

## ▶ Applying social security principles to support workers' incomes during the COVID-19 pandemic

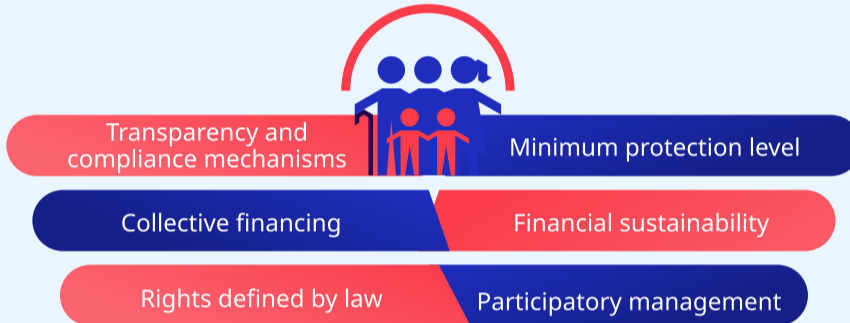
From 2020 to early 2022 the ILO, with financial support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), implemented an income-support project in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic** for workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided cash transfers for **job retention or laid-off workers or wage subsidies for furloughed workers**. It aimed to protect workers while also supporting factories to retain the workforce in light of business continuity in order to reduce impacts on livelihoods and the economy.

The experiences of the ILO-BMZ project are in line with the principles set forth in Recommendation No. 202, in particular on ensuring tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers.

### Social Security guiding principles



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Social dialogue is essential for designing and implementing social protection schemes, including in crisis contexts, and ensures that schemes are **socially inclusive and non-discriminatory, transparent and adopt efficient and accessible complaint procedures**.

In **Bangladesh**, tripartite consultations helped to identify and find agreement on the eligibility criteria for factories, based on the size of the factory (number of workers) and economic impact experienced (a decrease in work orders and revenue compared to a 2019 benchmark)

In **Ethiopia**, during the first meeting on the programme's basic design, members of the technical committee suggested that setting a flat transfer rate was not appropriate in this context, as there was no agreed minimum wage. Rather, it was agreed to cover the basic salary<sup>1</sup> of workers, which varies according to employer and grade.

<sup>1</sup> The regular monthly salary, not including any overtime or bonuses

### Delivery mechanisms

A number of service delivery improvements were introduced and are aligned with several social security guiding principles related to transparent, accountable and appropriate delivery mechanisms, as well as efficient and accessible complaint and appeal procedures, set out in Recommendation No. 202. For example:

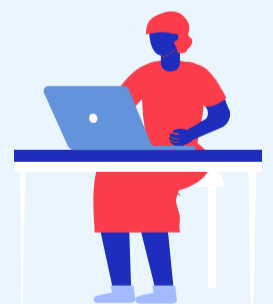


#### Outreach

In **Cambodia**, the project was publicized through the tripartite technical committees and meetings established for the Global Call to Action in the Garment Industry in Cambodia. The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training conducted sensitization visits to 893 garment sector factories. Employers' and workers' unions provided outreach and awareness communication for workers in the targeted factories

#### Registration

In **Ethiopia**, a digitized registration process through a dedicated web portal designed for the programme where factories who fit the eligibility criteria could be assessed and complete their application online before being reviewed by the tripartite technical committee. The online registration however proved cumbersome and inaccessible to some eligible factories and proved to be not a trusted mechanism. To improve accessibility, tripartite consultations took place which resulted in a lighter set of registration requirements and additional outreach was conducted through the garment industry association to boost project take up.



#### Payment mechanism

In **Lao PDR**, the Lao Social Security Organization expanded its payment platform from delivering benefits to workers' personal bank accounts to include newly introduced digital mobile and card payment solutions to ensure access to workers who did not have a bank account.

#### Appeal and Redress mechanism

In **Lao PDR**, the existing appeal and redress channels were not fully trusted and used by workers, the Lao Social Security Organization added a new channel for receiving and escalating complaints through union representatives and garment associations. In non-unionized factories, a focal point was established for sensitizing workers in the ILO-BMZ project and receiving and channelling queries.

