



 **Guy Ryder**
ILO Director-General

We entered the new year on a tense, yet optimistic note as the world was hit by the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. After having grappled with the pandemic for nearly two years, the ILO and its constituents have adapted to the new world of work, and the ILO is advancing social justice and decent work for all.

In June 2021, the International Labour Conference signed a [Global Call to Action for a Human-centred Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic](#), and in 2022, a [Global Forum for a Human-centred recovery](#) was hosted around it, acting on the urgency of a recovery that is equitable for all.

It's not good enough to have ambitions.

We have also to ensure that the necessary resources are mobilized internationally and nationally to make these ambitions a reality.

- **Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General**

**Promoting Decent
Work in India
January –
February 2022**

Highlights:

- ▶ Mr. Shishir Jaipuria, President and Mr. Arvind Francis, Executive Director of the **All-India Organisation of Employers (AIOE)** visited the ILO and had a fruitful discussion on the future activities and interventions possible for the year.



- ▶ A meeting with Secretary of Ministry of Labour and Employment occurred to share updates and discuss key events for the year, including APRM, development of the DWCP, the highlights of the previous biennium and priorities of the Ministry for 2022. The meeting was a follow up to the **Global Call to Action National Tripartite Dialogue** from December 2021. The Ministry is keen to engage on social protection, just-transition, child labour and economy formalization.

Knowledge Resources:

- ▶ Through the “**Technical support to ESIS (Employees’ State Insurance Scheme) for improving and expanding access to health care services in India – A transition to formality**” project, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) in India has been supported to strengthen its health services while increasing coverage and financial protection of working people in India. The report **Digital innovations in social health protection for India: Technical resource document** is aimed at providing latest information and lessons from countries across the world to support the ESIC’s ongoing digital initiatives.



- ▶ The development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) since the mid-1980s was believed to offer a new ‘development paradigm’ for developing countries such as India to create new markets and employment opportunities in knowledge-intensive services. The **Brief: Digital technologies and how India can use it to its advantage** provides insight on building and developing digital infrastructure to address the digital divide; how digital technologies can be used for productive transformation of the society and economy; and how institutions can be strengthened in the digital era. The brief was a contribution to the India@2047 visioning exercise undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.



- ▶ The **Pre-departure information for Indians going to the European Union** covers various aspects of the migration process aiming at sensitizing migrants to better prepare them for their migration process to the EU. The book includes links to official government webpages for ensuring people have access to officially correct and the most up-to-date information, making it a long-term resource.



Main Activities

In line with the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2018-2022)

► Priority 1: Promote, adopt and implement international labour standards for protection of workers from unacceptable forms of work

- **Dr. Girija Borker**, Economist, working at the Impact Evaluation Unit of the World Bank, presented findings from her [paper](#) at first **Female Economists Saturday Discussion Group (FESDIG)** meeting, which estimates the impact of perceived risk of street harassment on women's human capital attainment. The paper combines survey data obtained from **students at Delhi University**, with a mapping of potential travel routes to all colleges in the students' choice set from **Google Maps**, and crowdsourced mobile application safety data. Using a random utility framework, the research found that women are willing to attend a college that is nine percentage points lower in the ranking distribution for a route that is perceived to be one standard deviation (SD) safer (men are only willing to attend a college that is two percentage points lower in the quality distribution for a route that is one SD safer). Not only does this impact their **long-term labour market outcomes**, but women also spend significant amounts to ensure their safety (nearly an additional INR 7,500 on annual travel, relative to men, for a route that is one SD safer). This is almost 70 per cent of the average annual fees at DU.

- An **Awareness Session** on the International Labour Standards reporting systems and opportunities for Employers was organized, to increase awareness on ILS, its application and empower employers' organizations to use available tools and opportunities. Representatives of employers' organizations, working on labour laws and ILS issues, participated in the event.



▶ **Priority 2: Create sustainable, inclusive and decent employment for women and the youth, especially vulnerable to socio-economic and environmental exclusion and in informal economy**

- ▶ The [EU CAMM project](#) concluded in February 2022. A high-level meeting with the Ministry of External Affairs and the European Union was held to share the learnings from the project's four priority areas of Regular migration, Irregular migration, Migration and Development and International protection. The project engaged with multiple stakeholders – migrants, students, state governments, private sector, Member States and other ministries in India. International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the India Centre for Migration (ICM) were partners on this project, which developed practical tools for migration, helped bring in political and administrative changes, increased stakeholder engagement and published research papers.



A total of three events were held during the final two months of the project. The first was the state-level launch of the **“Pre-departure Handbook for Indians going to the EU”** with the state government of Punjab, with Shri Rana Gurjeet Singh, Cabinet Minister, Technical Education & Industrial Training; Employment Generation, Skill Development & Training; Horticulture; Soil & Water Conservation, Government of Punjab as the chief guest and the second was the handbook's launch in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

- ▶ Under the [Start and Improve Your Business \(SIYB\) programme](#), a batch of 25 rural youths in Sikar district, Rajasthan started their journey towards **self-employment** through the path of entrepreneurship. The Flanders funded project “ will be supporting more than 100 rural youths, till June this year to start rural business. The youth, majorly dependent upon stone mines and processing units for livelihood, were severely impacted due to COVID-19. The young trainees have been identified jointly by the District Administration and UNV.

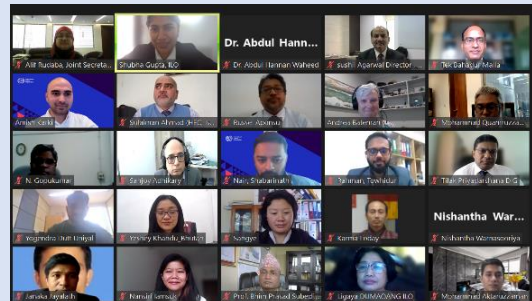


- ▶ The implementation of the tripartite state-wide strategy for the sustainable development of natural stone industry was discussed with the Department of Industries, Rajasthan. The Strategy had been prepared in consultation with state-level constituents and with Flanders' support. Commissioner, Industries; Managing Director, Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation; and CEO, Centre for Development of Stones participated, along with ILO Director and technical colleagues.

- ▶ Presented at the ESCAPs workshop "**ESCAP's Regional Technical Capacity Development Workshop**" on '**Green Recovery: Leveraging Synergies in implementing the SDGs focussing on building economic Resilience during and after Covid-19**'. Highlighted certain issues pertaining to the framework for Green Recovery, including incorporating and integrating informal economy and workers in efforts to build back better by cities.



- ▶ Organized the first technical meeting on [South Asia qualifications referencing framework under the GOALS programme](#). The meeting brought together representatives from seven South Asian countries, including participation from Bhutan. Through a consultative process over the next year and a half, the Programme envisages to develop a South Asia Qualifications Referencing Framework.



- ▶ Participated in the [Stakeholder Consultation on VISION INDIA@2047](#) organized by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. India is currently working on blueprint for India@2047, a vision plan for a '**future ready India**' to mark 100 years of India's independence. Ten sectoral group of secretaries (SGOS) have been set-up to draw the roadmap for the plan by May 2022 and the ministries leading the process are currently having rounds of meetings with various state and non-state actors, apart from international and other UN agencies.

- ▶ The [GOALS Programme](#) held its third **Programme Steering Committee (PSC) meeting** which brought together senior management and technical team from ILO, IOM, UN Women and the donor SDC. The PSC discussed progress made towards achieving the outcomes, collaboration between the UN agencies, key challenges and mitigation strategies, and plans for the near future. The PSC commended the seamless collaboration between the three UN agencies and the progress made despite the pandemic challenges.



- ▶ A multi-stakeholder policy dialogue was organized by the [PSEI project](#) on **'Building a market responsive, resilient, and inclusive MSME ecosystem for job rich and sustainable growth'**. The virtual dialogue was designed specifically for knowledge building of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha and had more than 100 participants. Secretary Ministry of MSME, Mr. BB Swain deliver special remarks. Bangladesh, Indonesia, South Korea and Vietnam shared country strategies and learnings on MSMEs and local economic development growth models, besides COVID-19 response. Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, largely benefitted from discussing the experiences from the other countries.



- ▶ Organized the launch of the **"[Impact of COVID-19 on nexus between climate change and labour migration in selected South Asian countries: An exploratory study](#)"** report. The study assesses the impact of climate change and COVID-19 that has further accelerated job loss and disrupted the world of work for migrant workers in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Observations on innovative approaches adopted by governments and other stakeholders to protect migrant workers, followed by policy recommendations can be found in this report. The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Ovais Sarmad, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC.



- ▶ Virtual session with **Employer Organizations** was held to present basic concepts relating to care economy, share examples of measures in [care economy](#), and seek views of EOs in terms of what needs to be done as a priority in India.

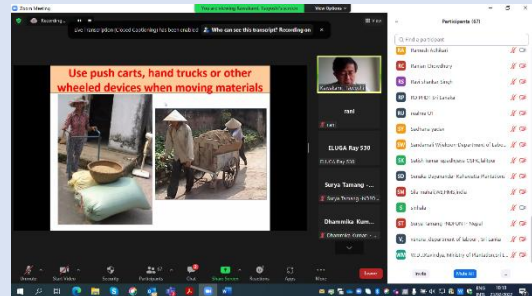


- ▶ Presented findings of the study on **'[Situation analysis on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on enterprises and workers in the formal and informal economy in India](#)'** and some policy suggestions at CII's third **Economic Affairs Council meeting**. The Economic Affairs Council is the apex body in CII to deliberate on various economic policy issues and is chaired by Mr. Uday Kotak, Past President, CII and Managing Director and CEO, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd, and co-chaired by Dr Shankar Acharya, Former Chief Economic Adviser to Government of India.

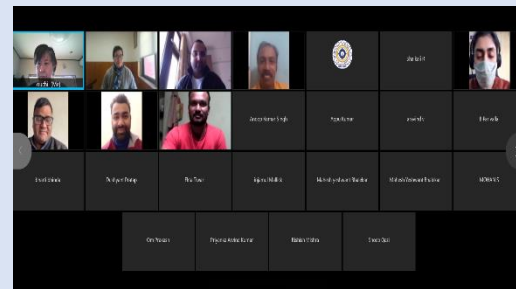


▶ **Priority 3: Tripartite mechanisms work better for protecting rights of workers through promoting labour administration, occupational safety, and health (OSH) and social protection**

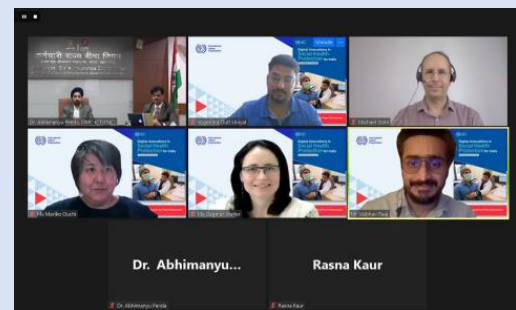
▶ The “[Safety+ Health for All Plantation workers in South Asia](#)” project organized a three-country tripartite training workshop to introduce ILO’s [WIND and WISE training methodologies](#). Tripartite constituents and membership-based organizations participated. The ILO emphasized the importance of OSH at the workplace and its linkage with SDGs. Integrated approach and initiatives from employers’ organizations were shared to demonstrate the importance for business. Action plans for the way forward were developed. The participants found the workshop useful and acknowledged the low cost, effective and simple methodologies to be applied in their workplace. It also served as a platform to learn from cross-country experiences and to understand the good practices and challenges.



▶ Participated in **VGNLI’s online training programme** on Good Governance through Labour Administration and Labour Inspection. Presented the highlights of India’s social security system in relation to ILO’s nine social security branches; the [World Social Protection Report 2020-2022](#) and social protection trends in South Asia and India; partnerships in India for promoting and providing social security benefits; and effective social security ecosystem in India: Issues and challenges.



▶ The ILO-ESIC Project organized a panel discussion to launch its report on “[Digital Innovations in Social Health Protection for India](#)”, where the need for cross-sectoral efforts for a “[safe, inclusive and equitable digital future](#)” was emphasized. The Director General of ESIC, Mr. Mukhmeet S Bhatia shared his vision of the role of digital technology in strengthening social health protection institutions in India. The ILO introduced the report highlighting its relevance in the post-COVID-19 embrace of digitalization in India.



Mr. Michael Stahl, the report’s author, made a presentation on successful examples of countries adopting digital technologies for strengthening and expanding social health protection. Dr. Abhimanyu Panda, the Deputy Medical Commissioner (ICT) of the ESIC, shared the digitization journey of one of India’s oldest and largest social security institutions through its Project Panchdeep.

Media Coverage

▶ WESO Trends Report

[The Times of India](#) | [Hindustan Times](#) | [Mint](#) | [Economic Times](#) | [Bloomberg Quint](#) | [CNBC TV18](#) | [ET Now](#) | [Down to Earth](#) | [Money Control](#) | [Newsclick](#) | [Republic TV](#) | [CSR Journal](#) | [Devidiscourse](#)

▶ MSME Dialogue with Andhra Pradesh and Odisha

[Prameya News](#) | [Odisha News Tune](#) | [Odisha Expo](#) | [The YMA](#) | [The Times Bureau](#)

- ▶ [How India's Workers And Employment Policy Fared In 2021](#)
- ▶ [Solving migrant workers' housing crisis](#)
- ▶ [Should We Abolish the Minimum Wage?](#)
- ▶ [India's long road to building a gender equal future](#)
- ▶ [Opinion: Without lowering unemployment rates, India cannot effectively address inequality](#)
- ▶ [A dipping graph in occupational safety](#)

The graphic is a teal-colored promotional card for a podcast. At the top left, it features the logos for 'F// x ICRW' and 'WOMEN AND WORK: WHY IT MATTERS!' with a microphone icon. Below this, it says 'NEW EPISODE!' in large white letters. The central focus is a white-bordered audio player interface. On the left of the player is a portrait of Neha Wadhawan, with her name 'Neha Wadhawan' written below it. To the right of the portrait, the text reads 'Episode 03' and 'What is the informal economy?'. Below the title are standard audio controls: a play button, a progress bar showing '09:13' out of '25:15', and a menu icon. At the bottom of the player is an orange button that says 'Listen Now!'. Below the entire graphic, a black banner contains the text 'Find 'Women and Work: Why it Matters' on your favourite streaming platforms!'.