



## Economic, social, and cultural rights

# 7

### Implementation of recommendations from the previous period

In the 2018 UPR, China, France, and Singapore recommended eradicating poverty and raising the population's standard of living. Both recommendations are unfulfilled as more than half of Colombians live in poverty. Guyana recommended intensifying efforts to address food insecurity, particularly in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. According to the WFP (1) (2022), 30% (15.5 million) of the population experience moderate to severe food insecurity.

On education, China, Russia, Palestine, Haiti, the Holy See, and Sri Lanka recommended that the Colombian State universally guarantee the right to education, reduce illiteracy among ethnic peoples, and overcome gaps between urban and rural areas. These recommendations were not fulfilled. Primary education enrollment rates do not exceed 60% and during the pandemic, educational access, quality, adaptability, and permanence were not guaranteed. In rural areas, limited access to technology increased exclusion during this period. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), 8.3% of individuals belonging to ethnic groups have not completed any educational level and 27.7% have only completed primary education. On healthcare, Honduras recommended improving access to healthcare in the countryside, while Ghana and Palestine recommended guaranteeing healthcare services for adolescents. Portugal and Zambia recommended ratifying the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, (2) which has not occurred.

### Current status

Between 2018 and 2022, poverty and inequality worsened in Colombia, especially among women and youth. Monetary poverty was at 39.3 % and extreme poverty reached 12.2 % of the population. In terms of gender, 55.3 % of all households led by a woman live in poverty (2021). The levels of hunger worsened due to the pandemic. According to the DANE Social Pulse Survey (3) (2023), out of 8.5 million households, just 6.15 million eat three meals a day (72.4 % of families). There are 92,857 families that only eat one meal a day (1.1%). A total of 1,820 households do not have access to one meal a day. The Ombuds Office stated that to date, 53 children under five years of age have died from causes associated with malnutrition. Of those, 18 are from the department of La Guajira where most are deaths of Indigenous Wayúu children. Seven out of ten Venezuelan migrant children under five years of age live in households that experience food insecurity. (4) The establishment of a progressive system to guarantee the right to food, a part of the Final Peace Agreement mandate, has not been implemented.

High dropout rates, low educational coverage, and significant gaps between urban and rural students persist. According to data from the Fedesarrollo Economic and Social Research Center, for every 100 children who enter first grade, just 44 graduate from high school. Of these 44 graduates, just 17 (38.7%) go on to higher education. It is evident that the lack of available spots in primary education and the phenomenon of students' families frequently moving in search of work contribute to the lack of educational coverage. This situation has been exacerbated by Venezuelan migrant children. In 2022, there were 583,550 Venezuelan children in Colombian public schools, of whom around 37,323 dropped out in the same year. In 2021, more than half (53.4%) of youth between 15 and 24 years of age were not studying in formal education. Data from the Fedesarrollo Center for Economic and Social Research shows that in June 2022, the number of students who were not studying in secondary education was higher in rural areas, equivalent to 45% of the population. In 2022, 41% of all Early Warnings issued by the Ombuds Office warned of risks to teachers.

(1) World Food Program WFP, 2022

(2) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

(3) National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)

(4) WFP 2023. Food Security Assessment: Migrants and Host Communities

Between 2018 and 2022 working people and trade unionists were severely affected. While the unemployment rate is currently 11.2%, in 2019 it shot up to 24.5%. The population most affected by unemployment during these five years were women and youth. The activities that experienced the biggest downturn in labor conditions were the service and sales sectors, dropping 70% and 40% respectively compared to the GDP. A total of 495 acts of violence against trade unionists were registered between 2018 and 2021.

Healthcare and life-threatening effects during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 139,867 deaths due to coronavirus reported in Colombia. Mortality was focused on people with limited resources living in socio-economic levels 1 and 2 (61.5%) while 60,000 health sector workers were infected and 300 died. The health infrastructure ratio in Colombia for 2019 was 1.3 health service providers per 1,000 inhabitants in departments with a high level of development, and 0.5 providers per 1,000 inhabitants in departments with a low level of development.

## Recommendations

1. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR) and advance on the 44 ILO Conventions that are pending ratification. (5)
2. Guarantee universal access to basic primary education for children and adopt a plan to reduce dropout rates. Take action to close the education gap between rural and urban areas, including the implementation of the Special Rural Education Plan that forms part of the Final Peace Agreement.
3. Participatively design a public food policy and adjust institutional and administrative management frameworks to progressively guarantee access to the right to food. Make progress with the effective implementation of all anti-hunger measures incorporated in the National Development Plan. Implement differential and emergency measures in territories with high levels of food insecurity.
4. Design, approve, and implement a labor reform that guarantees labor, association, and union rights. Take immediate measures that address unemployment and job insecurity for youth and women.
5. Protect and strengthen the national public health system in Colombia using predictive and preventive medicine approaches, implement a hospital infrastructure improvement plan for remote areas, and design a human talent policy for the healthcare sector that guarantees labor rights.

(5) See: Updated Conventions not ratified by Colombia (ilo.org)