ASEAN and EU support well-being of online platform workers in growing digital economy

Boracay Island, Philippines, 5 July 2023 – The launch of the ASEAN Employment Outlook (AEO): The Quest for Decent Work in Platform Economy: Issues, Opportunities, and Ways Forward brought together sixty-nine policymakers, practitioners, international experts, tripartite partners and other stakeholders.

The AEO explores emerging issues within Southeast Asia's labour landscape, specifically on the growth of workers in the online platform economy and persons working for digital platforms. It sheds light on implications on employment relationships, employee access to social security and skills development, and women’s access to platform jobs and entrepreneurship, among others. The AEO offers a critical analysis of the challenges encountered by digital platform workers while highlighting best practices to promote equitable treatment for the workforce, including insights from Europe. The publication is accessible online here: http://bit.ly/AEO_PlatformWorkers.

The AEO was endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials (SLOM) in March 2023. “The publication of the first ASEAN Employment Outlook is opportune,” highlighted Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma of the Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines. "It comes at a time when the ASEAN labour market indeed has undergone a massive transformation driven by the advancement of information and communication technologies," he added.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Kao Kim Hourn stated: "Platform work has seen significant increase in recent years and has emerged as a key driver of economic growth and social development in Southeast Asia, spurring employment opportunities for the people of ASEAN." He further shared: “ASEAN has undertaken concerted efforts to ensure that platform workers are provided with adequate support and protection that are aligned with decent work standards and labour norms.”

The AEO is supported by the European Union (EU) through the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI). It builds on the ASEAN-EU broader cooperation on human rights. “This publication is an essential contribution to the ASEAN region,” the EU Ambassador to ASEAN, Igor Driesmans underlined. “It is the first comprehensive analysis of digital labour platforms and platform workers in ASEAN Member States,” he explained.

This event allowed discussing the key findings and recommendations of the AEO to ensure human capital development and social protection for workers in non-traditional work arrangements amidst the changing world of work. The launch of the AEO was part of the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials' Workshop on Mid-Term Review and Strategic Planning of their 5-year work programme in Boracay, Philippines from 4 to 7 July 2023. The entire programme was hosted by the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Migrant Workers of the Philippines (DOLE) with support from the EU, through E-READI; the International Labour Organization (ILO); the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and the ASEAN Secretariat.
The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967 and constitutes ten Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. On 31 December 2015, the ASEAN Community was formally established. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The European Union (EU) is the economic and political union of 27 Member States. Together, the European Union has built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development while maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedom. In 2012, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the goals of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. The European Union is the world’s largest trading bloc, and the world’s largest source and destination of foreign direct investment. Collectively, the European Union and its member countries are the largest donors of Official Development Assistance (ODA), providing more than half of ODA globally. The 27 Member States of the European Union (in alphabetical order) are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI) is an EU-financed development cooperation programme that facilitates cooperation and dialogue between the EU and ASEAN in policy areas of joint interest. Drawing on the EU’s experience of regional integration, E-READI further strengthens both the ASEAN regional integration process as well as the overall ASEAN-EU strategic partnership.

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