

Extending Social Security to All

A guide through challenges and options

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Social security represents an investment in a country's "human infrastructure" no less important than investments in its physical infrastructure. At an early stage of economic development the priority is, of course, to put in place a basic level of provision; the evidence adduced in this Guide points to its affordability for, essentially, every country. While this message lies at the heart of the Guide, it is important to keep in mind that, at a later stage, the basic level can and should be augmented, and the ILO's long-standing approach to social security offers the framework to do so.

While the financial, fiscal and economic affordability and sustainability of social protection systems has become – rightly or wrongly – a major concern for countries at all stages of economic development, the Guide provides testimony showing that some level of social security can be afforded even at early stages of national development. Social security systems remain affordable moreover when economies mature and population age. Hence, a country's national investment in social security can be well justified, whether or not an extensive social security system has already been developed.

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