

APEC Human Resources Development Ministerial Meeting
September 5-6, 2014, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Action Plan (2015-2018)
Promoting quality employment and strengthening people-to-people connectivity through HRD

We, the Ministers responsible for human resource development from APEC economies and Heads of Delegations to the APEC Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministerial Meeting on September 5-6, 2014 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, recognize that the Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG) aims to fulfill the goals and reflect the themes set forth by the Bogor Goals APEC Growth Strategy as outlined in the 2010 Yokohama Vision and the 2013 Leaders' Bali Declaration.

The core mission of the HRDWG is to share knowledge, experience, and skills to strengthen HRD. To that end, the HRDWG pursues greater connectivity to meet current needs while looking ahead to marshal purposeful partnerships for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, recognizing the urgency of region-wide partnerships across APEC member economies to create decent, productive and quality jobs with social protection for a skilled workforce. In pursuing the actions within the plan, all economies will work to enhance the participation of women in the economy.

I. Strategic Approaches

Priority areas should include recognizing the increasing need for collaboration in people-to-people connectivity and quality employment, drawing on the diversity within APEC and harnessing the strengths of individual APEC economies. The HRDWG strives to implement this Action Plan by

- Taking further steps toward creating and expanding economic opportunities for our stakeholders and addressing issues that threaten and undermine inclusive economic growth such as gender discrimination, income inequality, informality, and restrictive/limited access to education and training opportunities.
- Playing an important role in coordinating information sharing, transparency, and capacity building, and holding policy dialogues and workshops between and among APEC economies and key stakeholders.
- Encouraging efforts to strengthen partnerships involving government, private sector, non-governmental organizations, education and training institutions and multilateral institutions to fortify and expand HRD infrastructure and capacity.
- Ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society such as youth, women, migrants and people with disabilities are addressed through inclusive design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of HRD initiatives.
- Deepening the HRD capacity of developing economies to compete on a level playing field in the global marketplace.
- Promoting the importance of gender equity and other social justice issues within HRD.
- Encouraging youth employability by addressing the school to work transition as well as improving the quality of education.

II. Priority Areas and Actions

APEC HRDWG2015-2018 Action Plan

We call on the HRDWG to consolidate resources and take concrete actions to fulfill priorities in pursuit of the Joint Ministerial Statement. The priority areas and actions are to work together to enhance connectivity, serving as the primary basis for the HRDWG to establish its annual work plans during the next four years.

A. Supporting inclusive and sustainable growth to address the social dimensions of globalization, including equality and needs of vulnerable groups

Priority areas should include quality job opportunities through employment-oriented growth, active labour market policies, equal access to training and public employment services within member economies, joint protocols for safety and health, and improved social protection policies.

To help APEC economies in the promotion of an inclusive and sustainable growth and enact the necessary social protection policies and measures in an environment of peace and prosperity, the HRDWG's actions should include:

- Promoting higher quality and productivity jobs through greater labour force participation and cost effective labour market programs.
- An ongoing focus on the impacts on employment due to economic integration, restructuring, industrial transformation, trade fluctuations and inequality, including harnessing the new job opportunities emerging from new sectors, professions, and technology.
- Promoting the sustainability of social protection measures and systems.
- Pursuing better labour market policies and pension reform to help address the ageing population process, youth bulge, and other demographic challenges.
- Enhancing the role of women in the workforce by identifying, developing and promoting successful workplace strategies and programs that address gender-specific societal and health challenges adversely affecting their participation in the labour market.
- Improving labour market policies and programs to take advantage of the youth bulge.
- Developing policies that protect other vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, migrants, unskilled workers and long-term unemployed.
- Supporting measures for accessibility of social protection services where appropriate to cover workers in the informal sectors and migrant workers.
- Supporting measures to transition workers from the informal to the formal economy.
- Promoting collaborative research through the APEC Secretariat Policy Support Unit (PSU) and through universities and research institutes around the APEC region which host APEC Study Centers (ASCs) to examine regional trends and challenges related to safe workplaces to identify potential initiatives and best practices for collective and individual action by APEC member economies.
- Encouraging youth employability policies to enable young people to obtain productive jobs with upward earnings prospects.
- Continuing the sharing of experiences and best practices on public employment services and effective labour market information systems.”
- Fostering the improvement of access to higher level and technical education.

B. Enhancing human resource quality to meet supply chain demands

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Priority areas should focus on the development of employment and skills strategies linked to the needs of industry and supply chains.

The HRDWG's actions should include:

- Developing of adaptability skills and youth employability in driving a new period of growth.
- Working with governments to enhance the quality of education and facilitating greater access, in order to improve youth employability.
- Developing the skills of trainers and managers to equip them to better lead a 21st-century workforce
- Continuing the collaboration among governments, VET providers and industries in ensuring that skills and professions meet labour market requirements through the development of a capacity building plan.
- Promoting mobility and skills development of workers to encourage economic equality and prosperity throughout the region.
- Advocating for -policies that ensure the development of the right skills for the right jobs and creating a skilled workforce that matches labour supply and demand.

C. Facilitating mobility of labor and skills development

Priority areas should include skills mapping and development, addressing skills shortages and mismatches, improving recognition of qualifications and competencies and the enhancement of cross-border labour mobility while recognizing the importance of social protection.

To help APEC economies to manage their labour markets efficiently and drive economic growth, the HRDWG's actions should include:

- Enhancing skills mapping cooperation to identify current and future needs and potentials in the region, including building on the APEC "Skills Mapping Project"..
- Identifying opportunities for improving recognition of qualifications, competencies and training systems to facilitate skills mobility to enhance human resource quality and develop skills that better meet global supply chain demands.
- Taking into account of the experiences and lessons learnt from other international fora where APEC Economies may participate (i.e. Union of South American Nations - UNASUR, South Common Market - MERCOSUR, Andres Bello Agreement, Pacific Alliance, among others) to obtain information that helps improve recognition of qualifications and educational systems.
- Coordinating of the capacity strengthening training and re-training systems in order to develop improved employment opportunities and deliver the needed workforce to generate and promote sustainable growth as well as guarantee of safety for international workers.
- Encouraging the establishment of Public Private Partnership for capacity building and collaborative efforts between various sectors in nurturing skilled employees for available jobs while fostering continuing education, lifelong learning and skills improvements.

APEC HRDWG2015-2018 Action Plan

- Supporting a long-term, regional, and sector-based framework of cooperation on facilitating mobility of professionals, researchers and skilled workers to promote workforce development, including building on the APEC "Strengthening Mobility of Professional Engineers Project".

III. Follow-up Mechanisms

We authorize the HRDWG to take the lead in monitoring implementation, regular evaluation and vigilantly report on the progress completed on this in the HRDWG's annual meeting. We encourage the sustained monitoring and periodic assessment of effectiveness of participation and actions of APEC member economies through surveys, consultations, recording and reporting mechanisms. For this point, it would be useful to get indicators that would allow economies to have a better understanding and supervision of the progress made.

We instruct the HRDWG to work with Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group, Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy and other substructures and fora in APEC, including ABAC, to ensure coordination for effective expeditious Action Plan implementation and identification of specific goals on which the sub-networks under HRDWG collaborate. The HRDWG should draw on the findings of previous projects and the experience of relevant international and regional organizations to ensure enhanced resource use, effectiveness and efficiency of its cooperation and capacity building activities.

We encourage projects that support the APEC Leaders' Growth Strategy of sustainable, inclusive and balanced economic and social development. Recognizing that high inequality threatens to stall future progress against poverty by attenuating growth prospects and to help APEC economies identify and develop flexible and responsive inclusive economic growth policies we urge the HRDWG to address the impediments of inequality by promoting greater social dialogue among member economies, academics, international organizations, private sector experts and worker organizations.

We urge economies active participation in the priority areas of this Action Plan. We call on APEC members to establish regional training centers, conduct high level dialogues on human capital development and form networks and public private partnerships with the goal of building capacity in such areas as vocational training, improved workplace safety. We encourage economies to establish and promote partnerships with the private sector to advance human resource development throughout the Asia Pacific region. We urge the HRD to take all necessary measures to support these efforts.

The HRDWG is to produce a report on the performance of this Action Plan for presentation in the next Ministerial Meeting for assessment.