

FACT SHEET

Tuvalu



International
Labour
Organization

Background

- Tuvalu is a microstate with a total land area of 26 square kilometres and a population that has remained stable at less than 10,000 due to substantial out-migration;

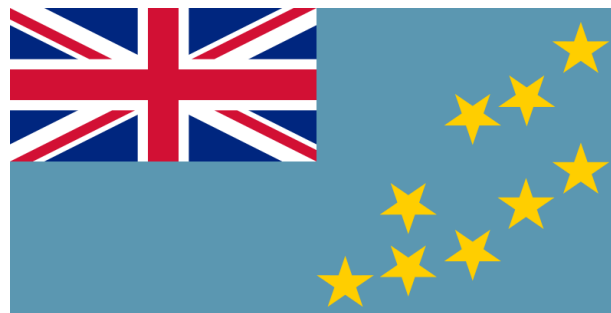
- Although Tuvalu's economy is predominantly subsistence in nature, with agriculture and fishing accounting for 80 per cent of national income, per capita income in Tuvalu is significantly higher than in many other PICs, based largely on Tuvalu's success of securing offshore income;

- Off-shore income is derived from maritime employment, remittances from seafarers and migrant workers, international aid, income from the marketing and licensing of Tuvalu's country-code internet domain name (.tv), philatelic sales and fishing licensing;

- Tuvaluans have a tradition to work aboard foreign vessels as seafarers and fishermen. The Tuvalu Maritime Training Institute (TMTI) offers the only formal post-secondary vocational program in Tuvalu and enrolls only males. Training at TMTI is offered only up to a basic level of maritime qualifications. The number of Tuvaluan seamen on-ship at any one time fluctuates and has been declining due to increased competition from other source countries with Tuvaluans being disadvantaged by poor discipline. At present, there are approximately 200 seafarers on ship;

- Tuvaluans have migrated under the Pacific Access Category (PAC) scheme which was introduced by New Zealand in 2002. Tuvalu also participates in the pilot scheme of the "Recognised Seasonal Employer" (RSE) Work Policy in New Zealand under which New Zealand employers can recruit workers from some Pacific Island Countries for seasonal work in the horticulture and viticulture industries since April 2007. The first lot of 99 Tuvaluans went to New Zealand in the first season (2007/08). For the 2008/09 season only 48 Tuvaluan workers have gone to New Zealand;

- The dispersion of the population over various atolls makes data collection costly and time-consuming in Tuvalu. Currently, the main source of labour market data is the population census which is held every ten years with the most recent census conducted in 2002. The capacity in the Labour Office and the National Statistics Office to analyse data is limited.



Tuvalu National Flag

ILO in Tuvalu

- Tuvalu became a member of ILO in 2008;

- Tuvalu has not ratified any of the eight Fundamental Conventions;

- Achieving the desired international labour standards, ratifying the Fundamental Conventions and other relevant Conventions as well as fulfilling the reporting obligations will be a focal area between ILO and the constituents;

- The tripartite constituents are the Department of Foreign Affairs and Labour in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Tuvalu National Chamber of Commerce (TNCC), and the Tuvalu Overseas Seamen's Union (TOSU);

- Some of the current labour issues in Tuvalu include the alignment of its labour laws with the ILS. Tuvalu requires support to prepare the ratification of the Fundamental Conventions over the next few years. Tripartite partners exist but require support to contribute productively to labour issues and concerns. There are no tripartite institutions. Although there are provisions for collective bargaining, the practice in the private sector is for wages to be set by employers;

- There is also a need to explore further employment opportunities for Tuvaluans overseas and to improve skills development to meet the overseas labour market demand;

- Given Tuvalu's recent membership at ILO, ILO is currently developing an in-depth understanding of the particular needs of the constituents and has already helped to build the capacity of the tripartite constituents through training programmes.



Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)

The first Decent Work Programme (DWCP) which details ILO cooperation activities with Tuvalu for the period 2010 – 2012, based on tripartite consultations identified the following priorities;

Priority 1.

Capacity building of tripartite partners

Outcome 1.1: The Labour Office is strengthened to review and implement labour legislation.

Outcome 1.2: The social partners are strengthened to engage meaningfully in policy development and implementation.

Priority 2.

Improvement of the labour market information and analysis system

Outcome 2.1: The capacity of production, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated labour market statistics is increased.

Priority 3.

Improving overseas employment opportunities

Outcome 3.1. Increase in the number and quality of migrant workers.

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