

## **Recommendations of the ASEAN Seminar on unemployment insurance, income security and active labour market policies**

**Ho Chi Minh City, 20-22 March 2012**

The ASEAN seminar on unemployment insurance (UI), income security measures and active labour market policies (ALMP) was held on the 20 – 22 March 2012, in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. The representatives of the governments, employers' and workers' organisations and civil society organizations of ASEAN member States, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the International Labour Organization participated in the Seminar.

The participants of the Seminar recognizes

that unemployment rate stands at 4.7 per cent in the ASEAN region, the female unemployment rate is higher than the male unemployment rate, and youth unemployment in the region is higher than adult unemployment,

that vulnerable workers still account for around 62 per cent of all workers in the region and nearly one out of three workers is estimated to live with his/her family on less than 2 US\$ a day,

that the uncertain international economic environment might impact again the ASEAN economic growth and labour market in the near future,

the importance of the ILO Conventions No.102 and No.168 relating to social security and in particular to the protection against unemployment, as well as a possible up-coming Recommendation on the Social Protection Floor,

After reviewing international experiences and lessons learnt on the extension of social protection to the unemployed and vulnerable workers, the participants acknowledge the positive impact of social protection on increasing capabilities and employability, enhancing productivity, while functioning as a macroeconomic stabilizer in time of crisis and supporting sustainable and inclusive economic growth,

Recalling that the ILO Fifteenth Asian Pacific Regional Meeting (Kyoto, 4-7 December 2011) included amongst the policy priorities a commitment to "build effective social protection floors, in line with national circumstances",

Recalling that the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Work Programme (2010-2015) and Related Recommendations includes the enhancement of social security and protection as a priority action, in particular considerations to extend social protection to self- or informally employed.

The participants of the Seminar recommend:

1. To work out appropriate solutions to address unemployment and vulnerable employment that should rely on better, decent and sustainable employment opportunities,

2. That it is necessary to set up integrated income security systems which will protect the person against all risks of the life cycle,
3. In view of the gaps of the severance pay system, to explore complementary measures to improve protection against loss of employment, through the introduction of unemployment insurance schemes or other social security schemes, in line with national circumstances,
4. To develop adapted income security measures and ALMPs to respond to specific needs and constraints of workers according to economic sector, skill levels, age, sex, disabilities, and so on,
5. To develop measures for increased employability and protection against loss of income that will not only support formal employees but also vulnerable workers and working poor, mainly of the informal economy, including domestic workers and migrant workers according to specific national laws and regulations,
6. To integrate income security measures with ALMPs, including re-employment initiatives,
7. To get young people involved in the design and implementation of adapted youth employment strategy and vocational training programs,
8. To build a national consensus on the design of the UI system and social protection measures, and to involve the social partners to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of those schemes,
9. To consider the concept of single window services at the local level, through the existing network of employment service centres or decentralized administration, in order to have access to existing social protection schemes and active labour market programs in a coordinated manner,
10. To closely coordinate the provision of social services, social protection benefits and employment services with community-based organizations, especially for informal economy and agriculture workers,
11. To promote public and private investments to generate employment and provide social protection to vulnerable workers, as well as to support long term local development,
12. To ensure transparent and robust governance of social security funds,
13. To improve the labour market information system as being crucial for the design of sound and efficient ALMPs.

**The participants proposed the following actions:**

1. To urge relevant stakeholders to pursue efforts in respective countries to implement nationally defined social protection floors and to explore innovative measures to improve income security of the working age population,
2. To call for increased ASEAN, ASEAN partners, international cooperation, and knowledge sharing, with the support of the ILO and other relevant international organizations, in implementing nationally defined social protection floors,
3. To continue information sharing and exchange of experiences among government officials, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and other stakeholders in ASEAN member States on social protection with the objective of learning from the good

practices and experiences of each other in improving the social protection coverage and delivery of services,

4. To explore measures for improved protection against loss of employment including the introduction of UI schemes with the expertise of the ILO and other relevant international organizations, through national dialogue with representatives of workers and employers,
5. To call for the ILO and other relevant international organizations to provide technical and financial support and disseminate knowledge on how to extend social protection to those who are self- or informally employed,
6. At national level, to start by mapping social protection situation, to identify and propose recommendations to fill the social protection gaps, in particular income security and better employment for vulnerable workers,
7. To call for the ILO or other relevant international organizations to provide technical guidance to conduct feasibility studies, pilot and implement adapted national social protection strategies, including mechanisms to improve coordination and outreach such as through the single window service mechanism.

Ho Chi Minh City, 22 March 2012