



# TUDCN ASIA-PACIFIC MEETING

BANGKOK, 27-28 SEPTEMBER

## Meeting Report

Meeting documents and participant list available online: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/tudcn-asia-pacific-meeting-bangkok>

### Day 1

Suzuki Noriyuki, General Secretary of the ITUC Asia-Pacific, welcomed the participants to the meeting and outlined the importance of an active trade union engagement in the development policies. The opportunities presented by the overlap between the work of trade unions and the objectives of development cooperation were highlighted.

Participants were then invited to introduce themselves and their aims for the meeting. Three priorities emerged as most prominent:

1. Strengthening the approach of trade unions in development policy making processes.
2. Building a strategy for coordinating trade unions on development policies at the regional level.
3. Sharing experiences on, and learning about trade union engagement in development.

Following the welcome note, Paola Simonetti, Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) coordinator, introduced the TUDCN. Diego López González followed up by presenting TUDCN Global Strategy 2016-2020. His presentation focussed on the two key priorities of the TUDCN's work: to ensure inclusion of trade union views in the development-related policy, and to improve trade union development cooperation effectiveness (cooperation and coordination).

Haridasan Parayarikkal, Asia-Pacific regional coordinator for the TUDCN, then presented the work of the ITUC AP in the field. Barriers to the full participation of trade unions as development actors in their own right were presented. A breakdown of the achievements and priorities was given with a focus on ASEAN, SAARC, the Asian Development Bank, the Policy Forum on Development, the GPEDC and the Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development Goals.

After lunch, three presentations by Pong-Sul Ahn of the ILO, Kate Lappin of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and Julius Cainglet of the Federation of Free Workers of the Philippines lead into a panel discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the Agenda 2030. Pong-Sul Ahn highlighted the need to connect Decent Work Country Programmes, National Economic Development Plans and Agenda 2030. The ILO has put together a training manual and invites participants to register for a regional training event scheduled for 17-28 April 2017. Kate Lappin

highlighted the need for strong alliances in opposing barriers to achieving the SDGs which included free trade agreements (FTAs), land and resource grabbing, militarism and conflict, the consolidation of corporate power and patriarchy. The need to go beyond national boundaries in challenging these obstacles was emphasised. Julius Cainglet noted that while the SDGs set ambitious targets, they lack the necessary definition of structural and financial resources. Much of the work is still to do, trade unions must adopt a proactive approach to ensure that governments recognise and include them as development actors. The important role of the ILO in Agenda 2030 monitoring is an advantage and trade unions should also aim to mainstream its international standards.

A number of additional points were raised in the ensuing discussion. For a number of countries in the region, trade union engagement on SDGs was limited by a lack of social dialogue. The need to guarantee policy coherence between free trade agreements and SDGs was further noted and the fact that trade unions are excluded from trade negotiations, means that labour clauses are not shaped by the interests of workers. The focus of the conversation shifted to measuring progress: measures of inequality (GINI vs PALMA), the need for encouraging increased participation of women in trade unions (including among leadership) to help reduce gender inequalities, and measuring trade union rights implementation (including measuring unionist imprisonment and numbers of strikes) were all discussed.

The final task of the day was to prioritise the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets and was undertaken in three working groups. The following SDGs were identified by the participants: SDG1, SDG3, SDG4, SDG5, SDG6, SDG8, SDG10, SDG13 and SDG16.

## DAY 2

The day began with an introduction to the TUDCN Agenda 2030 Strategy, framed on three pillars: mobilisation and engagement, advocacy and implementation, monitoring and reporting.

The following session focussed on the Agenda 2030 monitoring framework. The major work of trade unions is on the national trade union reports on SDG implementation. The aim is to set up a parallel set of trade union indicators to measure SDG progress that focus on labour priorities. An important part of trade union work on these indicators is to ensure that they accurately measure progress in quality of life for workers. The TUDCN is engaged in advocating for this in the ongoing process of setting the final official indicators.

Participants then broke up into working groups to provide contributions on Agenda 2030 and inputs on the indicators to be used for the national Trade Union reports. Contributions and additions to the proposed Trade Union indicators were noted and concerned the following indicators: 1.3, 5.4, 5.5, 8.5, 8.6 - 8.8, 8.b, 10.7, 13.2 and 16.10. Details of the input are available in the presentations.

The afternoon began with a session on the network's communication. Internal and external communication priorities were detailed as well as the tools available to each. Discussion focussed on establishing the most appropriate internal communication tools. Challenges were identified such as



language barriers and ensuring permanence of participation. It was agreed that internal mailing lists on the AP development network would be set up, so that work can get started on the Agenda 2030 exploratory and rolling surveys.

The final session of the day was on the establishment of the role and composition of the TUDCN Steering Committee for the Asia-Pacific region. The role of the Steering Committee will be:

- to support the elaboration of the overall strategy and annual plans of the network;
- overseeing the work implementation following the plans endorsed by the regional network meetings;
- enhance the preparation of the regional network meetings (including chairing meetings);
- take up representation tasks in regional/international fora.

Participants were invited to nominate for a max of 2 countries by sub-region. The nominations are:

- Korea (FKTU) and Japan (Rengo)
- Fiji (FTUC)
- Philippines (FFW/Sentro/TUCP) and Indonesia (KSPI/KSBSI)
- India (HMS/INTUC), Nepal (Gefont/NTUC) and Bangladesh. For this sub region no consensus was reached on 2 countries.

Therefore, the final selection would be made by the ITUC AP Secretariat and TUDCN based on the following criteria:

- Active participation, interest and involvement demonstrated by national organisations in the work of the TUDCN.
- Allocate due time and work to the implementation of the tasks described above on a voluntary basis.

The final proposed composition will be submitted for endorsement by the ITUC AP General Council in December.

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