



9th Staff Union Regional Committee Meeting for Asia and the Pacific Bangkok, Thailand, 5-7 September 2023

Report and Recommendations

The Regional Committee of the ILO Staff Union for Asia and the Pacific (hereafter the Regional Committee) held a meeting in Bangkok, Thailand from 5 to 7 September 2023, in coordination with SUC Geneva, the regional representation and with the support of the host country, Staff Union Committee Bangkok.

Fourteen (14) Staff Union Representatives from field offices participated in the regional meeting, namely, Bangkok, Beijing, Colombo, Dhaka, Hanoi, Islamabad, Jakarta, Japan, Kathmandu, Manila, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Suva and Yangon, together with the Regional Titular and Deputy Titular for Asia and the Pacific, and the Staff Union President.

The regional meeting also provided an opportunity for online participation of colleagues from SUC Geneva, SU Legal Adviser, SHIF General Secretary, HRD Director and her senior management team, ILO Senior Gender Specialist and a renowned resource person from international trade union community.



(Standing are the 14 Staff Union Representatives from the Asia and the Pacific Region and Mr David Clarkson, Chief of Regional Administrative Services. Seated from right, Ms Gwen Fabros, Regional Titular, Ms Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa, Regional Director, Ms Severine Deboos, Staff Union President, Jinah Lee, Regional HRD and Ms Yuka Okumura, Deputy Regional Titular)

I. List of Participants

<i>Mr Chet Thaotchoo</i>	<i>CO-Bangkok</i>
<i>Ms Jie Zhou</i>	<i>CO-Beijing</i>
<i>Noel Edwards</i>	<i>CO-Colombo</i>
<i>Shipra Chowdhury</i>	<i>CO-Dhaka</i>
<i>Pam Thi Thanh Huyen</i>	<i>CO-Hanoi (representing Gulmira Asanbaeva)</i>
<i>Sadia Hameed</i>	<i>CO-Islamabad (representing Razi Haider Mujtaba)</i>
<i>Abdul Hakim</i>	<i>CO-Jakarta</i>
<i>Chizuka Aki</i>	<i>CO-Tokyo</i>
<i>Arbind Lehak</i>	<i>CO-Kathmandu</i>
<i>Ana Liza Valencia</i>	<i>CO-Manila</i>
<i>Divya Verma</i>	<i>CO-Delhi</i>
<i>Nuon Virak</i>	<i>CO-Phnom Penh</i>
<i>Sereana Rokoika</i>	<i>CO-Suva (representing Peter Blumel)</i>
<i>Wai Hnin Po</i>	<i>CO-Yangon</i>
<i>Severine Deboos</i>	<i>SU Chairperson</i>
<i>Gwendolyn Fabros</i>	<i>Regional Titular</i>
<i>Yuka Okumura</i>	<i>Deputy Regional Titular</i>

II. Opening Session



The Opening Session held on 5 September 2023 was participated by the Deputy Regional Director, Ms Pannuda “Pin” Boonpala

III. Objectives

The Regional meetings are held every two years and for this year it has the following Objectives:

- Capacitate all the Staff Union Representatives with prerequisite trainings so that they can effectively deliver and perform their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide a venue to discuss remaining concerns and challenges in the region and at each ILO duty station and open an opportunity for sharing of advises, best practices and experiences.
- Develop joint and collective strategies and recommendations for implementation for the term (2023-2025).
- Celebrate and highlight the key achievements of the Staff Union in the last two terms and develop an improved communication strategy for the year 2023-2025.

IV. Recommendations

The regional meeting has identified that it would focus its actions in promoting and improving the following dimensions of working conditions for staff in Asia:

1. **Recruitment and Selection Procedures** across fourteen (14) Country Offices in Asia and the Pacific Region should at least meet the minimum standard of agreed participation of staff union according to the existing CBA agreement for recruitment and selection and future developments in the Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC).
2. To promote a **safe and respectful working environment** that is free of all forms of harassment and defend the rights of colleagues.
3. **Career Development Path** that is clear and effective for all staff in the region (GS, NO and P) as well as an improved and inclusive promotions policy across the Organization.
4. To contribute to the negotiation and implementation of an inclusive contract policy
5. **SHIF improvements** requested on (i) outpatient medical care services where there should be a mechanism for members not to shoulder upfront payment and to have a guarantee of access to the needed outpatient medical care and (2) ensure that there is partnership organized in advance with hospitals across all country offices in the region in anticipation that SHIF can smoothly assist all staff in emergency cases (3) partnership with an international insurance company where members can enrol their other dependants like parents and other relatives under their care.

The regional meeting also led to the opportunity to organize special bilateral meetings with the Regional Director and her Senior Managers for select country offices in the region (Colombo, Bangladesh and Myanmar) and a formal 1st Joint Management and Staff Union Meeting at the Regional Level.

V. Agreements

1. Determine regular schedule of meetings

It was accomplished and agreed that the regional Staff Union and the Management (RD, RHRD and RAS Chief) will go back to the practice of holding formal face to face meetings every six months with a provision to hold it on ad hoc basis, as needed.

A related meeting will be held between regional Staff Union and RHRD and RAS will be held every three months with a provision to hold it on ad hoc basis, as needed.

An All-Asia Staff Union Representatives meeting with the Regional and Deputy Regional Titulars will be held every two months with a provision to hold it on an ad hoc basis, as needed;

2. Organize the next Action Planning sessions;

A template will be made available to list the plan of activities according to the major recommendations shared above in this report;

3. Develop workplans and training plans including a monitoring tool for the plan of action determined for 2023 – 2025;
4. Develop a Communication Strategy

It was agreed that the communication strategy of the SU in the region will be improved with an aim to reach wider members in terms of updates, announcements and any relevant information that should reach wider audience in the region; and

5. It was agreed that the Staff Union will provide support to our colleagues in Malaysia and Mongolia through our local SUC in Bangkok and Beijing, respectively.

VI. Conclusions

The 9th Staff Union Regional meeting paved a way for a highly interactive face to face meeting after a halt due to pandemic. Moving forward, the Management and Staff Union at the regional level have agreed to meet formally on a regular basis to discuss relevant topics that affect staff welfare and collaborate towards joint actions and activities.

On Recruitment and Selection, it is a far cry of Staff Union Representatives to improve the SU's participation in its various processes, e.g. review of vacancy JDs and vacancy announcements as well as to be able to align with the current practice/model adapted in the regional office in Bangkok wherein the Staff Union is trained and recognized to have a seat as panellist in interviews and selection.

On safeguarding a safe and respectful working environment for all staff that is free from all forms of harassment, there is a unanimous request for us to anchor and strengthen our policies to Convention 190 by developing a system to monitor the number of cases and topics to analyse the trends and be able to design SU strategies accordingly.

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On career path and mobility, everyone is looking forward to the improvements hoping to be achieved through the recent negotiations on mobility. There was a strong quest for stronger support to functional mobility; an improved learning and development opportunities through post exchanges in the region and an easier transition mechanism from G posts to NO posts and from NO posts to P posts and; improved access to Staff Development Fund including for colleagues working in DC projects.

There is also a strong qualm for an improved policy on rewards and recognition in the Organization through following mechanisms like linkage of performance appraisal not only to merit increment but also to career growth, as well as better and inclusive recognition for DC Staff.

All Staff Union Representatives were appreciative of the chance given to have a direct interaction with the SHIF General Secretary and looking forward that the agreements reached will be implemented on time.

VII. Annexes

- 1. Programme of Activities**
- 2. List of Trainings given to Local SU Representatives**
- 3. Speech of the SU Chairperson**
- 4. Plan of Action Template**

**9th Staff Union Regional Committee Meeting for Asia and the Pacific
(Vie Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, 5-7 September 2023)**

Programme

Day 1, Tuesday, Sept 5, 2023

- 08:00–09:00 Registration of Participants
09:00–09:30 **Opening ceremony**
- Mr Chet Thaochoo, SU Representative, CO-Bangkok (Host Country)
Ms Severine Deboos, Staff Union President, SUC Geneva
Ms Panudda “Pin” Boonpala, Deputy Regional Director (tbc)
- Ms Gwendolyn Fabros, Regional Titular Member for A/P, CO-Manila, Facilitator
Ms Yuka Okumura, Deputy Regional Titular Member for A/P, SUC Geneva, Co-Facilitator
- 09:30-10:30 Introduction of the Participants
Group photo & Tea/Coffee Break
- 10:30-11:00 Election of Chairperson, Notes-taker and Rapporteur for the meeting
Adoption of the Agenda
Expectation Setting
- 11:00-11:30 Roles and Responsibilities of the Staff Union Committee (Severine)
- 11:30-12:00 New developments from Headquarters: contracts policy, mobility, etc., (Severine and Yuka)
Q&A
- 12:00-13:00 Lunch
- 13:00-14:00 Travel to UN ESCAP (All Participants) – ILO vehicle
- 14 :00 –14 :45 Meet and Greet with Regional Director, Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa (ALL SU Reps and SUC Geneva)
- 14 :45- 15 :15 Special Meeting with RD (bilateral Severine, Gwen and Yuka + Colombo)
- 15 :30- 16 :30 Social Gathering at the ILO UN ESCAP Office (c/o Chet, SUC Bangkok)

Day 2, Wednesday, 06 Sept 2023

- 09:00-09:30 Staff-management relations: Specific issues and concerns related to the Asia and the Pacific Region (Gwen Fabros)
Q&A
- 09:30-11:00 Presentations of issues from duty stations (Max 5 minutes presentation each)
Based on reports submitted by each region to the Secretariat
- 11:00 – 12:00 Agenda Setting for Meeting with HRD-HQ and ROAP
- 12:00-13:00 LUNCH
- 13:00–14:00 Recruitment and Selection in Asia and the Pacific Region: Best Practices and Models
- By Manuel Cespedes-Ocampo, Coordinator, Recruitment and Selection Working Group (presenting the Americas Region model and the Headquarters model)
 - By Chet Thaotchoo, SU Representative, CO-Bangkok (presenting the ROAP model)
 - Q&A
- 14:00 – 15:00 Towards a better Career Mobility Policy initiative (RB and DC)
- By Manuel Cespedes- Ocampo, Coordinator, Recruitment and Selection Working Group SUC Geneva
 - Q&A

Insert 10 Minutes Health Break and serve Working Snacks

- 15:00 – 16:00 Online Conference with HRD Geneva and ROAP (Danielle Guiho, HRD Director, Luca Bormioli, HR Policy Chief and Jinah Lee, Regional HRD)

Insert 10 minutes Health Break

- 16:00 - 17:00 Online Conference with SHIF General Secretary, Florian Ledger
- 17:00 -18:00 Presentations on Legal issues: Internal justice, grievances, the case of Asia Region
- By Natalia Delgado, SU Legal Adviser
 - Q&A
- 18:00-19:00 Effective Negotiation Skills by Simon Ferrar, International Consultant
- 18:00 - Rapporteur
Adjournment Day 2

Day 3, Thursday, 07 Sept 2023

- 09:00-11:00 Discussion on regional priorities and actions: Recommendations (Gwen and Yuka)
- 10:00-11:00 Presentation of Draft Report: conclusions and recommendations (Elected Chairperson of the Regional Meeting)

Insert 10 minute health break/ working snacks

11:00-12:00 Session on safe and respectful working environment free from violence and harassment

- By Joni Simpson, ILO Senior Specialist on Gender, Equality and Non-Discrimination
- Q&A

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00- 15:30 Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC) and how it works? (Severine Deboos, SUC Chairperson)

Insert 10 minute health break/ working snacks

15:30-15:45 Rapporteur

15:45-16:00 Closing ceremonies (Severine, Gwen, Yuka)

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Day 4, Friday, 08 Sept 2023
Bilateral and Special Meetings
(For Severine, Yuka and Gwen)

10:00 - 10:25 AM Bilateral (RD, Senior Management, Severine, Gwen, Yuka + Yangon)
RD Office

10:30 – 11:00 AM Bilateral (RD, Senior Management, Severine, Gwen, Yuka + Bangladesh)
RD Office

11:00 – 11:45 AM Management-SUC Management (RD, Senior Management + Severine, Gwen, Yuka)
ILO Office, 11th Floor, meeting room

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK

02:00 – 4:00 PM Townhall Meeting with SU- Bangkok (c/o Chet)

Annex 2. List of Trainings given to Local SU Representatives

1. Introduction to Staff Union: Structure, mission, objectives and respective roles, rights and responsibilities.
2. Effective negotiation skills
3. Respectful working environment free of violence and harassment
4. Presentations on Legal issues: Internal justice, grievances, the case of Asia Region

Annex 3. Speech of the the SU Chairperson

Speech of the Chairperson of the ILO Staff Union to the 9th Regional Committee Meeting of the ILO Staff Union for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 5 - 7 September 2023)

Madam Deputy Director of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific,
Dear Representative of the SU Committee in Bangkok
Dear colleagues and staff representatives from across Asia and the Pacific,

It is my great pleasure and honor today to address you as Chairperson of the Staff Union of the International Labor Organization.

Allow me first of all to express my sincere thanks to the Staff union Committee of Bangkok, which have ensured that this meeting can be held in the best possible conditions. Bangkok had hosted our Regional meeting in 2017. One never has enough of pleasant things and your hospitality is certainly one of those!

I would also like to thank Gwen, Regional Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific and Executive Officer of the Global Staff Union and her Substitute Yuka. It is thanks to them that the voice of this great continent of Asia and Pacific, in all our union meetings and assemblies, in good and difficult moments, is well heard.

As you may or may not know, the prime object of these regular meetings in the regions is to bring together all our union leaders during the two years of their mandate in order to take a careful look at past activities and identify the concerns that are common to us all, so as to voice them more effectively both at the regional level and in each duty station.

It will be their job to take note of these preoccupations and to formulate recommendations both for the local and regional managers and for headquarters, so that the Organization can respond with real improvements in everyday practice.

These regional meetings, by our SU statutes, take place every 2 year. This is where rules and framework have some beauties. We need to be able to connect, share our realities, realize that we have similar challenges, help each other in sharing our successes. The last Regional meeting took place virtually. Symbol of the challenges the world has been going through but also testimony that we can overcome together challenges and stay connected.

2023 is certainly a special year for a number of reasons. It seems to be the first year when we turn the page of the COVID pandemic. We should certainly not forget what it has meant for our lives, and in particular in our workplaces. Some basics of how our work is organized, of how we are interacting with colleagues in our offices and all over the world and what is important in life have been shaken. We need to learn, take on board the lessons and move forward. 2023 is also special for us in the ILO; as our new management has also taken office. This has had and still has consequences and impact: while we need to seize the opportunity for change we need also to safeguard what are the fundamental of our ILO values and what should be key for staff to feel committed to and respected by the Organization.

Part of the DNA of this organization is its Staff Union. We need to apply inside what we preach outside: dialogue, collective bargaining, collective representation of staff.

In 2020, celebrating its 100th Anniversary, the Staff Union approved its vision and mission for the next five years.

Our VISION is one of a global Staff Union that leads the process of transforming the ILO into a better workplace, by representing all staff as an equal and strong partner in social dialogue.

Our MISSION is to promote social justice and equality for all staff in order to have ONE ILO by:

- mobilizing and organizing for an even stronger Staff Union;
- safeguarding and improving working and employment conditions for all ILO staff;
- negotiating fair and effective collective agreements

The Organization should be in a position to guarantee all its staff the decent jobs that can make the ILO Staff Union's slogan "ONE ILO" a reality. And whether it will enable its entire staff at all times in all duty stations to perform the tasks assigned to them independently, inspired by the fundamental principles of the international civil service set out in the United Nations Charter. Indeed, the threats against the international civil service is more and more obvious outside and even inside the ILO through governing bodies which always ask staff to do more, but giving less and using reduction of manpower as a means to make savings.

Asia and Pacific is an immense region rich of its diversity and multiculturalism. It is also a region with number of challenges in terms of employment and labour, justice and social dialogue. We will be discussing during the 3 coming days common challenges, but we will also learn from each other good practices – whether it is in terms of recruitment and selection, career development, contract protection (in particular for TC staff), conflict prevention and management.

We will be sharing in due course with you Madam, the Deputy Regional Director and the Regional Director the priorities identified and the plan of action for addressing challenges in the region. Lot of work, exchanges, concerns, resolutions perhaps are in front of us this week... But I am deeply convinced that all this union energy will contribute to make clear the concerns of the staff working in Asia and the Pacific so that they are jointly shared with all the other regions, and that in the end, when the Global Staff Union negotiates the conditions of employment and work of the staff with the administration in Geneva, it is on behalf of all ILO staff it represents across all the around the world.

With these words, I wish us every success and thank you for your patience.

Severine Deboos
4 September 2023

Annex 4. ILO Staff Union for Asia and the Pacific
PLAN OF ACTION Template for 2024-2025

THEMATIC AREAS	BASELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)	ACTIVITIES	MEANS OF VERIFICATION (MOV)
PRIORITY 1: Recruitment and Selection Procedures				
PRIORITY 2: Safe and respectful working environment				
PRIORITY 3: Career Development Path				
PRIORITY 4: A more inclusive contract policy				
PRIORITY 5: SHIF improvements				