



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

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Media release

ILO-ICFTU/APRO project on skills development and vocational training for tsunami-affected people launched

The "ILO-ICFTU/APRO Project on Skills Development and Vocational Training for the Tsunami-affected People" was launched at the Campus of the Small Industries Service Institute (SISI) in Chennai on 20th December 2005 in collaboration with the INTUC and HMS as project implementing partners.

Around 140 people representing the ILO, ICFTU-APRO, the Government of Tamil Nadu, the SISI, national and local trade unions and project beneficiaries, attended the launch ceremony.

Ms. Leyla Tegmo-Reddy, Director, ILO-Sub Regional Office (SRO), New Delhi, Mr. N.M. Adyanthaya, ILO Governing Body Member, Mr. Pong-Sul Ahn, Senior Specialist on Workers' Activities, ILO, Ms. Susamma Varghese, National Co-ordinator, ILO, Mr. Subramaniam Kandiah, Divisional Director, Administration and Co-ordination, ICFTU-APRO, Mr. G.M. Ambhore, Director, SISI, Chennai, Mr. R.A. Mital, National Secretary, HMS, Mr. Murugesan, National Secretary, INTUC and Mr. Walter. I. Davaram, Indian Police Service (Retired), Vice-president, Sports Development Authority, the Government of Tamil Nadu were among them.

The SISI has a partnership with the ILO in providing this skills development and vocational training for the beneficiaries. The project will be implemented in two districts - Nagapattinam and Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu. The project is aiming to train around 3,000 tsunami-affected people mainly targeting fishers, youth and women.

The launch meeting began with a minute of silence to commemorate the first anniversary of the tsunami, which claimed tens of thousands of lives, damaged property and led to loss of means of income.

Ms. Leyla Tegmo-Reddy, Director, ILO SRO launched the project for the first batch of 40 trainees nominated by INTUC and HMS. In her inaugural address, she highlighted the need for creating alternative livelihood options for victims in the tsunami-affected areas, saying that the immediate focus of the ILO is on rebuilding the confidence of the communities, especially vulnerable groups like youth, women and fishers, by reviving, recovering and creating income generation opportunities. This project, being implemented in collaboration with ICFTU affiliates, INTUC and HMS, is in keeping with the overall response strategy of the ILO with regard to the restoration of

livelihoods. Ms. Tegmo-Reddy appreciated Mr. Noriyuki Suzuki, General-Secretary, ICFTU /APRO for initiating and supporting this project.

Addressing the launch meeting, Mr. N.M. Adyanthaya, ILO Governing Body Member pointed out that disaster preparedness training for affected communities is essential. Such training would enable people to face future natural disasters with courage. Mr. Adyanthaya encouraged the beneficiaries present at the gathering to avail the opportunity to build their self-confidence and empower themselves. "The success of any project depends fifty per cent on the organisation and the remaining fifty per cent on the beneficiaries", he said. He urged the beneficiaries to successfully complete the training and then train more people on the field in order to increase the impact of the project. He also highlighted the contribution of the ICFTU/APRO to the Trade Union movement and stressed the importance of this project in supporting the rebuilding of livelihoods of the affected people.

Speaking on behalf of Mr. Noriyuki Suzuki, General Secretary, ICFTU-APRO, Mr. Subramaniam Kandiah, Divisional Director, Administration and Co-ordination, ICFTU-APRO said that he was pleased to launch the project. He warmly welcomed the beneficiaries and the participants and introduced the project, saying that this project was based on a close collaboration between the ICFTU/APRO and the ILO. He stressed that this project would be greatly helpful to the beneficiaries in securing gainful employment. He expressed his special thanks to Mr. Shinichi Hasegawa, Regional Director, Asia and the Pacific, ILO for his continued support to this ILO-ICFTU/APRO partnership project. He also appreciated the ILO and JTUC-RENGO for their support and contribution. A similar skills development project was launched in Aceh, Indonesia on 19 December 2005, he said.

Outlining the training available at the institute, Mr. G.M.Ambhore, Director, SISI said that skills training made youth more employable than acquisition of degrees. He assured the ILO of continued support to the initiative through SISI.

Chief guest Mr. Walter I. Davaram, I.P.S. (Retd.), Vice-president, Sports Development Authority, Tamil Nadu expressed his appreciation for the ILO-ICFTU initiative. He said that at the outset after the tsunami, relief operations had taken place on a large-scale but had shortly disappeared. This project providing alternative livelihood would help beneficiaries to build their future lives. He stressed that the responsibilities for successful training now lay with the trainees themselves.

Mr. R.A. Mital, National Secretary, HMS said that the project was unique as it was focused on empowerment of the beneficiaries and the welfare of the community as a whole. He said that education is important for long-term employment and this project meets that requirement. He stressed the importance of community mobilization and advocacy in accelerating the rehabilitation of the affected people. He concluded with a request to the beneficiaries to disseminate the knowledge gained to others. He also called for the Trade Unions to organize the unorganised including the tsunami-affected victims.

Mr. Pong Sul Ahn, Senior Specialist on Workers' Activities, ILO-SRO, New Delhi proposed the vote of thanks to each and every person on the dias as well as the participants on the floor. Mr. Ahn stated that this small gathering was extremely important for several reasons. First, the project will strengthen the technical partnership

between the ILO and ICFTU. Therefore, the presence of ILO representatives, Ms. Tegmo-Reddy and Mr. Adyanthaya was appreciated as it represented the full support of the ILO to the project. He also thanked Mr. Kandiah for his role played as a focal point of the ICFTU-APRO in finalizing this project. Secondly, the project will enhance the cooperation and relationship between the national and local trade unions through the implementation process. The participation of central union leaders, Mr. Mital, HMS and Mr. Murugesan, INTUC shows their solidarity and full support to the project. Thirdly, the project will help the beneficiaries to build alternative livelihoods as well as reconstruct the affected communities through those trained. He expressed his gratitude to several other people who contributed towards organising the launch meeting and ensuring its success.

The launch meeting concluded with a visit by the participants and project beneficiaries to the training facilities of SISI led by Mr. G.M.Ambhore, Director, SISI and instructors.

For more information, contact:

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