



## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION/ ASIA PACIFIC LABOUR NETWORK (ITUC/APLN)**

### **STATEMENT TO THE 2015 APEC ECONOMIC LEADERS' MEETING Manila, Philippines, November 18-19, 2015**

*"We remain focussed on addressing informality, as well as structural and long-term unemployment, by strengthening labour markets and having appropriate social protection systems. Improving workplace safety and health is a priority."*

*G20 Leaders' Communiqué Brisbane Summit, November 2014*

It is critical that APEC economies reinforce action to create employment by promoting demand-led growth. This entails policies that encourage collective bargaining so as to raise low and middle incomes; formalization strategies to improve the quality of jobs and social protection coverage; massive investment in infrastructure, the green economy and the "care economy" that have vast potential for creating new jobs and increase the participation rates of vulnerable groups.

APEC Leaders should adopt concrete measures in order to promote labour participation in APEC including the establishment of an APEC Labour Forum, a new body with consultative responsibilities in parity with the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC). Further to this, APEC should enable meaningful participation of trade unions in the Human Resources Development Ministers' Meeting and other APEC meetings.

Trade negotiations in Asia-Pacific include the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The APEC Economies should not conclude trade agreements that only benefit investors but fail to improve the livelihoods of workers and citizens in general. As fundamental workers' rights are at the basis of creating a rule-based framework for globalisation, the APEC Leaders' Meeting should promote core labour standards in all regional and bilateral trade agreements and integration processes, including in the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific and the TPPA and RCEP as well as in the multilateral trading system. New trade agreements should also establish enforceable provisions that protect the environment. Dispute settlement mechanisms set up by trade agreements should provide equal access to all and not only to foreign investors. As a matter of principle all RTA/FTA negotiations should be transparent and reflect the views of representative civil society and trade unions. Particular action is required to address the decent work deficits and power imbalances in supply chains, especially in view of the G7 decisions and the work of the ILO starting in 2016.

In implementing these, the Leaders of APEC are encouraged to:

- commit to implementing policies on the national level that support aggregate demand and reduce inequality based on minimum living wages, collective bargaining and social protection. APEC Leaders should establish monitoring and reporting procedures to measure the progress of each Economy on an annual basis;
- formalise an APEC Labour Forum to contribute to APEC's goal for inclusive growth;
- commit to making trade negotiations in Asia-Pacific transparent and participatory; conduct impact assessments and inform the negotiations with a view to achieving a balanced agreement;
- actively engage in promoting an environmentally sustainable economic model through targeted investments in key sectors and new skills, the promotion of energy efficiency and the generation of renewable energy through an *APEC Plan for a Just Transition to the Green Economy*. Trade unions also ask APEC leaders to present ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in the context of the negotiation of a new climate deal under the UNFCCC and incorporate in them the assessment of the employment potential of these measures.
- work toward securing health and safe workplaces in APEC countries, through the ratification, adoption and enforcement of relevant international health and safety standards, such as ILO Convention No. 155, and work towards the respect of the right to health and safety throughout supply chains
- strengthen labour market institutions by establishing a comprehensive *APEC Decent Work Strategy and Guidelines*, and a *APEC-wide Social Protection Floor Initiative*
- eliminate informal, atypical and precarious forms of employment and, working in conjunction with the social partners, draw up a comprehensive *APEC Action Plan for Formalisation of Economic Activities* paying special attention to vulnerable groups
- promote gender equality with a rights-based approach aiming at the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions No. 189 on Domestic Workers, No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), No. 100 on Equal Remuneration and in view of the disproportionate participation of women in part-time work, ILO Convention No. 175. The Leaders should also adopt guidelines to ensure the proper and effective implementation of non-discriminatory policies.
- adopt an ambitious programme to address discrimination against and exploitation of migrant labour by creating a rights-based *APEC Framework on Labour Migration*. The framework should be designed with the participation of the ILO and the social partners and on the basis of policy and best practices to enhance the benefits of migration.
- make commitments to *ratify the Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention* and ensure legislative reform in order to eliminate slavery.

The ITUC/APLN calls the APEC Leaders to achieve economic recovery with investments in public infrastructure, promotion of decent work, establishment and strengthening of social protection floors and labour market institutions.