
Social protection: ILO, “4 billion people worldwide are unprotected”. Only one in four children receive a benefit

Over 4 billion people worldwide are left without social protection. Only one in four children (26.4 per cent) receive a social protection benefit. “The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated by 30% the social protection gap between countries with high- and low-income levels”, the International Labour Organization (ILO) said in the World Social Protection Report 2020-22. The data show that only 47% of the world’s population actually receive at least one social protection benefit, while 4.1 billion people (53%) obtain no income security at all from their country. “There are significant regional inequalities”, the ILO highlighted. Europe and Central Asia have the highest rates of coverage, with 84% of people receiving at least one benefit. The Americas are also above the global average (with 64.3%), while “Asia and the Pacific (44%), the Arab States (40%) and Africa (17.4%) have marked coverage gaps”. Only 45% of women with newborns worldwide receive a cash maternity benefit. Furthermore, only one in three persons with severe disabilities (33.5%) receive a disability benefit, and only 18.6% of unemployed workers are given an unemployment benefit. Also, while 77.5% of people above retirement age receive some form of old-age pension, “major disparities remain across regions, between rural and urban areas, and between women and men”. On average, countries spend 12.8% of their GDP on social protection (excluding health). But there are still “significant gaps” between high-income countries, that spend 16.4% of their GDP, and low-income countries that only spend “1.1% of their GDP on social protection”.

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