



International Webinar Social Protection in the Face of Digitalisation and Economic Uncertainties

Virtual, 25 November 2021

Mega Irena

Assistant Director and Head of Labour and Civil Service Division

The ASEAN Secretariat



Impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable workers in ASEAN



ASEAN
Rapid Assessment:

The Impact of COVID-19
on Livelihoods across ASEAN



Rapid assessment completed in Q2 of 2020

- The pandemic threatens to increase inequalities and undo the region's poverty reduction progress
- **The new poor is more in cities where economic shutdowns and movement restrictions have resulted in immediate job losses**
- The exclusion of vulnerable groups from policy responses would risk entrenching existing poverty and expanding the number of poor in ways that will be difficult to reverse
- These risks play out against a backdrop of ageing populations in some areas, on-going impact of climate change, and exposure to natural disasters



Impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable workers in ASEAN



ASEAN
Rapid Assessment:

The Impact of COVID-19
on Livelihoods across ASEAN



- Sectors hit hardest include tourism, hospitality, retail, and those who operate micro, small or medium enterprises
- Workers in informal labour markets have been especially affected by the pandemic's economic impacts
- Women workers have been disproportionately impacted due to the downturn on the service sector and the increased burden of unpaid care
- Higher unemployment in particular sectors, especially those with disrupted value chains, but employment opportunities may also arise in new sectors, such as remote/digital work, platform work, e-commerce, etc.
- The world of work and the notion of the workplace will evolve more quickly with teleworking in many sectors for the foreseeable future.
- Countries will try to move rapidly towards 4IR and towards greater automation as a protection against future crises. ASEAN is well placed to make that transition



JOINT STATEMENT OF ASEAN LABOUR MINISTERS ON
RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS
DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) ON LABOUR AND
EMPLOYMENT

WE, the Labour Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, convened the Special Meeting of ASEAN Labour Ministers on Response to the Impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on Labour and Employment through a video conference on 14 May 2020;

RECOGNISING the widespread and profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health well-being and livelihood of peoples and economies of ASEAN Member States and other countries around the world;

EXPRESSING our deepest sympathies to the bereaved of those who lost their lives due to the pandemic and to the individuals and sectors in our societies affected by COVID-19, including workers who lost their jobs and income;

EXPRESSING our gratitude to medical professionals, health care workers, researchers, scientists and other frontline personnel for their invaluable efforts in response to COVID-19;

Highlights of the joint commitment:

- Support livelihood and health of all workers, especially those working in high-risk sectors
- All laid off or furloughed workers, including migrant workers, are **compensated** appropriately by the employers and eligible to receive **social assistance** or **unemployment benefits** from the government
- Facilitate access of all workers infected by COVID-19 to essential **health care services** and other relevant **medical support**
- Provide appropriate assistance and support to ASEAN migrant workers affected by the pandemic in each other's country or in third countries



ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF)

Implementation Plan



- ACRF commenced the process of moving forward ASEAN's efforts to recover from the impacts of COVID-19
- Establishment of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund
- Establishment of ACRF Support Unit in the ASEAN Secretariat

Five broad strategies:

1. Enhancing health systems
2. Strengthening human security
3. Maximising the potential of intra-ASEAN market and broader economic integration
4. Accelerating inclusive digital transformation
5. Advancing towards a more sustainable and resilient future



ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF)

Implementation Plan



Various initiatives related to strengthening social protection, e.g.:

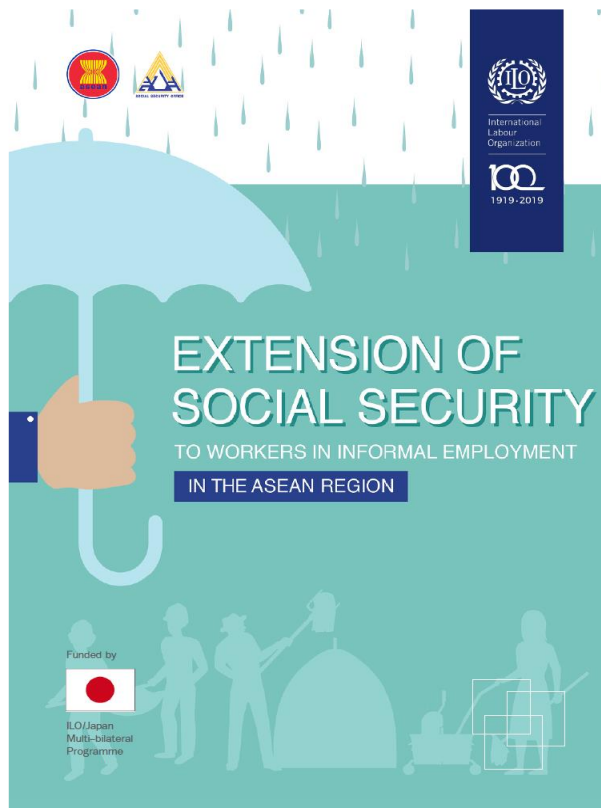
- ▶ Develop guidelines on social protection for **the elderly**, especially older women, with focus on financial security during old-age
- ▶ Build capacity on extension of social security for **informal workers**
- ▶ Build capacity on improving social security for **workers in gig economy**
- ▶ Explore recommendations of the study towards portability of social security of **migrant workers**
- ▶ Implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers
- ▶ Share information on measures to safeguard employment and support **the unemployed** in the COVID-19 most affected sectors
- ▶ Identify regional gaps/issues in existing policies in addressing **labour concerns under new normal**



**Study Report on the Portability of
Social Security Rights between
ASEAN Member States**



<https://asean.org/book/study-report-on-the-portability-of-social-security-rights-between-asean-member-states/>



**EXTENSION OF
SOCIAL SECURITY**

TO WORKERS IN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT
IN THE ASEAN REGION



https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_735512/lang--en/index.htm

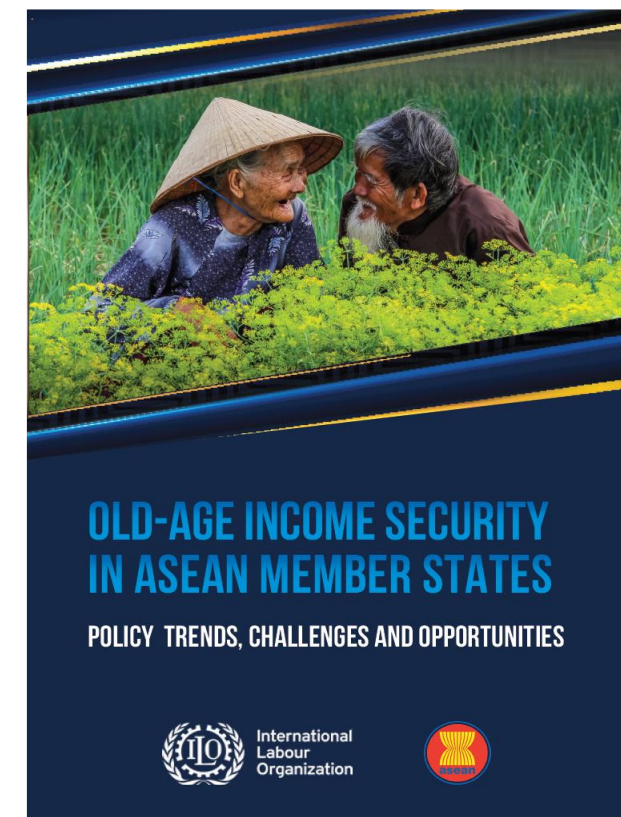


**MANAGING
TECHNOLOGY'S
IMPLICATIONS**

FOR WORK, WORKERS, AND
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS IN ASEAN



<https://asean.org/book/managing-technologys-implications-for-work-workers-and-employment-relationships-in-asean/>



**OLD-AGE INCOME SECURITY
IN ASEAN MEMBER STATES**

POLICY TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

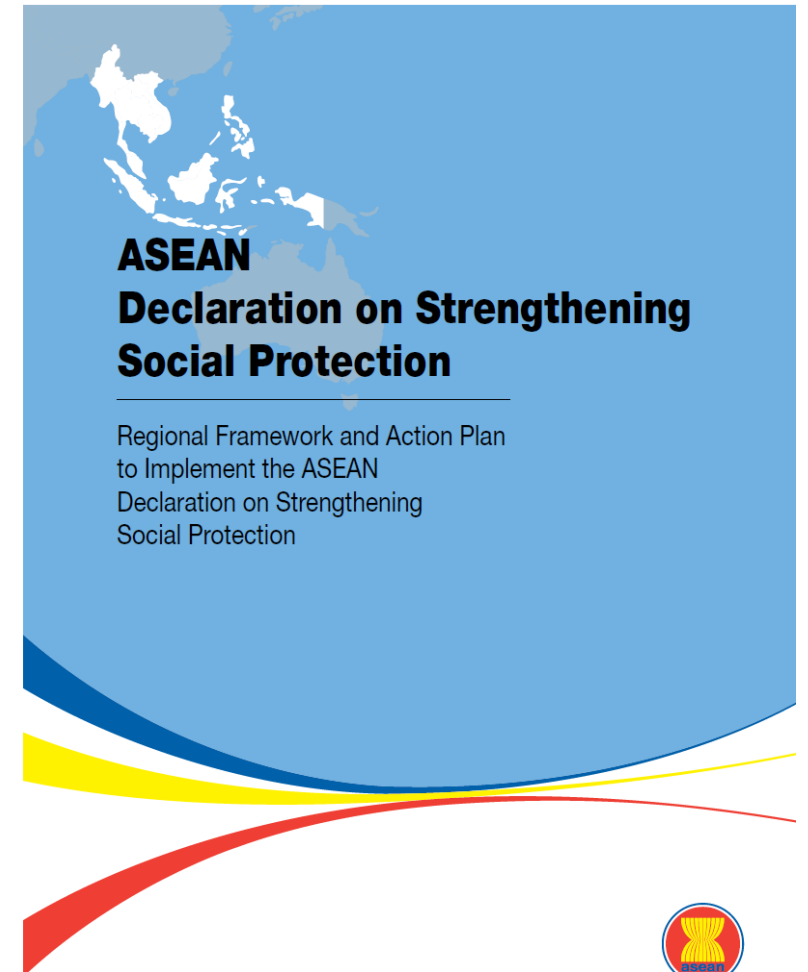


<https://asean.org/book/old-age-income-security-in-asean-member-states-policy-trends-challenges-and-opportunities/>



Regional Framework for Strengthening Social Protection

- **Everyone**, especially those who are poor, at risk, persons with disabilities, older people, out-of-school youth, children, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups, are entitled to have **equitable** access to social protection that is a **basic human right**
- Social protection covers, but is not limited to, social welfare and development, social safety nets, social insurance, social assistance, social services, in ASEAN Member States
- **Extending coverage, availability, quality, equitability and sustainability** of social protection should be gradually promoted to ensure optimal benefits to the beneficiaries
- Implementation of social protection towards **progressive realisation** in ASEAN Member States is the main responsibility of the respective governments



one vision
one identity
one community

Thank you!

www.asean.org