



## Realizing decent work in Asia

### Conclusions

1. The representatives of the governments and employers' and workers' organizations participating in the ILO Fourteenth Asian Regional Meeting thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting this Meeting. Its generosity, hospitality and efficient organization have contributed to the success of the Meeting.
2. Since the last Asian Regional Meeting, many countries in the region have experienced strong economic growth and increasing prosperity. Regrettably, many countries have also undergone tremendous turmoil related to major natural disasters and political, economic and humanitarian crises. We express our sympathies and solidarity with the people affected and resolve to do our part to promote recovery, economic development, peace and social justice for all. Efforts to promote the reconstruction and restoration of livelihoods in war-torn, conflict-affected and disaster-stricken countries shall be given due priority.
3. We thank the Director-General for his two Reports describing the situation in the region with respect to decent work and poverty eradication. We note that the Reports reflect upon the great diversity of the region including its many successes and challenges. We are especially pleased to note that the ILO's Decent Work Agenda has become integrated into the national agendas of many countries in the region as well the international development agenda. We strongly endorse the Outcome document of the United Nations World Summit in 2005 and the Ministerial Declaration by the high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2006.

### Regional cooperation to make decent work a national reality

4. We are convinced that the ILO's Decent Work Agenda can contribute to a sustainable route out of poverty, assist in addressing the growing economic inequalities both within and between countries in the region, and thus make an important contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Decent Work Agenda also enables progress towards a fair globalization in which the goals of economic development and social equity are well balanced.
5. We are proud to have pioneered the concept of national plans of action for decent work at our 2001 Meeting, and we note that several countries have established national plans, but not all. We call upon all countries in the region to do so, with full involvement of the social partners.

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6. We resolve to ensure that Asia continues to provide global policy leadership in making decent work for all a central objective of our relevant national, regional and international policies as well as our national development strategies.
  7. We therefore commit to an Asian Decent Work Decade – for the period up to 2015 – during which we will make a concerted and sustained effort to realize decent work in all countries of our diverse continent.
  8. We welcome the development of decent work country programmes, which are the ILO's means for harnessing resources and for delivering coordinated support to advance decent work priorities at the national level. Decent work country programmes should adequately reflect tripartite priority setting, engagement and ownership of the tripartite constituents. Each country, in accordance with its respective national circumstances and priorities, will define attainable decent work goals and shape its own national agenda, based on and around the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda – fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. They enable the Office and tripartite constituents to work closely with the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions and donors to integrate the objectives of full and productive employment, poverty alleviation and decent work in policy dialogue and programming cycles at country level.
  9. In addition, we resolve to promote actively regional cooperation initiatives, so that countries can identify common needs, share good practices and develop strategies and programmes to jointly address areas of mutual benefit and common concern.
  10. Tripartism and social dialogue are indispensable for delivering on these commitments. In this regard, we call also for strategic partnerships with relevant national, regional and international organizations, ensuring the involvement of the social partners.

## **Priorities for national action**

11. We affirm our commitment to tangible outcomes and practical measures for the implementation of time-bound policies and programmes for the realization of full and productive employment and decent work for all.
12. Interconnected priorities for realizing decent work and the reduction of poverty in countries of the region, during the coming decade are:
  - promoting ratification of core labour standards as well as respect for fundamental principles and rights at work;
  - promoting sustainable productivity growth and competitive economies;
  - promoting job creation;
  - promoting decent work opportunities in the informal economy, especially in the rural sector;
  - promoting access to education for all, including targeted relevant education, training and lifelong learning to ensure appropriate skills to enhance ongoing employability;
  - promoting decent work opportunities and access to entrepreneurship for young women and men, especially through facilitating the school-to-work transition and the sharing of good practices;

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- strengthening the capacity of the social partners and labour administration;
  - combating all forms of child labour as defined under ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182;
  - improving dialogue and the management of labour migration so as to benefit both sending and receiving countries and better protect the rights and equal treatment of migrant workers;
  - improving effective labour market governance by adopting, implementing and reviewing labour laws and social policies against the objectives of full and productive work sought by the Decent Work Agenda;
  - developing labour management cooperation and bipartite partnership mechanisms and other appropriate institutions and regulations, including frameworks for social dialogue, as important elements for the effective and fair functioning of labour markets;
  - promoting gender equality by, inter alia, empowering women by promoting equality of opportunity to decent and productive work;
  - according special attention to the needs of vulnerable workers, including those with disabilities, victims of trafficking and forced labour, those affected by HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples and workers in workplaces where their fundamental rights are denied;
  - extending the effectiveness and coverage of social protection for all, including workers in the informal economy;
  - promoting occupational safety and health.

**13.** Acknowledging the integrated nature of the Decent Work Agenda, we endorse a coherent and integrated approach to such policies and programmes, closely involving the social partners in local economic development efforts.

## **Regional initiatives and partnerships**

**14.** Building upon regional cooperation frameworks, we strongly encourage tripartite initiatives to share information, knowledge, experience and expertise for promoting decent work and poverty reduction.

**15.** In this regard, we note regional initiatives that have already started on:

- the Regional Skills Network of Partner Organizations, such as the Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific (Skills-AP);
- the ILO *Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration*; and
- the regional database on decent work indicators designed for the sharing of national experiences.

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## ILO action

- 16.** In support of the priorities listed above, we request the Office to assist governments and the social partners in developing further initiatives, within the means available, to consolidate and integrate action in the following fields:
- promoting the ratification and full implementation of the ILO Conventions concerning freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to organize and bargain collectively, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, as well as the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;
  - assisting in the development of national policies based on the ILO's Global Employment Agenda;
  - providing support services for small and medium-sized enterprises;
  - strengthening of labour inspection, dispute prevention and settlement, and employment services;
  - promoting the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions on occupational safety and health including the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187);
  - promoting ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006;
  - examining the feasibility of convening a regional event on growth, employment and decent work;
  - establishing benchmarks and good practices on the extension of social protection to all working women and men and their families;
  - promoting the development of up to date and reliable statistics and data-gathering to assist in fact-based research, comparison and decision-making.
- 17.** We invite regional and other international organizations, including the UN Economic and Social Commissions for Asia and the Pacific and Western Asia (ESCAP and ESCWA), the ASEAN, the Asian Development Bank, the UNDP, the World Bank, WHO, UNIDO, FAO and UNESCO, to work closely with the ILO in supporting such efforts, as called for by the UN Economic and Social Council's high-level segment in July 2006.
- 18.** We reaffirm the conclusions on Myanmar adopted by the 95th International Labour Conference (May-June 2006).

## Implementing the Asian Decent Work Decade

- 19.** As from this Meeting, an Asian Decent Work Decade will begin. The tripartite constituents of the countries of the region commit to the achievement of specific decent work outcomes in accordance with their respective national circumstances and priorities, and to cooperate on specific initiatives at the regional level where joint action and sharing of knowledge and expertise will contribute to making decent work a reality by 2015.
- 20.** Furthermore, we call upon the Governing Body of the ILO to instruct the Office to assist, as appropriate and upon request, the efforts of the tripartite constituents in the Asian Decent Work Decade.

1 September 2006.