



**High-Level Panel Discussion on
National Initiatives to Implement the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social
Protection in Asia and the Pacific
CONCEPT NOTE**

6 September 2022, 14:10-15:00 hrs., UN Conference Centre, Bangkok and online

Agenda Item 3: Strategies for strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific

BACKGROUND

The seventh Session of the Committee on Social Development comes at a critical juncture for sustainable development. Governments' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have showcased the centrality of social protection as a bulwark against shocks and life contingencies. Their adoption of the *Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific* at the sixth session of this Committee further signaled an increased commitment to social protection.

Despite these commitments and widespread acknowledgement, social protection coverage remains low. Throughout the region, more than half of the population has not even access to one social protection scheme. Shortcomings in legislative and regulatory frameworks, institutional and delivery mechanisms, high levels of informality, as well as fragmented systems are common explanations for weak social protection systems. Another key constraint is the low level of investment in social protection, with ESCAP member States spending, on average, only 4.9 per cent of GDP, far below the global average of 12.9 per cent of GDP.

The *Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific* serves as a shared vision, strategy and platform for countries to extend social protection for all. Agenda item 3 of this Committee session will consider national implementation measures of the Action Plan. Prior to the country dialogue a panel discussion will take place that will deliberate on countries readiness to implement the Action Plan.

OBJECTIVES

The panel discussion will share country experiences on efforts to enhance institutional coordination and delivery mechanisms, as well as key bottlenecks to further strengthening of social protection systems. The discussion also aims to kickstart interventions by member States on measures taken to implement the Action Plan.

ORGANIZATION & SPEAKERS

The panel discussion on *National Initiatives to Implement the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific* is organized in under Agenda item 3 of the seventh session of the Committee on Social Development. The documentation for the agenda item is contained in ESCAP/CSD/2022/2.

The panel discussion will consist of two prominent government officials, one United Nations representative and one academic expert:

- H.E. Ms. Ariunzaya Ayush, Senior Adviser and Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, Mongolia
- H.E. Mr. Boros Samheng, Minister, Delegation Attached to Prime Minister and Secretary of State of Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
- Ms. Celia Reyes, former President, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Philippines
- Ms. Catherine Haswell, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Maldives

Moderator: Mr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP