

Policy Paper

No. 2020/13



Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific:

Trends, Strategies and Policy Recommendations



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific: Trends, Strategies and Policy Recommendations was prepared by the Social Development Division (SDD) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) under the overall leadership of Srinivas Tata, Director, SDD.

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INTRODUCTION

Productive employment and decent work¹ is central to enabling persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in society and to enjoy an adequate standard of living. It therefore features strongly in international commitments on disability rights and disability-inclusive development, including as a dedicated article and goal in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific respectively.

In this context, this policy paper seeks to equip ESCAP members and associate members with updated information and insights on promoting employment for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, through snapshots of the latest figures, trends, policy developments and strategies, including interesting practices.

The paper contains five chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduces the employment status of persons with disabilities in the region based on latest available figures and discusses the critical issue of strengthening disability-disaggregated employment data for evidence-informed policymaking.
- Chapter 2 discusses the latest developments in the world of work brought about by technological change, the rise of the gig economy and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic – and explores the impact of these changes on employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Chapter 3 summarizes the evolution of the understanding of disability and disability rights over the years, including policy commitments at the international and regional level that have accompanied these changes, and analyses the resulting transformation in the approach to promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Chapter 4 lays out the array of strategies available to Asia-Pacific governments and other stakeholders in promoting productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities, and showcases interesting initiatives and practices undertaken to this end.
- Chapter 5 closes with proposed recommendations for further action to promote productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

¹ For purposes of this paper, productive employment is defined as employment yielding sufficient returns to labour to permit the worker and her/his dependents a level of consumption above the poverty line. Decent work is defined as productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, with the ILO Decent Work Agenda comprising four pillars, namely, employment creation and enterprise development; social protection; standards and rights at work; and governance and social dialogue. Source: ILO, *Understanding Deficits of Productive Employment and Setting Targets: A Methodological Guide* (Geneva, 2012) and ILO, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work* (Geneva, 2007).



CHAPTER 1. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

1.1 A snapshot of employment trends

There are an estimated 472 million persons with disabilities of working age in Asia and the Pacific.² Based on data reported by Asia-Pacific governments, persons with disabilities are approximately two to six times less likely to be employed than persons without disabilities in the region. Women with disabilities are only half as likely as men with disabilities to find a job,³ while persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are more likely to be disadvantaged in their search for work, as are those with severe or multiple impairments.⁴

The labour force participation rates of persons with disabilities are also two to five times lower than that of persons without disabilities.⁵ That persons with disabilities are often not registered as either employed or unemployed also means that they are often invisible in labour market statistics⁶ and thus likely to be overlooked in policy measures.

Where employed, workers with disabilities are likely to be in jobs with poor prospects; in vulnerable jobs in the informal economy without social protection; in corporate social responsibility projects; or in self-employment. Up to three quarters of employed persons with disabilities work in the informal economy, with the share of informal workers ranging from 28 to 92 per cent across the developing countries of the region.⁷ Individual country studies corroborate this observation: in Indonesia, 65 per cent of employed persons with mild disabilities and 76 per cent of employed persons with severe disabilities were reported to be working in informal jobs;⁸ in Timor-Leste, 62 per cent were reported to be own account workers, with a further 21 per cent employed as contributing family workers;⁹ while in Australia, persons with disabilities have a higher rate of entrepreneurship (13 per cent) than persons without disabilities (10 per cent).¹⁰ Available evidence indicates that they are involved in a range of services such as tailoring, massage and shop-keeping.¹¹

The unemployment, underemployment and exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market incur social and economic losses estimated at between 3 and 7 per cent of gross

² Calculated as 15 per cent of the ESCAP estimate that 3,144,378,848 of the Asia and Pacific population are of working age at mid-year 2020. Source: ESCAP, “Population and development indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2020”, Data Sheet (Bangkok, 2020).

³ ESCAP, *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific. Assessing the Progress of the Incheon Strategy* (Bangkok, 2018).

⁴ UN DESA, *Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities 2018* (New York, 2019).

⁵ ESCAP, 2018, op. cit.

⁶ OECD, *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: A Synthesis of Findings across OECD Countries* (Paris, 2010).

⁷ ESCAP, 2018, op. cit.

⁸ ILO, *Final report-Mapping Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in Indonesia Labor Market* (Jakarta, 2017).

⁹ National Statistics Directorate and UNFPA, *Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census, 2010: Analytical Report on Disability, Volume 10* (Dili, 2012).

¹⁰ Simon Darcy and others, *Australia’s Disability Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Experiences of People with Disability with Microenterprises, Self-employment and Entrepreneurship* (Sydney, 2020).

¹¹ See for example ILO, *Disabilities and Decent Work in the Pacific: The Case for Disability Inclusive Employment* (Suva, 2012).



domestic product.¹² It is critical for policymakers to be cognisant of these substantial costs and to integrate disability inclusion when designing measures to promote productive employment and decent work.

In seeking to understand the employment situation of persons with disabilities and to develop appropriate policy measures, it is also important to note that persons with disabilities have very diverse profiles, with different socioeconomic circumstances and varying levels of physical, sensory, intellectual and/or psycho-social impairments. In addition, depending on whether these impairments date from birth, childhood, teenage years or adulthood, their work-related profiles will differ significantly because of disparate educational, training and work experiences or lack thereof. Whether these impairments are observable or invisible also affect the extent to which persons with disabilities experience exclusion and disadvantage: those with invisible disabilities are less likely to face discriminatory barriers to employment, yet may find it difficult to request and obtain reasonable accommodation when such support become required, if no prior disclosure of their disabilities was made to their employers.¹³

1.2 Improving disability-disaggregated employment data for informed policymaking

Much of the employment data described in the above section was obtained from country survey responses submitted during the midpoint review of the implementation of the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific,¹⁴ conducted in 2017 by Asia-Pacific Governments. Of the 35 governments that responded to the survey, while several responded to individual indicators, only nine countries and territories reported figures for all the employment-related questions; in a few instances, the data reported was not disaggregated by disability or sex.¹⁵

Table 1. Reporting by governments on employment-related Incheon Strategy indicators

| Incheon Strategy indicators | No. of member States | No. of associate members |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.2 Ratio of persons with disabilities in employment to the general population in employment | | |
| Employment-to-population ratio, by sex and disability status | 18 | 1 |
| Unemployment rate, by sex and disability status | 17 | 1 |
| Labour force participation rate, by sex and disability status | 17 | 1 |
| Ratio of persons with disabilities in employment to general population in employment, by sex | 17 | 1 |
| 1.3 Proportion of persons with disabilities who participate in government-funded vocational training and other employment-support programmes as a proportion of all people trained | | |
| Participation of persons with disabilities in government-funded vocational training programmes, by sex | 14 | 3 |

¹² Based on an exploratory study of ten low- and middle-income developing countries in Africa and Asia. Source: ILO, “The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work”, Employment Working Paper No.43 (Geneva, 2009).

¹³ Michael J. Prince, "Persons with invisible disabilities and workplace accommodation: Findings from a scoping literature review", *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 26, No.1 (January 2017).

¹⁴ See chapter 3 for details on the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

¹⁵ ESCAP, 2018, op. cit.



Such information gaps often arise from the failure to capture persons with disabilities in statistical systems of the labour, education and social protection sectors, due to limited data collection, low levels of awareness of the importance of disability-mainstreaming, and the ensuing lack of disability-disaggregated data. These data deficiencies limit the efficacy of evidence-informed policymaking in improving the employment situation of persons with disabilities.

In light of the need for more comprehensive information on the employment of persons with disabilities, the International Labour Organization and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics have collaborated in developing and testing a disability module on functional difficulties and barriers to employment.¹⁶ Built on questions of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning that is widely used globally to capture data on disability prevalence,¹⁷ the module has been tested in several countries, including India and Mongolia,¹⁸ and is being considered for inclusion in a forthcoming labour force survey in Bangladesh.¹⁹ The module is now available for use in labour force surveys and other population-based surveys that include employment.

Box 1. Washington Group / ILO Labour Force Survey Disability Module

The Labour Force Survey disability module has five sections:

1. Disability identification, using the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning with two additional, optional questions on anxiety and depression.
2. Barriers to employment, including qualification, training and skills; availability of suitable transport to and from the workplace; assistance in identifying appropriate jobs; attitudes towards persons with disabilities; availability of special equipment or assistive devices; availability of more flexible work schedules or work tasks arrangements; availability of a more accommodating workplace; and supportiveness of family members.
3. Accommodations necessary for employment: whether the work schedule or work tasks have been arranged or the workplace modified to account for difficulties the individual has in performing certain activities.
4. Attitudes: willingness of employers to hire persons with disabilities and willingness of workers to work alongside persons with disabilities.
5. Social protection: whether the individual's difficulties have been officially recognized or certified, and whether he or she receives disability-related cash benefits from the government.

Note: Additional information, including national adaptation guides, variable derivation guides, and LFS integration guide are provided on the ILO website: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/lfs-resources/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

¹⁶ Washington Group on Disability Statistics, “WG ILO Labor Force Survey Disability Module (LFS-DM)”, web page. Available at <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-ilo-labor-force-survey-disability-module-lfs-dm/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

¹⁷ See Annex 1 for details on the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning.

¹⁸ Washington Group on Disability Statistics, “Report of the Washington Group (WG) on Disability Statistics including an Executive Summary of the 19th Annual Meeting”, Meeting Report (Hyattsville, 2019).

¹⁹ ILO Statistics Department, personal communications, November 2020.



CHAPTER 2. CHANGES IN THE WORLD OF WORK AND ASSOCIATED IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2.1 Technological advances

Technological changes in recent years have led to a fundamental transformation in the way work is carried out and resulted in mixed impacts on the employment situation of persons with disabilities.

Increased automation, having rapidly displaced low-skilled jobs involving routine and repetitive tasks,²⁰ have generally had a negative effect on the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities working in these labour-intensive occupations.

At the same time, new jobs have emerged. For example, where automation has led to declining working hours, the demand for leisure-related activities has increased, giving rise to new leisure industries and services and the creation of jobs in sports, health, recreation, tourism, restaurants, computer games, and the do-it-yourself movement.²¹

Importantly, the potential of combining computers with robotics, algorithms and other forms of artificial intelligence brought forth by the latest wave of technological development, often referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, has unlocked potential to expand employment possibilities for persons with disabilities in the manufacturing and service sectors. While it is still unclear what these innovations will eventually lead to, there are promising indications that the potential of robots to assist with physical tasks can be tapped to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

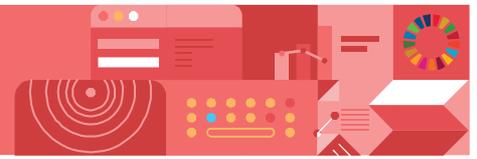
Box 2. AQUAS Project in Germany and Experimental Cafe in Japan

In the manufacturing sector, the AQUAS project in Germany illustrates the potential of service robots as assistants to persons with severe disabilities in performing physically-demanding manufacturing tasks. The service robot enables persons with severe disabilities to focus on higher-quality aspects of their jobs, such as work-step preparation, quality control and person-to-person communication. To implement this pioneering robotics technology, the workplace has been adjusted to suit the manufacturing environment. The robot can flexibly adjust to different table heights, and its sensor skin allows it to function without the need for a safety barrier – if a worker comes too close, the robot automatically stops without any contact.

The AQUAS project is jointly conducted by Robert Bosch GmbH, the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, the Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Engineering and Automation IPA, and ISAK GmbH. Funding is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

²⁰ McKinsey Global Institute, *Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: Workforce Transitions in a Time of Automation* (New York, 2017).

²¹ Ibid.



Box 2. AQUAS Project in Germany and Experimental Cafe in Japan (continued)

In the services sector, the Nippon Foundation in Japan has pilot-tested an approach using robotic technology to enable persons with significant physical disabilities to work. In an experimental cafe, visitors are served by robot waiters, each of which is equipped with a camera and a speaker to help it interact with customers and deliver coffee. The robots are remotely controlled by persons with severe physical disabilities. Following this pilot, there are plans to open a permanent facility in the near future.

Source: Robotics & Automation, “Robotics to aid people with disabilities at work”, 5 October 2018. Available at <https://roboticsandautomationnews.com/2018/10/05/robotics-to-aid-people-with-disabilities-at-work/19340/> (accessed on 27 November 2020); and Nippon Foundation, “Serving customers with robots remotely operated by persons with disabilities”, 28 November 2018. Available at <https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/en/news/articles/2018/20181128-19640.html> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

Advances in information and communications technology have also increased telework, commerce and distance learning options, thereby improving employment, entrepreneurship and training prospects. These advancements include the increased availability of small, powerful, affordable and accessible personal computers and smart ICT devices; the growth in public access to the World Wide Web and its enhanced accessibility through the setting of accessibility standards;²² and new ways of transmitting and searching for information on the Internet.²³ As a result, persons with mobility impairments are now able to study and work remotely using accessible computers and software applications, in localities where the ICT infrastructure allows. New entrepreneurship options have emerged, for instance, in China, where persons with disabilities have capitalized on accessible digital technologies to operate personal online stores on WeChat selling local produce or disability-related products.²⁴

Improvements in assistive devices that facilitate mobility, communication and orientation, have also enabled persons with disabilities to live and work more independently than in the past.²⁵ The proliferation of universal design – whereby products, environments, programmes and services are developed to be usable to everyone without the need for adaptation – has also made employment opportunities more accessible to persons with disabilities.

The cost of ICT equipment and sophisticated assistive devices remains prohibitive, however, for many persons with disabilities, particularly those living in developing countries. Inaccessible communications infrastructure and inaccessible built environments pose barriers to accessing employment in the region as well.²⁶

²² See the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) website: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

²³ In particular, the development of the hypertext transfer protocol (http) around 1990 which became the foundation of data transmission on the World Wide Web and the development of Yahoo, Google and similar search engines.

²⁴ Mercator Institute for China Studies, “China’s digital economy offers employment for disabled people”, 3 December 2018. Available at <https://merics.org/en/analysis/chinas-digital-economy-offers-employment-disabled-people> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

²⁵ See for example World Economic Forum, “What the Fourth Industrial Revolution will do for people with disabilities”, 18 January 2016. Available at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-will-give-us-super-powers/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

²⁶ ESCAP, *Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific-Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development* (Bangkok, 2019).



2.2 Gig economy

Another significant transformation in the world of work stems from the proliferation of short-term contracts and casual work arrangements for self-employed persons and freelance workers, either individually or as part of crowdwork arrangements. Jobs range from location-based service delivery requiring the use of physical labour, such as driving, running errands, making deliveries or cleaning houses, to digital work delivered through online platforms, such as desktop publishing, software development, web development, translation, transcription, data analytics, design, administrative support, and sales and marketing.²⁷ For the latter set of assignments, if carried out with others in a crowd-work arrangement, the overall tasks are divided into microwork such as data entry, interpretation of content, completion of surveys, and finding of information.²⁸

Persons with disabilities often require accessible technologies, relevant assistive devices, and access to the Internet to enter the gig economy. Digital gig work, through the omission of cues such as disability, age, accent and dressing, can potentially lower discriminatory barriers that frequently prevent persons with disabilities from accessing full time employment. The nature of jobs in the gig economy also provides persons with disabilities with much-needed flexibility in terms of time and location, coupled with low overhead costs, all of which may not be viable in the context of full-time employment.²⁹

Box 3. “Break the Silence” Project in Malaysia

The “Break the Silence” project demonstrates the potential of the gig economy in promoting employment for persons with disabilities. Initiated by Grab, a technology company offering ride-hailing and food delivery services as well as payment solutions, the project engages persons with disabilities as drivers and delivery partners. Over 500 persons with deafness, cerebral palsy or motor impairments now earn an income through the app platform. Grab has also appointed 19 service providers with disabilities to the Driver Representative Committee to explore ways of enhancing their work experience. Additionally, Grab is extending support to enterprises of persons with disabilities by introducing their business on the platform.

It is important to note that all Grab drivers and delivery partners, including service providers with disabilities, are eligible for the GrabBenefits Programme, which provides, among other benefits, personal accident insurance subsidies and discounts on travel, services and entertainment. A first-of-its-kind benefits programme for platform workers in the gig economy in Malaysia, the programme aims to support the livelihoods and well-being of Grab partners and strengthen their financial resilience.

Source: Grab, “Grab continues to create greater inclusivity for 500 persons with disabilities (PWD) in Malaysia”, 2 October 2019. Available at <https://www.grab.com/my/press/social-impact-safety/grab-break-the-silence-pwd/> (accessed on 25 November 2020). More information on the GrabBenefits Programme can be found at <https://www.grab.com/my/grabbenefits-in-driver-app/and> <https://www.grab.com/my/press/social-impact-safety/> (accessed on 21 December 2020).

²⁷ Richard Heeks, “Decent work and the digital gig economy: A developing country perspective on employment impacts and standards in online outsourcing, crowdwork, etc.”, Development Informatics Working Paper No. 71 (Manchester, 2017).

²⁸ ILO, “Income security in the on-demand economy: Findings and policy lessons from a survey of crowdworkers”, Conditions of Work and Employment Series No.74 (Geneva, 2016).

²⁹ ILO, “The rise of the ‘just-in-time workforce’: On-demand work, crowdwork and labour protection in the ‘gig-economy’”, Conditions of Work and Employment Series No. 71 (Geneva, 2016).



At the same time, it should be noted that workers in the gig economy might not have employment benefits and protections comparable to those of workers in a traditional employment relationship, including social security coverage, entitlement to sickness and maternity pay or receipt of statutory minimum wages.³⁰ There is therefore a need for policymakers to ensure that employment opportunities available to persons with disabilities yield decent work in the gig economy.

2.3 COVID-19

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn, there has been a significant loss of jobs in the Asia-Pacific region, estimated at 7.3 per cent of working hours, equivalent to around 125 million full-time jobs during the first quarter of 2020; 15.2 per cent of working hours or 265 million full-time equivalent jobs in the second quarter; and 10.7 per cent of working hours or 185 million full-time equivalent jobs in the third quarter.³¹ Workers in the informal economy, comprising 60 per cent of the labour force in the region, have been hardest hit by the lockdown as they are often in vulnerable jobs with little or no social protection and may endanger their health by continuing to work during the pandemic.³² Limited internet access in Asia and the Pacific, with only half the population having internet coverage, has restricted the option to work from home, while the nature of service sector and blue-collar jobs have made these workers less able to work remotely.³³

Persons with disabilities have been more vulnerable in the pandemic due to existing disadvantaged circumstances³⁴ - and the impact of COVID-19 on the employment situation of persons with disabilities, especially for those in vulnerable employment, is likely to be more severe, as evinced by findings from localized surveys and anecdotal evidence.³⁵ In India, for example, workers with disabilities in 10 localities became unemployed overnight due to the closure of businesses and factories, operating mainly in the informal economy;³⁶ a study carried out by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People found that 73 per cent of those surveyed had faced severe hardship – primarily financial crises and difficulties in accessing food and healthcare.³⁷ In China, 81.7 per cent of surveyed massage shops with blind

³⁰ ILO, *Non-standard Employment around the World: Understanding Challenges, Shaping Prospects* (Geneva, 2016).

³¹ ILO, “ILO monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Sixth edition. Updated estimates and analysis”, Briefing Note (Geneva, 2020) and ILO, “ILO monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition. Updated estimates and analysis”, Briefing Note (Geneva, 2020).

³² ILO, “ILO monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition. Updated Estimates and analysis”, Briefing Note (Geneva, 2020).

³³ ESCAP, “Can this time be different? Challenges and opportunities for Asia-Pacific economies in the aftermath of COVID-19”, Issue Paper (Bangkok, 2020).

³⁴ Easy Inclusion, “Making inclusion easier in China”, presentation, ILO Global Business and Disability Network China Chapter, March 2020. Available at <http://www.businessanddisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HaibinZhou.pdf> (accessed on 4 September 2020).

³⁵ Large scale studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment of persons with disabilities are not available yet.

³⁶ The Times of India, “How COVID-19 lockdown has hit disabled people hard”, 6 April 2020. Available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/how-covid-19-lockdown-has-hit-disabled-people-hard/articleshow/75003358.cms> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

³⁷ BBC, “Coronavirus: the disabled Indians losing their livelihoods”, 30 September 2020. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/disability-54188218> (accessed on 27 November 2020).



therapists struggled or closed during the pandemic, leading to a significant loss of livelihoods for the people concerned.³⁸

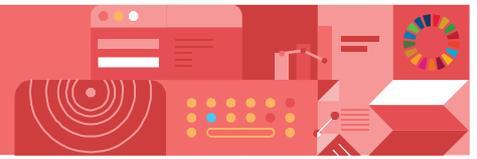
To safeguard the income security and livelihoods of persons with disabilities during the pandemic, at least 40 governments in the region have introduced COVID-19-related employment and social protection support concerning persons with disabilities. These include, among other provisions, encouraging flexible working arrangements, subsidizing companies that continue to employ persons with disabilities, supporting the business of persons with disabilities and establishing online training and recruitment service platforms; providing cash transfers and in-kind aid such as food packages and hygiene kits; and undertaking administrative measures, such as ensuring the timely payment of disability allowances and extending the validity period of disability certificates, to ensure the continued receipt of disability-related allowances.³⁹

In the private sector, an exploratory survey of members of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network companies, including 38 from Asia-Pacific countries, indicated that telework, flexible hours and paid leave were practices most frequently undertaken by employers to protect employees with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis. Additional practices included the provision of reasonable accommodation and facilities to enable employees with disabilities to work from home, and having personal protection equipment in place where they are involved in providing a service. Measures were often devised in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities.⁴⁰

³⁸ CNR News, “Report on the impact of the coronavirus on the massage industry with blind therapists (in Chinese)”, 14 March 2020. Available at http://www.cnr.cn/rdjj/20200314/t20200314_525016393.shtml (accessed on 9 December 2020).

³⁹ ESCAP, “Disability-related COVID-19 responses in Asia and the Pacific”, Issue Paper (forthcoming). Please see Annex 3 for the list of employment and social protection related responses by country.

⁴⁰ While the limited number of participating companies (159) means that the patterns emerging are very tentative, they are nonetheless useful in pointing to examples of good practice that could be promoted more widely. A quarter of the participants were based in the Asia - Pacific region (N=38), with companies from Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Philippines and Sri Lanka participating. Source: ILO, *Disability Inclusion in Company Responses to COVID-19: Results of a Survey among National Business and Disability Networks and Their Members* (Geneva, 2020).



CHAPTER 3. TRANSFORMED UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITY AND CHANGES IN APPROACHES TO PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

3.1 Models of disability

In recent decades, the understanding of disability has evolved significantly. Prior to the 1980s, disability was traditionally regarded as a personal problem requiring medical and charitable action. Under this medical model of disability, persons with disabilities were typically viewed as incapable and unable to participate in society, including in the open labour market, due to their impairments. They therefore had to rely on the goodwill of others or social welfare provisions to meet their basic needs.⁴¹ Accordingly, policies focused on the provision of social welfare and assistance, segregated medical and rehabilitation services, and employment in separate centres set aside for persons with disabilities.

Since the 1980s, a social model of disability has emerged whereby barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in society, including the labour market, have become perceived as stemming from inaccessible social and physical environments.⁴² Such environments, in turn, have been a result of laws, policies, programmes and services that perpetuated the medical or social welfare approach; inaccessible built and communications environments; as well as public perceptions of disability and ensuing assumptions about persons with disabilities. Policies have consequently aimed at promoting inclusion in the mainstream of society, including employment in mainstream firms. These include developing community-based services that provide support to persons with disabilities; promoting accessibility of the built environment and of information and communications technology; and tackling negative attitudes and mistaken assumptions about persons with disabilities.

More recently, a human rights model of disability has also arisen, which affirms that persons with disabilities are holders of rights and entitled to human dignity, and that impairments are to be considered as aspects of human diversity. Complementing the social model of disability, this approach identifies discrimination as the principal problem impeding persons with disabilities from enjoying their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.⁴³ As with the social model, the primary policy goal based on the human rights approach is therefore the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all parts of society, including in education and training programmes and the labour market. Further, as certain groups, such as women with disabilities and indigenous persons with disabilities, may experience multiple and intersecting discrimination, differentiated and targeted policy measures are required to bring about change and promote inclusion.

⁴¹ See A/70/297.

⁴² Tom Shakespeare and Nicholas Watson, "The social model of disability: An outdated ideology?", *Exploring Theories and Expanding Methodologies: Where We Are and Where We Need to Go*, vol.2 (June 2001)

⁴³ Theresia Degener, "Disability in a human rights context", *Laws*, vol.5, No.3 (August 2016).



3.2 Development of international commitments and instruments

Since the mid-20th century, the movement to improve the status of persons with disabilities in society has taken root and expanded through numerous international and regional initiatives, reflecting the transformed understanding of disability over the years.

While major human rights and non-discrimination instruments adopted by the UN between 1948 and 1966 made no specific mention of persons with disabilities, there have been sixteen international initiatives since 1944 specifically concerning persons with disabilities and a further thirteen pertaining to the general population in which persons with disabilities are explicitly mentioned.⁴⁴

Employment issues feature in several of these commitments, notably, the ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) No. 159 (1983); the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993); and most recently, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) adopted in 2006. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, also includes a target on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities and equal pay for work of equal value (Sustainable Development Goal 8.5).

Of these commitments, the CRPD has been critical in accelerating the promotion of disability rights and disability-inclusive development, including in the area of employment. Through its dedicated article on work and employment (Article 27), the CRPD explicitly recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others, including “the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities”.⁴⁵ Other articles on equality (Article 5), awareness-raising (Article 8), accessibility (Article 9) and education (Article 24) further provide guidance on strengthening the enabling environment for the promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

In Asia and the Pacific, the CRPD has been ratified by 46 out of 53 ESCAP member States and signed with a view to ratification by a further six member States. However, only 11 member States have ratified the Optional Protocol, which establishes a mechanism through which individuals or groups may lodge a complaint to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities if their rights under the Convention have been denied.

At the regional level, the commitment to promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities has deepened over the three Asian and Pacific Decades for Persons with Disabilities, since 1993, with the subject of employment featured prominently as a standalone goal or category in the policy frameworks for all three decades. The current framework spanning 2013 to 2022 is the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, adopted in 2012, which includes as its first goal the reduction of poverty and enhancement of work and employment prospects.

⁴⁴ See Annex 2 for the full list of disability-specific and disability-related instruments.

⁴⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.



Box 4. The Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, and the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy

Goal 1 of the Incheon Strategy seeks to ‘reduce poverty and enhance work and employment prospects’ through the following targets:

- (1.A) Eliminate extreme poverty among persons with disabilities
- (1.B) increase work and employment for persons of working age with disabilities who can and want to work; and
- (1.C) increase the participation of persons with disabilities in vocational training and other employment-support programmes funded by governments.

The Beijing Declaration and Action Plan, adopted in 2017, calls on Asia-Pacific governments to develop and implement enabling schemes to promote the employment of persons with disabilities and increase their opportunities with respect to livelihood, decent work and entrepreneurship, particularly by promoting the inclusion of persons with diverse disabilities and women with disabilities, keeping in mind the provision of reasonable accommodation, including by:

- Creating a one-stop system of employment services for persons with disabilities to avoid fragmentation;
- Providing financial or other incentives to employers to hire persons with disabilities and construct accessible facilities in the workplace;
- Promoting disability-inclusive business as a new business model, as distinct from the corporate social responsibility approach to disability, and incorporating disability perspectives into all stages of the business cycle;
- Promoting the establishment of business-to-business networks and improving coordination across the disability employment services system to increase job opportunities, vocational training and skills development for persons with disabilities;
- Promoting the provision of disability support services for employees such as job coaching, job matching, pre-employment counselling and the provision of information in accessible formats, reasonable accommodation and assistive technologies to sustain the employment of persons with disabilities.

3.3 Shifts in policy focus: from sheltered workshops to open employment

The transformed understanding of disability, increasingly reflected in international commitments and instruments on disability rights, has catalysed a fundamental shift in the approach to work and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

3.3.1 Sheltered employment

With the medical model being the predominant model of disability until the 1970s, sheltered workshops exclusively catering to persons with disabilities served as their primary employment option. Often established as social service initiatives by voluntary effort, such as charities, religious groups and family members of persons with disabilities, these segregated centres were frequently funded as charitable enterprises, with revenues being dependent on the number of



workers rather than sales⁴⁶; sheltered workshops only later became subject to state regulation and eligible for public funding.⁴⁷

Criticisms levelled at such workshops have concerned the absence of adequate working conditions, employment contracts and the right to organize, linked to the non-application of employment and occupational safety laws; and the payment of sheltered workers at less than the minimum wage, often in the form of a productivity-related top-up to their disability benefits.⁴⁸

Since the 1980s, stemming from the emergence of the social model of disability, the importance of productive employment and decent work for men and women with disabilities has come to be recognized, based on the increasingly widespread view that persons with disabilities should be provided with the opportunity to live and work in the mainstream of society. Sheltered workshops in receipt of public funding in many countries have therefore been required to reorganize in terms of programmes offered, working conditions, and opportunities for persons with disabilities to move to more open forms of employment, based on their own choices. This transformation has been further accelerated by the advent of the CRPD and the human rights model of disability.

In cases where persons with severe disabilities continue to face difficulties in entering the open labour market, despite the removal of other barriers to employment, sheltered workshops continue to fill the gap in providing non-competitive job opportunities.⁴⁹

Box 5. Sheltered workshops in Malaysia and Australia

In Australia, the Australia Disability Enterprises (ADEs) cater to approximately 20,000 persons with moderate to severe disabilities across the country. Funded by the Department of Social Services of the Australian Government, ADEs seek to equip persons with disabilities with the requisite training and experiences to progress to open employment if they choose. Work carried out in these enterprises involves tasks such as packaging, assembly, production, recycling, screen printing, plant nursery, garden maintenance and landscaping, cleaning services, laundry services and food services.

In Malaysia, sheltered workshops in different parts of the country employ persons with disabilities, in particular those with intellectual disabilities, in different kinds of sub-contracting work such as packaging, mailing and sorting services for local companies, and assembly line production of food and crafts. These workshops provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities who may not be readily accepted in open employment due to attitudinal or environmental barriers.

Note: More information can be found on the websites of the Department of Social Services, Australian Government: <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programmes-services-for-people-with-disability/australian-disability-enterprises> (accessed on 27 November 2020) and the Malaysian Information Network on Disabilities: <https://mind.org.my/employment/sheltered-workshops/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

⁴⁶ ESCAP, *Disability at a Glance 2015: Strengthening Employment Prospects for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, 2016).

⁴⁷ ILO, *Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities: Promoting Rights in the Global Development Agenda* (Geneva 2015).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ ESCAP, 2016, op. cit.



3.3.2 Supported employment

The concept of supported employment emerged in the 1980s as an effective way of assisting persons with disabilities to move from special training centres and sheltered workshops to jobs in mainstream companies and agencies. Initially developed for persons with intellectual disabilities, this approach has been expanded to be available to persons with other types of disabilities.

Seeking to remove barriers to employment by supporting persons with disabilities to obtain and retain jobs, supported employment takes several forms.

Table 2. Forms of supported employment⁵⁰

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Individual placements | A job placement officer or job coach identifies a potentially suitable job and provides on-job training and/or other assistance to the individual in the workplace. |
| Enclave within a company | A team of persons with disabilities works on specific tasks alongside a job coach or supervisor. |
| Mobile work crew | Persons with disabilities perform tasks such as gardening or cleaning under contract from companies. |
| Small businesses | Persons with disabilities, alongside persons without disabilities, offer manufacturing or sub-contracting services (e.g., word processing or desktop publishing) in an inclusive setting such as a business park or shopping mall. |

Following individual supported employment placements, some persons with disabilities continue as supported workers, requiring on-going support from their job coach or resource person, while others may be recruited as direct employees on regular employment contracts with the company.⁵¹ From the employer’s perspective, this arrangement is beneficial as the employee with disability is able to fulfil the requirements of the position with the partnership of a job coach, whose support is available to resolve any issues that might arise during or after the period of coaching.

Several countries and territories in the Asia- Pacific region, such as China, Malaysia and Singapore have introduced supported employment as an option for job-seekers with disabilities.

⁵⁰ ILO, *Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities: Promoting Rights in the Global Development Agenda* (Geneva 2015).

⁵¹ The training aspect of this approach is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.



Box 6. Supported Employment Service in Hong Kong, China

Since 1993, the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association in Hong Kong, China, has operated a supported employment service to empower persons with psychosocial disabilities to work in an open and competitive setting, based on self-directed choices according to their abilities, strengths and interests. The supported employment team, consisting of a manager, caseworkers, administrative staff and instructors, provides services for both persons with psychosocial disabilities and employers.

Persons with psychosocial disabilities may approach social workers for referral to the supported employment service, which involves individualized vocational counselling, systematic training, job matching, on-the-job support as well as various group and social rehabilitation activities. Through these services, persons with psychosocial disabilities can participate in productive employment in the open market, including in the fields of retailing, car cleaning, venue cleaning and catering. A discharge plan will be prepared when persons with psychosocial disabilities can stay in the job continuously and no longer require support services.

The Association also identifies the most suitable employees for employers who would like to offer job opportunities. Additionally, wage subsidies and mental-health related training are available for employers to encourage the employment of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Building on over 20 years' experience, the supported employment service has been incorporated into a one-stop vocational rehabilitation service centre which offers a wide range of employment assistance projects. The service centre is equipped with facilities to conduct training courses and assist persons with psychosocial disabilities in job-seeking.

Note: More information can be found on the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association website: [https://www.nlpra.org.hk/en/our services/ses/32#supported](https://www.nlpra.org.hk/en/our%20services/ses/32#supported) (accessed on 21 December 2020).

3.4 The rise of the private sector and the social economy in promoting productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities

3.4.1 The growing contribution of the private sector

In recent decades, employers have increasingly come to recognize the benefits to their companies of employing persons with disabilities, including improved productivity, lower employee turnover, safer workplaces and enhanced reputations.⁵²

In many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, employers have formed business and disability networks with a view to promoting the business case for employing persons with diverse disabilities and thereby effectively increasing their employment opportunities. These networks include the Australian Network on Disability; Business and Disability Networks in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore; the Employers' Network on Disability in Sri Lanka; the New Zealand Accessibility Tick Employers Network; and the Russian Business Advisory Board on Disability.⁵³

⁵² ILO, *Business as Unusual: Making Workplaces Inclusive of People with Disabilities* (Geneva, 2014).

⁵³ See the ILO Global Business and Disability Network website: <http://www.businessanddisability.org/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).



Box 7. The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN)

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) is an employer-led worldwide network aiming to promote disability inclusion in the workplace. Consisting of multinational enterprises, employer and business membership organizations, national business and disability networks, civil society organizations and academia, the GBDN provides technical advice on disability inclusion, particularly in developing countries, and facilitates contact with national business and disability initiatives, organizations of persons with disabilities, partners and ILO offices.

Company members have signed the Global Business and Disability Network Charter and thereby commit to its ten disability inclusion principles:

- Respect and promotion of rights
- Non-discrimination
- Equality of treatment and opportunities
- Accessibility
- Job retention
- Confidentiality
- Attention to all types of disabilities
- Collaboration
- Evaluation and
- Knowledge-sharing

Employer and business membership organizations increase their capacity to address their members' needs relating to disability diversity, corporate social responsibility, human resources and adherence to laws.

Note: More information can be found on the ILO Global Business and Disability Network website: <http://www.businessanddisability.org/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

Arising from these developments, employers have developed a range of initiatives – often in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities, training centres for persons with disabilities, or state employment agencies to include persons with disabilities within their workforce.⁵⁴

Many employers begin their involvement in disability inclusion with initiatives designed to meet legal obligations or corporate social responsibility targets, and gradually strengthen their commitments to become fully disability-inclusive businesses. Some establish dedicated training and employment services for persons with disabilities, while others create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities following a period of vocational training, often organized in collaboration with dedicated training centres for persons with disabilities.

⁵⁴ Workability International, *Customized Employment Guidelines* (Bangkok, 2019). Available at http://www.workabilityasia.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/WASIA_Guidebook_Pink_En.pdf (accessed on 27 November 2020).



Box 8. Coordinating public-private sector partnerships in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the National Board of the Employers' Association of Indonesia (APINDO) signed an agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration in 2013 to increase private sector's role in facilitating the employment of their workers with disabilities.

In 2018, a MOU between the two ministries and APINDO was released, focusing on training and working placement for persons with disabilities. APINDO has identified jobs that can be performed by persons with disabilities in several companies and is committed to matching persons with disabilities with training and job opportunities.

Source: See CRPD/C/IDN/1; Utami Dewi and others, "Employment governance for people with disabilities: comparative study between Indonesia and Malaysia", *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, vol.401 (February 2020); ILO, "Indonesia Business and Disability Network: Forum Jejaring Perusahaan Untuk Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Disabilitas", Meeting Note. Available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-jakarta/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_437102.pdf (accessed on 26 November 2020).

Box 9. Disability-inclusive companies in Asia and the Pacific

In Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, the Marks and Start programme of Marks and Spencer collaborates with training centres to provide vocational skills training to persons with disabilities who go on to work in the company's source factories.

In China, Flex Zhuhai, a Fortune 500 enterprise which integrates diversity and inclusion in its strategies, collaborated with the Inclusion Factory, a centre for persons with intellectual disabilities, in the training of 16 persons with intellectual disabilities for employment in the Flex Mechanical Inclusive Factory in 2019.

In Hong Kong, China, Marriott International has collaborated with the Hong Chi Association since 2001 to train persons with disabilities for employment in the hotel as housekeepers. It has also encouraged other hotels to employ its training graduates.

Nanglo International, a chain of restaurants in Nepal, employs 45 deaf staff as waiters and waitresses, bartenders and shift captains in its Bakery Cafe, which has 10 outlets. In collaboration with the Nepal Deaf Association, Nanglo runs a preparatory three-month pre-employment training course for deaf staff, arranges for sign language interpretation during hiring and initial training, provides training in basic sign language for hearing staff and on-going training for all Bakery staff.

Note: More information can be found on the M&S Careers website: <https://careers.marksandspencer.com/helping-you-find-work> (accessed on 27 November 2020); Inclusion Factory Annual Report 2019: <http://www.inclusion-factory.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/中德融创工场年报-2019-Inclusion-Factory-Annual-Report-2019.pdf> (accessed on 27 November 2020); Hong Chi Association website: https://www.hongchi.org.hk/entext_about_spirit.asp (accessed on 27 November 2020); ILO, *EmployAbility: A Resource Guide on Disability for Employers in Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, 2007); and Nanglo Bakery Cafe website: <https://www.thebakerycafe.com.np/about> (accessed on 27 November 2020).



3.4.2 The potential of the social economy and social enterprises

The social economy, comprising different types of community, voluntary, non-profit and for-profit activities in the form of cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit associations, foundations and social enterprises, is of growing importance as a source of employment generally. In Europe, for example, there are currently 2 million social economy enterprises, representing 10 per cent of all businesses in the European Union and employing around 6 per cent of EU employees. Operating on the basis of solidarity and mutuality, the primary objective of social economy entities is to serve their members rather than to obtain a return on investment, as traditional private companies do.⁵⁵

Since the 1980s, social enterprises, an integral part of the social economy, have developed as an employment option in Europe and elsewhere, initially for persons with psychosocial disabilities, following the closure of many psychiatric institutions. Persons with disabilities are often employed following a period of on-the-job training.

While Asia-Pacific governments have encouraged the growth of social enterprises over the years,⁵⁶ much remains to be explored and documented on how social enterprises could promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the region, including the role of governments in incentivizing the training, hiring and retaining of persons with disabilities.

Box 10. Social enterprises employing persons with disabilities in Hong Kong, China and Singapore

Hong Kong, China and Singapore are home to several disability-inclusive social enterprises.

For example, the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (New Life) runs 20 social enterprises in which people with psychosocial disabilities are trained in real work settings, with the aim of enabling them to develop skills and self-confidence to take part in open employment. Areas of employment include catering, retail, ecotourism, direct sales, cleaning service, and property management.

Other social enterprises include IBakery, under the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, which has trained and hired persons with disabilities in a bakery and a cafe since 2010; and ADAM, set up by the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong, which aims to create job opportunities and increase income for artists with disabilities.

⁵⁵ ILO, *Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities: Promoting Rights in the Global Development Agenda* (Geneva, 2015); OECD, “Social economy”, web page. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-economy.htm> (accessed on 12 December 2020); European Commission, “Social economy in the EU”, web page. Available at <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy> (accessed on 12 December 2020).

⁵⁶ This includes the enactment of laws, the establishment of agencies dedicated to the promotion of social enterprises, and the provision of seed-funding. See examples: Social Enterprise Promotion Act, 2019, Thailand: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/news-events/news-social-enterprise-set-to-take-off-in-thailand> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre: <https://www.mymagic.my/about> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Social Enterprise Promotion Agency, the Republic of Korea: <http://www.socialenterprise.or.kr/eng/exploring/promotion.do> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Thai Social Enterprise Office: <https://www.asean-sme-academy.org/resource/thai-social-enterprise-office-tseo/> (accessed on 30 November 2020); and Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise Project, Hong Kong, China: https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_employment/id_enhancing/ (accessed on 30 November 2020).



Box 10. Social enterprises employing persons with disabilities in Hong Kong, China and Singapore (continued)

In Singapore, the Bizlink Centre, a registered charity, runs social enterprises that offer a supportive environment for persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged individuals.

Genashtim Innovative Learning, a for-profit social enterprise based in Singapore but also employing persons with disabilities from other Asia-Pacific countries, provides sustainable gainful employment for persons with disabilities through the online delivery of learning and services using cloud-based operations. Employees with disabilities, currently comprising 60 per cent of its permanent workforce and including persons with physical, sensory, hearing and psycho-social disabilities, work online from their bases in Malaysia and the Philippines.

Note : More information can be found on the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association website: <https://www.nlpra.org.hk/en/socialenterprises> (accessed on 27 November 2020); IBakery website: <https://ibakery.tungwahcsd.org/#btnNewsModal/0> (accessed on 27 November 2020); ADAM website: http://adamartscreation.com/en/adam_intro (accessed on 27 November 2020); Bizlink Centre website: <https://www.bizlink.org.sg> (accessed on 27 November 2020); and Genashtim website: <https://genashtim.com> (accessed on 27 November 2020).

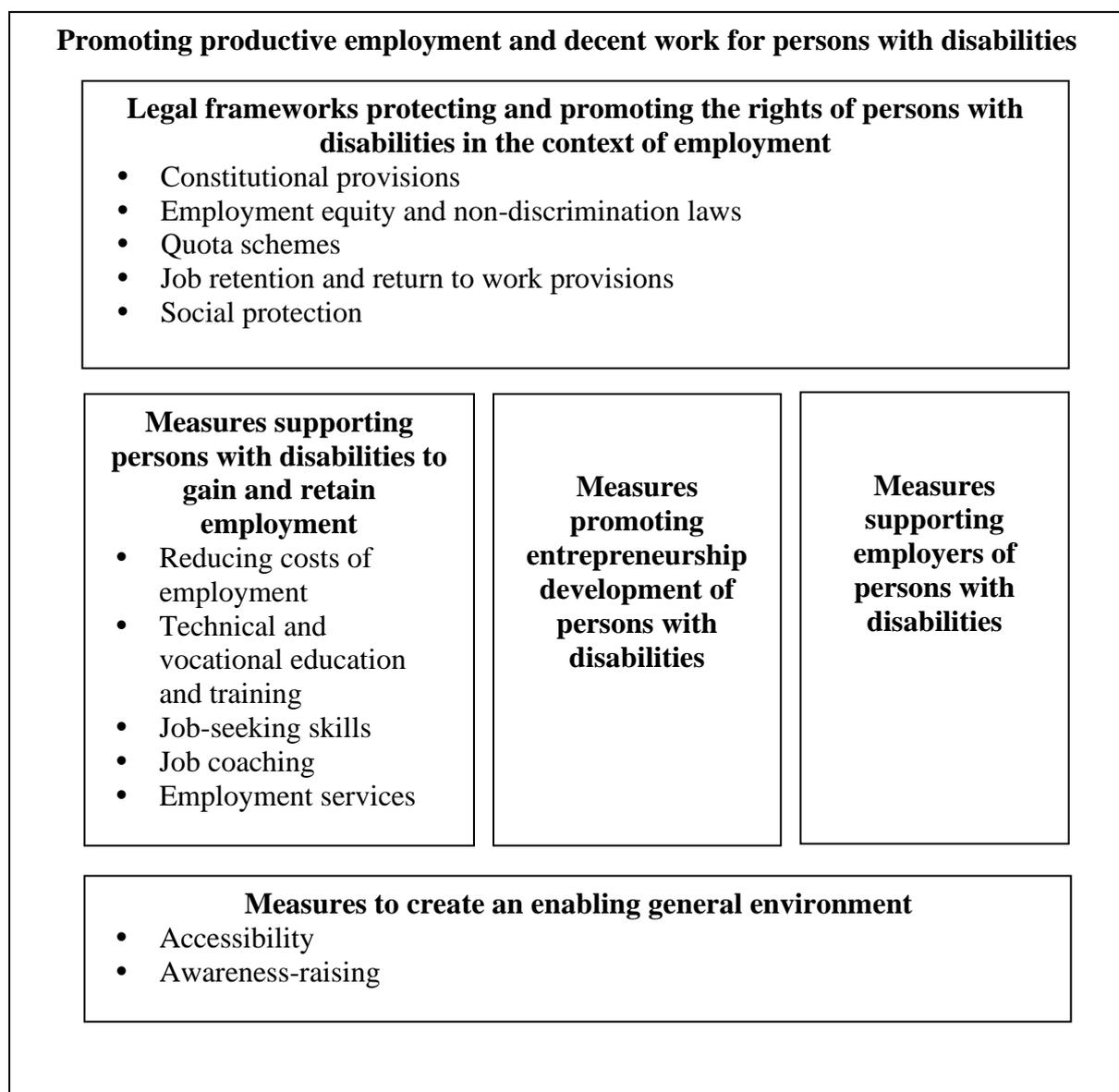


CHAPTER 4. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In tandem with shifts in the understanding of disability and approaches to work, coupled with the rise of the private sector and social economy in promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, governments in the Asia-Pacific region have been utilizing a variety of strategies that promote productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities in recent years.

These strategies are outlined in the following framework:

Figure 1. Strategies to promote productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities





4.1 Legal frameworks protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of employment

4.1.1 Constitutional provisions

Constitutions are the highest-level laws of each country. Where persons with disabilities are explicitly mentioned within the constitution, such provisions reflect the priority attached to disability rights in the country and set the framework for the development of laws to promote employment of persons with disabilities.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the commitment to disability rights is explicitly expressed in the constitutions of at least nine countries.⁵⁷ These constitutions include provisions that express a commitment to addressing the basic needs of persons with disabilities and to taking measures to ensure their social protection (Cambodia, China, Pakistan, Palau, the Republic of Korea; Viet Nam); explicitly prohibit the discrimination against citizens on the ground of disability (Armenia, Fiji, Nepal and Thailand); and mandate the establishment of an agency to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream society (Nepal and Philippines).

Box 11. Disability-related constitutional commitments in Fiji, Nepal and Viet Nam

In addition to prohibiting discrimination, the constitutions of Fiji and Nepal make further provisions to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

The 2013 Constitution of Fiji covers the right of persons with disabilities to the reasonable adaptation of buildings, infrastructure, vehicles, working arrangements, rules, practices or procedures, to enable their full participation in society and the effective realization of their rights.

The 2015 Constitution of Nepal provides for the establishment of a National Inclusion Commission with responsibility for promoting the status of persons with disabilities as well as other marginalized groups. It also guarantees access to education for persons with physical, visual and hearing disabilities, with provision for braille and sign language.

The 2013 Constitution of Viet Nam contains a commitment to providing favourable conditions for persons with disabilities to access vocational learning as well as developing a social security system to assist persons with disabilities in difficult circumstances.

Source: The Laws of Fiji, “Constitution of the Republic of Fiji”. Available at <https://www.laws.gov.fj/Home/information/constitutionoftherepublicoffiji> (accessed on 27 November 2020); Nepal Law Commission, “Constitution of Nepal”. Available at <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/category/documents/prevaling-law/constitution/constitution-of-nepal> (accessed on 27 November 2020); and CRPD/C/VNM/1.

4.1.2 Employment equity and non-discrimination laws

Persons with disabilities are beneficiaries of employment equity and non-discrimination laws in at least 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific, through disability-specific laws and/or laws concerning the population as a whole. Some of these laws focus on employment while others apply to all aspects of society.

⁵⁷ ILO, *Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for Persons with disabilities through Legislation: Guidelines* (Geneva, 2014).



Employment equity and non-discrimination laws make it unlawful for employers to discriminate on the basis of disability in recruitment, promotion, dismissal and other aspects of employment. Many of these laws require employers to provide reasonable accommodation involving adaptation of the job and work environment to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities, while noting that the accommodation should not involve an undue cost burden to employers. The denial of reasonable accommodation is considered in many laws to be a form of discrimination and therefore illegal. Some non-discrimination and employment equity laws require employers to develop and implement affirmative action plans to give effect to their legal obligations. In some cases, companies are required to be in conformity with employment equity and non-discrimination laws, to be eligible to provide goods or services to public entities.

Table 3. Non-discrimination laws– Asia and Pacific region⁵⁸

| Country | Non-discrimination law | Key provisions |
|------------|---|--|
| Australia | Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 | Makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person in employment and many other areas of public life, because of their disability. |
| Bangladesh | Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013 | Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in relation to employment, provided the person has the requisite qualifications. |
| China | Law on Promotion of Employment, 2007 Regulations on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, 2007 | Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in the recruitment process by employers. Prohibit discrimination against employees with disabilities in terms of promotion, performance evaluation and granting of professional qualifications, remuneration, social security and welfare benefits |
| Georgia | Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, 2014 | Prohibits discrimination, including on the ground of disability. |
| India | The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 | Discrimination on the ground of disability prohibited |
| Indonesia | Law on Persons with Disabilities (No. 8/2016), 2016 | Protects the rights of persons with disabilities to be free from discrimination |
| Japan | Persons with Disabilities Discrimination Elimination Act, 2013 Promotion of the Employment of Persons with Disabilities Law, 1960, amended 2005, 2008 and 2013 | Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment Obliges employers to provide reasonable accommodation. |

⁵⁸ The list is not intended to be exhaustive. Many of the examples have been drawn from the following source: ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Quota Schemes (Vol.2)* (Geneva, 2019); others are drawn from research on individual country laws.



| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Kazakhstan | Labour Code, 2015 | Discrimination on the ground of disability, among several grounds, in the sphere of labour is prohibited. (Art.6) |
| Mongolia | Law on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016 | Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (Art. 6). |
| Nepal | Constitution, 2015 Disabled Protection and Welfare Act, 1982 Disabled Protection and Welfare Regulations, 1994 | Prohibits discrimination of any kind on any basis which includes disability. Prohibits discrimination in any form in appointments, and promotions, to any governmental service or other public service, on the basis of disability |
| New Zealand | Bill of Rights Act 1990 Human Rights Act, 1993 | Includes an express prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities Protects the right of persons with disabilities to freedom from discrimination |
| Palau | Disabled Persons' Anti-Discrimination Act, 1992 | Prohibits discrimination in employment |
| Philippines | Magna Carta for Disabled Persons R.A. No. 7277, 1992 | Prohibits discrimination on the ground of disability in employment, education and other aspects of life. |
| Republic of Korea | Anti-Discrimination against and Remedies for Persons with Disabilities Act, 2008 | Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all aspects of life. |
| Viet Nam | Law on Persons with Disabilities (Nr. 51/2010/QH12), 2010 Labour Code, 2012 | Forbids stigmatization of persons with disabilities and discrimination against them Requires employers to consult with employees with disabilities on issues related to their rights and interests, and to provide persons with disabilities with equal pay for work of equal value, suitable working conditions, working tools and safety and health provisions |

Employment equity and non-discrimination laws are applied differently across the region, monitored and enforced either through the labour inspectorate, an administrative monitoring system, a national human rights institution, or the court system.⁵⁹

There are frequent calls for more rigorous implementation and enforcement of employment equity and non-discrimination laws, and for amendments to these laws to allow persons with disabilities to pursue cases of discrimination more easily. In some countries, it is up to an individual with a disability to lodge complaints about acts of discrimination experienced and to prove that discrimination occurred. Where the burden of proof lies with the plaintiff, there has been difficulty in accessing the necessary evidence to prove the case. In European Union countries, the burden of proof in employment discrimination cases has therefore shifted to the

⁵⁹ ILO, *Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities through Legislation: Guidelines* (Geneva, 2014).



employer, in line with an EU Directive of 2000⁶⁰: once the plaintiff has provided facts from which it may be presumed that discrimination has taken place, the employer has to prove that discrimination did not occur, drawing on information at his or her disposal. Such a shift has improved the effectiveness of anti-discrimination laws in practice.⁶¹ Many complaints are however resolved through conciliation rather than through courts.

Box 12. Complaint mechanisms in Australia, Indonesia, Philippines and Republic of Korea

In Australia, complaints about discrimination are made in the first instance to the Human Rights Commission. In the period 2018-2019, discrimination on the ground of disability comprised 44 per cent of all complaints received in that period, with discrimination in employment being a main concern. 69 per cent of the complaints were successfully resolved through mediation.

In Indonesia, a complaint mechanism has been established by the Ministry of Manpower to enable all workers, including those with disabilities, to report on disputes in the workplace, including disability-based discrimination, and to seek remedies and mediation. The law provides for sanctions on employers who fail to provide reasonable accommodation and accessible facilities: a written warning in the first instance, followed by termination of operational activities, suspension of the business permit and revocation of the business permit, in that order.

In the Philippines, the Secretary of Justice is responsible for monitoring compliance with the law, and is required to undertake periodic reviews to this end. Should discrimination be alleged, the courts are involved in judging the case, and if it is proven that discrimination has taken place, the employer may be fined or, in the case of repeat or multiple violations, subject to imprisonment of between two and six years.

In the Republic of Korea, a complainant may appeal to the National Human Rights Commission which reviews the case and makes recommendations to the Minister of Justice who makes a ruling. Should the act of discrimination be established, the offender will be required to discontinue the discrimination, restore the plaintiff(s) to his or her original position and take other measures to prevent future discrimination. Should the discrimination be deemed to be malicious, the offender may be sentenced to imprisonment of up to three years or the payment of a fine.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, “2018-19 complaint statistics”. Available at https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-10/AHRC_AR_2018-19_Stats_Tables_%28Final%29.pdf (accessed on 27 November 2020); CRPD/C/IDN/1; Philippines, *Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (R.A. No. 7277)*, Section 44 (Manila, 1992); and CRPD/C/KOR/1.

4.1.3 Quota schemes

Quota systems obliging companies to employ persons with disabilities as a specified percentage of their workforces are in place in 25 countries of Asia and the Pacific and being considered in one other country (See Table 4). Of these, only 10 schemes were in place prior to 2006; the majority of quota systems were introduced when countries in the region began applying the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion in employment policies following ratification of the CRPD.

The size of quota obligation in the region varies from 1 per cent to 5 per cent, with most requiring either 3 or 5 per cent of jobs in the company’s workforce to be filled by persons with

⁶⁰ European Union, Council Directive 2000/78/EC

⁶¹ ILO, *Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities through Legislation: Guidelines* (Geneva, 2014).



disabilities. Most apply to both public and private employers, usually above a specified minimum size of the workforce.⁶²

Where binding quotas are introduced as part of national legislation, there is sometimes a requirement for companies to pay a levy for each unfilled position. These payments usually contribute to a fund created to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and administered by a relevant government ministry. Such arrangements are in place in at least six schemes in the region, while in two cases, a warning or penalty is imposed (Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation). Where quota schemes are enforced, the labour inspectorate of ministry in charge of employment is usually responsible for checking that employers are in compliance with their obligations.

Table 4. Quota schemes in Asia and the Pacific⁶³

| Binding levy systems (8 countries) | Binding quota systems, no apparent sanction for non-compliance (15 countries) | Quota system introduced by Government Decision, decree (2 countries) | Introduction of quota system, currently under consideration (1 country) |
|---|---|---|--|
| Cambodia China Japan Pakistan Republic of Korea Russian Federation Turkey Uzbekistan | Afghanistan Armenia Azerbaijan India Indonesia Islamic Republic of Iran Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Mongolia Nepal Philippines Sri Lanka Tajikistan Thailand Turkmenistan | Bangladesh Malaysia | Myanmar |

Information on the effectiveness of quota schemes in improving employment opportunities is rarely publicly available for countries in Asia and the Pacific. In the absence of this information, it is difficult to gauge the direct impact of quotas on the employment rate of persons with disabilities.

Available evidence suggests that in many cases, employers meet their quota obligations in part rather than in full, opting to pay a contribution to the levy fund rather than recruit workers with

⁶² In some cases, quota requirements differ between public and private employers: in one instance, the quota only applies to the public sector and to private sector companies benefitting from public concessions (Iran); in others, obligations apply only to the public sector (Bangladesh, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka); in another, only private sector employers are subject to the requirement (Kazakhstan). Source: ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Quota Schemes (Vol.2)* (Geneva, 2019).

⁶³ ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities: Quota Schemes (Vol.2)* (Geneva, 2019).



disabilities.⁶⁴ In an attempt to strengthen employer involvement and support, additional ways to meet quota obligations have been introduced in some countries. In France, for example, as a way of partially meeting quota obligations, private companies may accept trainees with disabilities; outsource work to designated workshops or centres employing persons with disabilities; or reach company-wide agreements to promote recruitment, training, integration and retention of persons with disabilities.⁶⁵

Box 13. Implementing quota schemes in Japan

In Japan, 1.92 per cent of employees in the private and public sectors were reported to be persons with disabilities in 2016, slightly less than the 2 per cent statutory quota.

Technical guidance is provided to companies that have not achieved the minimum quota, including support in the development of employment plans and recommendations to assist with their implementation.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is responsible for the enforcement and regular review of the quota scheme, while the Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers collects and disburses the levy payments.

Source: ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Quota Schemes (Vol.1)* (Geneva, 2019).

Quotas have been subject to considerable debate and controversy. Proponents of quota systems are of the view that, without these obligations, employers would not give persons with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their work capacity. Critics consider these policy measures to be a form of discrimination, as the imposition of quotas implies that persons with disabilities cannot find jobs on their own merit. Countries where this critical view prevails usually promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities instead through employment equity and anti-discrimination laws as well as job retention and return-to-work measures, as is the case for all citizens.

Considering that quota systems are in widespread operation in Asia and the Pacific, they could be regarded – in the framework of employment equity/non-discrimination laws – as affirmative action measures that promote equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities in the workforce by setting employment targets. While the CRPD does not mention quotas, it does require States Parties to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, including affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures.

⁶⁴ ILO, *Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities: Promoting Rights in the Global Development Agenda* (Geneva 2015).

⁶⁵ ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities: Quota Schemes (Vol.1)* (Geneva, 2019).



Box 14. Steps to plan or revise a quota scheme

- To determine the level of the quota, gather information on: (1) number of persons with disabilities seeking employment; and (2) number of companies of different sizes in the labour market.
- To ensure commitment, organize consultations with key stakeholders, in particular employers' organizations, trade unions and organizations of persons with disabilities.
- Upon deciding to proceed with the design of a quota system, based on background information and consultation outcomes, develop a policy document in cooperation with the key stakeholders that sets out the legal status and main features of the scheme, including:
 - Whether it should apply to all employers;
 - Profile of beneficiaries, including whether priority should be given to certain job-seekers with disabilities (such as women with disabilities or persons with intellectual, psychosocial or multiple disabilities);
 - Sanctions for non-compliance, and
 - Alternative options for employers in addition to recruitment.
- If the scheme will involve a levy payment for non-compliance, the uses of the compensatory levy fund should be laid out in the policy document or in associated guidelines.
- Other measures to support implementation of the quota should be made available, such as financial incentives and advisory services to employers, as well as other means of encouraging employer involvement.
- Provisions should be made for monitoring the implementation of the scheme.

Source: ILO, *Promoting Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Quota Schemes (Vol.1)* (Geneva, 2019).

4.1.4 Job retention and return to work provisions

Most countries in Asia and the Pacific cater to employees who acquire a disability while in employment through worker compensation provisions, involving a payment in the settlement of damages caused by the injury or illness, often with the assumption that these workers will no longer return to work. At least eight countries in the region, however, combine such provisions with strategies regarding job retention and the return to work of the concerned employees. In some cases, employers are required to retain workers and employees who acquire a disability; be involved in their rehabilitation; and adapt their original jobs or find a new job if necessary; workers are encouraged to return to work and to retrain if they can no longer perform their previous jobs.

Table 5. Job retention and return-to-work laws

| Country | Law/Strategy | Main provisions |
|-----------|--|--|
| Australia | National Return to Work Strategy 2020-2030, 2019 | Aims to minimize the impact of work-related injuries and illness and enable a prompt return to work. ⁶⁶ |
| China | Labour Law, 1994 and the Law on | An employer cannot terminate an employment contract if the employee contracts an occupational disease or |

⁶⁶ Safe Work Australia, *National Return to Work Strategy 2020-2030* (Canberra, 2019).



| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| | Employment Contracts, 2007 | workplace injury during employment and is confirmed to have lost partially or completely the ability to work. ⁶⁷ |
| India | The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 | Public sector employers are prohibited from terminating or demoting employees who acquire a disability while in employment and are obliged to find another job for them, should they be unable to return to their previous position. ⁶⁸ |
| Malaysia | Return to Work Programme, initiated in 2007 | Offers comprehensive physical and vocational rehabilitation to employees who have acquired disabilities while in employment. ⁶⁹ |
| New Zealand | Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 2001 | Job retention provisions, including provisions for return to the same employment as before, if reasonably practicable and requirement for the employer to assist in vocational rehabilitation of the individual with acquired disability. ⁷⁰ |
| Philippines | Employee's Compensation Commission, established in 1974 | Assistance to workers with disabilities to be reintegrated into the economic mainstream, either with their former employer, in new jobs or by setting up small businesses through rehabilitation, vocational skills and entrepreneurial training, job placement, and assistance in setting up micro-enterprise or home-based business. ⁷¹ |
| Republic of Korea | Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act, 1963 | Provides for benefits such as financial support for returning to the original workplace, workplace adaptation training and rehabilitation consultation. ⁷² |
| Thailand | Social Security Act, 1990 Industrial Resource Center (IRC), established in 1985 | Provides for training and medical rehabilitation services including physical therapies, assistive technology devices and prostheses, counselling as well as training and support in entrepreneurship development. ⁷³ The IRC services include medical and vocational rehabilitation, adult education classes, psychosocial services and family counselling, with a view to assisting return to the previous job if possible. ⁷⁴ |

4.1.5 Social protection

Disability benefits provide core social protection support to persons with disabilities and their families, frequently forming their only source of income. In countries of Asia and the Pacific for which data is available, it is reported that coverage rates for disability benefits programmes are wide-ranging and can be as low as 28 per cent.⁷⁵

The eligibility criteria for disability benefits may sometimes end up serving as a disincentive to work, as persons with disabilities only become eligible for these benefits if they are certified

⁶⁷ See CRPD/C/CHN/1.

⁶⁸ India, *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016* (New Delhi, 2016).

⁶⁹ Zero Project, "Innovative policy 2013 on employment: Malaysia's returning to work programme". Available at <https://zeroproject.org/policy/malaysia/> (accessed on 30 November 2020).

⁷⁰ New Zealand Legislation, "Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation Act 2001", web page, available at <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/31.0/DLM99494.html> (accessed on 21 December 2020).

⁷¹ See CRPD/C/PHL/1.

⁷² See CRPD/C/KOR/1.

⁷³ See CRPD/C/THA/1.

⁷⁴ ESCAP, 2016, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵ ESCAP, 2018, *op. cit.*



as ‘incapable of work’. Persons with disabilities may thus find themselves in a ‘benefits trap’, where they become reluctant to seek employment for fear of losing their disability benefits and related entitlements including medical benefits and transportation allowances.

Governments can dismantle the benefits trap by permitting workers with disabilities to retain their disability benefits up to a certain threshold of income earned, and to become immediately eligible for the full benefit again, should they lose their employment. Provisions can also be made to provide top-ups to wages where the individual is in a low paid job.

Cost-of-disability allowances contributing towards defraying the additional costs of living with a disability, regardless of employment status, also offer important financial support for persons with disabilities seeking or in employment.

Box 15. Cost-of-disability allowances in Australia and New Zealand

In Australia, a Mobility Allowance is paid to persons with disabilities, aged 16 or over, who cannot use public transport without substantial assistance and are required to travel to and from their homes in order to undertake approved activities, which include work, study, training or job search. The individual recipient is free to decide how to use this allowance to meet their mobility needs.

In New Zealand, a weekly Disability Allowance is available to help cover extra costs regularly incurred due to a disability or illness, such as equipment, transport or medical assistance, with the amount paid depending on the additional costs of disability and income level of individual recipients.

Note: More information can be found on the websites of the Department of Social Services, Australian Government: <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-for-people-with-disability/mobility-allowance-mob> (accessed on 30 November 2020) and Work and Income, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Government: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/disability-allowance.html> (accessed on 30 November 2020).

4.2 Measures supporting persons with disabilities to gain and retain employment

4.2.1 Measures to reduce additional costs of employment to workers

In some countries, both financial and in-kind support is available to workers with disabilities in the form of wage top-ups, transport allowances and specialized equipment, among others. By reducing the associated costs of employment, these measures help reduce barriers to sustained employment.

Box 16. Financial support for employees with disabilities in Australia

In Australia, financial assistance is available from the Employment Assistance Fund to purchase various work-related modifications and services for persons with disabilities who are about to start a job or are currently working, as well as for those who are seeking employment. Eligible expenses include the cost of modifying the physical work environment or work vehicles, the purchase of information and communication devices as a range of services and awareness training.

Note: More information can be found on the Disability Employment Australia website: http://guide.disabilityemployment.org.au/resources/employer_incentives_and_financial_assistance (accessed on 30 November 2020).



4.2.2 Vocational training

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes enable persons with disabilities to obtain relevant skills and qualifications required for the labour market. Yet persons with disabilities often have limited access to these programmes; where they participate, the courses are often targeted at persons with disabilities only and not always linked to local, regional or national employment opportunities.⁷⁶

In Asia and the Pacific, the average participation rate of persons with disabilities in government-funded training stands at 3.4 per cent in countries for which data is available, although there is considerable variation across countries, from 0.1 per cent in Bhutan to 72.5 per cent in Thailand.⁷⁷

Vocational training centres catering solely to trainees with disabilities are widespread in the Asia-Pacific region.

Box 17. Specialized vocational training in Australia, Japan and Philippines

In Australia, Brite, a dedicated training and employment centre for persons with disabilities, is noteworthy in that it delivers nationally recognized training programmes for persons with disabilities in aged care, disability support, leisure and health, individual care, adult literacy and numeracy, as well as work education and transition education, to equip graduates with skills move to more open forms of employment if they wish. Brite also provides short courses in gardening, catering, literacy and numeracy as well as life skills.

In a rare trade union initiative in Asia and the Pacific, the Japanese Electrical, Electronic and Information Union runs three centres for people with intellectual disabilities in Yokohama South, Shounan and Kawasaki. It provides assessment, counselling and guidance; social skills training including job-seeking skills; workshop programmes to enable trainees to develop skills in a sheltered environment as similar as possible to regular company settings; internships, placements and follow-up services involving job-coaches; and technical advice to employers on job accommodations and workplace adjustments.

In the Philippines, the NOVA Foundation provides specialized training in information and communications technology to persons with disabilities which has resulted in more persons with disabilities being able to acquire jobs in the private and public sectors.

Note: See more information on the Brite website: <https://www.brite.org.au> (accessed on 30 November 2020); ILO, *Moving Forward: Towards Decent Work for People with Disabilities-Examples of Good Practices in Vocational Training and Employment from Asia and the Pacific* (Bangkok, 2003); and CRPD/C/PHL/1.

In recent years, some organizations of persons with disabilities have taken initiatives to become engaged in the development and promotion of vocational training opportunities, in addition to non-governmental organizations that have been active in the provision of training for many years.

⁷⁶ ILO, “Making TVET and Skills Systems Inclusive of Persons with Disabilities”, Policy Brief (Geneva, 2017).

⁷⁷ ESCAP, 2018, op. cit. It is not clear from the available information whether these vocational training programmes were disability-specific or mainstream programmes.



Box 18. Involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in vocational training in Indonesia and Lao PDR

In Indonesia, Puspadi Bali, a training service operated in large part by persons with disabilities, provides personal and professional development courses to job-seekers with disabilities. On completion of training, graduates are offered work experience stints in the form of three-month internships with collaborating companies, supported by access to accommodation, transport and on the job training.

In Lao PDR, the Lao Disabled People's Association has implemented projects with international funding including a project providing vocational training and training in the management and administration of small businesses for persons with disabilities.

In Myanmar, the Korea Disabled People's International Development Institute provides vocational training and internship opportunities for persons with disabilities in the coffee and bakery industry, in the framework of an international technical cooperation project.

Note: See more information on the Puspadi Bali website: <http://www.puspadibali.org/> (accessed on 30 November 2020); CRPD/C/LAO/1; and Korea Disabled People's Development Institute, "Make the Right Real Fund: Its current status & way forward", presentation. Available at https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Agenda%20Item%204_ROK%27s%20Intervention.pdf (accessed on 30 November 2020).

Countries in Asia and the Pacific, including the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam, have started to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream vocational training centres.

Box 19. Features of disability-inclusive TVET in Bangladesh

Bangladesh saw a sixfold increase in the enrolment of trainees with disabilities within three years, following a reform that comprehensively mainstreamed disability inclusion into its TVET system.

1) Disability-inclusive policymaking

Following the ratification of the CRPD in 2007 and its Optional Protocol in 2008, Bangladesh issued its National Skills Development Policy in 2011, followed by the National Strategy for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Skills Development in 2016. It also enacted its Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act in 2013 that includes a call for action to promote disability-inclusive education and training and to educate teachers and employers on disability issues.

The National Skills Development Policy makes recommendations on disability inclusion, with one objective being to improve access to skills development for various groups of citizens including persons with disabilities. In particular, the Policy established a five per cent enrolment quota for persons with disabilities across all skills development programmes, and mandated the provision of reasonable accommodation and the accessibility of TVET institution buildings.

To support policy implementation, the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), under the Ministry of Education, developed guidance and resources on disability inclusion for TVET institutes run by the Department of Technical Education. DTE also established a Disability Inclusion Advisory Group to guide policy formulation on disability budgeting and the implementation of disability inclusion measures in TVET institutions. The Advisory Group comprises members from DTE, the Bangladesh Technical Education Board, organizations specialized in training for persons with disabilities and various ministries.



Box 19. Features of disability-inclusive TVET in Bangladesh (continued)

2) Institutional capacity-building

DTE appoints a senior official in TVET institutions as a focal point to ensure disability inclusion in annual work plans, procurement plans, budgets, performance appraisals and data monitoring. Meanwhile, disability inclusion guidelines for TVET managers and instructors have been developed to enhance the skills and capacity of staff in the TVET system. Training of trainers and refresher courses on disability inclusion are arranged for vice-principals and chief instructors so that they can further train other instructors.

3) Partnership and network-building

DTE issued an office order to encourage TVET institutions to establish partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations working on disability issues. Several MoUs have been signed to assist the implementation of the five per cent enrolment target for persons with disabilities.

4) Monitoring

DTE has created a database of students with disabilities in TVET institutions to monitor enrolment, drop out and pass out rates. The data are disaggregated by 12 different types of disabilities, supporting management decision-making and relevant policymaking.

Sources: ILO, “Disability inclusion in the Bangladesh skills system”, Brochure (Dhaka, 2017); ILO, “Good practices for inclusion of persons with disabilities: a replication guide for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions”, Brochure (Dhaka, 2017); ILO, “Major achievements of the Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) Project”, Brochure (Dhaka, 2017); and ILO, *Including Persons with Disabilities in Technical and Vocational Education and Training: A Guide for Administrative and Instructors to Disability Inclusion* (Dhaka, 2016).

Box 20. Financial support for disability-inclusive mainstream TVET schools in Viet Nam

In Vietnam, vocational training is available for persons with disabilities in 200 mainstream training centres, in addition to 55 specialized vocational training centres.

Disability-inclusive mainstream centres are entitled to financial support to invest in facilities and training equipment; and are leased land to set up premises at locations suitable for persons with disabilities. Other measures to support the participation of persons with disabilities in vocational training include meal and travel allowances, available to trainees with disabilities in both rural and urban areas

Source: CRPD/C/VNM/1.

It should be noted that there is limited information on vocational training provision in the region, in terms of the profile of service providers; the scope, nature and quality of course offerings; and the impact of such training on employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. It would be timely to conduct a comprehensive review of the landscape of vocational training provision in the Asia-Pacific region to inform further development of such training by governments, organizations of persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders.

4.2.3 Job-seeking skills

In addition to technical skills, skills in seeking employment, including the ability to write application letters, complete application forms, and perform well in job interviews, are crucial to gaining employment. Some initiatives and programmes in the region have therefore



strengthened the provision of training in job-seeking skills, in addition to vocational skills, in recent years.

Box 21. Job-seeking skills training in China and Indonesia

In China, the project ‘Path to Success: Creating a strong eco-system for persons with disabilities in the labour market’, launched and funded by Standard Chartered Bank, aims to improve the vocational skills and employability of persons with disabilities aged between 18 and 30, with a particular focus on persons with visual disabilities. The project has organized 40 online courses through the WeChat platform, dealing with job preparation and soft skills such as interview preparation, résumé writing and career development; around 1,800 persons with disabilities have participated in the first six-month period after they became available. During the COVID-19 lockdown, this initiative has been expanded to a coalition of disability organizations and NGOs to support persons with disabilities, many of whom are facing economic challenges or have lost their jobs in the crisis. In addition, a training camp was organized in three cities for around 200 students, volunteers and staff from other companies. To date, the project has resulted in over 50 young persons with disabilities gaining employment.

In Indonesia, alongside to vocational training (see box 18), Puspadi Bali offers soft skills training, including communication skills, personal effectiveness, creative problem solving, strategic thinking, negotiation, team building, and personal care.

Note: More information can be found on the Easy Inclusion website: <http://www.easyinclusion.cn/> (accessed on 30 November 2020) and Puspadi Bali website: <http://www.puspadibali.org> (accessed on 30 November 2020).

4.2.4 Job coaching

Job-coaching is widely used in on-the-job vocational training of persons with disabilities. It involves a ‘place and train’ approach linked to supported employment, in contrast to the ‘train and place’ approach traditionally used by vocational training centres involving placement of a person to a job upon completion of training. Initially introduced by training centres and non-governmental organizations as an effective way of developing the skills of persons with intellectual disabilities using real work in practical situations to the extent possible,⁷⁸ job coaching is now widely accepted as an approach to provide employment and employability support to persons with diverse disabilities and supported by public funds.

Job coaching offers several advantages for the worker with a disability, including increased relevance of training to employer needs as well as gaining experience in an actual mainstream work environment with current and up-to-date working conditions, work processes and machinery. For the employer, the job coaching process also offers the opportunity to observe the work capacity of the trainees with disabilities in the process, without having to make an advance commitment to recruit.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ ILO, “Promoting training and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities: International experience”, Employment Working Paper No. 103 (Geneva, 2011).

⁷⁹ ILO, “Supported employment and job coaching”, Information Sheet (internal document, unpublished).



Box 22. Process of job coaching

- When an individual placement is envisaged, the first step involves reaching agreement with the employer that the worker with a disability can be trained in the workplace. If there is no supervisor in the workplace who can provide the training, the job coach steps in.
- The job coach works alongside the worker with a disability, providing training on the job and continuing to assist with job tasks until the individual can perform the job independently.
- The job coach also helps prepare the workplace for greater disability inclusion, including conducting disability awareness sessions for co-workers and supervisors,
- Once the training programme is complete, the job coach may visit the workplace from time to time, to ensure that everything is going smoothly and to resolve any problems that emerge, for the worker or the employer.

Source: ILO, “Supported employment and job coaching”, Information Sheet (internal document, unpublished).

Box 23. Job coaching in China, Malaysia and Singapore

Job coaching is increasingly provided in countries of Asia and the Pacific:

In China, the occupation of ‘job coach for persons with disabilities’ was added to the official list of occupations under the category ‘career counsellor’, in a notice issued in March 2020.

The Job Coach Network Malaysia, set up in 2008, comprises trained job coaches from the Department of Social Welfare, non-governmental organizations and the private sector who share information and collaborate to promote sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Up to 2015, 1,868 job coaches were trained, and 485 persons with disabilities found employment with their support.

In Singapore, persons with disabilities can seek assistance from agencies that provide job placement and job support services, some of which receive public funding and other support to deliver job coaching services for persons with disabilities for up to a year. An example is Bizlink, which provides skills and on-the-job training services for disadvantaged groups, in particular persons with disabilities, with the objective of empowering participants to reach their full potential.

Note: More information can be found on the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People’s Republic of China website: www.mohrss.gov.cn/gkml/zcfg/gfxwj/202003/t20200302_361062.html (accessed on 30 November 2020); Job Coach Network Malaysia website: <http://www.jobcoachmalaysia.com/index.html> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Malaysia’s Future Challenges on Employment and Social Welfare Services for Disadvantaged People (Persons with Disabilities), presentation. Available at <http://wapes.org/en/system/files/malaysia.pdf> (accessed on 30 November 2020); and Bizlink website: <https://www.bizlink.org.sg> (accessed on 30 November 2020).

4.2.5 Employment services

Employment services are central to promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, serving as a key link between job-seekers and employers. In addition to having access to comprehensive information about job vacancies and advising on job opportunities, employment service staff support job-seekers with disabilities by facilitating vocational assessment, pre-placement guidance, skills training, on-the-job training or work trials. They also assist employers by providing information on legal requirements and financial subsidies, identifying jobs which could be performed by candidates with disabilities through job and work



analysis, arranging job-coaching, and referring suitable candidates for the jobs. They further provide useful follow-up support to workers with disabilities and employers when problems arise.

Box 24. Employment services in Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Viet Nam

In Hong Kong, China, the Selective Placement Division of the Department of Labour provides employment counselling and guidance, as well as the latest information on the labour market, to help persons with disabilities find open employment jobs that best suit their abilities and the needs of the market. It also offers job-matching and referral to employers.

In Indonesia, complementing the work of public employment services, Puspadi Bali provides job-placement services for job-seekers with disabilities in cooperation with DNetwork, a not-for-profit organization that helps persons with disabilities find employment. A website providing information on job offers for persons with disabilities has also been established in a collaborative initiative between local government and non-governmental organizations.

In the Republic of Korea, the Korean Employment Agency for Persons with Disabilities (KEAD) provides a range of employment-related services for persons with disabilities including training and placement as well as collaborating with employers to promote employment opportunities. KEAD also runs a website providing employment openings for persons with disabilities.

In Singapore, SG Enable, an agency dedicated to empowering persons with disabilities, takes a streamlined approach to promoting employment opportunities. It applies a one-stop shop approach in the provision of information, referral and other employment support services to persons with disabilities seeking employment. SG Enable first prepares persons with disabilities through internships, mentoring, curriculum vitae (CV) clinics and training courses. Potential candidates then explore career opportunities from inclusive employers via the Disability Employment Jobs Portal or a job coach. After getting employed, SG Enable offers support for workplace integration and encourages persons with disabilities to enhance their competencies and skillsets through SkillsFuture Study Awards.

In Viet Nam, vocational counselling, job counselling and job placement services are provided for people with disabilities in mainstream employment service centres, some of which also hold job fairs specifically for persons with disabilities.

Note: More information can be found on the website of the Labour Department, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: <https://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/service/content3.htm> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Puspadi Bali website: <http://www.puspadibali.org> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Kerjabilias (Jobs for Persons with Disabilities) website: <https://kerjabilias.com/> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Korean Employment Agency for Persons with Disabilities website: <https://www.kead.or.kr/english/home/main.do> (accessed on 30 November 2020); CRPD/C/SGP/1 and <https://employment.sgenable.sg/> (accessed on 27 November 2020); and CRPD/C/VNM/1.

4.3 Measures promoting entrepreneurship development of persons with disabilities

As persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific are predominantly employed in the informal economy, mainly in self-employment, their livelihoods could be improved through the provision of business development skills training;⁸⁰ micro-credit, loans, grants and equipment;

⁸⁰ While persons with disabilities may have attended vocational training and acquired specific technical skills, they are less likely to have acquired entrepreneurship skills and may need support in assessing market needs,



as well as support to access markets and networks. Programmes to support the entrepreneurship endeavours of persons with disabilities are in place in several countries in the region.

General policies and services to promote enterprise development can also potentially benefit entrepreneurs with disabilities, as long as they are disability-inclusive and accessible; for example, websites with information on these schemes and application platforms should be digitally accessible, while the built environment of relevant service centres should be physically barrier-free.

Box 25. Support for entrepreneurship development in Australia, Philippines and the Republic of Korea

In Australia, a pilot project “Ignite-Ability” is underway to support new enterprise formation by persons with disabilities, providing support to aspiring entrepreneurs with disabilities through capacity-building and networking in areas such as product development, marketing and financial management, and working with individuals to overcome barriers faced. Ignite-Ability builds on the findings of a study of the experiences of entrepreneurs with disabilities, which examined their needs in business development, dynamics of their business enterprises, economic and social contributions made and barriers faced.

Entrepreneurs reported that the lack of entrepreneurial education was at the root of start-up mistakes, costing money, time and energy; that they faced difficulties in networking to foster the exchange of information and ideas critical to business development; that compliance with regulation agencies was cumbersome and laborious, tending to stifle entrepreneurial activity; that attitudinal barriers sometimes constrained them from fostering relationships with consumers, contractors, funders, and other key individuals; and that the support provided at many levels by family and friendship networks was central to the development of their enterprises, particularly when micro-enterprise activities were involved. These findings could also contribute to the development of disability-inclusive entrepreneurship development programmes in countries of the Asia and Pacific region.

In the Philippines, different agencies provide a range of support services including providing policy support, strengthening technical and entrepreneurship skills, facilitating access to credit, arranging counselling, and promoting access to markets.

In the Republic of Korea, state and local governments are required by law to give preference of investments and loans to start-ups of persons with disabilities and enterprises supporting ventures of persons with disabilities. They are also encouraged to purchase goods produced by enterprises of persons with disabilities.

Source: Settlement Services International, “IgniteAbility small business start-ups”. Available at <https://www.ssi.org.au/services/ignite-ability-small-business-start-ups> (accessed on 30 November 2020); Simon Darcy and others, *Australia’s Disability Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Experiences of People with Disability with Microenterprises, Self-employment and Entrepreneurship* (Sydney, 2020); CRPD/C/PHL/1; and CRPD/C/KOR/1.

identifying marketable products or services, seeking funding, selecting raw materials and deciding on location. Source: FAO, *A Handbook for Training of Disabled on Rural Enterprise Development* (Bangkok, 2003).



4.4 Measures supporting employers of persons with disabilities

Financial support is provided for employers as incentives for the recruitment and retention of workers with disabilities. These take the form of tax exemptions, wage subsidies for a specified period and the coverage of insurance premium costs.

Where there is a requirement on employers to provide reasonable accommodation, measures may include loans and grants to defray additional costs, including grants for workplace adaptation, as well as the provision of specialized equipment.

Box 26. Financial support for employers in Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Viet Nam

In Hong Kong, China, the Social Welfare Department provides a once-off subsidy to employers for each employee with a disability to procure assistive devices and/or to adapt the workplace, including accessories or adaptive equipment for computer, optical magnifying device, hearing and assistive devices, Braille products, handrails among other costs.

In Indonesia, the Government provides awards and incentives for employers to foster their involvement and also seeks to encourage collaboration with employers who regard disability issues as part of their corporate social responsibility or diversity policies, in addition to meeting their legal obligations.

In Singapore, the Special Employment Credit scheme seeks to incentivize the employment of older persons and persons with disabilities through credits provided to employers in the form of wage subsidies, with over 8,000 employers benefiting from this scheme and hiring more than 8,300 persons with disabilities up to 2015.

In Viet Nam, many provinces support the employment of persons with disabilities through funding allocation from the Disability Employment Fund. Preferential loans are provided from the National Employment Fund for small and medium enterprises, cooperatives, cooperative groups and household businesses employing a large number of persons with disabilities

Note: See the website of the Social Welfare Department, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_vocational/id_sped/ (accessed on 30 November 2020); CRPD/C/IDN/1; CRPD/C/SGP/1; and CRPD/C/VNM/1.

Box 27. Encouraging the growth of disability-inclusive social enterprises in Hong Kong, China

In Hong Kong, China, the employment of persons with disabilities in social enterprises is incentivized through the government's provision of seed funding under the project "Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise". Initiated in 2001, it aims to enhance genuine employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in a carefully planned and sympathetic working environment. For businesses to be eligible for funding support, persons with disabilities must make up at least 50 per cent of their workforce.

Note: See the website of the Social Welfare Department, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_employment/id_enhancing/ (accessed on 30 November 2020).



Technical support is also provided to employers in the form of advisory services, including job analysis and job matching as well as the identification of modification requirements and advice on reasonable accommodation, technical aids and assistive devices.

Box 28. Advisory services in Australia and Singapore

In Australia, the Employment Assistance Fund funds sign language interpretation, awareness training on disability, deafness and mental health services and specialist services for employees with specific learning disorders and mental health conditions, all of which benefit people with disabilities in seeking, gaining and retaining employment.

In Singapore, the Open Door programme offers a variety of job placement and support services to individuals with disabilities and their employers, including job re-design, workplace modifications, training, job placement and support services.

Note: See the website of the Department of Social Services, Australian Government: <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf> (accessed on 30 November 2020) and CRPD/C/SGP/1.

4.5 Measures to create an enabling general environment

4.5.1 Accessibility

Access to the built environment, public transportation, movement to and within workplaces, knowledge, information and communications technology are enablers for promoting employment and entrepreneurship opportunities among persons with disabilities.

Accessibility features strongly in both the CRPD and the Incheon Strategy, with a standalone article and goal on the theme respectively. The CRPD specifically requires States Parties to develop minimum accessibility standards and guidelines; ensure that facilities and services take into account the access requirements of persons with different types of disabilities; provide training on accessibility issues; promote access to information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet; and provide guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters as well as other forms of live assistance and intermediaries to facilitate access to buildings and other facilities open to the public. It also includes a general obligation on States Parties to promote the development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities requiring the minimum possible adaptation and the least cost to meet the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

Yet standards of accessibility vary across the region and do not always take into account the barriers faced by persons with different disabilities, with several countries in the region not having developed formal accessibility standards. Further, while some countries report high levels of accessibility of the built environment, this often applies primarily to wheelchair users and persons with other mobility impairments, and seldom reflect the experiences of persons with other types of disabilities.⁸¹

With the advent of the gig economy and rapid technological advancements, the accessibility of information and communications technology has become more important in the promotion of

⁸¹ ESCAP, 2018, op. cit.



employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. In an evaluation of digital accessibility rights in countries around the world, countries in the region put in a mixed performance.⁸² Urgent action is required by countries to strengthen actual implementation of policies and programmes on ICT accessibility, followed by the need to strengthen institutional capacity for more effective implementation.

4.5.2 Awareness-raising

A major barrier to the employment of persons with disabilities stems from mistaken assumptions and stereotypes about their working capacity on the part of employers and the public. These perceptions are sometimes internalized by persons with disabilities themselves, leading to poor self-image and low levels of self-confidence. There is thus an acute need to increase the awareness throughout society, including at the family level, of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities, to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, and to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices.

Examples of measures to be undertaken include public awareness campaigns to promote recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and the labour market. The media should also be mindful of portraying persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the CRPD, namely, as persons with long-term impairments who are hindered by various barriers from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.

It is noteworthy that the CRPD's provisions on awareness-raising in Article 8 are the only provisions in the Convention that come into immediate effect upon ratification. It is thus of concern that there is still a lack of public awareness-raising campaigns, a persistence of the medical approach to disability in measures introduced, as well as continuing negative attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices against persons with disabilities in society.⁸³

⁸² See Annex 4 for the Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation (DARE) Index 2020.

⁸³ Based on concluding observations by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the initial reports of States Parties in the Asia and Pacific Region. The States Parties reports can be found at UN OHCHR, "CRPD, State Parties Reports", UN Treaty Body Database. Available at <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&DocTypeID=29> (accessed on 4 September 2020).



CHAPTER 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of the approaches and strategies in Chapters 3 and 4 affirms that progress has been made by the Asia-Pacific region in shifting to a social and human-rights-based approach of disability and, accordingly, transitioning from the provision of sheltered employment to open employment. Efforts have also been made by governments, service providers, organizations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders to strengthen rights-based legal frameworks and develop supportive measures for aspiring and current employees, their employers, and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Yet large gaps in the employment status of persons with disabilities compared to the general population, coupled with challenges brought about by the rapidly changing world of work, reveal that more needs to be done to promote productive employment and decent work for persons with disabilities.

To this end, the following recommendations are proposed to equip Asia-Pacific governments:

Box 29. Engaging organizations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders in the implementation of policy recommendations

Persons with disabilities should be empowered to actively participate in the making of decisions concerning them, including those of policy design and implementation. In the context of employment, organizations of persons with disabilities should be encouraged to play an active role as employment-related advisers and service providers.

The involvement of other social partners in promoting the employability and employment of persons with disabilities should also be encouraged, including through mainstreaming disability concerns into the work of these organizations. These partners include trade unions, employer organizations and civil society organizations advocating for workers' rights.

Rights-based legislative frameworks

- Governments should ensure that national legal frameworks are harmonized with their international and regional commitments. While the social and human rights models of disability have come to predominate in international instruments, at the national level, rights-based approaches often operate alongside those based on a medical model of disability, thus leading to mixed messages being sent to individuals with disabilities and the population at large. A review of all relevant laws should be undertaken, with revisions undertaken to address any incompatibility.
- Sectoral laws and policies – particularly those related to education and TVET, labour and employment promotion, entrepreneurship development and the creation of an enabling and accessible general environment – should be reviewed and revised, where necessary, to effectively provide for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Employment equity and anti-discrimination laws should be developed in countries where these laws do not yet exist, making provision for reasonable accommodation. Where such laws are already in place, their implementation and enforcement should be strengthened, including a review of the complaints mechanisms and requirements regarding burden of proof in cases where discrimination is alleged to have taken place.



- The effectiveness of quota schemes as a form of affirmative action to promote the employment of persons with disabilities should be reviewed, with revisions made to promote the involvement of employers. Relevant measures should be designed to support employers in employing persons with disabilities and thus meeting their quota obligations (see recommendations on support for employers, below). Countries could also introduce alternative ways for employers to meet their quota obligations, such as accepting trainees with disabilities; outsourcing work to designated workshops or centres employing persons with disabilities; or reaching company-wide agreements to promote the recruitment, training, integration and retention of persons with disabilities.
- Where job retention and return-to-work measures are not in place, they should be introduced for employees and workers who acquire a disability while in employment, in addition to worker compensation provisions.
- Social protection measures should be reviewed and revised, where necessary, to ensure that the eligibility criteria for benefits and allowances do not create disincentives to employment. Accordingly, the approach to disability assessments also should be reviewed and revised, where required, to ensure that concepts such as incapacity and unemployability do not constitute central elements of the assessment. Disability benefit schemes could be structured such that workers with disabilities retain their disability benefits up to a certain threshold of income earned, and become immediately eligible for the full benefit again, should they become unemployed; wage top-ups for individuals with disabilities in low-paid jobs could also be provided. Additionally, governments could consider rolling out cost-of-disability allowances that help defray the additional costs of living with a disability, regardless of employment status.

Support for current and future employees with disabilities

- Regarding TVET, policy nudges, such as changes in funding criteria to TVET centres comprising only trainees with disabilities and to sheltered workshops, could help promote the transition of persons with disabilities to more mainstream forms of training and employment. A comprehensive review of the landscape of vocational training provision at the country level would also better inform the development of TVET for persons with disabilities; such a review should cover the profile of service providers, the scope, nature and quality of course offerings, and the impact of such training on employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.
- On job-coaching, action should be taken to significantly improve the access of persons with disabilities to on-the-job training with job coaches within the framework of supported employment.
- The one-stop shop approach to the provision of employment services for persons with diverse disabilities – including information on employment and training opportunities, referrals and placements, CV clinics and training on job-seeking skills – should be explored.

Support for entrepreneurship development

- Entrepreneurship development programmes and services catering to persons with disabilities should be strengthened. These include the provision of business development



skills training, micro-credit, loans, grants and equipment; as well as support to access markets and networks.

- Mainstream policies, programmes and services to promote entrepreneurship development in the general population should be disability-inclusive, fostering links with dedicated training centres for persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities to encourage applications. For example, websites with information on these schemes and application platforms should be digitally accessible, while the built environment of relevant service centres should be physically barrier-free.

Support for employers

- The involvement and buy-in of employers in promoting training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities should be strengthened through the provision of both financial and technical support. Such schemes should be calibrated to address the differing support needs of the different types of employers, ranging from private sector entities to cooperatives, and from multi-national business to small, medium and micro firms.
- Financial incentives, ranging from tax exemptions to wage subsidies for a specified period and the coverage of insurance premium costs, should be introduced to facilitate the hiring and retention of employees with disabilities. Where employers are legally required to provide reasonable accommodation, loans and grants to defray additional costs, including those of workplace adaptation, and the provision of specialized equipment could help employers fulfil their obligations more smoothly.
- Technical support should be provided to employers in the form of advisory services, including job analysis, matching and placement; on-demand support at the workplace through job coaches; and the identification of modification requirements and advice on reasonable accommodation, technical aids and assistive devices.

Creation of an enabling general environment

- Accessibility standards regulating the built environment and public transportation as well as knowledge, informational and communication should be reviewed and, where required, revised to align with international standards; where absent, they should be developed. Further, the implementation of accessibility laws and policies should be strengthened, including through improved cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination at all levels of government.
- Awareness-raising campaigns and sensitization training for policymakers, service providers and the public at large should be designed in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities and the media to tackle mistaken assumptions and stereotypes about the work capacity and employment rights of persons with disabilities.

Disability-disaggregated labour statistics

- Data on the employment status of persons with disabilities should be collected regularly, as part of overall labour market surveys or employment-related population censuses – and disaggregated by disability type, gender, age, employment type, level and duration, and



other criteria specific to the context of individual countries (such as ethnicity or migration status). To this end, the use of the Washington Group/International Labour Organization Labour Force Disability Module would help address these data needs.

- The way disability is defined and classified by type should be consistent throughout the administrative and survey systems of the governments, to allow disability-disaggregated data to be interoperable across sectoral management information systems, including those of labour, education and social protection.

Leveraging on change - Technological advancements

- The evolution of sectors, jobs and the nature of work brought about by technological change has increasing implications for the number and type of employment opportunities catering to persons with disabilities. Government support in the form of grants and joint projects with the private sector is therefore essential, to incentivize the development and application of disability-inclusive, accessible and cutting-edge technologies, including further exploration of the potential of robotics and the application of artificial intelligence in improving employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Measures are also required to ensure that all persons with disabilities, regardless of socioeconomic status as well as impairment type and level, can access and benefit from technological advances, in spite of the frequently prohibitive cost of ICT equipment and sophisticated assistive devices for persons with disabilities from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and/or locations with inaccessible communications infrastructure and built environments. Enabling persons with disabilities to access ICT infrastructure in central locations could be a way around this problem. Financial and in-kind support might also be necessary to allow persons with disabilities with financial difficulties to access the equipment and assistive devices necessary for gaining and retaining employment or setting up a business.
- Focused training in digital literacy for persons with different types of disabilities and different existing levels of education is indispensable. In this regard, training programmes should pay attention to supporting the adoption of technological innovations as they are introduced and to providing training in their use.
- To ensure that persons with disabilities are equipped with skills relevant to the job market, the emergence of new jobs and ways of working should also be taken into account when planning and updating vocational training curricula, career advisory programmes and job placement services for persons with disabilities.

Leveraging on change - Gig economy

- Policymakers should seek to protect workers with disabilities in the gig economy and ensure that employment opportunities yield decent work. Regulations and other measures should be considered to ensure that at least the minimum wage is paid; working hours are not excessive; working conditions are safe, hygienic and accessible; and that social protection is accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.



Leveraging on change - COVID-19

- The need to roll out emergency measures to protect the livelihoods of persons with disabilities as a result of the pandemic has provided the opportunity for governments to systematically review and, where required, reform policies and institutions to ensure that their employment promotion systems mainstream disability inclusion. To this end, governments should comprehensively study the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment of persons with disabilities, and thereafter develop holistic and integrative measures across sectors to empower persons with disabilities and systematically address barriers to their inclusion, beyond temporary measures aimed at mitigating short-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Annex 1. Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS)⁸⁴ and its application in Asia and the Pacific⁸⁵

The way in which disability is classified – and the corresponding methodology in which disability prevalence is captured – has evolved in tandem with changes in the understanding of disability. Specifically, disability classification has shifted from a medical model approach of focusing on medical impairments to an approach that examines functional limitations arising from impairments in different settings.

Disability classification focusing on functional limitations was first introduced in the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF). Based on the ICF framework, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics has since developed tools for governments to use in censuses and surveys to collect standardized and comparable disability data.

The fundamental Washington Group question set is its Short Set on Functioning, comprising six questions. These questions are designed to be culturally neutral; avoid reference to disability, which can result in underreporting; and are based on difficulties people may experience conducting familiar everyday activities.

Six WG-SS questions:

- [Do/Does] [you/he/she] have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
- [Do/Does] [you/he/she] have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid(s)?
- [Do/Does] [you/he/she] have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
- [Do/does] [you/he/she] have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
- [Do/does] [you/he/she] have difficulty with self-care, such as washing all over or dressing?
- Using [your/his/her] usual language, [do/does] [you/he/she] have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

Response categories to the above questions:

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- Cannot do at all

Use of WG-SS in Asia and the Pacific

With a view to gathering valid and reliable statistics on disability that are comparable worldwide, the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning has been used by over 80 countries and has been adopted as the way to disaggregate data for the Incheon Strategy in Asia and the Pacific.

⁸⁴ See more information on the Washington Group on Disability Statistics website: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/> (accessed on 9 December 2020).

⁸⁵ ESCAP, “From Indicators to Action: Operationalizing the Incheon Strategy Indicators to support disability-inclusive development”, Technical Guide (Bangkok, forthcoming).



The following member States have integrated Washington Group questions into population surveys:

- Samoa: 2016 Population and Housing Census. Disability Monograph. Available at https://www.sbs.gov.ws/digi/2018_Samoa_Disability_Monograph.pdf
- Kiribati: 2015 Population and Housing Census. Disability Monograph. Available at https://www.unicef.org/Kiribati_Disability_Report_E-Version.pdf
- Lao: 2015 Population and Housing Census. Disability Monograph. Available at https://lao.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PHC-ENG-FNAL-WEB_0.pdf
- Myanmar: 2014 Population and Housing Census. Disability Thematic Report. Available at https://myanmar.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/4K_Disability.pdf
- Nauru: 2011 Population and Housing Census. Disability Monograph. Available at <http://nauru.prism.spc.int/naurudocuments?view=download&format=raw&fileId=90>
- Timor-Leste: 2010 Population and Housing Census. Disability Monograph. Available at http://www.statistics.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Disability_Monograph.pdf
- Viet Nam: 2009 Population and Housing Census. Key Findings on People with Disabilities in Vietnam Booklet. Available at https://vietnam.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Disability_ENG.pdf

There are also plans for Kyrgyzstan and Sri Lanka to use the Washington Group questions in their upcoming censuses.



Annex 2. International Standards and Initiatives

International Instruments mentioning Persons with Disabilities

- ILO Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation No. 71, 1944
- ILO Social Security Convention, 1952
- European Social Charter, 1961
- ILO Human Resources Development Convention (No 142) and Recommendation 150, 1975
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981
- Additional Protocol on the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1988
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, World Conference on Human Rights, 1993
- Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, World Summit for Social Development, 1995
- Beijing Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995
- European Union initiatives
- Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, 2000
- EU Directive on Discrimination, 2000
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015

International Initiatives concerning persons with disabilities

- ILO Recommendation concerning Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled, 1955
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, 1971
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, 1975
- UN International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981
- The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, 1982
- U.N. Decade of Disabled Persons, 1983-92
- ILO Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) (No. 159) and Recommendations 168, 1983
- Council of Europe Coherent Policy for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, 1992
- U.N. Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons, 1993
- Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, 2003-2012 and 2013 -2022
- Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994
- Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, 1999
- African Decade of Disabled Persons, 1999-2009 and 2010-2019
- European Year of People with Disabilities, 2003 and Action Plan, 2004-2010
- Council of Europe–Malaga Declaration, 2003, and Disability Action Plan, 2006-2015
- Arab Decade, 2003–2012
- Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, 2006-2016
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006

Annex 3. COVID-19 related measures on employment and social protection concerning persons with disabilities in Asia-Pacific countries⁸⁶

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Afghanistan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free bread for people in need⁸⁷ • Assistance packages to provide essential items for poor people and people in need⁸⁸ |
| Armenia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance for families that receive family and social benefits⁸⁹ • Food and other protective measures for those who are more than 50 years old, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable people^{90,91} • Measures to ensure that there would be no delays in the payment of pensions and benefits⁹² • Extended deadline for fulfilling the obligations of pensions and benefits⁹³ |
| Australia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off payments for persons receiving disability allowance or carer allowance⁹⁴ |
| Azerbaijan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average monthly pensions increased in the first six months of 2020, with persons with disabilities as beneficiaries⁹⁵ • Food package deliveries for elderly citizens and persons with disabilities who live alone⁹⁶ • 50 per cent of the tuition fees paid for students from vulnerable families, including recipients of state social assistance and people whose parents have I or II degree disabilities⁹⁷ • Extension of the term of disability that expired on 1 March 2020, lasting until the end of the quarantine period⁹⁸ • Measures to increase access of persons with disabilities to the labour market and small business amid the pandemic, such as developing specialized profile tests, modular training programmes, and professional standards for persons with disabilities⁹⁹ |

⁸⁶ Different combinations of keywords such as “COVID-19”, “coronavirus”, “persons with disabilities”, “disability”, and “vulnerable groups” were used to find available online resources. Special attention was paid to the websites of national news agencies, government disability focal points and ministries in charge of health, human rights, or social protection. Additionally, the COVID-19 portals of IMF, ILO and KPMG were checked to complement the existing information. Due to the limited publicity of disability-related responses and the evolving situation of the pandemic, the measures cannot be considered as exhaustive, definitive or in any way binding and do not reflect the views or position of ESCAP. The hyperlinks of each measure are provided; however, we cannot guarantee the accuracy and quality of every resource.

⁸⁷ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#A>

⁸⁸ <https://president.gov.af/en/government-leadership-discusses-bread-distribution-initiative-additional-efforts-to-fight-covid-19/>

⁸⁹ <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/armenia-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>

⁹⁰ [http://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/Overview%20response 1.4.pdf](http://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/Overview%20response%201.4.pdf)

⁹¹ <https://www.redcross.am/en/news/coronavirus-arcs-activities.html>

⁹² <https://www.gov.am/ru/news/item/9676/>

⁹³ <https://www.gov.am/ru/news/item/9676/>

⁹⁴ [http://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/Overview%20response 1.4.pdf](http://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/Overview%20response%201.4.pdf)

⁹⁵ <https://www.azernews.az/news.php?news id=167417&cat=nation>

⁹⁶ <http://www.ombudsman.gov.az/en/view/news/1810/ombudsman-office-provided-food-aid-to-low-income-families>

⁹⁷ <https://www.azernews.az/news.php?news id=164092&cat=nation>

⁹⁸ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#AZ>

⁹⁹ <https://www.azernews.az/news.php?news id=168764&cat=nation>



| | |
|------------|---|
| Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance such as emergency grants for persons with disabilities¹⁰⁰ • Cash payments for insolvent persons with disabilities and students with disabilities¹⁰¹ |
| Cambodia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash transfers and provisions for persons with disabilities holding an IDPoor Card¹⁰² • Monthly cash transfer programme launched for poor and vulnerable households¹⁰³ • Aid programme for the Music Association of the Disabled, including cash and food items¹⁰⁴ |
| China | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash transfers for vulnerable groups¹⁰⁵ • Special allowance for persons with difficulties in Hubei Province¹⁰⁶ • In-kind support for persons with disabilities delivered by grassroots working groups in Hubei Province¹⁰⁷ • All allowances mandated to be paid on time, including the allowance for persons with severe disabilities and the nursing allowance, with the amount increased appropriately in areas where the epidemic situation is serious¹⁰⁸ • Job stabilization measures and recruitment subsidies to stabilize the employment of persons with disabilities¹⁰⁹ • Rent subsidies, living subsidies, and relief subsidies granted to help disability employment units such as blind massage workshops, auxiliary employment institutions, and individual businesses of persons with disabilities¹¹⁰ • Online employment service platform set up for persons with disabilities in Shenyang City¹¹¹ |
| Fiji | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relief packages for affected persons with disabilities¹¹² • Tax deduction for business employing persons with disabilities for three consecutive years increased¹¹³ |
| Georgia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash transfers for persons with disabilities¹¹⁴ • State transfers continued, such as state pensions, compensation, and social packages¹¹⁵ |

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.add.org.uk/covid-19-update-6>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.bssnews.net/?p=410106>

¹⁰² <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50757680/disabled-community-calls-for-more-help-during-covid-19/>

¹⁰³ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#C>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50729071/charity-program-benefits-people-with-disabilities/>

¹⁰⁵ http://www.cdpc.org.cn/english/MediaCenter/updates2/202004/t20200415_674503.shtml

¹⁰⁶ http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202004/01/content_WS5e847f4bc6d0c201c2cbff05.html

¹⁰⁷ http://www.cdpc.org.cn/english/MediaCenter/updates2/202003/t20200323_674299.shtml

¹⁰⁸ http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2020-03/07/content_5488352.htm

¹⁰⁹ http://www.cdpc.org.cn/english/MediaCenter/updates2/202003/t20200316_674242.shtml

¹¹⁰ http://www.cdpc.org.cn/english/MediaCenter/updates2/202003/t20200316_674242.shtml

¹¹¹ http://www.cdpc.org.cn/english/MediaCenter/updates2/202003/t20200323_674299.shtml

¹¹² <https://www.facebook.com/NCPDfiji/>

¹¹³ <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/Speeches/2020-COVID-19-BUDGET-RESPONSE-ADDRESS-BY-THE-ATTOR>

¹¹⁴ <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2020/1273>

¹¹⁵ <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2020/1273>



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| India | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free food rations provided under a social protection programme; wages under the employment guarantee scheme increased; direct cash transfers for poor pensioners, widows and persons with disabilities^{116,117} Payment of allowances to beneficiaries advanced in Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh¹¹⁸ Persons with disabilities engaged in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) work during the pandemic¹¹⁹ |
| Indonesia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash assistance for persons with disabilities¹²⁰ Basic food assistance for persons with disabilities¹²¹ |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash transfers for persons nursing spinal cord-injured patients, beneficiaries of family-centred nursing, and persons with severe disabilities^{122,123} |
| Japan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash handouts for every individual and affected firms through the Emergency Economic Package Against COVID-19¹²⁴ Temporary measures made for the certification of persons with disabilities¹²⁵ |
| Kazakhstan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash transfers for vulnerable households¹²⁶ Food and household sets for certain categories of the population, including persons with disabilities of 1-3 groups, children with disabilities, and persons engaged in caring for a child with a disability^{127,128} Utility costs reimbursed for seven categories of socially vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities of groups 1-3, families raising children with disabilities, and “invalids and participants of the Great Patriotic War, persons equated with disabled people and participants of the Great Patriotic War”¹²⁹ Payment of disability benefits ensured during the entire period of the emergency; disability benefits recalculated¹³⁰ Mechanism available to obtain disability status online¹³¹ |

¹¹⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#IN>

¹¹⁷ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nashik/nmc-deposits-rs-2000-to-bank-a/c-of-512-disabled-people/articleshow/75396235.cms>

¹¹⁸ http://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/Overview%20response_1.4.pdf

¹¹⁹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/record-engagement-of-disabled-persons-in-nrega/articleshow/77860761.cms>

¹²⁰ <https://kemsos.go.id/en/the-efforts-of-risk-reduction-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-against-persons-with-disabilities>

¹²¹ <https://www.kemsos.go.id/en/ensuring-that-covid-19-impact-management-reaches-vulnerable-groups>

¹²² <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#IR>

¹²³ <http://en.behzisti.ir/news/15817/Latest-measure-taken-by-SWO-to-prevent-Coronavirus>

¹²⁴ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#J>

¹²⁵ https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/0000121431_00097.html

¹²⁶ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#K>

¹²⁷ <https://primeminister.kz/en/news/press/pravitelstvom-rk-zaplanirovana-rabota-po-postepennomu-snizheniyu-nenftyanogo-deficita-a-smailov-1141040>

¹²⁸ <https://primeminister.kz/en/news/reviews/construction-support-for-smes-and-nvestment-how-east-kazakhstan-region-developed-during-the-pandemic>

¹²⁹ <https://primeminister.kz/en/news/press/390-mlrd-tenge-na-zhilishchnoe-stroitelstvo-kak-raspredeleny-sredstva-114436>

¹³⁰ <https://www.coronavirus2020.kz/kz/tzh-kezeninde-mugedekter-buryn-belgilengen-top-boyynsha-zhardemaky-alady-a3639045>

¹³¹ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#KZ>



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|-------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enbek State Programme for the Development of Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship for 2017-2021 continued during the state of emergency, with main beneficiaries as persons from large and low-income families, persons with disabilities, and young people¹³² |
| Kyrgyzstan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social payments for citizens from socially vulnerable groups¹³³ • Food security programme for vulnerable groups¹³⁴ • Period of payment of disability pensions extended due to the state of emergency; validity of disability-related certificates prolonged¹³⁵ |
| Malaysia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off financial aid for persons with disabilities and single mothers¹³⁶ • Financial assistance for Temporary Disability, Permanent Disability, and Dependent Benefits receivers¹³⁷ • Food, healthcare items, and shelter allocated to vulnerable groups, such as older persons and children in shelters, persons with disabilities, and homeless people¹³⁸ • Employee recruitment incentive programme available to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities, especially during the pandemic¹³⁹ |
| Maldives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal sanitation and essential items for persons with disabilities¹⁴⁰ |
| Mongolia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly financial assistance granted to children with disabilities who need permanent care until the end of this year¹⁴¹ • Social welfare pensions and allowances increased¹⁴² |
| Myanmar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash assistance for persons with disabilities¹⁴³ • In-kind food support for vulnerable households and at-risk populations; cash transfers for the most vulnerable and affected families¹⁴⁴ |
| Nepal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food aid with special priority given to expecting mothers, orphans, persons with disabilities and people with chronic illnesses¹⁴⁵ |
| New Zealand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits increased for the most vulnerable¹⁴⁶ |

¹³² <https://primeminister.kz/en/news/reviews/personnel-training-teaching-basics-of-entrepreneurship-expanding-microcrediting-in-rural-areas-how-enbek-state-program-implemented-in-kazakhstan>

¹³³ <https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2020/04/kyrgyzstan-government-and-institution-measures-in-response-to-covid.html>

¹³⁴ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#K>

¹³⁵ <https://24.kg/english/150625> Period of some social payments extended due to state of emergency/

¹³⁶ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/06/12/penjana-grant-for-nursery-operators-will-ensure-sop-compliance-says-group/1874961>

¹³⁷ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/06/11/melaka-socso-has-disbursed-rm10m-in-benefits-as-of-may/1874666>

¹³⁸ <https://www.bharian.com.my/rencana/komentar/2020/04/672084/pelaksanaan-pakej-prihatin-perlu-mesra-oku>

¹³⁹ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/06/12/penjana-grant-for-nursery-operators-will-ensure-sop-compliance-says-group/1874961>

¹⁴⁰ https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/maldives/maldives-sitrep-9-july2020.pdf?sfvrsn=6e6e278e_2

¹⁴¹ <https://montsame.mn/en/read/232972>

¹⁴² <https://www.zasag.mn/news/view/24959>

¹⁴³ <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/moswrr-discusses-providing-cash-assistance-for-persons-with-disabilities/#article-title>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.mopfi.gov.mm/my/blog/45/11310>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.nepalitimes.com/latest/nepal-covid-19-relief-package/>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/glance/covid-19-economic-package-glance-he-waka-eke-noa-we-are-all-working-together-april-2020>



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|--------------------------|--|
| Pakistan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme for vulnerable families affected by the COVID-19 crisis¹⁴⁷ • Other programmes for persons with disabilities including Ehsaas Roshan Programme (food rations) and Sehat Sahulat Programme (medical care)¹⁴⁸ |
| Philippines (the) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash assistance for persons with disabilities under the Social Amelioration Programme^{149,150,151,152,153} • Food packs for persons with disabilities¹⁵⁴ • Rice subsidy for indigent families and individuals, including persons with disabilities in Dumaguete City¹⁵⁵ • City Care Bag for children with disabilities available in Valenzuela, in addition to the City Food Voucher and the Valenzuela City Market on Wheels Programme¹⁵⁶ • Livelihood package for female agrarian reform beneficiaries, with women with disabilities among primary targets¹⁵⁷ • Strengthened support on assistive devices provided through the Persons with Disability Welfare Program and Assistance for Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) at the Crisis Intervention Unit field offices¹⁵⁸ • Special lane for persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and older citizens to claim their financial aid in San Juan City¹⁵⁹ |
| Republic of Korea (the) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency disaster relief payments through a universal programme, with vulnerable families receiving the funds first¹⁶⁰ • Consumption coupons for low-income households, including families receiving disability pensions¹⁶¹ |
| Russian Federation (the) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenses of the visits by workers of the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography covered by the state¹⁶² • Disability status granting process simplified, enabling more citizens to receive disability pensions^{163,164} • Disability status automatically extended for six months for citizens whose next re-examination was from 1 March to 1 October 2020; individual rehabilitation programme extended for six months¹⁶⁵ |

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.zameen.com/blog/ehsaas-kafaalat-programme-pakistan.html>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/magazine/us/641844-digital-baithak-covid-19-and-persons-with-disabilitiesc>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1110210>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1098794>

¹⁵¹ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1099609>

¹⁵² <https://www.dswd.gov.ph/dswd-supports-dilgs-move-to-extend-aid-distribution/>

¹⁵³ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1112805>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1098474>

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1097918>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.valenzuela.gov.ph/article/news/13386>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1109353>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.dswd.gov.ph/dswd-provides-assistive-devices-to-persons-with-disability/>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1113738>

¹⁶⁰ http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200504000558&ACE_SEARCH=1

¹⁶¹ <http://ncov.mohw.go.kr/tcmBoardView.do?brdId=&brdGubun=&dataGubun=&ncvContSeq=353818&contSeq=353818&board id=140&gubun=BDJ>

¹⁶² <http://government.ru/en/news/39724/>

¹⁶³ <http://government.ru/en/news/39452/>

¹⁶⁴ <https://xn--80aesfpebagmfb1c0a.xn--p1ai/what-is-done/social-measures/pomosch lyudyam s invalidnostyu.html>

¹⁶⁵ <https://xn--80aesfpebagmfb1c0a.xn--p1ai/what-is-done/social-measures/pomosch lyudyam s invalidnostyu.html>



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|-------------|---|
| Samoa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery package available, with persons with disabilities suggested as part of the primary target group of economic support¹⁶⁶ |
| Singapore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and financial assistance for vulnerable groups extended through the Temporary Relief Fund, the COVID-19 Support Grant and ComCare assistance schemes¹⁶⁷ Job support initiatives moved online as far as possible during the pandemic, with accessibility considerations for persons with disabilities^{168,169} |
| Sri Lanka | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-off cash transfers for vulnerable groups, including older citizens, persons with disabilities, and farmers insured by the Farmers Insurance Scheme^{170,171} Weekly food rations for beneficiaries of Samurdhi (a poverty alleviation programme) and other vulnerable households¹⁷² Older citizens' allowance and disability allowance issued via Grama Niladharis (village officers)¹⁷³ |
| Tajikistan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support for socially disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities^{174,175} Food products provided by the Dushanbe Chairman for needy families, persons with disabilities, patients, orphans and the homeless¹⁷⁶ |
| Thailand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash payments for disability cardholders approved, in addition to the monthly allowance¹⁷⁷ Cash handout programme for extremely vulnerable groups^{178,179} Food for students who are learning remotely, including students with disabilities and underprivileged students¹⁸⁰ Measures to support workers with disabilities affected by the pandemic discussed with the Association of Persons with Disabilities¹⁸¹ |
| Timor-Leste | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic support initiatives for poor and vulnerable households, including a universal cash transfer system and emergency rice supply¹⁸² |

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#WS>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.msf.gov.sg/media-room/Pages/Ensuring-continued-social-assistance-and-essential-services-for-vulnerable-groups.aspx>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/govt-agencies-to-help-job-seekers-with-disabilities>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.tnp.sg/news/singapore/hiring-people-disabilities-taken-hit-during-pandemic>

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.pmdnews.lk/கொரோனா-அச்சுறுத்தலுக்கு/>

¹⁷¹ <https://www.news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/30133-7-4-million-to-receive-rs-5000-allowance-in-april-min-bandula-gunawardhena>

¹⁷² <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#LK>

¹⁷³ <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2020/03/23/presidents-secretary-gives-instructions-to-ensure-smooth-operations-of-state-apparatus-during-covid-19-operations/>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#T>

¹⁷⁵ <https://eng.khovar.tj/2020/06/president-emomali-rahmon-signs-executive-order-to-mitigate-effects-of-covid-19-on-economy/>

¹⁷⁶ <https://eng.khovar.tj/2020/05/dushanbe-chairman-provides-assistance-to-5-000-families-and-road-service-employees/>

¹⁷⁷ https://www.nationthailand.com/news/30386927?utm_source=category&utm_medium=internal_referral

¹⁷⁸ https://www.nationthailand.com/news/30388495?utm_source=category&utm_medium=internal_referral

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1924668/b39bn-for-handouts-gets-nod>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1928424/remote-learning-to-stay-if-virus-persists>

¹⁸¹ <https://www.mol.go.th/en/news/association-of-persons-with-disabilities-of-thailand-discusses-alleviation-measures-for-covid-19-impacted-people-with-permanent-secretary-of-labour/>

¹⁸² <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=24159&lang=en&lang=en>



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| Tonga | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash transfers for Elderly Benefit and Disability Benefit receivers, in addition to regular benefits¹⁸³ • Budget designated for the Safety and Protection Cluster, aiming to increase the welfare scheme for vulnerable people that include persons with disabilities¹⁸⁴ |
| Turkey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic needs such as bread for the most vulnerable in self-isolation^{185,186} • Social assistance for older persons and persons with disabilities available without seeking income criteria and severe disability status¹⁸⁷ • Monthly money transfers to the Social Benevolent and Solidarity Associations increased, aiming to protect the most disadvantaged groups¹⁸⁸ |
| Tuvalu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance for all citizens¹⁸⁹ |
| Uzbekistan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability-related benefits increased¹⁹⁰ • Charitable assistance, such as food, hygiene items and medicine, for families in need and persons with disabilities^{191,192} • Procedure to issue documents on temporary disability simplified¹⁹³ • New working arrangements available for employees, particularly pregnant women, older persons and persons with disabilities, to use distance-working methods with flexible working hours¹⁹⁴ |
| Viet Nam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support for the poor and other social beneficiaries in Hanoi¹⁹⁵ • Funds allocated by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to support social policy beneficiaries and low-income households¹⁹⁶ |
| Cook Islands (the) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off welfare payments for old age pensioners, caregivers and the infirm and destitute¹⁹⁷ |
| Guam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash aid for qualified families, with special arrangements for persons with permanent disabilities^{198,199} |
| Hong Kong, China | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra payments for recipients of the Disability Allowance^{200,201} |

¹⁸³ <https://nukualofatimes.tbu.to/2020/04/02/tonga-sets-60-million-paanga-to-counter-coronavirus-impact/>

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.gov.to/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-Pamphlet-Final1.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/vefa-social-support-groups-to-provide-citizens-with-bread-over-curfew-period/news>

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/even-well-off-people-are-calling-social-support-groups-155080>

¹⁸⁷ <http://unprpd.org/sites/default/files/Overview%20response%201.4.pdf>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#TR>

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/415493/tuvalu-govt-announces-covid-19-relief>

¹⁹⁰ <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=126605>

¹⁹¹ <http://uza.uz/en/society/center-for-coordinating-sponsorship-activities-provides-char-03-04-2020?sphraseid=21367212>

¹⁹² <http://uza.uz/en/business/president-shavkat-mirziyoyev-signs-another-decree-to-support-04-04-2020?sphraseid=21367212suppo>

¹⁹³ <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/454671594649637530/pdf/Social-Protection-and-Jobs-Responses-to-COVID-19-A-Real-Time-Review-of-Country-Measures.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#UZ>

¹⁹⁵ <http://english.molisa.gov.vn/Pages/News/Detail.aspx?tintucID=222477>

¹⁹⁶ <http://english.molisa.gov.vn/Pages/News/Detail.aspx?tintucID=222530>

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/country-responses/lang--en/index.htm#CK>

¹⁹⁸ https://www.postguam.com/news/local/senators-ok-10m-aid-health-insurance-choice/article_b41c32f4-aec2-11ea-8826-ab75027d9f71.html

¹⁹⁹ https://www.postguam.com/news/local/senators-pass-bills-on-500-aid-program/article_4f1f2306-ecf8-11ea-ac88-1738bcc1f422.html

²⁰⁰ <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/fund/CE-Measure-12-eng.pdf>

²⁰¹ https://www.news.gov.hk/eng/2020/06/20200609/20200609_143426_835.html



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|--------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowances for employers increased to support the employment of persons with disabilities^{202,203} • Relief measures for enterprises subsidized by the Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise Project²⁰⁴ • Time-limited positions created to promote the employment of persons with disabilities²⁰⁵ • More small businesses encouraged to be set up to create job opportunities for persons with disabilities²⁰⁶ • On-the-job training allowance increased for persons with disabilities and their employers²⁰⁷ |
| Macao, China | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra payout for families regularly receiving financial support; special subsidy granted to single parents, those suffering from chronic illnesses and persons with disabilities²⁰⁸ • Benefits payments continued via bank transfer, including disability pensions²⁰⁹ • Deadline for the provision of proof of life (required for the payment of disability pensions) extended to the end of March 2020²¹⁰ |

²⁰² <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202006/03/P2020060300293.htm>

²⁰³ https://www.news.gov.hk/eng/2020/03/20200326/20200326_123952_011.html

²⁰⁴ <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202006/03/P2020060300293.htm>

²⁰⁵ https://www.lwb.gov.hk/tc/blog/post_10052020.html

²⁰⁶ https://www.lwb.gov.hk/tc/blog/post_10052020.html

²⁰⁷ https://www.lwb.gov.hk/tc/blog/post_10052020.html

²⁰⁸ <https://macaunews.mo/ias-provides-care-for-individuals-families-during-covid-19/>

²⁰⁹ <https://www.gov.mo/en/news/122807/>

²¹⁰ <https://www.gov.mo/en/news/122807/>



Annex 4. Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation (DARE) Index ranking ESCAP members in Asia and the Pacific 2020²¹¹

The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict) assesses digital accessibility in countries around the world, aiming to provide support for advocates and policymakers in promoting ICT accessibility. It compiled a Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation (DARE) for over 130 countries, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities and accessibility experts.

The DARE Index score is based on country assessments in the following three areas: country commitments as reflected in laws, regulations or policy programmes; country capacity to implement referring to the existence of relevant agencies, the availability of digital/technology resources as well as the adherence to international ICT accessibility standards; and country actual implementation measured by outcomes achieved in 10 key areas of ICT accessibility such as web, mobile telephony, inclusive ICTs in education and employment, e-government and smart cities, as well as enabling assistive technologies and ICTs for independent living.

The latest DARE Index was released in 2020, with ESCAP member States and associate members in Asia and the Pacific achieving overall scores ranging from 2.5 to 80.

| ESCAP members | Overall DARE Index Score (score out of 100) | Country Commitments (score out of 25) | Country Capacity to Implement (score out of 25) | Country Actual Implementation (score out of 50) |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Australia | 80 | 25 | 25 | 30 |
| Russian Federation (the) | 61 | 20 | 15 | 26 |
| India | 53 | 25 | 15 | 13 |
| Philippines (the) | 53 | 20 | 15 | 18 |
| Tajikistan | 52.5 | 17.5 | 15 | 20 |
| China | 49.5 | 22.5 | 15 | 12 |
| Azerbaijan | 49 | 25 | 5 | 19 |
| Indonesia | 48 | 20 | 20 | 8 |
| Turkey | 47.5 | 17.5 | 15 | 15 |
| Malaysia | 46.5 | 22.5 | 10 | 14 |
| Pakistan | 46.5 | 22.5 | 10 | 14 |
| Kazakhstan | 43.5 | 12.5 | 5 | 26 |
| Myanmar | 42.5 | 17.5 | 10 | 15 |
| Mongolia | 42 | 20 | 10 | 12 |
| Fiji | 41.5 | 17.5 | 5 | 19 |
| New Zealand | 38 | 10 | 20 | 8 |
| Nepal | 37.5 | 17.5 | 10 | 10 |
| Sri Lanka | 37 | 20 | 10 | 7 |
| Japan | 36 | 10 | 10 | 16 |

²¹¹ More information can be found on the G3ict website: <https://g3ict.org/digital-accessibility-rights-evaluation-index/> (accessed on 27 November 2020).



| ESCAP members | Overall DARE Index Score (score out of 100) | Country Commitments (score out of 25) | Country Capacity to Implement (score out of 25) | Country Actual Implementation (score out of 50) |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Singapore | 33 | 5 | 15 | 13 |
| Thailand | 31 | 20 | 5 | 6 |
| Cambodia | 26.5 | 7.5 | 10 | 9 |
| Samoa | 26.5 | 12.5 | 10 | 4 |
| Bhutan | 26 | 5 | 10 | 11 |
| Georgia | 25.5 | 7.5 | 0 | 18 |
| Cook Islands (the) | 25 | 15 | 10 | 0 |
| Afghanistan | 23 | 15 | 5 | 3 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 23 | 10 | 5 | 8 |
| Bangladesh | 22.5 | 12.5 | 5 | 5 |
| Uzbekistan | 22 | 10 | 5 | 7 |
| Lao People's Democratic Republic (the) | 18.5 | 7.5 | 10 | 1 |
| Maldives | 15.5 | 7.5 | 5 | 3 |
| Turkmenistan | 15.5 | 12.5 | 0 | 3 |
| Armenia | 13.5 | 7.5 | 5 | 1 |
| Papua New Guinea | 9.5 | 2.5 | 5 | 2 |
| Tuvalu | 2.5 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 |