

Public Labor and Social Protection Policies for Migrants in Latin America in Times of Covid and Post-Covid-19. Existing Gaps for Your Effective Access.¹

Políticas públicas laborales y de protección social para migrantes en América Latina en tiempos de Covid y post-Covid-19. Brechas existentes para su efectivo acceso

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ABSTRACT

The economic crisis that the Covid-19 pandemic has produced in Latin America has generated, in a very marked way, considerable increases in unemployment rates, this coupled with the wear and tear of the services offered by the States to the population and the poor implementation of practice of public policies of a labor nature and social protection, which has had a considerable impact on generating greater gaps to incorporate and care for people in a migratory situation, thus violating fundamental human rights. Methodologically, it is a documentary, descriptive, cross-sectional study, with a non-experimental design. Among its main conclusions, it is pointed out that after the adverse effects generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the States require a responsible commitment to put into practice public labor policies for social protection without any type of discrimination or exclusion of the migrant population to that these policies achieve true and inclusive effectiveness.

Keywords: Labor public policies, social protection, migration, pandemic.

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RESUMEN

La crisis económica que ha producido la pandemia del Covid-19 en América Latina ha generado, de manera muy marcada, aumentos considerables en las tasas de desempleo, esto aunado al desgaste de los servicios que ofrecen los Estados a la población y la mala implementación de práctica de políticas públicas de carácter laboral y de protección social, lo que ha tenido un impacto considerable en generar mayores brechas para la incorporación y atención de las personas en situación migratoria, vulnerando así derechos humanos fundamentales. Metodológicamente es un estudio documental, descriptivo, transversal, con un diseño no experimental. Entre sus principales conclusiones, se señala que luego de los efectos adversos generados por la pandemia de Covid-19, los Estados requieren de un compromiso responsable para poner en práctica políticas públicas laborales de protección social, sin ningún tipo de discriminación o exclusión de la población migrante para que estas políticas logren una efectividad verdadera e inclusiva.

Palabras clave: Políticas públicas laborales, protección social, migración, pandemia.

RESUMO

A crise econômica provocada pela pandemia da Covid-19 na América Latina gerou, de forma muito acentuada, aumentos consideráveis nas taxas de desemprego, combinados com a erosão dos serviços oferecidos pelos Estados à população e a má implementação de políticas públicas de caráter laboral e de proteção social, o que tem tido um impacto considerável na geração de maiores lacunas na incorporação e cuidado de pessoas em situação migratória, violando assim os direitos humanos fundamentais. Metodologicamente, trata-se de um estudo documental, descritivo, transversal, com desenho não experimental. Entre as suas principais conclusões, salienta-se que após os efeitos adversos gerados pela pandemia da Covid-19, os Estados exigem um compromisso responsável na implementação de políticas públicas laborais de proteção social, sem qualquer tipo de discriminação ou exclusão da população migrante para que estas. as políticas alcancem uma eficácia verdadeira e inclusiva.

Palavras-chave: Políticas públicas de trabalho, proteção social, migração, pandemia.

1. Introduction

It is no secret to anyone that in recent times the accentuated migratory phenomenon from the countryside to urban centers, the erosion in the services provided by States to the population, particularly in developing countries, together with the constant and repeated economic crises that have led to considerable increases in unemployment rates, in a constant and marked way in the last ten years, in Latin America, give rise to the study of the labor phenomenon which has been surrounded by economic and social aspects that have evidently ceased to be circumstantial, as originally believed, to be taken as a structural problem of the economic and political model of modern societies, especially in times of pandemic as include Espina-Romero *et al.* (2024)

The general situation of countries, worldwide, is submerged within an unpromising context, marked by complex situations that seem to be a downward spiral that leads to destabilizing consequences of a political, economic and social nature due to the problem caused by the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19); that not only does it translate into an issue related to the health and social protection of humanity, but that these complications transcend the current scenarios of the world, affecting production and work units, public revenues, the proper functioning of companies or organizations and the proper functioning of the productive apparatus of States, which will have to overcome great challenges to recover (Acevedo-Duque *et al.*, 2023).

The theories that were woven around the pandemic and that considered Covid-19 as a simple phenomenon of a temporary nature that would disappear shortly after its arrival, have given way to much more demotivating and worrying opinions, a depressed economy in all world scenarios, the scarce movement of the productive apparatus, public and private capital companies totally paralyzed by the lack of raw materials (Duque *et al.*, 2021), the slow recovery of organizations, the sustained growth of unemployment, a sharp decline in state revenues and a palpable and registered rise in inflation that eroded the purchasing power of the population and ended up plunging them into the greatest boom in poverty and misery that has been experienced in recent times, These are just some of the heartbreaking consequences of the global crisis due to the pandemic.

Latin America in times of Covid-19

The situation in Latin America due to Covid-19 projected a picture that is still not very clear, given that not only the health of millions of people was endangered, but also that the economy of the States was seriously compromised, negatively impacting the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of each of them and having an impact on all economic processes. Financial, budgetary, social, among others, of each region. For this reason, the role of national leaders worldwide, together with businessmen and private initiative, had a preponderant and decisive role in ensuring not only the social protection of people, but also their well-being through the progressive recovery of their economy and the sustainability of companies to guarantee employment.

In this sense, in the context of the pandemic, these Latin American countries, committed to the social well-being of their citizens,

announced certain restriction measures to mitigate the sources of contagion, among which we can mention:

- Social distancing measures, which led to the closure of some public workplaces such as cinemas, schools, universities, restaurants, and shopping centers.
- Partial or total quarantines, which forced both large industries and small and medium-sized enterprises to reduce their working hours and, in the worst cases, to temporarily close their work entities.
- Measures to restrict or prohibit travel and even border closures, which affected the working mass of airlines, hotels, and tourist sites, among others.

However, even when these measures were necessary, it had a bifurcation that generated two types of consequences: positive and negative, since, while on the one hand it sought to prevent the spread of the virus by keeping the population in a safe situation, away from exposure to the virus due to its rapid expansion; on the other, at the same time, there was a partial paralysis of the productive apparatus and the production of goods and services, due to the fact that these processes were put into operation thanks to the operability of the workers within the companies, which ended up being strongly affected by their absence, which in more cases placed the economic stability of the companies in check, of the workers and their families, when the partial or total stoppage of work occurs (Díaz *et al.*, 2021).

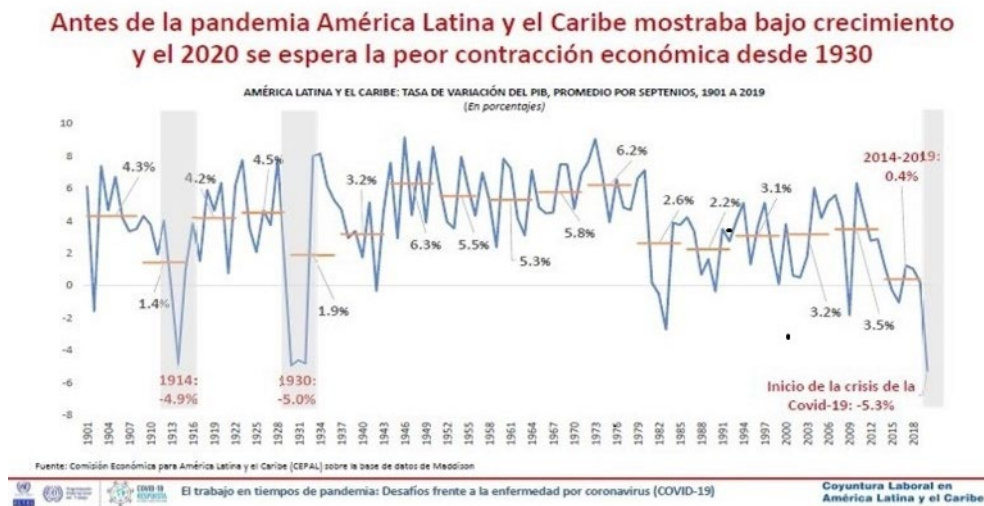
The role played by labor law is very important since it provides the opportunity for every worker to contribute with their work to the growth and mobilization of the productive process and to the smooth running of the production chain of goods and services that

the State apparatus puts in place, so that work is a fundamental axis where any State lays its foundations to encourage its production and to increase its sustainable growth (González-Díaz *et al.*, 2022). However, in these times of pandemic, we must be very cautious with the hygiene and safety measures that must be always present until the definitive eradication of the virus, to avoid as much as possible its contagion and future outbreaks, without neglecting economic stability and the erosion of employment.

Unemployment and economic contraction

In the first instance, it is important to note that before Covid-19, in Latin America (González-Díaz *et al.*, 2021), the unemployment figures were really depressing, due to the little attention paid to formal employment and the total neglect of informal work by the governments and sectors involved due to the lack of policies to stimulate the strengthening of private sector industries, showing only a brief growth in employment by 0.4 % between 2014-2019, as shown in the following graph:

Graph 1. Before and after pandemic 1901-2018



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) based on Maddison data

However, given the global Covid-19 pandemic and the evident paralysis of the production process in almost all workplaces, added to the negative effects of unemployment that has been on the rise, the reality has led to major social changes and a global financial crisis, which has been progressively affecting all sectors, especially the labor sector, which constitutes a transversal axis that, on the one hand, allows the population to obtain income through the provision of its services for its sustenance and well-being, while,

on the other, it encourages the productive apparatus to increase the production of goods and services, mobilizing the economic market (Jiménez-Bucarey *et al.*, 2021).

From a regional perspective, for the ILO (2020), the decrease in labor activity since the first quarter of 2020 did not have an equal pace in the different regions of Latin America since the result of this decrease was proportional to the appearance and spread of the virus in the different countries and to the social

distancing measures taken by governments. In other words, the more the virus spread, the greater the decrease in work activity. Hence, the estimate of the hours lost during the first quarter of 2020 stood at 4.5 %, which constituted an approximate equivalent of 130 million full-time jobs; however, with the spread of the virus, the outlook worsened for all regional groups, with estimates indicating that the largest decline was recorded in the Americas, in Europe and Central Asia. Therefore, in the Americas, the loss of working hours in the second quarter of 2020 reached a little more than double the first quarter, that is, approximately 12.4 %, which was extended towards the first quarter of 2021 (Kalia *et al.*, 2022).

At this point, it is important to note that GDP and the unemployment variable are proportionally inverse, so the percentage of unemployment increases when the economic cycle is at its lowest point, so with the arrival of Covid-19 there was a fall in GDP in all countries in general and this had an impact on the increase in unemployment. which, according to ILO figures (2020) generated almost 30 million more poor people. Immersing Latin America in Poverty and Extreme Poverty indices in a scenario of a 5.3 % drop in GDP and an increase in Unemployment of 3.7 percentage points in 2020 and 7.4 in 2021 (Kumar *et al.*, 2021).

In this sense, for the ILO and ECLAC (2020), the impact on the labor markets of each country in the region depended, among other things, on the productive structure and the composition of employment in each sector. Among the areas that were severely affected are those related to tourism (airlines, accommodation, restaurants, and hotels), trade and manufacturing, as well as real estate and administrative activities. These sectors are labor-intensive and some, such

as commerce, concentrate a high proportion of informal employment. Other sectors that also suffered a medium-high impact are transport and storage and entertainment and cultural activities. Workers in these sectors were particularly hard hit by economic risk (Marcano *et al.*, 2021).

In general terms, the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which not only affected areas of health, but also caused one of the largest contractions that has been generated in recent times, caused that, in the midst of this crisis, States implemented measures for their workers both in the workplace and in social protection to, in one way or another, to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic; however, many of these measures did not incorporate migrant workers who found themselves under a double violation because they were not in their countries of origin and, at the same time, were excluded from the protection measures implemented by countries in Latin America (Müller *et al.*, 2021).

Migrants in times of pandemic

One sector that was hard hit by the arrival of Covid-19 and that did not find peace either in their country of origin or in the country in which they were, are migrant workers, who for reasons of the pandemic were not working and many of whom did not have access to the benefits offered by government public policies; being severely limited by not generating income for their subsistence or sending remittances to their families, as well as not being able to move around due to restriction measures, being victims of discrimination and exclusion and, in many cases, not being able to return to their countries of origin, due to the closure of borders (Müller *et al.*, 2021).

It is important to highlight that labor migration, in the words of Delgado y Abellana

(2009), has become a determining factor and has a great impact on the world economy due to the large amounts of remittances that migrant workers send each year to their countries of origin, contributing both to their economic growth and to the support of their own families (Rajak, *et al.*, 2022).

On the other hand, Guadagno cited by Weller (2020) considered that in times of Covid anti-immigration policies were further reinforced, under the discourse of fear of the spread of viruses from other countries, criticizing multilateralism and arguing that international migration represents a high risk to the health situation of destination countries (Rojo-Ramos *et al.*, 2022).

For the IACHR (2013), migration policies, which constitute the set of administrative acts, measures, actions, laws, and the institutional omissions carried out by a State to regulate the entry, exit, or stay of the national or foreign population within its territory, constitute necessary tools to face the different challenges that international migration entails (Kadi Montiel *et al.*, 2014).

However, as Gzesh (2008) points out, it is no secret to anyone that in the most democratic and affluent states of North America and Europe, the human rights of non-citizens and in particular unauthorized migrants are not respected. Some advocates claim that the precarious condition of undocumented migrants is part of an implicit economic policy that rests on the over-exploitation of vulnerable workers to keep down labor costs in the service sector, marginal industries, and agriculture (Kalia *et al.*, 2022).

Therefore, international organizations had the responsibility to ensure the well-being of migrants, especially during this global crisis, given that the situation of vulnerability in which migrants found themselves increased

due to facing the reality of being victims of exposure to the pandemic, exclusion from protection systems and, in the worst case of persecution. And such is the magnitude of this problem that many countries of origin did not allow their return, pointing out that they were potential carriers and spreaders of the virus, which placed them at the top of the most affected and vulnerable people in this scenario of the pandemic with the most flagrant violation of their fundamental human rights (Shah *et al.*, 2023).

For ECLAC/ILO (2020), beyond the humanitarian aid that has been deployed in some cases, migrant workers required during the crisis, greater labor protection and access to social security benefits enjoyed by workers who are nationals of receiving countries. Similarly, they should have had the possibility of registering for social transfer and labor benefits programs, as well as contemplating possible temporary moratoriums on visas and that migrant worker affected by this situation be considered in the social policies implemented by Latin American countries.

Public labour and social protection policies in times of pandemic and post-pandemic

Within democratic models, the social demands of the population require timely and effective responses from the States, which have the governmental responsibility to meet them, applying a set of objectives and implementing action and application plans for the solution of collective problems that, at a given time, both the government and the citizens consider as a priority. These public policies stand as mechanisms to provide responses and obtain socioeconomic results that translate into satisfactory results for the community (Saiz-Álvarez *et al.*, 2020).

Different labor policies were implemented by the countries of Latin America and Central America on a temporary basis and even with a view to maintaining themselves in post-pandemic times, to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 and the adverse effects that have suffocated the world economy and all production sectors, especially workers and their families and companies. Below we will mention just some of the measures, taking as a reference the data collected in the *International Labor Organization portal (2020)* in the world of work and where it is evident that in almost all countries there was no incorporation of policies for the protection of migrant workers (Sandoval-Obando *et al.*, 2022).

Argentina

To reduce the effects of Covid-19 and its direct impact on workers and companies in all sectors, several Government Decrees were approved in Argentina and support programs were promoted, among which the following can be mentioned:

Prohibition of dismissals without just cause and for the reasons of absence, or reduction of work and force majeure during the early phases of the pandemic (Decree 329/20). A Compensatory Salary Allowance was also granted in companies with up to 100 workers; a complementary salary for private sector employees (50 % paid by the State) was also approved, and a comprehensive system of unemployment benefits. Employer contributions are also reduced (Ullah *et al.*, 2021).

Bolivia

The salary of public sector workers was guaranteed and to alleviate the adverse effects of Covid-19 on labor matters and the impact on workers' incomes, various aids were

created consisting of a Family Bonus for low-income families consisting of Bs. 500 per child of school age The Free Family Basket was granted where an amount of Bs. 400 (USD57) was paid for the amount of the family basket. The benefit was aimed at: older adults who received the dignity income, but not other income or retirement; mothers who received the Juana Azurduy bonus and people who could access the disability bonus to benefit 1.6 million families in the national territory at the rural and urban levels (Vergara *et al.*, 2019).

Brazil

The President of the Republic issued some Provisional Measures (MP) in labor matters on the occasion of the Covid-19 pandemic, among which the following can be highlighted: MP 936: which allowed the suspension of labor contracts or the reduction of working hours instead of the termination of the contract, also establishing public financing of part of the monthly income of workers who reduced their working hours during the pandemic The establishment of an "emergency monthly subsidy" was carried out for the most vulnerable citizens, with low-income, informal, self-employed and unemployed employment modalities (Villar *et al.*, 2019).

Chile

Opinion No. 1283/6 of the Labor Directorate establishing that due to the labor effects of the quarantine, these were considered to be force majeure or fortuitous events, which would lead to a suspension of the reciprocal obligations of the employment relationship, freeing the parties from the reciprocal obligations imposed on them by the employment contract, that is, employer: to grant the agreed work and pay the remuneration; and the worker: to assist in providing the agreed services. Excluded from

the effects of the fortuitous event or force majeure are those indispensable and essential tasks for the population determined by the competent authority (Vimal *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, Law 21.227 is decreed, which authorizes access to unemployment insurance benefits in exceptional circumstances applicable to cases of temporary closure of companies as a result of decisions of the authority, agreements to suspend the employment contract and agreements for the temporary reduction of working hours, it was provided that the worker would receive income from unemployment insurance. while the employer maintains the obligation to pay the worker's social security and health contributions. A monthly tax subsidy was established for dependent workers subject to working hours who receive a gross monthly remuneration of less than approximately USD445. The Income Support Bonus and another, equivalent to the Single Family Subsidy (SUF) bonus, were created, which will benefit 2 million people without formal work. As well as the creation of a fund of USD2,000 million to grant benefits to the most vulnerable individuals and families, with a view to informal workers who did not have the protection of unemployment insurance.

Colombia

Regarding employment protection measures, Circular 33 (04/17/20) was issued where compensable paid leave, modification of the working day, agreement of the salary, modification and suspension of extralegal benefits and agreement of conventional benefits were granted. Likewise, Decree 488 (03/27/20) was issued where the Ministry of Labor of that country proposed alternatives to keep employment: 1) Withdrawal of unemployment benefits in private funds, an

amount that compensates for the reduction in monthly income. 2) Enjoyment of early, collective, or accumulated vacations. 3) Workers who had become unemployed could access benefits from the Unemployment Protection Mechanism: economic aid of two minimum wages. Decree 486 was issued (03/27/20) which created an economic stimulus for workers and rural producers over 70 years of age, who were in mandatory isolation and who were not being benefited by another government social program as established by Noroño (2014).

Costa Rica

The Law of Authorization for the Reduction of Working Hours was promoted to preserve employment due to the declaration of national emergency. The Regulations for the procedure for the temporary suspension of employment contracts were issued and if it is not possible to readjust the functions of persons at risk, the enjoyment or advance of vacations is recommended. The Solidarity Fund for the Unemployed due to Emergencies was created, financed from the differential in the price of oil, with the purpose of helping families in the situation of contraction of the labor market, through the granting of unemployment benefits.

Cuba

As for the measures taken by the Cuban government to protect employment and stimulate the economy, the following are mentioned:

In the state sector, to guarantee the continuity of activities and the maintenance of income, it was agreed that in the event of work interruption, the relocation of workers was promoted. If the worker did not accept the job relocation in an unjustified manner, he would not be given a subsidy.

In case of not being able to relocate, a guarantee of a 100 % salary was given for one month. After this month, the salary was collected at 60 %.

For workers working for self-employed employers, the employer was obliged to guarantee remuneration in proportion to the actual time worked, the amount of which could not be less than the country's minimum wage. For those who were not working, they had to ask for a suspension of activities. For self-employed workers, in the event of suspension of the activity, the payment of taxes was suspended. The necessary deferrals for the Payment of Social Security were approved.

Ecuador

The Ministry of Labor, through Agreement 076, in order to preserve work, issued the guidelines for the application of the reduction, modification or suspension of the working day during the declaration of a health emergency, in order to alleviate the pressure of the payment of wages in the private sector, provided that employers would reach payment agreements with workers during the emergency and that they would provide their employees with the use of the of accumulated vacations or provided that the worker's consent is obtained, the employer may allow the enjoyment of early vacation periods; and in general, the employer could adopt measures that would reasonably avoid aggravating the worker's situation, provisions that were contemplated in the Labor Code. Decree 1022 was issued, in which the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion would deliver a bonus (Family Protection Bonus for Emergency contingency of \$120, \$60 in April and \$60 in May to 400 families who were underemployed and whose income was less than \$400 per month, being

beneficiaries those who do not have access to social security and whose income was less than the unified basic salary, and affiliated to the peasant insurance. The coverage of the IESS was extended for an additional 60 days to those who had been laid off during the months of April, May, June, and July of 2020. As well as the extension of the delivery of the solidarity bonus.

El Salvador

A guarantee of job stability is granted, so that no worker who is in quarantine due to Covid-19, ordered by the competent health authority, or who is unable to return to the workplace due to migratory or health restrictions decreed in the country or abroad, could not be dismissed and could not be subject to a deduction from their salary. Aid was granted to companies and the continuity of their activities, through measures to mitigate the non-payment of credits, derived from the Covid-19 emergency, with these rules also allowed the granting of credits, the consolidation, restructuring and refinancing of debts under favorable conditions, the non-collection of penalties for non-payment of credit obligations. New work modalities were created that sought to promote and implement telework as an instrument for the generation of employment and the modernization of public, private, and autonomous institutions. And the obligation to comply with safety measures at work.

Guatemala

The Employment Protection Fund was created to support private sector workers whose contracts had been suspended. The amount was constituted for up to two billion quetzals (Q2,000,000,000), which could be granted up to an amount of Q75 per day per worker. Regarding assistance to enterprises and the continuity of their activities, the Fund for Micro, Small and Medium-sized

Enterprises was created, a credit line of Q650 million (USD84 million) for individual merchants, professionals, companies and savings and credit cooperatives. Similarly, the payment of the Solidarity Tax (ISO) was deferred, and those companies that opted for the benefit could not dismiss any worker, except for justified cause. An increase in the State spending budget was carried out, to comply with salary obligations and collective agreements acquired in previous years by the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health.

Honduras

Solidarity contribution for the temporary maintenance of employment and income for workers during the validity of the national emergency. Guarantee of access to social security, workers maintained the benefit of access to health through the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS) even when the contributions are suspended due to the suspension of work or the period of the National Emergency. Law of aid to the productive sector and workers. The government created Operation "Honduras Solidaria" to supply at least eight hundred thousand (800,000) families affected by the Covid-19 crisis with food rations from the basic basket. Honduras Solidarity Decree with Solidarity Contribution for the temporary maintenance of employment and income for workers during the validity of the national emergency

Mexico

In labor matters, it prohibited dismissals or any impact on wages that would affect the employment relationship, so companies had to keep the full salary of their workers to the extent possible; in this sense, those companies that were evidently unable to follow this recommendation, were allowed to go to the

Federal Attorney for the Defense of Labor to help reach agreements that benefit both parties. In the social sphere, both the disabled and the elderly received the payment of their pensions in advance, equivalent to four months. For its part, the Mexico City Unemployment Insurance program was extended to more beneficiaries through the Social Action "Support for residents of Mexico City who lost their formal employment due to Covid-19", which consists of granting support of 1,500 pesos, to the population that lost their job involuntarily and comes from the formal sector. Extending an Emergent Support to Non-Salaried Workers Residents of Mexico City, in the face of Covid-19 for a one-time amount of 1,500 pesos.

Nicaragua

It agreed to grant work permits with percentage of salaries. Reduce working hours. Carry out temporary suspensions of contract. Prior to the collective and temporary suspension of contracts, mutual consent must be sought in companies under the free zone regime. Grant advance on account of vacations in companies under the free zone regime. Tripartite Agreement on Free Trade Zones. Interruption of work of people in vulnerable situations. People over 60 years of age, pregnant women, and high-risk people will be paid in companies under the free zone regime. Tripartite Agreement on Free Trade Zones.

Panama

Temporary modification of the working day, to mitigate the risk of contagion for workers, employers, and users of the services. Temporary modification of the working day and Regulation of the suspension of the employment contract, for workers of companies whose operations have been closed in accordance with the preventive measures

ordered by the government authorities within the State of National Emergency. Regulation of the suspension of the employment contract Plan “Panama Solidario”, to meet the urgent needs because of the Covid-19 pandemic through the programs: Food Bags, Solidarity Bonus and Digital Voucher. On the other hand, for the purposes of prevention against discrimination and exclusion, *the validity of work permits for foreign workers was extended*. Use of expired or early vacations, for workers 60 years of age or older, as well as those who suffer from chronic diseases and pregnant women, could take advantage of expired or early vacations, for a minimum of 15 calendar days. Provisions for the application of protocols to ensure hygiene and health in the workplace.

Paraguay

Law 6524, enacted on March 26, 2020, declaring a State of Emergency in Paraguay contains a series of administrative, fiscal, and financial measures, namely:

Subsidy for formal wage earners: A subsidy is introduced for formal wage earners who earn up to 2 minimum wages and whose employment contracts are suspended by virtue of the cessation of activities due to coronavirus. The subsidy, paid by the social security agency, will be 50 % of the minimum wage. The legality of teleworking was established as a modality for public and private companies during the emergency period (Law No. 6524). Likewise, Sick Leave and the Incentive for the use of paid vacations were granted, making the deadlines for notice by the employer more flexible to allow the use of paid vacations during the crisis (Resolution MTESS 499/2020 of 17.03.2020).

Peru

Emergency Decree No. 033-2020 was issued, which authorized workers to freely dispose of the Compensation for Time of Service funds (S/. 2400.00), in which the obligation to withhold and pay the components of the mandatory monthly contribution of affiliates to the Private Pension System is suspended. Similarly, through Emergency Decree No. 034-2020, affiliates of the Private Pension Fund Administration System were authorized to make a one-time extraordinary withdrawal of up to S/ 2,000.00. Likewise, Emergency Decree No. 038-2020 authorized workers included in a perfect suspension of work to freely dispose of the Compensation for Time of Service (CTS) funds for up to 1 gross monthly remuneration for each month that it lasted. For their part, workers who were in a perfect suspension of work, who belonged to the labor regime of the microenterprise and whose gross remuneration was up to S/ 2400, could access the “Economic Benefit of Emergency Social Protection in the face of the Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic” of up to 760 soles per month.

Dominican republic

The Employee Solidarity Assistance Fund (FASE) was created, aimed at formal workers whose employment contracts were suspended under the provisions of the Labor Code for a period of up to 90 days once the employer is authorized to suspend it by the Ministry of Labor. Employee Solidarity Assistance Fund Stay at Home Program, with the aim of providing economic aid to 1.5 million Dominicans from vulnerable sectors and with informal jobs. Through this initiative, 45 thousand families received 3 rations for nine days of food every day. Increase in the amount of the Eat is First program, increase in the monthly stipend for families benefiting from

the program for the acquisition of food and necessities. Preventive isolation measures for vulnerable workers, for workers over 60 years of age with high blood pressure or coronary or cardiovascular disease, pregnant women, people with cancer, kidney failure on dialysis, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and autoimmune diseases.

Uruguay

To preserve employment, the causes of partial suspension (6 days minimum) were included, as well as the partial reduction of hours worked (50 % of the working day at least) and access to insurance was expanded for workers who perform activities with total suspension of work that have between 75 and 145 daily wages in the last year. The contribution to Uruguay Social and the benefits for households were increased in the Equity Plan, social programs that benefit poor households. In addition, to reach informal workers not included in the two previous programs, the Emergency Food Basket for 1,200 pesos (MIDES) was introduced. The Unemployment Subsidy was proposed, extending the existing regime with a special regime that covers all sectors of activity that have wage councils (including industry, commerce and services, rural and domestic work). It includes both monthly contracts and day laborers, as well as those who exhausted the subsidy under the general regime.

Venezuela

Dismissals of workers were prohibited until December 2020, unless they were qualified by the Ministry of Labor. Decree No. 4167 (23.03.2020). Likewise, people who in 2019 had earned less than 3 minimum wages were exempt from paying income tax, Decree No. 4171 (02.04.2020).

The payment of pensions for retirees and older adults supported by the Amor Mayor program continued. Similarly, the monthly Stay at Home and Family Economy bonuses were granted to vulnerable unemployed or low-income groups, extending to informal and formal workers. In Decree No. 4168 (03.23.2020): The government guarantees bank loans for companies in the health, food, pharmacy, and personal hygiene sectors. In addition, credit requirements and conditions for loans in these sectors were decreased. Decree No. 4168 (03.23.2020): Companies Debtors of commercial bank loans that had been affected by Covid-19 could ask banks to restructure principal and interest payments for six months. Debtors could submit a new payment plan to their bank, and the bank would have 15 days to consider the changes. This applies to both individuals and companies. Decree no. 4169 (23.03.2020): Rent payment by individuals and businesses affected by Covid-19 was suspended (the cost is covered by the government). Decree No. 4160 (13.03.2020): Individuals and companies could carry out work through teleworking if their activities allowed it. Economic activity was suspended in cases where working from home is not possible, except for vital sectors. Additionally, public sector workers over 70 years of age or who were part of a risk group could telework. Similarly, the application of occupational hygiene and safety measures was ordered, complying with all the rigorous protocols.

At this point, it is important to note that, as evidenced, many labor and social protection policies were put into practice by Latin American countries, where only Panama reflected its own policies to assist migrant workers to Noroño *et al.* (2021) and Noroño *et al.* (2023) prevent discrimination and exclusion, and the validity of work permits

for foreign workers was extended. Because of this, there are a series of commitments that remain as a moral debt where some countries must assume an inclusive policy for migrants, after the pandemic.

Commitments of Latin American states after the Covid-19 pandemic

In view of the above considerations, all Latin American countries must continue with policies and mechanisms for the recovery and gradual reactivation of the economy and daily activities, which for the time will be in the medium term, but which; in some way progressively incorporate migrant workers. To this end, it is necessary to articulate policies and implement an action and implementation plan where all sectors converge to counteract the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and prevent its expansion, strengthening the economic sector, while implementing social and labor policies to mitigate the poverty generated by the pandemic.

For this reason, ECLAC/ILO (2020) point out that the United Nations has developed a framework to provide socio-economic responses against Covid-19 and the path to a new normal, referring to five priority areas of work: i) ensuring the availability of essential health services and protecting health systems; ii) helping people cope with adversity through basic social protection services; iii) protect jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and informal workers through financial support and recovery programs; iv) guide the fiscal and financial stimulus needed for macroeconomic policies to protect the most vulnerable and strengthen multilateral and regional responses; These five areas of work should be grounded in the imperatives of environmental sustainability and gender equality, the inclusion of migrants, and working together to build back a better world.

Final thoughts

Mitigating the adverse effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will require that governments be willing to implement assertive and changing public policies, which adapt according to the situations, where there is a real involvement of citizen participation at the time of decision-making, so that they feel linked and committed. This will require maintaining permanent contact with the communities. Indeed, citizens play an extremely important role in the reactivation of the production process, making this a matter of conscience, commitment, and ethics, since not all responsibility falls on the rulers, but on the population in general.

Therefore, the greatest challenge is to guarantee respect for human rights in all areas, especially for vulnerable sectors, including migrants. In relation to this last point, it is important to apply policies that safeguard the integrity of migrant workers, so that they are not subject to double discrimination, so the possibility of extending the validity of work and visit visas is recommended. And in general, to guarantee the rights of all human beings to put into practice today more than ever the validity of a Social State of Law and justice that respects humanity.

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