



**REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER**  
**South East Asia & the Pacific**  
**Bulletin #1 Feb 2014**

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**Letter from the Regional President**

*Dear members and partners,*

*I hope you are well and 2014 has been off to a good start for your organisations and the work you do.*

*We have had a productive 2013 with important work done at the regional and international levels. Our 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN GO-NGO conference in September 2013 saw a greater commitment by ASEAN to follow up on social protection initiatives. We also saw developments in the Pacific in acknowledging the need to step up on national social protection measures. All this would not be possible without the commitment from your representatives from respective organisations.*

*We hope to also hear from you and your organisations' work thus far. So please forward us write ups on key events and/or achievements of 2013. We would like to continue showcasing the work of our members in our upcoming newsletter issues.*

*Lastly, it is time for elections within ICSW and SEAP. We need those who are willing to serve to step up and be nominated for Regional President, Regional Vice-President and Treasurer's positions. A notice will be sent to fully paid members to be part of this process.*

*Once again thank you for the support, for staying with ICSW and most importantly for the work you did in 2013.*

*We look forward to hearing from you.*

*Braema Mathiapparanam  
Regional President (SEAP)*

## Asia Pacific post-2015 priorities, MDG8 and Global Partnerships

As the review of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) draw closer, it is time we evaluate the progress our region has made in achieving its post-2015 priorities. According to an article published by Asian Development Bank (ADB),

“Asia-Pacific remains home to more than 60% of the world’s extreme poor and two-thirds of the world’s hungry. While we’ve seen progress on the MDGs, it is uneven, across, and within countries. Despite eye-popping gross domestic product growth – increasing income inequality and vulnerability, infrastructure constraints, climate change and disaster risks threaten to undermine achievements.”

The article posits that “these developments demonstrate an emerging view that any post-2015 framework needs to be supported by dynamic partnerships. If stakeholders ultimately agree, then the successor to Goal 8 will be central to all other post-2015 goals and applicable to all countries – unlike the MDG framework where goals 1-7 applied to developing countries and goal 8 primarily targeted developed countries.”

\*\*Read more at this [link](#).



UNESCAP has developed a [Social Protection Toolbox](#) to tackle issues of social protection in the region. In an article published in December 2013, the launch of this toolbox at a public conference in Manila is set to expand social protection coverage. It is noted in the article that,

“Despite many good practices in the Asia-Pacific region... only 20 per cent of the population in the region has access to health care, less than one third of older persons receive a pension, only 10 per cent of the jobless receive unemployment benefits, and only 30 per cent of those with disabilities earn enough income to support themselves.”

\*\*To access UNESCAP’s Social Protection Toolbox, please visit this [link](#).

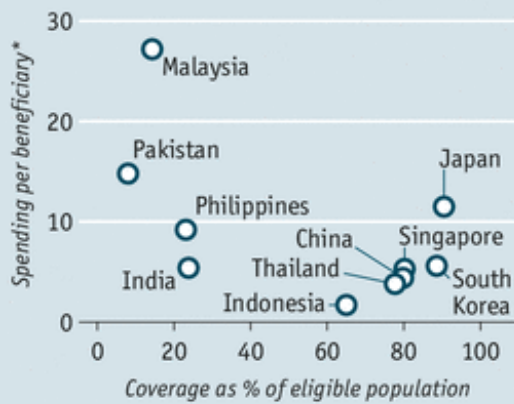
\*\*To read more about the launch, please click [here](#).

## The Social Protection Index: Assessing results for Asia and the Pacific (2013)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB)’s “[The Social Protection Index: Assessing results for Asia and the Pacific \(2013\)](#)” report analyses comprehensive 2009 data on government social protection programmes in 35 countries in Asia and the Pacific. The report explains the basic features of the index and how it was developed. It disaggregates the data by depth (the amount of spending per beneficiary, expressed as a percentage of the country’s

## Broad versus deep

Social Protection Index, 2009, %



Source: ADB

\*As % of GDP per person

GDP per person) and breadth of coverage (*the percentage of potential beneficiaries actually covered*), poverty and gender.

The report concludes with a summary of results and implications – namely a) dominance of social insurance b) impact of social assistance c) limited role of labour market programmes d) gender impact of social protection.

The Economist succinctly summarises findings from the ADB's Social Protection Index Report in its article: [Social spending in Asia](#).

## WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014 – 2021

2013 was a year of improvement in disability rights as Singapore joined the ASEAN family in ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Likewise in the international arena, a call for better health care for people with disabilities (PWDs) was made to the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Director-General to develop a comprehensive action plan in line with the CRPD and recommendations of the [World report on disability](#) together with United Nations organisations and member states.

The draft [WHO global disability action plan 2014-2021: Better health for all people with disabilities](#) is now available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Extensive consultations took place with around 300 contributions received, which WHO used in revising the initial draft.

\*\*To read more about the drafting process, please visit this [link](#).

## Press Freedom Index 2014



Reporters Without Borders released its latest [Press Freedom Index](#), which rates press freedom in 180 countries based on seven criteria. This year's ranking, along with previous years, is available online in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Farsi](#), [Arabic](#), and [Russian](#). Accompanying the index is a [map](#), which codes countries from a "Good Situation" to a "Very Serious Situation."

## Human Rights Watch World Report 2014



Human Rights Watch (HRW) has published its 24<sup>th</sup> annual World report summarising key human rights issues in more than 90 countries and territories worldwide in 2013.

To read more and download the report, please visit this [link](#).

## ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children maps out plan of action



Source: ASEAN Secretariat News

The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) has charted out its follow up action plan since adopting the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN at the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The action plan was discussed against the corresponding projects listed under the ACWC Work Plan 2012-2016. Inter-sectoral consultations, meetings and dialogue sessions with relevant ASEAN bodies and civil society organisations have been planned for 2014. Read this [link for more details](#) on the specific meetings.



## International Women's Day 2014 (8<sup>th</sup> March)



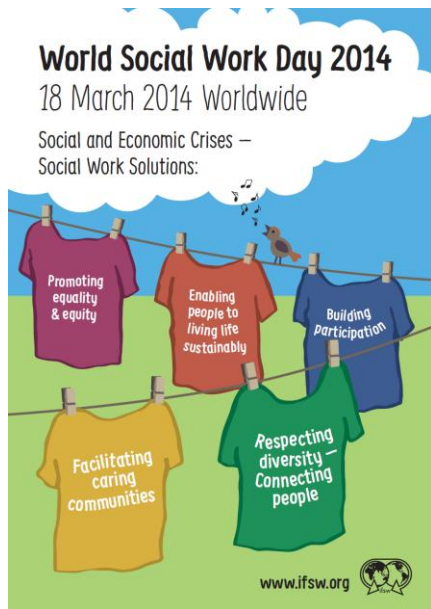
# International Women's Day

Source: Download this year's logo from this [link](#)

Recently, on the 14<sup>th</sup> February, the world commemorated the [One Billion Rising Campaign](#) - a campaign to raise awareness on violence against women. Many country representatives put on public flash mobs and silent protests to acknowledge this growing international awareness day. Though 14<sup>th</sup> Feb is not a formal United Nations observance day, it is a great prelude to the upcoming International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8. The theme this year is *inspiring change* - "it calls for challenging the status quo for women's equality and vigilance inspiring positive change."

\*\*To find out about what countries are doing for IWD, please click [here](#).

## World Social Work Day (18<sup>th</sup> March)



This year's theme is Social and Economic Crises – Social Work Solutions:

- Promoting equality and equity
- Enabling people to living life sustainably
- Building participation
- Facilitating caring communities
- Respecting diversity – connecting people

Please visit the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) website for more information. Click [here](#).

## Publications on the region

### [Economic and Social survey of Asia and the Pacific](#)

"At the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in 2010 and the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, world leaders pledged to adopt forward-looking macroeconomic policies that promote sustainable development and lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth. Fortunately, many economies in the region are well-placed to implement such policies.

The *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2013* makes it clear that such investments are not only essential but also affordable. These efforts are especially needed in Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. As well as assisting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, greater progress will fuel confidence in, and mobilize support for, an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

The recommendations in this issue of the *Survey* seek to assist these countries to advance economically, socially and environmentally. It is hoped that policy-makers of Asia and the Pacific, and beyond, will find this publication useful for its innovative approach to achieving more resilient, inclusive and sustainable development.”

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[The revised social protection index: methodology and handbook](#) “...is designed for practical use to assess the nature of social protection programmes in countries and to identify these programmes’ broad impact on the poor and vulnerable. It is a useful analytical and assessment tool for countries’ social protection programmes.

This document provides social protection background and offers guidance for preparing social protection country assessments, which can pave the ground for further activities.”

For more details about the handbook, please refer to this [link](#).

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[Social Protection Index for Committed Poverty Reduction](#) is a research commissioned by the Asian Development Bank’s Cooperation Fund in Support of the Formulation and Implementation of National Poverty Reduction Strategies (funded by the Government of the Netherlands) and the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund (funded by the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom).

The research has developed a social protection index methodology that systematically and consistently presents quantitative and qualitative information at the country level. It has also been condensed into an index of the overall level of social protection. The index is calculated for six very different Asian countries, namely, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Viet Nam.

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[Income support schemes in Pacific Island countries: a brief overview](#) is a report published in December 2013 that identifies the vulnerable groups in various Pacific island countries and assesses the adequacy of existing social protection schemes in place. It concludes with a summary and recommendations on policy interventions to improve universal coverage of social protection.

Similarly, [Evaluation of Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu’s Social Protection Policies post 2008 Global Economic Crises](#) is a multi-country analysis on social protection indicators and

initiatives in the Pacific, specifically with regards to Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It evaluates the state of social policies in these countries against the macro context of the Global Economic Crises (GEC). It seeks to determine the extent of inclusive growth in these countries. In 2010 at a regional conference, it was highlighted that many social protection policies need re-visiting given changing world economic contexts.

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[Migrants' Remittances, Poverty and Social Protection in the South Pacific: Fiji and Tonga](#) is a recent 2013 research publication highlighting that "where formal social protection are largely absent, migration and remittances can perform a similar function informally, contributing significantly to development objectives. Remittances also have a positive effect on poverty alleviation and wealth creation, although the impacts on income distribution are mixed. From a policy perspective, these informal social protection and poverty alleviation mechanisms may be more effective in promoting development than policies designed to incorporate remittances into the formal financial systems. Migration and remittances play an increasingly valuable role in small states where domestic development opportunities are limited."

## Upcoming conferences

### **(1) 5<sup>th</sup> WLEC – Women's Leadership and Empowerment Conference 2014**

**Conference details:**

1st to 3rd March 2014  
Bangkok, Thailand

**Website:** <http://www.tomorrowpeople.org/wlc-conference>

**Contact person:** Vladimir Ilic

WLEC 2014 is intended to be a forum, discussion and networking place for academics, researchers, professionals, administrators, educational leaders, policy makers, NGO representatives, students and others interested in the related fields.

**Organised by:** Tomorrow People Organization

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** 1st February 2014

Check the [event website](#) for more details.

### **(2) 7<sup>th</sup> PSPC – Poverty and Social Protection Conference 2014-02-16**

**Conference details:**

9th to 11th March 2014  
Bangkok, Thailand

**Website:** <http://www.pspconference.org>

**Contact person:** Vladimir Ilic

Poverty and Social Protection Conference 2014 will focus on issues of poverty and

its eradication, rural and agricultural development, social inequality, race relations and policy management and mismanagement with an international perspective.

**Organized by:** Tomorrow People Organization

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** 1st February 2014

Check the [event website](#) for more details.

### **(3) 2014 Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity**

**Conference Theme**  
**Learn from Yesterday. Live for Today. Envision Tomorrow.**

**May 19 & 20, 2014**

**Honolulu, HI: Hawai'i Convention Center**

"The Pacific Rim International Conference, considered one of the most 'diverse gatherings' in the world, encourages and respects voices from "diverse" perspective across numerous areas, including: voices from persons representing all disability areas; experiences of family members and supporters across all disability and diversity areas; responsiveness to diverse cultural and language differences; evidence of researchers and academics studying diversity and disability; stories of persons providing powerful lessons; examples of program providers, and; action plans to meet human and social needs in a globalized world.

In 2014, new topic areas will promote thoughtful discussion and suggest new ways to integrate education, technology, advocacy, activism and interdisciplinary research. We all strive to strengthen communities and enhance the lives of all human beings. Together, we can harness the tremendous synergy generated by the intermingling and cross-fertilization of diverse perspectives, and 'spread the word' as we continue our professional and personal life journey.

Take your first steps to the islands by visiting the website: [www.pacrim.hawaii.edu](http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu). We welcome your ideas, suggestions and enthusiasm. Then join us in Waikiki, Hawaii, May 19-20, 2014."

Call for proposals: <http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/submissions>

Registration link: <http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/registration>



**(4) The 2014 Asian Congress on the Millennium Development Goals**

**Conference details:**

29th to 31st July 2014

Hiroshima, Japan

**Website:** <http://www.esdfocus.org/millennium-development-goals-congress/>

**Contact person:** Michael Sasaoka

The 2014 Millennium Development Goals Congress in Asia invites scholarly interactions among academics, researchers, doctoral students, and representatives from industry, entrepreneurs, and non-profit and non-governmental organization professionals.

**Organized by:** PRESDA

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** 15th May 2014

Check the [event website](#) for more details.

**(5) International Forum on Disability Management (16-19 Nov 2014)**

The International Forum on Disability Management (IDFM) is held twice a year to address issues of disability at an international level. It "is the only global conference dedicated to in-depth discussion of problems, trends, and best practices in disability managements. A major goal of IFDM is to bring key policy makers into the discussion and be an agent of change.

For more information on IFDM, please visit their website [here](#).

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As always, we are keen to hear from our readers and welcome contributions. Best wishes, Braema Mathiapparanam, President, South East Asia & Pacific Region.

Website: [www.icsw.org](http://www.icsw.org)

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Please distribute this newsletter as widely as possible.

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