

International
Labour
Organization

BANGLADESH

Decent Work Country Programme

2012 – 2015

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)
BEF	Bangladesh Employers Federation
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
CEACR	Committee of Experts on Application of Conventions & Recommendations
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization/ International Labour Office
MES	Monitoring of Employment Survey
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NCCWE	National Coordination Committee for Workers Education
NGO	Non-government Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
SFYP	Sixth Five Year Plan
TCC	Tripartite Consultative Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to creating opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In every member state, the ILO promotes decent work as a national objective and assists its tripartite constituents and other stakeholders to make progress towards achieving that objective. The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) is the main instrument for ILO cooperation in a specific country over a period of four to six years.

The current document outlines the Decent Work Country Programme for Bangladesh for the period 2012-2015. It is the result of an intensive consultation process with ILO's tripartite constituents namely government, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders. It is based on a thorough analysis of the country's needs and is in full alignment with Bangladesh Vision 2021, the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP, 2011-15), the UN Development Framework (UNDAF, 2012-16) and ILO's Strategic Policy Framework 2010-15. As part of the long and participatory process, the key priority areas were adopted by the constituents during a tripartite workshop held in Dhaka on 13 December 2011.

Bangladesh is committed to achieving the millennium development goals. Promotion of decent and productive employment contributes significantly towards achieving the targets of such goals, especially millennium development goal 1 - Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. Bearing this in mind, the current DWCP contributes to reducing poverty through inclusive growth and decent employment as its overarching framework.

2. Decent Work - A Source of Inspiration

Strategic plans, development frameworks, and policy statements too often overlook their source of inspiration. The DWCP reminds the constituents that work, in all its forms, is not only the single most important means of earning a living for most people, but also it is an essential element for a person to be able to live with a sense of personal dignity. As such it is a source of family stability, peace in the community, democracies that deliver for people and economic growth that expands opportunities for productive jobs and enterprise development.

The creation of jobs involves three parties: the provider of labour - the workers, the provider of capital - the employers, and the provider of labour market regulation - the governments. It is this tripartite interaction embedded within the ILO that still denotes one of the most profoundly significant institutional innovations of the twentieth century. As the custodian of this innovation, the ILO has worked to foster sound relations among government, employers and workers in its member states since its establishment in 1919, introducing new tools and approaches as global and national circumstances changed.

Respecting time-honoured values that have guided the work of the ILO for almost one century, the introduction of the decent work concept (See Box 1) in 1999 was brought about by the changing realities of the last decade of the 20th century during which it became increasingly clear that globalisation benefited some but not all. The introduction of this concept was a reminder to the world what values were important and at the same time provided the ILO with guidance to target its limited resources - financial and human - where their impact would be the highest. The decent work agenda has since brought sustained and tangible benefits to millions of people across the world.

Box 1: Decent Work Concept

GOAL

Create more opportunities for women and men to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity".

Agenda

An integrated approach to the objectives of full and productive employment for all at global, regional, national, sectoral (industry) and local levels.

Strategic Objectives

Standards and rights at work
Employment creation
Social protection
Social dialogue

Cross-cutting themes

Gender-equality
Non-discrimination

The DWCP for Bangladesh is inspired by the values underpinning the concept of decent work and anchored in the realisation that too many women and men in Bangladesh do not enjoy decent work. It seeks to provide operational guidance for the ILO, its tripartite constituents, UN partners and other stakeholders in ensuring sustainable progress in key areas.

The key actors contributing to decent work formulation and implementation are the constituents namely Ministry of Labour and Employment representing the Government, Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) representing the employers and the National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) representing the workers. Comments and suggestions received from them have been reflected in the document and incorporated in the country priorities and country outcomes.

3. Ratification and Implementation of International Labour Standards

Bangladesh has ratified 33 ILO Conventions, including 7 of the 8 fundamental conventions. The 2006 Labor Act seeks, inter alia, to protect and promote rights of the workers. Although legal provisions exist to uphold the fundamental principles and to protect rights at work, their implementation and enforcement remain challenging. To address a number of weaknesses in the current Labour Act, 2006 the Government has initiated labour law reform through a tripartite consultative process.

In terms of practical implementation of laws, the level of labour compliance in major sectors, such as the ready-made garment sector, shrimp, frozen foods, construction and ship recycling, remains a particular concern given that the ability of workers to exercise their rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining leaves much to be desired. For some of these sectors, occupational safety and health is also of particular concern.

While child labor has diminished in recent years, due to concerted efforts from the government, the social partners and the international community including the ILO, indications are that substantial challenges continue to exist with regard to child labour, as well as other core labour standards in law and in practice. Industrial relations, social protection standards, occupational safety, minimum wage enforcement and other labour issues need to be addressed urgently.

Partly due to privatization and economic reforms, the trade unions' role in protecting the rights of the workers has been severely impacted and has caused a decline in union membership compared to the rapid expansion of the private sector.

Bangladesh's constituents are seeking support to improve adherence national laws and their application as well as adherence to international labour standards, as well as to build industrial relations and social dialogue systems. It is hoped that, with the assistance provided by the ILO and other relevant partners, issues raised by the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association, will, as a first step, be addressed in law and practice.

4. Country Context

Demographic Challenge and Opportunities

Bangladesh has a population of approximately 142.32 million people (Population and Housing Census 2011) and an annual population growth rate of 1.34 per cent. With its limited geographical space of 147,570 sq km, it is the most densely populated country in the world (about 964 inhabitants per square kilometre).

The potential silver lining of the country's demographic challenge is that youth (15 – 35 years) and the economically active dominate the age pyramid, 62.7 and 59.3 per cent respectively (See table 1). During 2000 to 2010, 6.4 million youth have joined the labour force. It is expected that Bangladesh will take advantage of its “demographic dividend” by unlocking the potential of its citizens through decent and productive job work.

Table 1: Youth and working age group in Bangladesh

Age Group	% Total	Male	Female
15-19	10.1	9.3	11.8
20-24	13.2	11.4	17.3
25-29	13.6	12.5	16.3
30-34	14.0	13.2	15.9
34-39	12.0	11.5	13.0
40-44	11.6	11.5	11.9
45-49	9.0	9.1	8.8
50-54	6.1	8.0	1.7
55-59	4.0	5.2	1.4

Source: BBS (2008, p.10).

Economic Growth and Employment

Due to the combined effect of its demography, geography and economy, Bangladesh remains one of the least developed economies of the world with a per capita income of US\$ 755.¹

Bangladesh has achieved respectable economic growth over the last two decades with a GDP growth rate averaging 6 per cent per annum. As a result, the percentage of people below the poverty line has been reduced from 56.6 percent in 1992 to 31.5 per cent in 2010 (BBS 2010). The country aims at reaching “middle-income” status by 2021. Accordingly, its Sixth Five-Year Plan envisages (a) GDP growth of more than 7 per cent per year from fiscal year 2013, (b) accelerated growth of employment to absorb the new entrants to the labour force, and (c) moving people from low productivity agriculture to more productive manufacturing sector.

During the period 2006-10, the labour force increased from 49.5 million to 56.7 million people with an average growth rate of 3.39% a year meaning that on an average 1.8 million people enter into the labour market annually. The labour force participation rate was 59.3% in 2010 against 58.5% in 2005-2006.

Although there has been a structural shift of employment from agriculture to secondary and tertiary sectors, agriculture still constitutes a large share of the GDP and absorbs 47.56 per cent of the employed labour force. The services sector, whose development has mostly taken place in low-productivity service sector, absorbs 35.35 per cent while the industrial sector, dominated by the ready-made garments, absorbs 17.52 per cent of employed labour force. The most telling figure illustrating the lack of modernisation of the economy is the large size of the informal economy, which accounts for 87.5 per cent of the employed labour force.

While Bangladesh has been able to reduce poverty, economic growth has not been accompanied by commensurate increase in job-creation to offset the labour force growth rate (See box 2).

Bangladesh’s open unemployment rate is 4.6%², which does not reflect the very large jobs deficits present.³ The high underemployment rate of approximately 30 per cent indicates that a large proportion of the total labour force remains engaged in marginal and low productivity occupations where they are often joined by working children(BBS 2010). Unemployment among young people is particularly high. More than 87% of workers are engaged in informal economy where productivity, wages, and legal and social protection are inadequate or non-existent.

Employment and Gender

With an equal potential to contribute towards the socio-economic development of the country, women constitute almost half of the population. However, they constitute only approximately 36 per cent of Bangladesh’s labour force. It is notable that the growth rate of the female labour force is much higher than for men - 8.69 per cent compared to 1.40 per cent. The entry of women into the labour force is mainly due to the ready-made garment sector, which employs approximately 3.5 million workers, of which an estimated 80 per cent are women.

Box 2: Jobless Growth

(Low and declining employment growth in relation to output/high output low employment)

- Despite acceleration of economic growth, employment situation did not improve
- Gap between labour force growth and employment growth
 - Labour force growth: 3.3% per annum
 - Annual addition to labour force: 1.8% per annum
 - During 2000-06, approximately 250,000 new jobs were created per each percentage point of GDP growth
 - With GDP growth rate of 6% per annum, total employment per annum will be about 1.5 million
 - Which is lower than the addition of labour force of 1.8 million.

Source: Islam (2010).

¹Bangladesh Economic Review, 2011.

²BBS, Report of Labor Force Survey 2010, Aug. 2011

³Persons working for even one hour during the reference week is considered as employed.

The inequality in employment of women is evident from all labour force characteristics (See table 2). For example, the unemployment rate is nearly double that of the rate for men, the underemployment rate for women exceeds the rate for men by five per cent, the labour force participation rate of women is only about one-third of men, and the formal sector is clearly male-dominated. It is therefore no surprise that women earn on average 21 per cent less than men.⁴

Table 2: Women's inequality as reflected in key labour force characteristics

Labour force characteristics (%)	Total	Male	Female
Unemployment rate	5.0	4.1	5.7
Underemployment rate	20.31	14.40	34.15
Labour force participation rate	59.2	82.51	35.98
Male-female labour composition in the total unpaid family labour	21.8	7.01	56.3
Male-female labour composition of the formal sector employment	12.5	14.6	7.7
Male-female labour composition of the informal sector employment	87.5	85.5	92.3

Source: BBS, LFS 2010

To increase women's employment, it is necessary to move women away from the care economy to the market economy. For this to happen, there is a need, among other things, for policies that will address women's unpaid care workload that constraints their employment options and underlies stereotypes about women's weaker labour force commitment.

In 2011 the government adopted a National Policy for the Advancement of Women. The goals of this policy are, inter alia, to ensure empowerment of women in the fields of politics, administration and the economy, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girl children, to establish women's rights and to ensure full and equal participation of women in mainstream socio economic development. Alleviation of women's poverty, employment and gender sensitive budget and data base are priority issues of the national policy.

The priorities and outcomes of the current DWCP, are aligned with the goals of the National Policy for the Advancement of Women.

Trade and Employment

Although Bangladesh's trade-GDP ratio was 40.5 per cent in fiscal year 2009-10, its linkages with employment remains confined to a limited number of activities. Agriculture and service-related activities, which are less exposed to trade, account for 87 per cent of total employment. However, a number of export-oriented sectors, especially the readymade garment sector (Bangladesh is the second largest exporter worldwide) have experienced significant growth and enabled important employment opportunities, including opportunities for hundreds of thousands of young women to engage in new productive roles in society. These jobs have often also provided an opportunity for empowerment, as compared to alternatives, for example, domestic or home-based work.

In addition, during the past decade, non-wage working conditions have improved in some industries exposed to trade due to both domestic and external pressure (international buyers). For example, many export-oriented garment industries have become more gender sensitive as a part of their compliance with buyer requirements. Partly as a result, the BGMEA now urges all its members to follow a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment of its female workers.

Like many other developing countries Bangladesh lacks the skills and productive capabilities that would enable it to take advantage of new economic opportunities and the potential for employment creation through growing global trade. There is a need for designing a strategic medium term trade and employment policy to guide the country towards attaining broad-based development.

⁴(Kapsos, 2008).

With the assistance of the ILO, a skills development policy has been adopted. Tripartite consultations are on-going to amend and implement the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, to ensure the application of fundamental principles and rights at work in line with Bangladesh's Constitution, labour laws and international labour standards as well as to support the country to formulate coherent trade and labour market policies.

Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers

Overseas employment is highlighted in the SFYP as one of the expressed priorities of government to foster economic development. Together with export revenues, migrant worker remittances constitute a key driver of Bangladesh's economy. More than 7 million Bangladeshi are currently working abroad, the majority as unskilled workers. Between January and June 2012 alone, 375,000 workers migrated abroad including approximately 16,000 female workers.⁵ Currently women migrant workers constitute about 5% of the total annual outflow - this figure is much higher than the 1% in 2004 but much lower than international figures. Presently women migrant workers are mostly confined to specific occupations, such as housekeeping, cleaner and garment workers. The protection and welfare of migrant workers and their families, as well as increasing their skills, remain a top priority for the government. An Overseas Employment Act is being formulated and several measures to reduce the cost of migration and ensuring compliance by national and international recruitment agencies of relevant rules and regulations were adopted.

Bangladesh receives vast amounts of remittances each year from its migrant workers – approximately US\$ 12.1 billion in 2011. Most of these remittances are used to purchase consumption goods. Most migrant workers lack the necessary information and knowledge that would enable them to invest in small, sustainable enterprises of their own. To address this issue, a financial institution, the Probashi Kallyan Bank, has been created by the government.

Social Protection

Social protection is considered an important tool for poverty alleviation and it is addressed through several sectoral policies and the national Five-Year Plans. According to the National Labour Policy 2011, the government will provide social security to all workers and employees within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programmes. In Section 11, the Policy states that the government will be active in making relevant reforms in laws and in their subsequent implementation in order to ensure provident funds, gratuity and retirement pensions for workers and employees in all public and private establishments. Under the SFYP, existing programmes will be reviewed and reformed to establish better targeting with a view to ensuring that all underprivileged groups are included.

While formal sector employees enjoy certain social protection benefits, informal sector workers and casual workers in the formal sector do not have access to such benefits. This makes a compelling case for reshaping the existing social protection system to include these vulnerable workers. The government requested the support of the development partners' for the formulation of a National Social Protection Strategy. The Government has supported the adoption of ILO Recommendation of Minimum Social Protection Floor at the International Labour Conference held in June 2012.

Working Conditions, Non-discrimination and Other Labour Related Issues

Occupational safety and health, violence against women, and non-discrimination of minorities and vulnerable peoples remain areas of concern. Though not a priority in most work places, given their growth and visibility, the construction, ready-made garment, and ship recycling sectors are often singled out with respect to working conditions and OSH. Existing minimum wages can hardly meet the increasing living costs in the country. The government is finalising a National Occupational Safety Health (OSH) policy and is extending its support to programmes and activities addressing these issues, as well as issues such as violence against women, inclusion of people with disabilities and implementation of the ILO Convention 107 concerning Indigenous and Tribal People.

⁵Source: GOB: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training

Capacity of Social Partners in Implementing Decent Work Country Programme

Constituents in Bangladesh have expressed their strong commitment towards implementing the decent work country programme. In doing so, they have also identified areas of building their capacities for effective decent work implementation. The following paragraphs outline some of the key issues relating to capacity building of each of the constituents.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) remains ILO's counterpart at the country level on labour issues. Including its departments, the MOLE is responsible for a range of diverse tasks such as ratification and implementation of ILO conventions, formulation and implementation of labour law, trade union registration, labour inspection, formulation of policies, such as child labour policy, OSH policy, employment policy, reporting on application of ILO conventions, responding to the comments of the ILO supervisory bodies, and promoting the principles of tripartism, including administering tripartite bodies such as Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC). The MOLE is also a key partner of the ILO concerning the development and implementation of projects and programmes related to activities such as skills development (for example skills policy, apprenticeship etc.), Green Jobs, Better Work, monitoring of decent work and the effects of trade on employment etc. Due to regular turnover of staff, resource constraints (human and others), increased demand for labour compliance, and the need for increasing the knowledge base, MOLE staff are faced with having to manage these emerging requirements and provide a leadership role with limited resources.

The Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) represents the employers with regard to labour and social issues and ILO projects and programmes at the country level. Because of emerging issues such as labour compliance, freedom of association and social dialogue, Green Jobs, Better Work, youth employment, child labour, skills development, domestic workers, and social protection, BEF needs to build its capacity and support its members in these fields on a continuous basis. ILO and BEF is implementing two-year joint programme of work through strategic planning at the beginning of each biennium.

The National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) represents the workers with regard to labour and social issues and ILO projects and programmes at the country level. Weak implementation of the law means that the protection of the rights of the workers is not ensured properly as envisaged in the law and the provisions of the ILO Conventions. In addition, capacity development is necessary to increase trade union membership and ensure their effective functioning as representative organizations of workers. Trade unions hardly exist in the country's major formal private sectors, such as garments and textiles. As a result, effective social dialogue is almost non-existent. Participation of females in trade unions is low, as is female trade union leadership. Therefore, the trade unions as a group should strengthen their capacity to effectively deal with the newly emerging issues including knowledge management and contribute to the implementation of the decent work country programme of ILO.

5. Lessons Learnt from Bangladesh's First DWCP 2006-2009

The 2006–2009 DWCP was the ILO's first comprehensive, results-based programme for promoting decent work in Bangladesh. The review of the first DWCP concluded that, though it had been implemented with mixed results, it had succeeded in:

- Sensitising tripartite constituents about (a) the four strategic decent work objectives – right to work (employment), social protection, rights at work and social dialogue – in general, and (b) child and woman labour in precarious occupations, indigenous people, safe migration, HIV/AIDS, in particular.
- Contributing to improved coverage of social protection, working conditions and rights for workers in target sectors and areas (ready-made garments, migrant workers, child labour, OSH, HIV/Aids in the workplace).
- Increasing employability through skills development programmes.
- Activating the stakeholders to work together for preventing and eliminating hazardous child labour in selected formal and informal sectors.

- Enhancing the capacities of the tripartite partners and, through the DWCP framework, ensuring the incorporation of ILO principles and standards in UNDAF.

At the time of undertaking the first DWCP 2006-09, key challenges to the decent work programme in Bangladesh were identified as the following; (i) low growth in wage; (ii) inadequate employment opportunities; (iii) persistent gender inequality, and (iv) decent work gaps with regard to child labour and trade union rights. All of these challenges are still very real, in spite of the fact that the review of the first DWCP has documented, quite comprehensively, progress made towards each of the four outcomes pursued during the first DWCP. However, it does bring to the fore how the current DWCP can be designed better to make the inspirational goal of decent work a reality for more people in Bangladesh.

For the future, the DWCP review made 12 specific recommendations for the new DWCP among which following ones are mentioned⁶:

- Making the DWCP truly results based;
- Focus efforts on strengthening the capacity of the tripartite constituents;
- Incorporate gender equity and the empowerment of women;
- Ensure that Decent Work is aligned with the government priorities and commitments and supportive of the international agenda;
- Ensure meaningful participation of national partners in all stages of programme and project development.

The current DWCP has been formulated taking into account the challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations of the past DWCP as reflected the review report. The decent work document is results based, focuses on strengthening the capacity of the constituents, incorporates gender issues and ensures meaningful participation of the national partners.

6. The Decent Work Country Programme 2012 -2015

Main Challenges

The main decent work challenges for Bangladesh are described here. The first is promoting new jobs, mostly for young people, who enter the labour force for the first time. As indicated earlier, it is estimated that on an average, about 1.8 million people are entering into the labour market every year. The second is to turn low skilled jobs (ready-made garment sector, construction, etc.) and survival strategy-based work (informal sector) to decent work opportunities. The third is to promote fundamental principles and rights at work which requires improved respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, industrial relations and effective social dialogue, promotion of tripartism, improved working conditions, and eliminating discrimination at workplace. This will require sustained efforts from all key stakeholders. It is against this backdrop that the ILO has been working with its constituents to promote decent work in Bangladesh - since 2006 within the framework of the Bangladesh Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).

Strategic Link with the Sixth Five Year Plan

Bangladesh has recognised the urgent need for job creation in its national policy and development plans. It has set itself a target of reducing underemployment from the current 30 per cent to 15 per cent in its Vision 2021. The strategic directions set for implementing the main socio-economic targets of the Vision 2021 include a better educated labour force and the expansion of the manufacturing sector. The Sixth Five-Year Plan provides the strategic directions for economic growth, employment, human development and poverty reduction. It acknowledges increasing productive employment as the most potent means of reducing poverty on a sustained basis. This requires strategies and actions on the demand side of the labour market (driven primarily by economic growth) as well as strategies and policies on the supply side (labour force growth and quality).

⁶Report on the review of Bangladesh DWCP 2006-2009, ILO Regional Office, Bangkok, 2010

On the demand side, both the rate of economic growth and its composition matters for job creation. Acceleration of the growth rate will require a substantial increase in the rate of investment from the present 24 per cent of GDP level. The government emphasizes the role of small enterprises to expand employment opportunities base. The promotion of small enterprises in rural areas needs to be a critical strategic element for creating higher income and employment in the rural economy, which is critical for sustained poverty reduction. From a decent work perspective, the most important strategy of the SFYP is the creation of employment opportunities through manufacturing and organized service sectors, which would allow transfer of workers from low productive employment in the agriculture and informal services sector of the economy to higher income jobs.

Link to UNDAF 2012-16

The UN agencies and programmes in Bangladesh have agreed on a “UN Development Assistance Framework, 2012-16” which was endorsed and signed by the GOB and UN agencies in June 2011. The UNDAF has seven pillars and 12 outcomes. ILO’s DWCP is linked to the following pillars:

Pillar one: Democratic governance and human rights.

Pillar two: Pro-poor economic growth with equity.

Pillar three: Social services for human development.

Pillar five: Climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction and response.

Pillar six: Pro-poor urban development.

Pillar seven: Gender equality and women’s advancement.

DWCP’s Priorities, Outcomes and Indicators

The broad consultation process through which the DWCP 2012-2015 was developed gave all stakeholders ample opportunity to consider which remaining and new decent work deficits need to be addressed as a priority. In this respect, stakeholders’ views and suggestions, consolidated into the DWCP framework, led to the development of:

- (a) three (3) pillars
- (b) five (5) Country Programme’s Priorities,
- (c) twelve (12) country programme outcomes; and
- (d) sixteen (16) Indicators (See table below).

The three pillars of the ILO DWCP are:

- (1) Employment generation and poverty reduction with improved productivity and competitiveness.
- (2) Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at work through effective social dialogue.
- (3) Reducing vulnerabilities through Basic Social Protection.

Decent Work Country Programme 2012 - 2015		
Five Priorities	12 Outcomes	16 Indicators
CP Priority 1 – Generating productive employment with improved sustainable enterprises and skills development.	1 – Skills development reforms for employability and livelihoods implemented.	(1) Action plan for a national skills development policy approved and operational. (2) The Government has aligned its TVET system in line with the recommendations of the ILO project including the National Strategy for the promotion of gender equality in TVET.
	2 – Inclusive growth and productive employment integrated into socio-economic policies.	(3) Decent work principles reflected in various government policies and programmes
	3 – Working conditions improved.	(4) Adoption of national OSH policy and action plan leads to better compliance with labour standards at workplace. (5) Number of enterprises with gender responsive policies and practices.
CP Priority 2 – Fundamental principles and rights at work promoted and implemented through effective social dialogue.	4 – Country takes effective measures to respond and implement CEACR recommendation and including fulfilling its reporting obligations.	(6) Tripartite constituents developed a national plan of action to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining. (7) Labour law is amended to conform with international labour standards.
	5 – Capacities of labour administration and institutions improved.	(8) Labour inspection services improved.
	6 – Indigenous and tribal peoples' rights and access to services strengthened.	(9) Indigenous and tribal peoples' concerns reflected in relevant policies.
CP Priority 3 – Extending social protection to the workers and their families, including migrant workers	7 – Coverage of social protection improved.	(10) Number of returnee male and female migrants covered by social protection schemes increased.
	8 – Worst forms of child labour eliminated.	(11) The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour implemented.
	9 – Management system of migration strengthened.	(12) Number of guidelines and circulars on national migration and overseas employment including bilateral agreements adopted. (13) Reduced recruitment and documentation costs for migrant male and female workers going to 2-3 specific destinations countries.
CP Priority 4: Strong and representative employers and workers organization influencing economic, social and governance policies.	10 – Improved capacity of employers contributes to effective DWCP implementation at country level	(14) Decent work principles are reflected in the formulation and implementation of BEF strategic plan.
	11 – Improved capacity of the workers organizations contributes to effective DWCP implementation at country level.	(15) NCCWE successfully reaches out to more workers and increase membership of unions and provide effective support and services to union members.

Decent Work Country Programme 2012 - 2015		
Five Priorities	12 Outcomes	16 Indicators
CP priority 5: Ratification and application of international labour standards	12 - Strengthened capacity of member states to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations.	(16) Government ratifies Maritime Labour Convention.

Alignment with Regional Priorities

At the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting held in Kyoto, Japan in December 2011, ILO's constituents called for “Implementing measures to address the challenge of creating opportunities for young women and men to enter into sustainable employment and decent work”. It also recommended support for sustainable enterprises and employment-intensive investment, development of minimum wage systems, the building of effective social protection floors, promoting greener growth and green jobs, and policies to address issues relating to youth employment and labour migration. The current DWCP for Bangladesh is well-aligned with these priorities. More specifically, the three pillars of DWCP (a) Employment generation and poverty reduction with improved productivity and competitiveness (b) Promoting Fundamental principles and rights at work through effective social dialogue and (c) Reducing vulnerabilities through basic social protection will contribute to the achievement of those regional priorities.

Implementation Strategy by Outcome

The ILO Country Office for Bangladesh has built a strong relationship with its tripartite constituents and has developed an extensive and valuable network of partners including UN agencies, development partners, NGOs and a number of local organizations active.

To achieve the objectives of the DWCP 2012-2015, the ILO will renew, develop, deepen and expand strategic partnerships with organisations which share ILO values and which can make a value added contribution. The DWCP will be undertaken within the overall United Nations Development Assistance Framework(UNDAF), agreed to and signed by the Government of Bangladesh and all the UN agencies. The implementation will also entail, where appropriate, collaboration with international and national government and non-government institutions including training institutions, universities and other institutions. Given the limited resources available, the ILO and the constituents are convinced that such strategic partnerships are vital to ensure coordination, optimal resource utilisation and targeted impact.

Outcome 1 – Skills development reforms for employability and livelihoods implemented.

Through its technical cooperation project *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform*, the ILO will support the efforts of the government and the social partners to reform the TVET system, thereby improving access for people to increase their skills and employability, in particular youth, women and people from vulnerable groups. The ILO will continue to provide its technical support for the implementation of the National Skills Development Policy adopted in 2011. The overall goal is to ensure Bangladesh’s competitiveness in the global market by improving the quality of vocational education and training.

Outcome 2 – Inclusive growth and productive employment integrated into socio-economic policies.

Employment promotion, being a cross cutting issue and involving partners beyond the traditional ILO social partners, will require ILO to reach out to other agencies and institutions including the Planning Commission, National Statistical Agency, other government line ministries, research institutions and reputed national think tanks. On-going as well as new and emerging areas like green jobs, trade and employment,youth employment, and impact of economic and financial crisis on social and labour trends, status of compliance of the core labour standards and baseline data and statistics are essential strategic issues within this outcome.

Outcome 3 – Working conditions improved.

The focus of the ILO will be (a) to assist in the implementation of the National OSH policy and action plan, ILO Code of Practice to address violence at workplace (b) to raise awareness concerning gender discrimination and violence against women in the workplace and (c) enhancing policy measures which can help improve the wage determination mechanism in the country. In that regard, an awareness and capacity building programme targeting labour inspectors, management of the enterprises and trade union representatives will be implemented. On a sectoral level, the possible establishment of a Better Work programme may provide the ready-made garment sector in Bangladesh with an opportunity to combine further growth with improved working conditions, thus improving its competitive position.

Outcome 4 – Country takes effective measures to respond and implement CEACR recommendation and including fulfilling its reporting obligations.

In Bangladesh, tripartite constituents have weak technical capacity to analyse and respond to the specific comments of the CEACR. This is in particular true in case of the government represented by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the trade unions. Ministry of Labour and Employment faces transfer of its officials as well as lacks the technical capacity to respond to the CEACR recommendations in a timely and adequate manner. It is therefore important that ILO strengthen the capacity of the Ministry as well as the two other social partners to help adequately respond to the CEACR in an effective manner. The ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work project, and the ILO-SIDA project on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining in the Rural and Export processing sectors will play an important role in this respect.

Outcome 5 – Capacities of labour administration and institutions improved.

In line with the ILO's long-standing commitment to strengthening labour administration structures and institutions to ensure they carry out their functions with greater efficiency and impact, the ILO will deepen its partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Employment. With a focus on strengthening labour inspection, further developing tripartism and sound industrial relations, and the ratification and implementation of international labour standards, the ILO believes this deepened partnership will lead to improved labour administration services. The ILO's *Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work project* and possible implementation of a Better Work programme will play an important role in this respect.

Also, ILO will support government, workers and employers to raise awareness about the rights of young people which will eventually contribute to the reduction of age-based discrimination at workplace.

Outcome 6 – Indigenous and tribal peoples' rights and access to services strengthened.

Based primarily on the principles of relevant ILO Conventions (No.107, No.169, and No.111), the ILO promotes the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in Bangladesh through its project *Building Capacities on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Issues in Bangladesh: Rights and Good Practices*. The project works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs which has a lead role in coordinating and mobilising relevant ministries and authorities to constructively engage with the indigenous rights discourse, through training, awareness raising and dialogue.

Outcome 7 – Coverage of social protection improved.

To improve the coverage of social protection, the ILO will spearhead several initiatives in certain target areas. ILO initiatives will be guided by the recently-adopted Minimum Social Protection Recommendation adopted by the ILC in June 2012. As part of the UN Country Team, the ILO will contribute to the development of a national social protection strategy currently being developed by the National Planning Commission. Through its technical cooperation projects namely "Way Out of Informality" and "Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh", the ILO will work with the relevant government institutions and other partners to improve coverage of social protection including improved migration systems and increase the protection of the migrant workers, especially female migrant workers (See also outcome 9).

Outcome 8– Worst forms of child labour eliminated.

Building on the successful work undertaken by previous child labour projects, on-going efforts led by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the planned National Child Labour Survey and the School to Work Transition Survey, the ILO will provide technical assistance for the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour in Bangladesh. Inter-agency cooperation will be encouraged to improve knowledge sharing, advocacy and technical assistance to the national partners. The Office will facilitate synergies with other relevant ILO or non ILO projects focusing on skills development.

Outcome 9 – Management system of migration strengthened.

The ILO will provide administrative and technical support to the implementation of a technical cooperation project on migration namely “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh” It aims to strengthen legal, policy and institutional capacities, improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, lay the groundwork for protective measures for male and female migrants and their families; and start monitoring and referral schemes for returning migrants. Special attention will be provided for the better regulation of private recruitment agencies in order to reduce migrant recruitment fees and costs.

Outcome 10– Improved capacity of employers contributes to effective DWCP implementation.

The ILO will continue to advocate and implement coordinated and well-planned steps towards building the capacity of the Bangladesh Employers’ Federation (BEF). Joint work planning at the beginning of the biennium and providing BEF an adequate role in on-going technical cooperation projects (TVET, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Better Work, Green Jobs, Prevention of Violence Against Women at Workplace etc.) are some of the measures that the ILO believes will improve the capacity of BEF. Together with the ILO, a strategic planning exercise was carried out by BEF in May 2012 in which key areas of joint ILO and BEF work were identified. Four strategic goals for the period 2012-16 were identified which will be aligned with the ILO DWCP.

Outcome 11– Improved capacity of workers contributes to effective DWCP implementation.

The ILO will continue to advocate and implement coordinated and well-planned steps towards building the capacity of unions in Bangladesh and promoting a unified response to the priorities and challenges the trade unions face at the country level. This approach is in line with the ILO’s principles and values and will be beneficial to the Bangladeshi trade union movement and the development of the country. The ILO will support the efforts of the National Coordination Committee for Workers’ Education (NCCWE), which is now well recognised as a partner and voice of the trade unions in the various forums. Joint work planning at the beginning of the biennium and providing the unions a more prominent role in ongoing technical cooperation projects are the two measures that the ILO believes will improve the capacity of the unions to play its due role in the implementation of the DWCP. To further boost the capacity of the trade unions, the ILO launched the Project Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in January 2012. The project will directly focus on strengthening the role of trade unions as well as strengthening the industrial machinery in Bangladesh.

With regard to outcomes 10 & 11 (i.e. capacity building of employers and workers), the ILO will also continue to promote tripartism at the country level as it has been doing in the past through its projects and programmes. New initiatives and areas of cooperation such as Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Better Work, Green Jobs, youth employment, migration, and TVET legislation will require full involvement of the unions and employers. They will therefore need to take part in the various forums and consultations so they have the opportunity to contribute to the policy and other decision-making processes. Coordination among different projects and programmes needs to be strengthened and capacity building efforts needs to be institutionalized.

Outcome 12- Strengthened capacity of member states to ratify and apply international labour standard and to fulfil their reporting obligations.

One of the ILO's core areas of work is to help its member States to ratify and apply the provisions of the ratified conventions. Also, the country has to report on ratified and non-ratified conventions. ILO focus in this respect will be to help and equip the MOLE officials and the social partners on the ratification process and fulfil their reporting obligations as a member State of ILO. Based on consultations so far with the ILO constituents, conventions which will be pursued for ratification include the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, the Minimum Age Convention, and the Domestic Workers' Convention.

Management and Evaluation

A framework to support the ILO Country programme will be put in place to give guidance and advice to the implementation of the DWCP. Ministry of Labour and Employment, BEF and NCCWE will be fully involved in the implementation and monitoring of DWCP activities. This partnership and working collaboration will be monitored through semi-annual review meetings. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed to facilitate proper evaluation of the DWCP and its contribution to the implementation of the Sixth Five Year Plan and the Decent Work Agenda.

Achievement of the outcomes of the DWCP will require the following management arrangements and actions:

- Taking a coordinated approach to implementation of the DWCP with provisions for periodic review through a tripartite mechanism involving MoLE, BEF and NCCWE.
- Developing the capacity of the tripartite constituents to play their role in implementing the DWCP will be an ongoing process and the ILO Country Office will support this process with the technical support of its Decent Work Technical Support Team in New Delhi, as well as other relevant Offices and Departments of the ILO in Bangkok and Geneva.
- Facilitating ownership of the DWCP process by ILO through their participation in the Project/Programme Advisory Committee of ILO programmes as well as implementing partners of the ILO technical cooperation projects and programmes.
- Mainstreaming of gender issues across all interventions and programmes in line with the policies of the government of Bangladesh, the UN system and the ILO including the design and implementation of gender-specific interventions based on sound gender-sensitive analysis.
- Mainstreaming of tripartism, social dialogue and normative action across all interventions and programmes involving both men and women.

The monitoring and evaluation of the DWCP allows the ILO to assess to which extent the ILO is contributing to national development initiatives, including UNDAF. Therefore, concerted efforts will also be made to monitor and evaluate the DWCP through ILO's standard mechanisms developed for this purpose in line with the ILO guidelines for monitoring and evaluation.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the undersigned workers' and employers' organizations, and the International Labor Organization (ILO), represented by the International Labor Office (referred collectively as Parties), wish to collaborate in order to promote and advance decent work in Bangladesh.

Now therefore, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

1. The Parties affirms their commitment to collaborate in the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP).

The following are agreed as priorities of the DWCP:

Priority 1: Generating productive employment with improved sustainable enterprises and skills development

Priority 2: Fundamental principles and rights at work promoted and implemented through effective social dialogue

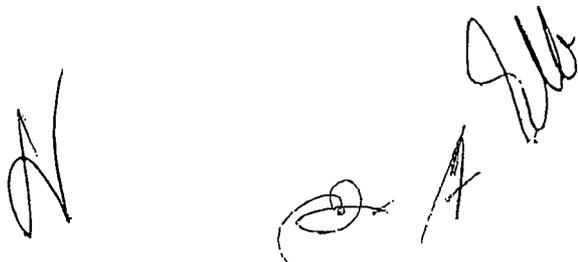
Priority 3: Extending social protection to the workers and their families, including migrant workers

Priority 4: Strong and representative employers and workers organizations influencing economic, social and governance policies.

Priority 5: Ratification and application of international labour standards.

2. The ILO agrees to assist in mobilization of resources and to provide technical cooperation in the implementation of the DWCP, subject to its rules, regulations, directives and procedures, the availability of funds and conditions to be agreed upon in writing.
3. In relation to DWCP and to any related activities of the ILO in the country, the Government will apply to the ILO the provisions of the Agreement signed on 25 May 1973 between the International Labour Organization and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh concerning the establishment of an office of the organization in Dhaka.
4. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be modified by agreement between the Parties.

Nothing in or relating to this MOU shall be construed as a constituting a waiver of privileges and immunities enjoyed by the ILO.

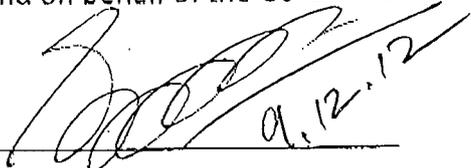


The DWCP is attached to this MOU. In the event that the terms contained in the DWCP document are incompatible with the terms of this MOU, including the provisions referenced in article 3, then the latter shall govern and prevail.

The original of the MOU has been written and signed in English. If this MOU is translated into another language, the English version shall govern and prevail.

This MOU, superseding all communications on this matter between the Parties, shall enter into force with effect from its signature by the authorized representatives of the Parties.

For and on behalf of the Government



9.12.12

Mikail Shipar
Secretary

Ministry of Labour and Employment

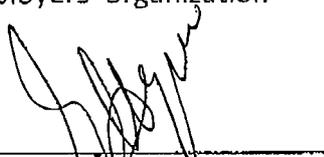
For and on behalf of the
International Labour Office



André Bogui
Country Director

ILO Country Office for Bangladesh

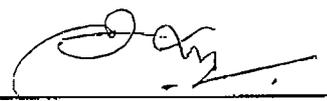
For and on behalf of
Employers' organization



Md. Faqul Hoque
President

Bangladesh Employers' Federation

For and on behalf of
Workers' organization



Shafiuddin Ahmed
Chairman

National Coordination Committee for
Workers Education