



**Statement By Hon. (Dr.) Anil Jayantha Fernanado,
Minister of Labour of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka at the
Asia-Pacific Ministerial Meeting**

9th June 2026, Geneva

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address the Asia-Pacific Labour Ministers' meeting today. I extend my sincere gratitude to Bangladesh for hosting the Asia -Pacific Group Ministerial Meeting.

The critical role played by ASPAG, enables us, as regional partners, to collaborate and contribute towards the objectives of the ILO. Sri Lanka firmly believes strengthen collaboration and developing a unified voice at the International Labour Conference (ILC) is vital. To achieve this, we should continue our efforts and work closely together.

While the Asia-Pacific region is characterized by significant diversity, there remains considerable potential to build consensus on issues related to the international Labour conference (ILC) and other matters of common interest.

Greater attention should be given to enhancing dialogue, coordination, and cooperation in this regard.

In alignment with our shared regional goals, Sri Lanka is actively taking progressive strides to reform and modernize our labor landscape:

As a result, we are reviewing our labour legislation to establish a more coherent, simplified legal framework.

This reform agenda is designed to enhance productivity through trusted and peaceful production environments and relations while ensuring that workers receive a fair share of the value they generate.

It also aims to improve compliance, foster decent working conditions, promote decent work, and make the labour market more inclusive and responsive to the evolving needs of both workers and employers.

We observe that labour law reforms are taking place across South Asia.

Sri Lanka stands ready to cooperate in this area by sharing our experiences, and best practices.

I am happy to announce that Sri Lanka ratified the ILO Convention C 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work. Now we are in the process of introducing necessary legal provisions to give effect to the articles of the Convention. We are further considering the ratification of C188: Work in Fishing Convention. We demonstrate by action, our steadfast commitment to decent work and improving labour standards.

Further, we firmly believe that child labour has no place in modern society. Strong legislation, effective policy frameworks, and a responsive institutional mechanism are essential to addressing this issue. Even though Sri Lanka has been successful in reducing child labour, we will continue our uncompromised dedicated efforts to eliminate child labour completely.

In addition, Sri Lanka is investing in digital solutions to enhance labour inspection, provision of services, complaints management, and social security systems. These efforts aim to strengthen institutional capacity and improve our engagement with workers to provide decent work opportunities in rapidly changing labour markets

I wish to emphasize Sri Lanka's strong commitment to working more closely and transparently with our ASPAG partners. We are fully committed to face emerging challenges through cooperation and solidarity, with the ultimate aim of securing social justice in the world of work.

I assure you of Sri Lanka's continued and steadfast cooperation and collaboration with ASPAG.

Thank you.