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The Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) is a specialized international technical organization, with permanent character. The CISS was founded by the Social Security Directors of the Continent in a 1942 meeting in Santiago de Chile.

The CISS has as its main objective the development of social security in the Americas. In order to attain this goal it fosters the diffusion of achievements in social security, cooperation and exchange of experiences among social security institutions.

Through its publications, the CISS gathers and disseminates social security studies across the Americas, while making policy recommendations for the consideration of planners of programs and policies throughout the Continent.

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## FOREWORD

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The Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) prepares the yearly *Americas Social Security Report*. The goal of this publication is to be a tool to improve the understanding of the status of social security programs in the Americas, through the evaluation of topics that the General Assembly selects every year. It is addressed to the social security community, including governments, agencies, social groups, employers, users, and anyone interested in the improvement of social protection in the contemporary society.

The main objective of social security is to stabilize the well-being of individuals throughout their lifetime and to function as an institution of solidarity. During the last decades, the aging of society has been discussed widely, but much less is known about the conditions of the children in the Americas and the way social security supports them. Yet, they are always the most vulnerable individuals in any society.

*The Americas Social Security Report 2011* does not need more of a justifier. It evaluates the way in which social security is supporting children and their families, with the aim of closing the gap in the knowledge of programs for children by identifying positive results and best administrative and policy practices, and researching new options to improve programs and administration. New knowledge and program evaluation can give policy makers guidelines or at least hints for reforming the existing programs or creating new ones. This Report also analyzes the issue of children and their transition to adulthood: many children entering the labor market are at a disadvantage because they are too young, they are not receiving an adequate offer from the educational system, and, more often than not, lack social security protection because they are neither studying nor working.

The main objective of this Report is to answer the following questions: Under what conditions are small children living, in terms of poverty, health, and social security coverage? What has been the answer of social security to protect children? What can be done to protect children in families facing special risks (for example, those with a disabled parent, or single mothers)? What public policies are needed to secure that children are raised in an environment that fosters their cognitive and non-cognitive development? What is the condition of teenagers and youths with respect to social insurance? What is being done to facilitate the transition from childhood to adulthood, from school to work?

**Gabriel Martinez**  
**Secretary-General**