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Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy, 2021-2025

Towards 40 % – a social protection coverage
acceleration framework to achieve the SDGs





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Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy, 2021-2025: Towards 40 % – a social protection coverage acceleration framework to achieve the SDGs

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Foreword

Social security is a fundamental human right that aims to ensure that every person enjoys a life in health and dignity. Since the early years of independence in the 1960s, the landmark Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention adopted by ILO constituents in 1952 has inspired and guided African countries, to develop and implement social protection systems with the technical support of the ILO.

While the extension of social protection has slowed over the past 30 years, African countries continue to show strong political will to expand coverage and recognize the importance of social protection in poverty reduction, fighting inequality, promoting gender equality and overall socioeconomic development. Indeed, this political commitment is reflected in the [Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor \(2011\)](#), which preceded the ILO Recommendation on Social Protection Floors, 2012, and the AUC's [Ouagadougou+10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development \(2015\)](#), among others. The [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#) outlines an African Union strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa within 50 years, while 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, calls for progressively extending sustainable social protection coverage to all.

Despite the relative importance given to social protection policies, at both regional and national levels, social protection coverage remains limited in Africa. The most recent ILO estimates ([ILO, WSPR 2020/22](#)) show that the continent has the lowest social protection coverage in the world at 17 per cent of the total population compared with the global average of 47 per cent (ILO, WSPR 2020/22). This is largely attributed to the prevalence of the informal

economy as the principal source of employment as well as a significant underinvestment in social protection, which on average is less than 5 per cent of a country's GDP, while the global average is 12.9 per cent (ILO, WSPR 2020/22).

The 2008 global financial crisis as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with a scenario of deep and constant changes in the world of work, continue to underscore the importance of investing in social protection systems to mitigate and address the challenges that arise from such crises.

In pursuit of this objective, the ILO Regional Office for Africa has developed a regional strategy to support constituents' initiatives aimed towards universal social protection. The **Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy** is shaped by recent developments in social protection both at the global and regional level. It builds on the [Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection \(social security\)](#) adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2021, providing member States with a framework for action towards universal, adequate, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems that are adapted to the developments in the world of work. This global framework reaffirms the ILO's mandate and leadership in social protection in the multilateral system.

The enabling environment got even stronger with the recent United Nations Secretary General's [Common Agenda Report](#), especially the renewed social contract between governments and their people and within societies. Together with the [Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection](#), it calls to a new era of universal social protection, green and job-rich growth, and put the world back on track to reach SDG 1, SDG 8, and related goals.

With this regional strategy, the Regional Office for Africa reaffirms its commitment to support and facilitate national dialogues to shape national social protection acceleration programmes aimed at progressively achieving universal social protection for all. Now is the time to act.

I recommend the **Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy** to governments, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations, academicians, and research institutions; social security institutions; development partners and financial institutions. The opportunity presented is to pursue a high-road approach to accelerate progress towards universal social protection as key for greater resilience, decent work, and social justice in Africa. We owe it to the young generations to do our utmost to make social protection in Africa a reality for all through the decisive and concrete actions outlined in this strategy. Let us commit to making the most of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to build back better towards the vision of The Africa We Want. Together we can make it happen.



Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon

ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa

1.

PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION



► 1.1. Social protection: a human right and a social and economic necessity

According to Articles 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), everyone has a right to social security and a decent standard of living. This understanding has been consistently reinforced through the international labour standards, most notably the International Labour Organization (ILO) Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

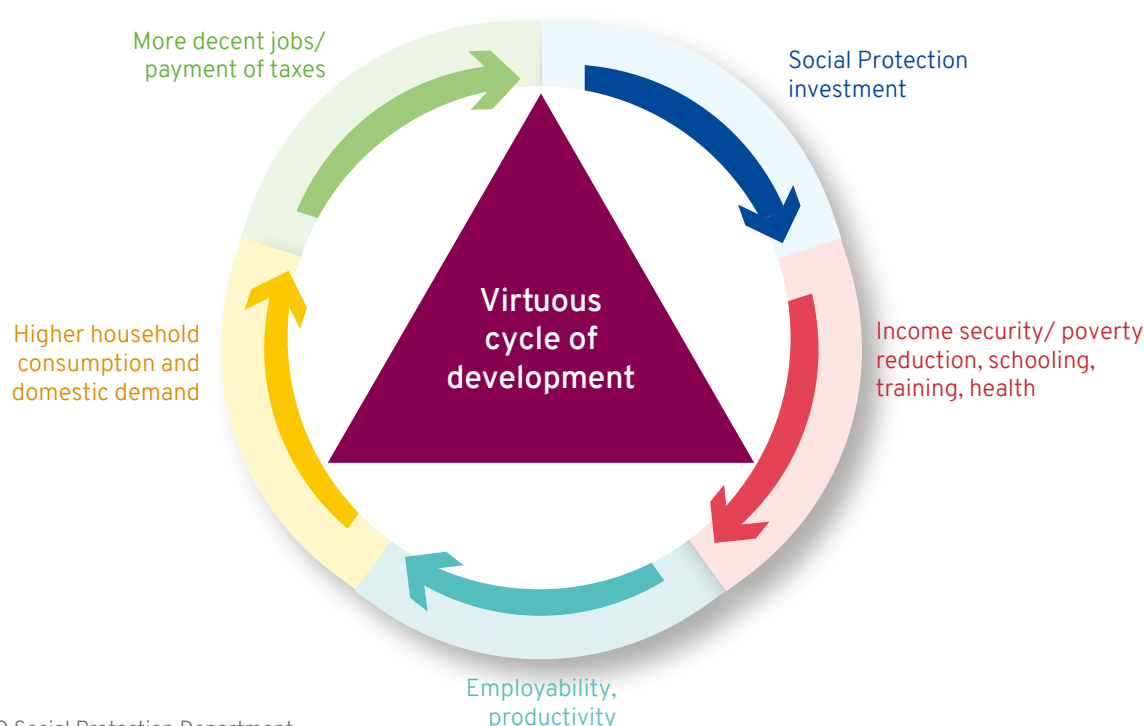
Social protection is a key factor in reducing poverty, exclusion, and inequality while enhancing political stability and social cohesion (Figure 1). It is a powerful tool for prevention of and recovery from economic crises, natural disasters, conflicts and, as the current experience with the COVID-19 Pandemic clearly illustrates. Social protection contributes to economic growth by supporting household income and domestic consumption and enhancing human capital and productivity and is therefore 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 (SDGs).

In the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, governments', employers' and workers' representatives unanimously adopted the ILO [Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 \(No. 202\)](#) in June 2012. Many international organizations and multilateral partners, including the African Union, the Group of 20 (G20) and the United Nations (UN), endorsed the approach and the guidelines for extending social protection coverage to all as outlined therein.

The Recommendation states that “social protection floors are nationally defined sets of at least four basic social security guarantees” (para. 2), including:

- (a) access to (...) essential healthcare, including maternity care (...);
- (b) basic income security for children (...) providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;
- (c) basic income security (...) for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in case of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and
- (d) basic income security (...) for older persons” (para. 5).

Figure 1: The role of social protection in initiating a virtuous cycle of development



Source: ILO Social Protection Department.

Social protection floors (SPF) should be defined at the national level through social dialogue and established by law. They can be provided through a combination of social insurance, social benefits financed through general government revenue, social assistance services, public works programmes and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security.

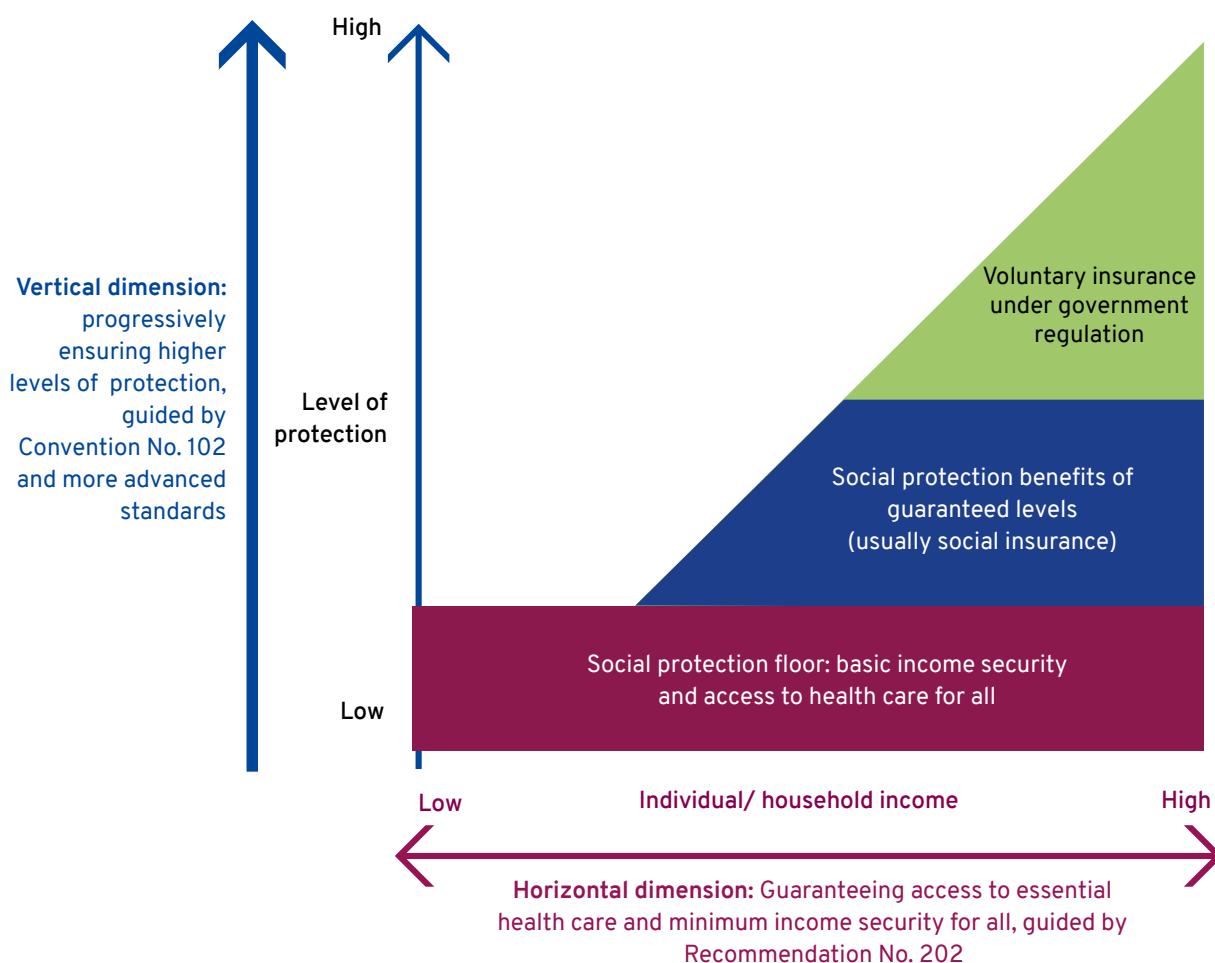
Recommendation No. 202 is based on a two-dimensional strategy for the extension of social protection (see Figure 2 below for illustration):

- ▶ the rapid implementation of national SPF containing basic social security guarantees that ensure universal access to essential healthcare and income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level (horizontal dimension); and
- ▶ the progressive achievement of higher levels of protection (vertical dimension) within comprehensive social security systems according to the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and other more advanced ILO standards.

In September 2015, UN Member States undertook to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030. The commitment to building universal social protection systems, including SPF, is integrated into at least five of the Goals, most notably Goal 1 on ending poverty, Goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives, Goal 5 on achieving gender equality, Goal 8 on promoting decent work and Goal 10 on reducing inequality (Figure 3).

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic consequences, the International Labour Conference, at its 109th Session in June 2021, adopted the resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. Governments and employers' and workers' organizations from around the world undertook to "build forward better" in the wake of the crisis by working to "achieve universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection, including nationally defined social protection floors" (paras 8 and 11(C)(a)).

Figure 2: Two-dimensional strategy for the extension of social protection



Source: ILO Social Protection Department.

Figure 3: Sustainable Development Goals of relevance to social protection floors

Source: UNDESA Sustainable Development and ILO Social Protection Department.

Also at its 109th Session, in accordance with the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), the Conference held a second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) in order to consider how the ILO should respond to the realities and needs of its Members in extending social protection. The Conference adopted the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security). The resolution includes a section in which the tripartite constituents reaffirm the full relevance of the guiding principles contained in Recommendation No. 202 and endorse its two-dimensional strategy for the extension of social protection to all through the implementation

of nationally defined SPF. The resolution provides a framework for progress towards universal, adequate, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems that are responsive to developments in the world of work and states that “[u]niversal social protection entails actions and measures to realize the human right to social security by progressively building and maintaining nationally appropriate social protection systems, so that everyone has access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable protection over the life cycle, in line with ILO standards” (para. 3).

▶ 1.2. The African context

African countries at the highest level have demonstrated strong political will to put in place policies aimed at building a sustainable development path that includes combating poverty by promoting social protection policies and ensuring that their entire population has effective access to social security.

Effective coverage in Africa is estimated to be as low as 17 per cent of the total population. This has prevented the continent from reaping the benefits that social protection brings.

In 2010, by adopting the Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor, 47 African ILO member States recognized the urgent need “to start the effective and rapid implementation of a Social Protection Floor for all Africans”.¹ They recognized that “the highest priority should go to policies and initiatives to extend social security coverage to those who have none; not only is social security important for the well-being of workers, their families and the community as a whole, but it also enhances productivity and supports economic development” (sect. I(a)).

The African Union Commission (AUC) Ouagadougou + 10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, adopted by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2015, identifies “Social Protection and Productivity for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth” as one of its six key priority policy areas. In line with Key Priority Area 4 of the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation, two instruments were adopted: the Programme on Upgrading the Informal Economy and the Social Protection Plan for the Informal Economy and Rural

Workers (SPIREWORK). SPIREWORK, adopted at the AU Assembly in 2011, has two main objectives, both of which focus on community-based schemes: (1) universal access to social protection for informal and rural workers and their families; and (2) facilitation of international cooperation and resource mobilization, including South-South cooperation. These policy instruments reflect the importance that the AU’s political leadership attaches to inclusive growth, equity and respect for the rights of all categories of workers in a labour market dominated by the informal economy and rural sectors.

The Addis Ababa Declaration on Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development was adopted at the ILO’s 13th African Regional Meeting, held in Addis Ababa in 2015. The Declaration’s continent-wide policy priorities include “extending social protection by establishing and maintaining national SPF based on the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)” (para. 13). The right to social security for all is enshrined in the constitutions of the majority of African countries.

The AU’s [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#), adopted in 2015, outlines a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa over the next 50 years. The Agenda seeks to achieve a high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens through affordable social security and protection for all and to increase incomes and provide decent jobs for people of working age, leading, among other things, to healthy, well-nourished citizens and affordable and sustainable access to high-quality basic necessities of life. The objectives for social protection at the national level under the [Agenda’s First Ten Year Implementation Plan \(2013–2023\)](#) are:

- ▶ at least 20 per cent of the informal and rural population has access to social security by 2023;
- ▶ at least 30 per cent of vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, older persons and children, are provided with social protection by 2023.²

¹ Third preambular paragraph of the Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor, adopted at the Second African Decent Work Symposium, “Building a Social Protection Floor with the Global Jobs Pact” (Yaoundé, 6–7 October 2010). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/africa/information-resources/publications/WCMS_181374/lang-en/index.htm

² African Union, [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. First Ten Year Implementation Plan](#), 2015, p. 26. Available at: [Agenda 2063 - FIRST TEN YEAR PLAN September 2015.pdf](#) (unep.org).

The AU's more recent analysis of the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the African economy states that the AUC should "re-enforce the health and social protection systems of African countries".³

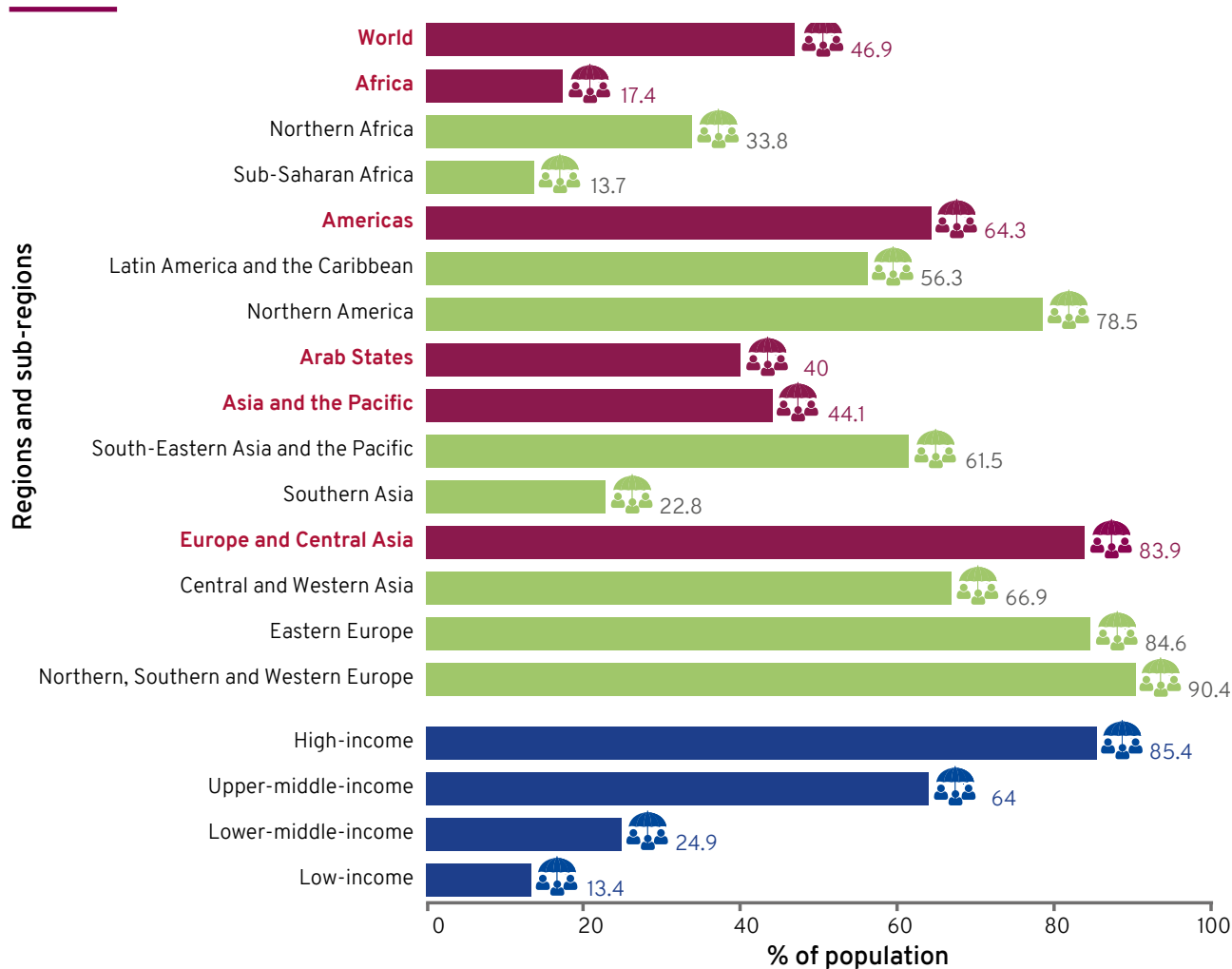
The ILO [Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#), adopted at the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2019 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at its 74th Session in September 2019, likewise calls for "developing and enhancing social protection systems, which are adequate, sustainable and adapted to developments in the world of work" (section II(A)(xv)).

Lastly, the [Abidjan Declaration on Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa](#), adopted on the occasion of the ILO Centenary at the 14th African Regional Meeting in December 2019, calls for "progressively extending sustainable social protection coverage" (para. 1(b)(iii)).

Many African countries have ratified the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and other relevant ILO Conventions – including the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), ratified by Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe and Senegal – in recent years. Most African countries, including, among others, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, have also adopted national social protection policies and strategies that focus on the extension of coverage to all.

Despite the relative importance attached to social protection at the regional and national levels, Africa remains the region with the lowest social protection coverage. According to the latest available data from the ILO Social Security Inquiry (SSI) database, most of Africa's inhabitants have no access to social protection systems. Effective coverage (including contributory

Figure 4: SDG 1.3.1: Percentage of the total population covered by at least one social protection benefit (effective coverage), 2020



Sources: ILO World Social Protection Database, based on the SSI, ILOSTAT and national sources.

Note: Regional and subregional estimates are weighted by relevant population group.

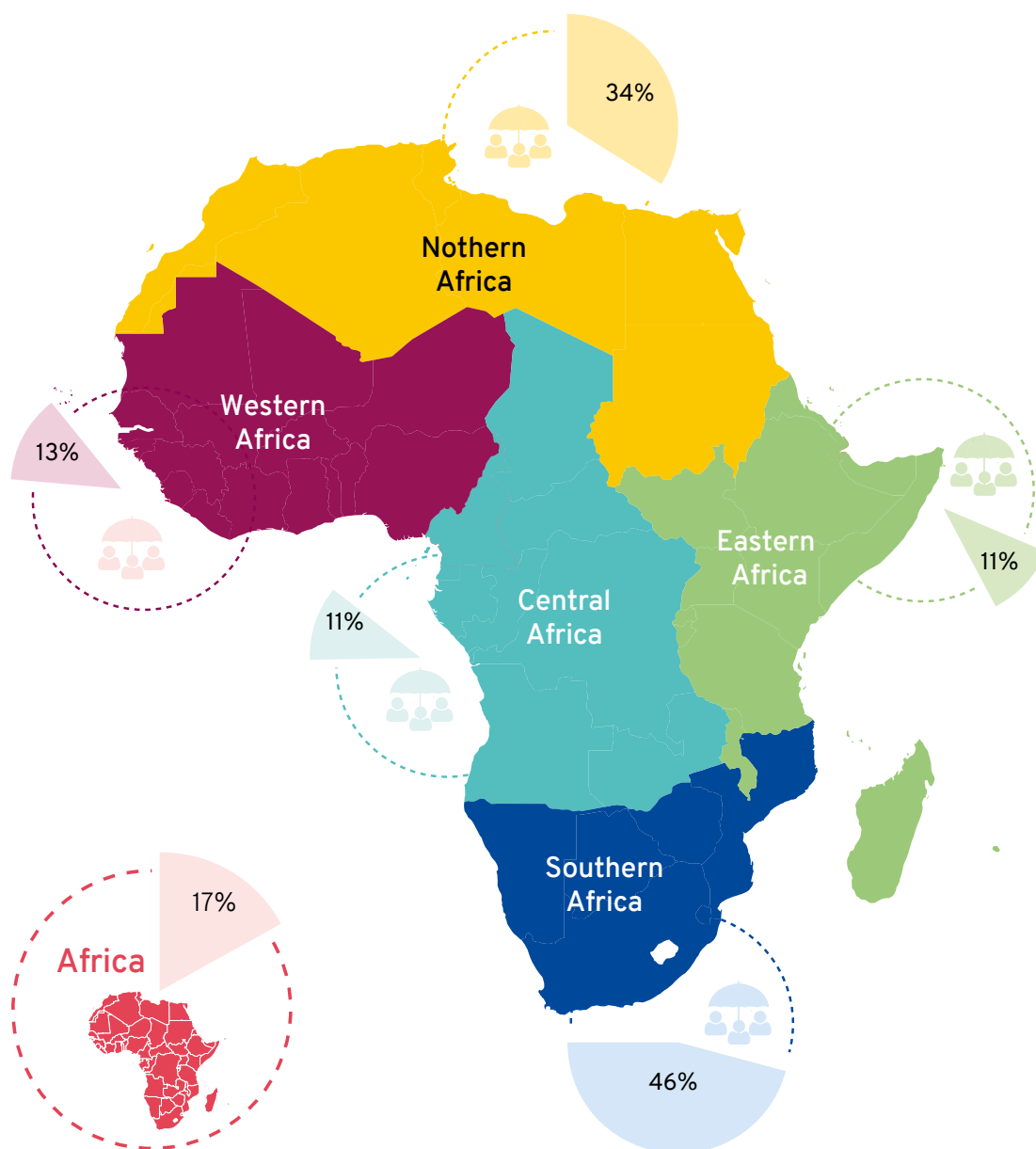
³ African Union, Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the African Economy, April 2020. Available at: <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/covid-19/3218-impact-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-on-the-african-economy-african-union-report-april-2020/file.html>.

and non-contributory schemes) is estimated to be as low as 17 per cent of the total population (Figure 4). This has prevented the continent from reaping the benefits that social protection brings, such as the reduction of poverty and vulnerability, formalization of informal workers and elimination of forced and child labour. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this situation, exposing the glaring gaps in social protection and underscoring the worrying consequences of insufficient coverage, particularly in the informal economy. It has also highlighted the importance of ensuring adequate social protection coverage over the life cycle and across all forms of employment with a view to increased resilience in times of crisis and more efficient economic recovery.

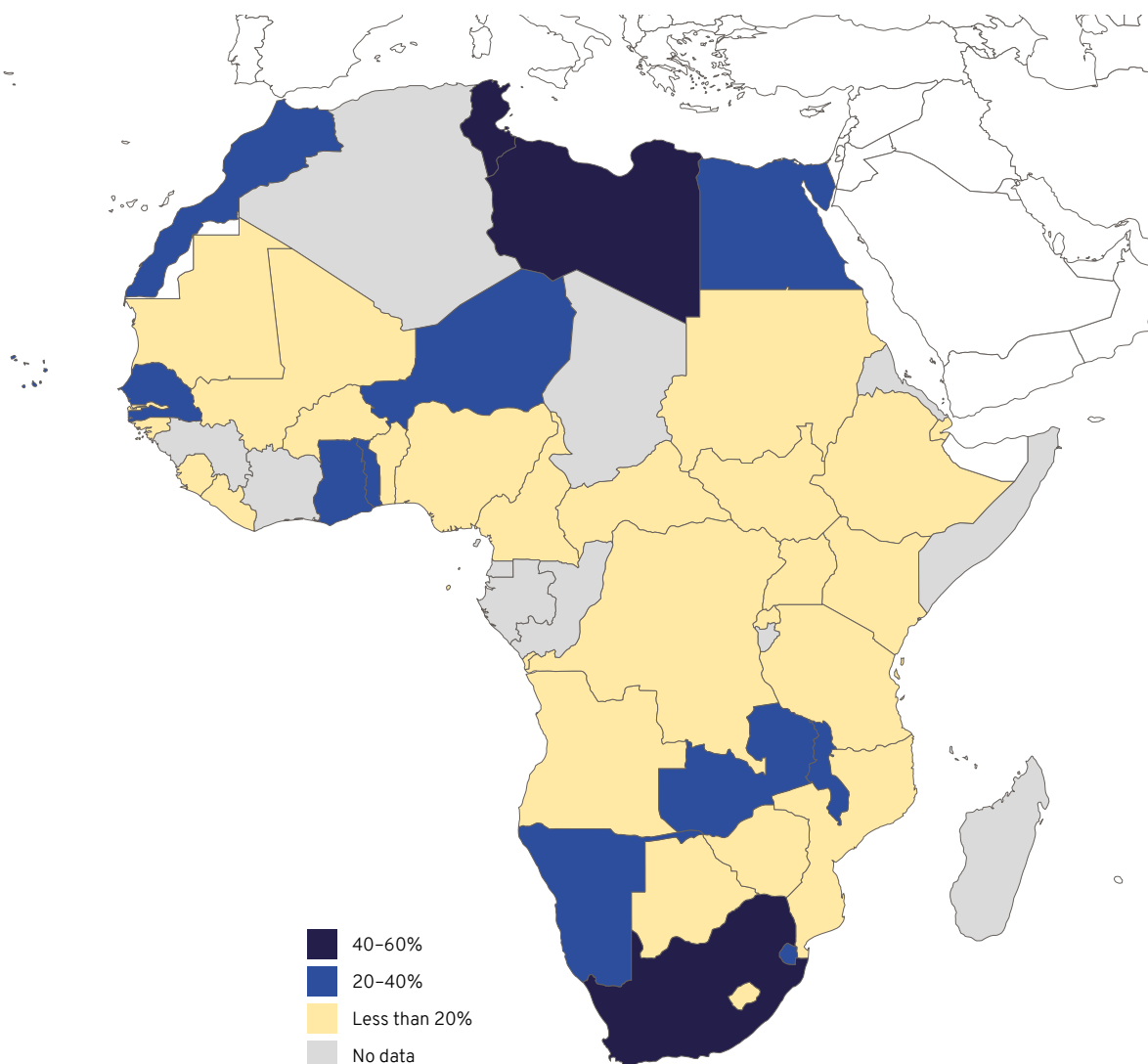
There are significant disparities across the continent: Southern and Northern Africa have relatively high coverage rates (46 and 34 per cent, respectively) while in the other subregions less than 15 per cent of the population is covered (Figure 5, see Figure 6 for the share of the population covered per country).

While the target of 40 per cent coverage with at least one social protection benefit set by the ILO Regional Office for Africa is achievable in Northern and Southern Africa by 2025, reaching this target at the continental level will require significant effort and funding since the countries of Central, Eastern and Western Africa have far lower coverage rates and much higher informality rates among their workforce.

Figure 5: SDG 1.3.1: Population receiving at least one social protection cash benefit, 2020



Source: ILO World Social Protection Database, based on the SSI and the ILO Social Protection Platform.

Figure 6: SDG 1.3.1: Share of the population covered by at least one social protection benefit

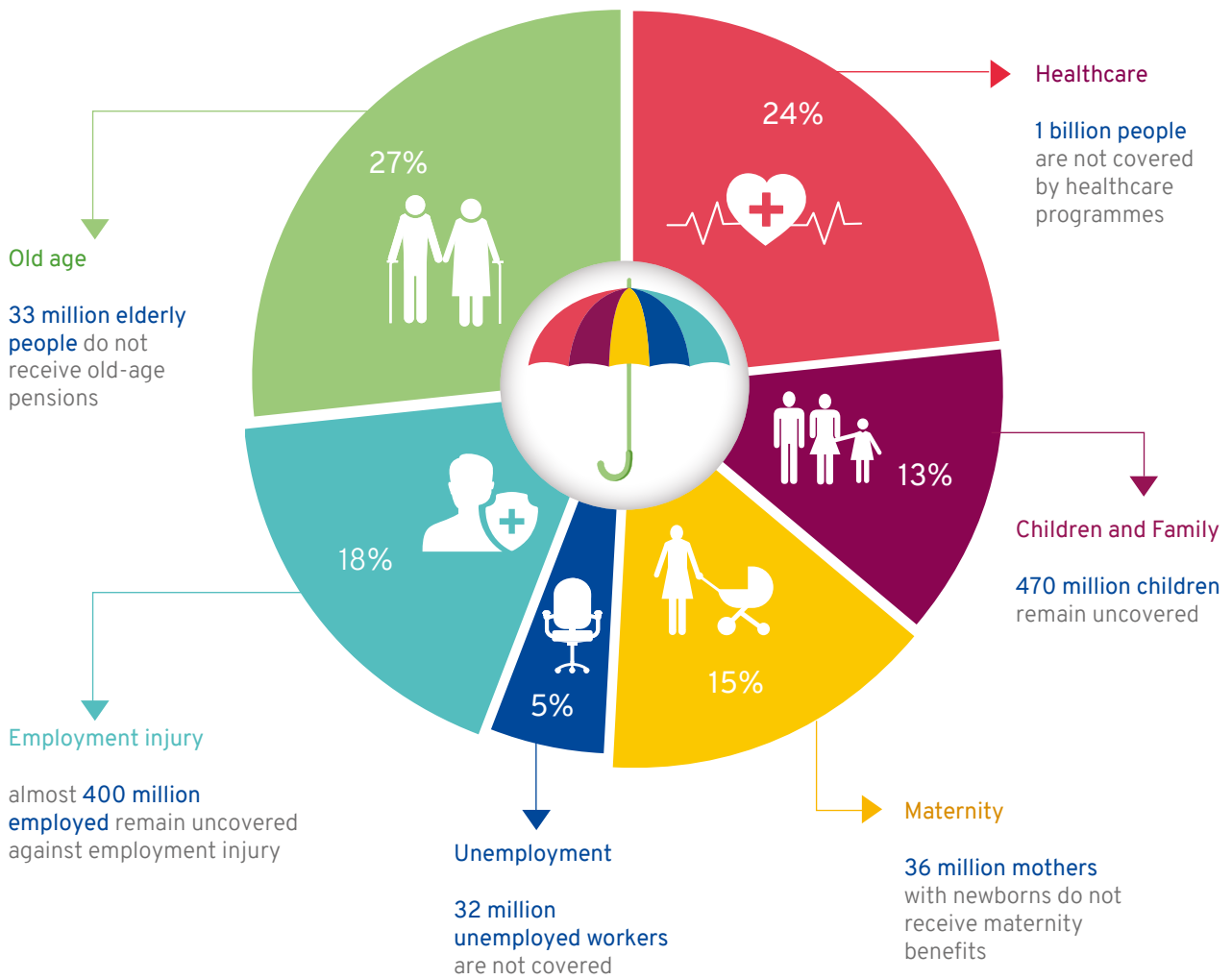
Source: ILO World Social Protection Database, based on the SSI.

The available data on social protection coverage shows that only 13.9 per cent of Africa's labour force is affiliated with a contributory social security institution. Additionally, coverage is usually broader for men than for women, who are prevented from joining the formal labour market by the gender burden. Although statutory social security schemes exist in all countries, coverage is extremely limited and is confined to workers in the formal economy.

Significant coverage gaps remain in the areas of maternity protection, unemployment protection and disability benefits (Figure 7). There has been greater progress in extending old age pensions, which now cover 27 per cent of older persons in Africa with universal coverage achieved or approached in Botswana, Cabo Verde, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius,

Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, and United Republic of Tanzania. However, with regard to income security for younger cohorts, there has been a decline in the number of children receiving a child or family benefit. The ILO – United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, *Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward*, shows that for the first time in the past 20 years, the number of working children is increasing. A total of 92 million African children are engaged in child labour and these numbers are likely to go up as a result of the growing poverty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; an additional 8.9 million children worldwide will be working by the end of 2022 (Figure 8). Expanding social protection can mitigate the poverty and economic uncertainty that underlie child labour.

Figure 7: Effective coverage by some social protection functions, 2020



Source: ILO World Social Protection Database, based on the SSI.

Figure 8: Projection: Children aged 5–17 engaged in child labour by the end of 2022



Source: ILO and UNICEF Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward

Despite greater efforts to invest in non-contributory cash benefits, only 9.3 per cent of vulnerable populations in Africa receive them.⁴ Although universal health coverage is one of the main priorities of several governments, social health protection remains extremely limited.

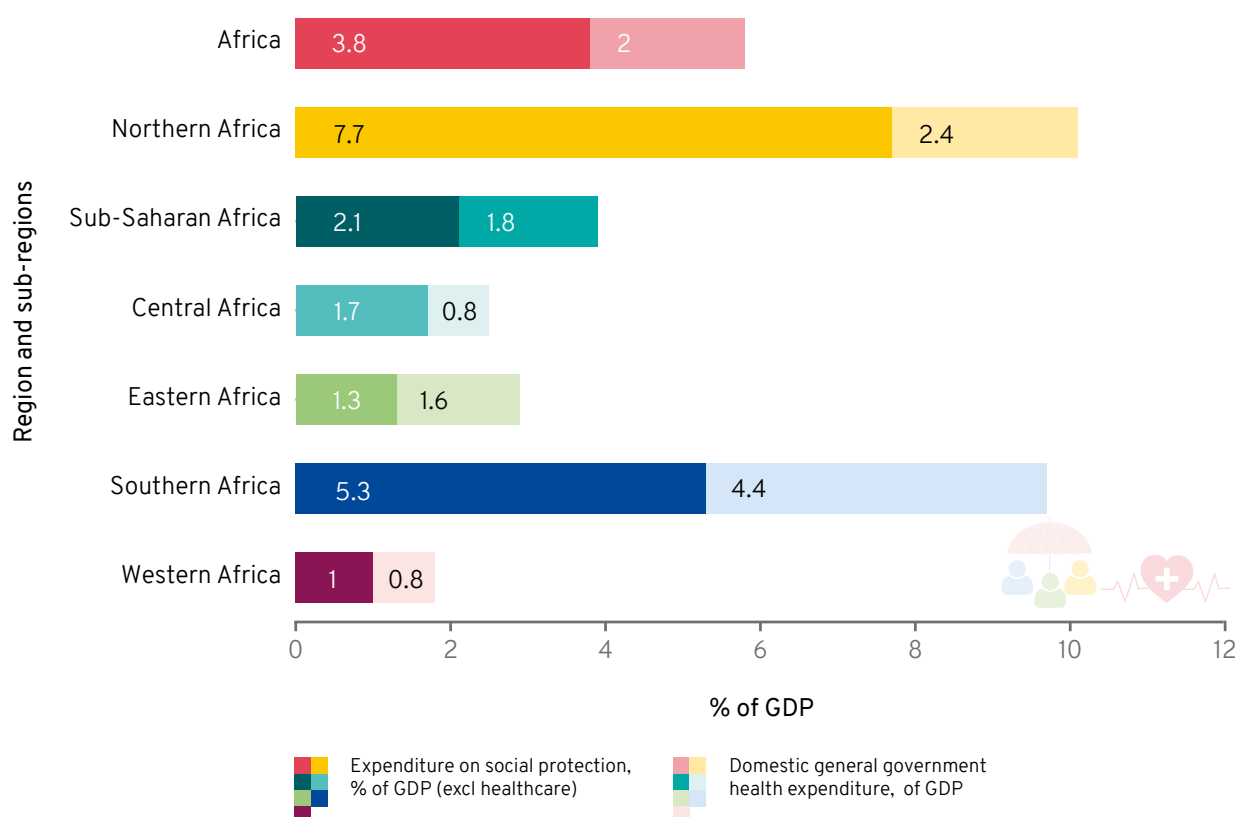
The coverage gap in Africa is associated with significant underinvestment in social protection; average social protection expenditure in Africa is less than 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Northern and Southern Africa are the subregions that spend the most on social protection (an average expenditure of 7.7 and 5.3 per cent of GDP, respectively), while the lowest expenditure rate is in Western Africa (1 per cent of GDP, see Figure 9).

In the absence of robust social protection systems, responding to the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has posed a significant challenge for most African countries. Social protection measures have been put in place in an ad hoc manner.

According to the ILO Social Protection Monitor, between 1st February and end of 2020, nearly **all countries in Africa** have introduced 230 emergency social protection measures. These measures were mostly **non-contributory** (86%) and new programmes (64%). They included the introduction of special allowances (20%), food and nutrition (16%), health (13%), income/job protection and unemployment benefits (13%). 36% of the measures were an **adjustment/ upgrade** of a pre-existing programme. Example of Mozambique (extension of the cash transfers to an additional 1 million households); 64% of the measures were **programmes developed from scratch**. Togo for instance launched a new programme, Novissi (which means mutual help), to support informal economy workers the most affected by lockdown measures.

Nonetheless, African countries can learn important lessons from the response to COVID-19 to help build an effective strategy to strengthen social protection systems on the continent.

Figure 9: Expenditure on social protection and healthcare as a percentage of GDP, regional and subregional estimates



Sources: ILO, World Social Protection Database, based on SSI, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and national sources.

⁴ ILO World Social Protection Database

▶ 1.3. Root causes of social protection coverage deficits in Africa

- ▶ **Need for a rights-based approach:** A prerequisite for universal coverage is translation of the right to social protection into entitlement to benefits as prescribed by national law. Although most African countries have enshrined the right to social security in their constitutions, many of the existing social protection programmes are not embedded in law. It is imperative to translate these constitutional guarantees into laws and strategies that will make the right to social security a reality for all.
- ▶ **Underfunding of social protection systems:** The level of public expenditure allocated to social protection in Africa is among the lowest in the world. According to ILO estimates, the financing gap for the provision of four social protection benefits (maternity, children, disability and old age) and healthcare amounts to 8.5 per cent of GDP. Bilateral and multilateral donors have become the main funders of non-contributory social protection in many countries and are influencing the type of social protection programmes provided, including their design and implementation, sometimes with little input from national stakeholders. There is a need for greater national ownership in the development of coherent social protection strategies and policies that are responsive to national needs and priorities, based on ILO standards and informed by social dialogue.
- ▶ **Inequities affecting workers in the informal economy, migrants, refugees and other minority groups:** Informal employment is the norm in many sub-Saharan African countries; in some of them, informal work accounts for over 80 per cent of total employment. Recent data shows a slight decline in informal employment: from 85.8 per cent in 2019 to 82.9 per cent in 2021.⁵ “Workers in informal employment are, by the very nature of their jobs, most commonly not covered by social protection or labour legislation, making them more vulnerable in the event of unemployment, loss of income, or work injury, to name a few examples.”⁶ The informal economy is often linked to low productivity, significant decent work deficits, working poverty and excessive inequality. It is therefore urgent to

African countries can learn important lessons from the response to COVID-19 to help build an effective strategy to strengthen social protection systems on the continent.

extend social protection to informal workers and facilitate their transition to the formal economy. Financial barriers and exclusion from social security legislation often make it difficult or impossible for informal workers and migrants to join social insurance schemes. The resulting low contributory capacity (to build a contributory system) and low tax base (to finance a non-contributory system) are major impediments to the establishment of sustainable social protection systems. Increasing coverage of those workers is a reliable way to finance social protection, thus freeing fiscal space for other social expenditure.

- ▶ **Weak governance and administration:** In many countries, continued improvement in governance and in the administration of schemes and programmes could lead to expanded and more sustainable coverage. The issues to be addressed are the absence of effective tripartite social dialogue and inefficiency in administrative processes such as registration, collection of contributions, financial management and monitoring.
- ▶ **Absence of policy and institutional coordination:** Social protection systems are highly fragmented and there is no cross-sectoral policy coherence, particularly between the social, employment and economic sectors.
- ▶ **Lack of social protection in rural areas and fragile zones:** There are disparities in coverage between urban and rural areas. A majority of the African population – 57 per cent according to the most recent data (ILOSTAT 2019) – live in rural areas. Social protection coverage is extremely limited in rural Africa, where the majority of workers are employed in agriculture and are thus often excluded from social security laws. In addition to coverage, access to social services such as healthcare is limited in remote areas.

⁵ ILO, World Economic and Social Outlook: Trends 2021, 2021.

⁶ ILO, Rural and urban labour markets: Different challenges for promoting decent work, Spotlight Brief on Work Statistics No. 11, October 2020, p. 13. Available at: https://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_757960.pdf.



2.

STRATEGY



In order to achieve the target of 40 per cent social protection coverage for Africa by 2025, a comprehensive strategy is needed.

In 2012, most African countries supported the adoption of the Recommendation No. 202. The Recommendation provides guidance to African countries in their efforts to establish and maintain national SPF as a fundamental element of comprehensive social security and to develop extension strategies for ensuring higher levels of social security to as many people as possible as soon as possible, reflecting national objectives and economic and fiscal capacities and guided by other ILO social security standards.

► 2.1. Principles

Bearing in mind the overall and primary responsibility of the State (Recommendation No. 202, para. 3), the following principles should guide the expansion of social protection:

- ▶ a rights-based approach based on the entitlements prescribed by national law;
- ▶ diversity of methods and approaches and progressive realization;
- ▶ universality of protection based on social solidarity and collective financing;
- ▶ adequacy and predictability of benefits and protection of the rights and dignity of beneficiaries;
- ▶ non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs;
- ▶ financial, fiscal and economic sustainability;
- ▶ transparency, accountability and sound financial management and administration; and
- ▶ tripartite participation and consultation with representatives of the persons concerned.

► 2.2. An enabling environment

A coherent and inclusive social protection system should be built gradually. Policies and programmes should be embedded in law and based on comprehensive longer-term plans that are incorporated into national social protection action plans. These in turn should be part of national development plans that reflect the basic elements detailed in this strategy and based on the principles set out in section 2.1 above.

The expansion of social protection coverage with a view to universal protection in Africa will require structural transformation in order to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of social protection systems in member States, including through:

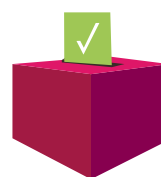
- (a) a systemic approach to social protection;
- (b) good governance;
- (c) social dialogue;
- (d) investment in data collection and analysis with a view to the development of empirically sound policies;
- (e) monitoring and evaluation of the system with a view to future reforms;
- (f) preparedness of the system should to include a shock-responsive approach.

A systemic approach



A **systemic approach** to social protection is crucial to the development of a national social protection system that is comprehensive, coherent and avoids coverage gaps. Such an approach promotes the coordination of all social protection initiatives throughout the life cycle in a coherent system that provides universal coverage to all. This ensures the sustainability of schemes and programmes and a rights-based approach to social protection. It is also conducive to solidarity in financing and provides an opportunity for low-income groups to move up the ladder – for instance, from social assistance to subsidized social insurance – and become contributors to the system. This approach is based on a combination of contributory and non-contributory mechanisms to ensure that all population groups can be covered through adapted social protection schemes.

Sound governance



Sound governance of a social security system is complex and requires skills in different domains, including public administration, information technology (IT) development, financial management, statistics, social work, law, health, labour markets and social dialogue. Investment in the capacities of national social security administrations and institutions in order to build the expertise required for effective, efficient implementation of the systems built is crucial if trust is to be maintained. Good governance also includes establishing an effective legal framework with clear identification of the rights and responsibilities of both rights-holders and the Government. As overall responsibility for social security lies primarily with member States, this enables the Government to discharge its responsibility towards the population.

A rights-based approach



A **rights-based approach**, based on the social protection entitlements prescribed by national law, requires the grounding of social protection systems in a strong legal and institutional framework that ensures both programme stability and the recognition of beneficiaries as rights-holders. Strong legal frameworks that clearly establish entitlements, rights and obligations contribute to the sustainability of the system.

Social dialogue



Social dialogue is important in promoting national dialogue and building consensus. A national social dialogue process enables member States to reach consensus regarding national priorities and the measures to be taken in order to formulate and implement their national social protection strategies. It also promotes confidence by inviting workers and the general population to participate in decision-making processes.

Investment in data availability



Investment in data availability enables the assessment of existing social protection systems, identification of gaps in coverage (including with respect to SPF guarantees), estimation of the costs and simulation of the impact of closing those gaps on poverty and inequality reduction, and identification of potential sources of financing. The availability of data also makes it possible to monitor progress in implementing social protection systems and achieving the other objectives of national social security extension strategies. In line with paragraph 21 of Recommendation No. 202, member States are encouraged to “regularly collect, compile, analyse and publish an appropriate range of social security data, statistics and indicators, disaggregated, in particular, by gender”. It is therefore important to invest in systems that ensure the availability of reliable data with a view to reform the existing national social protection systems.

Shock-responsive



Social protection systems should be shock-responsive in order to address both systemic challenges and unforeseen events such as demographic change, economic downturns, political crises and climate change and to proactively facilitate transformation of the economy and society. Safeguards should be incorporated into the design or reform of social protection programmes and schemes to ensure that they can adapt quickly and easily to changing national circumstances. Social protection systems also benefit from the creation of synergies between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in order to reduce vulnerability to the impact of climate change and other disasters.



► 2.3. Strategic action areas

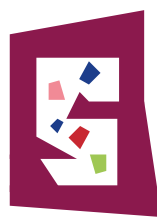
In order to increase social protection coverage in Africa to at least 40 per cent, African countries need to prioritize social protection and go beyond small and piecemeal interventions to pursue ambitious projects and programmes with sufficient scale to bring about effective change. The strategy aims to build on the ongoing COVID-19 response by building back better with more inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems. To that end, and in order to achieve the goals set out in the UN 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063, the ILO will continue to build strategic partnerships with the UN, the private sector and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and to pursue bilateral and other forms of cooperation. The strategy is based on a coherent and adaptable approach that supports the three steps in the development of national SPFs in African countries:

- (1) support the adoption of social protection policies and strategies in countries where there is no comprehensive social protection framework;
- (2) design and reform social protection schemes;
- (3) improve operations.

The majority of African countries have enacted social protection strategies and policies as part of their social and poverty reduction frameworks. The ILO supports these countries in their effort to move from policy design to the implementation and operationalization of social protection schemes and programmes that extend coverage to previously non-covered categories such as self-employed, rural, urban and migrant workers.

The strategy identifies three areas in which action is necessary in order to bring about tangible change:

- (1) enhance coverage and adequacy through stronger social protection strategies, legal frameworks and programmes and by scaling up existing and new initiatives;
- (2) close financing gaps by ensuring adequate and sustainable financing;
- (3) develop strategic partnerships.



Action area 1: Enhance coverage and adequacy through strong social protection strategies, legal frameworks and programmes

Extend social insurance to workers in the informal and rural economies

Although micro- and small enterprises, which fall into the informal economy, account for most employment in Africa, it has proved difficult for social insurance systems to cover a significant proportion of the population outside the public sector and large private sector companies that are registered and part of the declared economy.

A number of barriers have hindered social insurance coverage for informal workers. Among other things, many countries' social security laws cover specific groups of workers while expressly excluding others, such as agricultural workers.

In other cases, the organization of contributory systems is not adapted to the workers; administrative rules may require the monthly payment of social insurance contributions even by workers and enterprises with seasonal activity and irregular periodic revenue.

These legislative, administrative and financial barriers are significant issues that often jeopardize the extension of social insurance programmes to workers in the informal economy.

Country examples:

A number of African countries have significantly expanded their social protection coverage to include informal workers, thus facilitating their transition to the formal economy through various means and strategies. Some of these countries have made significant progress towards universal health coverage (Egypt, Ghana, Morocco and Rwanda) while others have extended social insurance coverage to domestic workers (South Africa), agricultural workers (Algeria and Tunisia), workers in small enterprises (Cabo Verde and Cameroon) and self-employed workers (Algeria, Cabo Verde and Cameroon). Some countries have introduced or expanded large-scale non-contributory schemes for children, persons with disabilities and older persons (Botswana, Cabo Verde, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and United Republic of Tanzania).

In 2019, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a law establishing a mandatory scheme for self-employed workers, managed by the National Social Security Fund (CNPS), and Zambia adopted Statutory Instrument No. 72, establishing the legal basis for the extension of social protection to informal workers through the National Pension Authority (NAPSA).

In 2003, South Africa's domestic workers were legally granted certain social protection benefits for the first time. The Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act includes domestic workers in the Unemployment Insurance Fund, which provides (a) relief in the event of partial or full unemployment owing to dismissal, retrenchment, illness or death of the employer; and (b) maternity benefits for pregnant domestic workers before or after their children are born, depending on their contributions. Recognizing the specific situation of domestic workers, the Act establishes the right to unemployment benefits even for workers who are still partially employed, for example, those who have lost their jobs with one employer but still work for another. It also entitles workers to unemployment benefits in the event of the death of an employer. Employers and domestic workers each contribute 1 per cent of their monthly wages to the Fund. The provision of financial and human resources for the training and employment of additional labour inspectors to strengthen control mechanisms accompanied implementation of the Act. By 2008, 324,000 of the country's 633,000 registered domestic workers, employed by 556,000 employers, had received benefits and by April 2009, an additional 23,000 employers (for a total of 579,000) had registered their workers.

The majority of African countries have enacted social protection strategies and policies as part of their social and poverty reduction frameworks

Recommendation 1: Extend social protection through the extension of social insurance coverage to previously unprotected categories of workers. This approach tends to prioritize specific groups of workers who are already close to the formal economy and have some contributory capacity or are already organized (such as cooperatives and markets) and may thus be relatively easily covered by social insurance schemes, especially if some contribution subsidies are introduced. This will require not only new or amended legislation, but also the removal of obstacles by facilitating administrative processes and adapting contribution rates, for example by subsidizing the employer's share of contribution and benefits. When adapting benefit packages, it is important to focus on short-term (health, maternity

and employment injury) benefits as a demonstration; long-term benefits (pensions) may be covered through a universal scheme (social pensions in Cabo Verde, Namibia and South Africa). COVID-19 offers an opportunity to expand coverage through partially subsidized schemes, financed in the short term through loans and grants from the international community. The pandemic makes it all the more important to register people and contributes to a culture of social insurance by increasing recognition of the benefits of social protection. In addition, coordination with employment (including vocational and other specific training), macroeconomic and fiscal (access to financing) policies, as well as those that support sustainable enterprises, is needed.

A number of barriers have hindered social insurance coverage for informal workers. Many countries' social security laws cover specific groups of workers while expressly excluding others.

Designing and implementing effective and sustainable social assistance programmes

In recent years, non-contributory benefits have received greater attention as a means of closing gaps in social protection coverage and ensuring at least a basic level of protection for all. However, despite significant progress in the expansion of coverage through non-contributory schemes, the vast majority of Africans are left unprotected, largely due to high levels of informal employment and targeted, restrictive entitlement conditions that exclude most informal workers.

Means-tested cash transfer programmes have been pilot tested and implemented in a number of African countries, often in the context of more structural budgetary reforms in which other benefits, such as food or energy subsidies, are replaced by a cash transfer programme for only the poorest families. Moreover, in some countries (Egypt), only a small share of the budget liberated through the removal of subsidies is reinvested in cash transfer programmes rather than implementing a larger and more ambitious social protection programme that includes universal benefits for some categories of the population. The net impact on poverty can be difficult to measure when social protection programmes are designed to replace other schemes.

Means testing may not be the most adequate methodology where there is a high incidence of poverty and limited reliable and timely data on household income (leading to the use of highly problematic proxy means tests). In such cases, households with incomes just above the threshold may be penalized by the removal of other programmes, such as food and energy subsidies, without benefiting from the new social assistance programme.

Social assistance programmes also offer very low benefit levels that do not allow households to move out of poverty. Moreover, they are not seen as an opportunity to move from social assistance to social insurance and thus do not promote the complementarity of and linkages between the different dimensions of a system.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the adequacy and scope of existing social assistance programmes.

Not only do social assistance programmes have limited scope in terms of benefits; they often restrict coverage to the poorest of the poor so that only a small percentage of households below the poverty line are eligible. To make these social assistance programmes more effective in reducing poverty and more socially acceptable, it is important to expand their coverage. In line with a rights-based approach, universal or categorical programmes and schemes or geographical approaches should be preferred whenever possible. However, this will require increased fiscal space for social protection, which can be achieved through several means (see below).

Recommendation 3: Promote a systemic approach to safety net programmes.

Existing safety nets are often not embedded in law, are disconnected from the rest of the social protection system and include implementing arrangements that are not in line with a rights-based approach (universality of protection and non-discrimination). All such programmes should focus on (i) coordinating and building links among programmes in order to harness synergies between safety nets, other social protection programmes/institutions and sectoral investments (active labour market policies (ALMPs)) to ensure that recipients of social assistance are given opportunities to qualify for a higher level of benefits through adapted social insurance schemes for the rural and informal economy; (ii) increasing institutional coordination between the ministries in charge of safety nets (often the Ministry of Social Welfare, but sometimes the Ministry of Planning or Economy and Finance) and the other ministries in charge of social protection (the Ministries of Health and Labour); and (iii) establishing and strengthening operational systems, including through the development of efficient management information systems and single registries that include not only the poorest of the poor, but also larger segments of the population.

Achieving universal health coverage

Access to at least essential healthcare is an SDG target (No. 3.8) and is one of the four SPF guarantees identified in Recommendation No. 202. Globally, Africa's rural population is the most deprived of health coverage and access to needed healthcare (ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2017–2019*). Serious health inequalities in Africa are compounded by health workforce shortages; here again, the deficit is far greater in rural than in urban areas, particularly for women (ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2020–2022*). Deficits in per capita health spending are also significant.

The *World Social Protection Report 2017–2019* estimates that over 80 per cent of the rural population, as compared to some 60 per cent of the urban population, is excluded from the right to health protection in Africa (p.104). There are multiple reasons for this exclusion, most notably severe shortages in the health workforce and high levels of out-of-pocket expenditure. In Africa more than on any other continent, the rural/urban SDG gap reflects imbalances in the health workforce and the resulting inequity in access to health services between rural and urban populations. Furthermore, out-of-pocket costs among Africa's rural populations account for over 50 and, in extreme cases, up to 80.4 per cent of total health expenditure. These indicators illustrate the significant underinvestment in the health sector and the lack of adapted social health protection mechanisms.

Different ways of expanding coverage have been attempted in the past but a pragmatic analysis of the successful experiments has yet to be conducted. While social health insurance schemes have usually had extremely limited coverage in Africa, several models have been tested.

Recommendation 4: Invest in the health sector. In a context of high domestic needs and under-employment of the working age population, health workforce deficits are a paradox explained by the fact that already-stressed health systems in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe have a net outflow of health workers migrating to high-income countries. Because women (nurses, midwives and other health personnel) are the backbone of healthcare systems, investing in health services will increase employment opportunities for them and turn the tide of nurse out-migration as African nurses seek employment in richer African countries such as South Africa and developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America.⁷ Governments and workers' and employers' organizations should be encouraged to promote decent work and employment growth in the health sector.

Country examples:

Rwanda: Rwanda has made a significant effort to develop its healthcare system at the national and community levels, making it possible for most people to access affordable healthcare. In 2011, 96 per cent of its population was covered by the various health insurance schemes, most of them (91 per cent) through community-based health insurance (CBHI) schemes. Over time, these schemes have become a national social health insurance system with universal coverage, administered by the Rwanda Social Security Board since 2015. Progress in coverage was achieved through political commitment by a strong, decentralized network of health facilities and health workers and the use of cultural elements of collective action and mutual support. The CBHI schemes subsidize the contributions of poor and vulnerable people, making it possible to extend coverage to otherwise excluded groups, and have greatly improved health standards in the country, including increased life expectancy and reduced child and maternal mortality rates. Rwanda's experience shows that progress is possible for low-income countries, even where the vast majority of people live in rural areas and work in the informal economy.

Egypt: The 2018 Universal Health Insurance Act is designed to extend coverage progressively to the entire Egyptian population. Those currently covered by the Health Insurance Organization continue to participate in a new national health insurance system, the contributions of those living below the poverty threshold are subsidized and the Act introduced a number of taxes that are earmarked for this subsidization and for health financing. While the Act expands coverage, it is being implemented progressively in each governorate with full national coverage not expected before 2032.

⁷ Christoph Aluttis, Tewabech Bishaw and Martina W. Frank, "The workforce for health in a globalized context – global shortages and international migration", in *Global Health Action* 7, No. 1 (2014). Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/gha.v7.23611> [accessed 7 May 2021].

Recommendation 5: Support health protection financing from a combination of sources to allow the reduction or, where possible, elimination of co-payments. Prepayment mechanisms are necessary in order to prevent Africans from falling into poverty through catastrophic health expenditure. For the most vulnerable groups, these mechanisms reduce the risk of the “poverty trap” generated by unexpected health expenditure. Various experiments adapted to the country context have been conducted in African countries. The expansion of health protection coverage should be supported through a combination of resources ranging from employers’ and workers’ contributions to partially-subsidized systems (Cabo Verde, Egypt, Rwanda and Senegal) and universal health coverage.

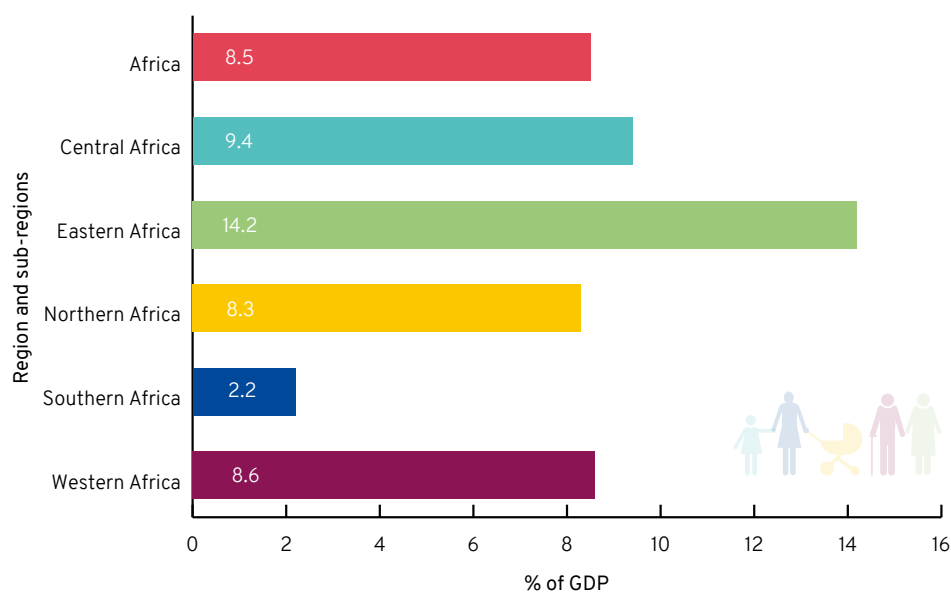


Action Area 2: Close financing gaps by ensuring adequate and sustainable financing

Public expenditure on social protection in Africa remains low in comparison both to other regions and to the need for comprehensive coverage of the population.

As at 2020, according to ILO estimates, the cost of providing four social protection benefits (maternity, child, disability and old age) to 100 per cent of potential beneficiaries in Africa is US\$131.1 billion (5.6 per cent of GDP). Taking into account existing fiscal outlay on these four benefits, a total financing gap of US\$99.4 billion (4.3 per cent of GDP) remains to be bridged (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Financing gaps in the provision of four non-contributory social protection benefits (maternity, child, disability and old age) and healthcare as a percentage of GDP



Source: Estimates based on Fabio Durán-Valverde, José F. Pacheco-Jiménez, Taneem Muzaffar and Hazel Elizondo-Barboza, *Financing Gaps in Social Protection: Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond*, ILO Working Paper No. 13, 2020.⁸

⁸ Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_758705.pdf.

The financing gap for health coverage is an estimated US\$198.6 billion (4.2 per cent of GDP).

The expenditure required for the financing of social protection systems is a long-term investment in people. Societies that do not invest in social protection face significant costs associated with the absence of a healthy and productive workforce, economic insecurity and social exclusion.

Expanding coverage and increasing benefit amounts must be planned and costed. Costing estimation models show that limited benefit packages are affordable and represent only a small part of government revenue. Fiscal space analyses should be conducted in order to support policy decisions.

Recommendation 6: Create more fiscal space for social protection by increasing domestic revenue and more effectively allocating the existing fiscal envelope.

Options for African countries include:

▶ *increasing tax revenue.* This is a key⁹ means of generating government revenue by taxing corporate profits, financial activities, property, imports/exports and natural resources or strengthening the efficiency of tax collection methods and overall compliance. In order to finance social protection, many countries are increasing existing taxes or introducing innovative ear-marked ones. For example, Zambia is financing universal pensions, child benefits and other schemes from mining and gas taxes; Ghana and Liberia have introduced taxes on tourism to support social programmes; Gabon has used revenue from a value-added tax on mobile communications to finance its universal healthcare system; and Algeria and Mauritius, among others, have supplemented social security revenue with high taxes on tobacco.

▶ *reallocating public expenditure.* This orthodox approach includes assessing ongoing budget allocations through public expenditure reviews, social budgeting and other types of budget analysis and replacing high-cost, low-impact investments with investments that have a more substantial socioeconomic impact on poverty reduction and inequality, for example, replacing fuel subsidies with categorical social assistance, eliminating spending inefficiencies and tackling corruption. The aim is to prioritize aspects of social protection in national budgets.

▶ *managing debt by borrowing and restructuring.* This involves an active exploration of low-cost domestic and foreign borrowing options, including concessional loans, following a careful assessment of debt sustainability.

▶ *eliminating illicit financial flows.* Estimated at more than ten times the amount of official development assistance (ODA) received, a colossal percentage of resources escapes developing countries illegally each year. Greater attention should be devoted to cracking down on money-laundering, bribery, tax evasion, trade mispricing and other financial crimes that deprive governments of revenue needed for social protection.

▶ *increasing aid transfers.* In many countries, there is a significant gap between domestically generated resources and the amount required for universal social protection. ODA can finance a pilot phase or start-up of a social protection programme with responsibility ideally transferred to the Government in the short to medium term.

Recommendation 7: Support national social dialogue with the Government, employers and workers, civil society, UN agencies and other development partners in order to generate the political will to exploit all possible fiscal space options in the country and adopt an optimal combination of public policies on social protection. This is fundamental in identifying domestic resources to finance the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁹ ILO 2019. FISCAL SPACE FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION: A Handbook for Assessing Financing Options. Available https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_727261.pdf



Action Area 3: Develop strategic partnerships

The AU Agenda 2063, the UN Agenda 2030 and the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the Abidjan Declaration on Advancing Social Justice all identify social protection as a key element of human-centred development strategies for combating poverty, social injustice and growing inequality in Africa. Social protection is therefore crucial to achievement of the SDGs. Since no organization can achieve this goal alone, partnerships must be developed with AU and UN agencies and other institutions at the subregional and regional levels, particularly within the framework of the “One UN” approach. To that effect, the United Nations Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, formerly the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)) integrate social protection as a strategic pillar. This requires inter-agency collaboration and coordination in order to ensure full implementation of the decent work objectives outlined in these strategic frameworks. Member States and international organizations and financial institutions with expertise in social protection should make better use of international and local expertise, legal instruments and ILO standards in order to better coordinate and implement social protection policies at the national level and make sustainable progress towards universal social protection.

In order to enable their constituents to develop and implement effective social protection policies, the international political and specialized institutions (the AU, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), among others) should strengthen national capacities, facilitate knowledge-sharing among countries (“success stories”) and support the scaling up of local experiences to the national level.

Through its institutional mandate, international standards, engagement with the social partners and proven technical expertise, the ILO can support the formulation and implementation of national social protection strategies through social dialogue with a view to national ownership.

The 2010 Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor recommended building a coalition between the African governments; the social partners; the UN agencies, bilateral aid agencies and other development partners; and the ILO in close collaboration with the AUC. The recommended architecture is still relevant. The signatories of the Declaration called upon:

1. African Governments:

to engage with social partners and promote effective social dialogue to achieve the most appropriate national policies and time frames for the progressive implementation of effective social protection floors, taking into consideration the AU Social Policy Framework for Africa (Windhoek 2008) vision and perspectives that also take into account the necessity to promote employment, economic and social development.

2. Social Partners:

- ▶ to actively support the elaboration and the implementation of national social protection strategies;
- ▶ to assist in developing standards of good performance and accountability for effective and efficient operation of the overall national social protection administration.

3. UN agencies, bilateral Aid Agencies and other development partners:

- ▶ to work towards sustainable financing of the Social Protection Floor to be established on the basis of thorough actuarial studies that should also determine required rates of additional taxes and/or contributions and to develop a Delivering as One UN support effort and funding strategies in the framework of UNDAFs;
- ▶ to envisage, in case of real need, external sources of funds, or international financial mechanisms for supplementary contribution into the scheme;
- ▶ to ensure that the implementation of a Social Protection Floor remains a central element of a joint social policy agenda of the UN system at the regional, sub-regional and national levels to cope with the recurrent social crises and toward the attainment of the SDGs.

4. The ILO, in close collaboration with the African Union Commission:

- (i) to pursue its Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All through all its means of action, and promote the ratification and implementation of up-to-date ILO Conventions on social security and notably Convention No. 102;
- (ii) to explore – using all its means of action - the option to introduce a new mechanism that guides countries in national implementation of the Social Protection Floor;
- (iii) to actively assist member States, through appropriate technical advisory services and by promoting outcome oriented social dialogue, to support the national implementation of the social protection floor, and the regular evaluation of its impact, viability and sustainability;
- (iv) to develop the capacities of member countries, including national social security institutions and labour administrations, to design social security systems which are responsive to new challenges including changing demographic trends and assure the proper functioning of national social security systems;
- (v) to strengthen the capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to participate in the design, governance and implementation of comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all;

- (vi) to promote south-south cooperation to facilitate the exchange of experiences and expertise.

At the national level, UN joint programmes with a social protection component have been implemented in 14 countries, strengthening UN support for the development and implementation of national social protection policies and programmes. At the global level, the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), a joint initiative established as a response to a G20 request to international organization to improve coordination, has helped the development partners to better coordinate their policy advice and positions, including through the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP 2030). In Africa, the ILO has strengthened its strategic partnerships with the UNDP, the African Development Bank (ADB), the European Union (EU), the Green Climate Fund and Alliance Sahel in order to support the expansion of social protection on the continent.

Recommendation 8: Support coordination between organizations and other stakeholders in the area of social protection at the regional, subregional and national levels. This is critical in scaling up interventions and creating greater coherence and synergies in order to maximize the available resources and increase their impact with a view to achievement of the SDG targets of relevance to social protection and the goals of Agenda 2063.



3.

THE ILO'S ROLE





Societies that do not invest in social protection face significant costs associated with the absence of a healthy and productive workforce, economic insecurity and social exclusion.

The ILO has gained substantial expertise in the law and practice relevant to the implementation of national social protection systems throughout the world. Its Global Social Protection Technical Team (GSPTT) and International Training Centre (ITCILO) have produced training materials and curricula designed to further knowledge on the design and implementation of national SPF.

The ILO's comparative advantage is not limited to its technical expertise in the area of social protection.

- ▶ **As the United Nations tripartite standard-setting agency for the world of work**, the ILO has a strong normative and conceptual framework for ensuring that social protection systems, including cash transfer programmes, are solidly grounded, fair, and transparent and are used with the aim of strengthening existing institutions through sound, effective social dialogue.
- ▶ The ILO's **normative instruments**, notably Conventions Nos 102, 168 and 176 and Recommendations Nos 202, 204 and 205, offer solid guidance to member States in this regard.¹⁰ Recommendation No. 205 affirms "the need to develop and strengthen measures of social protection, as a means of preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience" (thirteenth preambular paragraph) and recommends "stabilizing livelihoods and income through immediate social protection and employment measures" (para. 8(a)) while promoting active labour market policies and programmes, as well as sustainable social protection.
- ▶ The ILO's **experience and expertise** make it uniquely positioned among the development partners to link cash transfers with social security institutions, ALMPs and other employment policies, labour market institutions, support for enterprises and the transition to the formal economy and to greener economies, thereby operationalizing the humanitarian-development nexus and helping to accelerate post-COVID-19 recovery.

- ▶ The ILO's **tripartite structure** brings together those directly involved in and affected by policy development and implementation, the relevant ministries, and workers and employers through their representative organizations. Social dialogue leads to strong, consensus-based solutions, particularly in times of crisis. However, most cash transfer programmes lack this essential element, leaving recipients without a voice.

In order to reach the ambitious goal of extending adequate social protection to all in Africa, the ILO will provide support to member States, primarily through its Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All, the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. This will include:

1. **The provision of in-country support for the development of national social protection systems using a three-step approach:**
 - (a) **Step 1 – Assessment-based national dialogue (ABND)** leading to the adoption of national social protection strategies. A participatory assessment-based national dialogue exercise involving the relevant ministries, social partners, civil society organizations, UN agencies and other development partners will be used to forge consensus on the definition of a national SPF and the priorities for and estimate implementation costs of policy scenarios aimed at filling coverage gaps, strengthening social protection systems and expanding coverage.

¹⁰ Annex 3 of the World Social Protection Report 2020-22 provides a brief description of these standards.



(b) **Step 2 - Designing and reforming schemes.**

Advice and capacity-building will be provided alongside the organization and facilitation of social dialogue in order to design or reform social protection schemes in line with ILO standards. Services will include legal advisory services for the review or drafting of legislation; macroeconomic and fiscal assessments of social protection reforms; actuarial and financial advisory services to assess the costs and design implications of new schemes and investment strategies; and technical advisory services to design the scheme's architecture and institutional, administrative, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

(c) **Step 3 - Improving operations.** Administrative capacities and representation of the persons concerned will be increased at the national and local levels through hands-on training and the implementation of SPF delivery mechanisms, including one-stop shops for beneficiary registration and benefits distribution, as well as the development of IT systems;

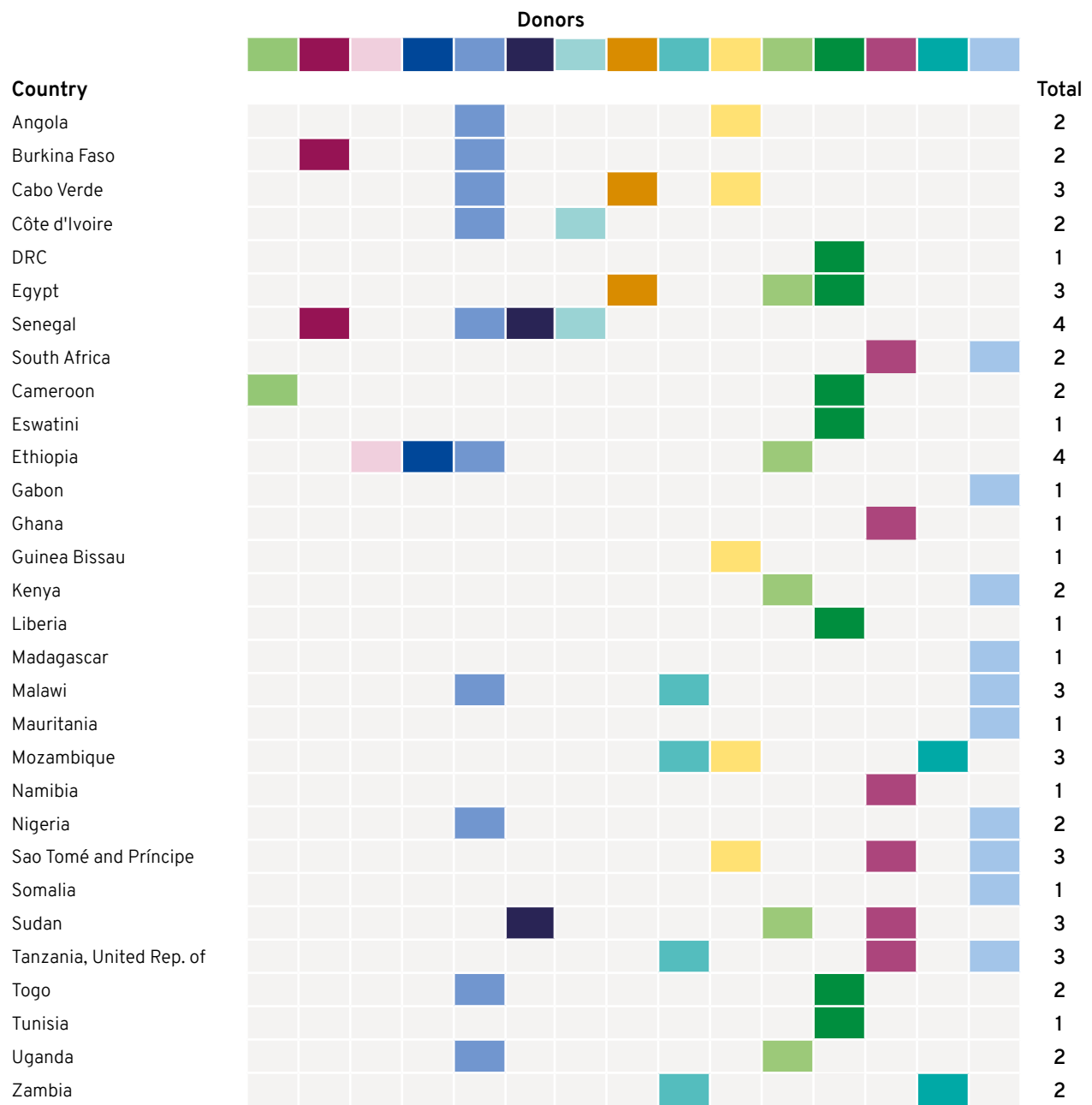
2. The provision of “cross-country” policy and technical advice in response to demand in specific thematic areas. The ILO has put in place a new Technical Support Facility to provide technical support for the expansion of social protection in priority areas such as actuarial work, financing, legal matters, health protection, management information systems and the informal economy;

3. The development, management and dissemination of knowledge (including, among other things, guides, tools, country briefs and training).

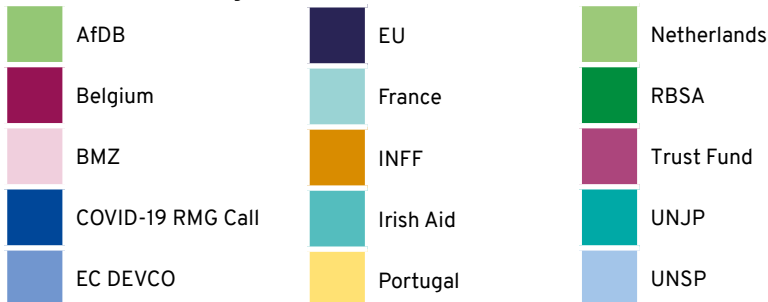
The ILO Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All is actively involved in 30 African countries with development cooperation projects financed from a variety of donors, including multilateral institutions (the EU and the ADB), bilateral donors (Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal), UN joint funds, and ILO voluntary contributions (Figure 11).




Figure 11: Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All, 2016-2020



Sources of financing



Acronyms in alphabetical order: AfDB – African Development Bank; BMZ – Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany; COVID-19 RMG – COVID-19: Action in the Global Garment Industry initiative; EC DEVCO – EU Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development; RBSA – ILO Regular Budget Supplementary Account; INFFs – UN Joint SDG Fund on Financing; UNJP – UN Joint Programme; UNSP – UN Joint SDG Fund for Social Protection.



Within the framework of this strategy, the ILO will actively promote coordination and coherence between social protection and other social and economic policies.



As the ILO moves into the second phase of the Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for the period of 2021-2025, more African countries are included with the goal of expanding social protection coverage to at least 40 per cent of the population.

To that end, the ILO will support member States and the social partners, through social dialogue, in their efforts to design and implement national acceleration programmes that take a comprehensive approach to the progressive development of universal social protection. In so doing, it will promote coherence with national social, economic and environmental development objectives and will seek to ensure that these programmes are anchored in the ILO's two-dimensional strategy for universal social protection.

This will entail providing policy and technical advice to African constituents in order to improve the economic, fiscal and financial sustainability of social protection systems with due regard for social justice, equity, governance, transparency and accountability, including through robust management information and national statistical systems, and facilitating a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies. In the case of fragile countries, the ILO will support national stakeholders' efforts to build and/or strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus that is crucial to the introduction of sustainable social protection systems.

Within the framework of this strategy, the ILO will actively promote coordination and coherence between social protection and other social and economic policies, including employment policies which seek to ensure that workers in all types of employment, including those working in the informal economy and the care economy, can exercise their right to adequate social protection. This will be done in accordance with the Social Justice Declaration, the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the Abidjan Declaration on Advancing Social Justice, as well as relevant regional policy frameworks such as

Agenda 2030 and the Ouagadougou+10 Declaration and Plan of Action. An effort will also be made to ensure, when adopting social protection policies, that crisis response and recovery strategies include the long-term stabilization of emergency measures adopted in response to the COVID-19 crisis and other humanitarian efforts on the continent.

In that regard, the Regional Office for Africa will seek to reinforce the ILO's leadership role in ensuring policy coherence on social protection in the multilateral system and to promote alignment between multilateral institutions based on the principles, approaches and benchmarks contained in ILO standards. The Office will continue to engage in partnerships with other relevant organizations and international and regional bodies in assessing national social protection needs and priorities and promoting options that expand fiscal space for social protection in ways consistent with ILO social security standards and principles, including by ensuring equitable and adequate financing. In that spirit, the Office and the AUC are revising the 1965 Memorandum of Understanding on collaboration on world-of-work issues, including the common effort to extend universal social protection in Africa with a view to achievement of the SDGs and the objectives set out in Agenda 2063.

The ILO is working closely with international financial institutions, including the World Bank (with which it signed a cooperation agreement on specific thematic areas, including social protection, in 2020), the ADB and the IMF, in supporting countries' search for innovative mechanisms to expand fiscal space for social protection extension policies and strategies. These options include increased ODA as a complement to the efforts of countries that have limited fiscal capacity to invest in social protection or are facing increased needs due to crises, natural disasters or climate change. Lastly, the ILO will explore options and develop concrete proposals for a new regional funding facility, such as an Africa regional social protection fund that would complement and support domestic resource mobilization efforts with a view to universal social protection on the continent as recommended by the ITCILO Regional Dialogue on accelerating social protection coverage and sustainable financing in Africa, held online in April 2021.¹¹

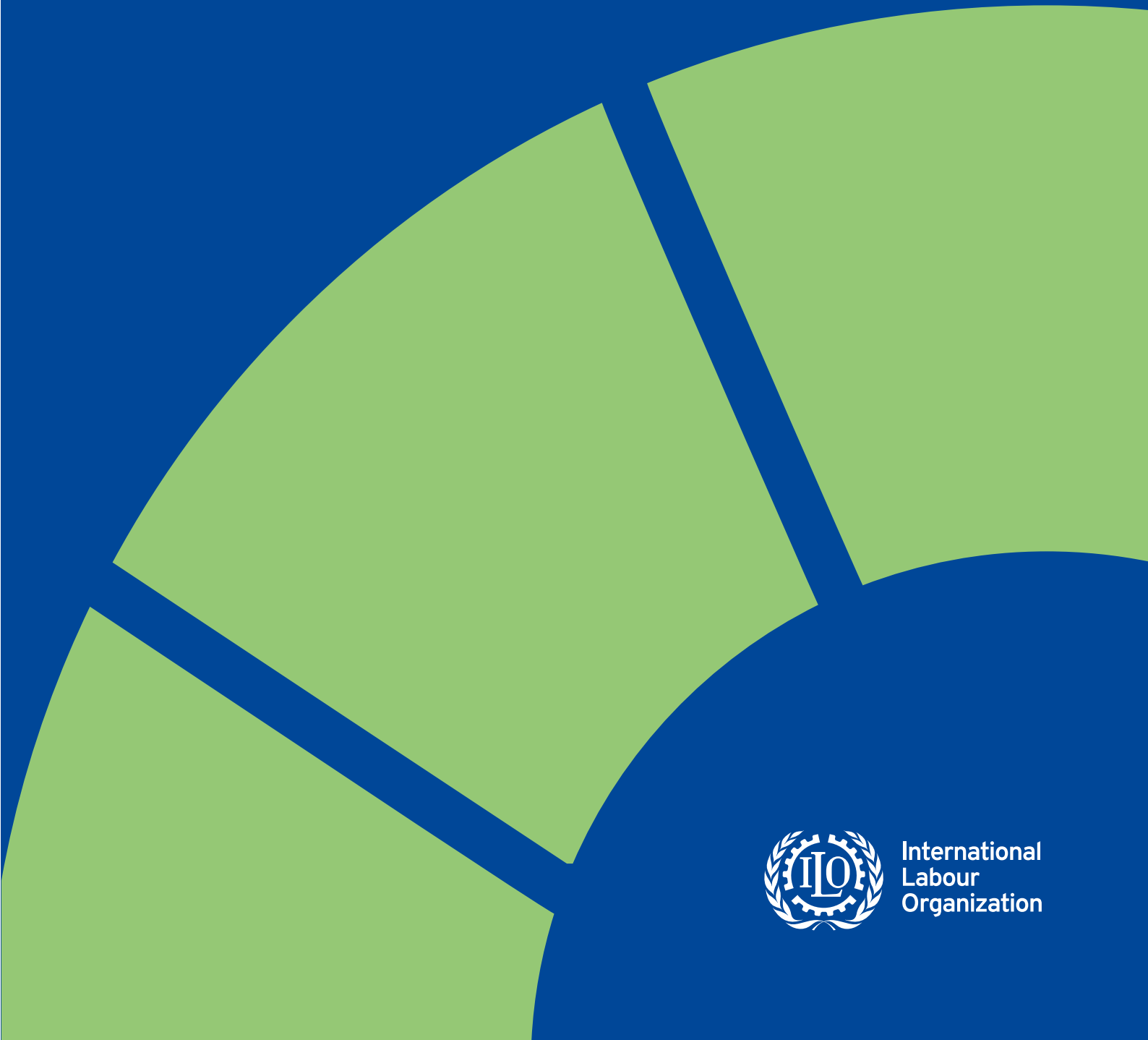
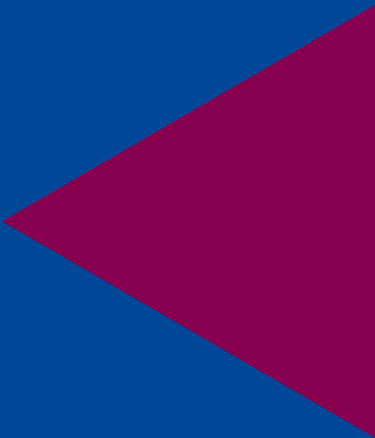
¹¹ <https://www.itcilo.org/events/accelerating-social-protection-coverage-and-sustainable-financing-africa>.



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