Registry, nor is it part of the nascent discussion on this issue. However, having a social Registry provides a more accurate map of needs, enhancing the ability of the Ministry of Social Development to better allocate resources - and implement interventions - that are more responsive to the real needs of the poor and marginalized.

Social protection programs are undermined by the weakness of available budgets. These only take into consideration social protection services provided through emergency and relief programs, since these are funded by external support. The level of spending on social protection programs is currently insufficient. Due to the financial crisis facing the government, during 2021 the Ministry was unable to provide more than one cash payment to poor families (a total amount of NIS 86,483,250), knowing that the Cash Transfer Program is premised on providing four payments during the year. This is a major setback in the social protection system, as the amount has shrunk over recent years from NIS 518 million in 2017 to just NIS 86 million in 2021. <sup>(9)</sup>

The activation of the unified, National Social Registry will channel greater sources of funding from various governmental (and other) agencies. In addition, it will reduce the fragmentation of data and programs, and thus reduce the duplication of benefits. This leads to enhanced effectiveness, transparency and the reduction of administrative costs through economies of scale. This Registry will also expand the range of available information compared to existing records at the Ministry of Social Development. This helps the Ministry of Social Development to achieve its strategic goals in terms of reducing multidimensional poverty, allowing Palestine to make progress in moving towards achieving sustainable development goals, the most important of which are poverty alleviation, hunger eradication, healthy well-being, access to education and others.

The existence of a unified, National Social Registry - through which different partners work to achieve social protection - allows the Ministry of Social Development to operate as a leader in the social development sector, drawing appropriate policies according to a clear roadmap of needs and services. This helps direct efforts towards achieving its vision of moving from relief to development within this sector, while raising the standards of living of poor Palestinian families who suffer from various forms of marginalization and impoverishment.

However, noteworthy reservations remain regarding how social records work, based on failed experiences in many countries in the South. This, we hope, will be avoided, while the process of updating data to include wider segments of society across time will itself benefit from the realization of the Registrar's anticipated benefits.

## Discussion Questions

- How will the unified, National Social Registry play an effective role, in the event that the conditions of employees and other members of the middle-class continue to deteriorate, and in light of the increase in the financial crises of the PA and the decrease in funding overall?
- What is the guarantor and determinant for activating the unified, National Social Registry and implementing it in the Palestinian territories, such that its fate will not be similar to previous, failed experiences such as the Unified Portal for Aid, and others?
- Will it be possible for the Ministry of Social Development to fulfill its obligations towards the groups that request support, with the expectation that the number of those seeking assistance will increase?
- Will the Registry be technically accessible to different groups, or is there a need for campaigns carried out by the Ministry of Social Development's researchers to fill out the registration form on behalf of those who need such assistance?
- How will the Social Registry solve the issue of new individuals moving into poverty, in light of an economic or health crisis similar to the Corona pandemic, while providing them with urgent assistance if they were not previously listed in the Registrar?
- Will the Palestinian government be able to incur the costs of the Social Registry at the end of the project if its finances?

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(9) Ibid