

Promoting
Decent Work
Through Improved
Migration Policy
and its Application
in Bangladesh

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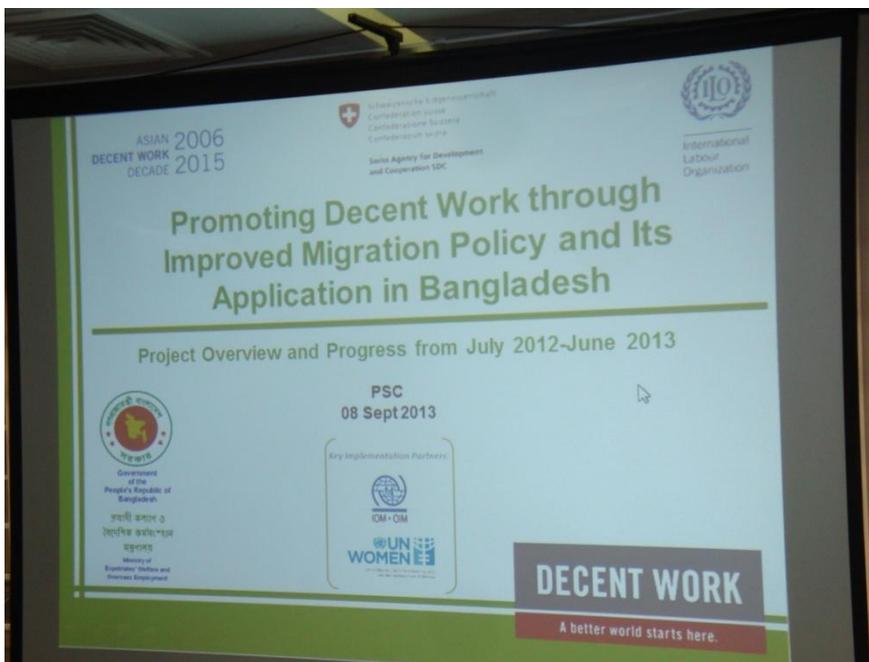


Third Project Steering Committee Meeting of the ILO Labour Migration Project in Bangladesh

Date: Sunday 08 Sept 2013

Time: 2:30 – 05:30 PM

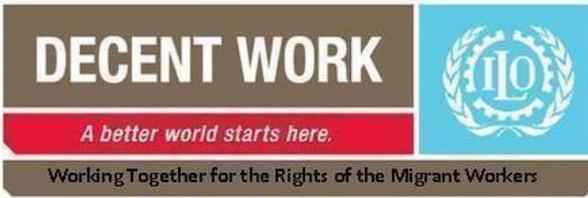
Venue: Conference Room, Level 5, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Probashi Kalyan Bhaban, Dhaka.



08 Sept 2013, Dhaka: The Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) called the third Steering Committee meeting for the International Labour Organization (ILO) executed “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh” project. Mr. Hazarat Ali, the Additional Secretary to the MEWOE, opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and thanking the ILO for technical cooperation. Participants introduced themselves and the organizations and the ministries and divisions they represented.

The proposed agenda was adopted. Ms. Nisha, Chief Technical Advisor of the ILO reminded participants of the purposes of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting and that this forum provided an opportunity for national representatives to provide feedback to the Project on the progress of the current work plan, revisions, future plans and policy related issues. She welcomed and invited the project implementation partners’, IOM and UN Women, to share their statements about the first year of implementation of the project. Representatives of the two implementation partners regretted the absence of their heads of agencies. Ms. Naheed Ahmed of the UN Women informed that they have finally managed to recruit a project coordinator, who was introduced to the PSC members. IOM representative, Ms. Christine Burwell, expressed hope that the IOM would be able to complete the implementation timely.

The representative of the SDC regretted the absence of the Head of Cooperation and expressed interest in learning about how the implementation partners plan to catch on the delays.



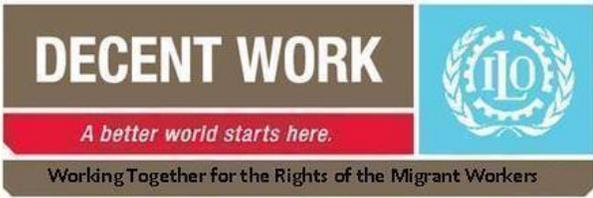
Mr. Srinivas Reddy, Director of the ILO Country Office for Bangladesh, spoke on how the Project fits within the priorities of the ILO globally and for the ILO Country Office for Bangladesh. He thanked the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for funding the project. He pointed out the key achievements of the project with regard to the law and policy, establishment of the broader partnerships and collaborations, and convening of stakeholders in the first year of its execution. Mr. Reddy, expressed his hope that the Project would succeed in supporting the MEWOE to strengthen labour migration governance.



Ms. Nisha presented the progress of the project, pointing out both achievements, activities which are on track, the ones which are delayed and the area of concern. She pointed out that the Project through its work in the past year successfully put emphasis on coherence and cooperation among the stakeholders. Mentioning also why it is important for the ILO's tripartite constituents to include regulation of labour migration, control of recruitment processes, recognition of migrant workers' skills and better linkages between migration and development in their agenda. Some achievements of the ILO technical cooperation

cited during the presentation included:

1. Review of the existing legislation and Rules, consultations and drafting of the Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers' Bill by the ILO;
2. Near conclusion of the five researches with the research team of the Human Development Research Centre by the ILO;
3. Review of the Overseas Employment Policy 2006, consultations and near finalization of the proposed draft of the Overseas Employment Policy 2013 by the ILO;
4. Assessment of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) database related needs by the IOM;
5. Establishment of the Migration Research Unit by the IOM;
6. Conclusion of a baseline survey of the current status and needs of the migrant workers families by the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM);
7. Planning of the comprehensive system review of the BMET and Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF) in consultation with the PSC members, other CSOs and BMET, the WEWF by the ILO;
8. Successful planning for the Intergovernmental Regional Seminar on regional cooperation for safe migration and decent work with the ILO's technical assistance;
9. Consistent dialogue by the ILO with the association of the recruitment agents, BAIRA;



- 10. Formulation of the trade unions’ plan for the migrant workers with the ILO facilitation under the umbrella of the National Coordination Committee for Workers’ Education (NCCWE).
- 11. Inclusion of the migrant workers’ rights issues in the Labour Day activities by the NCCWE.
- 12. Establishment of a collaboration between BMET, the Ministry, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies and Bangladesh Employers Federation for a profiling survey and labour market skills and entrepreneurship analysis by the ILO.
- 13. Together with BMET and RMMRU, establishment of a core technical groups by the ILO comprising of employers’ and workers organizations, implementation partners and all the civil society organizations who have pre-departure manuals and training, for the development of the standardized pre-departure manual, Training of trainers and technical needs assessment for decentralization of the pre-departure training.
- 14. Training of the 38 trade unionists in the national and international labour migration legislative and policy regimes;

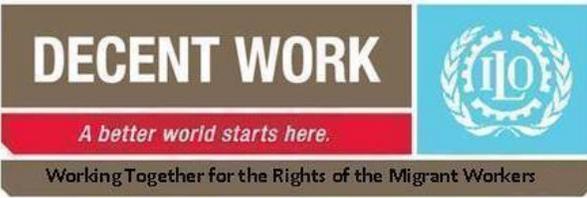


Activities which are delayed as at 30 June 2013, include:

- 1. Semestral review planning by the ILO;
- 2. Setting up the server and database by the IOM;
- 3. External market analysis by the UN Women;
- 4. Employers visit to be managed by the IOM;
- 5. Production of the communication strategy and the TV commercial by the IOM;
- 6. Top-up technical training curricula development by the DAM;
- 7. CSO to CSO collaboration building by the DAM;
- 8. Public awareness raising by the UN Women;
- 9. Skills training and accreditation related work by the UN Women;
- 10. Designing of referral and reintegration service by the UN women;
- 11. Assessment of the service providers by the UN Women;
- 12. Initial negotiations with the the service providers to organize services for the returned/returning migrant workers.

The activities which were mentioned as being postponed include:

- 1. Capacity strengthening plan and implementation based on the recommendations of the studies and assessments by the ILO as the activity was erroneously planned ahead of completion of the first round of studies and assessment;



2. Decentralisation of predeparture training to the DEMOs and the training of trainers (ToT) in pre-departure so the pre-requisite activity of conducting the capacity needs for the decentralisation can be completed and the ToT could be based on the pre-departure manual that is being developed.



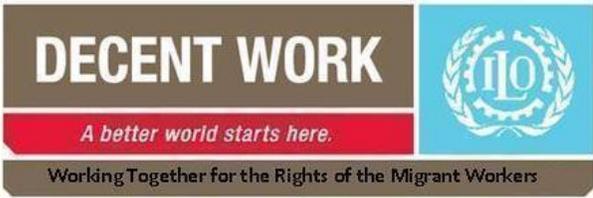
Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan, Secretary to the MEWOE and convenor chair of the meeting, joined the PSC meeting mid-way. Apologising for the urgent task which kept him away until then, he expressed satisfaction to see that the MEWOE's work and the technical cooperation through the ILO are moving hand in hand. He acknowledged that technical cooperation by the ILO has contributed to the ministry's engagement in the international dialogue as well. He also commented that the Project has consistently and regularly sought public participation in policy and law making as well as research and training material

development.

The progress related presentation was followed by a presentation on the proposed draft of the Overseas Employment Policy 2013, which was made by Mr. Hazarat Ali. Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan, specifically, wanted to know the developments since the inter-ministerial meeting. Mr. Ali and Ms. Nisha updated the PSC members on the steps taken. Dr Zafar Ahmed expressed the need to finalize the proposed draft quickly. He was assured by Ms. Nisha that the draft would be submitted to the MEWOE by 10 Sept 2013.

The workers' representative, Dr Wajedul Islam, acknowledging the consultations by the ILO and his own participation in the process, wanted to know the MEWOE's plan for dissemination. He expressed the need for the ministry to take onboard feedback from the PSC members. He also wondered if the other ministries had an input into the policy. Mr. Ali of MEWOE informed that indeed the ministry convened an Interministerial meeting to review the draft. Mr Azizul Haque of the Ministry of Labour and Employment further clarified the policy goes to the ministries through the government process and that he himself and a joint secretary of the MoLE were interviewed during the policy consultations process. The MEWOE officials present mentioned the names of the ministries who participated in the consultations. Dr Khan further advised the workers' representative that he should send further comments to the MEWOE.

Ms. Disha Sonata Faruque, National Project Officer of the ILO, presented the key issues emerging from the monitoring of the DAM, IOM and UN Women. The areas of improvement, pointed out, looked into issues of:



- Lack of continuous self monitoring by agencies and project planning
 - Need for specific task based project workplan with specific timeline
 - Especially with activities related to baselines (UN Women 2.3.3.1) and Needs Assessment (IOM 1.3.1.1).
 - Need for continuous adaptation of plan and implementation of non related work, in case of delays in inter related activities
 - With IOM , delay in work related to Employer’s visit, but promotional TVC could be implemented
 - UN Women, delay in returnee profiling but mapping of stakeholders could be implemented)
 - Need for staff members to develop individual workplans on monthly basis to ensure proper utilization of project staff
 - Planning of activities to take into consideration the minimum time required for follow up with concerned stakeholders/partners.



- Lack of proper documentation of all communications and coordination meetings –
 - Need for documentation of progress, bottlenecks and negotiations through meeting minutes, etc.
- Lack of linkage between project activities to ensure effective output
 - Need to establish link with other project partners, for example:
 - UN Women 2.1.1.1 and IOM 1.3.1.6 (specific market analysis)
 - IOM 2.1.3.3 (Employer’s visit) with ILO work with

tripartite organizations

- UN Women 2.3.3 and IOM 2.3.2 (awareness raising)
- Knock-down effect of delay on long term impact (and quality), for example:
 - Need for understanding and proper planning
 - UN Women Output 3.2.2.1 (profile on returnee women workers) delay impact on the remaining activities in the third outcome area (networks, referral systems)
 - IOM delay in setting up data base affected the ILO activity to produce a report of the returning migrant workers
 - IOM 2.3.1 (strategy) delay on 2.3.2 (awareness) and other following sub-activities ;
- Lack of conceptual clarity on Outputs and Objectives, for example:



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Working Together for the Rights of the Migrant Workers



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- DAM activities were started without proper planning and understanding- an orientation was carried out with DAM in March 2013
- Need for clarity for IOM on 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.3 (i.e. establishment of legal cell)
- UN Women plan to do a baseline instead of labour market analysis needs to be corrected to keep the activity focused on the output and true to original plan.

Mr. Ehsan Kabir from the IOM wanted to know the reasons for delay in all activities of the UN Women. Ms. Ahmed explained that this has been due to the institutional transformation that was going on in the UN Women. Ms Ahmed stated that they are taking this as a challenge to demonstrate that their activities will be on track as per the approved revised workplan when the next report is presented to the PSC meeting.



There was a question from Mr Amanat Ali of the Planning Commission about whether or not the server and data base system to be set by the IOM under this project could be decentralized to the level of DEMOs. Ms. Shahreen Munir of the IOM clarified that the current planning is limited to a centralized systems and decentralization would have much more extensive requirements both in terms of planning and resources.

The final discussion agenda on the Comprehensive System Review of the BMET and the review of the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund was presented by Begum Shamsun Nahar, the Director-General of BMET. She invited the PSC members to send their experiences, understanding and suggestions for the purpose to the BMET or the ILO. She asked the PSC members to focus on:

1. The quality and efficiency of the BMET and the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund's operations, service delivery and service use;
2. The policy and institutional coherence between BMET and the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund and with other government agencies and institutions in order to sharpen understanding of the structures that drive labour migration policy priorities and programme implementation; and
3. The possible future roles for BMET, ensuring balance between the roles and responsibilities of the BMET and various wings of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment one hand, and between the BMET and the Wage Earner's Welfare Fund and how they could better adapt to a rapidly changing and competitive international labour market.

The PSC members expressed their interest in the process and regarded it as a timely exercise.

The meeting concluded with:



1. A call to the implementation partners to expedite implementation to minimize the time and resource losses;
2. An advice to proceed with the implementation as per the plans submitted to the PSC members for this meeting; and
3. Request to the ILO to enhance efforts for protection of migrant workers and support services in the countries of destination and strengthening institutional capacities of the labour migration related institutions.

Dr. Khan thanked speakers and everyone else for participating, and thanked the ILO and SDC for assistance. He stressed his appreciation for the other ministries and divisions who have always joined the PSC meeting and also enthusiastically made their contributions to the Project. Finally, he thanked the officials of the MEWOE and BMET for good collaboration with the Project.