



## The 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers' Conference Chairman's Summary

1. The Second ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers' Conference was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 14-15 October 2008 under the title "*More and Better Jobs – Strategic Cooperation and Partnership to Promote Decent Work and Global Labour Markets to our Mutual Benefits*". It was attended by 13 Ministers of Labour, officials from 35 ASEM Member States, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunity of the European Commission, and by representatives of ILO and the World Bank as observers. The Conference was chaired by H.E. Mr. Erman Suparno, Minister of Manpower and Transmigration of The Republic of Indonesia.
2. In his opening remarks he emphasized that Asia and Europe relations will strengthen through progressive initiatives among Labour Ministers, and expressed his wish that such cooperation would bring about greater employment and economic opportunities for workers in both regions. He viewed that the Conference would establish stronger linkages in creating full employment and decent work. He further explained that not all countries are able to reap the advantages of globalisation and to counteract its negative implications. Therefore in the spirit of cooperation, Asia and Europe should work hand in hand and bear equal responsibilities in minimizing said impacts of globalisation.
3. Keynote speeches were delivered by H.E. Mr. Erman Soeparno and Ministers and Head of Delegation of ASEM coordinators, namely **H.E Mr. Gilles de Robien**, French Ambassador for Promoting Social Cohesion, France; **H.E Mr. Pehin Dato Adanan Yusof**, Minister of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam; **H.E Mr. Vladimir Spidla**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, European Commission; **H.E Mr. Hu Xiaoyi**, Vice Minister of Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China; as well as by **Mrs. Susanne Hoffmann**, Deputy Director General, Germany as the host of the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM LEMC Meeting.
4. In their speeches Ministers shared experiences in their respective country and region in promoting more and better jobs. In particular, H.E. Mr. Suparno shared the concept of "Three in One" comprising of training, certification and placement, of which Indonesia is currently striving to implement, in order to improve skills and opportunities for a better job. H.E. Mr. de Robien underlined the positive effect on employment of green jobs taking into account the importance of implementing decent work in this context. H.E. Mr. Yusof highlighted the importance of addressing the values of decent work in the field of labour and employment as a contribution to both national and regional development. H.E. Vladimir Spidla conveyed the importance of decent work, highlighting inter alia the need to effectively implement core labour standards, to expand social protection coverage, and to enhance social dialogue and the involvement of social partners and civil society in the field of labour and employment within the

ASEM process. H.E. Hu Xiaoyi, encouraged further development of technical cooperation between Asia and Europe to push forward economic development through job expansion and provide better employment opportunities for workers. Lastly, Mrs. Susanne Hoffmann, called for the involvement of social partners in the ASEM process, underlined the role of basic social security system including for those working in the informal sector and further supported the views of France and EC on green jobs as a socially responsible answer to the issue of climate change.

5. Ministers in their speeches touched upon the compelling issues of labour and employment in Asia and Europe. They emphasized the need for regional efforts to undertake current challenges, particularly in the promotion of decent work and social dimension of labour issues. Furthermore, they underlined the necessity of a continued dialogue, strategic cooperation, and partnership between Asia and Europe to promote decent work and global labour markets for the benefit of all ASEM partners. They recalled the increasing significance of Asia and EU partnership which is evident in the growing number of dialogues, initiatives, and cooperation among countries in both regions.
6. Following the opening session, Ministers exchanged views on labour market, social, economic and environmental policies which significantly contributes to the welfare of the peoples in Asia and Europe. In this regard, Ministers also discussed the importance of ongoing and future cooperation among ASEM partners as well as with related stakeholders which promotes economic growth and sustainable development.
7. The current global financial crisis and its impact upon the labour market and social dimension are also of common concern for the Ministers.
8. The Ministers sought concrete efforts in strengthening the social dimension of globalisation and in promoting decent work for all in the Conference's three separate working group sessions: Training and Employability, Labour Migration, and Social Protection.

### **Training and Employability**

9. In exploring areas for continued cooperation in the field of labour and employment, ASEM Labour Ministers is of the view that a continued cooperation in this respective area is high on the agenda of ASEM partners. Ministers were pleased to share expertise and experience in the implementation of training for employability practices. In this regard, Ministers stressed that ASEM partners should engage in joint activities to strengthen regional cooperation in human resource development. In this regard, Ministers took note the initiative of Indonesia to host Asia-Europe Workshop on Harmonization of Competency Standard in 2009, as a means to facilitate the mobility of workers in the two regions.
10. Ministers viewed that proper employment and social policies should promote employment opportunities, create more and better jobs, improve labour market, and strengthen employability and adaptability in the formal sector. Institutional capacity building including in adapting to technology advancement is also of importance to the Ministers.
11. Ministers reiterated the need to further bilateral and regional cooperation among Asia and Europe, particularly in life long learning educational programs,

apprenticeships, vocational institutions, research activities, and the creation and implementation of economic and social policies to promote progress in labour and employment issues. Ministers exchanged views on ways to ensure the quality and competitiveness of higher education systems and institutions as key element for educating qualified labours and promoting economic growth of both regions.

12. Ministers acknowledged the outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Ministers Responsible for Education of the ASEM Countries held in Berlin 5-6 May 2008 which calls for the strengthening of cooperation in higher education to enhance employability and lifelong learning by way of linking education system and labour market.
13. Result of the Working Group discussion on training and employability appears as annex A.

### **Labour Migration**

14. Ministers addressed various labour migration issues. Among other considerations, some Ministers made the following proposals:
  - a. Recognized the importance of concrete cooperation among ASEM partners in the implementation of protection for workers.
  - b. Shared the views on the need to intensify EU – Asia cooperation in the field of Labour Migration.
  - c. Encouraged the enhancement of cooperation in the field of technical or vocational education and training, including exchanges of experience on qualification frameworks in Asian and European Countries.
  - d. Ministers underlined the necessity to have a harmonized cooperation between sending and receiving countries. In this context, Ministers highlighted the importance of developing mechanism to protect migrant workers in Asia and Europe. Moreover, Ministers sought that labour market information (LMI) needs to become more accessible for the job seekers.
15. Result of the Working Group discussion on labour migration appears as annex B.

### **Social Protection**

13. Ministers highlighted the importance of further developing cooperation in the field of decent work, including social security and social protection for workers, particularly in the informal and vulnerable sectors. Understanding this, Ministers considered social protection as a beneficial form of investment.
14. Ministers reaffirmed the necessity to enhance social protection system and institutions of both regions.
15. Ministers had an exchange of views on lessons learned in the provision of social security/social protection of workers. Ministers concurred that notwithstanding the differing pace of change due to different levels of development, countries have much to share in developing and implementing appropriate policies to address common

concerns in the areas of social security and social protection.

16. Bearing in mind the advantages of social protection to the communities, Ministers were of the view that the implementation of system and schemes of this particular pillar of decent work need to take into account differing characteristics and socio-economic condition of every country.
17. Ministers sought the need to engage other stakeholders, in particular the business sector in promoting social protection. In this regard, Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Protection reflect complementarities and must be accessible to all by promoting national development cohesion.
18. Result of the Working Group discussion on social protection appears as annex C.

### **Further Cooperation**

19. Ministers proposed to report the results of the Conference to the ASEM 7 Summit in Beijing, China. Ministers agreed to accept the kind offer of European partners to host the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers Conference in 2010 (venue tbc). We also welcomed the announcement by the European Commission to organize the second ASEM Social Partners Forum in 2010.
20. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Indonesian authorities for their excellent arrangements of the Conference and warm hospitality rendered by the people and authorities of Bali.

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