

PRESS RELEASE

New Zealand and ILO launch NZ\$ 3 million project for remittance dependent communities in South-Eastern Myanmar to cope with COVID 19 impacts on livelihoods

Responding to the unprecedented crisis and pressing needs created by COVID-19 outbreak in Myanmar particularly in disaster and conflict-affected areas, the New Zealand Aid Programme and International Labour Organisation (ILO) technical team in Myanmar are launching a new project to provide livelihoods support to returned migrants and remittance dependent communities in South-Eastern Myanmar; one of the most vulnerable places along the border.

Ambassador Steve Marshall, New Zealand Ambassador to Myanmar, highlighted that this project will help Myanmar's vulnerable households over the next 18 months to better withstand the loss of remittances caused by COVID-19 and also build skills for future livelihood opportunities. The project primarily focuses on the provision of employment through the development of employment-intensive community-based infrastructure and the provision of vocational training for the communities. Through the project, return migrants and remittance-dependent communities in both mixed Government and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAO) administrated areas in Kayin and Mon State, will be supported. The emphasis will be on the most affected poor and vulnerable households, in particular returned migrants, women, and youth.

The ILO, through its Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), has more than 12 years of experience in Myanmar particularly in disaster / conflict affected areas and has implemented several projects that focused on social cohesion and economic empowerment of the rural population, the provision of employment, and the development of basic infrastructure.

During the Global Leaders' Day of the ILO Global Summit held on 8 July 2020 on COVID-19 and the World of Work, Her Excellency State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi highlighted that the Government of Myanmar would give top priority to create job opportunities for returned migrants by initiating labour-intensive programme in the construction and agriculture sectors. The project will contribute to the priorities of the Myanmar Government's Covid-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) and the UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (UN-SERF). It also aligns to the ILO Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Myanmar which aims to support

equitable development, addressing vulnerabilities that people face resulting from disaster and conflicts and enhance ongoing efforts at advancing peace and national reconciliation.

ILO Liaison Officer / representative for Myanmar Mr. Donglin Li expressed his appreciation for the generous funding and the confidence that the New Zealand Government has shown in ILO's technical support to Myanmar COVID 19 response.

ILO is committed to supporting Myanmar in her efforts in combating the COVID-19 outbreak, ensuring the safety of individuals at work, and steady economic recovery through decent employment creation.

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