

Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Inaugurates the First-ever Regional Dialogue on Social Justice

74th Foundation Day of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Celebrated

Director General, ILO, Gilbert F. Hougbo Praises India's Efforts in Doubling Social Protection Coverage to 49%

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Union Minister of Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the first-ever two-day Regional Dialogue on Social Justice under the Global Coalition for Social Justice in New Delhi today. Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO), Mr. Gilbert F. Hougbo, graced the event with his presence. Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Ms. Shobha Karandlaje, Secretary (Labour & Employment), Ms. Sumita Dawra, along with other dignitaries were also present at this prestigious international dialogue.



Commemorating the 74th Foundation Day of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), an award ceremony to felicitate achievements across its organisations was also held.



Launched in 2023, the Global Coalition for Social Justice calls for a collaborative approach and commitment towards promoting decent work, social protection, responsible business conduct and fair work. The Global Coalition has around 340 members of the Global Coalition including Governments, academia, private sector, financial institutions, etc.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, emphasized India's role as a proud member of the Asia Pacific Coordinating Group, leading the first Regional Dialogue. He expressed joy in championing the key Coalition intervention, stating, "India is privileged to spearhead the initiative on Responsible Business Practices for Sustainable and Inclusive Societies." Union Minister commended the BMS and the CII-EFI's shared commitment to ethical and sustainable business practices, respect for workers' rights, and inclusive economic growth. "Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has undertaken significant steps towards economic transformation. The next five years present a unique opportunity to realize our vision of 'Sabka Vikas'—balanced growth for all regions and communities," he asserted.



During the occasion, Dr. Mandaviya launched the e-Shram mobile app, a key step in strengthening social benefits delivery by offering real-time access to government welfare schemes, intelligent benefit filtering, curated job listings aligned with users' skills and location, and multilingual support.

Mr. Gilbert F. Hougbo, Director-General of the ILO, congratulated the Government of India for the efforts in doubling India's social protection from 24.4% to 48.8% as reported in the World Social Protection Report (WSPR) 2024. Recognizing India's important role in ILO's leadership, DG ILO remarked that India's efforts in business growth along with social protection serves as a good example to inspire change and improve social protection systems across the world. He mentioned that this remarkable achievement is an outcome of the decisive actions taken by the Central Government in expanding social protection in the past few years.



Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Smt. Shobha Karandlaje, emphasized that social justice cannot be achieved through a one-size-fit-all approach. She underscored that social justice is embedded in India's constitutional commitments. Reiterating India's remarkable progress reported in the WSPR, she highlighted that India's efforts in improving social protection, drove a 5% increase in the global social protection coverage. Congratulating ESIC on its 74th Foundation Day, she acknowledged its role in strengthening social security and announced the government's plans to extend coverage to unorganized, agricultural, construction, gig, and platform workers.



Addressing the gathering, Secretary MoLE, Smt. Sumita Dawra, praised the ILO's Global Coalition for Social Justice for strengthening global cooperation. Highlighting India as the fastest-growing major economy with a vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, she emphasized the country's foundation on social justice principles, strong demographic dividend with 65% of the population under the age of 35, and a commitment to employment generation, equity, and welfare. She reiterated India's goal of achieving 70% females engaged in economic activity by 2047, and applauded industry leaders for adopting responsible business practices, including youth skill development, education, and women's workforce participation.



During the occasion, India's largest workers association, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Through a Joint Statement on Responsible Business Conduct presented by the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and the Confederation of Indian Industry-Employers' Federation of India (CII-EFI), these organisations showcased their commitment towards this agenda.

Additionally, several key publications were unveiled, including Best Practices on Responsible Business Conduct in India, Position Paper on Transforming India's Social Protection Landscape through Data Pooling, Compendium of Social Protection in India, Social Security for Informal Workers: Reflections & Learnings from ISSA-ESIC International Seminar, 2025, and Shram Samarth: A Journey to Excellence.



An exhibition on the sidelines of the event showcased the innovative use of technology in labour welfare,

social security, medical care, personnel management, industrial safety, and more. Participants demonstrated how technology is driving positive change in the ecosystem, enhancing services and outreach for workers.



A series of insightful technical sessions brought together global experts, policymakers, and industry leaders to advance discussions on youth empowerment, social justice, and inclusion. These sessions explored strategies to bridge the education-to-employment gap, expand social protection for informal workers, and promote gender equality in the workforce. Key stakeholders from India, the Philippines, Namibia, Germany, Australia, Brazil, and international organizations such as the ILO and UN Women shared best practices, including digital skilling platforms, social security frameworks, and gender-responsive workplace policies. Emphasizing collaboration and innovation, the discussions reinforced the importance of public-private partnerships in fostering inclusive economic growth and ensuring equitable opportunities for all.

Today's event showcases the progress India has made on the global centre stage. India's social justice growth journey including 3.2% unemployment rate, modernized labour codes, 48.8% social protection coverage, partnering with ILO on determining living wages, building responsible business conduct, showcasing success business case studies, leading the regional agenda in Asia Pacific, is an epitome of India's confidence and critical positioning.

Taking a collaborative approach to further strengthening India's social protection coverage, making significant strides in developing the G20 international referencing classification of occupations, and advancing the decent work country programme with focus on living wages, AI and Future of Work and Global Value Chains, the two-day summit will prove to be a pathbreaking initiative and a global movement for strengthened cooperation.

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