

ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2026

Empowered Lives, Resilient Futures

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SPECIAL SESSION Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transition

EMCEE



Anand Ramesh Kumar
Social Development Specialist (Social Protection)
Human and Social Development Sector Office
Sectors Department 3
Asian Development Bank

Anand focuses on digital social protection and services, financing social protection, and adaptive and shock responsive social protection. Previously, he worked as an independent consultant supporting various development partners and countries in Asia and Africa on the design, implementation, and capacity development of social protection initiatives. Prior to that he was principal consultant with the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship in India. He holds a master's degree in public policy and human development from the United Nations University – MERIT in the Netherlands.

OPENING AND FRAMING



Shanti Jagannathan
Director
Human and Social Development Sector Office
Asian Development Bank

Shanti Jagannathan is Director, Education, with ADB and has over 30 years of experience in international cooperation in the education sector. She has worked in school education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education. She leads education policy and strategy work, and regional technical assistance programs relating to emerging areas such as networking for excellence in higher education, research and innovation, green skills, skills development for advanced technology sectors and digital transformation in education. She and her team lead grant financing partnerships for education with the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) and the Education Above All Foundation (EAA). Her work engagements have been in over 30 countries in Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and North America

GLOBAL ACCELERATOR FRAMING



Valérie Schmitt
Chief, Universal Social Protection Branch
International Labour Organization (ILO)

Valérie Schmitt is Chief of the Universal Social Protection Branch at the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, where she leads a global team supporting governments, workers' and employers' organizations in building inclusive and sustainable social protection systems. She oversees strategic partnerships and resource mobilization efforts to advance universal social protection, including through the ILO's Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All and the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.

With 28 years of experience in social protection, Valerie has held leadership roles at ILO headquarters and in field assignments across Africa and Asia. She has contributed extensively to global research, policy development, and innovative approaches to financing social protection, promoting its role in supporting inclusive and sustainable development.

Valerie holds a postgraduate degree in Quantitative Economics, is a graduate of HEC Paris, and also holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Sorbonne University.

PHILIPPINES GLOBAL ACCELERATOR ROADMAP



Carmela Torres
Undersecretary, Employment, Human Resource
Development, and International Affairs Cluster
Department of Labor and Employment
Government of the Philippines

Oversees policies and programs which provide access to employment and work opportunities and increase employability in line with the Philippine labor and Employment Plan. Coordinator for the Capacity Building Network (CBN) of the Human Resources Development Working Group under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

MODERATOR



Arnaud Peral
United Nations
Resident Coordinator
Philippines

He previously served as UN Resident Coordinator in Tunisia, Ecuador and held senior positions with UNDP in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, New York and Cuba. With about three decades of experience in international cooperation and sustainable development, he has led initiatives advancing poverty reduction, resilience, and inclusive growth across Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

PANELISTS



Nilufarkhon Kamalova
Head of the International Cooperation
and Rankings Department
Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction
Republic of Uzbekistan

Nilufarkhon Kamalova is responsible for strengthening cooperation with international organizations, IFIs, as well as bilateral cooperation. She continues to research international labor standards, including standards on social protection.

Nilufarkhon has a PhD in Sociology, with work experience in the UN agencies (including 5 years of experience with the ILO).



Rekson Silaban
Head Advisor
KSBSI
Indonesia

Rekson Silaban was involved in trade union movement since 1992. He started as research director, international affairs; union president. In 2005, he was also elected to the governing body of ILO and general council of the International Trade Union Confederation. He is author of articles in leading newspapers in Indonesia and his expertise includes labor standards, social security and human rights.

Rekson Silaban is a Graduate of Law faculty, North Sumatra, Indonesia.



Antoine Fontaine
Senior Advisor, CAMFEBA
Cambodia

Partner at Anant Law Firm and Special Advisor to the Board on Social Protection at CAMFEBA, bringing nearly three decades of legal expertise in Cambodia. Having advised the Cambodian government on labor, tax, insurance, and disaster risk financing frameworks, Antoine specializes in designing policies that maximize workforce security and economic resilience.