



17th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting

Singapore, 6-9 December 2022

► The Singapore Statement

1. As agreed in Singapore on 9 December 2022, we reaffirm the tripartite commitment to, and the relevance of, the priorities agreed in the Bali Declaration to address the persistence of decent work deficits in the Asia and the Pacific and Arab States regions, on which insufficient progress was made. These commitments include realizing fundamental principles and rights at work, eliminating forced and child labour, fostering sustainable enterprises, developing policies for decent jobs, reversing inequalities through social dialogue, building resilience in crises through employment promotion, closing gender gaps in the world of work, enhancing labour migration policies, extending social protection, and strengthening labour market institutions.
2. We recognize the significance of the Bali Declaration and the continuing importance of pursuing these commitments, while tackling new and emerging challenges for achieving social justice and decent work for all.
3. We express strong support for, and are committed to, the full realization of the aim of democratization of the ILO governance by ensuring a fair representation of all regions and establishing the principle of equality among Member States, as set out in the 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the resolution on the principle of equality among ILO Member States and fair representation of all regions in the ILO's tripartite governance adopted at the 109th Session (June 2021) of the International Labour Conference.

Context

4. Since the 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting in Bali, Indonesia in December 2016, the regions have continued to experience transformations in the world of work and have been subject to unprecedented crises.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed an unprecedented social and economic crisis, costing millions of lives, devastating businesses and jobs, and bringing severe contractions in economic growth, employment, working hours and labour income across the regions. The pandemic exposed fragilities in many labour markets, and in health and safety and social protection systems; and drew attention to the important role of public services and additional government support measures in responding to crises. Many countries in the region did not have the capacity or ability to expand services or spending in response to COVID-19. Longstanding weaknesses in areas of labour market governance and social protection perpetuated the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups, pushed millions back into poverty,

increased the prevalence of forced and child labour, and increased inequalities within and among countries.

6. The recovery from the pandemic is underway but remains uneven. Meanwhile additional crises are emerging, including an increasing number of climate-related natural disasters that destroy lives, jobs and livelihoods. Steep rises in food and energy prices are eroding real incomes and threatening the sustainability of enterprises, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Political instabilities and violations of democratic and human rights in parts of the regions leave too many in search of safe and secure livelihoods.
7. New opportunities are also emerging to support decent work such as those arising from digital transformation, the greening of economies, and economic recovery.

Guiding principles

8. Taking into account the confluence of crises, the rapidly evolving future of work, and longstanding decent work deficits, the ILO tripartite constituents across the regions adopt the following guiding principles for future actions:
 - (a) Work collectively towards the promotion of social justice and the fundamental principles and rights at work through effective social dialogue and tripartite cooperation to advance the achievement of full, productive and freely chosen employment, and decent work for all.
 - (b) The 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the 2021 Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient provide critical foundations for decent work, economic recovery and future growth to ensure a just transition to a future of work that contributes to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.
 - (c) Gender equality and diversity should underpin policy development and implementation to ensure no one is left behind.
 - (d) Social partners have an important role to play in preparing for the future of work, including policy design, analysis and implementation in areas of job transformation and the upskilling and reskilling of workers. It is vital for governments to undertake and promote genuine engagement and effective social dialogue.
 - (e) Sustainable enterprises play an important role as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work.
 - (f) Promotion of workers' rights is a key element for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable growth, with a focus on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining as enabling rights.

Priorities for national action

9. Governments, employers and workers in the regions agree that social dialogue is essential to addressing labour market challenges and finding solutions especially in crisis situations, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and economic uncertainty. Social dialogue is key to building trust, and resilient labour market institutions are essential to sustained recovery and inclusive and sustainable growth, and need to be strengthened in the regions. Recognizing that strong and representative organizations of workers and employers play an important role in building and sustaining inclusive societies and are fundamental to achieving social justice and decent work and that the social partners in some countries do not have the capacity, mechanisms or freedom to contribute effectively to policy development and

discussion, the capacities and skills of employer and worker representatives, and of governments must be strengthened.

10. Governments and social partners across the regions agree to engage in consultations towards the development of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, both as a contribution to the United Nations (UN) Our Common Agenda for a new social contract and to promote decent work in line with international labour standards.
11. Ensure labour protection for all through the promotion of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining throughout the regions, including for workers in vulnerable situations and workers in the informal economy, as enabling rights for decent work. Governments and social partners should urgently take effective measures to address allegations of serious violations of these rights.
12. Close gender gaps in the world of work through measures that increase women's labour force participation, promote equal pay for work of equal value, balance work and care responsibilities, and promote women's leadership, including considering the ratification and effective implementation of related international labour standards such as the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).
13. Develop and implement inclusive labour market programmes and policies that support life transitions and demographic shifts, noting the ageing populations in many countries and youthful populations in others and the need to invest in skills, social protection and health and social services.
14. Pursue collective and determined efforts to promote and accelerate a smooth and sustained transition from the informal to formal economy, guided by the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).
15. Strengthen governance frameworks and respect for freedom of association to protect the rights of migrant workers, including improved accommodation, protection of wages and extension of social protection and, where appropriate, through enhanced bilateral labour migration agreements between both sending and receiving countries. Tripartite mechanisms should help promote cooperation between constituents to mitigate negative impacts and harness opportunities that arise from labour migration.
16. Facilitate the transition to peace, security and decent work in situations of crisis, through the promotion of the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), as central to national and UN-led crisis and recovery responses.
17. Recognize the impact of climate change and develop through tripartite committees national plans for a just transition that help build environmentally sustainable economies and societies, based on meaningful and effective social dialogue, taking into account policies regarding the labour market, regulated labour migration, coordinated labour mobility, and social protection.
18. Strengthen the foundations for social and employment protection and resilience, including:
 - (a) expanding social protection to all workers, guaranteeing universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection for all, with a particular focus on extending protection to workers in the informal economy and those unprotected and in vulnerable situations whilst also ensuring good governance of social protection schemes;
 - (b) extending labour protections through the strengthening of labour inspections systems and enhancing occupational safety and health (OSH) through the ratification and effective implementation of the OSH conventions that are now part of the fundamental principles and rights at work;

- (c) addressing the rising costs of living with policies for adequate, fair, non-discriminatory wages and wage adjustment mechanisms through the provision of adequate minimum wages, statutory or negotiated, and support for collective bargaining at all levels and tripartite cooperation;
- (d) revitalizing productivity growth and skills development for more and better jobs with particular focus on digital transformation and digital divides and lifelong learning, that enhance employability and the sharing of productivity gains; and
- (e) eliminating all forms of forced and child labour, including through the ratification and implementation of the fundamental principles and rights at work Conventions.

ILO action

- 19.** Support tripartite constituents in developing and implementing national and regional priorities, including through Decent Work Country Programmes, where relevant. These programmes should be designed and implemented through consultation with the tripartite constituents, in line with the Bali Declaration and this Statement, constituent needs, and progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- 20.** Promote the importance of tripartism throughout the UN system and strengthening cooperation between tripartite constituents and relevant multilateral organizations, including supporting them to engage with the United Nations Development System at all levels, as well as in the development of relevant UN frameworks, such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, at the country level, and in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals guided by the Bali Declaration and this Statement.
- 21.** Promote policy coherence to advance social justice and decent work, including the promotion of systematic cooperation with regional bodies, regional development banks, and universities, and pursuing efforts and consultations to create the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
- 22.** Foster new and innovative opportunities for sharing experiences and best practices and promoting learning within and across the regions, including through evidence-based research and statistics, and further strengthening capacity-building programmes for employers' and workers' organizations.
- 23.** Propose to the Governing Body, within the ILO programme and budget framework, to increasingly allocate financial and human resources to the regions to effectively respond to the priorities of constituents, including through strong and effective social dialogue.
- 24.** Social partners reiterate the continuing importance of regularly scheduled opportunities to convene on a regional and subregional basis, as regional dialogue and meetings remain an important and relevant mechanism for this diverse and geographically dispersed region. The Office is requested to reflect these views to the Governing Body for it to examine options for rejuvenation and reform of future regional meetings, including measures to ensure: (i) participation from all ILO Member States, including Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; and (ii) gender balanced participation.
- 25.** The Office is requested to ensure a follow-up to the conclusions of the 17th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting, including in the development of an implementation plan on supporting constituents to give effect to the Singapore Statement to be reviewed and submitted to the constituents and to the Governing Body every two years based on existing processes and mechanisms.