

Universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and move towards inclusive social development

Alberto Arenas de Mesa¹

Received: 11/08/2023
Accepted: 22/08/2023

Abstract

Social protection was extensively discussed at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. Over 75 years, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has developed an agenda that prioritizes the construction of a rights-based society in order to move towards sustainable development. ECLAC argues that social protection is essential to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and successfully pursue a strategy of inclusive social development, and advocates universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems. These form the basis of welfare States, which will have to cope with new risks and trends such as the digital transformation, the demographic and epidemiological transition, the climate crisis and the rapid changes shaping the future of the labour market. New social and fiscal covenants are needed to ensure the financial sustainability of social protection and to progress towards inclusive social development.

Keywords

Social security, equality, social policy, ECLAC, social welfare, poverty mitigation, income distribution, education, employment, pensions, health, social development, Latin America and the Caribbean

JEL classification

I31, I38, H55

Author

Alberto Arenas de Mesa is Chief of the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Email: alberto.arenas@cepal.org.

¹ The author is grateful to Antonia Dahuabe, Andrés Espejo, Ernesto Espíndola, Nincen Figueroa, Isabel Jacas, Raúl Holz, Mariana Huepe, Carlos Kroll, Daniela Huneeus, Carlos Maldonado, María Luisa Marinho, Rodrigo Martínez, Amalia Palma, Claudia Robles, Raquel Santos Garcia, Daniela Trucco and Juan Vila, all of the ECLAC Social Development Division, for their contributions and comments.

I. Introduction

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has identified inequality as a structural obstacle to growth, development and sustainability in the region. From the perspective of sustainable development, the work carried out by ECLAC over its 75 years of existence has helped construct an agenda centred on a rights-based society and institutions equipped to deal with inequalities and foster social protection systems as a basis for inclusive social development. The current socioeconomic dynamics of the region are connected to the roots of inequality, while universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems are the basis for the construction of true welfare States (Arenas de Mesa and Cecchini, 2022).

Social protection was extensively discussed at the World Summit for Social Development held by the United Nations in Copenhagen in 1995 and was incorporated as a new concept for the first time into the final report of the Summit (Cecchini and Martínez, 2012; Arenas de Mesa, 2019). In this context, social protection is still very much a developing concept, and its initial formulations can be found in reports by the United Nations (2000) and ECLAC (2000 and 2006). The debate on the issue has continued and intensified over the last two decades (ECLAC, 2022a and 2023b; ILO, 2012, 2018 and 2021).

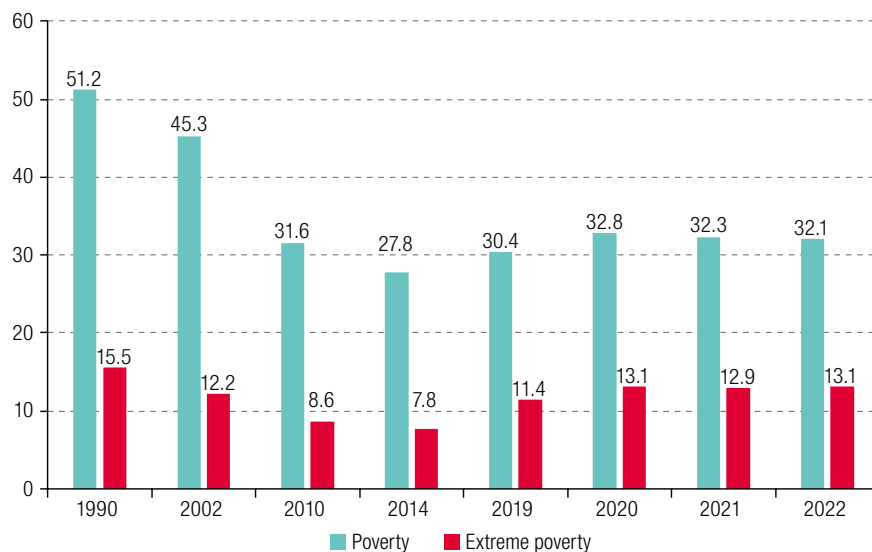
As ECLAC argues, social protection systems are the fundamental basis for progress towards true welfare States. Developing universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems is essential for eradicating poverty, reducing inequality and, in particular, progressively implementing public policies that lead to inclusive social development. These social policies must be underpinned by robust social institutions and financial sustainability (ECLAC, 2006, 2020, 2022a, 2022b and 2023b).

Universal, comprehensive, sustainable, resilient and people-centred social protection systems are in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The social dimension of the 2030 Agenda connects in multiple ways with ECLAC proposals and with the idea of social protection as a key policy for inclusive social development. In fact, fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (End poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health and well-being), 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) is very much bound up with efforts to strengthen social protection systems (ECLAC, 2015).

Social protection systems are strategically important for progress towards inclusive social development. Against this background, social policy proposals take on greater importance and their focus expands from the eradication of poverty and extreme poverty, which is still a distant goal in the region (see figure 1), to the reduction of inequality in its multiple dimensions and the need to provide social protection to broad sectors of the Latin American and Caribbean population living in vulnerable conditions, especially the middle- and lower-middle-income classes. The context for all this is one where social protection policies have to cope with different risks and new trends, such as digital transformation, the demographic and epidemiological transition, the rapid changes shaping the future of the labour market, the climate crisis and the increased frequency of disasters related to natural phenomena (ECLAC, 2019; Robles and Holz, 2023).

The present article comprises four sections besides this introduction. The first section presents a brief reflection on the contributions of ECLAC to the advance of social protection systems in the region. The second section describes the main debates that have arisen in the region on the issue of social protection. The third section discusses the main challenges and opportunities arising from social protection proposals aimed at overcoming inequality. The last section offers some brief final reflections.

Figure 1
Latin America (18 countries):^a poverty and extreme poverty rates,
1990–2021 and projections for 2022
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022* (LC/PUB.2022/15-P), Santiago, 2022, on the basis of the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

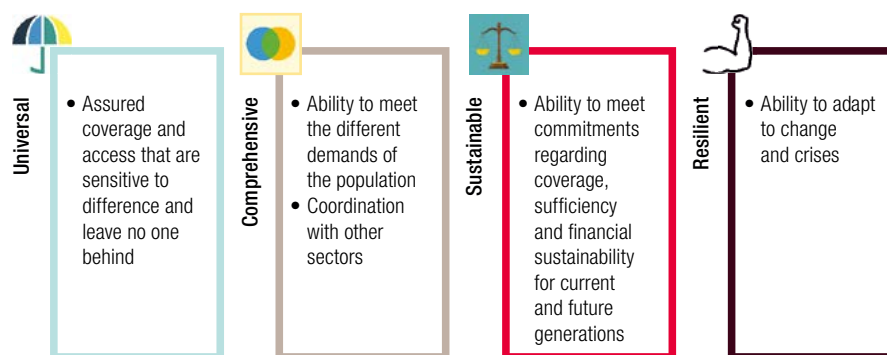
^a Weighted average of the following countries: Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

II. ECLAC contributions to the advance of social protection systems

1. Universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems

For progress to be made in closing the multiple economic and social gaps that characterize the region, ECLAC has argued that a new development model is needed, implying profound transformations in which equal importance is given to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. As part of the broad set of institutions and policies needed to achieve this goal, the creation of universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems (see diagram 1) is a key element, given their direct contribution to eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities (ECLAC, 2022a, 2022b and 2023b).

Diagram 1
Universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems



Source: M. L. Marinho, “Inequality and health in Latin America and the Caribbean: the centrality of health for an inclusive and sustainable development”, paper presented at the international seminar Inequalities in Access to Health: the Centrality of Primary Health Care to Advance towards Universal Health, Santiago, 19 July 2023.

(a) Universal social protection

Social protection systems are universal when they include everyone, and especially people belonging to the following three groups: (i) those who are poor and require income guarantees; (ii) those who, while not poor, are vulnerable and need continuous protection policies; and (iii) those who have a greater autonomous capacity to generate income but recognize the guarantee of a minimum level of protection as a common basis for social citizenship. When guaranteed for all, universal social protection establishes a framework in which people are not only consumers and requesters of services, but also rights holders and subjects of rights (ECLAC, 2006; Cecchini and Martínez, 2012).

As ECLAC (2000, p. 13) argues, “universality does not do away with the need to apply particular degrees of selectivity, and it cannot provide a basis for levels of protection for which financing is simply not available; the degree of solidarity must be compatible with the demands of social integration and with the structure of income distribution; and efficiency cannot be viewed solely in microeconomic terms, but must ultimately be understood as the capacity for maximizing social objectives within a context marked by the scarcity of resources”. Differentiated provision does not contravene the principle of universality of rights; on the contrary, it can enhance their exercise and reduce inequality. However, it is essential for social protection policies to aim at universality and for prioritization to be treated as an instrument only, in order to avoid entrenching a reductionist vision of social policy as being aimed only at the poor or extremely poor (Arenas de Mesa and Cecchini, 2022).

(b) Comprehensive social protection

Comprehensiveness means the capacity of social protection systems to deliver a set of social protection policies, plans and programmes that meet the multiple social development demands and needs of the population. Where supply is concerned, comprehensiveness is the product of coordination both between different social policy sectors (e.g., social development, employment, pensions, health and education) and between the different administrative levels of government (central, regional and local). Where demand is concerned, comprehensiveness arises from the coordination of differentiated benefits and services throughout the life cycle to meet the different social protection needs of various population groups, identified by their area of residence, income level, activity, employment status, race or ethnicity, or other factors (Cecchini and Martínez, 2012; ECLAC, 2020; Arenas de Mesa and Cecchini, 2022).

(c) Sustainable social protection

Sustainability is a concept linked to solvency and thus to the ability to fulfil social protection mandates and their commitments to current and future generations. It includes three dimensions that need to be addressed simultaneously: coverage, sufficiency of provision and financial sustainability. Striking a balance between these three dimensions in such a way that success in any one of them does not compromise the others will be essential for social protection systems to be sustainable (ECLAC, 2018c; Arenas de Mesa, 2019).

It is not enough for social protection just to be financially sustainable, therefore, because the system will not be truly sustainable if there are deficits in the other two dimensions. An example of this is the Chilean pension system, whose individually funded mechanism is financially sustainable but has a substantial deficit as regards the sufficiency of benefits in old age. This has prompted several structural reforms and kept alive the debate on the final design of the Chilean pension system (Arenas de Mesa, 2020; ECLAC, 2018c and 2022b; Arenas de Mesa, Robles and Vila, 2023).

(d) Resilient social protection

Resilience means “the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure” (UNISDR, 2004, cited by United Nations, 2005, p. 9). A universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection system whose functions include dealing with people’s vulnerability to disasters and crises such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is considered resilient and therefore successful in terms of responsiveness and adaptability to situations of change and crisis (ECLAC, 2021 and 2022b).

The health, economic and social crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic yielded numerous and varied reflections and lessons. One is that global crises must be addressed collaboratively, which implies that collective problems need collective solutions. In this context, the capacity of social protection systems to adapt and respond at times of crisis became central to the debate and to the response to future crises. Resilience is therefore a characteristic that is not only desirable but essential for social protection systems in the region and the world (ECLAC, 2021).

2. Milestones in ECLAC social protection proposals

The social protection proposals developed by ECLAC have been presented in its session position documents, in the different editions of the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean*, in the documents of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and in various institutional publications (Cecchini, 2019).

In 2000, ECLAC argued in the position paper of its twenty-eighth session, among other things, that social policies should be universal, solidary and efficient (ECLAC, 2000). In 2006, in the document *Shaping the Future of Social Protection: Access, Financing and Solidarity*, ECLAC (2006) placed social protection at the centre of the regional debate, urging States to adopt social protection policies in the areas of pensions, health and the fight against poverty.

In 2010, in *Time for Equality: Closing Gaps, Opening Trails*, ECLAC (2010) called for the pursuit of equal rights, advising the countries of the region to redistribute income by implementing or expanding a non-contributory social protection system with cash transfers for children, older persons and the unemployed. In 2018, *The Inefficiency of Inequality* (ECLAC, 2018b) called for stronger social protection systems, since these not only contribute to the fulfilment of people’s rights but also have a significant impact on growth and employment.

In 2018, at the second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, inclusive social development was an essential part of the debate. In this framework, ECLAC argued that “inclusive social development may be understood as the capacity of States to ensure the full exercise of their citizens’ social, economic and cultural rights, providing forums for participation and recognition, targeting gaps in access to key areas of well-being and addressing social inequalities and the axes around which they are structured from the perspective of a universalism sensitive to differences” (ECLAC, 2018a, p. 7).

In 2019, the member States of ECLAC, meeting at the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, approved the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. Universal and comprehensive social protection systems are the first strategic pillar of this Agenda for eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities (ECLAC, 2020).

In 2021 and 2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ECLAC expanded on the characteristics of social protection systems in the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean* (ECLAC, 2022a and 2022b) and the position paper of the fourth meeting of the Regional Conference (ECLAC, 2021), adding sustainability and resilience to universality and comprehensiveness with a view to addressing the structural problems of poverty and inequality and supporting inclusive social development strategies.

3. Developments in non-contributory social protection

The construction of universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems is an elusive goal in the region. The pandemic exposed the weaknesses of social protection systems, and the countries had to implement a large number of non-contributory emergency social protection measures to provide a basic protection floor in the face of the health, economic and social crisis caused by COVID-19² (Robles and Rossel, 2022; Atuesta and Van Hemelryck, 2023; ECLAC, 2022b).

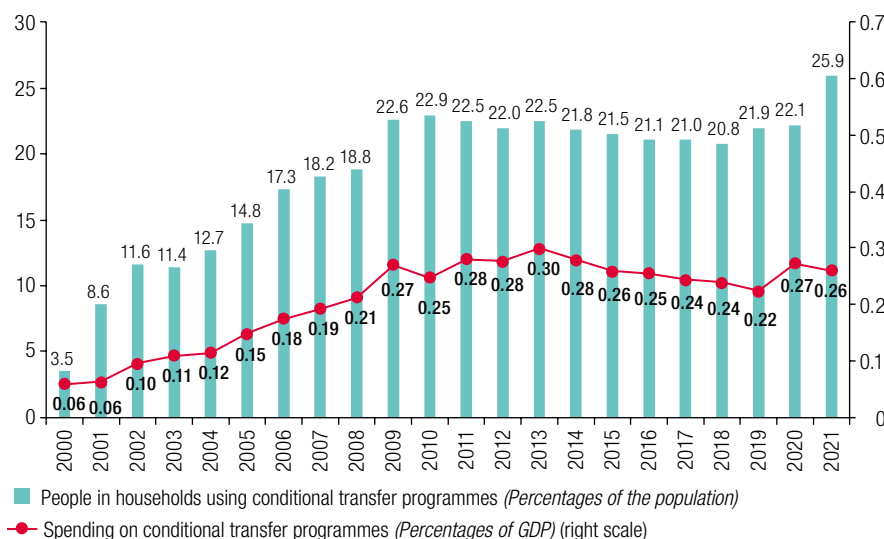
At the first meeting of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima in 2015, the countries of the region adopted resolution 1(l) in which they asked ECLAC to organize, maintain and systematically update the Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database - Latin America and the Caribbean, using official data provided by the countries. The database, which ECLAC has maintained for more than a decade, includes quantitative and qualitative information on conditional transfer programmes, non-contributory pension systems and labour inclusion programmes.³

From the data compiled there, it can be seen that coverage has increased in the region, mainly through the expansion of the non-contributory mechanisms of conditional transfer programmes (CTPs) and non-contributory pension systems (the latter will be discussed in more detail in section III.5). In the case of CTPs, this expansion occurred from the mid-1990s to 2010, when coverage reached 22.9% of the regional population. In 2021, in the context of the pandemic, the coverage of CTPs peaked at 25.9% of the population, with expenditure of 0.26% of GDP (see figure 2).

² With the aim of systematizing and monitoring the efforts made by the countries of the region, ECLAC developed the COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean Observatory (see [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/observatorio/socialcovid19/en/>).

³ The Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database - Latin America and the Caribbean provides information on 56 conditional transfer programmes in 21 countries, 42 non-contributory pension programmes in 25 countries and 92 labour inclusion programmes in 22 countries (see [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/home>).

Figure 2
Latin America and the Caribbean (21 countries):^a coverage and expenditure
of conditional and other continuous transfer programmes,^b 2000–2021
(Percentages of the population and percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database - Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/home>.

^a Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b Weighted average of coverage and simple average of expenditure, based on information from the countries' conditional transfer and other continuous cash transfer programmes.

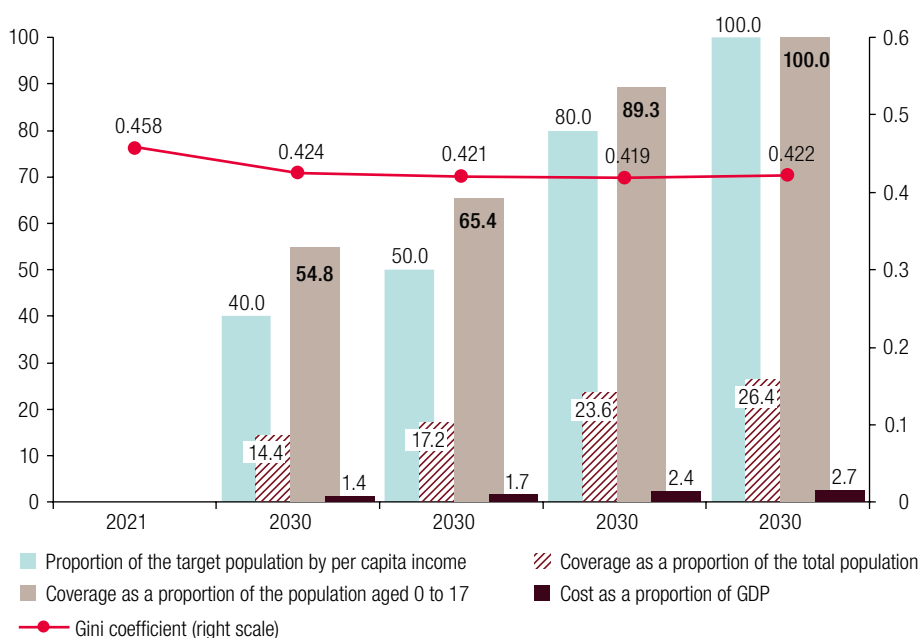
III. The main social protection debates in the region

1. Social income protection for poverty reduction: focusing on children

Income protection is a priority component of social protection systems, especially in a context of high levels of poverty and inequality. Different public policy options have been put forward in the region to guarantee people's income, including: (i) the creation and expansion of conditional cash transfer programmes; (ii) the emergency income protection measures adopted to deal with the COVID-19 crisis; (iii) a proposed guaranteed minimum income; and (iv) a universal basic income. Besides these options, there are those focused on enhancing targeted cash transfers for children, in consideration, among other factors, of the disproportionate poverty figures for the population aged 0 to 17 (45.5% in 2021), the low coverage of non-contributory benefits for households with children and adolescents, and the opportunity to reduce inequalities from the earliest stages of the life cycle (Santos Garcia, Farías and Robles, 2023).

Figure 3 presents an estimate of what a monthly transfer to children and adolescents equivalent to the value of the extreme poverty line would cost in 2030, based on projected coverage. A transfer to children and adolescents belonging to the poorest 40% of the population (54.8% of the child and adolescent population) would require resources equivalent to 1.4% of GDP in 2030. If coverage of the poorest 80% of the population (89.3% of the child and adolescent population) is projected, the expenditure rises to 2.4% of GDP in 2030. In the latter case, the Gini coefficient would fall by about 4 percentage points between 2021 and 2030.

Figure 3
Latin America and the Caribbean (15 countries):^a estimates of the cost and redistributive impact of a transfer targeting children and adolescents, by coverage, 2030
(Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of E. Espíndola, “Estimating the cost of cash transfers associated with the implementation of options to protect income levels in Latin America”, *Income support and social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: debates on policy options*, Project Documents (LC/TS.2023/27/Rev.1), R. Santos García, C. Fariás and C. Robles (coords.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023.

Note: Based on a monthly transfer per person equivalent to one extreme poverty line.

^a Simple average of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

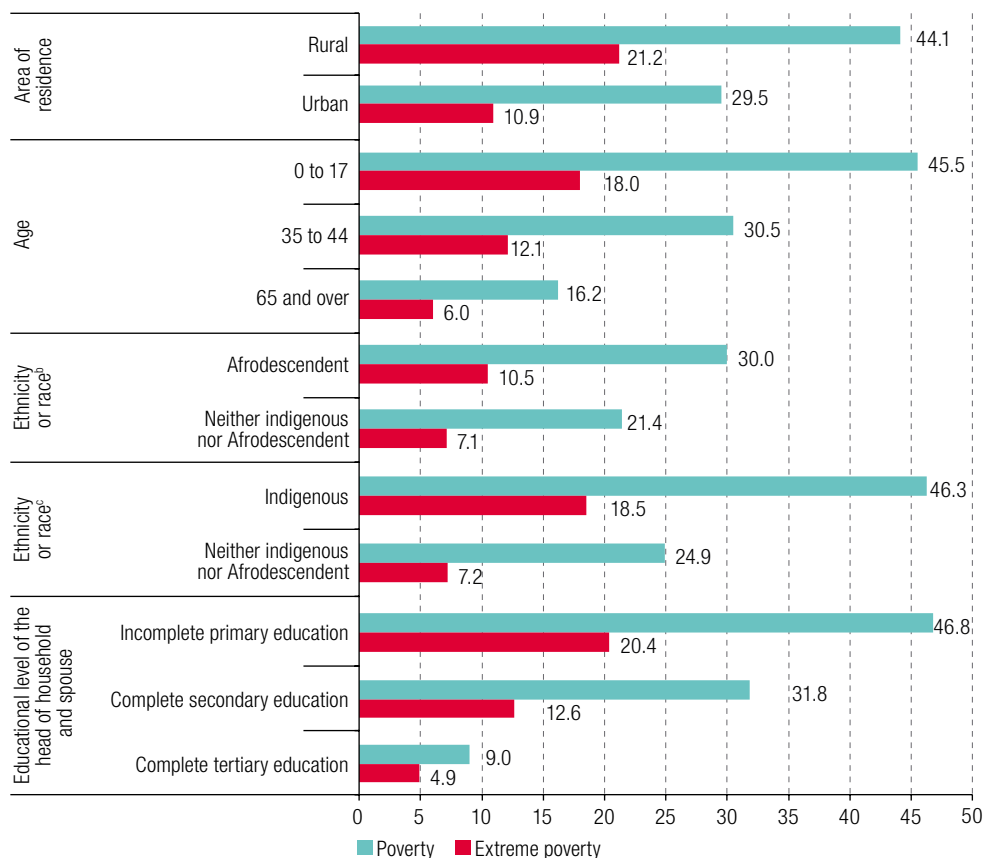
2. Social protection and the inefficiency of inequality

One of the main objectives of social protection is to reduce inequality, which is a historical and structural characteristic of Latin America and the Caribbean. Inequality reflects the structural heterogeneity of the region’s production systems, characterized as they are by the concentration of employment in informal, low-quality jobs, with low incomes and limited or little access to social protection (Arenas de Mesa and Cecchini, 2022).

The region has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. ECLAC argues that inequality hinders sustainable development and is inefficient, as it creates social gaps and disadvantage that affect productivity, State finances and environmental sustainability (ECLAC, 2018b). In this context, the concept of the “social inequality matrix” provides a way of looking beyond income inequality by including the following axes in the analysis: inequalities of gender, ethnicity or race, the life cycle (especially childhood, youth and old age) and territory. It thus contributes to analysis and consideration of this multidimensional and multi-causal phenomenon with the aim of progressively developing comprehensive social protection policies that address and reduce inequalities (ECLAC, 2016).

One way to represent the social inequality matrix in Latin America is by the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty in relation to their different axes. For example, poverty is higher among working-age women: in 2021, the poverty rate was 16% greater for these than for men in the same age group. In addition, the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty is higher in rural areas, among indigenous people and Afrodescendants, among children and adolescents (aged 0 to 17) and among people with incomplete primary education (see figure 4) (ECLAC, 2022a).

Figure 4
Latin America (18 countries):^a people living in poverty and extreme poverty by area of residence, age, ethnicity or race and educational level of the head of household and spouse, 2021
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022* (LC/PUB.2022/15-P), Santiago, 2022, on the basis of the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a Weighted average of the following countries: Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

^b Covers 8 countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

^c Covers 11 countries: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

Among the multiple dimensions of the social inequality matrix, income is particularly important because it largely determines access to the different goods and services and people's opportunities to achieve the life they aspire to. For this reason, the various editions of the ECLAC *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean* have paid special attention to the analysis of income inequality. Analyses are generally carried out using a set of indicators calculated on the basis of household surveys; however, alternative and complementary sources of data are also increasingly used (ECLAC, 2023b).

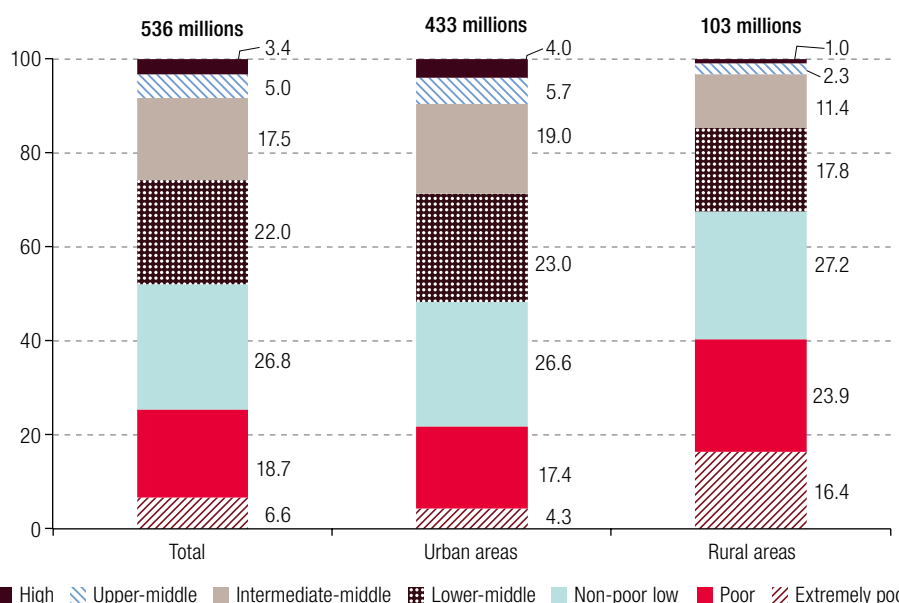
When discussing social protection, inequality and social inclusion, it is essential to mention, among other groups, persons with disabilities. According to ECLAC (2014), more than 70 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, or more than 12% of the total population, have some form of disability. These people face various types of inequalities in the exercise of their rights and high levels of exclusion, making it urgent to address the problem. Access to social protection for people with disabilities is still limited by a number of barriers. One example are the obstacles to successful labour market inclusion with decent working conditions and access to social protection (Bietti, 2023). In addition to higher rates of inactivity and unemployment, persons with disabilities are more likely to be in low-paid,

informal and unstable jobs, with little protection of their employment rights and limited access to social protection. Although the region has made progress in the different dimensions of social inclusion over recent decades, the significant segmentation that continues to exist in the coverage and sufficiency of benefits, which is also reflected by large differences in the quality of the services available to different population groups and in their opportunities for labour inclusion, is a cause for concern (ECLAC, 2023b).

A complementary way of examining inequality and unequal access to social protection is to stratify the population by a specific variable of interest, such as income, occupation, consumption or self-identification. ECLAC has a long tradition in the field of social stratification studies (see Martínez and others, 2022 for the most recent) and in recent years has once again emphasized income stratification to highlight the vulnerability of the middle-income strata and the large percentage of the Latin American population that is at high risk of falling into poverty as a result of economic shocks or crises (ECLAC, 2022a and 2022b).

Economic vulnerability in Latin America is significant. Even before the pandemic, in 2019, more than half the people in the subregion (52.1%) lived in households belonging to the low-income strata (less than 1.8 poverty lines per person). If households in lower-middle income strata (22%) are added in, the result is that 74.1% of people in Latin America lived in vulnerable households. Before the pandemic, in other words, approximately three out of every four people required assistance from social protection programmes. The figure was 71.3% in urban areas and 85.3% in rural areas (see figure 5).

Figure 5
Latin America (15 countries):^a population distribution by income stratum, around 2019
(Percentages and millions of people)



Source: R. Martínez and others, "Estratificación y clases sociales en América Latina: dinámicas y características en las dos primeras décadas del siglo XXI", *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2022/214), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2022, on the basis of the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a Simple averages of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. The estimates for rural areas do not include Argentina or Uruguay.

3. Social protection and education: investing in people

Social protection systems designed with a rights-based and life-cycle approach help to protect and secure income throughout the life cycle, thus reducing the likelihood of people being unable to cope with unforeseen risks, while also supporting the implementation of strategies aimed at empowering those most vulnerable to risks, fostering social and labour inclusion, eradicating poverty and reducing inequality.

The most important asset countries have are people. Investing in education is investing in people, and this investment can have results in at least two dimensions: personal growth, linked to inclusive social development, and productivity growth, linked to economic development. Investment in education is therefore the foundation of any successful development strategy, especially when it comes to inclusive social development.

The pandemic had a catastrophic social and economic impact in the region. It resulted in a silent crisis in education, particularly affecting children's and adolescents' learning. Among other things, educational institutions were partially or totally closed for 72 weeks between February 2020 and March 2022, longer than in any other region of the world (ECLAC, 2022a; Huepe, Palma and Trucco, 2022).

The Commission has worked in the area of education in Latin America and the Caribbean from the perspective of inequality, considering it critical for inclusive social development. It has paid special attention to school education and occupational training among the youth population. Furthermore, to foster the development of the conditions necessary for education, it has recommended strengthening the coordination of this area with other public policy sectors, especially social protection systems. For example, household income protection and care policies are crucial to support educational careers (see Trucco, 2023 in this same issue).

To achieve inclusive social development, it is necessary to invest more financial resources in the region's education systems, ensuring that these public resources are used efficiently and seeking to formulate strategies that endow education and social protection systems with financial sustainability and that together help provide comprehensive solutions to the problems that are part of the legacy of the pandemic, such as situations in which children disengage from education, drop out of school, experience learning difficulties and fall behind their age group.

4. Social protection, labour inclusion and the future of work

The link between employment and social protection has a long history. This connection is based on the fundamental idea that paid work plays a central role as a means of social inclusion and access to well-being, insofar as a minimum quality of life is maintained, access to social services is made possible and decent work is universalized (ECLAC, 2007; Cecchini and Martínez, 2012). Despite this, the labour market in Latin America and the Caribbean is characterized by low productive job creation, high unemployment and pronounced market segmentation, reflected in the fact that almost half of all employment is informal and therefore does not provide contributory access to social security (Espejo, 2022; ECLAC, 2023b; Espejo and Cortínez, 2023).

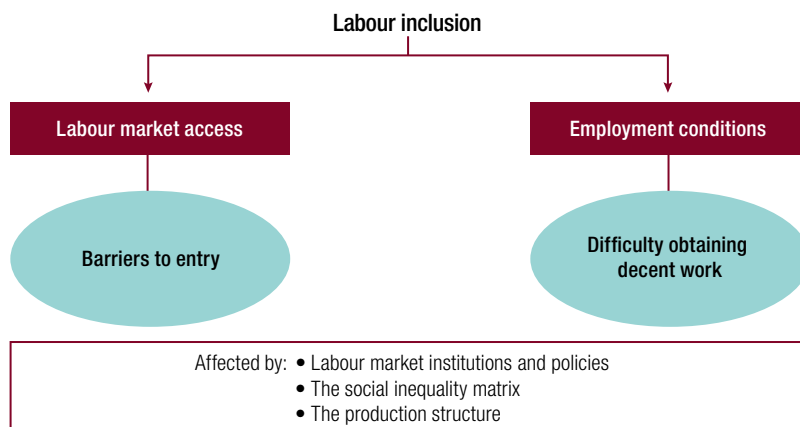
For ECLAC, labour inclusion is an inclusive social development objective, the idea being that all members of the labour force should have access to decent jobs which provide them with adequate levels of remuneration and social protection coverage. In practice, labour inclusion has two components: labour market access and employment conditions in the jobs obtained (see diagram 2). Women, youth, persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty, Afrodescendants, indigenous peoples and other populations at the intersection of the axes of the social inequality matrix face particular obstacles and barriers to labour inclusion (ECLAC, 2023b; Huepe, 2023).

Labour markets in Latin America and the Caribbean are undergoing major changes that are shaping what is known as the future of work. Key transformations include the current technological revolution and its processes of automation and digitalization. Unless adequate policies are implemented on social protection, among other things, these processes may exacerbate inequality and labour inclusion problems in the region. Automation technologies can result in the replacement and transformation of certain occupations, even as they lead to the creation of new jobs (Espíndola and Suárez, 2023). While the experience of the most technologically advanced countries suggests that previous technological

revolutions, and particularly the rise of information and communications technologies (ICTs) during the 1980s and 1990s, were not associated with a significant increase in unemployment rates, the fact is that the workers displaced by new technologies are not necessarily those who will subsequently participate in their development and application. At the same time, the rise of new forms of work such as teleworking and platform jobs threatens to contribute to the casualization of the world of work and to result in certain population groups beginning to regard insecure and informal conditions as a normal feature of labour markets (Huepe, 2023; Martínez, 2023; Robles, Tenenbaum and Jacas, 2023).

Diagram 2

Labour inclusion: labour market participation and employment conditions in the jobs obtained



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023*, Santiago, forthcoming.

In view of the obstacles that working people face in accessing social protection, diagram 3, which is adapted from Robles and others (2003), provides a set of public policy recommendations aimed at strengthening social protection in the face of labour inclusion challenges. Coordination between social protection systems and labour inclusion policies should be a priority objective for the countries, so that they can reduce levels of inequality and move towards inclusive social development.

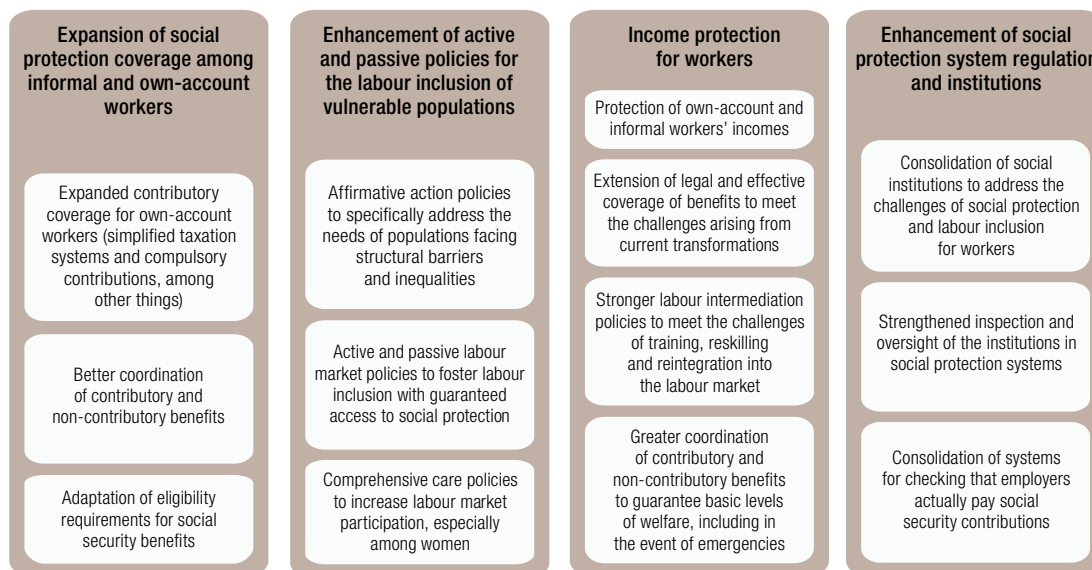
5. Social protection and pension systems: solidarity in old age

Pension systems have been at the centre of the social protection debate. Ageing, among other factors, will increase the demands of the older population and have far-reaching social and fiscal effects. The population aged 65 and over accounted for 8.9% of the total regional population in 2021, and the figure will reach 24.7% in 2065. In this context, the sustainability of social protection systems and pension systems in particular in terms of effective coverage, sufficiency of benefits and financial sustainability are key regional challenges for both social policy and the public finances (ECLAC, 2018c; Arenas de Mesa, 2019).

Where the effective coverage of contributory pension systems is concerned, in 2021 only 45.7% of the economically active population (EAP) was contributing to a pension system, implying that about 166 million people did not have access to contributory social protection in Latin America (see figure 6). Despite efforts in some countries to extend coverage to self-employed and informal workers and to domestic workers, this figure largely reflects the prevalence of labour informality and the weakness of mechanisms to control evasion and avoidance of pension contributions (Arenas de Mesa, Robles and Vila, 2023).

Diagram 3

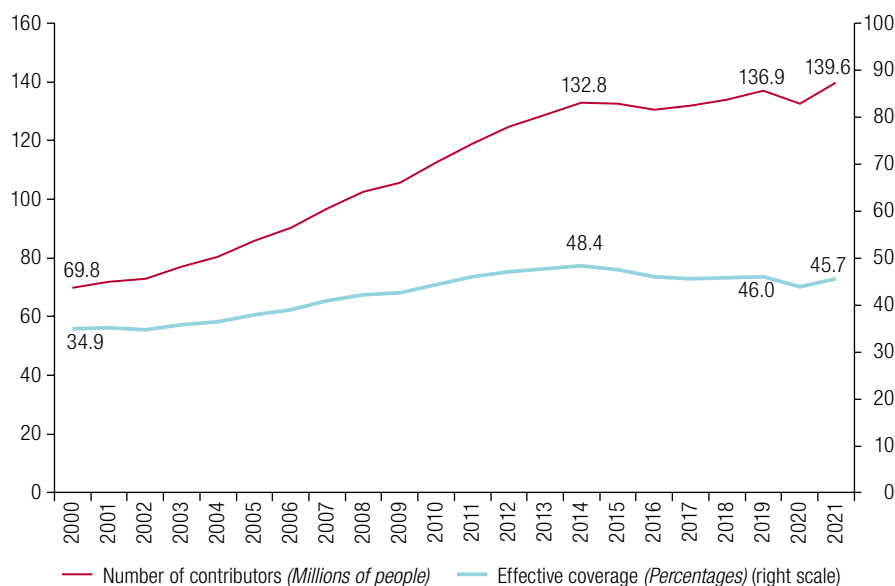
Policy proposals to strengthen social protection in the face of labour inclusion challenges



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of C. Robles and others, "Apuestas estratégicas hacia el futuro de la protección social: avanzar hacia sistemas universales, integrales, resilientes y sostenibles", *El futuro de la protección social ante la crisis prologada en América Latina: claves para avanzar hacia sistemas universales, integrales, resilientes y sostenibles*, Social Policy series, C. Robles and R. Holz (coords.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023, forthcoming.

Figure 6

Latin America (17 countries):^a economically active population contributing to pension systems (coverage of assets), 2000–2021
(Millions of people and percentages)

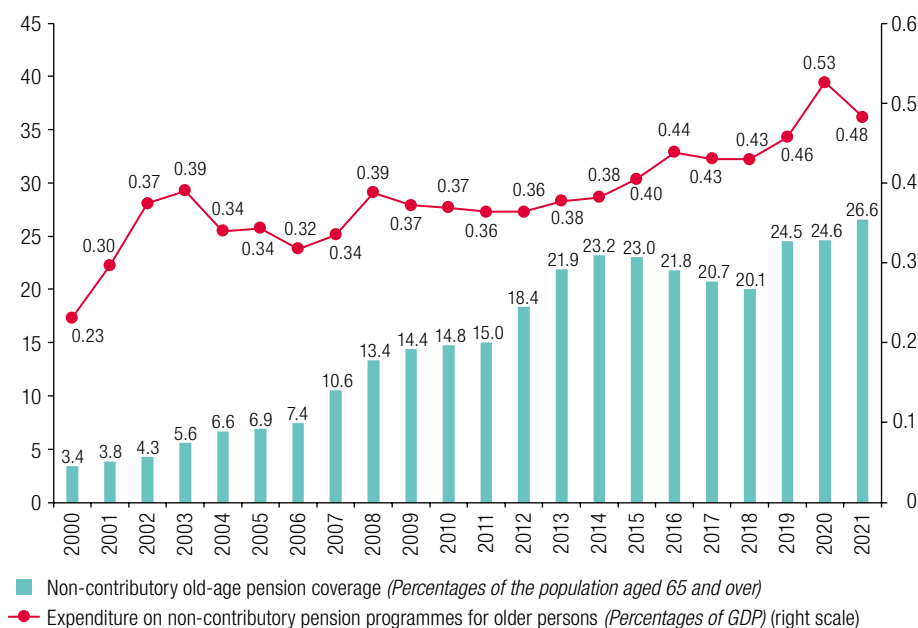


Source: A. Arenas de Mesa, C. Robles and J. Vila, "El desafío de avanzar hacia la sostenibilidad de los sistemas de pensiones en América Latina", *Social Policy series*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023, forthcoming.

^a Weighted average of the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

In this century, one of the most important changes affecting pension systems and driving the increase in the coverage of social protection programmes in the region has been the creation of non-contributory pension systems and the expansion of their coverage. Whereas only 11 of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had a non-contributory pension system in 2000, 28 did by 2021. As a result, the coverage of non-contributory pension systems among the population aged 65 and over grew from 3.4% to 26.6% between 2000 and 2021, which was reflected in an increase in public spending from 0.23% of GDP in 2000 to 0.48% of GDP in 2021 (see figure 7). In two decades, public spending on such systems increased by 0.25 percentage points of GDP, and coverage expanded by more than 15 million people, lifting many out of extreme poverty or poverty (Arenas de Mesa and Robles, 2023).

Figure 7
Latin America and the Caribbean (24 countries):^a public spending
on non-contributory pension systems and coverage, 2000–2021
(Percentages)



Source: A. Arenas de Mesa, C. Robles and J. Vila, “El desafío de avanzar hacia la sostenibilidad de los sistemas de pensiones en América Latina”, *Social Policy series*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023, forthcoming, on the basis of ECLAC, Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database - Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/home>.

^a Expenditure: simple averages based on information from Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. Coverage: weighted averages based on information from the same countries, excluding Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

6. Social protection and health care: health at the heart of inclusive social development strategies

Health care is essential for achieving inclusive social development and reducing inequality, which makes it essential to carry out the set of transformations required to move towards universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient health systems that give special priority to primary health care (PHC). The social conditions that influence how people are born, grow up, live, work and age are called social determinants of health. These are unevenly distributed, which leads to health inequalities. The direct relationship between the axes of the social inequality matrix and the unequal distribution of the social

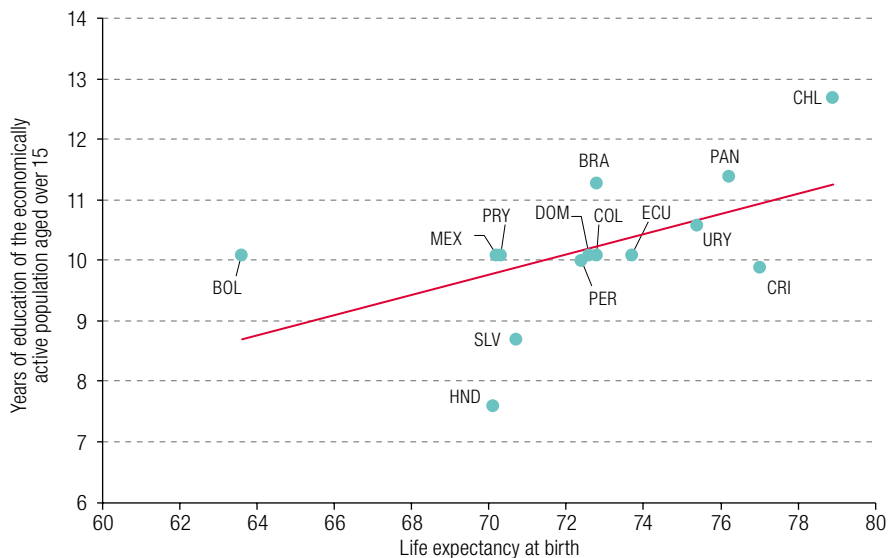
determinants of health means there is a need to coordinate health systems with the other components of social protection in order to maximize the synergy that exists between these areas and thereby guarantee the right to health and help to overcome poverty and inequalities (Marinho, Dahuabe and Arenas de Mesa, 2023).

Even before the pandemic, health systems in Latin America and the Caribbean were underfunded and struggled with resource availability and the organization of care services. Inadequate coverage and unequal access to it are consequences, among other factors, of underfunded, segmented and fragmented health systems that have problems when it comes to the organization of services, sectoral supervision and management, and the capacity to address the social determinants of health (ECLAC/PAHO, 2021).

The structural weaknesses of health systems in Latin America and the Caribbean are part of a context characterized by the social inequality matrix and an unequal distribution of the social determinants of health. The COVID-19 pandemic provided a historic opportunity to restructure health systems and move towards universal coverage with timely, high-quality care for the entire population via the implementation of broadly based shared solidarity mechanisms that produce quality services more efficiently and sustainably. This should go together with greater investment in health entailing a sustainable increase in financing and a more efficient organization of health services, with special emphasis on strengthening the first level of care, in line with a strategy where PHC incorporates the social determinants of health in its actions (Cid and Marinho, 2022; ECLAC, 2022b).

Figure 8 presents information on health inequalities between the countries of the region. There are large differences in social indicators and also as regards the positive relationship between health indicators (life expectancy at birth) and one of the social determinants of health (years of education of the population). This confirms that investing in the other components of social protection, which are social determinants of health, can lead to better outcomes in population health indicators.

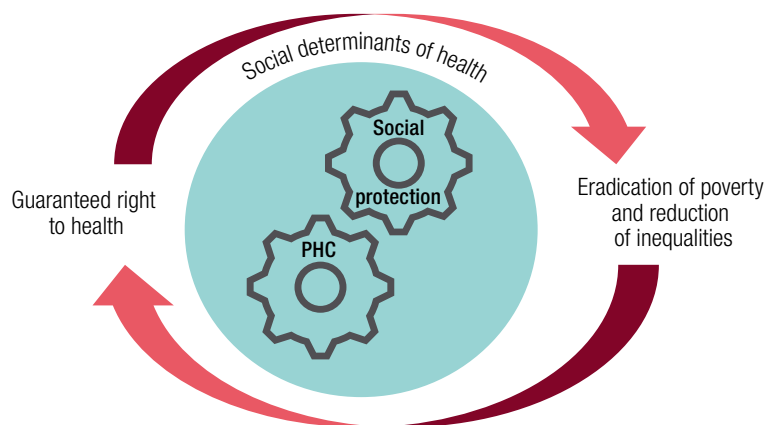
Figure 8
Latin America and the Caribbean (14 countries): average life expectancy at birth and years of education, around 2020
(Years)



Source: M. L. Marinho, A. Dahuabe and A. Arenas de Mesa, “Salud y desigualdad en América Latina y el Caribe: la centralidad de la salud para el desarrollo social inclusivo y sostenible”, *Social Policy series*, No. 244 (LC/TS.2023/115), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023, forthcoming.

PHC is a strategic dimension of health systems. In particular, it ties in closely with and complements social protection, which can contribute to progress towards guaranteeing people's rights, including the right to health (Abramo, Cecchini and Ullmann, 2020). An essential part of PHC relates to the social determinants of health, so that it has a direct effect in reducing levels of poverty and inequality, in both the health domain and others (see diagram 4), thereby contributing to inclusive social development and a number of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Diagram 4
Synergy between primary health care (PHC) and social protection



Source: M. L. Marinho, A. Dahuabe and A. Arenas de Mesa, "Salud y desigualdad en América Latina y el Caribe: la centralidad de la salud para el desarrollo social inclusivo y sostenible", *Social Policy series*, No. 244 (LC/TS.2023/115), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023, forthcoming.

Likewise, the synergy between PHC and social protection is essential to the well-being of the population at times of crisis, as was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and the various crises that accompanied it. Comprehensive action coordinated between PHC and social protection and recognizing the interdependence between the health, social, economic and environmental dimensions is essential in crisis situations for implementing coordinated joint responses that protect people's well-being and the exercise of their rights, especially the vulnerable population's (Marinho, Dahuabe and Arenas de Mesa, 2023).

IV. Key challenges and opportunities for social protection policies

1. The challenge of sustainability: meeting commitments to current and future generations

The challenge of sustainability is often connected to the challenge of environmental sustainability in sustainable development strategies or to the challenge of fiscal sustainability in the public finances. In the area of inclusive social development, the sustainability of social protection is essential if public policies aimed at reducing both poverty and inequality in the region are to be successfully designed and implemented (ECLAC, 2022b).

The sustainability of social protection is based on the fulfilment of mandates and commitments to current and future generations in respect of coverage, sufficiency and financial sustainability. Sustainable social protection is one of the region's main challenges. The universality, comprehensiveness and resilience of social protection are not characteristics of any particular moment in time. The quantity and quality of coverage and the sufficiency of social protection must be maintained if the commitments made to different generations are to be met. Accordingly, social protection generates permanent public commitments and thus ties in with debates both about inclusive social development and about the public finances and fiscal space. Ensuring the sustainability of social protection systems will create a greater capacity to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities in the region (ECLAC, 2023b).

2. The challenge of institutional framework for social policy: limitations and capabilities in bringing about social change

The slow-motion crisis that has been unfolding in the region for several years has further underscored the need for an institutional framework for social policy commensurate with the social challenges. Shortcomings in social institutions constrain the policies, programmes, transformations and reforms needed to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic brought out the strengths and weaknesses of social institutions, as well as their resilience and capacity to adapt to the demands arising from the social and economic effects of the pandemic in the region's countries. This veritable stress test was made yet more demanding by the intensification of phenomena such as migration, disasters associated with climate change and different types of violence, the global economic and social repercussions of the war in Ukraine and the acceleration of technological change, with its effects on the labour market and the future of work. All these factors are exacerbating the challenges associated with social protection institutions in the region (ECLAC, 2023a).

The fifth meeting of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago in October 2023, debated the role of social institutions as a pillar of the effort to achieve inclusive social development. The main public policy proposals for strengthening social institutions were: (i) make policy objectives and mandates more consistent with the organizational capacity of the institutional framework for social policy; (ii) invest in human resources, capabilities and technology to ensure positive results and consolidate and create social policy monitoring and evaluation systems; (iii) invest in information systems for decision-making, anticipating the changes that will result from rapid digital transformation; and (iv) enhance financial sustainability to secure the financial resources for a minimum level of benefits that guarantees well-being consistent with social rights and helps to reduce poverty and inequality (ECLAC, 2023a).

3. The challenge of the social and fiscal covenant: a fine balance between political economy and governance

ECLAC has argued that a regional commitment to inclusive social development is a precondition for sustainable development. Sound social policies are required to achieve these goals; in particular, a drive to strengthen universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems is urgently needed. It is essential to focus on the sustainability of the measures adopted in order to build broad support and move towards social and fiscal covenants that ensure the financial sustainability of social protection, among other things (ECLAC, 2022a and 2022b; Arenas de Mesa, 2019).

A feature shared by all countries in the region is the aversion of most of the population to the high levels of inequality there and the widely shared expectation that the State must act to reduce it by strengthening social protection (Maldonado Valera and others, 2021). This is an important starting point for progress with broad consensus-building and the establishment of cross-cutting agreements on both social and fiscal issues (ECLAC, 2022b).

A fiscal covenant is primarily a debate about political economy, about the kind of society that should be built. The chances of a fiscal agreement being implemented rise if it is accompanied by a social covenant that regulates and determines the way public resources are used both to enhance social protection and to strengthen inclusive social development strategies (Arenas de Mesa, 2016).

Economic management and the administration of the different interests of the various actors will be crucial in the effort to forge political covenants that underpin social and fiscal agreements in the region. These covenants will not only strengthen social protection systems but will be critical for the governance of sustainable development, making them one of the main social protection challenges for the region.

4. The challenge of digital transformation: the speed of change is shaping the future of social protection

Social protection systems should grasp the opportunities and address the challenges of the rapid digital transformation that is currently taking place and that may shape the future of social protection. The speed at which this digital transformation is occurring far exceeds the capacity of social protection systems to react and may thus condition both the design of future changes and the relationship of social protection to social inclusion (Martínez, Palma and Velásquez, 2020). Besides the digitalization of information, the digital transformation of the economy will entail a transformation of social protection as automation gives rise to new vulnerabilities in employment and other areas.

New technologies, including artificial intelligence, have the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social benefits and services. However, they can also become a source of exclusion, contributing to a new form of digital poverty, especially if access to the digital world is limited, as was observed during the pandemic, or if there are risks associated with the functioning of its mechanisms, as in the case of the algorithms used to target social policies. To illustrate this challenge, ECLAC has pointed out that, as of 2020, 26.3% of Latin America's population did not have access to the Internet and 79.3% of these people lived in rural areas (ECLAC, 2022a). Similarly, digital innovations were introduced during the pandemic to identify potential users and allocate social protection benefits, highlighting access gaps (Atuesta and Van Hemelryck, 2023). Older persons were undoubtedly among those experiencing this exclusion, as the available data show that they are the least engaged in the digital society and were the least likely to use the Internet before the pandemic.

A strategic area for social protection is investment in connectivity, technology and information systems, in order, for example, to develop a culture of evidence-based decision-making. There are a number of actions that can contribute to this goal, and many of them are already under way in the countries of the region; however, others require more of a push to materialize (ECLAC, 2023a).

5. The challenge of social protection to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities

Non-contributory social protection policies can have a significant impact in reducing poverty and inequalities. One option that has sometimes been explored is to target social income protection on the beginning and end of the life cycle: children and older persons. The poverty rate in the population

aged between 0 and 17 was 45.5% in 2021, which was much higher than the average for the overall population (32.3%). For their part, older persons (aged 65 and over) who have retired from the labour market depend mostly on the income and transfers they receive from contributory and non-contributory pension systems (ECLAC, 2022b; Robles and others, 2023).

A non-contributory cash transfer equivalent to one extreme poverty line targeted at children and adolescents (aged 0 to 17) belonging to households in the poorest 40% of the population could help reduce extreme poverty among children and adolescents by 10 percentage points, at an estimated cost of 1.4% of GDP in 2030 (Espíndola, 2023).

In the case of the population aged 65 and over, the most effective policy for reducing poverty and inequality is the creation and strengthening of non-contributory pension systems. Increasing the coverage of such systems to 40% of the population aged 65 and over by guaranteeing a combined benefit equivalent to one extreme poverty or poverty line are goals that are achievable this decade from the perspective of both the institutional framework for social policy and the financial sustainability of the region. It is estimated that achieving a target like the one proposed by means of such transfers by 2030 would add 0.5% of GDP to what is currently invested in non-contributory pension systems if the benefit were one extreme poverty line and 0.9% of GDP if it were one poverty line (Arenas de Mesa, 2019; Arenas de Mesa, Robles and Vila, 2023).

When the whole population is considered, an estimate for 2021 puts the income gap separating households from the extreme poverty line at an average of 0.24% of GDP and the gap separating them from the poverty line at 1.53% of GDP in the region. An average annual increase equivalent to 0.1% of GDP in public spending on non-contributory social protection transfers could increase the income of recipient households to a level equal to one extreme poverty line or more by 2030 (ECLAC, 2023a).

All these exercises (for children, older persons and the whole population) have a common denominator: they are feasible to implement, both institutionally and in terms of financial sustainability. The estimated public expenditure averages a few tenths of a percentage point of GDP in all these cases, and this figure could be reached over a number of years. Thus, the countries' annual incremental budget flow would enable them to achieve these goals while safeguarding financial sustainability, with potentially significant results for regional poverty reduction.

V. Final remarks

Social protection in the region needs to adopt a universal approach, covering people regardless of employment status or ability to pay. Moreover, it must be sensitive to differences and leave no one behind, as established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ECLAC has proposed the development of social protection systems with a rights-based and life-cycle approach for the youngest children, older children, adolescents, youth, workers (paid and unpaid) and older persons, with the aim of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality and advancing towards inclusive social development (ECLAC, 2023b).

The pandemic taught important lessons. One of the main ones is that regional collaboration, and therefore collective projects, are essential to address crises and inequalities. During this period, the countries were obliged to coordinate the short-term social protection measures needed to tackle the emergency with medium-term ones requiring gradual implementation and the development of mechanisms to ensure they would be financially sustainable.

The region faces a challenging economic, social and employment outlook, as well as the twin traps of low growth and high levels of poverty and inequality. It is therefore essential to focus on the sustainability of the measures needed to consolidate universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient

social protection systems with a view to securing the broadest possible support and establishing social and fiscal covenants. The social covenant must be accompanied by new fiscal contracts that guarantee the financial sustainability of social protection and foster the stability needed to achieve inclusive social development (ECLAC, 2023b).

The 2025 World Social Summit which the United Nations plans to hold 30 years on from the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development (1995) is likely to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities involved in the effort to move towards universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection, as discussed in this article. One of the main topics for discussion at the Summit will be the implications of rethinking the transition from the social development and social protection of the 1995 Copenhagen Summit to the inclusive social development and social protection of the future at the 2025 World Social Summit.

Bibliography

- Abramo, L., S. Cecchini and H. Ullmann (2020), “Enfrentar las desigualdades en salud en América Latina: el rol de la protección social”, *Ciência e saúde coletiva*, vol. 25, No. 5, Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian Association of Collective Health (ABRASCO).
- Arenas de Mesa, A. (2020), “Los sistemas de pensiones en América Latina: institucionalidad, gasto público y sostenibilidad financiera en tiempos del COVID-19”, *Macroeconomics of Development series*, No. 212 (LC/TS.2020/99), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- (2019), *Los sistemas de pensiones en la encrucijada: desafíos para la sostenibilidad en América Latina*, ECLAC Books, No. 159 (LC/PUB.2019/19-P), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- (2016), *Sostenibilidad fiscal y reformas tributarias en América Latina* (LC/G.2688-P), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Arenas de Mesa, A. and S. Cecchini (2022), “Equality and social protection: keys to inclusive and sustainable development”, *El Trimestre Económico*, vol. LXXXIX, No. 353, January–March.
- Arenas de Mesa, A. and C. Robles (eds.) (2023), *Sistemas de pensiones no contributivos en América Latina y el Caribe: avanzar hacia la sostenibilidad con solidaridad*, ECLAC Books, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Arenas de Mesa, A., C. Robles and J. Vila (2023), “El desafío de avanzar hacia la sostenibilidad de los sistemas de pensiones en América Latina”, *Social Policy series*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Atuesta, B. and T. van Hemelryck (2023), “Emergency social protection against the impacts of the pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean: evidence and lessons learned for universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2022/143), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Bietti, M. F. (2023), “Personas con discapacidad e inclusión laboral en América Latina y el Caribe: principales desafíos de los sistemas de protección social”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2023/23), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Cecchini, S. (comp.) (2019), *Universal Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean. Selected texts 2006-2019*, Selected Pages of ECLAC, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Cecchini, S. and R. Martínez (2012), *Inclusive Social Protection in Latin America: A Comprehensive, Rights-based Approach*, ECLAC Books, No. 111 (LC/G.2488-P), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Cid, C. and M. L. Marinho (2022), “Dos años de pandemia de COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe: reflexiones para avanzar hacia sistemas de salud y de protección social universales, integrales, sostenibles y resilientes”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2022/63), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

- ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) (2023a), *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing towards Inclusive Social Development* (LC/CDS.5/3), Santiago.
- (2023b), *Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023*, Santiago, forthcoming.
- (2022a), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2022* (LC/PUB.2022/15-P), Santiago.
- (2022b), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2021* (LC/PUB.2021/17-P), Santiago.
- (2021), *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/CDS.4/3), Santiago.
- (2020), *Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development* (LC/CDS.3/5), Santiago.
- (2019), *Critical obstacles to inclusive social development in Latin America and the Caribbean: background for a regional agenda* (LC/CDS.3/3), Santiago.
- (2018a), *Towards a regional agenda for inclusive social development: bases and initial proposal* (LC/MDS.2/2), Santiago.
- (2018b), *The Inefficiency of Inequality* (LC/SES.37/3-P), Santiago.
- (2018c), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2017* (LC/PUB.2018/1-P), Santiago.
- (2016), *The social inequality matrix in Latin America* (LC/G.2690(MDS.1/2)), Santiago.
- (2015), *Inclusive social development: the next generation of policies for overcoming poverty and reducing inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/L/4056(CDS.1/3)), Santiago.
- (2014), *Regional report on measuring disability: overview of the disability measurement procedures in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/L.3860(CE.13/3)), Santiago.
- (2010), *Time for Equality: Closing Gaps, Opening Trails* (LC/G.2432(SES.33/3)), Santiago.
- (2007), *Cohesión social: inclusión y sentido de pertenencia en América Latina y el Caribe* (LC/G.2335), Santiago.
- (2006), *Shaping the Future of Social Protection: Access, Financing and Solidarity* (LC/G.2294 (SES.31/3)), Santiago.
- (2000), *Equity, development and citizenship* (LC/G.2071(SES.28/3)), Santiago.
- ECLAC/PAHO (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/Pan American Health Organization) (2021), “The prolongation of the health crisis and its impact on health, the economy and social development”, *COVID-19 Report - ECLAC-PAHO*, Santiago, October.
- Espejo, A. (2022), “Informalidad laboral en América Latina: propuesta metodológica para su identificación a nivel subnacional”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2022/6), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Espejo, A. and V. Cortínez (2023), “Memoria del Tercer Seminario Regional de Desarrollo Social: Promover la Inclusión Laboral como una Forma de Superar las Desigualdades y la Informalidad en América Latina y el Caribe”, *Seminars and Conferences series*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Espíndola, E. (2023), “Estimating the cost of cash transfers associated with the implementation of options to protect income levels in Latin America”, *Income support and social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: debates on policy options*, Project Documents (LC/TS.2023/27/Rev.1), R. Santos Garcia, C. Fariás and C. Robles (coords.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Espíndola, E. and J. Suárez (2023), “Automatización laboral y desafíos para la inclusión laboral en los mercados latinoamericanos: estimaciones de riesgo mediante *machine learning* ajustadas a la región”, *Social Policy series*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Huepe, M. (ed.) (2023), “Desigualdades, inclusión laboral y futuro del trabajo en América Latina”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2023/63), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Huepe, M., A. Palma and D. Trucco (2022), “Education during the pandemic: an opportunity to transform education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean”, *Social Policy series*, No. 243 (LC/TS.2022/149), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- ILO (International Labour Organization) (2021), *World Social Protection Report 2020–22. Social protection at the crossroads: in pursuit of a better future*, Geneva.
- (2018), “Presente y futuro de la protección social en América Latina y el Caribe”, *Panorama Laboral Temático*, No. 4, Lima, July.
- (2012), “Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)” [online] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524.
- Maldonado Valera, C. and others (2021), “Panorama de la cohesión social en América Latina y el Caribe”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2021/205), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

- Marinho, M. L., A. Dahuabe and A. Arenas de Mesa (2023), “Salud y desigualdad en América Latina y el Caribe: la centralidad de la salud para el desarrollo social inclusivo y sostenible”, *Social Policy series*, No. 244 (LC/TS.2023/115), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Martínez, R. (coord.) (2023), “Automatización e inclusión laboral en América Latina: impactos potenciales, vulnerabilidades y propuestas de política pública”, *Project Documents*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Martínez, R., A. Palma and A. Velásquez (2020) “Revolución tecnológica e inclusión social: reflexiones sobre desafíos y oportunidades para la política social en América Latina”, *Social Policy series*, No. 233 (LC/TS.2020/88), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Martínez, R. and others (2022), “Estratificación y clases sociales en América Latina: dinámicas y características en las dos primeras décadas del siglo XXI”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2022/214), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Robles, C. and R. Holz (coords.) (2023), “El futuro de la protección social ante la crisis prologada en América Latina: claves para avanzar hacia sistemas universales, integrales, resilientes y sostenibles”, *Social Policy series*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Robles, C. and C. Rossel (2022), “Social protection tools for coping with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic: the Latin American experience”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2021/135), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Robles, C. and others (2023), “Apuestas estratégicas hacia el futuro de la protección social: avanzar hacia sistemas universales, integrales, resilientes y sostenibles”, *El futuro de la protección social ante la crisis prologada en América Latina: claves para avanzar hacia sistemas universales, integrales, resilientes y sostenibles*, Social Policy series, C. Robles and R. Holz (coords.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Robles, C., V. Tenenbaum and I. Jacas (2023), “Los desafíos de la protección social de los trabajadores de plataformas: reflexiones para América Latina”, *Project Documents*, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), forthcoming.
- Santos García, R., C. Farías and C. Robles (coords.) (2023), “Income support and social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: debates on policy options”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2023/27/Rev.1), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- Trucco, D. (2023), “Improving education is crucial for inclusive and sustainable economic and social development”, *CEPAL Review*, No. 141, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- UNISDR (United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2004), *Living with Risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives. 2004 Version - Volume I*, New York and Geneva.
- United Nations (2005), *Report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.206/6)*, New York.
- _____(2000), *Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world. Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2001/2)*, New York, December.