



International  
Labour  
Organization

# The ILO in Bangladesh



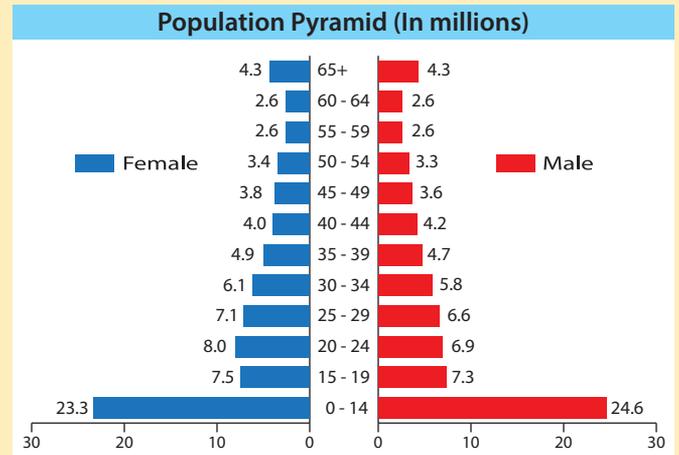
# Bangladesh key facts and figures

## Labour force statistics

Labour force growth rate	3.3%
Annual entrants to labour force	2.0 million
Unemployed	2.59 million
Unemployment rate	4.3%
Underemployed	2.3 million
Underemployment rate	4%
Proportion of workforce in informal economy	87.4%

## Economic statistics

Per capita income	USD 1,466
GDP Growth (2015-2016)	7.11%

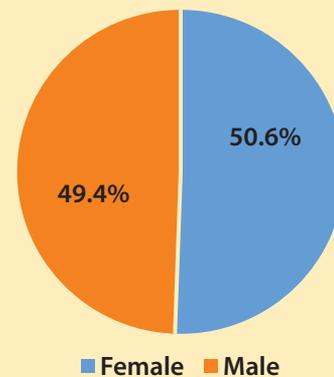


\*Source: Labour Force survey 2013 and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

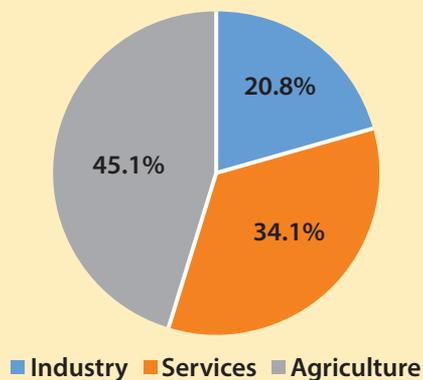
The proportion of young people (aged 15-35) and those in the economically active age group creates a potential “demographic dividend” for Bangladesh which can be unlocked through the creation of decent, productive work.

However, challenges remain. Demographics mean the labour force is growing quickly. While a structural shift of employment from agriculture to services and industry is steadily underway, agriculture still constitutes a large share of GDP and employs almost half of the labour force.

## Population 154.1 million



## Employment by sector



The most telling indication of the slow pace of economic modernisation is the large informal economy which absorbs 87.4 per cent of the labour force. This overwhelmingly large informal employment is mostly characterized by low productive, low pay and precarious jobs.

Unemployment and underemployment are high, particularly among young people. Though women make up half of the population, only about a third of them are in the labour market. Their entry into the labour force is mainly due to rapid growth of the ready-made garment industries which directly employ about four million workers of whom an estimated 55 per cent are female.

## The ILO – Who we are

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN specialized agency dealing with work and workplace issues, and related rights and standards. Its overarching goal is to achieve decent work for all so everyone benefits from working conditions that offer freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In working towards this goal, the ILO has four strategic objectives:

- To promote and realize standards, and fundamental principles and rights at work
- To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment
- To enhance coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- To strengthen the relationship between workers, employers and governments, and encourage social dialogue

Founded in 1919, the ILO is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations. It became the first specialised agency of the United Nations in 1946.

# ILO in Bangladesh

The International Labour Organization (ILO) works with the government, workers and employers organisations to promote decent and productive employment opportunities for women and men in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has been an active member State of the ILO since 22 June 1972 and has ratified 35 ILO Conventions including seven fundamental conventions.

The ILO opened its office in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 25 June 1973, and initially started working on expanding income-earning opportunities through labour-based infrastructure development and maintenance.

More recent technical cooperation activities have focused on enhancing working conditions and labour rights with considerable emphasis being placed on the ready-made garment sector. Major initiatives are also taking place in the areas of skills and migration.



© ILO

## Four Priority Areas

### Working conditions

ILO is working to improve structural and fire safety of ready-made garment factories. It also helps build capacity of national regulatory bodies while enhancing Occupational Safety and Health.

### Rights at work

ILO works with both workers and employers organisations to promote better compliance with and capacity relating to international labour standards, particularly freedom of association and collective bargaining. Focus is also placed on strengthening social dialogue between government, workers and employers.

### Skills and employment

ILO works to improve the national enabling environment for industry skills development and the increased employability of young and adult women and men, including those with disabilities.

### Social protection

ILO works to ensure protection and decent employment conditions for Bangladeshi migrant workers. ILO also works to eliminate child labour, promote the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and establish basic social protection benefits.

As part of the UN system in Bangladesh, the ILO supports the Government of Bangladesh in implementing its Five Year Plans and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 8 to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

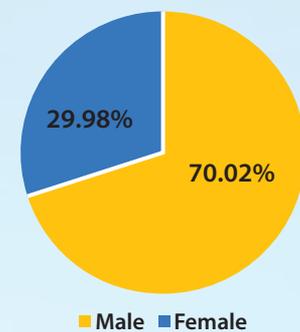
### Partnerships

The ILO Country Office for Bangladesh encourages tripartism by promoting social dialogue with the government, employers and workers organizations.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) is ILO's counterpart at the country level on labour issues. In addition, ILO works closely with the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment with regards to migration and social protection issues as well as the Ministry of Education on skills development. ILO works with employers through their focal representative body the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and the workers through the National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) and IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC).

Development partners include: Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, H&M, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and USA.

### Labour Force: 60.7 million



## The International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN agency for the world of work. It was founded in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the principle that universal and lasting peace can only be achieved if it is built on social justice. The ILO is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to shape policies and programmes for social justice and decent working and living conditions for all women and men. For this it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. The ILO is also responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards (Conventions and Recommendations). This unique arrangement gives the organization an edge in incorporating 'real world' knowledge about employment and work in to its activities.

### ILO Country Office for Bangladesh

House-S.E(G) 2, Road-140, Gulshan-1  
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh  
Tel : + 880 2 986 5973  
Fax : + 880 2 966 5982

Web: [www.ilo.org/dhaka](http://www.ilo.org/dhaka)  
Facebook: @ilobangladesh  
Twitter: @ilobangladesh

