

ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2026

Empowered Lives, Resilient Futures

6–8 October • ADB Headquarters, Manila



ADB

BIG IDEAS

Social Protection in a World Without Jobs?

SPEAKERS



Sarath Davala
Chair
Basic Income Earth Network

An independent sociologist based in India whose research since 2010 has focused primarily on Universal Basic Income (UBI). He led two major UBI pilot studies in India, one rural and one urban, generating evidence that informed the development of cash-transfer policy and wider policy debates in India. He served as Chair of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) until August 2026 and continues to undertake research and policy advocacy on Basic Income, with a particular focus on Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. He is co-author of *Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).



Valérie Schmitt
Chief of the 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, Ms. Schmitt 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.

Ms. Schmitt 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.