

▶ The ILO in Pakistan

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▶ At a glance

Pakistan joined the ILO in 1947

Key areas of collaboration

- ▶ Jobs, skills and social protection
- ▶ Promoting international labour standards
- ▶ Safe and inclusive workplaces
- ▶ Climate resilience and just transitions

Constituents

- ▶ Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
- ▶ Provincial Departments of Labour
- ▶ Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination
- ▶ Ministry of Maritime Affairs
- ▶ Ministry of Industries and Production
- ▶ Ministry of Commerce
- ▶ Employers' Federation of Pakistan & other employer organizations
- ▶ Pakistan United Workers' Federation & other worker organizations

Conventions ratified

Pakistan has ratified 38 Conventions and 1 Protocol, of which 32 Conventions and the Protocol are currently in force.

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▶ Towards decent work for all in Pakistan

Pakistan, an ILO member since 1947, partners with the organization to address evolving labour challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic hit Pakistan's economic growth hard, particularly informal sector workers, worsening pre-existing socioeconomic challenges for marginalized people and amplifying the effects of climate change on work.

The ILO collaborates with Pakistan to increase access to decent and productive work. Government, employers, and workers have collectively set out priorities which include improving working conditions, particularly in supply chains, promoting labour rights, preventing unacceptable forms of work, formalizing the informal economy, enhancing skills, and ensuring occupational safety and health in high-risk sectors like textiles and agriculture, mining, construction, sanitation, healthcare, and ship recycling.

In partnership with federal and provincial governments, the ILO supports these goals through policies and programmes, capacity building, and institutional strengthening. It also aids Pakistan's commitment to international labour standards, including ratifying and implementing ILO conventions, fostering a fairer, more inclusive workforce.

Labour market indicators

- ▶ Labour force: 83 million
- ▶ Employment by major industries: Agriculture (33.1%), Industry (25.7%), Services (41.2%)
- ▶ Formal workforce: 27.9%
- ▶ Female labour force participation rate: 21.4%
- ▶ Women in leadership roles: 6.1%
- ▶ Unemployment rate: 7.1%
- ▶ NEET: 28.4% (15–24-year-olds)

Source: Labour Force Survey 2020-21

► How do we work together?

The ILO and its government, employer and worker constituents in Pakistan are working together in a number of key areas:

- **Skills development:** Strengthening human capital through skill enhancement, offering upskilling opportunities, and providing skills assessment and certification for migrant workers and refugees.
- **Social protection:** Expanding coverage, enhancing benefits and integrating digital solutions.
- **Formalization of the informal economy:** Supporting legal and policy reforms, organising workers' and employers', and expanding access to social protection.
- **Labour standards and workplace safety:** Supporting ratification, application and reporting on international labour standards, making workplaces safe and inclusive for all.
- **Gender equality:** Addressing wage gaps, care burden, promoting women in leadership roles and strengthening their representation in trade unions and workers' organizations.
- **Child labour and forced labour:** Addressing child labour, forced labour, and trafficking through various initiatives.
- **Business growth and market inclusivity:** Strengthening compliance to improve business competitiveness and leverage trade preferential schemes. Enhancing access to inclusive market systems and formalizing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- **Crisis response and Climate Resilience:** Promoting green jobs, just transitions through Nationally Determined Contributions, and labour-intensive investment programmes.
- **Social dialogue:** Strengthening representation of workers and employers through active participation through dialogue for improved industrial relations.



► What have ILO and Pakistan achieved together?

- **Ratification of international labour standards:** On 14 March 2025, Pakistan ratified three key labour conventions after an 18-year gap, including the 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (1930), the Maritime Labour Convention (2006), and the Labour Statistics Convention (1985).
- **Inclusive growth and social protection:** In June 2024, Pakistan became a pathfinder country in the UN's Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. 'Just Transitions' have been incorporated into new jobs and social protection-related programmes. Additionally, social protection policies were developed in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, moving towards interoperable social protection systems.
- **Tripartite partnership in Global Coalition for Social Justice:** Pakistan became the first country with a tripartite partnership in the Global Coalition for Social Justice, subsequently forming a national coalition to reflect its global commitment.
- **Development of the World of Work Crises Response Strategy:** ILO provided extensive technical support to the country during the 2022 floods, leading to the development of the World of Work Crises Response Strategy.
- **National Emigration Policy:** Pakistan revised a National Emigration Policy (awaiting approval) to strengthen protection and access to services for migrant workers and their families, including through the Workers' Welfare digital portal.
- **Strengthened labour inspection:** The ILO facilitated the adoption of strategic compliance plans by provinces, enabling the effective use of limited labour inspection resources.
- **National Roadmap for Formalisation of SMEs and Workers 2025:** A national roadmap was developed to support SMEs and workers in transitioning to formal employment, expanding access to labour protection and social security.

What is the International Labour Organization?

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.