

# Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya to Inaugurate International Seminar on “Formalization and Social Security Coverage for Workers in the Informal Sector: Challenges and Innovations”

International Seminar to be hosted by Ministry of Labour & Employment & Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) in collaboration with International Social Security Association (ISSA) on 20-21 January 2025 in New Delhi

## Deliberations by Policy Makers and Experts of Social Security Organizations from Countries of Asia Pacific Region

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Union Minister of Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya will inaugurate a two-day international seminar on “Formalization and Social Security Coverage for Workers in the Informal Sector: Challenges and Innovations” on 20-21 January 2025 at New Delhi. Hon’ble Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Sushri Shobha Karandlaje and Secretary (Labour & Employment), Ms. Sumita Dawra will also grace the inaugural session of this technical seminar.

This international dialogue is being organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment of India, in collaboration with the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and International Social Security Association (ISSA) at Yashobhoomi - India International Convention and Expo Centre.

The technical seminar aims to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including policymakers, social security administrators, and experts from social security organizations from countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Over 150 participants will be sharing insights, strategies, and solutions regarding the formalization of informal workers and extension of social security coverage to them. Senior experts from prominent international organizations such as World Bank, United Nations, International Labour Organization, UN Women, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will also share their insights at the event. Senior officers from concerned Ministries/Departments of Government of India, States and UTs and social partners including employers’ and workers’ organizations will also participate.

The primary objective of this seminar is to enhance stakeholders' capacity in extending social protection to informal workers. The sessions will include discussions on pathways and strategies to promote formalization

and enhance social security coverage for vulnerable workers, workers in informal sector and difficult-to-cover groups including through incentives, extend coverage through transforming social security delivery and outreach, digital solutions and communication.

Deliberations will also be held on social security coverage extension to promote gender equality and women empowerment, and aspects of health and medical care insurance coverage.

The event will feature exchange of knowledge and experience sharing through technical discussion and sharing of countries' best practices. Landmark initiatives by India for labour welfare and social protection of workers such as e-Shram portal, National Career Service portal, Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme and Labour Reforms will be showcased. Progress made by ESIC and Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) in advancing social security for formal workers will also be highlighted. The exchange of ideas would enhance capacity of the constituents in the area of extending social protection to informal workers.

The seminar will also focus on accurate measurement of progress in social security coverage through improved data collection and reporting. International discourse on this issue is crucial as global reporting on social protection needs harmonization to account for in-kind social protection and welfare measures for more accurate reporting of progress in national and global social protection coverage.

In this context, the Ministry of Labour and Employment had initiated in collaboration with ILO, a national data pooling exercise of over 34 Central Government social protection and welfare schemes. Owing to this, India's social protection coverage doubled from 24.4% to 48.8% in ILO's latest World Social Protection Report (WSPR) 2024-26. ILO acknowledged that due to the substantial progress made by India in enhancing its social protection coverage the average social protection coverage of the world increased by 5% points.

The report also highlighted 920 million people (65% of population) are covered in India by at-least one social protection benefit (cash or in-kind) by schemes of Central Government level. India's Targeted Public Distribution System has been acknowledged by ILO as one of the world's largest legally binding social assistance schemes, providing in-kind food security to about 800 million people. ILO has agreed to consider inclusion of India's in-kind social assistance programs in their next World Social Protection Report.

The WSPR 2024-26 report includes only Central social protection and welfare schemes. The Ministry is initiating collaboration with states to map state-specific social protection and welfare schemes for the more accurate reflection of India's social protection coverage in the next report. This initiative also aims to increase social protection coverage and help identify beneficiaries who are currently not receiving benefits.

After this exercise is completed, a more accurate estimation of India's progress in enhancing social protection coverage will emerge which is expected to be significantly higher.

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