

SUBPROGRAMME 4: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY

Objective

The objective to which the subprogramme contributes is to improve the overall well-being of the people of the region and achieve greater social and economic equality in line with the 2030 Agenda with full respect for human rights.

Presentation

Even though levels of poverty and extreme poverty had been slowly climbing since 2015 in Latin America and the Caribbean, the impact of the pandemic led to a steep rise, marking a return to the levels of 12 and 20 years ago, respectively. Persistent and emerging risks are having a toll on the recovery process, which is proceeding slowly. While in some cases social policies and protection systems have been adjusted to reduce the vulnerability of low- and middle-income strata, in response to the sudden deterioration in their living conditions, structural challenges remain and are being aggravated by uncertainties derived from global geopolitical conflicts, higher inflation rates and disruption of supply chains affecting food security, hampering attainment of the SDGs. Widening of social gaps in areas such as education levels, women's labour force participation in paid work, formal employment and contributions to social protection systems are some examples of the dire effects of the pandemic and the slow recovery process. Furthermore, factors including the impact of climate change, more frequent natural disasters and rapid demographic change are endangering sustainable development processes. Lastly, the region is facing an accelerated digital transformation, with changes that impact the labour market—and go beyond it—affecting how social policies and programmes are developed.

Under the subprogramme, work related to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda will continue, in accordance with the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development and the guidance and decisions stemming from the Regional Conference on Social Development. Within the framework of the subprogramme, the Commission will also continue to provide data and analysis on the social situation of the region and support countries by providing capacity-building and technical cooperation on design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social development policies.

In this context, the priorities for the subprogramme in 2024 will include: (i) addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty, inequality and well-being; (ii) bridging gaps in well-being and tackling inequalities, including those related to gender, race, ethnicity, age and territory; (iii) ensuring access to universal social protection for all population groups, according to their specific characteristics and needs; (iv) promoting social and labour inclusion policies, in order to improve social rights, with access to health systems, pension systems, quality education and inclusive work; and (v) improving social institutional design and the capacity of social policy to adapt and respond to new and emerging challenges related to the demographic transition, migration, new technologies and climate change, among other factors.

Strategy

Responsibility for the implementation of subprogramme 4 rests with the Social Development Division, in close collaboration with other ECLAC divisions, as well as with subregional and national offices. Under the subprogramme, work will also be done in close coordination with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the resident coordinator system.

The subprogramme's activities will focus on the following subject areas: 1. Assessment of the social situation of the population and 2. Social policies for equality and social protection. Research and advisory services will be oriented towards improving the quality and impact of social policies, with an emphasis on: (i) universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems,

underpinned by full respect for human rights, equality and sustainability considerations; (ii) protection and promotion of the rights of women, children, adolescents and young people, indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants, migrants and persons with disabilities; (iii) social investment and institutional frameworks; and (iv) education, labour inclusion and health systems. Therefore, the main contributions to the 2030 Agenda will be related to its social pillar, namely SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 16. Under the subprogramme, data and analysis on the social situation of the region will continue to be provided, as well as assistance for countries with capacity-building and technical cooperation on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social development policies. Activities under this subprogramme will promote a comprehensive approach that will include carrying out applied qualitative and quantitative research, generating analyses, disseminating results, providing training and advisory services, and formulating policy recommendations to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to perform sound diagnostic assessments of social issues for application in policy design and implementation, as well as capacity-building activities and technical assistance to member States, upon request.

Another important element of the strategy will be to promote social and policy dialogue and the implementation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development among policymakers, civil society and NGOs, the business community, scholars and other stakeholders, and to facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices on poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, social protection systems and social policies with a multidimensional and gender approach, and citizen participation.

The main beneficiaries under the subprogramme will be governments, especially ministries of social development, as well as other government institutions responsible for the coordination and implementation of social policies (design, implementation and evaluation). Other beneficiaries will be regional and subregional organizations, academic institutions and other research centres, and NGOs. The strategy includes cooperation with other intergovernmental and multilateral institutions, as well as South-South cooperation.

Activities

Subject area 4.1: Assessment of the social situation of the population

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

- (i) A meeting of experts to examine new trends in social issues and the progress made with regard to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda.
- (ii) A meeting of experts to discuss trends and new issues concerning social policies to promote equality.

2. Recurrent publications

Social Panorama of Latin America, 2024.

The *Social Panorama* is prepared annually to examine recent trends in inequality and poverty in the region and analyse the structural challenges in the area of social policies faced by the countries.

3. Non-recurrent publications

- (i) A study on health systems and inequality.
- (ii) A study on education and inclusion.
- (iii) A study on labour inclusion policies.

(iv) A study on a high-priority issue concerning social and productive inclusion of youth and women in Colombia.

(v) A study of social or labour dynamics in Argentina.

4. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

Development, maintenance and updating of the Observatory on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which includes databases on social investment, non-contributory social protection, youth and social inclusion, and institutional frameworks for social policy, among other matters.

Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts and information kits

Preparation of infographics, policy guidelines and/or policy briefs to facilitate dissemination of the subprogramme's research findings and policy recommendations.

5. Advisory services

Provision of technical cooperation services to countries and institutions in the region, at their request, in areas relating to the situations of vulnerability that different population groups face.

6. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government, academic and non-governmental, regional and subregional institutions, upon request, in support of training activities on the analysis of poverty, inequality and the multiple dimensions of well-being.

7. Technical cooperation projects

Implementation of technical cooperation projects with countries and social sector institutions in the region, at their request, assessing social issues such as poverty, vulnerability, inequality, access to social rights, social inclusion and cohesion.

8. Intermediate activities

Preparation and coordination of selected inputs on social and economic issues to be presented at or used for the ECLAC session or publications of other subprogrammes and the ongoing coordination of activities with other divisions for the flagship publication *Social Panorama of Latin America*.

Preparation and coordination of interdivisional, inter-agency and interregional documents, seminars and meetings.

Implementation of operational activities, including advisory services, training activities and technical cooperation projects, will be subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources. The ECLAC office in Bogotá will be responsible for execution of the activity indicated in subparagraph 3 (iv). The ECLAC office in Buenos Aires will be responsible for execution of the activity indicated in subparagraph 3 (v).

Subject area 4.2: Social policies for equality and social protection

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Intergovernmental meetings

A meeting of the Presiding Officers of Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ad hoc expert group meetings

- (i) A meeting of experts to examine new and recurrent challenges related to social protection policies.
- (ii) A meeting of experts to discuss trends and new issues concerning social policy institutions.

2. Non-recurrent publications

- (i) A study on trends in policy concerning non-contributory pension systems.
- (ii) A study on the challenges of social policy institutions.

3. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

Preparation, upon request, of analytical and methodological proposals to foster the universalization of social policies and social protection systems and the improvement of their impact on equality gaps.

4. Advisory services

Provision of technical cooperation services to countries and institutions in the region, at their request, in areas relating to social protection and inclusive social policies and quality institutions for greater equality.

5. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government, academic, non-governmental, regional and subregional institutions, upon request, on training activities on policy formulation for poverty eradication and inequality reduction, increasing access to social protection systems, education and health among different population groups.

6. Technical cooperation projects

It is expected that projects will be undertaken in areas related to analysis of recent developments and trends in the region's social protection, education, health and pension systems, and in labour inclusion and social institutional policies.

7. Intermediate activities

Preparation and coordination of interdivisional, inter-agency and interregional documents, seminars and meetings.

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services, training activities and technical cooperation projects, will be subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources.