

Disability inclusion remains top priority for public employment services in South-East Asia



Workshop participants discuss how public employment services could be improved to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. ©Tarinee Youkhaw/ILO

SIEM REAP – The International Labour Organization brought together over 30 government officials from Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam to share good practices in implementing disability-inclusive employment services, with the aim of leaving no one behind in the labour market.

The workshop provided an overview of national and international policy frameworks on disability rights and featured good practices from different countries in rolling out inclusive employment policies and perspectives of groups advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities such as the People’s Action for Inclusive Development group and the Banteay Srei Organization.

Attendees also had the opportunity to discuss pressing topics such as accessibility, skills development programmes for persons with disabilities, and partnerships with the private sector and employers’ organizations.



Practitioners and civil society organizations across South-East Asia gathered in Siem Reap, Cambodia to exchange good practices and lessons learned in disability inclusion in public employment services. ©Tarinee Youkhaw/ILO

The regional knowledge sharing event also reinforces the participating countries' commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and promoting their active participation in society as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“The Royal Government of Cambodia has implemented significant measures to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. In 2012, the country ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which commits to promoting the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Royal Government has also implemented a quota system for public sector employment, which mandates that 2% of positions be reserved for persons with disabilities if the workplace employs more than 50 people, and for private sector employment, which mandates 1% if the workplace employs more than 100 people. The significance of disability inclusion in economic development is increasingly acknowledged in the ASEAN region. Consequently, this two-day technical workshop is both timely and crucial. By collaborating and learning from each other through this platform, we can develop more effective strategies for supporting persons with disabilities in achieving their employment goals,” said H.E. Kuoch Somean, Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia.

“This workshop marks a significant step towards fostering a collaborative environment where experiences, challenges, and successes can be exchanged in implementing inclusive employment for persons with disabilities. We hope to encourage the sharing of innovative policies and effective practices, that have been implemented in South-East Asia and in China. By ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to decent employment opportunities, we

are contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8, which promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all,” said Ms Xiaoyan Qian, Director, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific and Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People’s Democratic Republic.



Workshop participants discuss how public employment services could better accommodate the needs and requirements of persons with disabilities. ©Tarinee Youkhaw/ILO

Participants reiterated the importance of prioritizing disability inclusion in public employment services and exchanged practical experiences through a South-South and Triangular Cooperation approach, enabling participating countries from the Global South to learn from one another measures that could be applied to enhance service delivery.

This initiative was led by the ILO Promoting the Global Development Initiative with a Focus on South-South Cooperation in Employment in ASEAN, in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People’s Republic of China and the National Employment Agency under the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia, to promote South-South Cooperation between South-East Asian countries and China in high-quality employment and public employment services.

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