

Closing Session

Presentation of Group Work Products

The group work products were presented in the plenary of the Closing Session where guests from government ministries were also present. For the list of the guests present in the Closing Session, please refer to Annex 1. One Group suggested rural public works in both green and brown sectors to be implemented in collaboration with national and local government, CBOs and I/NGOs and donors with related capacity building at both policy and operational levels and funding from local and national and international resources. They also suggested need for related legislation, built-in T.A. program and basket fund for national priority programs. The other group suggested to go for Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) with a pilot testing period of two years, implemented in 8-10 districts based upon geographical and poverty mapping with community driven initiatives requiring capacity building of all related major stakeholders by integrating it with the sectoral public works programs with technical assistance. Based upon lessons learned legislation framework could then be drafted for nationwide expansion. Plenary discussion was carried out on each group work products. For the group work products, please refer to Annex 4.

Closing Remarks

Mr Shengjie Li, Director, ILO Office in Nepal made the closing remarks. He summarized the outcome of the workshop by saying that a consensus was reached in recognition of the public works programs as important intervention for employment generation, though at times short-term and seasonal, as a means of general poverty reduction, and rehabilitation and early recovery in post-armed conflict peacebuilding work. Positive results of Karnali Employment Program (KEP), have also been observed and recommendations are made for scaling it up in Karnali and extension elsewhere with piloting for employment guarantee program. For consolidation of KEP, building rural roads, irrigation, schools, etc and linking them with water resources would be required with capacity development of DDC and VDC level with technical backstopping for better planning and effective implementation. The types of intervention could be in employment guarantee, labor intensive employment generation and assets focused labor based schemes.

Mr Li also mentioned that the immediate objectives of public works programs, discussed in different sessions but may require further systematic discussions, have been: short-term jobs during agricultural slack seasons; anti-poverty program providing year-round employment (with or without a guarantee of minimum number of days) in regions of high unemployment/underemployment or throughout the country; purely as an income maintenance program in a post-armed conflict or post-disaster situation; or a bridge to self-employment in small business. The medium and long-term objectives would be to create assets/new infrastructure, or maintain existing infrastructures. However, the challenges foreseen in way forward are how to implement recommendations from ILO study and group work presentations. ILO will follow up with MLD and NPC on how to move from employment generation program to employment guarantee scheme. ILO can help the government to draft an Act and on how to build synergy among different ministries and various development partners currently working in Karnali. ILO will also carry out a mapping on how to sustain the short-term jobs.