

Background

Social protection systems are a key mechanism for reducing poverty, promoting equality and enhancing income security. Nevertheless, workers in many forms of employment are not adequately covered or protected whether due to the narrow legal scope of coverage, biased eligibility criteria, the low monetary value of protection or employer non-compliance. The world of work is also evolving. Shaped by global trends such as digitalization, automation and globalization, the growing diversification of work arrangements has become a distinct feature of today’s labour markets in both developed and developing countries. While some of the more traditional forms of employment are disappearing or transforming in the wake of automation and digitalization, new forms of employment have been growing, with newly emerging occupations and sectors, such as the platform economy.

While some emerging work and employment arrangements may provide greater flexibility for workers and employers, they may lead to significant gaps in social protection coverage, at a time when demands on social protection systems are increasing. It is therefore necessary to strengthen and adapt social protection systems to enable them to continue to fulfil their key role in preventing and reducing poverty, enhancing income security and limiting inequality. Extending coverage to people in new forms of work is a significant priority for ASEAN member states. It is also key to the ultimate realization of the goal of universal coverage targeted by the Chinese 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) and in the government’s policy agenda of 2018-2020.

This workshop is part of a project funded by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) of China seeking to deepen understanding of the “Challenges and opportunities for the extension of social protection arising from the new forms of employment in ASEAN and China”. The project aims to contribute to the dialogue in ASEAN on challenges and opportunities to extend social protection arising from the new forms of employment, particularly those related with digital platforms. It will focus on the development of innovative approaches that countries in ASEAN + China can explore to close coverage and adequacy gaps, and ways to adapt social protection systems to changing

circumstances and demands through a combination of contributory and non-contributory mechanisms.

This element of the project involves two components. First, a set of background papers will analyse the characteristics of workers in new forms of employment and the capacity of existing social protection systems to cover these workers. A particular focus will be on workers on digital platforms, include app-based work provided locally (such as chauffeur services provided through Uber, Didi or Grab), and crowd-based work which is provided in a global setting. The papers will look at the potential impact of new forms of payment in the extension of social protection, namely the growing impact of cash-less payments. The papers will consist of country-focused report focusing on Indonesia and the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia, and China, and a consolidated report. Second, a two-day expert meeting will bring together experts on issues of new forms of work and social protection from ASEAN and China to identify recommendations for how social protection systems can adapt to new forms of work.

The research and expert meeting are being conducted in partnership between the ITCILO, MOHRSS of China, ILO and the ADB. The ADB’s contribution to funding participants to the workshop falls under the project “Enhancing ADB’s Support for Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals” (TA 9534).

The conclusions of this research and the high level expert meeting are expected to contribute to a larger ASEAN-ILO research project on “Expansion of Social Security to Workers in Informal Employment”, which intends to strength knowledge and build capacity of ASEAN constituents to take informed policy decisions for the extension of social security coverage, including to workers in informal employment. These objectives are in line with ASEAN’s strategies and vision that clearly see the extension of social protection as an indispensable element for increasing the standard of living and welfare of the population in ASEAN.

Objectives of the expert meeting

The objective of the meeting will be threefold:

- To review and validate the findings of the background reports prepared in advance of the meeting

al protection arising from the new forms of employment in ASEAN and China”

- To exchange experiences of innovative approaches to extend social protection to workers in new forms of work
- To develop a set of recommendations for extending social protection to new forms of employment

Invited participants

The expert meeting will bring together senior representatives from:

- Labour Ministries and Social Security institutions from selected ASEAN member states
- Selected business companies involved in new economic sectors from ASEAN and China;
- National employers’ and workers’ federations, and youth organisations
- Researchers from other countries involved regionally and/or globally in this particular topic
- ILO experts

The total number of participants is expected to be approximately 30.

Dates and location

The two-day workshop will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 13 – 14 December 2018.

The venue of the meeting will be the Courtyard by Marriott, Bangkok located at 155/1 Soi Mahadlekluang 1, Rajdamri Road, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330 Thailand.

Registration

Invited participants to the workshop should register at the following link to confirm their place:

<http://intranetp.itcilo.org/SHN/A3511910/en>

Social protection in ASEAN:

In October 2013, ASEAN Heads of State adopted a Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection as one of the key priority areas to achieve growth with equity. It specifically states:

“Extending coverage, availability, quality, equitability and sustainability of social protection should be gradually promoted to ensure optimal benefits to the beneficiaries”, ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, Brunei Darussalam, 9 October 2013.

The Declaration represents a clear commitment by ASEAN member States to extend and enhance social protection systems in the region, echoing the principles embedded in the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No.202). This commitment was carried forward by the ASEAN Labour Ministers. The Senior Labour Officials Meeting included a specific output aiming at creating more knowledge on possible strategies for extending social security in its 2016-2020 Work Programme:

“4.1.3. Regional studies to support capacities of AMS on situational analysis of AMS, viable models from within and outside ASEAN, as well as recommendations on:

[...]

b) Expanding coverage of social insurance to informal sector”

Furthermore, expansion of social protection, including to workers of the informal economy, has to be linked with recent commitments to accelerate transition from the informal to the formal economy at global and ASEAN level: in 2014, the ILO constituents adopted a Recommendation on the Transition from Informal to Formal Employments, and in 2016 the ASEAN Leaders endorsed a Declaration along these lines.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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