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Trade union engagements on the SDGs and union revitalization in five Asian countries

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► Trade union engagements on the SDGs and union revitalization in five Asian countries

Authors / Melisa R. Serrano, Mary Leian C. Marasigan





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Abstract

Trade unions play an important role in ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integrated into the development agenda and strategies of countries. The findings from in-depth online interviews with trade union officers from seven national labour confederations and senior ILO officials in five Asian countries, complemented by a review of secondary sources, show that, depending on a set of factors, trade unions utilize a variety of strategies in influencing their country's commitments to and progress on achieving the SDGs. The paper argues that both the strategies and outcomes of the SDG-related engagements of the unions in three of the five countries, which are influenced by several important factors, have contributed, albeit to varying degrees, to their revitalization in terms of the development and strengthening of their power resources, particularly the unions' institutional power. The paper identifies several ways that trade unions can sustain successful SDG-related initiatives.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, trade unions, union revitalization, social dialogue.

About the authors

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Mary Leian C. Marasigan is a researcher and extension specialist at the School of Labor and Industrial Relations of the University of the Philippines, where she also graduated with a Master of Industrial Relations degree. Her recent research includes looking at Philippine trade unions' engagements with the Sustainable Development Goals and its processes: incorporating the Goals in union advocacies and programs, initiating involvement in national-level review processes, and integrating their positions on the SDGs in a collective agenda.

Table of contents

Abstract	01
About the authors	01
Acronyms	05
<hr/>	
► Introduction	07
Framework of analysis	08
Methods	08
Structure of the paper	09
<hr/>	
► 1 The state of unionization in the five Asian countries and challenges for union revitalization	10
1.1 Legal frameworks on unionization	12
1.2 Continuing and new challenges faced by trade unions	13
1.2.1 Changes in legal frameworks	13
1.2.2 The rise and expansion of non-standard forms of employment	14
1.2.3 Digitalization and the rise of the digital economy	15
1.2.4 The COVID-19-induced economic crisis	17
<hr/>	
► 2 Union revitalization and the role of trade unions as ‘development partners’	19
2.1 Influencing the development agenda on SDGs, developing institutional power, and union revitalization	19
Structural power	20
Associational power	20
Societal power	21
Institutional power	21
<hr/>	
► 3 How trade unions influence their country’s commitments to and progress on achieving the SDGs	22
3.1 Strategies used in influencing SDG commitments and assessing achievements	22
3.2 Outcomes of the SDG initiatives	23
3.3 Factors that influenced the success of the initiatives	25
3.3.1 Institutional frameworks that support social dialogue	25
3.3.2 Tradition and culture of social dialogue	26
3.3.3 Relations between trade unions and the government	26
3.3.4 Role of external actors and support organizations	28
3.4 Factors that constrained the implementation of the initiatives	28

► 4	How the SDG engagements initiatives may contribute to the revitalization of trade unions	30
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►	Conclusions and some insights on the sustainability of successful SDG-related initiatives	32
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	Appendix 1: The Analytical Framework	34
	References	35
	Acknowledgements	38

List of Figures

Figure 1. Union density rates, various years	10
Figure 2. Share and growth of temporary employment in five Asian countries (per cent)	15
Figure 3. Annual unemployment rates in five Asian countries in 2019 and 2021 (per cent)	18

Acronyms

ACTEMP	ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
ATUC	ASEAN Trade Union Council
B2B	Business-to-business
BMS	Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CAS	Committee on the Application of Standards
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CMTU	Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions
COVID 19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CPV	Communist Party of Viet Nam
DWCP	Decent Work Country Program
EFPP	Employers Federation of Pakistan
EPF	Employees Provident Fund
ESI	Employees State Insurance
FFW	Federation of Free Workers
FTCC	Federal Tripartite Consultative Council
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
HLTM	High-Level Tripartite Mission
ILC	Indian Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IoT	Internet of Things
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual and more
MFA	Multifiber Agreement

NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NERS	National Employment Recovery Strategy
NGOs	Non-government Organizations
NITI Aayog	National Institution for Transforming India
NSE	Non-standard Employment
NTIPC	National Tripartite and Industrial Peace Council
NTUC Phi	National Trade Union Center of the Philippines
PTCC	Provincial Tripartite Consultation Committees
PWF	Pakistan Workers' Federation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDV	Sustainable Development Vision
SENTRO	Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa
TUCP	Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNJPSP	United Nations Joint Program on Social Protection
UNRC	UN Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSEPF	United Nations Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework
VGCL	Vietnam General Confederation of Labor
VNR	Voluntary National Review

► Introduction

As elsewhere, trade unions in Asia face a multitude of challenges, both old and new. Some past victories are being rolled back by changes in regulatory frameworks that erode workers' and trade union rights, by the expansion of non-standard forms of employment and a shrinking policy space for trade unions, and by the rise of authoritarian regimes. At the same time, the structures of trade union representation have been challenged by the expansion of digital labour platforms that undermine the traditional relationship between employer and employee. Moreover, many trade unions are still reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on jobs, workers' and rights, union membership, and union activities. While these trends are common across the continent, they are being felt to a greater and lesser extent in different countries.

In the context of these rapidly evolving challenges, Jelle Visser has sought to address where trade unions are headed and whether past trends will continue, worsen, or be reversed? Visser suggests four possible future scenarios for trade unions:¹

- *Marginalization* through the continuation of current trends of decreasing rates of unionization and aging trade union membership;
- *Dualization* through trade unions defending their positions and, under conditions of increased instability of work and decreased institutional protection, focusing their decreasing resources on defending the members closest to them at the expense of outsiders and precarious workers;
- *Replacement* through trade unions being increasingly replaced by others, such as non-government organizations (NGOs), social movements, states, employers, or other intermediary agencies; and
- *Revitalization* through innovative tactics and coalitions to strengthen trade unions as strong, relevant, democratic, and representative actors in organizing and servicing, what he terms, "the new unstable workforce" in the Global North and South.

These four scenarios can be seen over the last two decades in many trade unions in Asia, albeit unfolding at different speeds in different countries. We, however, argue that *marginalization* and *revitalization* have been occurring simultaneously in the region. Historically, trade unions have successfully weathered the challenges and seized the opportunities that have accompanied changes in the development of capitalism. Despite the many challenges, trade unions remain the most durable membership-based organizations in the world, largely because they have, and continue to be, in a constant process of revitalization. In many cases, revitalization is focused on developing and strengthening institutional anchors that broaden and deepen unions' influence in policy making, both in the labour market and on broader economic development issues. This results in better laws, regulations, policies, programs, and measures that, in turn, contribute to the development and strengthening of a union's other sources of power, namely, increased membership, capacity to disrupt production, and the building of alliances and coalitions.

Revitalization in the form of developing, strengthening, and deploying institutional power has been observed, to varying degrees, in trade unions in India, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. This paper focuses on how trade unions in the five countries have attempted to (re)build their institutional power through various initiatives designed to embed workers' voice and decent work in economic policy making. Of particular focus is how trade unions have successfully highlighted and integrated key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the development agendas of their respective countries.

¹ Visser, Jelle: Trade Unions in the Balance, Working Paper, Bureau for Workers' Activities. Geneva: ILO, 2019.

Framework of analysis

Several factors, both internal and external, impact upon trade unions' capacity to engage successfully with the government and other state and non-state actors, including employers' organizations, in pushing for greater worker input in setting and monitoring a country's commitment to, and progress toward, the SDGs (see Appendix 1). The key internal factors are union density, leadership, inclusiveness, and identity. Having a relatively high union density and a united membership provides unions with the political space to pressure governments to include workers' voice in economic policy-making. As in any organization, leadership is of central importance as leaders shape the agenda and drive change. How a union frames its identity and how inclusive it is in terms of representation is also a key factor. When unions have a broader and more diverse membership base it is more likely that they will pursue an economic agenda that benefits a broader swathe of workers.

These internal factors are also influenced by several external factors: namely the legal framework on industrial relations, relations with the government and employers' organizations, and the role of critical actors and support networks. When a country's constitution, labour laws and the wider legal framework institutionalize consultation with trade unions and the role of tripartite social dialogue in policy making, it is more likely that trade unions can substantively engage with government on development issues. Equally when the political climate and relations between government, employers and unions is positive and constructive, union initiatives are more likely to be present on the policy agenda. On the other hand, a poor legal framework and antagonistic relationships have the opposite effect.

Finally, critical actors and support networks such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other United Nations (UN) agencies, international trade unions, global union federations, international trade union solidarity support organizations, and non-government organizations that focus on workplace issues can have a significant impact. These organizations provide various forms of support such as training and research that can contribute to the institutionalization of trade union voice advancing economic development and the SDGs. Moreover, global campaigns run by such agencies provide a framework for SDG advocacy at national level.

Several indicators of successful trade-union revitalization, that serve to advance the SDGs are identified in this study, namely:

- more worker-friendly policies
- increased membership of trade unions
- permanent or regular union representation in policy-making institutions through institutionalized union participation in economic planning and consultation
- strengthened social dialogue mechanisms; and
- expanded networks that strengthen trade unions' influence over public opinion

Methods

This paper is the output of a research project, commissioned by the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). The core data used in this paper is drawn from a review of secondary sources and from in-depth online interviews: nine with trade union officers from seven selected national labour confederations; one with the national coordination officer of a global union federation; and five with senior ILO officials in India, Mongolia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Viet Nam. The interviews were conducted between March and July 2022.

Structure of the paper

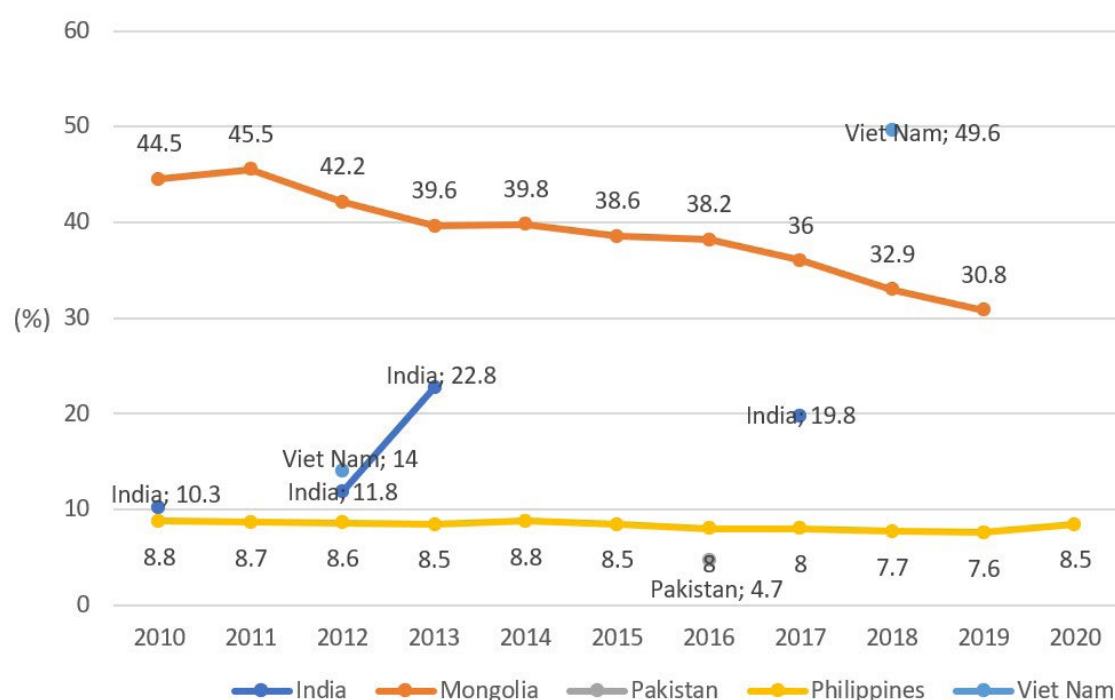
The paper presents the findings and analysis of the interviews, combined with documents provided by interviewees and secondary sources. Section 2 presents the state of unionization in the five Asian countries and identifies key challenges pushing unions to revitalize. Section 3 briefly explains the concept and key dimensions of trade union revitalization and the ‘power resources’ approach, outlines how these two concepts are linked, and explores the role of trade unions in influencing countries’ economic development strategies. Section 4, the core part of the paper, discusses how the selected trade unions influence their countries’ commitments to and progress in achieving the SDGs. Section 5 analyzes how the SDG-related work by trade unions has contributed to their revitalization and Section 6 concludes the paper by providing insights on the sustainability of successful SDG-related initiatives undertaken by trade unions.

► 1 The state of unionization in the five Asian countries and challenges for union revitalization

Trade union density rates² are pulling in different directions in the five countries. Membership is increasing in Viet Nam and India, while the opposite was observed in Mongolia and, to a lesser extent, in the Philippines (Figure 1). In the case of Pakistan, data on union density is only available for 2016.³

All trade union confederations researched as part of this study draw membership from almost all industries, both private and public, and from the informal economy. There is only one trade union in Mongolia, namely the Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU) and one in Viet Nam, the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL). Meanwhile, there is a multiplicity of confederations, federations, and enterprise unions in India, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

► Figure 1. Union density rates, various years



The CMTU was founded in 1908. According to the union officer we interviewed, the trade union density rate in Mongolia, derived from a register of dues-paying members, stands at 20 per cent. The CMTU has 36 affiliated unions at both sectoral and provincial levels.

The VGCL was established in 1929. To date, it has 10 million members across all economic sectors in Viet Nam, including the public and informal sectors. The union officer we interviewed mentioned that almost half of the membership of VGCL are women, while young people are

² Union density rate is the share of employees who are union members, expressed as a percentage. Trade union membership excludes union members who are not in paid employment (self-employed, unemployed, retired, etc.).

³ ILO STAT Explorer, accessed by the authors in 2023.

estimated to comprise the majority. Membership of VGCL has been increasing since 2013, largely because of its ongoing membership development efforts, which sets a target of adding two million new members every five years.

India's Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) was founded in 1955 and has been the largest centralized trade union in India since 1985. The union's membership cuts across all 55 defined sectors of the economy. The BMS has 40 federations and 5,600 local branches, with a total membership of 23.5 million members as of 2022. More than 50 per cent of the union's members are young people, while 35 per cent are women. The union officer we interviewed indicated that BMS's membership has increased by approximately 6.5 million since 2013. Many of the more than 1,200 recently affiliated unions have a high representation of women workers and younger workers, and many are informal workers - including contract labourers, workers in supply chains, tribal workers, gig and platform workers, and domestic workers.

The Pakistan Workers' Federation (PWF) is the largest trade union in Pakistan and was formed in 2005 as a result of merger of three leading national federations. One of the constituent federations of PWF is the All-Pakistan Federation of Labour which was established in 1948. The other two constituent federations, All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions and Pakistan National Federation of Trade Unions were both formed in the 1960s. At the time of writing the PWF has 24,000 affiliated unions. According to a union officer interviewed: out of a total of approximately 1.5 million unionized workers, 945,000 are members of PWF. However, less than 2 per cent of the total Pakistani workforce is unionized, and this may be an overestimate as it only counts workers as those working in the public sector, private sector, and a minority of informal sector workers.

Since 2018, the PWF's membership increased from 727,000 to 945,000. Membership decreased because of COVID-19, but rose again after the peak of the pandemic, during which the PWF regained 70,000 to 80,000 paid members. While many young people are union members, they remain absent from leadership positions, and work remains to be done on women's participation and gender equality. The union leader we interviewed pointed out that Pakistan unions have retained their largely masculine profile over the years.

In the Philippines, union leaders from three national trade unions and one national office of a global union federation were interviewed. The Federation of Free Workers (FFW) was founded in 1950 and has affiliates in almost all industries. Membership of the FFW peaked when the Multifiber Agreement (MFA) was in place, but declined steadily after the MFA ended, and was further aggravated by employers' increasing use of flexible hiring arrangements, and by the COVID pandemic. The union leader we interviewed estimates that there are less than 100,000 members.

The National Trade Union Center of the Philippines (NTUC Phl) is a relatively new trade union, borne out of the 2015 Supreme Court decision that resolved a leadership contest between two factions of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). The NTUC Phl was founded by a group of 18 national unions and federations, with a declared membership of 300,000, as of August 2018. The union organizes and operates in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, mining, services, healthcare, transport, casinos, and business process outsourcing. It has members from the public, private and informal sectors. In early 2020 before the pandemic, the union had 302,000 members, of which 100,000 were covered by collective bargaining agreements. As of June 2022, it had 238,000 members, of which 75 per cent paid dues. As of 2018, 35 percent of NTUC Phl members of the union were women, while 25 percent were young workers. NTUC Phl also serves as the Secretariat of the ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC).

The Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO) is a Filipino trade union confederation founded in 2013. It has affiliates in manufacturing, food and beverages, broadcasting, metal industry, agriculture, gas, chemicals, mining, health care, public sector, cooperatives, and the informal sector (in particular transport workers, domestic workers). The union also organizes Filipino domestic workers deployed overseas. According to the union officer interviewed, there was a drastic reduction in the union's membership during the pandemic, from 104,000 to

79,000 in 2020, with large losses in the hospital, hotel, and transport sectors. Women and men comprise 49 per cent and 51 per cent of SENTRO's membership respectively.

The global union federation IndustriALL has a national coordination office in the Philippines called IndustriALL Philippines, which was organized in 2014 with 17 affiliates. IndustriALL Philippines operates in the garment, semiconductors, wire harness, automotive, and mining sectors. Women comprise between 35 per cent and 45 per cent of the total membership of the affiliates. According to the union officer interviewed, the total number of members has grown from 60,000 to 80,000 since 2013.

1.1 Legal frameworks on unionization

Mongolia, Pakistan, and the Philippines have ratified both ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize) and Convention 98 (Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining). The ratification of these two 'fundamental' ILO conventions is important because they guarantee, in law, freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. Convention 87 guarantees the right to freedom of association without distinction, to collectively organize and join a trade union of their choosing to defend their rights and articulate their interests. Meanwhile, Convention 98 enjoins governments to encourage and promote voluntary negotiation between employers (or employers' organizations) and workers' organizations and recognizes that collective agreements can be utilized to regulate the terms and conditions of employment.

Viet Nam recently ratified Convention 98 but has not yet ratified Convention 87. Meanwhile, India has not ratified either Convention. Nonetheless, labour law in all five countries allow for trade union formation, although they have set varying thresholds in terms of the size of the enterprise (i.e., number of employees) where workers have the rights to be unionized. In practice, however, employer resistance to trade unions and government restrictions on registration and recognition pose hurdles.

In Mongolia, the CMTU lobbied hard for the new Labour Law which came into force in January 2022. The union officer interviewed considers it better than the previous labour law in guaranteeing workers' and trade union rights. Despite this, the CMTU still finds it difficult to organize in large firms and among workers in the informal sector. Employers in large foreign-owned companies in the mining and extractives, telecommunication, and petroleum industries tend to shun unions. Moreover, it is a big challenge to organize workers in the informal sector, although there have been recent successes in this regard, thanks to the support of the ILO.

Indian law places no restrictions on the number of trade unions and there are currently around 14 in existence nationally, according to BMS. However, the registration of new unions can take up to two years, and new restrictions imposed by the Industrial Relations Code of 2020 can impede union growth and activity. For example, a union must have more than 50 per cent of employees in a particular firm registered with it, or the disparate unions must form a negotiating council that represents more than 50 per cent of employees, in order for them to be able to enter negotiations with the employer. Other impediments include the fact that non-employees cannot hold union positions, and a de-facto prohibition on strikes in sectors declared as public utility services. Moreover, the multiplicity of trade unions can lead to inter-union rivalries and unions affiliated with particular political groups often take extreme positions on issues.

Pakistan's labour law allows for unionization, apart from certain public sector jobs, but labour laws in some provinces prohibit organizing and collective action. For example, in 2021 the registration of 62 unions in the public sector was prohibited and the unions were prevented from demonstrating. Moreover, unionization is particularly difficult in the informal sector and in cases where the employer is not easy to identify. According to a union officer we interviewed, some large multinational companies use security agencies to thwart unions entering the company

premises. Another disincentive is that when the Ministry receives an advance notice of a union seeking registration, this information could be shared with the employer who might then sack the concerned employees before the union can be registered. Litigation in such cases can drag for many years, and if the dismissed employees find employment in other companies, the litigation case is struck off or dismissed. Employees must remain unemployed for the case to continue, and workers can rarely afford this.

In Viet Nam, the 2019 Labour Code supports workers' right to organize. Workers can form their own workers' organization which can be independent from the VGCL, or they can affiliate with other trade unions. However, at the time of writing, VGCL remains the only trade union in the country.

In the Philippines, the combination of restrictive provisions in the Labour Code, employer practices that are tantamount to union busting, process delays, legal technicalities, and poor implementation of law and policy make organizing almost unrealizable for many workers. In 2019, the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) noted, in respect of the application of Convention 87, numerous allegations of murders of trade unionists and anti-union violence, very few of which have been adequately investigated.

The CAS has requested that the Philippine government take effective measures to prevent violence in relation to the exercise of workers' and employers' organizations' legitimate activities; immediately and effectively undertake investigations into the allegations of violence in relation to members of workers' organizations with a view to establishing the facts, determining culpability and punishing the perpetrators; operationalize the monitoring bodies, including by providing adequate resources, and provide regular information on these mechanisms and on progress on the cases assigned to them; and ensure that all workers without distinction are able to form and join organizations of their choosing in accordance with Article 2 of Convention 87. The CAS also called on the Government to accept a High-Level Tripartite Mission (HLTM), which the trade unions had been demanding since 2019.⁴ In 2022, the Philippine government confirmed its acceptance of the HLTM. The mission took place from 23 to 26 January 2023.⁵

1.2 Continuing and new challenges faced by trade unions

While there are many challenges faced by the trade unions in the five countries, this paper focuses on four key challenges, namely: changes in legal frameworks that erode workers' rights and trade union rights; the expansion of non-standard forms of employment; digitalization and the rise of the digital economy; and the health and economic crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2.1 Changes in legal frameworks

In 2020 the Indian government hastily passed three key labour laws without debate in the parliament or adequate consultation with trade unions and or workers in the informal sector. These new laws, namely, the Code on Industrial Relations; the Code on Social Security; and the Code on Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions, fundamentally rewrite Indian labour law.

⁴ The conclusions of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), International Labour Conference, June 2019

⁵ For the conclusions and recommendations of the HLTM, see ILO: Report of the High-Level Tripartite Mission, Philippines 23 – 26 January 2023 – Conclusions and recommendations. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/missionreport/wcms_874240.pdf.

Indian trade unions point out that these laws undermine workers' rights. They staged nationwide protests on 23 September 2020.⁶ Their objections focus on restrictions to the right to strike and that the laws pave the way for an easy "hire and fire" policy; make it difficult for trade unions to be recognized; and provide exemptions for certain categories of companies from adhering to the laws that safeguard workers' rights.⁷ They also stressed that the Code on Social Security is in many ways discriminatory, as it has removed welfare provisions for many informal sector workers. Meanwhile, the Industrial Relations Code allows companies with up to 300 workers to lay off people without the concerned state government's approval.

1.2.2 The rise and expansion of non-standard forms of employment

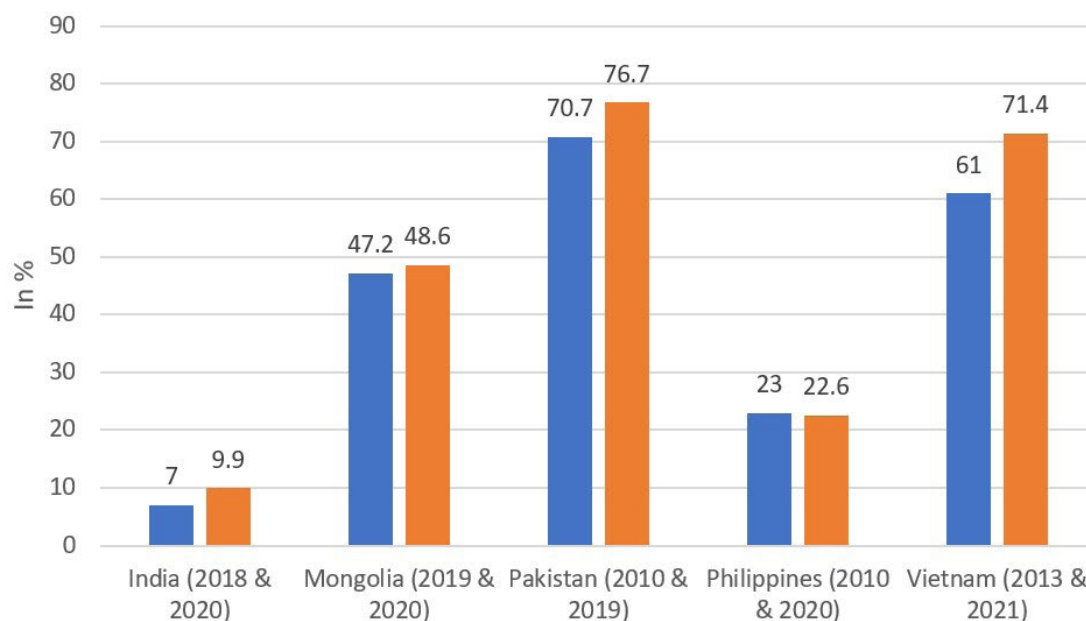
The ILO defines four types of non-standard employment (NSE): temporary employment, part-time and on-call work, multi-party relationship employment, and disguised or dependent self-employment.⁸ These forms of employment are all present in Asian countries, albeit to varying degrees. The expansion of NSE has important implications for industrial relations. For employers, it affords flexibility in addressing market uncertainties. For workers and trade unions, NSE undermines job security, depresses wages, lowers job quality, and weakens trade unions and collective bargaining. Moreover, workers in NSE typically don't enjoy the same levels of social protection. Taken together this can create disincentives for workers, and hurt productivity. The expansion of NSE has also contributed to the decline in unionization in many countries, as trade unions often concentrate their organizing drives on regularized, permanent workers.

As elsewhere in Asia, the use of non-standard forms of employment is on the rise in the five countries. Figure 2 shows the growth in the share of temporary employment (i.e., the proportion of temporary employees as a percentage of total number of employees) in India, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. Among the five countries, the share of temporary employment ranges from 7 per cent in India to as high as 76.7 per cent in Pakistan. In Mongolia the figure stands at 48.6 per cent, at 22.6 per cent in the Philippines, while in Viet Nam it is 71.4 per cent. Nonetheless, data on temporary employment may not be comparable across countries due to differences in how it is counted. For example, in India the coverage of temporary employment is limited to the formal sector, whereas in Pakistan and Viet Nam, temporary workers in the informal sector are included.

⁶ Indonesian government told to suspend Omnibus law., IndustriALL. 2 December 2021 <https://www.industriall-union.org/indonesian-government-told-to-suspend-omnibus-law>.

⁷ Explained: Here's Why Workers, Opposition Parties Are Protesting Against the 3 New Labour Laws. The Wire Staff, 23 September 2020. <https://thewire.in/labour/labour-code-explainer-unions-strike-workers-opposition-parties>.

⁸ Non-standard Employment Around the World: Understanding Challenges, Shaping Prospects. Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2016 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_534326.pdf.

► Figure 2. Share and growth of temporary employment in five Asian countries (per cent)⁹

Also of interest is the fact that four of the five countries have witnessed an increase in the share of temporary employment, the Philippines being the only outlier in this regard.

1.2.3 Digitalization and the rise of the digital economy

A relatively new challenge facing trade unions is the digitalization of work and the expansion of digital labour platforms that fundamentally alter the employment relationship. The digital transformation has the potential to increase informal and non-standard work, which can result in income and job insecurity. Digitalization is permeating every sector of the economy as activities and transactions are increasingly enabled by digital technologies and digitized devices. Frontier technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), big data, 5G, drones, and solar photovoltaic energy, have enabled a rapid digitalization process, and Asia is a global leader in tech, particularly in e-commerce and fintech (i.e., computer programs and other technology used to support or enable banking and financial services).

However, expertise in digital technology and digitalization varies across sectors and countries in Asia. Countries such as Viet Nam, Indonesia and Thailand are undergoing a digital technology transformation, particularly in the services sector. Cloud computing and software automation (e.g., robotic process automation) are increasingly being used in the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector. However, mobile and e-commerce platforms, the IoT, cloud technology, and big data analytics are yet to achieve mainstream usage in the retail sector in the region.¹⁰ In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies and consequently

⁹ Source: Graph constructed by the authors using data from ILOSTAT Explorer

a) For each country, the left bar is the earliest year for which data was available and the right bar the most recent.

b) For Pakistan and Viet Nam, it is possible that temporary workers in the informal sector (agricultural and non-agricultural) are included. In Viet Nam, for example, temporary employment includes definite-term labour contract which is a contract with a duration between 12 months and 36 months, and seasonal or job-specific labour contract which is a contract of less than 12 months of employment.

¹⁰ Chang, Jae-Hee, Rynhart, Gary & Huynh, Phu: ASEAN in Transformation. How Technology is Changing Jobs and Enterprises. International Labour Office Bureau for Employers' Activities Working Paper No. 10. Geneva: ILO, 2016. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_dialogue/-act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_579553.pdf.

the expansion of e-commerce and digital platforms in all countries in the region, including the five focus-countries of this study.

There has also been a proliferation of digital platforms, with broad consequences for the world-of-work. The ILO classifies digital platforms into three broad categories: platforms that offer digital services or products to individual users, such as search engines or social media; platforms that facilitate and mediate between different users, such as business-to-business (B2B) such as Alibaba or Amazon; and digital labour platforms.¹¹

Digital labour platforms are of greatest concern to trade unions. They can be classified into two broad categories, namely: online web-based platforms where tasks or work assignments are performed online or remotely by workers (e.g., translation, legal, financial and patent services, design and software development, annotating images, moderating content, or transcribing a video); and location-based platforms where tasks are carried out in person in specified locations by workers (e.g., taxi service, delivery, home services, domestic work, and care provision). Asia leads the world in digital labour platforms. About 46 per cent of the investment in digital labour platforms is concentrated in Asia (US\$56 billion), 40 per cent in North America (US\$46 billion) ten per cent in Europe (US\$12 billion), and only four per cent in Latin America, Africa, and the Arab States combined (US\$4 billion).¹²

The use of digital labour platforms and related technological innovations like cloud computing and the use of big data and algorithms has resulted in innovative ways of working and flexibility for both workers and businesses. For many workers, digital labour platforms have offered opportunities to earn an income. However, they can also lead to a risk of displacement and informalization and cast workers outside the protection of labour laws. Digital labour platforms can potentially obscure the relationship between employer and workers that forms the core basis of unionization. For workers engaged in digital platform work, usually classified as independent contractors, the challenges relate to regularity of work and income, working conditions, social protection, and access to the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Digitalization can have an uneven impact on employees with different skill levels resulting in increased job polarization between the highly skilled and highly-paid, who most likely benefit from digitalization, and low-skilled and low-paid workers, whose jobs are more prone to digitalization. Workers in retail are particularly at risk of job displacement due to digitalization. For example, 88 per cent of salaried workers in the retail sector in the Philippines are at high risk of automation,¹³ while in the BPO sector, software automation poses the greatest risk to call center workers. For example, in the Philippines, 89 per cent of the one million workers employed in the BPO sector are at risk of automation.¹⁴

Finally, digital automation may erode advances made in gender equality, pay and job status. Women workers are overrepresented in midlevel, routine, and cognitive jobs which can be displaced by automation. A recent World Economic Forum report highlights that over 57 per cent of the jobs that are set to be displaced by digital automation between now and 2026 belong to women.¹⁵ Moreover, women have a very low share in advanced technology jobs that are expanding in the digital economy. This is especially the case for women in the developing world who have limited or lack access to necessary training to acquire technological capabilities. Furthermore, homebased work and work-from-home arrangements for women in the digital economy not

¹¹ World Employment and Social Outlook: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work. Geneva: ILO, 2021 p. 40. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_771749.pdf.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Chang, Rynhart & Huynh: ASEAN in Transformation. How Technology is Changing Jobs and Enterprises. International Labour Office Bureau for Employers' Activities Working Paper No. 10. Geneva: ILO, 2016. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_579553.pdf.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Martinson, J.: Technology will widen pay gap and hit women hardest – Davos report. The Guardian, 21 January 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2018/jan/21/technology-widen-pay-gap-hit-womens-jobs-hardest-davos-report>.

only intensify women's multiple roles emanating from productive and reproductive work, but also undercut the hard-won battles for women's equal participation in the labour force.¹⁶

1.2.4 The COVID-19-induced economic crisis

Before the pandemic, employment in the Asia-Pacific region followed a steady upward trend, with annual employment growth rates of 0.7 per cent to 0.9 per cent.¹⁷ However, the ILO estimates a jobs gap of 81 million in 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis.¹⁸ In the first quarter of 2020, it is estimated that 7.3 per cent of working hours were lost, equivalent to 125 million full-time jobs (based on a 48-hour work week), relative to the fourth quarter of 2019. In India losses of 13.7 per cent were reported,¹⁹ while in Viet Nam, the figure was 9 per cent. Moreover, in the third quarter of 2020, despite the easing of lockdown measures and gradual resumption of economic activities in many countries of the region, working-hour losses were expected to remain at 10.7 per cent below those of fourth quarter 2019, equivalent to a loss of 185 million full-time jobs.²⁰ Sectors worst hit by the pandemic, which suffered massive job losses, included tourism (tour operators, airlines, and cruise ships), food and accommodation (restaurants, hotels), transportation (domestic transit, maritime, civil aviation), and construction. Other hard-hit sectors include retail and wholesale (except for food and other essential goods), entertainment, manufacturing, arts and culture (including film production and sound recording, performing arts and museums), amusement parks and casinos, sports and gyms, and other personal services (laundry, spas, etc.).

Despite the easing of health restrictions in many countries in the Asia-Pacific, employment levels have not regained pre-pandemic levels. This is the case for Pakistan, the Philippines, and Viet Nam (Figure 3). The emergence of new and more transmissible COVID-19 variants also forced countries in the region to adopt location-specific (e.g., city-wide, province-wide) lockdowns, disrupting efforts towards economic recovery and employment stabilization. Despite this the unemployment rates actually declined in India and Mongolia.

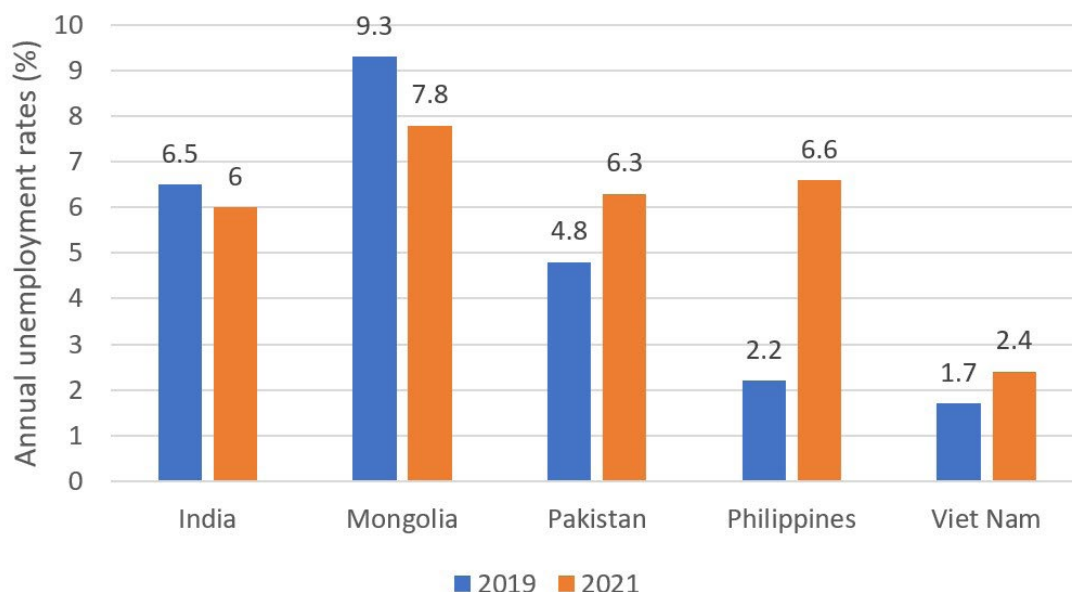
¹⁶ Gurumurthy, Anita, Chami, Nandini & Alemany, Cecilia: Gender Equality in the Digital Economy: Emerging Issues. A new social contract for women's rights in the data economy. Feminist Digital Justice Issue Paper 1, October 2019. https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/1620/Feminsit%20Digital%20Justice%20Issue%20Paper%201_%20updated%20name%20and%20logo.pdf.

¹⁷ COVID-19 and the world of work. Seventh edition. Updated estimates and analysis. 25 January ILO Monitor, 2021 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

²⁰ Ibid., p.16.

► Figure 3. Annual unemployment rates in five Asian countries in 2019 and 2021 (per cent)²¹

While there is no data showing the number of union members who have lost their jobs during the pandemic, trade unions are likely to have lost a significant proportion of their membership, particularly in the sectors identified above where there were massive layoffs. This was affirmed by the interviews with the three trade unions in the Philippines: FFW, NTUC Phl, and SENTRO. In addition, COVID-19 restrictions on mobility and public gatherings resulted in difficulties in organizing and reaching out to workers.

In some cases, the pandemic was used as a pretext for employers and governments to violate workers' and trade union rights. According to union reports received by the ILO, these violations included: violation of international labour standards; non-compliance with labour regulations with regard to layoffs, working hours and the payment of wages; and disregard of occupational safety and health requirements.²² Most violations have been reported in the Arab States (in 67 per cent of countries) and in Asia and Pacific (in 35 per cent of countries), followed by Europe and Central Asia (in 29 per cent of countries), Africa (in 21 per cent of countries), and the Americas (in 20 per cent of the countries).²³

In Southern India, a firm that runs more than 20 factories closed its sole unionized factory where three-quarters of its 1,200 workers are union members.²⁴ In the Philippines, several cases of employer attempts to break unions in the construction sector during the pandemic were reported, including illegal termination of union members and leaders during a collective negotiation, a company closure after a union had been recognized, and retrenchment of union leaders and members after a collective bargaining agreement was concluded.²⁵

²¹ Graph constructed by the authors using data extracted from the ILOSTAT: https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer50/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=SDG_0852_SEX_AGE_RT_A. The unemployment rate of India for 2021 came from Statista: (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/271330/unemployment-rate-in-india/#:~:text=The%20statistic%20shows%20the%20unemployment,estimated%20to%20be%205.98%20percent>). The unemployment rate for the Philippines in 2021 came from the Philippine Statistics Authority (<https://psa.gov.ph/content/unemployment-rate-december-2021-estimated-66-percent>)

²² ILO: A Global Trend Analysis on the Role of Trade Unions in Times of COVID-19: A Summary of Key Findings. Geneva: ILO, 2021. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_767226.pdf.

²³ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁴ AFP. Asia's garment workers say virus used as cover to smash unions. Bangkok Post, 15 July 2020. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/1951784/asias-garment-workers-say-virus-used-as-cover-to-smash-unions>.

²⁵ Serrano, Melisa R. & Castillo, Rolly Czar Joseph. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Construction Industry in the Philippines. Philippine Journal of Labor and Industrial Relations 37, 2020: 1-44.

► 2 Union revitalization and the role of trade unions as ‘development partners’

In this paper, we define union revitalization as “a gradual, continuing and purposive process of maintaining, re-establishing, rebuilding and reconfiguring the institutional and organizational sources of union power and strength in a changing environment.”²⁶ This definition is based on two assumptions. Firstly, revitalization involves regaining or reinforcing the organizational and institutional anchors of trade union power and influence. And secondly, revitalization means re-forming or creating new institutions and organizational arrangements, both within and outside the trade union.

Trade unions pursue revitalization strategies in a variety of ways:

- Through innovative ways of organizing workers through union restructuring and consolidation and by building union coalitions, union mergers, and allocating more budget to organizing;
- By expanding member services and democratizing the union through establishing new structures of representation and broadening the union membership base by organizing non-traditional workers and new sectors;
- By campaigning for social justice through leading campaigns on broader economic and social issues,
- By building stronger links with community organizations and social movements, organizing and participating in mass protests and mobilizations; and
- By participating in electoral politics by supporting labour-friendly candidates through leafletting, door-to-door campaigning and robustly engaging with the government and other key actors to influence policy making.²⁷

In all cases complementarity of strategies and the ability of the union leadership to drive transformational change within and beyond the union is key. There is, however, a dearth of literature on how trade unions in the five Asian countries are seeking to revitalize. This paper focuses on how the SDG engagements might contribute to or facilitate the revitalization of trade unions and trade union confederations.

2.1 Influencing the development agenda on SDGs, developing institutional power, and union revitalization

Union revitalization also involves the development and strengthening of a union’s ‘power resources’, an analytical tool that investigates four sources of workers’ power, namely structural power, associational power, societal power, and institutional power. By developing and activating these sources of power, workers and trade unions can transform and address the challenges of their political and economic environment.²⁸

²⁶ Serrano, Melisa R. Between accommodation and transformation: The two logics of union renewal. *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 20(3): 220., 2014

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ For a discussion of the power resources approach, see: Schmalz, Stefan; Ludwig, Carmen; Webster, Eddie The Power Resources Approach: Developments and Challenges. *Global Labour Journal* 9(2): 113-134. 2018 <https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/globallabour/article/view/3569>.

Structural power

Structural power relates to the position of wage earners in the economic system.²⁹ It is based on the premise that withdrawal of labour due to strikes, or people changing jobs, etc. disrupts production and is costly to employers.

There are two forms of structural power. Firstly, workers wield bargaining power in the marketplace when they possess scarce skills or competencies, making them valuable to the employer and therefore difficult to replace.³⁰ Secondly, when the labour market is tight i.e., when jobs are plentiful and available workers are scarce, the competition for hiring these workers becomes more intense. A tight labour market means that an economy is close to full employment so that recruitment of workers possessing scarce skills becomes difficult, placing upward pressure on wages. A tight labour market is also characterized by low unemployment rates.

The other form of structural power is workplace bargaining power held by workers who occupy a strategic position within the production process or supply chain.³¹ Any disruptive action by these workers is costly to the employer. Examples include dockers, and air traffic controllers, and workers in key industries such as transport, energy, health, and workers in just-in-time production processes. If workers who possess marketplace bargaining power and workplace bargaining power collectively organize, their structural power becomes stronger.

Associational power

Associational power comes from the collective representation of workers.³² It can take place at one or more levels simultaneously: at the workplace, at an industry or sector level, and at the regional, national level at the global level. In some countries, where there is a political party institutionally linked to trade unions, such as in the Philippines, workers have associational power in the legislature.

There are three sub-dimensions of associational power. The first is organizational power or how members identify with the union: whether members feel that they are part of the organization and have avenues for meaningful participation in decision-making.³³ This determines members' "willingness to act", as expressed by union members' participation in strikes and other forms of collective action, and their willingness to pay union dues.³⁴

The second component of associational power lies in the power of numbers.³⁵ An increasing rate of union membership and union density builds up and stabilizes associational power. Consequently a means of building associational power is through diversifying or broadening union membership by recruiting groups of workers not previously organized by trade unions to a sufficient degree. Depending on the context this may include women workers, young workers, LGBTQI+ workers, workers in informal employment, and workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The third dimension of associational power is institutional vitality, namely the capacity of trade unions to anticipate change and adjust to new contexts, embrace new strategies, and introduce

²⁹ Wright, Eric Olin: Working-class Power, Capitalist-class Interests and Class Compromise. *American Journal of Sociology* 105(4): 962, 2000.

³⁰ Silver, Beverly J.: *Forces of Labor. Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 13ff., 2003.

³¹ Schmalz et al. (2018: 116-117).

³² Silver (2003: 13ff.).

³³ Schmalz et al. (2018: 120).

³⁴ Offe, Claus and Wiesenthal, Helmut: Two Logics of Collective Action: Theoretical Notes on Social Class and Organizational Form. *Political Power and Social Theory* 1(1): 80, 1980.

³⁵ Schmalz et al. (2018: 118).

new and fresh ideas.³⁶ The involvement of trade unions in social movements as part of broader civil society is a key indicator of institutional vitality. A sound financial base is an important precursor to this.

Societal power

Societal power pertains to the ability to win allies and influence public opinion.³⁷ It pertains to trade union's ability to clearly and persuasively articulate social change or an alternative narrative and agenda. The perception that trade unions are democratic, people-driven organizations adds to their societal power. Collaborative or coalitional power is another component of societal power, and it stems from the cooperative relationships between trade unions and other worker groups, movements, and organizations which share many of their goals and interests. Collaborating, through sharing resources and knowledge with other organizations and groups results in trade unions having more influence.

Institutional power

Institutional power is derived from a trade union's ability to influence policy making at various levels of government, primarily through influencing election outcomes, and the formulation and implementation of laws and regulations. Institutional power stems from victories of past struggles³⁸, which resulted in organized labour's demands becoming legally enshrined rights on worker representation, the right to strike, collective bargaining, and the minimum wage. Institutional power may also come from trade unions' representation in tripartite structures that are consulted as part of the legislative process, and via trade unions representation in the legislature and has led to unions involvement in the development of economic policies and strategies, and union representation in policy processes on social security, wage fixing, etc. Case law, through Supreme Court or Constitutional Court decisions that uphold workers' and trade union rights, are also a good source of institutional power.

This paper focuses on three aspects of institutional power: how trade unions use their existing institutional power to influence implementation of the SDGs; how their institutional power is developed and strengthened by their SDG-related actions and initiatives; and how trade unions revitalize through their involvement in SDG-related initiatives.

³⁶ Behrens, Martin, Hurd, Richard & Waddington, Jeremy: How Does Restructuring Contribute to Union Revitalization? In *Varieties of Unionism. Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*, edited by C.M. Frege and J.E. Kelly. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

³⁷ Schmalz et al. (2018: 122-123).

³⁸ Schmalz et al. (2018: 121).

► 3 How trade unions influence their country's commitments to and progress on achieving the SDGs

According to many trade union interviewees, participating in SDG discussions and processes is a natural extension of social dialogue. From our interviews, we discerned that the ILO has been playing an important role in motivating trade unions to become part of SDG discussions and processes in the five countries. For many, involvement in social dialogue fora on the SDGs with the government and UN agencies, especially those with a global reach, motivates trade unions and adds to their prestige.

3.1 Strategies used in influencing SDG commitments and assessing achievements

Two main strategies are used by trade unions in influencing their governments' commitment to the SDGs: collaborating with broader civil society on SDG campaigns; and engaging directly with government at the local, national, and regional levels on matters relating to the SDGs. In terms of direct engagement: while there are many tripartite fora and social dialogue mechanisms where trade unions discuss labour issues with their respective governments, there have been limited engagements between unions and governments specifically on the SDGs. Most of the union officers interviewed attribute this to their governments' perception that government is solely in charge of SDG implementation and monitoring. Moreover, many trade union leaders intimated that they are unsure about how to engage with the government on the SDGs.

Nonetheless, unions in the five countries have participated in SDG related activities, albeit to varying degrees. In Viet Nam, these engagements seem limited to awareness raising, whereas in India, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Pakistan trade unions have been involved in discussions and review of the SDGs. These activities are often organized by the ILO and the UN.

Mongolia has developed its Sustainable Development Vision (SDV) 2030, aligned with the SDGs, and has set up a standing committee in the country's parliament to oversee and monitor implementation. The president of the CMTU is part of this committee, and the CMTU participates in UN meetings that discuss the SDGs and Mongolia's SDV 2030. Furthermore, the CMTU has developed its own strategic paper on SDV 2030, which reflects many of the SDGs and focuses on key issues including labour rights, environmental justice, and its objective to increase in union membership, including in the informal sector, by 5 per cent per year up to 2030. This strategic paper was presented to the President in March 2022.

Moreover, the CMTU has a consultative role at the Prime Minister's office, sits on the National Tripartite Committee on Social and Labour Partnership, and is a member of the Steering Committee of UN Joint Program on Social Protection (UNJPSP) and of the the Steering Committee of the United Nations Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework (UNSEPF). The CMTU officer interviewed attribute these achievements to a favorable legal framework, and in particular to Decree No. 370 of 2013, which institutionalizes trade unions' full participation with voting rights in governors' and ministers' boards.

In Pakistan the PWF has been involved in various ILO social dialogue initiatives since 2006, such as the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP), which it signed on behalf of workers. Meanwhile, the provincial leadership of the PWF was part of the consultation process of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDGs, with the provincial offices of the Department of Labour. The outputs of the

consultation were presented and discussed in Pakistan's Federal Tripartite Consultative Council (FTCC), and gaps identified were analyzed. Efforts to address these gaps – chiefly concerning shortcomings in government agencies – were then planned and acted upon collectively by workers and employers in the FTCC meetings. In addition, the FTCC is central to the ongoing campaign by the PWF and others to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

Trade unions in Pakistan participated in dialogue around the Millennium Development Goals pre-2015 and subsequently in SDG dialogues and on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and the UN Country Program with the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC). However, in larger trade unions, participation may be concentrated in a specific section of middle and upper management without wider input from the membership.

In the Philippines the SDG process, led by the Department of Labor and Employment in 2016, involved nationwide consultations with trade unions. In 2019, the unions submitted comments to the government's VNR report and in 2022 they prepared and submitted their own zero draft VNR to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the country's economic planning agency responsible for monitoring SDG indicators. The unions were also part of sectoral consultations for the DWCP, the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS), and policies related to labour inspection, and occupational safety and health. Unions have also contributed to consultations on fair recruitment and labour migration organized by the ILO, which is, at the time of writing, running 16 projects on different thematic areas, all of which contribute to specific SDGs.

In the second quarter of 2022, the Philippine government decided to allow accredited unions to attend SDG and VNR meetings chaired by the NEDA through the newly formed Stakeholders Chamber. It will be instructive to see how union participation in this Stakeholders Chamber evolves and what it will achieve in the medium term. This newly created policy space for trade unions came after a succession of SDG-related initiatives undertaken by trade unions in the country, including a trade union position paper on the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for Covid-19 Recovery (2020-2023) and submissions to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in 2021.

Between August and October 2022, trade unions collectively drafted a 15-point Labor Agenda which covers many of the SDGs, and in December 2022, presented it to the government (as labour's input to the Philippine Development Plan), UNCT, and development partners. It is to be noted that all these initiatives drew support from the ILO in the Philippines, which commissioned a labour academic to work with the trade unions in drafting the research-based position papers on various issues.

In all five countries there is some evidence of trade unions working together, with local and international non-government organizations (NGOs), and with the ILO. However, in some cases, negative inter-union dynamics, coupled with political, and ideological differences affect trade unions' willingness to work together. Some unions and federations successfully form alliances with other unions while some unions choose to work alone. Others could be active in trade union networks at the international level, but refrain from joining similar alliances at the national level. In this regard, the ILO has played an important role in facilitating inter-union engagement on SDGs, notwithstanding the fact that some interviewees thought that the ILO could have done more.

3.2 Outcomes of the SDG initiatives

In measuring the success or otherwise of trade union involvement in SDG initiatives we have looked at whether new social dialogue mechanisms and structures that tackle the SDGs and the country's development agenda have been created, or existing mechanisms reinforced; assessed the level of integration of SDGs in the development agenda as a result of union interventions; and reflected upon whether these initiatives have led to improved working conditions of

workers, enhanced worker and trade union rights, and institutionalized worker voice in development-related policy making.

All the union leaders interviewed agreed that the interests of trade unions and their members are advanced through social dialogue related to the SDGs, including reviewing legislation and policy-making initiatives of the government. Furthermore, a focus on the SDGs can lead to increased rights, protection, and welfare for workers. For Pakistan's PWF, exposure to and engagements on SDG initiatives motivated the union to organize workers in the informal sector, sparked an ongoing campaign for the ratification of Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and led to the establishment of complaints mechanisms on gender-based violence in some of its affiliates.

Another outcome of trade unions' SDG engagement and intra-union collaborations is improved knowledge among union leaders and members on the substance and goals of the SDGs. In the Philippines the NTUC Phl hopes to play an even more active role in SDG discussions after having succeeded in its application to be part of NEDA's Stakeholders Chamber, the government body in charge of SDG monitoring. NTUC Phl aims to bring the voice of workers into the deliberations of the chamber and push for better and more relevant SDG indicators, particularly for SDG 5, 8, and 10.

According to the NTUC Phl leader interviewed, the union regularly talks about SDG-related issues with its affiliates, often in the context of the union's ongoing programs. For example, in joint meetings with women and youth, they programmatically link specific union actions to particular SDG goals and look into how SDGs can be integrated into collective bargaining agreements. Some of NTUC Phl's sectoral affiliates also link advocacy campaigns to relevant SDG goals. For example, unions in the education sector contextualize their advocacy with SDG 4 on improving education, while unions in the electronics sector are more active on SDG 13 on climate action.

For the NTUC Phl, SDG discussions also bolster members' and affiliates' interests and knowledge of fundamental issues like wages, working conditions, freedom of association, and collective bargaining; but also of emerging concerns like gender equality, occupational safety and health, and climate justice. According to NTUC Phl, their affiliates initially find concepts like decent work and social development goals intimidating and vague, but by discussing these concepts and breaking these down to their basic elements, they realize that they are not entirely new. According to the FFW interviewee, labour issues in the Philippines are intricately connected to politics, economics, and social and environmental issues, so it is important to use multiple approaches in policy advocacy. In this sense, the FFW views the SDG processes as a solid platform to lobby government to address the concerns of workers.

Building new coalitions and strengthening existing coalitions is another outcome of workers' engagement in the SDGs. Since 2019, the ILO in the Philippines has been relatively successful in bringing different unions together for periodic SDG discussions. These activities not only helped the trade unions better clarify and elaborate their views and positions on a myriad of labour issues, but has also helped to maintain and strengthen existing networks and coalitions. It has also facilitated the formation of new networks, most prominently the All Philippine Trade Unions, the largest alliance of trade unions and worker organizations in the Philippines. In addition, the FFW, SENTRO, and TUCP have launched a 'dialogue platform' for discussions between trade unions and employers' organizations.

Trade Union participation in SDG related dialogue has extended to direct discussions between the unions and the UNRC in June 2021, through which the Philippine unions presented their position paper on the SDGs to the United Nations Social Economic and Peace Building Framework (UNSEPF). In response, the UNRC allotted space for unions to be part of regular discussions on the UNSEPF. This suggests that the SDG process has put unions on the UN's radar in a more meaningful way than before.

In Mongolia, the CMTU's strong representation in various government committees involved in development planning and SDG implementation, as well as in various country-level UN committees has enabled it to push for the integration of SDGs in the development agenda (SDV 2030) of the country. As mentioned above, the CMTU has developed its own strategic paper on SDV 2030 which draws on the SDGs.

In Pakistan, PWF's institutionalized participation in federal and provincial consultative councils enabled the union to participate in the VNR of SDGs. In addition, the presence of the PWF at the provincial consultative councils has facilitated its participation in the consultation process on the VNR at the provincial level. This suggests that discussions on the SDGs have started to gain a foothold in institutionalized structures of social dialogue in Pakistan at both national and provincial level.

3.3 Factors that influenced the success of the initiatives

From our analysis of information gathered through the interviews, four key factors appear to have the biggest influence in the success of SDG-related union initiatives:

- The existence of institutional frameworks that support social dialogue and whether there is a history and culture of social dialogue embedded in the system;
- Relations between trade unions and the government;
- The institutional strength of trade unions and inter-union cooperation; and
- The role of support organizations as facilitators of social dialogue.

3.3.1 Institutional frameworks that support social dialogue

All five countries have ratified the ILO Convention 144 (Tripartite Consultation, International Labour Standards) which provides for union participation in policy making and social dialogue. Thus, in the five countries, institutional frameworks are in place that allow social dialogue to take place at the national, sectoral, and workplace levels, albeit to varying degrees. However, trade unions in India and the Philippines pointed out that the proper and full implementation of the laws governing social dialogue is often not straightforward. Moreover, in most cases, social dialogue only involves the SDGs in a perfunctory manner and broader development-related matters are often not part of the discussions. Nonetheless, where social dialogue has been institutionalized and practiced for many years, trade unions have had some success in influencing conversations about the SDGs.

In Mongolia, the Union Rights Law, which had clauses relating to social dialogue, was adopted in 1993 when the country was undergoing transition from a centrally planned to a market-driven economy. This law was revised and replaced by a new Labour Law which took effect in January 2022. This new Labour Law expands upon the commitment to social dialogue through the establishment of a National Tripartite Committee on Labor and Social Partnerships. In addition, the CMTU considers Government Decree 370, 2014 an important instrument as it promotes social dialogue at all levels, and allows the union to engage in social dialogue from the national down to the local level. In addition, Mongolia has a Tripartite Agreement on Labor and Social Consensus, renewed every two-years, whereby government, employers, and the CMTU negotiate on different issues, including on decent work (SDG Goal 8). It is chaired by the Prime Minister and was the forum through which the minimum wage was negotiated in 2022.

In Pakistan, the Seventh Labour Policy, adopted by the Peoples Party government in 2010, declared that workers' right to form trade unions should be protected and an institutional framework be made available to foster close cooperation between workers and employers; and that consultations between workers and employers on matters of interest to the establishment and

welfare of workers should be made more effective.³⁹ The 18th Amendment to the Constitution of 2010 devolved labour market governance from the federal government to the provinces. Consequently, the administration of labour laws was transferred to provincial governments. Each of the provinces has enacted their own respective Industrial Relations Acts for registration and promotion of unions within their jurisdictions. The PWF has therefore had to enhance its engagements with the provincial governments on matters relating to the SDGs.

In India, the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 and the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act of 1946 form the basis of the labour law, with the latter only applicable to units with more than 100 workers. These laws provide for trade union involvement in social dialogue and collective bargaining at shopfloor level. There are also sector-wide and issue-specific tripartite bodies that engage in social dialogue at the national and state level, such as the Employees State Insurance (ESI)⁴⁰ and the Employees Provident Fund (EPF). At the national level, the Indian Labour Conference (ILC) is the highest tripartite body. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and attended by senior ministers and senior members of the social partners. It had, until recently, been held annually since 1940. However, it last convened in 2015. At the national and state level, the respective Ministries of Labour are initiating and coordinating dialogue with trade unions directly at various levels. In addition, other ministries are also involved in department-wide dialogue with trade unions, especially in the public sector.

In Viet Nam, the main tripartite bodies are the National Wage Commission, that negotiates the minimum wage increase every year, and the Industrial Relations Committee, which tackles industrial relations concerns. The VGCL sits on both. In the Philippines, there are tripartite bodies at national and sectoral level with trade unions representatives sitting on the board of directors. There are also tripartite structures at the regional, provincial, and local levels.

From our interviews it appears that in each of the five countries, tripartite discussions on the SDGs have only been introduced in recent years, mostly initiated by the ILO country offices and the UN. Reference to specific SDGs, chiefly SDG 8, SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 13, SDG 16,⁴¹ have been integrated into their respective policy areas and issues that are tackled in the various social dialogue structures in recent years.

3.3.2 Tradition and culture of social dialogue

The legal frameworks discussed above are founded on a long tradition of tripartite social dialogue in Mongolia, Pakistan, and Viet Nam. The robust culture of social dialogue in these countries is the result of the existence of legal and policy frameworks and permanent structures that support meaningful social dialogue and the existence of a large, long-established, dominant trade union. However, while trade unions in Mongolia and Pakistan have had robust engagements on the SDGs, this cannot be said of the VGCL in Viet Nam, where trade union engagements on the SDGs appear to be in their embryonic stage.

3.3.3 Relations between trade unions and the government

The strength and productiveness of relations between trade unions and the government varies from country to country. In Mongolia the CMTU has good relations with the government and with the Mongolian Employers Federation, and many CMTU leaders participate in decision-making at the sectoral and provincial levels. In addition, the CMTU is also a member of seven working groups

³⁹ Khalil, Zakaullah Khan. A Profile of Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations in Pakistan. Islamabad, ILO, 2018. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-islamabad/documents/publication/wcms_626921.pdf.

⁴⁰ Employees State Insurance has 120 million beneficiaries while the Employees Provident Fund has 150 million.

⁴¹ SDG Goal 1 (No Poverty); Goal 5 (Gender Equality); Goal 13 (Climate Action); and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). For a discussion of the 17 SDG Goals, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

that have been established by the government in line with its development of 10-year programs on economic and social development and is seen as a solid, valued participant in Mongolia's development process. This may be attributed to the fact that CMTU, which has been in existence for over a century, is the only trade union in Mongolia, and thus the sole representative of workers in the country. It is also interesting to note that two past presidents of CMTU went on to become members of the country's parliament. While many members of the union are also members of political parties, the CMTU's constitution specifically prohibits the union leadership from membership of any political party, so as to avoid a politicized relationship with the ruling party.

The BMS has good relations with the ruling party and with the government in India, and like in Mongolia, some BMS leaders have gone on to be government ministers. BMS is part of many collective bargaining processes, tripartite institutions, and committees at the level of the firm, community, district, and state; and perhaps most importantly, at the national level. The BMS however insists on remaining apolitical, an important characteristic that enables the union to take an independent position on policies and issues. The BMS has on several occasions supported or strongly objected to many policy-related concerns, and its federations have held national strikes with other unions against government policies.

Similarly, the PWF in Pakistan has good relations with the Ministry of Labour. Collective bargaining is conducted at the enterprise level, through Provincial Tripartite Consultation Committees (PTCC), and at the national level through the FTCC, chaired by the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development. Among the topics discussed are wages, occupational safety and health, amendments to labour law, and freedom of association. The PWF is free to propose topics for the agenda of the FTCC.

The PTCCs, chaired by the provincial secretaries of the Departments of Labour, have more worker and employers' representatives than the FTCC, and the workers' and employers' representatives in the PTCC are not necessarily from the same affiliates as those in the FTCC, so there can be differences in worker's opinions between the FTCC and the PTCC. Social dialogue is also conducted through the National Social Protection Forum, the SDG Forum in the Planning Commission, Provincial SDG fora, and through a plethora of other social security institutions.

In Viet Nam, the VGCL and the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) are institutionally linked and the VGCL wields strong influence on policy-making. In particular, the VGCL is an important partner of the government when it comes to the development and implementation of programs, decrees or circulars that impact upon workers. The VGCL and the government meet regularly to discuss workers' issues and the role of trade unions in Viet Nam, and some trade union leaders are members of the National Assembly. The VGCL's close ties to the CPV affords the union a place at the table in the formulation of broader plans for economic development where it can ensure that workers' issues are reflected. The government requests inputs from the VGCL during every new cycle of the development plans.

The major trade unions and confederations in the Philippines are recognized by the Department of Labor and Employment as important partners in social dialogue and have a seat in tripartite institutions at a number of different levels. They participate in the National Tripartite and Industrial Peace Council (NTIPC), Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards, and industry tripartite councils for different sectors and industries. Trade unions also engage with many government agencies such as the Department of Justice, the House of Representatives, Senate, and Philippine National Police; and with other civil society organizations. These engagements have been instrumental in successful advocacy initiatives such as the ratifications of ILO Convention 151 (Labour Relations, Public Service) in 2017, Convention 187 (Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health) in 2019, Convention 190 (Violence and Harassment), and in ensuring that workers' rights were protected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.4 Role of external actors and support organizations

As mentioned, much of the discussions and processes related to SDGs in the five countries have been initiated by ILO country offices. The ILO has been providing crucial support to trade unions in education on the SDGs, and in providing opportunities for them to influence their country's commitments to implementation. In many countries, the ILO supports capacity-building programs for the tripartite partners, including training, and the engagement of consultants to assist unions in research and in the translation of written materials into local languages.

The ILO in Mongolia has been providing support to the CMTU and other unions to participate in the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) process and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) discussions. It has provided customized training and translated the ACTRAV guide on how unions can participate in UN discussions. It has also organized workshops and seminars on how trade unions and employers can participate in the UNSDCF process. Both the employers' organization and trade unions were invited to the prioritization workshop of the UNSDCF, and the drafts of the CCA and the UNSDCF were translated by ACTRAV and Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) and shared with the employers and unions. The ILO has also assisted the CMTU in organizing workers in the informal economy.

In Pakistan, the ILO helped facilitate meetings between trade unions and the Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) on the Global Compact, a set of UN guidelines on how businesses and firms worldwide can adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies. This not only improved trade union's knowledge of the country's status in terms of the gaps, targets, and progress in the Global Compact, but has also opened opportunities for more bipartite, union-employer dialogue. The ILO also facilitated dialogue for youth leaders on SDG 1 (Poverty Eradication), SDG 8 (Decent Work), and on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) - in particular on equal pay for work of equal value, and nightshifts for women - and helped the PWF to develop position papers on the SDGs.

With the support of the ILO, trade unions in the Philippines submitted VNR reports and position papers for the 2019 and 2022 SDG VNRs and made submissions on the 2020 UNSEPF to NEDA and the UNRC. In 2021, with support from the ILO and with the assistance of a labour academic, the trade unions formulated a 15-point Labour Agenda which reflects many of the SDGs. The ILO supports Philippine trade unions through capacity-building, policy work, organizational development, research, education, skills training, interunion activities, and Decent Work Country Programs. In the mining sector, the ILO has worked with trade unions to facilitate cooperation between formal and informal workers through a supply chain approach so that the issues facing informal workers can be raised by formal sector workers through social dialogue.

Overall, the support of the ILO on SDG discussions and processes has been crucial in building the capacity and confidence of trade unions in Mongolia, Pakistan, and the Philippines to engage with government agencies, UNRC, UNCT, and other development partners.

3.4 Factors that constrained the implementation of the initiatives

Some trade unions in the countries researched were not involved in SDG discussions or policy planning. In India the BMS achieved good results in social dialogue and policy review processes such as discussions on the labour code, the social security review, and welfare policies. However, it has yet to be meaningfully involved in discussions on the SDGs. According to the BMS leader interviewed, there is an absence of effective discussions between the government and the major trade unions on the SDGs. At most, there had been two to three discussions, and the union's role in these discussions was very minimal; it consisted of "a few minutes of expressing views".

The Indian government has tasked the National Institute for Transforming India Commission (NITI Aayog), India's planning commission, to work on the SDGs, and the NITI Aayog has not

so far conducted any discussions with trade unions. The BMS, as a very large union with many members in the formal and informal sectors, is “very much interested” in the SDGs and keen to bring realities on the ground to the discussions. However, it has not been invited to be part of a voluntary national review. According to the BMS union leader we interviewed, instituting a tripartite mechanism on the SDG processes would give the unions opportunities to provide inputs and enrich the process.

For some unions, it is also not clear what their role in the UN processes and in the SDGs is. In Viet Nam, the VGCL has not really been involved in SDG discussions and UN processes more generally. Although VGCL attended a dissemination workshop on SDG indicators, it was not involved in the CCA, UNSDCF, or VNR processes, which included working groups and consultations. Perhaps most importantly, the VGCL was not consulted about labour-related indicators under the SDGs. A union leader explained that in the eyes of VGCL, the discussions on SDGs were initiated and funded externally, and the government saw itself as the sole stakeholder. In contrast, if the SDGs were a Vietnamese government project, the VGCL would have been consulted.

The VGCL also has no information about the implementation of the One UN joint workplan. Indeed, the whole idea of One UN is quite confusing for the VGCL. According to the interviewee the role of VGCL in the ILO is clear, but its role in the One UN system is not. The VGCL views the UN as being like a ‘government’ so when the latter developed the One UN⁴² document, it only consulted member states. The majority of trade unions under VGCL do not know or use the SDGs, but those who do know of them see them as a done-deal developed by government, rather than a framework to be developed and rolled out with them as partners.

It is important for the One UN system to clarify the role of the trade unions in it. The One UN system is new and involves many government agencies, albeit not the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. In the words of the VGCL officer:

The SDGs are about balancing the side of labour, economy, environment, etc., and if this is the case then representation (from different sides) should be official, just like the tripartite structure of the ILO. The UN should adopt a tripartite structure similar to what the ILO has. Otherwise, if One UN acts as the ‘government’ with the dominant voice, then the SDGs will not be achieved because the economic side is the most important aspect for governments compared to labour or environment. Unless the structure is changed, this economic mindset will remain and dominate the process. Maybe, if not tripartite the UN can adopt a multi-stakeholder decision-making mechanism. This might result in better SDG processes and outcomes.

There is also a perception that trade unions in the Philippines have played a negligible part in the SDGs and wider UN processes. SENTRO suggested that the government has not adequately considered the reports submitted formally by the trade unions. Moreover, according to the FFW, despite the ILO’s efforts and support, the SDGs have yet to be mainstreamed within the work of trade unions. The perceptions that submissions from trade unions are futile can affect union motivation and confidence in the SDG processes, and the impact of their collective efforts on VNR reviews, position papers, etc. Overall, the impact of trade union advocacy on the SDGs is difficult to quantify. There were tangible gains from previous union campaigns such as the Expanded Maternity Leave Law and the Occupational Safety and Health Law, but it is difficult to explicitly attribute these to the unions’ work on SDGs. A final factor that may have constrained trade unions from joining SDG discussions is lack of time. Many trade unionists are preoccupied with commitments at work and with union duties. Many union leaders are also volunteers and do not work for the union on a full-time basis.

⁴² On 31 May 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution [A/RES/72/279](#) which acknowledges that effectively meeting the pervasive challenges of the world today requires global and integrated responses that no single UN agency alone could provide. This Resolution paved the way for the the “One United Nations” initiative which requires specific changes in policy and in practice in the UN to facilitate the evolution of a more coordinated, cohesive and functional UN system. For more information about the One UN, see https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/one-un-report_0.pdf.

► 4 How the SDG engagements initiatives may contribute to the revitalization of trade unions

We identified several indicators of successful revitalization of trade unions anchored in the development and strengthening of trade unions' structural power, associational power, societal power, and institutional power (See Section 3) and conclude that the SDG-related initiatives undertaken by trade unions can contribute to their revitalization. Our analysis suggests that this might indeed be happening with respect to Pakistan's PWF, Mongolia's CMTU, and, to some extent, in different trade unions in the Philippines.

In Pakistan, a union leader we interviewed reported that the engagements of PWF in SDG indicators helped increase the union's membership. Specifically, the union leader thought that if the informal sector was not part of the SDG agenda, the union's organizing focus would have remained in the public and private sectors and would not have engaged the informal sector at all. Consequently, as a result of its SDG initiatives, the PWF has broadened its membership base to include workers in the informal sector, such as 24,000 domestic workers in Punjab and 70,000 home-based workers in Karachi.

According to the PWF leader interviewed, the union's ongoing campaign for the ratification of Convention 190 (Violence and Harassment) came about as a result of SDG initiatives in which the union was involved. For example, under SDG 5 on Gender Equality it has already put in place complaints mechanisms on gender-based violence in 12 unions. In addition, as an expression of its commitment to SDG 13 on Climate Change, the PWF has started to use solar energy in its offices. The SDGs also helped bolster PWF's involvement in policy making through tripartite dialogue. The SDG requirement of regular reporting on progress in ILO and other UN programmes, and EU initiatives like the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) has bolstered unions' participation in review and monitoring processes in government policy making institutions.

In Mongolia, the CMTU's membership in the Parliament's Standing Committee on Sustainable Development Vision has enabled the union to participate in the drafting of the government's Sustainable Development Vision 2030, which is aligned with many of the SDGs. In fact, the CMTU has developed its own strategic paper on SDV 2030 which reflects many of the SDGs. CMTU is also a member of the Steering Committee of UN Joint Program on Social Protection and Steering Committee of UNSEPF.

In the Philippines, according to the union officer we interviewed, NTUC Phl's participation in SDG discussions and activities has developed their leaders' awareness and consciousness on the SDGs and underscored the union's role in advocating for the SDGs. NTUC Phl is aware that many of the issues they have been fighting for such as decent work, gender equality, and action on climate change are all SDGs and consequently collective bargaining and position papers submitted to various government agencies are informed by the collective positions of trade unions on the SDGs. More importantly, NTUC Phl is now part of the Stakeholders Chamber of NEDA, which gives the union the policy space to influence discussions on the SDGs.

For FFW, their participation in SDG initiatives has begun to inform their agenda and strategies. However, the union has yet to assess the impact of these initiatives on union membership and strategies. Meanwhile, IndustriALL Philippines has used parts of the SDG-related position papers and reports to contextualize the Philippine situation in their presentation of the country's action agenda to IndustriALL at the global level. The involvement of trade unions in drafting two SDG VNR reports (in 2019 and 2022) provided useful background information for their preparation of a position paper on violence and harassment at the workplace, which was submitted to the administration of Rodrigo Duterte for the ratification of Convention 190.

Overall, the various SDG-related activities and reports prepared by Philippine trade unions have helped them gain recognition and legitimacy from the UN bodies so that the major trade unions in the country have become part of the regular UN discussions on SDG-related socio-economic development frameworks. The other Philippine union leaders we interviewed pointed out that their unions' involvement in SDG discussions and processes helped encourage their affiliates to participate in local and sectoral councils, and even propelled some union members to run for office at the local government level.

Finally, the various SDG-related activities and processes initiated by the ILO have resulted in the building of a network of trade unions and promoted inter-union unity in the country. This is important in putting more pressure on the government to enact policies and measures that facilitate the achievement of the SDGs and institutionalize worker voice in the design and implementation of the country's development strategy. A recent important result of this collective union pressure is the Philippines' ratification of Convention 190 in December 2023, making it the first country in Asia to ratify the said convention.

► Conclusions and some insights on the sustainability of successful SDG-related initiatives

While the selected union confederations in India, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Viet Nam face similar challenges, the state of unionization in these countries presents a mixed picture. While union density rates are increasing in Viet Nam and India, the opposite is taking place in Mongolia and, to a lesser extent, the Philippines. In the past five years, India's BMS, Mongolia's CMTU, Pakistan's PWF, and Viet Nam's VGCL have increased their union membership. In contrast, the three confederations in the Philippines - FFW, NTUC Phl, and SENTRO - saw their membership decline, and at an increased rate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All the seven confederations in the five countries have been involved in SDG-related initiatives, albeit to varying degrees. The confederations in Mongolia, Pakistan, and the Philippines have had more robust engagements than their counterparts in India and Viet Nam. Several factors have been identified that may have contributed to more successful SDG-linked outcomes, namely: institutional frameworks that institutionalize union representation in policy-making bodies and support meaningful social dialogue; a long history and established culture of social dialogue; positive relations between trade unions and the government; the internal organization of trade unions; inter-union cooperation; and the role of external support organizations, particularly the ILO.

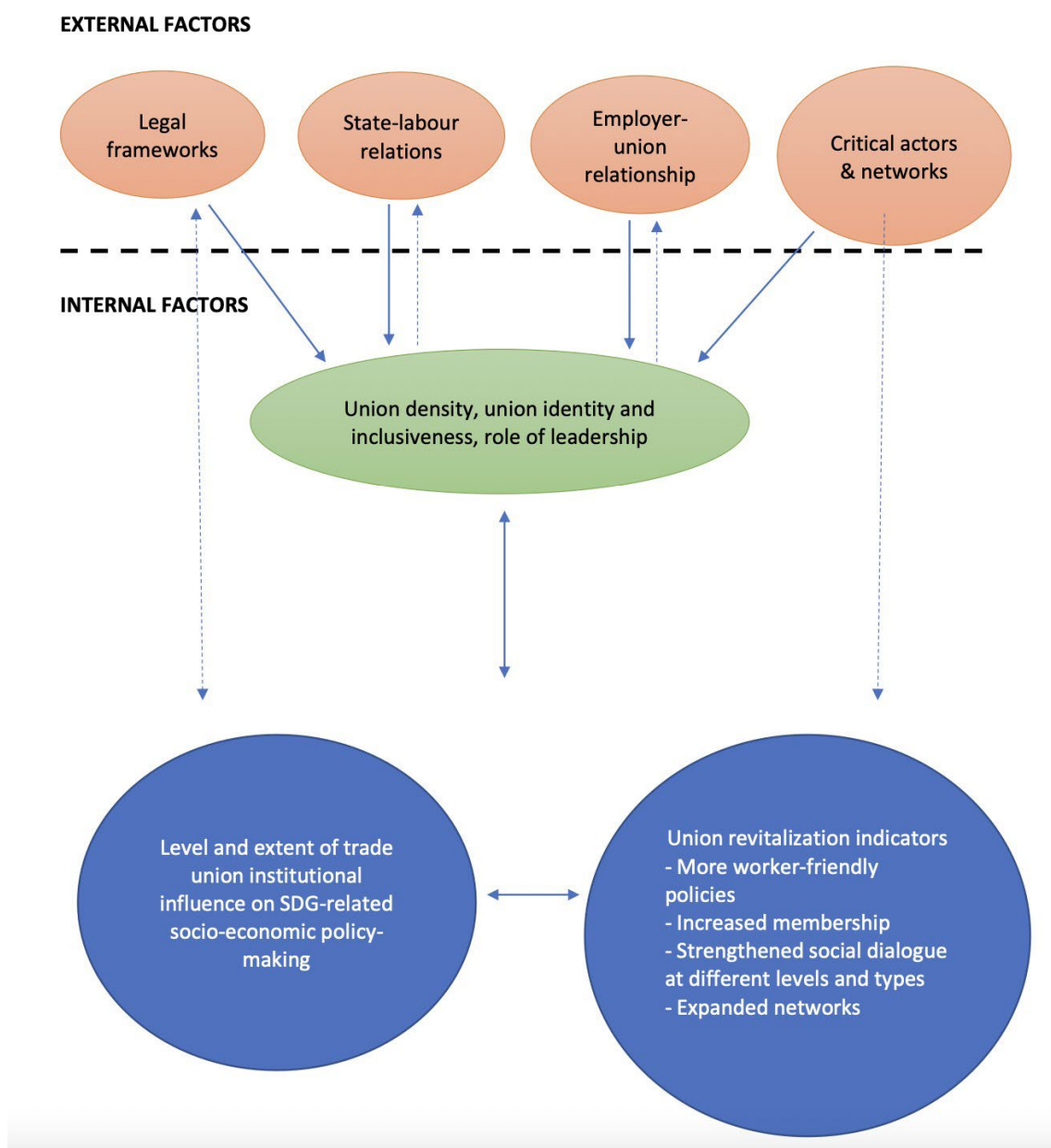
In the work of trade unions in Mongolia, Pakistan, and, to a lesser extent, the Philippines, we saw evidence of a strong link between the SDGs and social dialogue, a fact that underscores the crucial role of social dialogue at enterprise, regional, provincial, and national level. Trade unions, often with the support of the ILO country offices, have engaged social dialogue to integrate the SDGs into their work. SDG 8 on Decent Work has been on the forefront, but social dialogue has also focused on the inclusion of SDGs 1, 5, 13, and 16 in development frameworks, and on how SDG commitments are monitored and assessed. Moreover, the SDGs have become an important channel in establishing and strengthening bipartite social dialogue, namely direct exchanges, negotiations and consultations between workers' and employers' organizations. In this regard, social dialogue around the SDGs has become an important tool in revitalizing trade unions' institutional power.

From our interviews with union officers, we identified several ways that trade unions can sustain successful SDG-related initiatives.

- Firstly, a legal or policy framework that institutionalizes union representation and social dialogue in every public institution and policy-making body at all relevant levels, and on all matters that affect the well-being of workers enables a more meaningful participation of trade unions in the implementation of their countries' SDG commitments. Where social dialogue had been institutionalized and practiced for many years, trade unions have had some success in influencing conversations about the SDGs.
- Secondly, having an SDG focal person in each union who has the interest, understanding, ability, and time to engage with different groups at national and international level ensures continuous union actions on the SDGs.
- Thirdly, SDGs must be mainstreamed within unions and form part of their priorities and commitments.
- Fourthly, in countries where there are more than one national union or confederation, collective engagements that involve most, if not all, of the unions result in better outcomes.
- Fifthly, trade unions must have the capacity to engage in SDG discussions, relate the SDGs to union work and agenda, articulate clearly the union's position and perspective using evidence-based justifications for the union's position and demands, and develop public speaking and negotiation skills and confidence to speak with the social partners and authorities.

- Finally, the ILO, as the only tripartite UN body, plays a critical role in putting the SDGs on the trade union agenda, bringing together different unions to collectively discuss and engage on the SDGs, providing capacity-building training and resources to unions, connecting unions to the key UN bodies, and facilitating the holding of consultations and dialogues between the unions and the government and other key actors. We underscore that ILO's activism on SDG discussions and processes has been crucial in building the capacity and confidence of trade unions, particularly in the Philippines and Pakistan, to engage on the SDGs with various government agencies, the UNRC and UNCT, and other development partners.

Appendix 1: The Analytical Framework



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India

Mr. Saji Narayanan, President, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), 19 April 2022.

Ms. Divya Verma, Senior Programme Officer, ILO Country Office in India, 30 March 2022.

Mongolia

Mr. Amarsanaa Enebish, Director of International Relations, Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU), 22 and 23 March 2022.

Ms. Bolarmaa Purevsuren, Senior Programme Officer, ILO Country Office in Mongolia, 24 March 2022.

Pakistan

Mr. Zahoor Awan, General Secretary, Pakistan Federation of Workers (PFW), 20 April 2022.

Mr. Chaudhary Saad Muhammad, Deputy General Secretary, PFW, 28 April 2022.

Mr. Saghir Bukhari, Senior Programme Officer, ILO Country Office in Pakistan, 22 April 2022.

Philippines

Ms. Joana Bernice Coronacion, Deputy Secretary-General, Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO), 11 May 2022.

Mr. Ramon Certeza, National Coordinator, IndustriALL Philippines, 2 June 2022.

Mr. Cedric Bagtas, Honorable General Secretary, National Trade Union Center of the Philippines (NTUC Phl), 7 June 2022.

Mr. Julius Cainglet, Vice President for Advocacy and Partnerships, Federation of Free Workers (FFW), 21 July 2022.

Ms. Diane Lynn Respall, Senior Programme Officer, ILO Country Office in the Philippines, 4 May 2022.

Ms. Cerilyn Pastolero, Project Manager, ILO Philippines, 4 May 2022.

Viet Nam

Ms. Phan Thu Lan, Deputy Director, Institute for Workers and Trade Unions, Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), 22 July 2022.

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Trieu, Senior Programme Officer, ILO Country Program in Viet Nam, 4 April 2022.

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