

ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2026

Empowered Lives, Resilient Futures

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KEYNOTE AND HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY 2 Boosting Resilience to Face Polycrises and Megatrends

MODERATOR



Arghya Sinha Roy
Director, Adaptation and Resilience
Climate Change and Sustainable Development
Department
Asian Development Bank

Arghya Sinha Roy supports the implementation of ADB's climate adaptation and resilience priorities and targets by supporting client governments in strengthening policies, plans and investments. Arghya has more than twenty years of international experience in the field of climate and disaster resilience, especially in the context of supporting national and local governments in advancing inclusive resilience considerations into development policy; spatial, socioeconomic and fiscal planning; infrastructure planning and design; and social development and livelihood interventions. Arghya holds a Bachelor degree in Civil Engineering and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning.

SPEAKERS



Datuk Norma Mansor
Emeritus Professor and Director
Social Wellbeing Research Centre
Universiti Malaya
Malaysia

Professor Datuk Norma Mansor is a distinguished academic and policy expert whose career is defined by her leadership in economics, social protection and public policy. Currently serving as the Director of the Social Wellbeing Research Centre (SWRC) at Universiti Malaya since 2013, she has positioned the center as a premier hub for interdisciplinary research on ageing and social wellbeing. Following a

distinguished academic career at Universiti Malaya, she was named Emeritus Professor in 2018.

Beyond academia, Norma has played a pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's national strategy. She served as the Secretary of the National Economic Advisory Council (2009–2011) and held key leadership positions as the Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administration and Executive Director of the International Institute of Public Policy and Management (INPUMA).

Her influence extends to professional leadership, having served as the President of the Malaysian Economic Association (2018–2024), Vice Chair of Impact Investment Board, Malaysia and as a fellow of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia. Recently honored as CUEPACS' Woman Icon of the Year 2024 and appointed as a HRD Corp Thought Leader in 2025, Norma remains a central figure in advancing human capital and workforce development both in Malaysia and abroad.



Ugo Gentilini
Lead Economist in the World Bank's
Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice

Ugo Gentilini's interests encompass research and practice on social protection from high-income countries to fragile states. With a PhD in Economics, he has published extensively on social assistance in the context of, for example, labor markets, urbanization, food security and nutrition, subsidy reforms, humanitarian assistance, displacement and mobility. His recent books include *Exploring Universal Basic Income* (2020), *Adaptive Social Protection* (2020), and *the 1.5 Billion People Question* (2017); he is leading the global tracker of social protection responses to COVID-19; he has been a team member of the *World Development Report 2019*; and he is co-founder of the flagship *The State of Social Safety Nets in the World Series*. Ugo began his career in 2002 with the UN World Food Programme, and since 2016 he has been producing a weekly newsletter on social protection reaching thousands of subscribers



Rubina Khalid
Chairperson
Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)
Government of Pakistan

A distinguished Pakistani parliamentarian and social welfare champion, currently serving as Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). A member of the Senate of Pakistan since 2012, representing the Pakistan People's Party from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, she chaired the Senate Committees on Information Technology & Telecommunication and Maritime Affairs. Graduate of Khyber Law College, Peshawar. She advocates for women's empowerment, poverty alleviation, and inclusive digital governance. Under her leadership BISP Pakistan's flagship social safety net has strengthened economic resilience for more than 10 million vulnerable households, reflecting her enduring commitment to democratic values and social justice.



Brenda Alik-Heine
Secretary
Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs
Republic of Marshall Islands

Brenda Alik Heine is Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and President of Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), the country's leading national women's organization. Her career spans senior roles across government, civil society, tourism and private-sector development. She previously served as Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning and Research in the Ministry of Education and as General Manager of the Marshall Islands Visitors Authority, and has also served as President of the Marshall Islands Chamber of Commerce. She currently serves on several national boards, including the Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism, the Land Registration Authority, and the Kora and Ankil Fund. Her work focuses particularly on women's empowerment, social inclusion, community development, culture and strengthening opportunities for women and young people across the Marshall Islands.



Samir Wanmali
Regional Director
World Food Programme

Samir Wanmali leads strategic guidance, partnerships, resource mobilization, and operational effectiveness across the region. With more than 20 years of experience in food security, humanitarian operations, and emergency response, he has held senior leadership roles at WFP headquarters, regional bureaus, and country offices worldwide. He holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Cornell University and speaks five languages.