



▶ Social Protection spotlight

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▶ Why should countries ratify ILO Social Security Conventions ?

What makes ILO social security standards unique?

ILO social security standards provide a set of internationally adopted and accepted norms for its member States since the ILO's establishment in 1919. They comprise Conventions, Protocols to these Conventions, as well as Recommendations.

Unlike other international treaties, ILO standards are adopted by the ILC by a 2/3 majority of the votes of its tripartite stakeholders – a feature that guarantees they are the direct result of a participatory process and fully correspond to the diverse needs of all ILO member States and constituents. Once adopted, these standards crystallize a world consensus and become a reference point and a model to inspire reforms and improve national social protection systems.

Member States that ratify ILO Conventions assume the legal obligations and duties contained in the Convention upon its entry into force and need to demonstrate compliance, both in law and in practice, at regular intervals. The application of ratified ILO Conventions is monitored by a supervisory machinery based on periodic reporting and special procedures including complaints and representations.

ILO Recommendations provide non-binding guidelines based on best practices. They are not open to ratification, but provide essential guidance for ILO constituents in formulating their national social protection strategies and legal frameworks, as well as for the design, implementation and progressive development of their social protection systems.

Why should countries ratify ILO social security Conventions?

There are multiple reasons why the ratification of ILO social security Conventions should be considered and placed high on any national agenda:

Promoting human rights and attaining global goals

Ratifying ILO social security Conventions demonstrates a commitment to realizing the human right to social security, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, and other human rights instruments. Thus, the ratification and implementation of ILO social security conventions represents a concrete step towards meeting commitments under international human rights instruments (UN CESCR, 2008; UN OHCHR, 2012).

The ratification and implementation of these standards also contributes to attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely SDG target 1.3 on building social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, with a view to achieving universal social protection. It is also instrumental in achieving other SDGs related to good health and well-being (namely through universal health coverage), gender equality, decent work and reduced inequalities.

Furthermore, the ratification of ILO social security Conventions is a commitment to observe internationally agreed minimum standards securing an adequate level playing field for increasingly globalized economies and societies. Adherence to these standards supports the promotion of inclusive growth and sustainable development, and encourages investments in people. Moreover, by building comprehensive social protection systems, countries

contribute to strengthening their social contract and reinforcing economic and social stabilizers including in times of crisis.

Setting internationally agreed minimum benchmarks

ILO standards, and Convention No. 102 in particular, define internationally agreed minimum requirements, which serve as a framework for the establishment of comprehensive social protection systems (see Figure 1). Convention No. 102 establishes the set of risks that should be progressively addressed by national social protection systems, and specifies minimum requirements for each area with regard to coverage, level of benefits, entitlement conditions and other key parameters. A summary of minimum requirements for each area is provided in the annexes of the compendium of ILO social security standards (ILO, 2019a). In addition to these quantitative minimum benchmarks, the Conventions also sets out the main principles guaranteeing sound financing, good, and participatory governance and administration, which ensure that social protection systems are effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable.

Roadmap for strengthening national social protection systems

ILO social security Conventions guide the progressive development of universal social protection systems based on social solidarity through collective financing. By defining a minimum framework for social protection systems, ILO social security standards guide the establishment, maintenance and reform of these systems. In this manner, even in the absence of ratification, these standards provide benchmarks that guarantee effective, equitable and sustainable systems based on clearly defined rights and obligations.

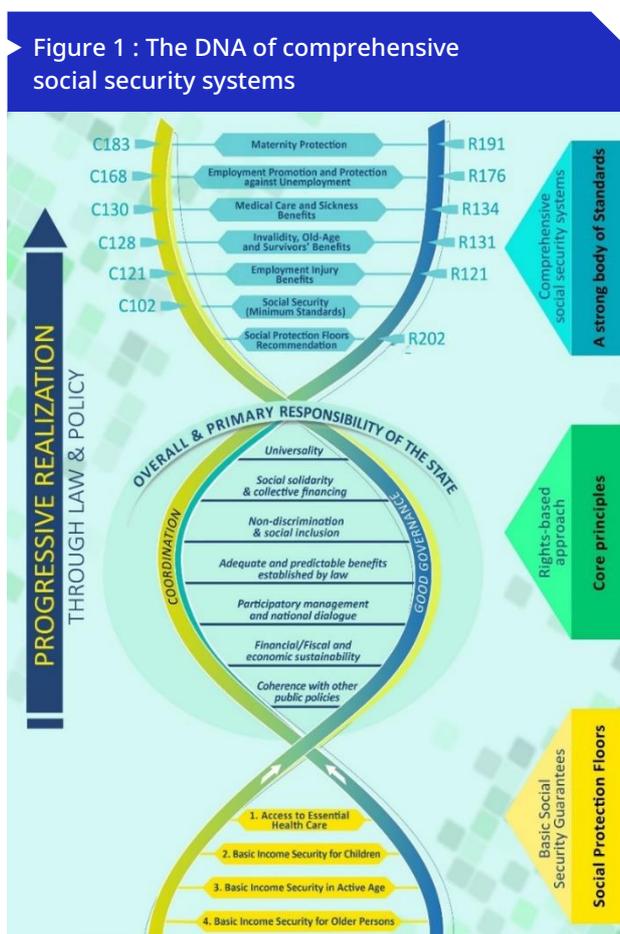
This minimum framework includes, in particular, the gradual extension of coverage to achieve universal social protection, measures to improve benefit adequacy, and ensuring effective governance and financing mechanisms that are indispensable for sustainable and equitable social protection systems.

The ratification of Convention No. 102 and the other up-to-date social security Conventions has been a catalyst for significant improvements in national social protection systems, which are guided by an internationally accepted framework that is supported by governments, workers and employers. ILO social security standards have also generally been of particular importance for countries undergoing reform processes or experiencing crises (ILO, 2017). Finally, ratifying these Conventions is a guarantee to benefit on a priority basis from ILO's technical expertise in its implementation.

Flexible framework for the development of social protection systems

ILO social security Conventions are unique in that they provide a flexible framework to steer the progressive expansion of any all type of social protection system. While Convention No. 102 sets out benchmarks with reference to the different parameters of contributory schemes or non-contributory schemes, more advanced standards build on these minimum benchmarks, establishing higher levels of protection.

This allows for the progressive attainment of comprehensive coverage, allowing for temporary derogations for countries whose economy and medical facilities are insufficiently developed, or the progressive ratification of different risks. In the case of Convention No. 102, for example, countries can ratify by accepting at least three out of the nine branches, while further developing their social protection systems and accepting obligations with respect to additional branches, and more advanced standards, as their systems develop.



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A guarantee that minimum levels of protection will be maintained including in times of crisis

The social impact of financial and economic crises on workers and their families can be mitigated by social protection. By ratifying ILO social security Conventions, a country undertakes to implement internationally agreed minimum social security standards through a legal framework; this requires the maintenance at all times of the minimum standards they set out. Conventions, once ratified, can therefore act as powerful tools for the preservation of social security guarantees and entitlements at the national level – and thereby, the preservation of decent standards of living and health. Ratification can therefore produce a ratchet effect and thereby prevent backsliding below internationally agreed minima mitigating the long-term social consequences of crises.

Visit the “Toolkit on ILO Social Security Standards – learn, ratify and apply”

A Toolkit was developed with the aim of raising awareness about ILO social security standards and promoting their ratification. By bringing together information and resources on these standards, the toolkit further serves to increase their impact and application in national contexts. The toolkit provides very practical and useful insights as to the ratification procedure, model instruments of ratification, as well as interactive information on the key provisions of these standards.

Visit the toolkit:

<http://standards.social-protection.org>



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► www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowWiki.action?id=62&lang=EN