Switzerland has been an ILO member State since its creation in 1919. It is a key partner as its host country, and is pursuing the Decent Work Agenda. Switzerland has ratified a considerable number of ILO Conventions, including all eight fundamental Conventions and three of the governance Conventions on labour inspection, tripartite consultation and employment policy. Switzerland is currently a deputy member of the ILO Governing Body.

Switzerland’s contribution to the Decent Work Agenda

Switzerland contributes to the regular budget of the ILO and to its development cooperation programmes. Contributions to development cooperation are channelled through the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

In 2009 SECO and the ILO signed a framework agreement on development cooperation supporting sustainable enterprises and promoting productive and decent work. SECO supports ILO global programmes such as ‘Sustainable, Competitive and Responsible Enterprises’ (SCORE), which is implemented in emerging economies in Africa, Asia and Latin America; and Better Work, which aims to improve labour standards in the global supply chain in several countries, including Bangladesh, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The SDC is also a valued and important contributor to the ILO by supporting programmes on migration at global, regional and country levels, including on issues such as the strategic action-learning partnership, the development of protection mechanisms for labour migration in the Gulf States, and the promotion of decent work through improved migration policy in Bangladesh.

SWITZERLAND’S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PRIORITIES¹

In 2012 Switzerland allocated 0.45 per cent of its gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA), an amount of USD 3.02 billion. Multilateral ODA accounted for 19 per cent of Swiss official development assistance.²

The Government of Switzerland’s Message on International Cooperation 2013-2016 details the operational activities of the SDC and SECO for –
- Humanitarian Aid (SDC)
- Technical cooperation and financial aid for developing countries (SDC)
- Economic and trade policy measures within the context of development cooperation (SECO)
- Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States CIS (SDC/SECO)

The main objective of SECO’s activities is the promotion of economically, environmentally and socially sustainable growth which creates new jobs, encourages higher productivity, and contributes to a reduction in poverty and inequality.

SECO’s priority countries are Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Peru, South Africa, Tunisia, and Viet Nam.

The SDC focuses on the following themes: conflict transformation and crisis resistance, health care, water, elementary and vocational education, agriculture and food security, private sector and financial services, state reforms, local administration, climate change, and migration.

SDC’s priority countries and regions are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Bolivia, Cuba, and Central America. At the same time, SDC increased its activities in fragile contexts.

In the framework of cooperation with Eastern Europe, SECO and the SDC started to carry out joint programmes in the Western Balkans and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to contribute to political and economic reform processes.

¹ Source: Message concernant la coopération internationale de la Suisse 2013-2016, (15 February 2012)
² Source: Development Co-operation Report 2013, OECD
Switzerland finances the ILO through the Regular Budget (RB) and Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC).

- The Regular Budget (RB) is composed of assessed contributions by member states. Switzerland provided a total assessed contribution of CHF 33.2 million between 2006 and 2013. Switzerland contributed with USD 4,172,461 to the ILO’s regular budget in 2013.

- Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC) contributions support specific global and national projects and programmes with a clear timeline and a pre-defined geographic and thematic focus. The overall funding from Switzerland to ILO development cooperation between 2006 and 2013 amounted to USD 34.6 million. In 2013, Switzerland provided the ILO with USD 9,000,928 (USD 7,293,144 from the SDC and USD 1,687,954 from the State of Geneva).

### Key SECO’s contributions: Better Work

Switzerland is a major contributor to the Better Work Global Programme, and has contributed CHF 16.6 million to it since 2008. Better Work is a partnership between the ILO and the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation (IFC) that improves the lives of workers and their families by driving sector-wide, sustainable improvements in adherence to core ILO labour standards and national labour law, and promoting business competitiveness in major garment producing industries.

Better Work currently engages the garment sector in Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan, Lesotho, Nicaragua and Viet Nam. As at January 2014, approximately 1,000 factories had been engaged, employing over 1,000,000 workers, of which 84 per cent are women. 80 per cent of the factories have developed improvement plans.

### Key SECO contributions: Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE)

Following the successful completion of its first phase, the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the ILO have signed an agreement to move forward with a second phase of the ‘Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises’ (SCORE) programme.

SCORE is a practical training and advisory service – including assessments, advisory work and training – leads to greater compliance in factories, with demonstrable improvements in working conditions.

In addition, factory-based manager surveys and independent research indicate that compliance with labour laws can increase a supplier’s productivity, profitability and resilience. Workers in factories with better working conditions have greater motivation, more loyalty and lower turnover and absenteeism. This improves business performance; improvements in working conditions and compliance can lead to higher worker household income, higher family remittances, greater mental and physical health, and better educational and health outcomes for family members.

### Switzerland’s support to the ILO’s priorities

**SECO support to sustainable enterprises and creation of more and better jobs**

- Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE), Phase II, 2013-2017
- Supporting Tourism in Myanmar through Business Management Training, 2014-2017
- Promoting Micro and Small Enterprises through Improved Entrepreneurs’ Access to Finance in Indonesia, inception phase, 2012-2013

**SDC support to migration**

- Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh, 2011-2014
- Improving the Governance and Protection Mechanisms for Labour Migration in the Middle East, 2012-2014
- Improving Governance of Labour Migration and Protection of Migrant Workers’ Rights in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Egypt, 2012-2015
- Promoting Decent Work through Good Governance, Protection and Empowerment of Migrant Workers, 2013-2015
- Regional Advocacy Strategy on the ILO’s Domestic Workers’ Convention, 2011 (No. 189) in Arab States, 2012-2014
- Mainstreaming Labour Migration Statistics in the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) in Yemen, 2011-2014

**ILO Director-General Guy Ryder at the launch ceremony for SCORE Phase II in October 2013.**

The first phase of the project benefited more than 50,000 workers and managers at over 300 participating SMEs. Phase II plans to reach out to a further 800 SMEs representing approximately 100,000 employees, with an increased focus on building the capacity of national partners to deliver and sustain the training programme independently.

With the support of the Governments of Switzerland and Norway, the second phase of SCORE will run for five years, with a budget amounting to around USD 19.5 million. Training will be implemented in China, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, India, South Africa and Viet Nam.

**UPDATE: NEW BETTER WORK PROGRAMME IN BANGLADESH**

Through their active participation in the Better Work Advisory Committee, SECO supported the establishment of the Better Work programme in Bangladesh in the first quarter of 2014.

Building on its expertise and unique position, Better Work will engage with national partners to promote sectoral changes, including effective industrial relations, and to support the long-term competitiveness of the industry.

Better Work Bangladesh will be funded by the Governments of Switzerland, Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.
Key SDC Contributions: Improving the Governance and Protection Mechanisms for Labour Migration in the Middle East (MAGNET)

SDC supports ongoing regional projects in the Middle East under the Migration and Governance Network (MAGNET).

Since the inception of this programme, there have been multiple national and regional efforts to improve migration governance and protect the rights of migrant workers in the Middle East. A partnership was developed with Panos Europe to improve the quality of reporting by the media on labour migration and trafficking. Separate regional dialogues were also launched with trade union representatives and academics from the region. Multiple research initiatives are under way, one to explore the feasibility of establishing cooperatives, and another in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) to assess the psychosocial risks that migrant domestic workers face in Lebanon.

In the light of country-specific work performed by the project, various Arab countries have made proactive strides to improve the protection of migrant workers. In Jordan and Kuwait the State requested ILO assistance to formulate a national migration policy. Kuwait also requested ILO support to align development policies to objectives on the governance of foreign labour. MAGNET additionally provided input on how to address the youth migration challenge in Yemen, specifically in the Youth Employment Plan adopted by the Prime Minister in October 2013.

The SDC supported the project with a contribution of USD 2.5 million.

Key SDC Contributions: Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh

Through the SDC-funded Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh project, the ILO has since 2011 assisted the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen legal, policy and institutional capacities, particularly to improve operational efficiency and lay the ground for social protection.

Partnerships for this project include the employers’ and workers’ organizations, the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, the Bureau of Manpower Training and Employment (BMET), and the Wage Earners’ Welfare Fund (WEWF). Other partners include the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the implementation of a communication campaign and of a return migration database system; and UN Women for the establishment of a return and reintegration programme.

The project helped draft the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act of 2013 and assisted the drafting of the Overseas Employment Policy, which are currently being considered by the Government. It has produced research and conducted institutional reviews of the BMET and the WEF. It supported dialogue with SAARC and between the countries of origin and destination through an Intergovernmental regional seminar in July 2013. The SDC supported the project with a contribution of USD 3.5 million.

Spotlight on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

The ILO works with enterprises, foundations and other non-state actors to tackle global labour market issues. Engagement with the private sector helps leverage resources and creates attractive sustainable development models for decent work.

Switzerland has provided a favourable environment for the ILO to further develop public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPs with Swiss-based organizations amounted to US$ 4.9 million for the period 2006-2013.

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DEPARTMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS AND FIELD SUPPORT

SWITZERLAND — ILO HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder visited Bern in February 2013 to meet Minister Schneider-Amman. The high-level visit resulted in an agreement for the second phase of Better Work. The DG hosted a ceremony for the launch of SCORE Phase II in October 2013, which was attended by Ambassador Maser Mallor.


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