

BUILDING SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS WITH THE ILO TOGETHER, TO CHANGE MILLIONS OF LIVES IN COLOMBIA



International
Labour
Organization

SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS FOR THE RURAL SECTOR IN THE POST-CONFLICT CONTEXT

Colombia's social protection public policies face a number of challenges, in particular in the rural area: high rates of informality due to historical and structural circumstances, the absence of systems to protect against risks, high labour market segmentation, the low participation of women in the labour market, the existence of child labour, the predominance of the agricultural sector seeking work, the low prevalence of workers and employers who are organized in this sector, and the lack of State presence as a service provider (education, health, infrastructure), among others.

According to the Colombian Labour Information Source (FILCO) and the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), currently, the rural sector is made up of 6.2 million people (29.3 per cent of national employment), of which 73.3 per cent are men and 36.3 per cent are women, out of a total working age population of 5 million people. The Colombian labour market in rural areas is largely self-employed. Self-employed persons make up a significant share in many sectors, including agriculture (50.5 per cent), transport (75 per cent), commerce (58, 6 per cent) and manufacturing (53.7 per cent). Due to the high proportion of unorganized self-employed workers, participation in social dialogue to discuss labour and wage policies is difficult.

It is estimated that multidimensional poverty in rural areas reaches 45.9 per cent of the population, compared to 18.5 per cent in urban areas, with a higher incidence among indigenous and Afro-descendent communities. Furthermore, the income of 91 per cent of workers and farmers in rural areas is below the legal minimum wage. Average income among women was approximately one-third lower than that of men in 2015. In terms of access to social security, more than 90 per cent of rural workers are affiliated to the subsidised health care scheme.



However, less than 5 per cent contribute to pensions (83.2 per cent and 86.7 per cent of employed men and women respectively do not contribute to pensions) and only 11.7 per cent of rural workers are affiliated to the employment injury scheme (12.5 per cent of employed men and 9.7 per cent of employed women). Only 7 per cent of older persons above 65 receive a pension. The high percentage of unprotected older persons translates, among other things, into higher rates of poverty and dependency and the distortion of the labour market which in turn affects the labour market participation of youth and women.

Further, unpaid family workers and day labourers account for more than 20 per cent of rural employment. Although there was an increase in unpaid family labour in all sectors, it was greater in the agricultural sector, which, at the same time, recorded the lowest increase in income between 2008 and 2013. On the other hand, employees, the only category of workers protected by labour laws, represent only 22.3 per cent of rural employment of which 10.6 per cent work in agricultural. Employees earn between 30 per cent and 50 per cent more than non-wage earners.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

These figures provide sufficient evidence to justify the implementation of a Social Protection scheme for the rural sector in Colombia. To this end, the State's initiative, "Misión Rural", plans, within a period of fifteen years, to eliminate the main rural-urban gaps in terms of access to quality social services. In this context, the ILO's work contributes to the formulation of a strategy aimed at the social inclusion of persons in the rural sector to improve their living conditions through the provision of goods of social interest through a rights-based approach. ILO's supports to this initiative further contributes to Colombia's fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goal's, and in particular, targets 1.3, 3.7, 3.8 and 10.4.

It is important to bear in mind the current historic moment for Colombia in the post-conflict context. This represents a unique opportunity to generate consensus around social initiatives. The post-conflict context sets the appropriate stage for changes in rural public policy through a territorial approach. This is in line with the objective of generating a differentiated and specialized rural policy that seeks to establish a social protection scheme for Colombian citizens residing in rural areas. Such an objective requires an institutional response with four key aspects:

1. Adapting existing social protection programmes to rural areas and formulate specific initiatives when necessary
2. Strengthening institutional coordination to ensure a comprehensive and coherent response by the State
3. Taking into account the Social Protection Floors Recommendation No. 202 and other international social security instruments
4. Ensuring the participation of workers 'and employers' organizations in the design and implementation of the strategy

It is essential to underline that Recommendation No. 202 will serve as the reference point that will guide ILO intervention in the development of each of the components described below. This Recommendation seeks to establish and maintain social protection floors as a fundamental element of national social security systems. It also promotes social security extension strategies that ensure higher levels of social security for as many people as possible. This is relevant in the Colombian rural context in which it will be necessary to progressively promote social insurance schemes beyond social assistance schemes to provide higher protection.

The strategy to close social protection gaps in the rural sector can be materialized through the implementation of the following components:

1. **Develop a social security strategy for workers in the rural area (currently under development)** within the framework of the current social protection system that is adapted to rural reality and considers alternative mechanisms. In addition, according to the four basic social security guarantees established by Recommendation No. 202, the strategy would pay particular attention to vulnerable groups in the rural sector. This component should be based on inter-institutional coordination and social dialogue between the different relevant stakeholders.
2. **Design adequate tools to access social security** that are appropriate to the circumstances and characteristics of the rural sector (short-term work, self-employment, work involving multiple parties or daily work, income variations, cooperatives, among others).
3. **Creating a family rural care system appropriate for rural areas**, enabling women to enter the labour market and offering employment opportunities in public, public-private or cooperative entities providing the corresponding care services.
4. **Promote a culture of Social Security** in the rural sector focused on prevention and on strengthening the rural labour inspection mechanism that monitors and evaluates the services provided in rural areas to ensure their access and quality.
5. **Create the National Information System** that integrates all social protection programs and centralizes the identification and selection processes of programs aimed at the vulnerable population, using population and territorial criteria.

ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

The ILO Office for Andean countries has presented this proposal to the national government after considering that the Social Protection Floor constitutes a fundamental tool in the peace process, and serves as a mechanism to close important poverty gaps between persons living in rural and urban areas. The Ministry of Labour has expressed its willingness to contribute to the development of the social security strategy. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was concluded to this effect with the ILO in order to launch the design of social protection scheme for rural workers in Colombia. This MOU is accompanied by a financial commitment from the Government of Colombia (equal to 337.495,78 USD, at the UN rate for the month of November 2016).

The ILO will provide technical assistance for the design, implementation, management, training and information awareness activities related to this proposal.

FROM RIGHT TO REALITY WITH YOUR SUPPORT

The ILO has long experience in supporting countries to extend social protection to all. Despite the current initial effort, Colombia faces numerous challenges in establishing its social protection floor for rural population. With your help, we can support Colombia' commitment to extend access to social protection for all people and make the Social Protection Floor become a tool for building peace.

With your support, we can:

- Support the national government to design the Social Protection Floor for the rural population in Colombia.

US\$ 100.000 per year

- Support the national government in the tripartite consultation of the strategy presented for discussion and approval.

US\$ 100.000 per year

- Support the national government in the process of approval of the normative instrument related to the Social Protection Floor.

US\$ 100.000 per year

- Carry out a diagnostic study of rural families in Colombia to serve as an input for the generation of a family care system appropriate for rural areas.

US\$ 50.000 per year

- Create a culture of social security in rural areas in Colombia

US\$ 50.000 per year

- Support the national government in the design the National Information System.

US\$ 200.000 per year

LISTENING TO YOUR AMBITIONS

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

To further discuss your objectives and the ways in which you can support stakeholders in Colombia and improve millions of lives, you can contact:



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