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## Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh



*The 2nd Project Steering committee (PSC) Meeting of the project titled “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh” Executed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Held on Thursday 14 Feb 2013*

Thursday 14 Feb 2013, Dhaka, Bangladesh: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the Labour Migration Project, titled, “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh” was held under the chairpersonship of Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) at the Probashi Kalyan Bhaban. The

Meeting was attended by all the members but one.

Welcoming the members, the Chairperson referred 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the PSC on 05 July 2012 and its proceedings which allowed the project to complete all the requirements to begin full implementation. The Chairperson stressed that finalization, and placing of the proposed Migration Bill, on which the Labour Migration Project worked during the reporting period, before the Cabinet and advocating for its passage by the parliament are a priority for the Ministry. Nisha, the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), and Chairperson invited all the PSC members to propose any changes in the agenda. With the concurrence of the members on Agenda, the meeting progressed.

Sarat Das, Chief of Mission (COM) of the IOM, an implementing partner of the project made introductory remarks on the project progress. Derek Mueller, Head of Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), Bangladesh, which is funding the project, expressed his satisfaction with the progress made by the Project during the reporting period.



Representatives of the ILO expressed their appreciation of all the project implementing partners and all other stakeholders who have been actively involved in the project.

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Presenting the progress, Disha Sonata Faruque, National Project Officer (NPO) of the ILO emphasised that during the first six months of its implementation the Project Management Team (ILO PMT) has worked on the legal frameworks, development of the component proposals of the implementing partners, signing of agreements, procurement for policy research, and development of concept notes and planning with the stakeholders as a matter of priority in recognition that it is pre-requisite for labour migration governance. It has also begun work to address the issues of migrant workers' lack of powerful allies, or indeed of networks of any kind, in the country of destination. During the presentation, it was pointed out that the project is

investigating issues of recruitment fees, remittances, labour markets and skills and certification on an urgency basis to ensure that in the coming few months there is enough substantive basis to reformulate the overseas employment policy to meet the changed reality of labour migration and to align it with the national perspective plans.

Nisha pointed out the activities involving Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) which are partially delayed and also mentioned the redress efforts being made. She further informed that the ILO PMT is following up with the UN Women for addressing the delay in starting the implementation of the component for which they are responsible.

After the presentation of the project progress, a presentation was made on the major articles of the proposed Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers' Welfare Act 2013 by Dr Nurul Islam, Director of the BMET.



Another short presentation was made by Grégoire Crettaz, Migration Specialist of the ILO on the new partnerships made since the project implementation started. These partnerships included: Human Development Research Centre (HDRC), National Coordination Committee for Worker's Education (NCCWE), and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM).

After the three presentations, the floor was opened for an open discussion, feedback and approval. The principle interest of the floor was related to the proposed Migration Bill 2013. The PSC members gave critical feedback and suggestions regarding the proposed Bill. They were unanimous in their appreciation of the rights orientation of the proposed Bill and hoped that the Bill would be passed in its current form with some corrections to benefit the migrant workers from Bangladesh. There were crucial demands on the floor to ensure that the proposed Bill 2013 should ensure representation of returnee migrant workers on the Wage Earner's Welfare Fund Board.



Arthur Shears, the CTA of the TVET Reform Project of the ILO, commenting on ongoing research, stressed the need to consider and relation the relationship between skills and certification of the migrant workers and the implementation of the National Skills Development Policy and the proposed certification mechanism to be introduced by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board to include the recognition of



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technical skills from prior learning (called "ladderization").

The 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC Meeting closed with the following unanimously taken decisions:



1. In case of any changes in the planned activities, formal process of revision as per the planning discipline would be undertaken at a later stage to coincide with the actions to be taken based on recommendations of the mid-term review;

2. Delayed activities should be expedited so project accomplishes results timely.

3. The project should continue to engage the PSC members in substantive discussions.

Hazrat Ali, Additional Secretary of the MEWOE and the National Project Coordinator summarized the discussions and thanked the PSC members for attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC Meeting. The meeting was closed with closing remarks from Mafruha Sultana, Additional Director General of the BMET who spoke on behalf of Begum Shamsun Nahar, the Chairperson of the Labour Migration Project Coordination Committee.

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