Thank you Chair, I speak on behalf of trade union movement of Asia-Pacific.

- Our region has lost an equivalent of 140 million full-time jobs\(^1\) due to the pandemic. Women, young people, older persons, migrants, and persons with disabilities are among the hardest hit.
- On top of jobs, we have also lost rights. According to Global Rights Index 2021 of the International Trade Union Confederation, Asia-Pacific is the second worst region in the world for workers’ rights.
- We believe that a human-centred recovery will only happen if we fix the broken labour market.
- **SDG 8 is particularly key.** Through its targets on decent work, social protection and environmental preservation, SDG 8 has a strong leverage effect on other goals.
- That is why we call for an SDG 8 driven recovery and resilience\(^2\):
  1) It means first of all **INVESTMENTS IN DECENT AND CLIMATE-FRIENDLY JOBS**, with a labour protection floor for all workers, and Just Transition measures negotiated with social partners.
  2) Secondly, scaling up **SOCIAL PROTECTION** to reach universal coverage, also by establishing a Social Protection Fund for the least wealthy countries.
  3) Thirdly, **EQUALITY**, by creating jobs for women and youth, investments in care, equal pay for work of equal value, minimum living wages, and eliminating gender-based violence in the world of work.
  4) Four, **FINANCING** these policies requires strengthened development cooperation, debt relief, and progressive taxation.
  5) Lastly, we need a new model of global **GOVERNANCE**: only an inclusive multilateral system - with social partners on board- will pave the way to global resilience. Right now, the moral imperative is to ensure universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.

These are the ingredients of what we call a “**NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT**” based on social dialogue. We stand ready to engage with all of you to make it happen.

Thank you,

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\(^1\) ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO brief on “COVID-19, labour market slack and what it means for recovery”, available [here](#).

\(^2\) See ITUC-AP, [Statement to the 8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development Forum 2021](#), and ITUC’s demands for the 2021 High Level Political Forum.