

## DHAKA SKILLS DECLARATION 2016

### ANNOUNCED AS THE OUTCOME OF TRIPARTITE DIALOGUE TITLED, “DHAKA SUMMIT ON SKILLS, EMPLOYABILITY, AND DECENT WORK 2016”

Held on 11-13 December 2016, in Dhaka, Bangladesh

#### Introduction

We, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE), representing the government, employers and workers, respectively, do hereby jointly declare the outcome of the 3-day tripartite dialogue titled, “**Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability, and Decent Work 2016**” in the context of ILO's Centenary Initiative on the theme of “**Future of Work**” on 11-13 December 2016 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and pledge ourselves to implement the same, as set forth below:

#### Attaining Vision and Objectives

- I. We assure our contribution to the ‘**employment-led growth model**’ by taking appropriate initiatives for skilling people, creating new employment opportunities, and enhancing the employability of our workforce in order to realize the national objective of Vision 2021, and thus to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by the Year 2021.
- II. We reaffirm, in line with our national circumstances, development context and national policies, our **commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** of reducing poverty, eliminating hunger, promoting a safer environment and workplace, and responsible production and consumption, among others, by appropriate actions to **create jobs and develop human capital**.
- III. We reiterate our determination to use **all policy tools** – monetary, fiscal, and structural - to achieve measurable and significant progress within the Year 2021 in skills development and capacity building, leading to a **better competitive edge** in the global supply chain.

#### Improving Regional Cooperation

- IV. In near future, we aim to align our trade and employment related policies to effectively and efficiently use the leverage of Bangladesh's strategic geographic location to turn the country into a **regional hub for trade, transport, and logistics** by **adding value in manufacturing, processing and service industries**.
- V. We shall continue to regularly interact with the organizations responsible for promoting skills and employment among the regional countries and exchange pertinent

information and “**best practices**” with them with the objective to create a **regional forum on skills development**, and move towards **regional standardization** of skills.

VI. We, therefore, request the ILO to consider setting up **an International Training Center in Bangladesh as a regional ILO center for South and South East Asia**.

VII. **Strengthening National Policy and Regulatory Frameworks**

**Our efforts in this area will focus on:**

VIII. Rendering support to expedite the finalization and promulgation of a **National Skills Development and Employment Act**, and formulation of Rules to set up an appropriate **national skills development authority (NSDA)**.

IX. Expanding the scope for **National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF)** to widen the coverage in terms of the number of qualifications for technical, vocational and professional courses.

X. Promoting equitable private sector participation in managing the **National Human Resources Development Fund (NHRDF)**.

XI. Supporting the effective implementation of the provisions in **Chapter 18 of Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, on apprenticeship, and amending its Rules to expedite and widen the apprenticeship practices**.

XII. Establishing an “**ICT enabled online, interactive and real time Labour Market Information System**” where the workers can learn about the training and employment opportunities and the employers will know where they can find the specific skill.

XIII. Expanding the assessment and certification system through **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** for various skills and trades throughout the country, with specific arrangements for recognizing and utilizing the skills and experience of **returning migrant workers**.

**Development of Skills and Human Capital**

XIV. Acknowledging the importance of migration and inward remittance, we pledge to align our skills development programs with the needs of the overseas labor markets, and promote a **safe, transparent, accountable, and efficient migration**.

XV. We strongly feel that our efforts in reforming primary, secondary, tertiary and professional education, and technical and vocational training should progressively focus on **innovation and ability for customized production of goods and services considering the present and future trends at the global context**. An enabling environment for innovation ecosystem through academy-industry partnership should also be created.

XVI. The urgent need to set up **Centers of Excellence in management and professional education and training** in collaboration with institutions in the public and private sectors to stem the financial outflow for expatriate managers and technical professionals and ensure the permeability between technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and professional education and training (TPVET)

### **Sustainable Position in the Global Supply Chain**

XVII. In order to secure our position in the **global supply chain** of goods and services in a sustainable manner, we shall strive to restructure our competitive advantages based on **higher productivity** instead of the current basis of **low wages**.

XVIII. Acknowledging the challenges of the increasing cost of doing business arising from the requirements of social and environmental compliance, we shall effectively engage with the international community of clients and consumers to persuade them to **bear a fair share of the costs**.

### **Investment Mobilization**

XIX. We underscore the importance of **public and private investments** in developing human capital and measures that promote inclusive socio-economic development and **sustainable growth, green technology and green jobs** with meaningful support from the development partners in line with the national development goals.

XX. We recognize the importance of an *effective national planning process* to ensure adequate investments in physical infrastructure with matching **investment in education and skills, and institutional capacity building** with a view to maximizing the benefits of demographic dividends and gainful employment of the country's youth population. Cognizant of the **need for aligning skills development initiatives** with the ongoing and future reforms in trade policies, we intend to provide necessary support to develop the human capital to **strengthen the competitive advantages** of our **labor intensive and export-oriented** industrial sectors.

### **Decent Work and Harmonious Industrial Relations**

XXI. We recognize that quality employment including a Decent Work Agenda, and promoting the fundamental principles and rights at work, are integral to inclusive and sustainable development, and intend to undertake the right steps to introduce appropriate **social safety net schemes in phases**, and promote harmonized industrial relations through social dialogues.

XXII. We re-affirm our commitment to undertake the necessary endeavors towards **transition to formalization** from the informality prevalent in our economy, within the parameters permitted by the level of our socio-economic development.

XXIII. We endorse the importance of undertaking due initiatives for **better workplace cooperation** and continuous social dialogues.

XXIV. We shall continue to improve the ongoing initiatives to **enhance the conditions of occupational health and safety** at the enterprise level across industrial sectors, and shall further develop our capacity to regularly monitor, inspect, and contain any lapses thereof.

XXV. With support from the national stakeholders and development partners, we pledge ourselves to adhere to the international norms and good practices to ensure the sustainability of businesses and enterprises while upholding **environmentally and socially responsible ways of doing business**.

XXVI. We believe that it is important to initiate a **national awareness campaign** by engaging the media and other social institutions to popularize **technical, professional, and vocational education and training**, and to develop a **culture of recognition of the dignity of labor** in the society under the guidance and supervision of National Skills Development Council.

### **Mainstreaming Persons with Disabilities**

XXVII. We commit ourselves to promoting disadvantaged groups, particularly **persons with disabilities (PWDs)**, in all skills and employment generation schemes **including apprenticeships**, and policy and regulatory frameworks; and encourage the use of **IT applications** for the PWDs.

XXVIII. **We also urge upon the appropriate authority to declare 2017 as the Year for Disability Inclusion in the mainstream of the workforce.**

### **Promoting Gender Equality**

XXIX. We commit to promote **Gender Equality** in skills system, TVET institutions and employment following the National Skills Development Policy and National Strategy for **Promoting Gender Equality in TVET**.

XXX. We shall continue our efforts to provide employment driven skills to women in non-traditional occupation to **promote gender and diversity in work place and women's empowerment**.

### **Acknowledgement**

XXXI. We express our gratitude and appreciation to the Access to Information (a2i) Programme of the Prime Minister's Office, ILO Country Office for Bangladesh, the World Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, BGMEA, BKMEA, other employers, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Governments of the Netherlands, Canada, and the United Kingdom, the European Union, other development partners, and all others who have provided material, financial, and intellectual support and cooperation for organizing this event, and hope that such cooperation in areas of national interest would continue in future.