

Unemployment insurance, income security measures and active labour market policies in ASEAN

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**Proceedings of the ASEAN tripartite seminar
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam
20–22 March 2012**

**ILO/Japan Project Promoting and Building Unemployment Insurance and
Employment Services in ASEAN**

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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First published 2013

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ASEAN - ILO/Japan Project Promoting and Building Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in ASEAN

Unemployment insurance, income security measures and active labour market policies in ASEAN

Proceedings of the ASEAN tripartite seminar in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, 20–22 March 2012/ ASEAN-ILO/Japan Project Promoting Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in ASEAN, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. - Bangkok: ILO, 2013

50 p.

ISBN 9789221275725; 9789221275732 (web pdf)

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; ASEAN-ILO/Japan Project Promoting Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in ASEAN

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Printed in Thailand

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This report brings together the proceedings of the Association for South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) tripartite seminar on unemployment insurance, income security, and active labour market policies. The seminar was held on 20–22 March 2012, in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. The event is part of the ILO/ Japan Project Promoting and Building Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in ASEAN, launched in May 2011 and running until December 2013. The project, co-implemented with the ASEAN Secretariat, seeks to support ASEAN countries to set up immediate measures to guarantee income replacement and facilitate decent and productive reemployment of the unemployed and working poor.

The topic is of particular relevance to the region. In the present international context with no resolution of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis and the fragile United States' recovery, the threat of another global economic and job crisis shadows the economic recovery in South East Asian countries. A recent report from the ILO establishes that overall employment growth is decelerating in several countries in the region despite recovering gross domestic product (GDP) growth.¹ Although the unemployment rate remains below 5 per cent in most ASEAN countries, with the exceptions of Indonesia and the Philippines, this indicator may disguise another reality. In the South East Asia region, vulnerable workers engaged as own-account or contributing family workers still account for around 180 million workers in 2011, or 62 per cent of all workers.² Hence, the main source of vulnerability is not conjectural but rather structural, with persistent vulnerable employment that is often characterized as extremely precarious, poorly remunerated, and unprotected by labour laws and social security provisions.

Each ASEAN member has or is developing its own strategies and practices to cope with economic fluctuations and uncertainty on labour markets. Thailand and Viet Nam have introduced an unemployment insurance scheme; Malaysia and the Philippines are considering it; Cambodia and Indonesia have developed public employment guarantee programmes, but these schemes have often been ad hoc, scattered, and insufficiently linked with measures to increase the employability of the working poor. Such measures to address vulnerabilities of those in active age groups are among the foundations of the Social Protection Floor promoted by the ILO and the other United Nations agencies as one of the measures to sustain economic and social development.

The seminar in Ho Chi Minh City provided a platform for officials from ASEAN governments and employers' and workers' representatives to exchange ideas about their respective experiences and explore new strategies to better protect the working-age population. The seminar resulted in a stronger ASEAN commitment calling for social protection for all working-age individuals and the emergence of ideas that were conveyed to the 101st International Labour Conference, which adopted the new Recommendation on nationally defined floors of social protection, 2012 (No. 202).

Yoshiteru Uramoto
Regional Director
ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

¹ ILO: *Asia-Pacific Labour Market Update*, (Bangkok, 2012).

² ILO: *Asia-Pacific Labour Market Update*, (Bangkok, 2012).

The ASEAN tripartite seminar on unemployment insurance (UI), income security, and active labour market policies (ALMPs) is part of an ILO-ASEAN initiative funded by the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme to extend unemployment protection and increase employability of those who are searching for productive and decent employment.

More specifically, seminar participants reaffirmed their commitments to extend social protection in the region, share experiences and knowledge, contribute to raising awareness, and build synergies between initiatives to promote unemployment benefits and other income security measures and ALMPs for unemployed and vulnerable workers, including own-account workers, unpaid family workers, and youth.

Sixty representatives from ministries of labour, social security offices, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations of the ASEAN member States, as well as experts, ASEAN Secretariat representatives, and ILO specialists participated in the Seminar.

In line with its objectives, the seminar was organized to disseminate good practices from ASEAN and other countries around the world on unemployment insurance, income security measures, and ALMPs for formal and informal economy workers. It was also an opportunity to recall the fundamental principles of the two up to date ILO Conventions related to unemployment protection—the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168)—and call for their ratification. The seminar likewise provided a platform to exchange experiences and ideas for the extension of social protection in preparation for the discussions at the 101st International Labour Conference regarding the possible adoption of a Recommendation on social protection floors.

The Seminar adopted thirteen recommendations to improve income security and access to decent employment for all workers in formal and informal economies in the region. These recommendations include:

- the need to develop adapted income security measures and ALMPs, including unemployment insurance benefits, to respond to specific needs and constraints of workers according to economic sector, skill levels, age (youth unemployment was highlighted as a major concern), sex, disabilities, and so on;
- the urgent need to extend these measures to vulnerable workers;
- the necessity to work with workers' and employers' organizations; and
- the need to improve the coordination and outreach of services and benefits delivered to unemployed and vulnerable workers.

The Seminar agreed on several follow-up actions:

1. 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 each other's good practices and experiences in improving social protection coverage and delivery of services;
2. To explore measures for improved protection against loss of employment, including measures for informal economy workers, through national dialogue with workers' and employers' representatives;
3. To start mapping social protection situations at national levels in order to identify and propose recommendations to fill social protection gaps, in particular income security and better employment for vulnerable workers; and
4. 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 informally or self-employed.

The full set of recommendations is available in Appendix I of this report.

Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Committee
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BOE	Bureau of Employment (Viet Nam)
CAMFEBA	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
CARD	Council of Agricultural and Rural Development (Cambodia)
CCU	Cambodian Confederation of Unions
CDC	Community Development Council (Singapore)
CET	Continuing Education and Training (Singapore)
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment (Philippines)
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)
E2I	Employment and Employability Institute (Singapore)
ESC	Employment Service Centre (Viet Nam)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEFONT	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
ICSW	International Council on Social Welfare
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah (1 US\$= 9.6 IDR , as of per January 2013)
ILO	International Labour Organization
K-SPI/CITU	Kongres Serikat Pekerja Indonesia / Confederation of Indonesian Trade Union
MEF	Malaysian Employers Federation
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)
MSD	Ministry of Social Development (Brazil)
MTUC	Malaysian Trades Union Congress
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy (Cambodia)
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit, Prime Minister's Department (Malaysia)
PEP	Public Employment Programmes
PESO	Public Employment Service Office (Philippines)
PWP	Public Work Programmes
RCP	Regional Cooperation Platform
RSBY	Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (India)
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan (Viet Nam)
SJSRY	Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (India)
SOCISO	Social Security Organization
SOMSWD	ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SWS	Single window service

TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute
TNP2K	National Team for Accelerating Poverty Reduction (Indonesia)
UCS	Universal Coverage Scheme (Thailand)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UI	Unemployment Insurance
VAT	Value Added Tax
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VGCL	Vietnam General Confederation of Labour
WIS	Workfare Income Supplement
YEN	Youth Employment Network



Opening remarks

H.E. Nguyen Thanh Hoa, Vice Minister, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) of Vietnam, briefly introduced the development of employment services in both the public and private sectors in Viet Nam. Starting in the 1980s, employment services in Viet Nam continuously developed until the first Employment Service Centres (ESCs) were established in the 1990s. In 2009, the unemployment insurance (UI) scheme was implemented. Under the existing UI scheme in Viet Nam, Viet Nam Social Security collects UI contributions and pays UI benefits, while the ESCs register the insured unemployed, process UI claims, and provide job and vocational training services. In February 2012, the total number of persons registered under the UI scheme reached approximately 8 million. The Vice Minister shares the viewpoint that there is an urgent need to reinforce the integration of unemployment benefits into active labour market policies (ALMPs), as such implementation would improve reemployment of the UI beneficiaries and hence yield mutual benefits to all stakeholders. He expressed gratitude for the contributions of the Government of Japan and the cooperation with the ILO in supporting the UI implementation over the last two years, and in particular organizing this Seminar. He expected the conclusions from the Seminar to be considered in the future and converted into applied measures.

Duma Yanti Theresa, Technical Officer for Labour and Migrant Workers, ASEAN Secretariat, expressed ASEAN's appreciation to MoLISA and the ILO for organizing the Seminar. Social protection is considered a critical component for the sustained development of the ASEAN economies and its integration by 2015. Endorsed in February 2009, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Committee (ASCC) is mandated to work for a better social welfare and protection of the ASEAN population. The ASEAN Labour Ministries' Work Programme (2010-15) calls for the ASEAN member States to develop national and regional follow-up plans on social security/protection systems, with considerations given to how to extend some form of social security to those who are self- or informally employed. The need for setting up unemployment protection and employment services is critical as the global financial crisis has urged for stronger social protection for all.

Gyorgy Sziraczki, Director of ILO Country Office for Viet Nam, on behalf of the ILO Regional Director, expressed ILO's gratitude to MoLISA and the Government of Japan for their cooperation in organizing the Seminar as part of the activities of the ILO/Japan-ASEAN project to promote unemployment insurance and employment services.³ He insisted that the real challenge in the region resides in the design and implementation of effective and sustainable schemes to extend protection to informal economy workers and their families. Such measures are among the guarantees of the Social Protection Floor. Building social protection floors in Asia was also recognized as

³ Subsequently referred to as ILO/Japan-ASEAN UI project.

Photo 1:
Group photo of
participants and
resource persons.



a priority by the region's ministries of labour, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations during the Fifteenth ILO Asia Pacific Regional Meeting held last December 2011 in Kyoto, Japan. He indicated that exploring new strategies to better protect the working-age population will also be discussed during the next 101st International Labour Conference in Geneva for the possible adoption of a Recommendation on the social protection floor.

Yasumitsu Kida, Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Viet Nam, first referred to the long-standing cooperation between Japan and the ILO in providing direct technical assistance to Asian countries since 1974, including Viet Nam from the very beginning, in particular through its ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme. In recent years the Government of Japan has contributed more than 4 million US\$ in partnership with the ILO to help reduce unemployment, improve working conditions and industrial relations, and help lift people out of poverty in the ASEAN region. Specifically, the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral programme has been providing technical assistance to Viet Nam to improve its unemployment insurance scheme since late 2010. The seminar's discussions will contribute to build a strong ASEAN commitment to improve social protection of all workers and that the success of this ASEAN-ILO/Japan Project will inspire more countries to improve protection against unemployment and vulnerable employment across the world.



Session I: Social security extension: ILO Conventions and frameworks

Moderated by Le Quang Trung, Vice director of Bureau of Employment (BOE), MOLISA, Viet Nam.

ILO Conventions related to social security, the social protection floor, the social security staircases approach, and its relevance in ASEAN, by Valerie Schmitt, Social Security Specialist, ILO Decent Work Team for East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

The ILO's mandate to promote social security was first introduced in the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia, which stated the ILO's solemn obligation to pursue "the extension of social security measures to provide a basic income to all in need of such protection and comprehensive medical care." The Philadelphia Declaration was followed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which included social security as one of the basic human rights. The ILO's flagship Convention guiding the realization of this right is the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). It defines social security as a set of public measures to provide protection against the financial consequences of nine risks, namely (i) health; (ii) sickness; (iii) work injury; (iv) unemployment; (v) old age; (vi) maternity; (vii) raising children; (viii) invalidity; and (ix) death of the breadwinner. The Convention No. 102 sets the minimum standards for each contingency and proposes seven guiding principles consisting of (i) universality and non-discrimination; (ii) State's responsibility; (iii) solidarity, pooling of risks, and collective financing of benefits; (iv) tripartite administration; (v) progressiveness of benefits; (vi) transparency and good governance; (vii) rights and mechanisms to appeal; (viii) periodic actuarial review; and (ix) suspension of benefits if fraudulently used.

Despite the significant development of social security schemes, about 80 per cent of the world population today still does not have access to comprehensive social security coverage. There is an urgent need to provide social security as many prevailing factors could lead to unstable economic growth and possible social unrest. Those factors are growing inequality in certain countries, persistent exclusion of some groups, natural disasters, economic and job crises, and need for more skilled workforce. Considering that most informal economy workers yet remain excluded from traditional social security coverage, a new initiative has been proposed to ensure social coverage for all. In April 2009, the Social Protection Floor (SPF) initiative was launched as one of the responses to the international economic and job crisis as a strategy for countries to extend coverage to their populations both horizontally (population coverage) and vertically (benefits level). The SPF divides benefits into four guarantees which address specific risks faced during the life cycle: (i) access to essential health care; (ii) income security for children; (iii) income security and employment support for the working age; and (iv) income security for the elderly. Many countries across Asia have already endorsed this approach to extend social protection to their populations. The SPF would build the foundation to push forward for additional steps to reach higher levels

Illustration 1:
The four guarantees
of the social
protection floor
(V. Schmitt, 2012).

In a country with a Social protection floor, four guarantees:

-  **All residents have access to essential health care**
-  **All children enjoy income security through transfers in cash or kind → access to nutrition, education and care**
-  **All those in active age groups who cannot earn sufficient income enjoy a basic income security (particularly in case of sickness, unemployment, maternity, disability)**
-  **All residents in old age have income security through pensions or transfers in kind**

of benefits. Finally, the 101st International Labour Conference in June 2012 will discuss the possible adoption of a Recommendation on social protection floors.



Addressing the challenges of the informal economy workers, lessons learnt from Cambodia, by HE Dr Sann Vathana, Deputy Secretary General, Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), Cambodia.

In Cambodia, more than 30 per cent of the population is considered living below the poverty line and more than 80 per cent of the workforce works in the informal sector and in vulnerable employment. In this context, the recently adopted National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) aims to provide social security to all vulnerable workers by the year 2020. The major challenge in Cambodia remains the low level of education of the labour force (with almost 60 per cent of the population attaining less than primary-level education), and skills mismatching for those who have higher education. In response to this, the current strategy links social protection policies with employment promotion policies by focusing on three main areas: labour productivity, employment, and competitiveness. The NSPS of Cambodia therefore aims at (i) expanding access to secure livelihoods against unpredictable circumstances; (ii) empowering people through the country's economic development; and (iii) promoting labour productivity. In this sense, the NSPS in Cambodia encompasses the concept of the SPF. When implementing the NSPS, the Government puts priority on relief programmes in case of emergency and crisis, human capital development, food security, employment support, social health protection, and assistance for specific vulnerable groups. ALMPs were also initiated

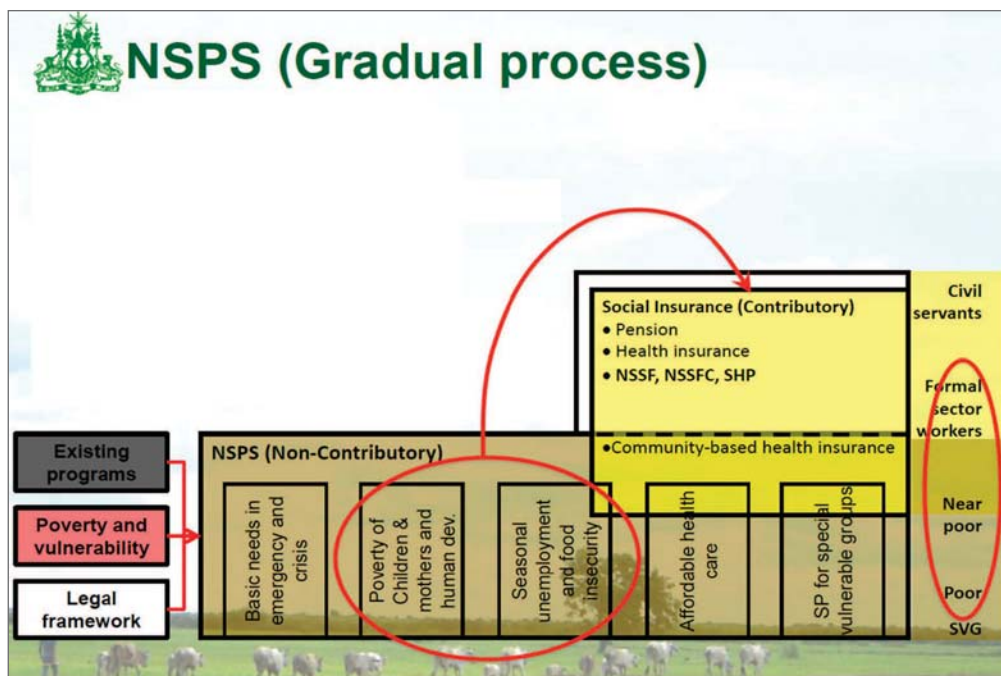


Illustration 2:
The National Social
Protection Strategy
in Cambodia
(CARD, 2012).

under intensive public work programs. The measures comprise non-contributory assistance aiming at better living conditions and employability, which will gradually transition vulnerable groups into the formal sector where social insurance is provided on a contributory basis. Likewise, human development strategies are provided through an integrated approach, combining the most fundamental needs with specific training and services required by individuals throughout their life cycles. In conclusion, there is a need for social protection to be developed in line with active employment policies in order to achieve the three developmental objectives of the country: labour productivity, human capital development, and formalization of the informal economy.

ILO Convention No. 168, EI/UI concepts, international comparison of UI models, by Celine Peyron Bista, Chief Project Advisor, ILO/Japan-ASEAN UI Project

Two ILO Conventions and related Recommendations specifically address protection against unemployment, namely Convention No. 102, the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), and the corresponding Recommendation No. 176. Convention No. 168 pursues a twofold objective, which are to protect workers and their families against loss of employment and income by providing income support and to promoting reemployment by increasing employability and facilitating access to jobs. Convention No. 168 is unique in the sense that it looks beyond the function of the social security system (Convention No. 102) and into the external socio-economic environment where social security interacts with the labour market, human resources development, and the economy at large. It will enhance the level of employability, capability, and work opportunities by emphasizing on ALMPs. The benchmarks set by Convention

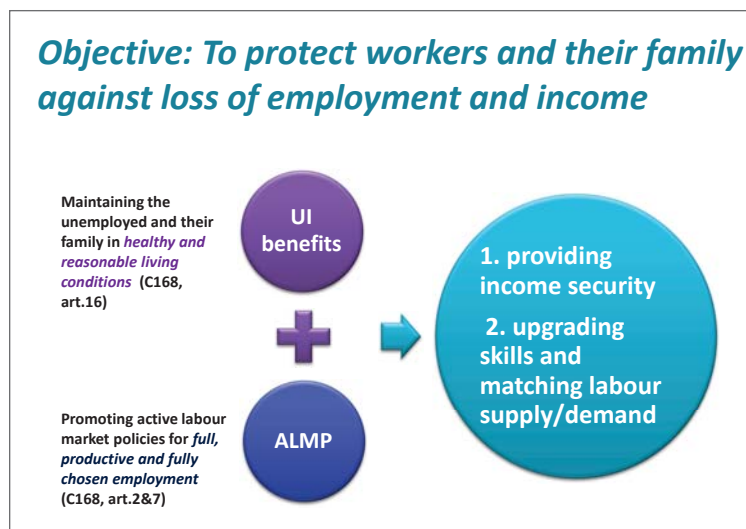


Illustration 3:
The combined approach for unemployment protection (C. P. Bista, 2012).

No. 168 and Recommendation No. 176 are useful guidelines in designing unemployment insurance schemes.

The ILO is of the view that unemployment benefits should be optimally provided as a form of social insurance made periodically. However, the social insurance schemes are often restricted to the formal economy. A better approach to cover informal employment is probably to strengthen social assistance provisions and develop programs to increase capability and employability of workers. The terms Unemployment Insurance and Employment Insurance

share the same concepts, but Employment Insurance may be perceived more positively by the public, which will facilitate the development of national policy frameworks for unemployment protection. Both have a critical role in transforming passive labour market policies into active ones.

Preliminary findings from a comparative study on unemployment insurance and employment insurance among 14 countries worldwide shows that the schemes have emerged during crisis. The review concludes that the contribution rates and coverage differ quite significantly depending on the labour market situation and socio-economic context of each country. The findings also suggest that seasonal workers, domestic workers, foreign workers, new entrants (young, women, and informal economy workers), “forced” part-time employed, home workers, small and medium enterprise employees, and self-employed workers should be included in the schemes. In countries where unemployment benefits systems are in place, such schemes have contributed to consumption smoothing and facilitated economic recovery. However, in ASEAN only Thailand and Viet Nam have implemented unemployment insurance schemes in 2004 and 2009, respectively. Other ASEAN countries mostly rely on mandatory severance pay provisions which have certain limitations, especially in the context of economic crisis. To conclude, contributory unemployment insurance schemes have limitations since formal employment still represents a minority in ASEAN labour markets.

The representative from International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) raised a question on the low cost of unemployment benefits compared to GDP in Canada even though coverage is widely extended and includes domestic and migrant workers. The ILO responded that the mentioned groups are less likely to be unemployed and that Canada is a country with high GDP. Thus, the small percentage is considered a large amount.

The moderator concluded that the concept of social security has a long history. The ILO has defined and provided instrumental guidelines on how a social security scheme can bring the utmost benefits to the population. In several ASEAN countries, the

informal economy comprises a large share of the labour force. The countries therefore should consider integrated approaches, which will gradually include informal workers in its coverage. The presentation from Cambodia showed that social protection provided in line with active employment policies can enhance the level of security and empower the population.

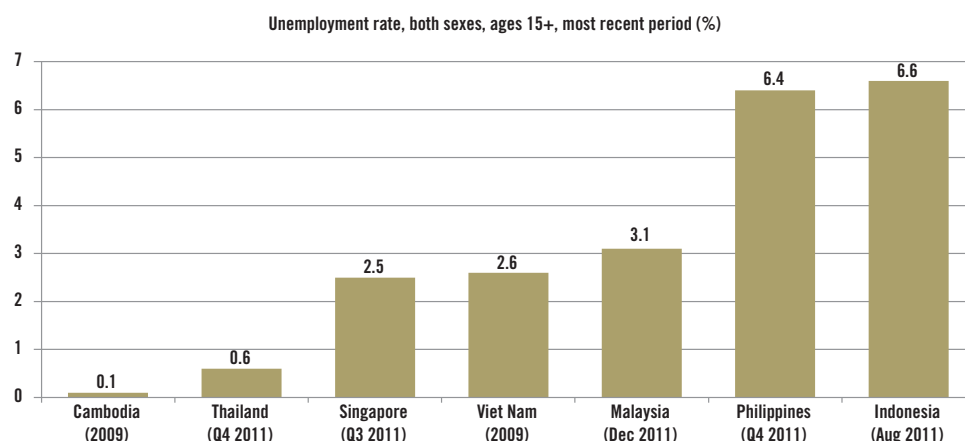


**Session II:
Unemployment situation in ASEAN**

Moderated by Vonny Diananto, Vice President, K-SPI/Confederation of Indonesian Trade Union (K-SPI/CITU), Indonesia.

Employment and unemployment trends in ASEAN, by Sukti Dasgupta, Senior Labour Market and Human Resources Specialist, ILO Decent Work Team for East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

While the impact of the global economic and financial crisis has been large on the ten ASEAN countries, the region has rebounded remarkably and economic growth in 2011 reached 6.2 per cent. However, since mid-2011, the external environment for emerging South East Asia has worsened with no resolution of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis and the fragile US recovery which poses the threat of another global economic crisis. In this context of after-crisis and uncertain recovery, the reduction in unemployment rates has been limited and most of the newly created employment was absorbed by the informal economy. Indonesia (6.6 per cent in August 2011) and Philippines (6.4 per cent in August 2011) are countries with the highest unemployment rates. Although unemployment rates remain low across the region, buffered by the informal economy, women and youth are highly represented among the unemployed in most of the countries. Youth unemployment in Indonesia, for instance, is increasing although the overall unemployment rate has declined. In the Philippines, youth unemployment reached 11.4 per cent in 2011. Vulnerable employment, represented by unpaid family workers and own account workers who are not covered by social insurance schemes, have become a larger share



Graph 1:
Current unemployment situation in ASEAN (S. Dasgupta, 2012).

of the economy, accounting for around 180 million workers in 2011, or 62 per cent of all workers. The population group that needs income support in this region is therefore the working poor in vulnerable employment conditions. The example from Viet Nam indicates that other income support and social protection measures are needed despite the implementation of an unemployment insurance scheme. In addition, the employment nature of ASEAN countries is changing from manufacturing-oriented to more service-oriented, resulting in lower productivity growth in each country. In addition, in the context of highly volatile global markets, ASEAN countries should have measures to strengthen the “automatic stabilizers” of social protection and gradually build a basic social protection floor for all. To be specific, countries are encouraged to focus on skills development, ensure the well-functioning of employment service centres, and strengthen data and statistics for a more accurate analysis of labour market information.

Youth unemployment characteristics and possible responses in ASEAN, by *Matthieu Cognac, Youth Employment Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.*

As one of the main themes of the ILO, youth employment is an issue that should be incorporated into employment development strategies. The Region’s youth unemployment rate (13.5 per cent in 2011) is still five times higher than that for adults. For ASEAN countries, the statistics show that Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia are the countries which are most affected by such circumstance. A high youth unemployment rate after crisis may tend to exacerbate skills and productivity gaps in the next decade, thus intertwining the economic crisis

with a social crisis. Young people—representing 24 per cent of the working poor—are often impacted by informality and vulnerability since obtaining formal employment is difficult, even for graduates. They do not receive proper training for the skills demanded by the market, neither are they supported by inclusive and proactive employment



Photo 2:
Waitress at a hotel in
Thailand.

services. Young women, young people in isolated areas, and young people with disabilities or HIV/AIDS are those facing the most difficulties in finding productive and decent employment. In the long term, current youth unemployment leads to the so-called ‘lost generation’. The lack of current opportunities can cause psychological effects and eventually bring about social unrest, similar to the recent situation in the Arab States. The key response to this situation is to create jobs and enhance the employability of youth. The ILO Convention No. 168 could be used as guidance for countries to implement programmes such as school-to-work transition and apprenticeship which could enrich the knowledge and understanding of the world of work to the younger generation. The State can partner with the private sector to provide appropriate skills development for secondary school students and undergraduates, improve accessibility to labour market information, as well as

promote local economic development to create more jobs. The initiative to promote youth employment has also been endorsed at the ASEAN level. The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth has conveyed progress on youth employment and youth development, including civil responsibilities and participation. The Regional Cooperation Platform (RCP) for Vocational Education and Teacher Training in the ASEAN region supports a better recognition of skills, education, and child development among the countries. Initiatives are also being carried out at the country level. Indonesia is one of the first countries to join the Youth Employment Network (YEN) Lead Country Network. Viet Nam's Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2011–2015 focuses extensively on youth, with an emphasis on those in living in remote areas. The National Youth Commission in the Philippines is actively working to address youth employment issues. The Cambodian government has shown commitment through the National Policy on Cambodian Youth Development, as well as Malaysia through its national skills develop plan. Finally the speaker reiterated the need to place young people at the core of employment policies and create a dialogue mechanism through which young people can be involved in policy design.

Wrap up session

The speaker clarified the concept of youth employment, as requested by the representative from Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA). The age range may differ from one country to another, but the ILO standards include workers who are 15-24 years old. The moderator closed the session by emphasizing that the unemployment situation is affecting the ASEAN population, women and youth in particular. Countries need to take into consideration vulnerable employment in developing employment policies and take actions to prevent the future threat of economic crisis on labour markets.



Session III: Promoting unemployment insurance and employment services in ASEAN

Moderated by Van Sou Ieng, President, CAMFEBA, Cambodia.

Moving from severance pay to unemployment insurance: Asian experiences and justification, by Yasuhito Asami, Professor, University of Tokyo, Japan.

Most ASEAN countries have mandatory severance pay schemes, although some countries have also initiated unemployment insurance schemes as a complementary measure to protect those who experience job loss. Severance pay brings about social benefits in the sense that it creates stable industrial relations, reduces social unrest, and promotes industry-specific skills. However, research shows that employers who bear the cost of severance pay are often the employers who are in difficult financial situations. As a result, it is difficult for the government to enforce and monitor

severance payments for employers who lay off workers as a result of bankruptcy. Unorganized workers, i.e. young workers and informal economy workers, are less likely to receive severance pay. Severance pay schemes also have the drawback of hampering structural adjustment within enterprises due to the costs of closing non-productive units in order to open new units with new workers. UI therefore is a way to minimize the negative impacts of severance pay. The cost is shared by employers and workers instead of only employers. In countries where UI has progressively replaced severance pay systems, the non-compliance rate and deterrence of lay-off has the tendency to decline. However, some groups of workers are reluctant to participate in the UI as they perceive it as a new form of tax. Some workers tend to feel that the abolition of compulsory severance pay in exchange for the introduction of UI will negatively affect their job security. Severance pay may reduce the risk that workers encounter against unemployment, but it provides no protection during unemployment. On the other hand, UI does not reduce the risk workers face against unemployment, but will protect the workers from the consequences of losing employment. From the research, the speaker would like to suggest countries without UI to reduce the level of severance pay and introduce UI as an alternative. For financial sustainability, it is recommended that UI funds administration is independent from other social security or employment support programs. Finally, there should be a separate programme for informal economy workers whose pay is often irregular and low and who often do not have contractual relationships with employers. For those workers, alternative and adapted active labour market policies and income security should be identified.



Lessons learnt from seven years' implementation of the UI scheme in Thailand, by *Worawan Chandoevmit, Research Director, Social Security, Human Resources and Social Development, Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)*.

In Thailand, the informal economy, dominated by women, employs two-thirds of the country's labour force. Overall unemployment has been declining, but is affected by seasonality. The UI scheme in Thailand was enforced in January 2004 under the Social Security Act 1990, motivated by a strong political movement of the Government. It is operated by three departments within the Ministry of Labour, namely the Social Security Office, Department of Employment, and Department of Skills Development. The contribution rate for workers and employers was reduced in 2012, while the Government's contribution was unchanged. In Thailand, UI is still considered supplementary to severance pay. With respect to the performance of the UI scheme, statistics show that the unemployment rate among persons eligible for UI benefits remains low and receivers of UI benefits are mainly persons voluntarily unemployed. It was also found that most of the unemployed do not want to attend training courses provided by the Government, as 20 per cent will opt to be self-employed as an alternative to formal employment. Seasonal workers and young workers are also among those who claim UI benefits. Most of the beneficiaries are found to be low-skilled workers. The analysis shows that there are still certain gaps in

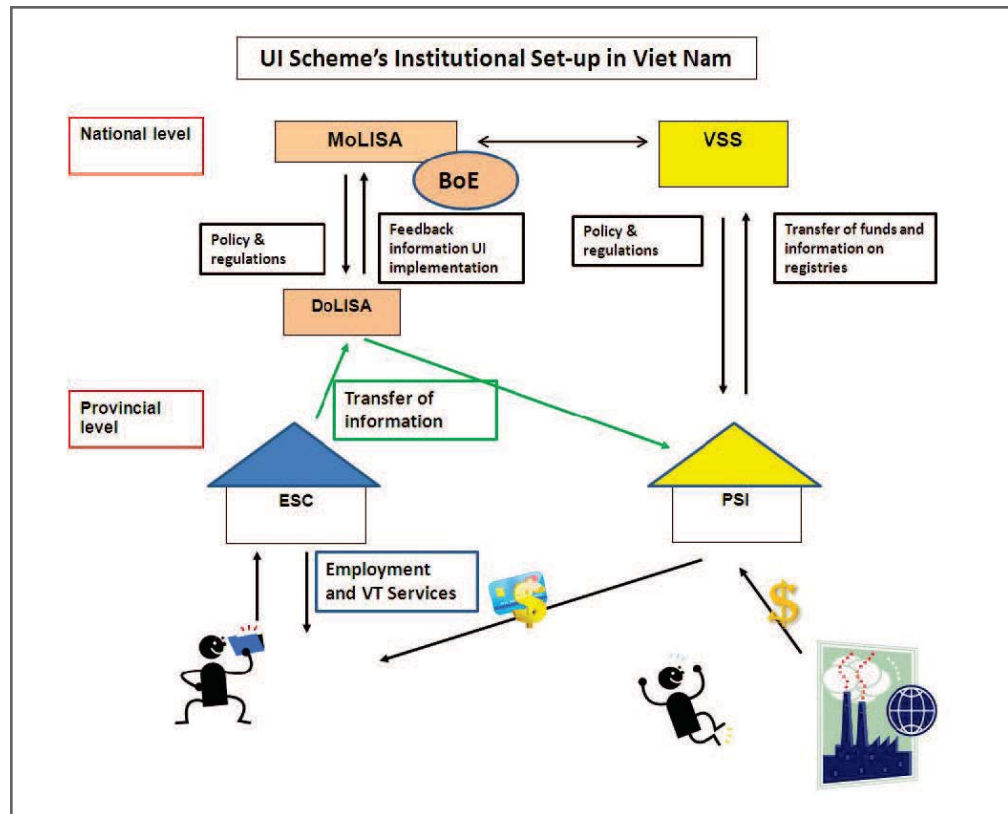
the UI implementation in Thailand. The role of severance pay and UI are duplicated instead of supplementing each other. Reduced UI benefits are paid to the voluntarily and seasonally unemployed, which may be a questionable practice since they are not actively looking for jobs. During the 2011 flood crisis, the contract situation of employees in affected enterprises was uncertain since it was unclear whether operations would resume. The contract uncertainty meant that these employees were not in a position to claim UI benefits. The experience of Thailand suggests that governments should consider introducing more flexibility in UI regulations in order to respond to economic and natural crises, as unemployment under such circumstances is often involuntary. The Fund should also strengthen measures to assist the return to employment through, for instance, enforcing suspension of benefits in cases where beneficiaries reject suitable employment offers. Furthermore, additional information concerning eligibility requirements and benefits should be disseminated to the public, as most people are still unclear or even unaware of the existence of UI protection. Also, to improve performance of the UI scheme in Thailand, mechanisms to reinforce coordination between the three responsible departments within the Ministry of Labour should be explored.



Reinforcing linkages with employment support programmes under the UI scheme in Viet Nam, by *Le Quang Trung, Vice Director of BOE, MoLISA, Viet Nam.*

The employment services system of Viet Nam was established in the early 1990s. In the mid-1990s, the first Employment Services Centres (ESCs) were set up across the country with objectives to provide career counselling, vocational training counselling, and collect labour market information. Since 2009, the ESCs also handle the claims for UI benefits. The system developed rapidly and is now considered effectively meeting requirements and demands of the labour market in Viet Nam. The UI scheme was implemented in 2009 covering workers under employment contracts in enterprises with at least ten employees. Workers and employers each contribute 1 per cent of salary and the Government adds an additional 1 per cent of salary. The scheme provides benefits to the unemployed who have contributed at least 12 months in the last 24 months and who are unable to find work within 15 days after their registration at the ESC. In terms of benefits, the claimant receives 60 per cent of salary for a duration of between three and 12 months, depending on the contribution period, an allowance to partially cover vocational training fees, job counselling and placement services, as well as an extension of health insurance coverage for the duration of benefits. Despite a rapid increase in the number of beneficiaries in recent years, expenditures versus fund balance is still positive. Since January 2009, 127,000 out of 500,000 UI beneficiaries from a total of 8 million people insured by the Social Insurance Law, 2006, have returned to work and 1,027 have attended vocational training. In the coming years, the Government is expecting to undertake measures to increase the coverage, simplify the procedures, ensure financial sustainability, and improve linkages with measures to support the return to employment. Such measures will require amending the UI legislation, developing the ESCs' operations and staff capacity,

Illustration 4:
Institutional set-up of
the UI scheme in
Viet Nam (C.P.Bista,
2012).



reinforcing the one-step-shop services delivery, continuing to strengthen labour administration, reviewing and increasing monitoring of the scheme and beneficiaries, and exploring innovative ALMPs.

Wrap up session

The representatives from Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), Cambodian Confederation of Unions (CCU), Department of Labour and Employment of Philippines (DOLE), and the ICSW raised questions on financial sustainability, inclusion, investment, operational structure, and terminology. Worawan Chandoevmit clarified that the financial aspect is not a concern for the Thailand Social Security Fund, as the current balance can currently cover ten years of expenditures. 60 per cent of the fund is obliged to be invested in secure assets, while the investment of the other 40 per cent is decided by the board's subcommittee. Concerning migrant workers in Thailand, those going through the National Verification Process or migrating under the Memorandum of Understanding signed with neighbouring countries are covered under the Social Security System and therefore the UI scheme. The cooperation of the three departments within the Ministry of Labour is still difficult due to the lack of a common database, an inefficient referral system, and limited service counters, which are the points of contact for insured persons. One-stop service would be a solution to this situation. Only the Social Security Office has the authority to spend 10 per cent of income on administration; the other two departments have to allocate resources from their

internal budgets. Concerning the inclusion the voluntarily unemployed under UI schemes, Le Quang Trung indicated that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether workers voluntarily quit or are forced to quit. Yasuhito Asami also reiterated that, in many countries, only a small amount of laid-off workers manage to claim their due severance pay because some requirements act as barriers in some industrial sectors. The moderator ended the session by summarizing that compulsory severance pay is not beneficial to all employees, does not cover informal economy workers, offers limited protection for dismissed workers, and could be a burden especially for declining enterprises. Therefore, there is a need for countries to push for the establishment of UI schemes. In Thailand and Viet Nam, less than 20 per cent of the workers are actually covered by UI although both funds proved to generate surpluses. The results of UI systems will be more beneficial if vocational training and labour market placement are reinforced.



Session IV: Building national consensus on UI and employment services

Moderated by Dayangku Siti Khatizah bte Pg Hj Bakar, Assistant Commissioner of Labour Ministry of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam.

Perspectives from governments on relevance of unemployment protection and the role of the public employment services



By Arief Winasis, Head, Subdivision of Evaluation and Reporting, Directorate General of Industrial Relation Development and Workers' Social Security, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia.

The social security system was implemented in Indonesia in 1992, covering health, work injury, and old age. With regards to unemployment, the country does not yet have in place an unemployment insurance system, but enforces a severance pay system, under which compensation depends on the employment duration. Indonesia is dotted with employment services centres, providing services for skills matching and contacting workers when vacancies are available. Currently there are approximately 336 centres in the country. The national planning bodies have set a target to open 100 additional centres in the coming years.



By Stella Banawis, Executive Director, Employees Compensation Commission, DOLE, Philippines.

The unemployment rate is one of the major challenges for the economy of the Philippines. The 7.2 per cent unemployment rate is the highest in ASEAN, caused by a mismatch in skills demand and supply, as demonstrated by a 40 per cent unemployment rate among college degree holders. The introduction of UI has been discussed within DOLE and six bills to establish UI were proposed to the Congress. In 2009, the ILO conducted a preliminary feasibility study to assess the possibility of starting a UI scheme. The results of the assessment were positive since the

structure—through the Public Employment Service Offices (PESO)—is already in place. The UI scheme is proposed to be developed in line with the revision of the Labor Code of the Philippines, which has been ongoing over the past two years. However, to date, no consensus on the parameters amongst the social partners has been reached. There is still a concern from employers and workers about the additional cost. Nevertheless, it is expected that the final decision will be made in the coming months. The existing protection measures related to loss of employment in the Philippines consist of severance pay, loan programme/housing fund, employment services and skills training, Field Job Net (automatic online services), job fairs and job kiosks, individual and group job counseling offered by the PESO, custom-designed livelihood programmes for different groups, industry-specific amelioration programs, micro-insurance programmes, and so on. The design of a UI system in the Philippines will have to incorporate mechanisms to improve coordination among all these services. Another challenge for the implementation of a UI scheme is that less than 10 per cent of the existing PESO is actually institutionalized in terms of official budget and staff support allocated by the Government. This has an adverse effect on the continuity and consistency of training, monitoring, and viability of programmes. To conclude, UI is being pushed by the current administration in order to extend social protection to the unemployed. However, a national consensus has yet to be reached and there is an urgent need for tripartite dialogue.



By Leong Wai Peng, Manager, Income Security Policy Division, Ministry of Manpower, Singapore.

The unemployment rate in Singapore has been relatively low, averaging 2 per cent for the year 2011.⁴ The Government of Singapore believes that employment is the best form of financial security and has adopted a full-employment strategy. The State's policies therefore focus on job creation to minimize unemployment and training to ensure employability. The Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) was introduced in 2007 as a social transfer mechanism to help supplement wages and retirement savings of older low-wage workers while encouraging work and self-reliance. Training and job referrals are provided free of charge through career centres located at Community Development Councils (CDCs) and the Employment and Employability Institute (e2i). The Government also invests heavily in the Continuing Education and Training (CET) infrastructure for adult learning, which offers training in fundamental skills (Employability Skills programme) and specific industry and occupational skills (Workforce Skills programme). Up to 95 per cent of the course fees are subsidized by the Government. Unemployed low-skilled workers may be eligible to receive a training allowance during the training period. In addition, the Government promotes a work support programme to assist workers

⁴ In Singapore, long-term unemployment is defined as looking for work for at least 25 weeks. Source: Ministry of Manpower, Singapore.

from low-income households to upgrade their skills by providing them with temporary financial, medical, and educational assistance. Those who need additional support receive financial assistance on a case-by-case basis through the Public Assistance Scheme and other social assistance schemes.

Malaysia's experience in building consensus around unemployment insurance



By Andrew Lo Kian Nyan, Chief Executive Officer, Sarawak Bank Employees Union, MTUC, Malaysia.

In Malaysia, a severance pay scheme is in place to compensate for the loss of employment. One of the criticisms is that it is based on the contingency payment system and there is a lack of compliance as employers who close down the business and retrench the workers are usually in a difficult financial situation. At the same time, the trade unions are reluctant to agree on the introduction of UI which they fear will provide less job security and a lower level of compensation to those who are laid off. The Government has invited various stakeholders to discuss the possible introduction of UI and has proposed a system funded by workers' and employers' contributions. The process has not yet reached a consensus since the interests of each party do not align. The Government sought the support of the ILO to facilitate consensus building among tripartite stakeholders on the eventual design of a UI system. This initiative is part of the country's new economic model, which includes improving labour flexibility into its policies and enhancing social protection through measures such as establishing an unemployment benefits system.

By Mohd Zakri bin Baharudin, Senior Manager- Employers Affairs, Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), Malaysia.

The National Retrenchment Scheme was first proposed by MTUC in 1998. Ten years later, the Social Security Office (SOCSSO) and the ILO conducted a study on the design of a Relief Fund for Loss of Employment. The conclusions concerning the parameters of the Relief Fund did not reach a consensus amongst MEF, MTUC, and the Government. In 2011, a feasibility study on unemployment insurance conducted by the Prime Ministers' Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) concluded that the introduction of a UI system is justified due to some certain limitations of the retrenchment benefit payments, noting that compulsory severance pay in Malaysia is the second highest in the world as recorded by the World Bank.⁵ In 2011, the Ministry of Human Resources sought the guidance of the ILO to facilitate and support the design of a UI system in Malaysia.

⁵ This was mentioned by the speaker. However, the a World Bank report shows that in regards to the amounts paid for retrenchment, Malaysia ranks as the sixth most expensive country amongst the ASEAN group. World Bank: *Cost of doing business*, (Washington, DC, 2012). Available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploretopics/employing-workers> [accessed 1 May 2013].

The main challenge of this project remains the buy-in from employers' and workers' groups on the introduction of UI in the country. ILO is now working in partnership with the tripartite stakeholders, notably supporting the draft of a position paper by the MEF. Some employers are concerned that a UI system will bail out a small number of recalcitrant employers at the expense of well-managed employers, as well as increase the cost of doing business. 80 per cent of the employers who have met with MEF do not support the establishment of a UI system and claim that the expense should be borne by the Government. MEF is proposing that the existing law should be enforced strictly and actions should be taken against non-complying employers. In addition, MEF suggests that retrenchment/termination payments may possibly be the most effective way to protect workers in case of unemployment.

Experience of the social partners in implementing the UI scheme in Viet Nam



By Vu Hong Quang, Officer, Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), Viet Nam.

Trade unions have been involved in the implementation of the UI system in Viet Nam under the country's Union Law 1990. Under article 11 of the Social Insurance Law 2006, trade unions have the responsibility to communicate and educate workers on social insurance legislation and policies, recommend and participate in the development, revision, amendment, and supplementation of social insurance legislation and policies, and participate in the monitoring of compliance to social insurance legislation. VGCL participated in the development of the Social Insurance Law and guiding legislative documents for the implementation of the provisions on unemployment insurance, as well as in the management of the Council of the Unemployment Insurance fund, ensuring the effective management and use of UI funds. They have organized and provided guidance for trade unions at all levels to participate in communication, educate workers and employers on compliance with unemployment insurance legislations, and monitor the compliance with unemployment insurance legislation and procedures. In other words, the unions are working as an information channel for the Government to obtain feedback from the beneficiaries. For instance, when some employers did not comply with the social insurance law during the economic crisis, VGCL was the agency that denounced and reported the cases to the Government. They also are actively involved in the review, evaluation, and recommendation of amendments to the existing scheme. In terms of performance, the number of workers participating in the UI scheme has increased significantly and more than 90 per cent of unionized workers are registered in the scheme.

Nguyen Hong Anh, Board member, Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Viet Nam.

VCCI is an organization representing employers in Vietnam. The core functions of VCCI are to promote and protect legitimate rights of employers, maintain harmonized industrial relations, and participate in the tripartite mechanisms in Viet

Nam to discuss labour and economic related matters. VCCI's tasks range from collecting employers' views on labour related issues, creating social dialogue, participating in labour law design, organizing trainings, and disseminating information on relevant topics. For the specific issue of social insurance, apart from participating in legal design and review processes, VCCI has also initiated the organization of workshops to disseminate information on social insurance law enforcement and created dialogues with involved partners to share difficulties in registering workers under UI and compiling required documentation for the unemployed to claim their UI benefits. According to the VCCI, the implementation of the UI scheme at the local level could be considered successful. Yet, certain design and implementation gaps have been voiced by employers. Among those issues, a number of employers found that the use of social insurance books is difficult, the benefit settlements face delays due to a complicated process, and there is still a lot of confusion on the categories of workers and working contracts covered by the scheme. VCCI, therefore, is putting forward a proposal to amend the current social insurance law to have broader coverage and more specific criteria for contributors and beneficiaries to ensure their compliance. The regulation on the lump-sum payments corresponding to the remaining entitlements set by Decree No. 127 tends to be in opposition to the ILO's standards related to unemployment insurance. Some workers take advantage of this loophole; thus, reasons for leaving the job should also be taken into consideration when the unemployed claim UI benefits. There should also be a further promulgation and dissemination of UI related information to ensure its effectiveness and compliance, not only to the employers but also to the employees who need to work in a unified manner.

Wrap up session

The moderator concluded that consensus building is critical for countries to have enforced, effective, and sustainable systems. In response to the questions from CCU and MTUC, VGCL shared that they are a keen actor in this scheme because it is a legal obligation for them as a trade union, representing both high- and low-skilled workers who have labour contracts. Both the union and the employers have to abide by the law announced by the Government, which is working through a tripartite mechanism to develop policies and ensure the legitimate rights of employers and workers. Worawan Chandoevmit from Thailand also shared that in the beginning Thai employers did not support the idea but a consensus was finally reached due to the strong political commitment from the Government at that time. A representative of Thailand added that the negotiation process was made easier thanks to the results of a feasibility study conducted by the ILO.



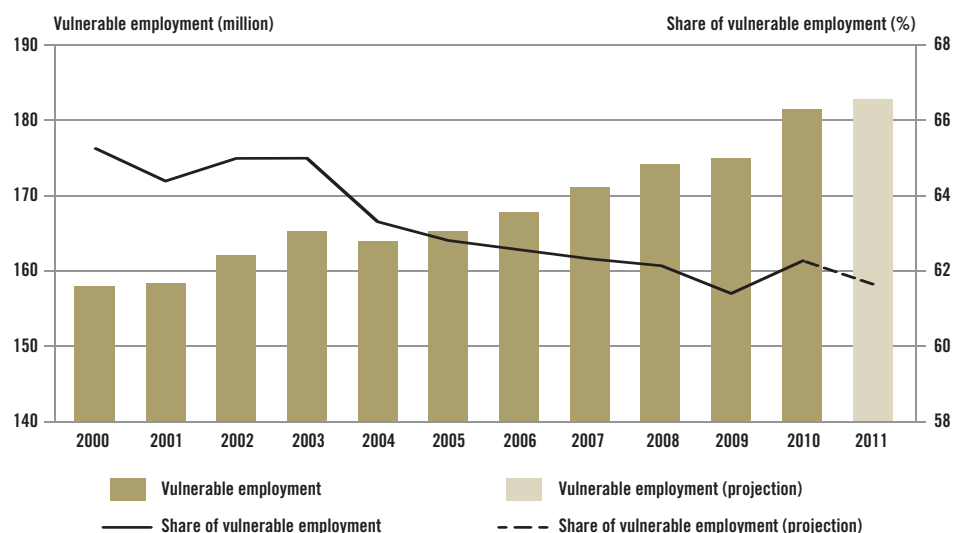
**Session V:
Protecting and creating employment security for vulnerable workers**

Moderated by Ferdinand Diaz, Co-Chair, Working Group on Labor and Social Policy Issues, Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines.

Perspective and international practices to provide income security and employment security for the informal economy and unemployed youth, by Celine Peyron Bista.

The second day’s discussion focused on strategies to address challenges persisting in the informal economy. Rather than generic concepts, the session showcased real strategies practiced worldwide. The financial crisis in 2009 has brought along the rise in vulnerable employment and, during its recovery period, the creation of largely low quality jobs in the informal economy. The example was drawn from Thailand where the number of own-account and contributing family workers increased by 4.5 per cent while the number of formal wage workers decreased. Notably, the employment lost in the formal economy has been absorbed by the informal economy during this period.

**Graph 2:
Share of vulnerable employment in South East Asia.**



Source:
ILO: Global Employment Trends (Geneva, 2012).

The ILO defines vulnerable employment as the sum of own-account workers and contributing family workers,⁶ who are mainly found in the informal economy.

Informal economy workers cope with risks, which can either be linked to the individual or surrounding factors. For instance, for someone who has stopped working in order to take care of their family, this risk is categorized as individual. Risks such as economic crisis or work seasonality are considered exogenous. The main challenge

⁶ ILO: *ILO Global Employment Trends Report* (Geneva, 2012).



Target: informal employment

- Street vendors, Domestic workers, Farmers, Home-based workers ...
- Evolve in an economy which has low entry and exit costs
- Vulnerable, underemployed and working poor rather than unemployed
- structural rather conjunctural: *“workers cannot afford to be jobless”*
- Low and irregular income (no minimum wage)
- Lack of decent working conditions
- Low skills and low productivity
- No protection in case of loss of income because of “contingencies” (sickness, work injury, loss of equipment...)
- Limited risk taking (limited economic investment)

Illustration 5:
Defining our target
(C.P. Bista, 2012).

resides in providing adapted income security measures for workers deprived from decent working conditions, facing skills mismatch, and who lack access to labour market information. While the long term and sustainable solution is decent and productive employment-generating policies, there is also an immediate need to design income support measures and ALMPs which can effectively reduce the vulnerability of workers in the informal economy, as defined under Guarantee No. 3 of the SPF.

In pursuit of this aim, it is recommended to adopt an approach with three elements: prevention, compensation, and increasing employability. There is a need to initiate programmes to prevent informal workers from falling into vulnerability through skills development and job counseling linked with existing social protection programmes. Compensation can be given through minimum income and employment guarantee schemes and better access to healthcare, nutrition, and education. Decent and productive work can be achieved through the provision of adapted vocational training, apprenticeship, and contracting after completion, incentives and support for SME development, as well as public works projects. These measures also need to be implemented through an integrated approach. One key integrated method is the one-stop-shop approach with case management services, which allows social workers to conduct surveys and provide continuing support to the community.

Finally, the speaker presented examples of practices from various countries. France, for instance, has the Universal Services Employment Vouchers programme, in which employers pay individual worker via vouchers. These vouchers are a means to pay social security contributions despite the lack of a signed contract. Tanzania is using a warehouse receipt system to protect farmers against price fluctuations during the dry season. In Bahrain, young workers receive aid benefits and access to training and employment services while they are looking for their first job.

GEFONT Social Welfare Schemes in Nepal, by Pong-Sul Ahn, Senior Specialist on Workers' Activities, ILO DWT for East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.



Photo 3:
Street vendor in Nepal.

Adding to the concepts and ideas of the previous presentation, the speaker emphasized that there is a major challenge in providing social coverage to informal workers, especially for trade unions, owing to the difficulty in organizing and including informal workers into unions as well as raising their voices. Nevertheless, the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) has managed to provide social security to its members who work in the informal economy. In Nepal, around 93 per cent of the total workforce is in the informal economy. Founded in 1946, the GEFONT affiliates 29 industries and has a membership of 354,242 persons across Nepal. Of the total members, 168,000 persons are from the informal economy. The GEFONT Social Security Programme consists of the Health Insurance Scheme established in 2000, the Women Assistance Fund set up in 2003, and the Emergency Fund founded in 2009. The Health Insurance Scheme has been working in the form of cooperatives. GEFONT and its individual members jointly contribute to the fund, which allows members to obtain medical services

and prescriptions at a reduced rate. On the other hand, the Women Assistance Fund, which is funded from donations and bank interest, provides assistance to women in cases of maternity, reproductive health problems, surgical cases, and relief from extreme emergencies. The Emergency Fund, with contributions collected from its members, provides assistance to all male and female members of the GEFONT who face extreme difficulties due to illness or any other emergencies. Experiences from the three assistance schemes have demonstrated that accessibility to hospital services can be enhanced through a simple administrative process. Although political stability and financial sustainability are matters of concern for the schemes, the case of the GEFONT shows a good example of trade union initiatives providing social security and assistance to union members in the informal economy. The GEFONT demonstrates that it is possible to develop a need-based social security scheme with relatively limited funds for a particular targeted group such as informal economy workers.

Employment creation through public investments, by Chris Donnges, Senior Specialist on Employment Intensive Investments, ILO for East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

Evidence shows that unemployment and underemployment in ASEAN countries drive its population into deeper vulnerability. Social Protection, therefore, is needed in the current context as it guarantees income security for unemployed and underemployed workers. Two strategies proven to be successful to do so are the creation of employment opportunities and skills development. The presentation

discussed the alternative of creating short-term jobs through public investments. Such initiatives have taken place in many countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and so on. Job creation and income generation are possible through three types of programmes: Infrastructure Investment Programmes, Community Development Programmes, and Public Employment or Public Work Programmes (PEP or PWP). While income generation is considered a secondary benefit for the first two programmes, the last one prioritizes income generation. In order to decide how to realize these programmes, policy makers need to analyze the wage component and technologies of the specific area. The investment should focus on sectors which are employment-intensive, such as rural work, environment protection, and construction. Another possible strategy is to switch from using technology to using labour in projects such as road and irrigation works. Statistics also show that moving from using technologies to labour can have a positive consequence in terms of cost efficiency. Evidence from Indonesia’s Economic Stimulus Package (2009), representing an investment of IDR73.3 trillion (US\$7 billion), shows that infrastructure investment created about 1 million jobs of 45 days and these short-term jobs provided income support for the poorest households. Public investment under the PWP in Cambodia has contributed to raising annual household incomes of the community by 15 per cent and at the same time improved the infrastructure within the community.

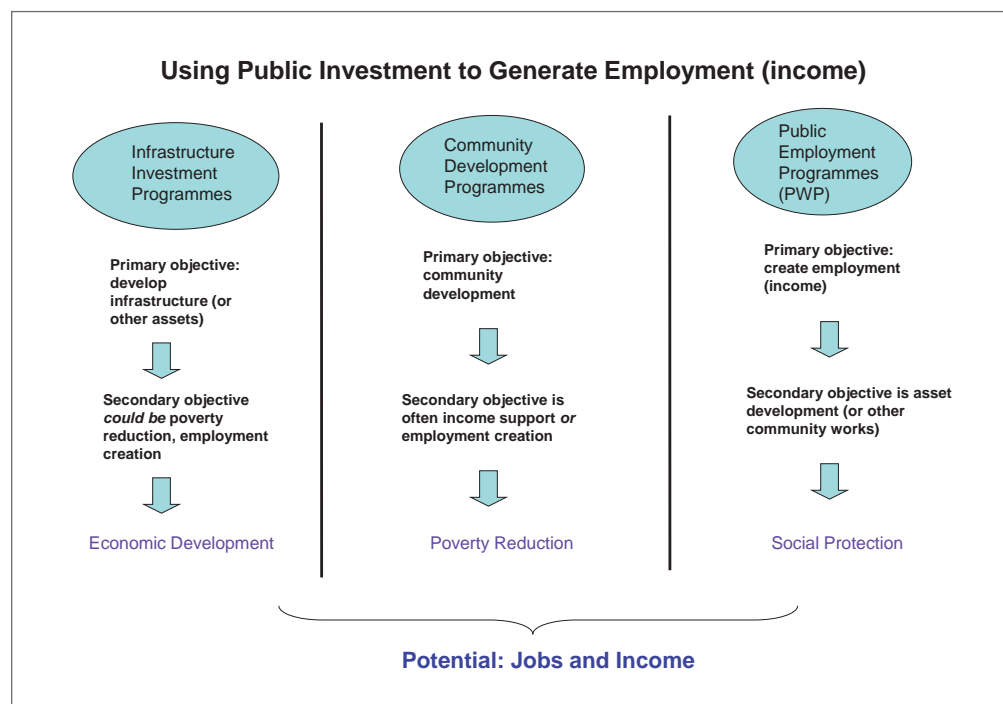


Illustration 6: Using public investment to generate employment (C. Donnges, 2012).

While considering the design of PEP or PWP, issues to be considered are target beneficiaries, methodology and duration, sub-projects and procurement, acquired skills and training, as well as the gender dimension.

Photos 4:
Cambodian workers
repair roads as part of
the public work program



 **Social Security Schemes in Lao PDR**, by *Prasong Vongkhamchanh, Deputy Director General, Skills Development and Employment Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao People's Democratic Republic.*

The social security system in Lao PDR is currently comprised of two schemes. The first one, implemented in 1993 and reformed in 2006, covers civil servants working for government, public organizations, military, and police. It includes healthcare insurance, work accident compensation, maternity benefits, elderly pension, funeral grants, and a special invalidity pension for military. The 2006 reform prescribes that civil servants need to contribute 8 per cent and the Government 8.5 per cent of salaries. The second programme is the Social Security Scheme for Enterprises implemented in 1999. Despite its administration by the Social Security Organization, the administrative body of the fund is a tripartite board of directors. The contributions come from both employers (5 per cent) and employees (4.5 per cent). The coverage includes funeral benefits, medical benefits, sickness benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity benefits (in case of permanent loss of working capacity), retirement pension, and survivors' benefits. It is expected that a child allowance and unemployment benefits will be implemented in the coming years. A major challenge of the current system is the lack of coordination among diversified schemes managed by different organizations. In order to improve harmonization among its social health insurance schemes, Lao PDR is currently receiving support from the ILO through funds provided by the Government of Luxembourg. The presentation concluded with the recommendation that policy-makers need to work in a coordinated and integrated manner in order to further develop their social security systems.

Wrap up session

The representative from CCU shared his experience in the community's road construction. Community members joined the programme but did not finish the work claiming that it is not practical for them to carry on the construction without equipment. Chris Donnges shared that a number of roads in Siem Reap were built by an employment intensive method and the minimum wage was provided. The construction was also done under the guidance of technical experts and combined technology, not only by the community on their own.

The moderator summarized that in most countries there is a dualistic structure comprising of both formal and informal economies. The informal sector is usually large and expanding. If the idea of social protection is to include all, informal workers should not be excluded from coverage. Despite the challenges in monitoring and managing schemes for informal economy workers, the presentations have demonstrated that there are channels through which this can be done. Governments' efforts to create jobs through public investment are evidently contributing to poverty alleviation. At the same time, tripartite dialogue is also considered critical along the process of developing public work programmes. With creativity and innovative ideas from major stakeholders, the challenges in providing social protection to informal workers can be overcome.



Session VI: The single window service: Concept, design and implementation

Moderated By Prasong Vongkhamchanh, Deputy Director General, Skills Development and Employment Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR.

Addressing vulnerability and inclusiveness, experience of Delhi Mission Convergence, by Vandana Singh, Advisor Finance, Mission Convergence, India.

In New Delhi, India, despite the considerable amount of resources allocated for health, education, and social welfare in the city, the social divide still persists in forms of homelessness and a high infant mortality rate stimulated by the annual influx of migrants. The so-called “state of exclusion” consequently emerged as the result of the underestimation of the poverty incidence and inadequate budget allocation. The State departments working against such circumstances are large in number but lacking coordination and effectiveness. The Samajik Suvidha programme, or Delhi Mission Convergence programme, was hence established as a mechanism to work towards an integrated approach to executing the work of the existing agencies. The administrative structure of Delhi Mission Convergence comprises of experts from the Government, the private sector, as well as community-based organizations. Its policy review committee is chaired by the Chief Minister at the city level. The pillar of Delhi Mission Convergence is principally to reach out to the unreached and provide a unified response through innovative strategies. Poverty was redefined by the level of vulnerability one meets through their spatial, social, and occupation conditions. The information collected from a community-based survey, also conducted with the homeless population, is entered into a database and each member of household receives an electronic card with an identification number (Aadhaar). As such, the problem of duplicating data in the system has been addressed by effective measures under a single window service (SWS). The speaker further illustrated the operating mechanism of the programme. Gender Resource and Common Facility Centres are established across Delhi to work on women's empowerment and the Government's social welfare schemes. The information from

the database allows the Government to have a continuous flow of information from the grassroots level to the top and vice versa. Each household member is provided appropriate and integrated assistance, which can be monitored through the common system. In addition, Samajik Suvidha also established special programs targeting special needs, including the Integrated Project for Homeless, Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) for skills development and training, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY) providing social health insurance, water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, among others. The programme has proved to be successful and has received increasing cooperation from civil society organizations.

Presentation of the concept and methodology for designing and implementing the SWS, by Valerie Schmitt.

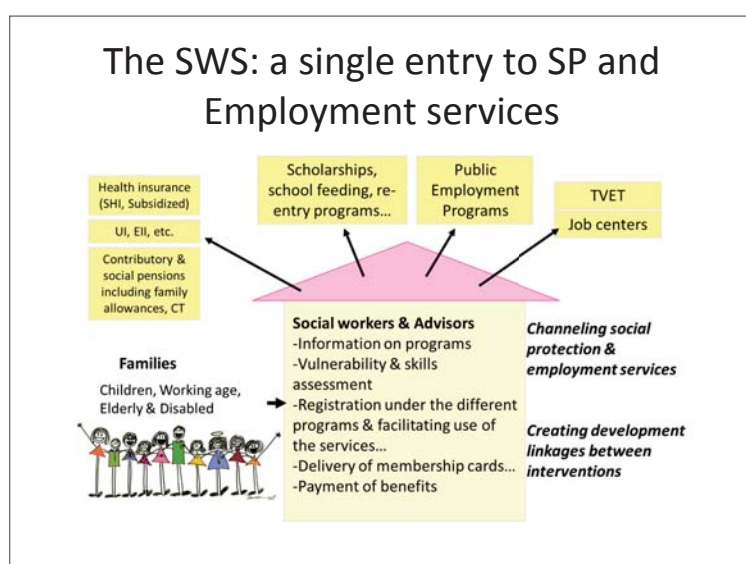


Illustration 7:
The single window service: a single entry to social protection and employment services (V. Schmitt, 2012).

Challenges yet hampering the proper provision of social protection services and benefits in many countries of the region will be addressed by implementing better coordinated and integrated policies, programmes, and delivery mechanisms. In Cambodia, different government agencies are providing social coverage in their respective areas without a unified approach. CARD has been involved in coordinating among the national and decentralized bodies and found that there is a need for the involved agencies to work under a unified database and improve coordination mechanisms. A common database would allow social workers to outreach to individuals and communities with specific needs and to provide combined benefit packages based on their specific needs. Under this method, we can overcome the existing administrative and geographical barriers. Theoretically, the SWS represents one entry point for individuals whose concerns will be analyzed from different development perspectives, resulting in an integrated assistance programme. The functions of social workers are needs assessment, facilitating membership registration until registrants receive membership cards, and ensuring the receipt of the combined benefit packages offered. Such a programme could offer basic social protection and services, which could lead to higher levels of employability and more sustainable incomes for households. Since the administration of the service is decentralized, subnational administration will therefore be empowered by being responsible for delivering such services. They will monitor, report the situation, and interact with the central unit through the existing modes of technology available in the area. CARD from Cambodia and TNP2K (National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction under the Ministry of National Development Planning, Bappenas) from Indonesia

can serve as evidence for such coordination. Before ending the presentation, the speaker described the process of operating an SWS programme. The first step is to perform a needs assessment and to select a pilot area. After the review of international experience and determination of the design, the pilot testing and its post-evaluation strategies can be rolled out.

Learning from international practices of single window service, by Diane Taieb, ILO Consultant, Cambodia.

In Brazil, under the Bolsa Familia program, a number of government agencies work closely through a common database with the Federal Bank which holds a performance-based contract with the State. Starting from the household survey and registration by the municipalities, the database is transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) who is responsible for analysing benefits eligibility for the family. Following MSD's instruction, the Federal Bank opens a bank account and transfers benefits to the family. They also partner with lottery points so that the community can have easier access to the programme. The Government also runs a ranking campaign to monitor quality and provide appropriate training to the local management unit. In Chile, the Chile Solidario programme was introduced as a form of contract between the household and the Government. Social workers visit each family on a regular basis during a period of 24 months. They discuss with the families and identify their needs. Once objectives to exit poverty circumstances are set, social workers will facilitate and provide assistance to the families until the objectives are met. Families would no longer need financial support from the Government after this two-year period. In Bangalore, India, LabourNet is operating in a form of social enterprise, bridging the social protection schemes and employment services via existing communication technologies. Micro- and small-entrepreneurs are registered and provided with certified training. They are able to open a bank account and benefit from social security schemes. In addition, they have access to job-matching services, which is funded through fees charged to both employers and workers. In conclusion, the key message conveyed by the speaker is that a combination of identification card, database, mobile technology, and the involvement of social workers and the civil society could contribute to more formalized conditions for informal workers.

Piloting experience of the People Service in Cambodia, by H.E. Sann Vathana, CARD, Valerie Schmitt and Diane Taieb.

A thorough analysis of the social protection programs in Cambodia shows that the existing services are limited in terms of geographical coverage, financial sustainability, and inter-agency coordination, which sometimes causes duplication in the activities' implementation. The major component of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) (2011–2015) is the People service. It is expected to support the coordination, harmonization, and rationalization of the NSPS programmes, provide a coherent institutional framework, support decentralization reforms, and empower the subnational institutions. Siem Reap Province has been

Illustration 9:
The People Service
in Cambodia
 (H.E. Sann Vathana,
 2012).



selected to be the pilot area for this initiative, which is expected to be launched in July 2012. All families will get a social protection card and information on existing services when they register at the People Service centres. The centres will input information related to the beneficiaries into a database at the national level. The centres are also registration points for all social protection programmes. The information will be cross-checked in the system and the applications will be forwarded to respective agencies.

Wrap up session

The moderator concluded that the concept of the single window service, shared to the participants both in theory and in practice, plays a critical role in providing social security. For instance, it facilitates a more accurate registration of beneficiaries, which allows a better targeting of the needed services and benefits. In addition, single window service offers better coordination among social protection and employment support provisions, thus reducing overlapping of resources. The issues concerning fund management and sustainability were illustrated. Nevertheless, the context of each country is different. The design and implementation of nationally defined programmes should, therefore, take into account the local circumstances.



**Session VII:
Challenges for the promotion of income security to informal
economy workers**

Moderated by Rath Rott Mony, Steering Committee Member, Cambodia Confederation of Unions (CCU), Cambodia.

Social protection, an increasing priority in ASEAN, by Braema Mathiapparanam, Regional President for South East Asia and Pacific, International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW).

ICSW is advocating for the implementation of SPFs in ASEAN countries following endorsement of the concept by the Sixth Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations during the Sixth ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) held in Bangkok in September 2011, and the preparation of an ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. Statistics indicate an alarming disparity between the 75 per cent of the world population still lacking appropriate social security and the 25 per cent of those covered who live in the highest income countries. In the specific context of ASEAN, challenges persist as most of ASEAN is still rural with industries supported by agriculture, with the exceptions of Singapore and Brunei. As a result of the largely agriculture-oriented economies in the region, more than half of the population in many countries are involved in the informal economy. Countries have to cope with the burden of restructuring, while countering the effects of workforce mobility and urbanization, which tend to break down traditional, family, and community based social protection systems. Migration is one of the other major concerns. Countries still struggle with poverty reduction due to various causes, such as lack of policy consistency, lack of political will, corruption, and change of leadership. In other words, neoliberal economic policies seem to have gained higher significance than societal concerns. It is important to note that several provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) clearly state that everyone has the right to social security and protection against unemployment. In particular, Article 22 of the UDHR clearly states that everyone has the right to social security and protection against unemployment.



Photo 5:
A happy life is a self-sufficient one in rural Thailand.

The United Nations is promoting the concept of the SPF which could help bridge the current social and economic divide. The SPF Initiative is considered a feasible solution to counter the growing inequalities in the region as it guarantees a minimum level of access to essential services and income security for all. It promotes access to comprehensive essential services and social transfers, as well as serves as a floor for those who fall and need to regain socio-economic stability. Its concept is different from safety nets in the sense that it is a systematic insurance against poverty for all residents, not

only the provision of scattered and discontinued assistance to the most vulnerable. Countries need to review some of their efforts to provide social protection to their populations. ASEAN member States have agreed to strengthen regional cooperation towards universal coverage of social protection to their people by ensuring a participatory and rights-based approach. Countries are keenly taking steps to provide such universal and minimum protection despite the challenges faced of informality, prioritizing the allocation of limited resources, and so on. For example, where a humanitarian response is needed, reconstruction activities can become an opportunity for sustainable and decent job creation. At the end of the presentation, the speaker proposed several recommendations for countries to consider, including the establishment of a national taskforce to work on social protection, capacity building, and greater collaboration with the private sector. The speaker also encouraged the participants to follow the results of the discussion on SPF which will take place in forthcoming international forums, notably the next G20 meetings and the International Labour Conference in June 2012.

Promoting income security for informal workers in Thailand, by Poonsap Thulaphan, Manager, Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (HomeNet), Thailand.

Photo 6:
Moto taxi driver in
Thailand.



The speaker presented HomeNet's experience in advocating for improved social protection coverage for informal economy workers in Thailand who still represent 62.3 per cent of the total population. HomeNet's work started in 1992 with the assistance of the ILO. HomeNet worked with other civil society organizations to advocate for the

National Health Security Act, which was enforced in 2002. This resulted in the implementation of the Universal Coverage Scheme (UCS), which provides social health insurance to informal workers and all other residents of Thailand who are not covered by the two existing social security schemes for civil servants and formal sector workers. Providing legal protection to informal economy workers is very challenging due to its unorganized nature and lack of bargaining power with employers. Since the start of HomeNet's advocacy in 2002, the Parliament finally passed the Home-workers Protection Act in September 2011, which will be enforced in May 2012. The Act will result in a minimum wage guarantee for all domestic workers. Concerning access to social security for informal workers, the Government announced in May 2011 that it will contribution up to 30 per cent of the total contribution under the Section 40 the Social Security Act B.E 2533 (1990) which specifically covers informal economy workers, noting that workers can contribute to the fund as self-employed on a voluntary basis. Workers insured under the 100 Thai baht (THB) monthly contribution scheme are entitled to sickness, disability, and death benefits. Those under the THB150 monthly contribution scheme are entitled to sickness, disability, death, and old-age benefits. As of March 2012, approximately

70,000 workers were registered in this Fund. It is expected that the number of insured persons will increase significantly with the newly announced reform that will partially subsidize the contribution. HomeNet also works with other issues, including occupational safety and health and income generation. The current social coverage for informal workers is being discussed widely in the country. While some consider it as a financial burden to the country, some are of the opinion that the benefits to the population are worth the 4 per cent of the country's GDP spent on the programmes. Among reluctant groups, the main concern raised is related to the Government's contribution to the Section 40 scheme since informal workers are perceived as no tax-payers by these groups. HomeNet responded to this argument by pointing out that informal economy workers pay general taxes in the form of Value Added Tax (VAT). HomeNet is also focusing on developing a legal framework for domestic workers and contract farmers, as well as the wider promotion of a SPF in Thailand.



Photo 8:
Tailor in Thailand.

Wrap up session

The representative from K-SPI/CTU of Indonesia raised questions on the possibility of formalizing the informal economy workers and their registration as trade union members. HomeNet Thailand shared that the key determinant is the law. Through registration to the social security system, we can consider that informal economy workers are indirectly formalized. However, Thailand has not yet ratified the relevant ILO Conventions, therefore informal economy workers in Thailand are not allowed to be members of trade unions. Braema Mathiaparanam clarified that ICSW advocates for the right to social security and universal access to a SPF. She also added that there is a need to review the concept of formality and informality as there is a need to increase unionization of workers. Rather than formalization, better protection of informal economy workers is to be promoted.

The moderator concluded that ASEAN member States have agreed on the general concept of the SPF. Thus, the States need to work with their partners to design policies which will push forward the implementation of the SPF in their respective countries. The example from Thailand has proven that informal economy workers can also benefit from their rightful entitlements, which was made possible thanks to continuous advocacy.



Session VIII: Adoption of recommendations on unemployment insurance, income security, and active labour market policies in ASEAN.

Participants were requested to divide into four groups to discuss possible recommendations on UI, income security measures for the working age, and ALMPs in ASEAN. Representatives from the tripartite constituents discussed in detail on the topics and came to joint recommendations aimed to improve income security and access to decent employment for all workers in the formal and informal economies in the region. These recommendations include:

- the need to develop adapted income security measures and ALMPs, including unemployment insurance benefits, to respond to specific needs and constraints of workers according to economic sectors, skill levels, age (youth unemployment was highlighted as a major concern), sex, disabilities, and so on;
- the urgent need to extend these measures to vulnerable workers;
- the necessity to work with workers and employers' organizations; and
- the need to improve the coordination and out-reach of services and benefits delivered to unemployed and vulnerable workers.

The Seminar agreed on the subsequent follow-up actions:

1. to continue sharing information and exchanging experiences among government officials, social partners, 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 social protection coverage and delivery of services;
2. to explore measures for improved protection against loss of employment, including measures for informal economy workers, through national dialogue with workers' and employers' representatives;
3. to map the social protection situations at national levels and subsequently identify and propose recommendations to fill the social protection gaps, in particular income security and better employment for vulnerable workers; and
4. 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.

The endorsed recommendations are available in Appendix I.



Closing remarks

Before closing the workshop, Celine Peyron Bista shared with the participants the progress made under the ILO/Japan ASEAN UI Project and proposed a list of activities for 2012 and 2013. The list includes:

1. a study visit of the unemployment insurance scheme of Thailand, July 2012;
2. an experts' meeting on the design of unemployment insurance system, September 2012;
3. a symposium on the implementation of integrated social protection and employment services, May 2013; and
4. a hands-on training on the design and implementation of unemployment protection measures, October 2013.

There was no comment from the participants on the proposed activities.

Vo Hong Quang, VGCL, Viet Nam, shared that this ASEAN Seminar has brought to the attention of the participants a great deal of international experiences which are valuable for the work of respective stakeholders. The tripartite members of Viet Nam are committed to working closely with MoLISA to develop a law that ensures the rights of workers.

Nguyen Hong Anh, VCCI, Viet Nam, expressed the employers group's gratitude to the organizing committee and participants of the seminar. She concluded that social protection is key to pursue sustainable economic growth in the region and it is the responsibility of all partners to work together to achieve at least the social protection floor in all countries.

Valerie Schmitt, ILO, expressed her appreciation to all participants, resource persons, MoLISA, and ASEAN Secretariat for making the Seminar a successful event. She expected that the ideas to improve protection of unemployed and vulnerable workers will be carried back to the home countries to be shared among their respective agencies. She encouraged the constituents to take concrete actions to promote social protection for formal and informal economy workers under an integrated approach. The ILO remains committed and stands ready to continue supporting the design and implementation of social protection measures in ASEAN countries.

Nguyen Dai Dong, Director of BOE, MOLISA, Viet Nam, thanked the ASEAN Secretariat, Embassy of Japan, the ILO, participants and resource persons for their cooperation and fruitful discussion during the seminar. MoLISA expressed its appreciation to ILO and the Government of Japan for their continuous support to Viet Nam in particular, but also to the rest of the region. He wishes to see the recommendations put into practice in the respective countries.



Visit to Binh Duong Employment Service Centre

The visit, on 20 March 2012, was designed to introduce to participants the functions and tasks of an ESC in Vietnam that provides services to workers and employers. The delegation included 39 ASEAN participants and resource persons.

The Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DoLISA) of Binh Duong delivered three presentations: (i) overview of the labour market of Binh Duong, (ii) organizational structure and key functions of the ESC, and (iii) UI services.

Binh Duong province is now in the process of heavy industrialization. Approximately 700,000 to 800,000 workers are working in 14 industrial zones across Binh Duong. 70 per cent of the workers are women and 85 per cent are migrants from other provinces. 90 per cent of the workers hold formal contracts with their employers. The employment support services, in particular, are being offered through the operation of the ESC. The main activities of the ESC are to (i) organize monthly job fairs in factories and provide job counselling for workers, (ii) set up networks and linkages with other provinces in order to mobilize workers across the provinces, (iii) enhance the quality of employment services in the province, (iv) implement UI, and (v) support enterprises in the recruitment of workers from other provinces.

Ms. Huong, Director of Binh Duong ESC, described in detail the organizational structure and functions of the ESC. The centre and its three branches in the city offer a variety of employment services free of charge to both workers and employers. Concerning industrial relations matters, the ESC provides training and disseminates information to workers and employers, as well as acts as a mediator when there are disputes.

In terms of job counselling, apart from the generic function of individual counselling services, the ESC also organizes group counselling for those with specific conditions, such as former military officials, undergraduate students, and secondary school students. The ESC advertises and recruits workers for enterprises and vice versa, as well as transfer workers who are laid off from bankrupted businesses to the others. Its job counselling and job matching services are also available online. Each monthly job fair attracts from 60 to 100 employers. According to the monitoring record, low-skilled workers can easily find jobs through the fair, while the high-skilled ones often need to follow other recruitment steps.

The UI division was established in December 2009 and operates through nine units that cover different stages of UI operations. The number of staff working for UI accounts for half of the total ESC staff. The UI office under this ESC receives about 400-500 cases of UI registration every day.

The last working section was followed by a tour around different departments under the ESC: information division, job counselling, UI front-line office, UI claims processing office, and filing.

Wrap-up session

In response to the questions and comments from the representatives of CAMFEBEA, CCU, Ministry of Labour of Lao PDR, and the ILO, the representatives of Binh Duong ESC clarified that unemployment rate in the province is 1.7 per cent. The contributions come from government, workers, and employers, and the benefits vary according to years of contribution. The representatives added that the Government also provides benefits such as social housing and other allowances. The challenges to operate the ESC functions are found in the labour market information analysis and the ESC's limitations in offering services to skilled workers and those who live in remote districts with limited access to information.

Appendix I: Recommendations

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.

Appendix II: Agenda

Tuesday 20 March 2012

- 12.00–14.00 Registration
14.00–17.00 Study visit to Binh Duong Employment Service Centre
19.00 Reception Dinner

Wednesday 21 March 2012

- 08.30–09.00 Opening Remarks
- H.E. Nguyen Thanh Hoa,
Vice Minister, MoLISA
 - Duma Yanti Theresa,
*Technical Officer for Labour and Migrant Workers,
ASEAN Secretariat*
 - Gyorgy Sziraczki,
Director, ILO Country Office for Viet Nam
 - Yasumitsu Kida,
Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Vietnam
- 09.00–09.30 Coffee break
- 09.30–10.50 **Session I: Social Security Extension: ILO Conventions and framework**
Moderator: Le Quang Trung, *Vice director of BoE, MOLISA,
Viet Nam*
- ILO Conventions related to social security, SPF and upcoming Recommendation 202, social security stair cases, and relevance in Asia, by Valerie Schmitt, *ILO Social Security Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
 - ILO Social Protection Floor movie
 - Addressing the challenges of the informal economy workers, lessons learnt from Cambodia, by H.E. Sann Vathana, *Deputy Secretary General, CARD, Cambodia*
 - ILO Convention No. 168, EI/UI concepts, international comparison of UI models, by Celine Peyron Bista, *Chief Technical Advisor, ILO/Japan-ASEAN UI Project, ILO Bangkok*
- Q&A session
- 10.50–12.00 **Session II: Unemployment situation in ASEAN**
Moderator: Vonny Diananto, *Vice President, Confederation of Indonesian Trade*
- Employment and unemployment trends in ASEAN, by Sukti Dasgupta, *Senior Labour Market and Human Resources Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
 - Youth unemployment characteristics and possible responses in ASEAN, by Matthieu Cognac, *Youth Employment Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
- Q&A session
- 12.00–13.00 Lunch

13.00–14.30 **Session III: Promoting unemployment insurance and employment services in ASEAN**

Moderator: Van Sou Ieng, *President, CAMFEBA, Cambodia*

- Moving from severance pay to unemployment insurance: Asian experiences and justification, by Yasuhito Asami, *Professor, University of Tokyo, Japan*
- Lessons learnt from seven years' implementation of the UI scheme in Thailand, by Worawan Chandoevmit, *Research Director, Social Security, Human Resources and Social Development, TDRI, Thailand*
- Reinforcing linkages with employment under the UI scheme in Viet Nam, by Le Quang Trung, *Vice Director of BoE, MOLISA, Viet Nam*

Q&A session

14.30–14.50 Coffee break

14.50–17.00 **Session IV: Building national consensus on UI and employment services**

Moderator: Dayangku Siti Khatizah bte Pg Hj Bakar, *Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Ministry of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam*

- Perspectives from governments on relevance of unemployment protection and the role of the public employment services
 - by Arief Winasis, *Head of the Subdivision of Evaluation and Reporting, Directorate General of Industrial Relation Development and Workers' Social Security, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia*
 - by Stella Banawis, *Executive Director, Employees Compensation Commission, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines*
 - by Leong Wai Peng, *Manager, Income Security Policy Division, Ministry of Manpower, Singapore*
- Malaysia's experience in building consensus
 - by Andrew Lo Kian Nyan, *Chief Executive Officer, Sarawak Bank Employees Union Malaysian Trade Union Congress*
 - by Mohd Zakri bin Baharudin, *Senior Manager- Employers Affairs, Malaysia Employers' Federation*
- Experience of the social partners in building consensus on UI design and implementation in Viet Nam
 - by Vu Hong Quang, *Officer, VGCL*
 - by Nguyen Hong Anh, *Board member, VCCI*

Q&A session

Thursday 22 March 2012**08.30–10.00 Session V: Protecting and creating employment security for vulnerable workers**

Moderator: Ferdinand Diaz, *Co-Chair, Working Group on Labor and Social Policy Issues, Employers' Confederation of the Philippines*

- Perspective and international practices to provide income security and employment security for the informal economy and unemployed youth, by Celine Peyron Bista (*ILO*) and Ahn Pong-Sul, *Senior Workers' Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
- ILO movie "Building a Social Protection Floor in Thailand for the working age population"
- Employment through public investments, by Chris Donnges, *Senior Specialist on Employment Intensive Investments, ILO Bangkok*

Q&A session

10.00–10.20 Coffee break

10.20–12.00 Session VI: The single window service: Concept, design and implementation

Moderator: Prasong Vongkhamchanh, *Deputy Director General, Skills Development and Employment Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR*

- Presentation of the concept and methodology for designing and implementing the SWS, by Valerie Schmitt, *ILO*
- Learning from international practices, by Diane Taieb, *ILO Consultant, Cambodia*
- Piloting experience of the People Service in Cambodia, by H.E. Sann Vathana, *CARD, Cambodia and Diane Taieb, ILO*
- Addressing vulnerability and inclusiveness, experience of Delhi Mission Convergence, by Vandana Singh, *Advisor Finance, Mission Convergence, India*

Q&A session

12.00–13.00 Lunch

13.00–13.50 Session VII: Challenges for the promotion of income security for the informal economy workers

Moderator: Rath Rott Mony, *Steering Committee Member, Cambodia Confederation of Unions*

- Braema Mathiapparanam, *Regional President for South East Asia and Pacific, International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW)*
- Poonsap Thulapan, *Manager, Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (Homenet), Thailand*

Q&A session

- 13.50–16.20 **Session VIII: Exchange of views on how to promote further and implement income and employment security for the working-age population**
Moderator: Le Quang Trung, *MOLISA, Viet Nam*
- Groups' Discussions
 - Restitution of the groups' work and open discussions on effective policy and measures to implement social protection and income security for the working age in ASEAN
 - Review and suggestions for the coming activities under the ASEAN UI Project and the creation a regional network of experts
- 16.20–16.35 Coffee break
- 16.35–17.00 **Session IX: Closing remarks:**
- Vo Hong Quang,
Officer, VGCL
 - Nguyen Hong Anh,
Board member, VCCI
 - Valerie Schmitt,
Social Security Specialist, ILO
 - Nguyen Dai Dong,
Director General, Bureau of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam

Appendix III: Presentations

All presentations can be downloaded from:

<http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowProjectPage.do?pid=1547>

Wednesday 21st March 2012

Session I: Social Security Extension: ILO Conventions and framework

- ILO Conventions related to Social Security, SPF and upcoming Recommendation 202, Social security stair cases, and relevance in Asia, *by Valerie Schmitt, ILO Social Security Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
- Addressing the challenges of the informal economy workers, lessons learnt from Cambodia, *by H.E. Sann Vathana, Deputy Secretary General, CARD, Cambodia*
- ILO Convention No.168, EI/UI concepts, international comparison of UI models, *by Celine Peyron Bista, Chief Technical Advisor, ILO/ Japan-ASEAN UI Project, ILO Bangkok*

Session II: Unemployment situation in ASEAN

- Employment and unemployment trends in ASEAN, *by Sukti Dasgupta, Senior Labour Market and Human Resources Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
- Youth unemployment characteristics and possible responses in ASEAN, *by Matthieu Cognac, Youth Employment Specialist, ILO Bangkok*

Session III: Promoting Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in ASEAN

- Moving from severance pay to unemployment insurance: Asian experiences and justification, *by Asami, Professor, University of Tokyo, Japan.*
- Lessons learnt from seven years' implementation of the UI scheme in Thailand, *by Worawan, Research Director, TDRI, Thailand*
- Reinforcing linkages with employment under the UI scheme in Viet Nam, *by Le Quang Trung, Vice Director of BoE, MOLISA, Viet Nam*

Session IV: Building National Consensus on UI and employment services

- Perspectives from governments on relevance of unemployment protection and the role of the public employment services:
 - *Arief Winasis, Head of the Subdivision of Evaluation and Reporting, Directorate General of Industrial Relation Development and Workers' Social Security, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia*
 - *Stella Banawis, Executive Director, Employees Compensation Commission, DOLE, Philippines*
 - *Leong Wai Peng, Manager, Income Security Policy Division, Ministry of Manpower, Singapore*

- Malaysia's experience in building consensus:
 - *Andrew Lo Kian Nyan, Chief Executive Officer, Sarawak Bank Employees Union, Malaysian Trade Union Congress*
 - *Mohd Zakri bin Baharudin, Senior Manager- Employers Affairs Malaysia Employers' Federation*
- Experience of the social partners in building consensus on UI design and implementation in Viet Nam:
 - *Vu Hong Quang, Officer, Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour*
 - *Nguyen Hong Anh, Board Member, Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

Thursday 22nd March 2012

Session V: **Protecting and creating employment security for vulnerable workers**

- Perspective and international practices to provide income security and employment security for the informal economy and unemployed youth, *by Celine Peyron Bista, ILO*
- GEFONT Social Welfare Schemes in Nepal, *by Ahn Pong-Sul, Senior Workers' Specialist, ILO Bangkok*
- ILO movie "Building a Social Protection Floor in Thailand for the working age population"
- Employment through public investments, *by Chris Donnges, Senior Specialist on Employment Intensive Investments, ILO Bangkok*
- Social Security Scheme of Lao PDR, *by Prasong Vongkhamchanh, Deputy Director General, Skills Development and Employment Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR*

Session VI: **The single window service: concept, design and implementation**

- Presentation of the concept and methodology for designing and implementing the SWS, *by Valerie Schmitt, ILO*
- Learning from international practices, *by Diane Taieb, ILO Consultant, Cambodia*
- Piloting experience of the People Service in Cambodia, *by H.E. Sann Vathana, CARD, Cambodia and Diane Taieb, ILO*
- Addressing vulnerability and inclusiveness, experience of Delhi Mission Convergence, *by Vandana Singh, Finance advisor, Mission Convergence, India*

Session VII: **Challenges for the promotion of income security for the informal economy workers**

- *Braema Mathiapparanam, Regional President for South East Asia and the Pacific, International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), Singapore*
- *Poonsap Thulapan, President, Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (Homenet), Thailand*

Appendix IV: List of participants and resource persons

Brunei Darussalam

1. Ms Norzaridahbinti Haji Zainal
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