

Celebrating World Day Against Child Labour 2017



In conflict and disaster, protect children from child labour

Mohammad Abdul Hamid, Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh presided over an event to mark World Day Against Child Labour on 20 June 2017. Those also taking part included Anisul Haque, Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; and Muhammad Mujibul Haque State Minister for Labour and Employment. Speakers highlighted the need to eliminate child labour in Bangladesh by 2025. Special emphasis was also placed on ending the employment of children as domestic workers. ILO supported the event with funding from USDOL.

"I would like to take this opportunity to urge the Government of Bangladesh to ratify Convention 138 on Minimum Age. This would send a resounding message about our common cause – and our common standards that protect children's human rights."

Srinivas Reddy, ILO Bangladesh Country Director



Remediation Coordination Cell for Bangladesh garment industry launched



State Minister for Labour and Employment Md. Mujibul Haque officially launches the RCC joined by development partners, industry and labour inspectorate representatives.

The safety of the Bangladesh garment industry took a step forward following the launch of a Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC) supported by ILO with funding from Canada, the Netherlands and United Kingdom.

Launched in Dhaka on 14 May 2017, the RCC will focus on managing the remediation process for garment factories under the Government of Bangladesh's National Initiative. The new unit will be staffed and supported by seconded members of various regulatory bodies and will be supported by private sector engineers hired to provide technical expertise for remediation follow up. Initially the RCC will work with 1,293 operational factories.

In addition to overseeing the remediation process, it will contribute to build the capacity of regulators as well as further collaboration between them. As the work of the RCC progresses, it is planned for it to evolve into an industrial safety unit or agency that provides a 'one-stop-shop' service issuing factory building, fire, electrical and occupancy permits. [For more see here.](#)

An infographic video as well as a short information sheet in English and Bangla explaining the work of the RCC can be [seen here.](#)

Where are the links?

This publication is designed to be read on the screen. In order to facilitate readership a number of printed copies are also distributed. Unless otherwise mentioned all website links lead to www.ilo.org/dhaka www.ilo.org/dhaka



The 106th International Labour Conference (ILC)

106th ILC shows ILO is ready and able to update its standards, making them robust and relevant.

The 106th ILC closed 16 June 2017 following two weeks of deliberations on key world of work issues, including the promotion of peace

and stability in countries emerging from conflict, strengthening labour migration governance and greening the economy. A full report on the ILC is [available here](#).

The ILC's Committee on the Application of Standards considered the case of Bangladesh with regards to ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise. The findings of the Committee can be [downloaded here](#).

During the ILC, Bangladesh was re-elected as a deputy member of the government group of the ILO Governing Body for 2017-2020. Meanwhile, Mr Farooq Ahmed (photo right) Secretary-General of the Bangladesh Employers Federation was also elected to the Governing Body as a deputy member for the employers group.



3rd review of Sustainability Compact for garment sector

Review recognises progress as well as challenges still to be addressed in ready made garment sector.

On May 18, 2017, the partners of the Sustainability Compact for the Bangladesh Ready Made Garment Sector – the Government of Bangladesh, the European Union, the USA, Canada, and the ILO – met for the third follow-up meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Progress against the Compact commitments relating to workplace safety, labour rights and responsible business conduct were reviewed and discussed.



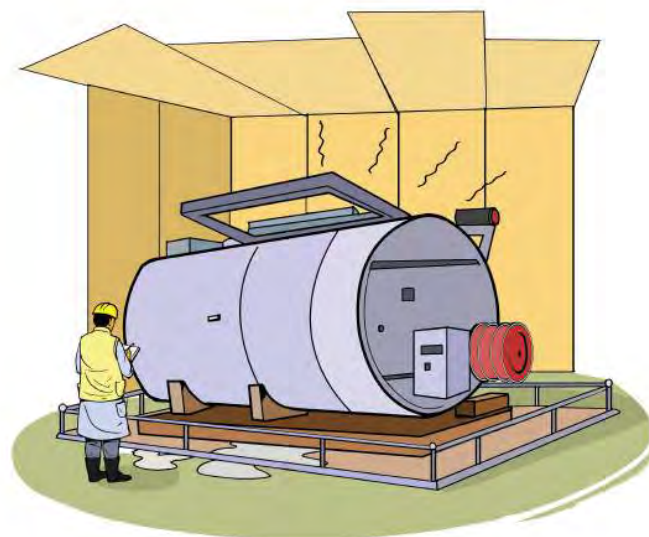
Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed addresses the Compact

Speaking at the event, Karen Curtis, Deputy Director of the ILO International Standards Department said: “The ILO values the important role the Sustainability Compact plays in driving change in the Bangladesh garment industry relating to workplace safety, labour rights and responsible business conduct. There is a need to build on what has been achieved to date and accelerate the pace of progress, especially in key areas identified by the ILO supervisory bodies relating to freedom of association. The ILO remains committed to supporting the Government of Bangladesh, employers and workers organizations to help achieve all Compact commitments and to meet the goal of ensuring Decent Work for all.”

Joint conclusions of the Sustainability Compact review can be [downloaded here](#)

Setting the course for improved workplace safety in Bangladesh

ILO is building on its work to improve working conditions in the ready made garment sector by supporting efforts to develop a National Plan of Action for Occupational Safety and Health. ILO Bangladesh senior OSH advisor Alberto Cerda explains why this process is so important.



Boiler safety - a major OSH issue in Bangladesh

Why does Bangladesh need a National Plan of Action for OSH?

Bangladesh has made impressive progress addressing key OSH and working conditions issues in the garment sector over the last four years. However there is still much to be done to ensure that workplaces in every sector are safe. We wish to build on the OSH foundations created so far and involve all stakeholders to design and develop a comprehensive OSH policy and programme for the country. It is important that the progress made and lessons learned so far are applied to all economic sectors.

How will this be achieved?

ILO is promoting the engagement of all concerned ministries and stakeholders to define standards and policies so that stronger cooperation can be achieved among partners. Better coordination between key players will multiply impact and help ensure that in the long run, Bangladesh has a coherent and comprehensive OSH policy that covers the whole economy, including the informal sector.

Who is involved?

The Ministry of Labour and Employment and its National OSH Council are actively involved along with major employers' organizations representing the RMG, construction, shrimp, leather and ship breaking industries. Workers' organisations have participated fully while the Labour Inspectorate is playing a critical coordination role.

How long will it take to obtain results?

Results will be produced in the short, medium and long term according to the level of commitment and involvement of all concerned. Employers need to realise that OSH should not be seen as a cost but as an investment that will be paid back. This is vital to the sustainability of critical sectors. At the end of the day the entire society will ultimately benefit from this exercise.

What areas will the OSH policy cover?

The NPA will include measures and strategies to address workplace accidents and occupational diseases. In the initial stage it will cover five priority sectors - RMG, construction, leather, shrimp and ship building. Strategic areas will include building OSH management capacity, the regulatory framework, enforcement, actions to manage specific risks and developing partnerships.

When will it be agreed?

Discussions are likely to go on until the middle of 2018. By then we hope that the major elements of the document can be agreed so that it can be adopted during the second half of next year.

ILO's work to support the NPA development is funded by Canada, the Netherlands and United Kingdom



Netherlands Ambassador Leoni Cuelenaere and ILO Deputy Director Gagan Rajbhandari sign the agreement.

Netherlands signs up for 2nd phase of RMG programme

Joins with UK government to continue efforts to improve working conditions in the garment sector

On 29 June 2017, the Netherlands Embassy agreed to continue its support for ILO's efforts to improve working conditions in the Bangladesh garment industry. A second phase of the Improving Working Conditions in the

RMG Sector programme is set to run until 2023. It will focus on four strategic areas namely factory remediation; governance building to support industrial safety and labour inspection reform; Occupational Safety and Health; and improving working conditions and productivity through Better Work Bangladesh. Earlier in the month the United Kingdom agreed to continue its support while Canada is also considering doing likewise.

Better Work forum highlights challenges and opportunities for RMG industry



Better Work Bangladesh stakeholder and buyer forum held in Dhaka 4 April 2017.

The event was held to explore progress made by the programme, challenges remaining and how to continue improve working conditions across the country's garment factories while increasing their competitiveness. Some 300 national and international garment sector representatives attended the forum, including partners from government, employer associations and unions, as well as 80 members from international brands. [For more see here.](#)

Canadian delegation see Better Work in action

Rakesh Patry, Director General of Canadian Government's International and Intergovernmental Labour Affairs dept visited an RMG factory taking part in the ILO/IFC Better Work Bangladesh programme recently to meet management and members of the recently elected Participation Committee.



A monthly update of Better Work Bangladesh news can be [found here](#)

Workers Resource Centre to support trade unions

The establishment of a Workers Resource Centre (WRC) to support the operation and capacity of trade unions takes a step closer

On 29 May 2017 representatives from the National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE) and IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) signed a trust deed for the establishment of a Workers Resource Centre.



The WRC will support the capacity of trade unions in the RMG sector.

The centre will provide capacity building and other services for workers and unions. This will cover areas such as workers' organizing, collective bargaining and negotiations. Advice on the Bangladesh Labour Act and labour dispute resolutions will also be given. Located in Dhaka between Uttara and Tongi the WRC is scheduled to open in the 3rd quarter of 2017. The signing was followed up with a first board of trustees meeting on 19 July 2017 in Dhaka to agree on a strategic plan for the next five years and a work plan for 2017.

The establishment of the centre has been supported by ILO's Social Dialogue Project funded by Denmark and Sweden as well as ILO's Workers Bureau (ACTRAV).

*"The Workers Resource Centre will help strengthen trade unions in the RMG sector by assisting them to organize and collectively bargain in a more effective manner. This will help ensure better working conditions and job protection for their members while also boosting industrial relations and productivity". **Tauvik Muhamad, ILO Bangladesh Workers Education Expert***



ILO's Mahandra Naidoo addresses the training

Training prepares women organisers for RMG union leadership roles

22 women union organizers from NCCWE and IBC learn essential union leadership skills

The training workshop covered topics including union organising, engaging in participation committees and OSH committees, negotiations, collective bargaining agreements, communication, strategy formulation and work planning.

The four-day course held in Savar, Dhaka from 26 – 29 June 2017 was organised by ILO's Social Dialogue project, Workers Bureau ACTRAV and the International Training Centre in Turin. Mahandra Naidoo, the Chief Technical Advisor of ILO's Social Dialogue Project encouraged participants to share the knowledge that they had obtained with other women workers in their respective workplaces.

Judges and lawyers gain better understanding of International Labour Standards

Training will facilitate application of International Labour Standards and Labour Legislation in Bangladesh.

Thirty judges and judicial officials and 30 lawyers from the and Supreme Courts were trained in April 2017 to help them make appropriate use of International Labour Standards (ILS) in the national context. The training was organised by ILO together with the Judicial Administration Training Institute with the support of ILO's International Training Centre. The course will help judges and lawyers determine when and how they can use international labour law within Bangladesh. It will also help judges to understand the relevance of the analysis and pronouncements of the ILO's supervisory bodies. [For more see here.](#)



Ambassador of Norway Sidsel Bleken awards a participant.

Law Minister announces relocation of existing labour courts, establishment of two new ones

Speaking at the launch of ILO training for judges on 25 April 2017, Mr. Anisul Huq, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs announced that two labour courts would be relocated from Dhaka to Tongi and Narayanganj, major RMG industrial areas. He added that the process would also be initiated to set up two new labour courts in Sylhet and Rangpur where they can serve the Northeast and Northwest regions of the country. This will enable the labour courts to more efficiently deal with RMG related issues as well as help facilitate access to the courts in key regions.



Minister Huq

Master trainers to support workplace cooperation and handle grievances

Work started in April 2017 to create a pool of 30 master trainers from the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations Institutes on workplace cooperation.

These master trainers will play a crucial role to support the development of workplace cooperation plans in 34 non-unionised factories out of 54 pilot factories. These

plans will provide a basis for the work of Participation Committees in the factories. Future sessions for the training pool are set to cover collective bargaining and grievance procedures.

The training programmes were supported by the ILO's Fundamental Rights and Labour Relations project funded by the Government of Norway, and the Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations Project supported by the Governments of Sweden and Denmark.



Participants take a well-earned break.



IndustriALL Global Union leader visits Dhaka

Valter Sanches (seated rear, centre) the General Secretary of the IndustriALL Global Union visited ILO Bangladesh on 2 May 2017. Accompanied by local leaders of the IndustriALL Bangladesh Council, Mr Sanches took the chance to discuss a range of labour related issues with the ILO Bangladesh team led by Country Director Srinivas Reddy.

Catalysing Social Dialogue in the Bangladesh RMG Sector

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) with the support of ILO's Social Dialogue project funded by Sweden and Denmark marked the fourth anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy with an event on 23 April 2017 to discuss Social Dialogue in the Bangladesh RMG Sector. A variety of stakeholders examined the progress of ongoing institutional reforms in the RMG sector and the role social dialogue can play to improve worker-employer relations.



A full report of the event including videos and presentations can be found at cpd.org.bd



ILO's Srinivas Reddy and ERD's Shamima Nargis mark the signing.

ILO & ERD ink Skills 21 project document

A signing ceremony for the project document of the European Union (EU) funded 'Skills 21 – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth' initiative took place at the Economic Relations Division (ERD), in Dhaka on 13 June 2017.

Signing the Project Document for the ERD was Ms. Shamima Nargis, Additional Secretary (UN) ERD while Mr. Srinivas B Reddy, Country Director, ILO Dhaka Office signed on behalf of the ILO.

The total budget for the initiative is EUR20 million of which the EU will contribute EUR19.5 million. Skills 21 will build on the achievements of earlier EU/ILO initiatives to modernise the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system in Bangladesh.

Pharmaceutical sector seeks higher skilled workforce

23 Bangladesh pharmaceutical companies signed an agreement with the Pharmaceutical Industry Skills Council (PISC) 6 June 2017 to deliver apprenticeship training to 35 factory supervisors and 600 newly appointed workers.

The move recognises that many workers in the fast growing pharmaceutical industry have little or no training. Training modules developed by experts from the Directorate of Technical Education, Bangladesh Technical Education Board and PISC follow a competency based curriculum set by the industry.

ILO supports this initiative as part of its Canadian-funded BSEP project. Through this training entry-level staff will be able to gain level 1 certification of the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF).

The Pharmaceutical Industry Skills Council was established in 2015 with ILO support to help better serve the needs of this industry to recruit skilled staff. In addition to the apprenticeship scheme, the PISC has also developed four occupation-specific training programmes that will be taught in TVET institutes in order to help meet the demand for a skilled workforce in the pharmaceuticals sector.



National event on TVET disability inclusion planned



The DIAG meets. Chief Guest at the event was the Secretary of Technical Education & Madrasa Division (TMED) of Ministry of Education Mr. Md. Alamgir.

Disability Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG) to organise national seminar on disability inclusion in TVET institutes in August 2017.

Meeting on 15 May 2017 the DIAG agreed to hold the event to help share with other ministries the successful steps the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) has taken to boost disability inclusion in its Technical and Vocational Training Institutes.

During the meeting the DIAG members also finalized a disability inclusion workplan for 2017-18 to help strengthen access for people with disabilities to TVET institutes and the job market.

The Disability Inclusion Advisory Group brings together the DTE, Bangladesh Technical Education Board, various ministries, NGOs and Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs). The purpose of the group is to advise DTE on how to effectively promote disability inclusion. ILO supports the DIAG through its Canadian funded BSEP project.

"DTE have taken a number of steps towards disability inclusion in its TVET institutes that have delivered positive results. Sharing these lessons with other ministries will further benefit people with disabilities."
Kishore Kumar Singh, Chief Technical Advisor B-S, ILO BSEP project



State Minister of Labour and Employment Md Mujibul Haq (standing centre) presides over the signing.

Leading RMG producers to enhance workplace inclusion

Three leading garment companies agree to enhance workforce inclusion for women and people with disabilities.

Executives of the Ananta, Bitopi and Shin Shin groups signed an Inclusive Business Policy on 30 May 2017 formalizing their respective business

practices to promote gender equality and better access for persons with disabilities in the RMG sector. The agreement will see the companies bring their disability inclusion policies in line with the “Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013”. Meanwhile the groups have also committed to reach gender parity at management levels and ensure equal pay for women employees. The signing was organised by the Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI). [For more see here.](#)

CEBAI Enterprise Based Training shows good potential

Enterprise Based Training benefiting companies and garment workers alike.

Representatives of the ILO, the Swedish Embassy and H&M visited Enterprise Based Training facilities developed with the support of the Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) on 27 March 2017. The visit to EBT operations established by leading garment manufacturers Fakir Apparels and Remi Holdings provided the opportunity to discuss how similar operations can be established across the industry.

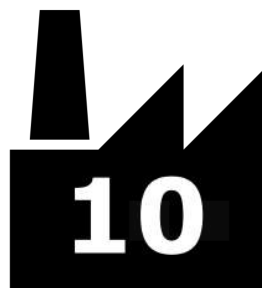
[See more here.](#)



Representatives of H&M and the Swedish Embassy visit the EBT at Fakir Apparels

What is CEBAI?

The Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) is run by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and supported by the ILO, Swedish government and H&M. It helps meet the need for a skilled labour force in the RMG sector by providing competency-based training in areas where demand is greatest.



CEBAI has established EBT in 10 RMG factories

What is EBT?

Enterprise Based Training (EBT) is a system of training established within factories to help them meet the skills development needs of their workers. By establishing in-house training that is provided to national standards employers gain more trained staff while workers are able to obtain nationally recognized qualifications that can lead to higher salaries.

Study reveals indigenous people need help to secure government jobs

A study supported by ILO has highlighted how job reservation policies could be adjusted to help more indigenous and tribal peoples (ITPs) secure government jobs in Bangladesh.

A study on Job Reservation Policies for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in the Civil Service in Bangladesh provides a comprehensive analysis of the reservation or 'quota' policy of the Government for the recruitment of ITPs in government service and the status of its implementation. According to the report, enhancing access to high quality primary, secondary and tertiary education, including mother tongue-based multilingual education at the primary level is a crucial step. This will help build longer-term capacity of ITP candidates for both government and private jobs, on merit basis as well as for reserved quota positions.

[Read more here](#)



Better access to education will help ITPs secure better jobs.



Building capacities on indigenous and tribal peoples' issues in Bangladesh

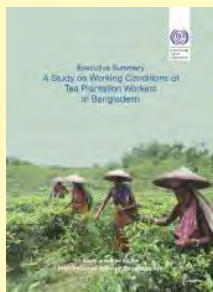
Brochure: Building capacities on indigenous and tribal peoples' issues

A new publication captures the work carried out by ILO to help strengthen the institutional capacity of the Government of Bangladesh and indigenous and tribal peoples (ITPs) so as to support the integration of ITPs rights into the national legal and policy environment.

[Download it here](#)

Indigenous and tribal peoples studies

Two new studies help identify issues and recommend appropriate responses to ensure that indigenous and tribal peoples fully enjoy fundamental principles and rights at work, safe working conditions and fair remuneration. [Download them here.](#)



Working Conditions of Tea Plantation Workers in Bangladesh

Working Conditions of Indigenous and Tribal Workers in Bangladesh's Urban Economy: A Focus on the Garment Industry and Beauty Parlours



Seeking a win-win situation on migration

ILO's Application of Migration Policy for Decent Work of Migrant Workers project, funded by the the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is working with the Government of Bangladesh and other social dialogue partners to operationalize policy and legal measures to protect rights of migrant workers. Chief Technical Advisor Deepa Bharathi talks about what the initiative is trying to achieve.



Hoping for a brighter future overseas

Seeking a win-win situation

ILO works with its partners to make migration a win-win situation, for the individual, for the families, and for Bangladesh. Migration management and governance must be done with a longer term vision and viewed more than as a means of finding employment for youth as well as supporting poverty alleviation. In several labour sending countries, remittances contribute tremendously to the economy, however promoting more people to migrate without ensuring rights and without taking a longer term perspective of providing decent jobs is not sustainable.

Building on past work

The project builds on work carried out by earlier ILO initiatives and provides technical support to help strengthen institutions responsible for migration governance. We support rights based, orderly migration governance initiatives of the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment as well as other agencies involved in the process. The project works at national level and helps linking national initiatives to regional and global initiatives on migration where Bangladesh is represented.

Involving trade unions

We work with national trade unions and through the project have formed a labour migration committee. The committee represents workers via the National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE) which is a national platform of trade union federations. This committee is consulted on all aspects of policy and legislative framework development.

Cost a major challenge

A major challenge is the high cost of migration and recruitment. Migration governance requires collaboration across borders, between the governments of sending and destination countries. According to ILO research Bangladesh has a very high cost of migration and these costs result in very low skilled workers going into very high debt which can take years to pay off. This needs to be addressed and ILO is working in collaboration with World Bank to develop a methodology to assess these costs.

Better skills mean higher salaries and better working conditions

Many workers migrating from Bangladesh go as low or semi-skilled workers. Subsequently this implies low salaries. Upgrading skills is a priority of the Government and we are working with partners in the area of skills with a particular focus on women. The majority of women from Bangladesh migrate into domestic work or the garment sector. Data shows that the numbers of women migrants are increasing and therefore we are looking to explore new sectors of labour for women which will also break gender stereotypes. This will be followed by identification of the type of skills women would need for undertaking jobs in these sectors.

Stories of change from ILO Bangladesh

Employment Support Services form a bridge between industry and students

Employment Support Services set up with ILO assistance are helping vocational students from the glass and ceramics institute to find work and companies to hire skilled employees.

[Read more here.](#)



Better Work's Sexual Harassment Prevention training sparks changes in attitudes & behaviour

"I used to touch my female colleagues on their shoulders or back to encourage them to work harder or highlight a mistake. Also, I addressed them using inappropriate, vulgar language. Now I am aware this is wrong. I stopped it completely and told the other supervisors to do the same.

We all thought this was no big deal before." [Read about it here](#)



Refusing to throw in the towel on factory safety in Bangladesh

Four years on since the disastrous collapse of the Rana Plaza building, have things changed in the Bangladesh garment industry? One producer of towels has taken up the challenge to make his factory fully compliant with safety rules. [This is his story.](#)



Enterprise Based Training (EBT) helps Fakir Apparels reduce helpers, cover staff shortages

EBT is helping one major Bangladesh RMG company to reduce the numbers of low-skilled 'helpers' and providing a pool of trained staff to step in when staff shortages occur. [Read more here](#)



ILO's activities in Bangladesh take place with the support of:

Canada



Kingdom of the Netherlands



SWEDEN



Australian Aid



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confederation suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



From the People of Japan



A safety colouring book for kids

A colouring book helps introduce basic safety steps such as 'Don't play with matches' and 'Be careful crossing the road' to children in Bangladesh. Produced by ILO's RMG programme it forms part of efforts to build a culture of workplace safety by focussing on the children of workers. To receive a copy please contact needham@ilo.org

Towards improved fire and building safety in Bangladesh

A new publication highlights the achievements of the ILO/US Department of Labor 'Improving Fire and General Building Safety in Bangladesh' project. It can be [downloaded here](#).



For more information

See www.ilo.org/dhaka or contact Steve Needham, Senior Communications Officer at needham@ilo.org or call Tel: + 880 2 8881425 or 8881467

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