



The Employers' Federation of Ceylon

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EFC and ILO launch a new programme for SME's for Sustaining Competitive & Responsible Enterprises in Sri Lanka. *In May, the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) partnered with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to launch SCORE (Sustaining Competitive & Responsible Enterprises), a course to support SME's on how to forge an enterprise culture of sustainable competitiveness and growth.*

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Tanya Warnakulasuriya, Employers Federation of Ceylon,

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On the 22nd of May, the EFC and the ILO welcomed CEOs from six companies to the launch of a new programme on how to become sustainable and responsible competitive enterprises. The selected companies; Associated Battery Manufacturers (Cey) Ltd, International Trimmings & Labels Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, Ceymac Rubber Co Ltd, Metric Products (Pvt) Ltd, Interplast Asian (Pvt) Ltd, and Trelleborg Wheel Systems Lanka (Pvt) Ltd.; are all companies from Sri Lanka's SME sector.

Each of the companies has nominated two managerial and two worker representatives to attend a combination of classroom and workplace training. The purpose of the course is to empower enterprises to effectively engage management and workers to work together, towards common goals that improve productivity and working conditions benefiting both workers and the enterprise. Using specific workplace cooperation tools and techniques they will engage in joint

problem solving, create effective waste reduction solutions, reduce quality defects and enhance productivity in the workplace.

The course will also facilitate participants in the implementation of key HR practices designed to reduce conflict, absenteeism and labour attrition for their companies and also advise them on how to improve on-site health and safety practices.

The initial programme commenced by inviting EFC member SMEs to apply for selection based on pre-determined criteria and an initial on-site assessment of each enterprise was carried out. The training methodology will be a combination of classroom sessions with follow up on-site enterprise visits concluding with a results sharing forum to highlight progress and results to key stakeholders of the EFC and ILO.

Country Director of the ILO, Mr. Donglin Li expressed his pleasure at joining the EFC in welcoming company CEO's to the launch of the SCORE programme in Sri Lanka. "The SCORE Programme is particularly important for us in the ILO as it is based on the premise that a good working environment not only benefits the worker, but also the employer. In one single programme it is possible to demonstrate that the phrase "a win-win situation" is not only rhetoric. This programme is a very viable tool for bringing about decent work to men and women in Sri Lanka and for improving productivity and quality of products in small and medium enterprises".

ILOs SCORE Global team Expert Trainer, Mr Jayantha R de Silva in his presentation explained that the SCORE short course in Sri Lanka which is run over 3 months is an abbreviated version of a longer course that is being successfully implemented in India, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Ghana, South Africa and Colombia since 2009. Of the 280 companies that have undergone the SCORE training, 70% have reported improved workplace relations between managerial and floor level employees, 50% of factories have reported cost savings, many reporting as much as \$3,000-\$15,000 cost savings within the first 2-3 months of training. Other companies have reported a reduction of 10% in production defects, 3.6% less absenteeism, and 16% less accidents in the workplace as a result of the SCORE programme. 70%-80% of the SME's have

adopted good practices whilst productivity gains from 15% to 50% have been reported over a 3-6 month period. The pre-runner to the SCORE programme was the ILO's Factory Improvement Project (FIP) implemented with success in Sri Lanka from 2002-06 with the EFC, in the apparel sector.

Commenting on the importance of the SCORE project, the EFC's Director General Mr. Ravi Peiris said, "This is something that is vital to focus on as the factory floor and enterprise operations are the nerve centre of employment relations in any organization."