

Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy And its Application in Bangladesh

10 June 2013

No. 2

The Labour Migration Project **NEWS**



International
Labour
Organization

Towards a new overseas employment policy for Bangladesh

The Ministry of Expatriates 'Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) has initiated a revision of the Overseas Employment Policy 2006, with the objective to elaborate a new instrument taking into account current challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh and its workers in the sector of labour migration. The policy to be developed with technical support from the ILO is to provide a comprehensive labour migration framework with a particular focus on the protection of migrant workers. A first day-long stakeholder consultation was convened on 15 May and was attended by about 65 representatives from civil society organizations, academic experts, workers' and employer's organizations. The need to strengthen protection mechanisms to support migrant workers in the countries of destination was raised by different stakeholders, highlighting the crucial role of the Bangladeshi missions and labour attaches on site. Issues such as health and social protection while abroad and upon return were also raised by the participants, in particular for women and most vulnerable migrant workers. Discussions also showed recognition of the positive role to play by the private sector when engaging in recruiting activities with social responsibility commitment, and the need for the government to install an efficient oversight mechanism to regulate recruitment and labour migration. Technical consultations were also conducted with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), where the DG and here directors provided numerous inputs on the processing of outgoing migrant workers and mechanisms to provide appropriate skills training and pre-departure information. Needs for efficient social protection and support services to the migrant workers while abroad were also discussed to be addressed in the new policy. A round table was organized with the Human Development Research Institute (HDRC), where key findings from five research studies commissioned by the ILO to inform the policy revision process were discussed and presented in the consultation with the stakeholders. Honorable Minister, H.E. Khandker Mosharraf Hossein, was met for his comments both prior and after this first round of consultations ahead of the drafting process. Based on these initial inputs and recommendations, the new Overseas Employment Policy will be drafted and submitted in a second stakeholder consultation and an interministerial meeting next month. It is expected to finalize the draft Overseas Employment Policy 2013 by the end of August 2013.



Training on policy and legislative frameworks

A series of training workshops will be conducted by the Project on labour migration policy regime, national legal frameworks and recruitment and migration costs. Trade unions, civil society, authorities and recruitment agencies will be addressed in distinct sessions until the end of the year. The first workshop will take place on 15 June 2013 and is organized together with the National Coordination Committee for Worker's Education (NCCWE) for a group of 40 trade unionists. The trainings will present and discuss the proposed Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers Bill 2013 and the current revision of the Overseas Employment Policy 2006, with comparative analysis of policies and legal instruments from countries of origin and destination. These trainings have for objective to improve the understanding and capacity of stakeholders in labour migration governance and application of labour standards to migrant workers.



DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.

Key
Implementing
Partners:



International
Labour
Organization

**Promoting Decent Work through
Improved Migration Policy and its
Application in Bangladesh**

Funded by:

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

ILO Constituents:
Workers
Government of Bangladesh
Employers

The Project in brief:

Objectives:

1. Strengthened policy and institutional frameworks to improve migration management and the protection of migrant workers
2. Improved operational efficiency and effectiveness in overseas employment promotion under protected conditions, including the reduction of migration costs
3. Strengthened social protection for migrant workers available in the countries of destination and upon return.

Beneficiaries

Potential, outgoing and returning migrant workers are the ultimate project beneficiaries. Women migrant workers constitute a specific target group and are given special attention in the overall project delivery.

Main partners

Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE)
Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

Other Key Partners

Employers' organization
Workers' organizations
IOM
UNWOMEN
CSOs

Donor



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Project duration

July 2011 - June 2015

Building a framework for safe labour migration

How do you say "I need to take leave next Friday, Madam" in Arabic? Migrant workers provided before departure with appropriate life skills and country-specific information are more likely to fulfil the expected requirements in a different work environment and to address any difficulties faced with their foreign employers. The Project started supporting the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) to improve their delivery of pre-departure sessions to migrant workers. Manual for trainers, new curricula, country-specific manuals and training of trainers will be developed in a partnership with the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU). Skills in languages are also key competences and both significantly increase employability and reduce vulnerability in the countries of destination. Technical training centres from BMET are in the process to be equipped through the Project with language labs for provisions of skills in Arabic and English. The teachers will be trained on the new curricula for both languages, which will be specifically adapted to answer the needs of the migrant workers.

Women migrant workers While women constitute only 6% percent of the migrant workers outflow from Bangladesh, they are particularly at risk in the migration process and vulnerable to abuses at work place – which is often a private house as many are employed as domestic workers. Through all its activities, the Project puts a particular emphasis on addressing the need to improve services and protection standards for women migrant workers. An implementation partner to the Project, UN WOMEN has recently started some preparatory work to carry out key outputs to improve access to overseas employment and strengthen the protection framework for women migrant workers from Bangladesh: a baseline survey for awareness raising activities for potential female workers is presently conducted in selected districts; an external labour market analysis has been initiated to explore opportunities for women migrant workers in more than ten countries of destination. Initial work to develop structures and services to support reintegration of returnee migrant workers has started with a mapping of service providers.

Inauguration Honorable Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain and SDC Director General Martin Dahinden inaugurated the ILO Labour Migration Project office on 11 March 2013. Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, Secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Urs Herren, Swiss Ambassador in Bangladesh, and Mr. Gagan Rajbhandari, ILO Officer-in-Charge, also spoke at the event, attended by Ministry and BMET officials, project partners and media representatives.



Coming up The Intergovernmental Regional Seminar on Promoting Cooperation for Safe Migration and Decent Work organized by the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment from 01-02 July 2013 in Dhaka. Senior officials from countries of origin and destination will discuss key migrant workers protection issues and explore regional cooperation for the labour rights protection of the migrant workers. The Seminar is funded by the SDC and is technically assisted by the ILO.

Decent work in overseas employment