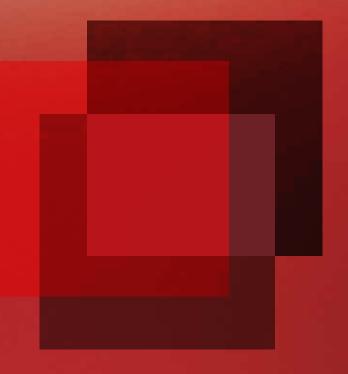


## SOCIAL PROTECTION Page 1 Page 2 Page



Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice

2014/15

World Social Protection Report 2014/15

Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice



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**Preface** 

Since its creation in 1919, the ILO has been supporting countries to develop and implement social security systems for all. There has been tremendous progress since then. At the outset, some 40 countries were starting to build such schemes; today, all countries in the world have a social security system.

What is more, social protection coverage and benefits continue to expand, as reflected in the groundbreaking ILO Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection (No. 202), adopted in 2012. The Recommendation bears witness to the joint commitment of governments, employers and workers to building nationally defined social protection floors which guarantee at least a basic level of social security to all, encompassing access to health care and income security throughout people's lives and ensuring their dignity and rights. While social protection floors are essential, the Recommendation does not stop there: it also sets out detailed guidance on building comprehensive social protection systems.

Two years after the adoption of the Recommendation, this *World Social Protection Report* offers a comprehensive body of evidence both on the impressive progress made over the last few years and on the remaining gaps that need to be filled. Based on a lifecycle approach, the report provides an overview of the current organization of social protection systems, coverage, benefits and expenditures. With its global scope and valuable statistical annexes, it is an essential reference for anyone interested in social protection.

In recent years, the ILO has provided technical assistance on social protection to no fewer than 136 countries. And we are proud to continue our support all over the world, as more and more evidence shows that social protection systems play a key role in the functioning of modern societies and are an essential ingredient of integrated strategies for economic and social development. Furthermore, experience since 2008 shows that countries with adequate social protection systems were able to respond more quickly and effectively to the global crisis.

Yet some 73 per cent of the world's population continues to live without adequate social protection coverage. In other words, for the large majority of people the fundamental human right to social security is only partially realized or not at all. In 2014, it is clear that the global community needs to make greater efforts in realizing this right. With this in view, it is opportune to recall the many countries that

historically have built sound economies at the same time as decent societies with social protection.

Still grappling with the economic repercussions of the global financial crisis, the world is faced with a deep social crisis which is also a crisis of social justice. Fiscal consolidation and adjustment measures threaten household living standards in a significant number of countries. Despite progress made in reducing levels of extreme poverty in some parts of the world, high levels of poverty and vulnerability persist; what is more, poverty is actually increasing in many high-income countries. In addition, high and still rising levels of inequality in both advanced and developing economies are widely acknowledged as cause for great concern.

Social protection measures are essential elements of a policy response that can address those challenges. They not only support the realization of the universal human right to social security, but are both a social and an economic necessity. Well-designed social protection systems support incomes and domestic consumption, build human capital and increase productivity. The bold efforts in extending social protection in many developing countries, from Brazil to China, from Ecuador to Mozambique, have underlined its key role in reducing poverty and vulnerability, redressing inequality and boosting inclusive growth.

This is an issue that the international community should embrace as a priority in the post-2015 development agenda. Social protection can ensure that all people have the security of knowing that if they lose their job or fall ill, and also when they grow old, they will not face the risk of poverty and insecurity. Our modern society can afford to provide universal social protection everywhere.

I hope that this report will be a useful tool for practitioners, and provide the basis for better informed policy-making.

Geneva, June 2014

GUY RYDER

Director-General

International Labour Office

Yung Kyde

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This report was drafted by a team supervised by the Director of the ILO Social Protection Department, Isabel Ortiz, consisting of Krzysztof Hagemejer, formerly Chief of the Social Policy, Governance and Standards Branch; Anne Drouin, Chief of the Public Finance, Actuarial and Statistics Services Branch; Florence Bonnet, Social Security Statistics Coordinator; Christina Behrendt, Senior Social Protection Policy Specialist; Emmanuelle St-Pierre Guilbault, Legal Specialist; Xenia Scheil-Adlung, Coordinator Social Health Protection; and John Woodall, formerly Coordinator Pension Policy.

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