

Advancing social protection for sustainable development in Asia-Pacific

WHO

In Asia and the Pacific, 1 out of 3 people live on less than USD 2 a day, often deprived of income security, basic social services and decent work. Children, women and girls, persons with disabilities, and migrants are especially susceptible to these vulnerable conditions.

WHAT

Social protection is a set of public policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, and generate more equitable economic growth. Effective social protection systems build resilience by preventing individuals from falling into poverty, and by protecting them from sudden natural and economic shocks. Social protection is a fundamental pillar of national economic and social development policies.

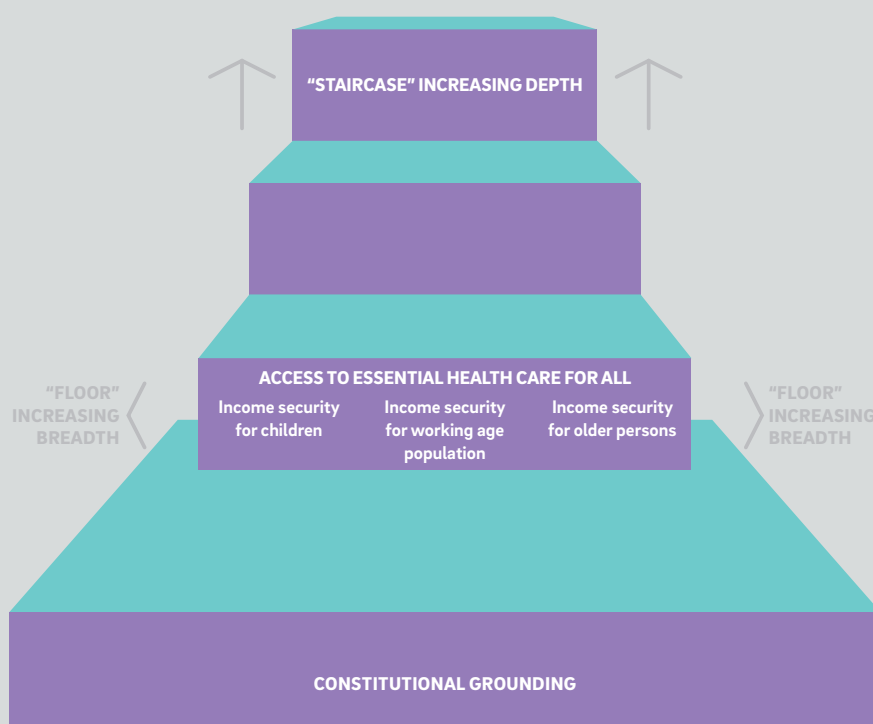
Social protection floors (SPF) are nationally-defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. These guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and basic income security (horizontal dimension), in line with the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), 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).

WHY

Robust social protection systems fulfil basic human rights, and are an investment in sustainable and inclusive development. Moreover, social protection provides a solid foundation for the realization of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets forward 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets that are aimed at achieving the human rights of all, and supporting the most vulnerable and left-behind population groups. Social protection is directly mentioned in Goals 1 (poverty), 3 (health), 5 (gender equality), and 10 (inequality), but is also critical for success in the Goal 2, 4, 8 and 16..

Despite significant progress being made in enhancing social protection in the Asia-Pacific region, important coverage gaps remain. Aggregate public expenditure remains insufficient, with many countries still spending low shares of their GDP on social protection. Moreover, multiple laws and fragmented administrative structures lead to inefficiencies and contribute to perpetuating gaps in the delivery of benefits.



ISSUE: Health care

FACT: In Asia and the Pacific, more than 40 per cent of the population has no access to health coverage

With limited access to public health care, out-of-pocket health expenditures in the region are among the highest in the world. Health-care costs, either unexpected or recurring, can cause financial catastrophe for households, creating stress on families and communities. A majority of Governments in the ESCAP region spend below the global average of 6 per cent of GDP on health care.

SPF: Access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, constituting essential health care, including maternity care that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality.

SDGS AND TARGETS: **Goal 3. Good Health and Well-being:** *Target 3.1:* Reduce global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births; *Target 3.2:* End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age; *Target 3.3:* End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria; *Target 3.4:* Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being; *Target 3.7:* Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes; *Target 3.8:* Achieve universal health coverage.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries: *Target 10.4:* Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

National good practices

Recognizing that it is a basic right which also enhances human capital, many countries in the region are taking important steps to provide health care to all citizens. Bhutan's Primary Health Care (PHC) system, the Philippines' Philhealth Programme, China's Health Care System, Thailand's Universal Health Coverage Scheme (UCS), and Turkey's General Health Insurance scheme (GHI) are all good examples of effective public health care in the region.

ISSUE: Children

FACT: In Asia and the Pacific, more than 85 million children under the age of 5 are chronically malnourished or stunted

When children have inadequate access to nutrition or education, the long-lasting effects are often irreversible. Failure to meet the basic needs of children can contribute to intergenerational poverty cycles. Social transfer programmes that include nutritional and educational objectives for children are effective in reducing malnutrition and increasing school attendance.

SPF: Basic income security for children, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services

SDGS AND TARGETS: **Goal 1. No Poverty:** *Target 1.1:* Eradicate extreme poverty for all people;

Goal 2. Zero Hunger: *Target 2.1:* End hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round; *Target 2.2:* End all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age;

Goal 3. Good Health and Well-being: *Target 3.2:* End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age; *Target 3.4:* Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases;

Goal 4. Quality Education: *Target 4.1:* Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education; *Target 4.2:* Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development; *Target 4.5:* Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training;

Goal 5. Gender Equality: *Target 5.3:* Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;

Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: *Target 8.7:* Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour;

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries: *Target 10.4:* Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

Goal 16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: *Target 16.2:* End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

National good practices

Many countries in the region have launched conditional cash transfer schemes (CCTs) to meet the nutritional and educational needs of poor children. The Stipend for Primary Students (PESP) in Bangladesh, Indonesia's Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), Monthly CCTs for children with disabilities in Uzbekistan and the Philippine's Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program ("4Ps") exemplify such initiatives. Additionally, in order to address structural inequalities in access to education, countries such as Sri Lanka provide free and universal education at primary, secondary and university levels.

ISSUE: Persons of working age

FACT: In Asia and the Pacific, over 1 billion people have vulnerable jobs

Despite the region's continued economic growth, large numbers of workers, particularly female workers, are engaged in informal and vulnerable employment. Workers in vulnerable jobs make up as much as 80 per cent of the labour market in some countries in the region and lack protection for unemployment, workplace injury, sickness and disability. Furthermore, these workers are not contributing to their future old age pensions.

SPF: Basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity, and disability.

SDGS AND TARGETS: **Goal 1. No Poverty:** *Target 1.1:* Eradicate extreme poverty for all people;

Goal 2. Zero Hunger: *Target 2.3:* Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers;

Goal 4. Quality Education; *Target 4.3:* Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; *Target 4.4:* Increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship;

Goal 5: Gender Equality: *Target 5.4:* Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work; *Target 5.a:* Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources;

Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: *Target 8.5:* Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and equal pay for work of equal value; *Target 8.6:* Substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries: *Target 10.4:* Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

National good practices

Understanding this development gap, significant progress is being made in the region in expanding protection to all people of working age. India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Armenia's Unemployment Insurance (UI) scheme, the Republic of Korea's Employment Insurance System (EIS), Uzbekistan's National Social Insurance System, and the national Unemployment Insurance (UI) programme in Viet Nam are important initiatives.

ISSUE: Older Persons

FACT: In Asia and the Pacific, less than 50 per cent of older persons receive an old-age pension

The number of older persons in the region is expected to more than double from 547 million in 2016 to nearly 1.3 billion by 2050. By then, one in four people in the region are expected to be over 60 years old. With informal family-based support systems breaking down because of urbanization and social change, formal pension schemes are key to income protection for people in old age. Though most countries in the region have pension schemes for formal sector workers, workers employed informally are covered at a very low rate. In developing countries in Asia-Pacific, only 20 per cent of all workers can expect to receive an old-age pension, compared to 90 per cent of those in developed countries, with variability and inequalities between women and men. Women are less likely to participate in pension schemes, due to their lower labour force participation rate and a higher likelihood to have worked in informal, part-time or vulnerable employment.

SPF: Basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for older persons.

SDGS AND TARGETS: **Goal 1. No Poverty:** Target 1.1: Eradicate extreme poverty for all people;

Goal 2. Zero Hunger: Target 2.2: End all forms of malnutrition and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries: Target 10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

National good practices

Some countries in the region are challenging this trend by introducing innovative programmes that aim to promote income security among older persons. The Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF), China's New Rural and Urban Pension Scheme, the Maldives Old-Age Basic Pension (MOABP), India's National Assistance Programme, the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation (PFRF), and the Samoa Senior Citizens Benefit Scheme (SCBS) are examples of such initiatives.

ESCAP's work

Responding to the call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to reach those furthest behind, strengthening social protection systems is a fundamental measure for achieving a prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future for all.

In May 2011, member States of ESCAP adopted Resolution 67/8 on "Strengthening social protection systems in Asia and the Pacific." This Resolution calls upon member States to "invest in building social

relevant policies and programmes.

Launched in December 2013, the Social Protection Toolbox is an online advocacy platform that aims to cover existing gaps in the promotion and analysis of social protection. The Toolbox utilizes a database of over 100 good practices and a network of social protection experts to facilitate South-South cooperation as well to build consensus in moving forward toward broader and more robust coverage. A new, more user-friendly

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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_1745

