



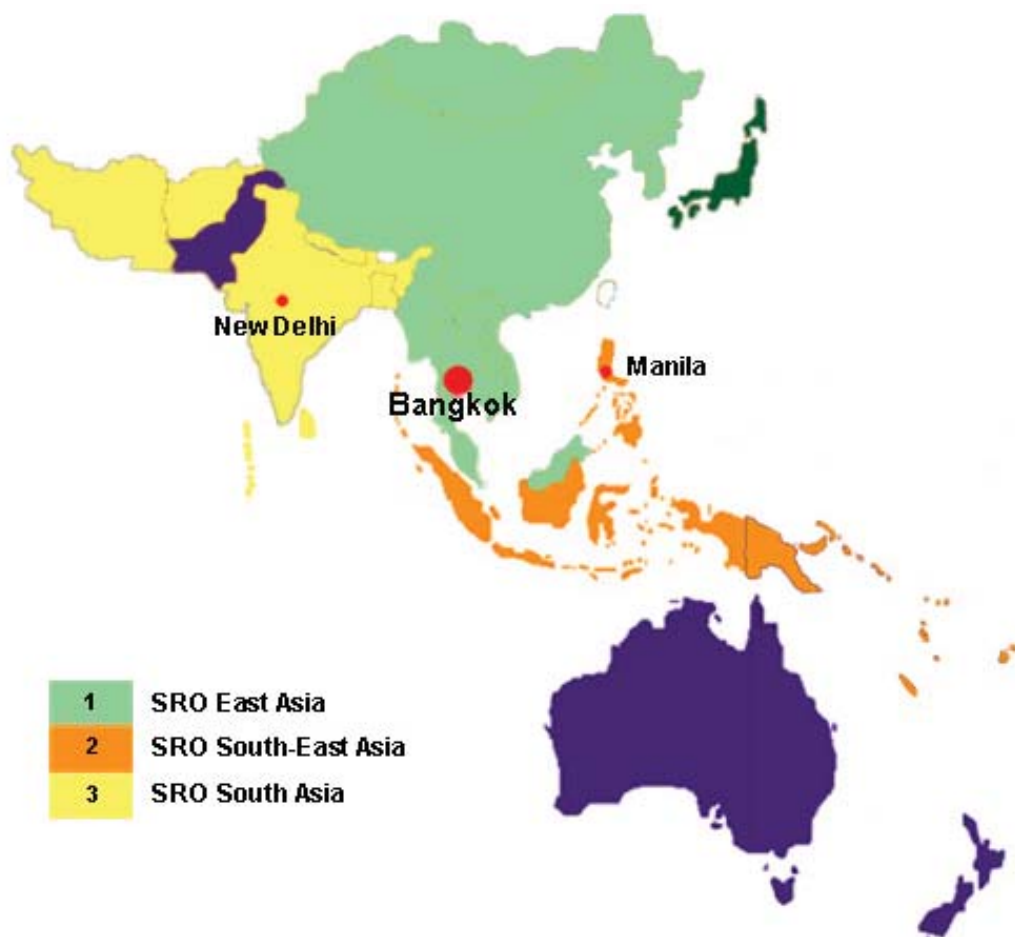
The ILO in Asia and the Pacific

The ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)* in Bangkok covers 30 countries. It is one of the most diverse regions of the world, ethnically, culturally, religiously and economically. Its population of more than 3.7 billion people includes some of the wealthiest countries on earth as well as two-thirds of the world's poor people.

There are three ILO subregional offices (SROs) in the region. The SRO for East Asia¹ is also based in Bangkok; the SRO for South East Asia and the Pacific² is in Manila, and SRO for South Asia³ in New Delhi. In addition there are country offices in Beijing, Colombo, Dhaka, Hanoi, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kathmandu, Suva and Tokyo. There are also liaison or project offices in Dili, Kabul, Phnom Penh, Ulaanbaatar, Vientiane and Yangon.

The 2006-07 biennium budget for Asia and the Pacific is US\$136,131,000. Major donors for the ILO's work in the region include Canada, European Union, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America and UNDP.

Asia and the Pacific



* ROAP is responsible for regional management, supervision and administrative support for ILO offices in the region; it also covers Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan.

¹ Covers Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China (including Hong Kong and Macao SARs), the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

² Covers Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and the other South Pacific island countries.

³ Covers Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations specialized agency that seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally-recognized human and labour rights. It was founded in 1919 and is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations. It became the first specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.

The Organization's tripartite structure is unique in the United Nations system, with workers, employers and governments acting as equal partners in the work of its governing institutions.

The goal of the ILO is to promote **decent work** for all so everyone can work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

The ILO has four principal strategic objectives:

- To promote and realize standards, and fundamental principles and rights at work;
- To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment;
- To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all;
- To strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

The ILO also provides a wide range of technical assistance. The areas covered include vocational training and rehabilitation, employment policy, labour administration, labour law and industrial relations, working conditions, management development, co-operatives, social security, labour statistics and occupational safety and health.



In recent years the region has faced challenges that have seriously tested its socio-economic infrastructure – natural disasters, economic crises and continuing conflicts. In addition shifts in the international economic and trading environment continually generate new challenges, for example the spread of globalization and changes to international trading rules.

The ILO is working with the Asia-Pacific countries to deal with these and other issues. Institution-building and local economic development play a critical role in creating the conditions for social and economic progress. Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work is growing and helping to ensure that all sectors of society benefit from development.



However, significant challenges still remain. Increasing productive employment opportunities and providing adequate social protection (an important tool in the fight against poverty) remain issues. The employment, social and human rights problems of some groups of workers (such as migrants, indigenous peoples, displaced and disabled workers) have actually deteriorated since 1997. Other pressing concerns include tackling trafficking in men, women and children, and ending bonded labour and hazardous child labour.

The ILO's Regional Office operates a wide range of projects in Asia and the Pacific. Some are designed to meet specific, short-term needs, others offer longer-term assistance and advice. The core activities for tackling relief and development challenges include the following:

CRISIS RESPONSE

Several countries in the region recently faced disasters and crises such as avian flu, tsunamis, earthquakes, and conflicts. The ILO proactively promotes employment creation as an integrated part of the humanitarian and reconstruction response, and provides technical advice and support.

CHILD LABOUR

The Asia-Pacific region has the largest number of child workers (aged 5-14) in the world—some 122.3 million or 64 per cent of working children. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) has projects to reduce the number of child workers in hazardous conditions and particularly in the so-called worst forms of child labour such as slavery, prostitution and fighting in wars and conflicts. The target is to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016. Another priority is the fight against trafficking in children and women.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Young women and men aged 15-24 years make up 20.5 per cent of Asia's labour force in 2005. However unemployed youth constitute 47.7 per cent, or almost half, of the region's jobless total. The ILO estimates that halving youth unemployment would increase the GDP between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent in East Asia, between 4.6 and 7.4 per cent in South-East Asia and between 4.2 and 6.7 per cent in South Asia. Providing young people with sound education and skills training would help them find decent work.

SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Matching the skills of workers to market demand is a key to economic development. The ILO has programmes on regional skills and employability to help countries and their workforces respond to increasing globalization, new technology and changing patterns of work.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

The ILO's Occupational Safety and Health experts offer a range of programmes including those specially designed for small businesses (WISE), small construction sites (WISCON) and homes and homeworkers (WISH). These focus on inexpensive methods that are designed to be easy to learn, implement and replicate.

INFORMAL ECONOMY

According to recent estimates informal employment comprises about 65 per cent of non-agricultural employment in developing parts of Asia. In addition millions more people are involved in subsistence agriculture. They work long hours, frequently in hazardous conditions, with low pay and with little or no social or legal protection. Many are women and children. Extending social protection schemes (including safety and health) to these workers is a priority.

LABOUR MIGRATION

More migrant workers come from Asia-Pacific than any other region of the world. In recent years 2.6 to 2.9 million Asians have left home every year to become overseas migrant workers. Of these 40 per cent go to other Asian countries. Managing the demand for labour and establishing proper legal channels can help improve the protection of migrant workers' rights and reduce illegal/irregular cross border movements. The ILO has programmes on labour migration which aims to help migrant workers find legal work which is fair, safe and secure.

POVERTY

The Advisory Support Information Services and Training Asia Pacific (ASIST-AP) programme focuses on poverty alleviation, employment generation and creating sustainable livelihoods. The key programme elements are: local participation in infrastructure planning, the development of small-scale private sector enterprises, cost-effective use of labour-based technology and local-level infrastructure maintenance.

SOME PROJECTS

- **Labour migration** (ILO/EC (European Commission) Asian Programme on the Governance of Labour Migration);
- **Trafficking of children and women** (Reducing labour exploitation of children and women: Combating trafficking the Greater Mekong Subregion);
- **Productive work and employability** (Policy Coherence on Competitiveness, Productivity Jobs and Employability to Achieve Decent Work);
- **Informal economy** (The informal economy, poverty and employment: An integrated approach);
- **Trafficking of domestic workers and forced labour** (Mobilizing Action for the Protection of Domestic Workers and Forced Labour and Trafficking in South-east Asia);
- **Bonded labour** (Promoting the Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia).

Regional Director: Mr. Gek-Boo Ng

ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific

UN Building, Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel. 662 288 1234, Fax. 662 288 3062

E-mail: BANGKOK@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/asia

Officer-in-Charge: Mr. Jiyuan Wang

ILO Subregional Office for East Asia

UN Building, Rajdamnern Avenue,

Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel. 662 288 1234, Fax. 662 288 3062

E-mail: SRO-BKK@ilo.org

Director: Ms. Linda Wirth-Dominice

ILO Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific

19F, Yuchengo Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue,

Makati City, Philippines

Tel : 632 580 9900, Fax: 632 580 9999

E-mail: MANILA@ilomnl.org.ph

Director: Ms. Leyla Tegmo-Reddy

ILO Subregional Office for South Asia

3F, Theatre Court, India Habitat Centre, Lodi Road,

New Delhi, 110 003, India

Tel: 9111 24 60 2101, Fax: 9111 24 60 2111

E-mail: SRO-DELHI@ilodel.org.in