



---

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**  
Committee on Social Development**Seventh session**

Bangkok and online, 6–8 September 2022

**Report of the Committee on Social Development on its seventh session****I. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

1. The following decisions adopted by the Committee on Social Development are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific:

**Decision 1**

The Committee requests the secretariat to promote its regional online platform on social protection and conduct regional stocktaking activities to support members and associate members of the Commission in their efforts to accelerate progress in the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific. In this regard, members and associate members are encouraged to complete the rapid baseline survey on the Action Plan.

**Decision 2**

The Committee requests the secretariat to explore appropriate ways and means to support interested members and associate members of the Commission to strengthen the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, taking into account the involvement, as appropriate, of civil society organizations and organizations of older persons operating at the regional and subregional levels in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>1</sup>

**Decision 3**

The Committee calls upon members and associate members of the Commission to strengthen existing networks of national focal points on ageing and to provide, on a voluntary basis, regular updates to the secretariat on policies, action plans and monitoring frameworks on population ageing in

---

<sup>1</sup> ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3 and ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1.

order to facilitate the sharing of experiences and knowledge at the regional level.

#### **Decision 4**

Noting the preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, to be held in Jakarta and online from 19 to 21 October 2022, the Committee encourages all members and associate members of the Commission to actively participate in the Meeting.

## **II. Organization**

### **A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

2. The Committee held its seventh session in Bangkok and online from 6 to 8 September 2022. The session was opened by the Minister for Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, Mr. Chuti Krairiksh, the Executive Secretary and the Chair of the seventh session of the Committee.

### **B. Attendance**

3. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission attended: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Nauru; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Türkiye; and United States of America.

4. A representative of the Development Coordination Office of the Secretariat attended.

5. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds also attended: International Labour Organization; International Telecommunication Union; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Population Fund; and World Food Programme.

6. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; Economic Cooperation Organization; and Eurasian Economic Commission.

7. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability; Development, Welfare and Research Foundation; Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia; Foundation for Older Persons' Development; Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti; HelpAge International; International Federation of Social Workers; International Federation on Ageing; International Human Rights Observer Pakistan (IHRO); International Trade Union Confederation; Kyrgyzstan Babushka Adoption Charitable Foundation; Pacific Disability Forum; Philippine Institute for Development Studies; Salesian Missions, Inc.; South Asian Disability Forum; Tsao Foundation; and Zhongshan Vocational College.

8. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the bureau examined the credentials of representatives of member States and reported upon them to the Committee. Credentials of 25 member States were found to be in order. The bureau decided to defer any action on the credentials

pertaining to the representatives of Myanmar at the seventh session of the Committee, pending a decision by the General Assembly on the representation of Myanmar and in line with General Assembly resolution 396 (V) of 14 December 1950, and acknowledging the report of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

9. The Committee took note of the oral report of the bureau on credentials.

### **C. Election of officers**

10. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair: Ms. Ariunzaya Ayush (Mongolia)  
Vice-Chairs: Mr. Boros Samheng (Cambodia)  
Ms. Suzilah Mohd Sidek (Malaysia)

### **D. Agenda**

11. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific.
3. Strategies for strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific.
4. Follow-up to the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.
5. Review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventh session.

## **III. Account of proceedings**

12. The discussions held during the session have been summarized in an account of proceedings (see annex II).

## Annex I

### List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CSD/2022/1	Strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific	2
ESCAP/CSD/2022/2	Regional actions to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific	3
ESCAP/CSD/2022/3	Review of progress in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, in Asia and the Pacific	4
ESCAP/CSD/2022/4	Review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific	5
ESCAP/CSD/2022/5	Report of the Committee on Social Development on its seventh session	
ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1	Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific	4
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CSD/2022/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CSD/2022/L.2	Draft report	7
<i>Information available online</i>		
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-social-development-seventh-session">www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-social-development-seventh-session</a>	Information for participants	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-social-development-seventh-session">www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-social-development-seventh-session</a>	List of participants	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-social-development-seventh-session">www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-social-development-seventh-session</a>	Tentative programme	

## Annex II

### Account of proceedings

#### I. Introduction

1. The account of proceedings contains a summary of the discussions and proceedings of the seventh session of the Committee on Social Development.

#### II. Summary of discussions

##### A. Strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific (agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CSD/2022/1).

3. The Committee benefited from a keynote speech by Mr. Dean Karlan, Professor of Economics and Finance, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, and President and Founder, Innovations for Poverty Action.

4. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific made statements: Bangladesh; China; Indonesia; and Philippines.

5. The representative of the International Labour Organization made a statement.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations made statements: International Trade Union Confederation–Asia-Pacific; South Asian Disability Forum; and Development, Welfare and Research Foundation.

7. The Committee commended the secretariat for its timely focus on the workforce and recognized the importance of building a healthy, productive and protected workforce, while also acknowledging the importance of an adaptable and resilient workforce to better respond to ongoing challenges of population ageing, digitalization and migration. In that respect, the importance of social protection and health care for all and shared national examples of how new policies had been introduced during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic was stressed.

8. The need to create more decent jobs, the importance of active labour market policies for workers in formal and informal sectors, and the need for vocational and technical skills training activities together with access to credit, cash grants and job facilitation programmes were highlighted. Several representatives underlined the importance of upskilling and reskilling programmes with particular attention to population groups in vulnerable situations, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and displaced workers, as well as measures to protect the rights of migrant workers in destination countries.

9. Several representatives shared examples from their countries' efforts to stabilize employment and aggregate demand, including how social protection schemes had harnessed digital technologies to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of social protection benefits.

10. Representatives of international and non-governmental organizations reiterated that many countries in the region faced challenges because of the shortage of decent employment, social protection and social dialogue. They stressed the centrality of investing in effective labour market institutions, ensuring the fundamental rights of workers and implementing active labour market policies.

11. Representatives of non-governmental organizations underlined inclusivity in promoting decent employment, particularly for older persons and persons with disabilities, to reduce inequalities and close the gaps in access to digital technologies and social protection.

**B. Strategies for strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific (agenda item 3)**

12. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on regional actions to support the implementation of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CSD/2022/2).

13. The Committee benefited from a high-level panel discussion on national initiatives to implement the Action Plan. The panel comprised Ms. Ariunzaya Ayush, Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office, Mongolia; Mr. Boros Samheng, Minister, Delegation Attached to Prime Minister, and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Cambodia; Ms. Celia Reyes, former President, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Philippines; and Ms. Catherine Haswell, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Maldives.

14. The discussion focused on ways to enhance institutional coordination and delivery mechanisms to accelerate the implementation of the Action Plan, with the aim of strengthening social protection systems. Panellists highlighted the impact that the expansion of social protection schemes has had on poverty alleviation and building the socioeconomic resilience of people, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The complementary role of contributory and non-contributory schemes in ensuring universal coverage was emphasized. Effective institutional and regulatory frameworks had also been instrumental in enhancing social protection systems. Panellists also stressed the need to tailor social protection systems to the national context and their unique challenges, such as climate change-related disasters, population ageing and topography. The need to identify sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure coverage of those left furthest behind was also discussed.

15. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Timor-Leste.

16. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations made statements: International Federation of Social Workers; Development, Welfare and Research Foundation; and Pacific Disability Forum.

17. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific and highlighted the importance of accelerating its implementation to broaden social protection coverage in the region. In that respect, several representatives commended the secretariat for its work on social protection and the support provided for implementing the Action Plan. One representative also thanked the secretariat for its development of the Social Protection Toolbox.

18. The importance of social protection to cushion the negative impacts of socioeconomic shocks was stressed. National progress made in extending social protection in the region, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic was also noted. Examples of national initiatives to extend coverage of social protection, including the extension of both contributory and non-contributory schemes were shared. Several representatives indicated the establishment of new contributory pension schemes as a step towards fostering a more comprehensive social protection system.

19. Further effort was needed to strengthen social protection systems in the region, although there were challenges in terms of high levels of labour market informality, population ageing, limited fiscal space and lack of coordination. Efforts to improve coordination and administrative systems as well as data management systems were also reported. Several representations stressed the centrality of accurate and up-to-date socioeconomic data to increase effective delivery and monitoring.

20. Representatives of United Nations agencies and bodies recognized the importance of the Action Plan as a framework to galvanize efforts to strengthen social protection. They stressed the importance of investing in social protection, including in shock-responsive social protection, to reduce poverty and inequalities, while strengthening the resilience of population groups being left behind. One representative acknowledged the close collaboration with the secretariat on the national stocktaking of the progress made in implementing the Action Plan through a regional baseline survey.

21. Representatives of non-governmental organizations highlighted the benefits of investing in inclusive social protection systems that included population groups in vulnerable situations, such as older persons and persons with disabilities, and of assuring that human rights were upheld for all. Transforming social protection systems from being reactive to preventive would therefore be an important measure.

**C. Follow-up to the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (agenda item 4)**

22. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat on the review of progress in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CSD/2022/3) and the outcome document of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing entitled “Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1).

23. The Committee benefited from a panel discussion on accelerating the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific. The panellists were Ms. Aishath Mohamed Didi, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, Maldives; Dr. Mary Ann Tsao, Chairperson and Founding

Director, Tsao Foundation, Singapore; and Ms. Alana Officer, Unit Head, Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing, Department of Healthier Populations, World Health Organization.

24. Panellists stressed the importance of national action plans to implement the Madrid Plan of Action and highlighted the positive impact of using a whole-of-society approach. The importance of alliances between member States, civil society, academia and local communities in the design and implementation of policies to enhance their impact was emphasized. The panel underscored that income security and integrated health and care systems were crucial to ensuring that older persons could live in dignity. The role of civil society organizations in providing services to older persons and ensuring their participation in policymaking and policy monitoring was highlighted. The intergenerational digital divide was raised as a significant obstacle to older persons' access to services, which would need to be facilitated with support and training activities on the use of technology. Collection, analysis and dissemination of data, disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics were crucial, and data should not be age capped. Panellists called upon civil society and member States to work together to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action.

25. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements or submitted statements in writing: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; Maldives; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and Timor-Leste.

26. The following non-governmental organizations made statements: Development, Welfare and Research Foundation; Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia; Foundation for Older Persons' Development; Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti; and International Federation on Ageing.

27. Representatives outlined the national contexts of rapidly ageing populations and the obstacles to healthy ageing, and they reported on national policies and action plans to implement the Madrid Plan of Action. Policies should address the potential vulnerabilities of older persons, such as increased social isolation and ageism, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of older women. Collection of timely and disaggregated data was highlighted as important for the design of evidence-based policies.

28. The following good practices on providing income security and ensuring older persons' participation in society were shared: comprehensive pension systems with social and contributory pensions; participation of older persons in income-generating work; intergenerational volunteering; developing anti-discrimination legislation; generating employment and changing the work culture; and providing lifelong learning opportunities, including in computer literacy.

29. Good practices in increasing access to health care for older persons, such as free health insurance or treatment, were reported, as well as actions to protect the health of older persons during the COVID-19 pandemic, including universal vaccinations as well as the provision of quality long-term care and ensuring ageing in place. The crucial role of civil society in implementing policies on ageing was highlighted with a focus on age-friendly communities, community-based care and services and age-friendly cities.

30. Representatives stressed the importance of and their readiness to participate in regional cooperation and peer learning in the design of policies on ageing. They noted the importance of including civil society in that



undertaking. In that context, representatives expressed appreciation to the Commission for technical cooperation received as well as data and tools prepared by the secretariat to support the design of policies on ageing.

31. Representatives of non-governmental organizations highlighted challenges faced by older persons, which included ageism, illiteracy, lack of digital skills, and limited access to health-care services, particularly for older women. In stressing the role of civil society in implementing policies on ageing, the need for cooperation and exchange of good practices between governments and civil society within and between countries was stressed.

**D. Review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (agenda item 5)**

32. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Review of implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/CSD/2022/4).

33. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Maldives; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Timor-Leste.

34. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations and other entities also made statements: Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability; Development, Welfare and Research Foundation; Pacific Disability Forum; and South Asian Disability Forum.

35. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities through the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and harmonization of national legislation and policies in line with the Convention.

36. The Committee also expressed its commitment to continue to implement the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

37. The importance of meaningful and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in decision-making was recognized. Efforts to partner with civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, to implement disability-inclusive development programmes were highlighted.

38. Persons with disabilities still faced barriers to full inclusion in society and representatives shared actions to improve access in several sectors, including education, employment, disaster risk reduction, health, and accessibility of the physical environment, public transportation, and information and communications. The importance of social protection, early identification and intervention and community-based rehabilitation and care were underlined. The distinct needs of women with disabilities were also recognized and programmes to support gender equality were shared.

39. The importance of the inclusion of persons with disabilities to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind was emphasized. The need for disability data to inform policymaking, including using the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning was further highlighted.

40. The representative of Indonesia invited all members and associate members to participate in the upcoming High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, hosted by his Government in Jakarta and online from 19 to 21 October 2022. The Committee noted the preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting and encouraged all members and associate members to actively participate in the Meeting. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran conveyed his Government's respect for the consensus reached by member States on the draft outcome document, the Jakarta declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032, while noting its dissociation from paragraphs 4 and 16 (e) of that document.

41. Representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations expressed support for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting and its objectives, which included charting the new course of disability-inclusive development in the next decade. They emphasized the challenges and importance of ensuring meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making and suggested that the lack of inclusion and accessibility should be addressed. In doing so, they shared good practices of adopting subregional frameworks on disability-inclusive development.

**E. Other matters (agenda item 6)**

42. No statements were made under this agenda item.

**F. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventh session (agenda item 7)**

43. The Committee adopted the report on its seventh session on 8 September 2022.

---