



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

National Tripartite Workshop
“Toward the Development of National Policy on HIV and
AIDS and World of Work in Jordan”
Amman, 17-19 December 2011

Report

Organized by:

Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Jordan Chamber of Industry
General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions
In collaboration with
the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States

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1. Rationale and justification

Considering the followings:

- The **National Strategic HIV and AIDS Plan (NSF)** 2012-2016 in Jordan which includes the world of work and highlights the role of the Ministry of Labour to strengthen workplace initiatives in collaboration with employers and workers organizations and develop anti-discrimination policy on HIV and AIDS at workplace.
 - The need for strengthening the engagement with the private sector and promoting public-private partnerships in the national response to HIV and AIDS.
 - The **number of work-related factors** that might contribute to the increase of HIV infections in the future such as poverty and unemployment rates; large population movements, including refugees and labour migration; gender inequality, and HIV-related stigma and discrimination at work. All recognized as important priority areas in the new National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2012-2016 (NSP).
 - **Findings from the ILO study on “Analyses and priority setting on policy and practice on HIV and AIDS and World of Work in Jordan”** which points out that while Jordanian legislation is based on general principles of non-discrimination, there is no specific reference to HIV status. The legislative and policy environment could thus be strengthened substantially to protect the rights of people living with HIV, including those at workplaces and to be more compliant with the international standard R.200
 - The adoption of the ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200) by Delegates representing the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan participating in the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference.
 - The principles of R.200 which takes a rights-based approach to the pandemic and establishes that the workplace should play a role in the HIV response and calls for the development, adoption and effective implementation of national tripartite workplace policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS.
 - The statement of commitment adopted during **The Sub-regional Consultation Meeting on “Integrating the world of work in National AIDS response in Mashreq countries”** Beirut (Lebanon) 20-19 June, 2011, which emphasized the direct and serious effect of HIV/AIDS on the world of work and the unique role that can be played by the world of work in effectively contributing to national and regional responses to HIV in Mashreq countries.
2. The endorsement of the aforementioned statement of commitment through national seminars held in Amman and Aqaba, November 2011.

It was agreed:

To promote this national tripartite workshop to bring the stakeholders together for a structured discussion toward the development of a National Policy on HIV and AIDS and World of Work in line with the NSP in Jordan and to give effect to the ILO Recommendation No.200. The workshop and its outcome aimed also to contribute to the achievement of the goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

2. Objectives

- To discuss the current Jordanian legal and policy environment, identify issues and reach a consensus for strengthening the policy and programmes on HIV and AIDS in the world of work in Jordan;
- To establish a technical committee on HIV and AIDS and World of work
- To draft national policy on HIV and AIDS and the world of work in Jordan.

3. Structure of the workshop

The workshop included relevant presentations on National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS with special focused on workplace component, findings from ILO study in Jordan on legal review and practices on HIV and World of Work, and the ILO Recommendation No.200, migration in the context on HIV and AIDS, HIV testing and discussions in plenary and working group sessions with facilitators identified from the relevant stakeholders and/or participants.

Day 1 included presentations on NSP, the ILO Recommendation no.200 and study on law and practice in the world of work in Jordan and working group discussions to better understand key policy and legal issues and identify the ones that need to be addressed in order to strengthen the policy and legal environment. Examples from other countries in relation to HIV/AIDS workplace policy and programmes will also be shared.

Day 2 offered insights on HIV testing and HIV and mobility as well as discussions on the outline of the draft national Policy and set up working groups to draft the policy.

Day 3 will involve group presentations and agreement on the draft policy with a discussion on the next steps for its adoption.

4. Participants' profile



The workshop gathered around 50 decision makers representing government, employers, workers, International organization and civil society organizations, including representatives of PLHIV. Broadly, as follows:

Government: around 18 representatives from Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of interior (Drug Control Department).

Employers/ private sector: around 8 representatives from Jordan Chamber of Industry, Chamber of Commerce, Association of Hotels.

Worker' representatives: around 5 representations from Textile & Weaving Trade Union, Electrify Trade Union, Land Transport Syndicate, Electricity Sector, Air Transport workers Trade Union.

Civil Society - around 10 representatives from Al Hussein Workers' Clinics, National Centre for women Health Care, Food Industries, Positive Vision Association, The National Council for Women, Al Aqaba Hotel Association, Jordanian Trade Agency, Food Industries, ORANGE.

International agencies - around 3 representatives from UN agencies/ UNAIDS, IOM.

Media – around 4 representatives from Hala News, AlGhad Newspaper, Rum + Petra Agency.

5. Achievements

Convened in Amman from 17 to 19 December 2011, the Workshop was opened by statements from representatives of the Ministry of Health, Jordan Chamber of Industry, General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions and the ILO Regional Office as well as the Minister of Labour who formally inaugurated the meeting.

A number of presentations were made followed by discussions in order to bring the participants up-to-date on recent developments. These included the following:

- the ILO study on HIV and AIDS and the world of work in Jordan;
- the ILO Recommendation No. 200;
- the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and its workplace component;
- HIV and testing;
- HIV/AIDS and migration.

The Workshop was then divided into tripartite working groups to examine in detail different chapters of a draft policy, to ensure that it is adjusted and brought into harmony within the Jordanian context, and to link it to relevant national policies and strategies. The draft policy was subsequently revised on the basis of the review in working group meetings as well as discussions in plenary. It was eventually presented for final review and revision to plenary on the third day of the workshop which amended and subsequently adopted the draft 'National policy on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work in Jordan'. The document has obtained the endorsement of ILO legal department and it is currently under technical review and editing in Arabic and English, in preparation for formal submission to the Ministry of Labour and endorsement by the Government of Jordan.

In addition, with a view to ensuring timely follow-up, endorsement and implementation of the policy, the Workshop recommended the establishment of a **'Technical Committee on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work'**. The workshop approved the Committee's draft terms of reference and its proposed composition to be submitted to the relevant authorities for its endorsement and establishment.

6. Findings and Challenges

The background documentations, presentations at the workshop and the discussions on the draft policy provided insights into the HIV and AIDS situation in Jordan that merit close attention:

6.1. Jordan, similar to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, is classified as low prevalence by WHO/UNAIDS. The country is also faced with underlying structural problems, high unemployment, widespread poverty and high levels of labour migration. The epidemic is generally seen to be concentrated among the most at-risk populations (MARPS) (female sex workers, intravenous drug users and men having sex with men) with very low levels of HIV among the general population. This has resulted in a sense of complacency with minimal awareness programmes on HIV/AIDS for the general population resulting in low understanding of the basic facts on HIV including its routes of transmission. This was even evident among participants at the Workshop, which is quite alarming at this stage of the epidemic. Unless the population becomes better informed on the basic facts about HIV/AIDS, the associated fear will result in continued stigma and discrimination and undermine efforts at prevention of HIV and mitigation of its adverse consequences.

6.2. In spite of the fact that prevalence is highest among MARPS, there does not seem to be an adequate response in terms of outreach programmes to contain and reduce prevalence rates among these groups, the main obstacle being that they appear to be 'criminalized' and consequently marginalized. Continuation of the status quo and lack of adequate programmes particularly for female sex workers, who are among the key drivers of the epidemic, presents a special problem for the world of work. It should be kept in mind that workers, particularly mobile workers, are the main group of clients of sex workers. It is obvious that they constitute a 'bridge population' to the rest of society. It is thus logical that effective programmes should work on both sides of the equation: harm reduction and protection programmes among sex workers on the one hand and education and behaviour change programmes among workers to protect themselves including the regular and consistent use of condoms on the other hand. These constitute components of the NSP and should be given urgent attention.

6.3. UNAIDS reported that the Middle East and North Africa, was the only region in the world showing an increase in HIV prevalence. This is quite alarming and should be a 'wake-up call' for action. It was reiterated that some countries in the region were moving from 'low prevalence' to 'concentrated prevalence'. The issues raised above may very well be contributing factors in the rise in prevalence rates in the region. The influx of refugees since the Iraq war and more recently the uprising in Syria has, of course, exacerbated the situation and as a result may be contributing factors to the rise in prevalence, as well.

6.4 The statistics available on the basis of compulsory testing have resulted in the perception that HIV is a problem within the migrant workers community in the country and among Jordanians returning from work abroad. The current policy and practice of compulsory testing of migrant workers needs to be addressed both for the sake of migrant workers and how such policies may also be generalized for job applicants, particularly in the public sector as it seems to be imminent. Lack of knowledge and understanding result in fear and stigma, leading to drastic measures such as compulsory testing and subsequent deportation thus destroying lives and reputations. Compulsory testing is regrettably regarded as a 'best practice', flagrantly used in isolation from the necessary prevention and treatment programmes. There is further danger that compulsory testing gives a false sense of security on the one hand and drives the epidemic underground with those in need not coming forward for help for fear of stigma and discrimination on the other hand.

7. Recommendations and next steps

In spite of these issues, there was clear openness and commitment by participants at the workshop to take the necessary action and work towards policies and practices that could address them. Adoption of the draft policy was a clear indication of the willingness to change presenting an opening that should be built upon with a sense of urgency. The adoption of the draft policy on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work is most timely as it comes soon after the endorsement of the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS which also includes a component on the world of work.

The following are a number of recommendations for follow up action to maintain the momentum, building on the workshop for concerted action to overcome stigma and discrimination, and paving the way for effective programmes on HIV and AIDS in the world of work:

7.1 The draft policy should be readied as a matter of urgency for submission to the Ministry of Labour and its formal endorsement by the Government.

7.2 The Ministry of Labour in close collaboration with the social partners and the Ministry of Health should take immediate steps to establish the Technical Committee on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. Necessary training and orientation should be provided to members of the Committee to enable it to effectively follow up the endorsement and implementation of the draft policy.

7.3. Work should commence as soon as possible to put into operation elements contained in the workplace component of the National Strategy. The Technical Committee should take the lead in supporting 7.2 and thus reinforcing the multi-sectoral approach envisaged in the Strategy.

7.4 As soon as it is endorsed, the policy on HIV/AIDS and the world of work should be printed and disseminated to all key government agencies, employers and workers organizations, civil society organizations including the organization of people living with HIV. This could also be reinforced through national and sectoral orientation seminars. Representatives of the media should be closely involved in the dissemination programme with adequate briefing.

7.5. Consultations should be initiated with all concerned to begin a review of testing policies to bring them in line with the principles contained in the ILO Recommendation and included in the Jordanian Policy.

7.6. Hotel and Tourism and Transport are two key sectors in the Jordanian economy and as in other countries their workforce is vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. Representatives of these two sectors participated in the Workshop and expressed interest and willingness to work on HIV and AIDS. It is thus urgent that with the direct involvement of the ministries of Tourism and Transport, action should be taken in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour as well as the Jordan Chamber of Industry, Jordan Chamber of Commerce and the General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions and the sectoral associations and unions to develop structured programmes for the Hotel and Tourism and the Transport Sectors along the following lines:

- Conduct situational analyses in these sectors, and consult closely with the key stakeholders.
- Hold sectoral meetings to present the policy and the results of the analysis.
- Present specific activities that could be carried out together with examples from other countries and tools developed by them and the ILO.
- Invite enterprises to participate in policy and programme development for their workforce.
- The enterprise programmes should include formulation of policy (based on the national policy, for which a model can be put together); establishment of a committee; conducting a survey to assess knowledge, attitudes and perceptions among workers; developing a behaviour change communication programme concentrating on peer education; promoting voluntary and confidential testing and providing information on treatment where needed. Every effort should be made to ensure that these initiatives are integrated and mainstreamed into existing programmes within the enterprise and linked to community-based services.

7.7 Migrant workers require special attention and thus apart from reviewing and revising compulsory testing policy and practices, similar initiatives along the lines suggested in 7.6 should be taken. In particular steps should be taken to integrate HIV/AIDS awareness and peer education into the existing programmes of ongoing projects such as those conducted in Qualified Industrial Zones including Better Work. The optimum approach would be to provide the necessary orientation and education to workers where they are recruited, where they are trained and where they work. For Jordanians going abroad for work, pre-departure training is essential to avoid as much as possible the harsh treatment including abrupt deportation that they receive if tested positive.

7.8. HIV and migration is a sensitive and complicated issue across the region which is characterized by harsh measures of compulsory testing and summary deportation which have immense negative impact on workers involved and are in direct contradiction of Human Rights and the principles contained in the ILO Recommendation. It is thus recommended that a sub-regional workshop on HIV and Migration be held in collaboration with UNAIDS and other organizations concerned together with national representatives to review the situation and arrive at recommendations for humane action on migrant workers for consideration and adoption by the national governments.

7.8 Controversial information on HIV testing during the workshop should be remarked. HIV testing should be discussed on tailored seminars which should include data analyses concerning Jordan.

Draft Agenda

Day 1

8.30 – 9:00 Registration

9:00 – 10:30 Opening session and remarks by:

H.E. Maher el Waked, Minister of Labour- Jordan

Dr. Bassam Al Hejjaoui, Ministry of Health-Jordan

Mr. Adnan Abul Ragheb, Jordan Chambers of Industry-Jordan

Mr. Mazen Maaytah, General Federation of Jordan Trade Unions-Jordan

Mr. Maurizio Bussi, ILO Regional Office Beirut

Adoption of the agenda of the workshop

10:30– 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00- 13:00 The need for national Policy on HIV and AIDS in the world of work

Presentation of ILO study on law and practice on HIV and AIDS and the world of work in Jordan, followed by discussions

Speaker: Ms. Michela Martini, Technical Specialist on HIV/AIDS

ILO Regional Office for Arab States

Presentation on the ILO Recommendation No. 200, followed by discussions

Speaker: Ms. Michela Martini, Technical Specialist on HIV/AIDS

ILO Regional Office for Arab States

Presentation of the National AIDS Strategy and its workplace component, followed by discussions

Speaker: Mr. Abdallah Hanathleh, Ministry of Health - Jordan

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 The national Policy on HIV and AIDS in the world of work in Jordan

Brief Introduction on how to develop the National policy

Speaker: Mr. Behrouz Shahandeh, ILO Consultant - Geneva

ILO Regional Office for Arab States

Working group sessions of participants to review some national policies on HIV and AIDS and the world of work and developing the first outline for the draft national Policy on HIV and AIDS and world of work in Jordan. *(coffee will be served during group work)*

15:30–16:30 Discussions and conclusions of the day

Day 2

- 09:00-10:00** **Key challenges in national policy development in Jordan**
- HIV and testing policies
Speaker: Mr. El Amin El Tayeb, UNAIDS - Cairo
- HIV/AIDS and migration
Speaker: Ms. Angela Santucci, IOM - Cairo
- 10:15-11:00** **Group presentations and reaching consensus on the structure/draft outline of the policy**
- 11:00-11:30** **Coffee break**
- 11:30-13:00** **Working Groups to formulate different sections of the draft policy**
- 13:00-14:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00-17:00** **Group presentations and discussion in plenary to reach consensus on draft principles and elements (Coffee will be served during group work)**

Day 3

- 09:00** **Distribution of the draft policy**
- 09:30-11:00** **Review, revision and adoption of the full draft written policy in plenary**
- 11:00-11:30** **Coffee break**
- 11:30-13:00** **Next steps in the process of formal approval of the policy, and its dissemination, promotion and implementation**
- 13:00 – 14:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00- 15:30** **Discussions on the implementation of the world of work component of the NSP- the work plan for the next year.**
- 15:00-15:00** **Closing**