



4. The LO/FTF Council in Asia

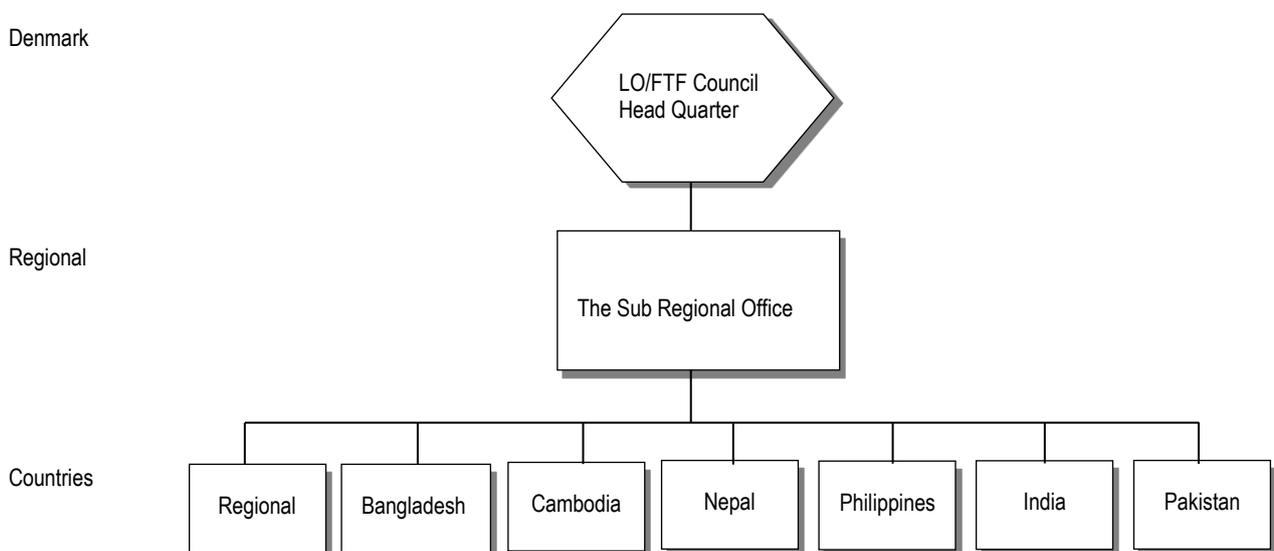
The LO/FTF Council has established a sub-regional office in Asia. The sub regional office delivers technical assistance and thematic advisory services to the partner organisations in each country programme, projects and other activities. Both the international and regional consultants, as well as other local staff extend their services in close collaboration and coordination with the colleagues based in HQ in Copenhagen.

The objective for the Regional Structure is to ensure timely, relevant and efficient technical assistance of high quality, in close cooperation with the partners in the programme and other partners in Asia.

Figure 2 presents the institutional framework of the regional structure

The sub regional office will work under the supervision and authority of the LO/FTF Council Head of Asia and MENA departments. The sub regional office will in general assist partner organisations in pursuing the aims and strategies as outlined in the programme/project documents defining the collaboration between the LO/FTF Council and the partner organisations. The sub regional office will in general assist and represent the LO/FTF Council in monitoring and developing programmes/projects as defined by the LO/FTF Council's working programme in Asia.

Figure 2 Institutional framework of the regional structure in Asia:



The Programme and project portfolio in Asia

The programme and project cooperation of the LO-FTF Council in Asia takes point of departure in the cooperation the LO-FTF Council has had with partner organisations in Asia since the beginning of the nineties, the Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs' revised strategy: *Denmark in Asia - . Prioritising the Future* and its revised strategy for *Danish Support to the Civil Society in Developing Countries* as well as the *Decent Work Agenda* formulated by the ILO and embraced by

governments and the international community, as a prerequisite to achieve the *Millennium Development Goals* by 2015.

The LO/FTF Council seeks to support the internal capacity building of the trade unions and the development of regional and sub-regional networks among trade unions. At national level, the aim is to support the development of a strong national labour movement, which is able to support member organisations and local trade unions in recruiting and servicing their members and at the same time participate as a credible cooperating partner in the social dialogue with both government and employers.

In a broader context the project and programme cooperation takes place within the global network of trade unions affiliated to the ITUC and its regional organisation ITUC-AP, within specific sectors with the Global Union Federations, and on national level with national centres and their affiliates.

The **Development Objective** of the Regional Programme in Asia is defined as:

By the end of 2015 the working and living conditions for children, women and men in both the formal and the informal economy will have improved substantially by strengthening the democratic institutions in the labour market and through the inclusion of the decent work agenda in the national labour legislation of selected countries in Asia.

The programme focus on three key areas:

- *Labour laws, social dialogue and conflict resolution.* The MDG's recognises the need for a stable labour market to promote the growth needed to address poverty. The capacity to contribute to the revision and development of labour laws and to institutionalise social dialogue and conflict resolution on the labour market is a prerequisite to achieve a stable labour market.
- *Good governance & democracy:* The MDGs explicitly recognizes the interdependence between growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development. To achieve the MDGs the development and promotion of good governance is of key importance. The concept of governance has many attributes. Good governance includes being transparent, accountable, efficient and effective in making the best use of resources in a sustainable manner. This requires, amongst others, that the trade unions as one of social partners has the capacity to advocate and lobby for necessary legislative changes in general and can address social evils such as graft, corruption and abuse of power both within the public and the private sector.
- *Poverty alleviation and the growing numbers of workers in the informal economy:* The development deficit is specifically troublesome for the workers in the growing informal economy where work is precarious and generally unprotected. For most of the informal workers in the region, the admirable objectives of the MDGs have still not created any changes, as they are still under sub-standard work conditions. This is especially true in the case of the construction industry and particularly *women and children* are exposed in this regard.

The broad target groups are:

- the organised wage earners within the public and private sectors;

- the potential members of the unions;
- workers (children, women and men) in the informal economy.

Priority is given to gender equality and the ambition to encourage more women to take an active part in the work of trade unions.

The direct beneficiaries of support through the various programmes are the politically elected representatives, educators and labour activists of the partner organisations. The intended beneficiaries are the members and potential members of the trade unions, thereby including the population at large, not least the most destitute and marginalised children, women and men, who are currently working within the informal economy.

Both at the national and the regional level, one or more of the following **strategic intervention areas** are included in the programmes:

1. Institutional, organisational and thematic capacity development
2. Education programmes and systems for shop stewards
3. Information, lobby, advocacy and campaign activities
4. Administrative and financial project management systems
5. Organising strategies and development of trade union systems
6. Formation of networks and alliances
7. Social dialogue

Education of trade union activists is an important element in the LO/FTF Council supported programmes in Asia. It enables the four focus areas mentioned above to be reflected and turned into capacity building in practice. Education activities range from establishing vocational training and educational systems to shop steward education and study circle activities.

Capacity to carry out advocacy is an important element in any trade union participation in social dialogue in Asia, and advocacy has a high priority for the LO/FTF Council building capacity to participate in decision-making processes, including negotiations of collective agreements, improvements of working conditions and social security services.