SESSION 5
Weathering Storms and Stresses:
Adaptive and Shock-Responsive Social Protection

MODERATOR

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<Bio to follow>

SPEAKERS and PANELIST

Bob Babajanian
Senior Social Development Specialist (Social Protection)
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Babken (Bob) Babajanian works on adaptive and shock-responsive social protection, inclusive and resilient social protection systems, and social protection indicators across Asia and the Pacific. Prior to joining ADB, Bob worked full-time at HelpAge International, ODI Global, and the World Bank. He also served as a lecturer at the London School of Economics (LSE) for over 10 years, where he designed and taught postgraduate courses, including *Design and Delivery of Social Protection* and *Evidence-Based Policy Design and Implementation*.

Veremo Muria
Director, Social Protection
Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection
Government of Fiji

Veremo Muria provides strategic and operational leadership for national social assistance and welfare programmes supporting vulnerable individuals, families, older persons and persons with disabilities.

His areas of expertise include social protection policy and program delivery, adaptive and shock-responsive social protection, social assistance reform, disability inclusion, poverty reduction, welfare graduation, digital transformation and strengthening social protection information systems. He has extensive experience in program governance, data-driven service delivery, emergency response and partnership with government agencies, civil society, and development partners.

Veremo holds a master's degree from Western Sydney University and a bachelor's degree from the University of the South Pacific.

Representative
Department of Social Welfare and Development
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Marco Knowles
Team Lead, Social Protection
Food and Agriculture Organization

Marco Knowles leads FAO's Social Protection Team. With almost 30 years of international experience, he has worked in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. His work focuses on leveraging social protection to make agrifood systems more inclusive of the rural poor. This involves supporting national social protection systems in adapting to the specificities of rural populations as well as making social protection an integral part of climate action. Marco holds a BSc in Economics and Sociology and an MSc in Development Studies. He loves cooking and exploring the Italian countryside to find ingredients for this.