

# ADB-ILO Annual MOU Meeting, Manila 15 August 2011

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## Opening remarks by Ms. Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director for the Asia-Pacific

Dear Ms. Schaefer-Preuss,

Dear colleagues from the ADB and colleagues from the ILO,

- I would like to thank the ADB for hosting this year's annual MOU meeting to review the cooperation between our two organizations in Asia-Pacific, which we are continuing to implement within the framework of our joint MOU concluded in 2002.
- I would firstly like to acknowledge the progress made in our collaboration during the last year. The themes on which we focus are particularly timely for the challenges the Asia-Pacific region is facing: social protection, skills, green growth and labour market information. Both our organizations agree that **regional cooperation and integration in Asia** is central to its further development.
- The world continues to deal with the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis. There is however also a wider context. And while Asia is generally seen as the engine for the global economy, at the same time, job security in Asia-Pacific remains precarious with continuing rising inequalities. The employment issue remains at the heart of **inclusive and sustainable growth** in Asia, which both the ADB and ILO are to help achieve.
- An example in this respect is the upcoming Asia-wide regional workshop in Jakarta on **Social Inclusiveness in Asia's Emerging Middle Income Countries**, which the ILO is helping the ADB organize.
- The ADB has rightly pointed out in its "**Asia 2050**" publication, that Asia's middle-income countries risk of getting stuck in a trap if their policies do not address labour and social considerations. The ILO can bring particular expertise in this particular area, especially through our initiatives on social protection and skills.
- The **G20** has asked the ILO to contribute to a multi-year development action plan spanning nine pillars of growth, ranging from private investment and trade to job creation, skills development, social protection and food security. We hope the ADB can contribute to this with their expertise.
- In light of the global and financial crisis and the need it has highlighted for greater gender equality, I would particularly like to mention the successful collaboration of our organizations on the publication this year on "**Women in the labour markets in Asia**". Unlocking the potential of women in the labour market remains essential to achieving gender equality and increasing productivity and growth.

- Growth in Asia-Pacific has come with great risks for the **environment** and poverty in the region now has an increasingly urban face. There is a need to address these issues through encouraging **green growth** and skills and education that can harness this type of growth. Our Green Jobs Programme in the region is a particular case in point.
- All of the above trends and examples point to the need to make sure that our cooperation has impact on the ground and in country. At times our colleagues have found it difficult to translate our cooperation initiatives into actual activities in countries and this has led to some frustration. There is therefore also a process element to our consultations which we should review critically to make sure that we are actually jointly working towards poverty reduction and inclusive growth in the real economies in Asia and the Pacific.
- Finally, I hope that the technical discussions being held today between respective colleagues will identify strategic priorities and focussed entry points to further and strengthen our collaboration during the 2010-2011 period and being the added value both our organizations seek.

Thank you.