



2022

## Mozambique: Advocacy for social protection through the annual social protection week

### Summary

Making the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) a reality in low- income and middle-income countries is a challenging goal that requires the development of a nation-wide culture of social protection. This can in turn support government efforts to expand fiscal space dedicated to social protection programmes and help to extend coverage.

Active, regular and evidence-based advocacy activities targeting key decision makers and stakeholders play a central role in ensuring an adequate level of political commitment and social support for social protection.

The week contributes to ensuring coherence across the institutions responsible for the delivery of social protection and provides a platform for the regular monitoring and periodic evaluation of the system's implementation, both core principles of Recommendation No. 202.

### Main Lessons Learned

- ▶ The Social Protection Week can serve as an effective platform to share national and international good practices, to respond to specific challenges in the country.
- ▶ Leadership of the Government in the planning and implementation of the Social Protection Week is essential for its success and continuity.
- ▶ The events during the Week must be linked to the political and technical dialogue in the country.
- ▶ The organization of advocacy events such as the Week and Social Action Fairs requires coordination among ministries as well as between the Government, development partners and civil society.

### Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)

SDG 1.3 aims to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030, achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Social protection floors (SPFs) guarantee access to essential health care and basic income security for children, persons of working age and older persons. 187 countries have adopted the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No.202), to achieve universal social protection.

ILO has been supporting the organization and institutionalization of an annual, government-led Social Protection Week in Mozambique since 2012. The Week is a coordinated effort to increase the importance of social protection policies and interventions and enhance the debate around challenges and constraints. This aims to ensure the progressive consolidation of a nationally defined social protection floor in Mozambique.

- The Social Protection Week is an opportunity for social partners and civil society to provide evidence-based feedback on implementation of social protection and impact on people as well as a space to identify challenges and explore solutions.
- The Social Protection Week has supported the different phases of development of a nationally defined social protection floor in Mozambique, by convincing stakeholders of the need for progressively increasing public investment in social protection.

## Why a Social Protection Week?

The ILO office in Maputo has been supporting the Social Protection Week since its institutionalisation by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action (MGCAS) in 2012. After the approval of the first National Strategy for Basic<sup>1</sup> Social Protection in Mozambique (2010–2014), designed with ILO support, the debate around social protection in Mozambique gained momentum. There was appetite to organize an International Conference on Social Protection that could serve as a knowledge-sharing platform. Such a platform could exchange and bring to Mozambique experiences on best practices and implementation mechanisms for basic social protection programmes. With financial and technical support from the UN system (ILO, UNICEF and World Food Programme), development partners (European Union, Sweden, United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Netherlands, Ireland), World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the first Social Protection Week took place in Maputo during 18–22 June 2012, with a 2-day International Conference on Social Protection as the main event within the week. The International Conference brought to Maputo African and international practitioners and experts on social protection.

Seeing the positive results achieved in the first edition, MGCAS decided to institutionalize and celebrate an annual "Social Protection Week" as the main advocacy instrument for the sector throughout the year. "Investing in social protection is an investment in human capital" become the official slogan of the Social Protection Week in Mozambique. It was decided that it would take place every year around the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October). Between 21 and 27 November 2022, MGCAS organized the 11th consecutive annual Social

Protection Week under the theme "Investing in social protection is investing in human capital".

## Debate around Fiscal Space

Mozambique has increased fiscal space for social protection from 0.2 per cent of GDP in 2012 to 0.9 per cent of GDP in 2021 (see figure). The Social Protection Weeks were an opportune moment to publicise this. Debate around fiscal space dedicated to social protection in Mozambique became a central activity supported by ILO during Social Protection Weeks.

With the ultimate goal of enhancing domestic resources dedicated to basic (non-contributory) social protection programmes, the ILO embarked on the organization of several strategic, tailor-made activities during the Social Protection Weeks held between 2012 and 2021 focussing on various key target groups.

## Journalists – strategic allies for social protection

As social debate is greatly shaped by media, ILO, jointly with the Mozambican Civil Society Platform for Social Protection (PSCM-PS), supports yearly attendance of a group of journalists (two per province), who have been receiving continuous training in social protection from ILO since 2015, allowing them to participate in all events during the Social Protection Week and therefore increasing their knowledge and promote an ideal platform for media coverage and enhanced debate about social protection topics. Field visits to beneficiaries with journalists as a means to sensitize their work and raise awareness on beneficiaries' situations is also a regular activity organized by ILO during Social Protection Weeks.

## Parliamentarians, decision makers and political parties – how to get them on board

To increase support to social protection reforms among policy makers, parliamentarians, and political parties, it is important to expand their knowledge on social protection, and also convince them that social protection is a sound investment. For the last seven years, ILO and UNICEF have supported the development of a Social Protection Budget

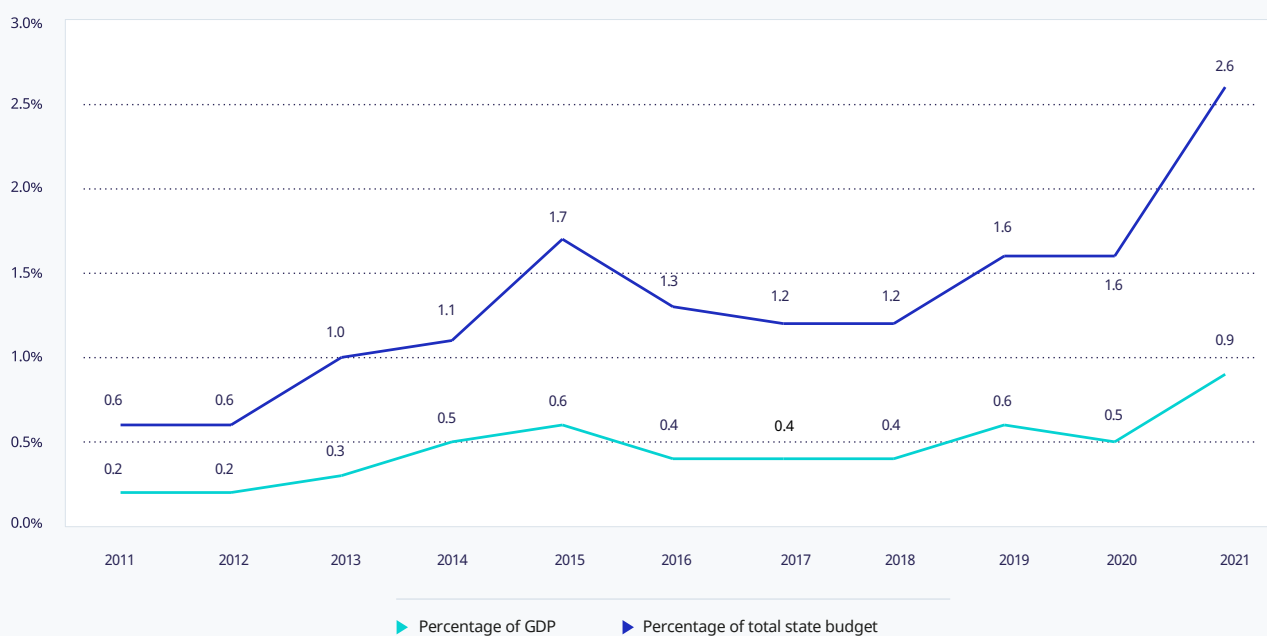
<sup>1</sup> Non-contributory.

Brief.<sup>2</sup> These briefs provide a succinct analysis of the sector budget to provide access to budgetary information and increase transparency of existing public instruments used for budgeting, planning and social policy, feeding the debate around fiscal space dedicated to social protection and the need for an additional effort to increase coverage. The Social Protection Budget Brief is launched by ILO during the Social Protection Week in an event attended by various political parties, unions, journalists, Ministry of Finance, development partners, and Parliamentarians from

the National Parliament. During this event, the State Budget Law is approved, followed by a field visit to interact directly with beneficiaries enrolled in social protection programmes.

Engaging with Parliamentarians is key to ensuring political support for social protection aiming at having the Budget Law approved with adequate allocations for social protection programmes. As referred in the Social Action

► **Figure. Expenditure on social protection in Mozambique**



► Source: ILO, 2021.

Budget Brief for 2021, allocations for basic social protection in Mozambique increased from 0.6 per cent of the State Budget in 2010 to 2.6 per cent in 2021. It should however be noted that the significant increase in resource allocation for social protection that was observed in 2021 is due to a boost in external funding allocated to the emergency response programme designed to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup>

### Right moment to launch key documents

As the peak moment of the year in terms of debate, visibility and advocacy around social protection, the Social Protection Week has been the perfect moment for the official launch of several documents in past years, providing space for debate. As examples, ILO organized the launch of the Trade Unions' Position Paper on a Social

<sup>2</sup> Available at: [www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowResource.action?id=54897](http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowResource.action?id=54897).

<sup>3</sup> Direct Social Support Programme – Post Emergency COVID-19.

Protection Floor in Mozambique (2014), the report “The Development of a Social Protection Floor in Mozambique: Capitalisation of the UN Experience”<sup>4</sup> (2015), and the “Communication and Advocacy Strategy for Basic Social Security” (2016). With ILO support, Mozambique also published its annual “National Statistical Bulletin on Social Protection” for the fourth consecutive year in 2022.

## Journalist Gala

Considering the important role media plays in disseminating information and raising awareness about social protection, ILO in partnership with PSCM-PS, has supported an event to reward those journalists that have produced the best piece of information (written press, radio or television) about social protection in Mozambique. The Journalist Gala aims to motivate the production of more and better pieces of information on social protection to feed the debate among society, raise awareness, disseminate information about rights and draw attention to unfairness and inequality, and also keep the society informed in a timely manner on social protection developments in the country.

## Social protection and citizens

There is still a challenge of broadening the debate around social protection to the whole society, as social protection policies are usually discussed at high-level forums. As an attempt to make social protection more visible in Mozambican society, ILO in partnership with PSCM-PS and MGCAS organized a cycling tour in Maputo under the motto “Cycling for inclusive and fair social protection” within the Social Protection Week 2017. The objective was to raise awareness for improved quality of social services in the country.

Inspired by the attendance and success of the initiative, ILO and PSCM-PS organized a Beach Football tournament for social inclusion in Maputo during the Social Protection Week 2018.

## Official Launch of ILO’s documentary films

An audio-visual narrative based on actual lives and experiences can create a powerful and lasting message.

Over the last few years, ILO Maputo has produced five documentary films, namely “Working Mother” (2014), “Grandma Regina” (2015), “Being Someone” (2016), “On your Own” (2017), and “Linda” (2021). They were officially launched during the Social Protection Week with participation of civil society, government, donors, development partners, UN and journalists, among others.

During the design phase of the second National Strategy for Basic Social Protection (ENSSB 2016–2024), and to advocate for the approval of a new child grant programme targeting children aged 0–2 years, ILO launched an animated film on Child Grants,<sup>5</sup> in an advocacy event jointly organized with UNICEF during the Social Protection Week 2015. The Child Grant programme was later included in the new National Strategy for Basic Social Protection 2016–2024.

## Social Action Fair – getting closer to beneficiaries

The Social Action Fair was suggested to MGCAS by ILO and PSCM-PS in 2016 – now completely institutionalized and organized by the Government – as an initiative aimed at bringing social services closer to beneficiaries of a certain area, normally excluded from basic social services due to their remote and isolated locations and lack of financial resources to access those services. During the Social Action Fair, everyone can have free access to information on basic social services and government programmes, with emphasis on social assistance, health and education programmes; counselling and legal advice; financial inclusion through the attribution of a tax identification number; birth registration and civil identification; and primary health care and social health services. The Social Action Fair of 2022 was organized in the district of Mecuburi, Nampula Province. This province was chosen to host the fair because of the significant population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who relocated there due to the humanitarian crisis in the neighboring province of Cabo Delgado. The Government used it as an opportunity to raise awareness at provincial level on the role of social protection as well as to provide social services during the event.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowResource.action?id=51137](http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowResource.action?id=51137).

<sup>5</sup> View the film at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaAvYiTH7\\_8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaAvYiTH7_8).



## National Conference on Social Protection – decentralizing the debate

In 2014, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action organized the first National Conference on Basic Social Protection in Mozambique. This conference was seen as a forum for public dialogue between different stakeholders in the area of basic social protection and advocacy for the growing recognition of social protection as an important tool to fight poverty, to promote an inclusive society and as a mechanism that enables poor and vulnerable people to enjoy the benefits of development and wealth creation.

This event brings together more than 300 participants (civil servants working on social protection, different line ministries, provincial directors and delegates, civil society organizations from all provinces, international organizations working in Mozambique, and so on) to discuss issues related to the implementation of social protection policies and strategies, ways to improve coordination in health and education, ways to increase efficiencies, overcoming bottlenecks, seizing new opportunities and to listen to the voices of those implementing social protection projects on the ground.

ILO has supported MGCAS in the organization of the three National Conferences on Social Protection (2014, 2016 and 2018). In 2020 the Conference was organized by the Mozambican Civil Society Platform for Social Protection (PSCM-PS) with support from the ILO in the city of Beira, which had been hardly hit by cyclone Idai in the previous year. In 2021 the Conference – organized once again by PSCM-PS with ILO support – focused on the implementation of the social protection response to COVID-19.

## Highlights from the Social Protection Weeks

► The Social Protection Week serves as a knowledge sharing platform on good practices in the country and

international experiences both in design and implementation, that can help respond to specific challenges faced by Mozambique.

- The involvement of political and financial decision-makers, such as parliamentarians, is essential to ensure political support for social protection, with regard to the adoption of the State Budget Law with adequate allocations for social protection.
- The Week must be linked to the political and technical dialogue in the sector, which feeds other actions.
- The leadership role assumed by the Government in the planning and implementation of the Social Protection Week is a condition for the initiative to be successful and ensure its continuity. Even with strong external support, the Government must be able to take responsibility and ensure its continuous implementation.
- The presence of civil society in the planning process, implementation and funding of Social Protection Weeks is essential.
- The organization of Social Action Fairs requires central coordination among all ministries involved in order to ensure harmonization of the services provided and of the manner in which these services will be made available in all provinces.
- Coordination between the Government, development partners and civil society is a key element in ensuring the success of advocacy interventions such as the Social Protection Week.
- This experience has inspired other countries that are conducting similar Social Protection Weeks and investing in the creation of a social protection culture.

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