

Background

- In 2006, Vanuatu's population was estimated at 221,000, about 77% of which live in rural areas;
- Vanuatu's economy is dominated by agriculture and the services sector, the latter reflecting the importance of tourism;
- With 39% of the population under 15 years of age, the "youth bulge" is one of the most profound challenges facing Vanuatu. The low absorption of school leavers into formal employment has contributed to a deterioration of law and order;
- Vanuatu participates in the pilot scheme of the "Recognised Seasonal Employer" (RSE) Work Policy in New Zealand under which New Zealand employers can recruit workers from some Pacific Island Countries for seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries since April 2007;
- Besides the 2000 Labour Market Survey, the only recent labour market data is produced from the Vanuatu Population Census and the Household Income & Expenditure Survey (HIES), which include only a limited set of labour market indicators;
- The formal social protection system in Vanuatu is limited to the Vanuatu National Provident Fund which is mainly confined to formal sector employees, and some health care benefits.

ILO in Vanuatu

- Vanuatu became a member of ILO in 2003;
- Vanuatu ratified seven of the eight Fundamental Conventions in 2006, as well as C.185 Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003;
- Achieving the desired international labour standards, implementing ILO Conventions ratified by Vanuatu as well as fulfilling the reporting obligations have been a focal area between ILO and the constituents;
- The tripartite constituents are the Department of Labour, within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions (VCTU) and the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI);



Vanuatu National Flag

- The number of union members in Vanuatu is low and the environment for promoting good industrial relations and collective bargaining is not enabling. The tripartite Labour Advisory Board is not regarded as a genuine tripartite forum by VCTU;
- ILO has developed an in-depth understanding of the particular needs of the constituents and has helped to build the capacity of the tripartite constituents through technical assistance, training programmes and the supply of equipment;
- ILO has provided assistance with a review of Vanuatu's labour legislation;
- Under the past technical cooperation project "Social Security in Pacific Island Countries", funded by the Netherlands, ILO has conducted a social security study in Vanuatu;
- ILO's technical cooperation project "Men as partners in reproductive health", funded by UNFPA, has run since 2008. The awareness on HIV/AIDS at the workplace and the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS have been raised with tripartite constituents and assistance was provided with drafting workplace policies in compliance with ILO's Code of Practice;
- ILO's "Sub-regional Programme on Education, Employability and Decent Work for Youth in the Pacific Island Countries", funded by the Netherlands, was also launched in early 2008.



Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)

The first Decent Work Programme (DWCP) which details ILO cooperation activities with Vanuatu for the period 2009 – 2012, based on tripartite consultations, was signed on the 22nd April 2009 in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Priority 1. Labour legislation reform and application of International Labour Standards

Outcome 1.1: Improved implementation of Vanuatu's modernised labour legislation in compliance with the International Labour Standards.

Outcome 1.2: International Labour Standards are broadly ratified and significant progress is made in their application in line with fundamental principles and rights at work.

Priority 3. Capacity building of tripartite partners and improvement of social dialogue

Outcome 3.1: The value of workers' and employers' organizations for existing and potential membership is increased.

Outcome 3.2: The enforcement of national labour standards is improved through strengthened labour administration.

Outcome 3.3: Tripartite partners are strengthened and an effective tripartite social dialogue mechanism is established to make tangible progress in promoting Decent Work.

Priority 2. Promotion of decent employment opportunities, particularly for young women and men, and inclusive of persons with disabilities

Outcome 2.1: Improved decent employment opportunities for youth through skills training, support services, and improved policies.

Outcome 2.2: Improved youth labour market statistics are collected and used.

Priority 4. Increasing social protection

Outcome 4.1: Extension of the scope of social protection.

Outcome 4.2: Increased compliance of employers' with VNPF requirements.

Outcome 4.3: OSH Bill including the national code of practice for workplace policies for HIV/AIDS has been enacted and implemented.

Outcome 4.4: Workers under overseas work schemes are supported.

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