Social Protection Monitor

Date: 12 May 2020

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

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
The ILO Social Protection Monitor ¹

Between 1 February and 11 May 2020, 168 countries and territories announced at least 915 social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The overall response rate in the world is 77 per cent (of out 217 countries and territories). Africa is the region with the highest number of responses when measured as a share of the region’s countries; 85.2 per cent of the region’s countries have introduced measures, followed by Europe and Central Asia (84.7 per cent), Americas (78.7 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (62.2 per cent), and Arab States (50.0 per cent).

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 168 as of 12 May.

Most measures entail the introduction of new programmes or benefits (54 per cent), followed by social protection programme adjustments (25.5 per cent), social spending adjustments (12.2 per cent) or improvements in administration (8.3 per cent).

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the measures announced cover all functions of social protection. Around 15.3 per cent of the responses in the period are related to special social allowances/grants, followed by measures addressing several social protection functions (12.7 per cent), income/job protection (12.5 per cent), unemployment protection (12.3 per cent), and housing and basic services (10.1 per cent). Measures

¹ 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.

² This brief’s is available and updated online: Social Protection Monitor on COVID-19.

addressing the allocation of food (9.7 per cent) and health (9.0 per cent) have been also widely adopted. These are followed by adjustments in pensions (6.4 per cent), as well as provision of benefits for children and families (6.2 per cent), sickness benefits (4.5 per cent), maternity or parental benefits (0.7 per cent), access to education (0.5 per cent) and employment injury benefits (0.1 per cent).

Among the top 10 most frequent measures, a total of 133 aim to introduce benefits specifically for the poor and vulnerable population groups, while 122 measures increased benefit levels or introduced benefits for workers and/or their dependents. Other measures included the introduction of subsidies to or deferring or reducing the cost of necessities/utilities (95), increase of benefit levels (87), the extension of coverage (65), and introducing subsidies to wage (65). Another share of measures has been focusing on deferring, reducing or waiving social contribution (53), improving delivery mechanisms/capacity (49), increasing credit/budgetary allocation (45) and relaxing or suspending eligibility criteria or conditionalities (32).

Click here to access the updated data visualization dashboard on COVID-19 responses.