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STRENGTHENING LABOUR INSPECTION SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN (2015-2019)

Labour inspection (LI) is one of the core functions of any system of labour administration and a key element for ensuring the implementation of labour laws and policies through the provision of advice to employers and workers and through enforcement, providing feedback and allowing for readjustment of these policies as necessary.

Since 2014, the Government of Pakistan has embarked upon an ambitious plan to reform the entire Labour Administration system under an umbrella programme ‘Strengthening National Capacity for ILS Compliance in Pakistan’ (SLISP) jointly designed by the Government of Pakistan and the ILO. One of the key areas under this umbrella programme was to reform the existing Labour Inspection system in Pakistan.

With nearly US\$ 1.3 million in financial support of the Government of the Netherlands, the ILO revitalized the country’s labour inspection system, working in close collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and workers’ and employers’ organizations.

Ending on 31st March 2019, SLISP advanced standalone Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) laws in Sindh and Punjab, which taken collectively account for Pakistan’s largest industrial areas. An achievement that not only means a great deal for addressing basic working conditions of workers but also expanded legal coverage to more workers, especially women, who had been largely excluded from the previous inspection mandate. SLISP also helped the provincial governments to reinforce implementation of national labour laws.

SLISP delivered extensive training to 450 Labour Inspectors on Effective Labour Inspection, OSH and Accident Investigation as well as working to strengthen the Labour Inspection Information Management System (LIMS). SLISP also supported the government to develop their annual Labour Inspection reports and profile the Labour Inspection apparatus of Pakistan.

Working to enhance the scale and quality of labour inspection, the project supported employers to organize awareness raising seminars and OSH awards as a means of positive reinforcement for other employers; strengthened dialogue between local stakeholders to facilitate effective Labour Inspection; and printed and disseminated informative materials.

Not only did the SLISP project help Pakistan revive and reinvigorate its Labour Inspection but it also created the momentum needed for sustainable change and improvement. From the outset, the SLISP project brought together the government, employers and workers to move past their differences on Labour Inspection on certain elements of mutual interest. SLISP’s continued awareness-raising helped highlight the need for effective Labour Inspection in Pakistan in order to comply with national and international labour laws.

The project contributed to the following achievements, among others:

- Provincial Action Plans to improve Labour Inspection system developed and endorsed by the Provinces;
- Strengthened social dialogue amongst local stakeholders that promoted actions of mutual interest within the purview of Labour Inspection;
- Enactment of OSH laws in Sindh and Punjab provinces;

- 450 Labour Inspection staff from the four provinces as well as Islamabad Capital Territory, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir trained on “Effective Labour Inspection, Wages and OSH”;
- The recruitment of around 96 additional Labour Inspectors, including 18 women;
- Training material on Effective Labour Inspection, OSH and Accident Investigation developed, and is now a resource for government owned training institutions;
- Increased number of employers and workers made aware of OSH needs and pertinent actions that could help improve OSH conditions at workplaces;
- Private Compliance Initiatives (PCIs) mapped;
- Labour Inspection Management and Information System (LIMIS) supported;
- Labour Inspection profile developed; and
- Annual labour inspection reports prepared.

The recruitment of additional Labour Inspectors, especially the women, improved legal coverage of Labour Inspection and that followed by growing number of inspection visits and provincial aspirations to strengthen their management and information systems are the key successes of the SLISP.

