

PRESS RELEASE



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Over 200 civil society organizations and trade unions unite to call for a Global Fund for Social Protection to protect the most vulnerable during COVID-19 and beyond

The COVID-19 crisis has driven economies and health systems around the world to the brink of collapse, pushed millions into extreme poverty and deepened deprivations experienced by many more. These devastating consequences could have been avoided if people had been supported by robust and comprehensive social protection systems that ensure income security for all during such crises. But this is precisely what has been lacking in many low-income countries where only a small proportion of the population is covered by social protection.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) just [published figures that give an idea of the size of the global social protection gap](#): To guarantee basic income security and access to essential health care for all in 2020 alone, low and middle income countries need to invest about US\$1.2 trillion – on average 3.8 per cent of their GDP.

The responsibility to ensure social protection lies with governments, but the pandemic has put a spotlight on the need for international solidarity in finally realizing the human right to social protection for everyone, everywhere.

Therefore, the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF), a group of over a 100 civil society organizations and trade unions, is calling on the world's governments support low-income countries to expand and improve their social protection systems through the establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection.

This Fund will enable low-income countries to implement national social protection systems that ensure income protection for all by providing temporary co-financing and facilitating access to technical support.

In expressing her support for the Call, **Sharan Burrow**, the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) stressed the importance of social protection in protecting people from the impacts of this crisis and the next: *"Covid-19 has exposed the global scandal of a world without social protection for all. 70% of the world's people have no or inadequate social protection, no income protection, no guaranteed access to health, no child protection and many other vital areas that ensure people are resilient against global shocks. Unions and civil society groups are calling for a Global Social Protection Fund for the poorest and most vulnerable of people. Join us, make the call for a Global Social Protection Fund!"*

Olivier De Schutter, the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, emphasized how a Global Fund for Social Protection would not just help low income countries finance social protection their citizens but also give them the security that they will be supported to maintain these systems when a crisis hits: *"Many poor countries are small and have a poorly diversified economy and they may be experiencing shocks, economic shocks, a loss of export revenues, a sudden increase of import bills, climatic shocks, droughts and floods, or indeed epidemics, as we have seen most recently. And these countries may be wary about committing to provide their populations with the support they need in the form of standing rights-based Social Protection Floors that people may claim as entitlements. So we need to support these countries by providing them the ability to be insured in times of crisis, to make sure that the Social Protection Floors they establish shall be affordable, even in times of crisis. **There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come, and I strongly believe that that is the case for the Global Fund for Social Protection.**"*

If the international community takes the promise of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development to 'not leave anyone behind' serious then now is the time to establish a Global Fund for Social Protection. It is only realistic way to ensure that this crisis and the next does not spell poverty and deprivation for the world's most vulnerable.

The list of organizations endorsing the Call for a Global Fund for Social Protection, testimonials of high-profile signatories and Call itself can be found here: <http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/civil-society-call/>