

Tripartite Workshop on Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) Research Findings: Agro-Processing sector and Pharmaceutical Sector

International Labour Organization (ILO) and Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) jointly organized a technical workshop on the research findings of a study on the agro-processing sector and the pharmaceuticals sector. The workshop was held on 7 and 8 December 2011 at the BEF Conference Hall in Dhaka. It intended to share the preliminary findings on skill demands for current and future needs of two important export sectors: agro-processing and pharmaceuticals industry.

Representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Commerce, Export Promotion Bureau and the ILO officials were present at the event. The workshop was also attended by a number of representatives from key agro-processing and pharmaceuticals industries and also by the different trade bodies, workers organizations and research institutes.



A snapshot from the workshop on the survey findings on pharmaceutical sector

Mr. Arthur E. Shears, Chief Technical Adviser of the Technical and Vocational Training Education (TVET) Reform Project of Bangladesh welcomed the participants while Mr Erik von Uexkull, of ILO Trade and Employment Programme presented the initial findings of the skill scenario of the agro- processing and pharmaceuticals sector of Bangladesh. The survey findings were presented by the national consultants Mr. Pradip Bhowmik (agro-processing sector) and Mr Mridul Biswas (pharmaceuticals sector).

The workshop discussed the findings of the baseline survey which was conducted in November this year. The objective of this baseline survey was to use the information from the survey findings to formulate guidelines for developing strategic skills and policies for the agro-processing and pharmaceutical sectors, and to assess the training needs of the anticipated areas of skills development in these sectors.

On 7 December the participants and the stakeholders discussed various issues regarding the skill challenges and future skill needs for agro-processing industry. After discussions, the participants unanimously agreed that (i) enhanced capacity for improved regulatory compliance, (ii) safe food handling and cold chain management, (iii) sourcing high-quality agricultural inputs, (iv) quality inspection, and (v) international marketing were the most important priority areas where Bangladeshi agro-processing sector needed to improve capability and skills development.



Snapshot from the workshop on the survey findings on agro-processing sector

On 8 December, the participants and the stakeholders discussed the skills development needs and bottlenecks of the pharmaceutical industry. After threadbare discussions, the participants agreed that (i) enhanced capacity for improved regulatory compliance, (ii) setting up the specialized industrial park for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients,

(iii) linkages between the industry needs and academia and training institutions, (iv) international marketing, and (v) more effective regulations were the most important priority areas where Bangladeshi pharmaceutical sector needed to improve capability and skills development.

Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) is an analytical tool developed by the ILO. Its purpose is to provide guidance for the design of strategic education and training policies that contribute to trade development and economic diversification and foster the creation of decent employment. STED methodology is meant to assist the governments and the constituents in anticipating skill demands for current and future labour market needs and the need to diversify domestic economic structure. This methodology was applied for the first time in Ukraine and is planned to apply in Macedonia and in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh STED activities consist of identification and conduct research on two sectors: agro-processing and pharmaceutical industry which have the potential to contribute significantly towards economic diversification and employment creation.