

Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) Report of the Secretary-General

ESCAP Input

Overview

From 1990 to 2024, the region experienced a decreasing trend in poverty at extreme and moderate poverty lines. Poverty reduction was much more pronounced and resilient in East Asia and the Pacific than in South Asia.

Yet approximately 2.1 billion people in Asia and the Pacific continue to live on less than USD 6.85 per day, 876 million living on less than USD 3.65 and 219 million living on less than USD 2.15 per day. As shown in the SDG Progress Report 2025, the Asia-Pacific region is off track in attaining SDG 1 overall, despite notable progress in eradicating extreme poverty (SDG 1.1) and reducing poverty by at least 50% in all its dimensions (SDG 1.2).

Most of the poor in Asia and the Pacific reside in South and South-West Asia. Specifically, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh together account for the majority of the poor in the region at all three international poverty lines.

The [Social Outlook 2024: Protecting Our Future Today - Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific](#) considered new risks and forecasted that around 266 million people could be pushed into poverty at national poverty lines by 2040 across Asia and the Pacific in a pessimistic scenario of multi-hazard risks induced by climate change, lack of policy response to demographic transition, including ageing, and insufficient adaptation to digital technologies.

Social Protection

At the 8th session of the Committee on Social Development (2024), ESCAP member States reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the [Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific](#), and in its implementation, the need to strengthen their capacity to foster more resilient societies and promote a just transition to a sustainable future. The [Social Outlook 2024](#) leveraged foresight methodology to identify key actions needed to futureproof social protection systems in view of megatrends such as climate change, population ageing and digitalization. Data on the [SPOT Simulator](#) was expanded to cover 29 member States and Governments of Thailand and Nepal enhanced their capacity on the microsimulation model through workshops on social protection parameters that impact on economic outcomes such as poverty, consumption and inequality. ESCAP further supported these countries to take stock of their readiness to implement more comprehensive and inclusive social protection systems and in addressing, for the first time, the integration of social protection and climate change through national analysis and multistakeholder dialogue.

Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)

ESCAP LNOB analysis helps policymakers access a data-driven and reliable overview of the groups left furthest behind in 19 SDG indicators across 33 countries at national and subnational levels. The results capture the intersectionality of circumstances that leave people behind in education, health and nutrition

among others. Being poor is the most important circumstance that drives inequality of opportunity. In 2024, ESCAP expanded its [LNOB platform](#), raised awareness and built technical capacity to disaggregate SDGs in Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Papua New Guinea.

Population ageing

In 2025, 15.6 per cent of the population in the region are 60 years or over. By 2050, one in four people will belong to this age group. Given the speed of population ageing, many countries in the region will grow old before they will become rich. Given the lack of social protection, older persons are at an increased risk of falling into poverty, in particular older women. In this regard, ESCAP is supporting member States in revising and drafting policies and action plans on population ageing, ensuring that they address social protection issues, including universal health care coverage and promote decent work for older persons. ESCAP supports member States in developing policies and corresponding action plans on population ageing, develops training modules to enhance digital literacy of older persons, which increases their social and economic inclusion, as well as training on national inclusion accounts (NIAs). Further, in collaboration with partners, ESCAP supports training on pension systems to countries in Asia and the Pacific.

Women's Economic Empowerment

ESCAP's regional report on the [Beijing +30 Review](#) highlights that women's poverty in Asia and the Pacific is driven by limited access to decent work, where only 44 percent of women participate in the labour force compared to 74 percent of men. Many remain in low-paying, informal jobs without social protection, while legal and social barriers further restrict financial access and asset ownership. To address this, ESCAP's Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship Programme has benefited 220,000 women entrepreneurs across six countries by strengthening policy environments, unlocking investment and providing digital literacy training.

Women spend up two to five times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men. This limits their ability to earn income, pursue education, and participate in decision-making. In this regard, ESCAP provides technical assistance to governments in the region to develop care policies. ESCAP's Model Framework for Action on the Care Economy informed the recently adopted [ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy](#).

Macroeconomic Developments

While average economic growth continued to be steady amid shocks in recent years, the [Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2025](#) highlights that some countries and people have fared worse than others. Economic growth in the region's least developed countries has fallen short of the target set out in SDG8.1. In many countries, people's purchasing power deteriorated as wage hikes failed to keep pace with high inflation; youth unemployment stayed well above total unemployment; and post-pandemic job recovery in sectors that hire many lower-skilled workers (such as hospitality) has been more sluggish than other sectors. The member States also benefited from ESCAP's technical assistance project on targeted poverty reduction in Bangladesh, China and the Philippines. The project examined recent policy experiences and highlighted ecological poverty reduction and specific policies targeting vulnerable population groups as ways forward. More than 60 policymakers benefited from the two peer-learning sessions.