

Signing Ceremony V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, India and the National Institute of Labour Studies, Sri Lanka

13 November 2009

Address by Tine Staermose, Director ILO Colombo

- Minister of Labour Relations and Manpower, Athauda Seneviratne
- Secretary of Labour Relations and Manpower, Mahinda Madihahewa
- Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Indian High Commission in Colombo, Mr. Sri Santhosh Jah
- Director, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, India, Shri Ved Prakash Yajurvedi
- Director General, National Institute of Labour Studies, Sri Lanka, Mr. N.G. Kularatne
- Trade Union Representatives
- Employers' Representatives
- Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the ILO, to be witnessing the signing of the MOU this morning between V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, India and the National Institute of Labour Studies.

I know that you Honourable Minister has promoted the NILS here in Sri Lanka and I remember that every time you have met the DG of the ILO, Mr. Somavia in Geneva, you have discussed with him how we could strengthen the Institute.

In the ILO, we strongly believe that interaction between professionals across borders can be one of the most fruitful and productive ways of injecting technical assistance and in recent years, we have increasingly promoted South - South relations or exchange and interaction between likeminded countries in the regions. Over the last many years that I have spent here in Sri Lanka, I have noticed very strong relations between India and Sri Lanka and I am indeed happy that this bond is now being

further cemented in the field of labour research and education. When the National Institute of Labour Studies in Sri Lanka took off with Mr. Kularatne as the Director General in 2007, he came to see me and wanted to go to India because he knew about the well renowned institute V.V. Giri National Labour Institute as well as the other Institute in Puna and I was happy to facilitate this trip. And it is of course therefore extra heartening to see such a concrete outcome of this professional relationship coming into existence today with the signing of the MOU between the two institutes.

High quality research underpins any informed action that a country and its partners may want to embark on including policies and their implementation. And in the world of work, we know how important it is to constantly infuse the social dialogue with correct information of the situation so that the dialogue can take place on solid and professional grounds. But also for the larger public the labour market research and education and training for social partners is crucial for sound industrial relations to promote decent work for all women and men.

The ILO stands ready to provide technical assistance to this new partnership. The International Institute for Labour Studies in the ILO Geneva which was established in 1960 as an autonomous facility of the International Labour Organization (ILO), is mandated to promote research, public debate and knowledge sharing on emerging issues of concern to the ILO and its constituents - government, business and labour.

And through our expert teams in both New Delhi and in Bangkok we will continue to provide you with technical assistance as well. It is indeed very important for a country to have a separate home for labour studies and I feel that under the dynamic daily leadership of Mr. Kularatne and the visionary leadership of you honourable Minister as well as strong interest and guidance by the Secretary this can only grow stronger by the day.

In concluding, let me say that I believe that the experiences from India who has a rich and long tradition in this field will greatly benefit Sri Lanka through the NILS and I wish the collaboration all the best for the future.