



ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2026

Empowered Lives, Resilient Futures

6-8 October • ADB Headquarters, Manila



Full Agenda and Session Details

DAY 1: EMPOWERMENT

Tuesday, 6 October 2026

Auditorium Halls 1-4

Manila Time (GMT+8)	Agenda
8:30 - 9:00	Registration
9:00 - 10:15 Auditorium Halls 1-4  BROADCAST AVAILABLE	Welcome by Emcee: Mitzi Borromeo, Multimedia Communications Consultant and Former Correspondent and News Anchor, CNN Philippines Welcome Address: Wempi Saputra, Vice-President (Sectors and Themes), ADB APSP Framing: Shamit Chakravarti, Director, Human and Social Development Sector Office, Sectors Department 3 (SD3-HSD), ADB KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Next-Generation Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific: What Do We Now Know and Where Do We Need to Go? Keynote Speaker: Rohini Pande, Henry J. Heinz II Professor of Economics and Director of the Economic Growth Center; Faculty Director of Inclusion Economics, Yale University Conversation with: Albert Park, Chief Economist and Director General, Economic Research and Development Impact Department, ADB
10:15 - 10:45 Auditorium Hallway	Tea & Coffee Break / Marketplace
10:45 - 12:00 Auditorium Halls 1-4  BROADCAST AVAILABLE	High-Level Plenary 1: Social Protection as a Platform for Empowerment For several decades, social protection has been recognized not only for its role as a social safety net (<i>protecting</i> those at risk of deprivation) and social security (<i>preventing</i> people from falling into deprivation when livelihood shocks occur), but also for its potential to act as a springboard – both for <i>promoting</i> economic empowerment, and for transforming <i>societies</i> to address the root causes of economic and social exclusion. This session will explore how social protection can effectively empower individuals, households, and communities across Asia and the Pacific, with empowerment referring to the transfer of power in many senses – including access to resources and opportunities, as well as the voice and agency to direct or leverage those resources and opportunities. Through framing

	remarks from a foundational thinker in the field, an opening policy address, and a vibrant panel discussion with high-level government, civil society, and development partner representatives, this session will explore how we can enhance the support provided <i>through</i> social protection systems, and the meaningful engagement of users <i>within</i> social protection systems, to enable them to serve as stronger platforms for empowerment, particularly of socially and economically marginalized populations. Moderator: Ayako Inagaki, Deputy Director-General, Sectors Department 3 (Finance, Human and Social Development, Public Sector Management; and Governance), Head, Human and Social Development Sector Office, ADB Framing Reflections: Naila Kabeer, Emeritus Professor of Gender and Development at the Department of International Development, London School of Economics [Video] Opening Policy Address: Rex Gatchalian, Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Government of the Philippines Speakers: • Aishath Zuhurubaan, State Minister, Ministry of Health, Family and Welfare, Government of Maldives • Rex Gatchalian, Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Government of the Philippines • Fa'atino Masunu Utumapu, Co-chair of the Pacific Disability Forum and UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Committee Member • Sudhanshu Handa, Chief Economist and Global Director for Economic and Social Policy, UNICEF
12:00 - 13:00 ADB Executive Dining Room (EDR)	Lunch
13:00 - 14:15 Auditorium Halls 1-2	Session 1: Food for Thought: Leveraging Social Protection to Improve Nutrition and Food Security Despite strong economic growth, Asia and the Pacific remains at the center of the global food security and nutrition challenge. The region is home to nearly half of the global population experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity, and more than 1.39 billion residents are unable to afford a healthy diet. Poverty and food insecurity contribute to all forms of malnutrition, with many countries facing a triple burden of malnutrition, with persistent child stunting and wasting alongside rising rates of overweight and obesity and high levels of anemia among women. This session will explore how social protection systems can be better leveraged to address these challenges. It will examine persistent challenges in accessing nutritious food, and implications for social protection design and delivery. Country case studies will highlight the effectiveness of nutrition-sensitive social protection programs and discuss the key design principles

	necessary for achieving nutritional gains. The session will also highlight how social protection can be integrated with health, education, WASH, agriculture, and other services to deliver sustained improvements in nutrition outcomes. By bringing together evidence, lessons, and practical country experiences, the session will generate actionable insights for policymakers on how to design, implement, and scale nutrition-sensitive social protection programs. Moderator: Amir Jilani, Senior Social Sector Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • Asim Ijaz, Director General, Nutrition CCT Wing, Government of Pakistan • Jacob Manasec, Director, Social Protection, Government of Papua New Guinea • Saskia de Pee, Senior Nutrition Advisor at the Nutrition, School Meals, and Social Protection Service, World Food Programme (WFP) • Laura Itzkowitz, Senior Social Development Specialist (Nutrition), SD3-HSD, ADB
13:00 - 14:15 Auditorium Halls 3-4	Session 2: Breaking Barriers: Enabling Gender Equality through Social Protection Social protection systems play a critical role in reducing poverty, strengthening resilience and promoting inclusion across Asia and the Pacific. Increasingly, governments are also recognizing that well-designed social protection systems can help address persistent gender inequalities by reducing barriers to women's economic participation, challenging restrictive social norms, recognizing unpaid care responsibilities, strengthening resilience to shocks, and improving access to essential services. This session will explore how social protection systems can be more intentionally designed and delivered to advance gender equality outcomes. Through a combination of global perspectives, and operational examples from developing member countries, the session will examine practical lessons and emerging approaches for strengthening gender-responsive, and ultimately gender-transformative, social protection systems. Moderators: Cindy Bryson, Principal Social Sector Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • Hera Subediang, Chief of Human Service, Ministry of Health and Human Services, Government of Palau • Tsend Munkhzul, Director, Evaluation, monitoring and internal auditing department, Government of Mongolia • Lauren Whitehead, Social Protection and Gender Lead, UNICEF • Keiko Nowacka, Director, Gender Equality Division, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, ADB
14:15 - 15:15 Auditorium Hallway	Tea & Coffee Break/ Marketplace

15:15 - 16:30 Auditorium Halls 1-2	Session 3: Scaling Economic Inclusion: Pathways out of Poverty through Social Protection Systems Across Asia and the Pacific, governments are increasingly seeking innovative solutions in social protection that support sustained pathways out of poverty and promote productive employment, sustainable livelihoods, and greater self-reliance. In this context, economic inclusion programs (often referred to as poverty graduation approaches or productive inclusion programs) have emerged as a promising approach, combining social assistance with livelihoods support, skills development, financial inclusion, coaching, and social empowerment to address the multiple constraints faced by poor and vulnerable households. Yet an important question remains: how can governments move beyond pilots and institutionalize and scale economic inclusion through national social protection systems while maintaining effectiveness, affordability, and impact? This session will convene policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and development partners to explore how countries across Asia and the Pacific are integrating economic inclusion within national social protection systems, including the adaptations required for implementation at scale and the institutional reforms needed to achieve lasting gains in poverty reduction, resilience, and economic and social empowerment. Moderator: Palak Rawal, Social Development Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB Framing Presentation: Amir Jilani, Senior Social Sector Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • H. T. R. Nalika Piyasena, Additional Secretary (Social Security and Community Empowerment), Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security, and Community Empowerment, Government of Sri Lanka • M. K. S. Radha Nanayakkara, Additional Secretary (Administration), Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security, and Community Empowerment, Government of Sri Lanka • Dinar Dana Kharisma, Director of Social and Economic Independence, Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), Government of Indonesia • Dean Karlan, Frederic Esser Nemmers Distinguished Professor of Economics and Finance, Northwestern University; Co-director of the Global Poverty Research Lab at the Kellogg School of Management • Shameran Abed, Executive Director, BRAC International
15:15 - 16:30 Auditorium Halls 3-4  BROADCAST AVAILABLE	Session 4: Advancing Autonomy: Disability-Inclusive Social Protection Across Asia and the Pacific, persons with disabilities face disproportionate costs and barriers to access education, employment, health services, social protection, assistive technologies, transportation, and community life. The result is lower labor force participation, higher poverty, greater vulnerability to shocks and crises, and fewer opportunities for independent living. By

	recognizing persons with disabilities as rights-holders and partners, and by combining comprehensive disability-specific and inclusive mainstream measures, disability-inclusive social protection can play a key role in addressing disability-related costs and barriers, promoting autonomy and economic participation for persons with disabilities, and building their resilience to disasters and crises. This session will provide participants with practical insights and experiences on strengthening disability-inclusive social protection systems across Asia and the Pacific. It will highlight how countries are combining cash and in-kind benefits to address the diversity of costs faced by people with disabilities, and how they are overcoming key delivery challenges including the identification of persons with disabilities for support. It will also show how meaningful engagement and institutionalized leadership by organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) strengthens policy, delivery, and accountability, in line with the principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us." Moderator: Charles Knox-Vydmanov, Social Policy Specialist, Disability-Inclusive Social Protection, UNICEF Speakers: • Lusine Kocharyan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Government of Armenia • Berthor Tongpaothor, Head of Disability Development Division, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Government of Lao PDR • Ngin Saorath, Executive President, Disability Youth Network Organisation, and Steering Committee Member, ASEAN Disability Forum • Shirleen Ali, Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion Adviser, Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP) • Benjamin Graham, Director, Fragility and Engagement Division, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, ADB
16:45 - 19:00 Auditorium Hallway	Networking Reception

DAY 2: RESILIENCE
Wednesday, 7 October 2026
Auditorium Halls 1-4

8:30 - 9:00	Registration
9:00 - 10:30 Auditorium Halls 1-4  BROADCAST AVAILABLE	KEYNOTE SESSION & High-Level Plenary 2: Boosting Resilience to Face Polycrises and Megatrends The Asia and Pacific region is confronting an unprecedented convergence of crises. The climate crisis continues to escalate, with Asia warming roughly twice as fast as the global average, and Pacific Islands facing rising existential threats. The Middle East Crisis in 2026 has triggered alarming fuel and food price spikes, and disrupted trade, supply chains and vital economic growth. At

	the same time, the Asia and Pacific region is facing rapid societal change, including faster population aging than any other region worldwide. This session will explore the role of social protection systems in strengthening resilience in the context of major climate, economic and demographic challenges. Through keynote reflections and a lively panel discussion with government and development partners, the session will explore how social protection can help people absorb shocks, prepare for future stresses, and navigate economic and social transitions without falling into hardship. It will also discuss how social protection systems can enhance their preparedness and capacity to operate effectively during large-scale shocks and periods of change. Keynote Speaker: Datuk Norma Mansor, Professor Emeritus and Director, Social Wellbeing Research Centre, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia Research Spotlight: Ugo Gentilini, Lead Economist in the World Bank's Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice [Video] Moderator: Arghya Sinha Roy, Director, Adaptation and Resilience Division, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, ADB Speakers: • Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Government of Pakistan • Brenda Alik-Heine, Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs, Government of Republic of Marshall Islands • Samir Wanmali, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, WFP • Datuk Norma Mansor, Professor Emeritus and Director, Social Wellbeing Research Centre, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia
10:30 – 11:00 Auditorium Hallway	Networking Break (Tea/Coffee)
11:00- 12:15 Auditorium Halls 1-2	Session 5: Is it Working for Our Workforce? Rethinking Social Insurance Given long-standing informality and gender-based coverage gaps, combined with emerging demographic and labor market shifts, countries are increasingly seeking to reform their social insurance systems to simultaneously increase coverage of the excluded 'missing middle', strengthen financial sustainability in aging societies, and adapt their contribution mechanisms to new forms of work and employment relationships. Innovative efforts to 'rethink' social insurance systems have spanned legal and policy reforms, administrative and operational adjustments, digital innovations, contribution subsidies, and new partnership models involving employers, insurers, pension administrators, financial institutions, and technology providers. This session will discuss the current social insurance reform and policy agenda, looking at recent evidence and policy lessons on the impact and effectiveness of reforms around the region and beyond. It will explore the case for social insurance, the challenges relating to social insurance provision, and

	effective strategies for extending and refining social insurance systems in light of such challenges. Through the panel discussion, the session will delve into operational examples, drawing out concrete lessons for diverse stakeholders to strengthen their social insurance systems. Moderator: Arup Chatterjee, Principal Financial Sector Specialist, Finance Sector Office, Sectors Department 3, ADB Speakers: • Krishna Bahadur Raut, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security • Madina Ortikova, National Agency for Social Protection, Government of Uzbekistan • Aura Sevilla, Adviser Consultant, Southeast Asia and Older Workers, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) • Kenichi Hirose, Senior Social Protection Specialist, International Labour Organization (ILO) • Philip O'Keefe, Professor of Practice, Centre for Population Ageing Research (CEPAR), University of New South Wales, Australia
11:00- 12:15 Auditorium Halls 3-4	Session 6: Weathering Storms and Stresses: Adaptive and Shock-Responsive Social Protection Asia and the Pacific is more vulnerable to natural and climate change-induced shocks and stresses than any other region. From 2005-2024, 76% of the people affected by disasters globally resided in the region, and in 2025, 180 recorded disasters caused economic damage estimated at \$57.4 billion. Climate change is also amplifying long-term stresses, such as glacial melt, rising sea levels, temperature increases, and water scarcity, with disproportionate impacts on the living standards and livelihoods of socially and economically marginalized households. This session will explore approaches for strengthening adaptive and shock-responsive social protection systems so that they can better support vulnerable populations to anticipate and absorb climate shocks and stresses, and adapt to their longer-term impacts. It will cover evidence and examples from countries across the region on how social protection is being integrated with disaster risk management and climate change adaptation efforts to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations. The overall aim of the session is to identify practical lessons and insights that policymakers and practitioners can apply in their own contexts to build more climate-adaptive and shock-responsive social protection policies, programs and systems. Moderator: • Bob Babajanian, Senior Social Development Specialist (Social Protection), SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • Veremo Muria, Director, Social Protection, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection, Government of Fiji

	• Juan Carlo Marquez, Assistant Secretary, Policy and Planning, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Government of the Philippines • Katinka Weinberger, Chief, Sustainable Socioeconomic Transformation Section, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) • Marco Knowles, Team Lead, Social Protection, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) • Christina Lowe, Adaptive Social Protection Consultant, ADB
12:15 - 13:15	Lunch
13:15 - 14:30 Multifunction Halls 4-5	Session 7: More than A Meal: School Feeding to Nourish Resilient Futures School meal programs are among the largest and most widely implemented social protection interventions in the world, reaching an estimated 466 million children globally. By providing a free or subsidized meal at school, they reduce households' financial burden, improve food security, and help protect vulnerable families from shocks. But they also serve as a strategic investment in human capital development, accelerating progress on education, health, and gender equality, among other areas. By procuring food from local farmers and suppliers, school meal programs can also support livelihoods, strengthen local economies, and contribute to more inclusive and resilient food systems, as well as broader national development objectives. This session will explore these diverse benefits, and consider how governments can effectively build, sustainably finance, manage, and scale nationally-owned school meal programs. Drawing from wide-ranging evidence and country experiences, it will examine the policies, governance arrangements, institutional capacities and cross sectoral coordination required to transition from externally-supported programs to government-led systems. It will also explore linkages to gender-sensitive and climate-resilient livelihoods and food systems and how these programs can be integrated within broader nutrition-sensitive social protection and human capital development agendas. Moderator: Laura Itzkowitz, Senior Social Development Specialist (Nutrition), SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • E. Bunthen, Director, Department of Policy, Government of Cambodia • Mirbek Rakhmatildeev, School Meals Coalition Coordinator and Lead Specialist, Ministry of Education, Government of Kyrgyz Republic • Elisabet Fadul, Head of Programme - Philippines, World Food Programme (WFP) • Richard Morgan, Director of Social Protection Programs, Nutrition International • Tomoko Kato, Senior Food and Nutrition Specialist, Agriculture, Food, Nature, and Rural Development Sector Office (AFNR), ADB

13:15 - 14:30 Auditorium Halls 1-2	Session 8: Generation Employed: Creating Youth Jobs through Labor Market Programs Many young people in Asia and the Pacific struggle to transition from education into jobs and economic security. Economic growth is not always or automatically translating into improved labor market participation or productivity, and the combined effects of the demographic, digital and green transitions – alongside increasing economic and geopolitical uncertainty – are reshaping patterns of production and consumption, with profound implications for the demand for skills, occupations, and forms of work. This session will share lessons from innovative programmatic and policy approaches to tackle the youth employment challenge in the region. With a focus on practical takeaways, the session will unpack issues related to youth labor market program design ('the what') and program delivery ('the how'). Audiences will improve knowledge and understanding of: (1) The case for government investment in youth employment programs to connect social protection systems, correct labor market failures and accelerate inclusive growth; (2) Cutting-edge youth labor market program approaches that governments can adopt and ADB can support to prepare youth to enter the workforce and secure quality jobs; and (3) Youth employment public-private program delivery and implementation arrangements that improve efficiency and sustainability and strengthen job outcomes for youth. Moderator: Helen Osborne, Labour Market Specialist (Consultant), ADB Speakers: • Sarah Buena S. Mirasol, Regional Director of Regional Office No. III, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Government of the Philippines • Tashi Tenzin, Assistant Program Officer, Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Employment, Royal Government of Bhutan • JobStart Youth representatives: Ms. Nice Estopia, Process Architect Associate, Goldilocks Bakeshop Inc., Philippines; and Mr. Vergel Lamberte, Housekeeping (Public Area Attendant), Astoria Plaza Hotel, Philippines • Carlos A. Coca Gamito, Employment, Future of Work, Jobs Specialist (Consultant), ADB
13:15 - 14:30 Auditorium Halls 3- 4	Session 9: The Silver Surge: Preparing for Aging and Long-Term Care Population aging in Asia and the Pacific is occurring faster than in any other region of the world. At the same time, many countries are growing old before becoming rich, experiencing demographic transitions at a much faster pace than today's high-income countries did historically. This session will move from understanding why aging matters now to identifying which systems need to be strengthened or established, what countries are already doing, and what governments, ADB, and partners should prioritize next. The discussion will highlight the broader shift from informal and fragmented care arrangements toward more integrated, resilient, and sustainable long-term care systems. Through a framing presentation and a diverse panel discussion, the session will provide practical insights and country experiences related to preparedness

	for long-term care; the integration of health and social care; models of home-based, community-based and residential care; workforce development; and sustainable financing approaches. The session ultimately aims to help inform emerging policy and operational approaches for governments and development partners to support more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable care systems. Moderators: Emiko Masaki, Principal Health Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB Francesco Tornieri, Principal Social Development Specialist (Social Inclusion), SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • Soonman Kwon, Professor of Health Economics and Policy, School of Public Health, Seoul National University • Nargis Khanam, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh • Fakafanua Paunga, CEO, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Government of Tonga • Thuy Bich Tran, Country Director, HelpAge Viet Nam
14:30 - 15:15 Auditorium Hallway	Tea & Coffee Break/ Marketplace
15:15 – 16:30 Auditorium Halls 1-2	Session 10: Safety Nets and Springboards: The Evolving Role of Social Assistance While the core function of social assistance remains to ensure basic income security and protection for vulnerable groups across the life cycle, growing evidence shows that sustainable pathways to social and economic empowerment require further strengthening of recipients' capacity, voice and agency. This in turn requires basic transfers to be complemented by measures enabling greater investments in education, health and skills; support to access rights and services; linkages to labor market opportunities and broader economic and financial inclusion; and shifts in oppressive social norms and practices. At the same time, recent years have repeatedly demonstrated the potential for even the core protective function of routine social assistance to be undermined if it is not adequately prepared for the impacts of large-scale shocks and crises. This session will examine how social assistance can optimally evolve, to provide not only “safety nets” that protect against poverty but also “springboards” that promote resilience, empowerment, and long-term mobility. Illustrated by examples and evidence from varied country contexts, the session will combine conceptual insights with operational experiences to identify how the design and delivery of social assistance programs and systems can be adjusted to be adaptive, integrated, and transformative, while maintaining their core protective function. Moderator: Omer Bin Zia, Social Sector Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB

15:15 – 16:30 Auditorium Halls 3-4	Speakers: • Khalida Bashir, Joint Secretary (Planning & Development), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Government of Pakistan • Gemito do Carmo Amaral de Jesus, Principal Advisor to the Minister and Vice Minister, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI), Government of Timor-Leste • Camilla Holmemo, Practice Manager for Social Policy, East Asia and the Pacific, World Bank • Lili Mohiddin, Humanitarian Advisor – Social Protection, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom Session 11: Linking the Missing Middle: Social Security for Gig and Platform Workers The gig and platform economy has become a significant and rapidly evolving feature of labor markets and economic activity across Asia and the Pacific. This presents a challenge for traditional social security systems, as the lack of standard employment contracts often leaves gig and platform workers in a precarious protection gap. With digital labor platforms expanding rapidly across the region, ensuring access to social protection for gig and platform workers has become an increasingly urgent policy priority for promoting inclusive growth, reducing vulnerability, and advancing decent work. This session aims to generate concrete, policy-relevant insights that move the discussion on social protection for gig and platform workers from conceptual debate to implementation. The session will discuss the policy and institutional reforms needed to extend coverage to the growing gig and platform workforce, and explore emerging models for delivering social protection at scale. It will examine the questions of sustainable and equitable financing, identify approaches to balance sustainability, inclusiveness, and affordability, and provide actionable pathways for progressively closing protection gaps. Moderator: Oleksiy Ivaschenko, Senior Social Protection and Jobs Specialist, SD3-HSD, ADB Speakers: • Ashutosh Pednekar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India • Gayatri Vadivel, Head of Employment Services Division Employment Insurance Office, PEREKSO, Government of Malaysia • Denise Monteiro, Social Protection Programme Manager, International Labour Organization • Liliia A. Kachkinbaeva, Employment, Future of Work, and Jobs Specialist (Consultant), ADB
16:30 – 18:00 Auditorium Halls 3-4  BROADCAST AVAILABLE	Special Session: From Roadmap to Results: Accelerating Investments in Decent Jobs and Social Protection in the Philippines and Asia and the Pacific Investing in social protection and decent jobs is both a social imperative and an economic investment that can strengthen resilience, productivity, and inclusive growth. Delivering this requires strong country ownership, nationally

	defined priorities, and effective partnerships among governments, development partners, social partners, and international financial institutions to mobilize financing and support implementation. The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions provides a framework for such collaboration. Led by the ILO, the initiative convenes governments, social partners, UN agencies, international financial institutions, and development partners to strengthen decent jobs and universal social protection. The Global Accelerator translates high-level political commitments into nationally owned roadmaps that bring together relevant ministries and stakeholders around agreed policy priorities, implementation arrangements, and financing strategies for decent jobs and social protection. The session will present the Philippines roadmap experience, complemented by implementation experiences from Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Cambodia during the panel discussion, to explore how governments and development partners can move from nationally owned roadmaps to concrete reforms, investments, and results. Emcee: Anand Ramesh Kumar, Senior Social Sector Economist, Human and Social Development Sector Office, SD3-HSD, ADB Opening and Framing: Shanti Jagannathan, Director, Human and Social Development Sector Office, SD3-HSD, ADB Global Accelerator Framing: Valérie Schmitt, Chief of the Universal Social Protection Branch at the International Labour Organization (ILO) Philippines Global Accelerator Roadmap presentation: Carmela Torres, Undersecretary, Employment, Human Resource Development, and International Affairs Cluster, Department of Labor and Employment, Government of the Philippines Moderator: Arnaud Peral, UN Resident Coordinator in the Philippines Speakers: • Nilufarkhon Kamalova, Head of the International Cooperation and Rankings Department, Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan • Rekson Silaban, Head Advisor, KSBSI, Indonesia • Antoine Fontaine, Senior Advisor, CAMFEBA, Cambodia
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DAY 3: SUSTAINABILITY
Thursday, 8 October 2026
Auditorium Halls 1-4

8:30 - 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:25 Auditorium Halls 1-4 	BIG IDEAS: Social Protection in a World Without Jobs? This session takes its deliberately provocative title as an invitation for big-picture, creative thinking about preparedness for current and potential future labor market shifts. While current calculations suggest far less dramatic projections than the extreme scenario of mass AI-induced job displacement, rapid technological advancements do highlight a need to understand how social protection systems can adapt to support populations through destabilizing labor market transitions, ensuring income security when job security is uncertain. Through back-to-back TED-Style Talks, this session will explore potential policy responses and systems adjustments to enable social protection to prepare for potential large-scale labor market shifts. Speakers: Sarath Davala, Chair, Basic Income Earth Network Valérie Schmitt, Chief of the Universal Social Protection Branch, ILO
9:25- 10:45 Auditorium Halls 1-4 	High-Level Plenary 3: Securing the Future of Social Protection Given the overlapping demographic, economic and climate challenges discussed this week, ensuring the sustainability of social protection systems is emerging as one of the defining policy and governance challenges across Asia and the Pacific. This high-level plenary session will focus on three fundamental determinants of social protection sustainability: (1) How can we secure sustainable <u>financing</u> of social protection systems, policies, and programs that effectively respond to current and emerging needs and challenges? (2) How can we establish effective <u>partnerships</u> between the public and private sectors and civil society and non-governmental organizations to secure the wide-ranging support needed to develop 'future-fit' social protection systems? (3) How can we secure the <u>political and public support</u> required to develop and sustain empowering and resilient social protection systems? Through a "Fireside Chat" with senior government, development partner and civil society representatives, this session will elicit cross-country and cross-stakeholder insights, inspiration, and ideas, to help strengthen social protection today while securing our ability to protect the generations of tomorrow. Moderator: Bhargav Dasgupta, Vice-President (Market Solutions), ADB Speakers: • Farzana Sharmin, State Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh • Dasho Kesang Deki, Cabinet Secretary, Royal Government of Bhutan

	• Renata Nowak-Garmer, Global Director of Social Protection, WIEGO • Valérie Schmitt, Chief of the Universal Social Protection Branch, ILO • Luis Benveniste, Regional Director for People, East Asia and the Pacific, World Bank
10:45- 11:15 Auditorium Hallway	Tea & Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:30 Auditorium Halls 1-2	Session 12: Systems Reboot: Social Protection in a Digital World Social protection systems across Asia and the Pacific are undergoing a structural shift from fragmented, program-based delivery toward integrated, digital, and interoperable systems. This transformation is being supported by foundational digital infrastructure, the advancement in digital public goods, and increasing use of advanced technologies including data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI). However, digitalization is not simply about technology adoption - it is about redesigning how systems identify, enroll, and support different types of users, and respond to people's needs across their lifecycle and in times of shock. While digital tools can enhance efficiency, scale, and responsiveness, they also introduce new risks related to exclusion, data misuse, system fragmentation, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and governance gaps. This session will examine how countries are building inclusive, interoperable, and future-ready social protection systems, leveraging digital and emerging technologies while managing risks and ensuring trust. The discussion will move beyond individual digital tools to explore how countries can build broader digital ecosystems that connect social protection programs with identification systems, payments, financial services, labor markets, and disaster response systems. Moderator: Saurav Bhattarai, Team Lead, openIMIS Initiative / Coordination Desk, Global Alliances for Social Protection, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Speakers: • Serkan Bozkurt, Head of Department of Cooperation with International and Voluntary Organizations, Ministry of Family and Social Services, Government of Türkiye • Elshan Dadashov, Head of Division, Social Security Policy Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, Government of Azerbaijan • Saeeda Umar, Managing Director, MINDCo, Government of Maldives • Anita Mittal, Component Lead, Digital Convergence Initiative (DCI)
11:15 – 12:30 Auditorium Halls 3-4	Session 13: Beyond this Budget Cycle: Making Social Protection Sustainable Well-designed social protection is a strategic investment, yet across Asia and the Pacific, social protection expenditure averages only 8% of gross domestic product (GDP), excluding health, compared with a global average of nearly 13%. Spending is also often regressive, with a disproportionate share of

	benefits accruing to relatively higher-income households and formal-sector workers. This session will examine how countries across Asia and the Pacific are deploying, and could further deploy, sustainable financing strategies to build inclusive, resilient, and adaptive social protection systems beyond annual budget cycles. The discussion will consider how countries can tailor and sequence domestic measures (including progressive revenue mobilization, expenditure efficiency and subsidy reform, macroeconomic levers where fiscal space permits, and sustainable contributory social insurance and pension systems) to their fiscal, economic, political, social, and environmental circumstances. It will also explore the catalytic and complementary role of international and innovative finance, including climate and disaster risk financing for adaptive and shock-responsive social protection, sovereign Sustainable Development Goal bonds, blended finance, and integrated national financing frameworks. The session will identify practical lessons, tools, and institutional approaches for embedding social protection financing in medium-term budgets, legislation, and national development and climate plans, while safeguarding fiscal sustainability. Moderator: Laisiasa Tora, Principal Public Sector Specialist, Public Sector Management and Governance Sector Cluster, Sectors Department 3, ADB Speakers: • Dinar Dana Kharisma, Director of Social and Economic Independence, Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), Government of Indonesia • K. A. P. Damayanthie, Director, Department of National Planning, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Government of Sri Lanka • Salote Latu Biukoto, Principal Welfare Officer, Disability and Older Persons Unit, Department of Social Protection, Government of Fiji • Jil Taige, Advisor, GIZ / Task Force on Linking Adaptive Social Protection and Climate Finance • Navendu Karan, Director, Public Sector Management and Governance Sector Cluster, Sectors Department 3, ADB
12:30 – 13:30 ADB Executive Dining Room (EDR)	Lunch
13:30 – 14:45 Auditorium Hall 1	Session 14: Bringing Business to the Table: The Role of the Private Sector in Social Protection While social protection is fundamentally a public responsibility, private sector actors also play multiple roles across social protection systems: as employers and contributors; insurers, pension and financial service providers; digital payment and technology providers; platforms connecting workers to economic opportunities; and providers of services and investment. When thoughtfully structured and appropriately regulated, private sector contributions can usefully complement public systems, helping to expand coverage, strengthen delivery, mobilize additional resources, support workers through transitions and shocks, and develop solutions for populations underserved by existing

	systems. At the same time, greater private sector participation raises important questions around the appropriate division of responsibilities between the public and private sectors, incentives for participation, affordability and inclusion, regulation and accountability, and the protection of vulnerable workers and households. This session will explore the role of the private sector in inclusive, sustainable and responsive social protection systems. Drawing on perspectives and experiences from government, employers, digital financial services and the platform economy, the session will aim to draw out lessons on how the public and private sector can work together most effectively — combining capabilities, costs and responsibilities to expand, finance and deliver social protection— while upholding core social protection principles and objectives, and safeguarding inclusion, equity and public accountability. Moderator: Christine Engstrom, Director General, Sectors Department 3, ADB Speakers: • Ashutosh Pednekar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India • Brendan Chia, Head of Regional Public Affairs (Policy), Grab • Jose Roland Moya, Director General, Employers Confederation of the Philippines • Martha Sazon, CEO, Mynt, Parent Company for GCash
13:30 – 14:45 Auditorium Hall 4	Session 15: Stop Guessing, Start Knowing: The Power of Data and Evidence Social protection systems are increasingly expected to respond to complex and evolving challenges—from poverty and vulnerability to demographic change, labor market transitions, climate shocks, and public health crises. Yet, many policy decisions continue to be made with limited information about who is being reached, what interventions are working, and whether resources are being used effectively. As governments across Asia and the Pacific expand and modernize their social protection systems, the need for timely data, rigorous evidence, and a culture of learning has never been greater. This session will explore how countries can move beyond assumptions and anecdotal decision-making toward evidence-informed policies and programs. The session will highlight the critical role of data systems, monitoring frameworks, impact evaluations, administrative records, digital technologies, and analytics in improving the design, targeting, delivery, and effectiveness of social protection interventions. It will also examine how evidence can support policy choices in contexts where fiscal resources are constrained and demands on social protection systems are rapidly increasing. Moderator: Elisabetta Gentile, Principal Economist (Development Impact), Economics Research and Development Impact Department, ADB

13:30 – 14:45
Auditorium Halls
2-3

Speakers:

- **Tatia Gvaramadze**, Head of the Social Protection and Labour Policy Department, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Government of Georgia
- **Elizabeth Hosking**, Chief Inspector, Social Protection and Labour Services Government of Cook Islands
- **Jahanara Manzoor Wattoo**, Vice Chairperson, Punjab Social Protection Authority
- **Siti Nur Shuhada Baharin**, Vice-Chairperson of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) Technical Commission on Actuarial, Statistical and Financial Studies, ISSA Regional Office for Southeast Asia
- **Ludovico Carraro**, Social Development Specialist (Consultant), ADB

Session 16: From Community Evidence to Financed Commitments: Partnerships and Finance for Adaptive Social Protection Systems

As climate change intensifies shocks and stresses across Asia and the Pacific, governments are increasingly recognizing adaptive social protection (ASP) as a critical tool for protecting vulnerable populations and building long-term resilience. Yet many countries face a common challenge: how to secure the financing, partnerships, and institutional arrangements needed to move from policy ambition to implementation. This session will bring together government officials, development partners, climate finance institutions, and community representatives to explore practical approaches for strengthening climate-responsive social protection systems.

This session will focus on how community-generated evidence can inform policy and investment decisions, and how collaboration between governments, multilateral development banks, climate funds, bilateral agencies, and civil society can help unlock financing at scale. Participants will gain insights into emerging country experiences, innovative financing approaches, and the partnerships required to transform adaptive social protection from a development aspiration into a funded and operational reality.

Moderator:

Digvijay Singh, Senior Social Protection and Climate Change Specialist, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, ADB

Speakers:

- **Anosack Phengthimmavong**, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Development and Poverty Reduction, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Government of Lao PDR
- **Sarah Love**, Regional Director, Climate, Energy & Nature, SE Asia, UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- **Suranjana Gupta**, Senior Advisor for Community Resilience, Huairou Commission
- **Thomas Gonnet**, Regional Task Manager, Health and Social Protection, Agence Française de Développement
- **Nisha Krishnan**, Senior Climate Change Specialist, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (CCSD), ADB

14:45 - 15:30 Auditorium Halls 2-3	Closing Session: Key Takeaways and Future Direction Overall Reflections on Key Takeaways: Michael Samson, Research Director, Economic Policy Research Institute Specific Perspectives: • Sweety Kalbesang, Alternate Governor for the Republic of Palau in ADB and Chief of the Division of Budget and Management, Bureau of Budget and Planning, Ministry of Finance, Republic of Palau • Dinar Dana Kharisma, Director of Social and Economic Independence, Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), Government of Indonesia • Agus Hasan Hidayat, Disability Rights, Social Inclusion and Equity Specialist, Indonesia Revolution and Education for Social Inclusion (REMISI) • Maria Fe “Anafe” Maravillas, President, Las Piñas Federation of Persons with Disabilities (Philippines) Closing Remarks: Shamit Chakravarti, Director, SD3-HSD, ADB
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