

Intervention of Francis Kim Uphi, International Trade Union Confederation – AP Workers and Trade Union Constituency  
Agenda Item 2.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for inviting me to speak

I am here to represent trade unions and workers in our region.

It is clear to us even before the global health and economic crisis from the outbreak of COVID-19, the Asian and the Pacific region had a poor potential for the achievement of SDG 8 with serious and persistent decent work deficits despite positive economic growth for decades; We had high informality, hundreds of millions working poor, prevalence of child labour, forced labour and modern slavery through global supply chains, inadequate and insufficient social protection, absence of social dialogue with the increase in violations of workers' rights.

These deficits are well highlighted and further deteriorated with huge working hour losses equivalent to 140 million full time job loss as well as more than additional 20 million working poor during the COVID-19 pandemic. The deficits have been also behind the prolonged current crisis. Therefore, for recovery and resilience, we must look into the current situation through the lens of persistent decent work deficits for the past decades under rampant attacks on fundamental workers' rights, values of social solidarity, democracy, multilateralism and welfare state. It is obvious that without a fundamental change for decent work, in particular, for vulnerable workers including women, migrants, youth, informal workers, it would not be possible to achieve recovery and resilience from the pandemic.

Indeed, the Covid-19 crisis makes SDG 8 more relevant than ever; emphasising the importance of occupational safety and health, protecting jobs and workers' rights, strengthening social protection systems, and addressing unemployment and informality shocks. The interlinkages between SDG 8 and the other SDGs are numerous and significant so that the full achievement of SDG targets largely depends on the achievement of SDG 8.

Therefore, Madam Chair, I would like to ask you to consider our recommendations already submitted to you and reflect them in your report. The recommendations include;

- Establishment of a labour protection floor that guarantees fundamental workers' rights, an adequate minimum wage, maximum limits on working time, and safety and health at work.
- Extending social protection systems and access to universal health care to ensure comprehensive and universal coverage to workers in all forms of work in line with ILO standards
- Taking concrete actions for the formalisation of the informal economy according to ILO Recommendation 204, supported by ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors.
- Designing and implementing Just Transition plans with workers' and employers' representatives
- Ensuring the respect of the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and collective action, especially in crafting new Covid 19 health protocols, to guarantee collective representation of workers and employers in social dialogue processes.
- Institutionalising social dialogue processes and tripartism for the implementation of SDG 8 and the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you, Chair.