MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

I. INTRODUCTION

RECALLING the Agreement between the United Nations and the International Labour Organization dated 3 November 1945, the International Labour Organization, represented by the International Labour Office, (ILO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) reaffirm their desire to work together in areas of mutual interest through the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);

WHEREAS the primary goal of the ILO is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda rests on four pillars: respect for fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards, enhanced employment and income opportunities for women and men, social protection for all, and social dialogue to ensure greater voice and representation for people at work. The Decent Work Agenda as described in the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization represents an integrated approach that enables balanced progress toward the goals of economic development and social equity. The ILO assists member States in Asia and the Pacific in implementing the Decent Work Agenda. In 2006, the ILO's tripartite constituents, comprising worker, employer and government representatives established the Asian Decent Work Decade for the period up to 2015 in order to make a concerted and sustained effort to realize decent work in all countries of this diverse region, which was updated at the ILO's 15th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting in 2011;

WHEREAS the primary objective of the ESCAP is to promote regional cooperation for inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, so that (a) member States have more effective, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development policies for addressing development from a multi-disciplinary perspective, to narrow development gaps and build resiliency; (b) global processes are shaped by a stronger coordinated regional voice and countries are supported in implementing international commitments; and (c) regional cooperation mechanisms and institutional frameworks are in place to promote regional integration and inclusive and equitable development;

WHEREAS the present MoU shall supersede the Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO and ESCAP signed respectively on 9 January 2009 and 27 November 2008;

NOW THEREFORE, the Parties agree:

II. PURPOSE OF ILO-ESCAP COOPERATION

1. ILO and ESCAP reaffirm their commitment to work together to mutually reinforce and strengthen the work programmes of the respective organizations in supporting member States in the overall achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and the outcomes of the post-

2015 process, including Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the decent work approach. The themes of "social protection and public policy", "the promotion of social justice for a fair globalization", "the rights-based approach to development" and "inclusive and equitable development" will guide cooperation under this MoU.

III. FOCUS OF ILO-ESCAP JOINT ACTIVITIES

2. The specific focus for joint priority activities include, but are not limited to, youth employment, social protection, statistics, and macroeconomic issues (including labour market and labour migration policies), which may be amended from time to time with the mutual written consent of the two organizations:

(a) **Youth Employment:** Investments in youth, including in relation to education, decent work, and awareness of health issues, are of vital importance. The promotion of youth employment, using a multi-pronged and balanced approach which takes into consideration the diversity of the region, in view to respond to the highest global priority of generating decent jobs for young women and men should foster pro-employment growth and decent job creation through macroeconomic policies; education, training and skills; ICTs; labour market policies; the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises; entrepreneurship and self-employment; and rights for young people in line with the Rio+20 Summit and the United Nations Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda.

(b) **Social protection:** Despite recent economic growth in the region, inequalities are also widening in a number of countries. Thus, a more sustainable approach to development is critical, in order to uphold the rights of all people to income security and ensure access to a minimum level of social services through more extensive social protection coverage. In this regard, it is imperative to support policymakers and stakeholders to build broader and more robust social protection systems; promote knowledge exchange through research and dialogue amongst policymakers and practitioners; and enhance the capacity of member States to strengthen relevant policies and programmes. This also includes special attention to migrants, who make significant contributions to the economies of societies of both countries of origin and destination, but are not fully granted basic human rights and have only limited access to social protection.

(c) **Statistics:** Enhancing regional knowledge of effective policy options for development results through (i) improving collection, analysis and dissemination of indicators for monitoring of progress towards the relevant development agendas, recognizing the importance of mainstreaming statistics across all areas of cooperation; and (ii) building capacity of member states for regular production, dissemination and use of relevant statistics within the framework of the Core Sets of economic and social statistics as endorsed by the ESCAP Commission.

(d) **Macroeconomic, labour market and labour migration policies:** Strengthening regional cooperation towards a stable macroeconomic environment, inclusive regional financial architecture, more effective governance of labour migration and increased protection of women and

achieving and sustaining high levels of inclusive growth and development. Joint analysis, research and policy discussion regarding interactions between forward-looking macroeconomic and labour market policies in Asia-Pacific region, the relationship among inclusive growth, productive employment, inequality and poverty, the development of knowledge base and policies on labour migration, capacity building of social partners are of the main collaboration's focus.

Gender equality is fundamental to achieving the sustainable economic growth, social development and the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The ILO and ESCAP, therefore, promote gender mainstreaming in all technical cooperation activities between the two agencies.

IV. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

3. ILO and ESCAP recognize that effective cooperation depends on open, comprehensive and regular exchange of information at the institutional level. They agree to make appropriate arrangements to:

(a) provide copies of relevant publications and public documents of each organization to the main library of the other organization to be maintained as reference documents; and

(b) give notice, through information posted on the websites of each organization, of:

- conferences, seminars and workshops being organized or sponsored;
- regional, country, sector and thematic policy/strategy documents;
- programme and project approval documents; and
- regional programme, country programme, sectoral, project and other evaluations.

V. PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS

4. ILO and ESCAP recognize that it is important to convene periodic consultations to review what is being planned, what is being implemented, and what is being achieved in terms of results as well as to discuss new challenges, opportunities and problems. They agree to hold such consultations on an annual basis to be coordinated by the focal points mentioned below.

VI. RESPONSIBLE FOCAL POINTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE MoU

5. ILO and ESCAP agree to designate as responsible focal points for the activities under this MoU:

(a) for ILO: Deputy Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

(c) for ESCAP: Director, Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD)

VII. PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF JOINT WORK ACTIVITIES

6. In the priority areas of joint focus, ILO and ESCAP will prepare as input into the annual consultation:

(a) a list of all on-going operational cooperation activities and status of implementation;

(b) a list with a brief description of all planned future cooperation activities.

7. ILO and ESCAP agree that:

(a) the appropriate programme managers in ILO and ESCAP will be responsible for the implementation of cooperation activities within their areas of responsibility;

(b) the appropriate programme managers will provide brief reports as necessary to the responsible units in the ILO and ESCAP on the status of implementation of all cooperation activities listed within their areas of responsibility;

(c) the designated ILO and ESCAP focal points will prepare a joint report periodically and as necessary on the status of implementation of joint cooperation activities;

(d) the responsible programme managers will complete annual assessments of results achieved with the cooperation activities;

(e) these assessments will be reviewed by the designated ILO and ESCAP focal points in considering further cooperation activities; and

(f) a joint mid-term review of the overall development impact of the ILO-ESCAP cooperation through the implementation of the MoU will be undertaken.

VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND USE OF INSTITUTIONAL EMBLEMS

8. ILO and ESCAP recognize that the involvement of both organizations in joint cooperation activities needs to be publicized. They agree that:

(a) there will be public acknowledgment of the role and contribution of each organization to cooperation projects in all public information documentation related to such cooperation; and

(b) the use of emblems of each organization in documentation related to cooperation will be in accord with the current policies of each organization concerning such usage.

IX. TERM AND REVIEW OF THE MoU

9. ILO and ESCAP agree that:

(a) the term of the MoU will be from the date of signature by both Parties until 31 December 2020;

(b) an annual review will be carried out and a joint mid-term review will be carried out in 2017, with any necessary amendments to the MoU being made at that time.

X. MISCELLANEOUS

10. Any specific activities under this MoU shall be covered by a project document and written agreement.

11. The MoU may be amended by mutual written consent of the Parties.

12. The MoU may be extended for another five years through an exchange of letters.

13. The MoU may be terminated by either organization on six months' notice in writing.

For the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Shamshad Akhtar
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Place: Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 29 June 2015

For the International Labour Organization

Guy Ryder
Director-General
International Labour Office

Place: Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 29 June 2015