



COVID-19 Country policy responses

1 March 2023

Countries are taking unprecedented measures to combat the spread of the disease, while ameliorating its pernicious effect on the economy and labour market.

Find out the policies implemented by governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and the ILO in **188 countries and territories**.

Content can be found in one of the ILO official languages (English, French and Spanish) depending on the country.

How policies are reported

Country policy responses are presented within the **four pillars of action** defined by the ILO to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on businesses, jobs and the most vulnerable members of society.

Pillar 1: Stimulating the economy and jobs

- Active fiscal policy
- Accommodative monetary policy
- Lending and financial support to specific sectors including the health sector

Pillar 2: Supporting enterprises, employment and incomes

- Extend social protection for all
- Implement employment retention measures
- Provide financial/tax and other relief for enterprises

Pillar 3: Protecting workers in the workplace

- Strengthen OSH measures
- Adapt work arrangements (e.g. teleworking)
- Prevent discrimination and exclusion

- Provide health access for all
- Expand access to paid leave

Pillar 4: Using social dialogue between government, workers and employers to find solutions

- Strengthen the capacity and resilience of employers' and workers' organizations
- Strengthen the capacity of governments
- Strengthen social dialogue, collective bargaining and labour relations institutions and processes

Afghanistan

Last Updated: **13 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- The Government is re-allocating part of the development funds for COVID-19 response
- Changes in facilitating the process and duration of business licenses, to expedite investment.
- In the northern region of the country, a committee has been established to ensure price control of food items
- Delegation of expenditure authority to Governors, for timely responses

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Businesses have re-purposed their production lines to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak: 118 businesses on production of PPEs, 31 businesses on manufacturing medical equipment, and 46 on production of medicine
- The government has provided cold storage services for businesses to protect agricultural produce in 10 provinces of the country
- The government has proposed tax cuts or tax exemptions for some types of businesses
- Provision of wheat and other necessities to IDPs and returnees, and daily wage workers
- Investors and private sector to receive additional support from the Government if they invest in basic needs, particularly in cooking oil
- Temporary employment creation in the healthcare sector

Protecting workers in the workplace

- [Ministry of Public Health](#) providing training for use of PPEs for healthcare workers

- Provision of safe buildings/offices for money exchange workers to protect them from COVID-19
- Government approved “extraordinary incentives” to doctors, nurses and healthcare workers who work in the frontline of fighting COVID-19

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) is in the process of convening a tripartite Labour High Council (LHC) meeting where the ILO representative employer and workers organisations will formally participate. Other employer and worker organisations will also be invited to contribute

Other measures

- Covid-19 response policy, consisting of 11 Articles
- Government facilitated (i.e. made easier) the procurement process for COVID-19, and procurement guidelines have changed
- The private sector has provided properties to government for use amid COVID-19 crisis
- Government has established a high-level committee chaired by 2nd Vice President to combat the coronavirus outbreak.
- The President issued a decree to [facilitate the release of prisoners](#) to decrease the risk of covid-19 infection. Prison cells are overcrowded, unsanitary and have inadequate health facilities.
- [Strict lockdown measures](#), only some government workers, and workers in healthcare, food, telecom and media allowed to work in their workplaces
- [Ministry of Public Health](#) ensured medicine stock. Final year medical students requested to support covid-19 response
- Afghan Ministries [launched Coronavirus tracking application](#)
- Omid TVET centre was handed over to by MoLSA to [MoPH](#) for 6 months, to keep drug users off the streets and reduce the spread of COVID-19
- UNOCHA provides [daily brief](#) on COVID-19 in Afghanistan
- [China supports](#) Afghanistan to prevent COVID-19

Australia

Last Updated: **17 November 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

October 2021

Active fiscal policy

The Australian Government has committed \$291 billion in direct economic support, 14.7% of GDP.

Accommodative monetary policy:

The Reserve Bank of Australia implemented a number measures, including:

- reducing the cash rate target to 0.1 per cent.
- taking steps to target a 0.1 per cent yield on 3-year Australian Government Securities.
- purchasing \$100 billion of government bonds over approximately 6 months, under the \$100 billion bond purchase program.
- providing a Term Funding Facility for the banking sector.
- establishing a temporary swap line with the US Federal Reserve for the provision of US dollar liquidity.

The Government will:

- support the markets for asset-backed securities through the Australian Office of Financial Management, investing \$15 billion in structured finance markets used by smaller lenders.
- guaranteed 50 per cent of new loans issued by participating lenders to SMEs (ceased on 30 June 2021).
- increase the government guarantee to 80 per cent, with a higher maximum loan size of \$5 million and a maximum loan term of 10 years, with interest rates capped at around 7.5 per cent.

Economic recovery

The Government's **JobMaker** agenda aims to rest the Australian economy for growth over the next three to five years. Measures include:

- **JobMaker Hiring Credit:** a payment to eligible organisations, for up to 12 months, who take on young job seekers aged 16 to 35.
- **\$1 Billion JobTrainer Fund:** providing school leavers and job seekers access to additional or low-cost courses in areas of identified skills need.
- **\$7.8 billion Personal Income Tax Cuts:** to support more than 10 million low and middle income earners through extending the low and middle income tax offset for an additional year. This builds on the \$17.8 billion in personal income tax cuts provided in the 2020-21 Budget.
- **Supporting Business Investment:** extending the temporary full expensing and temporary loss carry-back measures to deliver an additional \$20.7 billion in tax relief over the forward estimates period.

Lending and financial support to specific sectors

Health: \$20 billion to bolster the health system to protect all Australians from COVID-19, including investing PPE for the National Medical Stockpile and increased hospital funding to support states and territories manage the pandemic.

Tourism and aviation sectors: \$1.8 billion to subsidise airline tickets, provide cheap loans for businesses, and the provision of direct support to keep planes in the air, and airline workers in their jobs.

Education::

- **\$1.6 billion Early Childhood Education and Care Relief** for early childhood education and care sector. This measure involved three separate packages, the last of which concluded on 31 January 2021.
- **Higher Education Relief Package** for universities and non-university higher education providers to deliver short online courses to help upskill or retrain workers displaced by the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Job-ready Graduates Package** for university funding arrangements for a better integrated tertiary system to deliver more job-ready graduates in the disciplines and regions where they are needed most to help drive Australia's economic recovery.
- **Grants of \$150,000** to assist eligible English language course providers to invest in expertise and new teaching solutions. The Government is also extending regulatory fee relief for international education providers until 31 December 2021.

Infrastructure:

- **10-year infrastructure program:** \$110 billion investment to drive growth and help rebuild the economy, including \$1.5 billion for shovel ready works, \$2.5 billion for the **Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program** and a \$3 billion investment in the **Road Safety Program**.
- **HomeBuilder (\$2.7 billion):** a grant of \$25,000 for eligible contracts entered into between 4 June and 31 December 2020, and a \$15,000 grant for contracts entered into between 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021, to eligible owner-occupiers to assist them build a new home or substantially renovate an existing home.

COVID-19 Creative Economy Support Package (\$250 million) to support the cultural and creative sectors. This package was supplemented by a **300 million** support package announced in the 2021-2022 Budget. Measures include assistance to help production and event businesses to put on new events, and support to local film and television producers, Commonwealth-funded arts and culture organisations, and independent cinemas.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

October 2021

Extend social protection for all

The Government is supporting households and businesses address the significant economic consequences of COVID-19, including:

- **\$89 Billion JobKeeper Payment:** a fortnightly payment to businesses and not-for-profits that were significantly affected by the economic downturn. The JobKeeper

Payment was the largest economic support program in Australia's history, and supported over 3.8 million individuals. JobKeeper was in place until 28 March 2021.

- **COVID-19 Disaster Payment:** payment to individuals who are unable to work and earn income due to a public health order that imposes restrictions on movement, available for the second and any subsequent weeks of restrictions.
- **Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment:** lump sum payment to persons who cannot work and earn an income because they are directed to self-isolate or quarantine as a result of a positive COVID-19 test, or because they are the close contact of a confirmed case, or are caring for someone with COVID-19.
- **\$20.5 billion Coronavirus Supplement:** a temporary supplement for eligible persons receiving income support payments. The Coronavirus Supplement was paid from 27 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, and provided additional financial assistance to over three million Australians affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19. The Government also temporarily expanded eligibility for some income support payments.
- **Early release of Superannuation:** temporarily allowed individuals impacted by COVID-19 to access up to \$20,000 of their superannuation early. This program ran until 31 December 2020.
- **\$12 billion Economic Support Payments:** up to four once-off additional support payments delivered to pensioners, concession card holders and other eligible income support recipients: two payments of \$750 each paid in April and July 2020 and two payments of \$250 each paid in December 2020 and March 2021.
- **\$35.8 billion Boosting Cash Flow for Employers program:** eligible businesses and not-for-profit organisations that employed staff were eligible to receive payments of between \$20,000 and \$100,000. This program supported over 800,000 entities.

Implement employment retention measures

The Government is supporting businesses to retain apprentices and trainees through a number of initiatives, including:

- a wage subsidy (SAT) for small and medium sized business who retain eligible apprentices and trainees (\$2.8 Billion).
- a re-engagement register for apprentices and trainees eligible under the SAT wage subsidy who lose their employment.
- eligible workers in the age care workforce can receive up to three quarterly payments of \$800 for residential care, or \$600 for home care. Payment can be made for full-time, part-time and casual workers on a pro-rata basis.

Provide financial/tax and other relief for enterprises

The Government provided financial and regulatory relief to eligible businesses and not-for-profit organisations during the economic downturn associated with COVID-19. This includes:

- **six month temporary debt protection:** the temporary debt protection period available for people in financial difficulty increased from 21 days to 6 months until 31 December 2020.
- **changes to bankruptcy notices:** the debt threshold required for creditors to apply for a bankruptcy notice against a debtor increased from \$5,000 to \$20,000, and the timeframe for a debtor to respond to a bankruptcy notice increased from 21 days to up to 6 months,

until 31 December 2020.

- **temporary insolvency relief for businesses** the threshold required for creditors to issue a statutory demand on a company increased from \$2,000 to \$20,000, and the timeframe for a company to respond to a demand increased from 21 days to up to 6 months, until 31 December 2020.
- **instant asset write-off threshold** increased to \$150,000 (up from \$30,000) and access was expanded to include businesses with aggregated annual turnover of less than \$500 million (up from \$50 million) for eligible assets purchased by 31 December 2020.

Protecting workers in the workplace

October 2021

Prevent discrimination and exclusion

All Australians, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or cultural and religious background, have a right to feel safe and respected in our society. Racial discrimination in Australia is illegal. Australia's legislative framework provide protections for the underpayment and exploitation of vulnerable workers, primarily migrant workers and franchisees employees.

Strengthen OSH measures

Australia's Work Health and Safety laws require businesses and employers, to ensure the health and safety of workers and other people in the workplace, to the extent that is reasonably practicable. These obligations extend to protecting workers and other people in the workplace from the risk of COVID-19 transmission by ensuring the appropriate control measures are in place, in line with the latest advice provided by the relevant health authority or regulator.

Expand access to paid leave

The Fair Work Commission added a temporary new schedule into many modern awards to provide greater flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary schedule gives employees two weeks of unpaid pandemic leave, and the ability to take twice as much annual leave at half their normal pay if their employer agrees, up until 31 December 2021.

The Fair Work Commission has also made other temporary changes to some awards to provide more flexibility during the coronavirus outbreak.

Paid Parental Leave

The Government supported new parents whose employment was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing a temporary, extended **Paid Parental Leave** work test.

Provide health access for all

Medicare is Australia's universal health care scheme. It covers the cost of public hospital services, and some or all of the costs of other health services. These can include services provided by GPs and medical specialists. They can also include physiotherapy, community nurses and basic dental services for children.

Telehealth services: providing telehealth services on Medicare for GP, allied health and specialist services until 31 December 2021. Telehealth services help protect health care professionals, their staff and patients from unnecessary risk of infection.

Mental health and wellbeing: providing support for the mental health and wellbeing of Australians facing the challenges of COVID-19. This assistance include careful, targeted and practical measures to support mental health and wellbeing for Australians during this crisis, giving people direct access to online support and counselling services when and where they need it most.

Support for the disability sector: measures to assist National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and providers to ensure people with disability continue to receive essential supports during COVID-19. The Government has provided financial assistance to providers to support retention of workers including advance payments, a 10 per cent temporary COVID-19 loading on some core supports and changes to cancellation policies. Participants have been able to flexibly use their plan budgets to purchase technology to support the use of telehealth and telepractice.

The Government established a dedicated COVID-19 disability helpline for people with disability, and their families, carers, support workers and services. The helpline is currently being administered by the newly established National Disability Information Gateway.

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination. The Australian Government position on COVID-19 vaccination is that is voluntary, but strongly encouraged. State and territory governments have primary responsibility for public health, and have issued public health orders requiring workers in certain jobs, where there is an elevated risk of COVID-19 transmission, to be vaccinated. While the application of these public health orders varies between jurisdictions, mandatory vaccination requirements have been implemented in the residential aged care, quarantine, health, and education sectors, amongst others. Businesses and workers must comply with public health orders, and penalties may be applied for non-compliance.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

October 2021

The Government continues working cooperatively with unions and business groups to shape its response to the COVID-19 situation. The benefit of social dialogue has been evident in the development of initiatives such as the JobKeeper wage subsidy, and the flexibility of modern awards during the pandemic.

The value of informal social dialogue has been highlighted in these instances of rapid response, and are supported by formal pathways for social dialogue built into the enterprise bargaining framework.

Other measures

October 2021

For more information on the Australia's Government's response please view the following:

Australia's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.australia.gov.au>

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media>

<https://www.treasury.gov.au/coronavirus>

<https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-support>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/government-response-to-the-covid-19-outbreak>

Support available for individuals and businesses impacted by COVID-19

<https://www.ato.gov.au/General/COVID-19/>

<https://www.treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/jobkeeper>

<https://www.treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/households>

<https://www.treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/businesses>

<https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-support>

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/coronavirus-covid-19-and-how-we-may-help>

Education, skills and training

<https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19>

Workplace entitlements and obligations

<https://www.fwc.gov.au/about-us/coronavirus-covid-19-updates-advice>

Workplace health and safety

<https://www.coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/flexibility-in-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus>

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces>

Recovery measures

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/address-national-press-club-260520>

<https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/homebuilder>

<https://www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update>

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- The ACTU campaigned for a wage subsidy to keep workers in their jobs; the wage subsidy scheme called 'JobKeeper' was announced on 30 March and will begin May 1 onwards during the pandemic period
- **The social partners were united in calling for** this key government announcement in relation to workers
- There has also been constructive agreement between unions and employers about some measured and temporary changes to industrial agreements during the pandemic
- ACTU maintains an up to date webpage on the ongoing efforts to support workers in dealing with the pandemic. ACTU coronavirus information centre: <https://www.actu.org.au/coronavirus>
- ACTU advocated strongly for a wage subsidy, as did the peak employer group. The Government package, takes into account some suggestions made by the ACTU, and will benefit millions of workers. It falls short, however, and does not cover about 2 million workers – casual workers who have been with their employer for less than 12 months, and temporary visa workers.
- The government has also increased the quantum paid to unemployed persons on welfare.
- The ACTU continues to work constructively with both the Government and reasonable employer groups during the crisis to protect workers' rights, to save job and keep people safe.

Source: Australian Confederation of Trade Unions (ACTU)

For more information, see also:

Government responses

- Australian government responses to COVID-19
<https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/documents/resources/covid-19-information/information-note-government-responses-2020-03-30-1800.pdf>

Economic impact

- A report on the economic impact of COVID-19 on sectors/industries in Australia and New Zealand: <https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-insider/media/4637/covid-19-special-report.pdf>
- Other industry fact sheets, updated yesterday: <https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-insider/analyst-insights/coronavirus-update-industry-fast-facts/>

JobKeeper payment

- The government factsheet on the payment is here: <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/jobkeeper>
- ACTU analysis of JobKeeper payment: <https://www.actu.org.au/media/1449028/cv04-41->

[jobkeeper factsheet.pdf](#)

- ACTU media release: https://www.actu.org.au/media/1449028/cv04-41-jobkeeper_factsheet.pdf
- Unions and employers lobby: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/coronavirus-the-odd-couple-truce-working-to-save-jobs/news-story/59708ba2c118eddb02857dbca4608c70>

Activities of employers' organizations

Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) gathered members together to find out the questions individual employers wanted answers to, then prepared a guide for members. ACCI is also holding weekly teleconferences and have also made emergency proposals to government to change the law on workplace relations - to keep Australians in work and businesses in business. In the employment area, ACCI's proposal is focused on increased flexibility in hours of work (staggered shifts), leave flexibility, a moratorium on strikes, a zero increase in MW etc. In terms of the government's stimulus package, ACCI has requested for a targeted spending (i.e. to businesses in need

On 26 March, [ACCI and the Australian Services Union struck a deal and lodged an application](#) with the Fair Work Commission to amend the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2010 which covers more than a million people around the country performing clerical, payroll and administrative duties in businesses of all sizes and all industries. The application seeks to provide relief to business and employees during the pandemic by:

- Allowing employees and employers to agree to change ordinary hours of work whilst an employee is working at home. This should give employees expanded options to help manage their job around things like schooling children from home during the day without an employer facing additional costs for work being conducted out of usual business hours.
- Allowing a business with one weeks' notice to direct an employee to take annual leave if it decides to close-down its operations.
- Allowing staff to work more flexibly across classifications, provided it is safe to do so and the employee has the necessary qualifications.
- Allowing for employers to direct employees to take annual leave
- Increased flexibility in taking leave such as double leave at half-pay, where employers and employees agree.
- Allowing employers to engage casual and part-time employees for shorter shifts.
- Giving employers flexibility to reduce hours for full and part-time staff, whilst allowing employees whose hours are reduced to take on another job or ask to engage in training or additional study.

ACCI also made a strategic alternation to offer free membership to new members.

ACCI has prepared an [employer guide](#) for Australian business owners to help them navigate the key safety and employments issues during the coronavirus pandemic.

Stimulating the economy and employment

In 2020, Bangladesh had to deal with the severe economic fallout of a global pandemic as well as a devastating cyclone. In the wake of the country's pandemic socio-economic recovery, the IMF has lowered Bangladesh's GDP growth projections for the fiscal year 2019-2020 down to 3.8%, from earlier estimates of 7.4%.

In May 2020, 'super cyclone' Amphan made landfall. [Reports](#) indicated that 26 people were killed; 55,667 houses damaged; 162,000 homes partially damaged; approximately 149,000 hectares of agricultural land and fish farms (worth BDT 3.25 billion) damaged; millions of trees uprooted; 150kms of protection embankments washed away and 100km of roadways damaged.

To offset the social-economic challenges posed by Covid-19, actions to stimulate Bangladesh's economy and employment initiated by the Government, the UN, IFI's, development partners, and the private sector included:

August 2020: [According to the BGMEA](#), the RMG sector received BDT105 billion (US\$ 1.24 billion) to pay four months' wages (April to July 2020). RMG exports fell by 20.14 percent to \$2.25 billion in March 2020; 85.25 percent to \$374.67 million in April 2020 and 62.06 percent to \$1.23 billion in May 2020.

Official earnings, however, stood at \$2.24 billion and \$3.24 billion in June and July, recording 6.63 percent and 1.98 percent negative growth. Export earnings have seen a big jump with over 50 percent growth in the first 19 days of August 2020, as exports reached US\$2.04 billion over that of US\$1.35 billion in the corresponding period of August 2019. Despite the uptick, many of the orders have been restored at heavily reduced prices, including deferred payments and discounts, according to the BGMEA (Oct 2020).

August 2020: [BGMEA received BDT 13.20 million \(USD 155,660\) from Central Fund to help the families of 66 RMG workers, who died during the pandemic period.](#)

July 2020: [The EU pledged a €113 million grant, for one million retrenched workers](#) to be paid at BDT 3,000 (\$35) each for three months, starting from September 2020. The Department of Labour (DoL) was assigned to implement the GoB's direct cash assistance programme for destitute RMG and leather workers – with a focus on the design and development of a Management Information System (MIS) to be implemented by [ECORYS\[1\]](#).

June 2020: The [World Bank](#) approved USD1.05 billion for three projects to help Bangladesh create quality jobs and accelerate economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to build resilience to future crises. A USD500 million [Private Investment and Digital Entrepreneurship \(PRIDE\)](#) project will promote and attract USD2 billion private investments and strengthen social and environmental standards in select public and private economic zones, and software technology parks. It aims to create 150,000 jobs of which a percentage will be

dedicated to women (40 percent in software parks and 20 percent in Economic Zones).

May 2020: [Bangladesh Bank \(BB\) disbursed an additional BDT 725.85 crore](#) to commercial banks for the payment of workers' wages in export-oriented industries for the month of April. According to the BB Executive Director the central bank had released the funds based on the demands of the export-oriented industries. In May alone, 1,800 factories disbursed wages through 47 banks. As per the guidelines for the stimulus disbursement, companies availing the loans will have to pay back the sum within two years. The repayment tenure of the interest-free loan includes a grace period for six months from July to December 2020. However, in [September 2020](#), the BGMEA asked the GoB for a five-year period to pay back the loans.

May 2020: While labour unrest in the RMG sector was noted ahead of Eid, [1,577 garment and textile factories paid their workers according to Industrial Police](#).

May 2020: [The GoB directed factory owners to pay workers 50 percent of their basic salaries as Eid bonus](#), and to pay the remaining half within six months.

May 2020: [The Directorate General of Health Service \(DGHS\) issued guidelines on the prevention and control of Covid-19 infection](#) in the community and institutions, including safety measures to be followed after the reopening of businesses, educational institutions, and services.

May 2020: The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina [virtually launched](#) the distribution of BDT 2,500 (USD 29.50) to 50 lakh (5 million) families affected by the Covid-19 crisis through mobile financial services.

The PM also directed all District Commissioner offices to ensure food support to poor and marginalized groups, including tea stall owners and the third gender community. This effort is complemented by the [Prime Ministers Relief Fund \(PMRF\)](#), which is based on voluntary contributions from individuals, organizations, trusts, companies, and institutions. [Media reports](#) indicate that the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh has started selling essential commodities such as edible oil, lentil, and sugar, at lowered prices across the country.

May 2020: Garment workers [salary disbursement from the stimulus package](#) began on 3rd May 2020.

April 2020: [Ministry of Labour and Employment \(MoLE\) formed 23 regional based "Tripartite Crisis Management Committees"](#) (TCMC) to address the payment of wages; unfair labour practices; conduct tripartite inspection/investigation of factories in the event of labour unrest; and ensure compliance with Covid-19 related safety at the workplace, in line with MOLE's OSH guidelines.

April 2020: [Five million poor and unprivileged people were enlisted in the GoB's food-friendly programme "Khaddo Bandhob Kormoshuchi"](#), enabling them to buy a maximum of 20kg of rice per month at BDT10 per kilo.

April 2020: Prime Minister announced four stimulus packages of BDT 727.5 billion (*US\$8bn equivalent to 2.52 percent of the country's GDP*) to implement immediate, mid- and long-term measures (i.e. working capital for affected industries, increasing public expenditure, formulating a stimulus package, widening social safety net coverage and increasing monetary supply).

(Main source of above information [KPMG website, Bangladesh.](#))

April 2020: [Bangladesh Bank announced the expansion of its Export Development Fund \(EDF\) from US\\$ 3.5 billion to US\\$5 billion for the importation of raw materials under the Back-to-back LC system.](#)

March 2020: [Government announced details of its BDT 50bn \(approx. US\\$595m\) stimulus package for export-oriented industries including assistance towards salaries and funding of 2-year loans to factory owners at 2% interest.](#)

March 2020: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) put in place a Covid-19 [National Preparedness and Response Plan](#) (NPRP), financed by the International Development Association (IDA). The NPRP covers coordination, case management, and infection control, surveillance and laboratory, contact tracing and points of entry, and risk communication and awareness-raising.

[1] <https://www.ecorys.com/global>

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

According to the [World Economic Forum](#), Bangladesh has more than 50 million workers in the informal economy who have been severely and economically affected by the pandemic. It is estimated that up to 25 percent of the population may have become 'new poor' in the wake of Covid-19 and these are largely in the informal economy.

The RMG sector (4 million workers; 80 per cent export revenue), was also hard hit. [Initially 1,904 export oriented RMG factories closed and an estimated 2,138,778 RMG jobs were lost between 19-31 March 2020 according to DIFE.](#) A reduction in global aggregate demand resulted in [canceled orders](#) upwards of USD3 billion by international brands/buyers some of which were [re-instated](#). Primark, H&M, PVH, Inditex, Marks & Spencer came forward with [assurances](#) to help garment suppliers by taking the shipment of goods that have already been manufactured or ordered. Primark went further to [establish a fund](#) to pay the wages of factory employees. The fund will also support workers in Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Details of brands that are acting responsibly towards suppliers and workers is available [here](#).

According to the WTO: ["Orders received by Bangladesh's RMG factories declined by 45.8 percent over the first quarter of 2020, with an 81 percent contraction experienced in April alone."](#)

In [August 2020](#) however, a positive trend in export earnings was recorded. According to BGMEA data, garment export earnings stood at USD3.24 billion compared to USD2.23 billion in August 2019.

The pandemic threatens the existence of 2.5 million SME's in Bangladesh, which employ a significant portion of the labour force with a GDP contribution of 20.25 per cent. To support enterprises, jobs and incomes, the [stimulus package announced on 5th April](#) by the GoB earmarked USD2.3 billion as working capital for SME's at an interest rate of 9 per cent.

Only 4 percent of the agreed interest will be borne by the borrower, while the rest (5%) will be borne by the GoB, as a subsidy. Bangladesh Bank (BB) issued guidelines for the stimulus package to boost production and to overcome COVID-19 impacts.

Between April and August 2020, an estimated [95,000 migrant workers had returned to Bangladesh](#), after losing their jobs due to the pandemic (88,406 of the returnees were male, and 6,656 female). The GoB will provide affected migrant workers investment credit at 4% interest from a Tk700 crore (US\$ 82.55m) fund.

Between January and April 2020, an estimated 250,000 migrants returned to Bangladesh largely due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Source: IOM)

The GoB responded with a number of measures to support the returnee migrants, including distributing BDT 5,000 (USD 59) to 6,700 migrant returnees at the airport. The GoB also initiated bilateral discussions for the return of undocumented and irregular migrants from selected countries.

The national development discourse in Bangladesh tends to consider graduating from the least developed country (LDC) category and becoming a middle-income country as interchangeable. The country continues to express its aspiration to join the middle-income country group by 2021, the 50th anniversary of its independence. However, this status has already been achieved – Bangladesh joined the lower-middle-income country category (the lower tier of the two tiers of the middle-income category) on 1 July 2015. On the other hand, graduation from the LDC group is almost certain, but not until 2024, if the country meets all the technical requirements in the coming years. (CPD Policy Brief, 2018).

Protecting workers in the workplace

On 8th October 2020, the Ministry of Labour and Employment officially launched the Bangla version of the [COVID-19 OSH Guidelines](#) complete with a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and checklist in English. The guidelines were endorsed by the OSH National council in June.

To protect workers the GoB activated public health safeguards through lock down measures i.e., stay home, intercity travel suspension and airport closures between 26 March and 31 May 2020.

The ILO Bangladesh Office collaborated with LAB/ADMIN OSH to adapt global guidelines on risk assessment for health and safety in workplaces to Covid-19 conditions. With CO Dhaka's support, the labour inspectorate developed and adopted the National OSH Guidelines for Covid-19. The ILO has also helped develop an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Guide for Prevention and Mitigation of Covid-19 at the workplace.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

May 2020: MOLE convened a tripartite meeting with IBC leaders to discuss employers' proposals to pay 60% of workers' salary for the month of April 2020. The meeting could not reach a consensus although the media announced that the decision was to pay 65% salary for April 2020. IBC issued a statement protesting the announcement demanding 100% workers' salary for April 2020.

The BGMEA met with IBC leaders on **7 May 2020** and signed an MOU, pledging not to lay-off workers and an agreement on the payment of salaries for April 2020. They formed a joint monitoring committee to address the ongoing issues.

The ILO supported the GoB to develop a **Labour Relations Guideline**, which proposes the establishment of a Labour Relations Task Team to address payment of wages, overtime, arrears, lay-off and retrenchment issues, unfair labour practices, and a complaints mechanism.

The Workers Resource Centre (WRC) is also in the process of establishing Trade Union Rights Watch teams to monitor the violation of trade union rights and others as mentioned above.

Employers' initiatives:

4 June 2020, [BGMEA virtually inaugurated its first dedicated COVID-19 testing Lab](#) in collaboration with BADAS (Diabetic Association of Bangladesh) in Gazipur, one of the country's major apparel hubs.

11 May 2020, [BGMEA signed an agreement with Maya\[1\]](#) to provide free services to prevent and limit the spread of Covid-19, while also addressing general medical and mental health issues amongst RMG workers

9 May 2020, [BGMEA and Common Health signed a collaborative agreement](#) to provide free telemedicine consultations for 100,000 RMG workers.

30 April 2020, [the BGMEA announced hotlines](#) for all member factories. The hotline numbers are 01730442211, 09638012345 and the BGMEA Health In-charge one is 01913529877.

30 April 2020, [the BGMEA opened a portal on the health and safety of garment workers](#) All member factories were advised to assign a focal person who would upload information of corona infected workers in the portal.

The Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) issued a Covid-19 FBCCI Health Advisory Protocols for commercial establishments to resume their functions. It is a comprehensive document (in Bangla) covering OSH, hygiene, cleanliness, etc.

Workers' initiatives:

27 May: Sommito Garment Sramik Federation (SGSF) sent [a letter to the Labour secretary](#) demanding legal action against factories that did not clear April 2020 wages and bonuses.

17 May: The Garment Workers Front and the Garment Workers Trade Union Centre (GWTUC) issued a press release, protesting the 50% bonus decision and demanded a full bonus equivalent to basic salary. Bangladesh Garment Workers Solidarity (BGWS) also rejected the 50%

bonus decision and sent a letter to the Home Minister seeking the Prime Minister's intervention to pay workers their full bonus.

The workers' organizations issued press releases, memoranda (in both Bangla and English), and distributed them to the government, employers, the ILO, and development partners demanding no layoffs and retrenchment of workers and to ensure compensation and reinstatement of workers terminated during the Covid-19 crisis.

30 April, the General Secretary of IndustriALL global sent a letter to the Prime Minister <http://www.industrialunion.org/bangladesh-government-must-protect-workers-from-impacts-of-Covid-19> to address the health and safety, economic and social impact of Covid-19 on workers.

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) initiatives:

The Department of Labour (DoL) announced telemedicine service on 13 April 2020. DIFE launched the same service on 20 April for workers. For both services, doctors are providing verbal consultations and deliver prescriptions via text message.

DIFE distributed thousands of leaflets and posters for raising awareness of Covid-19. DIFE also formed Covid-19 Preventive Committees in March 2020 in 23 Deputy Inspector Generals' offices to monitor the progress of worker awareness.^[2]

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) initiatives:

11 May: MoHFW issued a circular asking factories to form a medical and monitoring team on an emergency basis.

7 May: MoHFW issued a circular asking all District Civil Surgeons and Deputy Commissioners to prepare details of RMG workers in their respective districts, and to ensure home quarantine for workers returning from Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj.

29 April: MoHFW circulated health guidelines to protect the RMG and other industries from Covid-19.

21 May: The Ministry formed an eight-member monitoring committee in every district to monitor the compliance of the health guidelines. Notably, these committees did not include representatives from DIFE, DoL, or the trade unions.

^[1] Maya is an anonymous platform where users can ask any questions to Maya's licensed doctors and mental health counselors, related to medical, health and well-being, psychological, social, lifestyle, and fitness concerns via app and web.

^[2] <http://dife.gov.bd/> and <http://dol.gov.bd>

Other measures

June 2020: [The EU pledged EUR334m \(US\\$371m\) to help GoB fight the pandemic](#) and provide cash assistance to export workers. In mid-April, the EU announced the mobilization of a fund

worth over EUR334 million for the fight against Covid-19 and its impact on Bangladesh. Of the EUR334 million, EUR113 million (93 million in EU grant and 20 million in German grant) will help provide cash assistance to RMG workers.

[In addition, the French Development Agency – Agence Française de Développement \(AFD\) - will support the Bangladesh government with EUR150m to improve the country's social protection measures.](#)

Around EUR64.8m (16.5m from the EU and 48.3m from Germany) will be used to scale up interventions through the UN and NGO partners for vulnerable host communities and Rohingya in Cox's Bazar, while EUR 5.5m is aimed at strengthening Bangladesh's research and health systems.

Another grant of EUR 714,383 (618,383 from the EU and 96,000 from Germany) will address the urgent needs of the ultra-poor and vulnerable people in the urban areas of Dhaka and rural areas, via direct cash transfers and awareness campaigns to reduce the spread of the virus.

April & May 2020: The GoB has taken actions to run TVET classes through alternative approaches. Directorate of Technical Education, along with a2i and other development partners, supported designing the new interventions. Live classes for diploma-in-engineering courses for public and private polytechnic institutes and technical schools and colleges (TSCs) began 10th May 2020.

This will target 3.25 lakh (325,000) students enrolled in 50 government and 553 private polytechnic institutes, and 64 technical schools and colleges. Facebook live classes include 34 technologies for the first year and six technologies - civil, mechanical, computer, electrical, electronics, and ceramics for second and third-year students which cover at least 80% of the total students.

19 April 2020: The DTE introduced televised lectures for 3.8 lakhs (380,000) SSC (vocational) and Dakhil (vocational) students of 3000 institutes through Shangshad Bangladesh Television.

DTE and the GoB is planning to include learning resources under a World Bank project. The government is setting up mini studios (one in each of the eight divisions in selected polytechnics) to produce learning content. A separate TV channel will be dedicated for education.

Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) has suggested a needs assessment to identify health-related occupations, provision of equipment, and introducing training and certification. UCEP, BRAC, UNICEF, and ILO's Skills 21 are directly involved in developing online content for TVET courses and skills training.

The Skills 21 project is also conducting an online Training of Trainers (TOT) programme with BTEB to engage teachers on a pilot basis.

UNFPA is strengthening social cohesion, solidarity, and healthy coping of youth through teleclasses on life skills, and scaling up remote support for the mental needs of youth through helpline service.

May 2020: [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\) approved an additional \\$500 million loan](#) to bolster

the efforts of the GoB to manage the impact of Covid-19 on the country's economy and public health. The loan should benefit over 15 million poor and vulnerable people in Bangladesh. Around 1.5 million workers, mostly women, in export-oriented industries will receive extended salary support while doctors, nurses, and medical workers in government-run hospitals will receive special honorariums.

At least 2 million vulnerable families will be given about USD23 each, while about 1 million poor and vulnerable households will receive food support of 20 kilograms per month during the pandemic emergency.

May 2020: The IMF, under its **Rapid Credit Facility and Rapid Financing Instrument**, approved emergency financial assistance worth USD732 million for Bangladesh. The financing will help health, social protection, and macro-stabilization measures.

May 2020: The German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) committed USD 14.5 million for seven countries in response to the pandemic. Bangladesh is poised to receive USD 1.6 million, through the ILO, to provide one-time wage subsidy payments to approx. 40,000 RMG female and disabled workers.

April 2020: [The World Bank fast-tracked US\\$100 million financing](#) to help Bangladesh prevent, detect, and respond to the pandemic and strengthen its national public health emergency systems.

April 2020: [The UK announced GBP 21 million \(BDT2.2bn\) to contain the spread of coronavirus, including at the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.](#) The ADB also provided a USD 600m loan to help fight the pandemic. ADB also provided a USD 350,000 emergency grant and a USD 1.3m one-off, cash support facility.

April 2020: [SAARC Development Fund \(SDF\)](#) allocated USD5m for the SDF-COVID 19 Emergency Project(s) for all the eight SAARC Member States subject to certain eligibility criteria.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- SKOP/NCCWE and IBC leaderships have participated in 3 tripartite meetings and placed their position/demand
- IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) issued 8 points' appeal to Bangladesh Government, for RMG sector. Socialist Labour Front (SLF) has also issued a press release in response to the recent crisis in RMG sector
- SKOP leaderships recently submitted a concern letter to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh
- At the beginning of COVID-19 in Bangladesh (on 25th March), Bangladesh Government declared bailout/stimulus package of BDT 5,000crs for export oriented industries in order to tackle the situation. Followed by the announcement, BGMEA and BKMEA also urged RMG factory owners to shut down factories. Later, statement coming from BGMEA, DIFE

and Commerce minister emphasized that factories should be kept open following 'proper health measures' for workers. As a result, workers who rushed to their village based on the previous decision are coming back to Dhaka like wave, which heavily increase risk of quick spreading of this disease and make workers' group more vulnerable. On 4 April night, BGMEA and Government decided again that factories will stay closed till 11 April. This lack of coordination has been widely criticized by trade unions and civil society. Whereas Government has declared closure of all public and private offices for 16 days, all educational institutions as well as prohibited all public gathering, this decision of keeping factories open is contradictory of what government is doing the other way, effort to stop spreading.

Source: SKOP/NCCWE affiliates (12 national trade union federations)

For more information, see also:

- [The Daily Star, 06/04/2020, garments factories to stay open](#)

Activities of employers' organizations

- The **BANGLADESH EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION (BEF)** immediately responded to the crisis by initiating meetings with the Ministry of Labour and other policymakers to assess and determine the impact. In addition, BEF took the following initiatives:
 - Engaged a research firm to [assess the situation and recommend measures](#)
 - Interacted with Sectors / enterprises to assess the degree and extent of the impact
 - Published a booklet to raise awareness and prevent COVID 19 spread
- On behalf of members, BEF formulated a comprehensive proposal and forwarded it to Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and other policy makers.
- As a demonstration of its commitment to respond to the crisis, BEF initiated a fund to import PPEs for distribution to frontline doctors and healthcare givers. In addition, a fund has also been initiated to support daily workers and street vendors.
- On 5th April 2020 the government of Bangladesh announced a stimulus package to save business and livelihoods affected by COVID-19. In response, the Bangladesh Employers' Federation and the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) released a [joint press](#) release acknowledging that the government has responded to some of their proposals made on behalf of business.

Brunei Darussalam

Last Updated: **6 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

National Action of The Government of Brunei Darussalam has announced the recent [stimulus package](#) on 1 April of BND 250 million (USD175 million). The stimulus package includes deferment of principal payment of loans or financing for all sectors with the following details.

- Restructuring and deferring principal amounts on personal loans and hire purchase facilities such as car loans or financing for not more than 10 years;
- Provision of deferment of the principal amount or financing for real estate, restructuring the outstanding credit card balance to loans for a period of not more than three years for individuals affected in the private sector only including the self-employed;
- Individuals may apply for Suspension and Restructuring at their banks or financial institutions between 1 April and 30 Dec 2020.
- The government launched artificial intelligence (AI)-powered web application www.healthinfo.gov.bn which will further aid the Ministry of Health in combating the spread of COVID-19 in Brunei Darussalam
- The additional features will include SMS Authentication, Direct Reporting Tool, Health Education Tool and FAQs, Government Press Statements and COVID-19 Activity Traces (Hotspots).

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- On Social protection: Deferment of payments on the Employees Trust Fund (TAP) and Supplemental Contributory Pension (SCP) contributions and increasing the capacity of workers.
- Social assistance: 25 percent payroll subsidy to local workers in Micro, and SMEs (MSMEs) with 100 employees and below for three months. This subsidy is intended to help ease the burden on MSMEs especially for local workers who receive a monthly salary of BND1,500 (US\$1071) and below, and contribute to the Employees Trust Fund (TAP).
- Employment retention: the Government has requested the employers not to retrench the workers during the crisis.
- Assistance to business: The minister announced that DARE 's fully sponsored Industry Business Academy online training starting on 28 March 2020, through Coursera – a platform run by international business experts who also handle courses at top universities around

the world, which can be accessed through the www.dare.gov.bn website. The platform provides more than 300 courses related to business affairs such as marketing and sales, finance and accounting, innovation and design, as well as for analytic data.

- Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can be assisted through joining an e-commerce platform for more effective business matching, which will be open to business owners on 1 April 2020.
- Co-Matching Grant for e-Commerce and logistics services, where DARE will also increase the amount of the grant to further expand the Co-Matching Grant initiative to aid businesses to improve and prepare for current and future situations.
- Omit the rental costs for community markets and stalls provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs for six months starting March 2020, where the rent to ease the financial burden on businesses.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- The Government encourages workers in upskilling and reskilling locals towards supporting the growth of the private sector. Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) has provided specific training such as online training, as well as hands-on training, whether in the form of current needs or as a step towards human resource capacity building.
- To expand the i-Ready Apprenticeship Programme to Diploma level based on Brunei Darussalam Qualification Framework (BDQF) Level 5 (HND or Advanced Diploma) or equivalent, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), BDQF Level 2 to 4, from a period of 18 months only to the current 36 months. The government will finance the apprenticeship allowance for 18 months at a fixed rate of BND800 per month for Bachelor's Degree and above, BND600 per month for Diploma (Level 5), and BND400 per month for TVET, as well as the funding of TAP and SCP contributions on behalf of the companies concerned.
- Jobcentre Brunei (JCB) portal will also be made to improve the

effectiveness of the job vacancies advertised including automatic job matching for local jobseekers; receiving application status in real-time; provide reports on compatibility and comprehensive Talent Profile information for companies.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

There is no role of social dialogue in Brunei since 2012 when the tripartite structure is not functioning due to the suspension of Brunei Oil Workers Union (BOWU).

Cambodia

Last Updated: **2 April 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

Since February 2020, the Government has implemented eight rounds of relief measures to support businesses, employment and incomes and to recover and boost the economic growth while reducing the vulnerability of poor and vulnerable households through cash transfer and protecting the people's health and life.

On the health front, Cambodia has responded hastily and aggressively to all the imported cases of COVID-19 and seemed to have effectively curtailed the community outbreak for a year, without fatality. The total cases were less than 500 since the first imported case was confirmed in late January 2020. However, since 20 February 2021 there has been a sharp rise of daily new cases involved with the worrisome cluster community transmission. As of 2 April 2021, Cambodia had 2,546 confirmed cases nationwide, 1,270 hospitalisations, 1,256 recoveries and 18 deaths. The country has accelerated its efforts to curb the outbreak. The Cambodia Master Plan for COVID-19 was launched in March 2020 to suppress the transmission of the virus and to mitigate the health, social and economic impacts of the epidemic in the country. It has since been effectively implemented and monitored by the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat COVID-19. A national plan for COVID-19 vaccination has been rolled out since February 2021 to administer 20 million doses targeting 10 million people by the end of 2021. At least 400,000 people have vaccinated, including health care workers, frontline armed force and police, frontline government officials, and elderly. Another 745,000 people, including teachers and garment factory workers, informal workers among others, will be vaccinated in April 2021. [Read more](#)

On the monetary policy, the [National Bank of Cambodia](#) (NBC) has implemented several

measures to improve liquidity in the banking system. These include: deferring additional increases in the capital conservation buffer; cutting the interest rate in its liquidity providing collateralized operations (LPCOs), reducing banks' funding costs in domestic currency, slashing the interest rate on negotiable certificates of deposit (the collateral for LPCOs), and lowering the obligatory reserves that banking and financial institutions are required to keep at the NBC. In addition, the Government has established a Credit Guarantee Fund of US\$200 million that may guarantee the loans for small, medium and large enterprises in all sectors, with at least US\$2 billion through commercial banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs). The Government also established first ever a state-owned [Credit Guarantee Corporation of Cambodia Plc](#) (CGCC), in November 2020, to provide credit guarantees for SMEs with larger loans through participating financing institutions. The CGCC launched in March 2021 a US\$200 million Business Recovery Guarantee Scheme that will increase access by SMEs to formal loans for working capital, investment and business expansion. This will help keep their businesses afloat during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

The Government has continued to consolidate fiscal support in stepping up the national efforts not only to contain the spread of the virus but also to address the many economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Prime Minister](#) announced on 10 March 2020 the Government had prepared US\$800 million to US\$2 billion (6.8% of GDP) to address economic issues amid COVID-19. Around [US\\$400](#) million has been streamlined from savings on the current spending and capital spending. Additional fiscal resources to the health sector of around US\$70 million are collected. In addition, the World Bank has approved [US\\$20](#) million for Cambodia's COVID-19 Response. EU has also approved a financial transfer of [€56 million](#) from existing programmes as a grant to help the country halt the COVID-19 infection and restore the economy, which has been hit by the disease. Since March 2020, the US has provided [\\$11 million](#) in grants to help Cambodia address the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Germany has since March provided around US\$10 million to support Cambodia in fight against the COVID-19. On 8 July 2020, ADB approved a [US\\$250 loan](#) as budget support to stop the virus transmission and to mitigate health, social and economic impacts of the crisis in Cambodia. On 13 November 2020, Japan signed the exchange of notes with Cambodia to extend its loan of [US\\$230](#) to be used in the COVID-19 response and economic revitalisation. Also, the Government has prepared an additional financing plan of US\$600 million to restore and accelerate economic growth.

On the economic front, the Government has laid out a stimulus package that keeps business continuity across the economic sectors while retaining employment for workers during the crisis. The package includes tax holiday up to 18 months, lending, exemption of contributions to the National Social Security Fund, establishing SME bank with an initial capital of US\$100 million and providing special low-interest loans to specialized banks to finance SMEs targeting agricultural and manufacturing sectors. SMEs can borrow up to \$200,000 for working capital and \$300,000 for investment capital with a maximum interest rate of seven per cent per year and a repayment period of seven years. The Government has also provided US\$50 million to Rural Development Bank to support SMEs. As of 31 December 2020, the two banks approved around US\$100 million in loans for SMEs.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

The Government has implemented a set of general economic measures that support enterprises, job retention and income. The measures target the hard-hit garment and tourism sectors that since mid-February have affected at least 270,600 workers – 87 percent were women. Around 132,000 workers have been laid off and/or their employment remains suspended due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government has addressed the garment supply chain disruption that has since mid-February forced more than 480 factories to suspend (partially or fully) their operations due to lack of raw materials or lack of orders.

On 7 April 2020, the Prime Minister announced that garment factories whose operations or workers' employment contracts are temporarily suspended the Government decided to provide workers each US\$70 per month, with [US\\$40](#) from the Government and another US\$30 from the employer.

As for tourism workers who have been furloughed due to the temporary suspension of business, the Government provides the workers US\$40 per month.

An official directive # 045 of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT) was issued on 17 April 2020 detailing the payment of US\$70 and US\$40 to the suspended garment workers and tourism workers, respectively. [Read more](#)

As of 23 November 2020, around 330,000 unemployed workers received the wage subsidy.

Along with the efforts of Better Work Programme, Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) has engaged with international buyers/brands that source from Cambodia to continue relations with their supplying factories on current production and on COVID-19 response and to pay for the orders completed and in production. Several buyers have agreed to pay per the payment terms with their suppliers who in turn pay their workers while ensuring business continuity.

This effort is being followed on with [Global Garment Sector Call to Action](#) that was developed following extensive consultation with global brands and manufacturers, employers' and workers' organisations. The initiative aims to catalyse action from across the global garment industry to support manufacturers to survive the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect garment workers' income, health and employment. It also calls for work on sustainable systems of social protection for a more just and resilient garment industry. To date, over 100 [organisations](#), including global brands and retailers, manufacturers, business federations, trade unions, NGOs and UN agencies, have endorsed the Call to Action.

Cash for work programme has been re-introduced to absorb unemployed from other sectors into agriculture, with a budget allocation of US\$100 million.

Low-paid workers who lost jobs or whose jobs were suspended due to the COVID-19 are allowed to delay their loan repayments to the commercial banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs). The NBC has issued a Directive to banks and MFIs on loan restructuring

for key sectors affected (garments, tourism and construction). As of 3 July 2020, more than [220,000 debtors](#) who had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were assisted in loan restructuring. According to Credit Bureau of Cambodia, as of 31 August 2020 around US\$3.6 billion worth of loans were restructured.

Protecting workers in the workplace

To protect workers and safeguard the public health, workers are encouraged to take precautions to reduce exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 and to follow the advice of the WHO and the Ministry of Health (MoH). Risk communication, prevention and social distancing measures are widely disseminated to all members of the public and workers. Furthermore, risk communication and prevention, hygiene kits and health checks were provided to more than 130,000 returning Cambodian migrant workers from Thailand and other countries.

An information session was offered to OSH and labour inspectors to raise awareness on COVID-19 to promote risk communication and protection at workplaces. Since January 2020 the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT) has released a set of guidelines on COVID-19 prevention measures for factories and enterprises. MLVT officials have provided information sessions on COVID-19 prevention and hygiene practice to around 700 workplaces covering more than 45,000 workers in Phnom Penh and provinces.

The WHO Guide "[Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19](#)", ILO ACT/EMP "Guide on managing your workplace during the Covid-19" and [Employer's Guide for Return to Work](#) have been disseminated to employers and workers in the garment, tourism and construction sectors. In addition, an ILO action [checklist](#) on Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 at work and a guideline on discrimination and stigma related to COVID-19 were translated and distributed to workplaces. OHCHR's [COVID-19 guidance](#) recalling respect for human rights across the spectrum, including economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights during the COVID-19 pandemic, was also shared with ILO constituents.

In 2020, ILO/Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) conducted almost 1,290 advisory meetings with 190 factories in the advisory programme, of which 712 were virtual. Six virtual learning seminars with bipartite committees were conducted focusing on COVID-19 awareness, emergency preparedness, gender awareness, OSH topics, and new regulations. In 2020, BFC also organised 62 virtual trainings (total 88 trainings), with more than 3,000 participants in total, on amongst others gender & COVID-19, OSH topics and labour law.

To better understand the situation of garment workers during COVID-19, BFC conducted 374 worker calls to discuss their concerns and situation in May 2020; the most common concern among workers was personal finances, and immediate safety and well-being. In addition, BFC adapted an ILO guideline for factories that includes recommendations for factories being back in business after the suspension period, and a retrenchment guideline. BFC also introduced the *Factory Ambassador Programme* (one worker, one management representative per factory) in 90 factories, to facilitate communication and introduction of new initiatives in factories – this programme has continued in 2021. As the team was unable to conduct in-person factory visits, BFC developed a virtual compliance check tool and piloted virtual compliance checks in four factories in July 2020, and that will be rolled out again in April 2021. In total, BFC conducted 260 factory assessment visits in 2020 during the months that BFC was able to go to factories (around

5 months in total).

The Government has increased funding of healthcare and social protection, stockpiled PPEs, medical equipment and supplies for the health facilities, and provided OSH protection for health caregivers and additional allowances for frontline health workers.

More than 2 million workers, public and private, including around 50,000 informal workers, who have been covered by health insurance with the National Social Security Fund continue to access health care free of charge.

All suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 for all members of the public, both local and foreign, can access health care for counseling, testing and treatment. The medical costs of Cambodian nationals are borne by the Government/MoH while foreigners have since July been required to pay for their own medical expenses. [Read more](#)

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Unions and Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC) have had a dialogue to decide joint advocacy to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT) to address the consequences of the COVID-19 on garment factories and workers. They both have also appealed to international buyers/brands to continue relations and honour the payment terms.

[GMAC](#) has regularly during COVID-19 pandemic, including with joint letters with BFC to factories, urged garment factories and unions to place the worker safety as a priority in the COVID-19 pandemic and to work together to protect workers and workplaces from the spread of the virus through effectively implementing the guidelines of MLVT. The guidelines cover temperature control, strict hygiene practices, physical distancing, coughing etiquette, 14-day quarantine, and IEC materials for enterprises and workers on COVID-19 awareness, prevention and mitigation measures.. GMAC also appealed to the buyers/brands to honour the contractual obligations to take the completed orders and pay the supplying factories so that they can pay their workers during these most difficult of times.

Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations ([CAMFEBA](#)) produced a [statement](#) on the outbreak of COVID-19 and recently undertook a survey to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on their members' businesses including best practices that they are currently implementing at the workplace to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have consolidate the results and recommendations from their members and brought them to discuss with the Government/MLVT to address the challenges employers face during the crisis.

CAMFEBA is developing a joint statement between Employers and Unions addressing the COVID-19 recovery approaches and policy recommendations.

The Government held a discussion with the private sector in last April to understand the issues and challenges the private sector, including CAMFEBA and GMAC, came across during the COVID-19 crisis. Inputs collected form the meeting inform the Government policy response to the COVID-19, including an economic recovery strategy.

Union federations have been supported in COVID-19 awareness and prevention, and they have then shared the information with their members and local unions. National Trade Union Council

(NTUC) made up of 16 major national unions submitted a request to MLVT for dialogue to address the impacts on workers affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

In September 2020, tripartite consultations on policies were back for the first time ever since the outbreak of the corona virus. The National Minimum Wage Council that is made up of respective 17 members of the tripartite constituent groups held a few rounds of tripartite negotiations on minimum wage adjustment for the garment and footwear sector amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the monthly minimum wage was set at US\$192 for 2021 (\$2 more over 2020). Also, there was a tripartite consultation on the proposed amendments to the labour law held on 15 September 2020.

A tripartite annual meeting on the Decent Work Country Programme were held in November 2020 and the tripartite partners agreed on five areas of priority for the COVID-19 recovery to support businesses and workers affected by COVID-19 crisis. These include: (1) development of e-learning/digital TVET programme for skilling, upskilling and reskilling of workers; (2) promoting OSH standards, including safe return to work protocols for workers and enterprises; (3) employment and income recovery for workers and enterprises; (4) social dialogue for sustainable solutions to mitigate and to build back better from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and (5) strengthening and expanding social protection to vulnerable workers, including for construction workers, returning migrant workers and informal workers. These are being delivered and monitored jointly in 2021.

European Chamber of Commerce (EuroCham in Cambodia) have kept their members in Cambodia informed of the Government policy response to COVID-19 by publishing [official announcements](#) by line ministries and state institutions on a weekly basis.

Other measures

The Government has expanded existing social protection programmes to the poor and vulnerable through especially cash transfer. On-demand ID Poor to cover new poor from the COVID-19 was rolled out in June when poor and vulnerable households already in the national ID poor database have begun to receive cash transfer from the Government – payments on a monthly average of \$30-\$50 per household depending on the household size and vulnerability level. Under the programme, each eligible and registered household receives either \$20 or \$30 a month, as a basic benefit. In addition, the household receives top-up amounts for members of vulnerable groups including pregnant women, children under 2, the elderly, people with disabilities and people living with HIV. As of 24 January 2021, around 710,000 households comprising of 2.8 million people received payouts totalling more than US\$232 million. The Government has reserved a budget of US\$300 million for and extended the programme until at least the second quarter of this year. [Read more](#)

The Government has established four Working Groups to coordinate its response to and to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19; (i) WG for budget, financing and social assistance policy to fight against the COVID-19; (ii) WG for the management of social assistance mechanism; (iii) WG for the management of supplies and prices of strategic goods; and (iv) WG for monetary and banking measures.

UN and development partners will coordinate and collaborate with the working groups to support the Government's response and recovery measures, essentially with the WGs 1 and 2 on social protection measures.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Cambodia has conducted a socio-economic assessment of the consequences of COVID-19. This leads to submission of social protection policy options for Cambodia focusing on the effects of stimulus packages that include cash transfers for poor and vulnerable are being implemented by the Government.

The UNCT has developed and implemented a Social and Economic Response Plan that supports Cambodia to manage the COVID19 crisis and emerge stronger and better. The plan, which is informed by the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 launched in April, is designed to support the Government of Cambodia's efforts to prepare, respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on: (i) Providing immediate health response to suppress transmission of the virus and to end the pandemic; (ii) Tackling the many social and economic dimensions of the crisis; and (iii) Setting the stage for an inclusive, sustainable, equitable and resilient recovery. [Read more.](#)

Specifically, on the returning migrants, the UNCT has worked closely with the national authorities to mobilize support for returnees and host communities. In this regard, two technical teams have been organized within the UNCT to focus on: (1) health and protection; and (2) food security and livelihoods.

Cambodia UNCT received US\$1-million from UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF) to strengthen the country's preparedness, response and resilience to COVID19. This project was jointly implemented by four agencies (WHO, IOM, UNFPA and UNICEF) to provide returning migrants with improved access to COVID-19 information and economic reintegration assistance packages to vulnerable migrants. This includes provision of mental health support to vulnerable children, parents and caregivers; improved access to maternal care for pregnant migrants; providing safe spaces and support for GBV survivors among migrants; and training for health professionals on vulnerable community level care.

Cambodia UNCT also received additional US\$846,325 from the COVID-19 MPTF for a project called Unlocking Cambodian Women's Potential through Fiscal Space Creation. The project was implemented jointly by UNCDF, IOM, IFAD and UNDP, focusing on policy design and the operational rollout of the credit facility; providing relevant gender-focused research; and piloting the credit guarantee schemes with female enterprise owners.

UNDP in partnership with World Bank and WHO has supported the Ministry of Health in procuring 60 ambulances, 50 ventilators and other emergency medical items to help the Government scale up the national efforts in COVID-19 response and recovery from the pandemic.

Activities of employers' organizations

- The **CAMBODIAN FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS**

(CAMFEBA) surveyed members to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their business, including best practices currently implemented at their workplace. [CAMFEBA Impact Assessment Report](#)

- CAMFEBA developed guidelines on workplace hygiene. Internally, CAMFEBA has an Operation Sustainable Plan (OSP) and Workforce Preparation for different phases of the outbreak.
- Issued and released the statement on preventing the spread of the Coronavirus in Cambodia on January 29, 2020. [>> detail](#)
- Conducted the survey and collected the data from members on COVID-19 Impact Assessment on Members Business on March 19, 2020. [>> detail](#)
- Sent email to members to keep reminding on COVID-19 protection. [>> detail](#)
- Developed monthly newsletter for members on COVID-19 alert/information. [>> detail](#)
- Developed the Legal Pointer on Suspension of Employment Contracts to educate members on the key legal provisions. [>> detail](#).
- CAMFEBA produced a [statement](#) on the outbreak of COVID-19 and offered its support for the government's efforts in preventing the spread.
- CAMFEBA supported the tourism sector, led by the Federation of Tourism, to meet the Ministry of Economic and Finance in order to present the [concerns and proposed recommendations](#) to get support from the government. The Tourism Federation, a CAMFEBA's industrial association member, will collect information from members, produce a report on COVID-19 impacts and submit proposals to the government. [>> detail](#).
- CAMFEBA has developed CAMFEBA Operation Sustainable Plan and Workforce Preparation for internal arrangement and implementation. CAMFEBA holds weekly Task Force team meeting to update the situation of COVID in the provinces. CAMFEBA has upgraded its facilities to be able to work from home.
- In accordance with COVID-19 Assessment on Member Businesses, CAMFEBA held [Webinar Series](#) on social security benefits and employment contract suspension in responding to the impacts of COVID-19.

China

Last Updated: **29 September 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

Fiscal and monetary policies were initially aimed at supporting antivirus manufacturing, public transportation and daily necessities. Then a package was launched to support the resumption of work and production focusing on tax alleviation, easing monetary policies and public investment.

The Government has prioritized the stabilisation of employment for 2020 and a number of specific targets were set including the creation of 9 million new jobs in urban areas:

http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202005/30/content_WS5ed197f3c6d0b3f0e94990da.html

Fiscal and Tax Policies

- Financial and tax measures to help SMEs for 4 years

http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202002/25/content_WS5e5534dac6d0c201c2cbce84.htm

http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/26/content_WS5ea59409c6d0b3f0e94990da.html

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-03/02/content_5485597.htm

http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/infographics/202004/15/content_WS5e96b616c6d0c201c2cc0f8

http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202004/14/content_WS5e95d363c6d0c201c2cc0e76.htm

- Tax and fee cuts policies extended to the end of 2020 for SMEs in public transport, catering and accommodation, tourism and entertainment sectors.

http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/policywatch/202008/09/content_WS5f2ff56cc6d029c1c26377b9

http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202006/t20200624_377465.html

- Stabilizing foreign trade and investment

http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/infographics/202003/12/content_WS5e69d419c6d0c201c2cbe1

http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/infographics/202004/08/content_WS5e8d76ffc6d0c201c2cc077

- The State Council of China adopted new policy to stabilize foreign trade and investment, promote innovation for trade in services.

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2020-08/12/content_5534361.htm

- Infrastructure construction

http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/infographics/202004/29/content_WS5ea91d81c6d0b3f0e9496a

http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202004/28/content_WS5ea8516dc6d0b3f0e94969a9.htm

Monetary Policies

- Improve macroeconomic plans, create effective demand, optimize the supply structure, and keep liquidity on track

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-02/01/content_5473639.htm

http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/liuhe/202005/05/content_WS5eb101b0c6d0b3f0e9496fef.f

- Central bank to target RRR cuts and refinancing

http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/16/content_WS5e98606bc6d0b3f0e94990da.html

- Temporary deferral of repayment of loans to SMEs; addition extension arrangements for enterprises with good growth prospects; Optimize financing guarantee services for

affected enterprises;

<http://www.cbirc.gov.cn/cn/view/pages/ItemDetail.html?docId=892278&itemId=926>

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-02/03/content_5474105.htm

- China has completed the special transfer payment of 2 trillion yuan (\$289.72 billion) to local governments. The special transfer payment mechanism has been established to channel funds straight to prefecture and county-level governments and directly benefit businesses and people.

http://english.www.gov.cn/news/pressbriefings/202008/27/content_WS5f46eab5c6d0f7257

http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202008/17/content_WS5f3a9825c6d029c1c2637fa

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Social protection

- Increased use of online platforms for social security services:
http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/shehuibaozhang/gzdt/202002/t20200212_359661.
- Eligibility to injury benefits for staff having contracted COVID-19 at work:
http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202001/t20200123_357525.html
- Reduction of employers' contribution to social insurance schemes
http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202002/t20200221_360350.html.
- Reimbursement of online consultations for chronic and common diseases
http://www.nhsa.gov.cn/art/2020/3/2/art_37_2750.html
- Unemployment social assistance for up to 6 months for the unemployed not eligible for unemployment social insurance benefits. Increased social assistance to families in difficulties. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2020-03/20/content_5493574.htm
- The 2020 Government Work Report urges a series of measures to meet people's basic living needs. Those include raising government subsidies for basic medical insurance for rural and non-working urban residents. Government subsidies per capita will be increased by 30 yuan to no less than 550 yuan per person per year.
<http://english.www.gov.cn/2020special/govtworkreport2020>
- CNY 3.71 billion (USD 525 million) of price subsidies offered to people in need.
http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/24/content_WS5ea296c7c6d0b3f
- Basic pension increases for retirees. Starting January 1, 2020, the basic pension level is adjusted by 5 percent of the 2019 monthly basic pension for retirees. Nearly 300 million people in the country receive pensions. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-04/19/content_5504190.htm
- The MOHRSS publishes a checklist to help registered unemployed workers understand and benefit from all employment and entrepreneurship support measures.
<http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/dongtaixinwen/buneyaowen/202010/t20201013>

Employment retention

- SMEs with low layoff rate get a refund up to 100% of previous year's unemployment contributions:
http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202003/20/content_WS5e74af1fc6d0c201
- Support migrant workers: http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-03/30/content_5497102.htm;
http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/30/content_WS5eaac4fac6d0b3f
http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202004/29/content_WS5ea91795c6d0b3f0e9496a
- 3.2 million companies received CNY 42.3 billion (USD 5.98 billion) in refunded unemployment insurance premiums.
http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202005/07/content_WS5eb3406cc6d0b3f
- Promotion of platform economy to promote employment and poverty alleviation.
http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-05/26/content_5515153.htm
- New vocational skill training program launched to stabilize employment for migrant workers - enterprises subsidized to train migrant workers especially from impoverished counties. http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202006/t20200601_370724.html
- Creation of jobs in welfare public institutions. http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/jiuye/zcwj/202006/t20200602_370846.
- Create new opportunities for university graduates in state-funded R&D programs. Newly created research assistant's compensation must be at least equivalent to the minimum wage and employers must enrol them in social security schemes.
http://www.most.gov.cn/mostinfo/xinxifenlei/fgzc/gfxwj/gfxwj2020/202006/t20200601_156
- The State Council of China issued policy on supporting flexible employment through multiple channels.
http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202007/31/content_WS5f241442c6d029c1
http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2020-07/31/content_5531613.htm
- China to boost employment with multi-pronged measures
http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202010/09/content_WS5f80721cc6d0f7257693d37
- 15 ministries jointly issued the *Opinion on Supporting the Employment and Entrepreneurship of Rural Migrant Workers*
<http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/dongtaixinwen/buneyaowen/202008/t20200807> :
- The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security pilot electronic vocational skills training coupons system
http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202006/t20200623_377350.html
- The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security issued Vocational Skills Training Plan for Stable Employment of Migrant Workers
http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202006/t20200601_370724.html

Assistance to business and business continuity

- Promotion of online recruitment and training, vocational training subsidy;
http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202002/t20200207_358328.html

http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/14/content_WS5e94f6dfc6d0c201c2cc0

- Support entrepreneurship, start-ups, and platforms
http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/infographics/202003/18/content_WS5e71e065c6d0c201c
http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/17/content_WS5e98e7d7c6d0b3f0e949f
- Guideline on work resumption
http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202004/10/content_WS5e8fd97cc6d0c201c2cc09
- “Digital Transformation Partnership Action” launched to help SMEs to reduce the cost of digital transformation, shorten the transformation cycle, and improve the success rate of transformation. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-05/29/content_5515823.htm
- Lower financing costs for enterprises by cutting bank’s fees and charges, limiting bank deposit and keeping loan rates and requirements stable.
http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202005/26/content_WS5ecc50cdc6d0b3f
- Encourage street stalls and small stores to inject more vitality into the Chinese economy.
http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202006/01/content_WS5ed4ec73c6d0b3f0e94993f
- People’s Bank of China plans bank loan buyback to lift SME lending.
http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202006/03/content_WS5ed6dbedc6d0b3f
- China unveils new measures to boost private businesses, efforts will be intensified to reduce corporate costs for private enterprises, strengthen the support of scientific and technological innovation, and improve the supply of land and other key resources.
http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-10/23/content_5553704.htm;
http://english.www.gov.cn/news/pressbriefings/202010/26/content_WS5f96cacc6d0f72576
- State Council updated policies to support micro and small enterprises and self-employed businesses
http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/policywatch/202008/09/content_WS5f2ff56cc6d029c1c2f
- State Council promulgated Regulations on The Protection of Payments to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2020-07/14/content_5526768.htm

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH

- Several guidelines and recommendations for employers to protect workers’ health while resuming production. [More information](#)

Prevention of discrimination and exclusion

- Explicit prohibition of discrimination on the ground of COVID 19 infection, suspicion of infection, provenance from a region affected by the virus or suspicion of provenance from such region.
- Supreme Court’s “Guiding Opinion on the Proper Handling of Civil Cases Involving the

Novel Coronavirus Outbreak in Accordance With the Laws and specified non-discrimination to affected workers.

<http://www.court.gov.cn/zixun-xiangqing-226241.html>

Protection of medical workers

- The government issued a series of notice and guidance to request local government to take strong measures to protect the physical and psychological health of medical workers, prevent their infection, provide favourable remuneration, guarantee their work-family balance, and prevent workplace violence.

Protection of community workers

- The Governments at different levels adopted targeted measures to protect community workers. [More information](#)
- China adopts the Basic Healthcare and Health Promotion Law to promote basic medical and health care. The Law also requires stronger efforts on improving occupational health. https://npcobserver.com/legislation/basic-healthcare-and-health-promotion-law/http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/28/c_138663736.htm

Regulation of the application of COVID-19 vaccines in a work context

COVID-19 vaccination is currently not mandatory in laws and regulations in China; it is encouraged and is on a voluntary basis.

In December 2020, the Joint Working Mechanism for the Prevention and Control of the Pandemic of the State Council announced that China would first vaccinate workers in industries with higher exposure risks, such as cold-chain logistics, customs, medical care, and seafood markets, etc. on a voluntary basis (Policy of Implementation of COVID-19 Vaccination ([PowerPoint Template \(nhc.gov.cn\)](#))).

Starting from March 2021, COVID-19 vaccination was administered to general public on a voluntary basis. As of 15 September 2021, more than 2.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in China.

Since the COVID-19 vaccination in China is voluntary, the employees have the legal right to refuse to be vaccinated. On the other hand, employers still have the legal responsibility to provide a safe work environment under the Chinese laws, so they can formulate reasonable internal rules such as taking the employee's body temperature at reasonable intervals, or requiring employees to wear masks, etc.

It should be noted that in practice the employees might feel pressured to take vaccination due to the promotion of the vaccination and the high vaccination rates in China.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Social partners to negotiate working conditions and work arrangements to protect jobs and reduce business costs including flexible working hours, teleworking and wages

arrangements. [More information](#)

- Employers' organisation CEC developed 7 manuals to help their affiliates implement the emergency measures. CEC also developed a guide to help its members mitigate labour compliance risks during the COVID-19 period. The ACFIC, the employer organization of the private sector and SMEs, is monitoring the effects of the government supportive measures.
- The trade union ACFTU is guiding collective negotiations to find copying solutions for enterprises facing difficulties. [More information](#)
- To support low-income workers, the ACFTU has allocated 250 million yuan as poverty relief fund and it has launched a website to provide job information to help workers find jobs.
- The ACFTU promotes teleworking, flexible working arrangement and other supportive measures especially in sectors where [women](#) are concentrated.
- The tripartite partners in China adopt a joint Notice to strengthen consultation to maintain stable labour relations, protect workers and jobs during the COVID recovery. <http://acftu.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0526/c67560-31723593.html>
- Tripartite partners in China jointly adopts a *Three Year Action Plan on Capacity-Building Programme for Promotion of Harmonious Labour Relations*. <http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYRlzyhshbzb/dongtaixinwen/buneiyaowen/202009/t20200911> :
- All-China Federation of Trade Unions mobilized 6.18 billion yuan to help 203,800 workers' families in poverty and 272,400 low-income workers' families cope with COVID-19 in the first half of 2020. <http://www.acftu.org/template/10041/file.jsp?cid=222&aid=100892>
- China Enterprise Confederation organizes a tele-conference to guide its member organizations to foster harmonious labour relation and prepare for prolonged impact of COVID-19. http://www.cec1979.org.cn/view_sy.php?id=44286
- All-China Federation of Trade Unions pushes for integration of maternity protection measures into policies on safe return to work. <http://www.acftu.org/template/10041/file.jsp?cid=222&aid=100>
- China Enterprise Confederation organizes a series of broadcasted lectures by famous experts to guide enterprises on prevention of labour disputes in the context COVID-19. <http://cec1979.org.cn/gz/view.php?id=2118>
- State Council of China launched a national programme to alleviate burdens of enterprises and promote the development of SMEs to ensure enforcement of policy measures adopted to support enterprises and protect jobs in response to COVID-19. <http://cec1979.org.cn/gz/view.php?id=2169>
- All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) achieved the targets of Five-year Plan on Protection of Rural Migrant Workers. ACFTU has helped more than 1.2 million workers find jobs through its online employment service since the outbreak of COVID-19. https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202012/t20201224_749702.html?70keOa4k=qAqskGcT8bV3Tw1_hF5OY2csgHDSjCVLGMonAgHEUN0qqoUsgFw_qAqq.G
- The national tripartite partners issued a Notice on Protection Workers' Rights and

Interests in cold weathers. The measures promoted by the Notice are aimed to protect outdoor workers such as sanitation workers, riders and delivery workers.

[https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202101/t20210121_774094.html?](https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202101/t20210121_774094.html?70keOa4k=qAq1kGkWqSSf.t6kYkY.tdQ2uhwOKRD8WUzvL4KWQvEqqoYdgFw_qAqqTa)

[70keOa4k=qAq1kGkWqSSf.t6kYkY.tdQ2uhwOKRD8WUzvL4KWQvEqqoYdgFw_qAqqTa](https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202101/t20210121_774094.html?70keOa4k=qAq1kGkWqSSf.t6kYkY.tdQ2uhwOKRD8WUzvL4KWQvEqqoYdgFw_qAqqTa)

- The All-China Federation of Trade Unions, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and other five ministries jointly issues the Opinion on Protection the Rights and Interests of Delivery Workers. The Opinion will promote a series measures to protect delivery workers, include strengthening efforts to organize them into trade unions and promote collective bargaining.

[https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202107/t20210709_783157.html?](https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202107/t20210709_783157.html?70keOa4k=qAqikGcnIKEI0zietjjFdQ_CtMZT9itN0IsQgKzvSxaqqHGpTjw_qAqqjA)

[70keOa4k=qAqikGcnIKEI0zietjjFdQ_CtMZT9itN0IsQgKzvSxaqqHGpTjw_qAqqjA](https://www.acftu.org/xwdt/ghyw/202107/t20210709_783157.html?70keOa4k=qAqikGcnIKEI0zietjjFdQ_CtMZT9itN0IsQgKzvSxaqqHGpTjw_qAqqjA)

- China promote a joint conference system among 17 ministries and key stakeholders to boost occupational disease control.

http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latestreleases/202007/22/content_WS5f17f520c6d029c1

- The National Health Commission released a guideline to improve the working conditions, wages and benefits of medical workers, including disease control personnel, as part of a "long-term mechanism" aimed at boosting their care and protection.

<https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202106/30/WS60dbc928a310efa1bd65ed43.htm>

Activities of employers' organizations

- **CHINA ENTERPRISE CONFEDERATION (CEC)** developed a guide on human resources and labour relations compliance issues. The guide is a compilation of the legal requirements of relevant laws and the policy measures recently adopted by government in response to COVID-19. The guide provides practical information on the issues that companies may encounter in the use of labour during the public health emergency period and includes Q&As such as "can employers ask their employees to have their temperature tested", and "how do employers deal with employees who can't return to the workplace".
- To assess business impact, CEC conducted an online survey between 18-20 February 2020, of Top 500 Chinese manufacturing companies to collect information of resumption of production, challenges facing these companies and their requests. The survey covered 491 companies.

Cook Islands

Last Updated: **8 June 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- Employment Services scheme to assist individuals in finding new employment as soon as

possible.

- Cash grants of up to \$15,000 to assist eligible businesses.
- Income tax credit of \$2,000 for short-term accommodation providers with up to 10 beds.
- Provisional tax adjustments:
 - businesses and individuals can re-estimate their provisional tax;
 - early refunds where provisional tax has been overpaid;
 - the provisional tax threshold increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000.
- Tax relief through payment instalment arrangements and serious financial hardship measures.

<http://www.mfem.gov.ck/economic-planning/covid-19-economic-response-plan-erp>

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Private sector wage subsidy at the minimum wage to all employers who are affected by COVID-19 for a period of up to 3 months.
- A further training subsidy at the minimum wage to support recognised training initiatives for a period of up to 3 months.
- Reduction in employer Cook Islands National Superannuation Fund (CINSF) contributions from 5 to 3 per cent for a 3-month period.
- Self-isolation support at the minimum wage for two weeks to assist eligible employees required to self-isolate by the Ministry of Health.
- Electricity subsidy of 60 per cent for all businesses on Rarotonga and 100 per cent subsidy for all businesses on Aitutaki, for 3 months starting from the 19 March 2020 meter reading.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- School Closure Support payment of \$100 for each child for each fortnight that school holidays are extended.
- Electricity subsidy of 100 per cent for households on Rarotonga and Aitutaki for 3 months starting from the 19 March 2020 meter reading.
- One-off welfare payment of \$400 to old age pensioners, care givers and the infirm and destitute who are registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF).
- Reduction in individual employee Cook Island Superannuation Fund (CINSF) contributions from 5 to 3 per cent for a 3-month period.
- One month of benefits at the minimum wage to be provided to all individuals who have become unemployed due to the impact of COVID-19.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

N/A

Other measures

N/A

Activities of employers' organizations

COOK ISLANDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (CICC) established a Private Sector Taskforce (PST) which meets weekly. The PST comprises of members from across the private sector including the Bankers Association, the Tourism Industry Council, the Chamber, CITC (the country's biggest employer), Air Rarotonga. Cook Islands Tourism Corporation and Internal Affairs are also members as is the Leader of the Opposition. The Taskforce is tasked with assessing the impacts of COVID19 on the economy, developing policy proposals, and proposing services and assistance for the Chamber to offer to member companies.

The Chamber provides regular updates via the [website](#) and social media ([Facebook](#)) to keep members informed of the latest policy developments and resources coming available and has compiled [an online reference centre](#) for business to access materials.

The Chamber has produced a number of factsheets for members on existing regulations on wages, benefits, and immigration and delivers this information through its extensive private sector database which has been delivered as a result of COVID-19 and encompasses businesses, sole traders and many other people and entities that previously had not been Members of the Chamber

The Chamber is now planning of setting up and engaging its youth chapter to develop tangible ideas for living and working in an economy without tourists for a period of time, and in the longer term, diversifying the economy to promote financial resilience in the future.

The PST produced and has now submitted to Government two proposals for business assistance. The first White Paper dealt with the urgent cash-flow requirements from the sudden drop in income as soon as the border was closed. Many of the requests in this initial paper were adopted by Government, including a proposal for CICC to operate a Business Support Office, funded by Government, with responsibility for managing all public inquiries relating to businesses and employers during this crisis. The Business Support Office has since been tasked with establishing registers of members of the Private Sector community that may have skills and experience that other businesses and Government might require as well as a redeployment register to record employees that may be available for work, and employers who have additional requirements. This office continues to support large numbers of private sector businesses to enable them to receive and access assistance, and future plans include capitalising on the process transitioning many from the informal sector to the formal sector. The second White Paper involved a substantial amount of work in economic modelling, and a comprehensive survey of businesses, the results of which formed the basis of recommendations for continued economic stabilisation and recovery for the private sector. Within days of the White Paper being delivered to the Minister of Finance and his team, the Government announced the outline of the Economic Response Package Round 2, While not every recommendation was taken up, the Chamber was nevertheless pleased overall with the

response.

It is now expected that with the Cook Islands remaining Covid-19 free, and New Zealand not having any new cases for some weeks, that our collective borders can form a bubble and therefore economic activity through tourism may be in a position of recommencing within a month. This would bring much relief to businesses and therefore the economy.

Fiji

Last Updated: **9 June 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- Government partners with Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) to provide FJ\$1 billion (US\$400 million) stimulus package.
- There would be no water supply disconnections until 31 December, 2020. The Water Authority of Fiji has also agreed to cart water to any area impacted by cuts through July this year - at a cost of just over \$US2m.
- Budget of FJ\$5 million announced to prop up SMEs.
- The Reserve Bank of Fiji reduced the overnight policy rate to 0.25 percent from 0.5 percent on March 18 to counter the economic impact of COVID-19.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- From 6 April, workers in the hospitality sector who had lost their jobs or on reduced hours would get up to FJ\$1000 (\$US435) from their National Provident Fund (FNPF). If they do not have the funds in their account, the government would subsidise the difference.
- People affected in the lockdown at Lautoka through job losses and reduced hours can access FJ\$500 (\$US217).
- Loan repayments have been deferred for six months including mortgages, personal loans, hire purchase for those who lost their jobs or are on reduced pay. Banks would also waive all charges on minimum balances for customers.
- The Reserve Bank (RBF) will make \$US26m worth of loans to banks at an interest rate of one percent, he said. The banks could then offer loans to small and medium businesses and customers at a maximum of five percent.
- The RBF would also re-activate and expand the Disaster Rehabilitation and Containment Facility.
- Energy Fiji Limited (electricity) would now fully match the state's existing 50 percent subsidy on the first 100 units of electricity for households earning less than \$US13,000 annually.
- For students with tertiary education loans, all repayments have been suspended until 31 December, 2020. Working Fijians will have about \$US4.5m in relief.
- Civil servants, including those working in state-owned enterprises and companies, will not

receive pay cuts. However, the Prime Minister, his Cabinet and MPs would receive a 20 percent pay cut.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Fiji National Provident Fund contributions will reduce from 10% to 5% for both employers and workers.
- The package includes funding tools Doctors and nurses with the tools they need to combat the virus and keep the country safe.
- Affected employers should continue to pay salaries as normal and the government would reimburse them. For unpaid salaries for those earning less than FJ\$30,000 (\$US13,000) the state would fund those upfront, he said.
- From 1 April to 31 December, FNPF employee contributions would decrease from 10 percent to five percent. Employer contributions would also reduce from 10 to 5 percent.
- Government will pay 21 days' sick leave to people earning less than \$US13,000 if they tested positive to the coronavirus.
- Unemployment benefit reduced from FJ\$2000 to FJ\$1000

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

The Minister for Employment invited the workers, employers and ILO to an informal tripartite meeting on 20 March.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- The Government has released a package is primarily based on giving early access to the social security fund of workers to manage themselves during the crisis. Employees in the tourism and hospitality trade are allowed to withdraw up to a maximum of 1,000 Fijian Dollars, while the other sector workers in the formal sector are allowed a maximum of 500 Fijian dollars, while the Govt is to top up the balance to a maximum of 1000 FD
- The FTUC is concerned in using the social security fund as a basis for financing wages and supplementary incomes during the pandemic and economic crisis. Because this would lead to longer, term issues of the fund deteriorating and being unable to support workers in the future
- The union is concerned about the informal sector workers which constituents between 60-80% of the economy who might not be supported through these processes. There has not been any proposal yet on how these workers are to be supported
- The tripartite mechanisms for dialogue is not fully operational during the crisis. There has been around two meetings with employer groups and about two meetings with the

Government by the FTUC to push on concerns raised by its membership

- The FTUC is lobbying for greater dialogue and coverage of workers during the crisis period. It is initiating dialogue much as possible with Government and Employers. FTUC has also released several media statements concerning the crisis
- The ongoing matters of FOA in Fiji is continuing. Even while the curfew and lock down is in place the charges in courts against the National Secretary of FTUC Mr. Felix Anthony continues. The FTUC had to seek an interim relief order to pardon Mr. Anthony from not attending courts due to lockdown.

Source: Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC) -<http://www.ftuc.org.fj/>

Activities of employers' organizations

Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF) has launched a COVID19 enterprise impact assessment among member companies with the findings to inform future service development and provide an evidence base for policy advocacy;

FCEF has taken a number of actions for its members in terms of tools/guidance:

- Launched the Employers Guide on Managing your Workplace During COVID-19 and Guide For Employers on Working from Home adapted from ILO ACTEMP resources.
- Provides awareness and information sharing on COVID-19 (risks and prevention) to members through emails, social media and creating a tab (COVID-19 Resources) on the FCEF website.
- Conducted a series of online **COVID-19 advisory services on HR and IR matters**
- Conducted two call out's to members in its efforts in strengthening the Federation's Fiji Business Disaster Resilience (FBDRC) Council in its role as the private sector coordinating mechanism for private sector to engage with government and partners on resilience building, response and recovery activities.

FBDRC began populating a private sector information sheet for preparedness and response. This will assist FCEF and Government to identify business focal points from different sectors.

Fiji Business Disaster Resilience (FBDRC) Information Sheet

FBDRC called out to members to provide their point(s) of contact that FCEF can liaise with. MSMEs were encouraged to come on board as well.

FCEF will continue to help map out key service providers in essential industries to assist with preparedness and response.

Solidarity in the face of the current crisis being faced can help address some of the impacts. FCEF believes in the continued collaboration and engagement with all stakeholders and government to achieve favourable outcomes for all.

Other actions:

- Online training on **'Sexual Harassment & Workplace discrimination'**
- **Toll Free line to support members** with enquiries on 'HR and IR employment and employee' matters
- **FBDRC** –point of contact for private sector response to Government
- Conducting survey on 'input on what business and workers are going through now in relation to COVID 19' with the following 2 questions:
 - **No. of Businesses that maybe reducing hours/making employees redundant**
 - **Number of employees affected**

Policy proposals made include:

- a) Development of Business Continuity Plans fully for SME's, this support is fully subsidized through our partners Business Link Pacific for their support. Development of BCP's will be driven by the focal point for FBDRC.
- b) Development of COVID-19 Response, and Workplace Policy

Proposed for nation wide lock down and employees to take annual leave, family care leave and sick leave in consultation with Government and Trade Unions and participated in the tripartite socio-economic impact assessment for Fiji with support from ILO.

Private Sector Meeting with Government on Protocol for Business Community During Nation-Wide Curfew.

Liasing with Government focal points.

Other FCEF recommendations/proposals to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19

- a) Develop support groups for employers/businesses by sector
- b) Subsidised online trainings for large corporates and MSME's
- c) Strengthening of supply chain training
- d) General Information sharing

India

Last Updated: **8 July 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

fiscal policy

- A comprehensive economic package announced which includes, USD 21.9 billion under [‘Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana’](#), targeting 800 million people affected by lockdown
- In May 2020, a special economic package ‘Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ (that is, Self Reliant India Campaign) of USD 265 billion announced. It includes [measures for relief and credit support to businesses, especially MSMEs](#); the poor, including migrants, farmers, and street vendors; measures to strengthen agriculture infrastructure logistics and; structural reforms across key sectors such as coal, airspace and power and others.
- [World Bank has pledged \\$1 billion to for Accelerating India’s COVID-19 Social Protection Response Programme](#). (May 2020)
- Government of India and World Bank signed [USD 400 million project](#) to protect India’s poor and vulnerable from the impact of COVID-19 (Dec 2020)

monetary policy

- [Reserve Bank of India](#) (RBI) announced a moratorium of EMIs on all outstanding loans till August 31, 2020.
- The Reserve Bank of India reduced repo rate by 40 basis points to 4 per cent in an effort to boost liquidity. Accordingly, the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate stand reduced to 4.25 per cent from 4.65 per cent; and the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands reduced to 3.35 per cent from 3.75 per cent.
- Special refinance facilities of USD 6.5 billion announced for all India financial institutions. The time period for realization and repatriation of [export proceeds for exports](#) made up to or on July 31, 2020, has been extended to 15 months from the date of export. RBI has extended a line of credit worth USD 1.9 billion to the EXIM Bank for a period of 90 days from the date of availing, with rollover up to a maximum period of one year. Extension of time up to one year has been granted for completion of remittances against normal imports into India. Way and Means Advance (WMA) limit increased by 30% from the existing limit for all States/UTs to enable the State Governments to tide over the situation arising from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

support to specific sectors, incl the health sector

- [USD 1.96 billion](#) earmarked for testing facilities, personal protection, isolation beds, ICU beds, ventilators and training medical and paramedical staff.
- District Mineral Fund diverted for supplementing and augmenting medical testing, screening and other activities
- ‘Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package: [Insurance Scheme for Health Workers](#) Fighting COVID-19’ approved. It will provide an insurance cover of USD 65,000 for ninety (90) days to a total of around 2.2 million public healthcare providers, including community health workers. It will also include accidental loss of life on account of contracting COVID-19.
- Scheme approved on [Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks](#) for financing Common Infrastructure Facilities in 3 Bulk Drug Parks. Also approved , Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for

promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical Key Starting Materials (KSMs)/Drug Intermediates and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs).

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi([PM-KISAN](#)) [Scheme](#) about 84 million farmers have benefitted since the lockdown on 24 March.
- Emergency Working Capital Facility worth USD 39 billion extended to MSMEs. Additional, USD 2 Billion subordinate Debt for provisioned for stressed MSMEs.
- USD 3.9 billion special Liquidity Scheme introduced for NBFC/HFC/MFIs. USD 5.9 billion partial credit guarantee Scheme 2.0 introduced for Liabilities of NBFCs/MFIs.
- Production Linked Incentive worth USD 19.9 billion offered to 10 champion sectors (Advance Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery, Electronic/Technology Products, Automobiles & Auto Components, Pharmaceuticals drugs, Telecom & Networking Products, Textile Products: MMF segment and technical textiles, Food Products, High Efficiency Solar PV Modules, White Goods (ACs & LED), Speciality Steel)
- USD 8 Billion have been provisioned for subsidizing fertilizers provided to support agriculture

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- **social protection**
- Government extended Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana till November-end for distributing free foodgrains - 5 kg rice or wheat and 1 kg gram every month to the poor. Under '[Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana](#)' free food ration will be provided through Public Distribution System. Wages under employment gurantee scheme (MGNREGS) increased. Direct cash transfers of USD 13 for poor pensioners, widows and disabled and USD 19.6 for 200 million women will be transferred in instalments.
- Directives issued to State Governments to directly release funds into the accounts of construction workers using the cess collected by their respective Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Boards.
- Government has provisioned to transfer USD 26.25 to farmers under the existing [PM Kisan Yojana](#). The move will benefit 8.69 million farmers
- The labour ministry has allowed over 60 million subscribers of retirement fund body [Employee Provident Fund Organization \(EPFO\)](#) to withdraw an amount not exceeding their three months basic pay and dearness allowance from their EPF account in view of the lockdown
- The Employees Provident Fund Support for business and organised workers extended for another 3 months for salary months of June, July and August 2020. EPF Contribution reduced for Employers and Employees for 3 months to 10% from 12% for all establishments and covered by EPFO for next 3 months

- USD 5.3 billion additional allocation for MGNREGS (employment guarantee scheme) made to provide employment boost.
- [Advisory](#) issued to State government to make adequate arrangements for food and shelter of poor and needy people including migrant laborers, preferably, at the place of their work. Further, house rent should not be demanded from the labourers during the lockdown period by owners.
- Compensation payment of USD 13054 extended to all Postal employees including Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) succumbing to the disease on duty
- Additional outlay of 1.3 billion USD has been provided for Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana – housing scheme.

- ***Employment retention***

- On 12 November 2020, a new Scheme "[Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana](#)" launched to give incentive for employment especially to those who lost their jobs during covid 19 pandemic lockdown. The beneficiaries under the new employment scheme include any new employee in enterprise registered under Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) with monthly wages less than Rs 15000 (USD 200). For establishments up to 1000 employees, 12 percent of wages as employee's contributions and 12 per cent of wages as employer's contributions towards Employees Provident Fund will be given by Union government
- [Advisory](#) issued to employers of public and private establishments to not terminate their employees, particularly casual and contractual workers from their job or reduce their wages during 21-day lockdown period.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment has set up [20 Control Rooms](#) under the Chief Labour Commissioner (C) on pan India basis to address wage related issues of workers and mitigate problems of migrant workers.

- **Assistance to business and business continuity**

- Interest subvention of 2% for prompt payees for a period of 12 months to MUDRA Shishu loan receivers (minor loan), who have loans below USD 660
- USD 663 million crore Credit facility provisioned for Street Vendors. Bank credit facility for initial working capital up to USD 130 for each enterprise will be extended to 5 million street vendors.
- [Message](#) from Textile Minister to garment retailers for not cancelling any of the existing orders and providing scope for delaying schedule and payment plans.

- USD 796 million crore of funds under Compensatory Afforestation Management & Planning Authority (CAMPA) will be used for Afforestation and Plantation works, including in urban areas.
- A special drive to provide concessional credit to PM-KISAN beneficiaries through Kisan Credit Cards, which will include fisherman and Animal Husbandry Farmers. This will inject additional liquidity of USD 26 billion in the farm sector. 25 million farmers will benefit from this.
- USD 13 billion will be provided for funding Agriculture Infrastructure Projects at farm-gate & aggregation points (Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies, Farmers Producer Organizations, Agriculture entrepreneurs, Start-ups, etc.)
- USD 1.4 billion for activities in Marine, Inland fisheries and Aquaculture and USD 1.1 billion for Infrastructure - Fishing Harbours, Cold chain, Markets will be provided
- USD 1.3 billion additional budget stimulus will be provided for capital and industrial expenditure

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH

- [Guidelines](#) on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 in workplace settings issued.
- [Advisory](#) for managing Health care workers working in COVID and Non-COVID areas of the Hospital issued.
- [Guidelines](#) issued on rational use PPE and training provided for frontline health workers.
- The Government of India has launched a mobile app '[AarogyaSetu](#)'. It will enable people to assess themselves the risk for their catching the Corona Virus infection.
- [University Grants Commission](#) (UGC) Issues Guidelines for Re-opening the Universities and Colleges Post Lockdown due to COVID-19 Pandemic

New work arrangements

- The government has allowed reopening of economic and other activities in a phased manner and is issuing Standard Operating Procedures for possible venues. The detailed guidelines issued on 25 November 2020 are [here](#).

prevention of discrimination and exclusion

- [IEC materials](#) have been developed and disseminated on 'How to communicate with Covid 19 suspected and confirmed cases. Front Line Health workers are being trained on addressing Myths and facts around 19 using communication materials. Behavioural and [psycho-social health helpline](#) has been launched by the government.

access to health care

- As per [Health Ministry](#), the country has 1,093 COVID facilities, around 3.24 lakh hospital beds

and 6.5 lakh beds in COVID Care Centres, in addition to testing capacity of more than 1 lakh tests per day.

- 56 lakh trainings have been imparted for COVID Warriors (dedicated staff and volunteers).
- Manodarpan, an initiative announced for psycho-social support for students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional well-being.
- The roll-out of COVID-19 vaccine was initiated on 16 January 2021 in India. The Government will provide priority to the healthcare workers and the frontline workers who are estimated to be around 30 million, followed by those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population groups with co-morbidities numbering around 270 million.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- High level virtual discussion organised by CII (a partner of Employers Federation of India) with two central trade unions (that is, INTUC and BMS), on continuation of operation of factories producing essential goods and measures undertaken for safety of workers.
- Deliberations held by EBMOS, notably FICCI, AIOE, SCOPE, ASSOCHAM and others, and central trade unions on approaches for safe resumption of operations and revival of economy and livelihood recovery, including recommendations on relief measures for income and social protection support to workers and employers.

Other measures

- - Skill mapping of citizens returning from overseas through [SWADES](#) initiative
- Vande Bharat Mission launched for repatriation of nationals back to India.
- '[Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund](#) (PM CARES Fund)' launched as dedicated national fund to deal with the situation.
- The Central government has set up [11 empowered groups](#), under Disaster Management Act, for ensuring a comprehensive and integrated response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All States in India have announced special financial assistance package to provide cash transfer, food and shelter to disadvantaged groups and Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.

Links to relevant websites

For citizens <https://www.mygov.in/covid-19/>

For Health Practitioners <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

For businesses and investors <https://www.investindia.gov.in/bip>

For constituents <https://labour.gov.in/>

Activities of workers' organizations

- Ten Central Trade Unions (TUs) submitted joint letter to Prime Minister and Labour Minister demanding immediate steps to protect the vulnerable workers, livelihood

security for the informal sector and migrant workers for tripartite dialogue and inclusion of TUs in the COVID response task force. However, there are no response from government

- BMS, separately, has sent separate letter to the Prime Minister, Labour and Employment Minister and all Chief Minister of the states demanding action
- There was one bilateral conversation between the representative of the employers' organization and the representatives of two major TUs, BMS and INTUC regarding the operational modalities of the factories that produce essential items mainly on issues related to safety and health of workers and workplace cooperation during emergency
- Only recently, after the uproar of the opposition, central government consulted the opposition leaders
- In some states of India, unions are working with government officials providing volunteers services like awareness campaign and distribution of materials
- All the national and state level trade unions are undertaking humanitarian service for the workers including food, medical support, and protective equipment. Millions of migrant workers are in standoff in several sectors including the capital city Delhi where all the major TUs are operating humanitarian services.

Sources: Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions (BMS, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, AICCTU, CITU, AIUTUC, LPF, SEWA, UTUC, NTUF,)

Activities of employers' organizations

The **Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** made the following direct interventions for membership and with policy makers:

- A detailed report on the COVID 19 impact on Indian Industry and suggestions was prepared and was widely circulated to government, industry and other stakeholders in the States.
- Compendium of the state wise nodal government officials for facilitating the movement of goods and manpower under essential category was prepared and circulated to the members.

Following consultations with members from different industries, FICCI sought their views on current challenges and possible solutions for immediate action and made [proposals and recommendations](#) to the government. These proposals include:

- Proposal to enable credit and support easier credit facilities to affected sections of the businesses that operate on very short financial cycles. Government / RBI should direct banks to continue disbursement of loans.

- Offer relaxation on statutory compliances without penalty.
- Bank guarantees should not be encashed as almost all industries are under Force Majeure conditions and hence an extension of minimum six months should be given.
- Establish a single window nodal agency in each states to resolve industry issues.
- Communication to the Ministry of Labour to issue necessary instructions to allow free movement of personnel engaged in manufacturing and logistics on self-declaration basis.
- Support and communication by local administration to encourage people to go to work in areas associated with manufacturing and distribution of essential items.
- Give MSMEs across the board interest rate subvention at 3 per cent, on standard loans.

In addition, the **Employers' Federation of India (EFI)** has made [representations](#) to government on relaxation of labour laws.

-Establishment of Enterprise level COVID-19 Task Force: Guidelines for the establishment of an enterprise-level COVID-19 Task Force were jointly developed by the SD Specialist ILO New Delhi with the ILO Employers' (ACT-EMP) and Workers' (ACTRAV) Specialists. The guidelines inform and encourage the formation of an enterprise-level COVID-19 Task Force, comprising representatives of management and workers. The key purpose of the enterprise-level COVID-19 Task Force is to facilitate the recovery of enterprises from the effects of the pandemic, through a partnership between employers and workers in an enterprise.

The ILO DWT/CO-New Delhi is currently implementing activities in this regard together with ITC-Turin and social partners. A training of trainers programme on the guidelines for the establishment of the enterprise-level COVID-19 Task Force is currently underway. Training material is in place, and in partnership with ITC-Turin, 30 representatives of TUs and EOs have been trained as trainers in January 2021. 17 of them are nominated by EBMOs. As a next step to this, preparations for piloting the task force at enterprise level is underway.

-Guidelines for setting up COVID enterprise bi partite task forces in India which were adopted by AIOE and EFI. The ILO via the International Training Centre (ILO ITC Turin) provided a training for employers' organizations representatives thereafter on "Workplace co - operation mechanisms and how they could set up the task forces in their enterprises".

Indonesia

Last Updated: **6 October 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

Fiscal policy

The government of Indonesia announced a national response package to the pandemic with additional state budget allocation of **IDR 405.1 trillion or USD 20.3 billion**. The additional budget is allocated to fund the following initiatives:

- Health sector (IDR 75 trillion or USD 3.8 billion)

- The purchase of medical equipment and supplies such as test kits and ventilators
- Protection of and incentives for medical workers including doctors and nurses
- Social protection (IDR 110 trillion or USD 5.5 billion)
 - Expansion of conditional cash transfer programme and staple food programme. Cash allowance for the programmes is increased.
 - Budget allocation for Pre-employment card (*Kartu Pra Kerja*) is doubled to IDR 20 trillion. The cardholders are entitled to receive training and allowances. The scheme benefited about 6 million school graduates, laid-off workers and informal workers among others. Beneficiaries receive a voucher for online training worth IDR 1 million, allowance worth IDR 2.4 million (0.6 million per month for 4 months) and incentives for participating in surveys, IDR 0.15 million.
 - Electricity bill discount for 3 months
- Tax incentives (IDR 70.1 trillion or USD 5 billion)
- Workers in the manufacturing sector with annual income below Rp 200 million will be exempt from income taxes for six months
- Import tax payments will be deferred for six months in 19 manufacturing sectors
- The corporate income tax will be reduced from 25 percent to 22 percent
- Debt payments will be delayed by six months for micro loan credit (*Kredit Usaha Rakyat-KUR*) for businesses affected by COVID-19
- National Economic recovery (IDR 150 trillion or USD 7.5 billion)
 - Debt/Credit restructuring
 - Financing for small-sized and medium enterprises

Indonesia maintained fiscal discipline (i.e. state budget deficit below 3 per cent of GDP) since the 1998 Asian financial crisis. An estimated state budget deficit will be 5.07 per cent of GDP.

Monetary policy

The Bank of Indonesia (BI) lowered the nation's policy rate, the BI seven-day reverse repo rate, from 5.00 per cent in January 2020 to 3.50 per cent in February 2021.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Social protection

Social protection programmes are expanded with an additional state budget of IDR 110 trillion in order to mitigate the impact of the outbreak. Please see the section above for details.

Social assistance

Social assistance will be provided to those who are laid off due to the outbreak. The Implementing Agency for Social Security for Workers will provide a cash compensation in the amount IDR 1 million per month up to three months.

The Ministry of Manpower recommends the remission of Employment BPJS fee contributions to companies affected by COVID-19 for up to 6 months.

Expansion of cash-for-work schemes

The government through the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration issued a circular to reallocate the village funds to respond to the pandemic. It requested all village authorities to revise their village budget to prioritise village-based Employment Intensive Cash for Work schemes (PTKD). The program targets marginalised groups in the village such as deprived family, the unemployed, day labourers.

Employment measures

MoM requests employers to discuss in advance with the trade unions/workers representative at the company level and take alternative measures before laying off workers, among others:

1. Reducing wages and perks of the top-level positions;
2. Reducing work shifts;
3. Limiting /removing overtime work;
4. Reducing work hours;
5. Reducing workdays;
6. Temporary layoff or rotational work;
7. (It can either) extend or not extend the contracts of the workers whose contracts have expired; and
8. Providing pensions for those who are eligible.

MoM intensifies employment opportunity development and expansion program through labour intensive and entrepreneurship for affected workers, prospective migrant workers, repatriated Indonesian migrant workers, and MSME workers.

MoM strengthens partnerships with strategic partners at the bilateral, regional and global levels to safeguard investments and stabilize the trade and investment climate as well as maintaining the open labor market. MoM extends work permits for foreign workers in Indonesia for certain amount of time during the pandemic.

Skills training programmes

The government optimizes the implementation Pre-Employment Program, especially for laid-off workers through the provision of training and financial support, along with Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs and Project Management Office (PMO).

MoM provides competence and productivity-based training incentives. It optimizes the role of Employment Training Body (BLK) to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 through BLK Responses COVID-19 Program.

Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Programmes

MoM provides training, helps with business facilities and establishes entrepreneurial groups for laid-off workers and the unemployed by involving the local community. It assists businesses by providing equipment and material for groups or communities in the Covid-19 affected areas.

Wage subsidies

The government allocated IDR 37.7 trillion to provide wage subsidy to a total of 15.7 million

workers who earn less than IDR 5 million per month and are active members of employment social insurance (*BPJS-Ketenagakerjaan*)

Protecting workers in the workplace

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) provided guidance on worker protection and business sustenance in the context of prevention and control of Covid-19 via *the Minister of Manpower Circular No. M / 3 / HK.04 / III / 2020 concerning Worker Protection and Business Sustenance in the Context of Preventing and Control of Covid-19*. The main idea of this is to: (1) make efforts to prevent the spread and handling of Covid-19 related cases in at work, (2) Implement wage protection for workers in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

MoM coordinates with Heads of Manpower Offices of Provinces throughout Indonesia in order to anticipate and overcome labor problems in the regions, among others, by providing directions and guidelines both verbally through teleconferences as well as through Circular Letters and coordinating on data collection and monitoring of companies laying off workers.

MOM provides online OSH services to provide information and consultation related to COVID-19. It opened an information web site concerning the outbreak, targeting employers and workers. The website informs steps to generate a business sustainability plan, preventive measures that can be taken at work places, rights of workers who contracted Covid-19. The web site also functions as an online forum for consulting and submitting any complaints relating to OSH and Covid-19.

Regarding Religious Festive Allowance (THR), the government reminded employers that they still have to pay THR in full to their workers despite disruptions in their business. The method of payment could be agreed between workers and employers (e.g. instalment).

MoM strengthens the role of labour attaches in an effort to ensure the implementation of the WHO protocol for migrant workers in the country of placement.

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination

The Government of Indonesia classifies communities into four levels reflecting local COVID-19 infection risks and implements differentiated Public Activity Restrictions (PPKM) measures of which the Interior Minister determines the details. Restrictions vary by economic sectors. Regulations are frequently updated as the government closely monitors key indicators such as daily new infection cases and available medical care capacity. Most restrictions relate to the maximum percentage of employees and customers who are allowed to enter workplaces/shops. Vaccination requirement applies to selected sectors and occupations.

According to the Instructions of Interior Minister (No. 43 of Year 2021, issued on 21 September) that applies in the Jawa and the Bali, football players and staff members of football leagues must have been vaccinated twice and possess COVID-19 negative certificate.

The Instructions of Interior Minister (No. 44 of Year 2021, issued on 21 September) stipulates restrictions that apply to workplaces outside the Jawa and the Bali. It does not impose vaccination requirement.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

The Ministry of Manpower (MoM) strengthens social dialogue with employers and workers to make adjustments to work arrangements in an effort to maintain employment and business sustainability. The MoM held the National Tripartite Consultative Body (LKS) meeting on 08 April 2020.

MoM conducted dialogue with APINDO (Employers' Association of Indonesia) and employers from various business sectors as well as with trade unions on the impact of Covid-19 on the business world and job security for workers as well as anticipations and handlings in this regard.

Given the decentralized governance of Indonesia, some local tripartite councils (*LKS Tripartit Kabupaten/Kota*) met and discussed various workplace issues concerning work arrangements during the outbreak and adopted recommendations. The national tripartite council has not issued any statements regarding the outbreak as of 06 April 2020.

APINDO participating actively in tripartite forum that discuss the impact of pandemic, through the National Social Protection Board (Dewan Jaminan Sosial Nasional- DJSN) and National Tripartite Consultative Bodies (Lembaga Kerjasama Tripartit Nasional).

Activities of employers' organizations

- The **EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION OF INDONESIA (APINDO)** is taking action together with the Government and stakeholders in order to anticipate and respond to COVID-19 outbreak, particularly on occupational safety and health (OSH).
- APINDO is taking action together with the Government and stakeholders in order to anticipate and respond to COVID-19 outbreak, particularly on occupational safety and health (OSH).
- APINDO keeps members updated by sharing COVID-19-related laws and policies, particularly during the emergency period through email, monthly report, and other media tools. The information includes:
 - Implementation of Safety and Health Management System;
 - Working from Home;
 - Suspension of Business;
 - Leaves of Absence;
 - Redundancy.
- APINDO made the following policy proposals:
 - proposals to the Finance Minister on income tax relaxation;
 - proposals to the Chairman of The Financial Services Authority to relax rules on Bank debt schedule/restructuring.
- To alleviate the impact, APINDO is working with the Government and other stakeholders as follows at several levels:
 - Developing policies related to particular state of disaster emergency status due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia declared by the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB);

- APINDO Provincial Boards developing policies to anticipate and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak with reference to the regulations of the local governments, particularly on occupational safety and health (OSH) implementation;
- Collaborating with the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin Indonesia) to raising funds for the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) [Donation Campaign](#);
- Mapping plan to implement Manpower Ministry's policy on labour protection and business continuity in response to COVID-19 crisis.
- APINDO is shifting to online members' and government relations meetings.

Japan

Last Updated: **12 November 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

30 September 2021

A state of emergency was declared again on April 25, for the third time, and lifted on 30 September.

For the latest numbers for the payments of Employment Adjustment Subsidies and special loans such as Emergency Small Amount Funds, please see [the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare \(MHLW\) website](#).

21 March 2021

The state of emergency declared on January 7, 2021 was extended twice and lasted until March 21.

7 January 2021

A state of emergency has been declared again in order to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus for Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo and Kanagawa initially, then expanded to Gifu, Aichi, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, and Fukuoka.

8 December 2020

The Cabinet adopted the Comprehensive Measures to Secure People's Lives and Livelihoods toward Relief and Hope, which consists of the following four pillars.

I. Containment Measures for the Novel Coronavirus Disease

1. Securing the medical treatment system & Supporting medical institutions

2. Enhancing the testing system & Developing vaccine distribution system
3. Containment measures based on data and technology
4. International cooperation for containing COVID-19

II. Promoting Structural Change and Virtuous Economic Cycle for Post-Corona Era

1. Realizing digitalization and green society
2. Enhancing productivity through structural changes and innovation
3. Realizing positive economic cycles in regions & employment led by private demand

III. Ensuring Safety and Security by Promoting Disaster Prevention and Mitigation and National Resilience

1. Promoting national resilience with respect to disaster management
2. Recovery from aftermaths of natural disasters
3. Securing people's safety and relief

IV. Proper and timely implementation of reserve fund.

For more details on the "Comprehensive Economic Measures to Secure People's Lives and Livelihoods toward Relief and Hope", see below.

[Summary text](#) & [Full text](#)

[Fiscal policy](#)

12 June 2020

[\[COVID-19\] Second Supplementary Budget \(Overview\)](#)

On 12 June, 2020, the second supplementary budget for FY2020, which aims at enhancing the government's measures to protect the lives and lifestyles of the public from COVID-19 and move forward economic recovery, was enacted by the Diet.

Total Scale

31,911.4 billion yen

(1USD = 106.8JPY as of 25 June 2020 UN Exchange Rate)

1. Enhancing the Employment Adjustment Subsidy

451.9 billion yen

*Budgeted in the General Account, including transfer to the Special Account for Employment Insurance and financial support for employees who work less than 20 hours per week. In addition, ¥857.6bn is budgeted in the Special Account for Employment Insurance.

2. Enhancing financial support

11,639.0 billion yen

- Loan to micro, small-and medium-sized businesses 8,817.4bn
- Loan to major corporations 452.1bn
- Providing capitals 2,369.2bn

Strengthening financial functions

Extend the period of capital participation and expand the framework under the Act on Special Measures for Strengthening Financial Functions (to ¥15tn)

3. Establishing a rent support grant for SMEs

2,024.2 billion yen

4. Supporting medical treatment providers

2,989.2 billion yen

- Emergency Comprehensive Support Grant for Novel Coronavirus Disease 2,237.0bn

* of which medical care 1,627.9bn, long-term care 609.1bn

- Distribution of medical masks to medical institutions 437.9bn
- Development of medicine and vaccines 205.5bn

5. Other Supports

4,712.7 billion yen

1. Expanding of "Special Allocation for Revitalization to Cope with COVID-19" 2,000.0bn
2. Additional payments to low-income single parent households 136.5bn
3. Enhancing the Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses 1,940.0bn
4. Others 636.3bn

- Enhancing the grants for micro, small-and medium-sized business operators 100.0bn
- Emergency comprehensive support package for art and cultural activities 56.0bn
- Measures to prevent the spread of infection in local public transportations 13.8bn
- Additional placement of teachers and assistant teachers 31.8bn
- Educational support and preventive measures against infection to reopen school 42.1bn
- AI simulation to realize "a Smart Life" 1.4bn
- Establishing a grant to sustain businesses for agriculture, forestry and fisheries 20.0bn
- Enhancing capacity of Self-Defence Forces to prevent and respond to infectious disease 6.3bn
- Special loans to individuals from the emergency small amount fund 204.8bn

- Deploying optical fibres for educational ICT platform ¥50.2bn

6. Contingency funds for COVID-19

10,000.0 billion yen

Transfer to the Special Account for the National Debt Consolidation Fund (interest payment)

96.3 billion yen

Reduction in previously approved expenses (annual allowance of the members of the Diet)

-2.0 billion yen

(note) The Emergency Support for Students ¥53.1bn (19 May, 2020, cabinet decision), distribution of medical masks to medical institutions ¥168.0bn and special allocation on health care fee ¥15.9bn, borne by the central government (May 26, 2020, cabinet decision) are allocated from the Contingency funds for the COVID-19 in the first Supplementary Budget for FY2020.

26 May 2020

The Government of Japan had adopted two emergency response packages to address the COVID-19 outbreak (on 13 February and 10 March), for a total amount of ¥446 billion (0.1 percent of GDP). [On 7 April, the government adopted additional Emergency Economic Measures for Response to COVID-19 that were scaled up on 20 April to 117 trillion yen \(approx. 1.1 trillion USD\)](#), equivalent to over 20% of Japan's GDP, to protect the lives and lifestyles of the public and move toward economic recovery. The Declaration of a State of Emergency was issued on 7 April and effective in all 47 prefectures in Japan up to 6 May. On 25 May the State of Emergency was lifted in all prefectures.

20 April 2020

1. Measures to prevent the spread of infections and to build medical treatment structures ([click here for more](#))

2. Measures in support of business

- Real interest-free unsecured loans
- Improved loan conditions: allowing recurring debts to be refinanced as interest free loans
- Deferral of the payments of national taxes and social security premiums without collateral and penalties (amounting to ¥26 trillion)

3. Cash payments (approx. ¥15 trillion in total)

- Cash payment of ¥100k each to all residents in Japan (¥12.9 trillion)
- Cash payments of ¥2 million each to micro-, small-, and medium-sized business and ¥1 million each to individual business owners (¥2.3 trillion)

4. Demand stimulation measures, looking ahead to the phase after the containment of outbreaks

- Support in the form of discounts and vouchers: tourism, transport, food services, and event businesses

Monetary policy

[Quotes from IMF Policy Tracker “Policy Responses to COVID-19](#)

The Bank of Japan expanded the overnight and term repos facility to enhance liquidity provision, and announced a comprehensive set of measures to maintain the smooth functioning of financial markets, and incentivize the provision of credit. ([Click here for more](#))

Support to specific sectors, including the health sector

- Support in the form of discounts and vouchers: tourism, transport, food services, and event businesses

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

2 July 2021

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) opened a call for applicants for the Program for Promoting Investment in Japan to Strengthen Supply Chains (second call) that ended on 7 May, 2021, and selected 151 projects as successful applicants. See more details on:

[The Successful Applicants Selected for the Program for Promoting Investment in Japan to Strengthen Supply Chains \(Second Call\)](#)

20 November 2020

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) opened a call for applicants for the Program for Promoting Investment in Japan to Strengthen Supply Chains that ended on 22 July, and selected 146 projects as successful applicants. See more details on:

[The Successful Applicants Selected for the Program for Promoting Investment in Japan to Strengthen Supply Chains](#)

26 June 2020

Support Measures Related to COVID-19 for Households and Individuals & Microbusinesses and SMEs ([Latest List in English](#))

22 May 2020

[Social protection](#)

Cash Payment to all residents in Japan

- Cash payment to all residents for the purpose of fostering national solidarity against COVID-19

- Amounting to Approx. 12.9 trillion yen
- 100K yen per person, tax exempt

Child allowance of 10k per child

On top of (regular) monthly 10K per child allowance, tax exempt

Emergency microcredit to troubled households

Max 200K loan (no interest) to those who need temporary money, and additional loan (no interest) of 450K-600K for 3 months to those who rebuild their lives. Loans are forgivable in certain cases.

Enhance rent support for low income households to include those who are about to lose their dwelling due to decrease in revenue below certain thresholds.

Reduction or exemption of social security contribution (healthcare, long-term care insurance)

Deferment of utility charges (request)

Support for parents' work leaves:

- Establish a new subsidy system that covers employees, no matter permanent or non-permanent (subsidy rate: 10/10, up to 8,330 yen a day)
- Support self-employed people performing subcontract work (4,100 yen a day for those who meet certain eligibility criteria)

Special loans from emergency small funds for individuals:

- The government makes an exception in the living and welfare fund loan program for households facing income decline due to the impacts of COVID-19
- Establish Special Loans from Emergency Small Funds (emergency small loan: incremental from 100,000 to 200,000 yen, with no interest and with possible exemption)

Strengthening comprehensive support by promoting the use of the self-reliance support system for people in need:

- The government encourages the local governments to provide comprehensive supports tailored to people in need, including those who had to leave their jobs or have decreased incomes due to the impacts of COVID-19

Employment retention

Expanding special measures on the Employment Adjustment Subsidies:

- Some businesses are forced to curtail their operations in response to the slow-down of the flow of people and goods. The government will significantly expand special measures on the Employment Adjustment Subsidies so as to protect employment and secure the stability of people's lives even in such a situation. Expand the scope of the special measures to all business owners, clarify eligibility criteria (such as simultaneous closure), and apply retroactively back to January 2020.

- Increase the subsidy rate for certain areas (SMEs: increase from 2/3 to 4/5, in case of no dismissals 9/10; large enterprises: from 1/2 to 2/3, in case of no dismissals 3/4).

22 May 2020

Assistance to business and business continuity

Cash Payment to SMEs and Sole proprietors, etc.

- Approx. 2.3 trillion yen. Cash payment to a variety of businesses (incl. NPO, healthcare corporations, etc.), which can be used in broad area.
- 2M yen to corporations and 1M yen to sole proprietors (similar to “*own-account workers*” *annotated by ILO-Tokyo) whose revenue falls by more than 50% in any month of 2020 from previous year.

Financial Measures (support for cash management)

- No interest no collateral loan (w/ principal amortization deferred up to 5 years) **through private financial institutions**, besides government affiliated financial institutions (e.g. JFC).
- Refinancing of outstanding loans to no interest loan.

Tax Measures

- **Enhance** Tax and SS contributions deferment for business with rev falling by more than 20%, etc.
- **Reduction or exemption** of local property tax on machinery and building for affected SMEs, etc.
- **Request to landlords to consider rent deferment**, etc. depending on tenant’s situation, while requesting banks to reschedule the landlord’s debt, etc.

Promoting telework:

- [Established new subsidies for SMEs to cover costs for new electric communication systems in order to introduce telework](#)
- [Emergency loans for freelancers and self-employed](#)

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH

[The government requested national business associations and workers organizations to promote measures for infection prevention at workplace:](#) Japan Business Federation (JBF: Keidanren), The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Federation of Small Business Associations (NFSBA), Central Federation of Societies of Commerce and Industry (CFSCI) and JTUC-RENGO. The request emphasized:

1) basic principle for infection prevention at workplace; 2) recommended measures to take such as ventilation, alcohol disinfection, and telework and staggered work hours; 3) recommended

treatments to those who have cold symptoms; 4) recommended responses when workers are tested positive for COVID-19; and, 5) collecting correct information about COVID-19 and share it to the workers.

New work arrangements

Strongly promotes staggered work hours and telework and announced a comprehensive package of measures.

Prevention of discrimination and exclusion

[Launched a webpage](#) presenting a list of hotlines related to bullying, harassment and other violation of human rights

[Introducing information](#) related to COVID-19 such as leave benefits and paid leave in easy Japanese and 14 languages at their website for foreign workers in Japan.

Access to paid leave

Applied paid-sick-leave system to patients of COVID-19 and those who have noticeable symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever.

With the school closure,

- Established a new subsidy for business owners who allowed their workers (including full-time and non-regular workers) to take days off to take care of their children.
- Established a new subsidy for freelancers and self-employed parents who cannot work due to childcare.
- Expanded support for babysitter costs of certain scale (from medium to large companies)

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Approaches to tripartite consultation

The government convened heads of national employers and workers organizations such as Japan Business Federation (JBF: Keidanren) and the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) for their cooperation in promoting staggered working hours and teleworking to contain the outbreak.

The MHLW has asked for the cooperation of business organizations such as Keidanren, as well as the JTUC-RENGO. As for wages when businesses have their pregnant workers take time off in relation to the coronavirus, the MHLW says that it is ideal for employers and workers to have meetings, and for employers to establish a paid special leave system or other measures that reflect those discussions.

Other measures

Protection of job offers of new graduate

Since Japan applies a collective recruitment of new graduates, many new graduates start new job in April. To prevent cancellations of job offers, the government requested eight national business associations to pay special attention to recruitment situation.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- JTUC-RENGO is part of tripartite labour-related policy-making bodies, and participate discussion on the responses to the covid-19, such as expanding of subsidies for preventing dismissal
- RENGO had a meeting with employers association and issued a joint statement, and requested governments and political parties to take actions especially on emergency measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, to ensure livelihoods and business continuity, and to ensure protection of employment
- Affiliated industrial federations and regional organizations also engaged in several activities like petitions, dialogue with their concerned stakeholders
- All these efforts contributed to the government issuing a plan to release 100,000 Yen as a relief measure to each citizen with no income restrictions. Any resident, including foreign nationals who are a status of registered residence for more than three months, is eligible. The benefit will cover around 127 million people. The homeless are also eligible, but they have to register in a city or town at first.
- During May Day and 28 April virtual events, RENGO President, Rikio KOZU released a [recorded address](#) by its announcing his solidarity and unity message to [frontline workers fighting in the COVID-19 crisis](#).
- Some RENGO federations and unions hold dialogues with their counterpart employers, to adopt workplace policies on working conditions including paid leave, OSH, etc.
- In response to the government's announcement of school closure until the end of spring break, RENGO made an urgent request to Chief Cabinet Secretary on the COVID19 response on March 4, for the following points: to inform employers and workers adequately to establish subsidy schemes to allow the parents to take leave, by preventing dismissals or layoffs; and to utilises the Employment Adjustment Subsidy to support job security at the micro, small and medium-size companies.
- On April 10, Tokyo Uber Eats Union called for hazard pay of 300 Yen (US\$2.8) per order and personal protective equipment to the staff. There are around 15,000 Uber Eats deliverers in Japan.

Source: [Japanese Trade Union Confederation \(JTUC-RENGO\)](#)

For more information, see also:

- [Japan's Abe Set to Declare Virus Emergency As Cases Jump](#)
- [RENGO's Urgent Requests to Chief Cabinet Secretary on the Novel Coronavirus response](#)
- [RENGO's Urgent Proposal on Comprehensive Measures against the spread of COVID-19 infection to Mr. Nishimura, Minister of Economic Revitalization](#)

[Tokyo Uber Eats union demands hazard pay, equipment to protect against virus](#)

[Japan's Abe Set to Declare Virus Emergency As Cases Jump](#)

[RENGO's Urgent Requests to Chief Cabinet Secretary on the Novel Coronavirus response](#)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **The Japan Business Federation (KEIDANREN, JBF)** circulated among its members the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) guidelines to take measures to prevent infections at the workplace:
 - paid leave for regular and non-regular workers;
 - a newly-established subsidy for enterprises allowing parents unable to work due to childcare needs to take days off.
- KEIDANREN asked member companies to answer the [questionnaire about measures against the spread of COVID-19](#) .
 - [Measures taken](#) (in Japanese)
- On 30 March KEIDANREN published Policy Recommendations ([KEIDANREN's Recommendations](#)) on the following:
 - Immediate crisis measures
 - Maintain employment and business continuity
 - Digitalization (deregulation for telework, online/remote medical treatment)
 - Develop measures to return to potential growth after end
 - Arouse consumption and revitalization of local economy and support for SMEs
 - Investing in a Future Society to Realize Society 5.0
 - Digitalization (promotion of labour saving and optimization of logistics by utilizing digital technology)
 - Business Initiatives
 - Protect employment and expand flexible working styles and create a future society
- Other Policy Recommendations: [Ensuring Resilience of Global Supply of Essential Services in Combating COVID-19 \(2020-04-01\)](#).
 - Called upon countries to cooperate multilaterally to avoid unjustifiable protectionist measures.
- KEIDANREN started a [donation campaign](#) for socially isolated children and families due to school closure.
- On 31 March, KEIDANREN released its guidelines on the recruitment in 2021 to protect students whose job-hunting just started. [KEIDANREN's recruitment guideline \(31 March 2020, in Japanese\)](#)
- Responding to Declaration of a State of Emergency of Japanese Government on

April 7th, Chairman H. Nakanishi released the opinion that KEIDANREN supports the policies of both central and local governments and will take initiative to overcome this difficult conditions.

Kiribati

Last Updated: **8 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- The Government of Kiribati has not yet declared a State of Emergency but has the put the country on alert setting 'level 2'.
- There have been no confirmed cases in Kiribati due to a lack of testing equipment, however mass hysteria was created in the capital Tarawa when rumours circulated of a South Korean shipping vessel's captain being infected, tests were taken, and the Government is waiting on the results.
- A Papua New Guinea national who travelled to Tarawa, having spent 14 days quarantine in Fiji has been isolated, checked and is under tight medical control. His situation is being monitored due to him showing signs of the symptoms related to COVID-19

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- There are serious concerns over supply lines for food and water being affected as many of the outer islands bulk buy for a few weeks and not for long period of time.

Protecting workers in the workplace

N/A

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

N/A

Other measures

N/A

Activities of employers' organizations

- **KIRIBATI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY** KCCI continues to monitor information on COVID-19 that is not aligned with WHO and local recommendations and publicizes fact sheets for the private sector through social media ([Facebook](#)) and email. A simple FAQ sheet on KCCI Private Sector Response to COVID19 has been widely circulated.
- With the ILO ACT/EMP resources for COVID19 enterprise impact assessments, enterprise guidelines, and business continuity planning now available, KCCI is undertaking a membership needs assessment with the objective of introduction further tailored services and assistance to members.
- KCCI's current policy priority is to support businesses to remain open despite the closure of international borders. In pursuit of this priority, policy advocacy on the needs of the private sector – both nationally and at local level – is ongoing with the Government and Banks.
- KCCI is actively advocating a Bi-lateral and Multilateral Donor and Development Agencies for the role of the Private Sector in strengthening national resilience and supporting the COVID-19 recovery. KCCI has consulted and met frequently with the World Bank, ADB and High Commissioners from Australia, New Zealand and PRC.
- KCCI is working closely with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives to draft a cabinet paper for a proposed private-sector stimulus package. The stimulus proposed aims to help businesses survive in the next 6 month after closure of international borders, noting the first and most effective sectors to be hotels and tourism and import-exporters.
- With 80% or more of carbohydrate staple foods imported into Kiribati and international borders closed, KCCI has mobilized quickly to work with the Government to develop a 4-month food buffer strategy that will ensure continuity of supply. With the policy measure and a budget recently approved by Government, KCCI is now working with Government to explore different public-private partnership models for implementation.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Last Updated: **8 July 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

On the 24th March 2020, Lao PDR announced its first 2 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country. Since that announcement, there are 19 confirmed cases. As of 12th May, 13 confirmed cases have been treated and discharged from the hospital. There has been no new cases found and recorded in Laos for more than 3 weeks now.

The Lao Government has set up a National Taskforce Committee for COVID-19 prevention and control, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, to coordinate and manage the responses. The National Taskforce Committee in charge of economic affairs, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Investment, has also been set up to deal with the impact of COVID-19 on the Lao economy. The hotline numbers have been established at the MoH to provide immediate advice to public.

On 29 March 2020, the Lao Prime Minister issued the PM's Order No. 06 to reinforce measures on containment, prevention and full response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which covered measures on international crossings, and travelling within Laos, and within provinces of the country, which came into effect from 1 April 2020. International flights have also been suspended. The key measures imposed are to restrict free movement. All people, except for officials assigned to fight against Covid-19 as well as other essential jobs nationwide, have been ordered to stay at home until 19 April and extended to 17 May 2020, with some eased to minimise economic impact.

The PM's Decision No. 31/PM issued on 29th March specifies policies and measures to mitigate the impact on the economy, particularly:

- Adjust GDP growth rate and other key economic indicators for 2020 to reflect the reality
- Maintenance of macroeconomic stability, exchange rate, revenue collection and debt services
- Facilitate to attract increased private investment
- Diligently collect revenue from as much resources as possible, targeting with liquidity that are not directly affected
- Tighten annual budget spending by reducing at least 10% of normal administrative expenses
- Deferral all 2020 approved public investment projects to 2021
- Deferral of road tax payment
- Consider possibility to reduced and defer payments of electricity and water bill for residential and commercial customers.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

The PM's Decision No. 31/PM also provides policies and measures to support the enterprises by

- Exemption on the payroll tax for all employees, both of the public and private sectors, with monthly income of less than 5 million LAK
- Exemption on corporate tax for micro-enterprises
- Deferral of tax payments to tourism business operators
- Extension of deadline for enterprises to submit their financial statements and balance sheet from March to April
- Concur with the Bank of Laos on cutting based interest rate and reducing commercial Banks' deposit reserve requirements
- Concur with the Bank of Laos' policy requiring commercial banks to implement policies on loan to tackle the impacts, such as principal and interest loan repayment referral, interest rates on loans reduction, new line of credit extension for business, loan restructure, loan reclassifications
- Deferral of compulsory social security contribution payments for affected business.

The Lao Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Office announces the unemployment benefits payment of around 50% of minimum wage to the members of the NSSF. In the case where the supportive budget for the workers exceeds the

NSSF's capacity, the proposal will be made jointly with the LNCCI and LFTU to the Cabinet for further guidance.

As the economic downturn results in a large number of Lao migrant workers returned from Thailand (estimated to be more than hundred thousand), the MoLSW has conducted survey of the returned migrant workers to collect information about their jobs in Thailand and find out whether they will return to their jobs after the lockdown, or employment opportunities in Laos will be provided.

The Bank of Laos, the LNCCI, business owners are also instructed to evaluate the economic impacts and propose policy on tax, banking credit and other necessary policies to propose for mitigation. The LNCCI has launched its online survey on COVID-19 business impact assessment to assess the impacts and needs of enterprises, for policy proposal to the government for assistance.

The PM's decision also advises the government to expedite the development of measures to promote commercial production, especially expediting the utilization of SME promotion fund into realization.

Protecting workers in the workplace

On 11 March 2020, the Lao Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare issued the Ministerial Notification No. 0709/MoLSW, calling all enterprises, employers, as well as workers working in Lao PDR to implement the measures against the outbreak. The Notification informs employers to provide free of charge PPE equipment, particularly masks, soaps, washing liquid, etc. Employers were also instructed to closely monitor the temperatures of workers.

The PM's Decision instructs all public, private, and international organizations to temporary shutdown their workplace to allow staff to work from home from 1-19 April, and then extended until 17 May 2020.

All the prevention and mitigation measures issued have been applied to all living and working in the country, including the influx of the Lao workers retruning after the authorities in neighbouring countries imposed prevention measures including shutting down workplace, leaving the Lao workers jobless.

On April 21st, the National Taskforce Committee for COVID-19 prevention and control issued another guideline on conditions and measures for businesses permitted to operate during COVID-19 outbreak.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has been tasked to work closely with the LNCCI and LFTU to study (policy) based on, what indicated, the special (abnormal) conditions and circumstances, to investigate the impacts to the economy, businesses and ways to help workers.

Other measures

The Lao Government has been using its activated emergency operations centre in Ministry of Health for coordinating preparedness and response activities to COVID-19. These include areas of multi-sectoral coordination, point of entry (PoE), surveillance, health services and risk communication.

Lao PDR has prepared medical teams to prevent a widespread outbreak of Covid-19, and stricter control measures have applied after the confirmed cases in the country. To ensure that public can access healthcare, the country expects to appoint over 800 medical staff, including doctors and nurses from government and private hospitals, as well as medical teams from the Lao People's Armed Forces, to join the efforts. More than thousands of local health workers at the national and sub-national levels have been trained to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

The Lao Ministry of Health has issued self-quarantine guidelines for the Covid-19 pandemic. The guidelines include self-quarantine for 14 days. If any person feels sick, or have similar symptom to COVID-19 and need medical services, they are advised to consult the medical team at hotline provided. The callers are required to provide the medical team with details of their travel history to risky areas.

Specific hospitals in the central and local levers are announced to be centres for testing COVID-19. Medical staff at these hospitals are on standby along with specialised equipment to treat people with the Covid-19 and with free of charge services.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- The government issued policy guidelines for socio-economy and health in response to COVID-19 and shut down every province and business except essential services from March 31. Afterwards, a Central Tripartite Committee organized regular meetings to take necessary measures to prevent from the virus and protect the health of people.
- Provincial tripartite committees also have had regular meetings to abide by the guidance from the Central Tripartite Committee. LFTU has set up a task force team to participate in the Central Tripartite Committee meetings, to educate unions and workers on Covid19 and monitor the impact of COVID-19 on employment. Data is being compiled by LFTU on loss of jobs in collaboration of LFTU provincial and district unions but has lots of barrier in obtaining information due to restriction of movement which will be presented at the Committee.
- LFTU is undertaking a survey on "Impact of COVID19 crisis on labour rights and livelihoods in the garment industry" during the May-July period. The survey will focus on 30% of workforce in garments who are outside of the members of the Association of Lao Garment Industries.

- LFTU continues to work with the government and employers to keep jobs and pay salaries to the workers. LFTU is also pushing its local unions to contact village heads to get information on informal workers.

Source: Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU)

Activities of employers' organizations

LAO NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (LNCCI) LNCCI held the [Working Group Meeting with Tourism Sector](#) to cope with the COVID-19 crisis.

On March 4, 2020 a platform for discussing roadblocks faced by the private sector in doing business was provided to members of the tourism industry. The Working Group meeting attracted 51 representatives of businesses across the spectrum of the tourism sector such as restaurants, hotels, tourist attraction operators, travel agencies, transport association and airlines to discuss the measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The impact on tourism caused a rippling effect to other businesses in Laos where 13.7% of its GDP in 2017 was attributed to tourism.

The private sector pleaded that measures, such as tax relief, in the wake of the outbreak are vitally needed to keep their business afloat while retaining as many of their employees as they could.

The issues the private sector identified as impediments to their business operation include those relating to inconsistent enforcement and transparent interpretation of laws and regulations, high administrative costs, unfavourable banking regulations and skilled workforce shortage. These issues will be reflected in LNCCI's policy proposals.

19th Tripartite meeting on industrial relations will be held after the Laos' New Year Holidays (late April) to discuss the actions to be taken in response to COVID-19 crisis. The 18th Tripartite meeting on industrial relations was held on 31 October 2019 at the LNCCI.

LNCCI is undertaking [COVID-19 Business Impact Assessment Survey](#) to evaluate the needs of enterprises as a result of COVID-19 crisis.

LNCCI conducted capacity building training on social dialogue for better industrial relations in the work place (bipartite social dialogue) on 22 May 2021 for LNCCI and provincial chapter board/staff members. Bipartite social dialogue will be held in the last quarter of 2021.

Malaysia

Last Updated: **30 June 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

Check complete explanation of [Penjana stimulus package](#) in addition to what are listed in this Country Responses (based on previous stimulus packages).

Loan moratorium and reduction in interest rates

- 6 months moratorium for all loans, restructuring of corporate loans and conversion of credit card balance to term loans by banking institutions
- Tax exemption and deferment for tourism industries, port machineries and equipments, and banking institutions due to moratorium period
- 0% interest rate for the Micro Credit Scheme under the Bank Simpanan Nasional and extension of loans from TEKUN Nasional with a maximum loan limit of RM10,000 per company, including microenterprises

Financing and loan guarantee schemes

- Special grant of RM3,000 for 700,000 eligible microenterprises. Additional funds and reduction of interest rates for the Special Relief Facility fund, All Economic Sector Facility fund and Micro Credit Scheme
- SMEs with business records of <4 years can leverage the BizMula-i and BizWanita-i schemes for financing up to RM300,000 under the Credit Guarantee Malaysia Berhad
- Introduction of Employer Advisory Services programme to assist for deferral of payments, restructuring and rescheduling of employer contributions
- Exemption of Human Resources Development Fund levy payment and postponement of income tax instalment payments
- RM50 billion guarantee scheme with a guarantee of up to 80% of the loan amount for the purpose of financing working capital requirements for viable businesses in all sectors facing difficulties due to the COVID19 outbreak
- Syarikat Jaminan Pembiayaan Perniagaan to provide RM5 billion worth of guarantees and increase the guarantee coverage from 70% to 80% for SMEs that face difficulties in obtaining loans

Special funds

- Special funds for farmers and fishermen associations to develop short-term agro-food projects that can generate income within 3-6 months
- Funds for infrastructure projects in government-organized schemes in plantations and other areas, upgrading dilapidated schools in Sabah and Sarawak and Housing Assistance Programme and continuing large scale projects in the 2020 Budget

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Financial assistance to identified target groups

- Special allowances for frontliners
- Income replacement for hospitalised patients who are infected with COVID- 19 and quarantined B40 PUIs (Bottom 40% of the population in terms of income group) One-off cash assistance for the eligible employees in the private sector, government-scheme plantation settlers, farmers, fishermen, small traders and those categorised in the M40

(middle 40% income group) and below, civil servants, including contract workers, e-hailing and taxi drivers

- Unemployment assistance to B40 entrepreneurs and people who lose their jobs
- Allow for pre-retirement withdrawals from the Employees Provident Fund up to RM1,500
- Rental exemption for Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) and Perumahan Awam and six-month moratorium for rent-to-own units

Payment of salaries and extension of contract of public contract services workers

Wage Subsidy Programme to assist employers in retaining their workers

- RM 13.8 billion for tiered wage subsidy programme as of 06 April 2020, to companies with local workers earning RM4,000 and below and registered since 1 January 2020. The Government will provide salary ranging from RM600 to RM1200 per month up to 3 months depending on the size of enterprise and number of workers. For employers who chose to receive this assistance, they will be required to retain their employees for at least 6 months, which is for a period of 3 months upon receiving a wage subsidy and 3 months later

Deferral of payments, restructuring and rescheduling of employer contributions for all companies

- Reduction in the Employees Provident Fund employees contribution to 4%
- 25% reduction in foreign workers' levy payments by all companies with work permit expiring April 1 to December 31, 2020. The reduction in levy payments does not apply to domestic workers
- Introduce a tiered-discount for electricity bills with rates ranging between 15% and 50% according to electricity usage

Protecting workers in the workplace

Occupational safety and health measures

- The Government published the Management Guidelines for Workplaces relating to the COVID-19 situation on 11 March 2020: <http://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/2019-ncov-wuhan-guidelines>. This includes:
 - Employers are advised to communicate to employees about COVID-19 including personal hygiene and respiratory etiquette and to instruct supervisors to monitor symptoms of employees at workplace.
 - Need to conduct mental health assessments among employees and carry out appropriate measures to reduce stress among employees.
 - Employees shall maintain good personal hygiene and are required to alert their supervisor immediately if they develop COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Disinfection procedures at the workplace are provided which also includes planning for contingency measures in light of limited human resources (working from home etc.).

- Measures to be taken for employees who are required to travel.
- The Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) has established a hotline that operates from 8am until 6pm to facilitate any enquiries from the employers and employees. See at <https://www.mohr.gov.my/index.php/ms/sumber-sumber/perintah-kawalan-pergerakan>. DOL gives advisory services through telephone calls and conducts inspections visits to the premises mentioned in the complaints.
- As of 1 April 2020, the Ministry of Human Resources has published 3 FAQs on issues pertaining to labour laws and the MCO: <https://www.mohr.gov.my/index.php/ms/sumber-sumber/perintah-kawalan-pergerakan>.

Employment retention

- The Government introduced the Employment Retention Package through the Social Security Organisation which operates as an immediate financial assistance under certain conditions provided for employees. See <https://www.perkeso.gov.my/index.php/en/kenyataan-media>. The package covers assistance up to 6 months.

Paid leave

- The MOHR announced that employers must pay full salaries to their employees during the MCO period even if they cannot report to work.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Approaches to tripartite consultation

- The Government introduced an open platform for discussions and interaction with employers, employees, social partners and the public at large. The platform includes the 24/7 call center as well as interaction via its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.
- The Government has scheduled a tripartite meeting with social partners for the week of 6 April 2020 on labour issues relating to the Covid-19 situation.

Other measures

Other financial reliefs

- Rental exemption or discounts for SME retailers renting from the premises owned by Government-linked companies. Private building property owners that reduce rent of SME tenants will be provided additional tax deduction equal to the amount of rent reduction for April 2020 to June 2020.
- Deferment of loan repayment for Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (PTPTN) loan repayment and Skills Development Fund Corporation (PTPK).

More detailed information from the following links

- <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2020/03/speech-text-prihatin-esp/>.

- <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2020/04/langkah-tambahan-bagi-pakej-rangsangan-ekonomi-prihatin-rakyat-prihatin/>
- <http://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/2019-ncov-wuhan-guidelines>.
- <https://www.mohr.gov.my/index.php/ms/sumber-sumber/perintah-kawalan-pergerakan>
- <https://www.mohr.gov.my/index.php/ms/sumber-sumber/perintah-kawalan-pergerakan>
- <https://www.perkeso.gov.my/index.php/en/kenyataan-media>.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- On April 7, a tripartite meeting was held at MOHR. MTUC submitted a letter of workers' concerns to the Minister, demanding that the Government
 - bring an "Emergency Employment Regulation" for a six month moratorium of retrenchment
 - fund additional stimulus package for SMEs
 - protect workers at enterprises with no unions
 - provide wage subsidy for middle-income groups earning monthly 4,000-8,000 ringgit.
- MTUC held discussions with Malaysia Employers Federation (MEF) on the bilateral collaboration on Covid19, and MTUC encouraged employers to engage unions to cope with Covid19
- MTUC continues to educate members online by uploading educational video on Covid19 and update COVID related news;
- MTUC set up a task force team to advise workers on salary cuts or employment contracts.
- MTUC leadership submitted a letter of demand to the Minister for Human Resource for "Emergency Employment (Prohibition of Retrenchment, Salary Reduction and Unpaid Leave due to Covid19 Pandemic) Regulations 2020". MTUC requested the government to enforce one year moratorium of retrenchment and salary cuts from April 2020 to April 2021
- MTUC organized a virtual May Day and the ILO Regional Director sent a solidarity message to the celebration. Labour Law Reform Coalition (LLRC), composed of more than 54 trade union organisations, migrant workers' associations and Labour NGOs, also held an online Forum on Rights-based Approach on Responding Covid-19 Impact
- MTUC Penang Division issued a press release criticizing the Malaysia Rubber Glove Manufacturing Association on the failure of employers for taking care of the safety and welfare of workers. A union representing the rubber glove manufacturing sector has lodged complaints with the Ministry Of International Trade and Industry (MITI) concerning the risk of workers in the rubber sector.

Source: [Malaysian Trade Union Congress \(MTUC\) and the COVID-19](#)

For more information, see also:

[MTUC urges strict enforcement of MOH's SOP at sectors allowed to operate at full capacity during MCO](#)

Government's stimulus package to ensure sustainability of companies and to retain jobs

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/03/27/prihatin-rakyat-package-designed-based-on-countrys-current-fiscal-capabilit/1850882>

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/03/27/pm-announces-rm250-billion-economic-rescue-plan/>

[Bank Negara announces 6 months moratorium for loans](#)

Wage payment during the movement control order

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/opinion/2020/03/25/employees-employers-and-wages-during-the-mco/>

<http://www.mtuc.org.my/let-people-trump-profits-during-mco/>

[Economic impact of covid19](#)

[Not right to allow RM500 monthly withdrawal from EPF, says MTUC](#)

[Employees, employers and wages during the MCO](#)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **MALAYSIAN EMPLOYERS FEDERATION (MEF)** issued guidelines for members to address workplace impact of COVID-19.
 - MEF Guidelines to Employers on Employment Issues Relating to the Outbreak of COVID-19 (14 Feb 2020)
 - MEF Guideline on Movement Control Order (MCO), including:
 - Arrangements of working from home
 - Granting employees paid company leave
 - Allowing employees to take annual leave
 - Granting employees unpaid leave in the event of no annual leave balance
 - For the 14 days period, employees may take up to 5 days annual leave or unpaid leave or combination of both.
 - MEF Circular: Business Issues/Problems Faced by Businesses and Suggestion of Proposed Solutions
- MEF undertook surveys to assess the impact of the COVID-19 on member companies:
 - MEF Survey on Impact of COVID-19) to Malaysian Business: MEF conducted a

survey to obtain feedback and comments from members prior to Movement Control Order.

- MEF Survey on Impact of COVID-19 to Malaysian Business with the objective to capture impact after MCO was in force and 2nd Stimulus Package
- MEF issued a Memorandum to the Ministry of Finance on Business Issues & Recommendations for the Government's Second Stimulus Package, including:
 - Review of Rates of Employee Provident Fund (EPF) Contributions to Retain Employment
 - Grant Exemptions to Employers and Employees on Contributions to SOCSO and EIS
 - Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) exemption
 - Restructuring and Rescheduling of Loans
 - MEF spearheaded the joint industry memorandum of 51 trade associations and business organizations to the Prime Minister on issues arising from the 2nd stimulus package. ([MEF Joint Memorandum](#) and [MEF Joint Letter](#))
- 23 March, 2020 the MEF met with YB Dato Sri M Saravanan, the new Minister of Human Resources on 23 March 2020 and issues related to social protection, HRD Fund, Employment Insurance System, amendments to Industrial Relations Act, Trade Unions Act as well as other proposed amendments to the labour legislation.

Maldives

Last Updated: **30 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- [COVID-19: Maldives projects MVR 12 billion deficit](#) inject a stimulus package worth 2.5 billion Maldivian Rufiyaa into the Maldivian economy; modify the Bank of Maldives (BML) loan repayment structure, citing a moratorium of 6 months on all loan repayments and extension of repayments terms amongst several other waivers; and provide financial assistance to businesses through loan schemes from SDFC and BML.
- [MVR 2.5 Billion Economic Recovery Plan –](#)
 - to arrange a working capital for businesses through banks.
 - To subsidize 40 % from electricity bill for the month of April and May
 - To subsidize 30 % from water bill for the month of April and May
- The Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services are monitoring the situations of senior citizens, persons with disabilities and vulnerable individuals and will continue services during the Government shutdown
- The prices of food items including onions, dahl, potatoes and eggs will be controlled, effective 6 April 2020
- The government is closely monitoring staple food stocks, and the State Trading Organisation (STO) is currently stockpiling essential food items, including 10-months' worth of rice and sugar, and 5-months' worth of flour by mid-April. STO guarantees the availability of fuel.
- As of 4 April, 676 complaints were lodged by employees at the Job Centre regarding

issues around employment

- The Bar Council has announced provision of pro-bono legal services for citizens during the pandemic.
- GDP growth had been projected at 8%, but is now expected to be a reduction of 5.6%, with a potential loss of revenue between USD168-448 million. As a result, the Maldives is now facing a serious shortfall in foreign currency earning, estimated to be at USD 450 million. The state budget passed for 2020 is expected to be in deficit of approximately USD779 million.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- [Maldives introduces 'Employee Withholding Tax'](#) - The withholding tax, levied on an employee's income, mandates employers to deduct applicable tax payments from the incomes of their employees who are subject to the tax, and file the tax payments with Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA).
- [State to provide unemployment allowance for people losing jobs over pandemic](#)
- The government announced that companies and businesses that do not adhere to the Employment Act will not be eligible to receive assistance from the economic stimulus package.
- All Government offices remain closed, however, all essential services to the public will continue without interruption. These essential services include hospitals and pharmacies, courts, security services, utility companies, diplomatic and consular services, social protection services, airports and seaport, broadcasting services, banking services, fire and rescue services, meteorological services, cooking gas and fuel supplies, waste management services and correctional services.
- The crisis highlights the need for diversifying the economy, with several initiatives in development for expanding the fisheries and agriculture sectors.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Some initial OSH guidance provided to construction sector workers by the construction employers organization early-mid March;
- Limited support for migrant workers issues in the country.
<https://edition.mv/news/15963> Without flights, migrant workers are stranded (mostly in Male'), and with little access to health insurance (or knowledge of the insurance they have), and fear of public health systems, their lack of access to care is troubling. One anonymous "Expatriate Flu Clinic" is operational in Hulhumale', but usage numbers are not available.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Tripartism is weak in the Maldives. No outreach from Government for consultation with employers and workers organisations. Some bilateral discussions, on an informal basis

have taken place.

Other measures

- National Federation of Maldivian Employers (NFME) deployed a survey to assess the initial impact of COVID 19. Maldives Trade Union Confederation (MTUC) member union Tourism Employees Association of Maldives (TEAM) has been [monitoring](#) the wage cuts and number of employees affected in the resorts sector and calling for protection of workers and payment of wages.

Activities of employers' organizations

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MALDIVIAN EMPLOYERS (NFME) was officially launched on 25th February 2020. Within a space of few weeks, it had to respond to the crisis. NFME had several discussions with the board members and relevant authorities. The NFME reached out to the members and liaised with the Maldives National Association of Construction Industry (MNACI) to reach out to many ministries and banks, explaining its concerns and proposals.

NFME has taken the following initiatives:

- Office bearers of NFME have offered Properties as Quarantine facilities, e.g. resorts
- Offering construction of new ICU rooms
- Having regular teleconferencing with Federation Ex co members.
- Promoting a tripartite discussion platform with government and employees.

NFME, with help from a legal team, is currently looking into 'rights of employers'. This is intended to safeguard rights of both, employers and employees, and to have a better understanding of the legal implications. The team will formulate a response and a proposal to approach the government on behalf of employers based on the explanation given by Federation. This will be shared with the President and further circulated after acceptance from Ex co members and their approval, to the public.

Marshall Islands

Last Updated: **8 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- As of April 04, no COVID-19 case had been confirmed in the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI). The government has responded with swift precautionary measures early on. Travel restrictions from affected countries have been imposed since January 24. Entry of all international travelers by commercial flight has been suspended since March 8. To ensure

food and other supplies, container vessels and fuel tankers have been exempted from entry restrictions, but with strict safety requirements including prohibition of human contacts and a minimum of 14 days between departure from ten restricted countries and arrival in RMI. Though small, the hotel and tourism sectors are experiencing significant losses.

- RMI is totally dependent on imports and steady supply of cargo ships, trying to resolve the person-to-person contact with ship crew.
- ADB announced US\$370,000 grant to RMI

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- The government has formulated a Coronavirus Disease Preparedness and Response Plan and is preparing preventive measures amounting to about US\$7 million (3.1 percent of GDP), including construction of quarantine units, purchases of medical equipment, instalment of washing stations, and funding for overtime of health workers. The authorities are currently working with multilateral and bilateral development partners in search for financial support.
- RMI loses international air link after COVID-19 measures incident with United Airlines.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- RMI Shipping registry urges countries to recognize and protect seafarers and to help them join their ship or families.

Other measures

US President and Congress approved \$55 million to be made directly available to the U.S. territories and the freely associated states on Friday, March 27 via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act will address impacts of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the islands, namely, the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as the freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Mongolia

Last Updated: **30 September 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

The law on COVID-19 prevention and response, and the Parliament Decree on Stimulus Package for Economic Recovery and Protection of Citizens' Health, Income and Employment were approved by the Parliament on April 29, 2020. The law establishes the legal framework of the Stimulus package announced on March 27, 2020. On August 5, 2020, some of the measures have been announced to be continued until end of 2020 (<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>) Details are added below.

Fiscal policy

- The country resumed the coal export.
- The Government is currently in discussion to receive USD60 million from ADB to simulate the economy, and EU support of Euro 47.1 million. Moreover, the Government will implement 14 projects in the area of food processing, agriculture and infrastructure development, for USD 720 million.
- The budget for 2020 will not be revised.
- The European Union supports Mongolia's efforts in boosting employment and improving transparency in public finances with a grant of EUR 50.8 million (MNT 155.7 billion). This is the first budget support programme in Mongolia, also aiming to address the social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The country's coal export resumed almost to the level of before pandemics.
- Mongolia traded a new bond called 'Nomad' on the international market. The new bond is worth 600 million USD and has an annual interest rate of 5.125 percent with an amortizing 5.5-year maturity. Issuing a new bond doesn't mean the money will come into Mongolia's account immediately. We're simply exchanging a high-interest bond with a low-interest bond. The annual interest rate of the government's 2016 Mazaalai bond will reduce to 10.872 percent **and** the 2012 Chinggis Bond's to 5.125 percent.

Monetary policy

- Mongolbank has lowered the policy rate by 2 percent down to 9%
- Borrowers experiencing difficulties to pay back loans (due to COVID situation) may postpone the monthly dues by 12 months.
- Commercial banks collectively reduced interbank transaction fees by 20 -100% starting from April 1 (<https://www.mongolbank.mn/news.aspx?tid=1&id=2480>).
- The commercial banks collectively made a decision to postpone mortgage and/or loan payments including salary and/or pension backed loans, only upon request of the borrower.
- The Bank of Mongolia (BoM) started the next 8% interest rate mortgage program (average mortgage rate is around 18%) with total investment of MNT 240 billion targeting mostly low and middle income groups, with aims to boost construction sector in the country.
- MNT 50 billion and MNT 40 billion of financial sources have been made available by the central bank and commercial banks respectively to lower interest rate of mortgage loans down to 6 percent. (Commercial rate of mortgage is 18 percent per annum)

Support to specific sectors, including health sector

- The Government allocated MNT 17billion (around USD 6.2 million) for procurement of

necessary equipment (including PPE) and sanitation materials for health sector. So far, ODA for COVID19 has reached MNT20.6 billion (USD 7.4 million) and currently efforts are made to mobilize a further MNT150 billion (USD54 million).

- A draft law to exempt customs due and VAT tax on medical equipment and medicines for testing and treatment of COVID19 has been submitted to the Parliament for approval.
- The Government will provide MNT300billion to purchase cashmere from herders at the concessional rate of 3 percent.
- Exemption of customs due and VAT tax on medical equipment and medicines for testing and treatment of COVID19 will continue until end of 2020.
(<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>)

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Social protection

- Child allowances to be increased from MNT 30,000 to 100,000 MNT/month over April- Oct
<https://www.zasag.mn/news/view/24959>
- Government will distribute dividends of state owned companies to all citizens for a total amount of MNT 120 billion (USD53.2 million).
- No penalty if electricity bill is not paid.
- Selected private enterprises and individuals exempted from social insurance contribution for a period of six months.
- VAT of the first quarter of 2020 will be refunded in April, which is around MNT40 billion (USD14.4 million) for 860 thousand people.
- Food stamps to be increased from 16,000 to 32,000 MNT for adults and from 8,000 to 16,000 MNT for children over the May - Oct period for 112,000 individuals.
- All forms of social welfare benefits increased by at least 100,000 MNT/month over May - Oct. <https://www.zasag.mn/news/view/24959>:
 - Increased social welfare pension from 188,000 to 288,000 MNT for 3,600 seniors.
 - Increased allowance to single parents with more than 4 children from 100,000 to 288,000 MNT.
- Increased allowance for persons with disabilities from 100,000 to 288,000 MNT. Welfare pension and monetary support to children under 16 years of age requiring constant care will receive MNT288,000 until end of 2020, which is MNT100,000 higher than the pre-pandemic support. (<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>)
- Child money programme will continue until end of 2020. Every child will receive MNT100,000. (<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>)
- Food stamps to be increased from 16,000 to 32,000 MNT for adults and from 8,000 to 16,000 MNT for children over the May - Oct period for 112,000 individuals Update as of August 2020: Food stamp increase will continue until end of 2020.
(<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>)

- Wage and salary exempted from income tax and social insurance contribution from April to Oct. except for public officials and state-owned enterprises.
- Employers and workers will contribute 5 percent each to social insurance (Pre-pandemic contribution rate is 9.5 percent each). Social insurance contribution of those who are participating in social insurance scheme voluntarily will pay 5 percent or MNT35,700 is exempt until end of 2020. (<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>)

Employment retention

- Wage and salary exempted from income tax and social insurance contribution from April to Oct. except for public officials and state-owned enterprises.
- Social Insurance fund participants receive MNT200,000 (USD72) /month when work has stopped due to mandatory quarantine.

Assistance to business and business continuity

- Companies, having failed to pay their social insurance dues won't be penalized but health insurance contribution has to be paid.
- Over 100,000 SMEs exempted from taxes for a period of six months.
- Penalties imposed on unpaid taxes and dues lifted during the period of emergency.
- Customs due and import tax on basic commodities postponed for a period of two months.
- Business enterprises with sales income up to MNT1.5 billion (approx. USD530,000) are exempt from corporate income tax until end of 2020. 105,000 SMEs are benefiting from this exemption, which is equivalent of business support of MNT15 billion. (<https://mof.gov.mn/article/entry/news-08-05>)
- Tax exemption on reduced rental income will continue until end of 2020. 1,000 business enterprises and 25,000 retail traders will benefit from reduced rental fee.
- Company's loss will be carried over in the next four years to reduce the income tax.
- Herder households will be given an additional 20,000 MNT per kg of cashmere sold for a total of 793.6 billion MNT <https://www.zasag.mn/news/view/24959>

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH

- The Minister of Labour and Social Protection has issued a Recommendation on March 27, to protect workers' health and take precautionary measures at workplace.

New work arrangements

- The Government made a decision to allow parents to work from home until March 30. The Government has implemented the decision in ministries and agencies, as well as state

owned enterprises, and called for the private sector to do the same for their employees.

Regulation of the application of COVID-19 vaccines in a work context, whether of general scope, sectoral or applicable to specific groups of workers.

- COVID vaccination in Mongolia is voluntary and vaccines are free of charge. However, there were and are cases where private hospitals, restaurants and other services requiring patients and customers to have two doses of vaccines. The Government has transferred MNT50,000 (around USD17) to those who received vaccines.
- 2.3 million (69.2 percent) of 3.3 million population of Mongolia have been vaccinated with 1st dose and 2.1 million (65.4 percent) with second dose. Vaccine is administered to all people above 12 years of age. Mongolia has started administering the booster dose or 3rd dose of vaccines. Mongolia received vaccines through COVAX.

Policies that specifically cover the theme of mandatory or voluntary vaccination in the workplace;

N/A

Jurisprudence issued on the same topic.

- Mongolia issued a law on Prevention and Combat against COVID19 Pandemics and Mitigation measures against its negative socio-economic impacts (<https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15312>) approved on April 29, 2020.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Social partners have established a working group on April 29, 2020, to monitor implementation of the Government's decision to exempt companies from contribution to social insurance fund for a period of six months (from April to October). The working groups comprises MLSP, CMTU and MONEF, as well as Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce. https://www.facebook.com/MUEHolboo/posts/3313366085415057?_tn_ =K-R
- MONEF and CMTU have submitted their comments on law on prevention and combating COVID19 Pandemics. (MONEF: <http://www.monef.mn/index.php?con=newsm&id=6&mid=730>, and CMTU: <https://www.facebook.com/MUEHolboo/photos/pcb.3308754042542928/3308752965876369?type=3&theater>, and <https://www.facebook.com/MUEHolboo/photos/pcb.3308754042542928/3308753115876354?type=3&theater>)
- Tripartite partners are preparing for national tripartite agreement 2021-2022. This is a unique timing for all three partners to prepare for negotiation which will be linked to socio-economic response to COVID19.
- With initiatives of the CMTU, the tripartite partners organized an online discussion on COVID19 and Employment on September 24, 2020 (<https://bit.ly/34tvFCA>).
- With initiatives of employers' and workers' organizations, a research company is conducting a study on future of work in Mongolia. The research also covers how future shocks such as COVID19 pandemics may affect the world of work in the country.

- Collective bargaining and/or significant collective agreements at an enterprise, industry or inter-professional level

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- CMTU works very closely with MONEF and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to protect employment, secure workplaces and promote income at SMEs and recommend business entities to avoid firing workers
- On April 9, CMTU President Amgalanbaatar and MONEF Vice-President Ganbaatar met with Mr Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, Prime Minister and Mr Chinzorig Sodnom, Minister for Labour and Social Protection. After sharing concerns and challenges in light of COVID-19, Mr. Amgalanbaatar emphasized the importance of protecting jobs and incomes and maintaining social protection. He also stressed the importance of social dialogue at all levels to cope with the challenging time. PM agreed to issue a decree to implement the government resolution on social dialogue at all levels
- On April 9, CMTU sent a letter to the Minister for Labour and Social Protection concerning the protection of informal workers affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and requested the Minister to ensure the stimulus package to benefit informal workers with temporary exemption from social security contributions and wage subsidies in particular
- CMTU issued a statement calling on the government and employers to jointly develop and implement a package of economic and social measures to protect jobs and incomes and introduce adapted working arrangements, etc.
- CMTU has formed an internal committee on COVID-19 composed of all Directors and Heads of its departments at HQ and led by Mr Ganaa Magsar, Director of Labour Research and Training Center. It aims to support CMTU secretariat and affiliated unions to share relevant information on how to prevent workplace from Coronavirus and provide all updates and regulation related to lockdown to other affiliated organizations.
- On April 15, CMTU issued a two page recommendation to its affiliates to launch a month-long OSH campaign to contain COVID-19. Other recommendations include:
 - to actively negotiate with respective employers and authorities to restrict layoffs and to prevent from deteriorating working conditions;
 - to take progressive actions to promote freedom of association, improve OSH and extend social security for workers in the informal economy.

Source: Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **MONGOLIAN EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION (MONEF)** has designed and published 4 different information posters on COVID-19 and formulated guidance for employers on how to overcome the crisis;
- MONEF has deployed online survey for members and enterprises to assess challenges that enterprises are facing and immediate necessary actions needed from the government to support private sector;
- MONEF has have actively connected with IOE and our regional partners via online webinars to learn best practices for sharing with members;
- Following the survey of members' and enterprises' needs, MONEF officially requested the Minister of Labour of Mongolia to organize promptly the National Tripartite Committee on Labour and Social Consensus to discuss on joint action of social partners to address the recovery;
- Based on its private sector survey results, MONEF proposed a plan of action to the President, Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Parliament, and the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry to take certain policy measures to support private sector in overcoming economic crisis and saving jobs.
- Policy proposals to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance of the Parliament included measures such as lowering policy rate of Central Bank, making temporary amendments on social insurance taxes, interest rate of commercial banks, workplace saving.
- MONEF's Director General is appointed to represent employers and private sector in the Working Group created by government to make policy directions during this uncertain time.

Myanmar

Last Updated: **20 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

Fiscal policy

The [Myanmar government announced](#) the quarterly income tax and monthly commercial tax for 2019-2020 fiscal year concerning CMP businesses, hotels and tourism and SMEs

Monetary policy

Government has announced ([Notification 1/2020](#)) an initial stimulus [monetary package](#) to cushion the impact of COVID-19 on economy, including 100 billion kyats (nearly US\$70 million) worth of [loans](#), eased deadlines for tax payments and exemptions for Myanmar-owned businesses that have been hit by Covid 19. (Loan Forms: [Eng](#), [MY](#))

Central Bank cut interest rates by 0.5% in mid-March 2020, then by 1% on 1 April. The rate effective of 1 April 2020 is 8.5%.

Support to specific sectors, including the health sector

Please refer to Monetary policy above.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Social protection

SSB extended the medical treatment benefit from 6 month to one year. Workers will get 60 % of wages from SSB for one year while they are under medical treatment.

MOLIP's issued [Directive 1/2020](#) on the closure of establishments.

MOLIP issued a [Notification 63/2020](#) ease deadline of fund contribution from 15 days to 3 months. Voluntary contributions by laid-off workers would allow them to access cash benefits. [Notification 64/2020](#) extends social security benefits for insured workers who have become unemployed due to COVID-19.

Employment retention

Myanmar national enterprise will be entitled to access a One year loans with 1% interest (see monetary policy above) with agreement to retain workers.

Assistance to business and business continuity

From tripartite discussion, Government pledges supports to employment re-generation for domestic market, and industry that performs well during the crisis (medical products, food, etc)

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH

Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHP) issues [an instruction on new working arrangement at workplace \(Myanmar version\)](#)

New work arrangements

Please Refer to OSH above.

Prevention of discrimination and exclusion

MSWRR drafted a plan for prevention, control and treatment of Covid-19 infection for the IDP camps. Local and international actors pledged their contribution.

MOFA issued a statement asking Myanmar nationals to return home only via official check points after 15th April to allow the Government to prepare quarantine facilities.

Access to paid leave

UMFCCI supports 14 day paid leave for any workers who are under quarantine during the crisis.

Workers on 31 March gathered at the entrance of the Yoma Central construction site demanding a halt in construction work due to COVID-19 positive cases in Myanmar. Dispute ended with positive results. [Details here](#).

Access to health care

See Social Protection above.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Approaches to tripartite consultation

1. TU and civil society discussed COVID 19 impact. Bipartite meeting held on 3 March. Tripartite held on 15 March. A [statement was issued after the meeting](#)
2. TU, SSB / MOLIP and MOHS conducted an Education program on COVID-19 preventive measures in industrial zone.

[UMFCCI establishes a Covid-19 Task Force \(TF\)](#) and launched a survey on risk and offered online loan system. UMFCCI made a 10 concerns on impact of COVID 19 .

[Tripartite dialogue](#) held three times on COVID 19 (as at 27 March 2020)

UMFCCI seeks ILO OSH technical assistance.

Joint action of employers and workers

Employers supported 14 day paid leave for any workers under quarantine during the crisis.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

Since early March, tripartite plus meeting on COVID19 has been held. Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM) negotiated with the Government and employers and succeeded in achieving the following items:

- Defer Social Security contribution during the unemployment period
- 60% of wages will be provided by SSB Fund during the Quarantine period
- SSB extended the medical treatment period to one year from 6 months. Workers will get 60 % of wages from SSB for one year when they get medical treatment.
- Stay Home Leave (employers proposed only unpaid leave.)
- Workers shall get their rights and all compensation according to the rules and regulations when factories were partially or fully shut down and workers were laid off
- The government, together with the Sector Associations, is controlling the price of locally produced basic commodities.
- The payment rate during the lockdown period is being negotiated among tripartite partners and CTUM proposes the pay of 100 % Minimum Wages during the period.

Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM) developed a brochure on COVID-19 and raise awareness on its risk with farmers and people in agro-communities

CTUM provides awareness-raising activities to garment workers through its office bearers as much as they can.

CTUM has negotiated with Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) on massive enterprise-level training for workers and employers on COVID19.

Sources:

- Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM)
- Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **UNION OF MYANMAR FEDERATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (UMFCCI)** launched the COVID-19 Task Force with four main Working Groups: Economic Impact Assessment, Health Remedies, Finance, and Communication.
- UMFCCI made efforts to stabilize the consumer prices of food and basic needs during the crisis in collaboration with relevant affiliated associations.
- Employers supported 14-day paid-leave for the workers who are under quarantine. UMFCCI helped the workers in industrial zones to have access to the basic food baskets at very affordable price.
- UMFCCI made a [Joint Statement](#) with foreign Chambers on COVID-19. A range of responses have been requested, including issuing loans for businesses through private banks, ensuring workers receive their full entitlements under the law, delaying an increase to the minimum wage, and speeding up customs clearance of raw materials.
- Policy proposals were made to defer payment of unemployment insurance premiums to those businesses who are going to shut down temporarily and to provide financial support for the employers and workers who are struggling from crisis with low interest rate from the social security fund.
- UMFCCI plays a leading role in providing access to loan under the National Stimulus Package Programme by identifying sectors of the most vulnerable businesses (Garment, Tourism and SMEs).
- UMFCCI took the initiative to make a fund of 100 million MMK to donate to government hospitals.
- UMFCCI discussed with Yangon Regional government measures to address the social, health and employment issues incurred by COVID-19 crisis.
- **Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA)** and the **Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM)** made a social agreement on April 18 “to give the unpaid leave from April 20 to 30 upon the request of workers while guaranteeing their employment”.

Stimulating the economy and employment

Immediate measures aimed at easing the daily lives of labourers, working poor and protecting the industries and businesses severely affected by the current lockdown approved as decided by the Council of Ministers on March 29, 2020 [\[1\]](#)

- Existing provisions for easing liquidity in financial sector reviewed to reduce the cost of borrowing, compulsory cash reserve and scientific liquidity ratio
- Refinance Fund to be maintained at NPR 60 billion and the Fund to be mobilised in areas more affected by Covid 19
- Deadline for affected borrowers to pay the interest & capital amount of loan to the banks and financial institutions to be extended (mid- April to mid-July 2020)
- 10% rebate(not less than base amount) to affected borrowers from the banks, financial institutions and cooperatives on monthly interest due by mid-April 2020
- Banks and financial institutions to provide services through digital/electronic system free of charges until further notice
- **MOF** to mobilise additional funds for emergency response: Subsidized loan of \$29 mln from WB, \$78.5 mln rapid credit facility of IMF, \$60 mln from ADB under 'policy based lending
- Deadlines extension for Inland Revenue collection to adjust expenses
- Amount contributed from taxable income and expenses by individuals and organisations to COVID -19 Relief Fund established by Federal or Provincial government to be made tax-free. Municipalities to establish the Fund from their current year's budget and stop certain programmes and purchases to divert resources to the Fund.
- To reduce impact on foreign exchange reserves, quota for gold import reduced from 20 KG/ day to 10 KG/ day. Import of vehicles above USD 50,000 and import of agro-goods such as dates, betel nuts, garden peas, black pepper stopped.

Specific Sector Support: Special tax incentives for individuals/organisations importing and supplying essential medicines, materials used to treat, prevent, control COVID-19 till 27th May 2020

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

As per the Action plan for the Implementation of the Decision of the GoN on Providing Relief Assistance to COVID-19 Affected Sectors 2020^[1]:

- concession loan after the end of the crisis for the persons who have obtained work permit for foreign employment but have not been able to leave because of Covid 19 if they wish to start enterprises or business, within the seven days of
- Depending on the nature of the production-based enterprises, 30 to 50 percent discount will be provided if consumed electricity during power surplus period designated by National Electricity Authority (NEA).
- Financial institutes to provide emergency loans, including for working capital, if required in 5 days to enterprises in Tourism and Transportation sectors, with priority to small and cottage industries and enterprises providing essential services; District administration Offices to provide vehicle passes to farmers, producers, collectors and transporters to sell the products in the market.
- Financial institutions, including cooperatives to open branches through the lockdown to continue business services for enterprises dealing in essential goods^[2]
- Government to provide 25 percent of transportation costs for the promotion of transportation services involved in transportation of food and essential items^[3]
- The government will deposit the necessary amount (31 % contribution from Employers and employees) to Social Security Fund in case of those firms who have completely closed due to lockdown^[4].
- **Relief Assistance to workers^[5]**: Relief funds to be created by local governments. Federal government will arrange additional funds where insufficient; Food Management and Trading Company Limited and Salt Trading should offer 10 percent discount on rice, flour, sugar, salt and cooking oil; 25% discount in electricity bills and on internet and data packages during lockdown. House owners wave rent of one month to tenants working in informal sectors.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- The local government will identify and prepare details of working individuals and their families in need of relief aid during the COVID-19 lockdown
- During the lockdown, food and other necessities of pregnant women, disabled persons, and elderly people living in elderly homes, children living in children's homes to be further managed.
- Notice to enterprises to conduct labour audit as per Labour Act Regulations^[1]
- OSH: All financial institutions to provide workers with protective equipment and materials not limited to - sanitizer, mask, disinfectant, thermal scanning, and hand gloves^[2]
- New work arrangements : New work arrangements such as, Shift-Work, Work from Home, and Remote Access be implemented for financial sector^[3]
- Access to paid leave^[4]
- Tourism-related enterprises that have been fully closed shall provide, as before, the regular salary of the month of (March-April) to employees working on wage contracts
- Enterprises will create a welfare trust for the regular payment of wages to the workers, as done before, until the businesses are operational.
- Use of diplomatic missions to ensure wages and benefits for migrant workers still in recipient countries.
- Access to health care^[5]
- Free health care to all who are sick from COVID-19
- Insurance of Rs.2.5. Million to be provided to medics and staff involved in treating COVID-19 patients.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- JTUCC called on the Government for strong measures to prevent the spread of global Covid-19 outbreak. JTUCC has condemn the layoff of the workers in formal and informal

sectors and demanded to guarantee the continuity of jobs of workers. JTUCC called affiliates to create awareness among the workers regarding prevention and safety measures as well as to follow the instructions from relevant authorities

- Trade Unions have been holding discussions with the employers on how the workers can be helped

- JTUCC called Government
 - Protect the workers with necessary safety measures
 - Urged the employers to provide paid leave to the formal and informal workers
 - Provide necessary relief package to the daily wage workers
 - Take diplomatic measures to protect the migrant workers and ensure that nobody is left stranded without income and food
 - take Strict actions against the wrong news/ rumours about the COVID-19
 - To regulate the effective monitoring so that that daily stuffs can be available easily and take stern action against the black marketing
 - urged all stakeholders to comply with the government's decisions in the fight against the pandemic

- At national and provincial levels, JTUCC is lobbying with the government and employers to protect the workers from COVID19 and secure the jobs of the workers. JTUCC has also decided to donate jointly in the COVID19 Control and Treatment Fund established by the government that will be used for the control and treatment of coronavirus infected people

- JTUCC Affiliates are dealing with the various workers problems at enterprises/workplaces level. They are lobbying with the local government, employers and relevant stakeholders

Source: Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre

For more information, see also:

- <https://mofa.gov.np/>
- <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2020/04/03/asian-development-bank-revises-nepal-s-economic-growth-rate-to-5-3-percent-in-light-of-covid-19-pandemic>
- <https://www.gefont.org/> -
- <http://ntuc.org.np/>
- <https://www.antuf.org.np/>

Activities of employers' organizations

FEDERATION OF NEPALESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (FNCCI) undertook the following action in response to the crisis:

- Awareness raising on COVID-19 regarding social distancing, risk assessment and safety measures for workers.
- Assessment of how private sector can work to bring the economy back to its previous state.
- Managing supply of essential goods as food materials, water, milk, fuels, medicine, as well as banking services.

- FNCCI advised the government that private sector can play effective role fighting against COVID-19 pandemic and minimizing the economic impact of the crises if the government takes necessary decisions and bring appropriate relief package for businesses community.
- Requested the government for a special relief package for highly affected sectors, like tourism.
- Requested for the reschedule of the Value Added Tax and Income Tax payment deadlines. As a result, the deadlines have been extended.
- Proposed to increase the amount of refinancing and emphasized the need for refinancing to employment-intensive industries.
- Requested government to change the rules related to refinancing.

New Zealand

Last Updated: **30 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

As of 3 April, New Zealand is operating under a Level 4 state of emergency. All schools and non-essential services are closed and the government has issued a comprehensive stimulus package to help reduce the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on workers and businesses.

Fiscal policy

A fiscal package worth NZ\$16.3 billion includes specific allocations for healthcare sector (\$500 million), wage subsidies for businesses that have been affected (\$9.3 billion), COVID-19 sick leave and self-isolation support (\$126 million), income support for vulnerable populations (\$2.8 billion), a redeployment package (\$100 million), business tax changes (\$2.8 billion) and support for the aviation industry (\$600 million).

Monetary policy

The central bank of New Zealand has ordered all banks to stop [paying dividends](#) and redeeming capital notes during the COVID-19 lockdown to help stabilize the financial system by allowing banks to maintain higher levels of capital.

Support to specific sectors, including the health sector

The government will inject an initial amount of \$500 million into the healthcare sector. [Allocations](#) will support the purchase of equipment such as ventilators, increased funding for primary care and in-home services, and enhanced testing capacity.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

The Government increased hourly minimum wages for adults by \$1.20 and for employees who

are starting-out/ training by 96¢.

Policies to stabilize living accommodations include freezing rent prices for 6 months and preventing the termination of tenancies. Banks in NZ will [defer repayments](#) of residential mortgages for up to 6 months for affected homeowners.

\$2.8B allocated for those on Government benefits, including a weekly increase of \$25 and increased Winter Energy Payment for 2020.

The Government created a Whānau Māori Community and Mārae package that re-prioritises \$10M to support community outreach.

Businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19 can apply for the [wage subsidy](#). Businesses in this scheme must pay each employee they receive the subsidy for and maintain at least 80% of employees' pre-COVID-19 income.

\$2.8B allocated in [business tax](#) changes and released a [Guarantee Scheme](#) whereby new loans of up to \$500,000 for businesses with annual revenue between \$250,000-\$80M will be 80% guaranteed by the Government and 20% guaranteed by the bank.

The Government will provide [\\$1M to Māori](#) for a Māori business needs assessment and \$470,000 to Te Arawhiti to work with iwi on their response.

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH

The New Zealand Health Ministry has begun to [release](#) some of its 18 million masks that it had in reserve for pandemics to address shortages in PPE.

New work arrangements

The government has incentivized employers to keep employees through the wage subsidy programme and is also encouraging companies to leverage work from home options. Only businesses that meet the classification requirements for an essential business are allowed to remain open.

For essential workers with children aged 5 to 14 who are working outside the home, funding is available for in-home [childcare services](#), a crucial support for [women workers](#) who are more represented in the healthcare sector.

Paid leave

The government will provide [paid leave](#) for workers of essential businesses who are self-isolating or sick from the virus (including if they have a dependent they need to care for) or are considered to be high risk (or are living with someone deemed high risk).

Access to health care

Individuals can be tested if they demonstrate symptoms consistent with COVID-19—this change

was made on 1 of April. Previously individuals could only be tested if they had a history of travel or exposure to another case.

A free 24 hour, 7 days a week [Healthline](#) is available for medical advice or information.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

The Government will provide [paid leave](#) for workers of essential businesses who are self-isolating, sick from the virus or are considered high risk.

Unions and district health boards developed [national guidelines](#) on PPE.

Other measures

The Government response includes the further promotion and rollout of progressive and inclusive measures merits mention. For example its gender-responsive measure of '[Domestic Violence leave](#)'. Additionally, data collection on COVID-19 cases disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age and location and is available on the [government website](#).

Activities of employers' organizations

Business New Zealand (BusinessNZ) developed dedicated web page has also been established on COVID-19. [A checklist of health and safety](#) quarantine, monitoring and information requirements for business are available. The checklist includes scenarios and options for managing absent employees (those who are sick, who need to take care of someone who is sick, who is not sick but chooses to stay away from the workplace etc).

BusinessNZ produced the following support products for its members:

- [Guide for Dairy Owners to comply with Alert 4 and Covid](#)
- [Wages and Leave Subsidies - Questions & Answers](#)
- [Essential services information](#)

BusinessNZ has also supported the Government develop factsheets on business cashflow, leave, income support, restructuring and redundancy, and wage subsidy schemes.

Palau

Last Updated: **8 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- The government is taking actions to support the health sector and the economy. The parliament is appropriating an additional \$916,808 (0.3 percent of GDP) to the Hospital Trust Fund to help with prevention and preparation for COVID-19. The parliament is also authorizing additional funding (up of to \$6 million or 2.1 percent of GDP) to help maintain government services in the face of declining tourism revenue.
<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#P>

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- The National Development Bank of Palau announced plans to provide financial relief to affected business and households, including interest only payments, term extension, loan consolidation, and temporary payment deferral. Some private banks have introduced loan deferral and forbearance programs for three months.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Air cargo and mail services remain open with air transport provided once a week (Asia Pacific Airlines);
- Matson shipping continuing with regular shipments;
- United Airlines to resume flights on the 9th April; hotels offering their premises as isolation sites for the 14-day quarantine.
- Dive Company packages for tourists extended to no change fees, no cancellation fees, travel any time.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

N/A

Other measures

US President and Congress approved \$55 million to be made directly available to the U.S. territories and the freely associated states on Friday, March 27 via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act will address impacts of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the islands, namely, the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as the freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Stimulating the economy and employment

Fiscal Policy:

The Govt. of Pakistan, 23 April 2020, launched an initial USD 595 million coordinated multi-sectorial Pakistan Preparedness and Response Plan (PPRP) to combat, suppress and mitigate the spread of Coronavirus.

The PPRP outlines the international assistance required by the Govt. of Pakistan to stop the transmission of the pandemic and respond to the emerging public health needs in Pakistan. It is created in line with the Pakistan National Action Plan. It aims to steer a coordinated international effort in support of the Ministry of Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Departments of Health, PDMA's and the overall efforts of the Govt. of Pakistan. It is prepared with the support of the UN and is guided by the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP).

This plan will strengthen and reduce gaps in coordination at all levels, support disease surveillance and laboratory diagnosis, enhance case management, ensure implementation of infection prevention and control and lastly mobilize community for control of the outbreak.

<https://unic.org.pk/pprp-covid-19/>

Prime Minister's COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund - 2020

The Govt. of Pakistan has established a relief fund namely Prime Minister's COVID -19 Pandemic Relief Fund - 2020 for providing relief and assistance to the people of Pakistan affected by the COVID - 19 pandemic in the country <http://www.sbp.org.pk/corona.asp>

Prime Minister Imran Khan, 12 April, appealed for a "Global Initiative on Debt Relief". While noting that COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented health and economic challenges, the Prime Minister underlined that a global recession was certain, one worse than the Great Depression. A global pandemic cannot be contained without strong, coordinated and well-crafted global response, he stressed.

https://pmo.gov.pk/news_details.php?news_id=1070

Monetary Policy:

SBP reduces policy rate by a cumulative 425 bps since 17 March 2020.

SBP Refinance Scheme to Support Employment and Prevent Layoff of Workers.

Relief package of Households, Business and Refinance Schemes.

Ensuring the availability and continuity of financial services.

Promoting digital payments.

Relaxing credit requirements for exporters and importers.

Facilitating new investments.

Provision of disinfected currency notes by banks.

Extension of deadline for applications.

<http://www.sbp.org.pk/corona.asp>

Support to specific sectors, including health sector:

Supporting the health sector to combat the virus - providing cheap loans for hospitals and medical centers to purchase medical equipment for combating COVID - 19.

<http://www.sbp.org.pk/corona.asp>

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Social protection:

The Social Protection Committee (AJK), 10 April 2020, made decisions regarding cash distribution mechanism within the districts, availability of liquid cash, and case profiles for those accepted for online registration and registration through district administration.

The Govt. of Punjab (Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skills Development Department), 19 April 2020, set up a joint team for implementation of Corona Prevention SOPs in operational industrial units (Order No. SO(R) ICI&SDD/2-3/2020)

Govt. of Pakistan rolls out Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program - a total of PKR 144 billion has been allocated to benefit 12 million vulnerable families affected by coronavirus crisis.

The Govt. of Sindh, 29 March 2020, issued a notification that it intends to launch a Mobile Registration System for disbursement of cash to the needy people through "Jazz Cash Transfer" like mechanism during the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Employment retention:

The Office of the Chief Commissioner, ICT (Govt. of Pakistan), 30 March 2020, issued an order that no worker shall be laid off and all kinds of workers shall be paid salaries / remuneration / wages in full by their respective employers during the closure/ lockdown. The period of closure may be considered by the employees as paid leave.

The Home Department (Govt. of Sindh), on 23 March 2020, issued a similar order.

The DG, Labour Welfare (Govt. Balochistan), 22 March 2020, issued a notification that in case of complete / partial lockdown or closure in the Province, all factories / industrial and commercial establishments / NGOs/ private bank/ private educational institutions and all other private entities shall pay at least minimum wages (PKR 17,500) to their workers (permanent, contract, daily wages, piece rate etc.) on regular basis without any deduction.

The Govt. of KP (Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department), 15 April 2020, issued a similar notification.

Assistance to business and business continuity:

The Govt. of Sindh, Home Department, Order No. SO (J-I)/HD/8-1 (04)/2020-Corona, dated 20 April 2020, issued a list of export oriented factories/ manufacturing units conforming with the SOPs developed for enterprises allowed to operate.

The Govt. of the Punjab, Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department, Order No. SO (G)/P&SHD/3-8/2020, dated 14 April 2020, and the Govt. of Balochistan, Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Order No. SO(Judl)8 (31)2020/833-860, dated 16 April 2020, have issued lists of activities that will be completely banned and SOPs for others that will be permitted to operate.

The Office of the Commissioner, Multan (Govt. of Punjab), 02 April 2020, issued an order whereby it allows a few export oriented companies to continue the processing of their on-going export orders until 14 April 2020.

Protecting workers in the workplace

OSH:

The Govt. of Sindh, 16 April 2020, directed that all those essential services who are already continuing their services/ operations since the start of the lockdown and before the issuance of SOPs are required to put all the arrangement and their workplace necessary for compliance with these SOPs, if not already done, within three days.

The Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 16 April 2020, issued a notification that unessential staff of P&D Department already identified shall not attend Office until Eid-ul-Fitr.

The Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 30 March 2020, issued a notification to all inspectors of factories that they ensure application of Standard Operating Procedures in all running factories across the Province to avoid COVID-19.

Access to paid leave:

The Directorate of Labour (Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) , 24 March 2020, issued a notification declaring the period from 24 March to 28 March 2020 as public holidays for their workers in the industrial establishment throughout the Province. It further says that this notification shall not apply to the following manufacturing and distribution units in the Province: oil and ghee mills, flour mills, bottled water and beverage units, other food items, pharmaceutical and allied industrial units, provided that the management ensures anti COVID-19 measures for the workers.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Joint action of employers and workers:

The Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) and the Pakistan Workers Federation (PWF), 26 March 2020, issued a joint declaration on the outbreak of the COVID-19 and its challenges. The declaration reinforces their commitment to work together, reach out to governments and other stakeholders to promoting actions, and help address these challenges. Both the social partners called upon the government to constitute special tripartite taskforce in each province for consultations on collective action and assistance in execution of the plans for economic and social recovery once the pandemic is contained, and asked for long and short-term measures to mitigate the long-lasting consequences of the epidemic.

Other measures

[A community-driven initiative \(with support of 50 community members and Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Dubai\) more than 1,700 ration bags have been distributed since the community-driven initiative began about a week ago.](#)

[Ration bags \(enough to last for 10 to 15 days\) contain essential food items, such as rice, milk, flour, biscuits and oil, which are separately packed for families and individuals who are either stuck in the gulf state due to flight closures or facing financial crunch after being laid off.](#)

[Pakistani Consulate in Dubai is also trying arranging special flights for the stranded people who want to go back to Pakistan.](#)

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- PWF and Employers Federation of Pakistan issued on 26 March [ajoint declaration on the outbreak of the COVID-19 and challenges in Pakistan.](#) The declaration reinforces their commitment to work together, reach out to governments and other stakeholders to promoting actions, and help address these challenges. Both social partners called upon the government to constitute a special tripartite taskforce in each province for consultations on collective action and assistance in execution of the plans for economic and social recovery once the pandemic is controlled and asked for long and short-term measures to mitigate the long-lasting consequences of the epidemic.
- The PWF has requested the Deputy Commissioner Lahore and arranged the COVID-19 Test Mobile Lab in front of PWF Office Lahore. Free testing was done. Only those workers having some symptoms like flu, cough and fever are called for the test, as they cannot afford the test from the private labs.

- The Domestic Workers Union (DWU) is organizing safe transportation for domestic workers for the COVID test
- PWF initiating a Talk Show "Mazdoor Ki Awaz" which will be webcasted every Saturday at 8pm
- PWF started distribution of Ration from today in PWF Lahore Office, Akhbar Faroosh Union Office in Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta & Peshawar. The ration funding is not from any industrialist but from PWF own sources & by some contribution from its own officer bearers
- PWF have started Social Media Campaign's all over Pakistan to raise awareness on COVID-19
- PWF have also made a tutorial video in collaboration with one of the unions in Lahore on COVID-19 for the workers who are working in factories
- PWF in Central Punjab have initiated a Petition which will be signed by the 150 plus unions of Punjab and will be sent to the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister by all of our unions on their letter heads. The same petition will also be printed in the newspapers

Source: Pakistan Workers Federation - PWF

Activities of employers' organizations

- **EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION OF PAKISTAN (EFP)** has taken numerous initiatives in responding to the crisis:
 - EFP has conveyed guidelines, updates, notifications to its members and imperative recommendations to the Governments for the COVID-19 challenges at the workplaces through an [information resource centre](#). The IEC material on OSH has reached to more than 1000 EO's and almost 1.5 million workers. The resource centre has three main sections: EFP response to the epidemic, Government Notifications and Press and Media section.
 - EFP shared its information material to promote health and safety at enterprise level to protect workers from the disease.
 - EFP Issued a circular on Sindh Government Notification on Wages, sharing legal position and supporting the payment of wages in terms of compliance and humanitarian aspects.
 - EFP disseminated government circulars to its members and non-members regarding wages, lockdown etc. through WhatsApp with the request to comply with the instructions from the Government.
 - EFP advocated the Government to safeguard the industries and workforce in the current crisis, calling on the authorities to provide relief to the industries and businesses for their survival.
 - EFP is lobbying the higher authorities of Federal and Provincial Governments to

introduce relief packages for the industries and welfare of labour.

- In addition, a [Joint Declaration by Employers Federation of Pakistan and Pakistan Workers Federation on the COVID-19 Outbreak and Challenges in Pakistan](#) was issued.

Papua New Guinea

Last Updated: 18 May 2020

Stimulating the economy and employment

- As of April 20, there are 8 confirmed cases COVID-19. The government had started imposing containment measures since early February, including a ban on travellers from Asian countries, reduced international flights, mandatory health declaration forms for incoming travellers and enhanced screening at designated ports of entries. On April 2, the PNG parliament voted to shut down the country and extended the state of emergency which started on March 24 for further two months.
- On April 2, the PNG government announced a K5.6 billion economic stimulus package in the parliament. The government has announced K600 million credit line to support businesses and individuals in coordination with the banks and financial institutions, and K500 million support from superannuation savings to employees affected by the economic slowdown. Moreover, the government has allocated K500 million more to support health, security and economic sector. A supplementary budget to accommodate the extra health spending and cut in low priority expenditure which will be tabled in the parliament in July.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Government is contemplating reviewing its employment policies in view of major global pandemics and disasters.
- All commercial banks have relaxed repayment of loans as well as reduce loan rates for the rest of 2020 in response to Covid-19 impacts on business. The Bank of Papua New Guinea as the regulator of financial institutions has been instructed to oversee implementation of this directive.
- The Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) has reduced the Kina Facility Rate (KFR) – the main policy rate - by 200 basis points to 3 percent from 5 percent and has asked the commercial banks to reduce their respective Indicator Lending Rates. BPNG has also reduced the Cash Reserve Requirement to 7 percent from 10 percent to provide additional liquidity to the commercial banks.
- Moreover, the government is working with the commercial banks to provide a 3-months buffer on loan repayments. To cover for the 3-month loan repayment holiday, BPNG will relax prudential standards relating to asset quality, capital adequacy and loan-loss provisioning. The government has also asked the superannuation funds to allow

members who have been laid off from work due to COVID-19 to access their savings.

PNG's economic stimulus: an assessment

Besides its direct effect on people's lives, COVID-19 will significantly impact businesses and the Papua New Guinea economy. Business Advantage PNG has reported on job losses, trading restrictions and the eventual closure of some businesses. Source: <https://devpolicy.org/pngs-economic-stimulus-an-assessment-20200423-3/>

- SMEs and MSMEs have been encouraged to obtain loans to remain in business.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Government has also directed through the SoE that no workers should be laid off during the initial 14-day lock-down period.
- On April 8, Superfunds announced that its members whose employment was terminated by their employer as a result of COVID-19 will be entitled to a one-off payment of 20 percent of the member's contribution.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Employers have strongly raised their concern to the Government that the Covid-19 has negatively impacted business (incl. large corporations, SMEs and the informal sector). Unless they are Government subsidies to support business, mass lay-offs was an expected outcome.
- Unions have likewise raised their concern about Government being unfair on private sector as opposed to public sector. The Government is accused of cushioning the impacts of Covid-19 on the public sector and not the private sector, by way of available subsidies.

Source: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/414906/png-union-leader-says-govt-only-supporting-public-sector>

Other measures

In response to Youth unemployment as a result of Covid-19; the PM has vouched for establishment of a National Volunteer Service (NVS).

Source: <http://www.looppng.com/png-news/plans-unemployed-youths-91410>

The pandemic has exacerbated the already existing levels of poverty. Government is working on how best to balance its acts between the health of its people and their livelihoods.

There is renewed call by the informal sector to empower and upscale MSMEs as it is worth PGK1.2 billion according to the Business Council.

To date:

- Only 8 positive cases, all recovered, zero deaths.

- International flights to Brisbane (5 weekly) Cairns (twice) and Singapore (4 times).
- Domestic flights have been lifted.
- All schools have resumed classes as of 04th May 2020; under strict compliance with SoE directions.

Philippines

Last Updated: **29 September 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- President Duterte signed Executive Order No. 140 in July 2021, adopting the [National Employment Recovery Strategy \(NERS\)](#) as the Philippine government's master plan for the recovery of the labour market. The NERS seeks to (a) create a policy environment that encourages employment generation and improved access to employment, livelihood and training opportunities; (b) improve employability, wellness and productivity of workers and take advantage of the opportunities in the labor market under the new normal; and (c) provide support to existing and emerging businesses to preserve and create employment.
- Emergency powers were granted to the President through Republic Act 11469 or the [Bayanihan Act](#) to address the impacts of COVID-19. The government rolled out a [PHP 27.1 billion fiscal package](#) (about 0.15 per cent of 2019 GDP) intended for [purchase of COVID-19 testing kits and health equipment; social protection for vulnerable workers; and support to the tourism and agriculture sectors. Financial assistance will also be provided to affected SMEs and vulnerable households through specialized microfinancing loans and loan restructuring.](#) The government also plans to accelerate budget execution and reallocate more resources toward COVID-19-related health spending.
- The [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas \(BSP\)](#) announced that it will purchase PHP 300 billion worth government securities (about 1.6 per cent of 2019 GDP) to support the government's programmes to counter the impacts of COVID-19. The BSP also announced a series of regulatory relief measures for the banking sector which are intended to encourage banks, in turn, to provide financial relief to their borrowers and to suspend all fees and charges imposed on online banking platforms during the period of regulatory relief.
- To support micro and small businesses affected COVID-19, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has set up a PHP 1 billion [Enterprise Rehabilitation Financing](#) facility. The loan fund is open to micro and small enterprises with at least one year continuous operation prior to March 2020, and whose businesses suffered drastic reduction in sales. In partnership with eCommerce partners, the Department of Trade has organized a series of free webinars called "CTRL+BIZ:REBOOT NOW" aimed at providing MSMEs information about starting their businesses online
- The Department of Agriculture (DA) approved an initial PHP1-billion [loan assistance to](#)

[marginal farmers and fisherfolk, as well as agri-fishery micro and small enterprises \(MSEs\)](#) to increase farm productivity and ensure food sufficiency during the COVID-19 emergency situation.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- In April 2021, the Employees Compensation Commission approved the inclusion of the [coronavirus disease among the compensable](#) occupational and work-related diseases.
- [Data from the Department of Labor and Employment \(DOLE\)](#) showed the pandemic forced over 93,000 commercial establishments employing 2.5 million formal sector workers to temporarily shut down or adopt flexible work arrangement since the start of the outbreak. [Wage subsidies](#) are being provided, with the subsidy ranging from Php 5,000 to Php 8,000 per worker for two months.
- The DOLE has just completed the COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP), a [one-time cash assistance of PHP5,000](#) (US\$97.6) per worker that was provided to workers in private establishments where flexible working arrangements were introduced. Under the CAMP, which was rolled out on March 23, about [650,000 formal sector workers from MSMEs were extended assistance](#). Meanwhile, close to a million displaced workers in the informal sector are intended to be reached by the Department's [TUPAD Program](#). DOLE is also providing assistance to overseas Filipino workers through its AKAP program which provides P10,000 or \$200 cash assistance per worker.
- The Social Security System (SSS) mobilized PHP 1.2 billion (US\$23.5 million) to cover [unemployment benefits](#) for displaced workers. This will cover unemployment insurance benefits for a projected 30,000 to 60,000 workers who will lose their jobs as a result of possible layoffs.
- The Department of Education (DepEd) implemented [measures to support the income of public teachers](#), including fast-track processing and release of the salaries for March and April.
- The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation ([PhilHealth](#)) [package was expanded](#) to include COVID-testing, referral and isolation. PhilHealth released [PHP 30 billion \(US\\$583 million\) in advance](#) to accredited hospitals. It uses its interim reimbursement mechanism to provide health care providers with liquidity to respond adequately to the increased demand due to COVID-19.
- SSS has also [extended the period](#) in filing sickness notifications and sickness benefit claims of members and employers. In addition, it has [extended the deadline](#) of remittances contributions of all members until 1 June 2020.
- For [Filipinos working overseas](#) who were affected by the travel ban due to COVID-19, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) provided cash aid, including the [441 Filipino ship crew](#) who were on-board the COVID 19-infested MV Diamond Princess Cruise Ship that was quarantined at the Port of Yokohama for 14 days.
- The Government will provide an [emergency subsidy](#) to around 18 million low income households amounting to a minimum of PHP 5,000 to a maximum of PHP 8,000 a month for 2 months.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- The Philippine Government continues to [promote vaccination of workers](#) but it is not mandatory. A national [vaccination plan](#) was put in place in January 2021 and continues to be updated including the list of priority groups. Frontline health workers are at the top of the priority list (A1) and other workers who are physically reporting to work or perform field work are now classified as [priority group A4](#).
- The [DOLE and DTI issued interim guidelines on workplace prevention and control of Covid-19](#) which mandates workers and employers in the private sector to observe strict health protocols as the enhanced community quarantine and general community quarantine remain in effect.
- The DOLE issued guidelines on the [COVID-19 prevention and control at the workplace](#). The guidelines cover entitlements of workers which includes leave of absence, hospitalization benefits and social security/ employees compensation benefits.
- The DOLE encouraged enterprises to adopt [flexible work arrangements](#) (i.e. telecommuting, work from home, reduced work days/hours, rotation of workers and forced leave).
- For the more than 800,000 public school teachers nationwide, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued [guidelines for alternative work arrangements](#) including telecommuting.
- Under the [new law](#) declaring the national emergency, health workers will be provided with a "COVID-19 special risk allowance" in addition to the hazard pay. Further, compensation of PHP 100,000 will be given to public and private health workers who may contract severe COVID-19 infection while in line of duty. A compensation of PHP 1,000,000 shall be given to those who may die.
- All government workers who physically report for work during the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine will also receive [hazard pay](#).
- The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) will [cover the cost of treatment](#) for COVID-19 patients under the National Health Insurance Program. PhilHealth will also shoulder all medical expenses of public and private health workers in case of exposure to COVID-19 or any work-related injury or disease.
- Alternative work arrangements were also encouraged by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) which issued [guidelines for the continued operation of ICT-BPO Companies](#).
- The Department of Health (DOH) issued an [Administrative Order](#) on to define the Minimum Health System Capacity Standards COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Strategies as guidance for local and sectoral planning.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- The NERS Task Force, composed of 20 government agencies led by the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Labor and Employment and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, convened a series of social dialogue activities leading to the Jobs Summit in 1 May 2021. The consultations, which were supported by ILO, ADB and World Bank, engaged various labor sector and business in identifying priority

concerns to address employment recovery.

- In light of its declared commitment to uphold social dialogue and tripartism, the DOLE highlighted consideration of inputs from sectoral partners and stakeholders in the formulation and/or fine-tuning of its social amelioration programs CAMP (for formal sector workers), TUPAD (for workers in the informal economy) and AKAP (for overseas Filipino workers). DOLE convened tripartite, sectoral, bilateral, including virtual meetings to discuss health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on workers and businesses. Discussions during these meetings resulted to tripartite Resolutions on augmentation of funds for COVID-19, right to security of tenure and the DOLE-DTI interim guidelines in the workplace.
- *Workers's advocacies.* Workers including through NAGKAISA continuously advocated for government to conduct social dialogue since the onset of the crisis. They also sent written position papers online and through social media on measure and issues that affect full protection of public and private sector workers. These included health and safety, safe working conditions and arrangements including work from home and logistical support, medical services, mass testing, guaranteed income, hazard pay, paid leaves, funding and mechanics for food and income distribution to support the needy, responsive governance, empowerment of LGUs, establishment of Philippine CDC, national production of essential goods/supplies to generate jobs for Filipinos, national action plan and stimulus packages applicable during and after the quarantine, among others.
- *Workers participation in legislation.* Trade unions are providing online inputs to House Bills on the stimulus package and policy framework under the new normal. Through TUCP Party list, they also participated in Congressional hearings, which included, for example, the adoption of Bayanihan Act and Congressional Resolutions on the effect of COVID-19 and on the implementation of government measures on employment and industries, among others. Meanwhile, public sector unions have engaged the Senate Committee on Labour calling for payment of salaries of all government employees regardless of employment status. Sub-national and sector specific collaboration had been undertaken by individual unions (e.g., PCIWU) with regional DOLE offices.
- *Workers/Unions at enterprise level.* The national union centers and federations encouraged their members/affiliates to carry out enterprise level dialogues to respond to COVID-19. These covered flexible work arrangements including work from home, paid leaves without charging Sick Leave, Vacation Leave or Paid Time Off under the CBA, as well as income (early bonuses cash advances, etc) and food security (groceries and food packs) and health support (medicines/vitamin C), among others.
- *ECOP forums.* The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) have been organizing a series of webinars to discuss the government measures and responses to support workers during the Enhanced Community Quarantine. The webinars usually have resource persons from relevant government organizations, industry stakeholders and representatives of workers organizations.

Other measures

- To support workers, who are affected or temporarily displaced and quarantined in their

homes during the lockdown, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) offers online classes at the [TESDA Online Program \(TOP\) or E-Tesda](#)

- To augment the supply for [facemasks needed for frontliners](#), TESDA has encouraged its schools offering training on Dressmaking NC II to sew face masks. Others produced DIY hand sanitizers, and surface disinfectants. The production of these essential goods were supervised by TESDA instructors in the area.
- The Department of Information and Communications Technology has offered free eBooks and other educational content designed for children under the eEdu-Skills Segment of the [Tech4ED Project](#) to provide free online educational materials and to boost learning outside the classroom. There is also a Covibook that provides an opportunity for children, parents and educators to learn more about the pandemic and discuss their feelings in earnest.
- In lieu of class suspension, the Department of Education provided alternative learning delivery platforms, such as [DepEd Commons, the online educational platform](#) for public school teachers and learners which supports alternative learning modalities amid enhanced community quarantine period.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- As of this date, no tripartite social dialogue has been undertaken for the government policy issuances. However, the government/DOLE has undertaken separate bilateral dialogues with employers and with the workers group. NAGKAISA has urged DOLE to convene the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council to effectively address the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19
- The DOLE issuance on COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) was the only policy that involved inputs from workers during a dialogue in March. Unions have also participated in hearings that contributed to the adoption of Bayanihan Act
- Public sector unions have submitted position papers at the Senate calling for payment of salaries of all government employees regardless of employment status
- NAGKAISA Labor Coalition (NAGKAISA) issued a series of almost daily joint statements calling for tripartite meetings, more government funds to provide income guarantees for all affected workers, free treatment, budget for mass testing and providing protection and support for health workers
- Representations with government agencies for early release of 13th month pay and 13th month pension; deferment of rent payments for workers
- Representations for subsidized wages for those unable to work, for work from home, for transportation to and from work, for better and safer accommodations, for hazard pay; for PPEs; for regular disinfection of work premises; for certain benefits to cover non-

regular workers (NTUC)

- SENTRO called on all its affiliates to negotiate with their employers to establish protocols on how to protect workers and secure their jobs. We are currently documenting best practices of our affiliates
- Congressional deliberations on the impact to Filipino migrant workers. As Chairperson of the House Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs, TUCP President and TUCP Partylist Rep. Raymond C. Mendoza called for a Congressional inquiry on the possible effects of COVID-19 on the 10 Million Filipinos worldwide.

Sources:

- NAGKAISA
- Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
- Federation of Free Workers (FFW)
- SENTRO
- Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)
- National Trade Union Center (NTUC)

Activities of employers' organizations

The **EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (ECOP)** launched on March 17, 2020 a Special Coverage on COVID-19: Looking After Business and Employment providing the following interventions:

- Service Helpdesk
- Advisory and Announcements
- Surveys
- Fast FAQs
- Webinar Series: Employers and Workers in the Time of COVID-19 – online learning sessions on how employers and workers can cope amid the crisis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EL6HkAAQOTY>
- Business Cases: A Series on Good Business Practices – documentation and compilation of good business practices especially on work arrangements, salaries and benefits, assistance [Best Practices](#)
- Prescriptions on Business Survival and Resilience
- Soft launch of the ECOP eCampus
- Partnerships with other organizations for course offerings on entrepreneurship and soft skills development for work-from-home workers

ECOP made a number of policy proposals, including

- Proposals to address the policy gaps of the DOLE's enterprise subsidy program
- Deferment of payment of April 2020 holidays
- Provide subsidy to businesses/rehabilitation fund, especially MSMEs

- Loan moratoriums and deferment of payment of premium contributions
- Encourage companies to install and implement business continuity plans (BCP), implement flexible work arrangements (FWA)

ECOP is undertaking joint action with other business organizations and trade unions:

ECOP, together with other business organizations, released a statement urging employers to advance the 13th month pay and other benefits and assistance to help workers during the on-going work stoppage

Joint weekly webinars with other business organizations until May 2020

Joint webinars with the trade union movement under the ambit of Leaders Forum

ECOP released a series of support material for member companies:

[What employers should know about the quarantine](#)

[Company best practices in the fight against COVID 19](#)

[Highlights of high-level consultative meeting on COVID-19](#)

With a “flattening of the curve” in the rise of COVID-19 cases, ECOP is conducting a survey ([Post-Crisis Questionnaire](#)) on the extension of the enhanced community quarantine and the restriction of mobility and enterprise openings. The survey is aimed at providing data and inputs to government policy-making bodies for their most important decisions to make in the next few weeks.

ECOP conducted the COVID-19 Impact Assessment Survey to gauge the impact brought about by the pandemic on COVID-19, learn about corporate responses in terms of operations, work arrangements, and workforce planning, and get insights on what kind of support and intervention the companies need from both ECOP and the government. The survey was conducted from 27 March 2020 to 15 April 2020 garnering responses from 347 companies. ECOP's Impact-Assessment-Survey-Analysis.

Samoa

Last Updated: **23 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- The government has put together the first phase of the fiscal and economic response package, which is to be approved by parliament. The package is centered around the mission of “Support the private sector so they can feed the nation,” and includes: (i) expenditure to cover the immediate medical response; (ii) assistance to the private sector; and (iii) assistance to individuals and households. The government has been stepping up its efforts to increase the level of preparedness and prevention. Temporary quarantine

facilities have been established in key areas. There is a dire need for testing kits, medical consumables, as well as other clinical equipment and medication, to prepare for the confirmation/arrival and treatment of COVID-19.

- The Central Bank of Samoa will encourage commercial banks to reduce interest rates, and/or associated bank fees and charges. Maintain ample liquidity in the banking system to support businesses and stands ready to activate its lending facilities for the financial institutions. The proposed fiscal and economic response package includes provision of a three-month grace period to be applied for all loan payments. To compensate part of the losses in interest income, local commercial banks will receive payments from the government.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#S>

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- The support for the private sector includes: a temporary exemption on import duties on most commonly bought food items for households; duty concessions to be applied to an expanded list of agricultural and fishing materials; a grace period of three months to be applied for all loan payments; and a six-month moratorium on pension contributions for the hospitality sector. Support for citizens includes: establishment of the Emergency Price Control Board to keep wholesale and retail prices in check and bring them down, if necessary; provision of financial assistance to members of the National Provident Fund in the form of a refund of their loan payments for March 2020; and a temporary reduction of utility bills (both electricity and water) for six months through September 2020.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#S>

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Self-employed – Including the small shop owners and agricultural farmers are still operating. With the promotion of eating natural food from farming by the Ministry of Health, Samoans have less disturbance with their daily operations.
- The only challenges they face though is that the order prevents them from selling at the public markets and on the streets, this strictly prohibited under the lock down order.
- Public transport companies are also affected with prohibitions of buses on the road at the lock down period as well as the taxi drivers struggle with no revenue earned during the day as not so many people travel during the lock down period.
- Public Sector ministries are also restricted to open from 9am – 3pm, otherwise telework from home.
- The most affected business operators are those in the Tourism & Transportation Sector.

Other measures

- Government issued the lock down order from the 27th March - 4th of April for 14 days with currently ZERO case of COVID-19.

As of 4th April State of Emergency has been extended to 2nd May 2020.

- Two tonnes of vital medical supplies arrived in Samoa on 31 March on a special Samoa Airways flight.
- Nurses Association would expect to be on frontline again with police officers if any cases. Samoa would be using the same model of emergency as they used during the Measles epidemic in Oct – Dec 2019.
- Workers at the only airline company of Samoa (Samoa Airways) are also at risk with no jobs at the moment, and this is also affecting the grounds staff of other international airlines like Fiji Airways, Air New Zealand, and Virgin Blue Pacific

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- There are no COVID 19 positive cases reported in Samoa. However, Samoa has initiated a lockdown to prevent it from occurring within the country. Initially the lockdown that was imposed as a two-week period, and now extended for an additional four-weeks, concluding by end April
- The primary vehicle for dialogue for the SWC has been the Samoan National Tripartite Committee to coordinate and support both the Government and national employer group responses
- Tripartite constituents have looking at not just providing and responding to situations, but also as to how best the tripartite structures can be better modeled so that more concrete actions can be initiated
- SWC has initiated media reach out to the general public on the pandemic and the need to protect workers that will be affected by the economic consequences
- SWC has endorsed and supported the preventive measures in place so far by Samoa. The government has proposed a 500 Million Samoan Tala package to recover from the pandemic
- For the package that is being designed, SWC has proposed that such should look at the following aspects:
 1. That workers laid off on grounds of business shut down be considered as temporary measures and they should be given priority on back to employment
 2. That Government as part of its relief package consider the protection of businesses and that s a consequence that workers' salaries or part payments be facilitated so that workers can be gainfully be employed back again
 3. That income loss of small traders be considered as part of the package and stimulate the local economy

4. That workers and persons with disabilities also be considered as part of the primary need group for economic support
- Coordination is maintained with Australian unions and New Zealand unions on the protection of the Samoan migrant workers and their rights

Source: Samoa Workers Congress (SWC)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **SAMOA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** has produced social media updates on the latest policy developments, sharing links to information and guidance materials, including resources from ILO, IOE and ICC, and encouraging members to take action;
- Conducted surveys to assess the impact of the State of Emergency on the business community with the data used to develop the Chambers policy submissions and support its advocacy;
- Two submissions on 'Request for Government Assistance to the Private Sector' were formulated. This led first to a dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and representatives SCCI executive council;
- The second provided a position outlining priorities to be considered for Government assistance. A coordinated approach of assistance by way of a stimulus package was encouraged. The key proposed priorities are:
 - Support on employer-related costs for the period of lockdown and the orders of the state of emergency;
 - For Samoa National Provident Fund to bring forward 50% of payment of its planned dividend to stimulate the economy;
 - For the Central Bank of Samoa to exercise control and regulation and provide relief through the commercial banks to support impacted businesses and individuals;
 - For subsidies on electricity and water charges and to consider flexible arrangements for monthly bills to assist with business cash flow;
 - To ease Import Duty Free on basic and essential supplies;
 - To postpone the deadline of income tax payments due and waive penalties for delayed payments;
 - To release outstanding payments owed to local businesses to assist with cash flow and expedite required processes to avoid delays;
 - For government to reprioritize expenditure and implement costs saving measures and to revive Agricultural related project activities;
- Discussions with the Government to work on ensuring the private sector survives. The Chamber is also participant in the Samoan National Tripartite Forum (SNTF). Now working on a consolidated position paper to support the Government's efforts.

Stimulating the economy and employment

The Government has obtained the President's in-principle support to draw up to [\\$17 billion](#) to fund some of the measures to save jobs and the economy. The government has provided a variety of tax deferments and rebates to support businesses. Also, there are rental waivers, financing schemes for companies, and incentives for specific sectors.

Specific Sector :

- Aviation Industry: the government will provide a 75 percent wage offset for the first S\$4,600 (US\$3,205) in monthly wages through the Jobs Support Scheme.
- tourism industry: there is also an additional \$90 million in funding for the industry.
- food and beverages (F&B) industry, the government will provide a 50 percent wage offset for the first \$4,600 in monthly wages.
- Transportation Sector: Special relief fund payment of \$300 per vehicle per month extended until September 2020. One year road tax rebate and 6 months waiver of parking charges at the government-owned facility.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- On social Protection: Care and Support Package will triple the cash payout for all adult Singaporeans to \$300.
- For lower-wage workers, the Workfare Special Payment will provide \$3,000 in cash for their household needs.
- Triple the Grocery Vouchers from \$100 to \$300.
- one-off Passion Card top-up for Singaporeans aged 50 years and above in cash instead.
- Eligible self-employed persons will receive \$1,000 a month for nine

months.

- taxi and private-hire car drivers can receive up to \$20 per vehicle per day for three months
- low-wage workers will receive 20 percent more for work done in the past year, with a minimum cash payout of \$100
- To set up a Temporary Relief Fund in April, to provide the unemployed with immediate financial assistance.
- Employment Retention: Employers can arrange for a short period and must pay 50 percent of the gross salary during the days they are temporarily laid off. Employers can ask employees to take up to 50 percent of their annual leave and any layoff period cannot exceed one month, or arrange a shorter week, not exceed more than three days in a week and should not last more than three months.
- The government will raise the percentage of co-funding of wages to 25 percent. The monthly wage ceiling allowance will also be raised from \$3,600 to \$4,600
- To support businesses' trade financing needs, to enhance the EFS – Trade Loan, by increasing the maximum loan quantum from \$5 million to \$10 million and increasing the Government's risk-share from up to 70% to 80%. Increase subsidies to businesses for loan insurance premiums under the Loan Insurance Scheme, from 50% to 80%.expand the Temporary Bridging Loan Programme to all sectors, and increase the maximum supported loan from \$1 million to \$5 million.
- To work with Participating Financial Institutions to defer capital payments for one year on the EFS-Working Capital Loan and the TBLP loans

Protecting workers in the workplace

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) announced various [safe distancing measures](#) to reduce the risk of local spread of COVID-19, including at workplaces. MOM also [monitors foreign work pass holders](#).
- [Step up cleaning](#) of workplace premises and adopt the sanitation and hygiene advisories disseminated by the National Environmental Agency (NEA).

- MOM promotes work from home wherever employees can perform their work by telecommuting from home, the employer must ensure that they do so. Special attention should be paid to vulnerable employees and for employers who have a frontline or customer-facing operations, they should adopt queue management measures as recommended by
- MOM provides *Temporary Housing Support* to help employers who are affected by Malaysia's implementation of a Movement Control Order and provide support to help FDW employers who are affected by the SHN requirements for FDWs.
- Access to paid leave MOM encourages employers to Leave of Absence (LOA) for all employees who have Stay AT Home notice and self-employed persons (SEPs) to claim for the \$100 daily support for such company-imposed LOA (company-LOA) under the Leave of Absence Support Programme (LOASP).
- The employees are eligible for 5 days of sick leave who have respiratory symptoms to allow them to rest at home and to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Access to health care: Work Injury benefit covers employees who contract diseases from biological agents, including COVID-19, arising from and in the course of work. The Government will cover the cost of inpatient COVID-19 treatment at public hospitals for all long-term pass holders, including work pass holders, holders of In-Principle Approvals (IPA), Letters of Eligibility (LOE) and temporary work permits (TWP).

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Employers, unions & workers and the Government always hold a consultation on the preventive and mitigation measures re the COVID impacts in the business and workplace.

A Joint Action: the tripartite partners through the National Wage Council (NWC) has convened earlier than usual this year. The NWC has developed a new set of Guidelines to give timely guidance to employers on sustaining their businesses and saving jobs. The tripartite partners stand together in calling on employers to reduce costs and manage excess manpower responsibly, and on employees to do their part to help enterprises save jobs.

Other measures

support training and create jobs opportunities for unemployed, young graduates and self-employed:

- Extend the Self-Employed Person Training Support Scheme to December 2020, and enhance the hourly training allowance from \$7.50 to \$10, with effect from 1 May 2020.
- Co-fund wage costs of companies offering traineeships to first-time job seekers
- Support up to 8000 traineeships in 2020 across both large and small enterprises.
- Initiatives to create about 10,000 jobs over the next one year.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- On March 21, "Tripartite advisory on managing excess manpower and responsible retrenchment" was issued to guide employers to strictly follow procedures and rules including advance consultation with trade unions if retrenchment is inevitable.
- Singapore imposes social distancing measures from 7 April to 4 May 2020. This policy will include non-essential workplace closures and restricted interaction, affecting businesses and workers. On top of S\$55 billion COVID-related Unity and Resilience budget, the government will mobilise an additional \$5.1 BILLION Solidarity budget to see Singaporeans and businesses through this period.
- Among other schemes, the Government will pay 75% on the first \$4,600 of monthly salaries for every local employee for April 2020; From May 2020, wage support levels will revert to original levels in Resilience Budget (75% wage support for aviation, and tourism sectors; 50% for the food services sector, and 25% for all other sectors). Eligible Self-employed workers will receive three quarterly cash payouts of \$3,000 each in May, July, and October 2020.
- NTUC Care Fund for union members who lose their jobs due to COVID-19. NTUC created a Singaporean \$25 million of NTUC Care Fund (COVID-19) which offers some aid to distressed workers. NTUC members, who originally earned up to \$3,400 Gross Monthly Personal Income with dependents or up to \$1,500 GPI without dependents, are eligible for the fund. The claimants will receive between \$50 to \$300 worth of one-off cash relief.
- Union members with dependents staying in the same household in Singapore will get S\$300 as existing member and S\$200 as new members.
- Union members without dependents staying in the same household in Singapore will get S\$200 as existing member and S\$50 as new members.

Source: [Singapore National Trades Union Congress \(NTUC\)](#)

For more information, see also:

- [NTUC has a separate programme to help union members](#)
- [Tripartite advisory on managing excess manpower and responsible retrenchment](#)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **SINGAPORE NATIONAL EMPLOYERS FEDERATION (SNEF)** has put together a dedicated [web page on COVID-19](#) to share all resources on the virus with its members. Guidance provided is also based on latest advisories published by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Manpower. [SNEF's Response](#)
- SNEF, together with the other social partners, developed the advisory on 11 March to help companies implement retrenchment exercises in a responsible and sensitive manner bearing in mind the impact on the affected employees, in the event that retrenchment is inevitable. The advisory on managing excess manpower and responsible retrenchment emphasizes that employees are treated with dignity and respect during a retrenchment exercise now that the retrenchment is a difficult time for all, especially for the affected employees and their families. [Tripartite advisories and guidelines on manpower retrenchment](#).
- On 7 February, the tripartite partners issued an advisory on the appropriate workplace measures to guide employers to continue running their operations while minimising risks of the COVID-19. [General Advisory for Workplace Measures in Response to DORSCON ORANGE Situation](#)
- SNEF, together with the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), issued the [Guide on Business Continuity Planning for 2019 novel coronavirus](#). This guide on business continuity planning for enterprises aims to help SMEs to deal with the COVID-19. It is guided by the Singapore Standard for Business Continuity Management System – Requirements, and relevant advisories issued by MOH and other government agencies.
- SNEF, together with the SBF, issued a [joint advisory](#) on “Workplace measures to manage the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Situation.”
- In Singapore, the Ministry of Manpower, the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), signed a tripartite advisory statement on managing excess manpower and responsible retrenchment (updated in March 2020). The statement invites enterprises to use retrenchment as a last resort, only after all other options have been explored and considered inapplicable. Alternatives to retrenchment include the training of employees to upgrade their skills; redeployment of employees to other parts of the company; flexible work schedules and short workweeks; wage adjustment following social dialogue; and unpaid leave. The document indicates, “Where there is a need to implement any of the measures, the principle of leadership by example, close consultation and transparency should prevail. Employers should engage and communicate with unions and employees. The measures should be regularly reviewed to assess whether they remain necessary and whether other measures are required”. It further states that if a company is unionized, the relevant union(s) should be

consulted as early as possible on these measures. Then the Government allocated “Resilience Budget” to support workers, stabilise businesses and build resilience from social distancing measures and workplace closures.

Solomon Islands

Last Updated: **8 April 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

The government has not approved any fiscal measures. However, it has requested all line ministries to review and re-prioritize their respective ministry budgets in anticipation of budget pressures due to the pandemic. The government has also announced scaling down non-essential government services following an assessment by Permanent Secretaries. The government is moving ahead to set up local capability for testing within the next few weeks as well as arranging quarantine facilities.

The central bank has confirmed its commitment to continuing to maintain an expansionary monetary policy stance for the next six months.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#S>

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Exemption of Surcharges will be considered and aligned to the SINPF Board Surcharge Policy for Employers.
- A sum of up to SB\$5,000 for members under the age of 50 years who are temporary laid off or stand down due to the effects of the COVID-19 or are unemployed. Members whose balances are below SB\$5000 are to be paid 50% of their balances.
- Members who are made redundant due to the effects of COVID-19 be waived the 3 months waiting period and be paid 1/3 of their contribution or in full, if the balance is less than SB\$10,000. The remaining balance will be paid according to the SINPF schedule.
- Members who are aged 50 years and above can withdraw up to 20% of their contributions should they wish to or else they can elect to withdraw in full.
- The application of member support will be for 3 months period effective 1st April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Government authorities are currently consulting private sector representatives to put together a stimulus package to relieve any serious impacts on the national economy in view of the current Covid-19 pandemic worldwide.

- The Minister of Finance has considered with responsibility, care and prudence to offer affected members the following listed below, without comprising the SINPF Board's ability and commitment to pay (especially in a period when the Fund's revenues are expected to decline as well);
 - Its eligible 50 years and above members
 - Its other normal member withdrawals, and
 - Its guarantee to the financial institutions for loans members of the Fund had borrowed from them.

Other measures

The government has banned entry of non-citizens and imposed mandatory strict quarantine measures for all incoming passengers. In addition, the government has restricted movement of its citizens to the capital city. Solomon Islands relies heavily on logging exports to China and the weak fiscal position increases vulnerability to shocks. <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#S>

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- The Government is the main lead in the process of the COVID 19 response. It works on primarily looking at preventive measures that needs initiation and secondly on the need to stimulate the economy to sustain the people in the country
- Based on recommendations from the employers and the workers groups, the government has allocated financial resources to the safe repatriation of workers back to the villages. Including providing free transportation
- SICTU through the Labor Advisory Council coordinates efforts with the Employers and the Government. All matters otherwise taken up by the National Labor Advisory Council are on hold and the pandemic and its response has been prioritized
- As a result of the agreements workers are getting two months' pay for March and April and ½ month pay thereafter till the stimulus and other economic stabilizations efforts are put in place
- SICTU has also agreed with the employer groups that workers covered through collective agreements would be protected as per its terms. Including payments where necessary on back wages
- Have sought consensus from the Employers that efforts will be taken both protect the businesses and the workers on equal footing
- While membership fees are in decline, the SICTU continues to engage the workers at the

village level through regular contact

Sources:

- Solomon Islands Council of Trade Unions (SICTU)
- Interviewed: Mr Tony Kagovai , National Secretary

Sri Lanka

Last Updated: **19 November 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

To ease pressure on exchange rate and calm the financial market, the [Central Bank of Sri Lanka](#) directed (until end June 2020):

- Suspension of importation of motor vehicles for 3 months
- Suspension of importation of non-essential goods
- Suspension of purchase of Sri Lanka International Sovereign Bonds, by domestic banks
- Foreign exchange for travel to be capped at USD5000 (or equivalent)
- [Price controls](#) on certain essential foods (tinned fish, lentils, eggs), with government absorbing subsidies to traders

Economic [relief measures](#) announced 23 March 2020:

- Debt moratorium of 6 months (till end September 2020) for tourism, apparel, small and medium enterprise sectors, and working capital loan (facilitated by Central Bank of Sri Lanka)
- 2020 1st Quarter deadlines for income tax, Value Added Tax, driver's license, local tax on households, electricity and water bills below LKR15,000 extended to 30 April 2020
- Value Added Tax and local taxes waived for the Cooperatives Department (Sathosa stores) and cooperative societies retail outlets
- Credit card transactions below LKR50,000 to have maximum interest rate of 15% and monthly charges to be reduced by 50%
- Tax exemptions for imported masks and disinfectant

[Central Bank of Sri Lanka](#) on 03 April reduced interest rates to 6% (Standing Deposit Facility Rate) and 7% (Standing Deposit Lending Rate) to enable domestic financial institutions to expand credit to businesses and individuals.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Samurdhi (poverty alleviation programme) beneficiaries and other vulnerable households to receive weekly [food rations](#) (rice, lentils, onions)

- [Income support](#) through 6-month moratorium (until end September 2020) on loan repayments by 1.5 million self-employed three-wheeler drivers, bus and van owners; personal loan salary deductions of public sector workers deferred until 30 May 2020; repayments to commercial banks of personal loans (below LKR1 million) postponed to end June 2020; salaries (LKR20,000 per month) of 100,000 newly recruited graduates from poor households to be paid from March 2020; cash advance of LKR10,000 to Samurdhi (poverty alleviation programme) beneficiaries
- National Insurance Trust Fund [benefits for key workers](#) (health, police, civil security) to be doubled
- [COVID19 Healthcare and Social Security Fund](#) created on 23 March, with contributions by government, private sector, individuals. Funds to be used for inter alia: health services e.g. testing, facilities, drugs; healthcare and safety of health sector workers and logistics providers of essential services; basic essentials to women, elderly, children, low-incomed and vulnerable groups; strengthen public healthcare systems including in rural areas; organic food consumption; resource mobilisation with international agencies, etc.
- [Presidential Task Force](#) to direct, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of continuous services for the sustenance of overall community life, comprising military and civilian administrators, appointed on 26 March 2020
- On 30 March, the Presidential Task Force directed by the President to implement following [socio-economic relief measures](#): Cash transfer of LKR5000 (one-off) to
 - 2,398,994 households of the poor
 - 559,109 senior citizens
 - 119,300 persons with disabilities
 - 160,675 farmers insured by the Farmers Insurance Scheme
 - 39,170 Chronic Kidney Disease patients; and
 - Support (unspecified) to "private businesses that are not in a position to pay employees' wages"

Protecting workers in the workplace

The Ministry of Labour issued [Covid19 Prevention Guidelines](#) on workplace health and hygiene practices for all industries, following discussion with social partners, on March 17 2020

On 30 March, the [Employers Federation of Ceylon](#) issued directive to members whose enterprises have been deemed "essential" and permitted to function during the strict lockdown (curfew) on workplace safety and health including activation or formation of bipartite OSH committees

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations formed a Tripartite Task Force [chaired by the Minister of Skills Development, Employment and Labour](#)-- as a sub-committee of the apex social dialogue mechanism, the National Labour Advisory Council. The [Task Force](#) met thrice (10 March, 17 March and 20 March), before the imposition of strict lockdown measures. Thereafter, members have been communicating with the Ministry of

Labour bilaterally via email and telephone on their issues and requests. There are attempts to arrange a virtual meeting during the lockdown, but this is hampered by technical difficulties.

The Tripartite Task Force also met with the Prime Minister (also in his capacity as Minister of Finance) on 11 March, to put forward their concerns and recommendations on managing the labour market impacts of COVID19.

Through Task Force dialogues, employers' organisations agreed to pay [full salaries in March and April](#) to workers. This decision was reaffirmed at a separate meeting with the [Minister of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations](#) on 02 April 2020.

Other measures

- US\$5 million [donated by Government of Sri Lanka](#) to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) COVID19 Emergency Fund
- [0.1% GDP allocated for quarantine and other containment measures](#)

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations formed a Tripartite Task Force [chaired by the Minister of Skills Development, Employment and Labour](#)-- as a sub-committee of the apex social dialogue mechanism, the National Labour Advisory Council
- The [Task Force](#) met thrice (10 March, 17 March and 20 March), before the imposition of strict lockdown measures. Thereafter, members have been communicating with the Ministry of Labour bilaterally via email and telephone on their issues and requests. There are attempts to arrange a virtual meeting during the lockdown, but this is hampered by technical difficulties
- Through Task Force dialogues, employers' organisations agreed to pay [full salaries in March and April](#) to workers. This decision was reaffirmed at a separate meeting with the [Minister of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations](#) on 02 April 2020
- Several Trade Unions have also sent petition letters to the President and Prime Minister
- CWC a one of the major Trade Unions suspended to collect membership subscription from the members

Sources:

- Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC)
- Red Flag
- Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **The EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION OF CEYLON (EFC)** responded immediately to the crisis by contacting its members and letting them know of the new modalities of operations of its secretariat.
- EFC provided advice to members on the following:
 - Home working modalities
 - Special government notifications on curfew restrictions and “essential services” that could operate. See [\(document 1\)](#) and [\(document 2\)](#)
- EFC made policy recommendations to government to seeking immediate relief in respect of the following:
 - Delayed remittances of EPF / ETF payments without surcharge up to 90 days
 - Dispensing with Inquiry process with regard to lay-offs.
- EFC participated at a meeting of a special Tri partite Task force set up by the Minister of Labour to respond to the crisis- situation in the country.
- EFC has recommended the government to introduce a special payment to daily paid workers similar to what is already been given to low income earners.
- An ad hoc tripartite taskforce on COVID-19 established to make recommendations on safeguarding the interests of workers and employers through social dialogue was established. Tripartite interactions within the Task Force led inter alia to a tripartite agreement between the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), trade unions and the Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations. The agreement calls upon employers to pay wages for days worked based on the basic salary, while for any days not worked to either pay at the rate of 50 per cent of the basic wage or Rs 14,500/ (whichever is higher). In addition to ensuring that full salaries would be paid for workers (for March and April), this agreement represented a rare occasion where all stakeholders agreed on a fixed minimum wages at national level.

Thailand

Last Updated: **8 July 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

The Royal Thai Government (RTG) set up the “COVID-19 Epidemic Management Centre” which is chaired by the Prime Minister on 12 March 2020. This is to ensure integrated and unified command since the evolving pandemic situation requires fast and prompt responses. The first confirmed COVID-19 case in Thailand found on 13 January 2020. Responses, up to date, are categorised into three phrases. The RTG has already introduced two economic stimulus and social protection packages to assist business and individuals for April – June 2020. On 3 April, the

Cabinet approved the launching of the third package, worth 1.68 trillion Baht, covering the period from May to July 2020. This third package aims to provide comprehensive and continued assistance for all people in the country.

Measures to assist affected workers, including enhanced social security benefits, cash transfers for unemployed informal workers, tax breaks, and other actions:

- Loans, for 10,000 – 50,000 Thai Baht (THB), with low interest, channelled through the Government Saving Bank (GSB). The grace period of repayment is up to 6 months.
 - Personal Emergency Loan of 10,000 THB per individual (no collateral) with fix interest rate of 0.10% per month, up to two and a half year.
 - Additional Special Personal Emergency Loan of 50,000 THB per individual (with collateral) with fix interest rate of 0.35% per month, up to three year.
- Soft loans of 3% interest rate for three years available for entrepreneurs registered with the SSO.
- Financial assistance of 5,000 Baht per month for three months to the 3 million temporary- and self-employed workers. The coverage of this measure later extends to 9 million people.
- Reduction of withholding tax from 3% to 1% from April to September 2020.
- SMEs can use expenses incurred by salary payments from April to July 2020, for workers who are members of the Social Security Office (SSO) and receive a monthly salary of 15,000 THB, to claim tax deductions of up to three times.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

Economic stimulus packages were introduced to mitigate COVID-19 impacts on all aspects. Currently, the mitigation measures include:

- Workers in the formal sector, approximately 13.3 million people, registered under the SSO will receive unemployment benefits which will be increased during 2020-21.
 - for laid-off, insured person will receive - from 50% of the salary for 180 days to 70% of the salary for 200 days.
 - for voluntary and end of contract, insured person will receive - from 30% of the salary up to 90 days change to 45% of the salary up to 90 days.
- For workers still employed, and are on leave-without-pay due to government instruction to temporarily close down the business, as measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, replacement income of 50% up to 60 days will be paid.
- Reduction of financial contributions by both workers and employers from 5 to 4% for 6 months with an extension of deadline for financial contributions by both workers and employers for 3 months.
- Line ministries can hire local people for 9,000 THB per month for 6 months, targeting 50,000 workers.
- Additional 100 billion THB approved for soft loans for tourism-related operators, including trainings of workers in return for income to help with daily expenses.
- Department of Skill Development, MOL, provides various training courses for workers for a duration of one month. Workers will receive 150 Baht per day while attending the

training.

- Deadline for payment of personal income tax of 2019 defer from 30 June to 31 August 2020.
- Tax exemption on risk compensation for medical and public healthcare workers related to treating COVID-19 patients, and on incomes related to service provided during the pandemic.
- The Cabinet also approved measure to increase health insurance premium deduction increased from 15,000 THB to 25,000 THB, however, must not exceed 100,000 THB when combined with life insurance deductions and living allowance deposits.
- Subsidies of electricity and water are in place.

Protecting workers in the workplace

The Cabinet's resolution on 10 March 2020 approved a risk compensation package to medical and healthcare workers. Medical doctors and veterinarians will receive compensation of 1,500 THB per shift while nurses and other healthcare workers will receive 1,000 THB per shift. Additionally, the National Health Security Office (NHSO) approved and granted access to all COVID-19 patients (foreigners and Thai) to the Universal Coverage for Emergency Patients (UCEP). This service allows patients to seek free medical treatment (within 72 hours) at their nearest public or private hospitals. It also approved the inclusion of testing and treatments of COVID-19 in the universal healthcare programme.

With regards to migrant workers in the country, the relief measures of the temporary stay in the country and work for registered migrant workers (entered to country through MOU agreement between Thailand and governments of partner countries) and family members whose visa are expired are allowed to continue their temporary stay in Thailand until 30 June 2020. The fine for overstay shall be exempted. Department of Employment of the MOL estimated that 1.2 million work permits have been renewed or approved as according to the relief measure to assist registered migrant workers and their families. Registered migrant workers are protected under Labour Protection Act (LPA) and enjoy the benefits as indicated in the act. In fact, all workers, regardless of their nationalities, are subject to provisions in the LPA including those for compensations according to the years of services and in lieu of advance notice and in case of force majeure related to COVID-19.

Only essential workers and officials of government agencies, state enterprises and some private companies continue their work functions at the workplace. Others, including UN agencies and international communities stated working remotely since the mid-March 2020

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

The workers group have set up "COVID-19 Situation Monitoring Centre". The Vice President of the State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC) is the chairperson of the Centre. This centre is mainly focus on the employment impacts on state enterprise workers. For information related to informal economy workers, the Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC) set up another Centre to monitor it. At the meantime, the Employers' Confederation of Thailand

(ECOT) has been providing legal assistance to its members, business and enterprises, and workers who have been effected by the pandemic. The Workers and Employers have consulted with the ILO on a possibility of organising a remote meeting to discuss the situation and possible bipartite collaborations on mitigation measures.

Other measures

In order to prevent mass outbreak, on 25 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced an emergency decree to control the pandemic. Subsequently, all schools, universities, malls, markets, dine-in restaurants, salons, spas, gyms, massage parlours, theme parks, sports venues, conference halls, cinemas and theatres were close until further notice. Supermarkets, fresh food markets and restaurants offering takeaway food are exempted from the order. Preventive measures also include postponing the Songkarn Holiday, a major five-day national holiday, and allowing provincial governors to close any gathering spaces and closely regulate travels. International arrivals have been tightly restricted, requiring medical clearances prior to departure and 14-day self-isolation after arrival.

Later on 3 April 2020, the Prime Minister imposed a nationwide curfew from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. imposed. It aims at control and limit public movement and the spreading of the virus.

Additionally, Ministry of Public Health issued directives on 14 days self-quarantine for travellers and people potentially exposed to virus. Travels between provinces are prohibited. Social and physical distancing practices have been promoted. Online physical education and exercises have been advertised and encouraged. The RTG continues to promptly introduce mitigation packages to assist general public, small-scale farmers, temporary workers, business operators and workers and the non-bank financial institutions. The packages aim to boost good and services sectors and support the healthcare system and create jobs, and upgrade infrastructure nationwide.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- Trade unions are communicating with workers via social media. They post videos on workers' rights and benefits in times of layoffs or plant closures. They also provide guidance to workers on how to apply for unemployment and social security benefits.
- Unions in the aviation sector are calling on the government to protect full-time permanent and subcontracted workers, and to provide health and safety measures in line with international labour standards at all workplaces.
- Public sector trade unions have set up "COVID-19 Situation Monitoring Centre". The Vice President of the State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC) chairs the Centre, which mainly focuses on the employment impacts of COVID-19 in state enterprises.

- The Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC) set up another Centre to monitor the impact of the pandemic on informal economy workers.
- Migrant worker organizations are also reaching out to migrant workers in Myanmar with information on preventing and identifying COVID-19 symptoms, and how and where to access health care.

Sources:

- Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT)
- Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC)
- State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC)
- National Congress Private Industrial of Employees (NCPE)

For more information, see also:

- [COVID-19 Impact on Migrant Workers in Thailand](#)

Activities of employers' organizations

Thailand: the ECOT-TUs bipartite social dialogue, entitled “Dealing with COVID-19 disruptions: Facilitating social dialogue for recovery and building back better”

Employers Confederation of Thailand (ECOT), in cooperation with ILO, called for consultations with workers organizations on 21 Oct 2020 in Bangkok. Consultations were aimed at building a shared understanding on the challenges of the current situation and develop a bipartite consensus on way forward

Covid-19 pandemic hit the Thai economy in early 2020 and worsened the situation for businesses and workers both. From big businesses to street vendors, tourism and exports, all have suffered as lock downs and restrictions on movement disrupted supply chains and production operations. This has severely affected incomes, employment and livelihoods, compounding many of the existing decent work challenges facing Thai economy. Reports of labour disputes and industrial relations conflicts related to compliance with labour laws, terminations, layoffs, wages and unpaid dues have been emerging.

Since 2019, ILO has been supporting ECOT and Workers Organizations' for social dialogue over business and labour relations challenges and capacity building for collaborative industrial relations. In COVID context, the ILO work has been focused on promoting constituents' social dialogue and workplace cooperation for business growth, employment and decent work as part of crisis response for better recovery.

It is against this background, ECOT, in cooperation with ILO, called for consultations with workers organizations on 21 Oct 2020 in Bangkok. Consultations were aimed at building a shared understanding on the challenges of the current situation and develop a bipartite consensus on way forward.

The meeting provided an opportunity for employers and workers representatives to share concerns about the seriousness of the situation and the need for social dialogue based cooperation to make the 'new normal' a better normal for all parties. Among other issues, both sides also acknowledged that steps need to be taken to promote productivity and competitiveness of businesses as part of the strategy to protect jobs, promote decent work and business sustainability. Constituents also proposed that bipartite mechanisms at enterprise level should be strengthened, as these are important forum to promote workplace consultations and cooperation for addressing labour and employment issues at the enterprise level, including disputes resolution. It was also realised that not all problems will have solutions at company/ factory level – some issues will need supportive interventions from the Government side. Both sides agreed that employers and workers organizations should strive for joint agenda for dialogue with the Government at tripartite level so that supportive policy interventions can help both sides.

EBMOs and TUs agreed to continue the bipartite social dialogue to build consensus and cooperation over measures needed to mitigate the negative impact of economic slowdown and COVID-19 disruption through,, otherwise the situation might further worsen and beyond control. These then can be followed up both at enterprise level for joint initiatives as well as at policy level with the Government through tripartite dialogue.

In October 2020, ECOT and TUs met together to review and build a shared understanding of the challenges facing economy, industry and workers in the face of COVID-19 and develop a bipartite consensus on way forward. At the Oct 2020 meeting, EOs and TUs agreed that measures need to be taken to prevent, alleviate and mitigate the negative impact of economic slowdown and COVID-19 disruption through continuous bipartite social dialogue. They agreed to hold the bipartite workshop aiming at promoting bipartite social dialogue for representatives at enterprise/workplace level in August 2021.

ECOT will hold an employer's meeting on July 13, 2021 to prepare for the bipartite social dialogue on the theme of 'Building workplace consultation and cooperation arrangements for productivity and decent work' at the workplace level. They will identify key challenges at enterprise/workplace level due to COVID crisis and finding solutions for promoting 'better recovery' and search for best practices of bipartite social dialogue at enterprise level.

Timor-Leste

Last Updated: **27 September 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

Government requested parliamentary approval for the Petroleum Fund withdrawal of USD 400 million, for general spending as well as stimulus package for the economy. On 2 April, parliament approved USD 250 million of that request. Specifics are yet to be disclosed and are awaiting approval by Council of Ministers or Parliament.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

The government has approved the following policies:

- Grant of 200 USD was given to families whose head of household had a monthly income below 500\$, in cash, with respects to first two months of the State of Emergency (April and May).
- In case of employment contract suspension or reduction in working hours, the government provides 60% of remuneration including waiver of social security contribution payment on condition that employer and employee in question are registered in the Contributory Social Security System.

Government support for employers and workers:

- 1,493 employer entities supported with a total payment of \$2.6 million.
- Electricity subsidy granted to 273 employers with a total payment of \$378 thousand.
- Rent subsidy to 181 companies with a total of \$176 thousand.
- Contributory expenses during the state pf emergency granted to 294 people with a total payment of \$274 thousand.
- Contributory expenses to 1,377 domestic workers with a total payment of \$29 thousand.
- Subsidy for 7,894 workers with a total payment of \$1.3 million.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- National Council of Workers discussed and made proposals for consideration of Council of Ministers through Secretary of State SEFOPE. The proposals, which were availed to ILO in confidence until when approved, include: tax exemptions, wage subsidies, subsidies for rents for those businesses using rented spaces, and a call to ensure the continuation of imports to the country.
- All parties are relying on Article 15 of the Labour Code which gives employers permission in cases of emergency to suspend activity for a maximum period of two months, during which employees should be paid 50% of their salary. This may become an issue if the state of Emergency is extended beyond 2 months.
- Under State of Emergency; Workers encouraged to Work from Home; Necessary to wear mask together with provision of sanitary facilities at work places.

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination

While the Government of Timor-Leste strongly recommend and encourage vaccination, it has not issued any formal government regulations on vaccine requirement at workplaces. Workers are not obliged by regulations to have a vaccination certificate or a COVID-19 negative certificate to work. However, the Prime Minister made a statement and demanded that all the public servants be vaccinated with exceptions permitted for medical or other approved reasons. Similarly, the Minister for Education allows school re-opening provided that all the teachers in the school are fully vaccinated.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- National Council of Workers convened on March 2020 in response to COVID-19 crisis and came up with proposals to be issued to government through Secretary of State – SEFOPE.
- Tripartite Meeting convened between SEFOPE, KSTL and CCI-TL on 28/03/2020 and facilitated by ILO to discuss on World of Work Policy Guidance to respond to COVID-19
- Tripartite dialogue convened between SEFOPE, KSTL and CCI-TL on 18/08/2021 on strengthening dispute resolution system in Timor-Leste that were increased due to COVID-19 crises.

Other measures

A new Economic Recovery Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers on the 12th of August. It includes a wide array of measures looking at boosting the economic recovery of the country in the two years following the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The plan includes a Food Basket (*Cesta Básica*) programme, subsidies to firms, extraordinary support measures to informal workers, and a full section dedicated to Social Protection, with the approval of the National Social Protection Strategy at the forefront.

Tonga

Last Updated: **11 June 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

On March 19, 2020, the National Reserve Bank of Tonga (NRBT) Board approved the provision of liquidity support to the banking system. It also committed to easing exchange control requirements if needed. Monetary policy, which has been accommodative given low inflation and slow economic recovery, remained on hold. The NRBT is also meeting weekly with banks to ensure there is clear communication, enhanced preparedness and best practices. It is supporting banks in their effort to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 virus on the economy as well as provide essential financial services to households and businesses. Commercial banks are assisting their customers affected by the COVID-19 virus on a case by case basis and depending on individual customers' circumstances by:

- reducing or suspending the principal loan repayments to interest only loan repayments;
- restructuring loans to businesses that have reduced business hours, in affected sectors such as tourism and related industries like transportation and to individuals who have been laid off;
- extending the terms of loans to reduce repayments;
- reducing loan interest rates on a case by case basis; and
- providing access to short-term funding, if required.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- All small businesses are affected and some have stopped operations altogether whilst some are increasing prices of goods illegally. Government has threatened to revoke their licenses, if caught.
- Business Continuity plans in place for most companies but cash stricken and will need Government help to boost. Most small companies are closed.

Other measures

- As of March 25, 2020, there have been no reported COVID-19 cases in Tonga. Nevertheless, Tonga is expected to be hit hard by the containment measures it has imposed and a sharp slowdown in partner countries, which are an important source of remittances and tourism for the economy. The Government of Tonga has been introducing increasingly restrictive containment measures since January 2020. In March 2020 it toughened measures for incoming travelers, while all international cruise ships and yachts were barred indefinitely.
- On March 21, 2020, Tonga declared a state of National Emergency. Until April 17, 2020, all foreign nationals are banned from entering Tonga while all Tongan citizens and emergency officials arriving in the Kingdom will now have to go through a 14 day quarantine period. The government has also announced a lockdown starting on March 25, 2020, which entails closing clubs and bars and restricting public gatherings to 20 indoors and 40 outdoors.
- All schools shut down from 27 March -14 April 2020.

Activities of employers' organizations

TONGA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (TCCI) introduced micro-learning units on business and HR strategies to manage the impacts of COVID-19;

Shared with members a tool to help members cope with disruption, resources and tools provided by ILO ACTEMP; a Business Continuity Plan tool previously developed by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (NZ);

Completed a survey to assess COVID-19 impact and the needs of 216 enterprises across the economy with a research brief presented to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee and published;

Worked in collaboration with the Computer Emergency Response Team to produce and distribute a circular on the growing COVID-19 themed scams and cyberattacks;

Worked in collaboration with Consumer Affairs to produce and distribute a Price List of Price-Regulated goods to deter price-gouging and for consumers to know what they should be

paying;

Supported more than 50 member firms to complete Funds Request forms for emergency relief in line with the recently announced Economic & Social Stimulus Package;

Advocated policy proposals to the Ministry of Trade & Economic Development on measures to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses and the community such as ensuring basic utilities/services/infrastructure continue to operate; requesting banks and lending institutions be flexible with businesses & employees affected by COVID-19; offering temporary tax and/or duty relief to businesses, organisations & the community impacted by COVID-19; calling for incomplete applications for the Business Economic Emergency Recovery Fund to be accepted;

Advocated a Rescue and Recovery proposal to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning including a public-private partnership to establish a register of licensed businesses requiring special assistance;

The Chamber is member of the Economic & Social Recovery Cluster and Food & Security Livelihood Cluster formed by Government to advise on implementation of the recently announced Economic & Social Stimulus Package. It advocates for further consultation with the private sector on businesses/employers needs and for public-private partnerships that enable speedy and effective implementation of key measures announced under the Economic & Social Stimulus Package.

Tuvalu

Last Updated: **8 June 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

The Government has approved AUD 200,000 in supplementary appropriation as a Coronavirus contingency fund. In addition, the Government has announced an extra AUD 5.6 million supplementary budget for the Ministry of Health. The supplementary budget will be used for specialized medical equipment, enhanced laboratory capabilities, upgrading of health facilities and increased surveillance measures to address the coronavirus threat.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#T>

Other measures

- As of March 24, Tuvalu has no reported cases of COVID-19 within its borders. Tuvalu has established a COVID-19 National Taskforce that will act as an Advisory body to Cabinet and provide updates on a regular basis. The Taskforce has recommended, and Cabinet approved, a 14 days quarantine period for anyone traveling into the country that has transited or originated their travel in a high risk country. Quarantine is being observed in Fiji, or if someone was to slip through the net, they would be isolated in Tuvalu for 14 days

to observe the same 14 days quarantine period. <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#T>

- Tuvalu although COVID-19 free, it has been reported t 'with limited testing equipment' Tuvalu is threatened by the unknown symptoms that might have reached Funafuti, the capital'.
- The Government have noted that a COVID 19 testing machine is due to arrive from the U.K, but the date is yet to be determined.
- ADB announced \$370,000 grant to Tuvalu.

Activities of employers' organizations

Tuvalu National Private Sector Organization TNPSO has deployed a formal survey of the private sector to collect data on the social-economic impacts of COVID-19 and identify areas in which businesses need support.

TNPSO regular communicates with members to assess private sector needs and concerns and to keep members informed of the latest policy developments and resources coming available.

TNPSO has distributed practical tools on [COVID-19 business continuity planning](#) and [guidance for managing the workplace during COVID-19](#) and is collaborating with ILO to translate these materials into the local language of Tuvaluan.

TNPSO has communicated private sector policy priorities and business needs publicly and privately through various forums, noting the most impacted industries in the country are critical to national food security and provide the majority of jobs in the private sector.

TNPSO, represented by its secretariat, is a member of the the National Task Force of the COVID-19 and has been supporting its member industry groups in opening dialogue with the Government on priority areas for private sector support to manage the impacts of COVID-2019.

Vanuatu

Last Updated: **12 May 2020**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- The package will be released in stages as economic developments unfold. The value of the first stage stimulus announce amounts to approximately VT4 billion (US\$32 million) or around 4% of GDP and has been made available through the existing budget to support the NCTF.
- In addition, the government, using its existing budget envelope and with help from Australia, UNICEF, WHO, and some local businesses, has begun to expand health facilities, equipment and supplies, and further train healthcare workers, especially in Port Vila.

- The government, UNICEF and other NGOs/CSOs are spending on community education and awareness. With the assistance of the French government, COVID-19 tests are to be analyzed in New Caledonia.
- The government will provide flights and cover arrival and short-term quarantine costs in Port Vila of repatriated seasonal workers and students before they return to their homes elsewhere in Vanuatu. There have been no other announced measure
<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#T>

<https://doft.gov.vu/index.php/covid-19>

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Supporting businesses by deferring of a number of taxes and charges in 2020 this includes Road Tax, Work Permits fees, Business Licenses fees (except for commercial banks), Residence Permit charges and Rent Tax;
- Government will suspend many of the regulations for procurements below VT10 million (US\$87,000) to ensure contracts can be signed quickly and to enable projects to begin immediately.
- Government will grant school fee exemption in 2020 in addition to other packages such as increasing internet capacity to schools for students to study on line.
- Reducing the turnover tax of commercial banks from 7% to 5% to support more efficient banking and encourage lower interest rates, fees and charges;
- Requirement to pay turnover tax on zero rated or exempt VAT sales removed to assist financial institutions, insurance entities, and professionals become better equipped to supply international services in an increasingly competitive international market;
- Business license reform measures to be backdated to begin on 01 January 2020, and or those businesses who have already paid these taxes, license fees, and charges, you will be refunded.
- Small to medium businesses with a turnover of less than VT200 million (US\$1,621,831) will have access to an additional payment equal to the value of the fees of a full year business license.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Supporting jobs through the Employment Stabilisation Payment, which will reimburse employers up to VT 30,000(US\$243) per employee on their payroll each month for a period of four months;
- Employers will also receive a payment of 15 per cent of the amount they are reimbursed for wages under this payment as an added incentive to keep their staff employed;

Other measures

- There are no confirmed cases or deaths from COVID-19 as of March 24, 2020. The government's response is being coordinated by the National Novel Coronavirus Taskforce (NCTF), led by the [Ministry of Health](#) and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).
- The caretaker government (a general election was held on March 19-20) has: closed all ports of entry for international flights and cruise ships; suspended departures for seasonal worker programs to Australia and New Zealand (with optional repatriation of workers already abroad); closed schools in three of six provinces indefinitely; and been encouraging social distancing.
- There is a temporary quarantine of the island of Aneityum because of a cruise ship that docked March 11-12 with a passenger who was later identified upon arrival in Australia as having COVID-19. Tourism, which contributes 24.6 percent of Vanuatu's GDP, has effectively ceased.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#T>

Activities of employers' organizations

- **VANUATU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (VCCI)** activated its Vanuatu Business Resilience Council (VBRC) on 17 March 2020. The VBRC has been proactively providing guidance to the National Task Force and the government agencies under the National Disaster Management Office of Vanuatu.
- More than 300 businesses have been trained in Business Preparedness through the Business Preparedness awareness workshop since February 2019. Specific [business preparedness materials in English](#) and [Bislama](#) for the pandemic situation are now available for businesses.
- VBRC has also been assisting the Vanuatu Government with Business Continuity Planning by delivering Business Preparedness awareness workshop to the Public Service Commission, government Department(s) and provided these tools and guidance to the Health Cluster of the Ministry of Health of Vanuatu.
- VCCI issues regular media releases, social media posts ([Facebook](#)), and [website updates](#) to keep members and the wider business community informed of the latest policy developments and resources coming available.
- VCCI and VBRC are engaged in an active dialogue with the Labour Department through its employers' representatives on the Tripartite Labour Advisory Council (TLAC) to represent the employers position on employment options across the sectors.
- The employers have particularly requested the Department of Labour and TLAC that the support of a VNPF allowance be put in place to assist employees who have been made redundant, or have had reduced working hours/days, or are on unpaid leave.
- Following consultations between the VCCI and VBRC representatives and the Macroeconomic Committee under the Ministry of Finance, the [Economic and Financial Stimulus Package of the Vanuatu Government](#) was announced on 26 March 2020. VCCI will be providing a business support centre to assist businesses in accessing Employment Stabilization Payment for employers and Business Support Program for business license

holders.

Viet Nam

Last Updated: **14 September 2021**

Stimulating the economy and employment

- Government is considering VND 61.58 trillion (USD 2.6 billion) worth of financial support to poor people and businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- State Bank of Viet Nam (SBV) eased its policy stance to allow commercial banks to restructure loan maturities to assist business, including especially those in textile, garment, computer/ electronics, tourism and transportation sectors that were most affected by travel bans and restrictions on imports from China.
- The Prime Minister approved a credit package worth VND 285 trillion (USD 12.4 billion) to support those businesses affected by the COVID-19 epidemic.
- Government proposed to dedicate the equivalent of 23 million USD of fiscal resources from the central government budget to the health system for COVID-19 prevention.
- Government approved the extension of payment for paying tax and land rent levies to enterprises, organizations, households and individuals affected by Covid-19, it was estimated that the total number of enterprises entitled to the extension of value-added tax, corporate income tax and land rent accounted for 98% of the total number of enterprises in the country.

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Cash transfers of 1 million VND/household (43 USD monthly) for 3 months (April to June) to poor and near-poor households.
- Income security support of VND 1 million/month (43 USD) for the same three months for workers who lost their jobs but are not eligible for unemployment insurance and workers without employment contracts working in business establishments closed due to social distancing measures.
- Financial support from state budget to workers on unpaid leave or reduced working hours, equal to VND 1.8 million/worker/month for the three months. Employers need to supplement with at least an equal contribution, for which they can access loans at 0% interest rate for a period not exceeding 12 months. The total wage received by workers during the period cannot be lower than 85% of the regional minimum wage.
- Postponement of pension and survivorship insurance payment contributions for companies with at least 50% revenue loss from the month support is claimed and for no longer than 12 months.
- Financial support of crisis million/year VND 1 million/month (43 USD) for April to June

2000 to household businesses with a declared revenue below VND 100 million/year (4,248 USD) and that are hit by the crisis.

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Government adopted a resolution for support measures for health workers, workers involved (including police, army officers and collaborators/volunteers) as well as those under quarantine.
- Ministry of Health promulgated Guidelines on prevention and control of Covid-19, for workers, employers and health professionals at workplace and in dormitories. In addition, it also developed a guideline on workplace disinfection, and one on prevention for high risk workers.

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Viet Nam's General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) issued an official letter regarding the delay of payment of trade union fund (2%) for enterprises affected by COVID-19 epidemic.
- Enterprises affected by COVID-19 epidemic can defer the payment to trade union fund for the first 6 months of 2020 to June 30, 2020, with possibility of further postponement until December 31, 2020
- Enterprise unions have discussed with employers to organize workers' annual leave and staggered-leave; arrange reasonable working shifts so that workers can look after their children during school closure. For quarantined workers, the grassroots trade union has discussed with employers to pay 70% of the salary, or apply the annual leave and try to ensure not lower than the regional minimum wage as prescribed by law.
- If jobs are at risk due to a shortage of raw materials and auxiliary materials for production, many provincial and city Federation of Labour held meetings to exchange information, listen to ideas and recommendations to find ways to support union members, including ways to access unemployment insurance benefits.
- Covid19 was among the first key themes for the 2020 National Month for Workers starting from May to June 2020 which was also the Month of Actions for the Occupational Safety and Health jointly organized by VGCL and MOLISA with an aim to accelerating improved working conditions and OSH related risk management at workplace. These OSH campaigns organised by trade union helped raise awareness of workers on COVID 19 prevention and supported workers in difficulties and other affected victims.
- Active dialoguing between the trade unions and the employers was also helping secure jobs for workers and minimizing adverse impact of unemployment and lay-off.

Activities of workers' organizations

Summary

- On April 7, the Government announced a financial support package of US\$2.6 billion in response to Covid19;
- There were no new infected case found for six consecutive days. On April 23, the Government decided to relax social distancing measures except those places classified as high risk. Non-essential services and other establishments in both Hanoi and HCMC were open from 23 April but with clear guidance. The government has taken a gradual opening approach by delegating decision-making power to the People's Committee in the city/province. Workers at domestic private sectors. Workers are expected to soon return to workplaces and self-employed to resume their own businesses.
- As a successful result of VGCL's negotiation with the government:
 - A laid-off worker will get 1.8 million VND (US\$78) per month for three months;
 - Dismissed workers who are not covered by unemployment benefit will receive a monthly payment of 1 million VND
 - Individual business households with yearly revenues of below 100 million VND who have to temporarily close down due to social distancing measures will be given 1 million VND per month for three-months;
 - Workers will be temporarily exempted from their obligatory contribution to the retirement and survivors' fund until June 20.
- Payment of union dues is also suspended for members in the affected enterprises.

Source: Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL)

Activities of employers' organizations

- **The Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)** conducted a survey on the impact of COVID-19 for its 2,000 members. VCCI survey aimed to assess the impact of the pandemic on the business, production of goods and services, the labour and employment aspect and the risks faced by businesses in the context of epidemics, which would help employers to find solutions and make policy recommendations to the government for support. The [VCCI Assessment Report](#) identifies the key impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Vietnamese enterprises.
- Through its information channels, VCCI has widely promoted to member companies and business associations the directions of the Politburo and the Prime Minister on the prevention of COVID-19 pandemic. VCCI proactively updates and provides businesses with information on the situation of markets and appropriate solutions that can be considered during and after the pandemic.
- VCCI developed an online support programme for businesses on training, which will provide e-training services, information and advice on necessary skills to improve their capacity in case of a potentially long-lasting pandemic.
- VCCI concentrates on guiding the prevention and fight against pandemic for labour-intensive enterprises in industrial parks and export processing zones.
- VCCI has made a range of [policy proposals to the government](#), including the following

main recommendations:

- To suggest commercial banks to restructure debt, reduce lending costs, give free service fees for small transactions and reduce lending interest rates by 2% - 2.5%.
- To grant the exemption and reduction of corporate income tax and VAT.
- To use the remaining surplus of social insurance fund to help enterprises pay their employees when they have to go through retrenchment exercises.
- VCCI is working with social partners on proposals to help businesses and workers to minimize the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis. It is working closely with sectoral business associations to guide businesses and find solutions and recommendations to the government.
- VCCI published the report: [VCCI Report on the impact of COVID-19 on labour market](#)
- The 4th wave of COVID-19 epidemic since April 2021 in Vietnam was very complicated, spreading quickly with multiple outbreaks, multiple sources of infection and multiple strains, especially the emergence of the Delta variant has created many challenges for the medical and healthcare systems. Many businesses had to stop operating, leading to very difficult employment and living conditions for workers. Faced with that situation, In September 2021 the VCCI conducted a business survey of the impact on labour and employment and provided policy recommendations to help businesses and stakeholders towards ensuring business competitiveness and sustainability, including maintaining safe business operations, workplaces safety and productivity. [VCCI's COVID assessment and policy recommendations \(September 2021\)](#)

In November and December 2020, the VCCI conducted the trainings on business continuity programme (BCP) for member companies with ACTEMP's 6-step Business Continuity Plan tool.