Why ratifying ILO social security standards is important?

Why should countries ratify Convention No. 102?

There are multiple reasons why the ratification of Convention No. 102 should be considered and placed high on any national agenda:

**Promoting human rights and attaining global goals**

Ratifying Convention No. 102 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 Convention No. 102 represents an essential step towards meeting commitments under international human rights instruments (UN CESCR, 2008; UN OHCHR, 2012).

The ratification and implementation of Convention No. 102 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 the eradication of poverty, good health and well-being (namely through universal health coverage), gender equality, decent work and reduced inequalities.

The ratification of Convention No. 102 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 support 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 in times of crisis and beyond.

**Figure 1. Convention No. 102: Strong roots for sound and sustainable social protection systems**

**Setting internationally agreed benchmarks**

Convention No. 102 defines internationally agreed minimum requirements for social protection systems, which serve as a framework for the establishment of comprehensive social protection systems. It establishes the minimum set of risks that should be addressed by national social protection systems, and specifies minimum requirements for each area with regard to coverage, benefit adequacy, entitlement conditions and other key parameters. A summary of minimum requirements for each area is provided in the annexes of the World Social Protection Report (ILO, 2017a) and the compendium.
of ILO social security standards (ILO, 2017b). In addition to these quantitative minimum benchmarks, the Convention 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**

Convention No. 102 guides the progressive development of national social protection systems towards the objective of universal social protection based on social solidarity through collective financing. By defining minimum requirements for social protection systems, Convention No. 102 provides guidance for the establishment, maintenance and reform of social protection systems even in the absence of ratification, ensuring that they can function effectively, equitably and sustainably based on clearly defined rights and obligations.

This 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 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. It has also been of particular importance for countries undergoing reform processes or experiencing crises (ILO, 2017b). Finally, ratifying Convention No. 102 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**

Convention No. 102 provides a flexible framework to steer the progressive expansion of protection for all types of social protection systems. It sets out minimum benchmark with several options for contributory schemes (usually social insurance), tax financed schemes (social assistance and universal schemes), or a combination of both.

It allows for the progressive attainment of comprehensive coverage, allowing for temporary derogations for countries whose economy and medical facilities are insufficiently developed. Countries can ratify the Convention 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 as their systems develop.

Following ratification of ILO social security Conventions, member States benefit from priority technical assistance in its implementation. Assistance is also available to help countries meeting their reporting obligations, with training seminars targeted at national report drafters.

The ILO has a vast experience in providing such services to its Members, ranging from setting up and improving social protection schemes to reforming entire social protection systems. It includes policy, legal and financial advice, actuarial valuations and studies, assistance for the drafting of legislation, advice on the governance of social security schemes and their institutional set-up, as well as on monitoring the performance social protection systems and schemes.
Ratification of ILO Convention No. 102 and other social security Conventions

References


ILO, 2012. Matters arising out of the work of the 101st Session (2012) of the International Labour Conference: Follow-up to the adoption of the resolution concerning efforts to make social protection floors a national reality worldwide (GB.316/INS/5/1(&Corr.)).


This issue brief has been prepared by Kroum Markov and Maya Stern Plaza with inputs from Christina Behrendt.
For more information, contact: socpro@ilo.org.
International Labour Office, 4, route des Morillons, 1211 Genève 22, Switzerland
Visit our website: www.social-protection.org