

ONLINE

SOCIAL PROTECTION

SOCIAL PROTECTION: AFRICA'S HOPE FOR ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

LAUNCH OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR
ACCELERATING SOCIAL PROTECTION COVERAGE IN AFRICA

16 – 17 NOVEMBER 2021

Information Note



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

BACKGROUND

Everyone has a right to social security and a decent standard of living, according to Article 22 and Article 25 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948).

Social protection helps to reduce poverty, exclusion, and inequality while enhancing political stability and social cohesion. It is a powerful tool to prevent and recover from economic crises, natural disasters, and conflicts. Finally, it contributes to economic growth by supporting household income and domestic consumption.

Furthermore, social protection enhances human capital and productivity. Therefore, it is essential for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Advancing social protection is also a condition for social justice and transformative change in the world of work and for the successful achievement of several **Sustainable Development Goals**.

In September 2016, Heads of State, the World Bank Group and the International Labour Organization launched the **Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to achieve the sustainable developments goals (USP2030)** with the objective to support all efforts put in place towards making the right to social protection a reality for all. Under the co-leadership of the **World Bank** and the **International Labour Organization**, USP2030 partners work together to increase the number of countries that provide universal social protection, in line with the **2030 agenda for sustainable development**.

Africa has shown very strong political will to put in place policies aimed at building sustainable development and combating poverty by promoting social protection policies and ensuring universal access to social security.

Such political commitment is reflected in several *Declarations, Plans of Action and Strategic Frameworks*, such as:

- The **Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor** (2011);
- The **Ouagadougou + 10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development** (2015);
- The **Addis Ababa Declaration on Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development** (2015);
- The AU's **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**;
- The **Abidjan Declaration – Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa** adopted by ILO Constituents during the 14th African Regional Meeting in December 2019.

However, despite the relative importance given to social protection policies, **social protection coverage remains limited in the Continent**.

Most recent ILO estimates show that Africa has the **lowest social protection coverage in the world**: 17% of the total population compared with the global average of 47%.

The coverage gap in Africa is associated with **a significant underinvestment in social protection** as well as the persistence of the **informal economy**. The level of average social protection expenditure compared to GDP in Africa is less than 5% compared with a global average of 12.9%.

Finally, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has exposed the glaring gaps in social protection and underscored the worrying consequences of insufficient coverage, particularly in the informal economy. It has reinforced the importance of ensuring adequate social protection coverage over the life cycle and across all forms of employment. The crisis compelled many governments to temporarily extend social protection to uncovered groups by introducing extraordinary measures and legislation.

Most of the COVID-19 response measures (85.9%) were provided through social assistance. However, these actions **had limited impact on workers in the informal economy**, who are the most affected by the pandemic. Active efforts to reach the informal economy with social protection during the crisis was curtailed by the challenges of informality, including identification. The crisis, however, presents an **opportunity to build back better** and to **accelerate social protection coverage** across the continent.

Considering the political, social and economic imperative for accelerating the extension of social protection in the Continent, the ILO Regional Office for Africa has developed a **Regional Strategy** to support constituents' initiatives aimed towards universal social protection at the national level.

The Strategy is aligned with the UN Secretary-General's **Common Agenda Report** –especially the renewed social contract between governments and their people and within societies that includes a new era of universal social protection. In particular:

- It builds on recent developments in social protection both at the global and regional level;
- It includes the findings of the **Regional Dialogue for Accelerating Social Protection and Sustainable Financing in Africa** (April 2021);
- It rooted in the **Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security)** adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2021.

The launch of this regional strategy and its implementation programme coincide with the release of the **Africa Social Protection Companion Report of the World Social Protection Report 2020-2022**, released in September 2021.

The **World Social Protection Report** developed by the ILO, provides a global overview of recent trends in social protection systems including social protection floors, featuring:

- A broad range of global, regional and country data on social protection coverage, benefits and public expenditures;
- An assessment of the range of social protection benefits for children, women and men of working age as well as for older persons;

- An evaluation of progress towards universal coverage in health and information for policies about relevant options to fill the gaps.

Moreover, this particular edition of the Report covers the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on social protection, the unparalleled policy responses and the opportunity it presents to pursue a high-road approach to accelerate progress towards universal social protection as key for greater resilience, decent work and social justice.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the meeting are:

- Official inauguration of the **Regional Strategy for Accelerating Social Protection Coverage in Africa** and its implementation programme;
- Regional launch of the **World Social Protection Report and Companion Report for Africa**;
- Discussions on financing the extension of social protection in Africa to build back-better towards Agenda 2030.

FORMAT AND CONTENT

The meeting, organized by the ILO in close collaboration with the African Union Commission, will be held exclusively online and will be structured over two days:

DAY 1 (DURATION: 2 HOURS)

- Session 1: Presentation of the main findings and policy orientations of the World Social Protection Report 2020-2021 and the Regional strategy for Accelerating Social Protection Coverage in Africa 2021-2025
- Session 2: High-level panel: **Towards 40 percent social protection coverage in Africa**

DAY 2 (DURATION: 3 HOURS)

- Session 1: Financing Social protection to building back-better towards Agenda 2030 Presentation of two countries cases on financing social protection
- Session 2: Development Partners' Roundtable (panel): **Funding the Strategy for acceleration of social protection coverage in Africa**

The meeting will be conducted in **English, French, Arabic** and **Portuguese**. Simultaneous interpretation will be available throughout the event.

PARTICIPANTS

This continental strategic meeting will bring together **high-level officials** from the following institutions:

- UN organizations (UNECA, UNDESA, UNDCO, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNICEF)
- African Union Commission– AU Commission and AU Organs
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Governments (Ministries in charge of social security and Finance)
- Workers and employers' organizations at Continental and national level
- Social security institutions and social security associations
- Development partners working on social protection in Africa (EU Delegations, EC, ICMPD, SIDA, UK Aid, Irish Aid, SDC, FES, GIZ, AfDB, World Bank, IMF and SPIAC-B)
- Civil society organizations, research and academia

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

The event will take place exclusively online. The programme and registration links will be made available through [the dedicated website](#).

The dates of the event are as follows:

- 16 November 2021 from 10:00 am to 12:00 am (GMT)
- 17 November 2021 from 09:00 am to 12:00 pm (GMT)

The event is open to the public upon registration.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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