

High-Level Tripartite Regional Seminar on Industrial Relations in Southeast Asian Countries

22-24 February 2023 | Tokyo, Japan

Concept note

► General background

Southeast Asian countries recognize the role of labour and industrial relations in national economic development and regional integration. Within the ASEAN structure, a working group of the senior labour officials has also been set up to promote progressive labour practices to enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN. It is in this context that ILO-Japan Programme, with the support of Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the ASEAN Secretariat, has been organizing annual regional tripartite social dialogue for building sound industrial relations. The proposed seminar is part of this ongoing work and is aimed at facilitating dialogue among tripartite representatives from selected countries of Southeast Asia to review current labour relations issues, build shared understanding on challenges posed by future of work and promote follow up initiatives at country level for industrial relations for growth, productivity & decent work.

COVID-19 crisis has hit most economies hard and both the businesses and the workers have suffered. In this process labour disputes have also arisen and are likely to increase as economies struggle to recover. Addressing the challenges created by pandemic will require not only supportive policies from the governments but also employers and workers organizations working together through social dialogue and cooperation for recovery and growth while addressing each other's concerns – if not done, conflicts will affect productivity of investments and become hurdles in the recovery process. Competitive businesses need pro-active (rather than reactive) labour relations policies to promote productive and fair workplaces.

Looking towards the future of work and industrial relations, it would be in the interest of both trade unions and managements to move IR culture from 'conflict' to 'collaboration focused'. While workplace practices may not be a cure-all for all problems, 'talking more and fighting less' can create conditions for social partnership that can improve efficiencies, bring down costs and increase value added (wealth created by the enterprise). This will benefit not only investors but also improve company capacities for decent work and address worker's needs. It is also important to realise that not all issues can be addressed at enterprise level – many issues need dialogue, negotiations and agreements at tripartite national and sectoral industrial level and supportive policies from the government.

There is no perfect system of industrial relations – in most countries, IR policies and systems have been shaped by political, industrial, social & cultural contexts. As circumstances change, the laws, IR systems and the approaches of the stake holders need adjustments too. While there is a role for the State, there is equally important role and value added for employers and workers organizations in regulating and managing their own relations through dialogue and negotiations at bipartite level – this would also help to bring about better balance between constituents' autonomy to manage their relations and government intervention in labour relations.

The social-economic crisis created by the Covid pandemic can be an opportunity (and indeed the situation requires it) for tripartite constituents to review approaches to labour relations and discuss how the 'relationships' at work can be moved from conflicts to collaboration.

▶ Objective of the Seminar

Review current approach to labour relations, build shared understanding on way forward for collaborative industrial relations and promote follow up initiatives at country level for working together for growth, productivity & decent work. The seminar aims to provide opportunity for tripartite representatives to share country experiences and knowledge on:

- Key challenges facing industrial relations and social dialogue, including tripartite social dialogue arrangements in the country;
- Practices and challenges of bipartite social dialogue between employers and workers organizations (focus on labour-management committee(s) at enterprise level, dispute resolution at enterprise level and social dialogue & collective bargaining practices); and
- Propose follow up initiatives in support of promoting collaborative industrial relations with a view to shift from conflict to social dialogue and cooperation based industrial relations.

▶ Participants

This seminar is intended for tripartite representatives from nine Southeast Asian countries and Japan. Suggested Southeast Asian countries are Thailand, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam and Timor-Leste.

Nominating organizations would be urged to give due representation to women candidates to ensure gender balance in their nominations.

Country Report on behalf of the Organization: Each invited organization will be sent a draft note on 'Tripartite and Bipartite Social Dialogue Mechanisms for their country' – participants will be requested to update and correct the information there-in. This draft note will also contain additional questions as guidance for the participants to give supplementary information.

Participants are requested to bring along one copy of this country report with them and also email the same to – akumar@ilo.org with cc to otsuji@ilo.org and leed@ilo.org.

▶ Dates and place

22-24 February 2023, Tokyo, Japan – Hotel Azur Takeshiba <https://www.hotel-azur.com/>

▶ Seminar agenda issues

- Introduction: Promoting collaborative industrial relations for competitive businesses and decent work (ILO)
- Presentation by employers and workers side (15 minutes each): Key IR challenges at workplace from employers and workers point of view
- Group work, followed by presentations: Country experiences of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue mechanisms
- Labour-management relations in Japan - good practices and challenges: Views of Japanese constituents
- Collective bargaining as industrial relations tool: Introduction by ILO, followed by views of employer's and worker's side
- Improving productivity through joint labour-management initiatives at workplace – Introduction by ILO and presentation of the experience of Japanese constituents
- Follow up at national level: Agenda and initiatives for working together for promoting collaborative industrial relations for promoting growth, productivity and decent work

- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of social partners for the future of work (Keidanren's Society 5.0), responsible business conducts in global supply chains (human rights due diligence), occupational safety and health and the elimination of child labour.

► **Agenda**

Wednesday, 22 February 2023	
09.00 – 10.00	<p>Opening session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Nozomi Tomita, Senior Assistant Minister, MHLW - Mr Hideyuki Shimizu, General Secretary, JTUC-RENGO - Mr Akihiro Ichimura, Chair, Sub-Committee on International Labor, KEIDANREN - Ms Maria Helena Andre, Director, ACTRAV - Ms Deborah France-Massin, Director, ACTEMP - Mr Ryusuke Tanaka, ILO Office for Japan <p>Group photo</p>
10.00 – 10.30	Break
10.30 – 11.00	<p>Promoting recovery, growth and decent work: Role of social dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Maria Helena Andre, Director, ACTRAV - Ms Deborah France-Massin, Director, ACTEMP
11.00 – 11.20	<p>Lessons learned from first to ninth Tripartite Regional Seminar on IR and Way Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Yasuo Ariga, Chief Technical Adviser and Overall Coordinator, ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme
11.20 – 12.30	<p>Panel discussion: Industrial relations - Moving from conflict to cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative from government (ASEC) - Representative from employers (ACE) - Representative from workers (ATUC) <p>Moderator: Mr Arun Kumar, Specialist on Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue, DWT-BKK</p>
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	<p>Country situation review: Joint presentation by tripartite representatives from each participating country</p> <p>Key issues in tripartite social dialogue, industrial relations and country experiences of bipartite social dialogue mechanisms (focus on workplace labour-management committees and enterprise level bipartite dispute resolution mechanisms)</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Ariel Castro, ACTRAV</p>
15.30 – 16.00	Break
16.00 – 17.00	<p>Panel discussion on labour-management relations in Japan- Good practices and challenges: Views of Japanese constituents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Nozomi Tomita, Senior Assistant Minister, MHLW - (TBC) Mr Kazumi Sakashita, Senior Manager, Labor Legislation Bureau, KEIDANREN - Ms Yoshiko Norimatsu, Assistant General Secretary, JTUC-RENGO <p>Moderator: Mr Ryusuke Tanaka, ILO Office for Japan</p>
17.00 – 17.15	<p>Key highlights of the Day 1 discussions</p> <p>Moderator: ACTRAV/ACTEMP</p>

Thursday, 23 February 2023

09.00 – 10.30	<p>Preventing and resolving labour disputes: Key ILO principles for prevention and settlement of industrial disputes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative from government - Representative from employers - Representative from workers <p>Moderator: Mr Arun Kumar, Specialist on Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue, DWT-BKK</p>
10.30 – 10.45	Break
10.45 – 12.00	<p>Follow up: 'Revitalization of social dialogue and promoting productive industrial relations' Group discussion</p> <p>*3 groups (government group, employers group, workers group) *Each group will have 30 minutes to discuss key challenges facing social dialogue & industrial relations mechanisms and propose agenda for strengthening social dialogue at country and regional level and promote collaborative industrial relations that benefit both workers and enterprises.</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Arun Kumar, Specialist on Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue, DWT-BKK</p>
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	<p>Panel discussion 'Social dialogue and industrial relations for fundamental principles and rights at work: Child labour, occupational safety and health and more'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Shoya Yoshida, General Secretary, ITUC-AP - Representative from government (Philippines, TBC) - Representative from employer (TBC) - Representative from workers (Thailand, TBC) <p>Moderator: Dr Yuka Ujita, Senior Specialist, Occupational Safety and Health, DWT-BKK</p>
15.00 – 15.15	Break
15.15 – 15.45	<p>Introducing new development from Japan - Business and human rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Yuki Kobayashi, Programme Coordinator, ILO-Tokyo
15.45 – 16.30	<p>Society 5.0 and the role of social partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Yasushi Nakajima, Deputy Director of Industrial Technology Bureau, KEIDANREN <p>Moderator: Ms Sanchir Tugschmeg, ACTEMP</p>
16.30 – 16.50	<p>Adoption of joint agenda for strengthening social dialogue and industrial relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative from government - Representative from employer - Representative from workers
16.50 – 17.15	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Yasuo Ariga, Chief Technical Adviser and Overall Coordinator, ILO/Japan Partnership Programme - Ms Maria Helena Andre, Director, ACTRAV - Ms Deborah France-Massin, Director, ACTEMP

Friday, 24 February 2023

Governments: ‘Social dialogue and labour relations at country level’

09.30 – 11.00	<p>Promoting sound labour relations for competitive business, growth and decent work: Role of Ministry of Labour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Introduction to the discussion: Presentation by ILO • Managing labour relations in Japan: Role of government, social dialogue and collective bargaining – Presentation by Japanese Association for Advancement of ILO Activities (ILOJ) • Q & A
11.00 – 11.15	Break
11.15 – 12.15	<p>Managing labour relations (focus on improving dispute resolution, promoting workplace cooperation and collective bargaining): Experiences and follow up plans — Sharing of experiences by representatives</p> <p>Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening tripartite social dialogue arrangements • Reviewing Dispute Resolution • Strengthening workplace consultation and cooperation mechanisms • Promoting collective bargaining as industrial relations tool
12.15 – 12.30	Closing
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch

Updated as of 1 February 2023