

VIRTUALIZING POLICIES, PRACTICES AND WAY FORWARD: WORKERS' PERSPECTIVE



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Regional Conference on "Promoting Decent Work for Older Persons for an Inclusive Society in ASEAN+3: Strengthening A More Resilient and Inclusive Society During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic"

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ATUC PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES:



- The fundamental principles and rights at work and core labor standards guide ATUC and its affiliates in pushing for a social pillar to achieve decent work and fair distribution of the benefits of ASEAN integration.
- Decent work helps workers and their families to live with dignity and the quality, not just the quantity, of jobs must be guaranteed. The social partners should work together to provide and achieve decent work for all.



- 10 ATUC's affiliates:

Cambodia (CCTU, CLC, CCU)

Indonesia (KSPI/CITU, KSPSI, KSBSI)

East Timor (KSTL/TLTUC)

Laos (LFTU),

Malaysia (MTUC)

Myanmar (CTUM)

Philippines (TUCP, FFW)

Singapore (NTUC)

Thailand (LCT, NCPE, SERC, TTUC) **Vietnam** (VGCL)

- ATUC represents 13 million workers/members.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LABOUR



ASEAN
Rapid Assessment:

The Impact of COVID-19
on Livelihoods across ASEAN



Full Publication: https://asean.org/storage/ASEAN-Rapid-Assessment_Final-23112020.pdf

ASEAN's connectedness to the global economy, through tourism, exports and international labour migration, a source of strength in the past, now contributes to its vulnerability.

Four ways in which COVID-19 has affected labour, including migrant labour:

1. **Through lockdowns** either nationally or at local levels;
2. **Through social or physical distancing** even after a lockdown or in the absence of a lockdown;
3. **Through reduction in aggregate demand** due to reduced purchasing power within-country and abroad;
4. **Through disruption in supply chains.**

- I. Key concerns & challenges in during the COVID-19 pandemic
- II Recommendations & suggestions to move forward

I. KEY CONCERNS & CHALLENGES IN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



- Employment situation has always been changing due to the latest development of Digital technology.
 1. Automation system would replace the human causing the lots of workers getting laid off.
 2. Formal workers are forced to become precarious-contracted workers, informal workers, or even unemployed workers, with less protected by the National Labour protection Act.
- Additionally, COVID-19 pandemic would cause the working situation getting worse more quickly because the businesses were forced to be temporarily closed due to the state of emergency or country locked down, and also some state policy such as social distancing, etc.
- Vulnerability and precarious employment of workers: both formal and informal workers, were labour-violated.
 1. Laid off without compensation
 2. Temporarily closed without pay or pay less, not enough for living.
 3. Informal workers, such as street food, restaurants, gift shop were forced to out of business, but the government did not subsidized or subsidized with difficulty of conditions to comply.
 4. Workers are risk group for infection, but the government's vaccination policy put less important for them to get access to the COVID-19 vaccination, causing seriously infected cluster from construction workers, for example Thailand case.

I. KEY CONCERNS & CHALLENGES IN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



- Digital Technology create the new and innovative business for employment, i.e. Gig. economy workers (platform workers, temporary workers, etc.), but they are less protected by the National Labour Protection Act.
- In some countries, migrant workers have difficulty to access to COVID-19 vaccination and medical treatment, and also the employers tend to treat them badly and violently against the labour laws if infected.
- Older workers & pre-elderly workers are among the first groups to be laid off when businesses encounter with the economic problems, and they are no way to return back to formal-economy working.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS TO MOVE FORWARD



Some specific recommendations and actions for older workers:

1. Retirement counseling, extended medical insurance, improved retirement benefits.
2. Higher benefits as optional retirement or separation with higher years of service
3. Preference for qualified family of retiring workers
4. Lighter assignments for older persons to be able to continually use the company facilities, eg, sports, clinic.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS TO MOVE FORWARD



Moving forward:

1. In consultation with unions, employers and other stakeholders, countries should adopt a policy, framework or strategy for **decent work for older workers or persons**, including prolonging the working lives of the elderly. These national strategies should be the basis for an ASEAN + 3 framework with flexible approach using digital solutions or platforms
2. Create the better labour protection for informal workers, such as elderly pension of social protection scheme, so that they would be guarantee to have decent living after getting retired.
3. Government should learn from the other countries for the best practices to manage the COVID-19 pandemic situation to prepare country for better management of the deadly virus pandemic situation.
4. Government should provide equally access for the elderly to get vaccinated against COVID-19.
5. Government should ratify the ILO Convention No. 87,98 so that workers would have their organization, i.e. trade unions, to represent the workers in order to do execute the social dialogue for the benefits of worker and also to create good collaboration and strong tripartism in the workplace.
6. Emphasize on the importance of mutual effort in build back better:
 - To employers: create good Industrial relations,
 - To workers: encourage the pre-elderly and older persons to develop their skills.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS TO MOVE FORWARD



ARCF (ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework) and its Implementation Plan

Some of the regional initiatives on labour in ACRF:

- ▶ Adaptation of TVET curricula to the post-COVID-19 future of work;
- ▶ Promotion of business models that incorporate reskilling and up-skilling of workers;
- ▶ Promotion of measures to safeguard employment and support the unemployed in the COVID-19 most affected sectors;
- ▶ Identification of regional gaps/issues in existing policies in addressing labour concerns under new normal (e.g. WFH arrangements, OSH standards, and responsiveness of social security); and
- ▶ Fostering regional social dialogue to maintain responsiveness of labour policies in the new normal

The details are accessible here: <https://asean.org/asean-comprehensive-recovery-framework-implementation-plan/>

II. RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS TO MOVE FORWARD



13th AFML Theme (2020)

“Supporting Migrant Workers during the Pandemic for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community”

Sub-theme 1: Impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers and response in ASEAN

5 recommendations on areas of:

- ▶ Health risk and vulnerabilities of migrant workers
- ▶ Labour rights, job security and social protection
- ▶ Access of migrant workers to: information, essential health care and protective, relief/income support
- ▶ Return and reintegration

Sub-theme 2: Cohesive and responsive labour migration policy for future preparedness in ASEAN

7 recommendations on areas of:

- ▶ Improving housing and OSH standards
- ▶ Extending migrant workers social protection
- ▶ Emergency and pandemic preparation
- ▶ Access to up-skilling and re-skilling
- ▶ Guidelines for labour migration management in the new normal (deployment, placement, workplace)

The recommendations are accessible here: https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/13th-AFML-Recommendations_FINAL.pdf.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

Question and Answer.