



**CONCEPT PAPER**  
**4<sup>th</sup> ASEM LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTERS' CONFERENCE**

***SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EMPLOYMENT – A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH***

**Background**

ASEM Leaders when they met in Brussels on 4-5 October 2010 agreed to promote decent work by spurring job creation and labour participation and they instructed Labour and Employment Ministers to further develop common strategies on various issues related to employment and social development and implement them by fostering cooperation among governments, dialogue between social partners and involvement of civil society organizations.

The third ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers Conference was held in Leiden, the Netherlands, on 13 - 14 December 2010, building on successful outcomes of previous ASEM Labour Ministerial Conferences in Potsdam, Germany in 2006 and in Bali, Indonesia in 2008. As a result, Ministers adopted a joint Declaration together with the "Leiden Framework of Action" that set concrete actions leading to the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM LEMC that will take place on 25-26 October 2012 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

The ASEM Labour and Employment Senior Officials' Meeting was organized by Viet Nam on 25 November 2011 in Ha Noi, to prepare for Ministerial Conference. It was preceded by the ASEM High Level Forum on Employment and Social Policies on 24<sup>th</sup> November with the participation of representatives of ASEM governments, social partners and experts from relevant international organizations.

**Rationale and Objectives**

The 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM LEMC in Ha Noi should build on the achievements of the ASEM dialogue in the employment and social area and look into the future.

The recent financial and economic crisis, and its employment and social impacts, highlight the importance of employment and social protection for a sustainable and inclusive growth.

During the preparatory SOM meeting the following objectives of the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM LEMC were identified by ASEM partners:

- Gaining better understanding of the current and long-term employment and social challenges in the ASEM countries;
- Recommending policies in the area of employment, notably youth employment, decent work, including social protection, CSR, health and safety and skills;
- Enhancing cooperation among ASEM members in handling these challenges.

Therefore it was recommended that the main theme of the Conference is "Social protection and employment – a key to sustainable and inclusive growth".

Under that theme, the forthcoming ASEM LEMC will focus on three topics, namely:

- Topic 1: Policies to foster employment, including youth employment and employment of other vulnerable groups;
- Topic 2: Three key future challenges of our joint decent work agenda, including social protection, CSR and health and safety at work;
- Topic 3: Matching skills development with future opportunities.

### **Conference Format**

- The 4<sup>th</sup> ASEM LEMC will start on 24 October 2012 in the evening with a welcome reception and will finish on 26 October 2012.
- The Ministerial Conference will consist of introductory session that will set up the context for discussions, working sessions on specific topics and concluding remarks. It will be followed by a visit to a project on the ground in the area of employment and social protection.
- The Conference will be preceded by a separate meeting, ASEM Social Partners Forum on 24 October 2012 with participation of workers and employers organisations from ASEM members and relevant international organisations. Ministers would be invited to the meeting. It will be an opportunity for social partners to present their key messages in view of the Ministerial Conference.

### **Expected Participants**

The number of participants will account for around 200 persons. Speakers and participants will include:

- Ministers and delegates from each ASEM member Ministry of Labour and Employment, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the European Commission.
- Experts from academia and relevant regional and international organisations.

### **Tentative Program**

ASEM LEMC will be organised in co-ordination with the European Commission, on 24-26 October 2012 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam (attached preliminary programme).

### **Output**

- Exchange of good practices in the area of employment and social policy in the context of the current and future situation on the labour market of the ASEM countries;
- Identification of issues of common interest in the context of other international discussions, like in the framework of ILO, UN and G20;
- Taking stock of the current cooperation projects and identification of future cooperation projects between 2012 and 2014;
- Labour ministerial declaration will contribute to the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit in Laos in 2012.

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