



THE LO/FTF COUNCIL IN ASIA



DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

The LO/FTF Council carries out development activities in Asia, Africa and Latin America through multi- and bilateral project partnerships, in particular with trade union organisations. The development objective is to support a sustainable, democratic development, strengthen civil society and contribute to the poverty alleviation in those communities in which our partner organisations function.

RESOURCE CENTRES

The LO-FTF Council implements four programmes in Asia utilising the services of a number of resource centres, created in cooperation with Asian partner organisations.

The key areas of competence of the centres are:

- **Occupational Health & Safety**
– OHSEI, the Regional Workers Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Institute in Bangkok.
- **Labour Market & Child Labour**
– BILS, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies.
- **Adult Training & Web-based membership databases** – PSLINK's certified Education Department in the Philippines.

The efforts are coordinated in cooperation with the resource centre in Bangkok.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The LO/FTF Council coordinates the technical assistance in the region through three regional resource persons who provide technical assistance on for example project planning and monitoring, occupational health and safety and the creation of membership databases and educational systems. The Technical assistance is coordinated and delivered in close cooperation with the LO-FTF Council in Copenhagen.

THE UNION MOVEMENT REGION

The union movement in Asia consists, roughly speaking, of two varieties. An 'old' one which was 'left behind' by the British and which was primarily created in connection with the establishment of railways, trade and plantations; and a 'new' one, created along more traditional Asian lines, that is, with closer relations to the government.



The old kind of union movement is found especially in India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, whereas the new form of organisation is represented in countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore.

The trade unions only organise a relatively small proportion of industrial workers (2-15%) and the union movement in many cases seems to find it difficult to adapt to the pace which the information age and the free market has created in the industry, in terms of the utilization of marginal differences in wages and working conditions.

There is still a great demand for information and education – and protection – of active union members and representatives, if the union movement is to increase its influence on the development of Asian societies.

TARGET GROUPS

The general target group consists of organised workers within the public and private sectors as well as potential members of the trade union movement. Union work is an essential 'engine' in the improvement of living conditions for

a large section of the population, to be achieved through dialogue and negotiation with the other social partners on the labour market. This occurs through collective bargaining and the participation of trade unions in for example commissions on minimum wages in which minimum standards for wages and working conditions are created with an impact far beyond the organised segment of the workers, which the trade unions represent. The union movement is increasingly developing its capacity as an advocate for groups within the so-called informal economy and in general plays an ever larger role in the reduction of poverty.

THE DIRECT RECIPIENTS

The direct recipients of assistance through individual projects are usually elected representatives, trainers and activists from the organisations that participate in the projects. Attention is paid to the promotion of equality between the genders and to the encouragement of active female participation in union work.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Project cooperation takes place within the global network of labour organisations in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and its regional organisation ICFTU-APRO, within the individual industrial sectors with the Global Union Federations (GUFs) and at the national level with national organisations that bring together federations as well as local trade unions.

AREAS OF FOCUS

A number of fundamental and common features are reflected at all levels of work in the region. Reaching from regional advocacy to the individual project intervention, the focus is on the following areas:

- **Democracy** – including social dialogue, negotiations and conflict resolution.
- **Human rights** – including the defence of labour rights
- **Poverty alleviation** – including improvement of living conditions for the poorest segments of society
- **Occupational Health and Safety** – including work related diseases

REGIONAL STRATEGY

With point of departure in the overall objectives of the LO-FTF Council and the experiences in

Asia since 1990, the efforts in the region evolve around *Capacity building* of the National trade Union organisations, enabling them to carry out effective *advocacy*, thus, strengthening their ability to support a democratic development in their own countries respectively, become efficient agents for poverty alleviation and improve their capacity to meet the challenges on the labour market. The comparative advantages of the LO-FTF Council is utilised in the partnership to achieve a sustainable organisational development of the partner organisation.

The intervention takes place on two complementary levels: By strengthening the conditions for creating a strong *national trade union movement* within the individual countries, and by strengthening and cooperating with *the regional trade union movement*.

The strategy has several strands and results in project cooperation containing one or more sub-strategies and/or components. Priorities among these and planning of the implementation of the individual components depend on specific analyses of needs, aims and possibilities of sustainable organisational development through:

- Educational programmes and systems
- Information and campaign activities
- Administrative and financial systems
- Recruiting of members/organisational development
- Creation of networks and alliances
- Conflict solutions and social dialogue on the labour market

All projects emphasise education, training and the establishment of networks;

The *education* of active union members is a fundamental methodological element in the LO/FTF Council projects in Asia; the educational programmes are important in reflecting the above-mentioned areas of focus, transforming them into capacity building in practice. Educational activities range from the creation of educational systems for teachers and trainers through the education of union representatives to study circles and similar activities.

The *creation of networks* takes place at all levels from the local to the regional – among unions

within the different industrial sectors on the labour market through the consolidation of trade union unification at the national level to the unification of the union movement at the regional level.

SPECIFIC THEMES

Besides the focus areas mentioned above which is part of all projects, the individual projects also concentrate on special themes. At present the projects involve the following programme themes:

Union Rights and other Human Rights

- Labour market legislation
- Collective bargaining
- The democratic development of the countries in question, including respect for human rights and union rights
- The union rights of employees

Democracy and Institutional Capacity Building

- Management and cooperation
- Institutional and financial sustainability
- Membership databases
- Financial administration
- Educational systems
- Servicing of members

Poverty and Empowerment

- Child labour
- Female opportunities in the labour market
- The informal sector
- Alternative forms of employment
- Basic education

Occupational Health and Safety

- Occupational health and safety at work
- Creation of health and safety committees
- Health and accident insurance
- Documentation and mapping

FOUR PROGRAMMES

There are four programmes in total within which the national projects are included. During 2004 the LO/FTF Council cooperates on projects with the national Trade union organisations in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Malaysia, the Philippines, India, Nepal and Cambodia.

Human rights on the labour market: Supports Trade Unions from countries, which are in an economic/political phase of transition. The partner organisations are ILO and 7 National centres in Cambodia

and CMTU in Mongolia. The intervention seeks to build the capacity of the partner organisations to negotiate collective bargaining agreements, to inform and advocate about workers rights and, further, to support the possibilities for the partner organisations to exercise influence on labour market legislation.

Democracy and Institutional Capacity Building:

Supports trade unions, which have achieved a relative high organisational level, already exercises political influence tri-partite bodies, organises a substantial amount of members and have some income. The partner organisations are APFOL (Pakistan), BILS (Bangladesh) and PSLINK (Philippines). The programme aims at developing and consolidating the services offered to the membership including, but not limited to, education, collective insurance and legal aid, and at the same time, cementing the trade union influence in tri- and bi-partite bodies, on labour market and within the field of social legislation.

Poverty and Empowerment:

Comprise of those organisations, which engage people on the labour market, working on the fringes of the formal sector and the informal economy. Construction workers in the Philippines (NUBCW), poor self-employed women in India (SEWA), workers in Nepal (Gefont/NTUC) and metal workers in India represent such groups. The programme focuses on the ability of the trade union to organise workers in the informal economy through innovative campaigns and activities. The programme further supports the advocacy efforts by the partner organisation, in bringing public attention to the problems in the informal economy.

Occupational Health and Safety:

The working environment has been a priority area for the union movement in Asia for a long time. Firstly, because the rapid industrialisation which has taken place in most Asian countries has made it an urgent matter and secondly, because occupational health and safety contains many strategic elements, such as tripartite cooperation, productivity and organising of the workers. Occupational health and safety is also an area in which a union relatively easy can contribute visibly to improving conditions for its members. The LO/FTF Council has supported the establishment of the Asian Workers' Institute for Occupational Health, Safety and Environment in Bangkok which is intended to

contribute to the strengthening and coordination of national union knowledge about – as well as their ability to improve - occupational health and safety. This is achieved through parallel efforts in research, networking, education and training as well as advocacy and publications. The Institute is established by the international trade union movement, that is, ICFTU-APRO and a number of Global Unions (GUFs) IFBWW, IMF, TWARO, PSI, EI and UNI. Furthermore, the LO/FTF Council will encourage its bilateral partners to make use of the Institute and its capacity; similarly, the Institute is at the disposal of other institutions and organisations.

TYPES OF PROJECTS

In connection with the four programmes, various kinds of projects are developed from one to two year pilot projects to actual capacity building projects, which often carry on from one phase to the next. In total a typical project period covers eight to twelve years. Pilot projects in the region have investigative and process developing aims with a view to identifying actual capacity building projects. A project covering several years and phases can be developed with one trade union or with several organisations, depending on the specific analysis of the processes of democratisation and unification as well as of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the union movement.

DONOR COORDINATION

The LOFTF-Council coordinates activities in Asia, partially through the annual donor conference arranged by the ICFTU-APRO in Singapore, partially through the annual donor coordination meeting in which the Scandinavian donor organisations the LO-TCO (Sweden), the LO-Norway, SASK (Finland) and FNV (Holland) meet, discuss and exchange information about strategies and activities. One day of the meeting is allocated to meeting with the Global Union Federations.

IN DENMARK

The LO and the FTF and their affiliated federations and organisations participate in Project Advisory Committees and in evaluations, and contribute to developing new co operations and technical support. They are also participating in Programme Committees, which have been established for each programme. The Programme Committee in which PAC representatives can discuss and advice on the strategies and interventions planned.



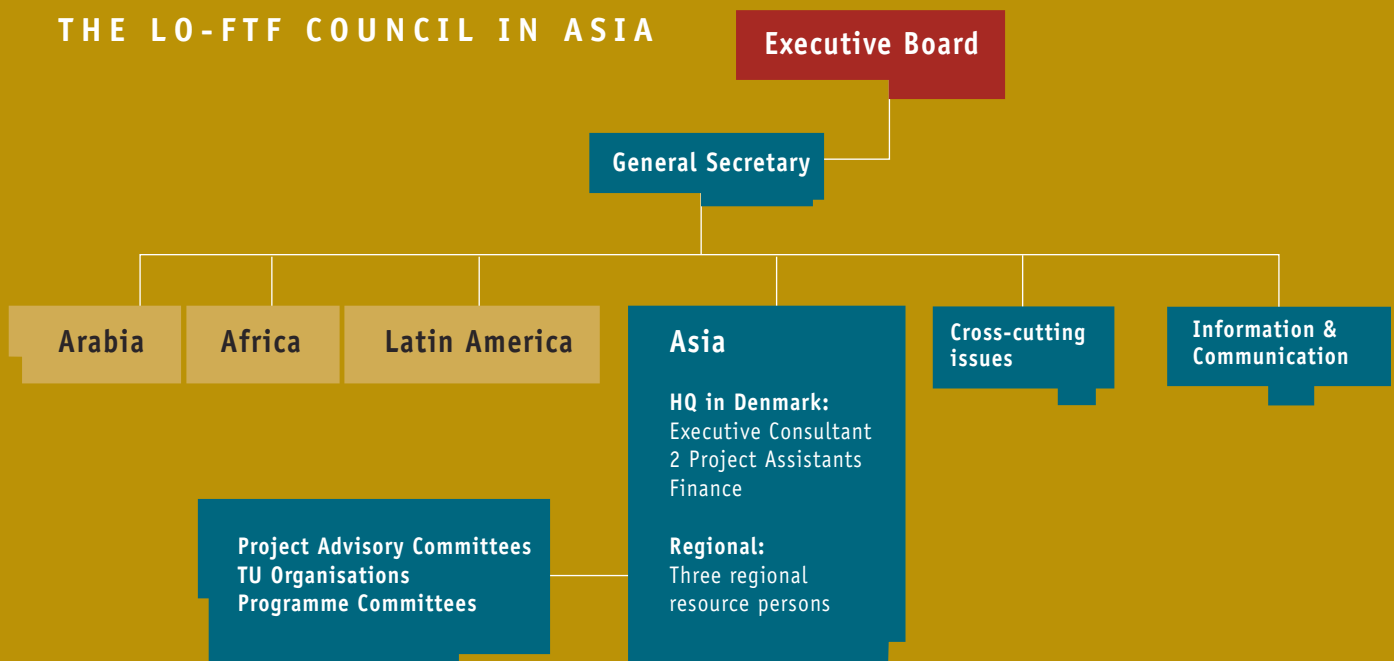
In cooperation with individual Danish Federations and organisations the LO-FTF Council is in the process of establishing networks for active members with interest in the international agenda. These networks offer the individual union member an avenue for information and a possibility to engage in the international solidarity work, with point of departure in activities in their own trade union organisation.

During 2006 an information campaign will be carried out in Denmark. The information campaign will focus on issues deriving from project cooperation in selected countries in Asia.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APFOL	All Pakistan Federation of Labour
BILS	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
CLEP	Child Labour Elimination Project (Bangladesh)
CMTU	Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions
EI	Education International
FNV	Netherlands National Trade Union Centre
GEFONT	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GUF	Global Union Federations
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICFTU-APRO	Asian Pacific Regional Organisation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IFBWW	International Federation of Building and Wood Workers
IMF	International Metalworkers Federation
LO-Norge	Norwegian National Trade Union Centre
LO-TCO	Secretariat for International Trade Union Development Cooperation (Sweden)
MTUC	Malaysian Trade Union Congress
NTUC	Nepal Trade Union Congress
NUBCW	National Union of Building and Construction Workers (Philippines)
OHSEI	The Asian Workers Regional Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Institute (Bangkok)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
PSLINK	Public Service Labor Independent Confederation (Philippines)
SASK	Secretariat for International Trade Union Development Cooperation (Finland)
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association (India)

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PROJECT SUMMARY 2004-2007

PROGRAMMES IN ASIA	2004-2005	2006-2007
Human Rights on the Labour Market		
Cambodia, Trainers Training	•	•
CMTU Mongolia Phase II	•	•
Democracy and Institutional Capacity Building		
PSLINK Interphase	•	•
BILS, Bangladesh, phase III	•	•
APFOL, Pakistan, Phase II	•	•
PSLINK, Alliance Projekt	•	•
Poverty & Empowerment		
NTUC-GEFONT, Nepal	•	•
IUF/SEWA, Women in India, Phase II	•	•
IMF, Metal Workers in India	•	•
IFBWW/NUBCWW, Philippine Construction Workers	•	•
BILS-CLEP, Child Labour in Bangladesh	•	•
Occupational Health and Safety		
OHSEI – OHS, Advocacy and Capacity	•	•
MTUC, OHS in Malaysia	•	•

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