



# ▶ Social Protection Monitor

Date: 31 December 2020

## ▶ Social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis around the world

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### Key points

This note summarizes the results of the Social Protection Monitor that tracks announcements of social protection measures responding to the possible impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

We will update this note as new data and information become available in this rapidly evolving situation.

Disclaimer: Owing to the exceptional circumstances generated by this global health pandemic, there has

been intense activity in terms of the breadth of national responses and therefore not all information contained in this document could be fully confirmed with reference to official legislation or legal bulletins, nor all measures reflected.

Consult our website for regular updates from the world of work response to the COVID-19 crisis.

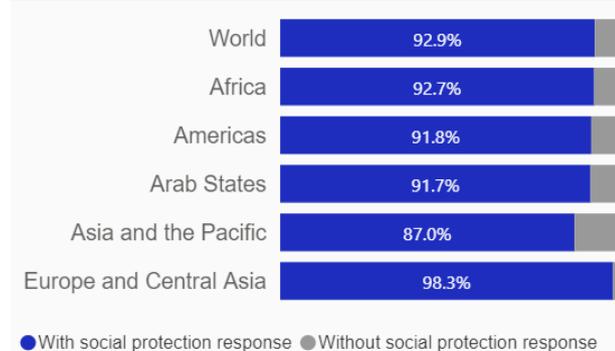
▶ [ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus](https://ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus)

## The ILO Social Protection Monitor

Between 1 February and the 31 December 2020, 209 countries and territories announced at least 1,622 social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The overall response rate in the world is 92.9 per cent (of out 222 countries and territories).

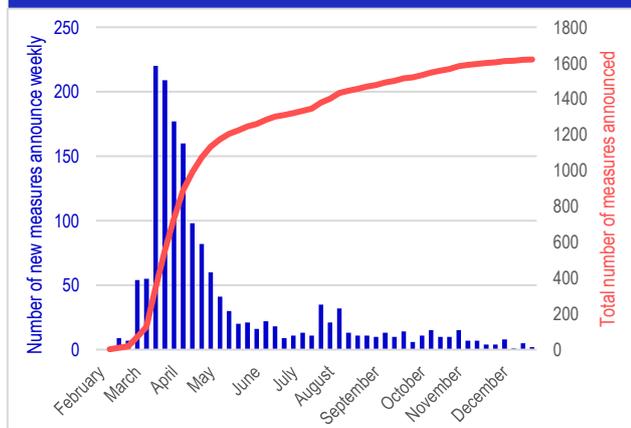
Europe and Central Asia is the region with the highest number of responses when measured as a share of the region's countries; 98.3 per cent of the region's countries have announced measures, followed by Africa (92.7 per cent), Americas (91.8 per cent), Arab States (91.7 per cent), and Asia and the Pacific (87.0 per cent).

Figure 1: Percentage of countries with and without social protection responses, by region



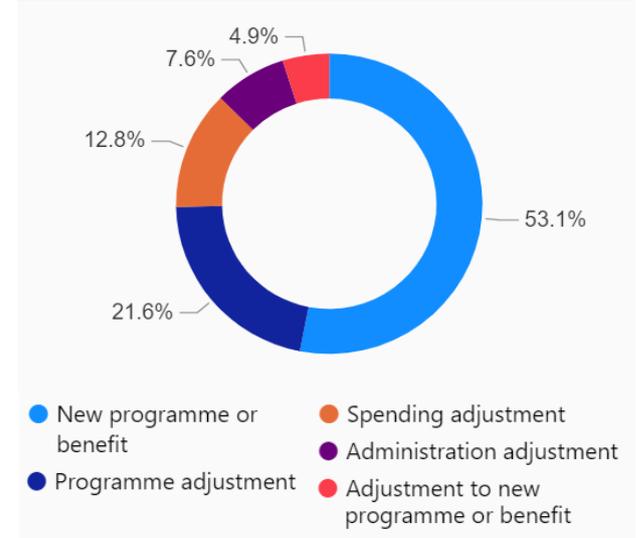
China announced its first set of social protection responses on 12 February and the number of countries and territories that announced responses quickly jumped from 17 in February, to 111 in March, and to 209 as of August 11<sup>th</sup>.

Figure 2: Global number of measures announced by date, February – October 2020



Most measures entail the introduction of new programmes or benefits (53.1 per cent), followed by social protection programme adjustments (21.6 per cent), social spending adjustments (12.8 per cent) or improvements in administration (7.6 per cent). Recently, some new measures or benefits are receiving adjustments (4.9 per cent), such as extension of their duration.

Figure 3: Percentage of measures announced, by type



Overall, 75.4 per cent of all measures are of non-contributory nature, especially introduction of new programmes and benefits (90.8 per cent), while contributory nature of measures is observed in programme adjustment (8.2 per cent) and spending (7.5 per cent). It is also worth to note that 81.7 per cent of countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia could rely on measures of contributory nature for COVID-19 responses, in contrast to a 57.8 per cent globally or 32.7 per cent in Africa.

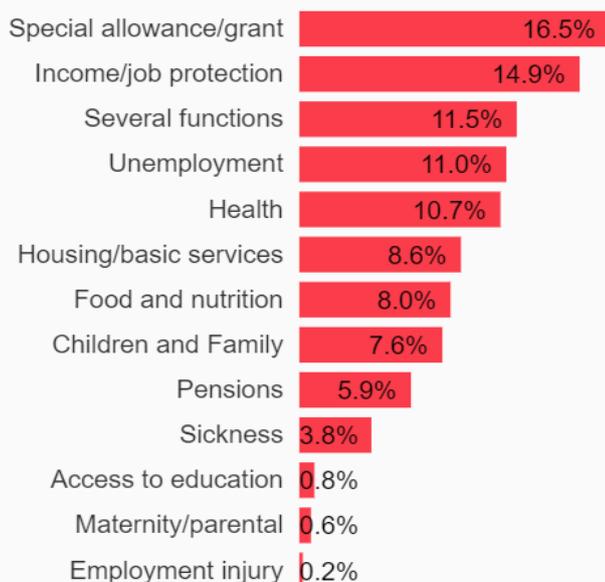
Figure 4: Distribution of measures, by type of programme



[Click here](#) to access the interactive data visualization dashboard on COVID-19 responses.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the measures announced cover all functions of social protection. Around 16.5 per cent of the responses in the period are related to special social allowances/grants, followed by measures addressing income/job protection (14.9 per cent), several social protection functions (11.5 per cent), unemployment protection (11.5 per cent), and health (10.7 per cent).

Figure 5: Percentage of measures announced, by function of social protection



Measures addressing housing and basic services (8.6 per cent) and the allocation of food (8.0 per cent) have been also widely adopted. These are followed by the provision of benefits for children and families (7.6 per cent), as well as adjustments in pensions (5.9 per cent), sickness benefits (3.8 per cent), access to education (0.8 per cent), maternity or parental benefits (0.6 per cent) and employment injury benefits (0.2 per cent).

► [Click here](#) to access the updated data visualization dashboard on COVID-19 responses.

Among the top 10 most frequent measures, a total of 243 aim to introduce benefits specifically for workers and/or their dependents, while 219 measures introduced benefits for the poor and vulnerable population groups.

Figure 6: Top ten social protection responses (number of measures)

Measure	Number
Introducing benefit for workers and/or dependents	243
Introducing benefit for poor or vulnerable population	219
Introducing subsidies to or deferring or reducing cost of necessities/utilities	131
Increasing benefit level	118
Extending coverage	108
Introducing subsidies to wage	107
Increasing benefit duration	98
Increasing resources/budgetary allocation	92
Improving delivery mechanism/capacity	90
Deferring, reducing or waiving social contribution	84

Other measures included the introduction of subsidies to or deferring or reducing the cost of necessities/utilities (131), increase levels of already existent benefits (118), the extension of coverage (108), and the introduction subsidies to wage (107). Another share of measures has been focusing on extending the duration of a benefit (98), especially the ones created to respond to the pandemic, increasing resources/budgetary allocation (92), improving delivery mechanisms/capacity (90), and deferring, reducing, or waiving social contribution (82).

ILO's *Social Protection Monitor* is based on a systematic analysis of media/news published online. The Monitor tracks announcements of social protection measures, defined as any policy decision that affects the functioning of a social protection system, from minor parametric adjustments to major developments and reforms, as well as social subsidies. While the Monitor provides the most comprehensive list of announced social protection measures and a snapshot of current global trends, it does not replace the thorough analysis provided by the *ILO's Social Security Inquiry* and the *World Social Protection Report*.

This brief provides a systematic classification of social protection-related policy responses to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. It is part of a series of ILO briefs on social protection in crisis response which can be found on the [ILO's Social Protection Platform COVID-19 Crisis page](#), including: [ILO, Social Protection Responses to the Covid-19 Crisis: Country Responses and Policy Considerations](#), forthcoming; and [ILO, Social Protection Responses to the Covid-19 Crisis: Country Responses in Asia and the Pacific](#), 2020.

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Consult our websites for regular updates from the world of work response to the COVID-19 crisis.

- [COVID-19 and the world of work](#)
- [Social Protection Response to the COVID-19](#)