



ILO-Korea TVET Forum, 2018

Skills and the Future of Work Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific

19-20 November 2018



BACKGROUND

Skills development is essential for building an inclusive future with decent work. While it is difficult to estimate how the future of work will impact on jobs and skills needs, the demand and supply of skills are being rapidly redefined by changing business models, demographic transformations, technological changes, and the transition to a green economy. These changes come with both opportunities and challenges. Advancement of technology enables new forms of business and work and potentially relieves workers from hazardous and drudgery work. At the same time, it is driving up skill needs and greater automation is putting low-skilled workers, in particular women, at employment risk whereas the demand for high-skilled workers is increasing. Transition to greener economies is an aspiration of many countries, but such transition, unless well-managed, brings about economic and enterprise restructuring with potential job losses. Realizing inclusive growth and shared prosperity is a key goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These future prospects and agenda for labour markets in the region are prompting countries to revisit their skills strategies and skills development systems.

In 2019, the ILO will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and the Future of Work Initiative is at the forefront of the Centenary Initiative, providing the analytical basis for the delivery of social justice in the 21st century. Skills development is a key theme in this broader initiative.

The ILO-KOREA TVET Forum, 2018 builds on three related events and debates that ILO has organized since 2016.

1. 1st ILO-KOREA TVET Forum, 2016

The 1st ILO-KOREA TVET Forum in October 2016, titled *Skills for the Future: The Perspectives and Experiences from Asia and the Pacific* in fact marked a kick-start of substantive debate and work in the area of jobs and skills in the future in Asia and the Pacific region. There had been much debate and work on these questions in other regions, mostly among OECD countries, but the topic was relatively new at that time in the region.

The conclusions from the Forum of 2016 reflected, amongst many other things, the concern that new technologies and automation would not diminish employment in terms of total quantity but that certain categories and segments of the workforce and specific industrial sectors would be more affected than others. The occupational structure will change and the tasks required to carry out jobs will also change. Workers may need to take on more responsibility for managing their careers which may involve several different jobs. Constant upgrading of skills or acquiring new skills is likely to be the norm of working life in the future. Since skills strategies have traditionally focused on increasing the quality and number of skilled workers from the supply side perspective, it was emphasized that for skills to have greater impact on quality employment and business growth, skills needs from the demand side and from the perspective of the workplace will gain importance.

In terms of TVET, competencies of communication, team work, ICT problem solving, and learning to learn have to be embedded in good balance to the technical skills to adopt to the megatrends of the future. Special attention surrounding competency-based training, assessment, and certification were encouraged as it will allow for flexibility in addressing emerging needs and design programmes in the language of the industry. There is a great need for public-private partnership in TVET, albeit with the need for continued financial provision from government. The areas of collaboration include policy development, competency standards development and the certification process as well as the implementation of quality apprenticeship programmes.



In light of the above, TVET institutions need to respond to the changing needs of the labour market. The discussion identified digitalizing TVET methodologies and providing flexible and individually tailored programmes as ways to deliver future skills. While it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the jobs that will be created in the future and skills needed, the ability of the skills system to anticipate such needs is critical for preparing individuals, enterprises, governments, and training providers with relevant competences.

2. 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting in 2016

The ILO's 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM, December 2016) deliberated on the achievements made, the remaining challenges, and the role of bringing about a future of inclusive growth with decent work. The subject of *Skills for the Future* was taken up as one of five key panel discussions during the APRM.

While reaffirming the importance of tripartism and urging increased efforts on public-private partnerships in skills development, the rich panel discussion at the APRM shed light on how ILO's Member States can prepare themselves for meeting future skill challenges. For example, the panels called for enabling workers to have broader career prospects through the clustering of skills, with enhanced core work skills, and through a lifelong learning approach. The discussion also included appeals to go beyond addressing skills mismatches. A call for building an inclusive future involves the creation of more jobs that are rewarding and productive, and that have a higher skills and value-added content. It is in this context of business and sector transformation that improved workforce skills contribute most to stronger business performance and better jobs. The discussion also highlighted that skills programmes do need to be in sync with future market demand, but at the same time, companies also need to value talent adequately in order to make the most of available competencies. This reemphasized the importance and role of enterprise-based training, including apprenticeships. The need to improve the status of vocational training in the region was also highlighted. Such improvements include high quality training products, multiple pathways towards higher level education, and decent working conditions and career prospects for TVET jobs. The need to tap the full potential of technology was also raised as a new way to increase access to TVET for disadvantaged groups. Further regional cooperation on the mutual recognition of skills for promoting fair and decent work for migrant workers was also discussed.

3. **Regional Meeting on Skills and the Future of Work: Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific, 13 October 2017**

Following the two above mentioned events, the debates and front-line research on the subject are being compiled as an ILO publication, tentatively titled *Skills and the Future of Work: Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific*. The Regional Meeting on Skills and the Future of Work: Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific was organized in Bangkok, Thailand on 13 October 2017 to share the initial drafts of the publication and obtain feedback from the tripartite partners of 6 countries in the region. These countries, namely Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, have already been holding national dialogues on the future of work and the representatives shared their experiences and perspectives on the topic at the meeting. The outcomes of the meeting were integrated into the final version of the publication.

ILO's publication: *Skills and the Future of Work: Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific*

Building on the previous meetings and other related research, the above publication will be formally launched at the ILO-Korea TVET Forum, 2018. It aims to share the front-line thinking and initiatives in the region on the subject of skills for the future with the view to informing Member States of possible courses of action as they prepare to meet future skills challenges.

Some of the key themes that the publication aims to address include:

- Evolving business models and work environment: opportunities and challenges for skills development;
- Responding to future demographic shifts, aging societies and youth aspirations;
- Technological change and its impacts on job and skills for the future;
- Meeting recurrent challenges of the labour market, including cross border integration, informality and rural economy; and
- Enabling a just transition to greener economies.

Objectives of the Forum in 2018

The ILO-Korea TVET Forum, 2018 will be the second bi-annual forum which has been co-hosted by the ILO and the Ministry of Employment and Labour of the Republic of Korea. The 2018 Forum will take the debates from the previous events, such as the APRM and the 2016 Forum, to the next level with a focused discussion of selected key skills challenges in light of the future of work and propose enabling strategies for inclusive growth and future in the region.

The Forum is organized as one of the ILO's Centenary Initiatives on "the Future of Work We want", contributing to shaping the current thinking, agenda and strategies for skills and TVET development as the Member States prepare for meeting future skills challenges.

The analyses and approaches to future skills strategies that will be presented at the Forum will be primarily drawn from the ILO publication on *Skills and the Future of Work: Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Asia and the Pacific*. The publication will be formally launched at the Forum. Building on these

analyses, the Forum intends to deepen the debates by sharing the experiences and perspectives of the tripartite representatives of 12 countries in the region, development partners, and TVET institutions and experts.

Date and Venue

The ILO-Korea TVET Forum, 2018 will be held on 19-20 November 2018 at the Amari Watergate Hotel's Ballrooms A&B on the 6th Floor, and in Bangkok, Thailand

Participants

The Forum will bring together representatives from 12 countries in Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) and, include representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the academic and experts' communities, development partners (e.g. ADB, GIZ), and relevant Korean agencies and training institutions working in the area of employment and skills.