



Social protection plays a key role in achieving sustainable development, promoting social justice and realizing the human right to social security for all. Social protection is defined as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout life. Social protection includes benefits for children and families, maternity, unemployment, employment injury, sickness, old age, disability, survivors, and health protection.

The new [World Social Protection Report 2017-19](#) launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO), provides a global overview of recent trends in social protection systems, including social protection floors. Social protection floors are nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that should ensure, as a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential healthcare and basic income security. The report analyses the current state of social protection for children, for women and men of working age, and for older persons, following a life-cycle approach.

A major finding is the fact that despite significant progress in the extension of social protection in many parts of the world, the human right to social security is not yet a reality for a majority of the world's population. Only 45 % of the global population are effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit, while the remaining 4 billion people are left unprotected.

Observed trends in social protection coverage vary substantially across regions and even between countries in the same region. In Africa for example, despite significant progress in the extension of social protection coverage, only 17,8 % of the population receive at least one social protection cash benefit. In Europe on the other hand, 84,2 % of the region's population have access to social protection benefits.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect the universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. SDG 1.3 commits all countries to "implement nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors" for reducing and preventing poverty. We still have 12 years to make social protection a reality for all. However, more cohesive efforts are necessary to ensure that the right to social security becomes a reality for each and every one.