



▶ ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)

▶ The relevance of R202 for trade unions

▶ Three ideas are behind the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202):

- all members of society should enjoy at least a basic level of social protection throughout their lives;
- social protection has proven to be a **powerful mechanism to mitigate the negative impact of crises and beyond**; and
- **social dialogue promotes the democratic participation in the policy-making process of the people most directly concerned** and ensures that the involvement of the social partners helps ensure that social protection policies are legitimate, fair and adapted to the real needs and priorities of workers and employers.

For these three reasons, it is crucial that workers' organisations are involved in crafting crisis responses: the impact goes at the very heart of their *raison d'être*, and their involvement will ensure societies that are, in the future, better adjusted to their needs and demands.

Workers' organisations may rely on R202 to remind member States of the commitment they took at the ILC when they adopted this Recommendation. R202 was adopted unanimously by all – governments (with the abstention of one country), employers and workers. It is an international law instrument and Governments are expected to respect its guidance. **Workers Organisations can request that it is taken into account.**

▶ The relevance of the R202 in times of the COVID-19 crisis

R202 was adopted by ILO constituents in the aftermath of the 2008 financial and economic crisis, expressing the commitment of member States to ensure that all members of society enjoy at least a basic level of social protection throughout their lives.

Social protection systems have proven to be powerful anti-crisis measures. Social protection protects and empowers people, increases resilience, while at the same time it contributes to boosting economic demand and accelerating recovery. It plays a crucial role in furthering social cohesion and inclusion, equality and social justice, as well as sustainable social and economic development.

The COVID-19 crisis, which originated as a public health crisis, has also developed into a global social and economic crisis, with severe and potentially lasting impacts on not only economies, employment and trade, but on livelihoods. It calls for the extension of basic social protection to all those in need.

► The content of R202 in a nutshell

► The Recommendation provides guidance to countries:

- in establishing and maintaining national social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security systems and
- in implementing their floors within strategies for the extension of social security that progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible, guided by ILO social security standards.

► What are national social protection floors¹?

National social protection floors are a set of basic social security guarantees, which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. These guarantees should at least include:

- access to essential health care, including maternity care;
- basic income security for children, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;
- basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability;
- basic income security for older persons.

► Basic principles when establishing and maintain social protection floors

The Recommendation comprises a set of principles, including the overall and primary responsibility of the State; a rights-based approach based on entitlements prescribed by national law; diversity of methods and approaches; progressive realization; universality of protection based on social solidarity; adequacy and predictability of benefits; protection of rights and dignity of beneficiaries; non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs; financial, fiscal and economic sustainability; transparent, accountable and sound financial management and administration; as well as tripartite participation and consultation with representatives of persons concerned.

► How to implement a national social protection floors?

National social protection floors should be established according to each individual nation's priorities and resources and **designed and implemented with the participation of all social partners**. It may be achieved through a variety of means, including contributory or non-contributory social transfers. It should be implemented through national legislation and be progressively enhanced according to the economic development of each country.

R202 has a **very strong social dialogue component**, as it requires Members, while recognizing the overall and primary responsibility of the State in giving effect to this Recommendation, to apply the principles of **full respect for collective bargaining and freedom of association for all workers as well as tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers**. It further requires, that Members should give due consideration to tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers when establishing and reviewing the levels of the basic social security guarantees. In addition, the progress in implementing social protection floors should be monitored through appropriate nationally defined mechanisms, including **tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers**.

¹ Please see the ILO General Survey 2019 on R202 *Universal social protection for human dignity, social justice and sustainable development*: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_673680.pdf