

**Panel 2: “The need to increase investment in social protection as a key strategy to reduce multidimensional poverty”. Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations –
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The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest economic and health crisis that Peru has faced in its modern era. Peru’s gross domestic product dropped by 11.1 per cent in 2020. Household income fell by 20.8 per cent and consumer spending fell by 16.0 per cent.

Monetary poverty affected 30.1 per cent of the population in 2020. This figure represents an increase of 9.9 percentage points compared to the previous year and a 10-year setback in the fight against poverty. The pandemic also increased the burden of care work on women, adolescent girls and girls, who more frequently assumed the care of the elderly, people with disabilities, and other household members.

After almost two years since the declaration of the national state of emergency to address COVID-19 in Peru, important lessons can be drawn. First, the importance of the government having a solid and responsible management of its public finances. Peru implemented the largest social and economic plan to respond to COVID-19 in Latin America.

A second lesson is the importance of having social protection interventions that can adapt to serve people in situations of poverty and vulnerability. Still, work remains to be done to design a shock responsive social protection strategy that provides a rapid and effective response to the most vulnerable people, and to build an integrated and inclusive social protection system that responds to the diverse needs of people with vulnerabilities generated by inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, geographic area, among others.

UNICEF is a valuable partner for the Government of Peru and can contribute to our work in three aspects: 1. Generate evidence to strengthen the design and implementation of social protection policies, programmes and services; 2. Provide technical assistance to officials of ministries and other public entities responsible for social protection interventions to increase their effectiveness, and promote joint and coordinated work between the education, health, social inclusion and justice sectors, among others; and, 3. Advocate and generate consensus between the government, civil society and the private sector on the importance and need to work together to build a child-sensitive social protection system and ensure its financing in the national accounts.