International Labour Organization

Statistical report of the Decent Work Decade 2006–15: Asia-Pacific and the Arab States

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First published 2016

Statistical report of the Decent Work Decade 2006–15: Asia-Pacific and the Arab States / International Labour Organization. – Bangkok: ILO, 2016

ISBN: 9789221309451; 9789221309468 (web pdf)

International Labour Organization

decent work / promotion of employment / future of work / labour economics / working conditions / Asia / Pacific / Arab countries

13.01.1

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

Printed in Thailand

Foreword

In 2006, the tripartite delegates to the Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting (AsRM) committed to the 2006–15 Asia and the Pacific Decent Work Decade (ADWD). The member States were to undertake concerted and sustained efforts to promote decent work for all, focusing on five priority areas: (a) competitiveness, productivity, and jobs; (b) labour market governance; (c) youth employment and child labour; (d) protecting migrant workers; and (e) social protection, employability, and local development.

Nearly 60 per cent of the global workforce live and work in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States, and, since the Fourteenth AsRM, the economies and labour markets of the region's diverse countries have experienced dynamic changes. Among other things, the region as a whole underwent significant economic expansion over the decade, with around 180 million people lifted out of working poverty.

The end of the Asia and the Pacific Decent Work Decade – which also coincided with both the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period and the start of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – provides an opportune time to review progress made, gaps that remain, and the challenges that lie ahead.

The *Statistical report of the ADWD 2006–15*, based on official national and international sources and focusing on the five ADWD priority areas, takes a quantitative approach to assessing both progress and major gaps remaining in realizing decent work. The report identifies the contextual factors linked to the region's efforts to achieve decent work over the ADWD decade. In addition, the report highlights emerging trends, key challenges, and opportunities for the future of work in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States. It also underscores the critical importance of the regular collection and use of up-to-date labour market data.

It is our sincere hope that this report will contribute to ongoing and future debates regarding the region's decent work agenda, as well as help ILO constituents to inform and, where needed, revise labour market policies that contribute to the advance towards decent work and sustainable development in the region.

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Acknowledgements

The *Statistical report of the Decent Work Decade 2006–15* for Asia-Pacific and the Arab States was prepared under the overall guidance of Tomoko Nishimoto, Assistant Director- General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, and Ruba Jaradat, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for the Arab States. The main draft of the report was produced primarily by the ILO lead consultant, Ms Lin Lean Lim, with overall technical coordination from Sukti Dasgupta and Tite Habiyakare of the ILO Regional Economic and Social Analysis Unit (RESA).

This report would not have been possible without the contributions, including substantial statistical assistance to the consultant, of a core team comprising Fernanda Bárcia, Richard Horne, Phu Huynh, Cuntao Xia, and Lingling Zhang of RESA, as well as Stefan Kuhn from the ILO Research Department.

The report benefitted from thorough reviews and detailed comments provided by various colleagues from Geneva and from the region's Decent Work Technical teams in Bangkok, Beirut, and Delhi, including Nilim Baruah, Ekkehard Ernst, Rosina Gammarano, Hans Van de Glind, Steven Kapsos, Emanuela Pozzan, and Steven Tobin.

The report team is grateful for the guidance and support from David Lamotte, ILO Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, and Frank Hagemann, ILO Deputy Regional Director for Arab States. The team is also grateful to the ILO Research Department, Geneva, for preparing the statistical estimates of the region's labour market, used throughout the report, as well as to the ILO Department of Statistics for their support with additional data collection and data checks.

Collin Piprell edited the report, Quo Bangkok Company Limited designed the cover, and Nattawarath Hengviriyapanich did the graphic design and layout. From the ILO, Chanitda Wiwatchanon assisted with the publication of the report, while Sophy Fisher and Kwantawan Hongladarom advised on its layout and dissemination. Monrudee Sucharitakul provided administrative support throughout the production process.

List of acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADWD	Asian Decent Work Decade
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AI	artificial intelligence
APRM	Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AsRM	Asian Regional Meeting
BLA	bilateral labour agreement
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EPR	employment-to-population ratio
ESSE	Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises
FDI	foreign direct investment
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCI	Global Competitiveness Index
GDP	gross domestic product
GNI	gross national income
GVC	global value chain
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILC	International Labour Conference
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
KILM	Key Indicators of the Labour Market
LFPR	labour force participation rate
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLC	Maritime Labour Convention
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MRA	mutual recognition arrangement
NEET	not in education, employment or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPP	purchasing power parity
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWTS	school-to-work transition survey
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCW	Understanding Children’s Work (ILO, UNICEF, World Bank programme)
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	The World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

1 Introduction

Decent work is an integral component of larger national commitments to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). More specifically, MDG Target 1.B aims to "achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people".

To this end, in 2006 the tripartite delegates to the Fourteenth International Labour Organization (ILO) Asian Regional Meeting (AsRM) committed to the 2006–15 Asia and the Pacific Decent Work Decade (ADWD), a period during which member States were to make concerted and sustained efforts to promote decent work for all.

The ILO worked with governments and employers' and workers' organizations to support ADWD implementation through five main priority clusters: (a) increasing competitiveness, productivity, and jobs; (b) improving labour market governance; (c) extending social protection; (d) eliminating child labour and creating opportunities for young people; and (e) improving the management of labour migration. In addressing each cluster, the ILO focused on promoting fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards, with gender equality and social dialogue as cross-cutting issues. At the country level, the ILO worked principally through Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and cooperated closely with the United Nations and multilateral financial institutions and donors.

Sixty per cent of the global labour force lives and works in the many diverse countries of Asia-Pacific and the Arab States,[1] and much happened over the ten years of the ADWD, with a wide range of impacts and implications for regional efforts to realize decent work. The end of the ADWD coincided with the conclusion of the MDGs period and the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[2] As requested by the constituents at the 15th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM) in 2011, it is now time to review progress made as well as the setbacks and gaps that remain, while looking ahead to the challenges ahead.

This report thus addresses the following aims:

- to assess progress made and deficits remaining in realizing decent work between 2006 and 2015, applying mainly quantitative indicators and focusing on the five ADWD priority areas; and

[1] For the purposes of this report, "Asia-Pacific and the Arab States" refers to the region that includes 47 ILO member States, plus the Occupied Palestinian Territory: (a) the Arab States in the Middle East; (b) West Asia as well as the developing countries of South, East, and South-East Asia; (c) the Pacific Island countries; and (d) the industrialized economies of Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand. The report also categorizes the countries as high income, with gross national income per capita of US$12,736 or more, or middle and low income with gross national income (GNI) per capita less than $12,736. "Asia-Pacific" as used in this report refers to the region excluding the Arab States in the Middle East. "Asia and the Pacific" as used in this report refers to Asia-Pacific and Arab States.

[2] UN: *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*, A/RES/70/1, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.

- to identify the major post-2015 trends and contextual factors likely to shape the future of work in Asia and the Pacific.

The report underscores the critical importance of reliable, timely, high-quality, disaggregated data to effectively monitor progress toward goals and targets, track performance, and improve the basis for evidence-based decision-making and accountability. The report endorses and itself exemplifies what is both a MDG conclusion and a key SDG message: "measure what we treasure: sustainable data for sustainable development"; "what gets measured gets done"; "only by counting the uncounted can we reach the unreached".[3]

To ensure that no one is left behind, the region must find better ways of tracking both old and new priorities at a level of detail and disaggregation that reveals the lived experience of the region's marginalized people.

[3] United Nations (UN): *The Millennium Development Goals report 2015* (New York, 2015), pp.10–11.

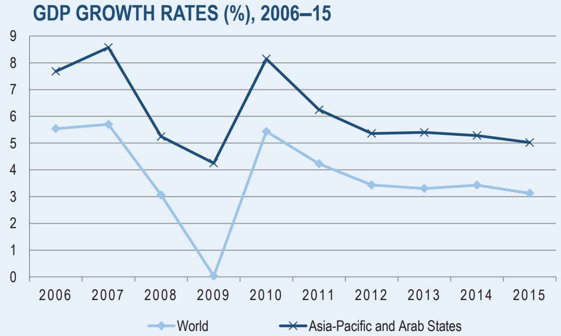
2

Scorecard for the Asia-Pacific and Arab States Decent Work Decade

SCORECARD FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC AND ARAB STATES DECENT WORK DECADE

Overall Economic Performance

GDP GROWTH RATES (%), 2006–15



Source: IMF: *World Economic Outlook Database* (April 2016).

GDP growth

7.7% in 2006

5.0% in 2015

Inequality is on the rise.

Employment-to-Population Ratio

	2006	
76.5%	2006	48.3%
75.0%	2015	44.7%

Developing Middle Class

26% in 2006

40% in 2015

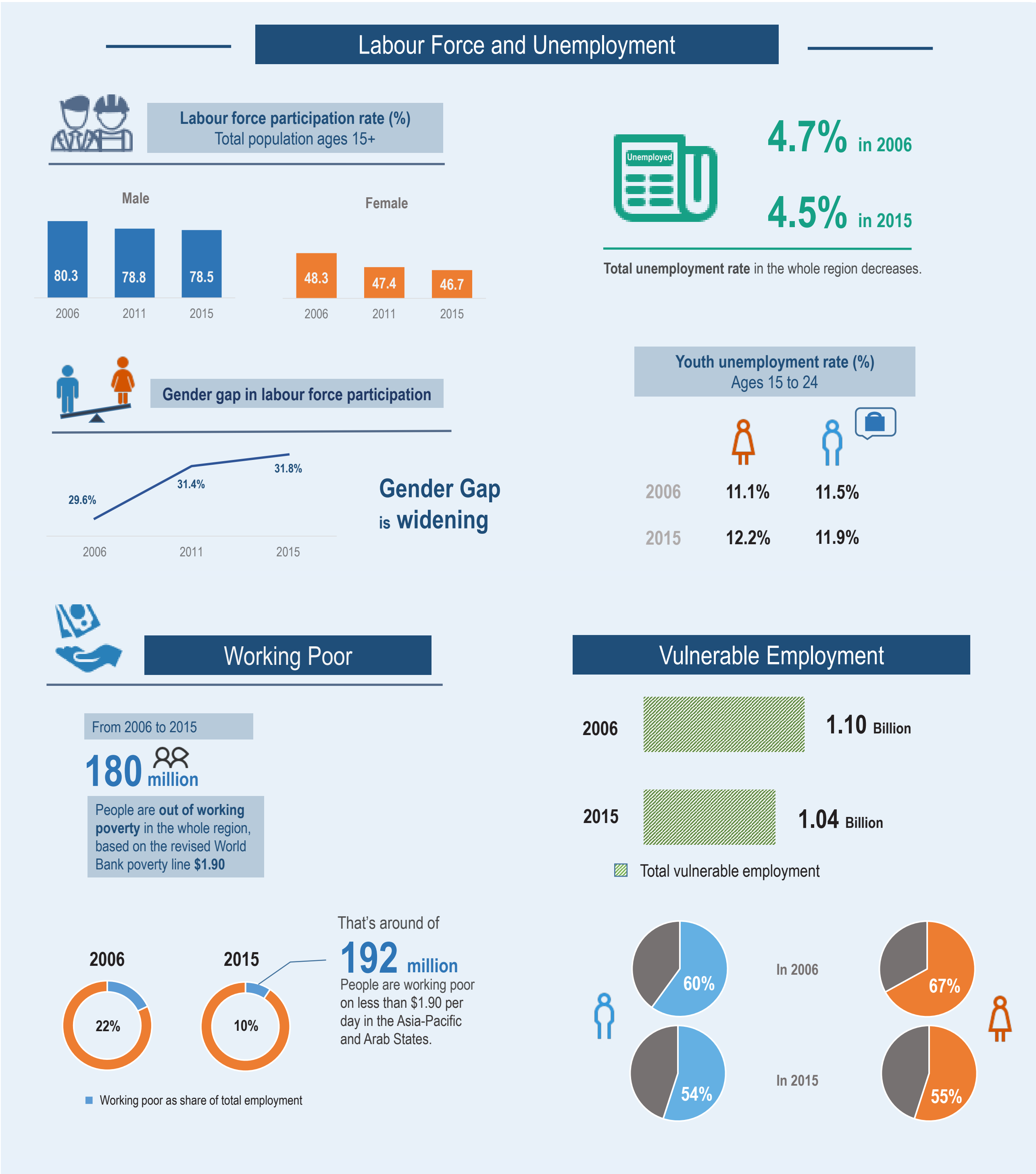
Developing middle class:
$5-$13 person/day

Upper Middle Class

Upper middle class:
above $13 person/day

5% in 2006

12% in 2015


Labour Force and Unemployment
Labour force participation rate (%)
Total population ages 15+
Male
80.3
78.8
78.5
2006
2011
2015
Female
48.3
47.4
46.7
2006
2011
2015
Gender gap in labour force participation
29.6%
31.4%
31.8%
2006
2011
2015
Gender Gap
is widening
Unemployed
4.7% in 2006
4.5% in 2015
Total unemployment rate in the whole region decreases.
Youth unemployment rate (%)
Ages 15 to 24
2006 11.1% 11.5%
2015 12.2% 11.9%
Working Poor
From 2006 to 2015
180 million
People are out of working poverty in the whole region, based on the revised World Bank poverty line $1.90
2006
2015
22%
10%
That's around of
192 million
People are working poor on less than $1.90 per day in the Asia-Pacific and Arab States.
Working poor as share of total employment
Vulnerable Employment
2006 1.10 Billion
2015 1.04 Billion
Total vulnerable employment
In 2006
In 2015
60%
54%
67%
55%

Remarkable overall economic performance despite a context of crises and uncertainty

At the time of the Fourteenth AsRM in 2006, and over the following year, the region was experiencing the highest output growth in decades (between 7 and 8 per cent). Toward the end of 2008, however, countries in the region started to bear the full brunt of the global financial and economic crisis. In 2009, economic output grew by just 4.2 per cent, more than four percentage points lower than the 2007 peak. By the 15th APRM in 2011, the region was leading the global recovery, with real GDP growth in 2011 at 6.2 per cent compared to a prevailing world rate of 4.2 per cent. After that, growth rates decelerated (figure 1).

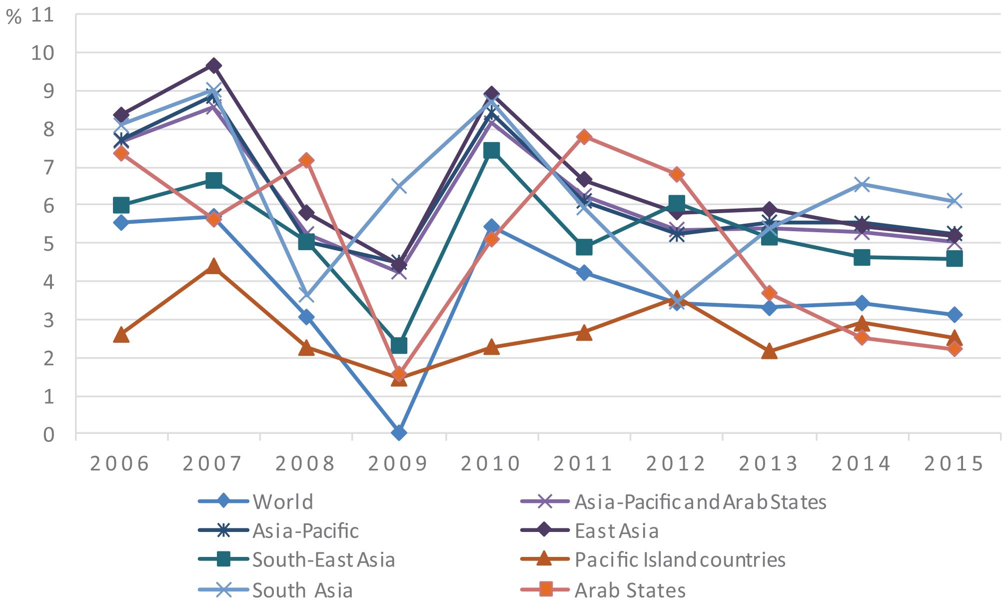
- The Arab States experienced a particularly dramatic decline, from 7.8 per cent in 2011 to a projected 2.2 per cent in 2015. A combination of declining oil prices, conflicts, and unstable security situations weighed upon that sub-region.
- The East Asian economies, on the other hand, against a backdrop of a slowdown in China (from 12.7 per cent in 2006 to 9.5 per cent in 2011 to 6.8 per cent in 2015), grew an average of 5.6 per year between 2011 and 2015, compared to 7.1 per cent per year during the first half of the ADWD.
- South Asia was the only subregion that appeared to buck the trend, with a projected growth rate for 2015 slightly higher than for 2011, buoyed by a slight recovery in growth in India and relatively robust growth in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Overall, however, economic performance during the ADWD was robust. Average annual growth over the ten years was 6.0 per cent in Asia-Pacific and 4.7 per cent in the Arab States, compared to 2.0 per cent in the rest of the world. Throughout the decade, the middle- and low-income countries grew faster than the high-income countries. The average annual GDP growth rate for the entire region was 6.5 per cent for the first half of the ADWD and 5.3 per cent for the second half of the decade. As in the rest of the world, the Asia-Pacific and Arab States region entered a phase of relatively tepid economic growth, with rates lower than pre-crisis levels. Nevertheless, the entire region remained one of the main sources of global economic advance, and the 5.0 per cent growth rate in 2015 remained significantly higher than the 1.5 per cent rate in the rest of the world.

Taking into account population growth, per capita GDP data in figure 2 confirm that the region fared better than the global trend. GDP per capita (2011 purchasing power parity [PPP]) for the region as a whole increased by US$4,743[4] over the decade compared to the global increase of $3,036. Large disparities remained, however, with GDP per capita in the high-income countries almost four times larger than in the middle- and low-income countries. Although growth in GDP per capita slowed significantly in the Arab States (with negative growth in 2014 and 2015), it was still more than three times greater than it was in Asia-Pacific. And within Asia-Pacific, GDP per capita was lowest in South Asia, at about 58 per cent of the average level in the region.

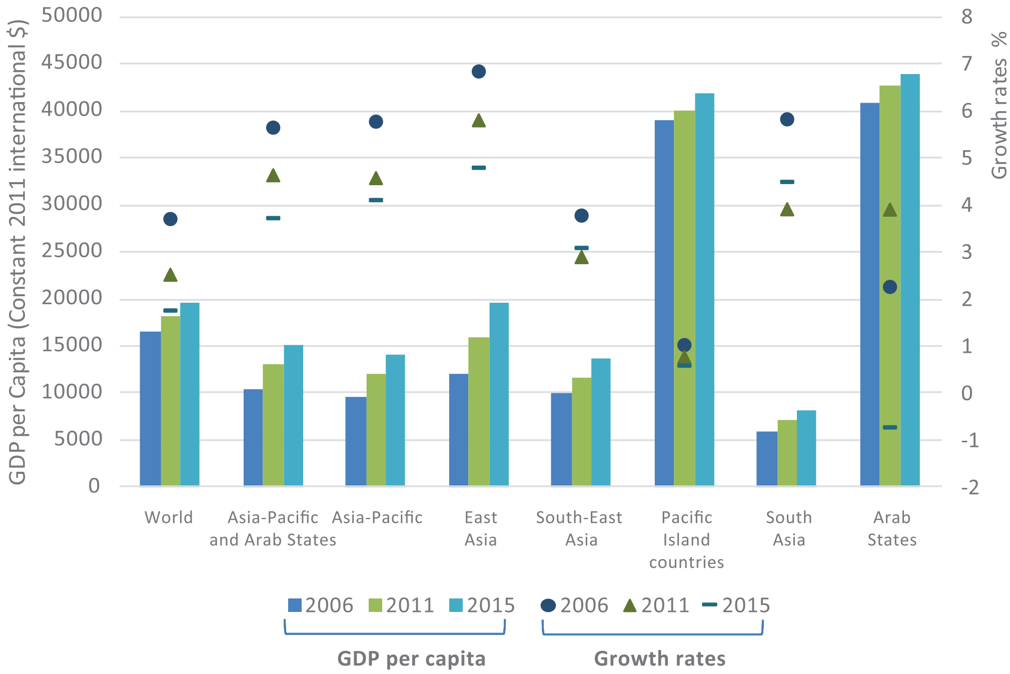
[4] Unless otherwise specified, "$" refers to US dollars.

Figure 1. GDP growth rates (%), 2006–15



Source: IMF: *World Economic Outlook Database* (April 2016).

Figure 2. GDP per capita (in PPP) and growth rates, 2006, 2011, 2015



Source: ILO calculations based on World Bank: *World Development Indicators.*

Asia-Pacific led the world in eradicating extreme poverty

Relatively high rates of economic growth contributed to the region's impressive performance in reducing extreme poverty. Reviews of MDG progress have noted how well the region did in achieving MDG Target 1.A much ahead of the 2015 deadline.[5] The most populous countries in the world, the People's Republic of China and India, led the way in radically reducing the proportion of people living on less than $1.9 a day (PPP 2011 international dollar). In 1990, the poverty headcount ratio in China dropped from 67 per cent, a total of 756 million people, to 11 per cent in 2010, a total of 150 million people. Led by India, South Asia reduced the poverty headcount ratio from 55 per cent in 1991 to 18 per cent in 2015. In South-East Asia, extreme poverty dropped from 53 per cent in 1991 to 8 per cent by 2015.

Asia-Pacific led the world in reducing the rate of working poverty[6]

In 2011, the World Bank (WB) adjusted the international line for extreme poverty to $1.90 per person per day PPP. In the light of this revised measure, the region's working poor – those working but not earning enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme poverty – were seen to drop as a percentage of total employment by more than half, from 21.9 per cent in 2006 to 10.3 per cent by the end of the ADWD. Nevertheless, this represented some 192 million working poor in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States in 2015 (down from 372 million in 2006), out of a global total of 329 million, and meant that regionally 1 in every 10 people was still working and living in extreme poverty (figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Progress across the subregions has been uneven. Although working poverty in South Asia dropped from 35 per cent to 18 per cent of total employment over the decade, in 2015 that subregion still accounted for 123 million, or 64 per cent, of the entire region's working poor. On the other hand, the proportion of working poor out of total employed was 14 per cent in the Pacific Island countries and 8 per cent in South-East Asia, and ranged between 4 and 5 per cent in the other sub-regions.

Asia-Pacific expanded the working middle class

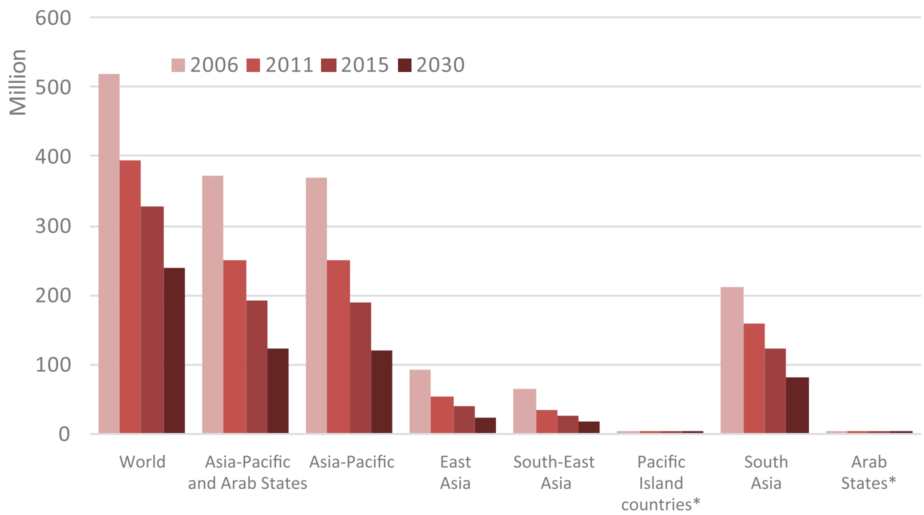
Asia-Pacific and the Arab States performed well in terms of lifting workers and their households out of poverty into middle-class status. The developing middle class (defined as $5–$13 per person per day) accounted for 40 per cent of all employed persons in 2015, up from 26 per cent at the start of the ADWD. This regional 14 percentage point increase compared to global progress of fewer than 10 percentage points. In 2006, the region's upper middle class (more than $13 per person per day) also expanded to 12 per cent from 5 per cent (figure 4).

Again, however, progress was uneven. (a) East Asia, driven largely by China, prospered fastest, with the share of the developing middle class rising over the decade by 24 percentage points and the upper middle class by 10 percentage points. (b) South-East Asia's developing and upper middle classes also grew steadily over those ten years. (c) In both South Asia and the Pacific Island countries, the developing middle class expanded, but the proportion of upper middle class remained relatively stagnant in the second half of the decade. (d) In the Arab States, while the developing middle class shrunk slightly, the upper middle class grew over the decade, and the total middle class (total population earning more than $5) steadily increased.

[5] *Millennium Development Goals report 2015*, op. cit., pp.14–16.

[6] In this Statistical report forecasts and projections are based on certain assumptions regarding the relationship between numerous indicators. Given their lengthy time horizon, estimates and projections are subject to considerable uncertainty and revision.

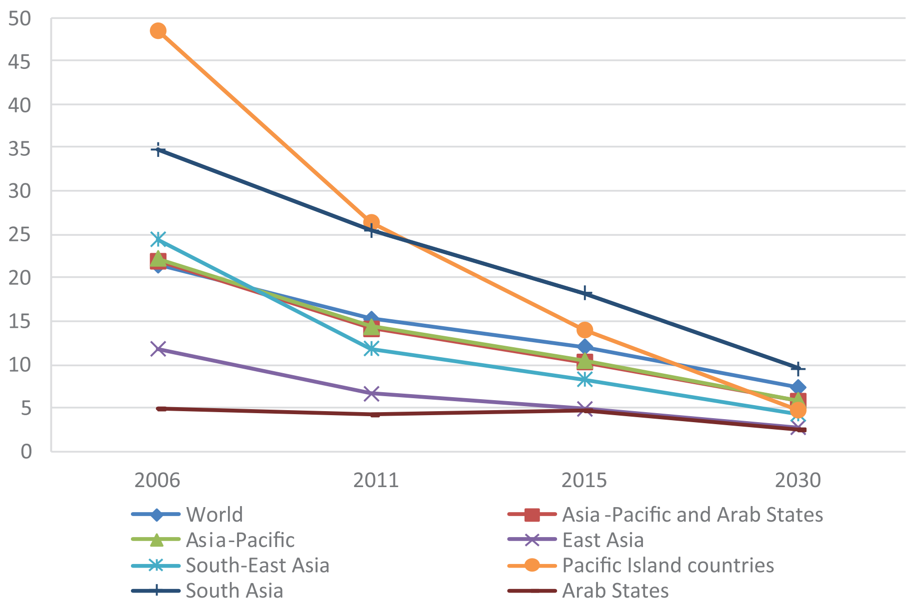
Figure 3.1. Total number of working poor, 2006, 2011, 2015, 2030



Note: (*) Numbers for working poor in Pacific Island countries and Arab States are too small, compared to those of other regions, to be displayed graphically on the chart. Pacific Island countries has 1.5 million working poor in 2006, 0.5 million in 2015, and is projected to be halved to 0.25 million by 2030. The working poor figure for Arab States is 1.6 million and 2.2 million in 2006 and 2015, respectively, and is projected to decrease to 1.6 million by 2030. Figures for 2030 are projections.

Source: ILO calculations based on October 2015 update of the model in Kapsos and Bourmpoula (2013) and ILO Trends Econometric Models, October 2015, The 2013 reference paper is available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_216451.pdf

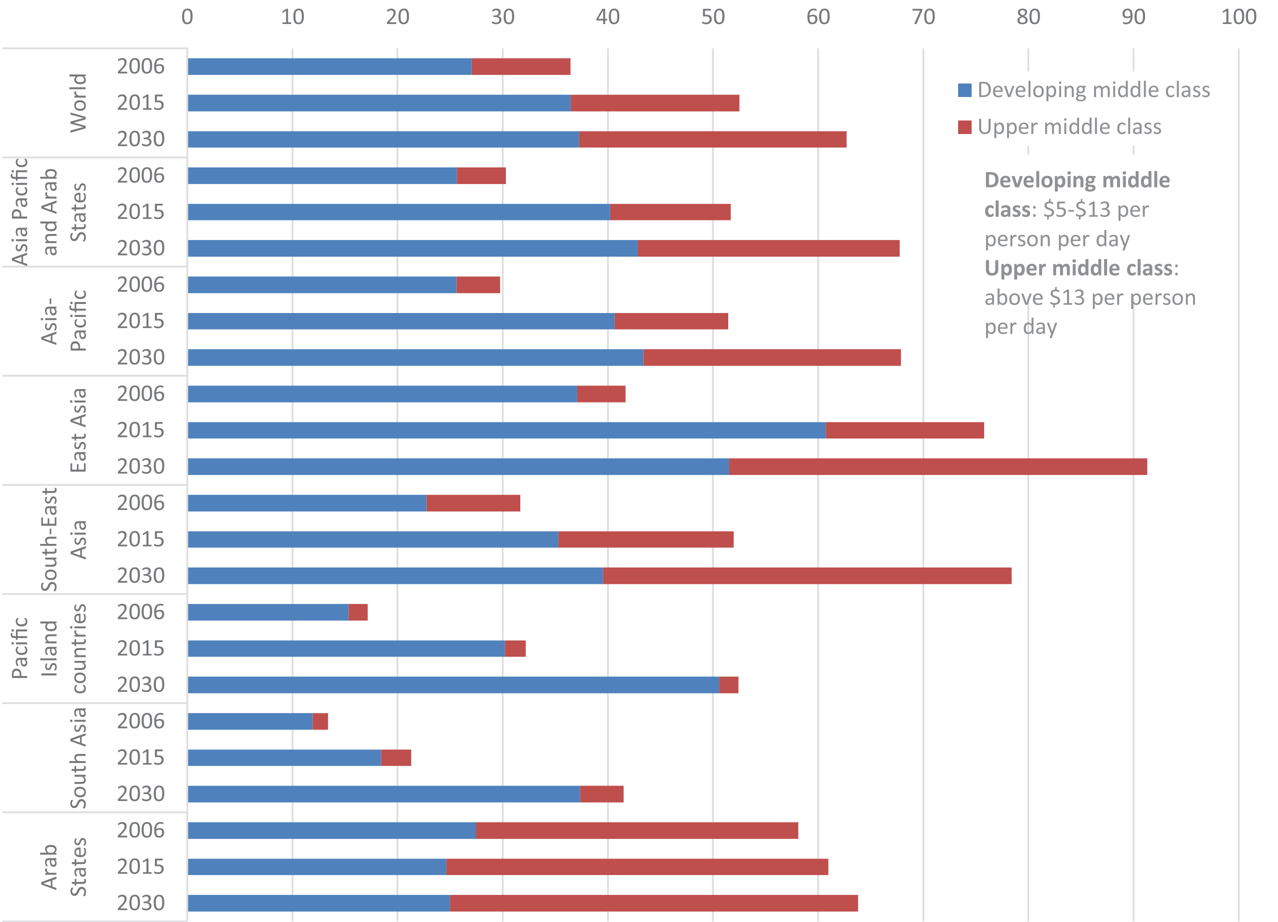
Figure 3.2. Working poor as % of total employment, 2006, 2011, 2015, 2030



Note: Figures for 2030 are projections.

Source: ILO calculations based on October 2015 update of the model in Kapsos and Bourmpoula (2013) and ILO Trends Econometric Models, October 2015, The 2013 reference paper is available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_216451.pdf

Figure 4. Developing middle class and upper middle class (% of total employment), 2006, 2015, 2030



Note: Figures for 2030 are projections.

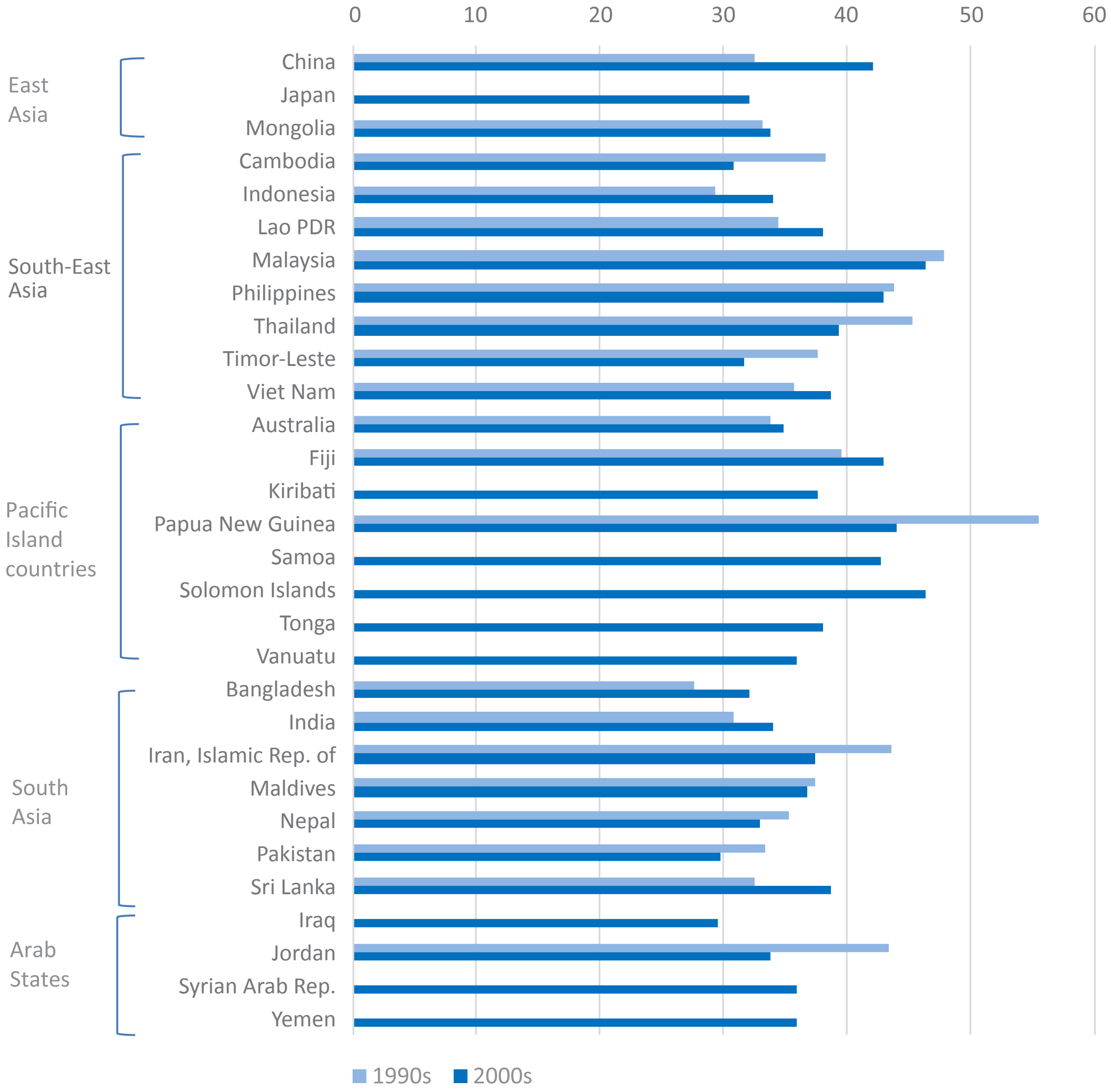
Source: ILO calculations based on October 2015 update of the model in Kapsos and Bourmpoula (2013) and ILO Trends Econometric Models, October 2015, The 2013 reference paper is available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_216451.pdf

Social progress lagged behind economic performance

Gaps between rich and poor widened. The region's remarkable performance in growth and poverty reduction was marred by rising inequality. Many countries have not succeeded in ensuring fair and inclusive growth. Over the past two decades, gaps between rich and poor have grown, particularly in the three most populous countries in the region: China, India, and Indonesia. In China and Indonesia, income inequality as measured by the Gini Index increased by some 10 points (figure 5.1). A Gini coefficient at or greater than 40 is widely considered to be the "high inequality" threshold. Several countries had Gini coefficients greater than 40, and, among countries such as Malaysia and the Philippines, income disparities have remained relatively unchanged over the years. Sri Lanka and the Lao People's Democratic Republic experienced large increases in inequality of 6.1 and 7.5 points respectively. In East Asia, the gap between rich and poor widened in the Republic of Korea and Mongolia, as well as in Viet Nam and Bangladesh. Countries where the income gaps narrowed included Cambodia, Nepal, the Pacific Island countries, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Pakistan.

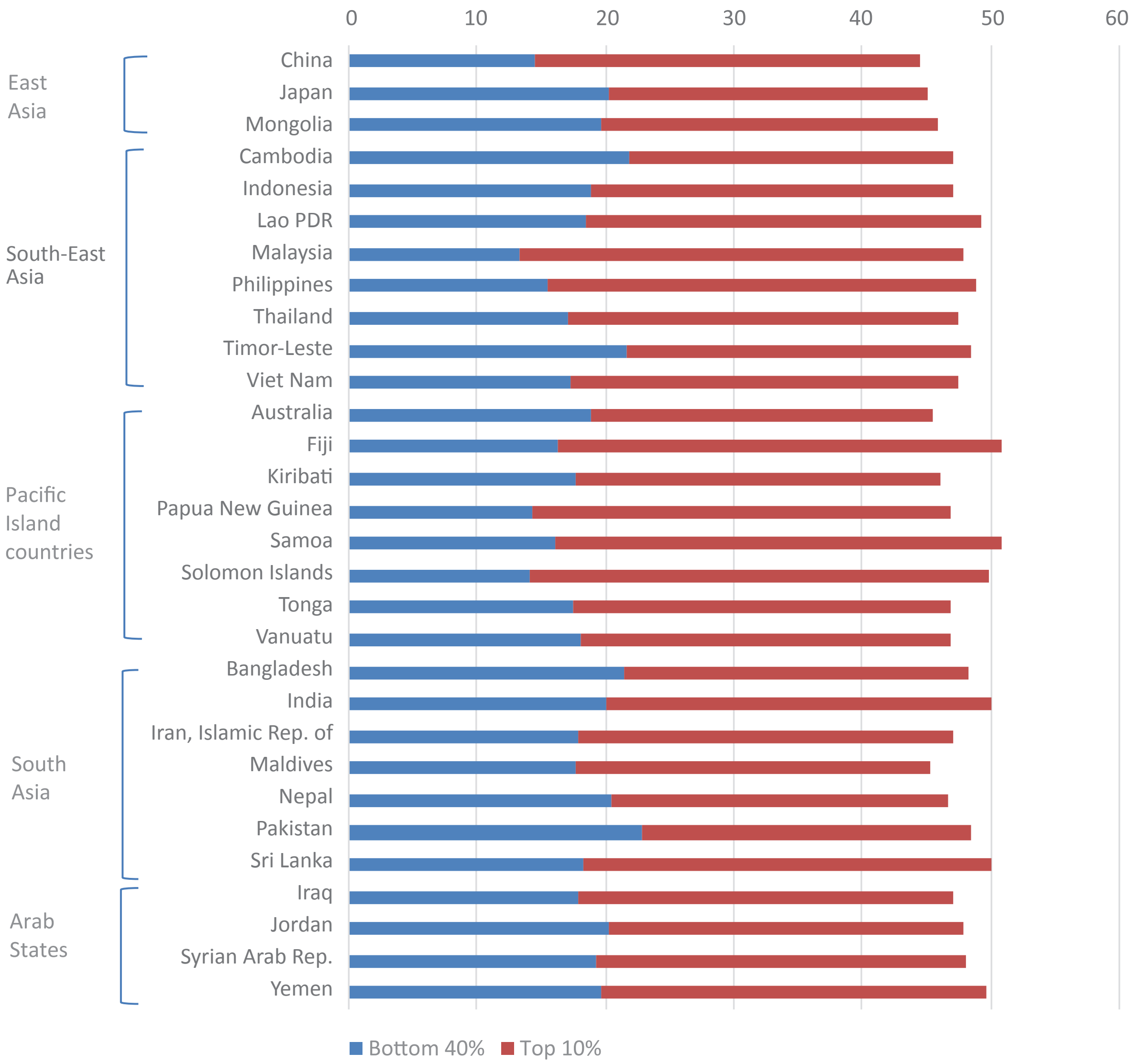
Other indicators also highlight the gap between rich and poor. Figure 5.2 shows that, while the income share held by the bottom 40 per cent of the population was as low as 13.2 per cent in Malaysia and 14.4 per cent in China, and only as high as 22.8 per cent in Pakistan, the top decile accounted for at least a quarter to more than a third of total income. In Malaysia, for example, the top 10 per cent of the population was more than 2.6 times richer than the bottom 40 per cent. In China, the share of the richest 10 per cent was more than twice that of the poorest 40 per cent of the population.

Figure 5.1. Gini index by country, 1990s and latest available year



Source: World Bank Development Research Group, PovcalNet database.

Figure 5.2. Percentage share of total income held by bottom 40% and top 10%, latest available year



Source: World Bank Development Research Group, PovcalNet database.

Trend data available for some countries confirmed the worsening income gap. For example, China experienced the greatest increase (some 10.5 points between 1990 and 2010) in the decile dispersion ratio,[7] followed by the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2.8 points), and Indonesia (2.5 points). However, some countries, notably Cambodia and Thailand, made progress in narrowing the income gap.[8]

The widening gap between rich and poor is a matter of concern not only because equality is an important dimension of decent work, but also because "there is growing evidence and recognition of the powerful and corrosive effects of inequality on economic growth, poverty reduction, social

[7] The decile dispersion rate is defined as the expenditure (or income) of the richest 10 per cent divided by that of the poorest 10 per cent of the population.

[8] ILO: *Asia-Pacific labour market update* (Bangkok, February 2015), p. 5–6.

and economic stability and socially-sustainable development".[9] An Asian Development Bank (ADB) simulation exercise estimated the degree to which rising inequality holds back poverty reduction. Had inequality not increased in India, for example, the poverty headcount rate (using the $1.25 a day poverty line) would have been reduced to 29.5 per cent in 2008, instead of the actual 32.7 per cent; in China extreme poverty would have declined to 4.9 per cent instead of the actual 13.1 per cent; while in Indonesia the poverty rate would have fallen to 6.1 per cent instead of the actual 16.3 per cent.[10] In terms of absolute numbers, had inequality not increased, an additional 128 million people would have been lifted out of poverty in China, 24 million in India, and 37 million in Indonesia.[11]

Growing social unrest

The slow pace of social progress and rising inequalities undermined trust in government, fuelling the risk of social unrest. Confidence in government declined rapidly, particularly in the Arab States but also in most other parts of Asia-Pacific.[12] Social unrest (measured as a percent of all events) increased, especially in the wake of the financial crisis and especially in the Arab States and South Asia.[13]

A growing divide between rich and poor is often a factor in rising levels of crime and social unrest, as it undermines trust and weakens bonds of solidarity. The growing social unrest, a source of grave concern, is particularly acute in countries with high rates of male youth unemployment. It is also a sign that the poor and disenfranchised are increasingly clamouring for their rights, a voice, and access to social services and benefits.

Gender equality an "unfinished agenda"[14]

The region has recognized the need for ensuring that men and women enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities, and protections. Yet gender inequality remains an issue of grave concern. The Gender Gap Index (table 1), which was first introduced at the World Economic Forum in 2006, shows how countries have been performing in terms of closing the gap between men and women in four key categories: (a) economic participation and opportunity; (b) educational attainment; (c) health and survival; and (d) political empowerment. The index ranges from 1 (equality) to 0 (inequality). In 2006, only six out of the 20 countries in the region with available data had managed to close at least two-thirds of the gap between men and women. By 2015, the number had risen to 18 out of 33 countries. None of the Arab States ranked among these countries; in fact, Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic, together with Pakistan, were at the very bottom of the global rankings. Some countries, including Singapore, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had made significant progress in closing the gender gap, regardless of the starting point and income level. In others, however, change was slow (such as in Malaysia), or there had even been deterioration (notably in Sri Lanka).

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[9] United Nations: *Inequality matters: Report of the world social situation 2013* (New York, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [DESA], 2013), p. 21.

[10] ADB: *Asian development outlook 2012: Confronting rising inequality in Asia* (Philippines, 2012), p. 41.

[11] UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP): *Confronting inequalities in Asia and the Pacific: The role of social protection*, working paper (Bangkok, 2014).

[12] ILO: *World employment and social outlook trends 2015* (Geneva, 2015), pp. 29–30.

[13] Ibid., figures in the Statistical annex, pp. 78–87.

[14] ADB: *Asian development outlook 2015 update: Enabling women, energizing Asia* (Philippines, 2015).

Table 1. Gender gap index

Subregions and countries	Gender gaps					
	2006		2011		2015	
	Ranking*	Score	Ranking	Score	Ranking	Score
East Asia						
Japan	79	0.64	98	0.65	101	0.67
Korea, Rep. of	92	0.62	107	0.63	115	0.65
China			61	0.69	91	0.68
Mongolia			36	0.71	56	0.71
South-East Asia						
Brunei Darussalam			76	0.68	88	0.68
Singapore	65	0.66	57	0.69	54	0.71
Cambodia	89	0.63	102	0.65	109	0.66
Indonesia	68	0.65	90	0.66	92	0.68
Lao PDR					52	0.71
Malaysia	72	0.65	97	0.65	111	0.66
Philippines	6	0.75	8	0.77	7	0.79
Thailand	40	0.68	60	0.69	60	0.71
Viet Nam			79	0.67	83	0.69
Pacific Island countries						
Australia	15	0.72	23	0.73	36	0.73
New Zealand	7	0.75	6	0.78	10	0.78
Fiji			109	0.63	121	0.65
South Asia						
Bangladesh	91	0.63	69	0.68	64	0.70
India	98	0.60	113	0.62	108	0.66
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	108	0.58	125	0.59	141	0.58
Maldives					113	0.65
Nepal	111	0.55	126	0.59	110	0.66
Pakistan	112	0.54	133	0.56	144	0.56
Sri Lanka	13	0.72	31	0.72	84	0.69
Arab States						
Bahrain			110	0.62	123	0.64
Kuwait			105	0.63	117	0.65
Oman			127	0.59	135	0.60
Qatar			111	0.62	122	0.65
Saudi Arabia	114	0.52	131	0.58	134	0.61
United Arab Emirates	101	0.59	103	0.65	119	0.65
Jordan	93	0.61	117	0.61	140	0.59
Lebanon			118	0.61	138	0.60
Syrian Arab Rep.			124	0.59	143	0.57
Yemen	115	0.46	135	0.49	145	0.48

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF): *Global gender gap report, 2006, 2015* (Geneva).

* Ranking in 2006 out of 115 countries; ranking in 2011 out of 135 countries; ranking in 2015 out of 145 countries. The highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality).

The Gender Gap Index comprises four sub-indices, so it is important to examine changes in each dimension.[15] Overall, countries in the region are closest to reaching gender parity in: (a) health and survival, followed by (b) educational attainment, (c) economic participation and opportunity, and (d) political empowerment. Several countries have fully or almost fully closed the gender gap in health and survival and also in educational attainment. But in only nine out of 33 countries did women have at least 70 per cent of the economic participation and opportunities of men, while in seven of the countries (India, Iran, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen) women's economic participation and opportunities were less than 40 per cent those of men. Performance has been particularly disappointing in terms of promoting the political empowerment of women. Seven countries in Asia-Pacific (Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Thailand) had closed less than 10 per cent of the political gender gap. Among the Arab States, only the UAE closed more than 10 per cent of the political gender gap.

The region fared less well in achieving MDG Target 1.B: Job growth did not keep pace with economic growth

Employment creation in the region failed to match the record of economic growth.[16] Figure 6 presents the trend of jobless growth in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States and in the various sub-regions. Over the decade, GDP grew at an average annual rate of 5.9 per cent, whereas employment grew only 1 per cent annually. The region's employment elasticity, which provides a numerical measure of how employment growth changes with growth of output, was lower than the world level in both halves of the decade, especially in the middle- and low-income countries.

The Arab States performed well in terms of job creation relative to economic growth, followed by the Pacific Island countries, whereas job growth was disappointingly low in East Asia. In South-East Asia, although employment grew on average by 1.4 per cent per annum between 2011 and 2015, employment elasticity dropped sharply between the two halves of the decade. Employment expansion in South Asia was severely affected by the crisis but has since recovered, so that elasticity rose from 0.10 during 2006–11 to 0.31 for the 2011–15 period. Much of the employment growth, however, was in vulnerable and informal employment,[17] and working poverty remained a serious issue. Vulnerable employment in South Asia accounted for almost three-quarters of all employment in 2015, and the working poor (earning less than $1.90 per day) still accounted for 18 per cent compared to less than 11 per cent in the Asia-Pacific and Arab States.

The trend in South Asia should also be viewed in relation to the large declines in both the employment-to-population ratio (EPR) and the labour force participation rate (LFPR), each by more than 4 percentage points over the ADWD. Neither did the EPR recover to pre-crisis levels in Asia-Pacific, standing at 61.0 in 2015 compared to 63.1 in 2006. The declining trend was also evident in the LFPRs. Only the Arab States were able to improve both the LFPRs and EPRs. South-East Asia was also able to slightly increase the share of the working population who were employed, although the LFPR remained largely unchanged (figures 7.1 and 7.2).

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[15] See table A6 in the statistical annex, below.

[16] Of course employment growth is associated not only with economic growth, but also with demographic dynamics in terms of labour force size in the region. See section 4.2 of this report.

[17] ILO: *World employment and social outlook trends 2015* (Geneva, 2015), p. 49.

Figure 6. Average annual growth rate of employment and GDP and employment elasticity, 2006–15

Figure 6.1. World, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

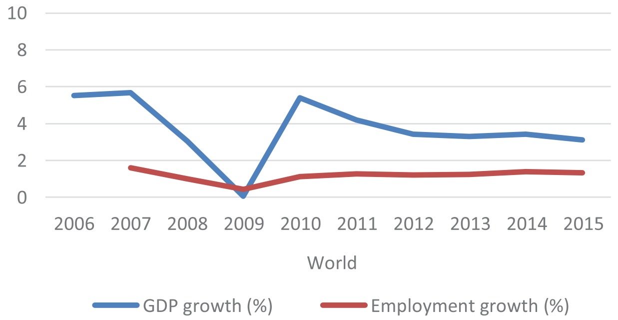


Figure 6.2. Asia-Pacific and Arab States, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

Figure 6.3. Asia-Pacific, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

Figure 6.4. East Asia, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

Figure 6.5. South-East Asia, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

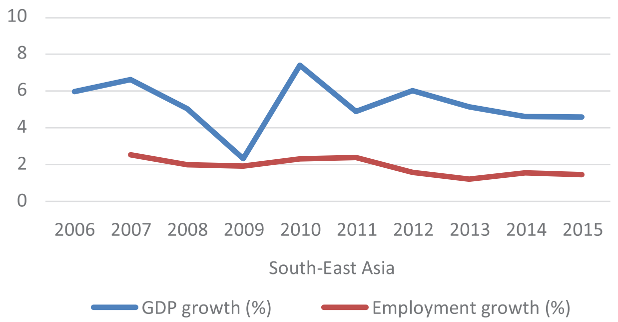


Figure 6.6. Pacific Island countries, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

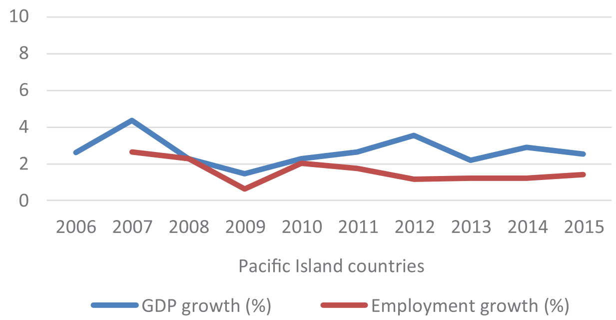
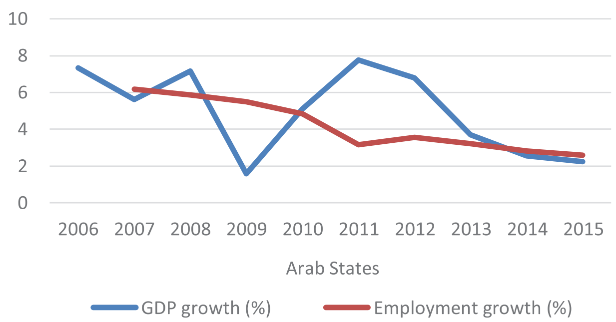


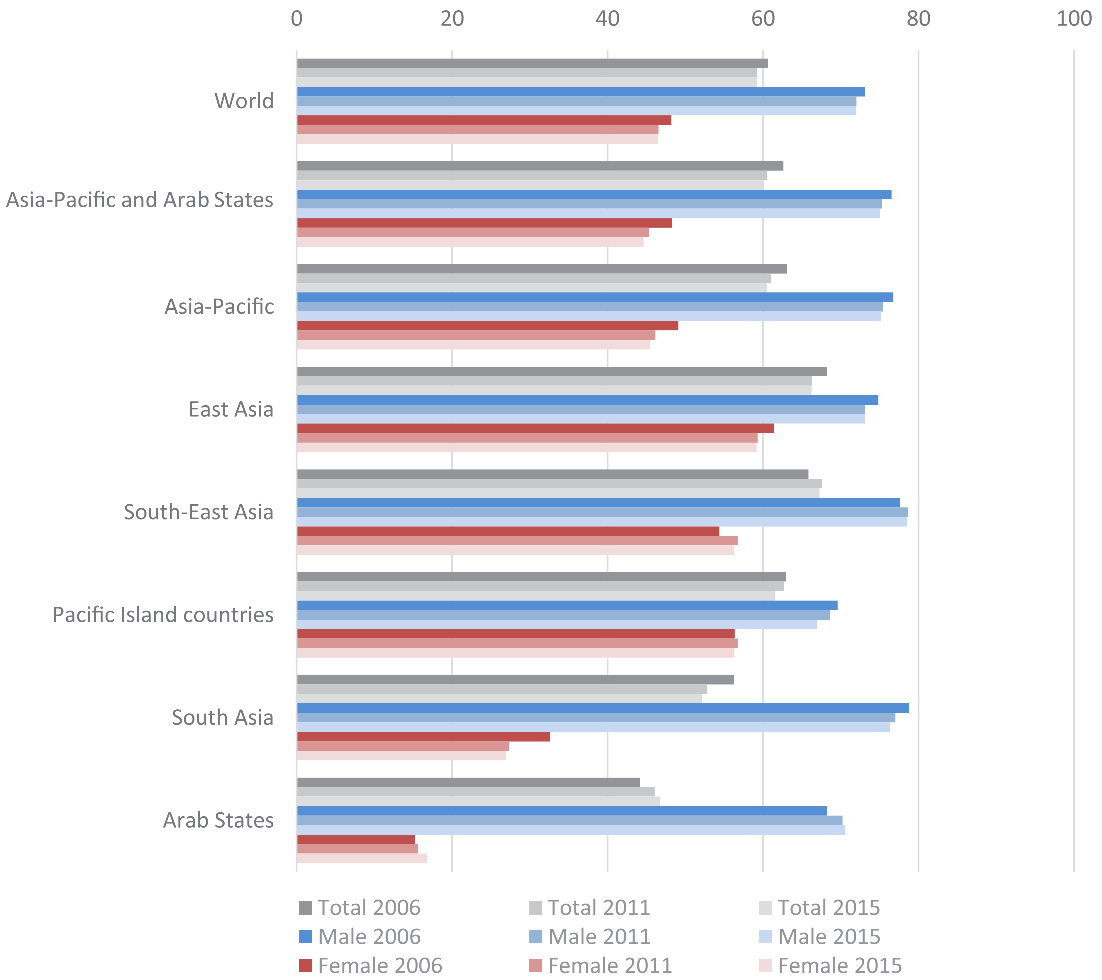
Figure 6.7. South Asia, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15

Figure 6.8. Arab States, annual growth rate of employment and GDP (%), 2006–15



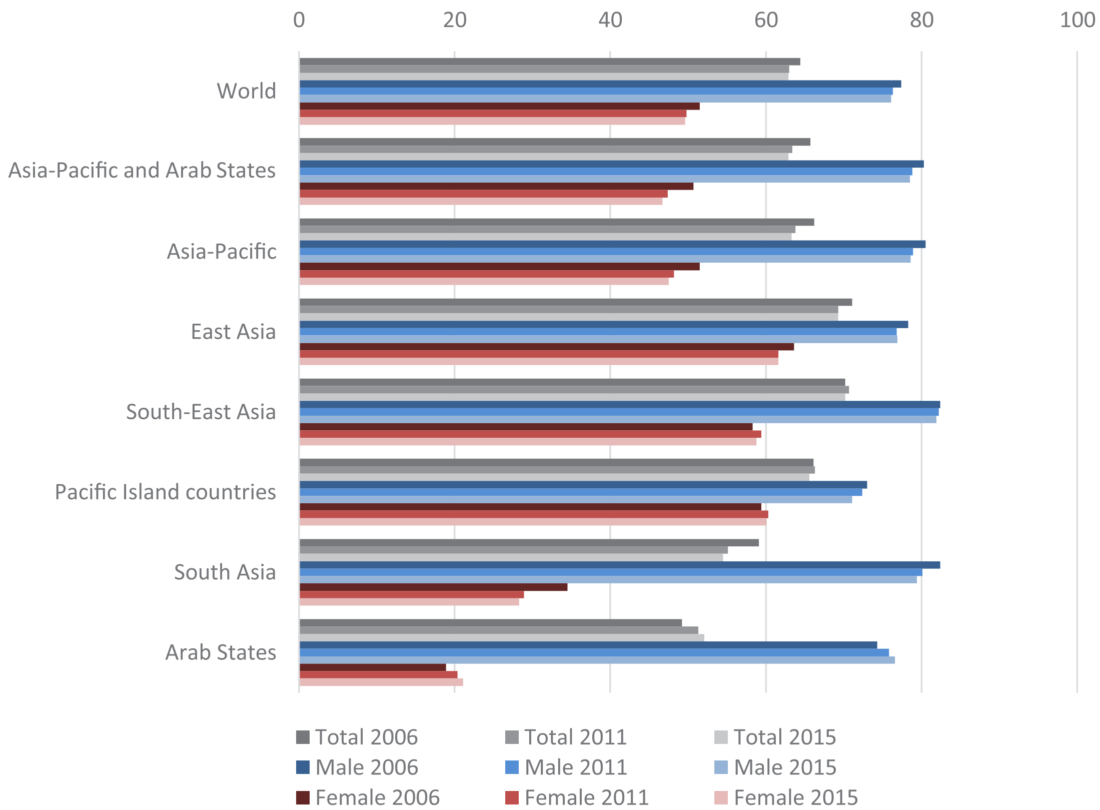
Source: ILO calculations based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015) and IMF*: World Economic Outlook Database* (April 2016).

Figure 7.1. Employment-to-population rates by sex (%), 2006, 2011, 2015



Source: ILO: *Trend econometric models* (November 2015).

Figure 7.2. Labour force participation rates by sex (%), 2006, 2011, 2015



Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Unemployment jumped

At the regional and subregional levels, unemployment rates remained relatively low, less than 5 per cent except in the Pacific Island countries, where they ranged between 5 and 6 per cent, and in the Arab States, which have consistently demonstrated the highest rates, ranging above 10 per cent (figure 8). The total number of unemployed for the entire region rose from 87 million in 2006 to 90 million in 2015. The bulk of the increase occurred in East Asia, where the number of unemployed rose by 6 million over the decade, from 35 million to 41 million. The number of unemployed also increased in the Arab States, rising from 3.7 million to 5.4 million, and in the Pacific Island countries from 0.8 million to 1.2 million. South-East Asia and South Asia experienced declines in the numbers of unemployed.

In fact, unemployment rates showed a year-on-year increase between 2014 and 2015 in eight out of 14 economies where 2015 estimates were available.[18] But unemployment data often do not reflect realities in developing countries – in fact most poor people cannot afford to not work, and the extent of under-employment and precarious, informal employment (discussed below) needs to be considered when assessing regional job challenges. It is important to consider not just the quantity but also the quality of jobs.

[18] Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Viet Nam, and Macau (China). ILO: *Asia-Pacific labour market update* (Bangkok, October 2015), figure 2, p. 3.

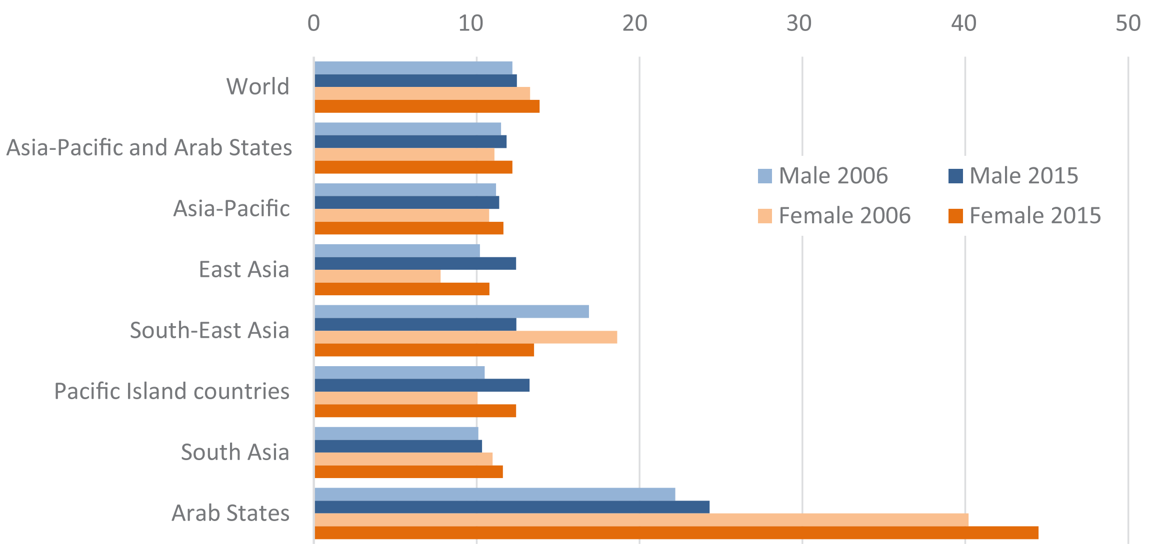
The various indicators taken together clearly indicate the region's lacklustre performance in the creation of decent jobs has meant a loss of human potential and a consequent dampening of economic potential and social progress.

Figure 8. Total unemployment and as % of labour force, 2006, 2011, 2015

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Note: (*) Numbers of total unemployment in Pacific Island countries are too small to be compared to those of other regions. See Table A10 in Statistical annex.

Figure 9. Youth unemployment rates by sex (%), 2006 and 2015



Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Young people bearing the brunt

The starkest sign of under-performance during the ADWD was the youth employment crisis. Young men and women, who accounted for one-fifth of the working age population in Asia-Pacific and Arab States (and up to a third or more in some countries, especially in the Arab States), were left behind in the region's economic and social progress. It was not easy to be young in the ADWD labour market. All the relevant statistical indicators pointed to the disadvantaged and depressed situation of young men and, even more, young women in finding decent jobs:

> The global jobs crisis has exacerbated the vulnerability of young people in terms of: (i) higher unemployment, (ii) lower quality jobs for those who find work, (iii) greater labour market inequalities among different groups of young people, (iv) longer and more insecure school-to-work transitions, and (v) increased detachment from the labour market.[19]

Except in South-East Asia, the youth unemployment rate was higher at the end than at the beginning of the ADWD (figure 9). In 2015, at 11.5 per cent in the region as a whole it was 2.6 times higher than the general unemployment rate, up from 2.4 times at the start of the decade. Young men and women accounted for 40 per cent of the total unemployed in the region. And there were large intra-regional and gender-related disparities. Youth unemployment was highest in the Arab States, where 28.6 per cent of the youth labour force was unemployed and the youth unemployment rate was 3.8 times higher than that for adult workers.[20] At 10.7 per cent, it was lowest in South Asia. Within South Asia, the youth unemployment situation was especially serious in Sri Lanka, where the rate rose to 21.4 per cent in 2015, compared to 19.5 per cent in 2014, and the trend was particularly serious for young female job seekers, whose unemployment rate in 2015 was 28.8 per cent. In South-East Asia, youth unemployment was particularly high in Indonesia in 2015, at 18.3 per cent, up by 1.2 percentage points over the previous year, and women accounted for nearly three-fifths of the additional 260,000 unemployed young people.[21] In the Pacific Island countries, unemployment climbed over the decade, and was especially serious for young men in urban areas.[22]

How the region fared in terms of dealing with the youth employment challenge should be assessed not only in terms of unemployment. The youth LFPRs fell significantly over the decade. On the one hand, this was a positive indicator, since it reflected a continued increase in school enrolment among both males and females, particularly at the tertiary level. On the other hand, this highlighted an inability to provide decent jobs for young people, who became increasingly discouraged and opted to stay out of the labour market altogether. A striking feature of the high youth unemployment rate in the Arab States was that it has occurred in a context of very low labour force participation, especially among young women. Only 30.3 per cent of young people in the Arab States were in the labour force, compared to the global rate of 48.5 per cent and the rate of 59.8 per cent for East Asia, 52.3 per cent for South-East Asia and the Pacific, and 41 per cent for South Asia.[23] This meant that a large share of Arab youth were unable to find jobs despite the fact that total number of active youth was relatively limited.

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[19] S. Elder and S. Kring: *Young and female – a double strike? Gender analysis of school-to-work transition surveys in 32 developing economies* (Geneva, ILO, 2016), p. i.

[20] ILO: *The twin challenges of child labour and youth employment in the Arab States: An overview* (Beirut, ILO Regional Office for Arab States and Understanding Children's Work Programme, 2014), p. 24.

[21] ILO: *Asia-Pacific labour market update* (Bangkok, October 2015), p. 2–3. The *Update* is based on quarterly or monthly youth unemployment rates for countries, however, which vary slightly from yearly rates.

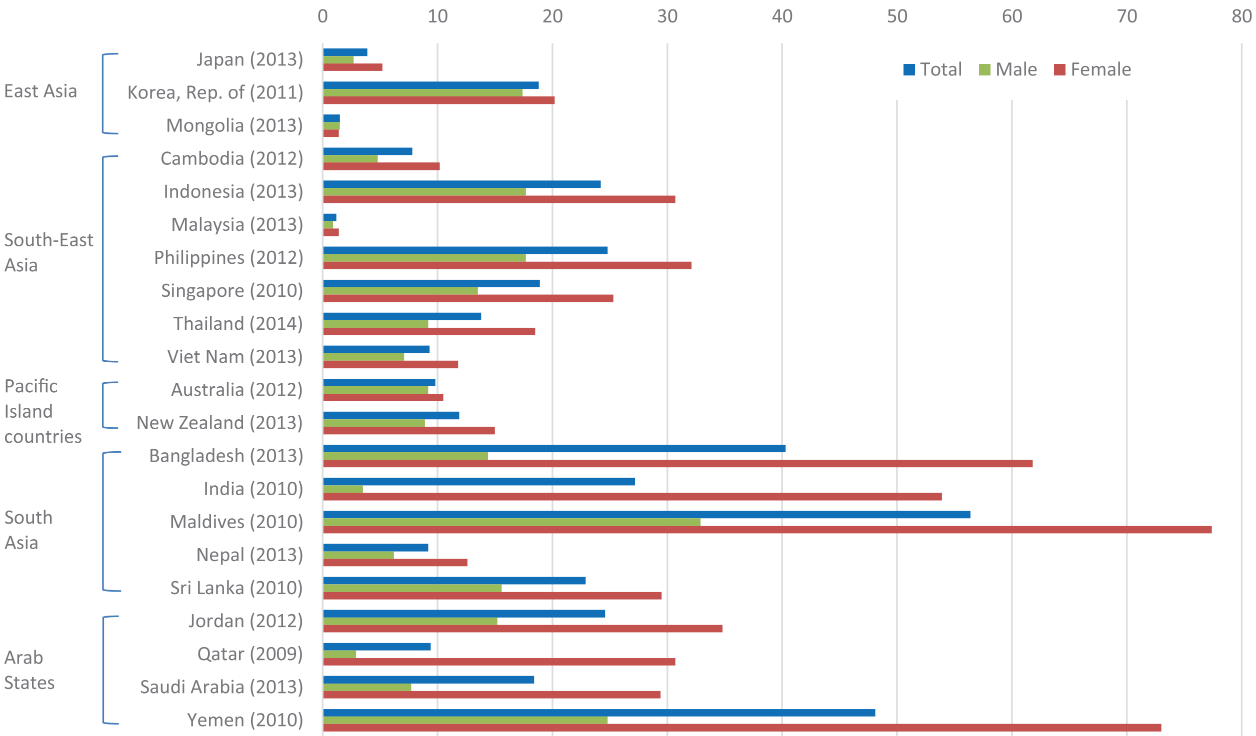
[22] In Papua New Guinea, the unemployment rate for youth was 6 per cent overall, but an alarming 18.1 per cent for urban male youth. Likewise, young men in Samoa accounted for more than one-third of the total unemployed population, and young women accounted for about one-fifth. In the Marshall Islands, youth unemployment was 11 per cent, with higher rates for young men (12.2 per cent) compared to young women (8.7 per cent). ILO: *Asia-Pacific labour market update* (Bangkok, ILO ROAP, April 2013), p. 3.

[23] *Twin challenges* (ILO, 2014), op. cit., figure 9, p. 25.

As youth LFPRs decreased, youth inactivity rates increased. The share of youth not in education, employment, or training – the NEET rate – is increasingly used as an indicator to highlight a broad array of vulnerabilities among young men and women, including unemployment, early school leaving, and labour market discouragement. The NEET rate has been adopted as an indicator for the 2030 SDGs.[24] Figure 10 shows that the share of youth not in education, employment, or training ranged as high as 56 per cent in the Maldives, 48 per cent in Yemen, and 40 per cent in Bangladesh, while at least a quarter of those aged 15–24 years were NEET in India, Indonesia, Jordan, and the Philippines. In Malaysia, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka, however, the NEET rate was only about 1 per cent. In all the countries with available data, the proportion of young women not in education, employment, or training was much higher than that of males. In the Maldives, for example, the female NEET rate was 77 per cent compared to the male rate of 33 per cent. In Bangladesh, the NEET rates were 62 per cent for females and 14 per cent for males. In Yemen, the female rate was almost three times that of the male rate.

Many young people could not afford to be unemployed or to stay on in the education system. Youth without social security and without families to support them or with families they had to support had no choice but to go into whatever source of livelihood was available, mainly in precarious, informal types of employment. Available data indicate that working poverty ranged between 4 and 5 percentage points higher for young workers than for adult workers.[25] Many young people were also forced to trade down and accept inferior forms of employment relative to their levels of education – this mismatch between education and employment obviously represented a waste of human resources.

Figure 10. Share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) by sex (%), latest available years



Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 2015, KILM10C.

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[24] SDG Target 8.6: "By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training." This target is subsumed under SDG 8, which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all".

[25] ILO: *Global employment trends for youth scaling up investments in decent jobs for youth* (Geneva, 2015), figure 3.15, p. 49.

Gender gap in employment remains glaringly large

The ADWD did not meet the MDG of promoting gender equality in the labour market. The higher female NEET rates meant that young women were much more likely than young men to be out of the labour force. Although gender gaps in education had very significantly narrowed, and in many cases young women were doing better than young men in school, female youth still faced greater difficulties in making the transition from school to stable, decent jobs. ILO school-to-work transition (SWTS) surveys concluded the following:

> [S]uccessful transitions are often correlated with gender. There are serious gaps in participation rates and transition outcomes between young women and men. In many countries, young women remain much more likely to be neither economically active nor in school.[26] ... With more young people going to school and staying in education for longer periods, there is a long-term trend of decreasing labour force participation rates for both sexes. Yet still the labour force participation rate of young men remained 16 percentage points higher than that of young women in 2014. Parenthood exacerbates the gaps, pushing young men into employment and young women out of employment. Gender gaps also remain evident in unemployment rates, informality rates and levels of labour underutilization. The underlying causes of young women's weaker employment outcomes are many but certainly include early marriage, the gender roles that ascribe greater unpaid work burdens for females, limited access to productive resources, persistent job segregation and low wages.[27]

Adult women, as well as young women, continued to face disadvantages and discrimination in the labour market. And the issue involved more than just the large gaps between men and women in employment – it was also significant that these gender gaps did not diminish over the decade. In 2015 the gender gap in the EPR for the entire region, at 30.4 percentage points, was in fact larger than at the start of the decade, when it was 28.2 points. The male-female gap, at 53.8 points, was particularly large and growing in the Arab States, as it was in South Asia, at 49.4 points (compared to 53.0 points and 46.2, respectively, in 2006). In the other subregions, the gender gap in the EPR ranged between 10 and 20 percentage points (figure 7.1, above).

With the exception of the Arab States, Asia-Pacific was unique in its relatively low female unemployment rates and the small male-female gaps. The female unemployment rate consistently remained below the global rate, and the gender gap was less than 1 percentage point. In East Asia, in fact, female unemployment rates were lower than male rates throughout the decade. In the Arab States, on the other hand, economic and socio-cultural factors contributed to an overall female unemployment rate of 20.6 per cent and a youth female unemployment rate of 44.5 per cent, compared to 7.9 per cent and 24.2 per cent respectively for males, underscoring the serious challenges that Arab women, especially young Arab women, faced in entering the labour market (see figures 9 and 10, above).

But low Asia-Pacific female rates and the small male-female gaps in unemployment did not mean that women were better off in the labour market. In nearly all cases, it reflected the fact that the women simply could not afford to be unemployed, and hence resorted to taking any job available, tending then to face various kinds of vulnerability and working in precarious conditions. Analysis to follow in this report clearly shows that women dominated in the most vulnerable forms of informal employment, particularly as contributing family workers, where they were more likely than men to have less access

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[26] M. Matsumoto and S. Elder: *Characterizing the school-to-work transitions of young men and women: Evidence from the ILO school-to-work transition surveys* (Geneva, ILO, 2010).

[27] Elder and Kring, op. cit., p. 2.

to assets, to be unpaid, and therefore to be poor. Men in vulnerable employment, on the other hand, were more likely to be own-account workers and to be better off.

Women continued to have less access to wage and salaried jobs than did men and to earn less when they did find jobs. Indicator 3.2 for MDG 3 – to "promote gender equality and empower women" –is the share of women in non-agricultural sector wage employment. Applying this measure, it was estimated that in 2013 women held only 37 per cent of all wage jobs in Asia-Pacific, compared to men's share of 63 per cent, and that progress toward gender parity was slow, showing only slight improvement in women's share in wage employment over the 35.4 per cent measured earlier, in 2000.[28] In the Arab States, women comprised only 14.9 per cent of total wage jobs during the same year,[29] but this was largely because of the small female population in employment compared to men. On the other hand, while 42.3 per cent of women held salaried jobs in Asia-Pacific, the Arab States had a relatively high 77.9 per cent of women who were waged employees.[30] Gender inequality was particularly evident in South Asia, where women still held only 21.5 per cent of all wage jobs, although slow improvement was evident over the decade. In East Asia, women accounted for 41 per cent of all wage jobs. In South-East Asia and the Pacific, their share was about 40 per cent by the end of the decade. In both these sub-regions, women's access to wage employment expanded slightly faster than it did for men.

A major indicator of regional under-performance in terms of reducing gender inequality was the fact that women able to find wage employment earned far less than their male counterparts. The unadjusted gender pay gap, presented in figure 11, or the shortfall of women's monthly earnings compared to men's, was especially wide in Nepal and Pakistan, where women earned around 40 per cent less than did men. Women's monthly average wages ranged between 30 and 36 per cent lower than those of men in Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. Smaller gender pay gaps were found in Viet Nam (-9.4 per cent), Malaysia (-4.5 per cent), and Thailand (-1.4 per cent).[31] The available data also suggested that women wage workers earned marginally more than their male counterparts in the Philippines and Timor-Leste.[32]

Some progress had been made in reducing these gender wage gaps by the end of the decade, but improvements were small. If current global trends prevailed, it was estimated that

> ... it will take more than 70 years before gender wage gaps are closed completely. Reductions in the gender wage gap are mostly attributable to explicit policy actions to address gender imbalances in the labour market, rather than to general improvements in living standards. In fact, the gender wage gap is unrelated to a country's level of economic development, as some of the countries with high per-capita levels are among those with the highest gender wage gaps. Economic development alone will not ensure an equitable distribution of the gains from growth between men and women. [33]

Without targeted action, at the current rate pay equity between women and men will not be achieved before 2086.

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[28] ILO: *Global wage report 2014/15*, Asia and the Pacific Supplement (Bangkok, December 2014), p. 4.

[29] Calculations based on ILO: *Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)*, 9th edition (2015), table R3.

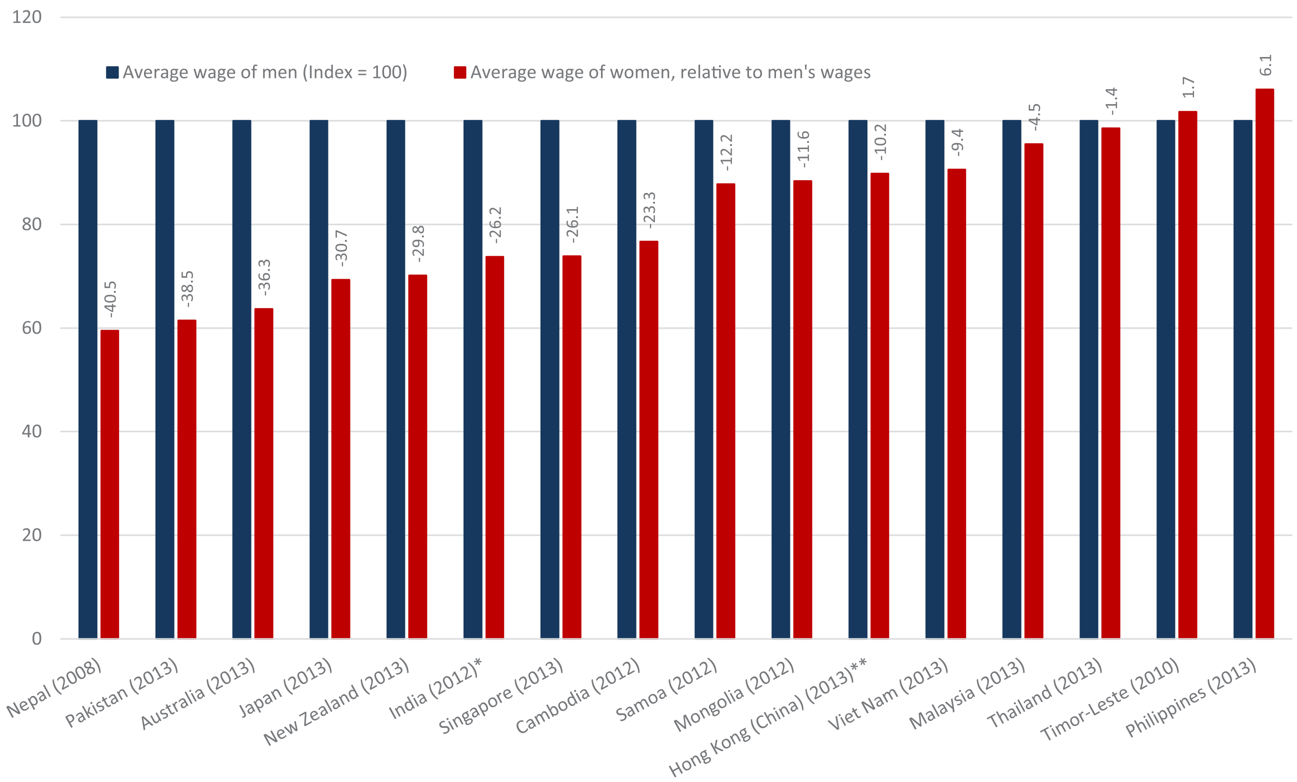
[30] Ibid.

[31] The minus signs indicate how much less women earn on average relative to the average men's wage (index = 100).

[32] ILO: KILM, op. cit., p. 5.

[33] ILO: *Women at work: trends 2016* (Geneva, 2016), p. xvi.

Figure 11. Gender wage pay gaps, selected countries, latest available year



Note: (*) Based on average daily wage or salary earnings received by regular wage and salaried employees. (**) Refers to Q1 2013.

3 Progress and setbacks during the Asia-Pacific and Arab States Decent Work Decade

This section focuses on progress made in the five ADWD priority areas, as well as on the remaining gaps.

3.1 Increasing competitiveness, productivity, and jobs

Performance in terms of the first ADWD priority area can be judged according to whether countries in the region were able to improve: (a) competitiveness; (b) growth in labour productivity; (c) real wage growth and the link between wages and productivity; and (d) the quality of jobs, particularly in terms of their relative informality and vulnerability.

Economies that improved their competitiveness weathered turbulence better and experienced faster and more robust recoveries

Table 2 ranks countries according to the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) published yearly by the World Economic Forum. Performance in terms of improved competitiveness is crucial because competitiveness drives higher productivity – which in turn is key to supporting long-term growth and economic resilience. Those countries that ranked high on the table, having become more competitive, were also those that performed relatively well economically. Countries such as China, Indonesia, and the Philippines jumped more than 20 places in the global competitiveness ladder during the decade. In 2015, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Qatar, Singapore, and the UAE ranked in the top 20. In that same year, low-income countries ranked much lower on the ladder, with Myanmar placing at 131 out of 140 countries, Pakistan at 126, Bangladesh at 107, and Mongolia at 104. China ranked 28 in 2015, up from 54 in 2006, managing to record GDP growth of well over 7 per cent per year over the decade. Meanwhile Pakistan, which dropped 35 places in rank over the decade, achieved annual GDP growth of between 3 and 4 per cent.

To enhance competitiveness – and hence productivity – countries require: (a) efficient markets; (b) strong institutions that ensure the ability to adapt; (c) a pool of talented human resources; and (d) a high capacity for innovation. The drivers of competitiveness reflected in the GCI, i.e. the factors that matter for productivity, include the following: (a) basic requirement factors (institutions, infrastructure, a macroeconomic environment, health services, and primary education); (b) efficiency enhancing factors (higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, and market size); and (c) innovation and sophistication factors (business sophistication and innovation).

Table 2. Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), 2006, 2011, and 2015

Subregions and countries	Global competitiveness ranking*		
	2006	2011	2015
East Asia:			
Japan	7	9	6
Korea, Rep. of	24	24	26
China	54	26	28
Mongolia		96	104
South-East Asia:			
Brunei Darussalam		28	
Singapore	5	2	2
Cambodia	103	97	90
Indonesia	50	46	37
Lao PDR			83
Malaysia	26	21	18
Myanmar			131
Philippines	71	75	47
Thailand	35	39	32
Timor-Leste	122	131	
Viet Nam	77	65	56
Pacific Island countries:			
Australia	19	20	21
New Zealand	23	25	16
South Asia:			
Bangladesh	99	108	107
India	43	56	55
Iran, Islamic Rep. of		62	74
Nepal	110	125	100
Pakistan	91	118	126
Sri Lanka	79	52	68
Arab States:			
Bahrain		37	39
Kuwait	44	34	34
Oman		32	62
Qatar	38	14	14
Saudi Arabia		17	25
United Arab Emirates	32	27	17
Jordan	52	71	64
Lebanon		89	101
Syrian Arab Rep.		98	
Yemen		138	

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF): *The global competitiveness report 2006–2007*, table 1, p. xvii; WEF: *Report 2011–2012*, table 3, p. 15; WEF: *Report 2015–2016*, p. xv.

* 2006 ranking out of 125 countries; 2011 ranking out of 142 countries; 2015 ranking out of 140 countries.

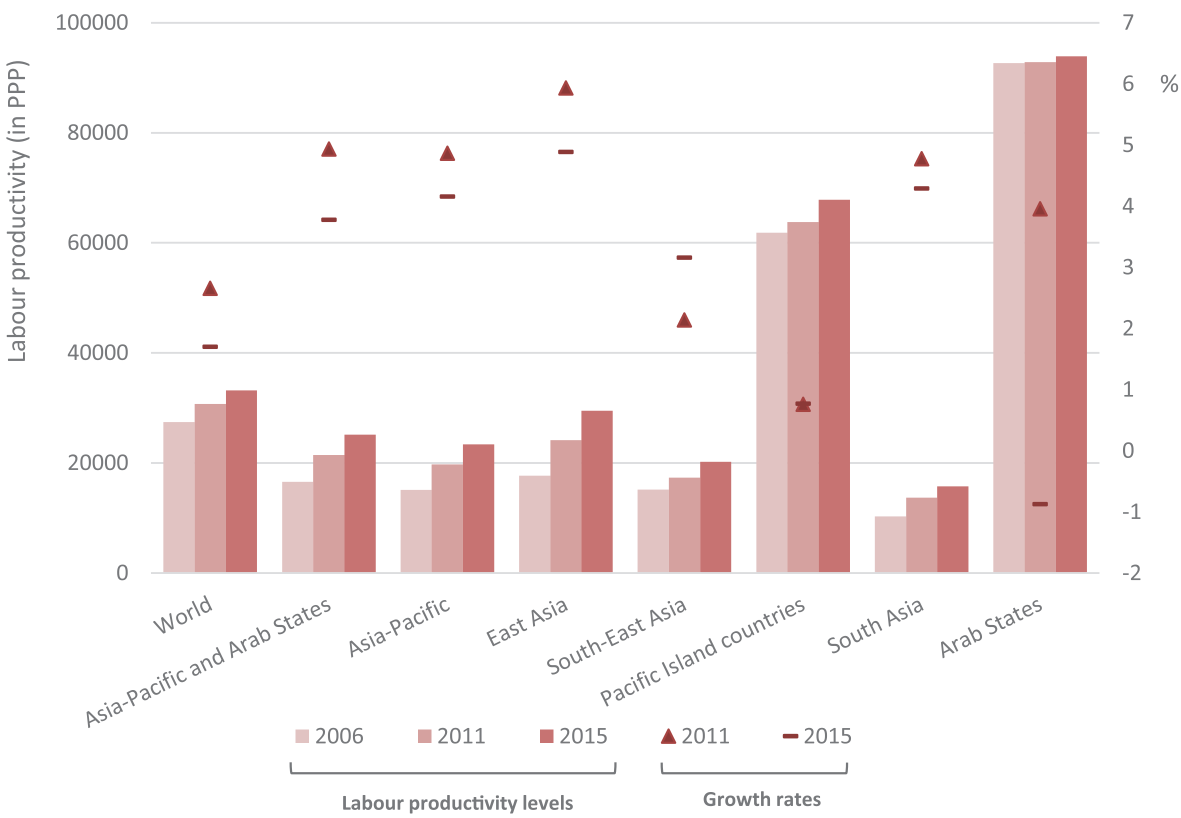
Labour productivity growth led the way globally but has since stagnated or decelerated

Growth in productivity raises living standards because some productivity gains can be distributed to workers in the form of higher wages or shorter working hours or both. Productivity growth is also crucial as a sustainable route out of working poverty – in particular because, with relatively low unemployment rates in the region, the poor are poor, not because they have no work, but because of the low productivity and limited remuneration for their work.

In the first half of the decade, labour productivity (defined as output per unit of labour input) in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States increased by 5.3 per cent annually, well above the global rate of 2.3 per cent. In the second half of the decade, the growth of labour productivity, at 4.1 per cent per year, mostly decelerated or stagnated, although it remained higher than the global rate of 1.9 per cent. In all the sub-regions, labour productivity growth was lower at the end than at the start of the decade. East Asia consistently performed best, with the highest, albeit declining rate of productivity growth (figure 12).

In 2015 the level of labour productivity, measured in 2011 PPP, was four times greater in the high-income countries compared to the region's middle- and low-income countries. But this represented an improvement, since a 6.3-times disparity prevailed between those two groups of countries at the start of the ADWD. The Arab States, the sub-region with the highest level of labour productivity, saw productivity growth slow considerably till it was in negative territory by the end of the decade. The Pacific Island countries also recorded high levels of labour productivity but, at 1.0 per cent per year on average over the entire decade, that growth was very low.

Figure 12. Labour productivity (in PPP) and growth rates (%), 2006, 2011, 2015

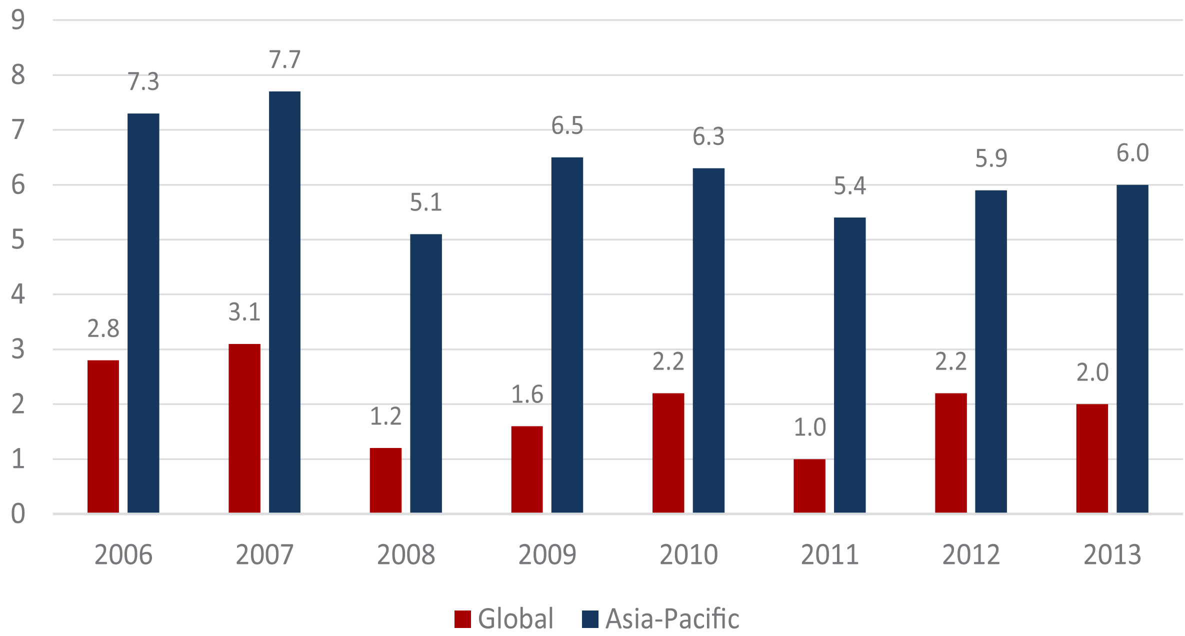


Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Picture for real wages a mixed one[34]

Asia-Pacific dynamism was also evident in terms of rising real wages (after accounting for inflation). Towards the end of the decade, the region consistently outperformed much of the rest of the world in terms of real wage growth (figure 13). In the developing and emerging economies of the region, real wages grew 6 per cent in 2013 compared to a world rate of only 2 per cent. The region's performance was distinct from that of the developed economies, where real wages more or less stagnated following the global economic crisis. In Japan, for example, real wages retreated by 0.8 per cent in 2013.

Figure 13. Average real wage growth in Asia-Pacific and the world (%), 2006–13



Despite the positive overall performance, the region presented a nuanced picture:

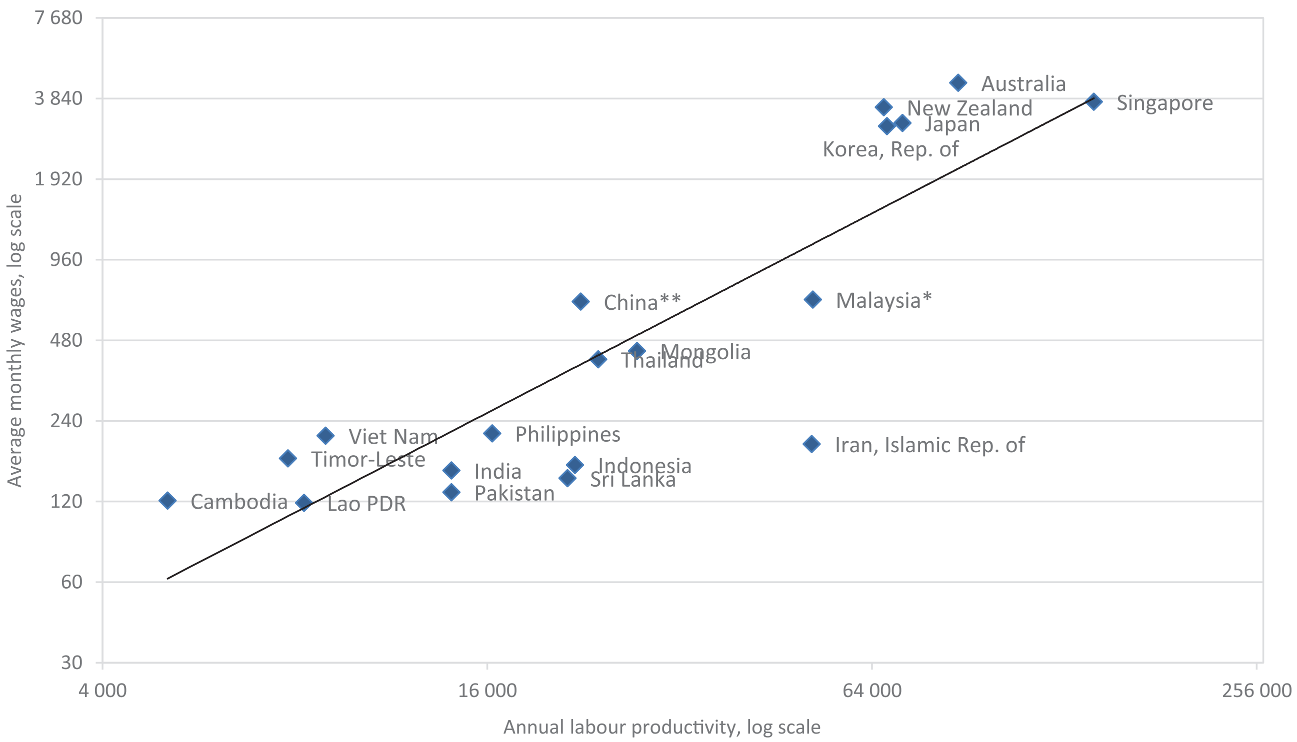
- Wages and incomes in many of the countries remained well below those of developed countries. Although there was a degree of rapid catch-up, about 187 million people still lived below the poverty threshold of $1.90 per day.
- The region's dynamic performance was largely driven by China, the region's largest economy; wage growth elsewhere was much more modest.
- Rising inequality and relatively weak wage-setting institutions in many countries meant that the benefits of growth often were not spread as widely as they might have been.
- Wages lagged behind productivity gains over the decade (see figure 14). In China, from the early 1990s to 2003 wages grew roughly in line with labour productivity, so that the labour share was relatively stable. After that, however, the labour share of China's expanding economy fell, at least until 2011, after which it started rising, though not to the levels recorded at the end of the 1990s.

With wage growth trailing productivity growth, domestic consumer demand was affected. In the ASEAN countries as well, there were gaps between productivity growth and real wages, with real wages

[34] This section on real wages is taken mainly from *Global wage report 2014/15*, op. cit.

falling behind growth of output per worker. In Thailand, for example, returns and benefits to workers did not keep pace with impressive increases in labour productivity in the manufacturing sector; in the first half of the ADWD, real wages in manufacturing remained flat. It was only in 2012 and 2013, after the country raised the minimum wage, that enterprises passed on some of the productivity gains to their workers. Analysis of Thai data also showed that, while profits reaped from a given investment were two-thirds higher in 2011 than a decade earlier, real wages earned by workers remained virtually unchanged – a result attributed largely to the country's weak labour market institutions.[35] Some economies did better in bringing wages in line with productivity growth. In Singapore, for instance, the National Wages Council followed the maxim that "To enable our workers to benefit from their share of productivity improvements and at the same time allow our businesses to remain competitive, real wages should increase in line with productivity growth over the long term."[36]

Figure 14. Labour productivity and average monthly wage, latest available year



Note: (*) Based on salaries and wages surveys. (**) Calculated as employment-weighted average of urban units and private enterprises. Only broadly comparable figures based on national Labour Force Surveys have been included in the comparison. All data are for 2014, with the exception of Lao (2010), Cambodia (2012), Sri Lanka (2011) and India (2013).

Source: *ILO Global Wage Database,* based on national sources (wages) *and ILO Employment trends database*, November 2015 (labour productivity); Exchanges rates are from the *World Bank*: *World Development Indicators.*

Vulnerable employment fell but remained sizeable

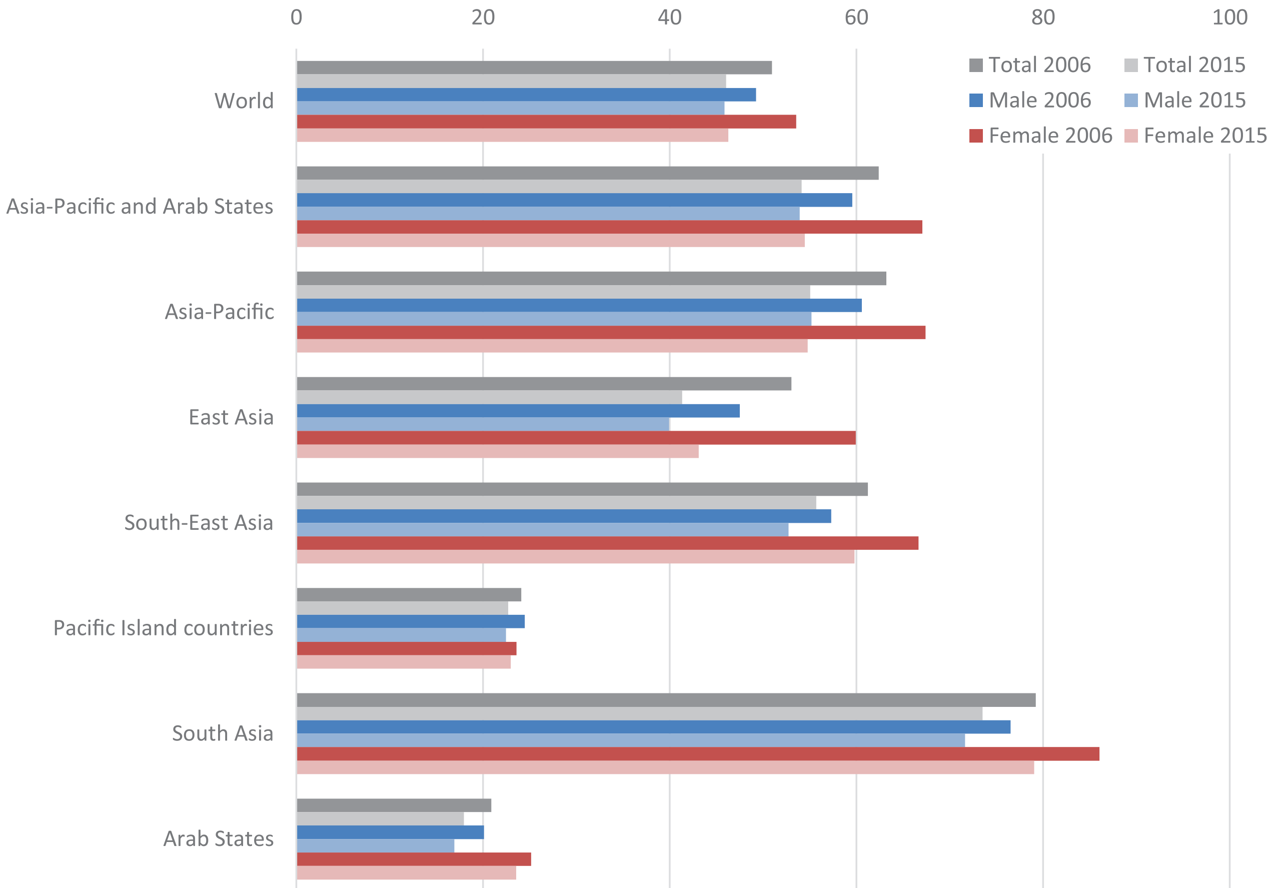
Given the turbulence and uncertainties of the ADWD decade, an important indicator of progress toward decent work – in fact the quantitative indicator for MDG Target 1.B – was vulnerable employment's share in total employment. Own-account or contributing family workers are typically those subject to high levels of precariousness because they often lack access to benefits or social protection. They are more at risk from the vagaries of economic cycles, and have no safety nets to cover them during periods of low economic demand, when they cannot work or do not have work. The fact they are largely unorganized and lack representation or a means to express their voice also leaves them vulnerable.

[35] ILO and ADB: *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity* (Bangkok, 2014), pp. 6.8–6.9.

[36] National Wages Council of Singapore: *NWC guidelines 2012/2013* (Singapore, Ministry of Manpower, 2012), para. 10.

The region as a whole showed progress in reducing vulnerable employment over the decade, with relatively faster progress in the first than the second half of the decade. As shown in figure 15, the share of vulnerable employment dropped from 63 per cent to 55 percent in Asia-Pacific and from 21 per cent to 18 per cent in the Arab States over the ten years. This was accompanied by rising wage employment. In Indonesia, for example, the share of wage and salary employees rose from 38 per cent in 2006 to 47 per cent in 2014; in the Philippines the proportion increased from 51 per cent to 58 per cent over the same time period. But what is striking is that, at the end of the ADWD, more than half of the total employed were still working in vulnerable situations, and the region's share at 54 per cent was higher than the global share of 46 per cent. Vulnerable employment totalled some 1.04 billion in the region.

Figure 15. Vulnerable employment by sex as % share of total employment, 2006 and 2015



Source: ILO calculations based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Some subregions made much better progress than others in reducing vulnerability. East Asia achieved the greatest reduction in vulnerable employment, 12 percentage points over the decade, driven largely by substantial investments in export-oriented industries and structural transformation away from agriculture. The extent of vulnerability was relatively low among the Pacific Island countries (23 per cent) and the Arab States (18 per cent). However, in South Asia three out of every four workers was in vulnerable employment; much of the employment growth that occurred in the sub-region had been in vulnerable employment. At the country level, data showed that between 2013 and 2014 Sri Lanka and Thailand reduced vulnerable employment by 2.6 and 4.6 percentage points respectively, but the share of vulnerable employment dipped only slightly in Indonesia, and was stagnant in the Philippines and Viet Nam.[37]

In Asia-Pacific, male and female shares of vulnerable employment out of total employment were equal (at 55 per cent) in 2015. But, as mentioned above, women in vulnerable employment were more

[37] ILO: *Asia-Pacific labour market update* (Bangkok, February 2015), p. 3.

likely than men to be contributing family workers rather than own-account workers, who had some form of assets; therefore women tended to be more susceptible to poverty and precarious working and living conditions.[38] Within Asia-Pacific, however, East Asia and South-East Asia reduced vulnerable employment more for women than for men so that, over the ten years, the male-female gap shrank from 13 points to 3 points in East Asia and from 9 to 7 points in South-East Asia. In South Asia, a similar pattern but a slightly faster decline in vulnerable employment for women resulted in a narrowing of the male-female gap from 10 to 8 percentage points. In the Arab States, women workers were about 1.4 times more likely to be in vulnerable forms of work, and they experienced a slower reduction in vulnerable employment than did the men.

Informal economy remains greatest source of employment and livelihoods

Until recently, informal employment was largely invisible to official statistics. But a growing number of countries are now focusing on measuring the informal economy, understood as "all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements".[39] Viewed through the lens of decent work deficits, the informal workforce is characterized by a broad range of vulnerabilities, most importantly: (a) the absence of sufficient opportunities for quality employment; (b) the denial of rights at work; (c) inadequate social protection; and (d) the lack of organization and representation.

Why the new interest? Contrary to expectations, informal jobs, enterprises, and activities have not only persisted through periods of both economic growth and recession, they have also emerged in many new places and guises in both developing and developed countries. Another key reason is the growing recognition of the links between informality and growth, on the one hand, and informality, poverty, and inequality on the other. Informality dampens economic growth. On average, earnings in the informal economy are low, while costs and risks are high, making it difficult for working poor to work their way out of poverty. Because they lack protection, rights, and representation, informal workers often remain trapped in poverty.

The available data[40] confirm that the informal economy, in both urban and rural areas of developing Asia and the Pacific, remains the largest source of employment and livelihoods. The size and significance of the informal economy can be judged from the fact that informal employment comprised 82 per cent of non-agricultural employment in South Asia and 65 per cent in East and South-East Asia (excluding China) – higher than other regions in the world. And considering that 54 per cent of total employment in South Asia and 41 per cent in East and South-East Asia was in agriculture, and that much of agricultural employment was not covered by labour and social protection, the share of informal employment in total employment was effectively larger still.[41] Data were currently unavailable for the Arab States.

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[38] See, for example, L.L. Lim: *Extending livelihood opportunities and social protection to empower poor urban informal workers in Asia* (Bangkok, OXFAM for Asia Development Dialogue, 2015), box 1, p. 26, which illustrates the hierarchy of earnings and poverty risk by employment status and sex. At the bottom of the pyramid are contributing family workers, predominantly women whose earnings tend to be lowest and who are most likely to be poor. At the apex of the pyramid are employers who are predominantly men who also have the highest earnings.

[39] This definition is from the ILO Recommendation concerning the Transition from the Informal to Formal Economy, 2015 (R204) adopted at the 104th International Labour Conference.

[40] Compiled by the ILO and the Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) Network: http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/WCMS_179795/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 19 Sep. 2016], and http://laborsta.ilo.org/informal_economy_E.html [accessed 19 Sep. 2016]. Detailed country tables are also found in ILO and WIEGO: *Women and men in the informal economy 2013: A statistical picture* (2013). See also J. Vanek, et al.: *Statistics on the informal economy: Definitions, regional estimates & challenges,* WIEGO Working Paper (Statistics) No. 2 (2014).

[41] *Extending livelihood opportunities*, op. cit., table 1, p. 19.

The latest available country-level information (figure 16) shows informal employment, as a share of total non-agricultural employment, reaching highs of 86 per cent in Nepal and 84 per cent in India. With the exception of China (where it was 33 per cent) and Thailand (42 per cent), informal employment accounted for at least 70 per cent of non-agricultural employment in the other countries in figure 16. If the agricultural sector is included, then informal employment was by far the major source of livelihoods in most of these countries. For example, the 2008 Nepal Labour Force Survey found that 99.7 per cent of all workers in agriculture were informally employed, and that total informal employment inside and outside of agriculture accounted for 96.2 per cent of total employment.[42] In the Philippines, 90.2 per cent of workers in agriculture were informal, and agricultural employment accounted for 31.2 per cent of total employment.[43]

The informal workforce comprises: (a) those working on own-account as self-employed, either alone or with the help of contributing family members, in informal enterprises (i.e. unincorporated enterprises that may also be unregistered and/or small, and classified in the statistics as "employment in the informal economy"); as well as (b) wage workers in informal jobs, i.e. working in formal enterprises but not covered by social protection or not entitled to certain employment benefits, and classified as "informal employment outside the informal economy". Figure 16 shows that employment in the informal economy was much larger than informal employment outside the informal economy. Such information is important in identifying the employment status of workers and in tracing the sources of their informality and vulnerability. "Status in employment" refers to two key aspects of employment or work arrangements: (a) the allocation of authority over the work process and over the outcome of the work done; and (b) the allocation of economic risks involved.

In the South Asian subregion, informal economy employment accounted for 69 per cent, while informal employment outside of the informal economy was only 15 per cent of non-agricultural employment. In East and South-East Asia (excluding China) the comparable figures were 57 per cent and 14 per cent. The much greater significance of self-employment or own-account work in unregistered enterprises was also evident at the country level. In Pakistan, informal economy employment in non-agricultural activities was 73 per cent, whereas informal employment outside the informal economy was only 8.3 per cent. In the Philippines, informal employment was 72.5 per cent inside and only 11.5 per cent outside the informal economy.

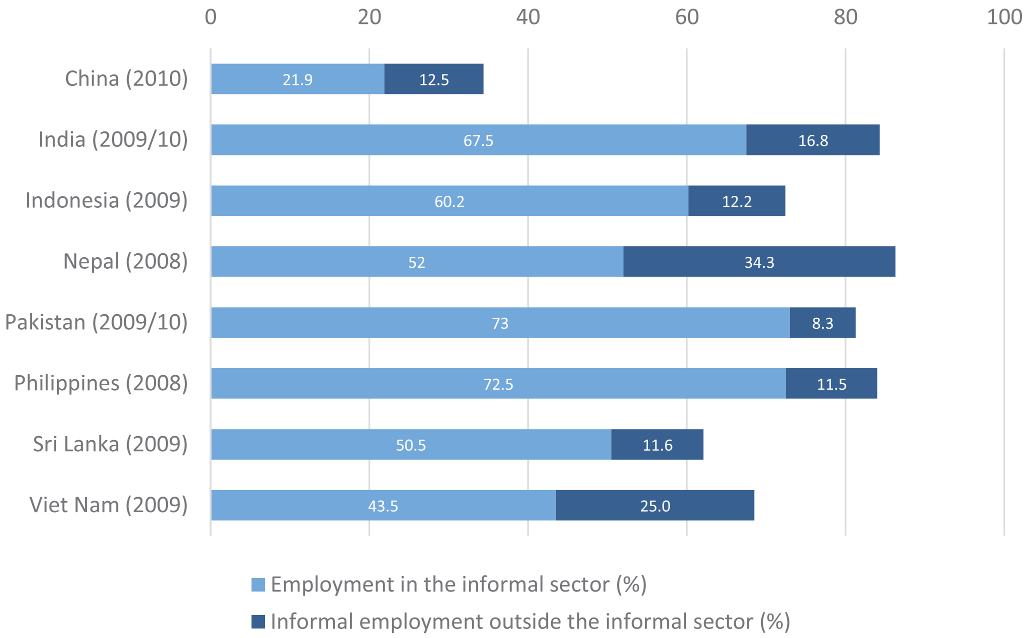
Gender inequality was rampant in the informal economy. In South Asia, informal employment outside of agriculture was a greater source of employment for women than for men. In East and South-East Asia, the percentage was roughly the same for both sexes. However, because many more men than women were in the workforce, males comprised a larger share of total informal employment than females. And within the informal workforce, there was gender segmentation. In East and South-East Asia, but not in South Asia, the share of women was larger than that of men in services (including domestic work), manufacturing, and trade, while the men dominated the construction and transportation sectors. Informal women workers were more likely than men to be self-employed – mainly as contributing family workers, rather than own-account workers and not as employers. Moreover, large numbers of women worked in informal employment, where they were exposed to exploitation and had less legal or social protection. Women often worked from home under strenuous conditions. In 2015, for example, more than 30 per cent of home-based women workers in selected provinces in Indonesia worked more than 48 hours per week and earned less than 50 per cent of the average wage of comparable workers

[42] Government of Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics National Planning Commission Secretariat: *Nepal labour force survey 2008* (Kathmandu, 2009), Chapter 12.

[43] J. Heintz: *Defining and measuring informal employment and the informal sector in the Philippines, Mongolia and Sri Lanka*. Working Paper No. 3 (Bangkok, United Nations Development Account Project, 2010).

with formal contracts.[44] Women's work was also typically concentrated in lower-skilled occupations, many of which, for example domestic work, were vulnerable and insecure.[45]

Figure 16. Informal employment and its components as % of non-agricultural employment (latest year available)



Notes: For China, the data cover six cities; for Indonesia, the data cover only Banten and Yogyakarta.

Source: ILO and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO): *Men and women in the informal economy: A statistical picture*, second edition (Geneva, ILO, 2013), table 2.1, pp. 10–11, for all countries; Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics, National Planing Commission: *Nepal labour force survey 2008*, statistical report (Kathmandu, 2009), Chapter 12.

3.2 Improving labour market governance

ILO assistance to countries to improve labour market governance has focused on: (a) promoting international labour standards based on respect for fundamental principles and rights at work; (b) strengthening systems of labour administration and labour inspection; (c) machinery for collective bargaining, labour dispute prevention, and settlement; (d) reviewing labour laws and social policies; and (e) developing mechanisms for labour-management cooperation and bipartite partnership.[46] Detailed quantitative indicators[47] to judge performance over the decade are hard to come by or are simply unavailable. One clear sign of progress, however, or lack thereof, is the ratification record for the core ILO Conventions (table 3).

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[44] ILO: *Results from the homeworker mapping study in North Sumatra, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java and Banten*, ILO-MAMPU Project (Jakarta, 2015).

[45] F. Hegazy and G. Rynhart: *The enabling environment for sustainable enterprises in Cambodia*, ILO-ESSE (Geneva, ILO, 2014).

[46] ILO: *Building a sustainable future with decent work in Asia and the Pacific*, Report of the Director-General, 15th Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting, Kyoto, Japan, (Geneva, ILO, 2011), p. 85.

[47] Other than those for gender discrimination and child labour, which are discussed in this report. Estimates of forced labour are available for 2005 and 2012, but they are non-comparable because of differences in methodology and better data sources for the latter year, so it is not possible to determine whether forced labour increased or decreased.

Table 3. Status of ratification of ILO Conventions and Protocols

	Core Conventions										Governance Conventions			
	Freedom of association		Forced labour			Discrimination		Child labour		Number ratified	Labour inspection		Employment policy	Tripartite consultation
	C87	C98	P29	C29	C105	C100	C111	C138	C182		C81	C129	C122	C144
East Asia														
Japan	1965	1953	…	1932	…	1967	…	2000	2001	6	1953	…	1986	2002
Korea, Rep. of	…	…	…	…	…	1997	1998	1999	2001	4	1992	…	1992	1999
China	…	…	…	…	…	1990	2006	1999	2001	4	…	…	1997	1990
Mongolia	1969	1969	…	2005	2005	1969	1969	2002	2001	8	…	…	1976	1998
South-East Asia														
Brunei Darussalam	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	2011	2008	2	…	…	…	…
Singapore	…	1965	…	1965	1965*	2002	…	2005	2001	5	…	…	1965	2010
Cambodia	1999	1999	…	1969	1999	1999	1999	1999	2006	8	…	…	1971	…
Indonesia	1998	1957	…	1950	1999	1958	1999	1999	2000	8	2004	…	..	1990
Lao PDR	…	…	…	1964	…	2008	2008	2005	2005	5	…	…	…	2010
Malaysia	…	1961	…	1957	1958*	1997	…	1997	2000	5	1963	…	…	2002
Myanmar	1955	…	…	1955	…	…	…	…	2013	3	…	…	…	…
Philippines	1953	1953	…	2005	1960	1953	1960	1998	2000	8	…	…	1976	1991
Thailand	…	…	…	1969	1969	1999	…	2004	2001	5	…	…	1969	…
Timor-Leste	2009	2009	…	2009	…	…	…	…	2009	4	…	…	…	…
Viet Nam	…	…	…	2007	…	1997	1997	2003	2000	5	1994	…	2012	2008

	Core Conventions										Governance Conventions			
	Freedom of association		Forced labour			Discrimination		Child labour		Number ratified	Labour inspection		Employment policy	Tripartite consultation
	C87	C98	P29	C29	C105	C100	C111	C138	C182		C81	C129	C122	C144
Pacific Island countries														
Australia	1973	1973	…	1932	1960	1974	1973	…	2006	7	1975	…	1969	1979
New Zealand	…	2003	…	1938	1968	1983	1983	…	2001	6	1959	…	1965	1987
Cook Islands	..	…	…	2015	2015	…	…	…	…	2	…	…	…	…
Fiji	2002	1974	…	1974	1974	2002	2002	2003	2002	8	2008	2010	2010	1998
Kiribati	2000	2000	…	2000	2000	2009	2009	2009	2009	8	…	…	…	…
Marshall Islands	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	0	…	…	…	…
Palau	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	0	…	…	…	…
Papua New Guinea	2000	1976	…	1976	1976	2000	2000	2000	2000	8	…	…	1976	…
Samoa	2008	2008	…	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	8	…	…	…	…
Solomon Islands	2012	2012	…	1985	2012	2012	2012	2013	2012	8	1985	…	…	…
Tonga	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	0	…	…	…	…
Tuvalu	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	0	…	…	…	…
Vanuatu	2006	2006	…	2006	2006	2006	2006	…	2006	7	…	…	…	…
South Asia														
Afghanistan	…	…	…	…	1963	1969	1969	2010	2010	5	…	…	…	2010
Bangladesh	1972	1972	…	1972	1972	1998	1972	…	2001	7	1972	…	…	1979
India	…	…	…	1954	2000	1958	1960	…	…	4	1949	…	1998	1978
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	…	…	…	1957	1959	1972	1964	…	2002	5	…	…	1972	…
Maldives	2013	2013	…	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	8	…	…	…	…
Nepal	…	1996	…	2002	2007	1976	1974	1997	2002	7	…	…	…	1995
Pakistan	1951	1952	…	1957	1960	2001	1961	2006	2001	8	1953	…	…	1994
Sri Lanka	1995	1972	…	1950	2003	1993	1998	2000	2001	8	1956	…	…	1994

	Core Conventions										Governance Conventions			
	Freedom of association		Forced labour			Discrimination		Child labour		Number ratified	Labour inspection		Employment policy	Tripartite consultation
	C87	C98	P29	C29	C105	C100	C111	C138	C182		C81	C129	C122	C144
Arab States														
Bahrain	...	...	...	1981	1998	...	2000	2012	2001	5	1981	...	...	...
Kuwait	1961	2007	...	1968	1961	...	1966	1999	2000	7	1964	...	...	2000
Oman	...	...	...	1998	2005	...	...	2005	2001	4	...	...	...	...
Qatar	...	...	...	1998	2007	...	1976	2006	2000	5	1976	...	...	...
Saudi Arabia	...	...	...	1978	1978	1978	1978	2014	2001	6	1978	...	...	...
United Arab Emirates	...	...	...	1982	1997	1997	2001	1998	2001	6	1982	...	...	...
Iraq	...	1962	...	1962	1959	1963	1959	1985	2001	7	1951	...	1970	1978
Jordan	...	1968	...	1966	1958	1966	1963	1998	2000	7	1969	...	1966	2003
Lebanon	...	1977	...	1977	1977	1977	1977	2003	2001	7	1962	...	1977	...
Syrian Arab Republic	1960	1957	...	1960	1958	1957	1960	2001	2003	8	1960	1972	...	1985
Yemen	1976	1969	...	1969	1969	1976	1969	2000	2000	8	1976	...	1989	2000

Source: ILO NORMLEX.

Note: "..." indicates Convention not ratified; "n/a" indicates data not applicable; (*) C105 was denounced by Malaysia in 1990 and Singapore in 1979.

Several countries have not yet ratified the eight core ILO Conventions

There were positive developments in the regions, with improvements in the ratification of fundamental ILO Conventions, including by the newer member States. But table 3 makes it clear that only 14 of the 47 member States in the region ratified all eight of the core ILO Conventions. This meant that Asia-Pacific and the Arab States had achieved less than 30 per cent of the ILO target for universal ratification of the fundamental Conventions by 2015. Universal respect for fundamental principles and rights at work remained a distant prospect.

What is striking is that a large number of countries had yet to sign the all-important Freedom of Association Conventions (Convention Nos. 87 and 98). Although it was reported at the 15th APRM in 2011 that trade union organizations, with the support of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), were targeting ratification campaigns in India, Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam, by 2015 no ratification had been reported. Clearly, more needs to be done to ensure that the decent work objectives are sustained by fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards.

Limited ratifications of governance and other technical Conventions

Relatively low priority was accorded the four governance Conventions that lay down the minimum prerequisites for ensuring labour markets deliver decent work, covering three important areas: (a) the coordination of all economic policies leading to higher standards of living through full, productive, and freely chosen employment; (b) tripartite consultations; and (c) effective labour inspection services. Only 19 of the 47 countries ratified the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), while about half the countries ratified the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

In terms of the technical Conventions, the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006) was ratified by Australia, Bangladesh, China (not yet in force as of this writing), Fiji, India (not yet in force), the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan (not yet in force), the Republic of Korea, Kiribati, Malaysia, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Myanmar (not yet in force), New Zealand (not yet in force), Palau, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Tuvalu, and Viet Nam. But only the Philippines ratified the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). This is significant, given that the region has the greatest number of domestic workers in the world – 21.5 million in 2010, of whom 81.4 per cent were women, accounting for 7.8 per cent of total female paid employees,[48] and most were not covered by legal and social protection.[49]

[48] ILO: *Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection* (Geneva, 2013), table 3.1, p. 20.

[49] See also section 3.5, below, on migrant domestic workers.

3.3 Extending social protection

Social protection was identified as an ADWD priority. Inadequate or total lack of social protection coverage is associated with: (a) high and persistent levels of poverty and economic insecurity; (b) growing levels of inequality; (c) insufficient investment in human capital and human capabilities; and (d) weak aggregate demand in a time of recession and slow growth.[50]

Progress in extending social protection can be judged on the basis of how countries performed in terms of developing and implementing social security systems for all – in particular, by how countries implemented the ILO Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection, 2012 (No. 202) to build nationally defined social protection floors that guarantee at least a basic level of social security to all, encompassing access to health care and income security throughout people's lives and ensuring their dignity and rights. Progress can also be judged on the basis of how countries implemented the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), to provide higher, more comprehensive levels of protection.

Social protection coverage has expanded, scope remains for improvement

Social protection in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States tended to expand over the decade. Most of the countries presented in figure 17 devoted a higher percentage of GDP to social protection programmes, a trend in part influenced by the global financial crisis. Even before the crisis, however, several countries, aiming to help their populations to cope with social risks and contingencies, had already embarked on expanding social protection mechanisms to better protect the most vulnerable groups of their population. Reform of social protection policies was driven not only by crisis response but also by a growing recognition that investment in health, education, and social protection throughout the life cycle is crucial to foster inclusive growth and sustainable poverty reduction. China and Thailand have been cited as particularly instructive instances of where countries embedded the extension of social security coverage in a broader approach, one aiming to establish a more inclusive and sustainable economic growth pattern while making social protection part of a wider range of coordinated employment, labour market, fiscal, and macroeconomic policies.[51]

All the South-East Asian countries reported spending more on social protection over the years. The exceptions in the region, those which experienced declines in social protection expenditures, included Mongolia, some of the Pacific Island countries (the Marshall Islands and Samoa), Sri Lanka, in South Asia, and several of the Arab States (Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Syrian Arab Republic).

Overall, the proportion of GDP devoted to social protection remained relatively limited. Thirty-one of the 42 countries in figure 17 invested less of their GDP in social protection programmes than the global average of 8.6 per cent.

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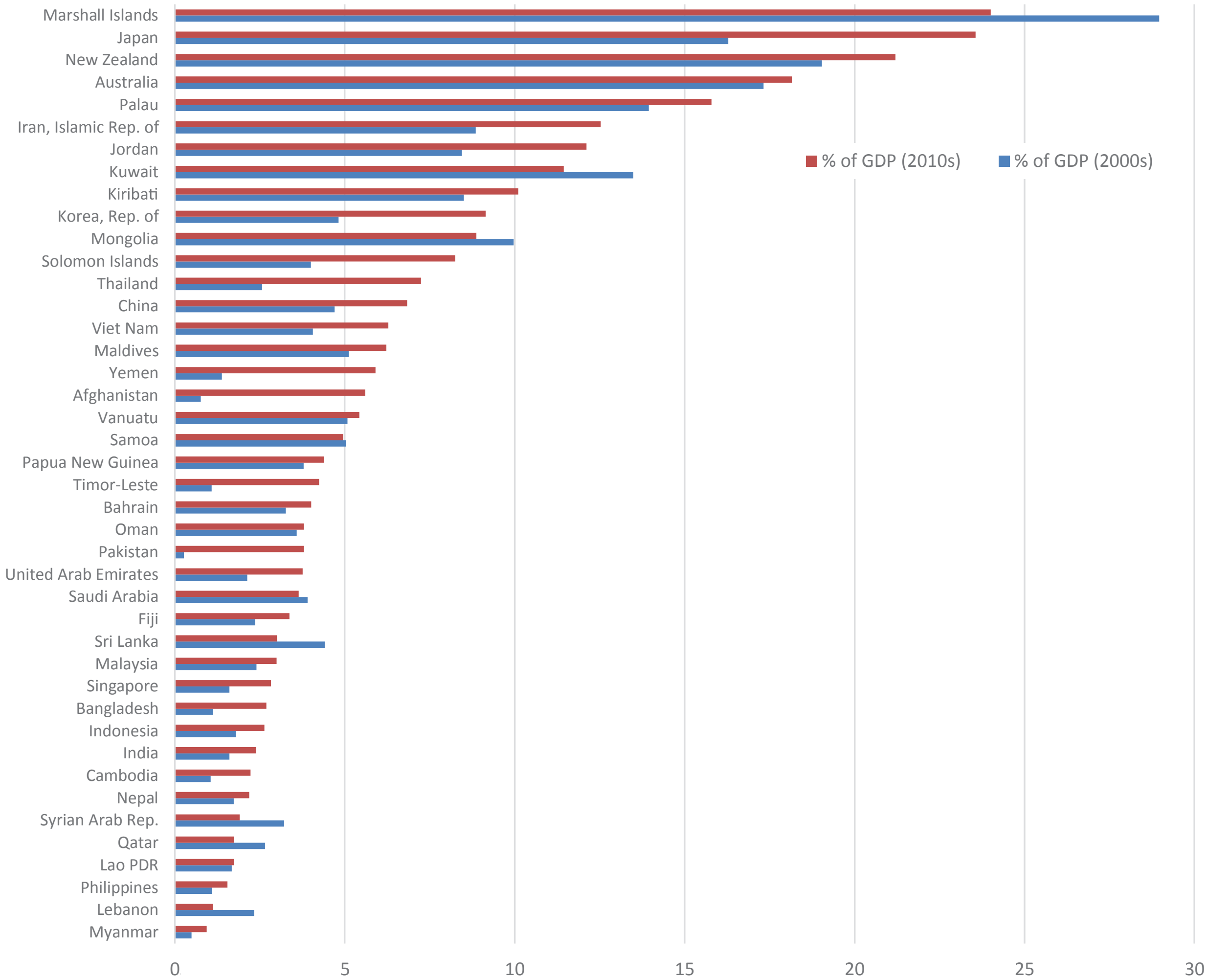
[50] ILO: *World social protection report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice* (Geneva, 2014), p. xxi.

[51] Ibid., pp. 142–144.

Figure 17. Total public social protection expenditure and health expenditure, 2000 to latest available year (% of GDP)



Source: ILO: *World social protection report 2014/15* (Geneva, 2014), table B12.

Unsurprisingly, the high-income countries were able to devote relatively more resources to social protection programmes. Japan, for instance, increased public expenditure from 16 per cent in 2000 to 24 per cent by 2011. However the middle- and low-income countries also made important strides in reinforcing national social protection floors and strengthening social security systems. Table 4 presents recent examples of the extension of social protection in the latter countries, which went beyond safety nets toward social protection floor guarantees and even more comprehensive and higher levels of social protection. Rather than perceiving social protection as a cost (one that previously was often considered unaffordable), more and more countries, even low-income ones, came to see social protection as an indispensable investment for sustained development in future. At the 67th Commission session in May 2011, Member States and Associate Members of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) adopted a resolution calling on Member States to "invest in building social protection systems that might form the basis of a 'social protection floor', which would offer a minimum level of access to essential services and income security for all, ... subsequently enhancing the capacity for extension, according to national aspirations and circumstances."[52]

[52] *Confronting inequalities* (Bangkok, UN ESCAP), op. cit., p. 12.

Table 4. Recent examples of extended social protection in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States**

Type of programme	Countries	
	Middle income	Low income
Child and family benefits	China, Mongolia	Nepal
Cash transfers with human development focus	Bahrain, Indonesia, Jordan, Mongolia, Philippines,	Bangladesh, Occupied Palestinian Territory
Household minimum income support	China	Occupied Palestinian Territory
Public employment programmes	India, Indonesia	Occupied Palestinian Territory, Yemen
Maternity protection	India, Indonesia, Jordan	Bangladesh
Unemployment protection	Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Viet Nam	
Pensions	China, India, Thailand, Viet Nam	Bangladesh, Nepal, Occupied Palestinian Territory
Health coverage expanded	China, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Thailand, United Arab Emirates	Cambodia, Occupied Palestinian Territory

** The table presents only selected cases for purposes of illustration; it is not possible to provide a full account here.

Source: ILO: *World social protection report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice* (Geneva, 2014), tables 6.3 and 6.4, pp. 141, 145.

3.4 Eliminating child labour and creating opportunities for young people

This ADWD priority recognized the need for coherent policy approaches in addressing the links between child labour and decent work for youth. Child labour not only deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, it is also harmful to their physical and mental development, and affects both the supply and demand sides of youth labour markets.

On the one hand, child labour hampers children from acquiring the education and skills needed to succeed as youth in labour markets. On the other hand, the prevalence of child labour together with youth unemployment and underemployment presents a cruel irony. Children who should not be working, who should instead be at school, meet the demand for certain types of labour while the labour of a supply of educated young women and men goes unused or under-used. Furthermore, youth employment outcomes are typically worst for former child labourers and other early school-leavers, groups with the least opportunity to accumulate the human capital needed for gainful employment. The link between child labour and labour market outcomes can also operate in the other direction: poor labour market prospects among youth can reduce the incentive of households to invest in education earlier in the lifecycle.

Several countries have not signed the fundamental Conventions concerning child labour

As table 3 indicates, several countries, including India and the Pacific Island states of the Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu, had not ratified either of the core child labour Conventions, No. 138 and No. 182. Other countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Myanmar, New Zealand, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu had ratified the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182), but had not ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). All the Arab States ratified both the core child labour Conventions.

Asia-Pacific, with largest number of child labourers, also registered largest absolute decline in these numbers

Recent estimates provide breakdowns by region and also a dynamic picture of progress, in particular over the 2008–12 period.[53] Figure 18 shows that, in absolute terms, the Asia-Pacific region had the most child labourers aged 5–17 years, some 77.7 million in 2012, of which 34 million, or 44 per cent (4.1 per cent of the total children population), were in hazardous forms of work. However, in terms of the incidence of child labour, the region was better off than sub-Saharan Africa, where at least one in every five children was a child labourer and 49 per cent (10.4 per cent of the total children population) were engaged in hazardous forms of work. Data were not available separately for the Arab States subregion, but child labourers of the same age group numbered 9.2 million in the Arab States and North Africa combined (8.4 per cent of total children population), of whom 5.1 million, or 55.4 per cent (4.7 per cent of the total children population) were in hazardous forms of work.

Asia-Pacific had also registered by far the largest absolute decline in child workers aged 5–17 years, by 36 million over the four-year 2008 to 2012 period. That number fell by only 6 million in sub-Saharan Africa, and by fewer than 2 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. The available data also suggested that the magnitude of the decline in child labour among girls was greater than that among boys. (There might have been greater under-counting of female child labour, however, since girls tended to work in less visible and therefore under-reported forms of employment such as domestic work in private households).

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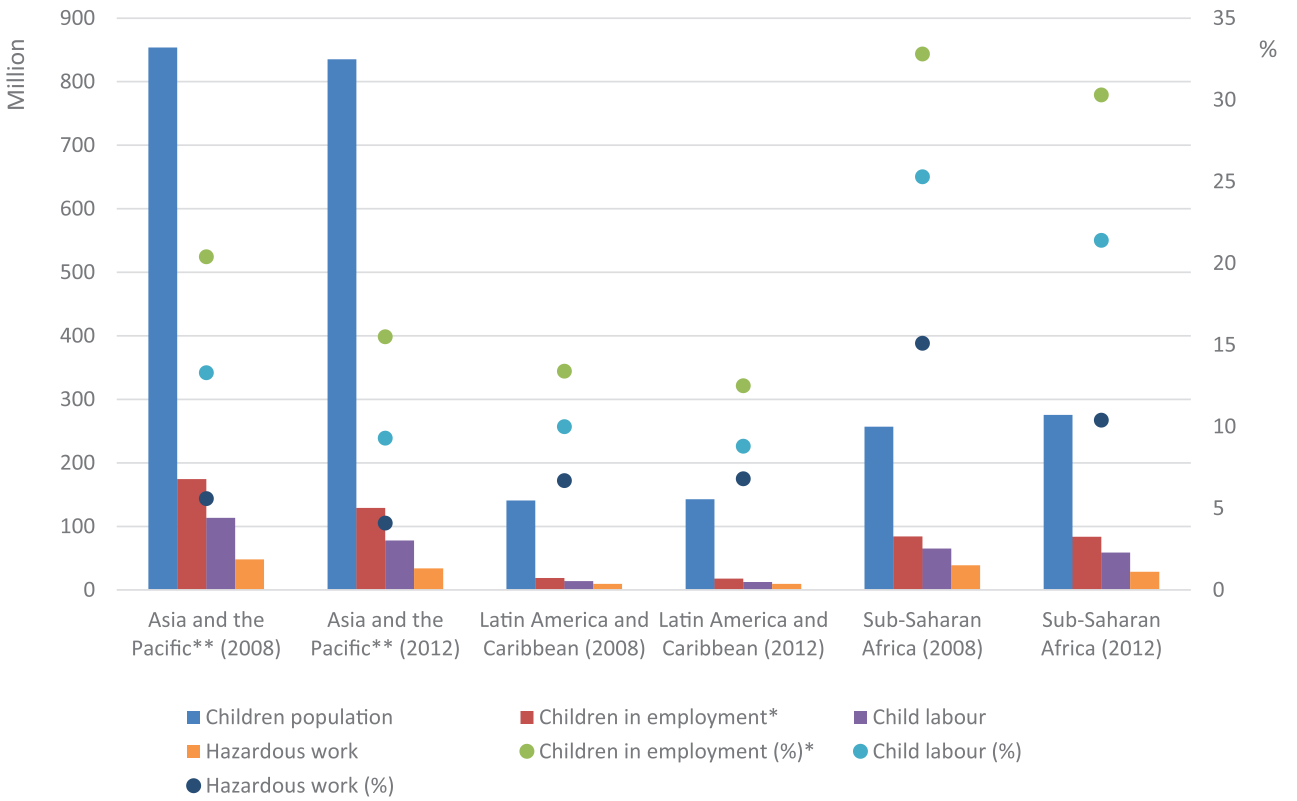
[53] ILO: *Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000–2012* (Geneva, ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour [IPEC], 2013); and Y. Diallo; A. Etienne; F. Mehran: *Global child labour trends 2008–2012* (Geneva, ILO IPEC, 2013).

Figure 18. Children in employment, child labour, and hazardous work by region, 5–17 age group, 2008 and 2012



Note: (*) Defined as those engaged in any economic activity for at least one hour during the reference period.
(**) Note that the grouping of countries does not correspond exactly to that used for the estimates in other tables in this report.

Source: ILO: *Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000–12 2014/15* (Geneva, ILO IPEC, 2013), table 3, p. 5.

In the Arab States, available data indicated that child labour "while not high relative to the global average, remained an important policy concern".[54] Arab States witnessed significant progress in the fight against child labour over the decade. However, indicators showed that, as a result of regional conflicts, the scale and incidence of child labour, including its worst forms, were rising significantly in Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen. The root causes of child labour in the Arab States varied. The prevailing occupation and settlement policy stifled the Palestinian economy, making household poverty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory the primary driver of child labour in that area, which increased from 3.7 per cent of all children aged 10–17 years in 2010[55] to 4.5 per cent in 2015.[56] Poverty and conflict were also the main causes of child labour in Yemen, which stood out in the region with the highest level of child labour (almost 14 per cent of children aged 5–14). At the same time, Jordan and Lebanon were facing the consequences of a massive influx of Syrian refugees. In Jordan, the number of child labourers in the country doubled between 2007 and 2016. Nevertheless, with 1.9 per cent of working children between the ages of 5 to 17 years, that rate remained among the lowest in the

[54] *Twin challenges* (ILO, 2014), op. cit., p. 12. Owing to different legal definitions of child labour across the Arab States, the data are based on the standardized statistical concept of children in employment as an approximation of child labour.

[55] *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: Palestinian children–issues and statistics annual report* (2011), p. 43.

[56] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2015): http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/childern-2015-01e.htm [accessed 11 Oct. 2016].

region.[57] The agricultural sector, identified by the ILO as one of the most hazardous sectors for workers of all ages, employed the largest share of Arab child labourers. Many Arab child labourers logged very long working hours, with obvious consequences for their study and leisure time. The share of male children in employment exceeded that of female children (although the data sources may have under-estimated the work of girls).

Significant strides in primary school attendance, but retention rates remain low

One flip side of the persistent issue of child labour was progress in school enrolment. Asia-Pacific performed well in expanding access to education in efforts to meet the MDG Goal 2 of universal primary education; figure 19 shows that all the countries, especially the low-income ones, greatly expanded the net enrolment ratio in primary schooling. A threshold of at least 97 per cent is often used to determine whether universal enrolment has been achieved.[58] According to this scale, the Lao People's Democratic Republic made the greatest progress, with a greater than 30 percentage point increase. Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Timor-Leste improved their enrolment rates by at least 20 points. However, China, the Philippines, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands showed neither significant progress nor regress in primary school enrolment. The gender gap in primary schooling was also bridged; where primary school boys had an advantage over the girls in the 1990s, the gap had narrowed considerably, with some countries now having gaps in favour of the girls. In Pakistan, however, the net enrolment ratio for boys was still almost 10 points higher than for girls.

In most countries, significant gains in primary school enrolment were evident in reduced numbers of out-of-school children of primary school age. Primary age school participation, however, was not matched by progress in primary school completion. The percentages of students who dropped out before the final year of primary school remained high – poverty being the most significant barrier for primary-age children to attend and complete their primary education. The ADB estimated that the proportion of children starting first grade who were able to complete the final grade of primary education was 62.2 per cent in South Asia, 69.5 per cent in the Pacific Island states, 85.1 per cent in South-East Asia, and 97.7 per cent in East Asia.[59] The data for the Arab States indicated that most working children combined work with schooling. But the share of working children denied schooling altogether was by no means negligible, particularly in Yemen, where almost 6 per cent of all children worked without going to school. There were also large shares of children neither in employment nor school, especially in Iraq (11 per cent) and Yemen (16 per cent).[60]

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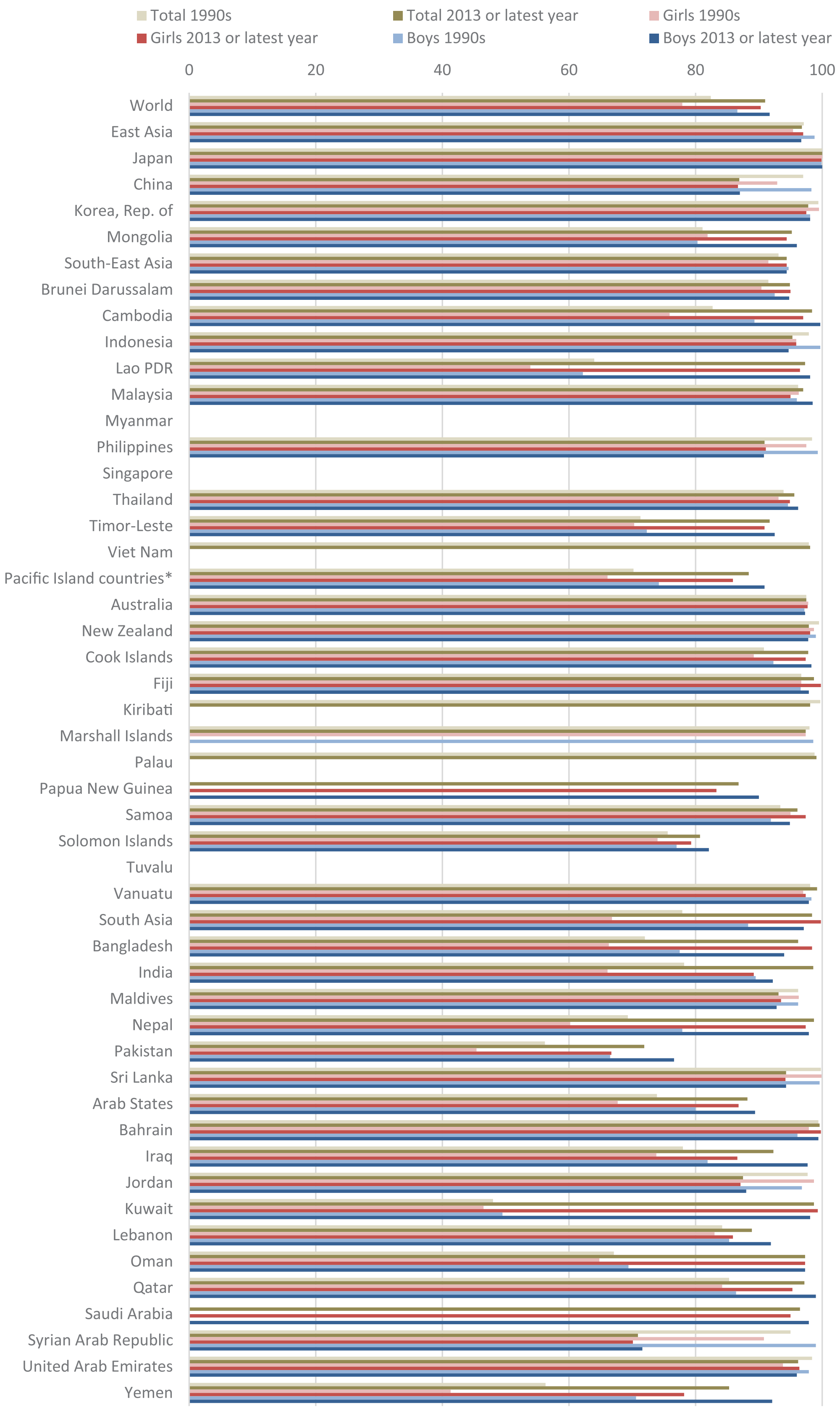
[57] Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, Ministry of Labour, Department of Statistics, and ILO: *National child labour survey 2016 of Jordan* (Amman, 2016), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_510520.pdf [accessed 11 Oct. 2016].

[58] United Nations: *The Millennium Development Goal: 2015 progress report* (New York, 2015). pp. 25.

[59] ADB: *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2015* (Manila, 2015), table 2.1, p. 130.

[60] *Twin challenges* (ILO, 2014), op. cit., p.18.

Figure 19. Net enrolment ratio in primary schooling by sex



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.

Note: (*) excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Measures to tackle child labour need complementary measures to promote youth employment

Attaining universal primary education represents only a first step toward ending child labour and promoting better lives and work opportunities for young people. Much remains to be done before achieving (a) SDG Target 8.7, to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, or (b) SDG Target 8.6, to substantially reduce by 2020 the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.

In the post-2015 era, increasing attention needs to be devoted to such objectives as universal secondary education, improving school retention rates, and addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups of children, ensuring that they are equipped with the skills they need to succeed when they enter the labour market. The mismatch between young people's education and the needs of the labour market has presented a serious constraint. Employers often suggest that many young women and men are "unemployable" – available jobs often go unfilled because young people do not have the relevant qualifications and skills. With governments and the private sector pouring funds into education and training, and producing the best-educated generation of young human resources ever, it has been a great waste that these young women and men are unable to fully realize their potential and contribute more on that basis to national development.

The foregoing sections of this review have highlighted the lack of progress in addressing the youth employment challenge during the ADWD. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the youth jobs crisis has been widely acknowledged in the region. At the 100th International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2011, for example, the then-President of Indonesia called for a global alliance to promote decent work for youth.

Regional groupings of Asia-Pacific countries have undertaken a number of initiatives to promote youth employment. The Pacific Islands Forum included youth as a priority for regional action in the Pacific Plan 2006–2015. An ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth has met once every three years to oversee ASEAN cooperation on youth at the ministerial level. At the national level, various countries have adopted specific plans or programmes to promote decent work opportunities for youth.[61]

3.5 Improving labour migration management

Migration flows have increased in size and complexity to the point that governance of labour migration has become a regional priority. Including as it does major countries of both origin and destination, the region presents a hub for labour mobility. The latest available 2013 estimates on migrant worker stocks show that the Arab States had the highest share of migrants in the workforce (35.6 per cent). In the other sub-regions, migrants accounted for 0.6 per cent of all workers in East Asia, 3.5 per cent in South-East Asia and the Pacific, and 1.3 per cent in South Asia.[62] The total number of migrant workers was estimated at 17.6 million in the Arab States and 25.8 million in Asia-Pacific.[63]

In earlier years, South Asian and South-East Asian countries were major origin countries for migrant workers mainly destined for the Arab States, East Asia, and other, western countries. Since 1990 the flows of international migrants to the ASEAN countries have roughly tripled: there were an estimated

[61] See L.L. Lim: *Building an Asia-Pacific youth employment coalition: Reviewing past policies and the way forward*, ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series (Bangkok, ILO, 2011), box 1, pp. 8–10.

[62] ILO: *ILO global estimates on migrant workers: Results and methodology* (Geneva, 2015), table 2.8, p. 16.

[63] Ibid.

9.5 million international migrants in ASEAN.[64] Around two thirds of international migrants in ASEAN come from other ASEAN Member States. However, the flows from South Asia and South-East Asia to the Arab States are still the largest flows. Post-2015, driven primarily by structural factors resulting from demographic and economic disparities among countries, cross-border labour mobility will likely continue to grow.

The management of labour migration aims primarily: (a) to promote regulated and orderly cross-border movement of workers so that both sending and receiving countries benefit, particularly in terms of more efficient labour market functioning; and (b) to aim at policies that can respond equitably to the interests of migrant workers, employers, and national workers.

Data problems major barrier to effective labour migration governance

Although valuable efforts have been made to estimate flows and stocks of labour migrants, the variety of estimation and imputation techniques used have resulted in wide variations in the data.[65] For example, estimated shares of intra-ASEAN migrants and nationals abroad range from 51.2 per cent to 68.6 per cent for migrants, and 24.7 per cent to 34.6 per cent for nationals abroad. Large differences are also apparent in the figures underpinning these regional estimates. For example, the three main data sources[66] respectively estimated the stock of Myanmar migrants in Thailand to be 0.1 million, 0.3 million, and 1.6 million, and the number of Philippine citizens in Malaysia to be 308,000, 103,000, and just 20,000.

Such wide discrepancies highlight some of the problems in using the data – not only for tracking labour mobility trends, but for better understanding the labour market dynamics in both origin and destination countries. Weak data can also render certain groups of migrants politically “invisible”, to the detriment of both origin and destination countries and certainly of the migrants themselves. Countries in the region have recognized the importance of reliable and detailed data on labour migration stocks and flows. For example, the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007) recommends that Member States “facilitate data-sharing on matters related to migrant workers, for the purpose of enhancing policies and programmes concerning migrant workers in both sending and receiving states” (article 18).

The growing international consensus on the importance of measuring reliable labour migration stocks and flows emphasizes the need for: (a) law enforcement statistics, which include public administrative records regarding recruitment and placement agencies; and (b) statistics on work permits issued, employers of migrant workers, and migrant workers departing countries of origin and arriving in countries of destination. Such law enforcement statistics can enhance the reliability of sources on migrant workers stocks and flows for both origin and destination countries. It also emphasizes the need for national statistical programmes to include regular measurement of internal and international migration, for example through national household-based surveys and population censuses.

Notwithstanding the data problems, labour migration management performance can be assessed in terms of other indicators, including: (a) number of countries that have ratified international Conventions relating to migrant workers; (b) numbers and substance of mutual recognition arrangements and bilateral labour agreements that have been signed between origin and destination countries; and (c) measures taken to extend the coverage and portability of social security for migrant workers.

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[64] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA): *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision, United Nations Database*, (New York, 2013).

[65] ILO and ADB: *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity* (Bangkok, 2014), op. cit., pp. 115–116.

[66] The Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty; the World Bank; and the Population Division of UN DESA.

Ratification of international Conventions relating to migrant workers remains weak

An important starting point for labour migration management would be the ratification and implementation of such international Conventions as the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111), which prohibits distinctions, exclusions, or preferences on the basis of a person's race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction (including nationals' place of birth, foreign origin, or ancestry), or social origin. However, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, the key destination countries in Asia-Pacific, have not ratified Convention No. 111. All the Arab States are destination countries and all, except Oman, have ratified Convention No. 111.

In addition to the fundamental Conventions, there are international instruments that deal directly with migrant workers' rights, as well as other key labour Conventions that ensure equal treatment for all workers in social protection. Table 5 highlights the low ratification levels for all these Conventions. Only the Philippines, a major country of origin sending country, has ratified all of the Conventions listed except Convention No. 181. The gaps have been especially striking in the main countries of destination.

Table 5. Ratification of migrant worker Conventions

Convention	Countries that have ratified the Convention
Migrant worker rights:	
ILO Migration for Employment Convention (revised), 1949 (No. 97)	Malaysia (Sabah), New Zealand, Philippines
Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	Philippines
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Palau, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste
Equal treatment in social protection:	
Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19)	Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Lebanon, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Yemen
Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1982 (No. 118)	Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, Philippines, Syrian Arab Republic
Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157)	Philippines
Protection of rights of all migrant workers and members of their families:	
Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)	Fiji, Japan, Mongolia
Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	Philippines

Labour recruitment agencies are particularly active with respect to migration within Asia-Pacific and from Asian to Arab states. It is here that many temporary labour migration programmes involving low-skilled workers are based in structural and income inequalities between developing and developed economies. During recruitment, migrant workers are highly vulnerable to abusive and fraudulent recruitment, which often traps migrant workers with limited voice and bargaining power, leading them into debt. The high recruitment fees the agencies charge are one exploitative aspect of the process. These fees greatly exceed actual costs incurred, and they reduce the impact of migration on development. Governments in countries of origin have often responded to recruitment abuses by introducing licensing requirements, limits on recruitment fees, and mechanisms for complaints. In 2015, Nepal announced a "no fee" and "no travel cost" approach to worker policy for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Malaysia. GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE have banned the charging of migrant worker fees. Despite these efforts, there has been only limited success overall in curbing recruitment abuses.[67]

ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, landmark agreement needing more implementation measures

In 2007, the ten ASEAN Member States[68] adopted the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (also known as the Cebu Declaration), which calls on countries of both origin and destination to promote "the full potential and dignity of migrant workers in a climate of freedom, equity and stability" in accordance with national laws (article 1). Among other Declaration articles worth noting is article 8, which emphasizes that destination countries should extend "fair and appropriate employment protection, payment of wages and adequate access to decent working and living conditions for migrant workers"; and article 22, which mandates "the relevant ASEAN bodies … to develop an ASEAN instrument [during the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meeting] on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers" by means of which progress might be monitored. The Declaration is a non-binding agreement, however, and the assessment is that effective implementation needs more[69] – especially looking ahead to the freer flow of goods, services, capital, and labour expected when the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) becomes a functioning reality.

Mutual recognition arrangements and bilateral labour agreements facilitate the management of labour migration

At the regional level, policies to manage labour migration focused mainly on high-skilled workers. The ASEAN Member States completed mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) for a number of skilled occupations,[70] aiming to facilitate labour mobility by establishing the skills or experience relevant professionals need to gain certification in another country and, ultimately, to work abroad. However, barriers at the national level meant MRA implementation fell short of the goal of managing labour mobility. For example, the countries varied significantly in the education and testing they required for granting professional recognition, while professional associations were often reluctant to alter

[67] ILO: *APRM technical brief: Labour migration in Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, forthcoming, 2016).

[68] Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

[69] ILO and ADB: *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity* (Bangkok, 2014), op. cit., pp. 99.

[70] Including engineering, nursing, architectural, surveying, medical practitioners, dental practitioners, accountancy, and tourism.

their existing standards to admit potential competition from abroad. More significantly, occupations covered by the MRAs accounted for a negligible fraction of the total jobs held in ASEAN – only between 0.3 per cent and 1.4 per cent of total employment in the Member States.[71] No MRAs covered the skills needed for such occupations as construction worker, garment worker, fisher folk, or plantation labourer. Yet formulation of such MRAs would have helped to legitimize and regulate much of the migrant flows, and might have also provided more manageable, more transparent, and safer channels for migrant workers.

The Asian Decent Work Decade saw a significant increase in the number of bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) and memoranda of understanding (MOUs)[72] on labour migration. The aim of the BLAs/MOUs was to promote "fair migration" for regulated and orderly cross-border movement of workers and to protect the human rights of all migrants. The BLAs/MOUs that extended protective provisions to migrant workers in sectors not covered by national labour law, for example domestic work, were especially important. Assessments of BLAs/MOUs generally concluded that they varied significantly in (a): scope, in terms of the sectors and issues covered; (b) inclusion or lack of implementation and monitoring mechanisms; and (c) effectiveness, which translated into different outcomes for the origin and destination countries and, very importantly, for migrant women and men.

Analysis of BLAs and MOUs in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States suggested that most BLAs and MOUs did not explicitly refer to the protection of migrant workers or provide for their equal treatment with nationals. Most also neglected gender considerations, except in Saudi Arabia's domestic worker agreements with Asian countries. As they were conceived, negotiated, and implemented, the BLAs/MOUs largely ignored gender issues and lacked gender-sensitive monitoring mechanisms. Only a few contained specific provisions concerning women or gender.[73] Yet women migrants tended to be much more at risk of exploitation and abuse than were men migrants. Furthermore, these agreements rarely featured the need for social dialogue, and few spelled out effective ways to address recruitment malpractices.

BLAs and MOUs among governments tend to be more effective where labour laws offer comprehensive protection of workers in all sectors, including domestic workers. In the design of any BLA or MOU among governments it is recommended that policy-makers engage social partners, make the texts available to the public (as in the Philippines), and adopt a system of periodic evaluation of their effectiveness, particularly regarding the protection of migrant workers.

Still a long way to go to provide social protection for migrant workers

Ensuring equal protection for migrant workers promotes economic equity and makes labour markets more efficient. Enforcing protection for migrant workers ensures that employers who do not comply with national labour standards cannot compete unfairly against those who do. However, many migrant workers in the region have no or little social protection, having forfeited their entitlements at home while facing highly limited and unequal protection abroad. Even when migrant workers are entitled

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[71] ILO and ADB: *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity* (Bangkok, 2014), op. cit., table 6.1, pp. 91.

[72] BLAs create legally binding rights and obligations, whereas MOUs are usually non-binding instruments setting out general principles of cooperation.

[73] Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): *Guide on gender-sensitive labour migration policies* (Vienna, 2009), pp. 53–54. See also P. Wickramasekara: *Bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding on migration of low-skilled workers: A review*, report prepared for the ILO by Global Migration Policy Associates (Geneva, 2014); and L.L. Lim: "Gender-sensitivity in labour migration-related agreements and MOUs", a paper prepared for the ILO Labour Migration Branch (Geneva, 2014).

to social security benefits in the destination countries, due to restrictions on the export of benefits abroad to non-nationals they often lose what they accumulated during their stay when they return to their origin country; i.e. their rights are not portable.

Among the ASEAN destination countries, social security provisions in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore excluded migrant workers who did not have permanent residency, withholding from them a number of key protections.[74] The Social Security Act of Malaysia did cover migrant workers, but loopholes resulted in ineffective coverage (e.g. employers were not obliged to register migrant workers under national schemes). In 2013, however, Thailand showed the way in announcing a new social health protection scheme that covered all migrant workers (including undocumented migrant workers and refugees) and that offered the same benefit packages as under the country's universal coverage scheme, although on a contributory basis. Migrant Welfare funds and private insurance schemes have long existed. Some countries of origin also started making efforts to protect their nationals going abroad as migrant workers. For example, social security laws in Indonesia and the Philippines provided migrant workers with a range of protections, as did draft laws in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Viet Nam.

[74] ILO and ADB: *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity* (Bangkok, 2014), op. cit., table 6.3, pp. 98.

4 Post-2015: Future of decent work in Asia-Pacific and the Arab States

This final section of this report analyses the main regional labour market trends and challenges ahead in achieving SDG 8, i.e. to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", as well as the many other SDGs linked to the Decent Work Agenda. This section also briefly discusses key factors likely to shape the future of work and the quest for social justice in the post-2015 development scenario.

4.1 "New normal" spells major challenges for decent employment

The ADWD ended with the region still facing challenges and uncertainties. Like the rest of the world, the region had never fully recovered from the global financial and economic crisis and had entered a "new normal" scenario of: (a) tepid economic growth; (b) little or no productivity growth; (c) low and even falling rates of employment growth; (d) rising unemployment; and (e) persistent vulnerable employment.

> If current policy responses are maintained, the outlook is for continued economic weakening, posing significant challenges to enterprises and workers. Indeed, over the next two years, the world economy is projected to grow by only around 3 per cent, significantly less than before the advent of the global crisis.[75]

Near-term estimates and projections could change, reflecting changing economic circumstances or the availability of new data and labour market information. But current projections for the coming five years in the figures below all point to serious challenges for decent employment.

Output and productivity growth slowing

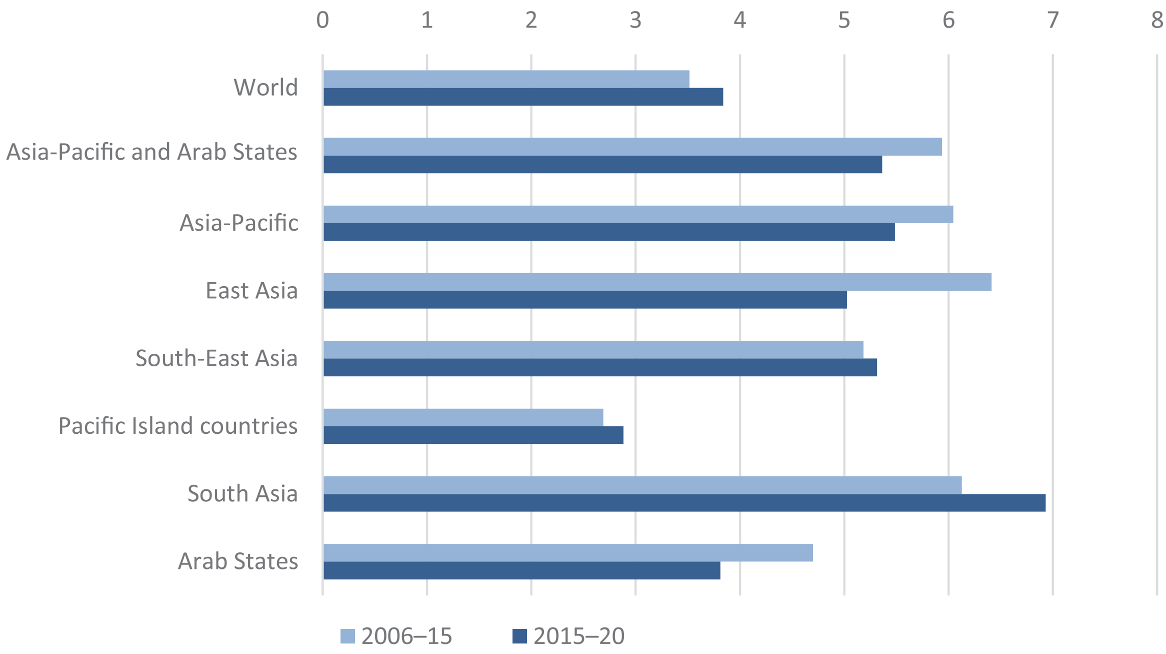
Trends suggest that the rate of output and productivity growth will continue to decelerate in Asia-Pacific. In terms of output, GDP is expected to grow at an average of 5.5 per cent each year until 2020, still higher than the projected global rate (of 3.8 per cent) but lower than the annual rate of 6.0 per cent during the ADWD (figure 20). Declining oil prices, security challenges, and regional conflicts are expected to continue to weigh on the Arab States' economic prospects. GDP growth is projected to fall to just 3.8 per cent per year over the next five years, compared to 4.7 per cent over the past decade. Among the other sub-regions, East Asia is expected to experience significantly slower growth (5 per cent annually to 2020, compared to 6.4 per cent over the ADWD), mainly due to a pronounced

[75] *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2016* (Geneva, ILO, 2016), op. cit., pp. 3.

economic slowdown in China (which accounts for some 40 per cent of the total Asia-Pacific output). Only South Asia is expected to experience clear improvement in output expansion and, at an annual rate of 6.9 per cent, economic growth will be significantly higher than the rate of 5.4 per cent for the region as a whole. Economic prospects in South-East Asia and the Pacific are expected to remain relatively unchanged.

Figure 21 shows that labour productivity growth in East Asia, in terms of output per unit of labour input, is expected to slow from the 5.9 per cent experienced during the ADWD to 5.0 per cent per year over the coming five years. The other sub-regions are all expected to experience slightly higher annual productivity growth rates in the near future. Projected productivity growth in both the Arab States and the Pacific Island countries, at 1.5 per cent, and in South-East Asia, at 3.8 per cent, will be significantly lower than the corresponding East Asia rate. Only South Asia's productivity growth of 4.9 per cent per year until 2020 is expected to approach East Asia's performance.

Figure 20. Average annual growth rate of GDP (%), 2006–20



Source: ILO estimates based on IMF: *World Economic Outlook*, April 2016.

Note: Figures beyond 2015 are projections.

Figure 21. Average annual growth rate of labour productivity (%), 2006–20

Source: ILO estimates based on IMF: *World Economic Outlook*, April 2016.
Note: Figures beyond 2015 are projections.

Bleak employment outlook, especially for youth

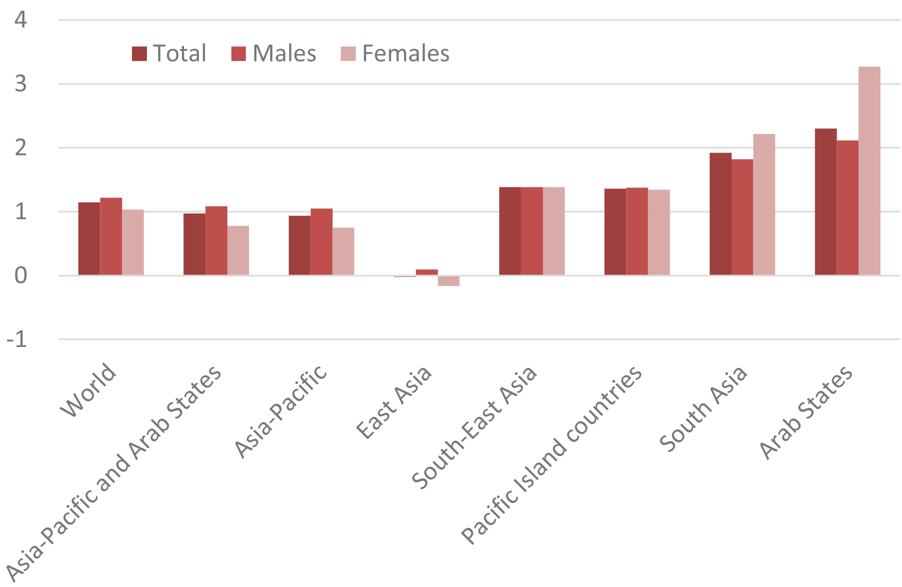
Against this backdrop of poor economic prospects, as shown in figure 22.1 the employment outlook is expected to deteriorate over the coming five years. In fact, negative employment growth is projected for East Asia, especially for women. Compared to the previous decade, growth will also be slower in the other sub-regions, with the exception of South Asia and the Pacific Island countries. Prospects will be particularly bleak for the Arab States, where jobs are expected to grow by 2.3 per cent compared to 4.2 per cent per year during the previous decade, and the male workforce in that sub-region will probably be more affected than their female counterparts.

The only subregion expected to buck the trend is South Asia, where employment growth is projected to be 1.9 per cent compared to the 1.1 per cent experienced during the ADWD. However, such expansion has to be assessed in context. The projected annual economic growth rate of 6.9 per cent corresponds to only 1.9 per cent of employment expansion over the next five years. (The employment elasticity of 0.28 can be compared to that of 0.31 for the previous five years.) Moreover, vulnerable employment is expected to account for much of the employment growth. Job growth will likely be significantly higher for South Asian women than for men, improving from negative growth through the ADWD to 2.2 per cent per year looking ahead to 2020. The comparable rate for men in 2020 is 1.8 per cent, suggesting that the gender gap should narrow slightly but (as indicated in figure 25, below) some 76 per cent of women and 69 per cent of men are expected to remain in vulnerable employment.

In the entire region (including the Arab States), an estimated 98 million jobs would need to be created within the next five years (by 2020) to close the employment gap. Looking farther ahead, 180 million jobs are going to be needed by 2025 and 249 million jobs by 2030.[76] To meet this enormous challenge, countries need to step up efforts to re-accelerate economic growth – especially since figure 20 indicates the GDP growth trajectory is expected to continue to remain below ADWD levels, and certainly below pre-crisis levels. Furthermore, coping with the coming challenges means anticipating that growth prospects might well be derailed by such contingencies as geopolitical tensions and conflicts, the future path of emerging markets, energy prices, and currency changes.

Figure 22.2 is particularly alarming, given that it suggests whatever employment growth is indeed achieved over the next five years will probably benefit adults rather than young women and men. The projected average annual youth employment growth rate is not merely substantially lower than the growth rate for total employment, it is in fact expected to be negative in East Asia and South-East Asia. In the other sub-regions, an inconsequential expansion of employment, less than 2 per cent per year, is expected for young people. However, given the projected decline of the overall youth population over the next decade, the lower youth employment prospects do not necessarily imply a significant employment deterioration.

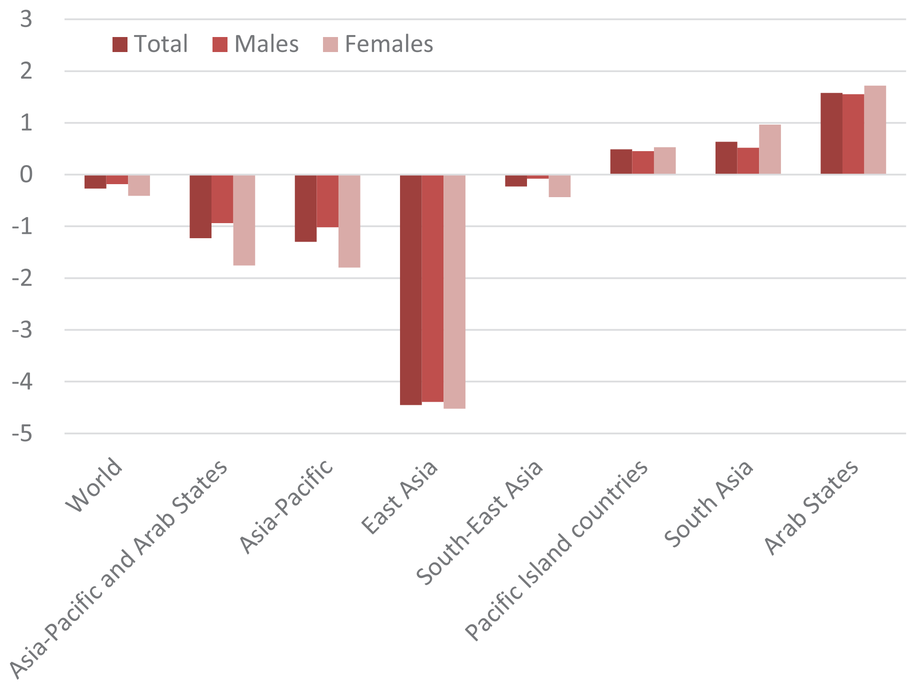
Figure 22.1. Average annual employment growth rate by sex (%), 2015–20



Source: ILO estimates based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).
Note: Figures beyond 2015 are projections.

[76] Statistical annex, below, table A21.

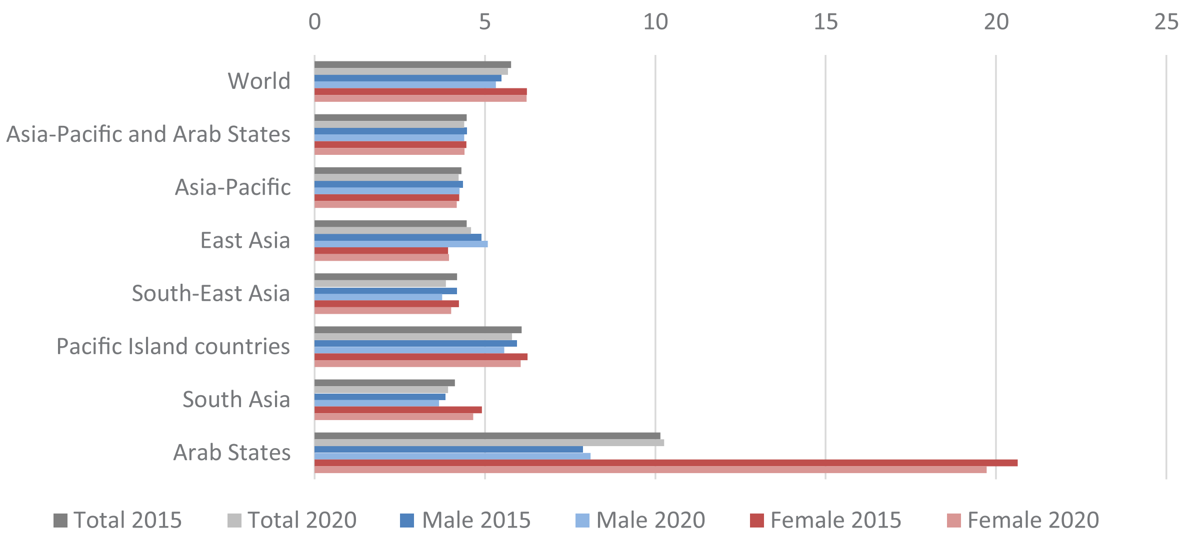
Figure 22.2. Average annual youth employment growth rate by sex (%), 2015–20



Source: ILO estimates based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Note: Figures beyond 2015 are projections.

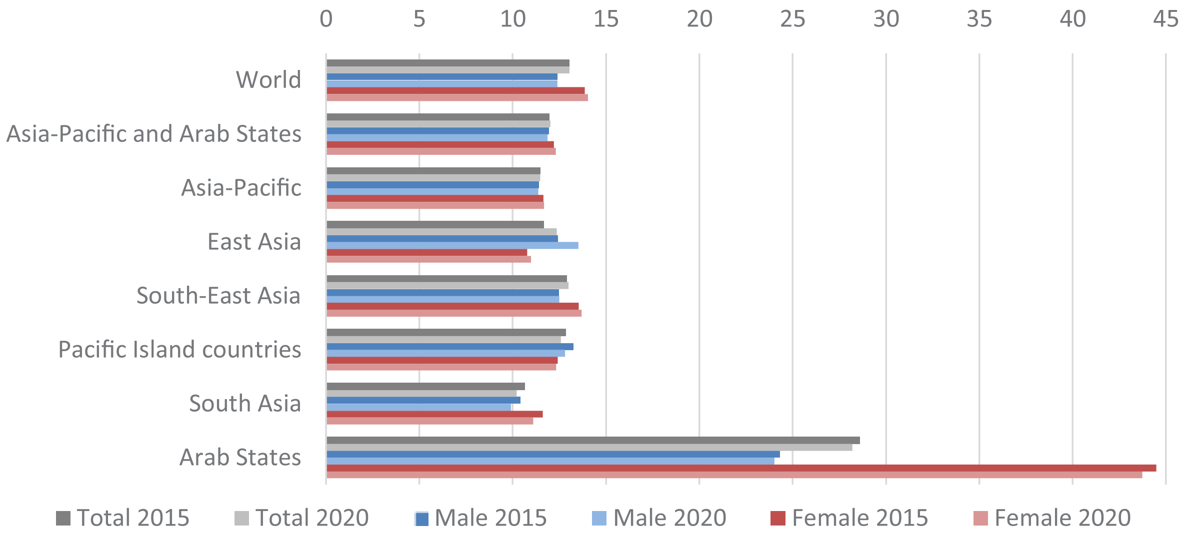
Figure 23.1. Unemployment rate by sex (%), 2015 and 2020



Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Note: Figures for 2020 are projections.

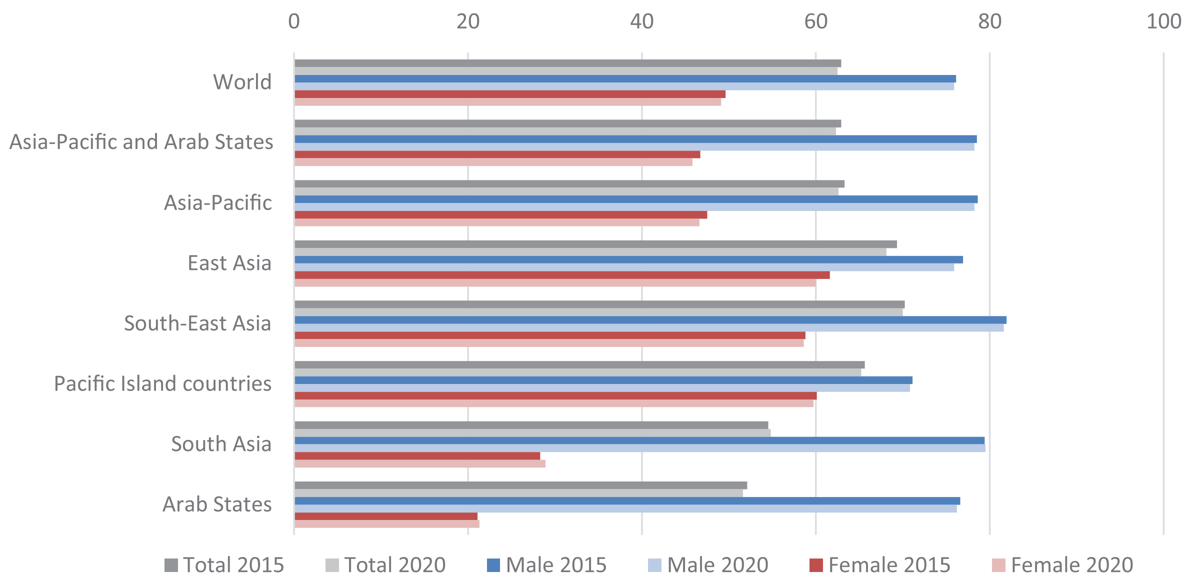
Figure 23.2. Youth unemployment rate by sex (%), 2015 and 2020



Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Note: Figures for 2020 are projections.

Figure 24. Labour force participation rates by sex (%), 2015 and 2020



Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Note: Figures for 2020 are projections.

Little dent in unemployment, especially youth unemployment

The poor prospects for employment growth suggest there will be little reduction in unemployment, with jobless numbers expected to increase. Figure 23.1 shows that projected total unemployment rates will remain relatively unchanged in the five years ahead – increasing slightly in East Asia and the Arab States, and falling slightly in the other sub-regions. Future unemployment is also likely to be affected by the "new normal" of lacklustre economic performance – growth slowdowns tend to exacerbate unemployment while, to a lesser extent, growth accelerations reduce unemployment.[77]

Even though many more young people will be equipped with higher levels of education, given the negative or very low rates of employment growth projected for the coming five years among this group, youth can be expected to continue facing serious difficulties finding decent jobs. In East Asia in particular, although new youth cohorts entering the labour market will be smaller than their previous counterparts,[78] the youth unemployment rate is expected to increase, more for young men than for young women (figure 23.2). South-East Asian young men and women are also expected to face greater difficulties with job searches. In the other sub-regions, the near-term prospects are expected to improve slightly, but with little change in the gender differentials.

Low labour force participation rates persist

With stubbornly high youth unemployment and poor employment prospects ahead, young people are likely to continue being discouraged regarding job prospects. This effect, together with changing demographics, can be expected to result in continued declines or stagnation in labour force participation rates (figure 24). In South Asia and the Arab States, the share of the economically active among the working age population is expected to remain at just a little over half. In the Arab States in particular, the risk of youth labour market detachment is expected to remain a largely unresolved issue. One major reason for this is that, despite significantly rising educational attainments, young people are not equipped with skills appropriate to labour market demand.[79] Only in South-East Asia is the LFPR expected to stabilize around 70 per cent. Projected rates by sex remain little changed, so that gender differentials are expected to remain huge, especially in South Asia and the Arab States. Implicit in these projections is a loss of potential human resources.

Vulnerable employment is declining

But not all the news is gloomy. Figure 25, for example, does present one welcome projection: vulnerable employment is expected to continue to fall in every sub-region.

In the region as a whole, projected vulnerability measured as the share of own-account and contributing family work drops from 62.4 per cent in 2006 at the start of the ADWD to 52.8 per cent by 2020. For the different sub-regions, the fall in percentage points over 15 years is expected to amount to 13.1 in East Asia, 8.1 in South Asia, 7.7 in South-East Asia, 3.0 in the Arab States, and 2.1 in the Pacific Island countries. By 2020, only South Asia is expected to see the bulk of its labour force remain in vulnerable forms of work. The projected decline in vulnerable employment is greater for women than for men in all the sub-regions except the Pacific Island countries, so some closing of the gender gap is to be expected.

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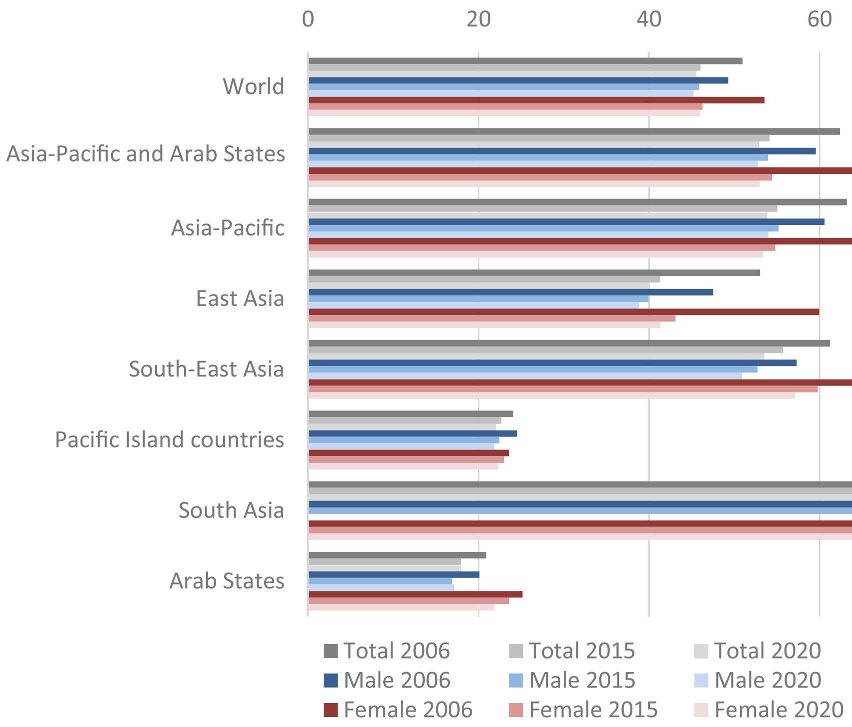
77 *World employment* (ILO), op. cit. figure 1.11, p. 26.

78 See the description of demographic trends and figure 28 below.

79 *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2016* (Geneva, ILO, 2016), op. cit., p. 44.

Figure 25. Vulnerable employment by sex (% of total employment), 2006, 2015, 2020



ILO estimates based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Note: Figures for 2020 are projections.

Continued decline expected in working poverty

Although projections suggest some 71 per cent of the total employed in South Asia will still be in vulnerable forms of work in 2020, the extent of working poverty is expected to drop from 18.3 per cent in 2015 to 13.9 per cent by 2020, and to continue decreasing to 9.5 per cent by 2030. The other subregions are also expected to experience declines in working poverty, those these will be of lesser magnitude – understandably enough, since the share of the workforce earning less than $1.90 per day in 2015 was already much smaller than in South Asia. In absolute numbers, over the coming 15 years the projected total working poor will drop by 69.7 million in Asia-Pacific and by 620.5 thousand in the Arab States (see figures 3.1 and 3.2, above).

Progress in the share of the middle class probably mixed

Between 2015 and 2030, figure 4 indicates (above), the projected share of the developing middle class in East Asia will decline by 9.1 percentage points, but the share of the upper middle class is expected to rise by 24.6 percentage points. South-East Asia is also expected to see an increase in the shares of both those earning between $5 and $13 per person per day and those earning more than $13 per person per day. Pacific Island countries and South Asia are both expected to see an estimated increase of 20 per cent in developing middle class, but the shares of upper middle class in both sub-regions are expected to remain stagnant over the next 15 years. In the Arab States, progress in improving living standards is likely to remain relatively stalled. A greater risk of social discontent is possible in those countries where there are slowdowns in economic growth and disappointing access to middle-class living standards.

Decent employment for all remains a distant goal

Major challenges in achieving the SDGs lie ahead for the region, given the extent of human trafficking, child labour, and the huge numbers still in forced labour. Occupational safety and health issues also continue to affect job quality.

Available estimates indicated that Asia-Pacific had the largest share of forced labour, including human trafficking, in the world. In 2012, those trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they could not leave amounted to 11.7 million persons, or 56 per cent of the global total.[80] Women and girls tended to represent the greater share of total forced labour. Child labour also remained an important policy concern. As already mentioned, although Asia-Pacific registered the largest absolute decline in child labour, the region remained responsible for the largest share of child labourers (77.7 million in 2012 with some 44 per cent in hazardous forms of work).

Job quality in terms of occupational safety and health remained a serious challenge. There were no specific figures for the region, but globally it was estimated that a worker died from a work-related accident or disease every 15 seconds, and every 15 seconds 153 workers suffered a work-related accident.[81] Given the extent of vulnerable and informal forms of employment in the region, these figures could range even higher.

4.2 Demographic transitions complicate efforts to promote decent work

The projected total regional population will grow from 4.2 billion in 2015 to 4.4 billion in 2020 to 4.58 billion by 2025. This region's share of the world population is expected to drop slightly from 57.2 per cent to an estimated 56.2 per cent over the next ten years. Countries in South Asia and the Arab States have experienced slower fertility declines than has Asia and the Pacific as a whole, so the population in South Asia is still expected to grow by 226 million, accounting for 60 per cent of the region's total population growth over the next ten years. The population in the Arab States is expected to grow by some 27 per cent, compared 9 per cent for the region as a whole.

Figure 26 shows that projected demographic change differs significantly among sub-regions and countries, with varying implications for the respective labour markets and the promotion of decent work. Three main patterns of demographic transition are evident: (a) those countries with an expanding working age population and a potential "demographic dividend"; (b) those countries with a youth bulge; and (c) those countries experiencing rapid population ageing that face a potential "demographic cliff".

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[80] ILO: *Global estimate of forced labour results and methodology* (Geneva, 2012).

[81] ILO: *Safety and health at work*, http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 19 Sep. 2016].

Figure 26.1. Population prospects by age group, 2015

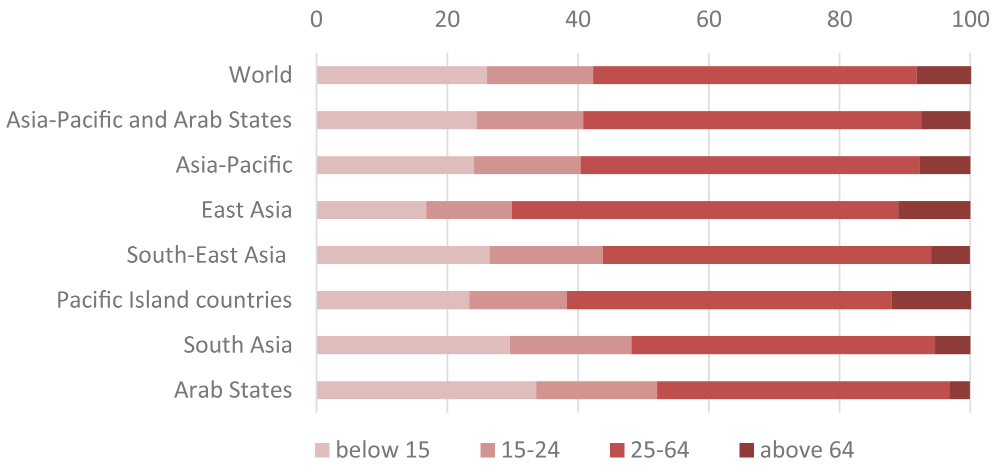


Figure 26.2. Population prospects by age group, 2020

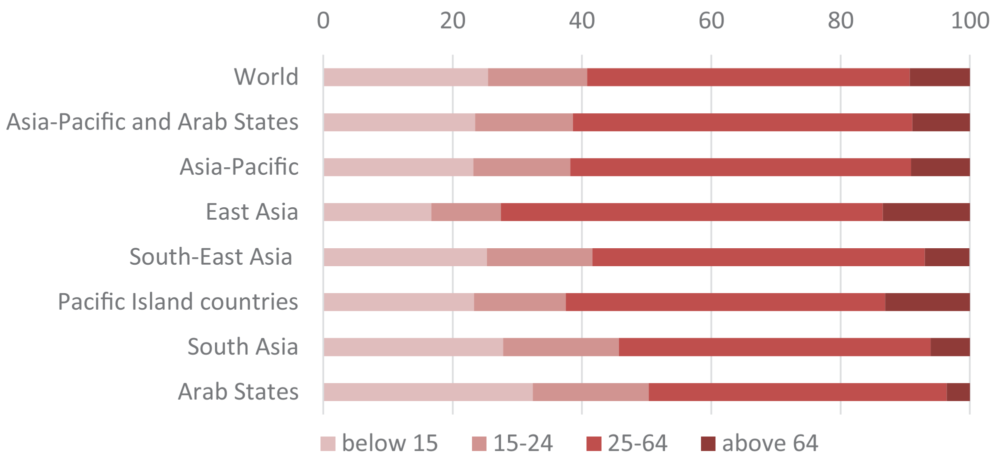
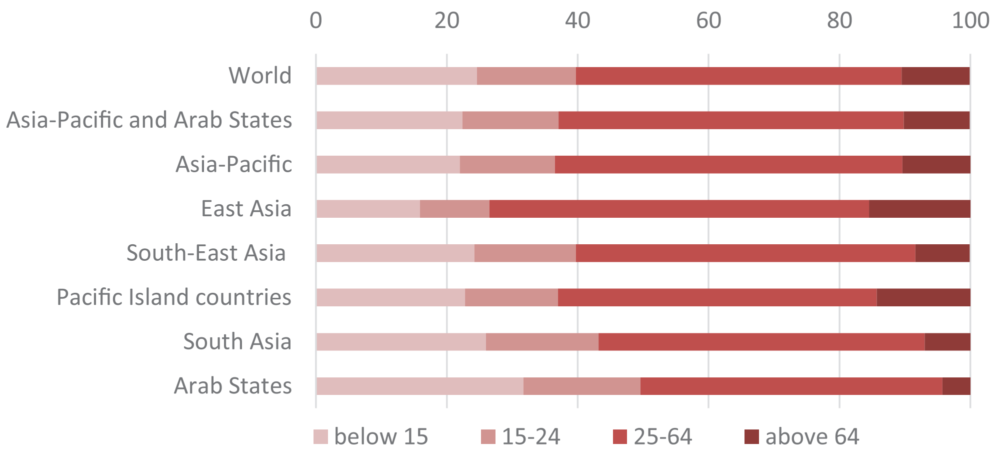


Figure 26.3. Population prospects by age group, 2025



Source: ILO calculations based on *United Nations world population prospects: 2015 revision* (DVD edition).
Note: Figures for 2020 and 2025 are projections.

Potential "demographic dividend" for countries with expanding working-age populations

Over the next ten years, slower fertility decline will mean that South Asian countries and the Arab States, as well as some of the lower-income countries in the other subregions, can expect to see a rising economically active proportion of their populations, together with a falling dependency ratio, suggesting a potential demographic gift. In South Asia, projections suggest that those aged 15–64 years will account for an estimated 67 per cent of the total population in 2025, compared to 65 per cent ten years earlier. Comparable figures for the middle- and low-income Arab states are 60.6 per cent in 2025 and 57.9 per cent in 2015.

Whether these countries will reap the potential social and economic benefits of the growing numbers of people in the workforce relative to the number of dependents hinges on a number of factors, e.g. on whether timely and effective policies are adopted to empower, educate, equip with appropriate skills, and productively employ the young and working-age population. India's 12th Five Year Plan (2012–2017), for instance, suggests that

> the 'demographic dividend' accounts for India having the world's youngest work force with a median age way below that of China and OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] Countries. Alongside this window of opportunity for India, the global economy is expected to witness a skilled manpower shortage. Thus, the 'demographic dividend' in India needs to be exploited not only to expand the production possibility frontier but also to meet the skilled manpower requirements in India and abroad.[82]

Employment challenges for countries with a youth bulge

The challenge of human resource development and decent job creation will be especially critical for those countries that are expected to see growing numbers of youth in their populations. Over the next ten years, projections for youth population growth are 14 million to 353.2 million in South Asia and 6.3 million to 34.6 million in the Arab States. There will also be a slight increase, about half a million, in Asia-Pacific's youth population. On the other hand, a substantial drop of 35.1 million is expected in the number of youth entering the workforce in East Asia, so their share of the total population will drop from 13.1 per cent to 10.6 per cent. China is expected to account for most of that drop, where the number of those aged 15–24 years will fall from 185 million to 153 million. The estimated youth employment challenge, in terms of numbers, should also be slightly less serious in South-East Asia, with the youth population dropping by 1.9 million over the ten years. However, expectations are that Indonesia and the Philippines will still see growth rather than decline in their youth respective populations.

Rapid population ageing poses policy challenges and economic and social risks

The transition that is drawing increasing attention is the rapid pace of ageing in the region. By 2025, Asia-Pacific (excluding the Arab States) is expected to be home, mostly in China, to 54 per cent of

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[82] Government of India Planning Commission. "Enhancing skills and faster generation of employment" 12th Five Year Plan, http://12thplan.gov.in/forum_description.php?f=9 [accessed 11 Oct. 2016].

the global population aged 65 years and older, and to more old people than any other region of the world. "More significantly, the region is ageing more rapidly than has any region in history a trend driven both by sharp declines in fertility and by steady increases in life expectancy. In many of these countries, furthermore, ageing is occurring at relatively low income levels."[83] Ageing is most apparent in the higher-income countries. Japan, where three out of every ten persons are older than 64 years, is expected to become the oldest society in the world. In the Republic of Korea and Singapore, the elderly are expected to account for one-fifth of the total population. The respective shares in Australia and New Zealand in 2025 will be an estimated 18 per cent and 19 per cent. But several middle-income countries have also been ageing rapidly. Projections indicate that China's elderly population will increase by more than one and a half times within the next ten years, whereas its total population is expected to increase by less than 3 per cent. Over the next decade, Thailand's elderly population is expected to expand from 10.5 to 16.1 per cent of the total population. In South Asia, Sri Lanka is the only country experiencing rapid ageing. Other countries in other parts of the region are ageing more slowly, including those in ASEAN (with the exception of Thailand and Viet Nam), the Pacific Island countries, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.

"Developing countries in East Asia and Pacific are getting old before getting rich"[84]

These ageing populations raise present policy challenges in face of concomitant economic and social issues. Many countries will also have to cope with ageing populations on income levels unprecedentedly lower than any society with comparable degrees of ageing. These countries, if they are to sustain economic growth and cope with unprecedented demands on social security systems, will encounter greater pressures to improve productivity through capital deepening and improving the quality of human resources.

Obvious implications for the labour market are complicated by such factors as the speed of urbanization (discussed below) as well as internal and external migration flows. Escalating rural-urban migration, for example, could leave relatively larger proportions of the elderly in rural areas, which usually have fewer resources than do urban areas to manage elderly dependency. Labour market implications, moreover, include not just issues of labour-supply quantity and quality, but also types of job in demand (e.g. jobs in the care economy). Increasingly significant will be such labour market policies as those addressing (a) the need for lifelong learning and extending productive working lives; (b) workplace adjustments to accommodate older workers; (c) promoting female labour force participation with appropriate arrangements for child care; and (d) raising the retirement age and reversing incentives for early retirement. Migration policies could also play an important role, but they will require proactive efforts in both sending and receiving countries.

Social protection will be key to developing effective pension, health, and long-term care systems for ageing societies. But such systems face challenges in balancing extended protection coverage, allocation of adequate resources, and sustainable operation of such systems. Adequate social protection financing models will require an appropriate mix of contributory and general revenue (state) financing that prioritizes inclusion of the poor and near-poor. Important social implications include the need for a fair social compact between generations, one that promotes the realization of human potential at all stages of the life cycle.

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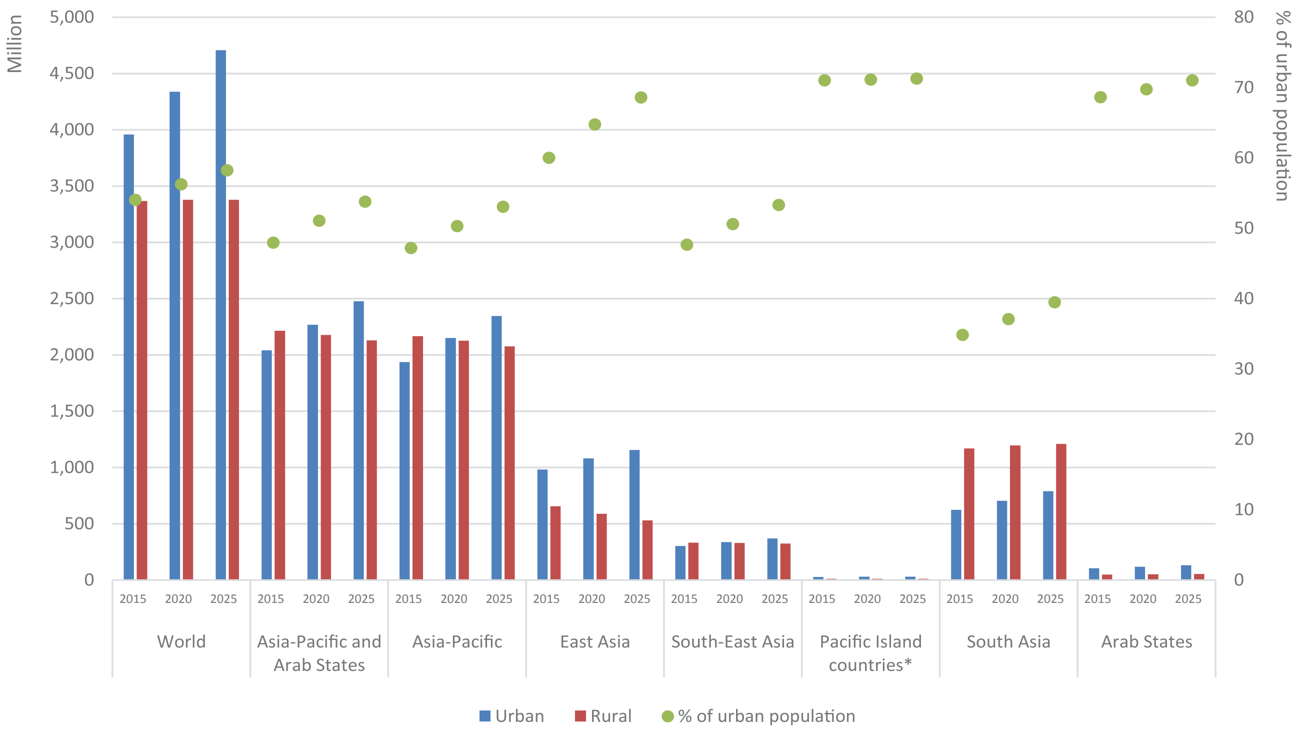
[83] World Bank: *Live long and prosper: Ageing in East Asia and Pacific* (Washington, DC, 2016), p. xv.

[84] Ibid., p. 9.

4.3 Rapid urbanization exerts additional pressures on urban labour markets

The speed of urbanization presents another significant regional demographic trend (figure 27). Over the ADWD, the share of population living in urban areas rose by 7 percentage points, and over the next ten years it is expected to rise from 48 per cent to 54 per cent. The total urban population of the entire region is expected to grow by an estimated 229 million within the next five years, and by another 208 million between 2020 and 2025. At the same time, projections have the rural population shrinking by 84 million over the coming decade. East Asia's urban population (driven largely by China) is expected to grow by 174 million, while the rural population will shrink by an estimated 126 million over the next ten years. Meanwhile the urban population of South-East Asia will increase, with a concomitant absolute decline in the number of people living in rural areas. South Asia's urban population is projected to grow substantially by 164 million, and its rural population is also expected to grow, though more slowly (by 41 million). While continued growth of rural populations is expected in the Pacific Island countries and the Arab States, urban populations in these two sub-regions are also expected to continue increasing, with the highest levels of urbanization continuing to stand at around 70 per cent.[85]

Figure 27. Rural and urban population, 2015, 2020, 2025



Source: UNESCAP: *World urbanization prospects: The 2014 revision* (Population Division, 2014).

Note: (*) Numbers for rural and urban populations in Pacific Island countries are too small, compared to those of other regions, to be displayed graphically on the chart. Figures for 2020 and 2025 are projections.

[85] Urbanization in the Pacific is driven mainly by Australia and New Zealand, where the rates range above 85 per cent.

Internal migration will continue to be the main factor behind urban growth. Important driving forces for rural-urban migration include: (a) lack of employment opportunities in rural areas; (b) natural disasters in rural areas; (c) desertification and the attraction of better job opportunities; and (d) greater access to infrastructure and services in cities. At the same time, the influx from rural areas coupled with population growth among urban dwellers will add to the pressures on urban labour markets – and also on urban infrastructure and social services. Urban areas typically have higher rates of unemployment, especially among young people, and this is likely to worsen with greater internal migration. Many rural-urban migrants are very likely to end up in the informal economy in vulnerable forms of work, mainly as construction workers, street traders, home-based workers in industrial putting-out systems, waste pickers, transport workers, and domestic workers. They will prove to be key economic agents, their work essential to the economies of cities and towns, but they will also likely subsist as urban working poor.

Informal employment will likely continue to be the main source of livelihoods in most cities, and the trend of geographical relocation of poverty from rural to urban areas[86] will probably continue.

Policies adopted by Asian cities and towns will shape future of decent work

City authorities, municipal officials, and urban planners often do not recognize, value, or support informal workers and informal enterprises as economic actors, and do not consult or take them into account when they develop economic, land allocation, or zoning plans. And when they do, the approach is often punitive rather than promotional or protective. Privatization of public land, other public resources and public services, slum clearance, urban renewal, and urban infrastructure schemes often destroy informal livelihoods and business opportunities without providing alternatives.[87] A fundamental rethinking and reshaping of urban priorities, plans, and regulations is needed, one that acknowledges and supports informal workers as key economic agents, not only to tackle the problems of the working poor, but to also promote inclusive urban development and facilitate transitions from the informal to formal economy.

Policies must also ensure that urbanization policies are gender-sensitive. Growing numbers of women are migrating on their own to cities within their own countries and in other countries. But they often: (a) lack access to the kinds of information they need on labour market opportunities and economic and social services and infrastructure; (b) have few opportunities for establishing networks of information and social support; (c) are vulnerable to human trafficking; and (d) continue to face gender discrimination. In consequence, they often end up in the lowest-rung informal economy jobs in poor working conditions.

[86] ADB: *Urban poverty in Asia* (Manila, 2014), p. 1.

[87] Lim: *Extending livelihood opportunities*, op. cit., p. 75–76.

Attention still needed to promoting decent work in rural economies

It is estimated that close to half the total regional population (and two-thirds of South Asia's population) will still be living in rural areas in 2020. Policies to promote decent rural employment will thus remain a priority concern:

> The potential of rural areas to drive the economy, create productive jobs, improve food security, address environmental and climate change concerns, act as a buffer during crises and generally to promote sustainable and balanced growth is now widely recognized. The ILO can make an important contribution to addressing the persistent decent work deficits in rural areas that impede the realization of that potential.[88]

The ILO Programme and Budget 2016–17 identifies as a major outcome the promotion of "decent work for sustainable rural livelihoods with a focus on protecting and empowering vulnerable people".[89]

The future of decent work in the rural economy will be affected by whether policies and programmes take into account the following issues:

- **The significance of informality in the rural economy.** The share of the informal economy is larger in rural than in urban areas and in agricultural than non-agricultural activities. Problems of the informal economy tend to be exacerbated in rural areas due to weak socio-economic infrastructure, remoteness from national institutions and basic services, limited income opportunities, and poor legal protection – all of these factors leaving rural economies more vulnerable to shocks and risks. Integrated and coherent policies to promote decent rural employment while addressing rural informality are needed to ensure more effective and more sustained impacts.
- **The role of agriculture as the mainstay of rural livelihoods, especially in South Asia.** Policies and programmes to enhance agricultural productivity and improve agricultural livelihoods will likely be ineffective if they focus only on the owners-employers of large commercial farms and plantations while ignoring the smallholders who do not own or control the farms they operate, wage workers hired on an informal basis, or the contributing family workers who are the poorest and most vulnerable.
- **The extent and severity of poverty and vulnerability, which tend to be greater in rural than urban areas.** Informality and poverty reduce the capacity of rural families to cope with various risks, including environmental, financial, and health-related dangers. "The last 60 years of development strategies have shown that growth does not reduce poverty unless associated with improved employment opportunities and conditions of employment and the elimination of informality, especially in rural areas."[90] Supporting the working poor in the rural informal economy is now widely recognized as a key pathway out of poverty and inequality.
- **The challenges of feeding a growing world population in the context of increasing environmental scarcities and climate change.** The food crisis poses a serious challenge to the achievement of SDG 2: to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture." Opportunities for decent rural employment can make important contributions to stabilizing food price volatility and promoting food security. Rural informal enterprises and workers

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[88] ILO: *Unleashing rural development through productive employment and decent work: Building on 40 years of ILO work in rural areas*, GB.310/ESP/1 (Geneva, 2011), p. iii.

[89] ILO: *Programme and budget for the biennium 2016–17* (Geneva, 2015), p. 22.

[90] ILO: *Addressing informality for rural development.* Rural Policy Briefs, Rural Employment through Decent Work, Employment Sector (Geneva, 2012) p. 1.

are key actors determining availability, access, utilization, and stability in the entire food system from production to consumption to waste management.

- **The significant gender inequalities in rural employment.** A higher proportion of women are employed in agriculture compared to men, especially in South Asia. But relatively fewer women are the de jure farmers or landowners, while relatively many are unpaid contributing family workers on family farms. Women continue to work in low-productivity, subsistence activities as the main producers of food while men manage most of the commercial crops. Women lag behind men in access to land, credit, and a broad range of technologies, information, advisory services and training. They often remain shut out of "social capital" such as farmers' organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, and community networks that can enhance productivity and growth. They rely more heavily than men on climate-dependent resources for their livelihoods, play a bigger role than men in natural resource management, and are responsible for the nutrition of their family. Yet programmes to promote green growth, conserve natural resources, or introduce new agricultural technologies often do not recognize the roles and responsibilities of rural women.

4.4 Rising inequality a priority policy challenge

Most people live in countries that are becoming more unequal. The latest available Gini Index estimates indicate several regional countries rank higher than 40, the threshold for "high inequality", in terms of income inequality.[91] The widening disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots" has clearly emerged as a priority policy challenge, one that preoccupies political leaders in the region and around the world. There has been growing acknowledgment that rising inequality not only undermines social justice objectives, but can also have adverse economic consequences.[92]

The ILO *World employment and social outlook trends* report highlighted worsening income inequalities in most parts of the world. Along with the fall in labour income share, personal income inequality has tended to worsen. The ILO report emphasized the fact that both market income inequality and disposable income inequality (after taxes and transfers) increased over the ADWD decade. Further increases in market income inequality will mean that the burden placed on tax and transfer systems will become larger.[93]

Another ILO report[94] finds the following:

- The distribution of wages and paid employment has been a key factor in recent inequality trends. This underscores the importance of labour market institutions and policies, including minimum wages and collective bargaining, which will affect income distribution.
- Wage gaps between men and women, and between nationals and migrants, remain significant and are only partly explained by differences in experience, education, occupation, and other labour market characteristics. This suggests that, to progress toward greater social justice and less inequalities, more effective anti-discrimination policies are needed, together with other policies that address the underlying causes of these wage gaps.

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[91] World Economic Forum: *The inclusive growth and development report 2015* (Geneva, 2015), table 2, pp. 23–26.

[92] For example, the World Economic Forum recently launched its inaugural *Inclusive growth and development report 2015–2016*, which examines what is needed to achieve both growth and equity.

[93] *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015* (Geneva, ILO, 2015), op. cit., p. 29.

[94] *Global wage report* (Geneva, ILO), op. cit.

- Lower-income groups rely disproportionately on social transfers or income from self-employment. In almost all countries, income sources are more diverse at the top and bottom of the household income distribution than in the middle, where households rely to a much larger extent on wages. This highlights the importance of ensuring coherence between wage policies and social protection, along with the creation of decent paid employment to reduce inequality.

Like the ILO and many other international institutions, the ADB has been focusing on the significance of rising inequality. The message of its *Asian Development Outlook 2012* was that "the social and political consequences of an Asia left to divide itself by wealth can no longer be ignored. It is time for governments in Asia to focus on policies that share the benefits of development fairly, and that maintain healthy growth rates".[95] The report noted that

> ... technological change, globalization, and market-oriented reform – the main drivers of Asia's rapid growth – are the basic forces behind rising inequality in the region. These forces tend to favour owners of capital over labour, high-skilled over low-skilled workers, and urban and coastal areas over rural and inland regions. The impacts of these forces have been compounded by various forms of unequal access to opportunity – to earn income from labour and to build human capital – caused by institutional weaknesses, market distortions, and social exclusion. Working together, these have led to a falling share of labour income in total national income, rising premiums on human capital, and growing spatial inequality. Yet these three forces should not be obstructed, because they are the engines of productivity and income growth. Policy-makers should confront rising inequality through interventions that equalize opportunity and reduce inequality in three areas: efficient fiscal measures that reduce inequality in human capital, policies that work toward more and high-quality jobs, and interventions that narrow spatial inequality.[96]

4.5 Onrushing wave of technology: Destroying or creating decent work?

The impact of technology is central to any discussion of the future of work:

> Evidence is mounting that rapid technological progress, which accounted for the long era of rapid productivity growth from the 19th century to the 1970s is back. The sort of advances that allow people to put in their pocket a computer that is not only more powerful than any in the world 20 years ago, but also has far better software and far greater access to useful data, as well as to other people and machines, have implications for all sorts of work.[97]

Previously, technological innovation delivered more long-run employment, but that is changing

The historical record has generally suggested that, over the long-term, technology created more jobs than it destroyed and pushed living standards to new levels.[98] But the continued likelihood of this outcome is being increasingly questioned in view of unprecedented advances in information and

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[95] Ibid., p. vi.

[96] Ibid., p. 37.

[97] *The Economist:* "The future of jobs: The onrushing wave", 18 Jan. 2014, http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21594264-previous-technological-innovation-has-always-delivered-more-long-run-employment-not-less [accessed 11 Oct. 2016].

[98] See, for example, I. Stewart et al.: *Technology and people: The great job-creating machine* (Deloitte, London, 2015), http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/finance/articles/technology-and-people.html [accessed 11 Oct. 2016]; and K. Allen: "Technology has created more jobs than it has destroyed, says 140 years of data", in The Guardian, 18 Aug. 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/aug/17/technology-created-more-jobs-than-destroyed-140-years-data-census [accessed 11 Oct. 2016].

communications technology (ICT), robotics, and other promising technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI). "For a long time the common understanding was that technology was destroying jobs but also creating new and better ones... Now the evidence is that technology is destroying jobs and indeed creating new and better ones but also fewer ones."[99]

Until recently, the jobs most vulnerable to machines were those involving routine, repetitive tasks. But thanks to the exponential rise in processing power and the ubiquity of digitized information ("big data"), computers are increasingly able to perform complicated tasks more cheaply and effectively than people can. Powerful new technologies are increasingly adopted not only in manufacturing, clerical, and retail work, but in professions such as law, education, financial services, and medicine. Even in a labour-rich country like China, as wages have risen, managers in manufacturing are already looking for opportunities to replace employees with robots. Even services have become more vulnerable; computers can already detect/diagnose fraud or illness more accurately and rapidly than any number of accountants and doctors. Text-mining programmes can displace professional jobs in legal services. Meanwhile 3D printing has begun to change industrial production processes. New technologies have further facilitated the fragmentation of the production process, enabling redefinition of the geographical location and boundaries of the enterprise, giving rise to increasingly complex global value chains and also global sourcing of information technology-enabled services.

Labour market disruptions and dislocations to come, important implications for job quality, skills, and inequality

The jury is still out on whether, in the longer-term, technological innovation will deliver more or less total employment, and where and what types of jobs will be available. But several likely impacts and challenges are worth noting:

- A new wave of technological progress and a startling progression of inventions will bring major disruptions and dislocations to the job market. Policy-makers need to consider how they can help workers adjust to these shocks, and create a labour market where the benefits of increased productivity are broadly shared as new technologies create new employment opportunities and challenges.
- Technological innovations are likely to improve job quality. Technology directly substitutes for human muscle power, so that there has been a decline in hard, dangerous, and dull jobs. While jobs have been lost, it has been argued that many of those were not generally desirable jobs. A clear decline has become apparent in the size of the manual agricultural workforce, while agricultural productivity has risen. Other examples include machines that can cut fabric in garment production and sensors that detect unsafe chemicals in production plants, thus freeing workers from dull, dangerous jobs. The challenge, however, is to ensure that the people whose jobs have been lost are given opportunities to upskill into more productive and safer occupations.
- Skills and training will be an increasingly key determinant of decent work opportunities. The job market is likely to bifurcate into a relatively small group of workers having skills that complement machine intelligence, on the one hand, and those who lack this asset on the other.

> Rapid and accelerating digitization is likely to bring economic rather than environmental disruption, stemming from the fact that as computers get more powerful, companies have less need for some kinds of workers. Technological progress is going to leave behind some people,

[99] D. Rotman: "Who will own the robots?" in *MIT Technology Review* (16 June 2015), https://www.technologyreview.com/s/538401/who-will-own-the-robots/ [accessed 11 Oct. 2016]. See also, Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee: *The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies* (New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).

> perhaps even a lot of people, as it races ahead…. There's never been a better time to be a worker with special skills or the right education, because these people can use technology to create and capture value. However, there's never been a worse time to be a worker with only 'ordinary' skills and abilities to offer, because computers, robots, and other digital technologies are acquiring these skills and abilities at an extraordinary rate.[100]

- Increased job polarization will lead to increased income inequality. Many of the jobs most at risk are found lower down the ladder (logistics, haulage), whereas the skills least vulnerable to automation (creativity, managerial expertise) tend to be found higher up, so median wages are likely to remain stagnant for some time, and income gaps are likely to widen.[101] "Society might find itself sorely tested if, as seems possible, growth and innovation deliver handsome gains to the skilled, while the rest cling to dwindling employment opportunities at stagnant wages."[102]

In sum, the challenge will be to ensure that "the benefits of new technologies based on extraordinarily advanced knowledge and capacities are widely diffused, both within and between nations, rather than becoming the basis of even greater divisions, which could dangerously deepen already existing conditions of advantage and disadvantage."[103]

There will be winners and losers in the region

These challenges carry with them a variety of implications for outcomes both within and between the countries of Asia and the Pacific. Within the various countries, shifts in labour markets induced by technological innovation are likely to aggravate inequalities across groups with different levels of skills and capacity to access and use ICT. Those with skills made redundant by technology and who are unable to make the necessary adjustments will face difficulties. Those equipped with skills complementing machine intelligence or skills required in a knowledge economy will survive and do well. Entrepreneurs able to seize the opportunities presented by new technologies stand to capture huge gains. Those able to create or invest in blockbuster ideas, bring a new product to market, and launch a start-up may earn unprecedented returns.[104]

The digital divide very much remains a reality, particularly in low-income countries, where many of the poor and marginalized remain unable to access the benefits of ICT. Figure 28 displays disparities in internet access and use. The low level of internet access and use in several countries in the region obviously has implications for the creation of services, products, applications, and employment gravitating around ICT, as well as for e-commerce and e-government. One pertinent question is whether ICT opportunities are inclusive by nature, or whether they are instead likely to increase the distance between the haves and the have-nots.

The digital divide affects comparative advantages both among national groups and between countries. ICT access and usage are key enablers of a country's overall technological readiness, and this in turn is an important determinant of its global competitiveness. Those countries that ranked high in the Global Competitiveness Index (table 2 above) are also those that ranked high on the technological

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[100] Brynjolfsson and McAfee, op. cit., p. 11.

[101] *The Economist:* "Technology and jobs: Coming to an office near you", 18 Jan. 2014, http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21594298-effect-todays-technology-tomorrows-jobs-will-be-immenseand-no-country-ready [accessed 11 Oct. 2016].

[102] *The Economist* (2014), op. cit.

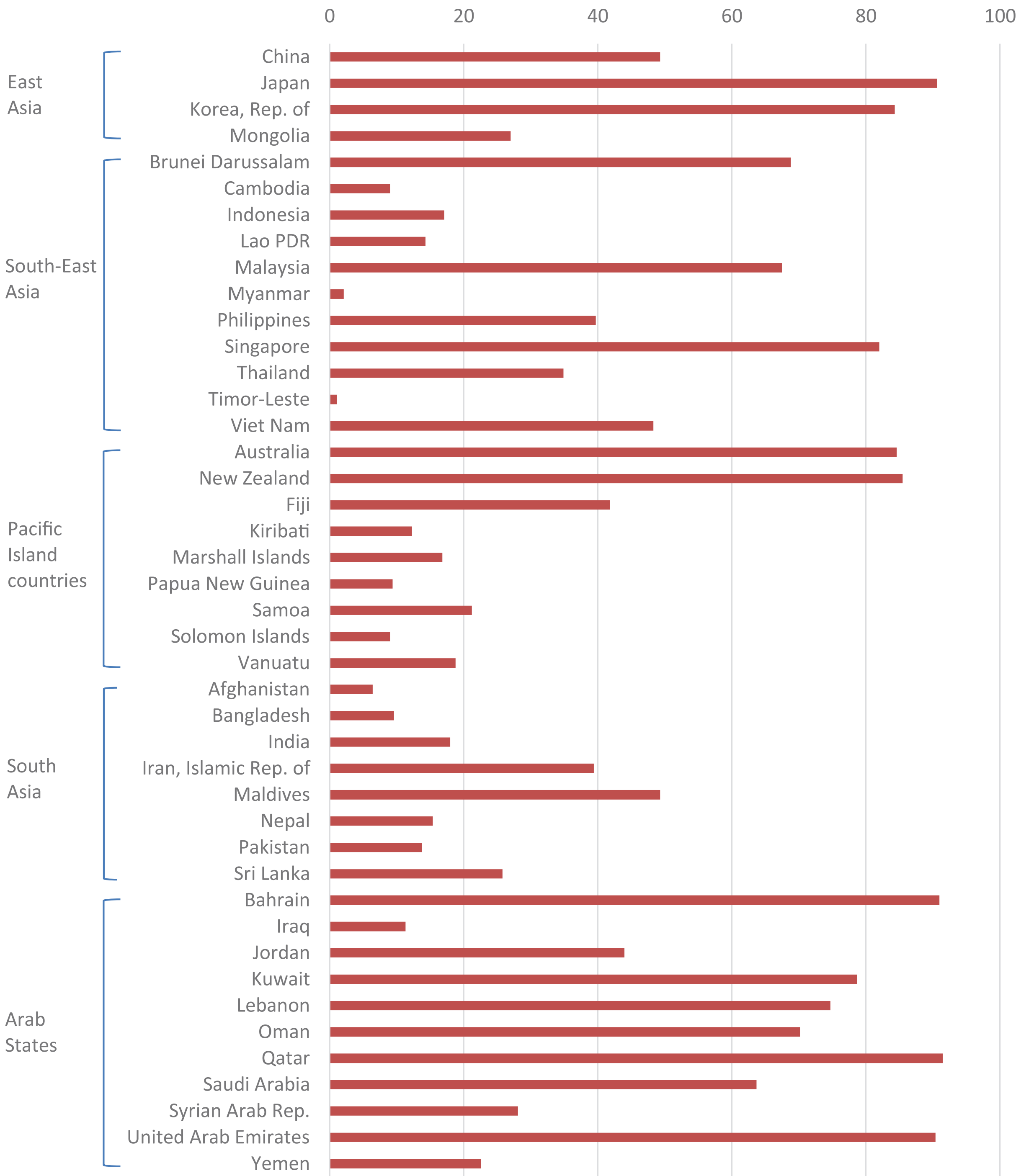
[103] ILO: *The future of work centenary initiative*, Report of the Director-General, 104th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 2015), p. 12.

[104] *MIT Review* (11 Oct. 2016), op. cit.

readiness pillar (which measures the capacity of a country to fully leverage ICT in daily activities and production processes for increased efficiency and competitiveness) and on the technological innovation pillar (which measures a country's ability to design and develop cutting-edge products and processes to maintain a competitive edge). For example, Singapore, which ranked second in global competitiveness, ranked fifth in technological readiness with a score of 6.20, while Bangladesh, which ranked 105th in global competitiveness, ranked 127th in technological readiness with a score of 2.62. In terms of technological innovation, Singapore ranked ninth, while Bangladesh ranked 127th.[105] Those Asian countries that have been able to access foreign technology and build their own innovative capacity have also been able to successfully integrate themselves into global value chains.

[105] *Global competitiveness report*, op. cit., tables 4 and 5.

Figure 28. Internet users (per 100 people) in selected countries, 2014



Source: International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report and database, and World Bank estimates.

4.6 Trade, investment, and global value chains: Can the benefits be more widely shared and sustained?

The Asia-Pacific region stands out for: (a) its significant and relatively sustained achievements in leveraging trade and investment flows; and (b) successfully integrating into global and regional value chains. Some key features and trends and the challenges they pose are summarized below.[106]

Slowing growth in trade and investment poses difficulties for inclusive and sustainable development

The region accounts for some 40 per cent of global exports and imports. Since the financial crisis of 2008, however, regional growth in both trade and investment has slowed significantly:

> As the global economy continues to face headwinds posed by one challenge after another, trade and investment flows have remained volatile and have yet to return to the pre-crisis pattern of sustained expansion. The period 2014–15 has, thus far, exhibited a continued lacklustre performance. Volumes of merchandise trade, foreign direct investment (FDI) and, to a certain extent, commercial services were all essentially flat. Looking forward, considerable uncertainty remains as the global economy undergoes a series of adjustments, not least from slackening growth in China. A failure to return to patterns of strong trade and investment growth is of particular concern for the region's developing economies – especially those in the low-income category. Following trade-led strategies for inclusive and sustainable development will be particularly difficult in a weakened external environment.[107]

Policy challenges for countries to enter and prosper from global value chains

Successful integration into global and regional value chains has made Asia-Pacific the largest single trading region in the world and the biggest recipient of global inward FDI, allowing this region to accrue the dividends of faster output, income, and employment growth as a result. Global value chain (GVC) production has boosted the economies of those involved. Economies that have found their niche within global production networks have created more jobs. Higher industrial productivity arising from specialization in cross-border production enhances employment.[108] While being part of a GVC exposes an economy to potential contagion from adverse shocks that hit others in the chain, overall the benefits seem to outweigh the costs.

The global economic crisis did amplify the vulnerability and volatility of economies deeply integrated into GVCs. But these economies recovered faster and, as one result, the core demand for final goods has been shifting toward Asia-Pacific rather than outside the region. The region has significantly increased its stake in final imports, from 19 per cent in 2007 to 26 per cent of the global total in 2013. The shift in global demand appears to be triggering a restructuring of GVC intermediate trade. For example, the share of intermediate electronics in the region's total intermediate exports dropped

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[106] This section is taken mainly from UN ESCAP: *Asia-Pacific trade and investment report 2015: Supporting participation in value chains* (Bangkok, 2015); and ADB: *Asian development outlook 2014 update Asia: Asia in global value chains* (Manila, 2014).

[107] Ibid. (ADB), p. 6.

[108] Ibid., p. 9.

from 73 per cent in 2006 to 43 per cent in 2013. The import share dropped even more, from 74 to 38 per cent, showing that assembling countries such as China are already diversifying their production toward upstream, higher value-added activities. The implication is that other economies in the region will need to adjust and upgrade their positions in accordance with shifting GVCs.

To date, GVC participation has been highly skewed, with 90 per cent of GVC participation in the region concentrated in just ten countries: Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand (and Turkey).[109] The high and upper middle income countries of East and South-East Asia have been the main participants in GVCs, while the low-income countries are essentially being left out – except for Bangladesh and Cambodia, which are involved mainly in low-wage/unskilled labour production and export of apparel and footwear. Few countries in South Asia, the Pacific, or the Arab States have found their GVC niche. The high cost of doing business, regulatory hurdles, policy deficiencies, and high transport cost due to remote locations are among the main factors posing challenges for these countries in linking with GVCs.

The challenge for the region now is to build upon its reputation as the world's workshop to boost incomes and employment: (a) to support the entry into value chains of the smaller and low-income countries, which are currently being left out; and (b) to assist those already participating in improving competitiveness, upgrading and moving away from "low-skill, low-cost" to high value-added production.

The ability of countries to enter into and prosper from GVCs depend on the following policy variables:

> [T]he liberalization of trade policies [which] allows more efficient sourcing of inputs, for both goods and services, and is a precondition for GVC participation. Likewise, country openness to FDI, which is dependent on the investment climate and the ability of business to acquire and diffuse technologies, is critical. There are other paths, beyond FDI, which facilitate the transfer of technology necessary for both participation in GVCs and upgrading, including the licensing and direct purchase of technology. This reflects the importance of import and intellectual property regimes.[110]

Especially for those economies seeking to upgrade GVC participation to higher value-added activities, "a smooth transition from labour-intensive to skills-intensive segments of GVC needs an enabling policy to facilitate the adjustment process through a well-designed labour market and social policies as well as through investment in education and skills."[111]

Regional integration and cooperation initiatives face challenges for shared prosperity and decent jobs

Various current regional integration initiatives and regional cooperation programmes have major implications for trade, investment, and GVCs. Recent moves include the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC),[112] which will establish a single common market and production base with freer flow of goods, services, investment capital, and skilled labour in the ASEAN region. The Trans-Pacific Partnership

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[109] The UN ESCAP regional grouping of countries is different from that of the ILO. The latter grouping is used in this report.

[110] *Asia-Pacific trade and investment report 2015*, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

[111] Ibid., p. 127.

[112] ILO and ADB: *ASEAN Community 2015: Managing integration for better jobs and shared prosperity* (Bangkok, 2014), op. cit.

Agreement (TPP), meanwhile, will establish a "mega-region" of 12 member countries[113] with the aim of enhancing trade and investment; promoting innovation, economic growth, and development; and supporting the creation and retention of jobs. The key challenge will be to ensure that development is inclusive, and that prosperity is fairly and equitably shared while the rights of workers are protected.

[113] Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Viet Nam.

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Statistical annex

Table A1. GDP growth rate, 2006, 2011, and 2015

	GDP growth rate (%)			Average annual growth rate (%)		
	2006	2011	2015	2006–11	2011–15	2011–15
World	5.5	4.2	3.1	3.7	3.3	3.5
High income	3.8	2.4	1.6	1.3	1.6	1.5
Middle and low income	8.3	6.4	4.7	6.8	5.2	6.1
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	7.7	6.2	5.0	6.5	5.3	5.9
High income	4.2	3.3	2.0	2.6	2.3	2.5
Middle and low income	9.5	7.4	6.1	8.2	6.3	7.4
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	7.7	6.1	5.3	6.6	5.4	6.0
High income	3.2	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.8
Middle and low income	9.7	7.5	6.3	8.3	6.4	7.5
East Asia	8.4	6.7	5.2	7.1	5.6	6.4
South-East Asia	6.0	4.9	4.6	5.2	5.1	5.2
Pacific Island countries	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.7
South Asia	8.1	5.9	6.1	6.7	5.4	6.1
Arab States	7.4	7.8	2.2	5.4	3.8	4.7

Source: IMF: *World Economic Outlook Database* (April 2016).

Table A2. GDP per capita, 2006, 2011, and 2015 (2011 PPP)

	GDP per capita			Growth rate (%)		
	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
World	16 619.7	18 227.0	19 655.6	3.7	2.5	1.8
High income	43 854.3	44 708.5	46 593.2	2.8	1.5	1.1
Middle and low income	8 558.5	10 738.5	12 330.2	6.1	4.4	3.1
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	10 372.3	12 978.6	15 115.7	5.6	4.6	3.7
High income	43 561.7	45 793.3	48 418.1	2.6	2.0	1.2
Middle and low income	7 493.9	10 167.1	12 309.4	7.4	5.8	4.7
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	9 543.8	12 057.3	14 174.3	5.8	4.6	4.1
High income	39 378.8	41 172.5	43 394.1	2.4	1.0	1.0
Middle and low income	7 218.5	9 886.2	12 063.6	7.6	6.0	5.1
East Asia	12 055.3	16 008.6	19 526.9	6.8	5.8	4.8
South-East Asia	9 993.5	11 714.4	13 590.6	3.8	2.9	3.1
Pacific Island countries	38 909.7	39 980.2	4 1771.3	1.0	0.8	0.6
South Asia	5 806.8	7 223.2	8 239.0	5.8	3.9	4.5
Arab States	40 934.9	42 757.1	43 943.6	2.3	3.9	-0.7

Source: ILO calculations based on World Bank: *World Development Indicators.*

Table A3. The working poor (% of total employment), 2006, 2011, 2015, and 2030 (2011 PPP)

	Employed persons living on less than $1.90 PPP per day '000				As % of total employment			
	2006	2011	2015	2030	2006	2011	2015	2030
World	518 488.0	393 076.3	328 867.1	239 479.9	21.4	15.2	12.0	7.4
High income	2 740.7	2 887.0	3 186.8	2 860.8	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.5
Middle and low income	515 747.3	390 189.3	325 680.3	236 619.1	22.9	16.2	12.8	7.7
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	371 772.3	251 118.7	191 525.3	121 782.3	21.9	14.1	10.3	5.8
High income	565.4	694.9	832.2	602.5	1.0	1.1	1.2	0.8
Middle and low income	371 206.9	250 423.9	190 693.1	121 179.8	22.6	14.6	10.6	5.9
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	370 174.9	249 358.9	189 316.0	120 193.4	22.2	14.3	10.4	5.9
High income	318.9	336.6	342.4	325.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7
Middle and low income	369 856.0	249 022.3	188 973.6	119 867.5	22.8	14.7	10.7	6.0
East Asia	93 480.4	53 733.6	40 316.7	22 270.1	11.8	6.6	4.9	2.8
South-East Asia	64 641.0	35 029.0	25 972.6	16 008.4	24.4	11.8	8.3	4.3
Pacific Island countries	1 496.8	899.6	524.7	250.9	48.5	26.4	14.0	4.7
South Asia	210 556.7	159 696.7	122 502.0	81 664.0	34.8	25.4	18.3	9.5
Arab States	1 597.4	1 759.9	2 209.3	1 588.8	4.9	4.2	4.7	2.5

Source: ILO calculations based on October 2015 update of the model in S. Kapsos and E. Bourmpoula: *Employment and economic class in the developing world*, ILO Research Paper No. 6 (ILO, 2013), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_216451.pdf [accessed 18 Sep. 2016].

Table A4. The employed developing middle class and upper middle class (% of total employment), 2006, 2011, 2015, and 2030 (2011 PPP)

	Employed persons living on $5-$13 PPP per person per day				Employed persons living on more than $13 PPP per person per day			
	2006	2011	2015	2030	2006	2011	2015	2030
World	27.1	33.4	36.5	37.3	9.4	12.8	16.0	25.4
High income	44.1	36.1	35.8	34.8	46.3	55.3	55.3	56.8
Middle and low income	25.8	33.2	36.5	37.4	6.7	9.7	13.2	23.5
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	25.6	35.4	40.2	42.8	4.7	7.3	11.5	24.9
High income	59.3	55.8	54.6	50.5	33.4	36.6	37.6	42.8
Middle and low income	24.5	34.7	39.7	42.6	3.7	6.3	10.5	24.3
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	25.6	35.6	40.6	43.4	4.1	6.7	10.8	24.5
High income	71.3	71.8	72.4	74.4	22.6	22.2	21.7	20.3
Middle and low income	24.5	34.7	39.9	42.7	3.7	6.3	10.5	24.6
East Asia	37.1	53.0	60.7	51.6	4.6	7.5	15.1	39.7
South-East Asia	22.8	33.0	35.3	39.5	8.9	12.5	16.7	38.9
Pacific Island countries	15.3	21.1	30.2	50.6	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.8
South Asia	11.9	14.4	18.4	37.4	1.5	2.8	2.8	4.1
Arab States	27.4	27.6	24.6	25.0	30.7	35.4	36.4	38.8

Source: ILO calculations based on October 2015 update of the model in Kapsos and Bourmpoula (2013), op. cit., and *Trends econometric models* (October 2015), op. cit.

Table A5. Inequality: Gini Index by country and latest year available

Countries and sub-regions	Gini index				Percentage share of total income	
	Initial year	Final year	1990s	2000s	Bottom 40%	Top 10%
East Asia:						
China	1990	2010	32.4	42.1	14.4	30.0
Japan	...	2008	...	32.1	20.3	24.8
Mongolia	1995	2012	33.2	33.8	19.7	26.2
South-East Asia:						
Cambodia	1994	2012	38.2	30.8	21.8	25.2
Indonesia	1990	2009	29.2	33.9	18.9	28.2
Lao PDR	1992	2012	34.3	37.9	18.4	30.8
Malaysia	1992	2009	47.7	46.3	13.2	34.6
Philippines	1991	2012	43.8	43.0	15.4	33.4
Thailand	1990	2012	45.3	39.3	17.1	30.4
Timor-Leste	2001	2007	37.6	31.6	21.7	26.7
Viet Nam	1992	2012	35.7	38.7	17.3	30.1
Pacific Island countries:						
Australia	1995	2010	33.7	34.9	18.9	26.5
Fiji	2002	2008	39.6	42.8	16.2	34.7
Kiribati	...	2006	...	37.6	17.6	28.5
Papua New Guinea	1996	2009	55.4	43.9	14.2	32.7
Samoa	...	2008	...	42.7	16.1	34.7
Solomon Islands	...	2005	...	46.2	14.1	35.8
Vanuatu	...	2005	...	35.9	18	28.9
South Asia:						
Bangladesh	1991	2010	27.6	32	21.4	26.8
India	1993	2009	30.8	33.9	20.0	30.0
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	1990	2013	43.6	37.4	17.9	29.1
Maldives	2004	2009	37.4	36.8	17.7	27.6
Nepal	1995	2010	35.2	32.8	20.4	26.3
Pakistan	1990	2010	33.3	29.6	22.8	25.6
Sri Lanka	1990	2012	32.5	38.6	18.3	31.8
Arab States:						
Iraq	...	2012	...	29.5	17.9	29.1
Jordan	1992	2010	43.4	33.7	20.3	27.5
Syrian Arab Rep.	...	2004	...	35.8	19.3	28.7
Yemen	...	2005	...	35.9	19.6	30.0

Source: World Bank Development Research Group, PovcalNet database.

Table A6. Gender gap by sub-index

Sub-regions and countries	Gender gap 2015			
	Economic participation and opportunity	Educational attainment	Health and survival	Political empowerment
East Asia				
Japan	0.611	0.988	0.979	0.103
Korea, Rep. of	0.567	0.965	0.973	0.107
China	0.657	0.988	0.919	0.162
Mongolia	0.783	0.992	0.980	0.084
South-East Asia				
Brunei Darussalam	0.780	0.993	0.966	0.000
Singapore	0.814	0.945	0.967	0.119
Cambodia	0.681	0.891	0.980	0.098
Indonesia	0.593	0.986	0.976	0.168
Lao PDR	0.811	0.935	0.972	0.132
Malaysia	0.634	0.967	0.969	0.051
Philippines	0.799	1.000	0.980	0.382
Thailand	0.794	0.994	0.980	0.057
Viet Nam	0.731	0.941	0.950	0.124
Pacific Island countries				
Australia	0.766	1.000	0.974	0.193
New Zealand	0.768	1.000	0.970	0.390
Fiji	0.512	0.992	0.980	0.097
South Asia				
Bangladesh	0.462	0.948	0.971	0.433
India	0.383	0.896	0.942	0.433
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	0.357	0.954	0.971	0.037
Maldives	0.589	0.998	0.966	0.055
Nepal	0.575	0.917	0.972	0.169
Pakistan	0.330	0.813	0.967	0.127
Sri Lanka	0.577	0.995	0.980	0.193
Arab States				
Bahrain	0.597	0.981	0.961	0.037
Kuwait	0.615	0.991	0.957	0.022
Oman	0.441	0.984	0.971	0.021
Qatar	0.632	0.977	0.957	0.013
Saudi Arabia	0.387	0.988	0.966	0.077
United Arab Emirates	0.519	0.987	0.961	0.115
Jordan	0.350	0.983	0.966	0.073
Lebanon	0.439	0.963	0.970	0.021
Syrian Arab Rep.	0.279	0.965	0.970	0.059
Yemen	0.225	0.720	0.967	0.026

Source: World Economic Forum: *Global gender gap report 2015* (Geneva, WEF).

Table A7. Average annual growth rate of employment and GDP and employment elasticity, 2006–11, 2011–15

	Employment growth (%)		GDP growth (%)		Employment elasticity (%)	
	2006–11	2011–15	2006–11	2011–15	2006–11	2011–15
World	1.1	1.3	3.7	3.3	0.30	0.39
High income	0.5	0.8	1.3	1.6	0.38	0.50
Middle and low income	1.3	1.4	6.8	5.2	0.19	0.27
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	0.9	1.1	6.5	5.3	0.14	0.21
High income	1.4	1.1	2.6	2.3	0.54	0.48
Middle and low income	0.9	1.1	8.2	6.3	0.11	0.17
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	0.8	1.0	6.6	5.4	0.12	0.19
High income	0.4	0.6	1.7	1.9	0.24	0.32
Middle and low income	0.9	1.1	8.3	6.4	0.11	0.17
East Asia	0.4	0.4	7.1	5.6	0.06	0.07
South-East Asia	2.2	1.4	5.2	5.1	0.42	0.27
Pacific Island countries	1.9	1.3	2.6	2.8	0.73	0.46
South Asia	0.7	1.7	6.7	5.4	0.10	0.31
Arab States	5.1	3.0	5.4	3.8	0.94	0.79

Source: ILO calculations based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A8: Employment-to-population ratio by sex, 2006, 2011, and 2015

	Total			Male			Female		
Total	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
World	60.6	59.3	59.3	73.1	72.0	72.0	48.2	46.6	46.5
High income	56.9	55.9	55.9	65.7	63.9	64.4	48.6	48.3	48.9
Middle and low income	61.7	60.2	60.2	75.2	74.2	74.0	48.1	46.1	45.8
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	62.6	60.6	60.6	76.5	75.3	75.0	48.3	45.3	44.6
High income	58.1	58.0	58.0	70.3	70.0	70.3	45.6	45.5	46.0
Middle and low income	63.0	60.8	60.8	77.0	75.8	75.4	48.5	45.3	44.5
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	63.1	61.0	61.0	76.8	75.5	75.2	49.1	46.1	45.5
High income	58.4	57.7	57.7	69.3	67.8	67.4	48.1	48.2	49.0
Middle and low income	63.5	61.3	61.3	77.3	76.0	75.7	49.2	46.0	45.2
East Asia	68.2	66.3	66.3	74.8	73.1	73.1	61.4	59.3	59.2
South-East Asia	65.8	67.5	67.5	77.6	78.6	78.5	54.3	56.7	56.2
Pacific Island countries	62.9	62.5	62.5	69.6	68.5	66.9	56.3	56.7	56.2
South Asia	56.3	52.8	52.8	78.8	77.0	76.3	32.6	27.4	26.9
Arab States	44.2	46.0	46.0	68.2	70.2	70.6	15.2	15.6	16.8

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A9: Labour Force Participation Rates by sex, 2006, 2011, and 2015

	Total			Male			Female		
Total	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
World	64.4	63.0	62.9	77.4	76.3	76.1	51.5	49.8	49.6
High income	60.8	60.6	60.5	70.0	69.2	68.8	52.1	52.4	52.5
Middle and low income	65.5	63.7	63.5	79.5	78.3	78.1	51.3	49.0	48.8
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	65.7	63.4	62.9	80.3	78.8	78.5	50.7	47.4	46.7
High income	60.6	60.6	60.8	73.4	73.1	73.0	47.6	47.7	48.1
Middle and low income	66.2	63.6	63.1	80.9	79.3	79.0	50.9	47.4	46.6
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	66.2	63.8	63.3	80.5	78.9	78.6	51.5	48.2	47.5
High income	60.9	60.3	60.2	72.4	70.9	70.2	49.9	50.2	50.8
Middle and low income	66.6	64.0	63.5	81.1	79.5	79.2	51.6	48.0	47.2
East Asia	71.1	69.3	69.3	78.3	76.8	76.9	63.6	61.6	61.6
South-East Asia	70.2	70.7	70.2	82.4	82.2	81.9	58.3	59.4	58.8
Pacific Island countries	66.1	66.3	65.6	73.0	72.4	71.1	59.4	60.3	60.1
South Asia	59.1	55.1	54.5	82.4	80.1	79.4	34.5	28.9	28.3
Arab States	49.2	51.3	52.1	74.3	75.8	76.6	18.9	20.4	21.1

Source: ILO calculations based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A10: Total Unemployment '000s and as % of labour force, 2006, 2011, and 2015

	Total unemployment '000			As % of labour force (unemployment rate)		
	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
			Total male and female			
World	179 667	193 466	196 672	5.9	6.0	5.8
High income	42 255	53 362	46 885	6.4	7.8	6.7
Middle and low income	137 412	140 103	149 788	5.7	5.5	5.5
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	87 005	85 773	89 938	4.7	4.4	4.5
High income	5 635	6 299	5 954	4.1	4.3	3.9
Middle and low income	81 370	79 474	83 984	4.8	4.5	4.5
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	83 276	80 969	84 585	4.6	4.3	4.3
High income	4 881	5 254	4 765	4.1	4.3	3.8
Middle and low income	78 395	75 715	79 820	4.6	4.3	4.3
East Asia	35 048	38 774	40 914	4.0	4.3	4.5
South-East Asia	17 508	13 648	13 655	6.2	4.4	4.2
Pacific Island countries	812	1 016	1 187	4.9	5.5	6.1
South Asia	29 907	27 531	28 828	4.7	4.2	4.1
Arab States	3 730	4 804	5 354	10.2	10.3	10.2

	Total unemployment '000			As % of labour force (unemployment rate)		
	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
			Male			
World	101 425	110 843	112 753	5.5	5.6	5.5
High income	22 542	29 549	25 531	6.1	7.7	6.5
Middle and low income	78 884	81 294	87 222	5.4	5.1	5.2
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	54 072	54 203	57 147	4.7	4.4	4.5
High income	3 447	3 777	3 438	4.2	4.2	3.7
Middle and low income	50 624	50 427	53 709	4.8	4.5	4.5
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	51 588	51 357	53 743	4.6	4.4	4.3
High income	2 960	3 171	2 785	4.2	4.5	3.9
Middle and low income	48 628	48 186	50 958	4.6	4.3	4.4
East Asia	21 695	24 250	25 220	4.4	4.8	4.9
South-East Asia	9 474	7 789	7 794	5.8	4.4	4.1
Pacific Island countries	426	528	624	4.7	5.3	5.9
South Asia	19 994	18 790	20 105	4.4	3.9	3.9
Arab States	2 484	2 846	3 404	8.2	7.4	7.9
			Female			
World	78 095	82 452	83 750	6.4	6.4	6.2
High income	19 714	23 813	21 353	6.8	7.8	6.9
Middle and low income	58 381	58 639	62 397	6.2	6.0	6.0
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	32 934	31 570	32 792	4.7	4.5	4.5
High income	2 188	2 522	2 516	4.1	4.5	4.3
Middle and low income	30 746	29 048	30 275	4.7	4.4	4.5
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	31 688	29 612	30 842	4.6	4.2	4.2
High income	1 921	2 083	1 980	3.8	4.0	3.6
Middle and low income	29 767	27 529	28 862	4.6	4.2	4.3
East Asia	13 354	14 524	15 695	3.5	3.7	3.9
South-East Asia	8 034	5 859	5 861	6.8	4.5	4.2
Pacific Island countries	387	488	563	5.1	5.8	6.2
South Asia	9 914	8 741	8 723	5.5	5.2	4.9
Arab States	1246	1 957	1 950	19.6	23.7	20.6

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A11. Youth unemployment rates, 2006, 2011, and 2015

	Total			Male			Female		
Total	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
World	12.6	12.9	13.0	12.2	12.5	12.5	13.3	13.5	13.9
High income	14.1	17.1	15.0	14.1	17.6	15.3	14.1	16.5	14.6
Middle and low income	12.3	12.2	12.7	11.9	11.8	12.1	13.1	13.0	13.7
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	11.3	11.3	12.0	11.5	11.5	11.8	11.1	11.1	12.2
High income	10.6	11.1	10.6	11.5	11.6	10.6	9.6	10.4	10.7
Middle and low income	11.3	11.3	12.0	11.5	11.5	11.9	11.2	11.1	12.3
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	11.0	10.9	11.5	11.2	11.1	11.4	10.8	10.6	11.7
High income	9.0	9.7	8.9	10.0	10.7	9.3	8.1	8.6	8.5
Middle and low income	11.1	11.0	11.6	11.2	11.2	11.5	10.9	10.7	11.8
East Asia	9.1	10.1	11.7	10.2	11.3	12.4	7.8	8.6	10.8
South-East Asia	17.5	13.3	12.9	16.9	13.1	12.4	18.6	13.6	13.5
Pacific Island countries	10.2	12.2	12.9	10.5	12.9	13.3	10.1	11.9	12.4
South Asia	10.3	10.7	10.7	10.1	10.3	10.3	11.0	11.9	11.6
Arab States	25.9	27.3	28.6	22.2	22.0	24.3	40.2	48.5	44.5

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A12. NEET rates by sex (latest available year)

	Share of youth not in education, employment, or training %			
	Year	Total	Male	Female
East Asia				
Japan	2013	3.9	2.7	5.2
Korea, Rep. of	2011	18.8	17.4	20.2
Mongolia*	2013	1.5	1.5	1.4
South-East Asia				
Cambodia	2012	7.8	4.8	10.2
Indonesia	2013	24.2	17.7	30.7
Malaysia	2013	1.2	0.9	1.4
Philippines	2012	24.8	17.7	32.1
Singapore	2010	18.9	13.5	25.3
Thailand	2014	13.8	9.2	18.5
Viet Nam	2013	9.3	7.1	11.8
Pacific Island countries				
Australia	2012	9.8	9.2	10.5
New Zealand	2013	11.9	8.9	15.0
South Asia				
Bangladesh	2013	40.3	14.4	61.8
India	2010	27.2	3.5	53.9
Maldives	2010	56.4	32.9	77.4
Nepal	2013	9.2	6.2	12.6
Sri Lanka	2010	22.9	15.6	29.5
Arab States				
Jordan	2012	24.6	15.2	34.8
Qatar	2009	9.4	2.9	30.7
Saudi Arabia	2013	18.4	7.7	29.4
Yemen	2010	48.1	24.8	73.0

Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2015, KILM10C.

Notes: (*) Data are presented as reported by the National Statistics Office (NSO) of Mongolia.

Table A13. Labour productivity level (in PPP) and growth rates (%), 2006, 2011, and 2015

	Labour productivity (PPP)			Growth rate of labour productivity (%)			
Country/region	2006	2011	2015	2011	2015	2006–11	2011–15
World	27 414	30 747	33 181	2.7	1.7	2.3	1.9
High income	77 035	79 982	82 492	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.8
Middle and low income	13 867	17 827	20 555	4.6	3.1	5.2	3.6
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	16 559	21 427	25 150	4.9	3.8	5.3	4.1
High income	75 015	78 938	82 848	2.1	1.3	1.0	1.2
Middle and low income	11 888	16 725	20 433	6.1	4.8	7.1	5.1
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	15 115	19 759	23 414	4.9	4.2	5.5	4.3
High income	67 392	71 330	74 866	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2
Middle and low income	11 367	16 136	19 866	6.3	5.1	7.3	5.3
East Asia	17 669	24 136	29 482	5.9	4.9	6.4	5.1
South-East Asia	15 175	17 336	20 205	2.1	3.2	2.7	3.9
Pacific Island countries	61 829	63 788	67 834	0.8	0.8	0.6	1.5
South Asia	10 315	13 683	15 778	4.8	4.3	5.8	3.6
Arab States	92 664	92 850	93 921	4.0	-0.9	0.0	0.3

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A14. Vulnerable employment as % share of total employment by sex, 2006, 2011, and 2015

	Total			Male			Female		
	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015	2006	2011	2015
World	51.0	47.7	46.0	49.3	47.1	45.9	53.5	48.7	46.3
High income	11.3	10.7	10.4	12.2	11.8	11.5	10.0	9.3	9.1
Middle and low income	61.8	57.5	55.2	58.5	55.5	53.8	67.0	60.7	57.4
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	62.4	56.9	54.1	59.6	55.8	53.9	67.1	58.7	54.5
High income	14.7	12.3	11.6	14.1	12.1	11.5	15.8	12.6	11.8
Middle and low income	66.2	60.6	57.6	63.1	59.3	57.3	71.3	62.7	58.1
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	63.2	57.8	55.0	60.6	57.1	55.2	67.4	59.1	54.8
High income	16.2	14.0	13.4	16.0	14.6	14.2	16.4	13.3	12.4
Middle and low income	66.6	60.9	57.9	63.6	59.8	57.7	71.5	62.8	58.3
East Asia	53.0	45.5	41.3	47.5	42.6	39.9	60.0	49.2	43.1
South-East Asia	61.2	57.9	55.7	57.3	54.5	52.7	66.7	62.6	59.8
Pacific Island countries	24.1	23.8	22.7	24.5	23.8	22.4	23.6	23.7	23.0
South Asia	79.2	75.6	73.5	76.5	73.5	71.6	86.0	81.8	79.1
Arab States	20.9	17.7	18.0	20.1	17.2	16.9	25.2	20.3	23.6

Source: ILO calculations based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A15. Informal employment and its components as percentage of non-agricultural employment (latest year available)

Country	Year	Informal employment		Employment in the informal economy		Informal employment outside the informal economy	
		000's	%	000's	%	000's	%
China	2010	36 030	32.6	24 220	21.9	13 850	12.5
India	2009/10	185 876	83.6	150 113	67.5	37 409	16.8
Indonesia	2009	3 157	72.5	2 621	60.2	532	12.2
Nepal	2008	2 655	86.4	1 600	52.0	1 054	34.3
Pakistan	2009/10	21 913	78.4	20 416	73.0	2 319	8.3
Philippines	2008	15 150	70.1	15 680	72.5	2 490	11.5
Sri Lanka	2009	3 184	62.1	2 588	50.5	597	11.6
Thailand	2010	9 642	42.3	..	..	..	..
Viet Nam	2009	17 172	68.2	10 948	43.5	6 303	25.0

Source: ILO and WIEGO: *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*, second edition (Geneva, 2013), table 2.1, pp. 10–11, for all countries except Nepal.

For Nepal, Central Bureau of Statistics, National Planning Commission: *Nepal labour force survey 2008* (Kathmandu, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009), Chapter 12.

For China, the data cover six cities; for Indonesia, the data cover only Banten and Yogyakarta.

Table A16. Public social protection expenditure and health expenditure 2000 and latest available year (% of GDP)

	Total public social protection expenditure and health expenditure (% of GDP)			
	Year	%	Year	%
East Asia				
China	2000	4.7	2010	6.8
Japan	2000	16.3	2011	23.6
Korea, Rep. of	2000	4.8	2011	9.1
Mongolia	2000	10.0	2012	8.9
South-East Asia				
Cambodia	2000	1.1	2013	2.2
Indonesia	1999	1.8	2010	2.6
Lao PDR	2000	1.7	2005	1.7
Malaysia	2000	2.4	2012	3.0
Myanmar	2000	0.5	2010	0.9
Philippines	2000	1.1	2012	1.6
Singapore	2000	1.6	2011	2.8
Thailand	2000	2.6	2011	7.2
Timor-Leste	2007	1.1	2013	4.2
Viet Nam	2000	4.1	2010	6.3
Pacific Island countries				
Kiribati	2000	8.5	2011	10.1
Australia	2000	17.3	2011	18.2
Fiji	2000	2.4	2010	3.4
Marshall Islands	2000	29.0	2010	24.0
New Zealand	2000	19.0	2010	21.2
Palau	2008	14.0	2010	15.8
Papua New Guinea	2000	3.8	2012	4.4
Samoa	2000	5.0	2012	5.0
Solomon Islands	2000	4.0	2010	8.3
Vanuatu	2000	5.1	2010	5.4
South Asia				
Afghanistan	2000	0.8	2011	5.6
Bangladesh	2000	1.1	2011	2.7
India	2000	1.6	2012	2.4
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	2001	8.9	2010	12.5
Maldives	2000	5.1	2012	6.2
Nepal	2000	1.7	2013	2.2
Pakistan	2000	0.3	2011	3.8
Sri Lanka	2000	4.4	2012	3.0
Arab States				
Bahrain	2000	3.3	2010	4.0
Jordan	2000	8.4	2011	12.1
Kuwait	2000	13.5	2011	11.4
Lebanon	2000	2.3	2011	1.1
Oman	2000	3.6	2011	3.8
Qatar	2004	2.7	2010	1.7
Saudi Arabia	2009	3.9	2011	3.6
Syrian Arab Rep.	2000	3.2	2010	1.9
United Arab Emirates	1999	2.1	2011	3.8
Yemen	2000	1.4	2011	5.9

Source: ILO: *World social protection report 2014/15* (Geneva, 2014), table B12.

Table A17. Children in employment, child labour and hazardous work by region, 5–17 age group, 2008 and 2012

Regions	Year	Children population	Children in employment*		Child labour		Hazardous work	
			'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Asia and the Pacific**	2008	853 895	174 460	20.4	113 607	13.3	48 164	5.6
	2012	835 334	129 358	15.5	77 723	9.3	33 860	4.1
Latin America and Caribbean	2008	141 043	18 851	13.4	14 125	10.0	9 436	6.7
	2012	142 693	17 843	12.5	12 505	8.8	9 638	6.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	2008	257 108	84 229	32.8	65 064	25.3	38 736	15.1
	2012	275 397	83 570	30.3	59 031	21.4	28 767	10.4

* Defined as those engaged in any economic activity for at least one hour during the reference period.

** Note that the country grouping does not correspond exactly to that used for the estimates in other tables in this report.

Source: ILO: *Marking progress against child labour: Global estimates and trends 2000–2012* (Geneva, ILO IPEC, 2013), table 3, p. 5.

Table A18: Net enrolment ratio in primary schooling (%)

Countries	Total		Girls		Boys	
	1990s	2013 or latest year	1990s	2013 or latest year	1990s	2013 or latest year
World	82.4	91.0	77.9	90.3	86.6	91.7
East Asia	97.1	96.8	95.4	97.0	98.8	96.7
Japan	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0
China	97.0	86.9	92.9	86.7	98.3	87.0
Korea, Rep. of	99.4	97.8	99.5	97.5	98.1	98.1
Mongolia	81.1	95.2	81.9	94.4	80.3	96.0
South-East Asia	93.1	94.4	91.5	94.4	94.7	94.4
Brunei	91.5	94.9	90.4	95.0	92.5	94.8
Cambodia	82.7	98.4	75.9	97.0	89.3	99.7
Indonesia	97.9	95.3	95.9	95.9	99.7	94.7
Lao PDR	64.0	97.3	53.9	96.5	62.2	98.1
Malaysia	96.2	97.0	96.3	95.0	96.0	98.5
Myanmar	..	..	..	..	..	..
Philippines	98.4	90.9	97.5	91.1	99.3	90.8
Singapore	..	..	..	..	..	..
Thailand	93.9	95.6	93.1	94.9	94.6	96.2
Timor-Leste	71.3	91.7	70.3	90.9	72.3	92.5
Viet Nam	97.9	98.1	..	..	..	..
Pacific Island countries	70.2*	88.4*	66.1*	85.9*	74.2*	90.9*
Australia	97.5	97.5	97.8	97.7	97.2	97.3
New Zealand	99.5	97.9	98.7	98.1	99.0	97.8
Cook Islands	90.8	97.8	89.2	97.4	92.3	98.3
Fiji	96.7	98.7	96.7	99.8	96.6	97.9
Kiribati	99.7	98.1	..	..	..	..
Marshall Islands	98.0	97.4	97.4	..	98.6	..
Palau	98.8	99.1	..	..	..	..
Papua New Guinea	..	86.8	..	83.3	..	90.0
Samoa	93.4	96.1	95.0	97.4	91.9	94.9
Solomon Islands	75.6	80.7	74.0	79.3	77.0	82.1
Tuvalu	..	..	..	..	..	..
Vanuatu	98.1	99.2	97.0	97.4	98.3	97.9
South Asia	77.9	98.4	66.8	99.8	88.3	97.1
Bangladesh	72.0	96.2	66.3	98.4	77.5	94.0
India	78.2	98.6	66.1	89.2	89.5	92.2
Maldives	96.2	93.1	96.3	93.5	96.2	92.8
Nepal	69.3	98.7	60.2	97.4	77.9	97.9
Pakistan	56.2	71.9	45.4	66.7	66.5	76.6
Sri Lanka	99.8	94.3	99.9	94.2	99.6	94.3
Arab States	73.9	88.2	67.7	86.8	80.0	89.4
Bahrain	99.4	..	97.9	..	96.1	..
Iraq	78.0	..	73.8	..	81.9	..
Jordan	97.7	..	98.7	..	96.8	..
Kuwait	48.0	98.7	46.5	99.3	49.5	98.1
Lebanon	84.2	88.9	83.0	85.9	85.3	91.9
Oman	67.1	97.3	64.8	97.3	69.4	97.3
Qatar	85.3	..	84.2	..	86.4	..
Saudi Arabia	..	96.5	..	95.0	..	97.9
Syrian Arab Rep.	95.0	70.9	90.8	70.1	99.0	71.6
United Arab Emirates	98.4	96.2	93.8	96.4	97.9	96.0
Yemen	56.3	85.3	41.3	78.2	70.6	92.1

Note: (*) excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.

Table A19: Average annual growth rates of GDP and labour productivity (%), 2006–20

Country/region	2006–11	2011–15	2006–15	2015–20
Average annual growth rate of GDP (%)				
World	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.8
High income	1.3	1.6	1.5	2.1
Middle and low income	6.8	5.2	6.1	5.5
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	6.5	5.3	5.9	5.4
High income	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.3
Middle and low Income	8.2	6.3	7.4	6.3
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	6.6	5.4	6.0	5.5
High income	1.7	1.9	1.8	2.0
Middle and Low Income	8.3	6.4	7.5	6.3
East Asia	7.1	5.6	6.4	5.0
South-East Asia	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.3
Pacific Island countries	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.9
South Asia	6.7	5.4	6.1	6.9
Arab States	5.4	3.8	4.7	3.8
Average annual growth rate of labour productivity (%)				
World	2.3	1.9	2.1	2.6
High income	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.8
Middle and low income	5.2	3.6	4.5	4.0
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	5.3	4.1	4.8	4.3
High income	1.0	1.2	1.1	2.0
Middle and low Income	7.1	5.1	6.2	5.2
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	5.5	4.3	5.0	4.5
High income	1.1	1.2	1.2	2.0
Middle and Low Income	7.3	5.3	6.4	5.3
East Asia	6.4	5.1	5.9	5.0
South-East Asia	2.7	3.9	3.2	3.8
Pacific Island countries	0.6	1.5	1.0	1.5
South Asia	5.8	3.6	4.8	4.9
Arab States	0.0	0.3	0.1	1.5

Source: ILO estimates based on IMF: *World Economic Outlook* (April 2016).

Table A20. Employment growth rate (%), total and youth by sex, 2015–20

	2015–20		
	Total	Male	Female
Average annual growth rate of total employment (%)			
World	1.1	1.2	1.0
High income	0.3	0.3	0.2
Middle and low income	1.4	1.4	1.3
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	1.0	1.1	0.8
High income	0.2	0.3	0.2
Middle and low Income	1.0	1.1	0.8
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	0.9	1.0	0.7
High income	0.0	0.0	0.1
Middle and Low Income	1.0	1.1	0.8
East Asia	0.0	0.1	-0.2
South-East Asia	1.4	1.4	1.4
Pacific Island countries	1.4	1.4	1.3
South Asia	1.9	1.8	2.2
Arab States	2.3	2.1	3.3
Average annual growth rate of youth employment (%)			
World	-0.3	-0.2	-0.4
High income	-1.3	-1.3	-1.2
Middle and low income	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	-1.2	-0.9	-1.8
High income	-0.9	-0.9	-0.9
Middle and low Income	-1.2	-0.9	-1.8
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	-1.3	-1.0	-1.8
High income	-1.0	-1.1	-0.9
Middle and Low Income	-1.3	-1.0	-1.8
East Asia	-4.5	-4.4	-4.5
South-East Asia	-0.2	-0.1	-0.4
Pacific Island countries	0.5	0.5	0.5
South Asia	0.6	0.5	1.0
Arab States	1.6	1.5	1.7

Source: ILO estimates based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A21. Employment gap: Jobs needed cumulative by sex (thousands), 2020, 2025, and 2030

	Male and female			Male			Female		
Country/region	2020	2025	2030	2020	2025	2030	2020	2025	2030
World	196 501	379 600	559 744	125 621	241 461	353 223	70 880	138 140	206 521
High income	7 061	10 449	14 174	4 096	5 804	7 689	2 965	4 644	6 485
Middle and low income	189 440	369 151	545 569	121 525	235 656	345 534	67 915	133 495	200 036
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	98 234	180 200	248 934	69 705	128 684	177 766	28 529	51 516	71 169
High income	2 110	2 615	2 001	1 398	1 789	1 537	712	826	465
Middle and low Income	96 124	177 584	246 933	68 306	126 894	176 229	27 818	50 690	70 704
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	91 812	167 228	229 419	64 806	118 826	163 045	27 006	48 402	66 374
High income	397	-348	-2 286	115	-377	-1 546	281	29	-741
Middle and Low Income	91 415	167 576	231 706	64 691	119 202	164 591	26 725	48 374	67 115
East Asia	295	-9 526	-25 290	3 448	237	-7 606	-3 153	-9 762	-17 683
South-East Asia	22 060	40 788	57 272	12 578	23 386	32 900	9 482	17 402	24 373
Pacific Island countries	1 301	2 613	3 984	701	1 397	2 120	600	1 216	1 864
South Asia	68 155	133 353	193 453	48 079	93 806	135 632	20 076	39 547	57 821
Arab States	6 422	12 972	19 515	4 898	9 858	14 721	1 524	3 114	4 795

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A22. Total unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate by sex, 2015 and 2020

			Male		Female	
Country/region	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020
Total unemployment rate % of labour force						
World	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.3	6.2	6.2
High income	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.1	6.9	6.7
Middle and low income	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.1	6.0	6.1
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4
High income	3.9	4.1	3.7	3.9	4.3	4.4
Middle and low Income	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.4
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
High income	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.6	3.8
Middle and Low Income	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2
East Asia	4.5	4.6	4.9	5.1	3.9	3.9
South-East Asia	4.2	3.9	4.1	3.7	4.2	4.0
Pacific Island countries	6.1	5.8	5.9	5.6	6.2	6.1
South Asia	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.9	4.7
Arab States	10.2	10.3	7.9	8.1	20.6	19.7
Youth unemployment rate % of labour force						
World	13.0	13.0	12.5	12.4	13.9	14.0
High income	15.0	15.5	15.3	15.7	14.6	15.2
Middle and low income	12.7	12.7	12.1	12.0	13.7	13.8
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	12.0	12.0	11.8	11.9	12.2	12.3
High income	10.6	11.4	10.6	11.5	10.7	11.1
Middle and low Income	12.0	12.1	11.9	11.9	12.3	12.4
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	11.5	11.5	11.4	11.4	11.7	11.7
High income	8.9	9.5	9.3	10.1	8.5	8.9
Middle and Low Income	11.6	11.6	11.5	11.4	11.8	11.8
East Asia	11.7	12.4	12.4	13.5	10.8	11.0
South-East Asia	12.9	13.0	12.4	12.5	13.5	13.7
Pacific Island countries	12.9	12.6	13.3	12.8	12.4	12.3
South Asia	10.7	10.2	10.3	9.9	11.6	11.1
Arab States	28.6	28.2	24.3	24.0	44.5	43.7

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A23: Labour force participation rates by sex, 2015 and 2020

	Male and female		Male		Female	
Country/region	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020
World	62.9	62.5	76.1	75.9	49.6	49.1
High income	60.5	59.8	68.8	68.0	52.5	51.9
Middle and low income	63.5	63.2	78.1	77.9	48.8	48.3
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	62.9	62.3	78.5	78.2	46.7	45.8
High income	60.8	60.2	73.0	72.3	48.1	47.4
Middle and low Income	63.1	62.4	79.0	78.6	46.6	45.7
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	63.3	62.6	78.6	78.2	47.5	46.6
High income	60.2	59.7	70.2	69.5	50.8	50.4
Middle and Low Income	63.5	62.8	79.2	78.8	47.2	46.3
East Asia	69.3	68.1	76.9	75.9	61.6	60.0
South-East Asia	70.2	70.0	81.9	81.6	58.8	58.6
Pacific Island countries	65.6	65.2	71.1	70.8	60.1	59.7
South Asia	54.5	54.8	79.4	79.5	28.3	28.9
Arab States	52.1	51.6	76.6	76.2	21.1	21.3

Source: ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A24. Vulnerable employment (% of total employment) by sex, 2006, 2015, and 2020

	Male and female			Male			Female		
Country/region	2006	2015	2020	2006	2015	2020	2006	2015	2020
World	51.0	46.0	45.5	49.3	45.9	45.2	53.6	46.3	46.0
High income	11.3	10.4	10.1	12.2	11.5	11.2	10.0	9.1	8.8
Middle and low income	61.8	55.2	54.1	58.6	53.8	52.6	67.0	57.4	56.5
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	62.4	54.1	52.8	59.6	53.9	52.7	67.1	54.5	53.0
High income	14.7	11.6	11.3	14.1	11.5	11.3	15.8	11.8	11.2
Middle and low Income	66.2	57.6	56.1	63.1	57.3	55.9	71.3	58.1	56.5
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	63.2	55.0	53.8	60.6	55.2	54.0	67.4	54.8	53.4
High income	16.2	13.4	13.1	16.0	14.2	14.1	16.4	12.4	11.9
Middle and Low Income	66.6	57.9	56.4	63.6	57.7	56.3	71.5	58.3	56.6
East Asia	53.0	41.3	39.9	47.5	39.9	38.8	60.0	43.1	41.3
South-East Asia	61.2	55.7	53.5	57.3	52.7	50.9	66.7	59.8	57.1
Pacific Island countries	24.1	22.7	22.0	24.5	22.4	21.8	23.6	23.0	22.2
South Asia	79.2	73.5	71.1	76.5	71.6	69.4	86.0	79.1	76.3
Arab States	20.9	18.0	17.9	20.1	16.9	17.1	25.2	23.6	21.8

Source: ILO calculations based on ILO: *Trends econometric models* (November 2015).

Table A25. Population Prospects 2015, 2020, 2025 by age (% share of total population)

	Male and Female											
	2015				2020				2025			
Country/region	below 15	15–24	15–64	above 64	below 15	15–24	15–64	above 64	below 15	15–24	15–64	above 64
World	26.1	16.2	65.7	8.3	25.5	15.3	65.2	9.3	24.6	15.1	64.9	10.4
High income	17.3	12.2	66.5	16.3	17.2	11.5	64.9	17.9	16.9	11.4	63.4	19.8
Middle and low income	28.1	17.2	65.5	6.4	27.4	16.2	65.2	7.4	26.3	15.9	65.3	8.4
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	24.5	16.3	68.0	7.5	23.5	15.1	67.6	8.9	22.4	14.7	67.4	10.1
High income	16.1	11.9	66.5	17.5	15.9	11.1	65.1	19.0	16.4	11.1	63.5	20.1
Middle and low income	25.0	16.6	68.1	6.9	24.0	15.4	67.8	8.2	22.8	14.9	67.7	9.5
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	24.1	16.3	68.2	7.7	23.2	15.0	67.7	9.1	22.0	14.5	67.6	10.4
High income	14.0	11.1	64.7	21.2	13.8	10.3	62.9	23.3	13.7	9.6	61.3	25.0
Middle and low income	24.7	16.5	68.4	7.0	23.7	15.2	68.0	8.3	22.4	14.8	67.9	9.6
East Asia	16.8	13.1	72.2	11.0	16.7	10.8	69.8	13.5	15.9	10.6	68.6	15.5
High income	13.2	10.7	64.2	22.6	12.8	9.9	62.4	24.8	12.7	9.1	60.8	26.5
Japan	12.9	9.5	60.8	26.3	12.6	9.3	58.9	28.5	12.4	9.0	58.2	29.4
Korea, Rep. of	14.0	13.5	72.9	13.1	13.4	11.3	70.8	15.8	13.3	9.3	67.0	19.7
Middle and low income	17.3	13.5	73.2	9.5	17.1	11.0	70.8	12.1	16.3	10.8	69.6	14.2
China	17.2	13.4	73.2	9.6	17.1	10.9	70.8	12.1	16.3	10.8	69.6	14.2
Mongolia	28.2	16.9	67.7	4.0	29.4	13.9	65.9	4.7	28.3	14.5	65.7	6.0
South-East Asia	26.5	17.3	67.5	5.9	25.3	16.3	67.7	6.9	24.2	15.5	67.4	8.3
High income	16.1	13.4	72.8	11.2	14.8	12.2	70.7	14.5	13.9	10.9	67.6	18.5
Brunei Darussalam	23.1	16.8	72.5	4.4	21.4	15.5	72.4	6.2	20.4	13.6	71.0	8.6
Singapore	15.5	13.2	72.8	11.7	14.3	11.9	70.6	15.1	13.4	10.7	67.4	19.3
Middle and low income	26.6	17.3	67.5	5.9	25.4	16.4	67.7	6.9	24.3	15.6	67.4	8.2
Cambodia	31.6	20.6	64.3	4.1	31.0	17.9	64.1	4.9	29.4	17.0	65.0	5.6
Indonesia	27.7	17.1	67.1	5.2	26.3	16.9	67.9	5.9	25.2	16.1	67.8	7.0
Lao PDR	34.8	22.2	61.4	3.8	33.4	19.7	62.4	4.2	31.4	18.7	63.9	4.6
Malaysia	24.5	18.7	69.6	5.9	22.9	16.9	70.1	7.0	22.5	14.7	69.1	8.4
Myanmar	27.6	17.8	67.1	5.4	24.8	18.1	68.8	6.4	23.0	17.4	69.5	7.5
Philippines	31.9	19.6	63.5	4.6	30.8	18.6	64.1	5.1	29.6	17.7	64.5	5.9
Thailand	17.7	13.2	71.8	10.5	16.4	12.1	70.7	13.0	15.1	11.3	68.8	16.1
Timor-Leste	42.4	19.8	52.0	5.6	42.4	19.8	52.8	4.9	42.6	19.0	52.8	4.6
Viet Nam	23.1	16.9	70.2	6.7	22.9	13.7	69.0	8.0	21.9	13.4	68.0	10.1
Pacific Island countries	23.4	14.9	64.6	12.1	23.3	14.2	63.6	13.1	22.8	14.2	62.9	14.3
High income	18.9	13.3	66.0	15.0	19.3	12.3	64.3	16.4	19.0	12.3	63.0	18.0
Australia	18.7	13.2	66.3	15.0	19.2	12.2	64.4	16.3	19.1	12.2	63.1	17.8
New Zealand	20.2	13.9	64.9	14.9	19.7	13.0	63.6	16.7	18.8	12.7	62.3	18.8
Middle and low income	36.5	19.5	60.2	3.4	34.8	19.7	61.4	3.8	33.2	19.5	62.6	4.2

	Male and Female											
	2015				2020				2025			
Country/region	below 15	15–24	15–64	above 64	below 15	15–24	15–64	above 64	below 15	15–24	15–64	above 64
Cook Islands												
Fiji	28.7	17.2	65.4	5.8	28.0	16.4	65.1	6.9	26.3	17.1	65.3	8.4
Kiribati	34.9	19.8	61.3	3.7	35.5	17.9	60.3	4.2	34.1	17.7	61.1	4.9
Marshall Islands												
Palau												
Papua New Guinea	37.1	19.8	59.8	3.0	35.3	20.0	61.3	3.4	33.7	19.7	62.6	3.7
Samoa	37.3	19.4	57.5	5.2	35.7	19.8	58.4	5.9	33.1	20.7	59.9	7.0
Solomon Islands	39.5	19.7	57.1	3.4	37.5	20.4	59.0	3.5	35.2	20.6	61.0	3.9
Tuvalu												
Vanuatu	36.5	18.3	59.3	4.2	35.3	18.0	59.9	4.8	33.2	18.1	61.5	5.3
South Asia	29.6	18.6	65.0	5.4	27.8	17.9	66.1	6.1	26.0	17.2	67.0	7.0
Middle and low income	29.6	18.6	65.0	5.4	27.8	17.9	66.1	6.1	26.0	17.2	67.0	7.0
Afghanistan	44.0	21.2	53.5	2.5	40.5	22.3	56.9	2.7	36.8	22.5	60.3	2.9
Bangladesh	29.4	19.5	65.6	5.0	26.9	18.8	68.0	5.1	24.9	17.5	69.2	5.9
India	28.8	18.4	65.6	5.6	26.8	17.9	66.6	6.5	25.2	17.2	67.4	7.5
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	23.6	15.9	71.3	5.1	23.3	13.0	70.4	6.3	21.1	13.6	71.1	7.8
Maldives	27.5	19.5	67.8	4.7	27.0	15.6	68.0	5.0	25.2	14.7	68.6	6.2
Nepal	32.7	20.9	61.8	5.5	29.0	21.4	64.8	6.3	26.3	19.7	67.0	6.7
Pakistan	35.0	19.9	60.5	4.5	34.4	18.4	61.1	4.5	32.9	18.0	62.2	4.9
Sri Lanka	24.6	15.1	66.1	9.3	23.0	15.0	65.8	11.2	21.1	15.4	65.6	13.3
Arab States	33.6	18.5	63.2	3.1	32.4	17.9	64.0	3.6	31.7	17.9	64.0	4.3
High income	24.1	15.0	73.5	2.4	23.5	14.3	73.3	3.2	25.1	15.9	70.4	4.5
Bahrain	21.5	15.2	76.1	2.4	20.3	14.0	76.9	2.9	18.3	13.3	77.0	4.6
Kuwait	22.3	13.4	75.7	2.0	23.5	12.1	74.0	2.4	22.7	12.8	73.6	3.7
Oman	20.5	16.3	76.9	2.6	22.8	12.3	73.8	3.4	22.8	12.8	72.8	4.4
Qatar	15.5	14.6	83.3	1.2	15.6	13.6	82.7	1.7	15.4	12.0	82.0	2.7
Saudi Arabia	28.6	15.6	68.6	2.9	27.0	15.6	69.3	3.7	24.8	16.1	70.3	5.0
United Arab Emirates	13.9	12.7	84.9	1.1	14.2	11.7	83.9	1.9	29.6	18.0	66.4	4.1
Middle and low income	38.6	20.4	57.9	3.5	36.9	19.8	59.3	3.9	35.2	19.0	60.6	4.1
Iraq	41.0	19.6	56.0	3.1	40.4	19.1	56.3	3.3	39.2	19.0	57.5	3.3
Jordan	35.5	19.0	60.7	3.8	33.8	18.6	62.3	3.9	31.8	18.4	63.9	4.3
Lebanon	24.0	19.5	67.9	8.1	21.5	17.0	69.1	9.4	20.1	13.2	68.4	11.5
Occupied Palestinian Territory	40.2	21.7	56.8	3.0	39.0	20.2	57.9	3.1	37.6	19.1	59.0	3.4
Syrian Arab Rep.	37.1	20.0	58.8	4.1	32.5	21.4	62.9	4.6	30.4	18.8	64.5	5.1
Yemen	40.3	22.1	56.9	2.8	38.5	20.5	58.4	3.2	36.2	20.1	60.3	3.4

Source: ILO calculations based on United Nations: *World population prospects* (2015 revision, DVD edition).

Table A26. Population living in urban and rural areas, % and totals 2015, 2020, and 2025

	% of population living in urban areas			Urban Population '000			Rural population '000		
	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020	2025
World	54.0	56.2	58.2	3 957 285	4 338 015	4 705 774	3 367 497	3 378 734	3 377 639
Asia-Pacific and Arab States	47.9	51.0	5 3.8	2 039 765	2 268 462	2 476 715	2 214 522	2 176 288	2 130 184
High income	88.7	89.8	90.7	260 159	269 664	276 283	33 229	30 494	28 467
Middle and low income	44.9	48.2	51.1	1 779 607	1 998 798	2 200 432	2 181 293	2 145 793	2 101 716
Asia-Pacific excluding Arab States	47.2	50.3	53.0	1 935 611	2 150 977	2 346 280	2 166 891	2 125 317	2 076 907
High income	89.4	90.7	91.5	216 820	221 864	224 815	25 641	22 800	20 814
Middle and low income	44.5	47.8	50.8	1 718 791	1 929 113	2 121 466	2 141 250	2 102 516	2 056 093
East Asia	60.0	64.8	68.6	982 410	1 081 098	1 156 060	655 149	588 549	529 375
South-East Asia	47.6	50.6	53.3	301 579	336 822	370 921	331 452	329 288	325 229
Pacific Island countries	71.0	71.1	71.3	27 192	29 116	31 047	11 104	11 834	12 518
South Asia	34.8	37.1	39.5	624 430	703 942	788 252	1 169 185	1 195 646	1 209 785
Arab States	68.6	69.7	71.0	104 154	117 485	130 435	47 631	50 971	53 276

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division: *World urbanization prospects: The 2014 revision* (2014).

Table A27. Internet users (per 100 people) in selected countries, 2011 and 2014

	Internet users (per 100 people)	
	2011	2014
East Asia		
China	38.3	49.3
Japan	79.1	90.6
Korea, Rep. of	83.8	84.3
Mongolia	12.5	27.0
South-East Asia		
Brunei Darussalam	56.0	68.8
Cambodia	3.1	9.0
Indonesia	12.3	17.1
Lao PDR	9.0	14.3
Malaysia	61.0	67.5
Myanmar	1.0	2.1
Philippines	29.0	39.7
Singapore	71.0	82.0
Thailand	23.7	34.9
Timor-Leste	0.9	1.1
Viet Nam	35.1	48.3
Pacific Island countries		
Australia	79.5	84.6
New Zealand	81.2	85.5
Fiji	28.0	41.8
Kiribati	10.0	12.3
Marshall Islands	10.0	16.8
Papua New Guinea	2.0	9.4
Samoa	11.0	21.2
Solomon Islands	6.0	9.0
Tuvalu	30.0	..
Vanuatu	9.2	18.8
South Asia		
Afghanistan	5.0	6.4
Bangladesh	4.5	9.6
India	10.1	18.0
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	19.0	39.4
Maldives	34.0	49.3
Nepal	9.0	15.4
Pakistan	9.0	13.8
Sri Lanka	15.0	25.8
Arab States		
Bahrain	77.0	91.0
Iraq	5.0	11.3
Jordan	34.9	44.0
Kuwait	65.8	78.7
Lebanon	52.0	74.7
Oman	48.0	70.2
Qatar	69.0	91.5
Saudi Arabia	47.5	63.7
Syrian Arab Rep.	22.5	28.1
United Arab Emirates	78.0	90.4
Yemen	14.9	22.6

Source: International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report and database, and World Bank estimates.

Statistical report of the Decent Work Decade 2006–15: Asia-Pacific and the Arab States

During the Asia and the Pacific Decent Work Decade (ADWD) 2006–15, Asia-Pacific and the Arab States led the way in achieving significant reductions in extreme poverty and in making important economic progress. For most economies, however, economic growth has not translated into commensurate increases in decent employment. Worsening inequality and widening income gaps constrain decent work prospects. The *Statistical report of the ADWD 2006–15 assesses* progress made with the region's decent work agenda, the setbacks and gaps that remain, and associated challenges for the future world of work.

The *Statistical report* identifies emerging trends and factors that will shape the future of work, and highlights the steps needed if the region is to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 8, i.e. to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", as well as other decent work-related goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The report indicates that priority challenges for the region's labour market policy-makers include widening disparities, particularly gender inequalities, persistent informality, labour rights deficits, and job market dislocations driven by technological progress. Fostering productive employment, it suggests, will also require greater attention to the region's demographic transitions and the potential of its rural economies.

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