



SUPPORT AN INTERNATIONAL PANEL ON INEQUALITY

The [Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors \(GCSPF\)](#) strongly supports the establishment of an [International Panel on Inequality \(IPI\)](#). It was the priority recommendation of the [2025 G20 Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Inequality](#), chaired by Joseph E. Stiglitz and commissioned by the South African G20 Presidency. We welcome the [leadership of South Africa](#), Brazil, Norway, and Spain in advancing the proposal. We call on all governments to endorse the [vision statement](#) and support the Panel's establishment.

In its [final report](#), the G20 Committee warned of a global inequality emergency. Eighty-three percent of countries, representing 90 percent of the world's population, have high income inequality. Between 2000 and 2024, the richest 1 percent captured 41 percent of new wealth, while the bottom half received just 1 percent. Extreme inequalities in income, wealth and power undermine human rights, democratic institutions, social cohesion, and societies' capacity to confront shared crises. They are not inevitable, but reflect policy choices, unequal power relations, and the international economic and financial architecture. A permanent, independent scientific body can build shared evidence on the drivers and consequences of inequality, identify effective policies, and clarify where national action depends on international cooperation.

Social security is central to reducing inequality

The [G20 report](#) identifies universal, adequately financed, and well-designed social protection as a proven means of reducing inequality. It finds that small, conditional, and means-tested programs are often ineffective and exclusionary, while universal transfers and social insurance can substantially reduce inequality. It also recognizes the importance of universal, publicly financed and delivered services and calls for a shift away from austerity and privatization.

The Global Coalition strongly supports the report's emphasis on universal, adequately financed and well-designed social protection alongside universal public services. We emphasize that [social security is an internationally recognized human right](#) and a cornerstone of a just social contract. Universal, adequate, and publicly organized social security systems pool risks and redistribute resources across income groups and throughout people's lives.

A [2024 ILO cross-country study](#) finds that social protection benefits can substantially reduce income inequality. Contributory pensions alone reduced the Gini coefficient by more than 15 percent in 18 of the 35 countries studied, and by at least 30 percent in four. The scale of redistribution depends not only on expenditure, but also on how benefits and contributions are designed.

These effects are not automatic. Coverage, adequacy, design, financing and governance determine who is protected, who pays and how far inequality is reduced. Tax systems that rely heavily on indirect taxes or flat-rate contributions can be regressive, placing a disproportionate burden on people with lower incomes and undermining the redistributive role of fiscal policy, while fragmented, narrowly targeted, inadequate, or privatized systems can [reinforce divisions based on class, gender, ethnicity and geography](#). Universal systems anchored in law, combining social insurance with tax-financed provision, are better able to protect rights, redistribute resources and build public support.

Social security cannot repair inequalities produced across the economy on its own.

[UNRISD research](#) shows that sustained reductions in poverty and inequality result from mutually supportive economic and social policies. Universal social security should form part of a wider agenda that includes labor rights, decent work, progressive taxation and [quality universal public services](#), including health care, education, care, housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport. Together, these institutions redistribute resources and power, reduce unpaid care burdens and strengthen public trust. This is especially important [in countries affected by conflict](#), where unequal access to public institutions can deepen social divisions.

Yet nearly half of the world's population remains entirely without social security. The [ILO estimates that 3.8 billion people](#) are not covered by even one social security benefit. The Global Coalition calls for universal, rights-aligned public systems that guarantee adequate support and progressively develop from national social protection floors into comprehensive social security systems.

A Panel that can strengthen public policy

The G20 Committee proposes a permanent technical body providing governments and multilateral institutions with policy-relevant assessments. The Panel would synthesize evidence, identify knowledge and data gaps, and assess the drivers and consequences of income and wealth inequality, links with other inequalities, and the distributional effects of events and policies. Its work could inform the G20, the UN High-Level Political Forum, and national governments.

The Coalition supports this vision, including an independent, geographically, and disciplinary diverse panel. We encourage governments to ensure that its mandate and working methods:

- address inequality within and among countries, including inequalities of income, wealth, power, and access to rights, and their intersections with gender, race, ethnicity, class, disability, age, migration status, and other grounds of discrimination;
- examine both the distribution of market income and the effects of public policy, including labor regulation, social security, public services, taxation, debt, austerity, climate policy, and the rules governing trade, finance and technology;
- assess the coverage, adequacy, design, financing, and governance of social security and public services, distinguishing universal, rights-aligned systems from fragmented or residual approaches, and examine the [political actors and institutions](#) that shape their redistributive effects; and
- be independent, multidisciplinary, and transparent, grounded in human rights and international labor standards, and shaped by meaningful participation from the Global South, workers' and civil society organizations, and people directly affected by inequality.

The Panel should examine the fiscal and international conditions needed to act on its findings. Universal systems require sustainable and equitable public financing. As the Coalition has emphasized, [progressive tax systems](#) can reduce inequality twice: by raising revenue fairly and by financing rights. By contrast, regressive taxation, tax abuse, unsustainable debt burdens, and austerity shift costs onto people with fewer resources and restrict the policy space of countries in the Global South. Inequality cannot be addressed fully without confronting these structural constraints.

Our call to governments

At a time of deepening division and declining trust, governments have an opportunity to build a credible global institution capable of turning rigorous evidence into better public policy and stronger international cooperation.

We urge all governments to:

- participate in the UNGA High-Level Leaders' Event on 23 September ([UN Web TV](#));
- endorse the vision statement for the International Panel on Inequality; and
- join and actively support the coalition of governments committed to establishing an independent, inclusive and effective Panel.

Inequality is a political choice. Building the knowledge and cooperation needed to reverse it should now be a global priority.

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