Training on Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining for the Omani Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI)

Muscat, Oman
September 3-4, 2014

A557570

SUMMARY

WHAT?

A training course which overviews social dialogue and collective bargaining with the objective to increase knowledge on these concepts, to share experiences and practices on social dialogue and collective bargaining in Oman and abroad, and to discuss the advantages and pitfalls from an employers’ perspective.

As such it brings essential building blocks to the audience to understand better the practice and to determine with a better insight the strategies to be developed by employers in Oman towards the emerging social dialogue and collective bargaining systems.

FOR WHOM?

Board and staff members of OCCI and high level HR managers from member companies. The number of participants is limited to 35.

WHEN AND WHERE?

Muscat, Oman, September 3-4, 2014, OCCI premises starting at 8.30 am
I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Social dialogue and collective bargaining are emerging in Oman. At the national level, Social dialogue and its current mechanisms of interaction; mainly, the National Social Dialogue committee, Secretariat and the sectoral committees, need to be strengthened to play their roles effectively. There is a consensus among the tripartite constituents on the need to strengthen the social dialogue processes.

At company level, one observes the prudent emergence of different forms of social dialogue, occasionally some industrial conflicts, and also the emergence of some forms of collective bargaining.

There are also international obligations to advance the further generalisation of social dialogue and/or collective bargaining principles at national and company level; commitments stemming from the need for compliance with ratified International Trade Agreements (such as the FTA with the US), or those conventions within the framework of the activities of the International Labour Organization (fundamental ILO conventions on Freedom of Association, or Collective Bargaining,...).

The emergence of social dialogue (SD) and collective bargaining (CB) may pose quite some challenges as they are indeed relatively new concepts in the Gulf States and in Oman in particular. However, in the recently signed DWCP in June 2014 between ILO and Oman’s Tripartite parties, enhancing dialogue among social partners in Oman has been clearly identified as a major objective for the Country for effective contribution to the development of social and economic policies.

Both SD and CB are container concepts, which cover a broad range of relationships between the social partners (workers, trade unions, companies, employers organisations, state authorities), which are in need to be clarified and unpacked.

As a global voice of the business community, OCCI may have to determine its strategy towards future public initiatives to impact policy making relating to legal or factual social dialogue frameworks and functioning.

Carving out such strategies will require a good insight into advantages, risks, overseas experiences, in order to optimise their effects on the business environment, the social climate, the institutions and of course on the actors in the field, the workers and companies.

And finally, the eventual putting into practice of social dialogue and collective bargaining at the different levels (national, company and/or branch) will also require some skills and experience sharing on ways to conduct collective bargaining and social dialogue.

In short, the emergence of SD and CB opens a full new agenda for policy discussions and practical implementation.
The workshop is a first attempt to tackle these subjects in an introductory and systematic way for employers and their organisation.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

To strengthen the capacity of OCCI and its members in the field of social dialogue and collective bargaining via:

* Knowledge transfer
  - Clarifying the concepts of social dialogue and collective bargaining and the issues and challenges behind both concepts.
  - Overviewing emerging or established practices and institutions in Oman, Arab States, and other regions
  - ILO conventions and recommendations and the binding character of these standards

* Policy discussions
  - Insight in trade union views and strategies in SD and CB
  - Discussions on opportunities and threats, as input for policy replies by OCCI and companies towards SD and CB

* Practice
  - Practical experiences in social dialogue; principles of negotiation

At the end of the training, the participants will be able to:

- better understand the concepts SD and CB
- develop strategies and planning for further development;
- assess and improve SD and CB strategies and techniques;

III. TARGET AUDIENCE

The programme is targeting Board and staff members of OCCI and HR managers of member companies of OCCI.

IV. STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

A. CONTENTS: The following issues will be the central themes of the training:

**Day 1: Introduction to Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining**

- The concepts SD and CB; different varying factors, level, intensity, type of partners etc...
- The issues behind SD and CB
- The present situation in Oman – exchange on existing practices, opportunities and challenges
- Short overview of practices elsewhere
The basic conditions necessary to have meaningful and independent SD and CB
The ILO obligations related to SD and CB and their possible translation in national legislation
How SD and CB? Short overview of negotiation techniques in SD and CB

Day 2: Practices, experiences and policy considerations on SD and CB
- Social dialogue at sector level in Jordan textile – apparel (Better Work Jordan)
- Trade unions view on SD and CB
- Why SD and CB? Advantages and pitfalls for SD and CB at national level and at company level – an employers’ perspective
- Policy considerations and options: building blocks to determine the OCCI strategies
- Practical preparation for stronger involvement in SD and CB: what should be considered in the EO
- Action planning: further training needs and development of OCCI actions

B. METHODOLOGY

The course methods applied by ILO and ITC ILO will be a mixture of tutoring, exercises and discussions and will aim at a maximum interactive input from the participants.

C. FACULTY

The curriculum has been developed by the Employers’ Activities Departments of the ILO and the International Training Centre of the ILO.

The tutors are ILO and ITC ILO staff with strong experience in social dialogue and collective bargaining, in the region and in Europe.

The training will be given partially in Arabic, partially in English, with Arabic/English translation at all times.