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Agenda Item: 16

Summary Report - Labour and Social Protection Network Meeting, 8 May 2016, Arequipa, Peru

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: LSPN Coordinator



**Human Resources Development Working
Group Plenary Meeting
Arequipa, Peru
7-10 May 2016**

APEC Labour and Social Protection Network Meeting

08 May 2016

*Cerro Juli Convention Center
Arequipa, Peru*

SUMMARY REPORT

The APEC Labour and Social Protection Network (LSPN) Meeting was held on 8 May 2016 during the 38th APEC Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG) Meeting in Arequipa, Peru.

Delegates from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Peru, The Philippines, Russia, Chinese Taipei and United States participated in the meeting.

Mr. Malcolm Greening, the LSPN Coordinator, chaired the meeting supported by Mr. Pierre Vicente, from the host economy.

Representatives from the APEC Business Advisory Council, International Labour Office and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University) also participated in the meeting. The Acting Lead Shepherd also spoke to the group.

MAY 08 SESSION

1. Welcoming remarks – Mr. Malcolm Greening LSPN Coordinator

Mr. Greening welcomed LSPN members and introduced Mr. Pierre Vicente, Peru's representative, as co-chair of the network meeting. He invited delegates to participate in the discussion and feel free to raise issues. Mr. Greening acknowledged and appreciated the network's effort in implementing the HRD Action Plan. He also acknowledged that there were gaps in some areas and that progress needed to be made in implementing the vision of the Connectivity Blueprint.

The Co-chair offered his remarks and highlighted the importance of addressing labour market challenges through concrete actions. He emphasized the need to address informality in developing economies.

2. Delegate introduction

The LSPN Coordinator invited delegates to introduce themselves and briefly outline recent labour market developments and social protection issues in their economies. Youth unemployment was highlighted by many delegates as a recurrent challenge.

Other challenges were also highlighted such as social security, protection of mobile workers, labour mobility, talent issues, achieving a society in which all citizens are dynamically engaged, demographic changes, occupational health and safety, informality, skills mismatch and employment for people with disabilities.

3. Adoption of the meeting agenda

The agenda was adopted with minor amendment to accommodate Russia's request to present a project proposal on "long-term public care of people with severe mental disorders".

4. Nomination of LSPN Coordinator

The LSPN Coordinator confirmed that PNG offered to take responsibility for coordinating the activities of the network. The offer was made at the HRDWG Technical Meeting on 7 May 2016.

Australia has held the position since 2011 and Mr. Greening was pleased that PNG was willing to take the role. Mr. Greening reassured PNG that Australia will take all reasonable efforts to assist the incoming coordinator.

5. Reflection on 2015

Mr. Greening invited the Philippines to make brief remarks in relation to the priorities and achievements in 2015.

In his remarks, the Philippines delegate made reference to key themes and initiatives, including the social dimensions of globalization, the mobility of human resource, the Philippines/US project on Healthy Women Healthy Economies and the Chinese Taipei/Philippines workshop on facilitating mobility through social protection and portability of social security benefits.

The LSPN Coordinator made brief comments encouraging members not to lose sight of the issues championed by the Philippines in 2015 such as labour mobility, social protection and the integration of women in the economy.

6. Priorities for 2016

The Co-chair, Mr. Pierre Vicente, made brief remarks about Peru's priorities for 2016 focusing on three areas - youth unemployment, informality and female labour force participation.

7. Discussion of work plan and outcomes for 2016

The LSPN Coordinator made brief reference to the work plan for 2016, the HRD Action Plan, Senior Officials Tasking Statement for 2016, The HRD Ministerial Statement 2014 and the Connectivity Blueprint.

Mr. Greening invited suggestions from delegates on what the network wants to achieve in 2016, and what might be the deliverables for Leaders.

A number of economies supported the elevation of youth unemployment as a long-term priority for APEC.

Korea sought the network's support to obtain HRDWG's endorsement of the proposal "APEC initiative for boosting youth employment and entrepreneurship", and requested the development of an APEC wide initiative to be included in the 2016 work plan of the HRDWG. There was support from some economies, while the US suggested that Korea redraft the proposal as a concept note. Brunei Darussalam echoed the US comments.

Mr. Greening made brief remarks and encouraged the network to further explore the issue on youth employment at the joint LSPN/CBN workshop on youth employment strategies. He also emphasized that it is important to take the topic on labour mobility forward and not to lose the momentum from the 2015 achievement.

8. Discussion of projects and key themes

A number of member economies led discussion on current or new activities. The ILO and RMIT University (Australia) also delivered presentations.

Russian Federation – discussed a proposal to conduct a study on APEC economies experiences in raising the retirement age.

United States – discussed the project on Healthy Women, Healthy Economies.

United States – presented a proposal to conduct research into the employment status of people with disabilities.

Russian Federation – presented a proposal to conduct an APEC study on best practice on delivering long-term public care for people with severe mental disorders.

Peru – highlighted the need for effective and reliable labour market information system to improve the quality of human resources.

Japan – provided an update on an ongoing project on Vocational Training in cooperation with enterprises focusing on the outcome effect on the projects including ten participating APEC economies. In this fiscal year Japan will implement the project just focusing on ongoing projects.

Acting Lead Shepherd – after the presentation by Japan, the Acting Lead Shepherd joined the meeting and offered her remarks and support to the work of the network. The Acting Lead Shepherd made reference to a number of issues, including Peru’s APEC priority on human capital development, the goals of the Port Moresby Declaration, youth employment, labour mobility and the APEC skills mapping system.

Chinese Taipei – presented a project regarding work life quality and quality growth under global supply chains in APEC economies.

United States – provided an update on recent developments on working conditions in the US concerning exposure to silica dust which has been linked to lung cancer, kidney disease and respiratory disease.

Philippines/Chinese Taipei – reported on the outcome of the seminar and field trip on facilitating human resource mobility by enhancing social protection for mobile workers, which was held in Chinese Taipei in August/September 2015.

Australia – provided an update on the pilot project on the development of the tourism workforce. Australia is conducting a study into the tourism workforce in the APEC region.

RMIT University – presented the research findings of the study on “Enhancing Labour Mobility in the APEC Region”.

Australia – presented the Non-Paper on the development of an APEC-wide labour mobility framework.

United States – provided an update on the implementation of the Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Policy Toolkit.

ILO - delivered a presentation on key challenges for the region, including informality, youth unemployment and mismatch between labour supply and demand.

9. Updates by APEC member economies on key labour and social protection issues and developments

All network members at the meeting presented short updates on labour and social protection developments in their economies.

The update covered a number of themes, including youth unemployment, quality jobs, demographic changes, people with disabilities, female labour force participation, informality in the labour force, labour market information systems, entrepreneurship, social protection, labour and talent shortage, public sector reform, skills mismatch and apprenticeships.

Some of the key themes which emerged from the discussions during this session included: new program initiatives in relation to the employment of youth, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, HRD strategy towards productivity improvement, generating self-employment and entrepreneurs, improving occupational safety and health, developments in labour regulations and social protection arrangements, and supporting mobile workers within and between APEC economies.

10. LSPN objectives over the next year

The LSPN Coordinator noted that the network has made progress in relation to the HRD Action Plan. He also stressed that it is important to continue to review progress and identify any gaps in the lead up to the HRD Ministerial Meeting in 2018. Mr. Greening encouraged economies to complete existing projects and initiate new ones.

The LSPN Coordinator also noted that there is scope to focus on the future of work theme, particularly its implications for job creation and activation policies.

Economies were invited to offer comments and direction for the next year. Canada reiterated previous comments on the elevation of youth unemployment as a long-term APEC priority. The US noted that the future of work topic should be aligned to other global priorities.

11. Other business

Mr. Greening invited economies to raise other issues. There were no further comments.

12. Closing remarks – LSPN Coordinator

The LSPN Coordinator expressed appreciation to the delegates for their contribution to the discussion and the implementation of the HRD Action Plan through previous, current and proposed projects. He acknowledged that there are some gaps in the implementation of the Connectivity Blueprint.

The Co-chair also made brief remarks by expressing his appreciation to members for their contribution to the discussion, noting that a number of issues were discussed during the day, including youth unemployment and labour mobility.

The US acknowledged that this will be Mr. Greening's last meeting as Chair of the network and thanked him for the service and excellent leadership over the past four years.