Among all the existing international pacts and conventions, at least four deserve mention for their major potential implications for social policies aimed at reducing socioeconomic inequalities.

1. **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted in 1966.** All the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have acceded to or ratified it.

   Under the Covenant, signatory States are obligated to take the necessary steps “to the maximum of [their] available resources” to advance towards the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights, avoid any regression and work towards the progressive realization of those rights, guarantee non-discrimination, and ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoy the rights set forth in the Covenant.

2. **ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention** of 1958, which promotes respect for the right to decent employment and human rights on the job and has been ratified or acceded to by 31 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

   For example, Article 1 of that convention explicitly calls for the promotion of legislation to prohibit all manner of discrimination and any form of exclusion, including “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.”
3. **ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention**, which has been ratified or acceded to by 10 countries of the region and outlines the minimum standards for social security benefits and the conditions for their application.

The Convention spells out nine main categories of social security benefits that are protected under its provisions:

- Medical care;
- Monetary benefits in the case of illness, old age, occupational accidents or occupational illness;
- Family benefits;
- Maternity benefits;
- Disability benefits;
- Survivors’ benefits.

4. **Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, also referred to as the “Protocol of San Salvador” that was opened for signature in 1988, has been ratified or acceded to by 16 countries in the region and also supports reducing socioeconomic inequalities.

Under this Protocol, countries commit themselves to adopt, to the maximum extent allowed by their available resources and taking into account their degree of development, the measures necessary to achieve the full observance of the rights to work.
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