

# ANNUAL REVIEW

## 2020/21



**Supporting our members  
through the pandemic**



# *Mission* OF THE ISSA

## *Promoting social security worldwide*

The International Social Security Association (ISSA) is the world's leading international organization for social security institutions and government departments. The ISSA promotes excellence in social security through offering its member institutions professional guidelines and capacity building as part of its Centre for Excellence, proposing innovative solutions to address key social security challenges, sharing unique international data as well as organizing high-level regional and global events. Supporting its member institutions to develop dynamic social security systems and policy throughout the world, the ISSA was founded in 1927 under the auspices of the International Labour Organization (ILO).



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

More than a year after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world still faces its most serious health, social and economic crisis in decades. The ISSA deeply deplores the loss of lives and the hardship inflicted on populations around the world. It is evident, however, that without the responses by social security institutions, the negative impact of COVID-19 would have been much more devastating.

## SOCIAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS: A PILLAR OF RESILIENCE

Social security has been at the centre of government action to address the crisis, by facilitating public health measures, protecting employment and preventing poverty. The effectiveness of these responses was enabled by the capacity and agility of social security institutions, which once again emerged as essential pillars of national resilience. In this context, providing relevant knowledge and exchange opportunities to support its members in their adaptation to an unprecedented crisis was not only a call, but also an obligation for the ISSA.

Through the COVID-19 Monitor, the ISSA has documented how social security is key to alleviating the social and economic crisis in countries all around the world. Through around 80 webinars, ISSA members from all regions have shared their challenges, good practices and innovations with their colleagues. Through more than 40 analytical articles, the ISSA provided structure to the

wide range of country responses and kept its members up-to-date on strategies and approaches. As we are gradually starting to look beyond the crisis, the ISSA will further enhance these activities to support social security institutions in contributing to an inclusive recovery.

What strikes me is how social security institutions rose to the challenge. The pressure and the expectations have been enormous and unexpected. Still, social security institutions have delivered, often beyond their usual mandates. They have implemented new programmes and procedures, scaled up and reached out to cover new groups, and innovated and digitized service delivery. All this while re-organizing their own ways of working, including teleworking arrangements and digital cooperation.

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*“My gratitude goes  
out to all social  
security institutions  
and staff.”*

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In addition to facilitating the sharing and learning among members during this difficult year, the ISSA General Secretariat has focused on bringing social security to the forefront of the international agenda. Our cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) continues to be a cornerstone in our international efforts, and together we have made important contributions in the context of both the G20 and BRICS cooperation. We have also strengthened our relations with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and World Health Organization (WHO), and entered new partnerships with the United Nations University (UNU) and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

I would never have thought that I would have a full year as ISSA President without one single occasion to meet the ISSA General Secretariat and ISSA members in person. Our meetings and events are usually the place where the organization breathes, where good practices are shared, common understanding produced and bright ideas developed. My relief is therefore great that we have been able to keep this spirit alive, and even strengthened it in some ways, during this year of only virtual encounters. My gratitude goes out to all member institutions, for all their efforts and their willingness to share during this challenging period.



**Prof. Dr Joachim Breuer**  
**ISSA President**

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "J. Breuer".

## INTERVIEW WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano, Secretary General of the ISSA, reflects on the extraordinary past year, where social security institutions have demonstrated their power to transform, innovate and deliver at a rapid pace. The ISSA will build on the experiences from this period when developing its plans for the future.

# THE POWER TO TRANSFORM IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

*How has this last year been for ISSA as an organization and as a community?*

This has been a challenging year for all of us, for the ISSA as an organization and for all our member institutions. COVID-19 has impacted everyone, every day. It has affected organizations, staff and colleagues, and ordinary citizens. While the demand for social security benefits has exploded, the institutions have had to deal with lockdown, social distancing, and teleworking. This is also the case for us. Since March 2020, ISSA staff have primarily worked from home. Nevertheless, we are fortunate to have digital tools that have made it possible to exchange, cooperate and create important results.

*What have been the most important developments and innovations for the ISSA?*

Almost all our meetings and events used to be in-person. This last year, they have all been virtual. This complete turnaround was achieved within a matter of weeks in early 2020, but at the time we did not expect the situation to last so long. However, in 2020 we organized around 80 events, almost all of them virtual. This year, we are on track to deliver even more. Our weekly webinars and analytical articles have been a great success, and attract the interest of many that we did not reach before. The COVID-19 Monitor, tracking social security responses to the pandemic, has also been very important. I am pleased to say that we have been able to deliver both in terms of quantity and quality to our members.



Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano  
ISSA Secretary General



### *What have been the topical priorities of the ISSA beyond COVID-19 in this period?*

While COVID-19 has been our predominating focus area, we were able to gradually build bridges to other key topics in line with ISSA priorities for the 2020–2022 triennium. At the end of 2019, ISSA members mandated us to prioritize the future of administration and management, the evolving needs of an ageing population, coverage in a changing world, and promoting inclusive growth and social cohesion. It is possible to see social security responses to COVID-19 as an accelerator for important changes that will have long-term impact. I am in particular thinking of labour market changes and digitalization on the one hand, and new service models to cover new groups on the other.

### *Half-way through the 2020–2022 triennium, how do you see the second half for the ISSA?*

Well, the first half has been very different from what we expected. I believe that the ISSA was able to support global social security efforts during these difficult times. However, while we gradually return to in presence events and deliver on the programmed outputs of the triennium, the impact of the crisis will remain a key priority. What will be its long-time impact on labour markets, social security financing and coverage? How can social security contribute to an inclusive recovery? How can social security gaps identified during the crisis be minimized in the future? What lessons can be drawn to make social security more resilient in the future? A lot of thoughts will go into answering such questions. We will discuss at technical and regional events in order to provide appropriate responses and strategies during our World Social Security Forum at the end of 2022. I am hoping and expecting to see all our members in person at this historical event.



The 121st Meeting of the ISSA Bureau was held in a virtual format on 13 October 2020.

## COVID-19

Social security is at the heart of the response to the coronavirus crisis. The ISSA's actions last year have focussed on helping social security institutions in their responses to the crisis.

# TACKLING THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of society. Social security institutions have been at the centre of government actions to address the social and economic consequences for people and for employers. At the same time, the institutions themselves have had to quickly adapt their ways of working to provide services in a highly challenging context, while stepping up their capacities.

Through its COVID-19 Monitor, the ISSA has actively followed, mapped and analysed developments, and facilitated the sharing of institutional experiences and good practices within the global community of social security institutions, professionals and experts. The aim has been to support agile institutional adaptation to the crisis and the effective delivery of social security responses to the crisis.

### COVID-19 MONITOR

- Country measures
- News monitor
- Analysis
- Webinars







## COVID-19

No country has been left untouched by the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments all over the world have taken drastic social and economic measures in order to deal with this crisis.

# NATIONAL POLICY RESPONSES

Already in early 2020, the first important social security national policy responses were observed. The ISSA analysed the extensive use of short-term work and partial unemployment schemes, the extension of sickness and family benefits, and the use of temporary flexibility and exemptions for social security contributions.

As the pandemic continued to develop and new waves broke across countries and regions, the ISSA monitored how measures were extended and adjusted and new ones introduced. Lockdown measures obviously had a severe impact on economic activity and jobs, but also on the health and well-being of people due to restrictions on their social life.

More recently, discussions have turned from emergency crisis responses to addressing the longer-term impact of the crisis, such as the phasing out of extraordinary measures, the financing of social security and how coverage gaps can be filled for the future. The ISSA continues to provide a relevant platform for the analysis and discussion of the social security ingredients for an inclusive recovery.

### SOCIAL SECURITY RESPONSES

- Health-care benefits and access
- Sickness benefits
- Unemployment protection
- Employment retention benefits
- Emergency social protection of vulnerable groups
- Family-related benefits
- Contribution obligations
- Occupational diseases and prevention

### ANALYSES

Analyses of global, national and regional developments of social security responses to COVID-19 are available on the ISSA website.



### COUNTRY MEASURES MONITOR

The ISSA has mapped over 1,600 social security measures in 206 countries and territories.

[www.issa.int/coronavirus](http://www.issa.int/coronavirus)

## COVID-19

Social security institutions have responded remarkably to the COVID-19 crisis. While dealing with an explosion in demand, at the same time they had to address health and safety concerns in the workplace, reorganize their ways of working and innovate in terms of delivering services.

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

As national governments took rapid action and placed social security at the heart of the response to the coronavirus pandemic, social security institutions often found themselves in a completely new reality almost overnight.

They were impacted by lockdown and new health and safety measures, just like any other employer. Social distancing between employees and with customers was required. Offices were closed, or access restricted. Partial or general teleworking was, and still is, necessary. At the same time business

continuity had to be secured and services scaled up to respond to increasing and new demands from governments and the public.

All of this required new ways of working, remote equipment and digital access for staff, and new ways of interacting with clients. Social security institutions rose to the challenge, demonstrating flexibility and agility, and a strong capacity to push forward innovation and digital transformation. In many ways, a new human-and-digital model in social security has emerged from the crisis.

### KEYS TO SUCCESS DURING THE CRISIS

- Ensure the continuity of social security services
- Decisive leadership that inspires unity
- Speed before perfection
- Simplicity translates to speed
- Inter-institutional collaboration
- Digital skills enabling innovation

### CHANGES THAT MAY BE HERE TO STAY

- Teleworking: increased flexibility and working from home
- Virtual collaboration: use of digital platforms for meetings and cooperation
- E-services: services have moved online
- Customer-centric approach: new approaches to meet client demand

## COVID-19

The ISSA has relentlessly worked to serve its members through data collection and knowledge sharing on social security responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# SUPPORTING ISSA MEMBERS AND NATIONAL RESPONSES

Just like its member institutions, the ISSA quickly had to reorganize, innovate, upscale its digital capacities and refocus its programme of activities because of the pandemic. The COVID-19 Monitor has been a central tool to support ISSA members.

In many ways, the last year has brought the Association even closer to its members. Through online events, the ISSA was able to respond rapidly to the needs of members, engage with them more frequently and attract many first-time participants. The webinars became a channel for keeping members abreast with recent developments and experiences. Short online sessions became an opportunity for members to share good practices and take inspiration from each other, while facing the same crisis.

### WEBINARS

The ISSA has organized 47 COVID-19 webinars since April 2020, with the participation of thousands of staff from member institutions.

Through daily updates to the Coronavirus news monitor and the Coronavirus country measures database, ISSA members have been able to follow developments in a dynamic way. The ISSA has regularly published analytical articles based on data collection, experiences shared in the webinars and good practices submitted by member institutions through the competitions for Africa and the Americas.

The accumulation of knowledge through these activities will also enable an analysis of the lessons learnt and the longer-term impact of the crisis on social security. One example includes the ongoing preparation of new ISSA Guidelines, focussing on business continuity and resilience, which will be based on the analysis carried out during the past months.



### ISSR SPECIAL ISSUE

Vol. 73, No. 3, of the *International Social Security Review*, a special issue on *Social security, inclusive growth and social cohesion*, reports on social protection responses to COVID-19.

## COVID-19

Social security institutions are widely recognized as a fundamental pillar in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Monitor, webinar programme, analysis and professional expertise of its community, has enabled the ISSA to strengthen its role at the international level. Highlights included ISSA contribution to the G20 and the BRICS countries, emphasizing the importance of adequate investment in social security and institutional capacities.

# SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

No other international organization can build on the experience of 318 social security institutions in 159 countries, providing social protection to over 3 billion people every day. The implementation of effective social security schemes and benefits depend on these institutions. In times of crisis, the agility and capacities of social security institutions emerge as a national pillar of social and economic resilience.

Building on their historic relationship, the ISSA has worked closely with the ILO throughout the crisis. Through information and data sharing arrangements, the ISSA COVID-19 Monitor contributes to the ILO World Social Protection Data Dashboards, and the two have regularly contributed to each other's online events on social protection responses to COVID-19.

In September 2020, the G20 labour and employment ministers emphasized the crucial role of international cooperation to tackle the pandemic, recognizing the important contributions of the ISSA, ILO, OECD and the World Bank. As a new member of the G20 Employment Working Group, the ISSA has presented joint papers with the ILO and OECD on social protection responses to COVID-19 and on coordinating social protection and active labour market policies. The ISSA



G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting, June 2021.

highlighted policy implementation and the importance of investment in institutional capacities, areas where attention was lacking in the past.

The ISSA also has a close cooperation with the ILO in supporting the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa. In October 2020, the ISSA participated in the Sixth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting, emphasizing the transformative power of COVID-19, and the need to innovate and take on board digital solutions in social security. In April 2021, an executive webinar on social security agreements was organized by the ISSA-ILO Virtual Liaison Office for the BRICS countries.

Partnerships have also been strengthened with the European Commission, UNICEF, UNU, Rehabilitation International and the WHO.

The ISSA is pleased to have been able to offer members access to the knowledge of these institutions at our webinars, and to highlight the role of social security institutions in the strategic discussions of these organizations.

### THE ISSA AND THE G20

- **October 2020:** G20 recognized the role of the ISSA in responding to the social and economic consequences of COVID-19
- **February 2021:** Joint ISSA/ILO/OECD paper on social protection
- **April 2021:** Joint ISSA/ILO/OECD paper on income support and active labour market policies
- **June 2021:** Participation in G20 ministerial meetings



### OXFORD SUPERTRACKER

The ISSA COVID-19 Monitor was included in the Oxford Supertracker, a repository of reliable international sources of information linked to the pandemic.

### ILO SOCIAL PROTECTION DASHBOARD

The ISSA COVID-19 Monitor feeds the ILO World Social Protection Data Dashboards.



## THE ISSA AROUND THE WORLD

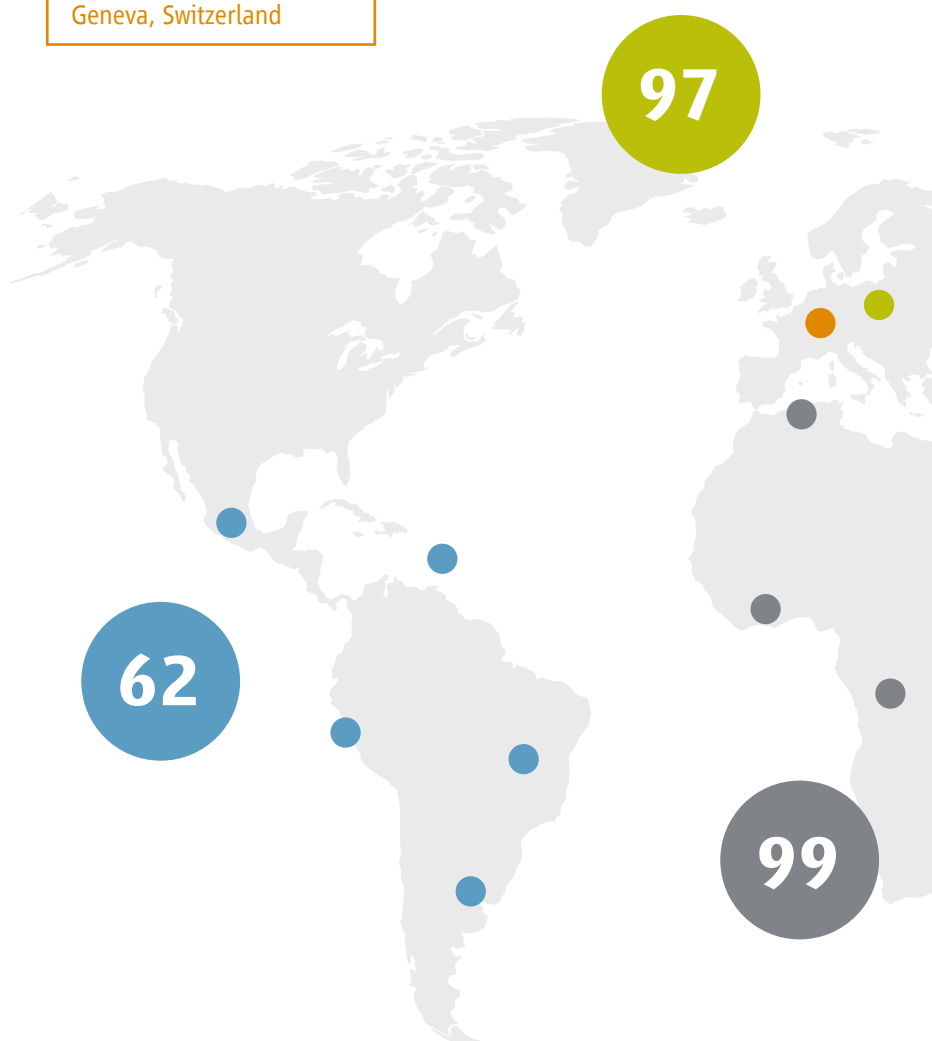
The 18 regional structures play an important role in strengthening the outreach of the ISSA and regional cooperation on social security. Each regional structure is hosted by an ISSA member institution and has a dedicated Regional Liaison Officer.

# 318 MEMBER INSTITUTIONS IN 159 COUNTRIES

The regional structures complement the ISSA technical programme through activities that directly respond to the expressed priorities of members in a region. Adapting to the pandemic situation, they organized a large number of the ISSA webinars during the last year in six languages, and thereby contributed to the Association's impact and relevance for members.

The ISSA was honoured to be able to launch the Focal Point for the English-speaking Caribbean Countries, hosted by the National Insurance Services of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in March 2021.

ISSA General Secretariat  
Geneva, Switzerland



# ISSA regional structures

## AFRICA

### Liaison Office for Central Africa

Hosted by the National Social Security Fund  
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

### Focal Point for East Africa

Hosted by the East and Central Africa Social Security Association  
Nairobi, Kenya

### Liaison Office for North Africa

Hosted by the National Social Insurance Fund for Employees  
Algiers, Algeria

### Liaison Office for Southern Africa

Hosted by the Eswatini National Provident Fund  
Manzini, Eswatini

### Liaison Office for West Africa

Hosted by the Social Insurance Institute – National Social Insurance Fund  
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

## AMERICAS

### Liaison Office for the Andean Countries

Hosted by the Derrama Magisterial  
Lima, Peru

### Liaison Office for North and Central America

Hosted by the State Employees' Social Security and Social Services Institute  
Mexico City, Mexico

### Liaison Office for the Southern Cone of the Americas

Hosted by the National Social Security Administration  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

### Focal Point for the English-speaking Caribbean Countries

Hosted by the National Insurance Services  
Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

### Focal Point for Portuguese-speaking Countries

Hosted by the National Institute of Social Security  
Brasilia, Brazil

## ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### Liaison Office for the Arab Countries

Hosted by the Social Security Corporation  
Amman, Jordan

### Liaison Office for East Asia

Hosted by the National Health Insurance Service  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

### Liaison Office for South Asia

Hosted by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation  
New Delhi, India

### Liaison Office for South East Asia

Hosted by the Social Security Organisation  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

### Focal Point for Chinese Members

Hosted by the Social Insurance Administration of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security  
Beijing, China

### Focal Point for the Pacific Island Countries

Hosted by the Fiji National Provident Fund  
Suva, Fiji

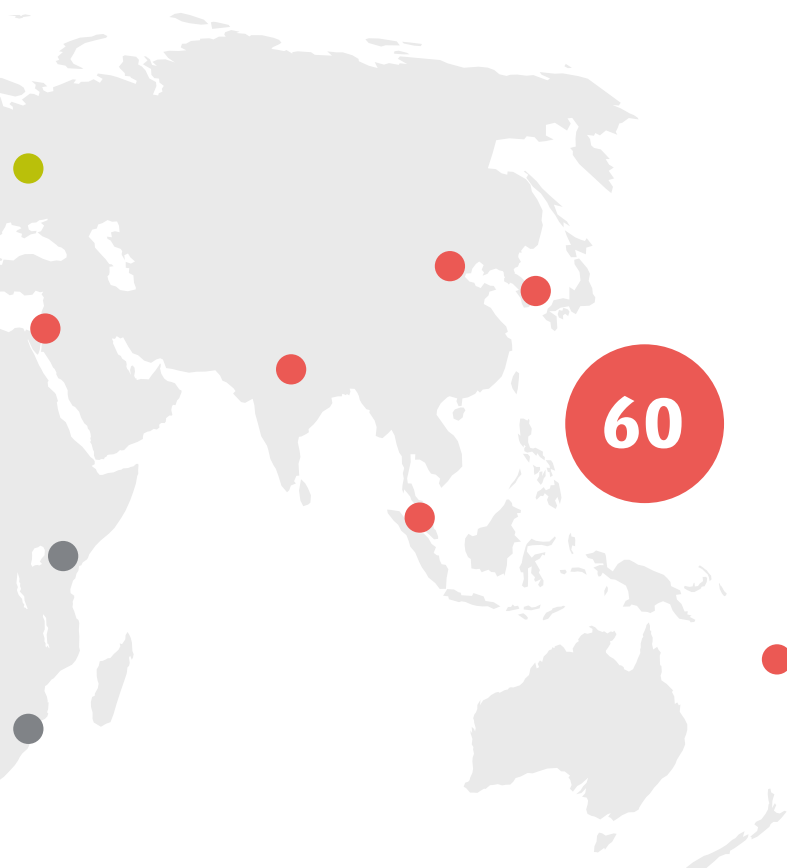
## EUROPE

### ISSA European Network

Hosted by the Social Insurance Institution  
Warsaw, Poland

### Liaison Office for Eurasia

Hosted by the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation  
Moscow, Russian Federation



## FEATURE

While social security institutions have been drivers of digital transformation in public services for decades, the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this trend. In the last year, the ISSA has focussed on data gathering and sharing of good practices among ISSA members, and strengthened its international partnerships on digitalization of processes and services in social security.

# ACCELERATING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN SOCIAL SECURITY

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the ISSA documented a widespread increase in the use of digital channels, including e-services, mobile services and shared data services for social security institutions. Not only were more benefits and services provided through digital channels than before, lockdown measures pushed beneficiaries over to digital platforms, and social security institutions implemented communication campaigns to stimulate and facilitate this transition.

### A human-and-digital reality

The transition to the human-and-digital age has accelerated over this last year. As ISSA member institutions have demonstrated in a number of webinars, the blending of human skills and digital technologies is no longer an option, but an obligation in social security. This human-and-digital reality emerged along two dimensions, in internal collaboration and in external interaction with clients.

Internally, the sudden and massive shift towards teleworking experienced by many social security institutions due to COVID-19 meant that collaboration moved online. Externally, in-person contact with customers became difficult or impossible, and contact through digital channels took over. With the help of artificial intelligence and big data, processes were also automated and digitized.

The immediate benefits of this new human-and-digital reality has been the capacity to serve more people and to do it faster. At the same time, it has been necessary to focus even more on making sure both staff and clients are capable of using digital tools.

## Digital inclusion

Digital solutions were at the heart of strategies to deliver services during the crisis and expand coverage. However, whenever social security services go digital and in particular in reaching out to difficult-to-cover groups, the question of digital literacy and inclusion must be considered in order not to exclude certain parts of the population.

Through a webinar series on digital inclusion, ISSA member institutions have shared their good practices in this area. Ensuring accessibility is one of the key elements in any approach, and social security institutions have implemented innovative, but practical, solutions, taking into account mobile and internet infrastructure and penetration.

Social security institutions are also focussing on the continuous re-skilling and upskilling of their staff, to prepare them to work in a human-and-digital environment.

## International partnership

For the ISSA, it is essential to partner with the leading international experts in key fields for social security institutions. Partnerships with the United Nations University Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV) and with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have been particularly fruitful. These two organizations and the ISSA have converging priorities and goals when it comes to making strategic use of technology to transform and improve public governance and services.

Both organizations are contributing to the ISSA knowledge in their areas of expertise. For the ITU, focus has been on cybersecurity, and for UNU-EGOV it has been on digital transformation in public services. UNU-EGOV has contributed in a range of virtual events organized by the ISSA this year, including the webinar series on digital inclusion.



### VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM ON ICT

The ISSA Virtual Symposium on Information and Communication Technology showed the power of ICT in addressing the impact of COVID-19 in social security services.

### HUMAN-AND-DIGITAL IS THE REALITY

The ISSA Virtual Symposium on Leadership in Social Security, in January 2021, demonstrated the transformation towards a human-and-digital model in social security.

### WEBINARS ON TECHNOLOGIES AND DIGITALIZATION

The ISSA ran webinars on emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, and on digital inclusion, drawing on the experiences of ISSA member institutions in all regions.

### POPULAR ISSA GUIDELINES ON ICT

The *ISSA Guidelines on Information and Communication Technology* are the most consulted of the 13 sets of ISSA Guidelines for Social Security Administration.

## ISSA ONLINE EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

With the COVID-19 outbreak, the ISSA went virtual with all its events and activities. Webinars, regional and technical events, and statutory meetings have been organized online, while the ISSA Diploma programme is offered through e-learning platforms, and a new e-workshop concept has been developed and piloted.

## GOING VIRTUAL

In the last year, all ISSA activities and events have been organized online, and there have been more events than ever before. While the ISSA organizes around 50 events in a normal year, almost 80 took place in 2020.

### Weekly webinars

The ISSA webinars were launched in April 2020 and quickly became a success. The ISSA organized at least one webinar per week, often in response to expressions of interest by members, and there were over 7,500 registrations to webinars in 2020. More than 2,200 staff from member institutions registered for the first time to an ISSA event.

The COVID-19 webinar series dominated in the beginning, while focus gradually moved on to other areas. Series on long-term care and digitalization were launched, as well as a special CEO Roundtable series. A number of webinars were organized in cooperation with ISSA technical commissions or regional

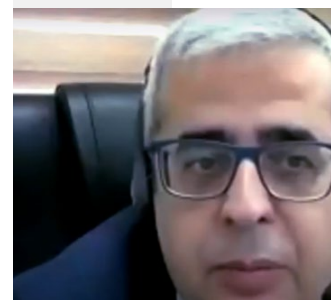
structures. All webinars are recorded and the videos are made available for members on the ISSA website.

### International and regional virtual events

The ISSA organized larger virtual events: the Social Security Virtual Summit for the Americas in December 2020, the Virtual Symposium on Leadership in Social Security (LEAD2021) in January 2021 and the Virtual Symposium on Information and Communication Technology (ICT2021) in May 2021.

*“ISSA regional webinars are like a rare and indispensable sap for the development of social security in Central Africa, in line with the noble objectives of the ISSA.”*

Tiguy Elebe Motingiya, National Social Security Fund, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Regional Liaison Officer for Central Africa



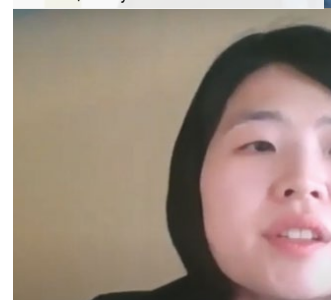
Hossein Moshiri Tabrizi  
Iranian Social Security Organization



Mohammed Azman  
bin Aziz Mohammed

Chief Executive Officer  
and Director General,  
Social Security  
Organisation (PERKESO),  
Malaysia

Mohammed Azman bin Aziz Mohammed  
SOCSO, Malaysia



Zee-A Han  
World Health Organization





The LEAD2021 virtual symposium focused on leadership, digitalization and behavioural insight in social security, demonstrating the move towards a human-and-digital model in social security. ICT2021 focussed on ICT responses to COVID-19, and showed how the pandemic has boosted digital transformation in social security. LEAD2021 was organized in cooperation with the ISSA Technical Commission on Organization, Management and Innovation and the Social Security Administering Body for the Health Sector (BPJS Kesehatan) of Indonesia. ICT2021 was organized in cooperation with the Estonian National Social Insurance Board.

In addition, the World Congress Digital Meeting took place in October 2020, while waiting for the XXII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, which was postponed to September 2021. These meetings are organized in cooperation with the ILO, and hosted by the Institute for Work & Health, Canada, and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

## E-learning and e-workshops

In cooperation with the ISSA's training partners, the ISSA Diploma programme moved from in-presence to innovative online courses. EN3S, ITC-ILO and the Muhanna Foundation all offered e-learning courses based on the ISSA Guidelines for Social Security Administration, in French, English and Arabic respectively. A successful pilot e-workshop on error, evasion and fraud in social security was organized in December 2020, and became the model for a new e-workshop programme.

## Statutory and technical meetings

The 121st Meeting of the ISSA Bureau, in October 2020, was the first ever held virtually, followed up by a second virtual meeting in June 2021. The 15th ISSA Forum for Technical Commissions (TC Forum) was held virtually for the second time in June 2021. An innovative approach was taken, with a number of technical and cross-cutting meetings taking place over a two-week period, leading up to a joint closing session. One of the major tasks of ISSA technical commissions is the revision of existing ISSA Guidelines, and the preparation of new ones, for 2022.

OVER  
7,500 participants

registered to ISSA virtual events  
in 2020



*"It is a learning opportunity, an exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices, and since the topics addressed help strengthening the competencies and functions of the institutions, the benefits cascade to the affiliates."*

Ana Marilyn Ortiz Ruiz de Juárez, General Manager,  
Social Security Institute of Guatemala

## FEATURE

Access to affordable and high-quality health and long-term care has been one of the most important priorities for social security in the past years. Inclusion and coverage, health, rehabilitation and long-term care are issues closely linked to ageing populations. They are at the core of the ISSA priorities for the triennium.

# HEALTH, LONG-TERM CARE & REHABILITATION

Through a number of activities including webinars, a technical report and articles, the ISSA has facilitated the sharing of experiences on a number of strategic aspects related to health. The aim is to help members take inspiration, learn and find solutions from each other. A number of activities have focussed on the resilience of health systems, eHealth, the innovative use of digital solutions, and links to COVID-19. Others focused on aging populations, long-term care (LTC) and the evolving needs of older people.

### The importance of rehabilitation

The ISSA established the Special Working Group on Rehabilitation. The multidisciplinary nature of rehabilitation – involving work injury, health, employment and sickness benefits – motivated the creation of this important group, which was announced at the World Social Security Forum in October 2019. It is implementing an ambitious work plan focussing on increased labour market participation, active living and active ageing,

and provides input to the work of the ISSA technical commissions. In view of the pandemic, it will also look into rehabilitation aspects for persons affected by long-term effects from COVID-19.

Recovering from a coronavirus infection and returning to a normal life and full work capacities is not a given. The symptoms can be anything from insignificant, to severe and even lethal. Experts increasingly point to the long-term effects. Older people and people with underlying diseases are most vulnerable, but there are many examples of patients that suffer severely and for which recovery is a long process. The pandemic has accentuated the crucial importance of rehabilitation, as millions of coronavirus patients are in need of help to get back to a normal life and to work.

### ISSA SPECIAL WORKING GROUP ON REHABILITATION

The ISSA Special Working Group on Rehabilitation, consists of ISSA member institutions from Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria and the United Kingdom.



## Health-care systems

Responding to ISSA members' interests in the health area, webinars and articles have addressed the issues of building more resilient health systems, facing the challenges of medical deserts, and improving the coverage and service quality of health insurance systems. Furthermore, the application of ICT in health – e-Health – emerges as a strategic tool to improve health systems, and this is also covered in the *ISSA Guidelines on Information and Communication Technology*.

## Long-term care and active ageing

Meeting the evolving needs of an ageing population is one of four ISSA priorities during this 2020–2022 triennium. Demographic ageing is one of the major challenges for societies around the world, and social security needs to adapt to this reality. As people live longer, the ambition is that they live as healthy, active and independent lives as possible. At the same time, many need care for long periods, which means that systems should be in place, professional workforce

### WEBINAR SERIES ON LONG-TERM CARE

The ISSA has launched a webinar series on long-term care, looking at international strategies and responses as well as sectoral and regional approaches.

must be available, financing issues have to be addressed, and services adapted to client needs. Thus, social security institutions should be prepared and equipped to respond with the appropriate services.

In November 2019, the ISSA launched a new webinar series on long-term care (LTC) with the participation of the EC, ILO, OECD and WHO. Each of them presented their research findings and

international strategies and responses to address urgent LTC needs. This was followed by webinars with ISSA members from different regions to share experiences on long-term care in a comparative perspective.

### WEBINARS: INNOVATION, HEALTH AND COVID-19



ISSA organized a number of webinars that discussed health-care coverage, COVID-19, innovation and use of digital technology.



## GOOD PRACTICE AWARD & VIRTUAL SUMMIT

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) was announced as the winner of the ISSA Good Practice Award for the Americas during the ISSA Virtual Summit for the Americas, which was held on 3 December 2020.

## CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN THE AMERICAS

ESDC Canada won the ISSA Good Practice Award (GPA) for the Americas 2020 for its entry *Service transformation: Design-thinking and the Acceleration Hub*. This is a good practice on how to take a holistic approach to improving service delivery. Through immersive design-thinking processes and agile, repeatable design methods, the ESDC gathered innovative ideas from employees, clients and partners that were translated into client-centred service solutions.

### Record participation

The ISSA GPA competitions are held regionally every three years, to celebrate excellence in social security. The regional competition for the Americas 2020 saw a record number of 138 entries coming from Central, North and South America, as well as the Caribbean. They are all available in the ISSA Database of Good Practices.

The regional competition was held in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, and the record

participation level is a sign of the strong dedication of ISSA members in the region to share good practices, learn from each other and promote the crucial role of social security in society. A number of the good practices submitted were focused on responses to COVID-19.

### Sharing good practices in a virtual summit

The Virtual Summit for the Americas was organized under the theme *Towards a new normal: Challenges and opportunities*, and more than 500 social security professionals from ISSA members in the region registered for the event.

COVID-19 was naturally the main topic at the event, with discussions centred around measures implemented, and the long-term effects on social security institutions and systems. Other key topics covered during the summit were coverage extension in view of the crisis,



### GPA AMERICAS COMPETITION IN FIGURES

- 138 good practices
- 30 institutions
- 18 countries



addressing inequalities in the region, with a focus on gender inequalities, and the acceleration of innovation and digitalization in social security due to the pandemic.

Building on first-hand experiences and good practices of ISSA members in the region, as well as contributions from the ILO, OECD, UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and UNU, resulted in rich presentations and discussions.

The rapid digital transformation pushed forward by the pandemic was broadly seen as a game changer, ensuring not only business continuity and service delivery, but

also possibilities for service improvements. While digital solutions can facilitate coverage extension, more still has to be done to reach difficult-to-cover groups and to improve gender equality.

The Virtual Summit was organized in cooperation with the Social Insurance Fund of Costa Rica (*Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social* – CCSS), in anticipation of the Regional Social Security Forum that it will host in December 2021, and which was postponed due to COVID-19. The event was recorded and is available for members on the ISSA website.



## GPA AFRICA COMPETITION

The Good Practice Award for Africa competition was held in 2020. It had record participation numbers of 97 entries from 36 institutions in 27 countries.

The award winner will be announced at the Regional Social Security Forum for Africa, which will take place in a virtual format the second half of 2021.

*“I congratulate Employment and Social Development Canada on winning the ISSA Good Practice Award for the Americas in a competition with many outstanding good practice entries of the highest quality from across the region.”*

Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano, ISSA Secretary General



# OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Social distancing, facemasks, hand-sanitizers, safety glass, teleworking arrangements, COVID-19 has placed health and safety measures at the forefront of everyone's mind, also in the workplace.

## PREVENTION DURING COVID-19

With the coronavirus spreading rapidly across the world, authorities and workplaces were struggling to keep pace, widespread prevention measures were implemented more quickly than ever before. Social distancing became the new buzzword, and overnight hand-sanitizers and facemasks were everywhere. Teleworking arrangements became widespread, while safety glass became common in places where in-person interactions were still necessary, such as for shopping and various services.

### CORONA PREVENTION MONITOR

The ISSA Corona Prevention Monitor offers a selection of news and analysis from media and other sources around the world on prevention during COVID-19. This was an initiative by the Austrian Workers' Compensation Board (*Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt – AUVA*) together with the ISSA's Special Commission on Prevention and its 14 international prevention sections.

The World Congress Digital Meeting in October 2020 highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic placed occupational safety and health (OSH) centre stage and pushed forward innovation in this area. As part of the digital meeting, the ISSA organized the Global Forum for Work Injury Insurance. Stefan Hussy, from the German Social Accident Insurance and Chair of the ISSA Technical Commission on Insurance against Employment Accidents and Occupational Diseases, stressed the necessity to build on this momentum and develop an ecosystem of safe and healthy workplaces. The Forum was hosted by the Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation.

### WORKPLACE MEASURES

The ISSA's Special Commission on Prevention has published a list of measures that can be shared by occupational accident insurances to ensure that the COVID-19 will not spread at the workplace.

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*“COVID-19 has pushed society into new work patterns, such as teleworking, into new lifestyles and into social distancing.”*

Marcelo Abi-Ramia Caetano, ISSA Secretary General

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Safety.Health.Wellbeing.

The Vision Zero strategy for safety, health and well-being at work took a decisive step forward with the launch of the Vision Zero Accredited Training Programme, a cooperation between the ISSA and the IOSH.

# VISION ZERO ACCREDITED TRAINING PROGRAMME

Vision Zero is built on a community of institutions, companies and occupational and safety health trainers, who all believe in a world of work without accident or harm. The trainers play an important role in building prevention capacities in workplaces, and the launch of the Vision Zero Accredited Training Programme is therefore an important step forward.

The new programme is offered by IOSH, and builds on a partnership agreement signed with the ISSA in October 2020. IOSH is the world's leading chartered professional body for people responsible for safety, health and well-being in the workplace.

The Vision Zero Accredited Training Programme was launched during the World Congress Digital Meeting on 5 October 2020. Over 1,200 Vision Zero trainers were invited to take part in the programme, which is available to anyone with the necessary experience.

## VISION ZERO IN FIGURES

- 10,300 companies
- 3,500 partners
- 1,300 trainers

## Vision Zero Digital

Another important development during this last year, was the launch of Vision Zero Digital in March 2021. This is a unique online platform that brings together specialists in the field of occupational safety, health, wellbeing, and environmental protection. This platform is expanding the usual tools of interaction: participants will find unique materials, and networking, personalized personal accounts, chats and voting.

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*“Together we will further the cause of preventing workplace harm and achieve our shared vision of a safer, healthier world of work.”*

Bev Messinger, Chief Executive, IOSH

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## INTERVIEW

Eric Le Bont, Director of the Council for the Social Protection of Self-Employed Workers (*Conseil de la protection sociale des travailleurs indépendants* – CPSTI), France.

# A NEW MEMBER FROM FRANCE

Since mid-2020, six social security institutions around the world have joined the ISSA. Among them is the CPSTI, France. ISSA asked its Director, Eric Le Bont, why CPSTI decided to join ISSA and what he hopes to gain from membership of the Association.

### ***What are your institution's main roles and responsibilities?***

In France, the CPSTI:

- ensures that the bodies responsible for collecting contributions and providing benefits correctly apply the rules relating to the social protection of self-employed workers and provide them with a good quality service;
- determines the general guidelines for health and social action specifically in favour of self-employed workers;
- manages the compulsory supplementary old-age and disability-death schemes for the self-employed and administers the related assets.

It may make proposals for legislative or regulatory amendments to the minister responsible for social security, who may also refer to it any question relating to the social protection of self-employed workers.

### ***Why did your institution decide to become a member of ISSA?***

Our institution, which was created on 1 January 2019 following the abolition of the social security scheme for the self-employed (*Régime social des indépendants* – RSI), has inherited a culture of international representation. CPSTI's President, Sophie Duprez, and I are convinced of the value of international comparisons of the action of social security organizations, and the importance of the universal dimension of social protection.



Eric Le Bont, Director, CPSTI

### ***Which ISSA activities and services are most relevant to your institution, and in which do you intend to participate?***

Acting within a flexible and responsive structure, the CPSTI advisors and staff focus on thematic networking around the social protection of self-employed workers, in the fields of expertise and visibility. These needs have become more pressing due to the global COVID-19 crisis and new forms of self-employment, such as digital platform work and microenterprises.

## INTERVIEW

The ISSA Focal Point for the English-speaking Caribbean Countries was launched in March 2021. This is the 18th regional structure in the ISSA community. The Focal Point is headed by Stewart Haynes, Director of the National Insurance Services in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the ISSA asked him a few questions about this new role.

# NEW FOCAL POINT IN THE CARIBBEAN

### ***Why is it important for the region to have a focal point?***

Our regional social security systems are experiencing many-sided challenges regarding the administration and sustainability of the systems. We recognize this partnership with ISSA as an indispensable tool to fortify governance, administration, and institutional capabilities to better identify and respond to these challenges.

### ***What motivated the National Insurance Services in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to host the Focal Point for the English-speaking Caribbean Countries?***

As a Bureau member of ISSA, representing the English-speaking Caribbean social security systems, I have first-hand knowledge and experience of the significant benefits of the Focal Point. As such, I was energized to position our regional social systems to improve access to the practical knowledge, extensive network, activities, products, and services offered.

### ***What would you say are the key similarities and differences in terms of social security systems within the region?***

Some key similarities of our systems are that they operate in small and open economies that are vulnerable to external shocks including natural disasters, and we face significant challenges to provide social protection for self-employed and informal sector workers. The key differences of our systems surround the administrative and governance practices.

### ***What will be the key activities of the Focal Point in the coming year?***

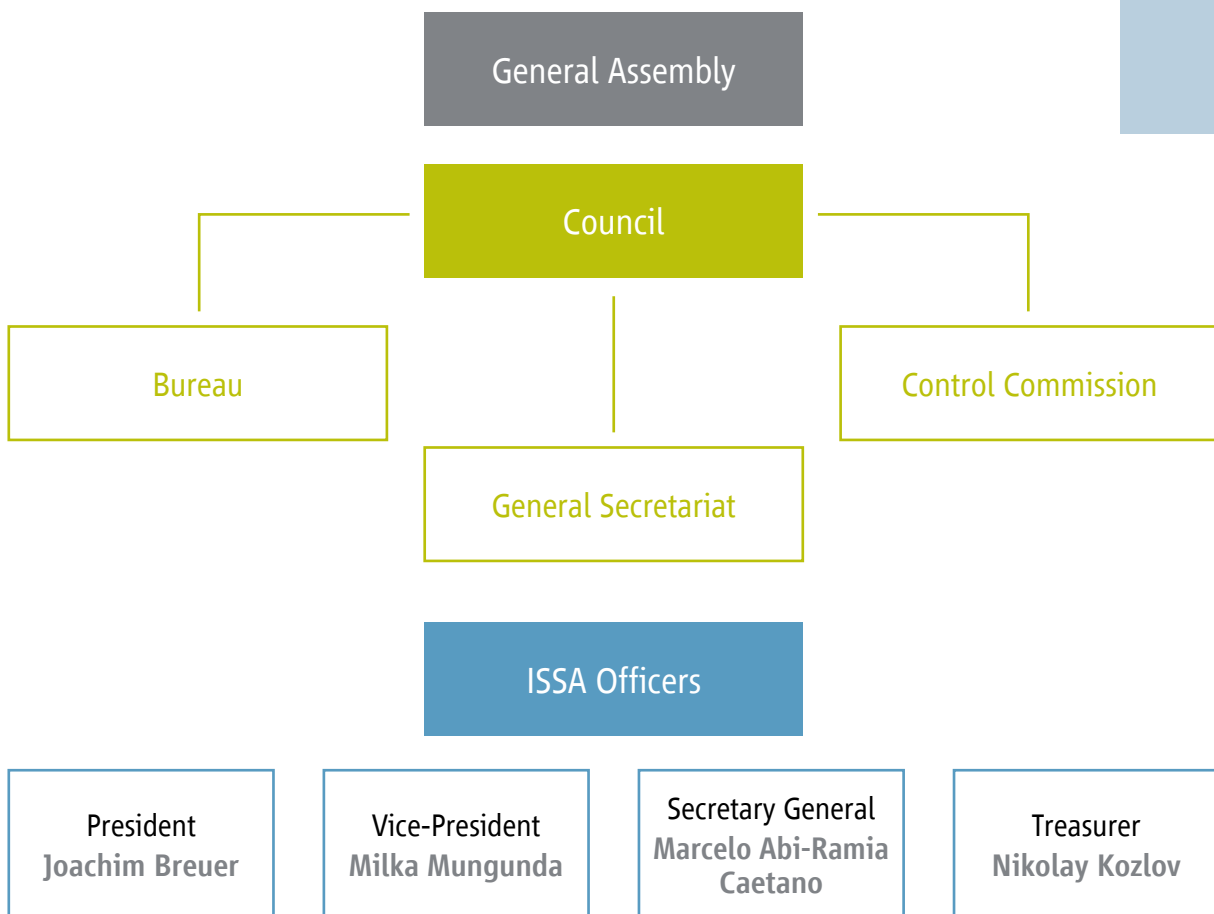
In addition to representation and presentations at next meeting of the heads of regional social security systems to be facilitated by CARICOM Secretariat, there will also be workshops and webinars on key areas and a needs-assessment across individual social security systems, which would inform the work programme and activities for the region.



Stewart Haynes, Head of Focal Point

ISSA governance and technical work depends fully on the engagement and expertise of its members. The ISSA General Secretariat has 42 staff members, complemented by a number of seconded staff from member institutions.

## STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE





## ISSA TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS

The 13 ISSA technical commissions gather the knowledge and expertise of member institutions in order to develop products and services that benefit the global community of top-level managers and professionals in social security administration. In June 2021, all the technical commissions met during the 15th ISSA Forum for Technical Commissions.

### DEVELOPING ISSA GUIDELINES

The technical commissions are revising the following ISSA Guidelines by end of 2022:

- Actuarial Work for Social Security
- Administrative Solutions for Coverage Extension
- Communication by Social Security Administrations
- Information and Communication Technology

They are also developing new Guidelines on:

- Business continuity and resilience
- Human resources

### 13 ISSA TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS ON:

- Contribution Collection and Compliance
- Employment Policies and Unemployment Insurance
- Family Benefits
- Information and Communication Technology
- Insurance against Employment Accidents and Occupational Diseases
- Investment of Social Security Funds
- Medical Care and Sickness Insurance
- Mutual Benefit Societies
- Old-age, Invalidity and Survivors' Insurance
- Organization, Management and Innovation
- Policy Analysis and Research
- Statistical, Actuarial and Financial Studies
- Special Commission on Prevention

### 2 SPECIAL WORKING GROUPS ON:

- Rehabilitation
- International data exchange

## ISSA INTERNATIONAL PREVENTION SECTIONS

The Special Commission on Prevention is composed of 14 international prevention sections and coordinates joint activities in the field of prevention of occupational risks.



- |                          |                              |                   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| - Agriculture            | - Electricity, Gas and Water | - Mining Industry |
| - Chemical Industry      | - Health Services            | - Research        |
| - Construction Industry  | - Information                | - Trade           |
| - Culture of Prevention  | - Iron and Metal Industry    | - Transportation  |
| - Education and Training | - Machine and System Safety  |                   |

# UPGRADING ISSA KNOWLEDGE AND SERVICES

During this last year, the ISSA has innovated to upgrade and renew the products and services provided to its members. COVID-19 has led to an increased focus on social security, and increased demand for regular analysis of developments, information sharing and mutual learning activities.

## Virtual summit and symposiums

The Virtual Summit for the Americas, the Virtual Symposium on Leadership in Social Security and the Virtual Symposium on ICT in Social Security have been quality substitutes while waiting for the possibility to organize presence based conferences.

## Webinars

Since the first one in April 2020, the ISSA has organized close to 90 webinars and other online events. They are all recorded and available on the ISSA website.

## Virtual bilateral cooperation

On request, the ISSA has facilitated bilateral meetings and cooperation.

## WEEKLY ANALYSIS

The ISSA provides a weekly analysis of good practices, trends and developments in social security on its website.

## New My ISSA

The new logged-in environment for ISSA members with a personalized online dashboard, and online spaces for sharing, networking and collaboration.

## New Country Profiles

In July 2020, the ISSA launched the new and improved online database, covering 184 country and territory profiles on social security and with information on international agreements.

## e-workshops

The ISSA has developed a new e-workshop programme for mutual discussion, exchanges and problem-solving in a virtual environment.

## e-learning

The ISSA Diploma programme courses are being offered in English, Arabic and French on online training platforms provided by the ISSA training partners.

## Regional structures

Regional structures have adapted their services and been involved in organizing ISSA webinars. The ISSA has launched a new regional structure for the English-speaking Caribbean.

## COVID-19 MONITOR

The online COVID-19 Monitor attracted over 40,000 views of its pages, covering:

- country measures
- analysis
- news
- webinars
- links to other sources

# KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES

## New website

In July 2020, the migration to a new ISSA web platform was completed with the launch of the new ISSA Country Profiles section. The ISSA has continued developments to further improve the user experience. This includes: new My ISSA with tailored content; easier access to ISSA products and services; improved search and filtering; mobile and tablet compatible.

[www.issa.int](http://www.issa.int)

## Analysis and publications

The ISSA provides weekly analysis of key trends and developments in social security. Experiences shared in ISSA webinars and good practices submitted by ISSA member institutions are important sources of information for the articles. The ISSA also prepared draft reports on international social security agreements and on long-term care for the ISSA Forum for Technical Commissions in June 2021.

[www.issa.int/analysis](http://www.issa.int/analysis) / [www.issa.int/publications](http://www.issa.int/publications)

## ISSA Guidelines

The ISSA Guidelines provide concise and practical knowledge of international best practice in key areas of social security administration. They build on the experiences of ISSA member institutions. They are developed, and regularly updated, in consultation with the ISSA technical commissions. New Guidelines are being developed in the areas of business continuity and human resources.

[www.issa.int/guidelines](http://www.issa.int/guidelines)

## Good practices in social security

Over 1,000 good practices from ISSA member institutions are available in the online ISSA Database of Good Practices. This is a unique and exclusive source of knowledge and experiences for ISSA member institutions. Over 200 new good practices from Africa and the Americas were submitted in the regional ISSA Good Practice Award competitions in 2020.

[www.issa.int/gp](http://www.issa.int/gp)

## ISSA Country Profiles

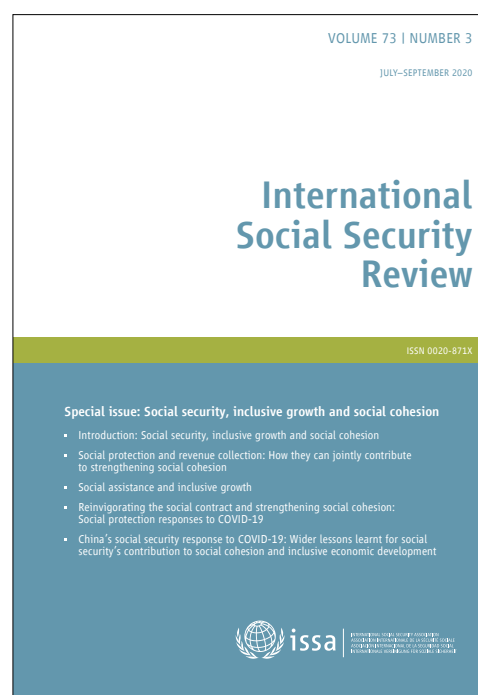
The new online ISSA Country Profiles offer improved access to structured, comparative profiles of social security systems and programmes in 184 countries and territories. Regular updates are produced for Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Americas and Europe, providing an overview of the features of social security programmes in the particular region.

[www.issa.int/country-profiles](http://www.issa.int/country-profiles)

## International Social Security Review

First published in 1948, the *International Social Security Review* (ISSR) is the world's major quarterly publication in the field of social security. Among the four issues published across 2020/21, are the 2020 special issue, *Social security, inclusive growth and social cohesion* and a 2021 special issue, *Social security coverage extension in the People's Republic of China*. ISSA members have free access.

[www.issa.int/review](http://www.issa.int/review)



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