



**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMISSION FOR ASIA  
AND THE PACIFIC**

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

## Letter from the Executive Board

Distinguished Delegates,

With our utmost pleasure, we would like to welcome you to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

We are students pursuing computer science in International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad (IIIT, that's 3 I's) and in Sri Sivasubramaniya Nadar (SSN) respectively, who spent the majority of their school life in several speaking competitions.

This year, ESCAP is dealing with two significant problems: ***Extending social protection in Asia and the Pacific / Achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 12***. Social protection is very crucial in order to create an environment for sustainability. We hope that this topic can create a fruitful debate that each participant can join and enjoy. This study guide has been prepared to give background and general knowledge about the agenda item. Delegates are expected to fulfil their knowledge with their further researches.

We would like to thank CHSV for giving us a chance to serve as chairs for this committee.

If you have any questions regarding the committee and the topic, please do not hesitate to contact us via Instagram or Facebook.

Sincerely,

***Sumanth Balaji***

Chairperson

***Sujay Sathya***

Chairperson

## Introduction to UNESCAP

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), serves as the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. It has a geographical scope, which stretches from Turkey in the west to the Pacific island nation of Kiribati in the east, and from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south. The region includes 4.1 Billion people, in other words, two-thirds of the world's population. Therefore, it is made up of 53 Member states, and 9 Associate members. This makes ESCAP, the most inclusive of the United Nations five regional commissions, and the largest United Nations body serving in the Asia-Pacific region with over 600 staff.

ESCAP was established in 1947, in Bangkok, Thailand, with the aim of overcoming the region's greatest challenges. In order to achieve its goals, ESCAP provides result-oriented projects, technical assistance and capacity building to member states in the following areas which are;

-  Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development
-  Trade, Investment, and Innovation
-  Environment and Development
-  Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction
-  Social Development
-  Statistics
-  Sub-regional activities for development
-  Energy

ESCAP highlights the significance of regional cooperation and collective action, following the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, therefore it provides a forum for its member states. With this forum, ESCAP aims to assist countries to achieve shared economic growth and social equity. ESCAP also gives stronger participation to the smaller and often left out voices of the region. Its norm setting and policy work often results in a positive way and helps the countries to shape and implement a more balanced and inclusive development agenda for the region.

The ESCAP secretariat is composed of the Office of the Executive Secretary, nine substantive Divisions, the Division of Administration, and the Strategy and Programme Management Division. The programmes of the ESCAP are supported by the sub regional offices and the regional institutions.

## A brief history of the UNESCAP

In 1947, in order to assist post-war economic reconstruction, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) was established in Shanghai, China. Then, in January 1949 ESCAP moved its headquarters to Bangkok. Its name was changed in 1974, with the aim of reflecting both the economic and social aspects, and then to highlight the geographic location of its member countries. After its mandate broadened in 1977 by the General Assembly, it became the main UN economic and social development centres within the five different regions.

## Asia and the Pacific

With the population of 3.7 billion people, the region hosts more than half of the world population. It includes nearly 900 million of the world's poor, and 30% of the global land mass. The region's economic performance has dramatically decreased levels in poverty.

According to the Human Development Report of 2013, the annual growth in human development has been higher for Asia and the Pacific than any other region worldwide. The region mainly challenges climate change and women's empowerment. According to the Asia Pacific Disaster Report of 2010, the people who live in the region, compared to Africa and North America/Europe, are 4 and 25 times more vulnerable to natural disasters.

Even though the region has gone through economic progress and rapid development, gender inequality remains. Over recent decades, economic prosperity, educational attainments and access to healthcare have improved in the region, however, gender gaps have not closed. Women in the region face discrimination in jobs, disparities in power, voice and political representation. The region as a whole is ranked near the worst in the world, based on protecting women from violence. East Asia is ahead of South Asia in terms of gender equality, and in the Pacific, customary laws, practices and constitutional provisions represent a key factor behind the subordinate status of women.



# AGENDA

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 12

## What is Sustainable Development and what has the UN done to promote it?

Sustainable Development is the development of the world while not interfering with the future generations ability to do so. To prevent Development of the world which could seriously affect the world in the future the United Nations Development Program has set certain Sustainable Development Goals.

In Committee, we will be discussing one of them in detail-***Sustainable Development Goal 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production***, ie; producing the amount of resources that is required and consumption of it without wastage. A lot of developments have come to light recently after the United Nations declared this as one of its SDGs.

### Initiatives supporting SDG 12

Glass Half Full- An initiative by Anvita Nair convinced several restaurants to fill glasses with half their capacity in order to prevent wastage of water won hearts worldwide. More than One Lakh restaurants in India have adopted this policy and many more are doing so abroad. This initiative helps in both reducing water wastage and in reducing surface runoff.

### Resources, ecology and sustainable development

Achieving economic growth and sustainable development requires that we urgently reduce our ecological footprint by changing the way we produce and consume goods and resources. Agriculture is the biggest user of water worldwide, and irrigation now claims close to 70 % of all freshwater for human use.

The efficient management of our shared natural resources, and the way we dispose of toxic waste and pollutants, are important things to consider. Encouraging industries, businesses and consumers to recycle and reduce waste is equally important, as is supporting developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption.

A large share of the world population still consumes far too little to meet even their basic needs. Halving the per capita of global food waste at the retailer and consumer levels is also important for creating more efficient production and supply chains. This can help with food security and shift us towards a more resource efficient economy.

## Facts and figures

### 1.3 BILLION

1.3 billion tonnes of food are wasted every year, while almost 2 billion people go hungry or undernourished. If this food were utilized and a proper supply and demand chain were set up then poverty, hunger and food wastage could be solved.

### 22%

The food sector accounts for around 22 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions, largely from the conversion of forests into farmland. If the process of production could be improved then the pollution levels in today's world would reduce by almost a quarter.

### 2 BILLION

Globally, 2 billion people are overweight or obese. This could be the next big crisis and awareness needs to be spread about obesity and solutions need to be discovered.

### 3%

Only 3 percent of the world's water is fresh (drinkable), and humans are using it faster than nature can replenish it. Which is why water conservation is most necessary right now since, in the past droughts water was available at other sources. But at the current rate water will not be available at any sources in the upcoming years.

### US \$120 BILLION

If people everywhere switched to energy efficient lightbulbs, the world would save US \$120 billion annually.

### 20%

One-fifth of the world's final energy consumption in 2013 was from renewable sources.

## Goals in action

### VOICES WITH IDENTITY

Deyanira Mishari has an unusual job for an indigenous Peruvian woman—she’s Head of the San Matias-San Carlos Protection Forest.

### A FAIR DEAL FOR ECUADORIAN CACAO FARMERS

Farmers will benefit from an innovative programme to develop the world’s first blockchain shared-value chocolate.

### A TIDAL WAVE OF PLASTIC

13 million tonnes of plastic reach the ocean every year. See how the journey is marked by opportunities to change course.

### UNITED FOR A CLEAN CITY

Gregoria Cruz doesn't just recycle waste, she re-imagines it. She's on a mission to create a culture of recycling Peru's second city.

### SMALL ISLAND, BIG RESULTS

Partnerships between scientists, local authorities and the community are showing promising results in protecting the Sabana-Camagüey ecosystem.

### TOGETHER, PROTECTING THE BENGUELA MARINE ECOSYSTEM

Three countries band together to protect one of the world's richest ecosystems, under threat from fishing, mining and pollution.

### PEOPLE AND THE SEA: FINDING A SUSTAINABLE BALANCE

When Olive Ridley turtles hatch on the beach, Suhas Torasker carefully collects them and releases them into the sea. He’s part of group in his fishing.

## Fiscal Policy

Fiscal policy – the use of government spending and taxation – is a prominent policy tool for national development. Since the 1980s, its role somewhat diminished as laissez-faire, an approach of limited government, began to prevail. The unprecedented and concerted fiscal expansion in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 not only helped stabilize the world economy, but also vindicated the importance of a proactive fiscal policy. Nevertheless, it also resulted in higher public debt in developed countries and non-private corporate debt in China.

This illustrates the policy dilemma of how to balance proactive fiscal policy and debt sustainability – an issue which is highly relevant for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ESCAP estimates that Asia-Pacific developing countries need to invest, on average, an additional \$1.5 trillion per year, or 5 per cent of their combined GDP, in people, prosperity and the planet in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The pertinent questions in this vein are:

-  How can countries meet these investment needs while keeping debt at a manageable level? What is a “safe” level of debt?
-  What other factors determine a country’s fiscal space?
-  Do fiscal rules (aimed at containing pressures to overspend and thereby achieve debt sustainability) prevent the desirable use of fiscal space?

These were some of the issues we raised at a recent seminar jointly organized by ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank Institute, in which planning, finance and budget authorities from a dozen member States participated and shared their experiences. While the seminar did not provide all the answers, the two days’ discussions highlighted the need for an SDG-consistent fiscal responsibility framework which is tailored to country-specific priorities and circumstances. What do we mean by that?

First, while many countries have adopted numerous fiscal rules, in particular, budget balance and debt rules, the precise threshold should be better calibrated according to the country context, rather than replicate the 3% deficit and 60% debt thresholds of the EU’s Stability and Growth Pact. These thresholds themselves have weak theoretical foundations and their relevance came into question as they imposed fiscal austerity at a time when fiscal support was needed for recovery. Moreover, unlike developed countries, where the long-term size of the government is relatively stable, the demand for public goods and services is still increasing in developing countries.

Successful examples from the East Asian economies also suggest that the government must lead the economy's structural transformation through public investments. These are all critical to the achievement of the SDGs and need to be considered when developing fiscal rules and medium-term fiscal frameworks.

Second, while international organizations, including the UN, have raised alarm over rising public debt at the global level, this does not seem to apply to many countries in Asia-Pacific region. Based on IMF projections, general government debt in Asia-Pacific developing countries would remain stable at 42 per cent of GDP, on average, over the medium-term. Moreover, ESCAP analysis shows that even under an adverse shock of economic growth slowdown or higher interest rates, only about half of the countries in the region would face an upward pressure on debt levels. This suggests that the Asia-Pacific region may have more fiscal space to invest in the SDGs than commonly perceived.

Third, there are factors other than debt levels which determine a country's fiscal space, and they warrant greater attention. These include government revenues, expenditure efficiency and access to stable and affordable financing. While countries' ability to mobilize domestic resources seems to have improved in recent years, there is scope for further reforms. ESCAP analysis shows that better tax administration could increase tax-to-GDP levels by 5 to 8 per cent in Cambodia, Myanmar and Tajikistan. At the same time, ensuring that government expenditures translate into improved development outcomes could save significant resources; health and education sectors could use 30 per cent less resources, and potential savings are even higher for infrastructure investment. This illustrates that effective fiscal policy depends on good governance and strong institutions, as recognized in SDG 16 and in ESCAP analysis.

Finally, many developing countries in the region lack access to stable and affordable financing, with few borrowing options in domestic or international financial markets. What is worrying is that countries with the highest SDG investment needs seem to have the lowest access to long-term finance. This mismatch must be urgently addressed, including through regional financial cooperation, as some countries have surplus savings while others are starting from a low base but on an upward trajectory.

The takeaway is that there is a lot of conventional thinking in fiscal policy and public financial management. Rather than accepting them as a given, policymakers should assess their relevance and applicability to their own country context and ensure that well-intended rules do not unduly constrain the use of fiscal space for investing in people, prosperity and the planet.

# AGENDA

## EXTENDING SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

## What is social protection?

Before analysing the social protection in Asia and the Pacific, we should look into the details of what social protection means. Different organizations have explained the meaning of social protection and what it contains.

The World Food Programme (WFP) explains the social protection as; “Social protection refers to a broad set of arrangements and instruments designed to protect members of society from shocks and stresses over the lifecycle. It includes social assistance for the poor, social insurance for the vulnerable, labour market regulations and social justice for the marginalized. At a minimum, social protection systems include safety nets, labour market policies, insurance options (e.g. contributory pensions, health or crop insurance)”.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines the social protection as; “Social protection can take on a variety of forms, from cash transfers to school meals to public works. When targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable, these policies may be seen as social protection interventions in their own right. Policies promoting agricultural production, such as input subsidies, may also have a social protection function to the extent that they help reduce the vulnerability of smallholder farm households to price volatility.”

Social protection also defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as; “The term ‘social protection’ is used to mean protection provided by social security systems in the case of social risks and needs. Social protection is often interpreted as having a broader character than social security (including, in particular, the protection provided between members of the family or members of a local community). It is also used in some contexts with a narrower meaning than social security.”

Briefly, to understand the social protection, we can look at the definition brought by the UNESCAP, which is explained as; “Social protection is the policies and programmes that help women, men and children reach or maintain an adequate standard of living and good health throughout their life.” According to ESCAP, social protection should guarantee;

-  No one lives in poverty,
-  All children have access to nutrition and education,
-  All working-age adults get income support in case of sickness, unemployment, maternity, and disability,
-  All older persons receive a pension,
-  Everyone should have access to essential health care, including maternity care.

Furthermore, ESCAP discusses that social protection floors are important social security guarantees, and they ensure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. ESCAP also discusses two social protection floors which are essential for ESCAP's aim. They are listed as;

-  Access to essential health care for all,
-  Income security for children, working age and older persons.

ESCAP also focuses on the importance of social protection as a human right. Because, also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to social security for everyone, everywhere is guaranteed.

## Social assistance

Social assistance includes direct, regular and predictable cash or in-kind resources transfer to poor which is usually provided by the state and financed by national taxes. It serves as the primary type of social protection in most developing countries. Cash transfer serves as the direct, regular and predictable transfers. They aim to raise and smooth incomes to reduce poverty and vulnerability. Social pensions are the most common social protection tool which is a form of cash transfer targeted by age. In-kind transfers assist income generation. Public works programmes (PWPs or Public Employment Programmes) provide jobs on infrastructure projects for cash or food.

## Social insurance

They are the programmes which serve as the participants make consistent payments to an arrangement that will cover costs related to life-course events, for instance, maternity, unemployment or illness. They can be either provided through a bank or employer, or through a community-based pooled fund. It is the dominant social protection form in Asia and the Pacific.

## Labour market interventions

They are aimed to provide basic standards and rights for poor people who are able to work. However, labour market interventions cannot always reach all of the workers, because many poor people work within the informal sector. Furthermore, people with disabilities and are chronically ill, may not be able to work at all.

## Traditional or informal social protection

The problem with the formal social protection is that it does not offer complete coverage, and also, inevitably, exclude parts of the population. Traditional community – based forms work within the effort to fill those gaps. They are usually self-funded, but sometimes can be externally funded by state or donors.

## Social protection in Asia and the Pacific

Asia and the Pacific region have monumental challenges to social protection. Since it is considered as a human right, social protection should be upheld for everyone. But this is not the case in Asia and the Pacific region. 60% of all women, men, and children in the region do not have access to any form of social protection at all. Only 21 of 49 countries offer benefits to children and families. Only 1 out of 5 unemployed adults receive unemployment benefits. Only 3 out of 10 mothers with new-born receive maternity benefits. Less than 4 in 10 people have access to health care. Just over half of all older persons receive an old age pension. Less than half of all persons with disabilities are covered by a disability benefit. More than 1.2 billion people live in poverty, on less than \$3.10 a day in Asia and the Pacific.

## Social security reforms in Asia and the Pacific

Social security is crucial in order to reduce poverty and promote social and economic development. When we consider the number of people, Asians are largely challenging with social security systems. Because of sudden population aging in Asia, while it accounted for 28% of the world's population aged 60 and older in 1985, that percentage will more than double to 58% in 2050. The Asian and the Pacific regions contain the majority of the world's countries with provident funds, therefore provident funds are an essential feature of retirement income systems in the region. But the countries in the region, have been slow in developing social security programs.

For example, China does not have a social security program for workers, who do not work for the government or in government-owned enterprises.

In most Asian societies, the extended family is very important and plays a significant role by providing retirement income security, because most Asian elderly live with one or more of their children. Social security programs have slowed because of the traditional Confucian value which emphasizes family responsibility for the economic support of older persons. Traditionally felt that the role of the family would be undermined by the development of social security systems.

A national social security program was only introduced in South Korea in 1988, and in Thailand in 1998. Due to urbanization and declining fertility rates, families are becoming smaller and more geographically dispersed. Therefore, increasingly social security benefits supplement traditional family support. Rapid economic development, especially in East Asia, has drawn many more workers out of self-employment or casual employment and wage employment. Between 1980 and 1995-96, the number of employees as a percentage of the economically active population grew in Malaysia from 54% to 73%, in Pakistan from 22% to 33%, and in Thailand from 22% to 37%. This has led to an increasing need for social security pensions.

## Provident Funds and pensions

An important feature in the region is that a large number of countries have no mandatory social program. Most of these countries are former British colonies that provide provident funds. The provident funds are mandatory savings plans with individual accounts. Old-age benefits through provident funds are provided in Brunei, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. However, provident funds are criticized for doing a poor job of managing their investments. Provident funds in those countries operate at the national level under public administration. The only system that relies on decentralization and private management, is the system which started in 2000, in Hong Kong named Mandatory Provident Fund.

The centralized nature of most of the provident funds has caused some problems such as low return on investment of member balances, the restricted choice for the individual in terms of investment and use of savings, lack of contribution to financial market development, and inadequate benefits and benefit provision.

Pension reforms in Asia and the Pacific are done in three ways. In a first way, some national provident funds are being reformed to incorporate defined benefit plans. Secondly, some market-oriented countries with existing defined benefit social security programs are reforming those programs. And thirdly, some socialist countries are moving towards market economies, and by that change, they are affecting their provision of old-age benefits.

## Health care systems

In Asia and the Pacific region, the poor and other vulnerable groups have poor access to quality health services. Those who need the most face with high barriers in order to access health services. These barriers include multiple dimensions of social exclusion. The region has the highest levels of dependence on out-of-pocket expenditure to finance health services. This has resulted in reducing access to health services and led to poverty caused by health-care costs. The region also struggles with imbalances in health worker skills, quality, and density. Because the shortages are serious in South Asian countries, worker emigration causes difficulties for the Pacific island countries. Where the health needs are greatest, unfortunately, there are the problems with having fewer workers. The national medicines policies have not been achieved by many countries in the region. People face financial barriers to obtaining needed medicines, and the sale of drugs to provide income for health workers contributes to irrational drug use in many settings.

Including the private sector, it is an important function of government to ensure the quality and safety of all health services. Even though the Region suffers a disproportionate share of natural disasters, many countries still do not have a dedicated organizational unit for emergency preparedness and response. Ad hoc actions cannot be an effective substitute for adequate preparation. The range and seriousness of these key challenges mean that population health requires a greater commitment from most governments in the Region to put health higher on government agendas, as well as to build infrastructure with the capacity to deal with foreseeable problems.

Health insurance is an alternative approach to public finance of the treatment component of the public intervention. Instead of a comprehensive public insurance package, private involvement also should be encouraged. Countries in the region have not been in the private insurance markets yet. Almost all of the private health care expenses in the region is made out-of-pocket.

## Social protection and children

Social protection reaching each baby offers every child a chance to develop to his or her full potential, also better their participation in the new global economy. Financing child-sensitive social protection interventions promises particularly high returns in countries that embrace international collaboration for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through reinforcing positive feedback loops between sustainable economic and social development.

Cognitive capital includes the complete set of intellectual skills in early childhood that determines human capabilities. Also, it refers to cognitive skills, as well as non-cognitive, socioemotional and executive function skills which allow creativity, flexibility and ability to work collaboratively. Child-sensitive social protection is vital for development of a child's 'cognitive capital', therefore it lays the foundation for inclusive social development and equitable economic growth.

As a result of rapid economic growth, extreme poverty decreased in Asia and the Pacific over the past decades, and this is good news for children. The World Development Indicators database implies that in East Asia the population living in moderate poverty shrank to a third of its 1990 size, with 454 million people living on less than 3.10 dollars a day at purchasing power parity, while it actually increased from 791 to 899 million people in South Asia. In South Asia, 28% of babies have low birth weight, contributing to high levels of stunting by the age of 5 years. In East Asia, breastfeeding shows a serious deficit. In the Philippines or Indonesia, children born into the poorest 20% of households. In Asia and the Pacific, still, over 1.4 million children do not live to their fifth birthday. Also, around 80.000 women lose their lives related to maternity complications. Across the region, nearly 17 million children (1 out of 20), do not participate in primary education. Gender disparity and violence against women and remain a concern. Women in Asia and the Pacific are over-represented in the informal economy.

Finally, it is important to remember here that the region faces high exposure to weather-related risks, climate change, natural disasters as well as imbalances in the global economy. The effects of these shocks tend to hit the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable populations much harder than others. Adjustments should be done to better the economic and social life of the children, especially considering the first 1000 days of their life. Creating unified registers for social programmes and monitoring the inclusion of children in services and supports are essential. Countries in the region, should build child-sensitive social protection and prioritize domestic resource mobilization for early childhood investments and child-sensitive social protection.

## Social protection based on food

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), it was estimated for 2014-2016, 794.6 million people are undernourished in the world. The Asian and the Pacific regions have achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) hunger target of “halving, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger”. Out of 27 countries for which progress was monitored, 19 countries, or 70 percent, achieved the MDG hunger target, seven countries did not reach the target owing to slow progress, and one country witnessed an increase in the proportion of undernourished.

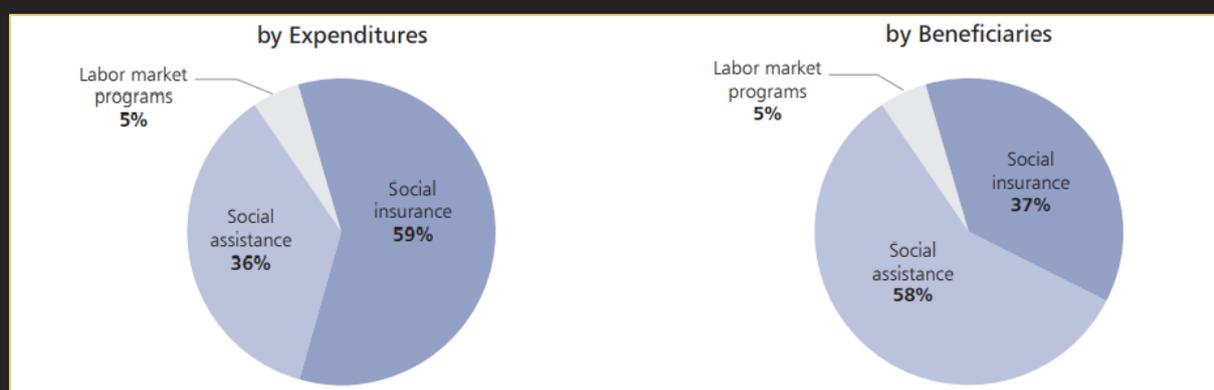
Total arable land per person in East and South Asia has been shrinking, falling from almost one-quarter hectare per person 50 years ago to an estimated one-tenth hectare by 2050. Water resources are also strained. Across Asia, between 60% and 90% of water is used for agriculture. However, the share of household and industrial water consumption almost doubled during 1992–2002. The region would need an additional 2.4 billion cubic meters of water each day to provide each consumer with 1,800 calories per day by 2050. The growth in yields has been declining in Asia. And the projected impact of climate change will significantly affect soil and water resources in many subregions.

Social safety nets play an important role in achieving food security. Social safety nets not only help provide immediate relief to disadvantaged groups during crises but also help provide care for those bypassed by rapid economic growth and poverty reduction efforts. Food-based safety nets and related social protection programs play an essential role in building food security for the poor and vulnerable groups, given the prevailing structural weaknesses and market failures in food systems. Targeted food aid and cash transfer programs—together with other social assistance schemes—help reduce the vulnerability of poor households, help farmers manage risks and improve community resilience.

## Social protection and labour

Most Asia-Pacific economies are growing, and as a result, the share of vulnerable employment might be expected to gradually fall across the region. Despite the region's resilience to the 2008 financial and economic crisis, however, the high growth rates of the past decade are unlikely to continue, and this will affect labour markets in the region. The rate of vulnerable employment remains high, especially in South-East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia, where in 2015 it reached 53.9 percent and 73.6 percent respectively.

Labour market programs feature little in social protection programs in Asia and the Pacific. Investments in active labour market programs in 35 countries are mostly food- or cash-for-work and skills development and training programs. Coverage of labour market programs remains low at 22% of potential beneficiaries. Men tend to receive more benefits from labour market programs than women.



As a major problem in the region, even though the economic growth is strong, improvements in the quality and quantity of employment have not followed. Informal workers account for two-thirds of those employed in Asia and the Pacific. This is one of the highest regional averages in the world. Moreover, about 44% of the employed are still engaged in mostly low-productivity work in the agriculture sector.

Passive labour market programs play a modest role in providing social protection for workers in Asia and the Pacific. Unemployment benefits are, by far, the largest component of such passive programs, accounting for 18% of all expenditures on both active and passive labour market programs. But, they cover only 8% of beneficiaries of labour market programs. Such beneficiaries tend to be concentrated among workers who have been employed in the public sector or sizable private enterprises.

Active labour market programs, particularly special work programs, are important, especially in South Asia. Such programs have had some notable success in providing income and food security to poor and vulnerable workers through temporary employment on infrastructure projects. Across Asia and the Pacific, skills development and training programs that address the needs of the unemployed and underemployed are generally small.

## Conclusion

Considering the Sustainable Development Goals, social protection helps to build a world with no poverty. It provides regular and reliable cash transfer that helps people to buy nutritious food. It increases access to affordable health care and income security; families will be able to send their children to school. Social protection is also crucial for the empowerment of women. It reduces insecurity for workers and injects cash into communities. It is also helpful for environmental conservation and strengthens social cohesion and stability. It would take less than 1% of total GDP in the region to lift these 1.2 billion women, men, and children out of poverty, in Asia and the Pacific. UNESCAP should work collectively in order to provide a decent social protection system in the region, considering the importance of social protection as a human right.

## Questions a resolution must answer

-  Considering the definitions of 'social protection' discussed by different organizations, which aspect of social protection are not provided in the Asia and the Pacific region?
-  Which types of social protection can be observed in the region, and how are they provided?
-  How can social security and provident funds be better provided?
-  How can the ESCAP, improve the health care system and health insurances?
-  How can the committee work in order to provide better social protection for children?
-  How can food security be improved in the region?
-  How can the social security programs considering labours be improved?

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