

ILO to Launch Toolkit on Poverty Reduction through Tourism

The International Labour Organization (ILO) will launch its toolkit on poverty reduction through tourism on 5th August 2013 at the Chef's Guild awards ceremony to be held at the Bandaranayake International Convention Centre, Colombo. The launch will be followed by a workshop carried out by ILO in collaboration with the Chefs Guild of Sri Lanka to introduce the toolkit to stakeholders. This will take place on 6th August 2013 at the Taj Samudra Hotel.

Introduced in the year 2011 for universal use, mainly in developing and least developed countries (LDCs), the toolkit focuses on how tourism can drive rural poverty reduction. It details a vision for an inclusive pro-poor tourism industry.

From a local perspective the introduction of the toolkit is a timely intervention. Tourism has been identified as a major thrust industry receiving top priority of the government. Prime among targets set for tourism will be the registration of 2.5 million tourist arrivals and the provision of jobs for 500,000 persons through direct employment within the tourist industry by the year 2016. Tourism benefits are envisaged to filter into rural economies benefitting the rural communities. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the industry particularly at a rural level among all stakeholders and the low skill levels within the industry are concerns to be addressed on a priority basis.

The toolkit localized and used at a rural level among Small and Medium Enterprises and other stakeholders is expected to create the desired impact.

The workshop aims to create a discussion through which valuable inputs could be generated towards adapting the toolkit to the Sri Lankan context.

Mr. Wolfgang Weinz, Senior Tourism Specialist from the sectoral department of ILO in Geneva will officially introduce the toolkit at its launch on 5th August. Mr. Weinz will provide an overview of the toolkit at the introductory workshop on 6th August 2013. The introduction of the 5 key chapters at the workshop will be done by Mr. Dilip de Silva, ILO Expert SCORE (Sustainable Competitive Responsible Enterprises). Mr. Priantha Fernando, National Consultant, ILO will expand on "How will the ILO tourism tool kit benefit SMEs in Sri Lanka".

Efforts of the government of Sri Lanka to get SMEs and local communities involved in tourism through programs such as the matching grant program and the home stay program to be launched shortly could enjoy value addition through training programs using the Toolkit for Poverty Reduction through Tourism.