

# Trade unions' engagements on SDGs

Regional level

**Joy Hernandez**

Communications and Advocacy Officer  
ITUC-Asia Pacific

# Annual participation in the APSFD and the Peoples' Forum



The pandemic underscored the importance of the care economy, where women workers – both paid and unpaid – are overrepresented.

Post-COVID recovery measures must boost public investments in the care sector, promote the formalisation of care workers in the informal economy, and introduce family-friendly policies that enable women's labour force participation while reducing and redistributing unpaid care work.

**SHOYA YOSHIDA**  
General Secretary  
ITUC-Asia Pacific



\*Intervention during the Roundtable on SDG 5 at the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), 29 Mar 2022



# Annual participation in the APSFD and the Peoples' Forum

“

Instead of using the pandemic as an opportunity to institute **policy changes** that ensure workers' protection, it was rather abused to **revoke the rights** that have been previously enjoyed by workers. **Collective agreements** were not respected and neoliberal reforms that dismantled labour and environmental safeguards were introduced in the **guise** of pandemic **response**.

**JOY HERNANDEZ**

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION



with support from  
the European Union



[asiapacificrcem.org](http://asiapacificrcem.org)



CSOAsiaPacific







## PHILIPPINES

### A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2022

**WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY AND RÉSILIENCE**

#### COVID-19: WORKERS NEED DURABLE RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

The Philippines government responded to the Covid-19 pandemic with militarised lockdowns and continues to rank poorly in terms of Covid resilience. Financial assistance to workers was not inclusive, was insufficient to meet basic needs, and was only temporarily available. Wage subsidies were only provided to SMEs. There was a 30-day extension on mortgages, rents and loans. While some companies provided reduced working hours or paid sick leave from day one, Covid-19 was only classed as a compensable occupational disease after a trade union campaign. The government released issuances that effectively amended labour laws without any act of Congress and suspended its labour inspection function. There was no childcare support for frontline workers.

Trade unions continue to call for adequate financial assistance and income protection for all, and for a safe return to work. The government missed opportunities to strengthen the overwhelmed free public healthcare system and provide free mass testing; to provide emergency employment, including transport services; and to develop a just transition, including a more efficient transport system. Furthermore, the Anti-Terror Law passed hastily at the height of the pandemic has been used to justify arrests and extrajudicial killings of union leaders and labour activists.

#### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Philippine government has integrated the SDGs into the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022. SDG implementation is coordinated via a National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) secretariat and a Development Budget Coordination subcommittee. SDG implementation was discussed but once at the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC), the formal social dialogue mechanism at the national level, but there was no meeting involving social partners called for the purpose of VNR consultation.

Information on the SDGs is generally available. However, the government is not fully transparent, for example on extrajudicial killings or on freedom of association cases that are misleadingly classified as non-labour-related. There are mechanisms to gather input from national actors, both online and offline, including multi-stakeholder platforms that include civil society organisations. While social partners mostly submit individual contributions

to the government, these are not necessarily considered in SDG planning and implementation.

There are also formal institutions for social dialogue, although limited to the Department of Labour and Employment, including the Social Security System, the Home Mutual Development Fund and the national health insurance system PhilHealth. Despite the legal mandate to appoint workers at policy making boards of these institutions, workers are not genuinely represented in these and their inputs are hardly considered for decisions. Unions call for social dialogue to apply more widely to all labour-related issues across government and for workers to be treated on an equal footing with employers, as SDG implementation is not currently discussed in tripartite fora. Unions also warn that insufficient resources have been allocated for SDG implementation.

##### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

##### CONSULTATION



Information sessions but no interaction

##### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions from social partners to the national government





tudcn@ituc-csi.org • [www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation](http://www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation) • Twitter: @TUDCN\_rscd • Facebook: /TUDCN.RSCD • [www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda](http://www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda)





## PAKISTAN

### A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGS

#HLPF2022

**WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY AND RÉSILIENCE**

#### COVID-19: WORKERS NEED DURABLE RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

After the first wave, the federal and provincial governments of Pakistan coordinated their response to the Covid-19 pandemic via a national platform. Vaccination is now provided free of charge to all citizens. Individuals and households were supported with an emergency payment via the national social protection "Ehsaas" programme, which is being extended to low-income workers through the specific "Mazdoor Ka Ehsaas" initiative. Fuel, rent and loan payments were deferred for a limited period and paid sick leave was partially provided. Food parcels were distributed to the most marginalised. Financial support was also provided to businesses, including SMEs, to protect jobs and incomes. A targeted approach allowed certain sectors and areas to stay open.

Trade unions call on the Pakistani government to ensure social protection for all, including workers in informal and vulnerable employment. Women and Pakistani migrant workers abroad were particularly affected by the measures taken to contain the pandemic. Trade unions emphasise the importance of a multilateral approach to sustainable development, combining social, economic and environmental priorities. Investments in the care economy must be a priority for Pakistan's resilience strategy.

#### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Pakistan has integrated the SDGs into its national and provincial plans, including its "Vision 2025" growth strategy. The federal and provincial ministries of Planning, Development and Reform each have a unit dedicated to monitoring and coordinating SDG progress. However, resources allocated to the SDGs, particularly for education, health and social protection, are limited. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy already faced significant challenges in terms of foreign debt, a current account deficit and an energy crisis.

Trade unions call for full, structured participation in the development and monitoring of policies and programmes to realise the SDGs, given that they have not been involved in their implementation. There is scope for greater collaboration with social partners in the government's efforts towards sustainable recovery and resilience in key areas, including the green economy, environmental protection, creation of productive employment, decent work, skills development, and social protection for all.

##### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

##### CONSULTATION



Informal or ad hoc consultation

##### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



No involvement of social partners by national government on SDG plan





tudcn@ituc-csi.org • [www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation](http://www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation) • Twitter: @TUDCN\_rscd • Facebook: /TUDCN.RSCD • [www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda](http://www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda)

# Trade union country reports

ESCAP Social Outlook 2022 for Asia and the Pacific

# **A Future of Work We Want and the Workforce We Need**

**SHOYA YOSHIDA**  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
ITUC-ASIA PACIFIC



## **Expert Group Meeting on "Social Outlook in Asia and the Pacific: The Workforce We Need"**



# 7th Session of the Committee on Social Development



ITUC-AP intervened in Agenda Item 2: Strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific

# Case studies on SDGs for recovery and resilience

SDG DECADE OF ACTION  
TRADE UNION POLICY RESPONSES

## SDGs FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE CASE STUDIES: PAKISTAN AND NEPAL

# TIME FOR



THE CLOCK IS TICKING  
FOR A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT







## Dialogue with the UN Resident Coordinators