



International Labour Organization  
Organisation internationale du Travail  
Organización Internacional del Trabajo

## Terms of Reference

# Exposure visit on good practices in labour migration management in Sri Lanka:

An exposure visit of delegates from Nepal and Pakistan to Sri Lanka

### 1. Background and justification

International labour migration from Sri Lanka has been on the increase during the last three decades, especially with the opening of temporary employment opportunities in the Gulf. Recent estimates suggest that over a million migrants work abroad while the annual reported outflows are more than 250,000 persons. Over the years, foreign employment has generated substantial inflows of remittances and, acted as a safety valve for local unemployment and has opened up overseas employment opportunities for many women who may not have been active in the local labour force, though in low paid occupations such as domestic work and men who seek higher wages

With almost three decades of experience with foreign employment, Sri Lanka has developed a mature overseas employment administration system. Since the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act of 1985 to the 2007 creation of a separate Ministry for Foreign Employment and the 2008 adoption of a progressive National Labour Migration Policy<sup>1</sup> for Sri Lanka. The policy adheres to principles, and guidelines enshrined in international standards, instruments and international good practices and are among the indications of the priority assigned to labour migration in the country.

Among the South Asia countries, Sri Lanka is considered to have established well-managed mechanisms to facilitate labour migration addressing the rights of the migrant workers and their families and have developed a number of good practices in labour migration governance that can serve as inspiration for other countries in the region. Given this, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), through its two projects *Work in Freedom (WiF)*<sup>2</sup> and *Promoting Effective Governance of Labour Migration from South Asia (SALM)*<sup>3</sup> are partnering to support an **exposure visit to Sri Lanka of government officials from Nepal and Pakistan involved in the governance of labour migration in their respective countries.**

The Government of Nepal are currently implementing a number of initiatives to improve labour migration and make it safe and decent for its nationals. These include the development of a community awareness programme on pre-decision steps to be considered while making a decision on foreign employment; review of mandatory training curriculum and manuals including pre-departure and

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<sup>1</sup> The Labour Migration Policy focuses on three major areas: governance of the migration process; protection and empowerment of migrant workers and their families; and linking migration and development processes.

<sup>2</sup> The Work in Freedom Project is a five-year (2013 – 2018) DFID funded initiative. It adopts an integrated and targeted approach to prevent trafficking of women and girls in South Asian countries of origin (Bangladesh, India and Nepal) and in selected destination countries (India, Jordan and Lebanon). It will reach at least 100,000 women and girls as direct beneficiaries by promoting empowerment and education, fair recruitment, safe migration and decent work for women and girls from South Asia, and thus contribute to the prevention of human trafficking in this region and in the Middle East.

<sup>3</sup> The SALM project (2013-2016), funded by the EU aims to promote the management of low skilled labour migration from India, Nepal and Pakistan to the GCC (Kuwait, Qatar and UAE), to ensure effective protection of the rights of vulnerable migrant workers, enhance the development impact of labour migration and reduce irregular flows.

domestic work skills training; registration of returnee migrant workers; database management of migrant workers; reform of policies to promote ethical recruitment practices; and reintegration plan for the returnees.

The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development was created in July 2013 after the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendments. At present the newly developed Ministry is focusing to promote Pakistani manpower in international labour markets with decent working conditions. To improve governance of labour migration from Pakistan, the Ministry is focusing on number of areas including research, LMI, pre-departure material development and orientation system, training of community welfare attachés, database management of migrant workers, review of national laws in the context of international standards and good practices and better management of recruitment agencies.

Given that the systems and models developed in Sri Lanka will benefit the Nepali and Pakistani Ministries responsible for foreign employment, the two projects of ILO (WiF & SALM) are keen to support the proposed exchange visit as per the below objectives.

## 2. Objective

The objective of the proposed study tour is to support 8-10 government officials from agencies and departments concerned with various aspects of labour migration from Nepal and Pakistan to participate in an exposure visit to Sri Lanka. The visit is expected to offer opportunity for cross-learning in the following areas within labour migration governance:

- **Management Information Systems:** The SLBFE has developed an integrated and comprehensive system for management of information related to migrant workers. This includes information related to the entire migration cycle. Of particular interest is the system for complaints and grievances<sup>4</sup> handling and dispute resolution.
- **Pre-departure training:** The SLBFE has a number of pre-departure training centers, including a purpose built and owned residential centre in the south of Sri Lanka (Tangalle) and other rented facilities at District level around the country. A 21 day skills training curricula for migrant domestic workers have been developed and are being used for training with the support of ILO developed standardized training curricular
- **Ethical recruitment and grading of recruitment agencies:** The Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), with the support from the ILO, has developed a Code of Ethical Conduct for licensed foreign employment agencies with the *“intention of streamlining the practices of recruitment agents, enhancing professionalism, responsibility and accountability and promoting transparency of business activities”*. The delegates would like to know more of how this is being implemented and experiences.
- **Return and reintegration:** The Sri Lanka National Policy on Labour Migration identifies reintegration of returnee workers as one of its key objectives and are undertaking a number of activities in this area, including the Happy Return Programme of Korea (where returnees are linked to employers) and are developing a system for returnees. The ministry is also elaborating a national sub-policy dedicated to reintegration of returnee migrant workers.

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<sup>4</sup> The SLBFE is the main State body that deals with migrant worker complaints and grievances and has built an organized mechanism for handling the complaints and grievances of migrant workers.

### 3. Participants, Institutional Arrangements and Costs

In total, 8-10 government officials from government agencies and departments concerned with labour migration from Nepal and Pakistan will join the exposure visit as follows:

- **Nepal:** 6-7 representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and its Department of Foreign Employment (DOFE) and the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB).
- **Pakistan:** 3 representatives from the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and the Lahore Department of Labour.

The exposure visit will be coordinated by the ILO WiF and SALM projects based in Kathmandu in close partnership with the ILO Colombo Office and in particular its SDC funded project on ***Promoting Decent Work through Good Governance, Protection and Empowering of Migrant Workers: Ensuring the Effective Implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy*** (hereafter referred to as the Sri Lanka Labour Migration Project).

The WiF and SALM projects will coordinate with the respective ministries and institutions in Nepal and Pakistan to select participants and arrange tickets and DSA payments to participants.

The Sri Lanka Labour Migration Project will coordinate with the Sri Lanka Ministry for Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment to agree on the dates and programme for the exposure visit, as well as coordination local travel and meeting arrangements as needed.

### 4. Proposed agenda and dates

The exposure visit will take place 21-23 December 2015. The tentative agenda is:

**Day 1:** Visit the SLBFE - tour of the facilities,

Presentation by SLBFE on their services with discussion session

Presentation on the CMS with discussion session

Presentation on recruitment agents licensing and ethical recruitment practices - with discussion

**Day 2:** Visit to SLBFE training centre in Tangalle and training center in Pannipitiya/Ratmalana

**Day 3:** Visit 2-3 selected Korean returnees of the happy return programme

Debriefing at SLBFE and question and answer session followed by closing.