

Workers and Trade Union Constituency Statement on Agenda Item 2: Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for SD and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific

Thank you chair, it is our privilege to speak on behalf of the workers' and trade union constituency of APRCEM.

The 2030 SDG Progress has stalled, and worse, regressed. With only 6 years left, we are perilously behind. The eradication of poverty, creation of decent work with living wages for all, and ensuring social protections for the peoples of Asia-Pacific demand urgent, sustainable, inclusive, and pro-people solutions that address the systemic barriers that prevent workers from living a life of dignity.

An estimated 47 million people in the region were pushed into extreme poverty. About 2.4 billion jobs are informal. Workers are grappling with poverty wages, job insecurity, and inhumane working conditions. As wages lag behind inflation, the wealth gap widens, perpetuating the trend of diminishing labor income shares and worsening working conditions.

A staggering 53.5% of the population lack access to social protections in the region, with the gaps amplified by the disparate inadequacies of COVID-19 emergency responses. The persisting climate crisis brought unprecedented disruption to agriculture and food systems, and increased threats to jobs and health and safety at work and in communities.

The corporate capture of development through the plunder of natural resources and sources of livelihoods severely impoverishes the peoples of the region. It fueled multidimensional crises and social unrest in the region, increasing gender-based violence and violations of human and labor rights.

Just Transition - a concept that originated from the trade union movement - is being co-opted by many institutions. It becomes increasingly at risk to corporatization through greenwashed initiatives and environmentally and socially unjust energy transition projects that deprive people of jobs, livelihoods, lands, and lives.

We call on governments to:

- Invest in decent, climate-friendly jobs with living wages for all. Update the education and training curricula to include climate and labor education, towards a sustainable future.
- Implement the Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways adopted at COP28 and ensure that labour rights and social dialogue are central in climate policies.
- Ensure quality public services, control the prices of basic goods, combat exploitation, income inequality, and inflation, while ensuring occupational safety and health and public funding for social protection

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- Ratify ILO Convention 190 for a world of work free from violence and harassment.
- Facilitate the transition to the formal economy in line with ILO Recommendation 204, and stop informalization, especially of women, youth and platform workers
- Respect the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining and the right to strike. These are pillars to building peace and democracy that are a cornerstone for sustainable development.

More power to the unions!