



International
Labour
Organization

► ACTRAV Regional Meeting on Skills and Lifelong Learning

ILC standard-setting on quality apprenticeships

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

December 2022

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Day 1, 14 November 2022

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Day 2, 15 November 2022

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Plenary session	All resource persons and Union participants
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► Introduction

Mr Pong-Sul Ahn, ACTRAV Specialist of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, greeted all the participants and introduced himself. He shared a list of objectives for the 2-day meeting:

1. To review the brown report resulting from the first session of the 2022 ILC on quality apprenticeships;
2. To share national experiences on TVET, skills and lifelong learning from India, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam;
3. To understand the ITUC/ITUC-AP policy on skills development and lifelong learning, as well as in the ILC discussions on quality apprenticeships;
4. To launch the policy briefs on skills development and lifelong learning to disseminate it widely; and
5. To develop union actions for improving the governance system of TVET, promote skills and lifelong learning ecosystem, as well as for implementation of a new ILO instrument.

After the introduction, Mr Ahn went through the programme flow for the two days and introduced the speakers and moderators for each session. The first day consisted of a sharing of the ILC Brown Report and presentations of ITUC-AP policy on skills and lifelong learning, on new trends in skills and lifelong learning in Asia and the Pacific, on country cases of skills development and apprenticeship from India and the Philippines, and a sharing of insights Workers Group's stand on quality apprenticeships. The second day consisted of presentations on country cases of skills development and apprenticeship from Singapore and Viet Nam. It would end with a panel discussion with union leaders from India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore followed by a group work. He revealed the three groups working on different questions for the group work on the second day.

For the opening remarks, Mr Ahn invited Mr Ariel Castro (Asia Desk Officer, ILO ACTRAV), who would be speaking on behalf of Ms Maria Helena Andre (Director, ILO ACTRAV), and Ms Boonpala Panudda (Deputy Regional Director, ILO ROAP).

► Opening remarks

Ms Maria Helena André

Director, ILO ACTRAV

Mr Ariel Castro delivered opening remarks on behalf of Ms Maria Helena Andre. In her speech, Ms André highlighted the importance of skills development and lifelong learning in the changing world of work and the post-Covid-19 environment. Skills development is vital for workers for the three reasons she cited: to get jobs, keep jobs and transit to new jobs. Skills development and lifelong learning is also essential to enhance workers' capabilities to participate fully in decent work, contribute to inclusive human development and active citizenship, and strengthen social justice. It is crucial to ensure decent and productive employment, and sustainable economic growth. She believed that this would help achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal, "Leaving no one behind".

Furthermore, Ms André emphasized the importance of a human-centred approach to cope with challenges from a future of work and embrace its positive effects; this is highlighted in the ILO's Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work at the 2019 International Labour Conference. ILO and its tripartite constituents also discussed the human-centred approach at the 2021 International Labour Conference to adopt "a global call for action for a human-centred recovery from the Covid-19 crisis which is inclusive, sustainable and resilient".

Finally, Ms André mentioned that the meeting aims to update participants about the tripartite discussions on the ILC Standard-Setting on Quality Apprenticeships that happened this year and the key issues to be discussed in 2023. This regional meeting would provide an opportunity for trade unions in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss skills

development and lifelong learning in the context of the post-Covid-19 recovery and the ILC standard-setting, as well as in the ILO centenary Declaration.

At the end of her remarks, Ms André emphasized that workers' organisation play an important role in social dialogue to address gaps in skills and lifelong learning and to develop a national policy and strategies for these. She believed social dialogue mechanisms could influence the implementation of the new Instrument on Quality Apprenticeships to be adopted in 2023. Furthermore, the regional meeting would be a platform to share good national and global experiences and develop ideas on how best trade unions can take action for better financing, infrastructure, and programmes of skills and lifelong learning.

Ms Panudda Boonpala

Deputy Regional Director, ILO ROAP

Ms Panudda Boonpala greeted all the guests at the regional meeting. She agreed that the regional meeting bringing together trade unions and experts to discuss Skills Development and lifelong learning is very timely.

Ms Boonpala reminded the participants that the COVID-19 pandemic had triggered many changes and impacted industries and sectors differently. Some industries experience a gain in employment while the hard-hit industries experience a serious loss of employment. Their recovery to pre-pandemic levels is uncertain. The pandemic has also accelerated the adoption of new technologies and the rise of the green economy. She shared an example of increased automation within manufacturing, services and other commercial activities.

She highlighted that access to skills and knowledge-based jobs is important to achieve a fair, inclusive and secure future of work for workers. This will assist workers in gaining productive employment and provide income security. Finally, she noted that this would help to ensure social justice.

The adoption of technology and automation can increase productivity. Ms Boonpala shared an example where a garment manufacturing company from Vietnam managed to increase output value per production line by 31 per cent while reducing the number of workers on the sewing lines by around a third. She highlighted that trade unions and their members can play a role in building capacity and resilience in the changing workplace. She emphasized that social dialogue is the key to the development of national policies for skills development. Trade unions have an active role in social dialogue with the Government and employers to develop and implement national policies and strategies for skills and lifelong learning.

At the end of her remarks, Ms Boonpala thanked her ILO colleagues for organizing the regional meeting and hoped that the meeting would provide opportunities for trade unions to share good national practices on skills development and lifelong learning. Besides, she also hoped that the participants would discuss ways to promote and operationalize the new ILO instrument after its adoption during the meeting.

► Launch of the Regional Policy Briefs

Moving to the official launch of the Regional Policy Briefs on Skills Development and Lifelong Learning. Mr Ahn invited Ms Tan Siew Peng, Senior Research Manager, Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). Ms Tan greeted the earlier speakers, resource persons and participants.

Ms Tan conveyed his thanks for ILO's invitation to join this meeting. She introduced her University as an institution that provides applied education in social sciences and other disciplines that have a strong impact on human and community development. It aims to equip students with knowledge and skills for future and lifelong employment through its undergraduate and continual education training programmes. It works closely with industry partners and public organizations on issues related to the business community and society.

The Centre for Applied Research of SUSS, in partnership with ILO ACTRAV, has undertaken research on seven policy briefs on skills development and lifelong learning in Asia and the Pacific. Representing Associate Professor Randolph Tan who was unable to attend the meeting personally, as he had another event to attend in Kuala Lumpur, Ms Tan unveiled the seven regional policy briefs on Skills Development and lifelong learning, which include a regional brief, five country cases, and digital learning and training:

- Skills development and lifelong learning in Asia and the Pacific: Strengthening the role of trade unions

Ms Tan noted an extensive discussion in the brief on how the roles of trade unions could be strengthened by expanding their involvement in 3 areas in skills development and lifelong learning.

The 3 areas are:

- **Accountability:** involves in standards-setting and accreditation
- **Sustainability:** recognizing that resources are limited and necessary trade-offs may have to be made to ensure that outcomes and stakeholder commitments are consistent and sustainable
- **Accessibility:** availability of information, financing and support for participants
- Skills development and lifelong learning: Challenges for trade unions in the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, India, the Philippines, and Singapore
 - Skills development and lifelong learning experiences and challenges faced by the trade unions in the 5 countries.
- Digital learning and training Opportunities and challenges for trade union education
 - The brief discusses the opportunities presented with the use of technology and digital tools in learning and training.

Ms Tan concluded her presentation and congratulated the ILO for successfully holding this regional meeting.



► Day 1, 14 November - Presentations: Sharing experiences in skills development and lifelong learning

Presentation on Key Issues of the 2022 ILC Discussion on Quality Apprenticeships (Brown report) and the forecast of the 2023 ILC Discussions

Following closely with the main objectives of the regional meeting, Mr Ahn invited Mr Julien Magnat, Skills and Employability Specialist, ILO DWT, Bangkok, to share the steps taken and the record of proceedings of the 110th ILC Standard-setting Session on Quality Apprenticeship.

Mr Magnat shared the rationale for a new standard for apprenticeship following the juridical replacement of two instruments: The Apprenticeship Recommendation, 1939 (No. 60) and The Vocational Training Recommendation, 1962 (No. 117). The subsequent ILO instruments did not address contemporary apprenticeship issues. This regulatory gap was identified by the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group (SRM TWG) and has been requested by the 334th ILO Governing Body in 2018 to place a stand-setting item related to apprenticeships on the agenda of the 110th session of the ILC. Mr Magnat noted that ILO has prepared 3 reports concerning quality apprenticeships:

- 1st Report: Discussed an overview of the regulatory framework and questionnaire concerning a framework for quality apprenticeships
- 2nd Report: Shared current observations and proposed conclusions
- 3rd Report: Proposed recommendations concerning Quality apprenticeship

He underlined some critical issues from replies to the questionnaires:

- Creating an enabling environment to promote quality apprenticeships
- Involve social partners in the design and implementation of policies, systems and programmes
- Ensure equality and diversity

Mr Magnat revealed ILO's plans after the 110th ILC in preparation for the second Standard-Setting discussion on the apprenticeship at the 111th ILC in 2023. The preparation involves the drafting and publishing of report ILC 111 (i.e., The Brown Report) in February 2023 before the 111th ILC.

There have been various proceedings and reports of the Standard-Setting Committee: Quality Apprenticeships. In a previous discussion mediated by the ILO, workers' and employers' organizations and governments have decided on proposed resolutions and conclusions.

The content of the recommended instrument consists of the following:

1. Preamble
2. Promotion of quality apprenticeships and international cooperation
3. Equality and diversity in quality apprenticeship
4. The apprenticeship agreement
5. Regulatory framework for quality apprenticeship
6. Definitions, scope and implementation

At the end of Mr Magnat's presentation, he shared a list of comments drawn from the ILC discussions. One of the comments was to replace the word "job" with "employment", in line with the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122).

Moving on to the Q&A segment, Dr Mehrotra endorsed the comment regarding replacing “job” with “employment” and explained that employment has a broader category than “job”. He also questioned whether the definition of apprenticeship that Mr Magnat had shared earlier would be adopted and implemented in an informal economy consisting of many workers. Dr Mehrotra highlighted the need to strengthen the capacity of micro and small units in supporting the implementation of Quality Apprenticeships and the very first step is for Governments to start recognizing and register SMEs. Dr Mehrotra also commented on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), highlighting the issues of regulation to ensure the value of these certifications.

In response to Dr Mehrotra’s remarks, Mr Magnat echoed his point on the choice of words (i.e., “job” or “employment”). He also agreed that ILO should not exclude the informal sectors in the implementation of quality apprenticeships. Finally, Mr Magnat agreed that RPL is a complex topic but there have been efforts by the organization to support RPL. One example is the ASEAN Mutual Skills Recognition Arrangements which allows people to be assessed and obtain ASEAN certification, allowing them to move freely to other ASEAN countries. He noted that more robust programmes are needed to include RPL. Mr Magnat thanked Dr Mehrotra for his comments before concluding his deliberation.

ITUC-AP: Policy on skills and lifelong learning

Mr Ahn invited Mr Francis Kim to share about ITUC-AP policies on skills and lifelong learning. Mr Kim shared the recent global trends that impacted the international trade and supply chains and the world of work and accelerated the need for transformations. The global trends are the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change & pollution, digital technology, backsliding democracy and an ageing society. These have led to employment losses, change in skills need and impacted the way we learn.

Mr Kim shared the objectives of labour market policies for Skills Development, lifelong learning and Quality Apprenticeship. One objective he shared was to connect people with decent job and to promote their access to the labour force and good jobs. Other objectives include direct employment generation, labour exchanges, reducing unemployment and boosting productivity.

Active labour market policies, focusing on upskilling, reskilling and on-the-job training, have been shown to enhancing an income-generating potential of unemployed and underemployed workers in a recent report by ADB. In spite of these potentials, Mr Kim highlighted that there is very little investment (i.e. less than 0.1 per cent of GDP) in related programmes in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Kim highlighted a few key elements to achieve QA: “Robust Social Dialogue”, “Public-private partnerships” and “Recognized qualifications”. He underlined a few challenges that the Asia Pacific region would face in achieving quality apprenticeships:

- Large informality and irregular workforce in the region
- High employment rate/ poverty among youth
- Low wages/ social protection deficits
- Continuity of work after apprenticeships or internships
- Exploitation (particularly in informal arrangements)

In addition, he explained that it is challenging to implement social dialogues in the region as workers’ rights are not prioritized in many Asian countries.

ILO’s Guidelines for a Just Transition is a good reference, but Mr Kim mentioned the need to have a clear alignment with national development policies to implement suitable programmes. Unfortunately, he noted this is not the case in many Asian countries.

Mr Kim identified the following points for consideration to support a Just Transition:

- Clear macroeconomic and industrial policies for this transition towards a sustainable, resilient, inclusive and environmentally friendly future;
- The development of labour market policies should be done through social dialogues with workers;
- Well-regulated labour market policies together with income-led growth policy;
- Occupational health and safety of workers to be one of the main focal policy areas;
- Formalization of the informal economy in the Asia Pacific; and
- Further international/regional cooperation

At the closing of his presentation, Mr Kim shared that ITUC is organizing a new social contract, which involves “Building Workers’ Power”, “Making Social Dialogues Work” and “Making Social Wave”. ITUC hopes to engage workers in developing skills development and quality apprenticeship policies at the national level.

New trends in Skills Development and Lifelong Learning in Asia and the Pacific

Ms Tan Siew Peng made her presentation on the new trends in Skills Development and Lifelong learning in Asia and the Pacific. She began her presentation by sharing few characteristics of the Asia-Pacific workforce:

- Asia-Pacific region represents more than half of the global workforce (59 per cent in 2020).
- Agriculture, forestry or fishing sector has the largest proportion of workers (close to 30 per cent) this is followed by Wholesale and retail trade, and Manufacturing.
- The labour force participation rate for males was higher than for females in 2017 (77.7 per cent and 46.4 per cent); this reflects a slight decrease for both genders from 2000.
- Close to 70 per cent of the workers are in the informal sector, and the proportion is higher among youths.
- The project median age of workers in 2030 is 41.5 years, an increase from 39.3 years in 2017.

Ms Tan highlighted that countries face different challenges depending on the profile of their workers. She noted that it is helpful to differentiate the countries based on country classifications by World Bank, e.g. Low income, lower-middle income, upper-middle income and high income. There is a higher proportion of informal employment in lower-income economies such as Viet Nam, Sri Lanka and India. Additionally, people in high-income economies are more likely to work in the non-agricultural sector.

The following are the challenges in skills development in Asia and the Pacific that Ms Tan underlined:

- The large group of informal workers in APAC poses challenges to labour productivity and skills development, hindering growth.
- Informal workers are neglected in the system resulting in little or no social protection and employment-related benefits, and they are at an increased risk of exploitation.
- Lack of formal employment opportunities may risk consequences for long-term human capital development and increases informal employment and unemployment.
- The rates of youths in informal employment tend to be higher. Unable to maximize the potential of young people in the workforce and move the workforce up the value chain.
- Without a proper structure to train, reskill or upskill workers, it can obstruct one's progress to decent jobs or transition to a formal economy.

Ms Tan presented 5 global drivers of change that influence the transformation of the labour market and skills:

- **Globalization:** There is a rapid expansion in International Trade due to the rise of global value chains. Reduced trade barriers which enable production processes to extend beyond national borders also attribute this trend. This transformed global workplace practices and contributed to emerging sectors, new occupations and skills demand. This directly impacts workers resulting in employment loss and potential sectoral restructuring.

- **Labour migration:** Supply of skills in deficit in the receiving country to fill in frontline jobs and vacancies in fast-growing sectors where education and training cannot keep pace. Labour migration with high skills has implications for sending countries, and they risk losing skilled workers they had invested in. Hence, more circular labour migration in the region could benefit both the receiving and sending countries as it encourages skills transfer. Well-governed labour migration can balance labour supply and demand, help to develop and transfer skills at all levels and contribute to sustainable development for all countries involved.
- **Demographic change:** The speed of ageing is a concern in some Asia countries. The demographic classifications of countries in Asia and the Pacific can be grouped into Early Dividend, Post Dividend and Late Dividend. This diversity leads to a dichotomous growth priority in the region. Some economies are seeing more youths entering the labour force while others face labour contraction due to the growing older population.
- **Technological change and digitalization:** This trend is spurred by the increasing use of the internet, high smartphone penetration, and rising consumer acceptance of technology. There is also a need to adopt digital tools and automation to ensure productivity. Technology-related and digital skills are increasingly important as the future of work focuses less on manual and routine work and more on knowledge-based task. Hence, cognitive and core skills are also crucial in this digital era. Digitalization also resulted in the rise of a new form of work procurement through online and app-based platforms (i.e. the Gig economy) which has its challenges at this point.
- **Climate change:** Market and regulatory changes are expected to be introduced to preserve or restore the environment as Countries entered into the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This impacts workers, particularly the vulnerable groups (i.e. informal workers, women and youth) in brown jobs. There is a need for reskills and upskills, especially skills related to environmental sustainability, to support the transition to the green economy.

Asia and the Pacific experienced its worst economy since the 1970s during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ms Tan explained that sectors are impacted unevenly and the hard-hit sectors are manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services, and real estate. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated some global trends that Ms Tan shared. It also disrupted learning and education with the full or partial closure of education and training centers. This can reinforce existing inequalities and the lack of access to training and education can impact one's transition to the labour market.

Ms Tan emphasized the importance of skills and lifelong learning to enable enterprises and workers to adapt to and shape the trends and seize opportunities that are presented in this development.

Ms Tan remarked that adopting a digital approach to learning and training is inevitable. The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption and shifted the world to online almost overnight. She shared the advantage of adopting such an approach to access a larger audience group without boundaries and those who cannot attend in person. This can complement traditional modes of learning. She believed that this could be applied to trade union education and training to better support workers.

Ms Tan shared a list of recommendations in her final slides:

- Social dialogue between governments, employers and trade unions is key to setting a clear vision and developing mechanisms to enable lifelong learning and policies to harness regional talent mobility and future-ready social safety nets for lasting success.
- Trade unions need to understand that changes in the world of work are creating new opportunities and challenges. Trade unions should strengthen the participation of high-risk groups such as young people, since the way they enter the world of work is quite different from that of previous generations. It should also broaden the periphery of the trade union movement to the gig workers and migrant workers.
- The involvement of trade unions in the skills development, training and TVET ecosystems is important to prepare the workforce for the future of work.
- Trade unions will face pressure to use modern information technology tools to advance trade union work and activities through online channels. Trade unions will need to invent strategies or a road map with an investment of resources to reform their workers' education centres towards digital platform-based lifelong learning institutions.

- Trade unions should encourage sharing the various experiences of community organizations, trade unions and social movements to strengthen their resilience to navigate these changing realities.

Moving on to the next session, Mr Jordi Prat Tuca, Regional Technical and Programme Coordinator, ILO Bangkok invited participants to participate in the Q&A.

Ms Phan Tra Khuc posted a question on trade unions' role in two mentioned challenges, informal workers and the ageing population. Ms Tan shared an example of platform delivery workers who are usually not covered by insurance or entitled to a pension. The trade union can play a proactive role by understanding workers' challenges and highlight them to the policymakers for necessary action to be taken. Ms Tan took the same stance for the other challenge. Trade unions can also play an important role in understanding and supporting the learning of the older population due to potential digital divide.

Mr Francis Kim commented that low income is also a challenge as they are unable to join education and training programmes without subsidies.

Mr M. Shanadat Hossain shared that Bangladesh is sending workers to other countries. Bangladeshi workers with low skills or no training are taking a lower income but that the trade unions organize training with ILO support.

Mr Ariel Castro emphasized that skills development and lifelong learning should be a part of a policy framework, which can be developed through social dialogues with trade unions. Thus, he encouraged trade unions to follow up with the technical panel and better prepare themselves to be involved in the ILC.

Ms Tan thanked all the participants who shared their points of view during the Q&A and concluded her session.

National policy, legislation and governance on skills development and apprenticeships: Role of trade unions - India case

Mr Ahn introduced the next speaker, Dr Santosh Mehrotra, who would share about the challenges of skills development in India.

Dr Mehrotra began his presentation by introducing the five pillars of the skills ecosystem in India in relation to pre-employment and employment:

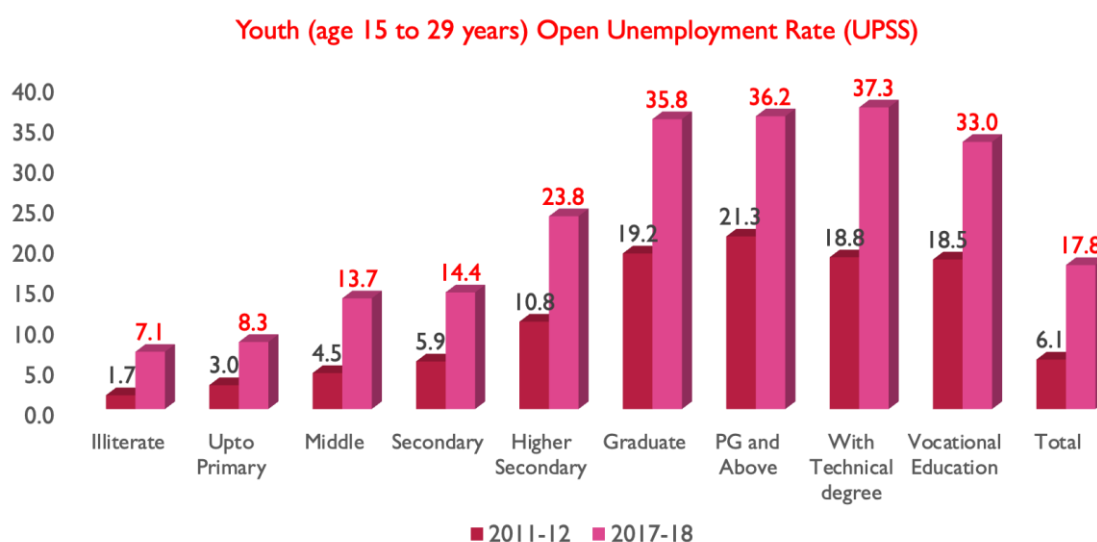
- Pre-employment-based:
 - Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) (since 1950s): Includes public and private ITIs. There has been a rise in private ITIs.
 - Private Vocational Training Providers: NSDC funded (2011): This is reflected in India's 5-year plan. The Government recognised the strong need for private VTPs.
 - Secondary/ Higher Secondary Schools (2014): Provide vocational education to youths aged 14-15 years. The Ministry of Education has developed a National Skills Qualifications Framework, but has had limited success.
 - 20 Central line ministries: offer short-term training courses.
- Employment-based training:
 - Apprenticeships

Dr Mehrotra further identified the role of trade unions in each pillar he had mentioned and reiterated the importance of the 3 elements from the Policy Brief: Accountability, Sustainability and Accessibility. He highlighted that trade unions have their influence mainly in the formal sector, and are mainly affiliated with political parties. He noted potential trade unions' involvement to ensure accountability for ITIs, and pre-employment training for workers for formal industries. There is currently little involvement from the trade union for private VTPs, which offers pre-employment training for informal sectors. Similarly, there is little to no involvement from the trade unions for the secondary/ Hi secondary school. Dr Mehrotra highlighted that general education has the potential

to offer education and training opportunities for everyone; however, there are limited TVET courses for workers. Finally for apprenticeship, he underlined the importance of trade unions' involvement in the non-government-sponsored private corporate EBT to ensure accountability. Trade unions should also be involved in the apprenticeship supported by the Government to ensure accessibility and accountability.

Later Dr Mehrotra shared India's journey on apprenticeship from 1961 to 2022. He underlined the challenges as India has a lower labour force participation rate and a much higher percentage of informal workers than the global rates. The current Apprenticeship Act 1961 encourages only formal apprentices. He noted little involvement from the private enterprises and cited 250,000 apprenticeships after 50 years in 2011. Also, 78 per cent of private enterprises had no apprenticeship. The share of apprentices to 10,000 workers is lower in India, at 7 to 10,000 workers in 2021, lower than Cambodia, South Africa and Senegal. He hoped for clearer trade unions' role of accountability with private and public companies.

Dr Mehrotra highlighted the potential of apprenticeship to provide jobs for young school leavers. He mentioned that firms with less than 30 workers are not required to offer apprenticeships. This is an issue which requires trade unions' attention to bring this up to the Government. Trade unions play a huge role in ensuring that apprenticeship is not avoided. He also brought attention to the poorly educated manufacturing and services workforce and recommended this as an area of focus for trade unions.



Dr Mehrotra shared the following observations:

- Increased educated unemployment from 2011/12 to 2017/18. The economy is not generating jobs for young graduates. Furthermore, with more youths pursuing general education instead of technical education or OJT, this may have increased the youth unemployment rate due to the lack of working experiences and employment opportunities.
- There is a need to encourage youths to take up vocational education through apprenticeship to ensure employment opportunities.

Before concluding his presentation, Dr Mehrotra emphasized the need for more explicit industrial policies closely linked with employment policies. It should be able to transition workers from one industry to another. Furthermore, the Government needs to recognize the private forms to ensure that employers take responsibility for apprenticeship and training. He advocated for trade unions to start engaging the Government to push for these changes.

Ms Phan Tra Khuc questioned the possibility of advocating for the Government to make changes through social dialogues. Dr Mehrotra responded that it is not possible due to the current political situation. Currently, only BMS

(Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, or Indian Workers' Union) has the potential to influence this. However, BMS themselves face challenges.

Mr Francis Kim agreed that these were interesting points and that even at the national level, the Government refuses to speak to workers' organizations. ITUC faces challenges trying to engage the Government in social dialogue. Dr Mehrotra echoed this point as he agreed that ITUC faces more challenges than ever due to the political state of the countries (e.g., Sri Lanka). He further commented that India's economy contracted despite the growth observed in many other countries such as the Republic of Korea, Japan and China.

National policy, legislation and governance on skills development and apprenticeships: Role of trade unions - The Philippines case

Before beginning her presentation, Ms Irene Isaac, former Director General, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) introduced a former board member of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Isidro Antonio Asper ("Tony"). Ms Isaac shared that Tony had passed on two months ago and was a very active board member involved in the area of policies and competency.

Ms Isaac began her presentation by providing background on Philippine TVET:

- TESDA: Formation of TESDA in 1994
- Philippines Development Plan 2017-22: It consists of key strategies and targets to ensure access to lifelong learning opportunities to enable Filipinos to attain both personal and national goals.
- The Philippine Qualifications Framework: aligns the qualification level for technical and higher education. Ms Isaac believed that the framework is still new but it would provide a good groundwork in some aspects.
- Quality-assured Philippine TESD systems: This started with the development of competency and programme standards, the accreditation system to the Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification (PTCACS).

Ms Isaac emphasized the importance of universal entitlement to lifelong learning as this will allow people to be skilled, reskilled and upskilled.

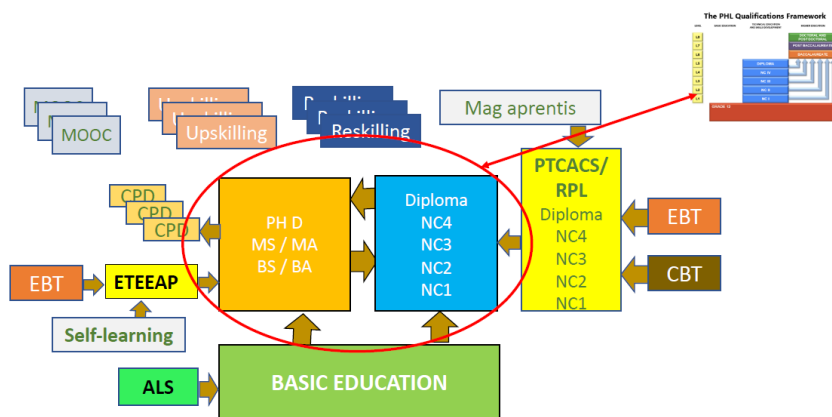
While acknowledging the various factors (e.g. social, natural calamities, economic and technological) disrupting to the Philippine Education and Training System before the pandemic, Ms Isaac shared that are many systems/programmes offer alternative education and training opportunities.

She detailed the following examples:

- Alternative Learning System (ALS): Provides non-formal education to out-of-school Filipinos through accreditation. Candidates that demonstrate and achieve the learning outcomes will get certification equivalent to junior high school.
- The Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP): Provide education to Filipinos with at least 5 years of work experience. Candidates can be awarded a degree after they complete all the modules.
- Philippine TVET Competency and Assessment Certification Systems (PTCACS): PTCACS does not provide training certification. It is a self-assessment guide based on competency standards. Those interested can self-study and apply for assessment. Otherwise, they can attend available training.
- Community-based training: Provides training and self-directed learning.
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): Courses are free, but students need to pay tuition fees to receive the certification.
- Area-based Sector-based Strategy: Addresses the needs of the impacted committee. Government to pay more for local training programmes.

After going through the various systems and programmes, Ms Isaac moved on to share the implementation mechanism for lifelong learning. The pathway brings together the independent elements together as a framework. The implementation is anchored on a bachelor's degree and TVET certification.

Implementation Mechanisms for Lifelong Learning



In terms of lifelong learning, Ms Isaac outlined the 12 Skills for Prosperity (SfP) Key Action Areas for Lifelong Learning. The various areas include social inclusion, effective capacity building, decent work opportunity, improved access to training and participation of stakeholders in the governance system, etc. These areas surround the 4 main strategies: Social Inclusion Policies & Strategies, Governance and Quality Assurance, Adaptive Technologies and Multi-party.

Ms Isaac explained that apprenticeship in the Philippines should involve a contract between an apprentice and an employer on an apprentice-able occupation endorsed by tripartite partners and approved by Authority. The Dual Training System as part of the apprenticeship programme is modelled after the German system.

After a brief sharing on elements of an apprenticeship programme, Ms Isaac pointed out that the duration of the programme is an important element. She explained that the apprenticeship programmes were only 6 months long. The strict duration has made it difficult for certain occupations to hire apprentices.

While participating enterprises are entitled to an additional deduction from taxable income of one-half of the value of labour training expenses incurred from the apprenticeship programmes, Ms Isaac noted that most enterprises do not claim the deduction as it is difficult to compute and claim.

Moving on to the Q&A, Mr Julien Magnat shared in his summary that Tripartism plays a significant role in the Philippines apprenticeship system. In response to Mr Magnat's comment, Ms Isaac emphasized that active trade unions alone are insufficient, as they need to be supported by the same level of participation from their workers/union members. Mr Francis Kim believed this is important at the community level, but trade unions are also important to bring the ministries together for necessary changes. Ms Isaac agreed with Mr Kim's input and added that it depends on the labour education system and its fundamentals.

At the end of the session, Mr Ariel Castro acknowledged the good practices that the Philippines has put in place. He suggested that the capacity building mentioned during the presentation should be a recognised responsibility of the organisations. Enterprises are responsible for ensuring that their staff are ready to participate and take on such challenges. On the other hand, Mr Castro emphasized that funds and resources provided to trade unions to support the training of workers must be put to good use.

Workers group's stand at the 2022 ILC on the quality apprenticeships and strategies at the 2023 ILC

Mr Ahn introduced the participants and resource persons to Ms Amanda Brown over a Zoom video call. He also provided Ms Brown with a summary of the topics discussed. Mr Ahn introduced Ms Brown, the Workers Group Spokesperson for the 2022 ILC and Deputy General Secretary of the National Education Union, UK.

Ms Brown shared the progress of the discussions at the ILC. She pointed out issues such as different traditions and system across the world; while some countries have established training and apprenticeship systems, others have yet to. She revealed that their goals are to develop a good system, a good pathway to work, a good education route, and promote decent work and good quality employment.

The following are some recommendations for the apprenticeship system that she listed:

- There is a need to define the system that encompasses both formal and informal apprenticeships. It should include informal workers in this formal apprenticeship system to ensure decent work.
- While training is often associated with skills specific to their work, apprenticeship should provide a broader range of education. This includes levelling up people's general education skills.
- Apprenticeship should not replace proper working arrangements. Apprentices are not the replacement for other workers, and should not be viewed as cheaper forms of employees.
- Importance of stronger trade unions rights and active social dialogues for collective bargaining. Workers should be given the right to join trade unions.
- Trade unions and employers should work with Government to develop a regulatory system to select apprenticeship-suitable occupations and decide on the skills and structure that are most suitable for the occupation.

Ms Brown recognized that in certain countries, trade unions might face challenges participating in the development of the structure of the apprenticeship. She emphasized that the objective of the recommendations is to ensure everyone has access to decent work and working conditions, including the apprentices. They should be entitled to fundamental rights in decent wages and working conditions and access to social protection. Ms Brown pointed out that some systems treat apprentices like other workers, but some do not. She also shared the need for a clear reference to anti-discrimination measures to ensure that apprentices are treated the same as every other worker. She highlighted the importance of considering formal and informal education when assessing their skills.

Apprenticeship is often associated with craftsmanship and manufacturing roles. However the truth is there are and could be apprenticeships in other roles. Ms Brown believed that changing people's mindset is a good start for people to recognize that qualifications gained at the end of the programme can be used as a bridge to further their studies and career.

While the rights have been set out in the draft recommendation, a regulatory system is also required. Ms Brown suggested that the Government should work with both unions and employers to set up apprenticeship structure. Employers who offer apprenticeship can learn about their obligations and knows what to expect from apprenticeship. Especially with a clear contractual agreement, they should know what they are entitled to. She noted that they had built structures to enable people to move between employers through their apprenticeships, to gain wider experience.

Ms Brown updated that ITUC has sent out briefing notes, and Governments will be working with various social partners about their response to the current text in preparation for the meeting in June (ILC). She hoped to hear from affiliates about the situation in their countries and the problems they experience, and their thoughts on how this exercise could help tackle their national contexts.

Mr Ahn opened the floor for questions and comments. Dr Santosh Mehrotra asked about the expectations of employer representatives regarding apprenticeships. Ms Brown shared her earlier conference with the employers, and she explained that while most of them agreed with the rights and entitlement of apprentices, they opposed

the inclusion of the term 'adequate' pay. She also shared her experience when employers asked whether the Government would provide subsidies if they participate in skills development and training. She shared her disagreement with the point and emphasized that employers should also take up the responsibility to invest in the future workforce.

At the end of the Q&A, Ms Brown thanked the audience and Mr Ahn before leaving Zoom. Mr Ashwani Aggarwal was invited to present the agenda of ILC on Quality Apprenticeship in the second part of the session.

Mr Aggarwal shared insights on formal and informal apprenticeships. He shared that some countries have developed other forms of the system, such as the dual degree system, that may not be considered apprenticeships. He highlighted the need to pay close attention to other alternative systems that are similar to an apprenticeship to ensure that they are also covered under the employment law. He mentioned that the constituents were able to achieve consensus in their earlier discussion. One consideration was highlighted during the meeting regarding the apprenticeship standards, whether they serve as a set of recommendations and the need to enforce them. This is still in discussion and the decision will be revealed in the instrument next year.

Mr Aggarwal then asked Ms Irene Isaac on increasing the take-up rate of the dual-degree system as compared to other TVET programmes. Ms Isaac agreed that there had been a declining number due to the Covid-19 pandemic and many other reasons. She mentioned the difficulty in tax claiming and the strict apprenticeship duration (6 months) as the reasons. Furthermore, training providers need to review and adjust the training plan frequently due to the fast-changing workplace and skills needs.

Ms Phan Tra Khuc commented that there is a social belief that having a degree would provide social security. Hence, there is more enrolment in general high school than in TVET programmes. Many believe those with Bachelor's degrees has a higher social status than those who graduated from TVET programmes. She noted this is a social issue that needs to be addressed but was unsure how trade unions can be involved.

Mr Aggarwal asked the same question for India. In response to his question, Dr Mehrotra shared the need for employers to see the good in investing in the workforce. In India, many enterprises are not required to take apprentices if they have less than 30 workers. Hence, many SMEs, especially those the micros and not registered ones, nor do they involve in apprenticeship.

Mr Aggarwal emphasized the importance of understanding the perspectives of different countries. For instance, this can help them to understand whether an apprenticeship is the preferred mode of learning and why it is not common in various countries. He thanked Dr Mehrotra for sharing his point of view and agreed that it is a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed.

He shared that ILO has a module that go through strategies and recommendations to promote apprenticeship. He revealed that ILO would publish new publications that discuss the effectiveness of apprenticeship and how to promote it in SMEs, etc. On 7 Dec 2022, ILO will organize a webinar that showcase how apprenticeship can help with digital economies and how digital transformations modernize apprenticeship.

▶ Day 2, 15 November - Presentations & discussion: Sharing experiences in skills development and lifelong learning

National policy, legislation and governance on skills development and apprenticeships: Role of trade unions – Viet Nam case

Mr Ahn greeted all participants and invited Ms Phan Tra Khuc to present the case of Viet Nam. At the beginning of her presentation, Ms Phan shared that trade unions provide social protection and they need to strengthen their role in skills development. She cited the 3 areas trade unions can work towards in the policy brief: Accessibility, Accountability and Sustainability.

Accessibility can be achieved with up-to-date information, training programmes, financing and support.

Ms Phan underlined the various ways that currently support the Information and Training Programmes:

- Individuals, organizations, and businesses can start TVET institutions
- Government implements TVET programmes for labourers in rural areas
- The increasing number of continuing learning centres established throughout the country to provide illiteracy eradication and post-literacy courses, provide training in foreign languages and IT and short-term TVET courses (17,459 in 2021)

Similarly, there has been an increase in financing and finance for training and education. Ms Phan highlighted a few examples, such as tax exemptions for traditional TVET institutions and funding students from marginalized population participating in short-term TVET programmes. Marginalized populations are also entitled to take a loan from the Government to participate in TVET at the intermediate and college levels.

In the area of accountability, Ms Phan listed the different standards in Vietnam: National Skills Standards, 191 National Occupation Skills Standards and 36 centres for assessment and certification of NOSS.

Ms Phan cited examples that measure the success of the mentioned policies in the two areas (i.e. accessibility and accountability). Citing a report from Asian Development Bank, Ms Phan noted that 21 per cent of the employed workforce in Vietnam received TVET in 2016. However, there is a gap between gender and geographic areas, and urban regions have more facilities and better infrastructure. Ms Phan believed that this is representative of the outcomes of the various programmes and initiatives that she highlighted earlier in the area of accessibility. For accountability, she underscored that the labour productivity rate is lower than in other countries in the region, declining in some sectors such as mining and construction. She believed that the productivity rate measures of economic success and mentioned the need to focus on skills development.

She identified two challenges that Vietnam faces. First, TVET graduates lack proficiency in industry-relevant occupational skills and fundamental soft skills; hence, there is a shortage of skills. Second, an imbalance in skill supply and demand is observed in Vietnam.

Ms Phan outlined the 3 main reasons for the skills gap:

- **Social belief**
 - Women's roles: Women's participation is lower in male-dominated sectors. Most companies recruit women who are under the age of 30. Hence, it is difficult for women to find or change jobs.
 - Roles of college/university degree: Most people wants to go to the University as they believe a Bachelor's degree can bring them a more stable job.
- **TVET institutions**
 - Teaching approaches

- Infrastructure: There is a lack of infrastructure, which result in a lack of hands-on experience. Many learn without using the equipment.
- Trainers: There is a lack of trainers to support the training.
- **Assessment:** lack of assessment reports.
 - Market needs: Mismatch in terms of skills supply and demand.
 - Future needs: It is difficult to meet future needs given the current mismatch.
 - TVET programmes.

Ms Phan provided her suggestions to ensure Sustainability. Her suggestions can be grouped into 4 elements: Inclusion, Efficiency, Assessment and Mindset.

- **Inclusion:** While there are existing programmes to support marginalized populations (women/ those living in rural areas), Ms Phan believed that more could be done to reach out to them. She shared in her examples that trade unions can collaborate with the Women's Union and connect TVET institutions with employment services centres and job fairs.
- **Efficiency:** Ms Phan suggested providing experiential training, engage workers and employers in the training design delivery and internal quality assurance (i.e. through social dialogues) and develop intentional TVET programmes to meet the needs of the market and future workforce.
- **Assessment:** Ms Phan highlighted the need to assess the need of local, national and international markets and to assess the success of TVET programmes.
- **Mindset:** Ms Phan advocated for a change of mindset regarding skills training to recognize the need to build capacity of the workforce to cope with job market challenges. She also underlined the importance of soft skills (e.g., communication and time management skills) that can help people transfer from one job to another.

The Q&A began with Dr Santosh Mehrotra asking the very first question. He commented on the oversimplification of TVET in Germany and Switzerland and wondered if a standard is necessary for Vietnam. He further elaborated that Germany created occupation standards depending on those that are recognized in the national standard data; this might differ in other countries. He emphasized the importance of the Government in determining who should be deciding on setting these standards. In his second point, he questioned the need for Industry Revolution 4.0 in Vietnam, who has been successful in the manufacturing sector.

In response to Dr Mehrotra's first point, Ms Phan agreed that there are differences between Vietnam and Germany. She commented that the need for standards depends on the context and whether people are comfortable following through. She also pointed out the difficulty of implementing the standards. In response to Dr Mehrotra's second point, she believed that this decision lies with the Government. The Government can work with ILO to study these needs at a macro level. Mr Ahn clarified the usefulness of the technology adoption by citing its success in Vietnam's garment manufacturing industry with an increased output during the pandemic.

Dr Mehrotra agreed that localized standards are necessary for Vietnam, India and the Philippines. However, he questioned the need for a national standard similar to those in Scotland and England and how the standards value-add. Ms Phan believed that social dialogue could support this to ensure consistency at the company level. Mr Julien Magnat agreed that there is no simple solution as the strategy depends on the condition and history of the countries. Furthermore, a strong institution is required to develop and implement the solution. Currently, most countries only have plans for the next 2-3 years.

National policy, legislation and governance on skills development and apprenticeships: Role of trade unions – Singapore case

Mr Ahn invited Ms Tan Siew Peng to present skills development and lifelong learning in Singapore. Ms Tan introduced Singapore as the 3rd largest exporter globally and service sector accounts for 70 per cent of output. Economic growth in Singapore has been relatively positive since its independence in 1965. In 2020, Singapore's

economy suffered a downturn due to the Covid-19 pandemic but rebounded with a 7.2 per cent growth rate in 2021, faster than its recovery from the 2008/09 global financial crisis. Ms Tan briefly shared the workforce profile of the country. Singapore has one of the smallest shares of millennials (aged 25-39). Singapore's labour force participation rate is about 70 per cent, the highest among the high-income economies. Highly skilled workers make up three-fifths of the resident workforce, while the proportion of low-skilled workers is one of the smallest in the world.

Ms Tan presented the changes in skills profile from 2001 to 2020. The share of employment in the Manufacturing sector was one of the highest between 2001 and 2012, but this proportion declined in 2020. Meanwhile, the Finance and insurance sector has seen an increase in employment numbers over the years. She explained that the skills profile of the overall workforce in Singapore is highly linked to changes in economic activities.

Despite the positive outlook, Ms Tan outlined the challenges that Singapore faces:

- Labour shortage & reliant on foreign workforce: Singapore faces labour shortage in certain sectors such as construction, manufacturing, healthcare and ICT. Singapore relies heavily on migrant workers to meet the growing economy's needs. The total foreign workforce grew faster than its resident population from 2007 and 2020.
- As a small and open economy, Singapore's economy is much more susceptible to global economic shocks than its regional neighbours.
- Average productivity still languishes despite Government efforts causing concerns about the sustainability of wage gains.
- Policy concerns on whether workforce skills are adequate to meet the changing needs of the economy.

Ms Tan showcased the strong framework for Tripartite cooperation in Singapore to promote harmonious labour-management relations, helped overcome manpower challenges, and boosted Singapore's economic competitiveness. The tripartite partners are the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF).

Ms Tan went through the development of skills development and lifelong learning framework from the policy's perspective:

- 2009: The Government established the Economic Strategies Committee in 2009 after the global financial crisis to map the recovery plan.
- 2012: Committee on University Education Pathways was convened to re-examine the cohort participation rate to increase the supply of locally trained graduates in response to the global financial crisis.
- 2016: Set up the Committee of the Future Economy to prepare for the new skills demand for the future of work. The committee later announced the establishment of 2 statutory boards: SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore.
- 2017: The Committee of the Future Economy recommended 7 strategies, 2 are related skills development and a lifelong learning framework. One of the strategies is to develop and implement Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs).
- 2020: The Government announced the refreshment of the 23 ITMs under ITM 2025.

Ms Tan explained that ITMs is a strategy to promote growth and transformation for 23 industries developed and implemented in partnership with industry partners to prepare for the future economy.

Ms Tan moved on to share skills development and lifelong learning framework from individual and workers' perspectives. The Government has set up 4 schemes over a few decades to support the education and training of its citizens.

- Edusave Scheme (1991), Child Development Co-Saving Scheme (2001) and Post-Secondary Education Account (2001): Education accounts to cover individual's educational expenses from preschool to post-secondary up to age 30. The Government provides incentives to encourage top-ups to these accounts.
- SkillsFuture Credit Scheme (2015): This account is introduced for all Singaporeans aged 25 and above for a range of approved training courses.

Ms Tan shared the following TVET and work-study programmes that are offered:

- Institute of Technical Education: Offers TVET Pathway for students who have completed lower-secondary education.
- SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programmes: Allows Singapore citizens to undertake a course relevant to their current job. Offer pathways from diploma to post-graduate and degree levels. It was re-designated to “SkillsFuture Work-Study Post-Diploma”, “SkillsFuture Work-Study Diploma” and “SkillsFuture Work-Study Certificates”. SkillsFuture Singapore aims the work-study programmes to benefit 12 per cent of each age cohort by 2025.

Trade unions play a significant role in the skills development and lifelong learning framework. Ms Tan shared the following examples of trade unions’ involvement:

- Develop and implement the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) to support skills upgrading for low-wage workers.
- Assist in establishing company training committees within enterprises via the Training and Transformation Division. There are 600 company training committees formed to-date.
- Provides training through the 3 training entities: Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute, LearningHub and e2i. NTUC also provides training for union leaders, designs skills-upgrading courses with academia and assists with issues related to employment and employability.

Finally, Ms Tan shared the observed labour market outcomes of these efforts. The number of highly skilled workers has increased since 2013, while the number of medium-skilled workers has declined. She highlighted that the earnings of elementary occupations grew more than 50 per cent between 2011 and 2022.

Ms Tan shared the challenges that Trade unions would face and her recommendations.

- Seek ways to moderate the reliance on foreign labour.
- Pressure on the skills development framework to deliver results will continue to rise with rapid changes and tightening access to foreign labour.
- Trade unions will find their resources increasingly stretched by competing priorities as skills development challenges become more complex.
- Continual focus on skills upgrading of older and low-skilled workers is needed to ensure inclusivity in workplace.
- Training provision is limited by size. Trade unions could advocate for further policy refinement in converting the SkillFuture accounts into fully personalized individual learning accounts. This is to provide greater flexibility for individuals to structure long-term learning plans that meet their long-term career aspirations.

During the Q&A, Mr Francis Kim elaborated on the Progressive Wage Model in Singapore, which is a model that combines the skills development process with wage increment. He explained that the model is sustainable in Singapore as it is a small city-state with strong tripartite cooperation and trust in the Government. He cautioned that the model might be difficult to apply in other countries from the Asia Pacific.

Ms Irene Isaac questioned how AI and automation are used to compensate for low-skills job as the skill level of Singaporean increased over the years. Ms Tan replied that Singapore requires foreign labour workers to fill in jobs that are not necessarily low-skill (e.g. nurses). She mentioned that the Government monitors the trend closely to see how resident workers can use technologies to fill in the gap. Ms Isaac noted that this is also an issue in the Philippines but Singapore has the advantage of being a small city-state.

Mr Bayarkhuu Oyundorj, a participant from Mongolia, commented that the Government had to pay for people to attend TVET in his country. He shared that the minimum wage model in Mongolia has encouraged companies to pay at the minimum rate stated. The Mongolian Government will be visiting Singapore to study the current PWM model.

Dr Santoh Mehrotra asked about the proportion of foreign workers in Singapore’s workforce and questioned if the mentioned policies are also extended to them. Mr Kim commented that the Singapore Government put in great effort to protect foreign workers and to improve working conditions. A participant from Singapore, Ms Tan Ying

Ying, added that foreign workers are allowed to participate in the training programmes by joining the trade union, but they are not eligible for the national schemes.

Ms Tan thanked all the resource persons and participants for sharing their insights and concluded her session.

Panel discussions

Moving on to the second last segment of the programme, Mr Julien Magnat invited Union participants from India, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore to discuss two questions.

Q1: Can you share your union experience of engagement in the governance of TVET, including apprenticeships, in their respective countries: Weaknesses, strengths and good practices

Ms Tan Ying Ying (NTUC, Singapore): Ms Tan believed that changes should happen at the company level. Trade unions in Singapore advocate training committees in each company to get feedback from the ground to understand their future plans. Trade unions review the information and identify training and potential growth areas.

Mr Agus Sarjanto (KSSSPI/CITU, Indonesia): Mr Sarjanto highlighted some issues that Indonesia faces, such as 25 million jobs would be lost due to industry 4.0. He mentioned that apprenticeship strategies in Indonesia are insufficient and can be further improved. Furthermore, there is a practice of low-wage work in Indonesia.

Mr Mohammed Dauzkaply Nor Ghazli (MTUC, Malaysia): Mr Ghazli introduced the two types of TVET training offered in Malaysia. The first type of programme is by the Government and HRD for Lifelong Learning. Trade unions work with companies to have their employers trained and certified. Another programme is offered to migrant workers through the unions. Many migrant workers face a language barrier that makes it difficult for them to be involved in training despite the opportunities available for them. Mr Ghazli also emphasized the need for Government to be ready for technological transformation in the future of work. He shared that MTUC has been organizing social dialogue to teach workers about technology and the changes to the future of work. MTUC has been helping residents and foreign workers prepare for the new digital era with technological changes. The Government funds this training.

Mr Arun Gupta (HMS, India): Mr Gupta shared that vocational training can upskill workers and increase their confidence. In India, the training is provided by either the employer or training providers. He stated that the trade unions in India have negotiating power with the Government, and they have raised issues about skills development, relevant programmes and infrastructure. He mentioned that unions provide separate training for their members and employees in various areas, such as track maintenance, train control and safety and health guidance. Mr Gupta shared that India faces challenge in linking gained skills to financial and promotion benefits.

Q2: Marginalised workers such as migrants, gig workers and informal workers are often excluded from the policy of skills and lifelong learning. What trade unions can do to help them access to skills and lifelong learning training?

Mr Arun Gupta (HMS, India): Mr Gupta noted that labour migration is critical to address labour shortage issues and demand. Trade unions in India recognize the challenges that migrants face. Mr Gupta shared that the trade unions provide programmes to improve their employability, social status and self-esteem.

Mr Mohammed Dauzkaply Nor Ghazli (MTUC, Malaysia): Mr Ghazli mentioned the challenges they faced in reaching out to the migrants due to language barrier. With ILO support, the trade union have established a committee for migrant workers. They reach out to them to educate them on using different technology. However, Mr Ghazli shared that employers are reluctant to provide training as they often worry that the migrant workers will return to their home countries or might leave the company for a new one. Mr Ghazli explained that trade unions try their best to understand and guide the migrant workers and explore any further training that could be helpful for them.

Mr Agus Sarjanto (KSSSPI/CITU, Indonesia): At the department level, employers are required to conduct training for the employees, but Mr Sarjanto shared the unions' worries on whether the employer will do as agreed. They are

worried that the employer will conduct the training and re-training but provide a lower salary as they have already spent a sum on training. While incentives are offered to workers who take up training, Mr Sarjanto explained these are mainly for workers with experience. Many employers take advantage of new workers on probation, where the new workers are required to work even though they are in training. He recommended that the training schedule be followed closely.

Ms Tan Ying Ying (NTUC, Singapore): Ms Tan revealed that migrant workers can be covered under the union programs in Singapore. The Government provides funding to the members' companies. The fund allocated to each company depends on the number of union members. Ms Tan shared an example where the trade union worked with Grab to discuss and identify the training needs of the platform workers. NTUC Learning Hub will then curate the courses to meet their training needs. NTUC would then propose the training to the Government to seek funding and support to conduct this.

Plenary session

Mr Ahn encouraged all participants to participate in the discussion on the three questions instead of splitting up into groups as it is important for everyone to engage in the discussion.

Question 1: What are key themes and issues of skills that trade unions like to better reflect the new Instrument at the discussions of the 2023 ILC?

Dr Mehrotra noted that the Government should help in the capacity building of the SMEs to participate in skills and lifelong learning programs.

Mr Bayarkhuu Oyundorj shared examples of the Mongolia case, where skills development and lifelong learning are fragmented between the Mongolian central and local Governments. He suggested having a clearer focus and improved coordination between the central and local Government in implementing related programs.

Ms Nguyen Ngoc Kieu, a union leader from Vietnam (VGCL), highlighted that Industry 4.0 directly impacts employment in Vietnam. New jobs are generated during the transformation, and it is important for employers to provide education and training to support workers in gaining qualifications to transition into these jobs.

Mr Chhiev Sarath, a union leader from Cambodia (CLC) shared challenges that his country faces: compliance with the labour law in apprenticeship. He noted that workers lack opportunities to improve and upgrade as employers do not comply with the law. He shared an example where factory workers work long hours but earn very little in the apprenticeship programme.

Mr Mehrotra noted that many countries are reluctant to invest in training as it is expensive. He reiterated that employers need to recognize the possible benefits of training employees and start investing in human capital. Ms Cheow Yee Pin, a union leader from Malaysia (MTUC), highlighted that companies are reluctant to invest in training as they are worried that people might leave after gaining the qualifications. Most often, they would send the higher skills workers for training; those who really need training are left behind and do not have access to the same opportunities. She suggested having trade unions take control of the workers' training and allocate training funds to the union instead of company. Ms Mehrotra agreed with her suggestion and noted that unions should be part of designing the programs and the registration.

Question 2: What are union campaign strategies at national and global level to bring the support from employers and Governments for the effective implementation of a new Instrument after adoption at the 2023 ILC?

Ms Kieu believed that it is important to supplement, amend and develop policies on training, re-training and internships for workers. She also highlighted the importance of motivating workers to adopt the continuous learning and lifelong learning mindset and encouraging enterprises of all sectors to allocate appropriate funds and time for training of their workers.

Mr Oyundorj noted the importance of reporting the outcomes of skills development and lifelong learning programs/policies from earlier years. This can help to understand the role of union and Government and their

performances. Mr Ahn shared the reporting cycle of ratified ILO standards that fundamental conventions require a 3-year reporting interval and technical conventions 5 years' reporting. Trade unions must be able to provide inputs either in the Government's progress report or send their comments directly ILO NORMES.

Mr Isaac suggested unions think of a more flexible and accessible training mode to support employers in training workers.

Question 3: What are your suggestions to improve the union participation in the governance of TVET, including apprenticeships, in your respective countries?

In Viet Nam cases, Ms Kieu suggested involving various parties (business community, training institutions and state management agencies) in education and training and the standardization and development of vocational skills. She encouraged the reviewing and revamping of content, methods and forms of training and education at training institutions of the Vietnamese Trade Union to link the needs between schools and enterprises and meet the requirements in the changing skills demand for future jobs.

Mr Oyundori shared that union leaders should be more involved in the decision-making related to skills development. Mr Ahn suggested that union leaders participating in the discussion on TVET should also share the information with union members as constructive feedback.

Mr Ahn suggested that different interest groups (youths, disabled, etc.) be invited to discussions on skills development and lifelong learning programmes/policies for their inclusiveness. Mr Oyundori agreed that there could be various sub-committees involved.

▶ Closing remarks

During the closing, Mr Magnat shared some of his takeaways as follows:

1. COVID-19 has impacted the world. Tripartism and engaging in social dialogues are important to move forward with trust.
2. Global trends have strong impact on the future of work, and skills development is essential to cope with future labour market challenges. Many countries are adopting credit learning and education system. Workers should be allowed to learn anything (whether or not related to their work). He cited a study where flexibility in training improves the productivity of the company and improves workers' loyalty. For trade unions, skills development is the first step to promoting decent work. Hence, he emphasized employers, workers and Government involvement in social dialogue is the key to ensuring a peaceful society and avoiding any national or international conflicts.
3. Skills development is important but it is not sufficient. Active market policies consist of more than skills development. He encourages the participants to think of a longer dimension and build on it.
4. While this might be the programme's end, he believed it was a beginning as well. He stated that ILO would continue working closely with countries and trade unions to build the training capacity.

The participants and resource persons also shared their thoughts and thanked the organizers and those who presented.

Mr Ahn thanks all the resource persons who had presented their cases comprehensively over the last 2 days. He highlighted that trade unions, in their position, have significant influence in their countries over socio-economic issues, including skills development and lifelong learning. He expressed his expectation that the participants continue to work on this topic and take initiative social dialogue for the improvement of relevant policies and legal framework at country level. He further thanked his ILO colleagues who had supported the meeting.

Mr Castro informed the participants there would be a discussion on productivity and skills at the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting in Singapore. He hoped that the union leaders bring this knowledge back to their unions. He believed transformation and changes could start from someone in the union, and collectively ILO and trade unions can bring in this transition. He ended off by thanking those who had participated in the meeting.

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