

# ILO COLOMBO e-newsletter

## National Tripartite Consultation on Ratification of ILO Convention C-122



The Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations with the support of the ILO held a national tripartite consultation workshop to explore the possibility of ratification of ILO Employment Policy Convention (C-122). The workshop was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 at the Taj Samudra Hotel, Colombo.

The workshop was addressed by Hon. Gamini Lokuge, Minister of Labour and Labour Relations, Hon. DEW Gunasekara, Senior Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Mr. Ravi Peiris, Director General, Employers' Federation of Ceylon and representatives from the trade unions.

Sri Lanka has ratified 40 conventions including the eight ILO core conventions and ratifying Convention C-122 will help to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment and to implement the National Human Resources and Employment Policy.

## New Year Message from the Country Director – Mr Donglin Li

Dear Friends,

As the year 2013 draws to a close, I am sure there is much that all of us can be proud of. I am extremely appreciative of all your cooperation, support and commitment provided to ILO over the past year.

The year 2013 saw us marking several significant milestones in the ILO calendar. Notable among them were the signing of the Sri Lanka Decent Work Country Programme 2013-2017 together with our tripartite partners and launching of the National Human Resource and Employment Policy. Through our eight projects we have continued to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

The ILO and its tripartite partners are committed to collaborate and implement the Sri Lanka Decent Work Country Programme to address three priorities, e.g. Promotion of full, decent and productive employment and enabling environment for competitive, sustainable enterprise development; strengthening democratic governance of the labour market and; social inclusion and the establishment of a social protection floor.

There is a lot we can be happy and proud of as this year ends.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014!

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## Launching the Code of Ethical Conduct, Pre-departure Training Guides and Safe Labour Migration Information Package on International Migrants Day 2013



### Code of Ethical Conduct

The Government with the assistance of the ILO introduced a Code of Ethical Conduct (CoEC) for foreign employment agents, to minimize the actions of errant foreign employment promoters and regularize registered foreign employment agents.

The CoEC, considered as the first of its kind in South Asia has been developed in all three languages and approved by the Board of Management of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE).

Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare Minister Hon. Dilan Perera at the launch of the CoEC said "there has been a long felt need for a guide on how the recruitment industry should operate to ensure professionalism and discipline in the industry, but, most importantly, to ensure that migrant workers' rights are protected during the recruitment process and period of employment overseas". The CoEC covers areas such as, professional conduct, compliance with laws, respecting diversity, dignified recruitment, pre-departure training and confidentiality.



### Pre-departure Training Guides

39 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) 3 level trainer and trainee guides have been developed to standardize the SLBFE's 21-day mandatory pre-departure training programme aimed at domestic sector job expectants. The full set of guides consist 28 functional guides covering domestic cooking, cleaning, basic care giving for elderly, children, persons with disabilities and common competencies and 10 language guides covering Arabic, English, Hebrew, Greek, Mandarin, Cantonese and Hindi.

The main purpose of developing these guides was to ensure standardized competency based training was conducted throughout the country to ensure prospective migrants are aware of their job demands and have a better understanding of effective service delivery. The guides are available in all three languages.

### Safe Labour Migration Information Package

This easy to use Safe Labour Migration Information Package was developed with a view to help local level officers of the SLBFE, officers attached to Divisional Secretariats such as Women Development officers, Samurdhi officers and Planning officers to share up to date and accurate information on safe migration among prospective migrants, returnees and the local communities. The full range of information contained within the labour migration cycle is expanded upon in the information package. Guides have been prepared in Sinhala and Tamil languages.

These publications were developed under the Project on Promoting Decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring effective implementation of the National Labour Migration Policy funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

## ILO and EFC successfully complete pilot project on SCORE



A pilot project on 'Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises' (SCORE), facilitated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Employers Federation of Ceylon (EFC), came to an end in October resulting in substantial workplace cooperation improvements in selected local entities.

Whilst the SCORE project currently operates in eight other countries such as China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, South Africa, Ghana, and Colombia; in Sri Lanka the project started off by providing training for six selected enterprises.

The selected enterprises for the program were, Interplast Asia, Ceymac Rubber Co., Trelleborg Lanka, Metric Products, International Trimmings, and Associated Battery Manufacturers.

Aimed at strengthening collaboration and communication between managers and workers, the objective of the training was to boost quality and productivity, improve working conditions, reduce environmental footprint, and make enterprises more competitive in national and global markets.

At the conference held by the ILO together with EFC to mark the successful end of the pilot project, it was observed that by following the SCORE program the selected organizations not only saw an improvement in communication between employees and their superiors, but also saw a reduction in wastage during production, fewer workplace accidents, reduced absenteeism, and maximum utilization of available resources.

Mr. W. J. L. U. Wijeweera, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives and Mr. Ravi Peiris, Director General, Employers' Federation of Ceylon addressed the gathering.

## ILO conducts sensitization sessions on Safe Labour Migration for SLBFE District level staff

ILO is currently supporting the SLBFE to take accurate and up to date safe labour migration information to the local level and assisted in the developed of a Safe Labour Migration Information package. The package is aimed at field level officers of the SLBFE and other local government officers who are in a position share safe migration information to job seekers, returnees and local communities.

A Training of Trainers group consisting SLBFE District Resource centre Managers, Assistant Managers and Development Officers have led the conduct of cascade District level sensitization programmes on the Safe Migration Information Package in Anuradhapura, Galle, Gampaha, Kandy, Kurunegala, and Puttalam. The programmes have so far covered 135 officers who are working at Divisional Secretariat level.

The package will be further piloted at village level in the above districts through the project on Promoting Decent work through good governance, protection and empowerment of migrant workers: Ensuring effective implementation of the National Labour Migration Policy funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)..



## National Workshop on Dispute Settlement & Social Dialogue Strategy for the Public Sector

A National Workshop on Dispute Settlement and Social Dialogue Strategy for the Public Sector was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 at the Grand Monarch Hotel. The workshop was organized by the Senior Ministers' Secretariat with the support of the ILO.

The objective of the workshop was to share the experiences of the implementation of the pilot phase, to create awareness among the trade unions and the officials of the relevant Ministries on the proposed Dispute Settlement and Social Dialogue strategy in the public service and to enlist their support for the effective implementation of the strategy.

The event was addressed by Hon. Maithripala Sirisena, Minister of Health, Hon. W.D.J. Seneviratne, Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs, Hon. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Minister (Senior) for Good Governance and Infrastructure Development, Mr. Mahinda Madihahewa, Secretary, Senior Ministers' Secretariat and Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Speaking at the inaugural session, ILO Country Director, Donglin Li said "social dialogue is particularly important in the face of the globalization process. The ILO has been undertaking technical assistance and cooperation in the country to build the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to engage in social dialogue from which both sides can benefit."

## Training Tomorrow's Leaders Today



The second in a series of four workshops titled "Training Tomorrow's Leaders Today" was held on 16 December 2013 at the Hotel Janaki in Colombo, by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF).

The training is aimed at developing skills of the second level leadership in the affiliated trade unions of the NTUF. About thirty 2nd level leaders of trade unions such as the Sri Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya (SLNSS), Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya (JSS), Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU) among others, participated in this event. This series of workshops is being funded by ACTRAV under the Social Dialogue theme of the Decent Work Country Programme of Sri Lanka.



The second workshop consisted of several modules covering Sri Lankan employment legislation such as the Establishment Code, Industrial Disputes Act, Wages Ordinance and the Shop & Office Employees' Act among others. In addition, participants gained an understanding of grievance handling procedures, occupational safety and health, women and children in employment as well as social security legislation such as Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), Employees' Trust Fund (ETF) and other benefit schemes.

At the training, ILO presented the module on Skills Development on Communication & Media for Trade Unions where participants practiced the concepts learnt by designing their specific issue-based communication campaigns.

The next two phases of the training is expected to take place in 2014.



## Launch of Study on “Employment Challenges in the Maldives”

The Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sport, Government of the Maldives, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly hosted the launch of a study on the “Employment Challenges in the Maldives” and a consultation on employment policy options on 9 December 2013 at the STELCO Conference Hall, Male.

The Hon. Mohamed Maleeh Jamaal, Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr. Donglin Li, ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and Mohamed Mahid Shareef, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports addressed the gathering.

Employment is arguably the most pressing challenge facing the Maldives. The high rate of unemployment and discouragement, especially among young Maldivians, is a critical priority. The workshop will present the findings of an ILO-sponsored study on “Employment Challenges in the Maldives”, which identifies five areas for action:

- Economic diversification through the promotion of second-tier growth centres.
- Education and skills development
- Interventions targeting youth.
- Managing the expatriate workforce.
- Establishing a labour market information system, and better monitoring and evaluation.

## A Workplace Gender Policy and Guideline



The ILO in collaboration with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) launched the “Maximizing Benefits – Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development” A workplace Gender Policy and Guideline on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 at the Taj Samudra Hotel in Colombo.

The proposed model policy for the private sector was developed by the EFC with technical support from the ILO. The Code of Conduct and Guidelines to Prevent and Address Sexual Harassment in the Workplace was also presented at the same event.

## Promoting Gender Equity/Equality in Sri Lankan Universities

The Centre for Gender Studies of the Kelaniya University with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (CGSUK) and the ILO organized a workshop titled ‘Promoting Gender Equity/Equality in Sri Lankan Universities’ which was held from the 29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2013 at Hotel Renuka in Colombo.

The workshop brought together senior academics and administrators committed to initiating and promoting social and gender issues within universities. Participants representing all 15 state universities were deliberated on ways and means of enhancing gender equity/equality in University policy, governance, curricular institutional practice and culture.

A panel of speakers including Consultant to the Association of Commonwealth Universities Gender Programme Dr. Jasbir Singh, who provided a statistical overview of ‘Women in Leadership and Management in Higher Education in Commonwealth Universities’, Prof of Education of the OUSL Chandra Gunawardena addressed those present.

Director Media Unit University of Kelaniya Prof. Mapa Thilakarathna said that in 2012 the CGSUK conducted an international conference together with the ACU titled ‘Critical Women: Women as Agents of Change through Higher Education’



## ILO's LEED Project generates Employment Opportunities in the North

### Fruit Processing Centre – Puliyankulam, Vavuniya

The Local Empowerment through Economic Development (LEED) Project inaugurated a Fruit Processing Centre in Puliyankulam, Vavuniya at a ceremony held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2013.

Funded by the Government of Australia, implemented by the ILO, the opening of the Fruit Processing Centre was attended by Ms Robyn Moudie, Acting High Commissioner, Australian High Commission, Colombo, Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The Chief Guest for the opening was the Provincial Minister for Health, Northern Province.

Speaking at the opening of the Fruit Processing Centre, H.E. Ms Robyn Moudie congratulated the ILO LEED project, ILO Colombo and the partner organizations and departments for the remarkable work done in opening a fruit processing center with the support from an exporter. She indicated that the work done by the ILO LEED was remarkable and would be an ideal model for the development agencies to follow-on.

ILO Country Director, Mr. Donglin Li mentioned that the innovative public private joint venture has created lucrative income opportunities for over 200 vulnerable people and is gradually empowering them through their cooperative.

The Provincial Minister for Health appreciated the ILO's contribution in the North specially in creating employment and incomes for the poor.



### Rice Mill – Visuvamadu, Mullaitivu

The LEED project's interventions in the paddy sector have concentrated on providing assistance to reestablish local milling capacity for medium size cooperative mills and small local mills. To date the project has supported two medium scale mills to reestablish milling capacity.

The third rice mill was opened on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 by Mr. Steven Wawrzonek, First Secretary - Development Cooperation Australian High Commission, Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The Chief Guest for the opening was Mr. C.V. Vigneshwaran, Hon. Chief Minister of the Northern Province.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, First Secretary, Mr. Steven Wawrzonek noted the unique model pursued by the ILO LEED Project in building capacities of northern producer organizations and MSMEs so that they can compete with and or partner with southern based businesses. It involves building linkages through trade to enhance dialogue, breaking the invisible cultural barriers between the North and South.

ILO Country Director, Mr. Donglin Li thanked the central and provincial governments, local level partners, cooperatives and provincial level authorities for their continuous support for the ILO LEED project and promised to carry on the development work in the coming years.

Chief Minister, Mr. C.V. Vigneshwaran praised the role played by the ILO and the Government of Australia in terms of creating new employment and for their efforts to develop the economy in the North.

## ILO partners EDEX to launch "EDEX job fair 2014"



Recognizing the important role played by EDEX for the past ten years, International Labour Organization (ILO), will partner with EDEX Expo to launch their inaugural "Job Fair" to be held in January 2014.

EDEX will introduce its inaugural 'Job Fair' on a national scale concurrent with Sri Lanka's largest education exhibition - EDEX Expo 2014 at BMICH, Colombo with the aim of facilitating decent employment opportunities for youth.

Speaking on the occasion of signing the service agreement, ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Donglin Li said 'In keeping with our strategic objectives the ILO supports creating greater opportunities for women and men to decent and productive employment, whilst enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all. Therefore we are happy to partner with EDEX in this timely endeavour'.

The inaugural EDEX Job Fair will unveil a new paradigm in recruitment in Sri Lanka and will provide an opportunity for youth ready for the "world of work" to interact directly with Employers and understand the expectations of the job market and seek timely employment.

Hailing the ILO endorsement as a huge encouragement for his passionate team of volunteers Chairman EDEX Kamal Abeysinghe said 'Leading corporates from a diverse mix of sectors among the most preferred employers by the youth are expected to participate at the 'EDEX Job Fair 2014'.

EDEX Job Fair 2014 is being supported by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), SLASSCOM, Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC), Organization of Professional Associations (OPA), Old Royalists Human Resource Professionals Association (ORHRPA) and Career Guidance Counselors Association of Sri Lanka.

## Poverty Reduction through Tourism



ILO launched its toolkit on poverty reduction through tourism on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2013, at the Chef's Guild awards ceremony held at Bandaranaike International Convention Centre, Colombo. The launch was followed by a workshop carried out by ILO in collaboration with the Chefs Guild of Sri Lanka to introduce the toolkit to stakeholders at the Taj Samudra Hotel.

Introduced in 2011 for universal use, mainly in developing and least developed countries (LDCs), the toolkit focuses on how tourism can drive rural poverty reduction. It details a vision for an inclusive pro-poor tourism industry.

From a local perspective, the introduction of the toolkit is a timely intervention. Tourism has been identified as a major thrust industry receiving top priority of the government. Prime among targets set for tourism will be the registration of 2.5 million tourist arrivals and the provision of jobs for 500,000 persons through direct employment within the tourist industry by the year 2016. Tourism benefits are envisaged to filter into rural economies benefitting the rural communities. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the industry particularly at a rural level among all stakeholders and the low skill levels within the industry are concerns to be addressed on a priority basis. The toolkit localized and used at a rural level among small and medium enterprises and other stakeholders is expected to create the desired impact.

The workshop created a discussion through which valuable inputs could be generated towards adapting the toolkit to the Sri Lankan context.

Wolfgang Weinz, Senior Tourism Specialist from the sectoral department of ILO in Geneva officially introduced the toolkit at its launch on 5 August. Weinz provided an overview of the toolkit at the introductory workshop on 6 August 2013. The introduction of the five key chapters at the workshop was done by ILO Expert SCORE (Sustainable Competitive Responsible Enterprises), Dilip de Silva. ILO National Consultant Priantha Fernando expanded on, "How will the ILO tourism toolkit benefit SMEs in Sri Lanka".

## ILO and Watawala Plantations PLC commemorate World AIDS Day 2013

ILO in partnership with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon and the Watawala Plantations Southern Cluster comprising 4 estates and the Oil Palm Mill commemorated the WAD 2013 on the 30th November 2013. Sixty five peer educators trained by the ILO and the management organized several activities to create awareness among nearly 2500 estate employees and community members. The activities included street drama performances, poster completions for children (12- 18yrs) and adults (over 18yrs), inter-estate AIDS cricket matches, quiz completions and a tent completion.

The highlight of the event was conducting a Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) clinic by the Mahamodera Provincial Hospital, at which 53 women and 49 men volunteered to get tested for HIV. Several approaches were used by the peer educators to promote VCT. These included interpersonal and group discussions, announcements, sale of raffle tickets with attractive prizes drawn at the WAD event, distribution of leaflets with the November pay packets and displaying banners and posters promoting 'Knowing your status'. In recognition of the contribution to the success of the HIV prevention intervention on Watawala Plantation and the VCT clinic the peer educators received certificates, identity cards and caps.



Street Drama Training Session



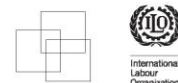
Poster Competition



VCT Clinic in Progress



Street Drama Performance



**HIV Helpline: 0112 667 163**

Happyline 0112 588 488, SMS - 071 6 408 408

