

Technical Session

A series of four presentations were made to highlight the employment intensive public work programs and share the actual experience made from the Region. Mr Chris Donnges, Senior Specialist on Employment Intensive Investment, ILO Regional Office, Bangkok provided a general information on the ILO experiences and issues for developing public works schemes in Nepal. He provided comparative advantages and shortcomings of employment guarantee scheme, employment creation program and labor-based infrastructure development with optimal mix of labor and machine from experiences made in India, Bangladesh, Timor Lest, Cambodia, Indonesia and Philippines. He related some of the programs with adaptation to climate change with 'green jobs'. He also provided tips on good labor policies and practices that include targeting, gender mainstreaming, recruitment of labor and payment; and capacity building and institutional set-up. For detail information, please refer to Annex 3A: Public Works and Employment Creation Schemes, a presentation by Mr Donnges.

The second presentation was on Appraisal of Karnali Employment Program (KEP) by Kirit Vaidya, who spoke about benefits and challenges in social protection through employment generating public works programs like KEP as a support to GON strategy of inclusive growth. Started with the scheme 'one job for one household' the fund was disbursed directly to VDCs for spending on labor intensive projects, KEP has been implemented in five districts of Karnali Zone. With only 2.5% administrative costs, the project aimed to reach 60,000 unemployed (about 95% households) with a daily rate of NR200-per day. KEP projects included building roads and tracks, irrigation schemes, drinking water schemes, and school play ground. The benefits have been social protection through provision of short-term employment, creation or preservation of social and economic assets, which contribute further benefits, cost-effective operation and potential of strengthening local communities and institutions. The challenges faced have been that the costs of delivering social protection through KEP approach becomes high if the targeting is imprecise and asset creation and preservation activities are ineffective or too costly. Combining efficient and effective social protection, and productive and efficient work can pose management and technical challenges. For detail information, please refer to Annex 3B: Appraisal of Karnali Employment Program, a presentation by Mr Vaidya.

Mr Shaikh Shamsuddin Ahmed, Social Protection Economist of WB presented 100 Day Employment Generation Program, which was planned to help ultra poor people retain purchasing power in the face of high inflation through employment in building small rural infrastructures like rural roads, culverts, bazaars, playing fields, ground raising, pond digging, compost heap, etc. This was the top-down program designed to provide 200 million person days of employment to 2 million beneficiaries across the country with 100 days per person over the year splitting two lean seasons of 60 and 40 days with a daily wage rate of little over the market rate. 67% of the benefit was captured by the poor of whom 37% were extreme poor. The program had ad hoc form of monitoring by government departments with little sharing of information between them with no ICT use at the district level, low community consultation but high dependence on labor leaders, and inadequate human/financial resources allocated for monitoring. The Program could spend only half of the allocated money with only 76% of the first phase work and not covering the second lean season. Then the government suspended the program to improve by the use of ICT and poverty mapping for targeting, inclusion of administrative and non-wage costs, increased inclusion of women, payment of wages per five days and social auditing. For more information, please refer to Annex 3C: Bangladesh: 100 Day Employment Generation Program, a presentation by Mr Ahmed.

Mukesh Gupta, Senior Specialist, Employment Intensive Investments, ILO Sub-Regional Office for South Asia, New Delhi presented the Indian Scenario of Gearing Employment as per National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). NREGA has been implemented since 2006 with bottom-up approach in 615 districts nationwide with an intension of employment intensive growth

focusing accelerated employment in organized sector with increased productivity in the unorganized sector. The primary objective was to supplement the employment opportunities with the auxiliary one being the regeneration of the natural resource base for sustainable livelihoods as water conservation and harvesting, afforestation & tree-plantation, irrigation, renovation of traditional water bodies, flood control and increased rural connectivity. As per NREGA, rights-based approach was adopted to guarantee jobs within 15 days of demand in labor intensive works with 60:40 of wage : machine ratio, decentralized to Gram Sabha with no involvement of contractors, transparent payment through post-office and banks and performance feedback internal and external mechanisms, and social audit. An increase in minimum agricultural wage with increased bargaining power of labor was observed with reduced distressed migration and 70% of the 'Green Jobs' for improving the natural resource base sustainable livelihoods. For more information, please refer to Annex 3D: Gearing Employment-Indian Scenario, a presentation by Mr Gupta.

Each of the presentations was followed by brief discussion in the plenary.