



**The 11th ASEAN Regional Tripartite Social Dialogue Conference  
“Building Back Better for Cohesive and Responsive  
ASEAN Post COVID-19 Pandemic”  
17 – 18 December 2020, Viet Nam**

**Conference Conclusions and Recommendations**

The 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Tripartite Social Dialogue Conference (11<sup>th</sup> ARTSDC) was convened virtually on 17-18 December 2020. In response to the current the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic situation, the 11<sup>th</sup> ARTSDC was held with the theme “Building Back Better for Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Post COVID-19 Pandemic.”

The conference was jointly organised by the ASEAN Services Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC), the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM), the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE), ASEAN Secretariat, and with the full assistance of the host Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) Viet Nam and the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Germany. We acknowledge the contributions from UNESCAP and ILO.

The 11<sup>th</sup> ARTSDC acknowledge the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to public health, to livelihoods and the socio-economic fabric of the ASEAN community.

We recognise that the pandemic necessitates a seismic shift in public policy responses of the level not seen in the history of ASEAN. We will deepen our resolve to work in solidarity as tripartite partners. Together we will work to shape a healthier, more equitable and more just and sustainable region.

We recognise that we cannot rely totally on existing systems and we can never go back to business as usual. Instead, we will build back better.

We recognise the sacrifice and efforts that health workers - over 70% of whom are women - and other essential workers are performing to keep communities healthy. We express our deep respect, sincerest gratitude, and solidarity to those workers.

We commit ourselves to recognising the efforts of governments, employers, businesses, unions, and workers through a renewed shared commitment to Decent Work through social dialogue, ensuring that no one is left behind, in the ASEAN region.

We underlined the need for coordinated cooperation amongst ASEAN’s tripartite partners to build back better in accordance with ASEAN Vision 2025, ASEAN



Comprehensive Recovery Framework, ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work, and Joint Statement of ASEAN Labour Ministers on Response to the Impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on Labour and Employment.

The 11<sup>th</sup> ARTSDC agree that governments, employers' organisations, and trade unions of the ASEAN Member States will strengthen cooperation in this challenging time and take the following actions:

1. Use tripartite mechanisms of social dialogue to shape COVID-19 Recovery Plans designed to reduce inequalities, provide decent work, advance sustainable development for all, and build back better.
2. Expand support for social protection to all workers including informal sector, migrant workers, and the most vulnerable workers, ensuring unemployment benefits, disability support, pensions, maternity, and child support are available for all where possible.
3. Prioritise protection and decent work for health, emergency services and essential workers. Commit to the implementation of the recommendations of the WHO – ILO High Level Commission on Health, Employment and Economic Growth (COMHEEG) to attract, train and retain health workers in the region.
4. Ensure all workers have access to appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) following WHO guidelines (or higher), regular free or affordable testing, to workspaces that allow for social distancing or protection, and to free or affordable medical treatment, paid medical leaves and vaccines when they are made available.
5. Build COVID-19 Recovery Plans that advance gender equality by increasing support for public care facilities, increasing opportunities for decent work, including by reducing the gender pay gap in health and care work and moving toward the implementation of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (C190).
6. Recognise the important role of public services in responding to this pandemic, to other crises and in reducing inequalities. We will build back better public services that increase public health, resilience and prepare for more climate resilient economies that support just transition.
7. Provide greater attention to lifelong learning that consists of basic education, technical and vocational education, and training (TVET), higher education, skills development as well as skill certification and ASEAN Mutual



Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) through a human-centred approach with the main goal of achieving decent work for all workers, to prepare the workforce to meet current and future skills needs.

8. Encourage governments, employers, and trade unions to engage in social dialogue on how where possible jobs can be preserved, how job losses can be minimized, how new skills can be developed to keep workers in their jobs and how new jobs can be created to ensure that there are minimum job losses during and post COVID-19 pandemic. Government will take, a central coordinating role to facilitate the dialogue process among parties.
9. Ensure that all workers who have become unemployed because of the pandemic are provided where applicable with adequate compensation by employers and receive adequate social assistance from the government in accordance with respective ASEAN Member States' laws, regulations, and policies.
10. Further strengthen the effectiveness and expand the coverage of occupational safety and health standards at the workplace through social dialogue during the pandemic, by classifying COVID-19 as occupational disease for essential workers, encouraging preventive, promotive, reproductive, and mental health, as well as making COVID testing and vaccine free or affordable for all, including vulnerable groups like migrant workers and informal workers.
11. Enhance cooperation and coordination with tripartite partners and encourage the institutionalisation of policies for partnership and social dialogue at all levels of – enterprise, industry, national, regional, and global, post-pandemic recovery plan.

The participants agreed that given the impact of COVID-19, none of us is safe unless we are all safe. Therefore, strengthening social partnership in the COVID-19 pandemic is central to building a people-centred ASEAN. The tripartite partners must share responsibility and work in solidarity to deliver our region a healthier, kinder, more equitable future for all.

We are thankful to the excellent arrangements of the conference hosted by Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) Vietnam and gratefulness to all the participants involved in this 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Tripartite Social Dialogue Conference (11<sup>th</sup> ARTSDC). We hope the next ARTSDC will be held in Brunei Darussalam next year.