



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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Agenda Item: 14

**Human Resources Development Working Group  
Detroit Non-Binding Principles and  
Recommendations for Equality and Inclusion in  
Education, Training, and Employment (Endorsed)**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: HRDWG Lead Shepherd



**48<sup>th</sup> Human Resources Development  
Working Group Meeting  
Detroit, United States  
16-19 May 2023**



## **The HRDWG Detroit Non-Binding Principles and Recommendations for Equality and Inclusion in Education, Training, and Employment**

**May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

APEC economies met in Detroit, Michigan, May 16 to 19, 2023, at the 48<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG).

In Detroit, a center of industry and innovation that has sheltered migrants and provided economic opportunities to many, the HRDWG discussed furthering the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 of an open, dynamic, resilient, and peaceful Asia-Pacific community, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations, by promoting inclusive human resource development as well as economic and technical cooperation.

Under the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, the Aotearoa Plan of Action (APA) calls for “all our people [to be] well equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to adapt and thrive now and, in the future,” to assure strong, balanced, secure, sustainable, and inclusive growth.

### ***Equality and Inclusion***

Economic growth that realizes the potential of our people depends on sustainable and equal access to education, training, and employment, including career and vocational learning.

**Equality** in learning from pre-school to post-secondary education, vocational training, and in the workplace helps economic growth and prosperity that includes everyone.

Policies designed for **inclusion** in education, training, and the workplace will result in strong, balanced, secure, sustainable, and inclusive growth in each economy and throughout the region. Present and future generations will enjoy prosperity only if our policies help ensure that no one is left behind.

Further, we strive to advance the 2022 APEC Leaders’ Declaration that commits to the 2019-2030 La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth, and “building an environment where all, including MSMEs [micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises] and women, are empowered to access economic opportunities and contribute to and benefit from our economy ...[W]e encourage further efforts to expand APEC’s work with other groups with untapped economic potential, such as Indigenous Peoples as appropriate, people with disabilities, and those from remote and rural communities, while also promoting the role of youth in advancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth.”

## **Action Areas: Education, Capacity Building, and Labor and Social Protection**

### ***Education***

Investing in high-quality public education provides all learners with equal access to opportunities for successful careers and fulfilling lives. To accomplish the ECOTECH Medium-Term Priorities and the 2016-2030 Action Plan of APEC Education Strategy requires domestic and local policies and programs that:

- Deliver affordable, comprehensive, and quality education to learners in all socioeconomic and educational situations.
- Provide a safe learning environment by preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based harassment and violence in schools and online, and by fostering responsible digital citizenship.
- Improve learning conditions, address educator shortages, support learners' mental health and well-being, and promote multilingual and multicultural learning.
- Advance multiple pathways to digital literacy, higher education, and careers by making post-secondary education, vocational education, and training accessible to all.
- Invest in high-quality preschools and early learning to afford all children the opportunity for success in life.
- Safely and equitably harness the potential of digital and other innovative technologies and enhance digital and critical literacy in curricula.
- Empower and invest in the teaching workforce and strengthen the resilience of our education institutions.
- Advance mutual recognition of education qualifications across the region, where applicable.

### ***Capacity Building***

As the Capacity Building Network Roadmap 2022-2025 states, and affirmed by the APEC Business Advisory Council's Report to Leaders 2022 and the ECOTECH Medium-Term Priorities, the economies seek to:

- Foster an environment for the cultivation of a new mindset towards capacity building.
- Encourage economies to prioritize strengthening the digital capacity of their constituents through formal and informal means.
- Undertake efforts to reskill and upskill workers in response to post-pandemic economic recovery.
- Restyle capacity building initiatives to take into consideration new or updated systems, processes, and procedures.

In addition, economies will emphasize equality and inclusion with an aim to:

- Bridge gender gaps and include groups with untapped economic potential through increased access to digital, cyber, and technical learning.
- Develop innovative vocational training and apprenticeship programs, in collaboration with industry, regions, and communities, that provide access to quality employment and decent work to job seekers, especially women, people with disabilities, young and Indigenous Peoples as appropriate.
- Ensure all populations' access to technology and lifelong learning by improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education among youth and reducing skills gaps in aging populations.
- Empower MSMEs, including start-ups and women-owned and women-led enterprises, to access markets and foster innovation by providing capacity building.

### ***Labor, Employment, and Social Protection***

To advance the ECOTECH Medium-Term Priorities and allow all to share in a sustainable future, we seek to:

- Take into consideration the interest and welfare of the workforce in formulating domestic labor-market policies and utilize tools, such as social dialogue, to facilitate that process, as per domestic circumstances.
- Promote gender equality and access for people with disabilities to career and skills development opportunities.
- Respect the fundamental principle of occupational safety and health in the workplace.
- Promote digital skills training and employment opportunities for groups with untapped economic potential and across economies.
- Create a reliable, well-regulated, and sustainable social security system for all. Improve the social security and service systems for people with disabilities.
- Promote transition to green and low-carbon development and address workforce challenges caused by climate change.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Economies will further promote equality and inclusion in developing their workforces to better achieve strong, balanced, secure, sustainable, and inclusive growth.

#### ***1. Promoting full and high-quality employment through skills development***

We strongly support the acknowledgement in the Aotearoa Plan of Action that efforts shall be made to better assess and bridge skills gaps and mismatches between skills and development. We believe economies should strengthen lifelong vocational education and training to adequately prepare the workforce for the changing world of work and support workers to

acquire sufficient skills to improve their employability and entrepreneurship. We will strive to ensure that everyone can fulfill career development to the best of their abilities.

## ***2. Pursuing Equality and Inclusion***

We support greater cross-fora collaboration, a common practice in APEC that was a focus of the February 2023 Palm Springs First Senior Officials Meeting, and acknowledge the 2022 APEC Leaders' Declaration, which welcomes continued efforts to use a gender mainstreaming approach in relevant APEC processes. The HRDWG will incorporate equality and inclusion in its work plan and evaluation of project outcomes.

*This statement has been endorsed by all 21 APEC HRDWG member economies.*