Japan is a founding member State of the ILO, and a valued partner in promoting the Decent Work Agenda. Japan has ratified 49 Conventions, including 6 Fundamental, 3 Governance and 40 Technical Conventions. Japan holds one of the ten permanent government seats on the ILO Governing Body as a State of Chief Industrial Importance.

Japan's contribution to the ILO

Japan has a long-standing relationship with the ILO in the field of development cooperation, establishing itself as a key partner in the promotion of social justice and decent work, especially in Asia and the Pacific. Japan supports the ILO's mandate by contributing to both its core budget and its development cooperation programmes.

The ILO works closely with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, as its governmental constituent. The collaboration aims primarily at supporting a fair globalization, contributing to poverty reduction, advancing occupational safety and health, promoting international labour standards and social dialogue.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare provides strategic funding to implement programmes in Asia and the Pacific, chiefly through the multi-bilateral programme, aimed at making the world of work a better place for all. The Ministry further supports the regional Skills and Employability Programme, the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, and the Social Safety Nets Fund.

Further support to development cooperation activities is provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both directly and through the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. The cooperation extends primarily to livelihood-oriented emergency response to both humanitarian and environmental crises. The ILO also collaborates with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for technical interventions in the Pacific.

In terms of cooperation with the private sector, the ILO implements a global programme to reduce the worst forms of child labour in tobacco-growing communities with the support of Japan Tobacco International.

Furthermore, the ILO avails itself of Japanese expertise thanks to the country’s participation in the Junior Professional Officer programme and to the secondment of Japanese officials, as well as specialists from the Japanese Consumers’ Cooperative Union. The JCCU, together with the Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA), also annually supports a Study Tour to Japan for African Cooperative Leaders.

JAPAN'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Japan contributes proactively to the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community.

The priority areas within Japanese development assistance are:

- Poverty reduction and quality growth: education, health and population, water and sanitation, agriculture and rural development, infrastructures and ICT.
- Peace building and humanitarian assistance
- Resilient international community: environment, energy, climate change and disaster risk reduction
- Gender equality and human security.

Japan’s development cooperation strives to address these priority areas to achieve “quality growth” through the development of infrastructure and human resources.

In 2017, Japan provided USD 11.5 billion in Official Development Aid, which represents 0.23% of its Gross National Income. (source: OECD Development cooperation report 2018).
Japan funds the ILO through:

- **Assessed contributions**, which are paid by all ILO Member States by virtue of their membership. With more than USD 313 million provided between 2012 and 2018, Japan is the second largest contributor to the ILO’s regular budget.

- **Voluntary contributions** earmarked to priority programmes and projects. Between 2012 and 2018, it amounted to USD 36.8 million.

Promoting and building social protection in Asia

Since 2011, the ILO and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare have supported ASEAN members to strengthen their social protection systems. The cooperation includes measures to expand social protection coverage, design and improve unemployment insurance schemes, pensions’ reforms, and promote better maternity and sickness protection, including for migrant workers. Viet Nam and Indonesia are receiving direct technical support for improving their legal and institutional frameworks in view of increasing social security coverage. Lessons learnt and good practices are disseminated to other ASEAN members through South-South and Triangular cooperation. The project also helps ASEAN members to define a monitoring framework to measure progress, as part of their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Mongolia, the project helped the country defining its social protection floors, devise the old-age pension’s reform and its extension to herders, while also encouraging the ratification of the ILO’s Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention. Support is also provided to design income security and employability measures for rural youth.

More and Better Jobs through Socially Responsible Labour Practices

With the support of Japan, the ILO engaged with multinational enterprises and their suppliers in the Vietnamese electronics industry to advance socially responsible labour practices. A Joint Action Plan was devised in 2016, followed by a nation-wide labour inspection campaign, which included nearly 400 factories. In 2017 the Electronics Business Coalition was launched, to promote dialogue and joint action by bringing together actors from different levels of the supply chains (including investor countries such as Japan).
The Fund for Building Social Safety Nets in Asia and the Pacific

Recognizing the growing importance of social safety nets in Asia and the Pacific in terms of response to financial crises, unemployment and natural disasters, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan established with the ILO in 2011 the Fund for Building Social Safety Nets in Asia and the Pacific (SSN Fund).

Social Safety Nets in Asia and the Pacific are estimated to represent almost 4 per cent of global GDP per year, or 3 trillion US dollars. 2.78 million workers die each year from work-related injuries and illnesses - 2.4 million of which can be attributed to work-related diseases alone. Japan counts among ILO’s partners to address these challenges.

Supporting post-disaster recovery

The ILO and Japan also bring their support in response to natural disasters in most vulnerable areas. Joint livelihood recovery and reconstruction programmes were set up in the Philippines after Super Typhoon Haiyan in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake and in Fiji, after it was hit by the largest storm ever formed in the Southern Pacific.

Lifting people out of poverty through entrepreneurship

For many people in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand, entrepreneurship and vulnerable employment in micro-enterprises are the only available income streams, often in the informal sector, with limited impact in terms of social and economic development. Responding to this situation, the project “Fostering an enabling environment for livelihoods development in vulnerable and at risk communities through entrepreneurship and microenterprise skills” develops the capacity of institutions to provide, sustain, and scale up interventions through innovative and low-cost models built around self-facilitation and social learning techniques. The ILO’s Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) program provides a comprehensive suite of self-implemented training tools for participants to develop basic skill sets and competencies in entrepreneurship, business management, marketplace financial literacy, social protection and rights at work. The tools incorporate simple, hands-on, activity-based lessons, maximizing the use of diagrams and pictures so that even participants with little or no literacy are able to learn together.

Building a culture of occupational safety and health (OSH)

Work-related illnesses and injuries are estimated to represent almost 4 per cent of global GDP per year, or 3 trillion US dollars. 2.78 million workers die each year from work-related injuries and illnesses - 2.4 million of which can be attributed to work-related diseases alone. Japan counts among ILO’s partners to address these challenges.

In Cambodia, a Japan-funded project strengthens OSH legislation, policies and practices in the construction industry to forge a preventative culture of safety and health at work in a sector prone to hazards and risks, including asbestos and chemicals exposure. It provides technical support for legislative reform and skills training programme for labour inspectors. Japan also funded a project in Papua New Guinea to improve national capacities to implement OSH legislation.
PROGRAMMES AT THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF THE ILO

Within the scope of the cooperation framework between the ILO and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Government of Japan provides financial and technical support to the training activities of the ILO’s International Training Centre in Turin. The appointment of Japanese experts has strengthened the Centre’s training offer on employment and training policies and practices, occupational safety and health and labour inspections, while allowing the Government of Japan to benefit from international exposure and peer-to-peer exchanges.

Regional Skills and Employability programme in Asia and the Pacific

The ILO and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare supports a skills development programme for green jobs in Asia and the Pacific, as a tool to ensure an efficient transition to a green economy and foster sustainable growth.

Recognizing the need to create sustainable jobs in Samoa, the ILO developed and pilot tested a national green job skill-set, which was shared at the regional workshop on Core Skills and Competencies for Green Jobs in the agricultural sector in March 2016. The event provided guidance on how to better integrate environmental awareness into domestic skills development policies.

In Myanmar green competencies were integrated into the skills standards for tour guides, in order to enhance the delivery of tour guide services in the area of green tourism.

Youth Employment for Sustainable Peace in The Gambia

Following the political transition initiated by the December 2016 constitutional crisis, the Gambia faces the challenge of reintegrating thousands of returnees (more than 3,500 in 2018 alone) back in to the society.

With support from the Government of Japan, the ILO launched in 2018 the project “Employment Creation for Youth to Build Sustainable Peace in The Gambia”. The project has promoted employment-intensive infrastructure construction works, which have generated - as of November 2018 - employment opportunities for 250 labourers and 4 engineers. The ILO promotes equal opportunities by integrating returnees, people with disabilities and young women among the beneficiaries. Participants further benefit from skills and enterprise development training to ensure longer-term employability prospects. Besides creating decent income-generating opportunities, the infrastructures built will contribute to the growth of local agriculture, tourism, and fishery, further contributing to poverty alleviation. The ILO partners with the Japanese NGO Community Road Empowerment (CORE), which introduced the «Do-no» technology to The Gambia for the first time.

The project also provided training for trainers on occupational safety and health to 55 tripartite partners, while more than 300 youth were connected to potential employers in a job fair organized with the Government, IOM and ITC.

Facilitating the formalization of the informal economy in South Asia and supporting decent work in global supply chains

A significant share of the workforce in South Asia earns its livelihood in the informal economy, with no access to social protection and no formal labour rights. To address this problem, in 2012-2017 Japan and the ILO implemented a project to promote formalization in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, in close cooperation with governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations. The project achieved important regulatory and policy improvements in Bangladesh and Nepal, and greatly increased the awareness on the importance of formalization and strategies to achieve it.

The project’s results include the establishment in Nepal of a registration system for informal construction sub-contractors and the registration of more than 2,800 micro entrepreneurs. An association of sub-contractors was founded in Bangladesh, with more than 500 members joining, while 521 informal workers in Pune (India) while more than 1,400 informal workers in Pune (India) were made eligible to access social security.

A training programme on the transition to the formal economy was piloted in Nepal and adopted by the ILO’s International Training Centre in Turin. The ILO and Japan are committed to the promotion of decent work in global supply chains, in the context of the Future of Work centenary initiative.