

HLPF 2021- THEMATIC SESSION “Messages from the regions”

STATEMENT FROM CHANDRA SEK HAR, INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Thank you Chair, I speak on behalf of **trade union movement of Asia-Pacific**.

- Our **region has lost an equivalent of 140 million full-time jobs**¹ due to the pandemic. Women, young people, older persons, migrants, and persons with disabilities are among the hardest hit.
- On top of jobs, we have also lost rights. According to Global Rights Index 2021 of the International Trade Union Confederation, Asia-Pacific is the **second worst region in the world for workers’ rights**.
- We believe that a **human-centred recovery** will only happen if we fix the broken labour market.
- **SDG 8 is particularly key**. Through its targets on decent work, social protection and environmental preservation, SDG 8 has a strong **leverage effect** on other goals.
- That is why we call for an **SDG 8 driven recovery and resilience**²:
 - 1) It means first of all **INVESTMENTS IN DECENT AND CLIMATE-FRIENDLY JOBS**, with a labour protection floor for all workers, and Just Transition measures negotiated with social partners.
 - 2) Secondly, scaling up **SOCIAL PROTECTION** to reach universal coverage, also by establishing a Social Protection Fund for the least wealthy countries.
 - 3) Thirdly, **EQUALITY**, by creating jobs for women and youth, investments in care, equal pay for work of equal value, minimum living wages, and eliminating gender-based violence in the world of work.
 - 4) Four, **FINANCING** these policies requires strengthened development cooperation, debt relief, and progressive taxation.
 - 5) Lastly, we need a new model of global **GOVERNANCE**: only an inclusive multilateral system - with social partners on board- will pave the way to global resilience. Right now, the moral imperative is to ensure universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.

These are the ingredients of what we call a “**NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT**” based on social dialogue. We stand ready to engage with all of you to make it happen.

Thank you,

¹ ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO brief on “COVID-19, labour market slack and what it means for recovery”, available [here](#).

² See ITUC-AP, [Statement to the 8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development Forum 2021](#), and [ITUC’s demands for the 2021 High Level Political Forum](#).