



TUDCN ASIA-PACIFIC MEETING

7-8 MARCH 2023, BANGKOK, THAILAND

REPORT

DAY 1: TRADE UNION ENGAGEMENT ON THE SDGS: STATE OF PLAY

TUESDAY 7 MARCH

Welcome and opening

The meeting was opened by Shoya Yoshida, General Secretary of ITUC-AP, who welcomed participants and introduced the challenges that the region is currently facing to achieve the SDGs. Giulia Massobrio, ITUC/TUDCN Coordinator, followed with opening remarks and presented the objectives of the meeting. Participants then presented themselves and their expectations for the meeting.

Session 1: State of Play of the SDGs in Asia-Pacific

Diego López, ITUC Development Cooperation Coordinator, introduced the discussions in session 1 with a [presentation](#) on how trade unions are monitoring progress on the SDGs through the trade union SDG country profiles and the SDG 8 Global Monitor. This was followed by a [presentation](#) from Arman Bidarbakhtnia, Head of the Statistical Data Management Unit in the Statistics Division of UN-ESCAP. Arman presented the Asia-Pacific SDG progress report and showed the challenges for the achievement of the SDGs in the region, highlighting concerns in terms of data.

Felix Weidenkaff, Expert on Youth Employment at the ILO Regional Office followed with a [presentation on the state of play on the SDGs in the region from a labour perspective](#), focusing on SDG indicators relating to the Decent Work Agenda and putting forward policy considerations for national action in terms of formalisation and decent work, social protection, productivity and skills development, labour rights and social dialogue, and gender equality.

Presentations were followed by questions and answers to dig deeper into the subject.

Session 2: Update on trade union engagement on SDGs at global and regional level

Giulia Massobrio opened this session with a [presentation](#) on the trade union messages on SDGs that the ITUC has been putting forwards with the United Nations, the main TUDCN advocacy tools and highlights of key wins in 2022, and the SDGs roadmap for 2023. Joy Hernández from ITUC-AP followed with an overview of the upcoming UN ESCAP Forum on Sustainable Development and the engagement of trade unions in this space (Joy's presentation available [here](#)).

Session 3: Reports from members on SDGs implementation at national level

The third session of the day consisted in group work to discuss progress on the SDGs at country level, including the key wins and main challenges that trade unions are facing.

Amongst the key wins participants highlighted progress in social protection, wages, just transition, organising informal workers, involvement in SDG processes with some governments and UN Country Offices, trade union shadow reports, and improving dialogue with tripartite partners. Amongst the challenges, participants highlighted the lack of response from governments and the UN in some countries, and the lack of consultation and social dialogue on development policies.

Session 4: Roadmap for trade union engagement with the UN Development System

The last session of the day started with a [presentation](#) from Diego López on the UN Reform and the different steps that trade unions need to take to engage in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF). This was followed by a [presentation](#) from Yuki Otsuji, Senior Specialist of ACTRAV, who showed how ACTRAV is assisting trade unions in the region and put forward concrete recommendations for improving engagement.

DAY 2: ADVANCING TRADE UNION ADVOCACY ON SDGS: NEXT STEPS

WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH

Session 1: The UN-ESCAP Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and opportunities for trade union engagement.

The second day of the meeting started with a [presentation](#) from Juliet Braslow, Sustainable Development Officer at UN-ESCAP, who presented the objectives of the Regional Forum on the SDGs, the timeline and the programme of the meeting, highlighting spaces for engagement for trade unions. After this, Joy Hernandez presented the People's Forum organised by the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM), which will take place just before the Forum and in which trade unions will also participate. Diego López then presented [key messages](#) from trade unions on the SDGs that will be reviewed this year (SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation; SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy; SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure; SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities; SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals).

Following the different presentations, participants went into working groups to discuss and sharpen the key messages on the SDGs under review.

Session 2: High Level Debate: Accelerating the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia-Pacific: the role of decent work and just transition

The high level debate was introduced by Shoya Yoshida who gave way to the interventions from the high level speakers.

Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, underscored the labour market challenges in the region since the start of the Covid-19 crisis. She then highlighted the importance of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, how the ILO is working on it as well as the role that trade unions play in the Accelerator.

David Mclachlan-Karr, Director of the UN Development Coordination Office for Asia-Pacific, gave examples of countries where the UN Country Teams are progressing on SDG 8 and working closely with trade unions, he focused on the cases of Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Lao, Papua New Guinea

and the Maldives. He also highlighted the entry points for trade unions to have a greater role in the UNSDCF.

Patrik Andersson, Chief of the Sustainable Socio-economic Transitions Section at UN- ESCAP, gave a [presentation](#) which outlined the challenges that workers in the region are facing in terms of informality, poverty and vulnerability, and showed how specific policies aimed at achieving universal social protection, obtaining universal health coverage, and investing in quality education and life-long learning while supporting the transition to decent jobs could improve this situation.

Interventions from the panellists were followed by a discussion in which participants shared their experiences in engaging with the UN Resident Coordinators and raised question on the Global Accelerator, and panellists highlighted specific areas for engagement and recommendations on how to enhance the role of trade unions.

Session 3: Investment policy and the SDGs: FFD strategy to implement SDG 8 and the role of trade unions

The first session of the afternoon was led by Hamza Ali Malik, Director of the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division at UN-ESCAP who presented [current challenges on financing for development in the region](#) and suggested immediate and long term policy options at the domestic and multilateral level to enhance fiscal space and improve debt sustainability, as well as policy considerations to strengthen sustainable finance.

Giulia Massobrio then presented the [ITUC policy priorities](#) and key financing strategies on development cooperation, tax justice, financing from multilateral banks, business accountability, debt and trade. She also introduced the key advocacy moments on financing for development.

Session 4: TUDCN workplan for 2023

The last session of the meeting consisted in the presentation of the [TUDCN/AP work plan for 2023](#) which was discussed and agreed with participants.

Conclusions



After a recap of the key discussions of the meeting, participants assessed positively the work done throughout the two days. The meeting was closed by Shoya Yoshida who called upon TUDCN-AP members to improve their engagement in all the processes that were discussed and to count on the ITUC and ITUC-AP for technical and political support in this respect.

All meeting documents are available in the [Meeting Webpage](#).

The article of the meeting is available [here](#).





Trade Union Development Cooperation Network – @TUDCN_RSCD 
www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation – TUDCN.RSCD 

This project is co-funded by the European Union

