On 29 October 2023, unions across Asia and the Pacific join in solidarity to celebrate a momentous milestone — the official recognition of this day as the International Day for Care by the United Nations General Assembly.

This historic decision, adopted in July 2023, represents a major achievement in our ongoing efforts to recognise the invaluable contributions of care workers and the critical importance of investing in the care sector for both economic growth and societal development.

The trade union community is thrilled to witness this milestone in the journey that began four years ago, propelled by the true heroes of care – the care workers, union women, and the global trade union movement who passionately championed the importance of honouring those who dedicate their lives to the well-being of and caring for others.

Inspired by their activism, resilience, and shared stories and experiences, we have been relentless in our mission to secure the well-deserved recognition for the crucial role that care work plays in our lives and in supporting the economy. It fills us with great pride to see part of this vision come to life.
Increasing public investments in the care sector and integrating the care economy into the national government’s GDP will generate millions of new jobs, boost women’s economic participation, and guarantee universal access to high-quality public health, education, and care services.

Adopting comprehensive care policies, encompassing inclusive labour market policies, family-friendly workplace policies, and gender-responsive social protection measures will contribute to a more equitable distribution of care responsibilities and promote gender-neutral flexible working arrangements.

Ensuring decent work for all care workers involves: formalising care roles to adhere to decent work standards; providing safe and healthy working conditions, fair compensation, and equal pay for work of equal value; ensuring freedom from gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination; and protecting care workers’ rights to organise and bargain collectively.

This momentous occasion is a testament to the power of collective action and advocacy. The initial success of these efforts underscores the impact that sustained social dialogue and collaboration can have in building a resilient and inclusive care economy.

As we celebrate this extraordinary milestone and embark on this new chapter with the International Day for Care, we do so with a collective understanding that there is still much work to be done. This new UN Day for Care provides a good opportunity to maintain the momentum by urging governments to take concrete actions, all underpinned by the following principles:

- Increasing public investments in the care sector and integrating the care economy into the national government's GDP will generate millions of new jobs, boost women's economic participation, and guarantee universal access to high-quality public health, education, and care services.
- Adopting comprehensive care policies, encompassing inclusive labour market policies, family-friendly workplace policies, and gender-responsive social protection measures will contribute to a more equitable distribution of care responsibilities and promote gender-neutral flexible working arrangements.
- Ensuring decent work for all care workers involves: formalising care roles to adhere to decent work standards; providing safe and healthy working conditions, fair compensation, and equal pay for work of equal value; ensuring freedom from gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination; and protecting care workers’ rights to organise and bargain collectively.

Realising these principles and demands will require another sustained, collective effort. The International Trade Union Confederation - Asia Pacific is fully committed to supporting affiliates in ensuring these demands remain at the forefront, shaping the decisions and actions of governments, employers, and other relevant institutions. We will continue collaborating closely with our allies and partners to ensure that the care economy and care work, both paid and unpaid, are never undervalued or overlooked again.

The road ahead may be long, but together, we will persist in paving this path toward a just and more equitable future for women, for care workers, those we care for, and for society as a whole.