



## ▶ China ILO cooperation

November 2021

**The People's Republic of China is a founding member State of the ILO. The country has ratified 26 Conventions, which include four Fundamental Conventions, two prioritized Governance Conventions, and 20 Technical Conventions. The ILO and China have a long-standing partnership that has intensified in recent years on South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) and with voluntary contributions by China to the ILO's Development Cooperation Programme.**

### ▶ China and the ILO

The ILO office in Beijing was established in 1985 and oversees ILO's activities in China (including the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions) and Mongolia.

Since the beginning of the country's transition to a market economy, the ILO has been providing technical assistance to the Chinese government and social partners in areas such as labour legislation, employment promotion and social security reform. The first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the ILO and MOHRSS in 2001 deepened the cooperation in developing the labour market policies supporting China's transition from a centrally planned to a market economy.

The new MoU signed in 2016 established a strategic partnership in realizing the common objectives of promoting social justice, decent work and fair globalization in a world marked by deepening economic integration, rapid economic and social transformation and a pressing need for quality job creation and fair globalization. Over time, the nature of the cooperation between ILO and China have evolved. The ILO began integrating Chinese experience and approaches on employment services and other areas in its development cooperation programmes around the world. In 2012, the first South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) agreement between the ILO and China was signed, whereby China committed US\$ 1 million to support South-South cooperation and the Decent Work agenda.

In 2016, the third Decent Work Country Programme was agreed between the ILO and its Chinese constituents, laying the foundation for a MoU for strategic partnership focusing on the four dimensions of the decent work agenda, which was signed in the same year.

More recently, in April and June 2019, the ILO signed three MoUs with the Government of China and one with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), all of which provide a solid basis for an expanded programme of development cooperation:

- ▶ "South-South Cooperation under the Framework of the Belt and Road Initiative" (signed by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security - MOHRSS)
- ▶ "Cooperation for the Promotion of the Effective Implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (as amended, MLC, 2006) through the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative" (signed by the Ministry of Transport)
- ▶ "South-South Cooperation on Work Safety Under the Framework of the Belt and Road Initiative" (signed by the Ministry of Emergency Management - MEM)
- ▶ Cooperation to assist trade union development in the Asia and the Pacific region to enhance their core capacities through sharing knowledge, experiences, training and technology transfer (signed by ACFTU).

## ► China and the BRICS

In China, development cooperation is primarily managed by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and the [China International Development Cooperation Agency, or CIDCA](#). Since 2015, China has been committed to advancing social protection through SSTC. The Ministerial Declaration adopted in Chongqing in July 2017 includes the BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework, which “is designed to implement the requirements passed by the Declarations of previous BRICS Summits and the commitments of the Declarations of Labour and Employment Ministerial Meetings, which provides guidance for the BRICS countries to deepen coordination and cooperation in the field of social security”. This cooperation framework rests on the principles of “equality, openness, efficiency, mutual trust and benefit as well as consensus built upon consultation”, and is “pragmatic, open-ended and progressive”. In 2021 China was very active during the BRICS LEMM that adopted an important declaration on formalisation of the informal economy.

## ► CURRENT AND RECENT ILO PROJECTS FUNDED BY CHINA

### ► ILO-China Partnership Project on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN Member Countries (2018-2025)



Government officials from China, Cambodia, and Lao PDR participated in the virtual launch of the Skills Development Network through SSC alongside the ILO's Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, November 2021.

Featuring SSTC, this project aims to improve the employability of workers and increase the productivity of enterprises through skills development and institutional capacity building, to build forward better.

As a sustained and impactful program with a US\$ 4 million financial contribution from MOHRSS, it supports its development partners in ASEAN countries from formulating skills laws and regulations for mutual skills recognition in the ASEAN region. This includes initiatives ranging from reskilling and upskilling policy advice to institutional capacity building, from skills testing to skills certification, from job counselling to curriculum development, from combined training of online and offline modalities to Skill competitions in partner countries.

The project promotes knowledge sharing on skills development between skills centres, TVET institutions through SSTC. Under the Project, a Skills Development Network through SSC was launched at an online ceremony held 10 November 2021. Supported by the ILO, MOHRSS. The network currently brings together 22 TVET institutes from China, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

In November 2021, the Director General of the ILO and the Vice Minister of MOHRSS signed a third amendment to the MoU on South-South Cooperation with a focus on Skills development during the 11th Joint Committee ILO-China. At the virtual signing ceremony, the ILO emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to harm the most disadvantaged and unskilled, making it more important than ever to strengthen SSTC as part of building back better. During the meeting, MOHRSS reaffirmed that China will continue to work in : a) Platform workers, social security, skills development; b) fair digitalisation and new forms of work; c) South-South cooperation.



ILO Director General Guy Ryder participates in the virtual signature of the third amendment of the MoU on SSC, November 2021.

## ► BRICS knowledge series

Through the South-South Cooperation framework, the ILO has worked with BRICS countries to tackle the challenge of transition to formality. In 2021 two BRICS knowledge sharing series were organized to help identify key challenges that countries face in this process of formalization and facilitate exchange of information and good practice among BRICS and the ILO. The series also provided an opportunity to share knowledge and experience among various stakeholders of BRICS countries. As one of the BRICS countries, China has remained an important partner in capacity development and interregional cooperation. China was represented by policy makers, practitioners, representatives of workers and employers organizations, experts and technical staff working in the field of transition to formality. [BRICS-South-South Meeting Point](#)

## ► Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Ending Poverty through Universal Social Protection (2018-2020)

Jointly implemented by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the ILO in Cambodia and Pakistan, this project benefits from US\$ 745,000 in support from the Government of China. By the end of the project in 2020, 500,000 additional people in Cambodia and Pakistan obtained access to social protection coverage through improved governance of social security schemes. Part of the long history of bilateral cooperation between each of the two project countries and China, this action also allows China to share its own experiences in extending social security, by providing technical assistance as part of the project.

►► We must reimagine and rebuild our world in a way that works for everyone, brings women into the leadership of the economy of the future and expands the opportunities for young people. It is in this context that the Belt and Road Initiative assumes remarkable and urgent importance. It offers a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the creation of a more equitable, prosperous world for all, and to reversing the negative impact of climate change.”

► Secretary-General António Guterres at the opening of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, 26 April 2019

## ► The Future of Work in Asia: Skills Development Strategies and Social Protection Policies to Promote Employment-Rich and Equitable Growth (2018)



With an additional US\$ 200,000 in support from the Government of China, the project strengthened the capacity of ILO constituents in the ASEAN countries to mitigate risks and unlock opportunities in the context of the large-scale labour market transformation processes shaping the Future of Work in Asia. The ILO and the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security organized an expert meeting on the Future of Work in Asia. This event brought together high-level authorities from Asia and Europe as well as researchers, ILO experts and representatives from civil society to share knowledge on skills development strategies and to promote decent work in the care economy. Through experts' meetings and capacity building workshops, this project reached over 150 individuals from 16 workers' organizations, 20 employers' organizations and 23 labour ministry representatives.

## ► China and the International Training Centre (ITC) of the ILO

China has a long tradition of participation in the programme of the ILO's International Training Centre (ITCILO). In 2018 alone, more than 250 young experts from China received training from ITCILO, sponsored by a range of Chinese institutions of higher learning. The training programmes aim to equip a young generation with the tools and knowledge to become agents of change. Key topics included entrepreneurship and social innovation.

Moreover, seventeen Chinese universities sponsored the participation of over 200 Chinese youth on the training "Global Youth Leadership Academy – Building on Youth Talent: Developing

Young Leaders for the UN 2030 Agenda." ITCILO has also engaged with the Chinese Scholarship Council to promote the participation of Chinese post-graduates students in selected Master programmes within the framework of the Turin School of Development. The Centre also maintains a strong collaborative relationship with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security to which it provides training services in jointly defined priority areas such as labour inspection, with a first group of labour inspectors attended a tailor-made group training in Turin in November 2019. China MOHRSS, ACFTU and employers' were also very active during the BRICS and BRICS-CIS Knowledge series in 2021.

## ► Expand Employment Services and Enhance Labour Market Information in Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (2013-2017)

This ILO-China South-South project was designed to improve labour market efficiency and participation, reduce unemployment, and enhance linkages and information flows between job seekers and employers, thereby contributing to the reduction of poverty in Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic. China's support combined the provision of financial resources (US\$ 1 million) and a wide range of knowledge exchange initiatives based on experiences at both national and provincial levels. In this context, China's technical assistance, advisory services and sharing of good practices together with the ILO's expertise contributed to more efficient labour markets to match supply and demand for jobs.



ILO Director-General Guy Ryder and MOHRSS Minister Zhang Jinan signed the MoU on South-South Cooperation under the Framework of the BRI, April 2019.

## ► China and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

China's 14th Five Year Plan (2021-25) underscores the country's commitments to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and support developing countries in the areas of human resources and development planning and programmes. Furthermore, the Plan underscores South-South Cooperation as an effective tool to tackle climate change and enhance international cooperation in this area.

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