



# Gaps, challenges and progress towards universal access to social protection

EGM on the Implementation of the Third United Nations  
Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)  
24-27 May 2021

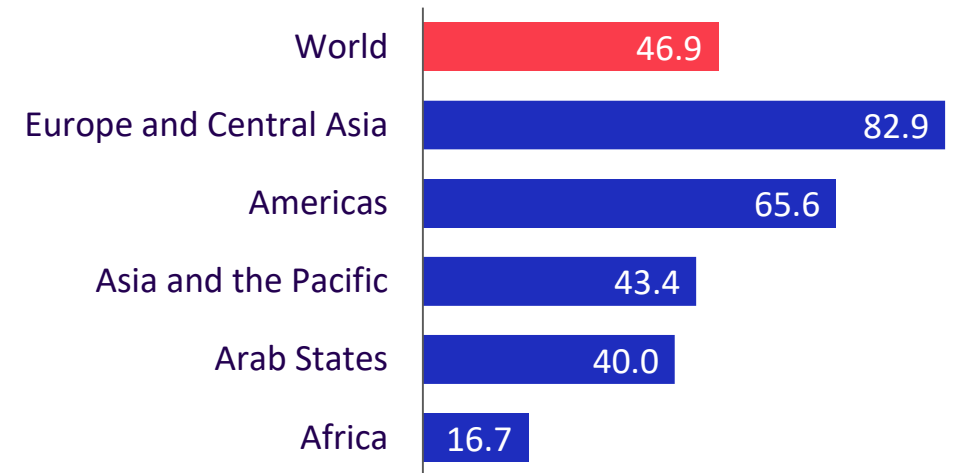
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## COVID-19 social protection policy response through two channels:

### 1 “Automatic” response through existing social protection systems

- ▶ Protecting people’s health, jobs and incomes
  - ▶ Health coverage: health insurance, national health service
  - ▶ Sickness benefits and paid sick leave
  - ▶ Employment retention measures and unemployment benefits
  - ▶ Social assistance and other cash transfers
- ▶ Countries with solid social protection systems were able to respond faster and better than others
- ▶ Social protection systems as key automatic stabilizers for the economy, contributing to higher resilience
- ▶ Significant challenges for countries with weak social protection systems

Only 46.9% of global population covered prior to COVID-19: 4.1 billion people excluded from coverage (SDG indicator 1.3.1)



Source: [ILO World Social Protection Database](#);  
ILO World Social Protection Report 2020-22 (forthcoming).

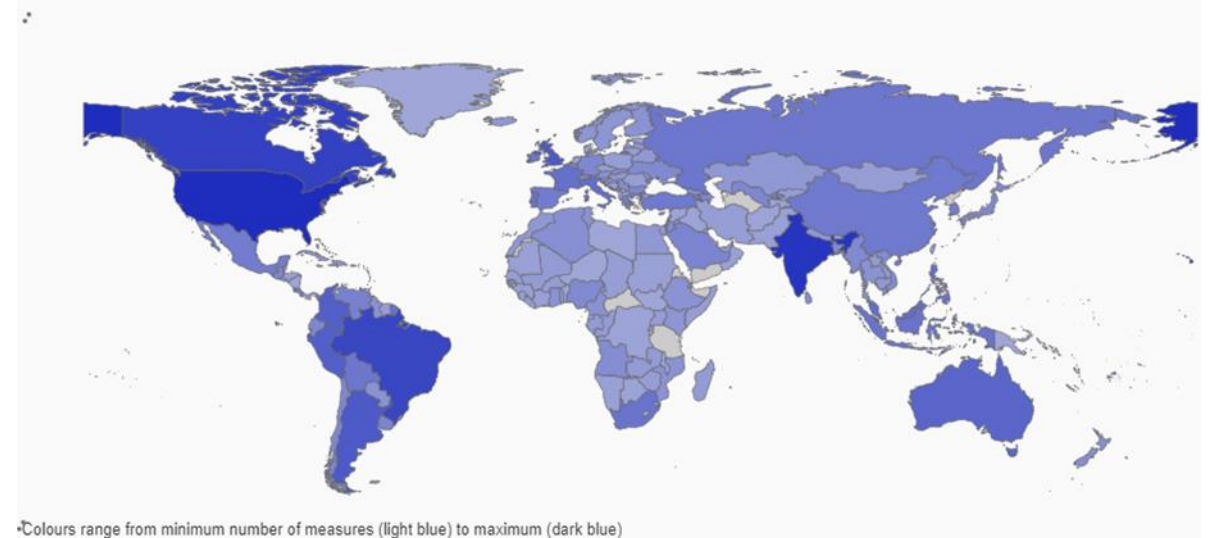
## ► COVID-19 social protection policy response through two channels:

### ② Emergency policy responses to close coverage and adequacy gaps

- Focusing in particular on populations who were previously not adequately protected
- Strongly dependent on pre-existing structures, using tax-financed programmes, social insurance, or a combination of both; in some countries with international support
- Mobilisation of additional resources (domestic and international)
- Temporary character: one-off or short-term measures

#### COVID-19 social protection policy response: urgent measures to extend coverage and improve benefits

Countries with social protection responses

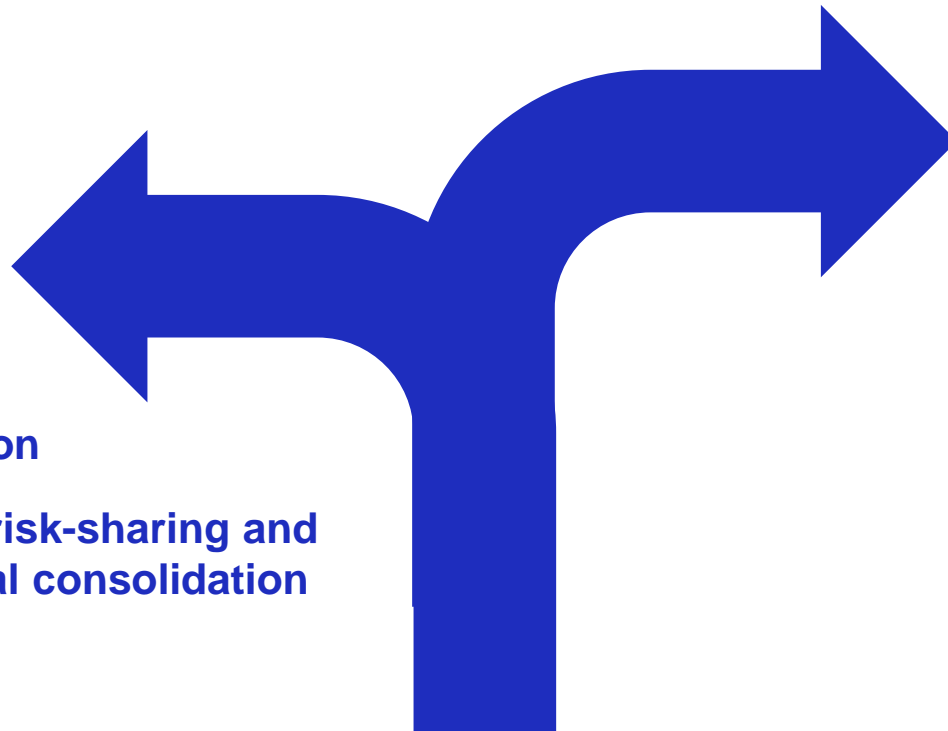


Source: [ILO COVID-19 Social Protection Monitor \(15 January 2021\)](#)

# Recovering from COVID-19: Social protection at a crossroads Towards a new “better normal”?

## Austerity context

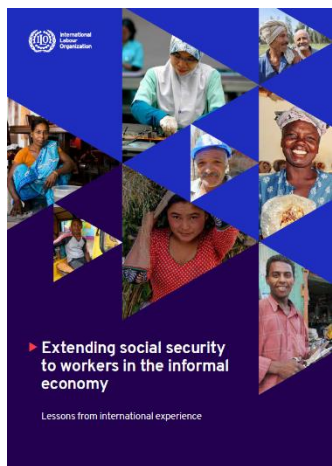
- ▶ Limited coverage
- ▶ Minimal benefits
- ▶ Gaps in labour and social protection
- ▶ Limited solidarity, risk-sharing and redistribution, fiscal consolidation
- ▶ No decent work



## Universal social protection systems, including floors

- ▶ Universal coverage
- ▶ Adequate protection
- ▶ Comprehensive protection
- ▶ Sustainable and equitable financing
- ▶ Adapted to the world of work

## Recovery priority 1: Accelerating the extension of social protection to those in the informal economy >> ensuring adequate coverage for workers in all types in employment

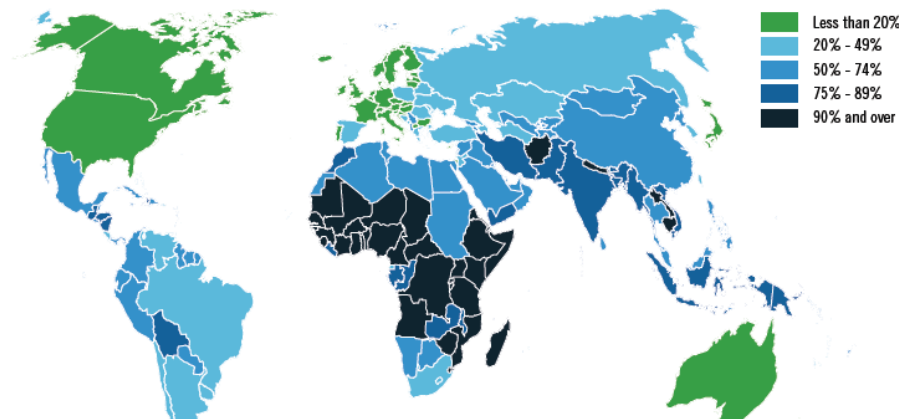


More information: ILO policy  
resource package on extending  
social security to the informal  
economy  
(<http://informaleconomy.social-protection.org>)

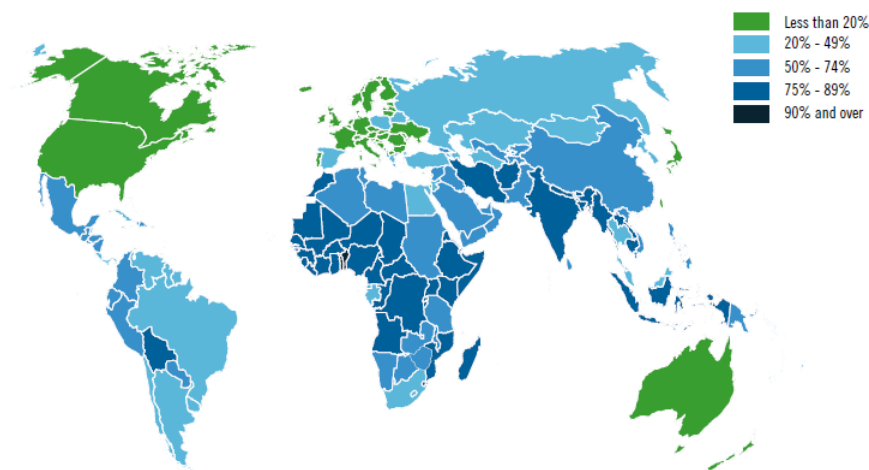
Informal employment in per cent of total employment, latest year

5

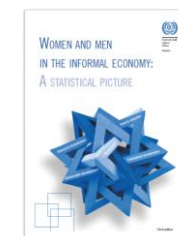
Panel A. Including agriculture<sup>a</sup>



Panel B. Excluding agriculture



Source: ILO, 2018. Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture. Geneva.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_626831.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf)





## ► Social protection in the age of labour market transformation: What is at stake?

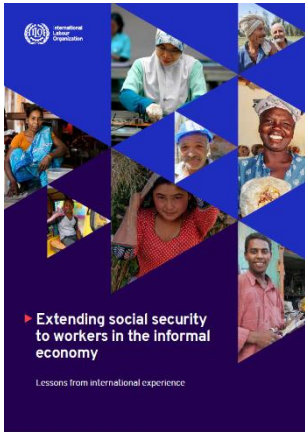
- 
- 
- Shifting economic risks to workers
  - De-responsibilisation of (some) enterprises
  - Unfair competition
  - Fragmentation
  - Disempowerment
  - Fractured social contract

- Fair risk-sharing and protection of workers' rights
- Continued relevance of employment relationship
- Fair competitive environment
- Integrated solutions
- Representation and social dialogue
- Reinvigorated social contract

## ► The role of social protection in fostering an inclusive recovery and accompanying a productive transformation towards a green and digital economy

- Social protection a human right and one of the pillars of decent work
- Investments in human capabilities, including access to education and skills development
- Enhancing economic security, increasing/stabilizing household incomes, reducing inequalities and promoting social cohesion
- Enabling people to better manage risks and seize economic opportunities, including innovation and entrepreneurship
- Stabilize and stimulate aggregate demand and have significant effects on economic growth, particularly through counter-cyclical spending during economic downturns.
- Smoothing life and work transitions and supporting labour market mobility >> better functioning of labour markets, thereby fostering productivity gains and the creation of decent jobs.
- Sizeable sector of employment, especially health care, child and long-term care, social work and social security administration.

## Practical measures to support the extension of social protection to those in the informal economy (examples)



More information: [ILO policy resource package on extending social security to the informal economy](#)

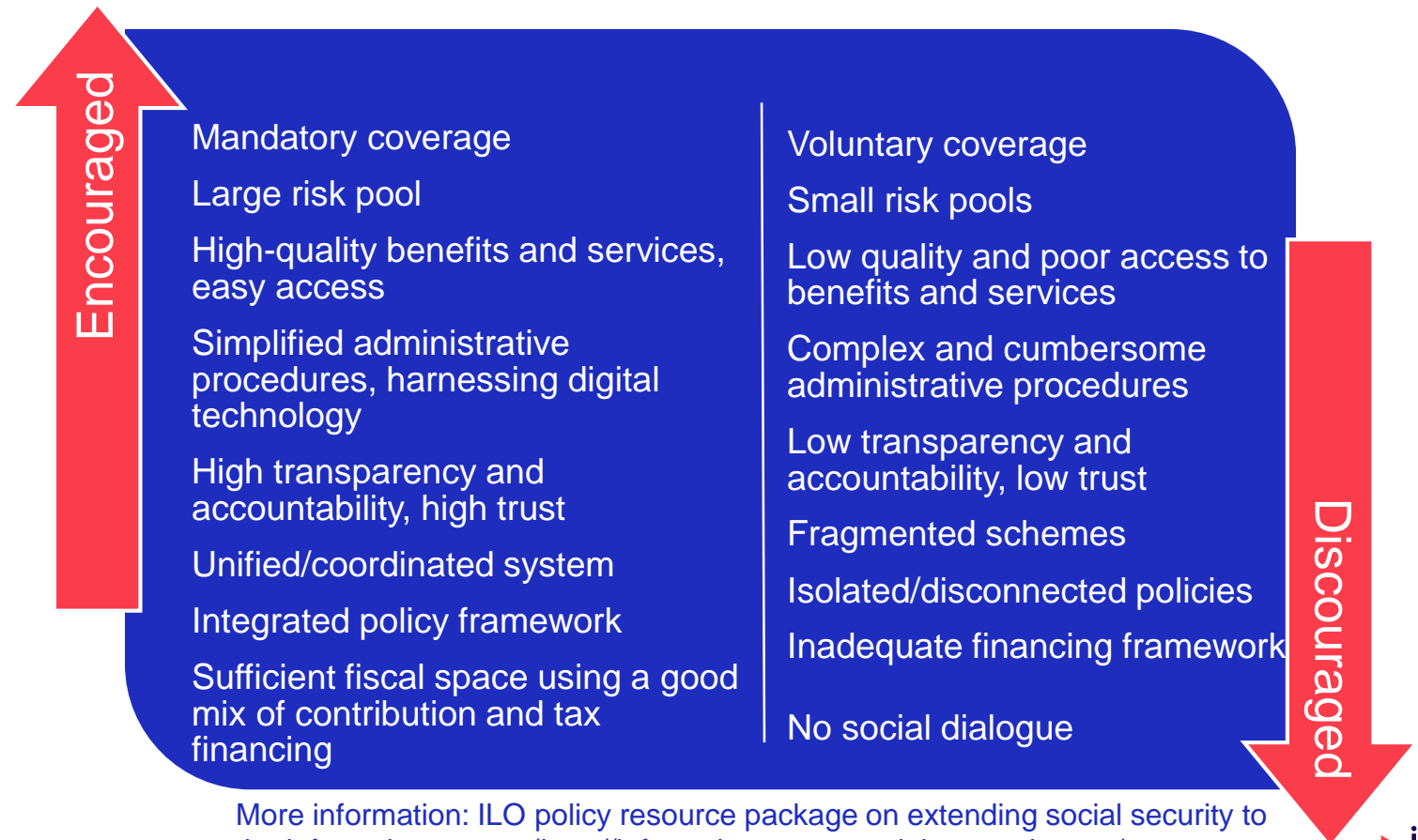




## Ensuring social protection for workers in all types of employment

### Key principles:

- ▶ Universality of protection
- ▶ Adequacy
- ▶ Portability and transferability
- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Gender equality
- ▶ Good governance and trust



More information: ILO policy resource package on extending social security to the informal economy (<http://informaleconomy.social-protection.org>)

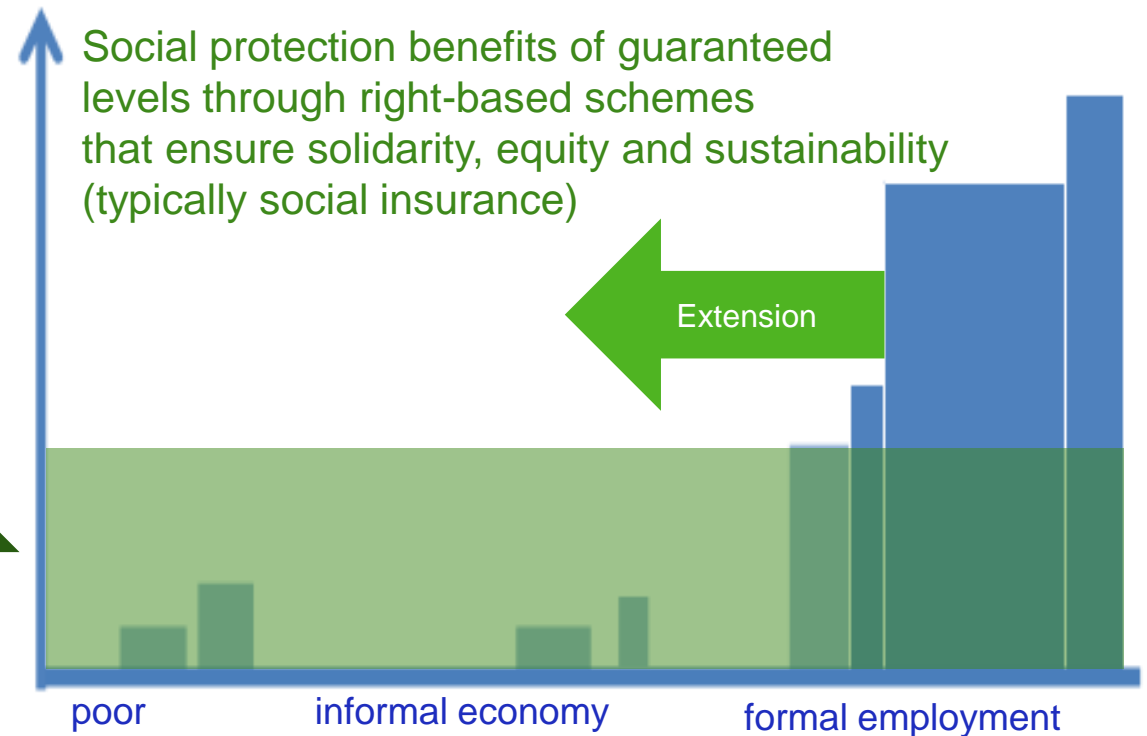
## Recovery priority 2: Strengthening social protection systems, including floors

- ▶ Promoting universal social protection systems in line with ILO Recommendation No. 202 and SDG 1.3
- ▶ Rights-based: human rights and international social security standards, national legislation
- ▶ Sustainable and equitable financing, usually through a combination of taxes and contributions
- ▶ Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy

Social protection floor that guarantees at least a basic level of income security and effective access to health care



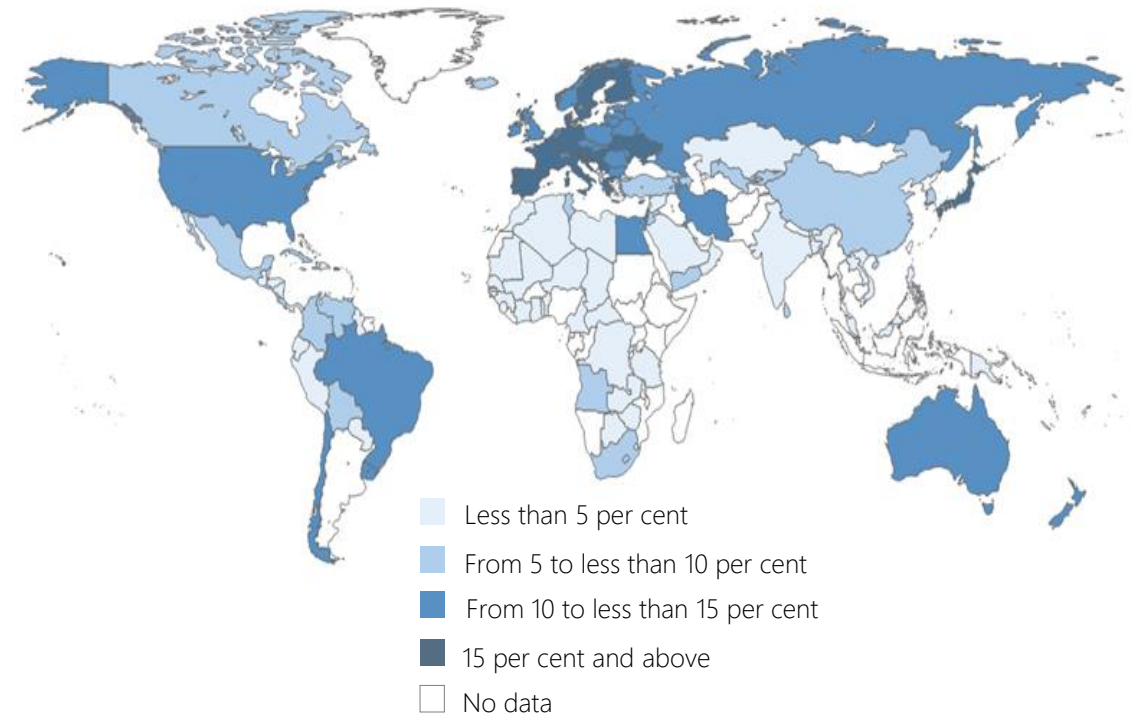
### Closing social protection coverage and adequacy gaps



## Recovery priority 3: Investing in universal social protection systems for more resilience

- ▶ Social protection financing gaps widened due to COVID-19; austerity could have negative impacts on progress achieved
- ▶ Low-income countries would need to invest an additional USD 77.9 billion (15.9% of GDP per annum) to guarantee a nationally-defined social protection floor for all.
- ▶ Strengthening sustainable and equitable domestic financing mechanisms for universal social protection systems, including through taxes and social security contributions
- ▶ International support needed to support countries with insufficient own capacities
- ▶ Global support for universal social protection more necessary than ever (USP2030)

Public social protection expenditure, excluding health, latest available year (percentage of GDP)



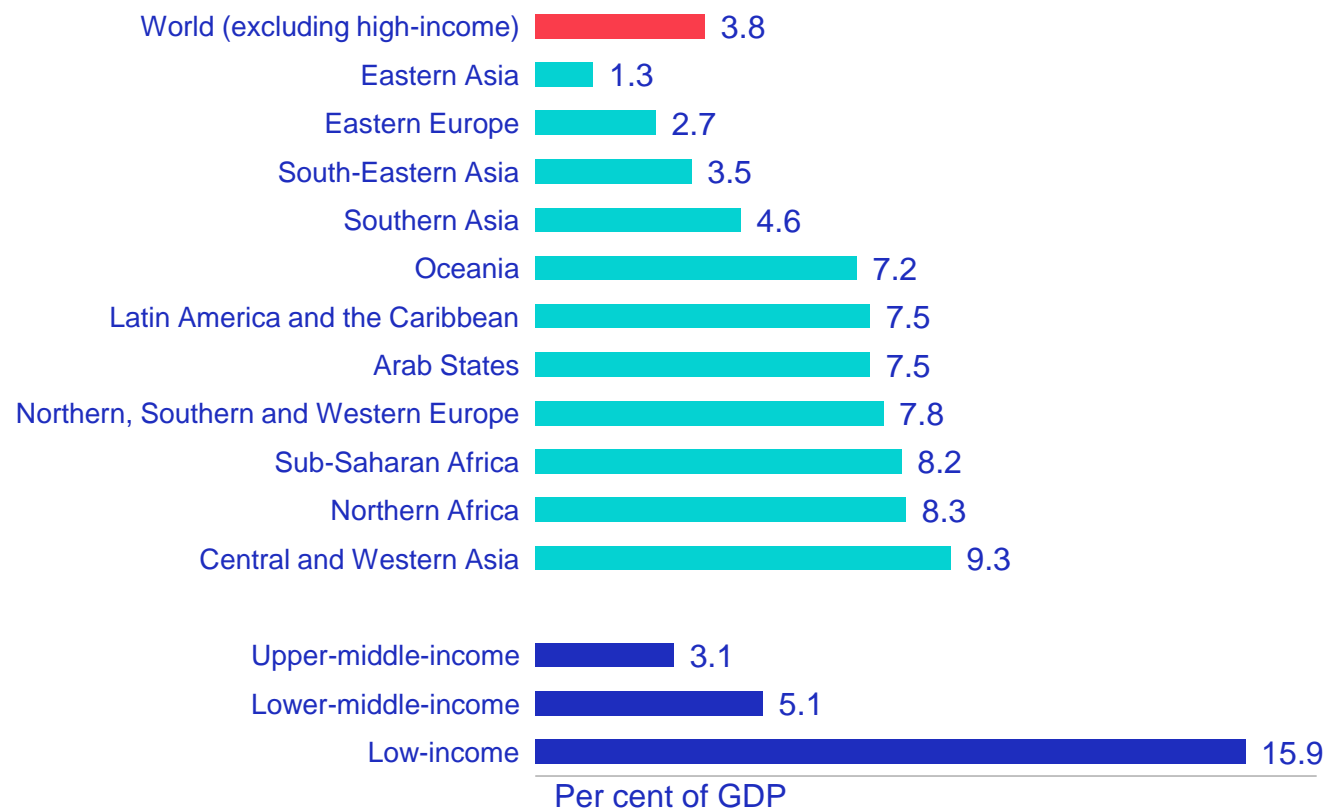
Source: ILO, World Social Protection Report 2017-19

## Social protection has clearly demonstrated its value during COVID-19, but achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require additional investment

Low-income countries would need to invest an additional USD 77.9 billion or 15.9% of GDP per annum to guarantee at least a basic level of social security for all through a nationally-defined social protection floor.

*Notes:* The graph shows the financing gap for achieving a universal package comprising social protection benefits for children, maternity, disability, and old-age and access to essential health care in 2020 as a percentage of GDP (low- and middle-income countries only).

*Source:* ILO, 2020: [Financing gaps in social protection: Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.](#)



# ► **Social protection policies as part of integrated policy solutions to achieve the SDGs**





## COVID-19 crisis response:

- ▶ [ILO portal on social protection response to COVID-19](#), including
  - ▶ [Spotlight briefs:](#)
    - [Extending social protection to informal workers in the COVID-19 crisis;](#)
    - [Social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries;](#)
    - [Unemployment protection in the COVID-19 crisis;](#)
    - [Sickness benefits during sick leave and quarantine;](#)
    - [Financing gaps in social protection: Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of COVID-19 and beyond;](#)
    - [Towards solid social protection floors? The role of non-contributory provision during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond](#)
  - ▶ [Data dashboard:](#) [Social Protection Monitor: Social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis around the world](#)
  - ▶ [Costing tool:](#) [Rapid Social Protection Calculator for COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [ILO portal on COVID-19 and the world of work](#)

## Other key resources:

- ▶ [ILO World Social Protection Database](#)
- ▶ [World Social Protection Report 2017-19](#)
- ▶ [Policy resource package on extending social security to workers in the informal economy](#)
- ▶ [Fiscal Space for Social Protection. A Handbook for Assessing Financing Options](#)
- ▶ [ILO Social Protection Platform](#)
- ▶ [Joint UN Social Protection and Human Rights web platform](#)
- ▶ [Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection \(USP2030\)](#)

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