

FACT SHEET: The Third Labour Rights Stakeholder Forum

Nay Pyi Taw 17-18 January 2018

On Jan 17-18 2018 the Government of Myanmar, supported by Denmark, the European Union, Japan, the United States, and the International Labour Organization, will convene the Third Stakeholder Forum under their joint Initiative to Promote Fundamental Labour Rights and Practices in Myanmar. The 2018 Forum is being funded by the European Union.

The "Labour Initiative" is intended to help modernise Myanmar's labour code, improve compliance with international labour standards, and foster a constructive dialogue between the government, business, labour unions and civil society.

Structure of the Initiative

The Initiative is designed to use a multilateral, multi-stakeholder approach to strengthen and support Myanmar in labour reform, enforcement, transparency, and domestic stakeholder consultations. Ultimately, improving labour standards in Myanmar is about creating decent work for all, a critical element in poverty alleviation, responsible business conduct, sustainable development and the promotion of human rights in the country.

The Initiative is based on two pillars:

Labour Reform: The Initiative supports the development of a multi-year labour reform plan, based on input from all relevant actors in Myanmar. International assistance is aimed at helping Myanmar comply with international standards, and lay out a plan to build the capacity of the government and other relevant actors to achieve and implement these reforms.

A strategy for comprehensive labour law reform was agreed at the 2015 Stakeholder Forum and updated in 2016. The Government of Myanmar and its social partners are currently progressing in its reform efforts, with international assistance.

Stakeholder Consultative Mechanism: The Initiative aims to bring stakeholders into the discussion on labour reform and build the foundation for good industrial relations and civil society consultations in Myanmar. Specifically, the Initiative supports the Government of Myanmar in its efforts to strengthen stakeholder consultation through:

- a) encouraging Myanmar's National Tripartite Dialogue Forum in its work, as the country's regular body for tripartite consultation (i.e., consultation between government, employers, and workers);
- b) supporting the establishment of mechanisms that facilitate strong industrial relations, including social dialogue between Myanmar's workers' and employers' organisations, and the involvement of civil society; and
- c) convening the Stakeholder Forum as a mechanism for broad stakeholder engagement and for building relations among domestic and international stakeholders from business, labour and civil society.

Development of the Initiative

Two previous Stakeholders Fora have been organised, in 2015 and 2016 respectively. These events brought together over several hundred participants representing labour, business, and civil society interests, as well as governments and international organisations, in two days of constructive engagement on labour law reform and other important labour issues in Myanmar.

Next Steps

The Government of Myanmar has identified a number of immediate priorities for labour law reform, which it pursues in consultation with workers' and employers' organisations.

The Initiative partners will seek to continue and strengthen their ongoing support for the Government of Myanmar and relevant actors to reform its labour law and build institutional capacities.

- The Government of Denmark is providing capacity building support on both occupational safety and health to Myanmar's Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department as well as on social dialogue to Myanmar's tripartite constituents.
- The European Union is helping to build capacity in the garment sector for sustainable and responsible production and is providing funding to support activities held under the Initiative through the ILO – including the organisation of the 2016 and 2018 Stakeholders Fora, as well as other technical assistance programmes in areas of relevance for this Initiative.
- The Government of Japan has seconded a labour law expert to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population to work with the Government of Myanmar on its labour law reform efforts.
- The U.S. Government provided seed funding to support the launch and initial technical assistance under the Initiative and is currently providing funding to support the Government's efforts to eliminate child labour and address occupational safety and health issues in the country.
- The ILO is providing technical support to the Government's labour law reform process, the strengthening of the National Tripartite Dialogue Forum, and capacity building to employers' and workers' organisations for freedom of association and social dialogue.

In the long term, the Initiative is designed to support the government and stakeholders in promoting fundamental labour rights and responsible business practices, helping to make Myanmar an attractive sourcing and investment destination, protecting Myanmar's workers and supporting its businesses, and advancing the country's overall sustainable growth and development.

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