

# BUILDING SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS WITH THE ILO TOGETHER, TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF WOMEN IN NEED OF HEALTH PROTECTION



International  
Labour  
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## WOMEN ARE FREQUENTLY EXCLUDED FROM HEALTH PROTECTION

Despite the wish to achieve universal health protection, inequities in access to urgently needed health care prevail for half of the world's population. Due to gender-biased health schemes and systems, women are often excluded even from the most basic services:

- ▶ Coverage in health schemes often requires formal employment where women, particularly in low-income countries, are less likely to work. Thus, coverage rates of women are expected to be much lower than those of men. However, no reliable data at global, regional, or national levels exist.
- ▶ Unfair financing mechanisms based on high out-of-pocket payments combined with lower or no income of women compared to men result in high access barriers and impoverishment of women. Currently, no specific policies are known to address these issues using an inclusive and comprehensive policy approach.
- ▶ Benefit packages are often not gender specific and service delivery often ignores specific needs of women. As a result, health care might not be acceptable and available for women.

As a result, women are deprived of their human rights to health and social protection and exposed to unnecessary suffering, even death.

Change is possible. Equitable health protection requires inclusive legislation, financial protection, and the employment of sufficient numbers of skilled health workers. It also requires a broader policy framework that addresses gender inequities both within and beyond the health sector, such as in social, economic, and labour market policies.



## IMPROVING WOMEN'S HEALTH PROTECTION

The Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), offers such a framework. It provides guidance on universal health protection policies that is based on non-discrimination, is responsive to special needs, and has the potential to achieve equity in access to health care. Improving women's health protection along these lines requires:

- ▶ in-depth assessments of root causes of access deficits;
- ▶ global, regional, and national evidence of the extent of coverage gaps; and
- ▶ country support ensuring inclusive health protection for all women in need.



## IMPROVING THE FATE OF WOMEN IN NEPAL AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE DISASTER BY PROVIDING NEEDED HEALTH PROTECTION

Following the earthquake in Nepal, women are at high risk. Women's health protection was already scarce prior to the disaster, but now access to health care is nearly impossible. Costs of essential care – particularly women-specific care – are soaring, facilities have been devastated, skilled health workers are missing particularly in rural areas, and the gendered status of women in society creates additional problems by often giving men's health-care needs priority over women's needs. As a result, thousands of sick or pregnant women have no effective access to the health care they need. In the absence of data that accurately characterizes the situation, policy-makers might be tempted to continue biased policies that exclude women.

### CLOSING HEALTH ACCESS DEFICITS

The ILO and its UN partners have extensive experience in working as One and supporting countries to provide and extend social health protection for all in need.

With your support, we can help to ensure that more women across the globe are covered by health protection and have access to health care when in need. You can support us to:

- Assess the root causes of women's access deficits and gender discrimination in health protection by in-depth evaluations.

US\$ 300,000

- Close the data gap and provide evidence to policy- and decision-makers regarding key areas of improvement by developing global, regional, and national evidence on the extent of women's coverage gaps.

\$ 500,000

- Develop guidance on effective and efficient health protection policies that are gender-sensitive and ensure the availability, affordability, and accessibility of quality health care for and financial protection to women.

\$ 300,000

- Facilitate South-South exchanges and training.

\$ 300,000

- Develop a practical multilingual how-to guide on building universal health protection in close partnership with ongoing countries' initiatives.

\$ 150,000 over 3 years

### LISTENING TO YOUR AMBITIONS

As a donor, you receive regular reports detailing the progress made and have access to ongoing project activities and performance indicators.

To discuss your support and the ways you can improve the lives of women without access to health care across the globe, you can contact:



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