

Tripartite Regional Meeting on Social Protection and Formalization

15-16 November 2022 | Bangkok, Thailand
Pullman Bangkok Grande Sukhumvit

Concept note

► General background

The economies of the Asia-Pacific regions and respective labour markets have been hardly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Poverty in general, but also working poverty increased for the first time after having trended downwards for decades. The crisis is affecting some sub-groups of the population hard, such as migrants, young people, women, refugees, and workers in the informal economy. The crisis-specific challenges threaten to overturn years of progress towards improved labour market outcomes and reduced inequalities. Likewise, informal workers have experienced increased levels of poverty and vulnerability and have been exposed to serious occupational health and safety risks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the significant social protection coverage gaps for many workers in a stark and unprecedented way, particularly those in the informal economy, placing social protection even higher on national and regional agendas as a core element of strategies to foster an inclusive and sustainable recovery, greater resilience, decent work and social justice.

The Global Call for Action adopted at the ILC in June 2021 called for joint action to achieve the objective of universal social protection and curb the spread of informality. Governments, workers and employers of the ILO's member States emphasized the need to "improve coverage of those not yet adequately protected, including by ensuring access to adequate social protection to workers in all types of employment", fostering transitions from the informal to the formal economy and preventing the informalization of employment. It also recommends the development and implementation of "comprehensive, innovative and integrated approaches to curb the spread of informality and accelerate the transition to the formal economy, particularly for the creation, preservation and formalization of enterprises and decent jobs, paying due attention to the rural economy". This call for action is particularly relevant for countries in Asia and the Pacific, which together are home to 1.3 billion informal workers, most of whom work in poor conditions with no or very limited access to social protection. It also aligns with Bali Declaration Priority Policy Priorities 2 and 11 which calls for member states in the Region to: develop policies for more decent jobs through (...) measures facilitating the transition of workers from the informal to the formal economy, particularly the extension of labour market institutions to rural areas and to extend social protection, including by establishing sustainable social security systems and by establishing, maintaining and upgrading social protection floors.

Aligned with the Call to Action, in September 2021, the United Nations Secretary General launched the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition, which aims to increase the level and coordination of the multilateral system's efforts to help countries create 400 million decent jobs, including in the green, digital and care economies, and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded. In this context, it can be argued that countries across Asia and the Pacific have a significant need and a conducive environment for significant transformation of social protection systems so they can deliver on the objective of achieving universal, comprehensive, and adequate protection for all

workers and their families and that formalization is a key ingredient, not only to promote the extension of social protection, but to enable making decent work a reality for all workers. Considering the intersections between extension of social protection coverage and formalization, this workshop will be organized in two sessions. The first one will focus in the latest developments, challenges and opportunities for Asia and Pacific to deliver on the objective of achieving universal, comprehensive, and adequate protection for all workers and their families. The second session will focus on the topic of integrated strategies to promote formalization as a way to promote decent work and achieve social justice.

► Objective of the Meeting

General objectives:

- Enhance the exchange of experiences between national experts, including tripartite representatives, on the status and future of social protection;
- Promote a regional tripartite joint reflection on the importance of linking efforts to extend social protection coverage with efforts to promote the transition towards formalization;
- Promote a discussion on the role of ILO tripartite partners in accelerating the extension of social protection to all workers as proposed by the ILO Call for Action, the UN SG Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection and the Recommendation 204 on transition to the formal economy;

Session 1:

- Promote a stock taking exercise of the situation in Asia and Pacific in social protection;
- Promote a tripartite joint reflection on how social protection systems can adapt and respond to the regional dynamics and challenges

Session 2:

- Promote policy dialogue on the challenges faced by constituents to promote formalisation, and which pathways have been implemented at the country level.
- Share good practices on how countries in the region and beyond are addressing the issue of formalization, including through integrated and coherent policy frameworks and its inclusion in national development strategies.
- Enhance knowledge exchange building up on lessons learned and practical experiences of the participants in structuring and rolling out formalisation strategies at the national and local level

► Agenda

Day one: The State of social protection in Asia and Pacific

Time	Activity
Opening ceremony	
09.00 - 09.20	Representative from Workers Representative from Employers ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
09.20 - 09.40	Keynote speech on the importance of social protection and formalization in the current context in Asia and the Pacific
09.40 - 10.20	Tripartite panel discussion
10.20 - 10.35	Coffee break
Session One - The state of social protection in Asia and the Pacific	
10.35 - 10.40	Video on social protection in Asia and the Pacific
10.40 - 12.00	Panel discussion – Setting a vision for the future of social protection in Asia and the Pacific
12.00 - 13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
13.00 - 14.20	<p>Session One (a) - Governance and the role of social partners in designing and monitoring social protection implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social security systems in ASEAN: An overview and strategy guide for employers • The ILO/ACTRAV social protection resource package • Social protection governance • Opening to plenary
14.20 - 15.15	<p>Session One (b) - The state of social protection in Asia and the Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel discussion: Future of work and social protection (the high-income countries perspective) • Opening plenary
15.15 - 15.30	Coffee break
15.45 - 16.15	Panel discussion: The social protection formalization nexus: Is formalization the key for the extension of social protection?
16.15 - 16.30	Main lessons from day one and introduction to day 2

Day two: **Formalization: ILO integrated approach to promote decent work in Asia and the Pacific**

Time	Activity
09.00 - 10.30	<p>Session Two – Formalization: ILO integrated approach to promote decent work in Asia and the Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: Setting the stage for the discussions: Objectives and key definitions • An integrated approach for formalization in Asia and the Pacific: Technical Brief "ILO integrated approach to formalization in Asia and the Pacific" R204 • Panel discussion
10.30 - 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 - 12.00	<p>Session Two (a)– Formalization: Good practices to promote in formalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy design and implementation • One-Stop Business Establishment Center (TBC) <p>Q&A</p>
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch
13.00 - 14.00	Panel discussion: New policy challenges in new forms of work
14.10 - 16.00	<p>Interactive activity: Shaping a formalization strategy in a tripartite manner (<i>world-café methodology</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSMEs formalization pathways • Platform economies and the future of work • Strategies for being successful in formalization <p><i>Coffee break will be provided in this session</i></p>
16.00 - 16.15	Next steps and concluding remarks

► **Participants**

Tripartite delegations from the following countries: Cambodia, Viet Nam, Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, Mongolia, Nepal, Bangladesh, India