
EXPERT GROUP MEETING: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

29-30 July 2021, 09:00-16:00 (Thailand Standard Time), Virtual

Concept Note

I. Background

Productive employment and decent work is central to enabling persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in society and to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

Of the estimated 472 million persons with disabilities of working age in Asia and the Pacific¹, many are unemployed, underemployed and excluded from the labour market. Based on data reported by Asia-Pacific governments, persons with disabilities are approximately two to six times less likely to be employed than persons without disabilities. The labour force participation rates of persons with disabilities are also two to five times lower than that of persons without disabilities. Up to three quarters of employed persons with disabilities work in the informal economy, with the share of informal workers ranging from 28 to 92 per cent across the developing countries of the region². Such unemployment, underemployment and exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market incur social and economic losses estimated at between 3 and 7 per cent of gross domestic product.³

In this context, it is critical for governments, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, private sector organizations and civil society actors to join hands in increasing quality employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, including through the mainstreaming of disability inclusion into employment systems and labour markets through legislation, policies and programming.

II. Objective

Against this background, ESCAP is organizing an expert group meeting to review the state of employment for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, with the following aims:

- A. To analyze the design and implementation of disability-related employment promotion frameworks, instruments, systems and interventions at the legislative, policy, programmatic and institutional levels;
- B. To study models of partnerships between governments, organizations of persons with disabilities, private sector organizations, and civil society organizations that effectively promote employment for persons with disabilities;

¹ Calculated as 15 per cent of the ESCAP estimate that 3,144,378,848 of the Asia and Pacific population are of working age at mid-year 2020. Source: ESCAP, "Population and development indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2020", Data Sheet (Bangkok, 2020).

² ESCAP, *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific. Assessing the Progress of the Incheon Strategy* (Bangkok, 2018).

³ Based on an exploratory study of ten low- and middle-income developing countries in Africa and Asia. Source: ILO, "The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work", Employment Working Paper No.43 (Geneva, 2009).

- C. To facilitate exchange of good practices and experiences in promoting the rights and needs of persons with diverse disabilities in accessing and maintaining employment; and
- D. To explore recommendations to further empower persons with disabilities in the evolving world of work, including in the context of technological advancements and new work modalities in the post-COVID world.

Outcomes and findings of the meeting, including gaps, challenges, good practices and lessons identified – will inform content of the 2021 edition of “Disability at a Glance”, ESCAP’s biennial publication on the state of disability inclusion in Asia and the Pacific.

III. Participants

The meeting will bring together experts in the area of disability-inclusive employment from Governments, persons with diverse disabilities and their representative organizations, civil society organizations, private sector organizations, United Nations entities and other international organizations.

IV. Meeting platform and reasonable accommodation

The meeting will be conducted on the Microsoft Teams platform. Real-time captioning and sign-language interpretation will be available.

V. Contact for further information

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Tentative Agenda

Thursday, 29 July 2021 (Day One)	
09:00-09:15	<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming and opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Srinivas Tata, Director, ESCAP Social Development Division • Introduction of meeting objectives and agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, ESCAP
09:15-10:30	<p>Item 1: The state of employment of persons with disabilities</p> <p><u>Expert Presentations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the employment status of persons with disabilities - country case studies from Asia and the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Kamal Lamichhane, Associate Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba • Measuring work outcomes by disability status: findings from national surveys and censuses in Asia and the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Sophie Mitra, Professor of Economics, Fordham University • Integrating the Washington Group-ILO disability module into labour force surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Daniel Mont, Chair, Disability Module for Labor Force Surveys Workgroup <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p>
10:30-11:30	<p>Item 2: Disability-inclusive employment and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p> <p><u>Expert Presentations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRPD harmonization in the context of employment in Asia and the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Andrew Byrnes, Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales • Interpretation of Article 27 for application to national realities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Esteban Tromel, Senior Disability Specialist, ILO <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p>
11:30-12:15	<p>Lunch break</p>
12:15-14:00	<p>Item 3: Legal and policy instruments to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of employment</p> <p><u>Expert Presentations</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of employment quota systems for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Barbara Murray, Senior Expert on Disability-Inclusive Employment • Preferential contracting as a tool to promote disability-inclusive employment in Asia and the Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Michael Szporluk, Senior Expert on Disability Inclusion • Establishing robust grievance redressal mechanisms to promote anti-discrimination in the labour market – the case of India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Thakur D. Dhariyal, President, National Association for the Blind-Delhi, India, and Advisor-Disability, CBM India • Integrated policy interventions for employment creation at subnational levels – the case of China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Zhou Kai, Deputy Director, Education and Employment Department, China Disabled Persons' Federation <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p>
14:00-14:30	<p>Thematic Spotlight 1: Social protection as a tool in promoting employment for persons with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Alexandre Cote, Disability and Social Protection Specialist, UNICEF
14:30-16:00	<p>Item 4: Forms and modalities of employment</p> <p><u>Expert Presentations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating supported and open employment through partnerships between government and the social sector – the case of Hong Kong, China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Deborah Wan, former Chair, Employment Subcommittee of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, Hong Kong, China, and former CEO, New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association • Promoting employment of persons with autism through social enterprises – the case of Thai Autism Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Samrerng Virachanang, First Vice President, Thai Parents Association of Persons with Autism • Job coaching as a tool for sustained employment in the open labour market – the case of Job Coach Network Malaysia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Yeo Swee Lan, Certified Senior Job Coach Trainer, Job Coach Network Malaysia • Pathways from sheltered to supported employment – the case of Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Linda Steele, Senior Lecturer of Law, University of Technology Sydney, and Mr. Sam Sondhi, Chief Executive Officer, Outlook (Aust.) Limited <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p>

Friday, 30 July 2021 (Day Two)	
09:00-09:30	<p>Thematic Spotlight 2: Protecting and empowering women with disabilities in the context of employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Tricia Malowney, President, Women with Disabilities Australia
09:30-11:15	<p>Item 5: Employment support services for disability-inclusive employment</p>

	<p><u>From the employee's perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience sharing on seeking and maintaining employment for Deaf persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Anthony Chong of Malaysia <p><u>Roundtable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and operationalizing needs-relevant employment support services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Song Moon Hyun, Executive Director, and Ms. Jung Min Jeon, Team Leader (International Cooperation), Korea Employment Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Republic of Korea ❖ Ms. Phyllis Choo, Director of Planning, SG Enable, Singapore ❖ Mr. Rick Kane, Chief Executive Officer, Disability Employment Australia ❖ Mr. Supornthum Mongkolsawadi, Secretary General, Redemptorist Foundation for People with Disabilities, Thailand <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p>
11:15-12:00	<p>Thematic Spotlight 3: Supporting employers through business and disability networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Joni Simpson, Senior Specialist in Gender, Equality and Non-Discrimination, ILO ❖ Mr. Ramya Prajna S. (Rama), CEO, Think.Web
12:00-12:45	<p>Lunch break</p>
12:45-13:15	<p>Thematic Spotlight 4: Supporting entrepreneurs with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Manique Gunaratne, Manager (Specialised Training & Disability Resource Centre), Employers' Federation of Ceylon
13:15-14:30	<p>Item 6: Disability-inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training</p> <p><u>Expert Presentations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a disability-inclusive TVET system from policy to institutions – the case of Bangladesh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Kishore Singh, Senior Regional Skills Specialist, ILO • Integrating disability inclusion into TVET sector-planning – the case of Vanuatu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ms. Sherol George, Inclusion Program Manager, Vanuatu Skills Partnership • Providing relevant skills training for the labour market in disability-specific TVET schools and education institutions – the case of Caritas Lok Mo Integrated Vocational Training Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Nicky Chan, Senior Manager, Caritas Lok Mo Integrated Vocational Training Centre, Hong Kong, China <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p>
14:30-15:45	<p>Item 7: Envisioning regional priorities for the next phase of disability-inclusive development in the context of employment</p> <p><u>Plenary Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowing the remaining gaps in facilitating employment for persons with disabilities • Riding the waves of technological advancements and new modalities of work to build back better in the post-COVID world
15:45	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP