

ASIA-PACIFIC 2006
DECENT WORK
DECADE 2015



International
Labour
Organization

The ILO in Afghanistan



Key Facts and Figures

Population¹ (2012): 30 million

GDP per capita² (2011): US\$1,235

Labour force³ (2012): 7.2 million

- 5.9 million male
- 1.3 million female

Labour participation rate⁴ (2011-12): 49.8%

- 80.3% male
- 19% female

Employment-to-population ratio⁵ (2011-12): 45.7%

- 74.9% male
- 15.5% female

Unemployment rate⁶ (2011-12): 8.2%

- 6.4% male
- 15.5% female

Under employment rate⁷ (2011-12): 16.8%

Youth unemployment rate⁸ (2011-12): 10.4%

Located at the crossroads of central, south and west Asia, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has great geostrategic significance. However, this has brought the country warfare and instability rather than prosperity, and has restricted the development of the Afghan economy and improvements to peoples' livelihoods.

The UNDP Human Development Index 2012 ranks Afghanistan 175th out of 187 countries worldwide. About 77 per cent of Afghans live in rural areas with poor infrastructure and basic facilities. An estimated 21 per cent of the population live in



extreme poverty and 38 per cent of households face food shortages. More than 48 per cent of the population is under the age of 15 while just over 2 per cent is above the age of 65.

Afghanistan has a predominantly agrarian economy. Agriculture and natural resources contribute more than 80 per cent of GDP. The labour market has the typical characteristics of a less developed economy. More than 90 per cent of jobs can be classified as vulnerable employment because they do not offer secure, stable or sufficient income.

Gender inequality and child labour are pervasive. Day labourers, salaried workers, employers and self-employed workers are predominantly male, while the majority of unpaid family workers are female. Nearly half the population is under the age of 15 and many of these children are working in highly exploitative and hazardous conditions.

To address socio-economic grievances and rebuild the economy the Afghan Government and the international community have developed a series of frameworks, including the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) (2008-13), the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2010-13) and the National Action Plan for Women (2008-18). These serve as strategic guidelines for socio-economic revival and employment generation, particularly for vulnerable social groups such as women, young people and ex-combatants.

Sources: 1. World Population Prospects 2010; 2. World Bank; 3. ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) 8th Edition; 4-8. The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment of Afghanistan 2011-12.

Ratified Conventions

Afghanistan has ratified 19 ILO Conventions including 5 of the 8 Fundamental Conventions.

- C.100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
- C.105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957
- C.111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958
- C.138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973
- C.182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

The ILO - Who We Are

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN specialized agency dealing with work and workplace issues, and related rights and standards. Its overarching goal is to achieve decent work for all so everyone benefits from working conditions that offer freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In working towards this goal the ILO has four principal strategic objectives:

- To promote and realize standards, and fundamental principles and rights at work.
- To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment.
- To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
- To strengthen the relationship between workers, employers and governments, and encourage social dialogue.

Founded in 1919, the ILO is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations. It became the first specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.

The ILO in Afghanistan

Afghanistan became the 60th member of the ILO in 1934 and is considered an “original” member State. The ILO officially established a Liaison Office in Kabul, the capital, in 2003.

Current areas of work

Since the establishment of the Liaison Office the ILO has worked in a wide range of areas including:

- Employment policies and strategies.
- Labour law reform.
- International labour standards.
- Skills development and technical education and vocational training.
- Employment creation and labour migration.
- Capacity building for the government and social partners.
- Labour market information and analysis.
- Child labour issues.
- Returnee livelihood issues.
- Area-based economic analysis.



The ILO helped to establish and operate 12 Employment Service Centres in 10 provinces. Between 2007 and 2008 the centres registered more than 33,000 people, gave training to more than 20,000 people (including more than 12,000 ex-combatants and their families) and created more than 5,300 job placements.

On 17 July 2010, the Afghan Government, employers’ and workers’ organizations signed Afghanistan’s first Decent Work Country Programme for Afghanistan (2010-15), which was drafted with technical assistance from the ILO. The programme has three priorities:

- Promoting productive employment through labour market indicators and skills development.
- Promoting and applying international labour standards with a focus on the ILO core Conventions.
- Strengthening employers’ and workers’ organizations, contributing to national policy formulation and improving industrial relations at all levels.

To support the three priorities, the ILO has committed its expertise and resources to a range of work, including:

- Supporting the first national conference on sustainable jobs.
- Supporting the development of the national labour policy and the national employment policy and strategy including youth employment issues among others.
- Providing technical assistance in gathering and analysing labour market information.
- Assisting with labour administration reform and improved labour inspections.
- Identifying job creation potential through a cross-country agriculture value chain analysis and the assessment of livelihood options for returnees and internal displaced persons.
- Developing skills training programmes for men and women, assessing and certifying skills.
- Supporting the development of the National Labour Migration Policy and Strategy.
- Conducting child labour surveys and providing technical advices on the elimination of child labour.

The Decent Work Country Programme is in line with the national development strategies such as the ANDS and National Priority Programmes (NPPs), inter-linked to the new UNDAF, and thereby contributes to the economic rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan.

Social partners

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled is the nodal ministry representing the Government. The ILO is working with the Ministry to reform its organizational structure and build a modern labour administration. The Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industries represents employers and around 12 trade unions represent the workers. The ILO is working with them to establish mechanisms that will support better social dialogue and build industrial relations.

The Asia-Pacific Decent Work Decade

The International Labour Organization's members in Asia and the Pacific - governments, employers' and workers' organizations - have committed themselves to an "Asia-Pacific Decent Work Decade 2006-2015". In doing so they reaffirmed their commitment to achieving full, productive and decent employment for their people. To help realize the aims of the Decade five regional priority areas were selected:

- Competiveness, productivity and jobs.
- Labour market governance.
- Youth employment.
- Managing labour migration.
- Local development for poverty reduction.

These priorities compliment each member country's individual goals, which are outlined in their national Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). In turn, these DWCP's shape the ILO's work with its member States and so support the Organization's mandated aim, of Decent Work for All.

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DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.