International Labour Organization (ILO)

* **ILO contributions to the report on the rights of the child and inclusive social protection - Human Rights Council Resolution 49/20**

Introductory remarks:

For over 100 years, ILO has been setting, promoting and supervising the application of international labour standards supporting both the rights of the child and inclusive social protection. While the ILO Constitution places social protection at the core of Organization’s mandate and recognizes protection of children as one of key elements towards achieving social justice, ILO social security standards guide Member States in building and maintaining access to universal social protection systems, comprised of floors providing basic levels of protection and the provision of higher levels of protection.

1. Relevant ILO standards

The sixth General Principle defining the ILO mandate (Article 427 of the Treaty of Versailles) attaches special and urgent importance to the abolition of child labour and “the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons to permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development”. This principle laid foundation for the adoption of the first ILO conventions on protection of young persons, including children, which later on evolved into more modern instruments, such as C005 - Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5), C006 - Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 6), C016 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921 (No. 16), and so on.

Up-to-date general framework instruments governing social security include C102 – Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), which covers the nine principal branches of social security, sets out minimum standards for the level of social security benefits and the conditions under which they are granted. A specific provision for family benefits for the maintenance of children aims at ensuring the welfare of children and the economic stability of their families by providing the necessary additional income for the sustainable development of the child and to prevent families of limited means form falling into poverty due to the need to maintain a child.

R202 - Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) provides, inter alia, guidance to establish and maintain social protection floors, comprising basic social security guarantees, including basic income security for all children (irrespective of their immigration status), as a fundamental element of national social security systems. C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) links the general minimum age for admission to employment or work to the age of completion of compulsory schooling which shall not be less than 15 years (13 for light work) and provides for the flexibility of initially setting the general minimum age at 14 (12 for light work) in States where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. This fundamental Convention sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18.

R146 - Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146) highlights the importance of social security measures in eliminating child labour by calling for the progressive extension of economic and social measures to alleviate poverty wherever it exists and to ensure family living standards and income which are such as to make it unnecessary to have recourse to the economic activity of children. C183 - Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and the accompanying R191 - Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191) call, inter alia, for health protection of new-borns and standards for breastfeeding.

Other relevant standards include C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), ILO fundamental Convention achieved universal ratification, which requires ratifying states to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. C182 recognizes that child labour is to a great extent caused by poverty and that the long-term solution lies in sustained economic growth leading to social progress, in particular poverty alleviation and universal education. Against this backdrop, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) in its comments on the application of C182 and C138 have supported poverty alleviation and social security measures, as can be seen in some of recent comments in respect of Togo, Kenya, and Gabon. The Committee has reminded member States that compulsory education remains one of the most effective means of combating child labour and that poverty reduction programmes, including social security projects, contribute to breaking the circle of poverty, which is essential for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

1. ILO 2019 General Survey

The 2019 General Survey of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), entitled “Universal social protection for human dignity, social justice and sustainable development” concerning R202 underlines the pivotal role of basic income security for children in combating child labour. As part of measures against the risks that drive children into poverty, States should consider national social security systems providing adequate protection for children, in line with R202, as emphasized in SDG 1 on ending extreme poverty, which includes target 1.3 on the implementation of social protection systems and measures, including social protection floors.

The General Survey further highlights the importance to ensure that all social protection interventions are child sensitive, in accordance with the principles outlined in the Joint Statement on Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection adopted in 2009 by a coalition of international agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Committee further emphasizes the need to achieve adequate levels of protection tailored to specific needs of children, particularly in vulnerable situations, in order to ensure that children can realize their full potential and break the vicious circle of poverty and vulnerability and implement benefit schemes for children in a manner that ensures gender equality and supports women’s labour market participation.

Reflecting the strategic objective of social protection and ILO’s normative priorities as well as recognizing that certain groups are often disproportionately affected by lack of coverage and/or inadequate levels of protection, the International Labour Conference in 2021 called for accelerated ratification of C102 and effective implementation of R202 and other relevant ILO standards as well as for investment in affordable and quality child care and social protection for children, in particular with a view to eliminating child labour, and to commit with strong political will and through strong social dialogue to progressively and as soon as possible build and maintain universal, comprehensive, sustainable and adequate social protection systems.

1. Multilateral approach

In line with its constitutional mandate to set international social security standards, its tripartite structure and its technical expertise, the ILO takes a leadership role in ensuring policy coherence on social protection with a view to advancing the achievement of the vision and principles embedded in ILO standards at the national and international level, through close collaboration within the multilateral system, particularly within the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) and the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP2030).

Launched by the UN Secretary-General in September 2021 as a human-centred response to complex global challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions with its commitment to rights-based universal social protection systems and decent work at the heart of sustainable development allows to focus more on human rights that are often neglected in socio-economic policy and development landscape. Based on a solid human rights foundation, including a strong reference to international labour standards, and the systematic promotion of social dialogue and participation, the Global Accelerator proposes a coherent framework for action bringing together relevant policy solutions and the necessary investments through enhanced multilateral cooperation.

According to the 2020 Global Estimates of Child Labour, 160 million boys and girls worldwide are engaged in child labour, half of whom are in hazardous work. The COVID-19 crisis threatens to further erode global progress against child labour with a new analysis suggesting a further 8.9 million children being in child labour by the end of 2022 as a result of rising poverty driven by the pandemic. Recognizing that adequate social protection systems are essential for child labour elimination and for protection against poverty, the commitment of the Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labour calls to scale up action towards achieving universal access to social protection by:

* progressively extending access to comprehensive, adequate, sustainable, gender- and age-responsive, disability-inclusive social protection, including through the establishment of national social protection floors;
* promoting universal child benefit payments, such as cash transfers, and child dependent allowances in social welfare payments;
* promoting basic household income security for all, including children and young persons in extreme poverty and those with disabilities (including covering disability-related extra costs), to increase household resilience to shocks, reduce the risk of child labour and remove children from child labour;
* improving access of communities depending on agriculture for their livelihoods to social and agricultural insurances;
* expanding child labour monitoring systems, linked to the provision of social protection services;
* supporting robust parental benefit systems including through support for maternity and paternity benefit systems; and
* providing for equitable and sustainable financing for social protection systems through effective domestic and international resource mobilization, including official development assistance, particularly for Least Developed Countries and in light of demographic trends and the impact of climate change.

1. Information with specific view to the questions raised in the questionnaire
2. Based on your work, what are the main gaps and challenges to children’s enjoyment of social protection in law, policy, and practice and the main impacts on children’s rights? Please provide any relevant statistical or disaggregated data based on age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status, or other categories. Please consider the specific situation of marginalized children and those in vulnerable situations in your response.

* Children’s enjoyment of their right to social security, including to social insurance, as well as their right to an adequate standards of living, to the highest attainable standard of health and other rights, is an important part of the ILO’s mandate, and guided by international social security standards. The ILO works closely with UNICEF and other partners to promote universal social protection systems, including floors, which can provide children with adequate social protection. Benefits directed to children, such as child and family benefits, play an important role in this respect, yet the picture would not be complete without considering the important role of social protection for the working-age population and older persons, which ensure income security and access to health care for families.
* Limited effective social protection coverage: Of the 2.4 billion children aged 0-18, a vast majority of children - 77.4 per cent, equivalent to 1.77 billion children - still receive no child and family cash benefits at all. This is the headline figure. However, the most extensive and complete SDG data on effective coverage is for children aged 0-15. Effective coverage figures for SDG indicator 1.3.1 show that the rates for children aged 0-15 have either not progressed or even stalled slightly. In 2020 only 26.4 per cent of children globally received social protection cash benefits whereas in 2016 the effective coverage rate was 27.2 per cent. This means 1.5 billion children below the age of 15 currently have no access to social protection (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).

(*Please note any text proceeded by the reference ‘(ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023)’, is verbatim text from this report and should be cited as such).*

* Significant and troubling regional disparities exist in effective coverage for children, and in some regions, progress has stalled or there has been a decline in coverage since 2016. The most pronounced decline occurred in the Americas, where coverage fell by 6.4 percentage points from 63.8 to 57.4 per cent. Elsewhere, insufficient progress has been made, with coverage stalled. For instance, it remains relatively low in the Arab States at 15.4 per cent. Coverage declined slightly from 84.6 to 82.3 per cent in Europe and Central Asia. And of all regions, effective coverage remains the lowest in Africa, where the rate has barely moved since 2016, from 12.8 to 12.6 per cent. In Asia and the Pacific, coverage has remained more or less the same and is currently 18.0 per cent (ILO 2020, 2021; ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023a).
* The COVID-19 social protection response insufficiently child sensitive: Despite the unprecedented social protection response during the pandemic and some positive examples (see further below), the overall response cannot be considered child-sensitive, and it is no coincidence that the increase in child poverty has occurred for the first time in decades. Using the principles of child-sensitive social protection as a benchmark to appraise the policy response, troubling shortcomings are revealed. These include:
* Insufficient sensitivity to gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities. Too few measures - approximately one in ten - addressed the needs of girls and women directly;
* Substantial and untimely disbursement delays in delivering support, ranging from two to 119 days;
* Failure to reach especially vulnerable children, who tend to live in families with limited labour market attachment. They were missed by large flagship job or labour market responses;
* Limited duration of support, typically lasting 4.5 months - support that was often of questionable adequacy given the very protracted nature of the crisis;
* Little support was provided to caregivers. Only 12 countries, mainly HICs, provided additional childcare allowance support to caregivers;
* Non-existent or limited national dialogue with and participation of families and children occurred in helping to formulate a policy response commensurate with their perceived needs. Social dialogue with persons of concern was conspicuously absent in the global social protection response.

Virtually none of the measures adopted attained permanent statutory status and therefore the policy response has failed to leave a policy legacy that concretely improves social protection provision for children (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).

* Adequacy- There is limited comparative global data on the adequacy of child benefits. However, adequacy in child and family benefits means rates of payments that are sufficiently high to meet a child’s individual needs (e.g. for children with disabilities) and needs that are defined by the settings in which they live (e.g. fragile contexts). Guidance for the adequacy of child and family benefits is provided by international social security standards, in particular ILO Convention No. 102 and Recommendation No. 202. Moreover, one way of determining the adequacy of social protection is to assess the extent to which it reduces child poverty. In the European Union over the past decade, the reduction in child income poverty after taxes and social protection benefits falls into the range 36-41 per cent of market income For example, in 2020 the pre-tax “at risk of poverty” rate of 32.3 per cent fell to 18.9 per cent on average after taxes and transfers. Effectively, this represents a reduction in the poverty risk in the child population of 41 per cent. Moreover, outside the European context there is ample evidence that social protection reduces child poverty and accomplishes an array of positive human development outcomes for children and their families (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Comprehensiveness- children do not exist in a vacuum and given that children usually live in families, gaps in social protection anywhere across the life cycle for other household members adversely affect children too. Across all the different functions of social protection - the comprehensiveness of protection - there remain large effective-coverage gaps as. This is why policymakers must focus on closing not only coverage and adequacy gaps but comprehensiveness gaps too for parents and caregivers. For instance 71 million mothers with newborns do not receive maternity cash benefits, 1.7 billion persons in the labour force are not legally entitled to sickness cash benefits; 179 million unemployed person do not have access to unemployment cash benefits and 2,7 billion people are not protected by and kind of health protection scheme. Gaps in social protection for parents and caregivers adversely impact child wellbeing and threatens their rights enjoyment/realisation (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Protection gaps are associated with financing gaps - Many of these gaps in coverage, adequacy and comprehensiveness are associated with significant underinvestment in social protection systems for all groups, and especially children. At the global level, national expenditure on social protection for children reaches only 1.1 per cent of GDP, compared with 12.9 per cent of GDP spent overall on social protection, and received the lowest expenditure of all the guarantees across all regions and all country income levels. While countries in Europe and Central Asia and in Asia and the Pacific spend more than 1 per cent of GDP, in other parts of the world expenditure ratios remain well below 1 per cent of GDP. Regional estimates for expenditure in Africa, the Arab States and the Americas show expenditure levels of 0.7 per cent of GDP or below, even though children represent a large share of populations in these regions. An average expenditure level of only 0.1 per cent of GDP in low-income countries is particularly striking when it is recalled that children aged 0-15 constitute 41.8 per cent of their aggregate population. It can also be observed that expenditure is 1.2 per cent of GDP in high-income countries and less than 0.5 per cent of GDP or lower in middle- and low-income countries (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Girls and women have been disproportionately impacted by multiple crises. They also experience higher poverty rates than boys and men and face multiple systematic barriers that impede gender equality*.* Social protection also displays major gaps in gender-responsiveness, with evidence showing only 12 per cent of measures in response to COVID-19 could be considered fully gender-responsive. A range of social protection schemes and family-friendly policies are needed to ensure social protection is gender-responsive, including social transfers, maternity benefits, care policies and parental leave, as well as connecting social protection schemes to broader gender-responsive services. When designed appropriately, social protection can reduce gendered poverty, overcome barriers and promote girls’ and women’s fuller participation in economic and social life. While the commitment to gender-responsive social protection is growing, significant gaps in coverage, adequacy and comprehensiveness remain, particularly in lower-income countries (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).

1. Based on your work, can you share examples of the good practices to ensure that social protection benefits the rights of children? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes directed at ensuring children’s access to inclusive social protection.

* The positive impacts of social protection on children are beyond question. Extensive evidence shows that child-sensitive social protection reduces poverty while also contributing to income security in households, with broader significance for child health, education, and food security and protection. Further, it provides resilience to households, allowing them to boost their productivity and earning potential. However, if these basic conditions for well-being are not met in the early years of childhood it is difficult to rectify this lost opportunity for a child’s development later. This gives reason for concern, as analysis of age-related spending shows that all children - and the families they live in - are underserved in terms of social protection, particularly in early childhood. This needs to be addressed urgently. The importance of social protection has been recognized in its explicit inclusion in SDG1 on ending poverty, as well as in SDG10 as fundamental to addressing growing inequality. Most recently, the UN Secretary-General established the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions to catalyse progress and expand social protection coverage to another 4 billion people (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Universal child benefits or highly inclusive quasi-universal child benefits are the preferred option that countries have at their disposal to achieve universal social protection for children. They can be seen as a strategic starting point for building universal systems in an affordable and efficient way. Evidence from countries with long-established universal child benefits demonstrates that they help to achieve greater poverty reduction than means-tested benefits. Increasing coverage of inclusive child and family benefits will also contribute in the longer run to fostering transitions from the informal to the formal economy and more sustainable and equitable financing of social protection systems. Thirty-nine countries have reached - or are close to or moving in the direction of - universal coverage in child and family benefits. While universal coverage has important poverty reduction effects, its absolute advantage lies in its “welfare optimization” role in ensuring children’s rights. They possess comparative advantages over other approaches to child benefits by:
* Enabling every child to fulfil their potential by addressing child poverty and well-being.
* Accelerating human capability development, with long-term positive impacts on societies and economies.
* Effectively preventing and reducing child poverty and contributing to a reductions in income inequality.
* Enabling countries to seize their latent “demographic dividend”.
* Building and sustaining social cohesion.
* Offering a comparative advantage in contexts of fragility and forced displacement where large categories of the population are vulnerable.
* Carrying a negligible risk of exclusion and inclusion errors and rendering such concerns irrelevant.
* Maximizing dignity and social inclusion by minimizing shame and stigma.
* Exhibiting a high propensity to be gender-responsive.
* Promoting social cohesion and garnering political support most effectively.
* Being designed with everyone in mind. This delivers higher-quality, more human-centred benefits that enjoy broad political support in protecting sustainable financing, and are therefore less prone to erosion of benefit levels and more likely to endure.
* Enjoying superior administrative simplicity and efficiency.
* Possessing the crucial characteristic of being non-withdrawable as they are unconditional, not work-tested and non-sanctionable.
* Allowing for the allocation of public expenditure on children to maximize child development through a child life-course minimum income guarantee.
* Compensating today’s and tomorrow’s children for the challenge posed by the climate emergency and the fossil fuel excess of previous generations (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Universal child disability benefits are essential to guaranteeing adequate protection for children with disabilities by supporting families in meeting disability-related costs. Together with access to good-quality healthcare, education and social services, adequate child disability benefits contribute to reducing vulnerabilities, realizing these children’s right to live dignified lives and ensuring their full and inclusive participation in social and (when adults) economic life (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Ensuring universal approaches to child and family cash benefits should be part of a social protection system that connects to other crucial services beyond cash, and addresses life-cycle risks. Child and family benefits are a crucial foundation in social protection for children and directly address the financial barriers that prevent them realizing their rights and fulfilling their potential. However, they are not a magic bullet and need to be part of - and certainly not replace - broader social policy that ensures access to the high-quality services and social care that children and families require (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* For child benefits to effectively prevent poverty and reduce vulnerability, benefit levels need to be adequate. Benefits need to be set at a level to provide meaningful support to children and families, and regularly reviewed and adapted to changes in living costs in line with international social security standards. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the positive impact of adequate social protection benefits on families. High-coverage, adequate child benefits such as UCBs also contribute to gender-responsiveness, including through gender-based increments in circumstances where gender inequality and discrimination are pronounced, to ensure girls and young women get the best start in life. This would help guarantee their access to nutrition and schooling, thereby contributing to the full development of their capabilities (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Greater efforts are necessary to ensure social protection is gender-responsive and works for girls and women. Social protection must become far more responsive if it is to address the structural disadvantages that women face, and thereby contribute to transformative change. Ways forward include dispensing with freedom-constraining designs like conditionality and the related punitive sanctions, work conditionality, overzealous means-testing and so on. In addition to the strong case for UCBs to ensure gender equality, later in life when these women reach working age, they must have access to decent work and the full range of working-age benefits. Maternity and paternity benefits are important for equalizing the care burden better among parents and reducing distorted incentives for women with newborns to return to work early before having recovered. Investment in accessible, affordable and high-quality childcare services can be a game changer for women’s ability to access employment opportunities. Employment protection and achieving parity in pension coverage, contributory history and adequacy are also key. Allocating pension care credits when women and men have to take a care-related break from the labour market and establishing minimum benefit levels can all help to remove the “motherhood penalty” women experience and equalize the distribution of care work among women and men. This will guard against inadequate pension income in retirement and stave off old-age poverty. Together, all of this would be transformative and allow women and girls to more smoothly navigate the life-cycle risks they face. It would also unlock the massively untapped and hitherto squandered potential of women to fully participate in social and economic life and realize their capabilities (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Closing the protection gap requires filling the financing gap for children, by considering a diversity of mechanisms and ensuring that sustainable and equitable financing is a matter of priority. Protection gaps are associated with significant underinvestment in social protection. Currently, low- and middle-income countries spend a woefully low amount of GDP on social protection for children. This must - and can - increase. The ILO and UNICEF have emphasized this and support countries in this respect through fiscal space and child-sensitive budgeting analysis. In 2021, the International Labour Conference called for investment in social protection for children, in particular to help eliminate child labour (ILO 2021c, para. 13(h)). The principle of progressive realization of social protection requires that countries use a maximum amount of available resources to extend protection, thus being simultaneously both “realistic” and aspirational. This principle urges countries to strive for the most advanced provision possible while respecting the very real fiscal constraints they face. Efforts to close the financing gap should progressively secure domestic financing, if necessary supplemented by international support. This would also require closer coordination of international and national public financing and debt management (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Concerted efforts to enhance solidarity in financing are required to ensure sustainable and equitable financing to guarantee social justice, at both the national and international level. To increase the available fiscal space for social protection, countries could do more to expand their tax base and increase the progressivity of their tax system by taxing those with the broadest shoulders in the form of progressive income and wealth taxes. It would also require that all countries take responsibility beyond pledges and commitments in the current crisis context. This will include combating tax base erosion and profit-shifting (BEPS) by conducting meaningful and coordinated international tax reforms, such as those led by the BEPS initiative of the OECD, as well as by combatting illicit financial flows, honouring commitments on official development assistance and policies that facilitate debt relief (i.e. debt restructuring and sound debt management), addressing the external debt of heavily indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress. At the same time, the formalization of enterprises and employment can also contribute to expanding the tax base and enhancing tax justice. Other options to expand fiscal space include extending social insurance coverage and increasing contributory revenues; reallocating public expenditure and enhancing the quality of spending; using fiscal and foreign exchange reserves; and adopting a more accommodating macroeconomic framework. If such actions together with solidarity in financing are pursued, both at national and international levels, there is sufficient wealth to ensure universal social protection for all (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).

1. Are there examples of how measures and responses to alleviate poverty through social protection systems in emergency situations or, for example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have positively affected children’s rights, particularly to social security?

* Using existing child benefits for a child-sensitive pandemic response: Countries with established child benefits were able to react quickly in support of children and families as part of the COVID-19 response. This emphatically underlines the importance of having systems and provisions in place to contend not only with ordinary life-cycle challenges but also those that are primed and can be easily bolstered to respond to shocks in support of children and their caregivers during the crisis response and recovery phases. It is precisely for this reason that the ILO and UNICEF have been advocating the establishment of high-coverage child benefits and comprehensive life-cycle social protection systems to protect all children in crises or times of non-crisis, and which could be further scaled up and adapted during the crisis, as the following examples show:
* Austria, Guatemala, Egypt and the Philippines dropped the behavioural conditions assigned to their child benefits to remove impediments to benefit take-up.
* Germany: families received a one-off child bonus of €300 (US$300) for each child in addition to UCB. Some 18 million children and adolescents have received this bonus. Furthermore, tax relief has been granted for lone parents, 90 per cent of whom are women.
* Mongolia increased its Child Money Programme monthly benefit by five times from 20,000 tugriks (US$6) per month to 100,000 tugriks (US$31) from April 2020 to the present day.
* Thailand provided a top-up to Child Support Grant of 1,000 baht (US$27) for three months. A similar top-up to the Disability Grant was also delivered.
* South Africa increased the amount of the Child Support Grant, usually 450 rand (US$26), by 300 rand (US$18) in May and 500 rand (US$29) in June-October 2020, and provided it to every caregiver each month (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* The United States temporarily expanded its main child benefit, the Child Tax Credit in 2021 as part of the response to the pandemic. This involved significantly increasing coverage, in particular by making children in low- and no-income households eligible for the full benefit, as well as increasing the value of the benefit, and delivering it monthly. The child poverty reduction effects of this temporary adjustment were huge: in a short space of time, the expanded Child Tax Credit slashed the child poverty rate nearly in half in 2021 - by 43 per cent - moving 2.9 million children out of poverty. This is demonstrative of the substantial child poverty reduction countries can achieve with rapidity by moving in the direction of (q)UCBs, and shows what countries can do almost overnight when they set their minds to it. It also temporarily brough the US in line with many other OECD countries where universal child benefits are the norm (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* National child benefit systems can be and are being extended to protect migrant and forcibly displaced children. Migrant and forcibly displaced children often lack statutory coverage of child and other social protection benefits despite being among the most vulnerable. However, there are also promising examples of inclusive social protection systems for children and families on the move. In Brazil, migrants can access national social protection schemes and benefits. Evidence shows that many vulnerable and displaced Venezuelan families hosted in Brazil receive the two main cash transfers: Auxílio Brasil (previously Bolsa Família, a new conditional cash transfer targeting poor households with children, and the Beneficio de Prestação Continuada, an unconditional cash transfer for the elderly population and persons with disabilities living in poverty. Similarly, in 2019 Guyana extended its social protection system to make migrant children and their families from Venezuela eligible for family cash benefits. Payments were used for housing or rent, and purchase of school supplies. During the pandemic, there have been a number of countries that loosened eligibility conditions for migrant and displaced families with children or temporally regularized the status of non-nationals to enable their access to social assistance and healthcare (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* The international and national social protection response to the war in Ukraine shows how well-developed systems are inherently shock-responsive and can rapidly support families with children. What is equally unprecedented is seeing the power of States, especially those contiguous to Ukraine, rapidly accommodating millions of displaced children and their families into their social protection systems in the near blink of an eye, and extending critical rights, such as the right to work, with little difficulty. This has been an impressive response to behold; however, it has shown the glaring disparity of treatment of other refugees during other ongoing and previous refugee crise. In addition to granting newly arrived Ukrainian adults the right to work and access to education for all children, many countries provided simplified access to their social protection and healthcare systems. This often included refugee-specific ad hoc measures or full - or at least wide-ranging - access to their social protection system, including their national child benefit schemes, often under the same conditions as for other residents or citizens. Below are some diverse examples of responses provided to Ukrainian children (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).
* Canada provides a one-off, non-taxable benefit payment of Can$1,500 (US$1,100) per child aged 0–18 as a settling-in benefit.
* Germany is paying a monthly UCB to each Ukrainian child of between €219 and €250 (US$215-246) depending on the number of children in the family.
* Latviaamended its law and provides a childbirth allowance of €421.17 (US$415) for Ukrainian children born in Latvia, and a child benefit of €171 (US$168.50) a month for children aged 0–18 plus other social assistance benefits.
* Poland provides access to its 500+ monthly child benefit of 500 zlotys (€106, US$100) for each Ukrainian child, a yearly benefit of 300 zlotys (€63, US$62) for each child for school supplies, and a family care support benefit for every second and subsequent child aged 12 to 36 months, up to a maximum of 12,000 zlotys (€2,553, US$2,450) for each child, as well as providing access to some of its means-tested child and family benefits.
* Slovakia is, in collaboration with the IOM and UNICEF, providing a disability Carer’s Benefit for severe disability or severe illness of €508 (US$500) per month, with the IOM at the outset covering all adults and UNICEF covering all children, close to the average disability benefit of Slovak nationals. From October 2020 the Government assumed full responsibility for the programs (ILO and UNICEF Forthcoming 2023).

1. Can you provide information on any programs or activities your agency has implemented regarding inclusive social protection and the rights of the child?

Extending Universal Health Coverage to vulnerable workers in the cocoa supply chain in Côte d’Ivoire. Evidence shows that social health protection can shield households from resorting to child labour by eliminating or reducing out of pocket expenses on health and improving health outcomes (ILO and UNICEF, 2022). In Côte d’Ivoire, ILO is applying a supply chain approach to extend UHC to cocoa farming households, members of organized cooperatives, in collaboration with National Health Insurance Fund (Caisse Nationale d’Assurance Maladie - CNAM). ILO has approached cocoa exporters and traders to support their cooperatives partners to offer a 12-months coverage of the social health insurance. By December 2022, 6,368 cocoa farmers, members of 18 cooperatives, have been enrolled and received a social security number for the first time. ILO is following closely that health services are provided at the health centre in rural communities to ensure that the insurance effectively works. In addition, a baseline study has been conducted to be able to measure the impact of the social health insurance in reducing child labour.

1. How can States deliver more effectively to ensure the effective implementation of universal social protection for children, including through international cooperation?

* Evidence from a number of studies conducted since 2010 that show how social protection - by helping families cope with economic or health shocks - reduces child labour and facilitates schooling. However, too little progress has been made in ensuring that all children enjoy social protection, as referenced above. Inadequate investment in social protection for children has contributed to an increase in child labour of some 8 million from 2016-2020, the first increase since we started measuring in 2000. Ominously, the estimates are based on data from before the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to closing the coverage gap for children, building integrated social protection systems that provide adequate benefits throughout the life cycle, from child and family benefits, maternity and unemployment benefits to old-age pensions, as well as health protection is critical to eliminate child labour; in addition, policy makers should ensure that the design of social protection programmes is inclusive and child-labour sensitive.
* In September 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General launched the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, with the ambition of bringing together member States, international financial institutions, social partners, civil society and the private sector to help countries create 400 million decent jobs, including in the green, digital and care economies, and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded. At the initial stage, the Global Accelerator will be implemented in a selected number of pathfinder countries that have considerable potential and are committed to amplifying investments in jobs and social protection. Based on a solid human rights foundation, including a strong reference to international labour standards, and the systematic promotion of social dialogue and participation, the Global Accelerator proposes a coherent framework for action bringing together relevant policy solutions and the necessary investments through enhanced multilateral cooperation.
* In Argentina, research was conducted to determine the impact of the most important social protection program - Universal Child Allowance (AUH) - in reducing child labour. Among the findings, it was possible to determine that this children-oriented social protection program has a positive impact in reducing child labour: 16 percentage points (p.p.) in those households that received the contribution. Moreover, these studies established the population groups where the impact is weaker such as women and children living in rural areas. It also established the coverage of the social protection program among the different regions within the country and the specific children’s groups with a lack of protection in each region. ILO is disseminating these results among national and local public officers so they can orient their children’s policies to those groups and individuals with lack of social protection coverage or in higher risk of entering in child labour.

(<https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS_791095/lang--es/index.htm>; [https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS\_825042/lang--es/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS_825042/lang--es/index.htmn))

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