

2nd Asian Regional Conference of TUI (P&R)

Thiruvananthapuram – Kerala

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(Draft Report to be placed before the Conference)

Preamble:

The WFTU had considered the necessity of founding a separate Trade Union International for the Pensioners and Retirees in the background of bitter attack on the Pension and the Social Security by the forces of neo-liberalism after the collapse of Socialist Bloc. It took the decision to found a TUI (P&R) and guided the Pensioners and Retirees to hold its first international conference at Barcelona in 2014. The Second World Conference of the TUI (P&R) was also held at Bogota city in Columbia in the year 2019. The formation of a separate TUI for the Pensioners and Retirees is also because of the fact that the great number of Pensioners and Retirees in each country have a good role to play in opposition to the neo-liberal policies pursued by every capitalist government at the dictates of the financial institutions at the world level controlled by the corporates. The impending World Conference of WFTU in Rome will definitely discuss the prospects of building a stronger Pensioners and Retirees movement in the world as part of its strategy to counter the neo-liberalism of the Corporate World.

Since its formation, the Trade Union International (Pensioners & Retirees) is growing to reach out the community of pensioners and retirees in general and the class-oriented pensioners associations in particular in all countries. Besides holding the World Conferences, the TUI (P&R) is holding Regional Conferences encompassing countries inside every continent. The idea is to organize the movement in every continent so that the community of pensioners and retirees work with the working class and allied sections in establishing an effective platform against the corporates and to establish a world order free of human exploitation in each country. The events of the world have proven beyond doubt that Socialism alone and the existence of a Socialist Bloc alone, can ensure the Pension and Social Security to the retired persons world over. Destabilization of capitalism in each country is a must to ensure them once again. Establishing a socialistic order is not possible without the working class as the vanguard of the fighting forces for a change in the existing social order.

The TUI (P&R) as an affiliate of WFTU is just teaching the blend of working class and the community of pensioners and retirees. The TUI (P&R) is trying to organize the community of

pensioners and retirees behind the slogan of “Decent Pension and Decent Life to all Pensioners and Retirees”. With this motive the TUI is organizing different activities including by adopting the October 1st UN Call for observance of the day as the day of elderly persons by highlighting the basic needs of all Pensioners and Retirees. Every year the 1st October is being observed world over by the Pensioners Associations affiliated to TUI (P&R) to highlight these basic demands of Decent Life with Pension, Medical Care, Transportation, Housing and Potable Drinking water etc to us. It is evident that year after year the observance at the call of the TUI (P&R) on 1st October is a growing phenomenon with more and more Pensioners took part in the demonstrations and meetings. This conference has to review the actual observance of the programme in different countries of this Continent and to plan for accentuation of the programme next year. We are not pessimistic but a realistic estimate shows that many countries don't take part in the programme on 1st October in this region at our call. In short, our numbers are heavy but the observance is not as sharp as in European or South American Countries. This Conference is the proper venue to discuss and find means of improving the situation.

The holding of the Regional Conference of Asia Region for the second time is also aimed at mobilising the community of pensioners and retirees in the correct class line. It is our prime duty to expose and weaken the grip of the yellow unions on the Pensioners and Retirees as also the working class ideologically. The ideological grip of yellow unions on the working people should be weakened in order to educate the working class and the pensioners community to fight for a social order change.

Background of 2nd Asian Conference:

The Asian Region's 2nd Conference of Trade Union International (Pensioners & Retirees) affiliated to World Federation of Trade Unions is being organized in the backdrop of a serious pandemic shaking the entire world for the past three years. The pandemic has proved our viewpoint in unequivocal terms. The weakening of the public health services and strengthening of private hospitals under LPG era has clearly proven that the policy of privatization of health services is not going to be as effective as the strong public health services in the countable Socialist Countries in the world. The pandemic was successfully combated in the Socialist Countries with the help of the strong public health services within a very short time. But the capitalist countries struggled for long and is struggling still to get over the pandemic and its new forms both medically as well as in economic terms. The basic view point of TUI (P&R) that capitalism is not the cure to several ills of society is proved to be 100% correct during the spread of pandemic. The view that the pandemic is the handiwork of medical pharmaceutical mafia to loot the world and to amass billions of dollars by mercilessly killing and terrorizing people is also gaining ground. There is no separate cure for economic illness and simultaneously for the pandemic also except by establishing a working class state in our countries. This is the lesson that we have to learn and propagate.

All of us remember that the 1st Asian Regional Conference was successfully organized at Kathmandu (Nepal) in the year 2016 December. As there was a government led by the left in place in Nepal and full cooperation of the Government was extended to us also at that time, the 1st Asian Conference was held in a most favourable ambience. The leadership of TUI (P&R)

and WFTU in Nepal took all responsibility and organized the conference in a most befitting manner.

1st Regional Conference ended with a Kathmandu Declaration:

The Kathmandu Regional Conference ended with a 'Kathmandu Declaration' that called for a consistent struggle against the attacks on Pension and Social Security by the Governments of different countries at the behest of international corporates. The Declaration in order to strengthen this struggle had also called for strengthening of coordination of the struggle of the pensioners and retired in various countries in the globe. The direction was to assert our rights to social security, pensioners, health, housing and recreation-entertainment more vigorously. The Declaration reminded us that in the name of fighting the capitalist crisis the hard-won human rights of the pensioners and the retired are under the threat of elimination. The 1st Regional Conference of Asian Continent through discussions reached the unassailable conclusion that only under Socialism the barbarism can end.

The Declaration of the Kathmandu stressed the need to strengthen the bond between the working class of all strata including the peasantry, undeclared workers, immigrants, refugees, the spirit workers, self-employed and all indigenous working population in order to give strength to their struggles for emancipation and to radicalize their struggles towards the ultimate victory for social emancipation and from capitalist slavery, which is a precondition to ensure the rights of all pensioners and retirees.

The Declaration called for strengthening of social security benefits of all pensioners in the Asia/Pacific Region with adequate rise in pension as per the increase in the price index; proper health care; housing; and Transportation. It also opposed all designs of privatization aimed at curtailing the rights of pensioners and retirees and called for enactment of uniform retirement policy to all sections of working class.

Tasks before the 2nd Regional Conference:

The basic tasks before this 2nd Regional Conference are two-fold. They are the involvement of Pensioners in the national and international calls for decent pension and life and the review we undertake to evaluate the actual position and plan for future growth. The level of integration of pensioners movement in each country with the working-class movement of that country and the integration of the movement of pensioners with the international TUI and WFTU are inseparable tasks in the path of advancement of the movement of pensioners and retirees. The second important task before this conference is to assess the pensioners movement in each country of the region and the existence of yellow unions that prevent the movement of pensioners to highlight class-oriented slogans and struggles. Third task is to analyze the existing condition of pension and social security in each country and the impact of neo-liberalism on the social security and pension and the amount of resistance developed by the Pensioners and Workers Movement in that country.

The basic task of our organization is to spread awareness among the community of pensioners and retirees in all countries of our region and to mobilise them under our banner of Trade

Union International (P&R) for strengthening the universal action against the onslaught of universal neo-liberalism.

The condition of Pension and Social Security in the Region:

Vietnam:

Vietnam is known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which is a Socialist Country in this Region. The allegiance to Socialism despite the fall of Socialist Bloc shows the tenacity of this country in the principles of Socialism to build the economy to cater to the well being of the working people. But this country also is not able to resist the contributory pension schemes though there is a difference in quality that the contributory pension is also disbursed by the State itself through the State.

Thus, the main difference is that in Vietnam the State takes up the responsibility to pay pension through the contributory scheme through the Government agency while in many other countries “contributory schemes” are left to the private hands, without any guarantee to any minimum pension.

India:

In India the continuous struggle of employees since independence resulted in some pension and social security benefits to pensioners and family pensioners. The Judiciary also intervened to stop the discriminating efforts of the Government now and then. But the entry of neo-liberalism after the collapse of Socialist Bloc resulted slowly in creation of a new pension scheme called the NPS to Government and Public Sector employees entered in service after 1.1.2004. The new employees of both Central and State Governments and also the Public Sector employees are now covered under the NPS called “contributory pension system”. Old Pension System of Defined Pension System paid by the Government Exchequer is for the Government employees entered in service before 1.1.2004 and to Military Personnel only. The struggles to end this contributory system of pension schemes as well as to gain the minimum pension guarantee in NPS are still not fructified.

The united struggles under the leadership of Central Trade Unions and independent Federations and Associations could ensure the payment of DCRG to NPS Pensioners and grant of Family Pension to the dying NPS Government Employees while on duty! But the wide disparity between the pre-2004 Government and PSU workers on the one hand and the post-2004 workers of these industries continues.

The difference between the Civil, Military Pensioners on one hand and the others on the other is really very big. Other sections of work force which is very big in size and undergoes all kinds of discrimination while in service are void of any pension and social security benefit. They are hardly taken care of by the employers who did not hesitate to exploit them to the maximum at service.

There are some other kinds of pension available in India but they are hardly sufficient to take care of the pensioners and retired at the advanced age. The old age pension system is available in India and that varies from State to State (India is divided into various states). In

some states the old age pension is 1000/- per month = roughly less than 14 US \$ per month). In Kerala 1600/- is being paid as OAP which is considered as the maximum in India given to Old Age Pensioners and Widows etc. All other states are paying only less than the above amount.

There are many other sections in India who are not able to contribute and not able to survive beyond the age of 60 by way of any pension. They are forced to labour until even at their age of 80 and if they don't work, they don't eat.

Recently 6 State Governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab, Himachal and Delhi have legislated to end the NPS in their states and embraced OPS. But the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi State who is Central Government controlled, has not released the files and so the Delhi State is still to implement NPS only. The State of West Bengal never implemented NPS and so there are at least 7 States which have come out of the NPS. But there is tremendous pressure on these States from the Central Government with dire financial implications etc. However, there is heavy pressure on the Union Government also due to the political trend, working class struggles etc. This pressure caused the Central Government to constitute a Committee to go into the issues of NPS but the terms of reference to the committee only allows it to suggest face lift to the scheme of NPS and certainly not to abolish the NPS. Recently, the Central, State Government and PSU employees have stepped up their struggles and the role of Pensioners in supporting their activities are on the increase against the NPS.

As far as the organizational position of pensioners movement is concerned, there are many organizations representing pensioners in India. Not all of them are class conscious. At our initiative, NCCPA or the National Coordination Committee of Pensioners Associations had been formed and functioning with class consciousness. Initially this NCCPA was started as an Apex Body of Pensioners Associations representing the Union Government. In course of time there was a change in concept that all Pensioners Associations of Central, State Government as well as Public Sector Pensioners Associations can be enrolled as affiliates. But practically today the NCCPA is functioning with organizations of various State level Central Government Pensioners Associations and All India Associations like the AIBDPA (Telecom); AIPRPA (Postal); Income Tax Pensioners Federation; and also Public Sector Pensioners Associations like PNB Pensioners Welfare Association and Kerala Bank Pensioners Federation etc. This NCCPA as well as the AIBDPA and AIPRPA are the affiliates of TUI (P&R) also.

There is one more organization called the All India BSNL Pensioners Welfare Association (AIBSNLPWA) which is outside the NCCPA but affiliated to TUI (P&R) from the inception like the AIBDPA. These two organizations viz., the AIBDPA and AIBSNLPWA took part in the foundation Barcelona Conference itself.

There are many Central Government Pensioners Associations functioning outside the ambit of NCCPA. Earlier there was an umbrella organization called the BCPC (Bharat Central Pensioners Confederation) encompassing various such Pensioners Associations and the NCCPA organizations to act in unison in projecting the demands of the pensioners of Central Government. Unfortunately, today that BCPC has become defunct.

The State Government Pensioners, the Teachers and many other State Public Sector Pensioners Associations are functioning without any link with each other. Recently, the All India State Government Pensioners Federation was formed during the period of pandemic. We are hopeful that this Federation can spearhead the movement of State Government Pensioners of various States in India. We are insisting for formation of all India level Pensioners Associations for Teachers, Electricity Board Pensioners, Transport pensioners etc. We are also highlighting the need to form a broad platform called the Confederation of Pensioners Associations involving Pensioners of Central Government, State Government, Teachers, Transport, Electricity, Central and State Public Sector like BSNL, Banks, LIC etc. But the formation of such a broad based platform of pensioners is possible only if the left forces and the trade unions controlled by them take the initiative to found that platform. We are focussing our attention towards formation of such a broad platform in order to intensify the movement of Pensioners.

The task to mobilise the retirees also as part of our movement is much wanting. Much initiative in this field is required and this Regional Conference can be a starting point to emphasise the need and urgency to unite all the Retired also in our movement.

The Pensioners movement especially the CGPA Associations and the All-India Associations like the AIBDPA, AIRPPA, ITPF etc affiliated to NCCPA are working closely with the Central Trade Unions and other Independent Federations in order to support all struggles and movements organized by the working class. On many occasions the Pensioners under the banner of NCCPA also court arrest by joining the Central Trade Unions sponsored Rasta-Roko like agitations as part of opposing the neo-liberal policies pursued by the Government. The present policies of the Central Government aimed at total privatization of all Government Institutions and PSU Organisations in the name of "National Monetization Pipeline" is opposed stoutly by the united Working Class and the Pensioners movement.

Nepal:

Nepal got a developed trade union movement and their role in the WFTU as well as in the TUI (P&R) was appreciable, even though there is some gap between the TUI and the Nepal TUI leaders at present.

The strong labour movement ensured Nepal do not move too much towards neo-liberal forces and curtail the pension and social security benefits available to the military, police and civilian pensioners. There is a system of paying 10% additional pension as medical allowance to the aged pensioners above the age of 75; and another 10% of additional pension to the pensioners above the age of 85 as medical allowance. The pension scheme is available only to Government sector covering the Civil Servants, Army, Police and Teachers and under Public Sector to employees of government run organizations only. There may be around 3,00,000 Pensioners totally representing all pension drawing sections under defined pension scheme.

In the year 2018, there was a proposal to reform the pension system in Nepal and a contributory pension scheme was about to be introduced in Parliament. The original proposal was to collect 6% from the Civilian Employees to be matched by equal contribution by the

Government. We have no authentic information as to whether such a contributory scheme was enacted or not in Nepal.

Srilanka:

The PSPS (Public Service Pension Scheme) is a non-contributory benefit financed from general government revenues and is provided to Civil Servants. The Armed Services also get PSPS Pension. The pension is based on final salary (85-90% replacement after 30 years of service), is not taxable, but is not indexed for inflation. The retirement benefits are calculated based on the years of service of the employee. Retirees can earn up to 90% of their final salary [excluding allowances added to the salary]. Retirees also receive a gratuity payment on the day of the retirement which is also calculated based on their length of the service. Pensioners benefit from life-long pensions under this scheme. Widow or Family Pension which is disbursed at the same rate after the death of the Government servant or the Pensioner provided they have opted for mandatory contributory pension scheme by contributing 6% - 7% of the salary. But for pension to Civilian and Military Employees there is no need for any contribution and it is fully non-contributory. Even today this system of non-contributory pension is continued and several attempts to bring in contributory pension scheme was stopped at the gates by the struggles of Trade Unions and the political development also contributed to the success of the trade unions.

There are contributory pension schemes available to non-Civilian Employees working in informal sectors. But generally, those schemes are not very successful. We do not have much interaction with the leaders of pensioners movement in Srilanka to provide more authentic information.

Pakistan:

The Civilian Employees, the Military Personnel, the Police like Government Employees are given pension after retirement from the state revenues in Pakistan. The important factor is that even today the Civilian and Military personnel are being paid Pension as a 'Defined Pension' only and there are no scheme of contributions promulgated to Civilian Employees in Pakistan. Pakistan has not brought in any plan of 'Contributory Pensions' to deny the retiring Civilian Employees of their terminal benefits including the Defined Pension.

However, contributory pension systems are in place to informal sector employees.

As far as the organization is concerned, again unfortunately we don't have any direct link with the leaders of Pensioners movement in Pakistan. This Regional Conference can discuss about this grave issue. WFTU and TUI leadership can directly involve with the Trade Unions affiliated to WFTU in Pakistan and help in restoring links with the movement of Pensioners Associations.

Bangladesh:

In Bangladesh about 34.9% are getting Social Pension from the Government which is non-contributory in nature. This non-contributory pension is given only to Civil Servants, Military Personnel, Police etc who come under formal sector of employees. At present, the principal amount of pension for government employees is **90% of the last pay drawn**. For others, only 4%

are getting contributory pension and a vast majority of work force to the tune of 61.1% are not covered under any pension scheme in Bangladesh.

Old Age allowance of 500 Taka (Bangladesh Currency) per month is paid to old age persons under some conditions like only one person in a household is eligible etc besides living under poverty line.

The major factor that concerns our study is that in Bangladesh there is no system of contributory pension to civil servants and all are paid pension from the State Exchequer only.

As like some other countries in this Region, our movement is not able restore proper links with the leaders of the pensioners movement in Bangladesh. Again, the WFTU and the TUI top leadership are expected to intervene.

Bhutan:

There were only the systems of paying Provident Fund and Retirement Gratuity to retiring employees in civil services since long. In 2002, the Government Employees Provident Fund was restructured into mandatory defined-benefit pension and defined-contribution plan for protection of workers in the government employees (civil service, corporate employees and armed forces)

Recently in the year 2018, the Bhutan Government had presented a policy of National Pension and Provident Fund of Bhutan. As per the policy of National Pension and Provident Fund of Bhutan, the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan shall be the regulatory and supervisory authority for both pension and provident funds. The Ministry of Finance shall monitor the implementation of the policy.

As per the scheme there are five components viz., (1) Defined Benefit Pension Scheme (DB-PS); (2) Defined Contribution Provident Fund Scheme (DC-PFS); (3) Voluntary Defined Contribution Scheme; (4) Non-contributory Schemes; and (5) Other schemes as may be deemed necessary.

We can see that Bhutan too embraced a Pension Scheme based on contribution in the background of different countries are led to embrace such a scheme of contributory pension scheme.

Bhutan the trade union movement itself is very weak and at the starting point and therefore there is no link with the pensioners of that country. We even do not know whether there exists any pensioners Association as such to take up the issues of Pensioners.

Laos:

The country came under the left rule in 1975. At that time the Government issued legal documents for payment of social security to Civilian Employees (including the military and police). In 1980, the Government issued regulation on pension and death grant for government employees. From 1975 to 1993 the entire expenditure towards social security was borne by the Government exchequer including for health care. In 1993, the Prime Minister promulgated a decree to be applied to all Civil Servants including the military and

police replacing all earlier regulations. This 1993 decree introduced a co-payment concept to the social security of civil servants.

In April 1996 a new Prime-Minister decree was adopted and currently, the new public sector scheme is under a pilot period particularly regarding the health care benefit. This new reformed public sector social security scheme is a contributory social security system. The main source of finance is the contribution of employees and the government as employers.

The decree regarding social security system for the private sector employees which was approved in 1999 and officially implemented in early 2001 was also contributory in nature.

As far as the organizational position of pensioners and retirees movement is concerned, we have hardly any links with the leadership of the movement from Laos. Therefore, we cannot place any information on the organizational structure and movement of either the trade unions or the pensioners associations functioning in Laos.

Cambodia:

In Cambodia the Pension system is existing for the civilian employees only at present. For the rest there was no pension system until 2021. Now, the private sector employees, if they are registered under National Social Security Fund for at least 20 years and had paid their contributions for at least 60 months during a period of 10 years, are eligible for old-age pension. In the first five years of its implementation, an amount equivalent to 4% of the gross monthly salary of the worker will need to be contributed to the pension scheme. Of this, 2% shall be borne by the employer and 2% by the worker. According to the Sub Decree this rate will be increased every five years. This is a new scheme and the date for payment of this contribution has not yet fixed by the Government.

Since we have no contact with the leaders of either trade unions or pensioners movement, we are unable to say anything more about the system of pension and pensioners movement in Cambodia.

Malaysia:

The Pension System in Malaysia is funded by the Government to the Civil Employees. Pension benefits form part of the workers conditions of service in public sector. The private sector employees are not covered by the pension scheme applicable to the employees in Public Sector. The retirement age of men is 50 years and the women 45 years with a minimum service of 10 years. The Government proposed to withdraw the benefits of pension and social security during the backdrop of recession years of 1985-86. But the stout opposition from the Trade Union movement deterred the Government from going ahead with the plan.

But for the private sector employees, the Employers are to pay or contribute to the Provident Fund or Social Security organizations. All Pension and other benefits to private sector employees is basically from the contributions of the employers and the wage deductions from the employees of the private sector.

As far as the movement of pensioners are concerned, we are hardly having any contacts with the leaders of pensioners associations in Malaysia.

Maldives:

The Government of the Maldives introduced two pension schemes in 2010, namely the Maldives Old-Age Basic Pension (MOABP) and the Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme (MRPS). The Maldives Pension Administration Office administers the MOABP and is responsible for investing contributions to manage the MRPS. The MOABP is a non-contributory and universal pension scheme available to all citizens of at least 65 years of age who do not collect other pension income exceeding twice the amount of the basic pension. The MOABP is designed to complement MRPS, which is a mandatory contributory scheme for all public and formal sector workers and voluntary for all informal sector workers, and can also be applied to migrant workers.

Before the introduction of these schemes only public sector employees had access to income security. However, coverage became available to all Maldivians with the passing of the Pension Act in 2009. Investments, such as the MOABP and MRPS, create an essential part of the social protection floor in the Maldives and are essential in ensuring equal access to income security for older persons.

Beyond the above, we are not aware of any other pension situation in Maldives and no information about the movement of Pensioners Associations there.

South Korea:

In South Korea we have four major type of pension schemes under Public Pension System. They are:

1. Government Employees Pension Scheme (GEPS)
2. National Pension Scheme.
3. Private School Teachers Pension Scheme.
4. Military Personnel Pension Scheme.

Government Employees Pension Scheme (GEPS) is the oldest pension scheme introduced as early as in 1960. This GEPS Scheme had been modified several times. The initial contribution rate was 4.6% of the salary which was shared equally between the State as an employer and the individual employee. After meeting the crisis in 1995, when there was deficit between the rate of contribution and benefits, the Government slowly started raising the contribution rate. Now that contribution rate is 15%.

National Pension Scheme was introduced in the year 1988 for workers in establishments with 10 employees or workers. In 1992 it was extended to all establishments with five or more workers. In 1995, it was extended to farmers, fishermen and self-employed in rural areas. In 1999, it was further expanded to all self-employed in urban areas. It was then amended that the contribution rates would increase to match the benefit rates.

Private School Teachers Pension Scheme was introduced in 1973 but implemented from 1975 after a gap of 15 years from the introduction of GEPS.

The Military Personnel Pension Scheme was introduced in 1960, Initially it was part of GEPS but soon separated from 1963. The retirement age of Civil Servants and the Military Personnel are different as for the former it was between 55 and 63 and for the latter it is much earlier.

In addition to the above Public Pension Schemes, there are also “Occupational Pension Schemes” which pay higher rate of pension than the NPS. There are corporate pension schemes too in Korea.

Recently, we heard that some Unions in South Korea had threatened to organize a strike if the age of retirement is not raised from 60. This is against the general trend in other countries and against our line of TUI(P&R) that the age of retirement should not be increased. We can remember the strike in Russia that had brought down the popularity of the President Shri.Putin and the general strike that shook France and the President of France could hardly manage his majority in the Parliament. We have to discuss in this Regional Conference this trend manifested in South Korea.

We do not have any contacts in South Korea and therefore we are not in a position to analyse the pension schemes exist there and the movement of pensioners in that country.

North Korea:

North Korea is a Socialist Country. The North Korean welfare system has been based on the Bismarckian-Socialist welfare System since the establishment of a socialist government. Even though North Korea has recently expanded economic openings through the operation of particular economic zones, the legacy of the Bismarckian-Socialist welfare System endures.

Actually, we do not know first hand the pension system in existence in that country. WFTU leaders can help us in establishing contacts with the Pensioners Association there so that they can also play a due role in this front.

China:

From China, we had the benefit of participation in the first Asian Regional Conference at Kathmandu but we did not have that benefit in Bogota World Conference. Organisationally we are not able to establish ties with the Pensioners Associations in China. WFTU and TUI leadership should take this as a basic task and try to rope in the Pensioners Associations in our activities of TUI (P&R) in future.

We learn that China got a multi-layer pension systems. Until 2015, the system encompassed four schemes that were intended to cover the entire eligible population. The first two schemes were for employed workers in firms and the government sector, respectively, and the latter two schemes were for non-employed individuals in rural and urban areas. They are:

- Basic Old Age Insurance (BOAI): For employees in for-profit enterprises, including for-profit public enterprises, and all other private sectors;
- Public Employee Pension (PEP): For civil servants and employees in non-profit government institutions, such as schools and cultural and health facilities;

- Urban Resident Pension (URP): For urban residents aged 16 and older without a formal non-agricultural job;
- New Rural Resident Pension (NRP): For rural residents aged 16 and older without a formal non-agricultural job.

We also learn that there is a system of Pension Payment to Civil Servants and employees in non-profit Public Sector called the Public Employee Pension. Public Employee Pension (PEP) was established in 1953 for civil servants and employees in the non-profit public sector. PEP system expenditure is included in both the central and local governments' fiscal budgets. It is more generous than the other schemes, and a notable feature is that it does not require any contribution from public employees. Public employees have an average pension replacement ratio of 80-90% of pre-retirement wages.

When PEP was merged into BOAI (Basic Old Age Insurance Scheme) in 2015, the contribution and benefit rules for public employees were switched to those of BOAI. There is a transition arrangement between the two schemes. For those who retired before the 2015 reform, pension benefits are unchanged; for those who entered the public sector after 2015, the BOAI system applies; and for those who were already in PEP but not yet retired in 2015, there is a transitional arrangement for financing individual accounts, as there had been no contributions to individual accounts before the reform. The PEP retirement eligibility age is 55 for females and 60 for males.

At the beginning of 2014, the State Council announced that the URP and NRP were to be merged into a uniform Resident Pension system. As mentioned earlier, in 2015, the PEP was merged into BOAI, making BOAI the uniform program for all employees in urban sectors.

We are fighting for Universal Pension and Social Security. We argue that the State has a responsibility towards all its citizens irrespective of them being the retirees of Civil Servants or private employees. We highlight the demand of Decent Life with Medical care, Housing, Transport and Potable Water to all. In China, as a Socialist Society these things would have been judiciously provided to all but the element of contribution from the employees from the recent year is point in conflict with the basic demand of TUI (P&R). But as we do not have direct ties with the leaders of the Pensioners Associations in China, we have not answered the question.

The integration of Pensioners Movement with Working Class

The integration of Pensioners Movement with the movement of Trade Unions and the Working Class of that country as well as the TUI (P&R) and the WFTU is very important to understand the class tasks before us and to work on those lines. In India the task before the Pensioners Movement in integrating with the movement of Working Class led by Central Trade Unions is progressing well. The Pensioners Movement led by the NCCPA is integrated with the trade unions movement and the struggles led by them against neo-liberalism to a fine degree. The Pensioners Movement is encouraged to join the working class in all the State level and District level programmes of the Central Trade Unions including Rasta-roko and

court arrest programmes launched by the Trade Unions according to local conditions. Many all-India affiliates of the NCCPA and the State CGPA organizations are involving themselves in this task. The State Government Pensioners Association and the COC of Central, State Government Pensioners and the Pensioners Associations of Central and State PSUs are also joining these programmes of Central Trade Unions in different states according to their level of understanding. The recent formation of All India State Government Pensioners Federation at the behest of the All India State Government Employees Federation is expected to give a boost to the process of integration with the workers movement in all States.

The process of founding a broad platform of Confederation of all Pensioners Associations with class consciousness is on and unless such a platform is erected the movement cannot advance with speed in India. But, there are many organizations of pensioners which are keeping them away from the mainstream and they are satisfied with their finding a place in the negotiating body of pensioners issues with the Union Government known as "SCOVA" (Standing Committee of Voluntary Associations). This body is not with any statutory powers to negotiate and the presence of representatives of pensioners is purely at the whims of the Government which selects them at random. The Government with a view to divide the pensioners movement with the movement of CG Employees has even removed the presence of Staff Side Joint Consultative Machinery of CG Employees from the SCOVA. In addition to that there is another body called the "Pensioners Portal" in which the All India Associations are debarred to join. The members in the Pensioners Portal are given an annual payment by the Union Government to run the Associations and the Journals by them. Since they are funded by the Government, they generally remain apolitical in their basic approach and do not join the working class action. In effect they behave like the yellow unions in their basic approach and they do not worry beyond the issues of pensioners themselves.

Another unfinished task is to mobilise the retirees in the movement. This is not possible without conscious effort from the Pensioners Associations and also the highlighting of the demand for universal pension to cover all senior citizens. Fortunately, the Central Trade Unions are taking up this demand and are highlighting the demand of minimum pension to all retired. But the Pensioners Associations should concentrate more to highlight the demand of the retirees and link it with the demands of the Pensioners in order to attract more retirees towards our movement. This task will be taken up along with other tasks.

In other countries of the Region, we are not in a position to evaluate the requirements of the pensioners movement and their integration level with the trade unions for want of proper information.

Integration with the TUI (P&R) and the WFTU:

In India, the NCCPA and all its affiliates are observing the calls of TUI (P&R) and WFTU and the amount of participation of members is better from year to year. The observance of TUI Call for 1st October as the day for highlighting the pensioners and retirees demands by using the call of the UN for 'Day of the Elderly Persons' is actually increasing year after year. Since last

two or three years the participation is widespread in India. The call of WFTU for observing the call of the WFTU to observe the foundation day of WFTU was endorsed by the NCCPA and its affiliates and wherever the Trade Unions had observed the call, the pensioners also joined in it. But to dispassionately analyse the implementation, we are to say that the call of TUI (P&R) was largely implemented in comparison to the call of the WFTU in India.

Regarding the integration of Pensioners movement with that of TUI (P&R) and WFTU from other countries cannot be assessed for want of sufficient information from the other countries of this Region.

Conclusion:

Asia is perhaps the continent that holds its regional conference last in the world. The delay is mainly due to the pandemic that played havoc with us in all continents. The traditional forms of organization were given up by all of us. We started resorting to virtual consultations in order to keep in touch with all. The TUI (P&R) headquarters also started using extensively the virtual meetings in order to galvanize the organizations in all countries. However, we can say that we have successfully adopted to the new situation and started using all new technology to run our organizations as effectively as feasible.

Despite the problems, all continents level Regional Conferences are planned successfully and held in America, Europe etc. The Conferences at Asia and Africa are being delayed. But the TUI leadership is very particular that we carry out the holding of Conferences by combining both physical and virtual forms if necessary. Today, we are meeting in our Asia level Regional Conference and as planned we are convening the Conference in Thiruvananthapuram City (Capital of Kerala State in India).

The Trade Union International (Pensioners & Retirees) should expand its presence to all corners of the Region in order to mobilize the pensioners and retirees of all countries together against the nefarious LPG Policies. The Regional Conferences besides the World Conference of TUI (P&R) are of course an important vehicle to reach the destination. TUI (P&R) is planning to organize regional wise agitations too in order to mobilize the pensioners and retirees of the region. But to conduct the planned agitations at all countries of the Region, the TUI (P&R) should be strong in each region including Asia. Asia is the biggest continent both geographically and population wise. Naturally, this Region should have the largest number of Pensioners and Retirees in the world. Without a class-conscious organization, we cannot unify all of them. Without organising the pensioners and retirees we cannot launch the agitations with desired results. Therefore, this Regional Conference of Asia should evaluate our positive and negative points of the movement and to plan for a militant class-oriented organization with the presence of it in every country in the region.

The Regional Conference also opines that in order to build a strong and militant pensioners and retirees organization of TUI(P&R), held and assistance is required from the trade unions affiliated to WFTU in every country. Unless the WFTU makes it a point to drive home the point that today's workers are tomorrow's pensioners, and that the building of an organisation for the pensioners and retirees are their responsibility, we cannot emerge into a broad organization. The WFTU affiliated organisations in each country should have some

representatives earmarked for working for the integration of the Pensioners and Workers movement and WFTU should insist reports from these representatives periodically to guide them in this task.

We are confident that this 2nd Regional Conference of Asia will evolve suitable strategies for the tasks fulfilled and to take the movement of Pensioners and Retirees to new heights.