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A woman with a bindi and a white shawl is smiling while operating a large industrial spinning machine in a factory. The machine has many spindles and bobbins. The background shows rows of similar machines stretching into the distance under bright lights.

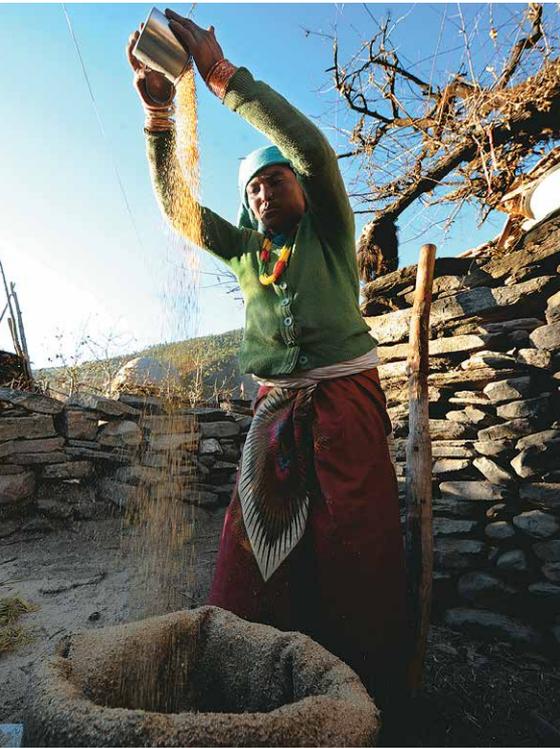
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Special thanks to all those who contributed photos for this publication.

The yellow brick road towards the Himalayas

Today, new technologies can implode a sky scraper in seconds, the very same building that took years to erect. Maybe that is the reason why we are so genuinely impressed to see it collapsing and pay so little attention to the continued and relentless construction work. Progress happens before us every day and most of it goes unnoticed. Progress is routine; flaws are news. So, in this issue of the Nepal Decent Work newsletter let us look into and highlight a part of the sunny side of a country that is hiking its way up. And if sometimes the progress seems slow, it is just because the gradient is high.

For nearly a decade, poor labour-management relations were presented as part of the Nepal DNA and an important cause for low productivity and competitiveness of enterprises.

Not anymore. Today, trade unions and employers representatives seat at the same table, present and defend their points of view and interests, and reach win-win situations. Recent months witnessed amazing developments with the preparation of fundamental policies and legal instruments, including the National Employment Policy, Labour Act, and Social Security Act. These are not just papers, but solid consensual frameworks for joint implementation, achieved through systematic, informed and competent dialogue, involving the Government (National Planning Commission, Ministry of Labour and Employment and line ministries) and social partners.

A distinctive feature common to the three documents is their inclusiveness. The new Labour



Jose Assalino
Director, ILO Country Office for Nepal

Act, the Social Security Act and the National Employment Policy are not just for the formal economy, but for all enterprises and workers including those in the informal economy (more than 70 per cent of the economically active population), representing a major achievement and progress towards improved equality in the workforce and society. Employers will have higher degree of flexibility to adjust their workforce to production requirements and workers will enjoy better social protection contributing for the establishment of an enabling environment to attract investment, promote private sector development and create decent work opportunities for women and men.

So, may be Nepal is not yet there at the top of the mountain but is definitely climbing towards that direction and is on the right track. ■



THE LABOUR ACT THAT CAN WORK IN NEPAL

After 10 years of talks and negotiations, the employers and workers agree on a draft of the new Labour Act.



SALOMAN RAJBANSHI
PROGRAMME OFFICER
ILO-CO KATHMANDU

Setting an example of unequivocal endurance, the ILO constituents of Nepal have once again shown the rest of the world what they can achieve together. After more than ten years, the employers' and trade unions' representatives finally signed a draft for the new Labour Act (Bill) for Nepal on 10 October 2014 – the result of continuous dialogue and countless consultations, bipartite and tripartite, during which the ILO has provided technical assistance.

The Labour Market Governance Reform programme in Nepal was initiated back in 2002 at the request of the tripartite constituents of the ILO. Labour flexibility was a key concern raised by employers, while workers sought greater social security. Politically speaking, the country has gone through a sea of changes since then but never did the ILO constituents in Nepal give up. They were determined to achieve the goal of having a well-functioning labour law that brings more investment and economic growth while at the same time fundamental principles and rights for the workers.

Some of the highlights of the draft are:

- The workers get most of the social security benefits from day one (like provident fund, gratuity, medical and accidental benefits).
- Employers will contribute 20 per cent of the basic salary to the Social Security Fund while the workers will contribute 11 per cent. In return, employers will enjoy greater flexibility in the way that they can downsize the workforce depending on their market needs, operational requirements or in the case of natural disaster. They no longer need approval from government authorities to do so.
- The law encourages the use of arbitration and assures unemployment insurance and compensation.
- The law covers all the workers of the country, regardless of the size and type of an enterprise, formal or informal.
- Any type of forced labour and child labour is prohibited under the law.
- Employment contracts based on discrimination and against the freedom of association will be nullified.



- Regular, temporary contract or wage forms of employment will be implemented.
- In the case of laid off workers, the law provides the workers with benefits like the provision of compensation equivalent to a month's salary for each year of service completed. This must be paid within 15 days of termination of employment
- Similarly, the age of retirement has been raised to 58 years from 55.
- Women workers are given a public holiday on 8 March, and the maternity leave have been extended to 98 days of which 60 days are fully paid leave and the rest is without pay.

Apart from the demands by trade unions like payment of wage during

The ILO constituents of Nepal have once again shown the rest of the world what they can achieve together.

legal strike and legal recognition for sectorial bargaining, other agendas have been agreed by both the workers and the employers. However, there are still two crucial areas on which consensus

has not been reached but mutually agreed to leave it up to the government to decide over. There are reasons to be hopeful that Nepal will see a new labour act sooner because the draft of the new Labour Act was prepared through a free, informed and participatory approach. Above all, the parties have understood that a good Labour Act created through cooperation serves their mutual interests as well as the interest of the nation.

Let's hope the Labour Act (Bill) finds its way to the national parliament as soon as possible for its enactment. The ILO stands ready and willing to provide further technical support if needed for a smooth implementation of the law. ■



“To get happy customers we need happy workers.”

TOGETHER THEY THRIVE

In a new initiative, three private sector enterprises will develop and share experiences on how to improve dialogue between workers and employers.



TROELS KOLLN
ILO-CO KATHMANDU

A new child care facility to be used free of charge and a first aid clinic in case of Emergencies – this is what Kiran Shoes Manufacturer Ltd., Kathmandu will begin to offer its employees after representatives of management and workers sat down together and brainstormed on how to improve lives for both parties.

“To me it’s essential that the workers and the management talk to each other in order to constantly improve ourselves. To get happy customers, we need happy workers. This is just one more step in that direction,” says Mr. Amir Pratap JB Rana, the Managing Director of the company. Kiran Shoes is one of three companies that is a part of the initiative led by the ILO and its partners, named “Improving

Labour Management Relations in the Nepalese Enterprises”. Launched this August, the project is a one-year pilot attempt to improve social dialogue at the enterprise level. “We want to try a bottom-up approach and involve the private sector enterprise more. There is a huge potential for positive change here,” says Mr. Saloman Rajbanshi from ILO Nepal who is taking charge of this initiative, which is based on the idea that good relations between management and workers will benefit both enterprises and workers.

Research shows that satisfied workers will perform better as they work harder, show up for work more regularly and don’t go on strike as often. At the same time, when workers get a say in questions at the workplace, they have a chance to improve the conditions at their work place.

Under this initiative, each participating enterprise will form a working group whose members include both management and workers. This group then develops a plan of action on how to improve the work place which must describe concrete actions and have clear deadlines to ensure that actual improvements will be done rather than merely remaining good intentions. The three participating enterprises are the chemical importer and animal feed producer Probiotech Industries Pvt. Ltd., the jute mill Arihan Multi-Fibres Ltd. and Kiran Shoes Manufacturer Ltd.

It is a joint effort of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, All Nepal Federation of Trade Unions, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions, Nepal Trade Union Congress and the ILO in Nepal. ■

SOCIAL NETWORKS PROTECT MIGRANT WORKERS

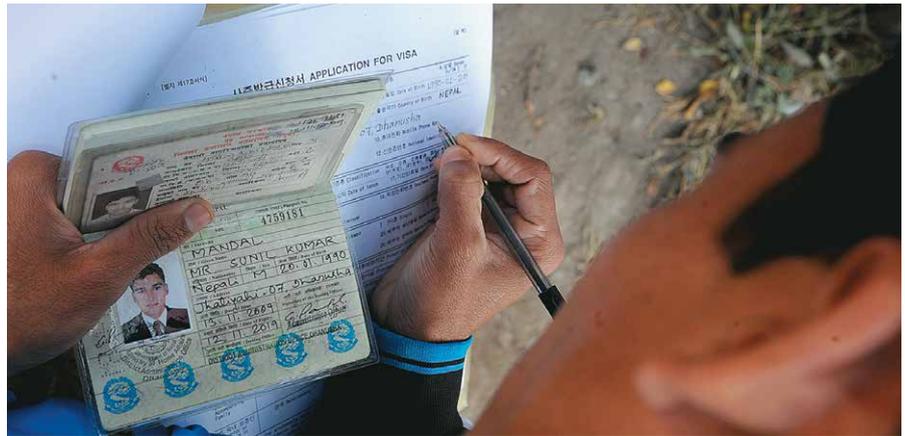


NIYAMA RAI
NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR
SOUTH ASIA LABOUR MIGRATION PROJECT

Nepal has witnessed a surge in the outflow of Nepali migrant workers in the past decade. Official data from the Department of Foreign Employment indicates that a total of 521,878 labour permits have been issued during the last fiscal year (FY 2013/14) which marks an estimated 16 per cent annual increase.

When we analyse the longitudinal data from the past six years, a staggering 137 per cent increase in the number of Nepali migrants opting for foreign employment can be noted. The lack of decent employment opportunities and the dearth of productive employment sectors within the country suggest that the current trends of foreign employment will remain.

Even as Malaysia has emerged as the top destination for Nepali migrant workers, the regional destination for majority of the Nepali migrant workers is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). While migration brings many positive aspects, testimonies from migrant workers and empirical evidence brought forth by studies also illustrate the harsh realities. The Kafala sponsorship system creates a structural dependency of the migrant workers to the employers thus making the workers more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. The absence of freedom of association in many GCC countries has further contributed to the vulnerability,



The ILO's EU-funded South Asia Labour Migration Governance (SALM) project aims to increase the Nepali migrant workers' access to support services including information, advice, dispute resolution, and legal support in destination countries as a means of enhancing protection measures during employment. In this regard, the SALM project is working together with the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) to mobilize support groups in three GCC countries: Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE).

These groups provide a platform for Nepali migrant workers in the destination countries to foster support systems and build on the social capital through the network. With the support from the project, in September of 2014 GEFONT facilitated the establishment of two migrant workers' support groups in the UAE. These support groups will play a vital role in providing information to the Nepali migrant

workers, initiating informal interactions with the migrant workers, and providing direct and referral assistance to Nepali migrant workers seeking support services.

In addition, migrant worker support groups have proven to be an effective instrument in coordinating with Nepali government and non-government agencies in the destination countries to advocate for the protection of the migrant workers. As the recently formed support groups in the UAE plan to celebrate the upcoming International Migrants Day (December 18), it is anticipated to mark a grand assembly of Nepali migrant workers from all the seven emirates. The rise in mobility of people coupled with the mounting complexities of labour migration call for the need of protective measures in countries of destination. By providing a platform for the migrant workers, access to support services is ensured as well as allowing them to benefit from social capital. ■



NEPA



ILO REGIONAL DIRECTOR CALLS ON SAARC COUNTRIES

TO UNITE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

BINA KUNWAR THAPA
PROGRAMME OFFICER
ILO-CO KATHMANDU

The International Labour Organization's Assistant Director and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Mr Yoshiteru Uramoto, has called on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to have greater strategic cooperation to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers from the region.

During a high-level visit in Nepal*, Mr Uramoto met with officials from Nepalese government and the SAARC, as well as trade union representatives. He said during the meetings that the SAARC forum can play a key role to ensure that millions of migrant workers and their families get the fair deal they deserve, and labour-sending countries. He stressed that the countries in South Asia should work together to improve the con-

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To improve conditions for migrant workers in the region, the SAARC countries need greater strategic cooperation."

ditions for migrant workers. “Any one country may find it difficult to deal with a receiving country, as the receiving country is often stronger in negotiations. But if SAARC countries work together, it helps in setting up standards and developing skills, and bringing parity in wages of all nationalities. It improves sending countries’ bargaining power”, he said.

At the meeting with the Secretary General of the SAARC Secretariat, H.E Mr Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Mr Uramoto said that SAARC countries share many of the same challenges and opportunities related to the recruitment and employment of their out-bound migrant workers and SAARC countries will benefit through discussions and agreement on reducing recruitment costs and promoting fair recruitment practices, wage protection and fair remuneration.

During an interview with a leading Nepalese newspaper My República, Mr Uramoto said that even though labour migration has brought economic benefits to the countries in South Asia, many migrant workers suffer from a range of challenges and problems and even lose their lives. “I understand that a few coffins return to Nepal every day and there are bodies which never return. Right now, the migration system doesn’t respond to the needs of migrant workers, therefore it doesn’t serve the economic development of receiving countries either,” he said.

About ILO’s role in the protection of migrant workers, Mr Uramoto said: “ILO, with its decent work and social protection mandate, stands ready to provide technical assistance to the SAARC countries for realizing a fair migration agenda.” ■



ILO stands ready to provide technical assistance to the SAARC countries for realizing fair migration.”

— **Mr Yoshiteru Uramoto**
ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific



**Mr Yoshiteru Uramoto, after concluding his meetings with the officials in India, arrived in Kathmandu on 21 September, 2014 leading a high-level ILO mission as part of the ILO’s efforts to improve the situation of migration governance systems in the region. The mission members included Ms Tine Staermose, Director, ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office for India and Mr Nilim Baruah, Labour Migration Specialist, ROAP.*



DON'T SELL... DONATE!

Once, the UN agencies in Nepal sold their used computers but now a much better solution has been found.



SANJEEB MANANDHAR
IT ASSISTANT
ILO-CO KATHMANDU

A group of Information Technology (IT) focal persons from the UN agencies in Nepal, the Interagency IT Taskforce (IAITTF) are collecting used computers and printers to handover to government organisations and community based public schools identified on a need basis. These are then set up with E-libraries that include knowledge based information, academic textbooks and free Wikipedia.

Previously, computers and other IT equipment used to be auctioned off for money but now these computers are used for a good purpose and for a bright future of hundreds of children for whom just seeing a computer used be only a dream. This initiative marks a new trend in the UN system in Nepal and is being highly appreciated by the UN management.

The main objective of this initiative – which goes by the name ICT4D – is to provide under-privileged communities with access to IT and communication facilities. In other words, ICT4D supports education, empowerment, governance and human rights. The core aim of this volunteer project of UN staff members also aligns with the aim of UN Development Framework (UNDAF).

So far the group has collected a good numbers of equipment from different UN agencies and donated them to five schools in Bara, Bhaktapur, Dolakha, Lubhu and Naglebhare which were selected on a priority basis by the IAITTF committee and field visits were conducted by ILO's Ms Marina Rai and Mr Sanjeeb Manandhar amongst others, to assess and ensure that the selected schools were capable to operate and maintain the equipment by themselves once the installation was completed.

The ILO in Nepal, with the full support of Mr. Jose Assalino, Director, has also donated some of our used desktop computers and monitors this year. These have been put to use in schools in remote areas of Nepal. So far, the schools are giving excellent feedback.

Many requests from various other schools for similar support have been received and the team is hopeful that it will be able to continue providing equipment to them thereby contributing to improving the quality of the education of disadvantaged children of Nepal.

An encouraging news is that, nowadays, individual UN staff members are also joining this initiative and have started donating their personal equipment for a good cause.

A short documentary about the project is available on Youtube. Go to www.bit.ly/ITforNepal to watch. ■

CONNECTIVITY FOR PROSPERITY

Strengthening the National Rural Transport Programme



SHAIENDRA KUMAR JHA
NATIONAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR
STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL RURAL TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

The Government of Nepal aims to provide all-weather road access to all the Village Development Committees by gradually upgrading the District Core Road Networks (DCRN) and providing proper maintenance with the aim of promoting economic growth, providing access to services and creating sustainable decent jobs in rural areas. Currently a large majority of roads are only fair-weather and in poor condition, with a large portion of roads not trafficable. Insufficient maintenance is being carried out, further aggravating the situation.

In this context, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development with support from the World Bank is implementing the Strengthening the National Rural Transport Programme (SNRTP) project to strengthen the DCRN with a particular emphasis on the “Maintenance First” approach. The project will furthermore upgrade and rehabilitate rural roads as well as construct new river crossing structures to bring the roads to an all-weather maintainable standard. The project covers 33 districts of Nepal reaching approximately 14.6 million people.

The project is providing technical assistance for systemizing maintenance system. It carried out a

two phase training on rural road maintenance for newly recruited 35 engineers and 33 sub-engineers followed by their deployment. These officials subsequently completed the inventory for 176 roads and selected 203 roads covering 4,138 km road for routine and periodic road maintenance. In addition, they also prepared the Annual Road Maintenance Plan (ARMP) in the project intervention districts. Apart from this, the project has set up two project implementing units in Hetuada and Butwal to provide technical support.

Moreover, rural transport infrastructure management system training has been provided to 280 participants, including engineers, sub-engineers, planning officers of the District Development Committee and District Technical Office representing 30 districts. A two day “Orientation and Memorandum of Understanding Signing” workshop was organized inviting the representatives of Local Development Office, District Technical Offices and Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agriculture Road in addition to the SNRTP project team members.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Prakash Man Singh officially launched the SNRTP programme along with the project operations



Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Prakash Man Singh launching the project operational manual.



Road maintenance



Road maintenance training for engineers and sub-engineers.

manual and environmental and social management framework in the presence of the donor, implementing partners and civil society organisations. ■



SAGAR WITH HIS FAMILY

A STORY OF SAGAR

More than 620,000 children work under hazardous conditions in Nepal. This is the story of one.



BHARATI SHARMA POKHAREL
NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR
WORK IN FREEDOM PROJECT

For the two years, 15 year old Sagar Manandhar has woken up early in the morning with his two elder sisters and his parents to work in a brick kiln. He has assisted them in mixing clay, making bricks, loading and off loading, and piling the bricks.

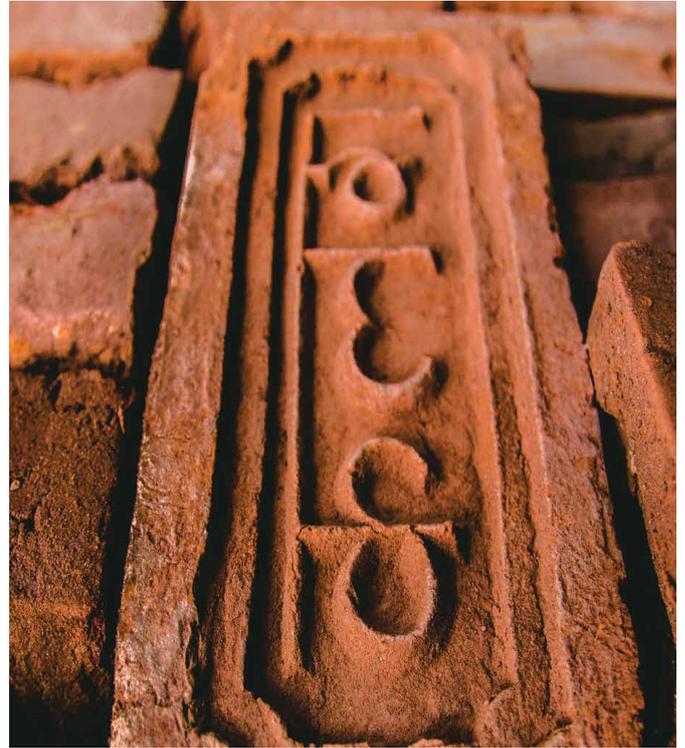
Sagar is not alone. Child labour is widespread in Nepal, despite enforcement of national laws against child labour and the ratification of the ILO Conventions 138

and 182, which prohibits involvement of children in any form of hazardous work. According to the National Labour Force Survey 2008, about 621,000 Nepali children have been working under hazardous conditions,.

Sagar and his family migrated from Khaniyapani village in the Ramechhap district to Bhaktapur in order to work in the brick kiln. Sagar's father, Chatur Bahadur Manandhar, has been working with bricks since the last 28 years.

He himself also began assisting his father when he was 12 years old, just as his own son does now.

Sagar's family makes approximately 5,000 bricks a day, but they can never be sure how much money they have earned. The payment rate varies every year and it is decided only after completion of the work, just before the rainy season, by the brick kiln owner and the brokers. This year, they were paid NPR 720 for 1,000 pcs of bricks. On the market, the



selling price for 1,000 bricks was NPR 11,000- 13,000. According to the father Chatur Manandhar, their broker earns more than NPR 1,100,000 a year for arranging the workers from villages to the kilns.

While the brick kiln owner does provide a living area for Sagar's family, these are kept in very poor conditions and are without drinking water, separate cooking area, toilet or other sanitation facilities. The hut in which they live is made of brick but without proper maintenance of the floor and a leaking roof.

This scenario shows the unequal distribution of profit among the worker, broker and the employer. A distribution which keep workers bound to provide their labour for a cheap rate throughout their life, and in some cases from one to another generation. At the same time, the workers have no form of social security as they work under a verbal contract on a piecemeal basis and own responsibility for

any health problem arising from their labour.

The children are most often seasonal workers who come with their families as migrant workers from rural areas of Nepal, leaving behind their education. Others join the kilns on their own in order to simply survive. Since they work from early morning to late night, they are in effect denied access to education and skills training which leads them to remain as unskilled labour force for their entire life.

Due to lack of employment opportunities in Nepal, these workers are likely to seek foreign employment as semiskilled or unskilled labourers where they may again be trapped under the risk of forced labour and trafficking, particularly in the Gulf countries.

As brick work is seasonal and poorly paid, many are forced to take advance money on which they are required to pay interest.

Sagar's father, Chatur, had to take an advance NPR 150,000 in 2011 to repay another loan of NPR 200,000 with an interest rate of 30 percent. It was not possible for him to recover the loan by himself, which is why his whole family is now working with brick production.

After two years of hard work, Sagar's family still owes NPR 180,000. However, being a trade union member, Chatur has realized the importance of education for his children and enrolled Sagar in a school with support from Child Development Society.

Sagar is happy for getting chance to go back to school and his father has a big hope that they can recover the loan by the time his son reaches grade 10. That would allow him to focus on his studies enough for him to get a better job and break out of his family's history of a kind of forced labour. ■



CONSTRUCTING A FORMAL ECONOMY



PRAKASH SHARMA
NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR
WAY OUT OF INFORMALITY PROJECT

The ILO launched the “Way-out of Informality: Facilitating Formalization of Informal Economy” project two years ago, to facilitate the formalization of the informal businesses and employment relationships in Nepal. It focuses on mainstreaming issues of informality in national policies and programmes and on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) including the construction sector as a whole. This project is implemented in seven districts namely Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Chitwan, Kaski, Morang and Sunsari. This is being

implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Industry, employers organisations and trade unions with the financial support from the Government of Japan.

The project has three major components: improving regulatory and policy environment, job-rich growth strategies and integrated formalization assistance, and knowledge management. The key partners are: the Department of Cottage and Small Industries (DCSI), the Federation of Nepalese Cottage and Small Industries

(FNCSI) and Federation of Women Entrepreneur Association Nepal (FWEAN), Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC), General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) and All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF)

In the past two years, with the support of the project, more than 5,000 new SMEs have been registered with the Government system in all project districts. The linkages between SMEs and relevant stakeholders such as the tax office, banks and micro-finance institutes, insurance companies, and local municipalities have



Meeting with a private bank officials

been established. Over 200 entrepreneurs in the selected districts have been trained on Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) in order to enhance their business skills and services. The project conducted different workshops, consultation and discussion programmes as a sensitisation strategy and to help participants understand issues and challenges of formalising informal sector.

Construction sector is a rapidly growing business in Nepal, however, its operation in the district level is still informal. For example: in one of the municipalities of the project areas, it is reported that about 3,000-5,000 new houses are constructed every year. The cost of constructing one house is estimated to be a minimum of US\$ 40,000 which clearly indicates the high volume of the business in this sector.



Likewise, it is estimated that there are more than 2,000 petty contractors called *Naikes* in the project districts and a minimum of 25 people work under each *Naika*. This indicates that there is high number of workers engaged in this sector without having formal mechanisms.

The project is addressing the current gaps in the informal sector in Nepal through various interventions which include, registration of small contractors and *Naikes* with the local municipalities, skill

development training, sensitisation on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), linking workers with service providers like insurance companies, banks and training institutes in addition to supporting for unionisation and strengthening of their associations. The project is also working to address the policy gaps and extend better services to the target groups. Work place cooperation and gender issues are the cross cutting issues that are being taken into consideration during the implementation of the project activities. ■

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

A Key Social Dialogue Tool at Workplaces



NARAYAN P. BHATTARAI
NATIONAL PROJECT MANAGER
ACTRAV PROJECT



Existence of both parties (workers and employers) is a precondition for effective social dialogue to resolve labour problems at workplaces. Collective bargaining is one of such tools to promote social dialogue. The Government of Nepal has recognized the practice of collective bargaining only after the restoration of democracy in early 90s. Promulgation of two fundamental laws – Labour Act 1992 and Trade Union Act 1992 - framed the legal foundation for resolving labour disputes. While the Labour Act provisioned collective

bargaining and grievance handling procedures in institutions, the Trade Union Act provided a platform for the existence and operationalization of unions for protecting the rights and interests of workers. An important step towards the recognition of collective bargaining in Nepal was seen after ratification of the ILO Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining in November 1996.

Collective bargaining is an evolving process which takes time producing good results for both parties. Political

situation, willingness of both parties for good-faith bargaining, government's facilitation with appropriate rules and procedures as well as education to both workers and employers representatives are key elements for an effective social dialogue and positive results.

Negotiation in Nepal is taking place through different modalities. Some institutions negotiate through some workers' or union representative especially in a situation of not having a formal union registered or having only a single union registered. Negotiations

in many of the institutions having only a single union do not come into public notice but they also have very good practice of union-management negotiations through peaceful processes. The situation of negotiation in an institution having multiple unions is different and somehow difficult as compared to single union institution. In multiple union situation, the most crucial step is to build consensus amongst existing unions to form a negotiation committee. The labor law 1992 has provided a provision of conducting an election of collective bargaining union in case of disputes on deciding the most representative union in the institution. Furthermore, the government conducts an election when there is a joint request from the management and the unions. Then only a formal negotiation takes place between the most representative union and the management. The practice of deciding the most representative union for negotiation even in a situation of having multiple unions in an institution have a lot of positive impacts for sound labour relations.

The election of collective bargaining union unveils the face of the most representative union in the institution. This facilitates all the stakeholders to recognize the authorized union. In lack of proper clarity on the strength of the union or its membership-base, real dialogue is difficult to take place. Many of the plants having multiple unions entangle in the debate on whom to bargain and negotiate with, especially in a country like ours where the trade union politics is embedded with national transitional politics.

Multiple unions and differences amongst them is a common phenomenon in South Asian countries. In Nepal, multi-unionism exists especially in big multi-nationals and reputed public and private companies. Timely election of



the collective bargaining union could resolve disputes in a peaceful manner. The practice conducting election for the collective bargaining union thus, not only supports sound industrial relations, but also establishes democratic culture.

Interestingly, the collective bargaining union has a mandate of negotiation with the employers on behalf of all the workers of the institution. It can perform this mandate only when it works in close collaboration and consultation with other unions. The other unions and workers who are not authorized for bargaining can still put forth their voices for protecting the interests of their members through the authorized union. This enforces co-existence and collaborative culture between the unions existing in the institution.

The election process gives an opportunity to all workers for their participation in decision making process. Casting votes to select a union of their choice without fear and prejudice is a real example of applying the essence of the Convention No. 98 on the Right to organize and collective bargaining already ratified by Nepal. ■

Wider National Workers' Conference

The three major trade unions in Nepal; All Nepal Federation of Trade Union, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions and Nepal Trade Union Congress; organized a Wider Workers' Conference in Kathmandu on 27 and 28 October, 2014. Conducted in collaboration with the ILO/ACTRAV Norway project, the objective of the conference was to mobilize all workers for policy interventions in Nepal. The conference passed a declaration demanding immediate promulgation of the proposed labour and social security bills including the ratification of ILO Conventions 87, 189 and 102.

The three unions are planning to hand over the declaration to the parliamentarians in a programme to be organized soon so that the law makers understand the importance of these bills and international standards for the protection of workers' rights and improvement in the industrial relations in Nepal.

The conference was attended by 1200 workers' leaders. The guest participants included ILO Director for Nepal, Mr. Jose Assalino; the Minister for Labour and Employment, Mr. Tek Bahadur Gurung; international guests, Mr. Karl-Peter Thorwaldsson, the Deputy President of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and President ILO-Sweden as well as Mr. Stephen Benedict, Director of Human and Trade Union Rights Department of ITUC. The General Secretary of the South Asia Regional Trade Union Council Mr. Laxman Basnet and ILO Governing Body Member Ms. Binda Pandey were also present in the conference.



Mainstreaming Child Labour Agenda Workshop

UDDAV POU DYAL, ACHIEVE PROJECT

To support the Government of Nepal's initiatives on combating child labour, the ILO through the "ACHIEVE" project supports concerned local government and non-government organisations to develop child labour mainstreaming strategies in the district programmes and policies to be implemented at local level. The project is funded by the Government of Denmark.

By mainstreaming child labour issues in local plans and policies, it would be easier to combat child labour as it is multi-sectoral and directly related to services. Moreover, it strengthens the child protection system and helps in reducing vulnerability of the children and families prone to child labour. In connection to this, the project organised a "District Level Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop on Mainstreaming Child Labour Issues in Local Plan and Policy" at Dhulikhel, Kavre district from 26 to 27 August 2014.

The objective of the workshop was to develop district level strategies mainstreaming child labour issues by bringing together all the concerned stakeholders for greater collaboration. The workshop was successful in drawing strategies to incorporate child labour issues in Ilaka (Clusters of VDCs) level planning of the local government as well as allocation of resources under the Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) framework.

All concerned district level officials were present at the meeting including the Chief District Officer, Local Development Officer, Women Development Officer, and Chairperson of the District Child Welfare Board. The two-day workshop concluded with the preparation of an action plan to mainstream child labour issues in local plans and policies and each agency at the district identified their roles and responsibilities. ■

New Curriculum for Domestic Work Skills Training

BHARATI S. POKHAREL, NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR, WORK IN FREEDOM PROJECT

The Work in Freedom (WiF) Programme, funded by DFID is supporting the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB) to review the existing curriculum and training manual of domestic work skills training. In this regard, a two-day workshop was organised at the ILO Office in October 2014 to discuss on the draft curriculum which included returnee domestic workers from Middle Eastern countries. The workshop was facilitated by the Curriculum Department of the Council for Technical Education & Vocational Training.

The new curriculum has provision of skill testing certification which will be extremely beneficial to training recipients for their professional career development. To meet the certification training standards, the duration of this training is planned to be extended from 120 hours to 160 hours. The workshop was fruitful in reviewing and designing the contents of the curriculum following the Develop Curriculum (DECUM) method.

The new curriculum will have extended basic knowledge on Arabic language, counselling and life skills required for working in the destination countries. These come in addition to the existing contents on cooking, housekeeping, caring of children and elderly, health and hygiene, and other socio-cultural aspects.

Once the curriculum and training manual are finalized, a training of trainers will be organized to train the authorized training institutes. The WiF programme also plans to support the Ministry of Labour and Employment to extend the domestic work skills services through the vocational and skills development training centres in Itahari- Sunsari and Rupandehi districts. ■

Seminar on Formalizing Informal Economy

PRAKASH SHARMA, NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR, WAY OUT OF INFORMALITY PROJECT

ILO Office for Nepal and Way Out of Informality project jointly with Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) organised a national Seminar on Formalizing Informal Economy aiming to share knowledge and experiences of addressing informality in addition to sensitize various stakeholders on the issue and challenge.

Mr. Ravindra Mohan Bhattarai, Director General of Department of Labour delivered an opening remarks on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Mr. Frederic Lapeyre, Head of the Informal Economy Unit and Employment Policy Department from ILO-Geneva facilitated the sessions of the workshops. Over 90

representatives from the government, employers and workers Organizations participated in the seminar. Mr. Kewal Prasad Bhandari, Executive Director-Social Security Fund under Ministry of Labour and Employment presented a closing remarks highlighting an importance of formalizing informal business and employment relation in Nepal. ■

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH PROMOTION

For Decent Work in Nepal



SHAIENDRA KUMAR JHA
NATIONAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL PROJECT

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is the science of anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of hazards arising in or from the workplace which could impair the health and well-being of workers. It also impacts the surrounding communities and the environment.

The Occupational Safety and Health Development in Nepal (SHIELD) project, funded by the Government of Japan, aims to initiate a comprehensive plan for promoting occupational safety and health services. In addition it aims to reform labour inspection system in Nepal in line with the International Labour Standards, in general, and with the Occupational Safety and Health Conventions (C155) and (C187) and the Labour Inspection Convention (C81), in particular.

The project produced a needs assessment report, which briefly describes the current situation, highlights its gaps, weaknesses and provides recommendations for improving the OSH situation in the country.

Based on the findings of the report, the project developed a comprehensive action plan to address the gaps. The action plan is in line with the International Labour Standards. Likewise, it developed a National



Occupational Safety and Health profile in order to bridge the gap of the current legal provisions on OSH and labour inspection in line with the relevant international labour standards.

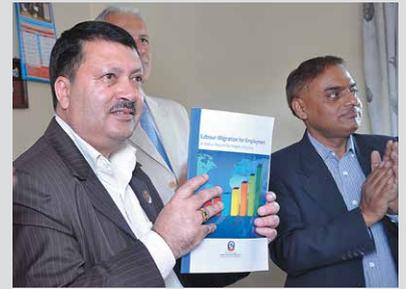
Capacity building of the government, employers' and workers' organisations has also been initiated and will continue through different trainings. The project provided training to 75 representatives of the government, workers' and employers' organisations on modern occupational safety and health and labour inspection practices and procedures, in partner-

ship with the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MoLE). Furthermore, it organised several workshops on OSH practice in Nepal and disseminated the reports on OSH Nepal for tripartite constituents.

The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Labour and Employment has constituted a National Occupational Health and Safety Committee (NOHS) to formulate NOHS Policy for Nepal with technical assistance of ILO. In line to its objective, the project supports the MoLE to revise the national labour law with sufficient provision of OSH. ■



RECENT PUBLICATIONS



LABOUR MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT – A STATUS REPORT FOR NEPAL: 2013/14

This report is the first ever Government of Nepal report on the status of labour migration in Nepal with technical support provided by ILO, IOM and The Asia Foundation. It presents the magnitude of labour migration through longitudinal comparison by collecting and collating information from various data sources. This report acts as a statistical basis and guide for policy-makers and other stakeholders concerned with addressing effective governance of labour migration and in particular protection of the rights of migrant workers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON ILO CONVENTION ON INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES, 1989 (169)

This is a publication on Frequently Asked Questions related to the ILO Convention 169 and relevant answers compiled by the experts in consultation with stakeholders in Nepal. The document was published by the Ministry of Federal Affairs with technical assistance from the ILO Nepal.



INTERNATIONAL DAYS IN BETWEEN DECEMBER TO MAY:

- 1 December** – World AIDS Day
- 3 December** – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 10 December** – Human Rights Day
- 18 December** – International Migrants Day
- 20 February** – World Day of Social Justice
- 8 March** – International Women's Day
- 28 April** – World Day for Safety and Health at Work
- 1 May** – International Labour Day

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