The Republic of Korea has been a member State of the ILO since 1991 and has ratified a total of 32 Conventions, including four Fundamental, three Governance and 20 Technical Conventions.

The Republic of Korea has a long-standing relationship with the ILO in the field of development cooperation. It 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 Employment and Labour within the framework of the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme first established in 2004. Renewed for the period 2021-2023, this partnership supports projects that strengthen social protection floors, occupational safety and health frameworks, public employment services and technical, and vocational education and training.

In addition, the Ministry of Employment Labour provides strategic funding to implement a Social and Solidarity Economy programme in Asia that seeks to tackle the challenges related to employment and basic services provision as well as to support social cohesion.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) provides further support in the area of skills development and economic diversification in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Specifically, this cooperation addresses skills mismatch and strengthens national, regional and sector level capacity to design skill strategies.

Furthermore, the ILO benefits from Korean expertise through the country’s participation in the Junior Professional Officer programme as well as the secondment of Korean officials and specialists from the Korean Experts Programme.

The Republic of Korea’s international cooperation is based on a people-centred approach to peace and prosperity. Its development assistance focuses on the following sectors:

- Education
- Health
- Governance
- Agriculture
- Forestry and fisheries
- Technology
- Energy

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Republic of Korea launched a mid-term strategy to promote human rights, civil participation, survival and livelihoods in partner countries, and it has provided US$6 million in immediate humanitarian assistance to the international humanitarian community.
The Republic of Korea’s financial contribution to the ILO

The Republic of Korea funds the ILO through:

- **Assessed contributions**, which are paid by all ILO member States by virtue of their membership. The Republic of Korea provided US$ 41.1 million between 2017 and 2021.

- **Voluntary contributions** earmarked to priority programmes, regions and projects. Between 2017 and 2021, the Republic of Korea’s contributions totalled more than US$ 14.8 million.

Strengthening the impact of employment policies and supporting the creation of ICT-based jobs for young people and women in Tunisia

With the support of KOICA, the project aims to support the labour market participation of young women and men in Tunisia, building on the ongoing preparation of the country’s National Employment Strategy, supported by the ILO. For the first time, the country has equipped itself with a comprehensive framework orienting the efforts of all ministries and stakeholders for more concerted and effective action on employment.

The project facilitates the provision of high-end technical support, policy advice as well as institution and capacity development – including through specific expertise of Korean labour market specialists – to translate the Employment Strategy into concrete results for Tunisian youth. National and local actors will improve their capacities to develop regional plans that generate employment opportunities. The ILO will support direct job creation in the ICT sector in the regions of Tunis, Sousse and Sfax via an ILO value chain development approach, with a particular focus on enterprise creation.

Empowering women for resilient economies and peaceful communities in the refugee-affected regions of East and Adamawa in Cameroon

Thanks to a contribution of nearly US$ 8 million from KOICA, the projects is working to revitalize economies and enhance social cohesion between refugees and host communities through women’s entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment in productive agro-ecological value chains through local economic development; women’s entrepreneurship; and social protection, AIDS and gender-based violence.

The four-year project covers 16 communes in two regions of Cameroon. It will benefit 5,000 women and men refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and members of refugee-hosting communities, of which at least 65% are women, and 50% are refugees. The ILO works on three agricultural value chains – maze, cassava and poultry – in partnership with UNHCR, UNICEF, local NGOs, financial institutions, the private sector and unions among others.
Thanks to the support of the Republic of Korea, the ILO conducts research to build knowledge on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) qualification frameworks and standards as good practices to ensure that OSH professionals have the qualifications to meet the needs of countries and enterprises are often lacking. Based on the findings, the project will then develop a tool to help countries assess their own framework and identify gaps and areas for improvements to ensure the availability and suitably of qualified OSH professionals. This initiative is critical in the context of the ILC 2022 adopting a resolution to include a safe and healthy work environment in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work. The project is part of the ILO Flagship Programme Safety + Health for All.

Promoting Sustainable Enterprises in India (PSEI)

Launched in December 2022 to enable Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India to sustainably integrate into global supply chains in alignment with the Decent Work agenda and generate more and better quality jobs, the project, Promoting Sustainable Enterprises in India (PSEI), benefits from US$2.4 million in support from KOICA. The 26-month project aims to strengthen local development strategies in India, with a focus on market system and value chain development in the food processing and garments sector. In addition to building the capacity of policymakers and associates to design and implement evidence-based gender and market-responsive MSME policy initiatives, the project also promotes improved multi-stakeholder dialogue and local institutional capacity.

The project leverages ILO enterprise development tools, Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), and Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) to support entrepreneurship development and productivity enhancement. These efforts are also focused on improving working conditions in targeted MSMEs to enhance sectoral competitiveness. The project will facilitate learning between the Republic of Korea and India as well as bring in global experiences on private-sector led local development strategies, sectoral policies, and sustainable enterprise.

Strengthening the Social and Solidarity Economy Knowledge Base

The Strengthening Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) Knowledge Base project seeks to generate sound and convincing evidence about the size, reach and socio-economic importance of the SSE, including cooperatives.

Through its first component, a continuation of Phase I (2019-21), the project focuses on strengthening the knowledge and understanding around the SSE in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The project is mapping the SSE landscape in these six countries, and will then undertake capacity building for policy dialogue on the SSE at the national level.

The second component of the project focuses on improving statistics on cooperatives in the Republic of Korea, Italy, Tanzania, Turkey, and Costa Rica. It aims to provide practical guidance to ILO member States on implementing the Guidelines concerning statistics of cooperatives as well as facilitate the development of a coherent, harmonized and standardized set of statistics on cooperatives.

Improving Occupational Safety and Health Qualifications Frameworks

Thanks to the support of the Republic of Korea, the ILO conducts research to build knowledge on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) qualification frameworks and standards as good practices to ensure that OSH professionals have the qualifications to meet the needs of countries and enterprises are often lacking. Based on the findings, the project will then develop a tool to help countries assess their own framework and identify gaps and areas for improvements to ensure the availability and suitably of qualified OSH professionals. This initiative is critical in the context of the ILC 2022 adopting a resolution to include a safe and healthy work environment in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work. The project is part of the ILO Flagship Programme Safety + Health for All.
Strengthening Public Employment Services in English speaking Africa

Supported by the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labour, the ILO is implementing a project to strengthen the Public employment services (PES) in English Speaking Africa. PES play a pivotal role in matching the available vacancies with jobseekers, thereby improving productivity and creating more jobs. PES is also responsible for implementing active labour market policies. The project is focused on upgrading an online job portal to enhance blended service delivery in Kenya and enhancing the awareness and knowledge of PES in the selected South-eastern African countries. In Kenya, in line with the ongoing situation analysis and planning of the system, the ILO will support the development and launch of an upgraded job portal, including the procurement of core software and hardware.

Improved mechanisms for skills recognition and TVET digitisation in ASEAN

With funding from the Republic of Korea, the ILO has made a significant contribution to the Mutual Recognition of Skills (MRS) initiatives which have been recognized as one of the three key regional initiatives for promoting skills recognition in ASEAN. Through the initial years of MRS work (Phases I and II of the ILO/Korea Partnership Programmes on Skills Development), the ILO established strong working relationships with constituents and focal points of skills development/TVET in each ASEAN country as well as the ASEAN Secretariat.

In its current phase, the project “Improved mechanisms for skills recognition and TVET digitisation in ASEAN” builds upon this collaborative partnership to improve and enhance mechanisms for national and regional skills recognition and TVET digitisation as well as enhanced knowledge sharing and partnership building in ASEAN. The project also aims to enhance the skills and lifelong learning of women, men, youth, vulnerable workers and migrant workers to facilitate their access to ASEAN labour markets.

Supporting the Implementation of Sustainable Social Protection Floors for the Workers and their Families in ASEAN – Phase III

Since 2015, the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) has supported the project Supporting the Implementation of Sustainable Social Protection Floors for the Workers and their Families in ASEAN. This ILO-led initiative aims to strengthen and gradually build comprehensive, sustainable social protection systems for all by increasing the system's coverage, effectiveness and efficiency.

This project brings experiences and lessons from its previous phases, which focus on barriers to access to social security among workers and extending social security coverage to more workers, especially the self-employed and workers in rural areas, in Lao PDR, while also reducing administrative barriers to access. In addition, it also develops activities to increase countries' understanding and awareness about the importance of social protection.