



Facts and Figures

#SocialSummit2025

The Opportunity

The [Second World Summit for Social Development](#) offers a historic opportunity to accelerate global progress on social justice, equality, and inclusion. By placing people at the centre of development, countries can eradicate poverty, create decent work, strengthen social protection, and build inclusive societies that leave no one behind.

Poverty and Inequality

- Since 1995, nearly 1.5 billion people have escaped extreme poverty according to the World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP). Yet progress remains uneven.
- Income inequality has risen in many countries since 1995; gender wage gaps remain significant.
- As of 2023, an estimated 808 million people were still living in extreme poverty. Beyond income, poverty also takes many other forms: in 2024, around 1.1 billion people faced multidimensional poverty, experiencing overlapping deprivations in health, education, and living standards.
- Working poverty fell from 27.9 per cent in 2000 to 6.9 per cent in 2024, yet significant disparities persist.
- Over half of the world's population is now covered by at least one social protection scheme, but gaps remain wide in low-income countries.
- Women perform the majority of unpaid care work — including childcare, elder care, household tasks, and community work — which often goes unrecognized and is rarely covered by social protection.

Employment and Decent Work

- Millions of workers live in poverty, despite being employed.
- Informal employment affects 58 percent of workers globally, limiting access to decent work.
- The high rate of youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) continues to be a challenge, especially young women (28 per cent in 2024).
- Women still earn only 78 per cent of men's earnings on average, with the gender wage gap projected to take 50–100 years to close.
- Employment rates of those 55+ are increasing globally, yet systems remain ill-suited to harness their skills and contributions.

- Child labour has dropped from 20.6 per cent in 1995 to 7.8 per cent in 2024, but 138 million children (aged 5-17) remain in child labour, nearly half in hazardous conditions.
- Closing the gender gap in labour force participation could add trillions to global GDP.

Social Protection and Housing

- Extending social protection coverage by just two percentage points per year could lift millions out of poverty.
- Older persons still face social protection coverage and adequacy challenges, particularly for women and workers with low earnings or in precarious employment.
- Around 300 million people are unhoused worldwide.
- Nearly 3 billion people lack adequate housing, undermining health and social inclusion.

Education and Lifelong Learning

- While access has expanded, millions of children remain out of school.
- Each additional year of schooling increases earnings by up to 10%.
- Lifelong learning is vital in a world of increased longevity, yet many older persons encounter multiple barriers, such as discrimination and stigma.
- Investment in STEM, digital literacy, and vocational training is critical for the green and digital transitions.

Health and Well-being

- Achieving universal health coverage could prevent millions of avoidable deaths.
- A life-course approach to health policies fosters healthy behaviours at all ages, helping reduce NCDs and extend healthy life expectancy.
- Mental health is recognized as an essential component of universal coverage.
- Affordable, equitable access to medicines, vaccines, and digital health tools remains out of reach for many.

Food Security and Nutrition

- One third of the world's population is food-insecure.
- Global undernourishment is rising, disproportionately affecting children.
- Investing in resilient food systems and small-scale farmers is essential to end hunger.

Digital Transformation and AI

- Billions remain offline, excluded from the digital economy.
- Rural, least developed, and small island developing States face the greatest connectivity gaps.
- Age is a key driver of digital divides, particularly among older persons, and interacts with other factors affecting access to ICT and the internet.

- Harnessing AI and digital transformation for inclusion requires bridging divides and safeguarding rights.

Climate Change and Just Transition

- Climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation are reversing development gains.
- Investing in just transitions ensures no one is left behind in the shift to green economies.
- Climate change policies should adopt an intergenerational lens, responsive to the rights and needs of current and future generations of all ages.

Disaster Risk Reduction

- Disasters disrupt education, health, and livelihoods, pushing millions back into poverty.
- Every \$1 invested in disaster risk reduction saves up to \$15 in recovery costs.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

- Women earn 20% less than men on average.
- Closing gender gaps could raise global GDP significantly.
- Eliminating gender-based violence and redistributing unpaid care work are urgent priorities.
- Women may experience heightened inequality where gender intersects with other grounds of discrimination, such as age, disability, or migrant status.

Demographics and Ageing

- Countries face divergent trends: rapid population growth in some, ageing in others, with current data showing that the world's population will peak around the mid-2080s, when it will start declining gradually.
- Between 2025 and 2050, the number of persons aged 60 or older will nearly double worldwide to 2.1 billion, while those aged 80 or older will double in high-income countries and triple in lower-middle-income countries.
- While global life expectancy at birth rose from 66.4 years in 2000 to 73.5 years in 2025 and is projected to reach 77.0 years by 2050, significant disparities in opportunities for healthy lives persist, primarily driven by poverty and inequities.
- By 2080, persons aged 65 or older will outnumber children under 18.
- Older persons encounter diverse barriers, including age-based discrimination, that limit their ability to fully participate and contribute meaningfully across all areas of life.
- A life-course approach in inclusive policies can leverage the contributions of all generations.

Persons with Disabilities

- An estimated 1.3 billion persons – or 16% of the world population – experience a disability.
- Persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty and encounter systemic barriers. Persons without disabilities are twice as likely to be employed as persons with disabilities.
- Disability-related costs, such as costs for accessible transportation, assistive devices and rehabilitation, exacerbate inequalities, as persons with disabilities tend to spend about a third of their household income on these costs.
- Inclusive policies and social protection schemes are essential. Globally, only 34% of persons with severe disabilities receive cash benefits.

Indigenous Peoples and Minorities

- Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' identity, traditions, and social organization is vital for inclusive development.
- Combatting systemic racism, xenophobia, and hate speech remains a global priority.

Migration

- Migration is a driver of inclusive growth and development.
- Ensuring safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways is essential.
- Migrants' rights, regardless of status, must be upheld.

Financing for Social Development

- Developing countries face unsustainable debt burdens and high borrowing costs.
- Developed countries are urged to meet the 0.7% ODA target, which could unlock over \$150 billion annually.
- Implementing the Sevilla Commitment is critical to close the financing gap for the SDGs.

Governance and Institutions

- Trust in institutions must be rebuilt through transparency, accountability, and participation.
- Combating corruption, strengthening the rule of law, and reinforcing multilateralism are essential to inclusive social progress.

The **Second World Summit for Social Development** represents a pivotal moment to renew hope, deliver concrete action and reaffirm our shared commitment to **justice, equality, and dignity for all**.