



Report on
Regional Consultation on Formalisation of Informal Economy and Just Transition to
the Future of Work in South Asia: The Trade Unions' Perspective
Colombo, Sri Lanka
21-22 March 2023

Background

The informal economy, in which 2 billion women and men - more than 60 per cent - of the world's employed population earn their livelihoods, is a global issue that affects all countries but is more prevalent in developing countries.¹ People enter the informal economy not by choice, but due to a lack of opportunities in the formal economy, and a lack of income source or other means of earning a livelihood. There is an urgent need to address this issue as workers in the informal economy face a higher risk of poverty; offer low pay; have little or no access to social protection; and are deprived of decent working conditions than those in the formal economy.² The ILO defines informal economy as a composition of all economic activities that are not legally or practically recognized as formal employment. Informal employment is usually characterized by a lack of protection for issues like unpaid wages, lack of notice or compensation during discharges, poor working conditions and inadequate access to benefits such as health insurance, sick leave, and pensions.³ Similarly, the informal economy, which is the oldest form of economy, these sectors often consists of traditional self-employment and provides a significant amount of employment in society.⁴

Informal workers have limited access to labour and social protections as they are unrecognised, unregistered, unregulated and unprotected thus, have to face challenges in exercising their rights. They do not have representation and often work in unsafe and unhealthy conditions with low skills, productivity, and income, as well as long working hours and limited access to information, markets, finance, training, and technology.⁵ Informal sector workers are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has made the formalisation of the informal economy one of its strategic outcomes and in 2015, the ILO's International Labour Conference adopted the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation (No. 204)⁶, the first international labour standard that focuses on the informal economy in its entirety and provides practical guidance to address this issue. This new consensus recognizing that transition from the

¹ ILO. 2018. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture (Third Edition)*. International Labour Office: Geneva. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf

² ILO. 2018. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture (Third Edition)*. International Labour Office: Geneva; and ILO. 2020. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020*. International Labour Office: Geneva.

³ ILO. *Informal economy in Asia and the Pacific*. <https://www.ilo.org/asia/areas/informal-economy/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴ Islam, M.T., and Alam, M.J. 2019. 'The Relationship between Informal Economy and GDP Growth: A Study on South-Asian Developing Countries'. *Canadian Journal of Business and Information Studies*, 1(5), 01-09, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.34104/cjbis.019.0109>

⁵ Sirotin, Phoebe. 2022. "No jobs on a dead planet": Barriers to a just transition for informal workers and unskilled laborers in the European Union. Thesis. Liberal Arts and Sciences: Tilburg University. <http://arno.uvt.nl/show.cgi?fid=158724>

⁶ ILO. 2015. *R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation*, 2015 (No. 204). https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R204



informal to the formal economy is essential to achieving inclusive development and realise decent work for all is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁷, notably Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, Target 8.3 which aims to promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities and decent job creation and to encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.⁸ Two recent global milestones - UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy - call attention to the centrality of the informal economy to achieving decent work and social protection for all and equitable development more broadly.⁹

The informal economy is a significant issue in South Asia, with estimates suggesting that the majority of workers in the region are engaged in informal sector activities. The informal economy in South Asia is a significant and complex phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of economic activities and sectors, including agriculture, construction, retail, trade, and services. However, the formalisation of the informal economy should not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all solution. To formalise the informal economy, workers' needs and circumstances must be considered, and the process should be sustainable and inclusive. This includes policies supporting the transition to the future of work and investment in education, training, and social protection for informal workers while avoiding displacement and deteriorating working conditions. Thus, formalising the informal economy is an important process that can improve working conditions, increase productivity, and promote sustainable economic growth in South Asia. Importantly, trade unions play a vital role in the process therefore their involvement is key issues in representing the interests of informal sector workers, providing access to education, training and social protections, and advocating for policies and regulations that support the formalisation of the informal economy. The formalisation of the informal economy can have a positive impact on economic growth and can be a major source of employment and income for the population of South Asia.

With the above background, In collaboration with ITUC-AP, the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) successfully conducted two days of regional consultation with the title - *Regional Consultation on Formalisation of Informal Economy and Just Transition to the Future of Work in South Asia: The Trade Unions' Perspective*, as well as the 3rd General Conference with the SARTUC and its affiliates (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan), on 21-22 March 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

As a part of the consultation and general conference, the experts on various issues of labour from different organisations such as the ITUC-AP, International Labour Organization (ILO), ILO-ACTRAV, Solidarity Centre (SC), University of Colombo, UNI Global Union, Public Services International (PSI), Mondiaal FNV, IndustriALL Global Union, South Asian Workers Gender

⁷ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

⁸ ILO. 2018. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture (Third Edition)*. International Labour Office: Geneva.

⁹ Bonnet, Florence, Joann Vanek and Martha Chen. 2019. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy – A Statistical Brief*. Manchester, UK: WIEGO. <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/migrated/publications/files/Women%20and%20Men%20in%20the%20Informal%20Economy%20-%20A%20Statistical%20Brief%20-%20for%20web.pdf>



Platform (SAGP) gathered physically and shared expertise and experience on prioritise the areas of the future of work to SARTUC.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness among trade union leaders from SARTUC affiliates about the importance of formalising the informal economy and its impact on informal sector workers;
- To share experiences and knowledge among trade union leaders from SARTUC affiliates on the challenges and opportunities in the formalisation of the informal economy in South Asia;
- To develop an action plan, strategies and recommendations for trade unions to promote a just transition to the future of work that takes into account the needs of informal sector workers in the process of formalisation of the informal economy;
- To prioritise the areas of the future of work to SARTUC;
- To develop committees on the priority areas of future work for SARTUC.

First Day: 21st March 2023 (Tuesday)

The first day of the conference was dedicated to in-depth discussions on a range of issues affecting workers in the South Asian region - formalisation of the informal economy and future of work in South Asia; decent work and sustainable development goal (SDG); social protection; the impact of outsourcing and privatisation on workers in South Asia; labour migration; Occupational Safety and Health (OSH); and climate change and just transition to the future of work. Participants were highly engaged in fruitful debates, shared insights, and proposed innovative solutions to address the challenges facing the labour movement.

Opening and Welcome Remarks

Mr Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC welcomed and thanked all the participants and delegates. He felt honoured for the attendance of all the delegates from ILO, TUSSOs, GUFs and all trade union leaders from SARTUC affiliates in one place. He discussed the program's goals, emphasised the importance of international gatherings and priority areas, and talked about SARTUC's future work. He identified migration, the gig economy, the digital economy, and social protection as major challenges to the future of work. Further, he stressed the need to formalise the informal sector to improve working conditions and make organising and collective bargaining stronger.

Mr. Padmashree Ranawakaarachchi, General Secretary, National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), welcomed all the participants on behalf of the host country. He highlighted the significance of the day for Sri Lanka, gathering delegates for the trade union movement and boosting morale during a crisis. He expressed hope for IMF funding and acknowledged recent hardships and improvements in the economy. He requested positive messaging about Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and praised the ILO's role in crisis situations. He urged the formalisation of the informal economy and thanked SARTUC and ITUC-AP for their work on migrant workers during COVID-19. Finally, he thanked SARTUC for organising the event in Sri Lanka and



appreciated all the participants and delegates for visiting the beautiful island and offered his support while in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Janaka Wijayapathirathna, president, Sri Lankan Nidahas Sewaka Sangamaya (SLNSS) welcomed all the participants and delegates on behalf of the host country. He thanked SARTUC and ITUC-AP for organising the timely needed event in Sri Lanka. He said SLNSS is representing around 100,000 workers, mostly, from the semi-government and private sectors. He explained the situation of workers has worsened after the COVID-19 pandemic and highly inflation situation in Sri Lanka.

Ms Simrin Singh, Director, Country Office, ILO Sri Lanka and the Maldives, welcomed all the delegates on behalf of ILO to a beautiful island. She thanked SARTUC and General Secretary for inviting her and ILO to such an important event. She has spent over 6 years in Sri Lanka and over 24 years with ILO. The past few years have been challenging, with issues like inequality, discrimination, and politics affecting the world of work. The human-centred approach has taken a backseat to financial concerns. Youth, women, and migrant workers are facing more difficulties. Informality is an important topic for ILO, but the formal sector is promoting it in the current situation where stat shows that 80-90 per cent of informal workers in South Asia. Tripartite social dialogue and collective bargaining are vital tools for trade unions in the future of work. The concept of a "just transition" is not easily understood but we need to communicate in our own way to make people understand. ILO Recommendation 204 addresses the informal sector and the need for formalisation. Social protection should be inclusive and extend to everyone. An evidence-based approach is necessary to deal with informality. She praised the topics chosen by SARTUC for discussion, including those interlinked with formalisation. She applauded SARTUC's planning for youth and women's programmes and assured the availability of ILO support for the trade union movement.

1. Formalisation of the informal economy and the Future of Work in South Asia

The two days regional consultation discussed the various issues that are currently affecting the labour market in South Asia. One of the key topics discussed was the *formalisation of the informal economy and the future of work in South Asia*, the session was conducted by **Mr Manorajan Pegu**, country program director, Solidarity Centre. He expressed that the informal and unorganised sector has not been regulated by the government, thus workers would not have access to regular income, benefits and social protection. An estimation of 70 to 90 per cent of the workforce is in the informal sector in South Asia – in India around 85 per cent, in Sri Lanka around 70, and in Bangladesh around 90 per cent. The majority of the marginalised (socially) groups; Women, Dalits, and tribal are in informal sectors. The informal sector can be outside of the formal sector, but the unorganised sector can be both within the formal and informal. He questioned the future of work if that will bring a lot of informality. Technology is organising the informal sector workers but also increasing surveillance. He further discussed the future of work and informality where technology, globalisation, the gig economy and the political economy will play a major role. Trade unions in South Asia, have always organised the informal sector workers, and further need to use the combination of strategies and legal recognition campaigns. The speaker discussed the challenges



of formalising the informal economy and the importance of providing social protections and benefits along with unionising them.

Discussion and Q&A Session

- **Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury, BLF, Bangladesh** expressed that social protection is a demand and a right for workers, but the increasing informality makes it hard to include them in the system. The future of work is also a challenge for trade unions to include social protection for informal workers, thus, the government needs to take the initiative. Trade unions should pressure the government to protect workers.
- **Ms. Sonia George, SEWA, India** expressed that the trade unions have been discussing formalisation for a long time, but informalisation is making it challenging due to a lack of official data. The majority of income is generated through the informal economy. Universal social protection may neglect the workers' needs, so a new narrative is needed to include the contribution of the informal economy. Trade unions should work with the ILO to develop this narrative.
- **Mr. Md. Shahidullah Badal, BMSF, Bangladesh** explained the example of the labour reform committee in Bangladesh which advocates for the inclusion of all labours into the labour law.
- **Ms. Champa Verma, HMS, India** highlighted the involvement of female workers in the informal sectors is around 90 per cent so gender equality along with unity shall be promoted.
- **Ms Bharati Birla, ILO** specified that it is important for unions to understand that not all forms of formalisation result in decent work. Even the formal economy has its challenges, so we need to explore the approaches in the context of South Asian economics.
- **Ms. Umanagendramani Makaraju, INTUC, INDIA** expressed that the Governments are not protecting workers' rights despite their contribution to the economy. Trade unions must organise and raise awareness. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the difficulties faced by female workers and their families due to a lack of facilities, thus, unity is essential to achieving our goal.
- **Mr Prabhu Rajendran, Mondiaal FNV** shared survey results showing informal workers are willing to contribute to a social security system and suggested discussing social protection with a focus on the informal sector including informal workers.
- **Mr Ashok Singh, INTUC, India** described that the Governments prioritise employers over workers in their laws, as seen in India where labour laws are snatched by the government, and also, shared the example of earnings by employers in the difficult times of COVID-19. He emphasised that trade unions have to work and advocate for workers' rights.

2. Decent Work and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Trade Unions Strategies in Promoting Decent Work in South Asia

Another important topic was *decent work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, and the session was conducted by renowned professors from the University of Colombo - **Prof S Premaratne, PhD and Dr M Sumanadasa**. The experts discussed detailed information on decent work and SDG in the case of South Asia. Also, they have shared first-hand research and study experience and outcomes. The informal economic sector is directly and indirectly addressed in many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), however, the speakers were more focused on SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth as well as other SDGs – poverty, hunger, gender equality, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities. The SDGs aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all people (5 Ps). They emphasised that informal



workers, mostly women, should have the same rights and benefits as formal workers. The four dimensions of decent work were discussed: full employment, the effective exercise of rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue. Experts provided recommendations for governments and trade unions and shared evidence from their research, studies, and pilot projects. They highlighted the importance of social dialogue and workplace cooperation in achieving decent work and proposed a dialogue framework and dispute resolution flow chart.

Discussion and Q&A session

- **Q: Mr. Laxman Basnet**, General Secretary, SARTUC: *How to convince the government and employers that social security is beneficial for them. Can we create the narratives?*
- **Q: Mr. Raman Kannan**, PSI, kept his queries on a model for effective service delivery. *You were talking about two dimensions – the public sector and public services, especially to transport sector, and you have talked about the model. How the model came out, is this model given by ILO or how this all came out? How trade unions and other partners can be included so that this can be used in other places? Mostly, these models are used by multilateral to privatise the sector.*
- **A: Dr M Sumanadasa**, University of Colombo
- These are the models used mostly in Australia, South Africa, Ireland and many European countries - *social dialogue and workplace cooperation*. The project is supported by ILO and the concept is introduced by ILO. An inter-sectorial steering committee under the Ministry of public administration that consists of the trade union leaders of health and transport at the beginning. Support from all the – management, higher official, and trade unions have no problem in working together.
- **Q: Mahendra Sharma**, Advisor, SARTUC: *I have experience working with a transport trade union in Sri Lanka, you are mentioning the model from Australia and South Africa – those are two or three unions or single strong unions but Sri Lanka is fragmented. At the time of my first meeting in 1990, there were 48 unions in railways. Cyclone transport board was compared to Singapore but what happens now, it is a case of disintegration, and because unions were highly politicised. The model is not bad but will that work for other countries in South Asia, my reservations on that.*
- **A: Dr M Sumanadasa**, University of Colombo: There are a lot of unions in health and transport in Sri Lanka but there is no conflict in the project (pilot project), we started to see whether it will work on the ground. The management and trade unions are sitting around the table and discuss the issues.

3. Importance of Strengthening Social Protection Coverage to Workers in South Asia: Status and Challenges of Implementing

One of the emerging topics in South Asia, after the COVID-19 pandemic was realised more important is *Social Protection*, and the session was conducted by **Mr Rajendra Acharya**, regional secretary, UNI Global Union, Asia Pacific. He thanked SARTUC for inviting him to the event, and more importantly, for raising the important issues related to workers. He spoke on the importance of eliminating racial discrimination on March 21, a day for the elimination of racial discrimination, and how it affects workers, including challenges such as the pandemic, climate crisis, and shrinking democracy and union rights. He emphasised the need for social protection as a human right for workers and the nation, but many South Asian countries lack it, especially for the 80 per cent of informal workers. Expansion of social security coverage needs both social



security extension strategies as well as the formalisation of the informal economy. Also, the informal sector inside the formal economy is challenging for expansion of social protection. Further, he kept challenges for the extension of social protection in three groups - 1) policy and enforcement group; 2) Capacity - contributory and weak governance capacity; and 3) motivational and awareness. He claimed that big tech giants (Google, Amazon and many others) are having a formal identity but have an informal setup for work. He highlighted the impact of technological advancement, digitalisation and automation on informality and the need to strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining, moreover, expanding social protection coverage for workers in South Asia is crucial to promote inclusive growth and reduce discrimination.

4. The Impact of Outsourcing and Privatisation on Workers in South Asia

The impact of outsourcing and privatisation on workers in South Asia was also discussed, and the session was conducted by **Mr. Raman Kannan**, sub-regional secretary for South Asia, Public Services International (PSI). He thanked SARTUC for inviting him to the event. He spoke about the drivers and proponents of privatisation and explained outsourcing as a type of privatisation. He explained privatisation as the process of handing over all the ownership and management from the government to the private sector and thinking of maximising the profit by reducing the workers' costs. However, employers and corporates do not want to mention the word '*privatisation*' but a '*public-private partnership*'. He discussed privatisation and outsourcing, which often result in job losses and reduced benefits for workers. These practices are driven by institutions like IMF, WB, ADB, multinational corporations, a few governments and trade agreements. Outsourcing is a type of privatisation that uses a third party. He advocated for alternate policies to privatisation and outsourcing, such as *Remunicipalisation* and *in-sourcing*, which protects workers' rights. Additionally, he suggested trade unions become stronger by using organising, mobilising, and influencing decision-makers by using resources effectively.

5. South Asia's Labour Migration: Complexities from Home to Host Country

Labour migration was another important topic of discussion which started with the *animation video made by the SARTUC on labour migration in South Asia*. The session on *labour migration* was conducted by **Mr. Amish Karki**, technical officer, ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India. He highlighted the context of outflows of migrant workers in South and South-East Asia along with the labour migration governance. He emphasized that re-migration has increased five times since the pre-COVID-19 era and highlighted the role of trade unions in addressing the issues faced by migrant workers. He shared good practices from trade unions and the priorities of the ILO in terms of labour migration, such as fair recruitment, skill development, and evidence-based policy. He also discussed the presence of SARTUC in global forums – Colombo Process, ADD, GCM, APRM, on labour migration and the challenges faced by migrant workers in South Asia, such as high recruitment costs and lack of social protection. He appreciated the promising practices of SARTUC and its affiliates in the field of labour migration - SEWA in India for organising migrant workers, GEFONT's support group in destination countries, and Pakistan for their efforts in migrant resource centres and mentioned the potential for expanding the MRA to other South Asian countries. He also noted that the ILO has been working on labour governance, technical



support, and capacity building, but none of the South Asian countries has ratified any of the ILO conventions for protecting migrant workers. He requested trade unions to share their experiences and thoughts on labour migration.

Discussion and Q&A session

- **Q: Mr. Md. Shahidullah Badal, BMSF, Bangladesh:** *Can you explain the contribution of SEWA and how they organise the migrant workers?* The MRA project has had a significant impact on raising awareness of labour migration in Bangladesh, and therefore, it should be continued in the country.
- **A: Amish Karki, ILO:** Question on SEWA, I would like to request Sonia to express her experience in organising, challenges, and benefits.
- **Ms. Sonia George, SEWA, India,** explained the progression of organising migrant workers in SEWA. She explained the challenges of organising migrant workers, especially female workers who are mostly in the informal and undocumented sectors – domestic workers, cleaners, and care economy workers. SEWA started with a one-time support system, and education loans to children, and now working on a reintegration policy for migrant workers. Migrant workers do not fall under the poverty line from the government’s perspective but the reality is different. SEWA started grassroots organising and now the migrant workers take leadership in their organisation. She thanked ILO for the project.
- **Mr. K. M. Azam Khasru, JSL, Bangladesh,** expressed that mostly, poor people and women choose labour migration to the Middle East. He suggested that contracts should be made available in their local language for better understanding to avoid fraudulent agreements and difficulties faced by them.
- **Mr. Binod Shrestha, GEFONT, Nepal,** shared how GEFONT creates support groups for Nepali migrant workers in destination countries, partnering with local trade unions such as the cooperation and MoU with the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC). This has been effective in resolving migrant worker issues and has resulted in Nepali workers receiving equal pay and benefits as local workers. A success story is that Nepali migrant workers are also getting 1500 ringgit and other facilities equal to local workers. GEFONT started this work in Hong Kong in 1993, aligning with the construction sector in HKTUC. Furthermore, it helped to link workers with trade unions after returning to Nepal.
- **Mr. Prabhu Rajendran, Mondiaal FNV,** praised the work done by SARTUC and General Secretary in initiating dialogue with SAFE - employers on labour migration issues.

6. Issues and challenges faced by workers in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) include lack of access to information, training, and protective equipment, and rights violations.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) was also discussed at the consultation as one of the major topics, and the session was conducted by **Ms Bharti Birla**, chief technical advisor (Project Manager) ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India. She emphasized the importance of prioritizing Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for all workers, including those in the informal sector, and highlighted the need for safe and healthy working conditions. She stated that the OSH has become a fundamental right (5th) and two new conventions (C155 and C187) have been added to the list of core conventions. She clarified that when we talk about fundamental rights



it belongs to all countries, despite economic development, whether they have ratified the ILO conventions or not, and whether they have laws or not. But they have to report the ILO on the issue. That gives the power to trade unions to demand those rights. Not only workers or government but all the trade agreements or businesses have to accept this right. She stated that every year around 304 million workers suffer from non-fatal injuries or diseases related to the workplace, and out of this 2.8 per cent of workers dies every year. However, none of the countries is interested to collect data on injuries and death of workers based on occupational diseases. Migrant workers have to take 3D jobs – Dangerous, Dirty, and Difficult. Most of the women are working in the informal economy, part of supply chain work, and also they are working unpaid domestic work. Women are more vulnerable to OSH in the workplace. Despite this, there is a lack of attention to OSH in collective bargaining and a lack of data collection on occupational diseases. She presented pictorial examples of workplace risks and highlighted the impact of accidents and industrial disasters on humans, the economy, and the environment. Also, she questioned if the formalisation will ensure the safety and health of the workers in the workplace. She stressed the importance of trade unions in consulting and reporting to the ILO on OSH, especially for South Asian workers who face physical and chemical risks due to vulnerable working conditions.

Discussion and Q&A session

- **Mr Shakil Akhter Chowdhury, JSL, Bangladesh,** expressed the importance of conventions for a country like Bangladesh where a lot of incidents are happening, and provides an opportunity for unions to report on government reports and intervene in the process.
- **Q: Ms. Sonia George, SEWA, India:** *When OSH became a core right, how it comes under the preview of OSH to the informal sector workers? How it is coming under the OSH law/labour laws, which is very important? Second, most of the things we are experiencing are violence in the world of work so what is the relationship between OSH and violence, especially, in the case of C190, and its relation to the informal economy?* Additionally, she thought the gap between formal and informal workers in terms of rights and protections is a pressing issue, beyond just OSH, and includes issues of denial of rights and experiences of violence and harassment.
- **Q: Mr. Md. Shahidullah Badal, BMSF, Bangladesh:** *The OSH includes the formal sector workers but how can we expand the coverage of OSH to informal sector workers?* Informal sector workers are out of ILO conventions and labour laws. Further, he expressed that due to the ILO IPEC project (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour), now there is no child labour in the RMG sector but there are child labours in the informal sector.
- **A: Ms Bharti Birla, ILO:** My project focuses on global supply chains and OSH, and we have developed micro policies beyond ILO laws. Nepal has a good example where even workers employed for one hour have an employment relationship. To cover the informal sector, we need to increase their visibility and legislate their coverage. National employers are concerned about the lack of national OSH guidelines to maintain international standards. Unions have an opportunity to intervene.

7. Climate change and the just transition to the future of work

The last session of the day, the session on *climate change and the just transition to the future of work* was discussed, and the session was conducted by Mr Prabhu Rajendran, regional consultant, Mondiaal FNV. He explained the issues from the perspective of working together for the Trade



Union power. He referenced the IPCC's warning on the urgent need to address climate change, which is causing floods, rising seas, melting glaciers, and lack of drinking water in South Asia and impacting workers. He highlighted the need for a transition in the labour market that prioritises the well-being of workers, with trade unions playing a vital role in filling gaps. He proposed the 4 R's - Recognise, Responsible, Respond, and Respect - for a just transition that does not harm workers. He called for a change in behaviour among union leaders and workers and stressed the importance of youth involvement in the transition. Finally, he showed a video to explain just transition on how unions can demand social justice and work together for decent work on a healthy planet.

Way forward Discussion

Mr. Mahendra Sharma, Advisor, SARTUC: why can't we create an advisory group of the people the resource person today to SARTUC? (Informal now but can be made formal later)

Ms. Sonia George, SEWA, India: All these issues are very relevant for setting our plans for the next 4-5 years. We have international standards and recommendations 204, so what could be our next recommendation to ILO, to the government and to employers and also for our evaluation of our work? How do we take up these issues with us and representation of South Asia in the different forums and international discussions is more important?

Ms. Champa Verma, HMS, India: how to connect OSH and C190 to protect women, mostly in the informal sector?

Day Two: 22nd March 2023 (Wednesday)

The 3rd General Conference of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) was successfully concluded on 21-22 March 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka in presence of all SARTUC affiliates (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan).

As observers in the third general conference, the experts on various issues of labour from different organizations such as the ITUC-AP, International Labour Organization (ILO), ILO-ACTRAV, Solidarity Centre (SC), UNI Global Union, Public Services International (PSI), Mondiaal FNV, IndustriALL Global Union attended physically and observed the constitutional process of 3rd conference of SARTUC.

The constitutional process was conducted smoothly and transparently, and most importantly, **Mr Shoya Yoshida**, General Secretary ITUC-AP, attended as chief guest and keynote speaker in the opening session of the third General Conference is a prestigious moment for SARTUC. Similarly, the presence of other delegates from ILO, ITUC-AP, GUF and TUSSOs was a remarkable achievement in the constitutional process of SARTUC.

Opening and Welcome Remarks

Mr Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC, welcomed the delegates and observers and explained the agenda of the conference with a briefing on the topics discussed on the previous days - formalisation of the informal economy and future of work in South Asia; decent work and



sustainable development goal (SDG); social protection; the impact of outsourcing and privatisation on workers in South Asia; labour migration; Occupational Safety and Health (OSH); and climate change and just transition to the future of work. Moreover, he explained the constitutional process in General Conference. He expressed his best wishes for the speedy recovery of Dr G. Sanjeeva Reddy, President of SARTUC, who was unable to attend the general conference due to his health condition.

Dr. G. Sanjeeva Reddy, President SARTUC, could not attend due to health reasons, however, conveyed his best wishes for the success of the conference. In the absence of the President, Mr. Basnet proposed the name of Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu (HMS), Senior Vice President of SARTUC to chair the meeting. The proposal was endorsed by the conference.

Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu, Senior Vice President, SARTUC, in his address, welcomed all participants and delegates to the 3rd SARTUC General Conference which is being held almost after seven years. In his opening remarks, he wished a speedy recovery to President Reddy. He said that Workers and the general public of South Asia went through a very difficult period during the COVID-19 pandemic. He mentioned that Governments in South Asia in order to attract capital are supporting big corporate houses. He specially mentioned the situation in India where the Govt. has decided to scrap 44 labour laws which were won through the workers' struggles during the last seventy years and has compressed them into four labour codes. Now the employer has got the right to hire and fire, fix term contract has been introduced in many states and working hours have been increased from 8 to 12 hours. He also highlighted the violation of workers' rights in the countries of South Asia. There has been a reverse trend of formal jobs turning into precarious informal jobs with out-sourcing and contractualisation. He also stressed the need to promote the second line leadership in the Unions and appreciated the SARTUC's initiative in organising the Youth and Women. He hoped and wished that this meeting would decide the future course of action for protecting the workers' rights.

Mr. Leslie Devendra, General Secretary, SLNSS, welcomed all participants and delegates on behalf of the host country and thanked General Secretary for organising the programme in Sri Lanka. He expressed the difficult economic condition of the informal sector workers in Sri Lanka and stressed the need for their formalisation. He further, demanded reforms in the labour laws as the transition due to technology and other factors will hit the workers strongly and many will lose their jobs. He expressed the need for trade unions in the Sub-Region to work together for the protection of workers' rights.

Hon. JeevanThondaman, Sri Lankan Minister of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure, and General Secretary, CWC, highlighted the high level of exploitation amongst the Plantation Workers in Sri Lanka and the neglect of tea estate workers for the past 200 years and informed that the Hon. President will commemorate the upcountry workers in 2023, the 200th year of the arrival of Indian labourers in Sri Lanka.

Hon. Vadivel Suresh, M.P., Sri Lanka and President, NTUF, welcomed all the delegates and participants to Sri Lanka on behalf of NTUF. He served as deputy minister of health, provincial



education minister, and plantation state minister. He further stated that trade unions are working continuously and rigorously for the protection of workers' rights in Sri Lanka.

Obituaries:

A one-minute silence was observed to pay homage to Trade Union leaders and workers from the regions who passed away since the last Convention¹⁰. Homage was also paid to the people who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic and due to floods in Pakistan and the earthquake in Turkey.

Roll Call

Mr. Inder Dev Yadav, executive officer of SARTUC conducted the roll call.

Key Note Speech

Mr. Shoya Yoshida, General Secretary of ITUC-AP, congratulated SARTUC and its affiliates for organising a successful General Conference. He regretted his unavailability on the first day as he was required to be at the ITUC-AP meeting to finalise the conference thematic paper which will be presented at the forthcoming regional conference of ITUC-AP, on 20-23 November 2023, in Bangkok, Thailand. He discussed threats to trade unions, including the pandemic and backsliding democracy and emphasized the need for a new social contract focused on workers' rights. He mentioned the six demands adopted at the ITUC Congress and discussed the violation of fundamental rights in the region and the need to support workers in vulnerable countries. Finally, he wished for a successful conference and assured further cooperation from ITUC-AP to SARTUC in the future.

Ms. Maria Helena ANDRE, Director, ILO ACTRAV, welcomed all the delegates through her video message. She elucidated the issues of workers in the informal economy, migrant workers, particularly in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and platform workers. She added that South Asia represents almost around 700 million workers and more than 85 per cent of workers are in the informal economy. South Asian trade unions need to take a more proactive role to protect migrant workers' rights in destination countries.

Ms. Apoorva Kaiwar, regional secretary of IndustriALL Global Union, spoke on behalf of GUFs and highlighted the issue of inequality in South Asia, which was worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She suggested that trade unions bridge the gap and maintain solidarity to combat income inequality in the region. She further expressed the new forms of precarious work coming in South Asia to workers which are costing trade unions, making unity weak, and SARTUC can mount challenges from the workers' side to SAARC, and SARTUC can be a counterpart of SAARC.

Mr. Manorajan Pegu, country program director of Solidarity Centre, welcomed participants on behalf of the Sri Lankan labour movement and emphasized the need for SARTUC to take a leading role in responding to attacks on labour laws across South Asian countries. He suggested finding

¹⁰ See the full list of Obituaries in ANNEX-IV.



strategies for trade unions to fight together and move forward in dealing with employers on technological platforms.

General Secretary's Report and Financial Report

Mr Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC, presented the General Secretary's report explaining the overview and activities done by the SARTUC after the 2016 - Formalisation of the informal economy; Elimination of child labour; Social protection; SARTUC women's committee and gender equality; Migration; Inter-regional trade unions agreements; Presence in regional and international platforms; Global compact for migration (GCM) and implementation in south Asia; and Working with employers. Similarly, **Ms. Sweanta Lama**, admin and finance officer, SARTUC, presented the financial report.

Country-wise comments on General Secretary Report and Financial Report

- **Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury** from BLF, Bangladesh, praised SARTUC for their efforts on migration during COVID-19. He attended a meeting of GOALS in Bangkok and found that there is a lot of scope for trade unions as they have very minimal participation in such events. He suggested that ITUC-AP can take a lead role to include trade unions from this region to implement GCM. Meetings held in Nepal were also fruitful for networking and discussion. Also, Maldives and Afghanistan shall be taken together in the process of migration discussion. Maldives is the only receiving country in the region so we can learn the experience from them.
- **Mr. Ashok Singh from INTUC, India:** The report has touched everything and SARTUC is working with employers and the government is praiseworthy. The tripartite dialogue is the only option to solve the problems of workers.
- **Mr. Mukhtar Awan** from PWF, Pakistan: I appreciate the report which covered every aspect of the current issues of workers. I agree with the report and am thankful to all participants.
- **Mr. Pushkar Acharya** from NTUC, Nepal: The report has presented the work of SARTUC and also provides in-depth information. We, Nepali trade unions, are glad that Nepali working abroad and the informal sector will be covered by the social security fund.
- **Ms. Sonia George** from SEWA, India expressed concerns about SARTUC's efforts on migration and called for more concerted efforts from a worker's perspective, including the inclusion of women workers in the action plan. She also emphasized the importance of proper representation in national, regional, and international forums, and transparent and participatory involvement for SARTUC's affiliates. She raised the issue of SEWA's exclusion from the women's committee despite being a women-only union and called for stronger women's perspectives in leadership. Also, she expressed that in the case of Indian affiliates, the issue of external labour migration shall be taken seriously by them.
- **Mr. Leslie Devendra** from SLNSS, Sri Lanka expressed the challenging historical development of the SARTUC having a small organisation and it was not the realisation of regional cooperation among trade unions. He thanked Laxman for being a pioneer of SARTUC and regional cooperation, the organisation has improved greatly. He highlighted the economic crisis of Sri Lanka where workers are suffering. Furthermore, he claimed that when there is an economic crisis the workers have to suffer ultimately.
- **Ms. Champa Verma** from HMS, India: SARTUC provides opportunities for women and youth to strengthen the trade union movement and promote gender equality. The women's committee formed in 2017 is appreciated.



SARTUC County report



No report has been received initially however reports received later will be sent with the report.

ELECTION

The SARTUC affiliates' representatives elected a new Executive Board to lead SARTUC for the next term of 4 years. The newly elected executive board members¹¹ comprise experienced and dynamic trade union leaders from across the region, who are committed to maintaining and developing a powerful and effective organisation at the regional level, composed of free and democratic trade unions and pledged to the task of promoting the interests of the working people of the region and of enhancing the dignity of labour. Moreover, the advisor for SARTUC was also elected for the next term of 4 years.

Discussion

- **Ms. Sonia George** from SEWA, India raised concerns about how to increase democracy and shared responsibility among affiliates, as some have more than one responsibility but some have none. She also questioned the democratic process of the women's and youth committee elections, stating that the invitation did not provide enough information and they had not discussed the election process inside their union.
- **Pasha** wanted to understand the roles of the overlapping positions in the women's committee - women secretary and coordinator of the women's committee.
- **Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu**, the President of SARTUC, clarified that there is no overlapping, women office bearer SARTUC elected here that woman will be the member of the working committee member of women as an ex officio and coordinator of the women's committee that will be part of the executive board as ex officio. One position has been secured for women according to the constitution which is around 15 per cent but he expressed that SARTUC will increase that to 30 per cent. Regarding the democratic process, he clarified that SARTUC is following the same process of election as done by ITUC and ITUC-AP and we have observers from ITUC-AP.
- **Laxman**, General Secretary of SARTUC: ToR of the women's committee was adopted in 2015 in Delhi and according to that the committee was formed in 2017 in Kathmandu where Champa Ji was elected as chair. The constitutional process for the women's and youth committee is the committee's election and adoption of ToR. We requested to make a women's committee in the country and since then there was no meeting for the women's committee. In the invitation, the constitutional process has been written clearly. This is the first time SARTUC is initiating the two committees - women's and youth's committees. We will provide ToR to participants and they will make their own constitution.
- **Ms. Umanagendramani Makaraju** from INTUC, India questioned why three office bearers would not be accommodated in the women's committee.

Resolution

The General Secretary circulated the resolution among all the delegates and the discussion happened on the resolution. After getting comments and suggestions from delegates, the updated resolution was adopted by the 3rd SARTUC Congress 2023¹² for the protection of workers' rights,

¹¹ The newly elected board members are listed in the ANNEX-I.

¹² See the adopted resolution in ANNEX-III.



promoting democracy, and supporting trade union rights for organising and collective bargaining. More importantly, the resolution unanimously endorse the resolution passed by ITUC Congress in Melbourne, Australia held on 17-20 November 2022; in line with the ITUC-ITUC-AP on New Social Contract.

Discussion

- **Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu**, the President of SARTUC, explained the **fake L20** that violates the rules of ITUC and TUAC that will be chaired by the BMS president. ITUC has decided not to conduct L20 this year but the Government of India is planning to do a **fake L20** and send the invitation to more than 20 countries. They also invite non-ITUC affiliates and call representatives from China, Russia, Oman, and Bangladesh. We have tried to convince the Indian government but they have a majority in the parliament thus, fake L20 is going on in India so SARTUC shall note this to support Indian affiliates. We, other trade unions, do not agree to work under BMS on fake L20.
- **Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury** from BLF, Bangladesh, expressed that all must be careful about it, BMS from India had sent an invitation for L20 to him as well but he refused to attend the programme.
- **Mr. Ashok Singh** from INTUC, India expressed that the Prime minister of India shall not do like fake L20 but the real L20 shall be organised under the leadership of ITUC.

The Technical Committee for Programme and the Technical Committee for Finance

The technical committee for programme and the technical committee for finance¹³ were also formed and the chair and members of the technical committees were elected in the General Conference, and also the role and responsibilities of the technical committees were discussed among the delegates and executive board members.

Final Address and Closing Remarks

Mr. Shoya Yoshida, General Secretary, ITUC-AP spoke on the so-called L20 this year happening in India. The L20 is organised independently by ITUC and its members. The ITUC had a discussion with the Indian government, ministry and BMS and ask for cooperation from the host government. He expressed that they had got cooperation from Saudi and China but this year they didn't get cooperation from the Indian government, which is really unfortunate. ITUC respects the decision of Indian affiliates to not hold the physical L20 meeting in India. If a compromise is made with the Indian government, then there may be compromises with other countries in the future. He fully supported the resolution and encouraged working together and uniting under the name of ITUC and ITUC-AP. He congratulated the newly elected officials, and he hopes that SARTUC will have success stories for workers in the region. Furthermore, he expressed strong solidarity with SARTUC from ITUC and ITUC-AP.

Mr. Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC, the importance of the main body for the organisation and said the process of making a strong organisation is a long process. He explained the difficult phase of SARTUC due to the earthquake in Nepal, and COVID-19 and was on the

¹³ The newly elected technical committees' members are listed in ANNEX-II.



verge of closing down. Thus, he is glad that SARTUC has created a finance committee which always looks into the finances. He explained the time of joining the trade union when his senior leaders from ITUC said, *'the only thing you have to be careful of is finance'* and thus, he is very careful about it. We create an organisation, this was initiated by our elders. Thus, this organisation is possible because our elders initiated this and all of its members have contributed from the past to the present. He highlighted that every year SARTUC tried to make committees for the youth and women for the future leadership of SARTUC. ILO has accredited the SARTUC, this is the achievement of an organisation. Democracy depends upon the individual and how s/he looks into but the organisation creating a consensus of a board and letting them decide – this is the constitution for your committee and let them decide to accept. Whom we have invited here will be responsible for their committee for tomorrow. He emphasised that organisations create people in the trade union movement. If there is no trade union, the voice of workers will not be heard so he requested to be ready for organising the workers in trade unions. Finally, he thanked all the delegates and observers for supporting SARTUC and congratulated the president and all the elected representatives. These are most of the new faces in the Executive Committee and how it goes the organisation, and we will get many new faces in the SARTUC in the coming years.

Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu, the President, SARTUC, expressed that in future, SARTUC will make the image of a trade union, not an NGO or global organisation by standing on its own. He stated that nowadays, SARTUC is known as specialised in migration (migrant workers) because Brother Laxman has worked hard on that so everybody recognised that. He urged all to unite for the protection of human rights because capitalists have come together and governments are working under their pressure but the trade unions are divided. Trade unions will try their best to come into a single platform and SARTUC has to take a lead on the serious attack on workers' rights. He suggested that through a WhatsApp group, we can react immediately on the issues regarding workers and workers' rights so that statement of the SARTUC/General Secretary will be released through the website. Further, he highlighted the responsibilities of the technical committees. He assured that the responsibility given by SARTUC and its affiliates will be fulfilled to him and he ensured his availability at the time of challenges to labour rights. Finally, he thanked all the delegates and observers to make the general conference a great success.

After the discussion of the agenda, the following decisions were made:

- General Secretary's report was passed unanimously.
- The financial report was passed unanimously.
- The resolution was approved unanimously.
- Create a WhatsApp group for all the top leaders from South Asia to share challenges and experiences on different labour issues and react immediately through the WhatsApp group.
- Maldives Trade Union Congress (MTUC) was recognised as an affiliate of SARTUC.
- Binod Shrestha will continue as the second signatory for SARTUC's cheque along with General Secretary.
- A new Executive Board was elected for the next term of 4 years.



- The technical committee for the programme and the technical committee for finance were established.
- The technical committee for the programme and the technical committee for finance constituted 3 members each and heading by a chair.
- Before the next working committee meeting, affiliates have to discuss and decide on *Gender involvement in the SARTUC's Meetings* (constitutional meetings not for programmes) – at least one female shall be sent from a country. Financial management shall be done by affiliates for an additional member. One county - one woman must come to the meetings.



ANNEX-I
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS (22 March 2023)

Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu

President

Mr. Laxman Basnet

General Secretary

Mr. Ashok Kumar Singh

Vice President

Mr. Lesslie Devendra

Vice-President

Mr. Binod Shrestha

Vice President

Mr. Md. Shahidullah Badal/ Mr. K. M. Azam Khasru (On the basis of rotation for 2-2 years)

Vice-President

Mr. Mukhtar Awan

Vice-President

Ms. Champa Verma

Deputy General Secretary

Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury

Deputy General Secretary

Ms. Umanagendramani Makaraju

Women Secretary

Mr. Mahendra Sharma

Adviser



ANNEX-II Technical Committees

The Technical Committee for Programme

Ms. Sonia George
Chair

Mr. Pushkar Acharya
Member

Mr. MD. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury
Member

The Technical Committee for Finance

Mr. Padmashree Ranawakaarachchi
Member



ANNEX-III

Resolution on

3rd SARTUC Congress

The South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) Conference meeting was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 21-22 March 2023;

STRONGLY CONDEMNS the growing incidence of backsliding democracy, blatant violation of trade union rights in several countries in the South Asian region, more particularly the right to organise and bargain collectively. Governments and employers are increasingly intolerant of trade unions. Freedom of Association and the right to Organise and Bargain collectively as enshrined in the ILO Conventions No.87 and 98 are curtailed or altogether denied,

IS DISMAYED that the workers' rights achieved through long relentless struggle are being diluted or snatched away;

SERIOUSLY CONCERNED that some of the countries in the region are making amendments to the labour legislations to deny existing basic rights enjoyed by working people;

NOTES THAT in the ITUC Annual Survey of Violation of Trade Union Rights several South Asian countries are placed in “**Rating 5 No guarantee of rights**”;

NOTES THAT already large segments of workers are excluded from the purview of labour enactments either by law or in practice;

DEPLORES the pro-capital anti-labour policies of the governments;

DEPLORES the attempts to take away the right to strike;

REITERATES that strike is a legitimate weapon in the armoury of trade unions;

IS ALARMED at the increasing cases of victimisation of union activists in the forms of arrest, jail terms, dismissal, transfer, physical intimidation and assaults. Violence and threats against unionists hardly provide a conducive atmosphere to exercise the right to organise and bargain collectively and prevent unions from effectively representing the interests of working people;

REMINDS that working people are the victims of globalisation and the corporates are the sole beneficiaries of the economic growth. Income inequalities are growing and the share of workers in the national income is declining. Restriction on the role of unions is one of the labour market factors contributing to the rising inequality. Strong unions and high collective bargaining coverage help reduce wage inequality and produce a fairer share of income distribution;

CALLS UPON the working people in South Asia to unitedly fight against the onslaughts on workers' rights;



URGES ON ITUC AND ITUC-AP to monitor and act appropriately to oppose cases of violations of workers' fundamental rights and mobilise solidarity of workers' organisations to strengthen such efforts.

SARTUC will work in line with the ITUC-ITUC-AP on New Social Contract – 1. Jobs; 2. Rights; 3. Wages; 4. Social Protection; 5. Equality; 6. Inclusion, we SARTUC and its affiliates unanimously endorse the resolution passed by ITUC Congress in Melbourne, Australia held on 17-20 November 2022; with reference to the topics;

1. **Formalisation of the informal economy** and future of work in South Asia
2. **Decent Work and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG):** Trade Unions Strategies in Promoting Decent Work in South Asia
3. Importance of Strengthening **Social Protection** Coverage to Workers in South Asia: Status and Challenges of Implementing
4. The impact of **outsourcing and privatisation on workers** in South Asia
5. South Asia's **Labour Migration:** Complexities from Home to Host Country
6. Issues and challenges faced by workers in **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)** include lack of access to information, training, and protective equipment, and rights violations.
7. **Climate Change and Just Transition** to the Future of Work
8. **Call** to support Indian Affiliates by abstaining from the **Fake L-20** happening in India.



ANNEX-IV Obituaries

ITUC-BC, Bangladesh:

1. Advocate Md Delwar Hossain Khan, General Secretary, BLF
2. Mr. Zafrul Hassan, Former General Secretary, BJSD
3. Mr. Shukur Mahmud, President, JSL
4. Mr. Fazlul Haque Mantu, President, JSL
5. Mr. Abdul Mukit Khan, President, BFTUC
6. Mr. Roy Ramesh Chandra, Former General Secretary, JSL
7. Mr. Mollah Abul Kalam, working President, JSL
8. Mr. Samsur Rhaman Bulu, BSSF

NTUC, Nepal

1. Mr. Ramjee Kunwar, Former Senior Vice President as well as Advisor of NTUC
2. Mr. Radhakant Dev, Former Vice President as well as Advisor of NTUC
3. Mr. Durga Datt Acharya, Central Member of NTUC



ANNEX-V
Agenda of Regional Consultation
22nd March 2023
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Day 1: 21 st March 2023 (Tuesday)		
9:00– 9:30	Registration	
9:30 – 10:15	<p>Opening</p> <p>Opening and welcome address: Mr Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC;</p> <p>Welcome remarks by Ms Simrin Singh, Director, Country Office, ILO Sri Lanka and Maldives;</p> <p>Address by Host Country:</p> <p>CWC;</p> <p>NTUF;</p> <p>SLNSS.</p>	
10:15 – 11:00	Formalisation of the informal economy and Future of Work in South Asia	Mr Manorajan Pegu , Country Program Director, Solidarity Centre
11:00 – 11:15	Tea/Coffee Break	
11:15 – 12:00	Decent Work and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Trade Unions Strategies in Promoting Decent Work in South Asia	Dr M Sumanadasa and Prof S Premaratne, PhD , University of Colombo
12:00 – 13:00	Importance of Strengthening Social Protection Coverage to Workers in South Asia: Status and Challenges of Implementing	Mr Rajendra Acharya , Regional Secretary, UNI Global Union, Asia Pacific
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:30	The impact of outsourcing and privatisation on workers in South Asia	Mr. Raman Kannan , Sub- regional Secretary for South Asia, Public Services International (PSI)
14:30 - 15:00	South Asia’s Labour Migration: Complexities from Home to Host Country	Mr. Amish Karki , Technical Officer, ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India
15:00 – 15:30	Issues and challenges faced by workers in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) include lack of access to information, training, and protective equipment, and rights violations.	Ms Bharti Birla , Chief Technical Advisor (Project Manager) ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India
15:30 – 15:45	Tea/Coffee Break	



15:30 – 16:00	Climate Change and Just Transition to the Future of Work	Mr Prabhu Rajendran, Regional Consultant, Mondiaal FNV
16:00 – 16:30	Way Forward Discussion	
End of the Day 1		
DAY – 2: 22nd March 2023 (Wednesday)		
9:00– 9:30	Registration	
9:30 – 10:45	<p>Opening and welcome address: Mr Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC (General Conference)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obituaries 2. Roll Call <p>Address by Mr. Shoya Yoshida, ITUC-AP, General Secretary Address by Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy, President, SARTUC Address by Ms. Maria Helena ANDRE (Video message), Director, ILO ACTRAV Address by GUFs’ Representative Address by TUSSOs’ Representative</p>	
10:45 – 11:15	General Secretary’s Report	
11:15 – 11:30	Tea/Coffee break	
11:30 – 11:45	Financial Report	
11:45 – 12:00	Comments from delegates on Reports	
12:00 - 12:30	Country Reports (Report on activities by affiliates - including trade union situation in the region, emerging issues and SARTUC’s initiations) [<i>5 minutes for each country</i>]	
12:30 – 13:00	Constitutional Amendments	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 15:00	Election	
15:00 – 16:00	Formation of Committee and others if any	
	<p>Propose Technical Committee for Programme and Finance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formation of a Technical Committee for Programme 2. Finance Committee 	
16:00 - 16:30	Plan of action for the next 4 years to SARTUC (priority areas)	
16:30 – 17:00	Closing and Vote of thanks by President and General Secretary	
End of Programme		



ANNEX-VI List of Participants

SN	Name	Organisation/ Designation
1	Ms. Simrin Singh	Country Office, ILO Sri Lanka and Maldives, Director
2	Mr. Shoya Yoshida	ITUC-AP, General Secretary
3	Mr. Syed Sultan Uddin AHMMED	ILO-ACTRAV, Senior Specialist in Workers Activities
4	Ms. Anna Tuvera	ITUC-AP, Director, Gender Equality Activities
5	Mr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha	ITUC-AP, Senior Officer, Workers' Rights
6	Hon. Jeevan Thondaman	Minister of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure, Sri Lanka
7	Hon. Vadivel Suresh	Member of Parliament, Sri Lanka
8	Mr. Manorajan Pegu	Solidarity Centre, Country Program Director
9	Dr. M Sumanadasa	University of Colombo
10	Prof. S Premaratne, PhD	University of Colombo
11	Mr. Rajendra Acharya	UNI Global Union, Asia Pacific, Regional Secretary
12	Mr. Raman Kannan	Public Services International (PSI), Sub-regional Secretary for South Asia
13	Ms. Bharti Birla	ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India, Chief Technical Advisor (Project Manager)
14	Mr. Amish Karki	ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India, Technical Officer
15	Mr. Prabhu Rajendran	Mondiaal FNV, Regional Consultant
16	Ms. Nishi Kapahi	South Asia Gender Platform, Coordinator
17	Ms Apoorva Kaiwar	IndustriALL Global Union, Regional Secretary
18	Mr. Md. Shahidullah Badal	BMSF, Acting General Secretary
19	Mr. MD.Jahangir Alam Chowdhury	BSSF, General Secretary
20	Mr. Anwar Hossain	BJSB, President
21	Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury	BLF, General Secretary
22	Mr. K. M. Azam Khasru	Jatio Sramik League (JSL), General Secretary
23	Mr. Nur Mohammad	BFTUC, Vice President
24	Mr. Jagat Simkhada	ANTUF, President
25	Mr. Pushkar Acharya	NTUC, President
26	Mr. Binod Shrestha	GEFONT, President
27	Mr. Mukhtar Awan	PWF, General Secretary
28	Mr. Barath Arullamy	Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), Vice President
29	Mr. Padmashree Ranawakaarachchi	National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), General Secretary
30	Mr. Leslie Devendra	SLNSS, General Secretary
31	Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu	Hind Mazdoor Sabha, General Secretary
32	Mr. Ashok Singh	INTUC, Senior National Vice President
33	Ms. Sonia George	SEWA, Vice President
34	Ms. Umanagendramani Makaraju	INTUC, Women Secretary
35	Ms. Champa Verma	HMS, Women Secretary
36	Mr. Mahendra Sharma	SARTUC, Advisor
37	Mr. Laxman Basnet	SARTUC, General Secretary
38	Mr. Indra Deo Yadav	SARTUC, Executive Officer
39	Mr. Kishor Bikram Shah	SARTUC, Programme Officer
40	Ms. Sweanta Lama	SARTUC, Programme Assistant

ANNEX-VI Photos



Group Photo after the 3rd General Conference, SARTUC



Hon. Jeevan Thondaman, Sri Lankan Minister of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure, and General Secretary, CWC, in his opening remarks.



Hon. Vadivel Suresh, M.P., Sri Lanka and President, NTUF, welcomed all the delegates and observers to Sri Lanka on behalf of NTUF.



Participants at the 3rd General Conference, SARTUC.



Ms. Maria Helena ANDRE, Director, ILO ACTRAV, welcomed all the delegates through her video message.



Mr. Harbhajan Singh Sidhu, the president of SARTUC thanking all the delegates and observers in closing session.



Mr Laxman Basnet, General Secretary of SARTUC thanking all the delegates and observers in closing session.