

Media Advisory: 21 Asia-Pacific countries to discuss extending social security coverage

Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, 19-20 May 2008

Wednesday, 14 May 2008

NEW DELHI (ILO NEWS) –The International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, is hosting a high level tripartite Asia-Pacific meeting on Socially-Inclusive Strategies to Extend Social Security Coverage, in New Delhi . The two-day meeting, to be held at Vigyan Bhawan on 19-20 May 2008, will be opened by the Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Mr. Oscar Fernandes on Monday 19 May 2008 at 0930 hrs.

The meeting will bring together government, workers and employers' delegates from 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The aim of the conference is to identify a set of policy approaches that countries can use to pursue the effective and progressive extension of social security coverage, particularly to workers in the informal economy.

The ILO will be represented by Mr. Assane Diop, Executive Director, Social Protection Sector, Mr. Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director, Employment Sector, and Ms. Sachiko Yamamoto, Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, among others.

A number of international agencies closely concerned with social protection issues will be represented, including the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the International Social Security Association (ISSA).

The specific objectives of the meeting include:

- To share knowledge and experiences regarding strategies and mechanisms for the extension of social security.
- To identify good practices and encourage initiatives and responses to emerging challenges.
- To foster a consensual approach or approaches to issues of extension of coverage.

In addition to a high level round table on the *Extension of Social Protection* and a panel discussion on *Social Security and the Right to Work* on 19 May, thematic discussions on 20 May will centre around two topics, namely: *Income Security and Strategies for Extension of Coverage* and *Social Health and Protection: Strategies for Extension of Coverage*. These panels will be followed by general discussion on the way forward.

More information can be found at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/events/sis/index.htm>

Background

At the fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting of the ILO, held in Busan, Korea in 2006, the tripartite delegates – governments, employers' and workers' organizations – committed themselves to an Asian Decent Work Decade (2006- 2015). In doing so they reaffirmed their dedication to the overall goal of full, productive and decent employment for all, and specifically to implementing the priorities laid down in their national Decent Work Country Programmes, and to cooperate on specific regional initiatives where joint action and the sharing of knowledge and expertise would contribute to the realization of decent work. One of these priority areas is "extending the effectiveness and coverage of social protection for all, including workers in the informal economy".

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