

“WORLD OF WORK SUMMIT 2023: SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL”



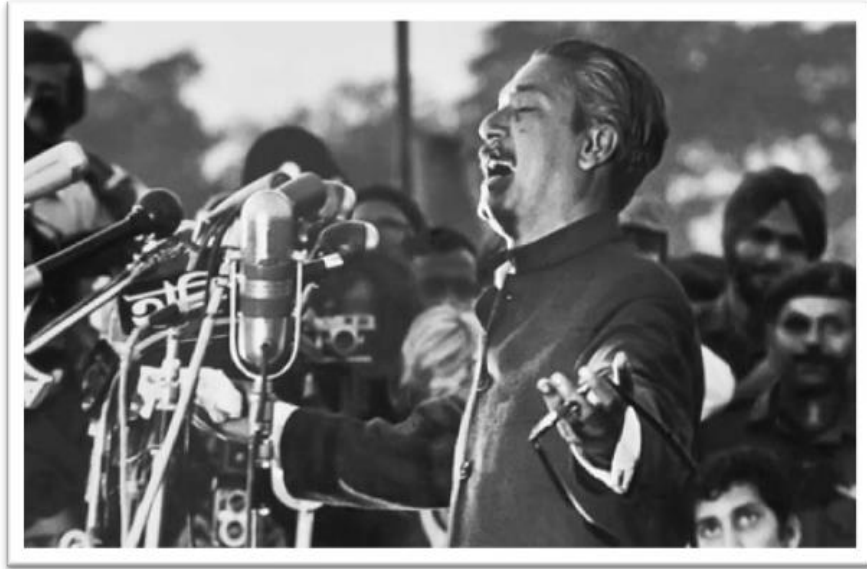
EXECUTIVE BRIEF

14-15 June 2023
Geneva, Switzerland



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

CONFIDENTIAL



**FATHER OF THE NATION
BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN**

“I would like to say categorically and unequivocally that, our country will be a democratic, secular and socialist country. In this country the workers, peasants, Hindus and Muslim all will be living in peace and harmony.”

- Address at Suhrawardy Uddan upon returning to the independent Bangladesh after 9 months in prison in Mianwali, Pakistan, 10 January 1972

Executive Summary

The “*World of Work Summit 2023: Social Justice for All*” is a high-level forum to gather global voices and political leaders to advocate for increased, coordinated, and coherent action in favor of social justice. It will be convened on 14-15 June 2023 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The Summit will coincide with the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference, running from 05-16 June 2023.

The Summit is expected to provide an opportunity to discuss and inform the proposal to forge a Global Coalition for Social Justice, as welcomed by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office at its 347th Session in March 2023.

The Summit acknowledges the critical role of social justice in establishing universal and lasting peace, as stated in the International Labour Organization's Constitution. Despite global efforts, progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been affected, particularly in the social dimensions, due to economic shocks for COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine war, environmental changes, technological transformations, and demographic shifts. These challenges have intensified poverty, insecurity, inequality, and fractures in societies, leading to a growing mistrust in institutions.

In response to these challenges, the international community feels the need to support national responses and prioritize a human-centered approach that addresses both short-term crises and long-term trends. The Summit aims to contribute to this effort by calling for a Global Coalition for Social Justice, aligned with the UN Secretary-General's call for ‘Our Common Agenda’ and the envisioned World Social Summit in 2025. It is expected that the outcomes of the Summit will inform discussions in other multilateral forums to achieve greater social justice, such as, in 2023, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the G20 and the summits of the BRICS countries.

The Summit has three primary objectives (i) raise awareness and plea for social justice to be prioritized in global, regional, and national agendas, as a rally point to put the social dimension of the SDGs back on track; (ii) promote and call for increased, coordinated and coherent action for the advancement of social justice through the forging of the Global Coalition for Social Justice; and (iii) feed the global debate by voicing priorities and commitments to do more to advance social justice for all.

The Summit will hold 4 Panel Sessions with the aim to strengthen global efforts to ensure social justice. The Panels are *a. addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion b. fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development c. jobs and social protection for just transitions and d. trade, employment and sustainable development: Advancing human and labour rights.*

The Summit will feature addresses by Heads of State and Government, representatives from employers' and workers' organizations, as well as panel discussions with high-level representatives from UN agencies and other international organizations. By convening leaders and stakeholders from various sectors, the Summit seeks to catalyze collective efforts towards achieving social justice, addressing the urgent social challenges of today, and building a sustainable and equitable future.

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PART I:
GLOBAL COALITION ON SOCIAL
JUSTICE

GLOBAL COALITION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE – A SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN BY GILBERT F. HOUNGBO, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ILO

‘Global Coalition on Social Justice’ is the flagship initiative of Director General Gilbert F. Hougbo that he came up with in line with his election pledge at the very outset of the assumption of charge of his Office at the ILO. The Governing Body of ILO approved the conception at its 347th session held in March 2023 to forge the Coalition at the 111th session of the International Labour Conference(ILC) to be held in June 2023.

The discussion on the Coalition is yet to be mature. However, by now, the developed countries have in principle agreed to go along with the idea conceived by Mr. Hougbo. Since the discussion in Geneva was full of critical remarks and questions, he is seeking support and guidance of the political leaderships of the developing countries in the run up to its endorsement by the ILC.

Historically, social justice was pursued by ILO’s previous Directors General as well aiming to secure decent work for all. It may be recalled that Mr. Juan Somavia during his tenure in ILO pursued the Member States to create jobs with acceptable quality in the quest of social justice. Mr. Guy Ryder held decent work as the key to achieving sustainable development and social justice as a foundation of lasting peace.

CONCEPTION OF THE GLOBAL COALITION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE BY MR. HOUNGBO

DG Hougbo’s vision for the Coalition under ILO’s leadership is anchored in the opening words of the ILO Constitution: ‘whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice’.

As Mr. Hougbo envisages, the current body of standards is insufficient and inadequate to support the quest for social justice in a rapidly changing world of work, characterized by eroding employment relationships in the gig and platform economies, the rapid digitization and automation, and the undeniable impact of climate change on jobs and livelihoods. The multiplication of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria within companies and investment funds are a tangible proof of a “normative” demand by the very game of market forces. The impact of Covid-19 on societies and economies has exposed the interconnectedness and fragility of global supply chains. On the other hand, the pandemic has accelerated the rise of the digital economy, whose manifestations, such as tele-working, may require appropriate labour standards, yet to be developed.

In the context of the growing challenges, Mr. Houngbo advocates that the progress made in last decades in terms of social justice must be preserved and protected, while the global solutions to new challenges and opportunities must be centred around human, environmental, economic and societal values. In short, a new global social contract is required.

The Coalition would pursue the overarching goal of ensuring that social justice is prioritized in national and global policymaking, in development cooperation, and in financial, trade and investment agreements. The Coalition could pioneer:

- The setting up of a standing socially sustainable anti-crisis framework jointly with the IMF and the World Bank, to ensure that the institutional support programmes, particularly in time of crisis, fully integrate social justice dimensions which could be critical for debt-stressed countries and countries with limited fiscal space;
- A programme for universal social protection, based on the concept of the Social Protection Floor, with a special attention to universal health care and to the possibility of an evidence-based minimum living income for all;
- An initiative supporting enterprises in the transition to a green economy and to a digital economy;
- A joint initiative with WTO for socially fair trade;
- The creation, within the ILO, of a support programme for countries negotiating social measures under trade and investment agreements;
- A joint initiative with the Green Climate Fund for Green transition and Climate Finance gap reduction for SMEs.

DEVELOPMENT BASED ON THE DISCUSSION IN GENEVA

Following the discourse during the 347th session of the Governing Body, the Office held consultations with its tripartite constituents. However, during the discussions, composition, commitment and governance structure of the Coalition were in limelight. The development up till now may be summarized as follows:

COMMITMENTS OF THE COALITION

The Coalition will be guided by the principle of tripartism. The Coalition members will commit to:

- uphold the principles and values of the UN, and the fundamental principles and rights at work of the ILO;
- advocate for the promotion of social justice within the organizations, forums and institutions with which they are affiliated;

- increase efforts and action at global, regional and national levels to advance social justice for all;
- share successful experiences and action in the promotion of social justice with other Coalition members and the general public;
- contribute to the drafting of the regular report on the state of social justice by providing national, regional or global data and information, subject to availability.

COMPOSITION OF THE COALITION

As envisaged, participation of the following categories will be considered for the Coalition:

- ILO Member States including Governments, national employers' and workers' organizations;
- The Secretariats of the ILO Employers' and Workers' groups;
- Multilateral organizations including the members of the United Nations System;
- Regional organizations including regional development banks;
- Enterprises;
- International non-governmental organizations; and
- Academic institutions

From each Member State, two representatives from Governments, one from Employers' Group and another from Workers' Group will be included in the Coalition.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A. Forum

A general gathering of all Coalition members will be held once a year, possibly at the margins of the International Labour Conference, or other major events organized by the UN and its agencies. The aim of the Forum is to debate on issues related to social justice and exchange knowledge. It will also provide an opportunity for the Coalition members to present their activities and outcomes related to social justice. At the Forum, the Steering Committee of the Coalition will present a progress report and a work plan for the coming year.

B. Steering Committee

In order to guide the Coalition, a steering committee will be formed. It will be composed of the following members, for a two-year period, renewable once:

- Director-General of the ILO as a Co-Chairperson;
- 4 Government representatives nominated by the ILO Government group on a regional basis, one of whom will act as a Co-Chairperson;

- Two representatives from the ILO Employers' Group, one of whom will act as a Vice-Chairperson;
- Two representatives from the ILO Workers' Group, one of whom will act as a Vice-Chairperson;
- One representative of a UNSDG member organization and one representative from either the WTO or the international financial institutions, both nominated by the multilateral organizations participating in the Coalition; and
- Observers: one representative of an enterprise nominated by the Secretariat of the ILO Employers' Group, one representative from an international NGO, one representative from a regional organization and one representative from an academic institution.

The composition of the Coalition's Steering Committee will aim to respect gender balance and regional diversity.

The Steering Committee will meet two times a year.

Function of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will:

- admit members;
- approve the Coalition's work plan prepared by the Secretariat and the progress report to be presented to the Forum;
- provide inputs to help prepare the Social Justice report;
- represent the Coalition in relevant forums and help mobilize resources for its activities; and
- approve the annual work plan of the Secretariat.

C. SECRETARIAT

The International Labour Office will act as the Coalition's Secretariat and provide the Steering Committee with necessary administrative and technical support.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED COALITION

The Coalition is aimed at achieving social justice through decent work. Though no Member State has squarely rejected the Coalition, there is a genuine concern particularly among the developing countries on its possible mandate and how that mandate would be exercised to realize social justice. Based on the information available up till now, the following may be commented:

1. DG's leadership in the Steering Committee at par with the memberships' leaderships is a deviation from his routine role and not commensurate with the assignment he is entrusted to.
2. The composition of the Coalition is heterogeneous. It is yet to be clear how such a diverse group of institutions/entities will act in tandem and harmonize their actions for a result-oriented pursuit.
3. Apart from ILO's tripartite structure, there is no guidance at this stage how International Financial Institutions, NGOs and enterprises will be selected; and
4. Coalition's mandate, as envisioned, is likely to go beyond ILO's remit with a focus on human rights that will as such, compromise its competence as a specialized agency.

CAUTIONARY APPROACH OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND EMPLOYERS' GROUP DURING THE 347TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

During the last session of the Governing Body, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and African countries cautioned against a quick move to form the Coalition without having in-depth discussion on its deliverables. They urged for, among others, a balanced geographical representation of the Member States in the Coalition, creation of jobs and improving skills and lifelong learning as the centrality of its pursuit, coherence among the multilateral processes etc.

Against the hesitancy of the developing countries, the EU and the UK apparently opined for launching of the Coalition in 2023. This apart, following the last session of the Governing Body, the developed countries made a number of attempts to refer to the yet-to-be-born Coalition in various resolutions of ILO which were not accepted by the developing countries.

It was noticeable that the Employers' Group pointed out that all thematic areas as conceived in the Coalition are already part of the ILO's current programme and there is a lack of clarity on what value the Coalition is going to add. They pointed out the unclarity on the social justice report, unconditional open participation, office's internal governance etc. However, they welcomed the DG's conception.

BANGLADESH POSITION

- a. Any talk on social justice must be centered around creating resilient societies and economies that further the wellbeing of people and human dignity.
- b. While Universal Human Rights (such as access to an adequate standard of living, education, healthcare and social security, freedom of association etc.) are important, *equal access to opportunities* in particular skills, education and training are directly relevant to enhancing human capacities, productive and gainful employment in an everchanging workplace.
- c. *Fair distribution* of incomes and benefits as well as *just transition* in the world of work in the face of globalization, technological, demographic, environmental and other transformations, and compounding crises are to be treated as cardinal principles.
- d. In the context of the catastrophic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, war in Europe, impact of climate change, break-down of supply chains, and other unpredictable external factors on the world of work, *equity, inclusivity and international solidarity* should be the cornerstone in overall approach of the Coalition to ensure social justice for everyone, everywhere.
- e. There should be a strong focus on *minimizing inequalities* within and among societies across the globe. A rights-based approach to mitigate employment losses owing to the impact of climate change for the vulnerable countries, mandatory support from the economies which have been historically responsible for these crises towards the victims, as all seek to make transition to green economies.
- f. There should be normative measures to ensure *rights of the employees in the gig economy* (characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance works as opposed to permanent jobs) and *platform economy* (characterized by online sales or technology frameworks).
- g. There should be a greater emphasis on skills and lifelong learning, youth employment and women's economic empowerment to address the issues related to labour market insecurity.
- h. Benefits and gains generated in the whole ecosystem of business cycle should be equitably shared among the workers as a means of minimizing high and rising inequality in terms of income and opportunities for decent life.
- i. There should be a 360-degree approach to promote labour rights and achieve decent work in global supply chains including both suppliers and global brands and buyers in the spirit of fostering shared responsibility.

- j. There should be consolidated efforts between the host and destination countries to ensure social justice for the migrants and migrant workers.
- k. As human, environmental, economic and societal values are being considered to form the basis of pursuit of the Coalition that goes much beyond the mandate of the ILO, this Coalition on Social Justice ought to be ideally a *consultative or deliberative forum, not a norm-setting or negotiating forum*.
- l. The Coalition may offer a *platform for exchanging country experiences* on promoting decent work to cater to needs of the people at local level and then explore best practices for consideration at other country and society setting.
- m. A balance between normative aspiration and pragmatism based on national or economy-centric circumstances should influence functioning of the Coalition must be preserved.
- n. Any periodic reporting on social justice must be respectful of the culture, practices, ethos and values of societies.
- o. As a specialized agency, ILO's focus on labour rights should be strengthened. Too much focus on issues beyond labour rights such as human rights is likely to compromise its main goal of achieving decent work in the world of work.
- p. Emerging and new technologies such as AI are going to impact the job market worldwide, particularly in developing countries where there is a considerable deficit of technology and challenges in access to technology. Loss of jobs and unemployment will intensify inequality and injustice. The Coalition should seriously consider the implications of this phenomenon and make efforts to address the related challenges.
- q. While the Coalition becomes a meeting place of diverse institutions and organizations, it should contribute to efforts to promote fair and rule-based trade regime as a pathway for achieving social justice.
- r. The International Financial Institutions should be encouraged to provide finances or loans to the developing countries on flexible terms and conditions in relation to the projects on social justice— particularly, on creation of jobs, transition in jobs, development and upgradation of skill, social protection etc.
- s. The global financial system should aim at promoting equitable distribution of financial benefits to ensure human dignity and social justice, wherever possible on soft terms. Special support for the people suffering from injustice, insecurity and inequalities owing to compounded crises such as pandemic, high price of commodity,

extreme weather events, war and conflicts etc. may be built in to preserve gainful employment and advance decent work.

PART II:
BANGLADESH'S ACHIEVEMENT IN
IMPROVING LABOUR RIGHTS

BANGLADESH AND ILO

Bangladesh became member of ILO on 22 June 1972 under the guidance of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and ratified 29 ILO Conventions including 5 fundamental Conventions.

Till now Bangladesh has ratified 36 ILO Conventions including 8 fundamental Conventions .

Bangladesh has regularly served as member of ILO Governing Body and other Tripartite Committees.



LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

**Bangladesh Labour
Act, 2006, amended
in 2013 and 2018**

**Bangladesh Labour
Rules 2015
amended in 2022**

**Bangladesh EPZ
Act, 2019 and
Bangladesh EPZ
Labour Rules, 2022**

**National Plan of
Action to Eliminate
Child Labour
(2021-2025)**

**National
Occupational
Safety and Health
Policy, 2013**

**Roadmap/National
Action Plan (NAP)
on Labour Sector
Reform (2021-2026)**



WORKPLACE SAFETY



- After the 2013 Rana Plaza incident structural, fire and electrical safety of **3,780** RMG factories were assessed with assistance of Accord, Alliance and ILO. Majority of the factories completed remediation work.



- Industrial Safety Unit has been formed with the Department of Inspection for Factory and Establishment on 21 March 2022. National Occupational Health and Safety Research and Training Institute has been established.



- The National Plan of Action (NPA) on Occupational Safety And Health (OSH) adopted by the Government of Bangladesh in 2022.



- 8 of the world's Top 10 LEED (Leadership in Energy And Environmental Design) certified factories are in Bangladesh



STRENGTHENING LABOUR INSPECTION



Number of manpower of Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) was 314 in 2013 which increased by four-fold to 1,156 in April 2023.

Number of posts of labour inspectors was 131 in 2013 which increased by more than 5 times to 711 in April 2023.

The number of female inspectors has increased from only 2 in 2010 to 82 April 2023.

The budget of DIFE has been increased by about 425%.

Web-based “Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA)” has been introduced through which over 43,000 inspections have been conducted.

LIMA currently contains information of over 39,000 enterprises.

From July 2022 to April 2023 Total 4,106 inspections were carried out by DIFE.



HELPLINE CENTRE

June 2020

LABOUR HELPLINE: 16357
operational under DIFE

EPZ WORKERS HELPLINE: 16128

March 2021

Department	Number of complaints			
	Duration	Received	Disposed	Disposal rate(%)
DIFE	July, 2022- April, 2023	826	748	90.56%
BEPZA	March, 2021 April, 2023	6,599	6,577	99%

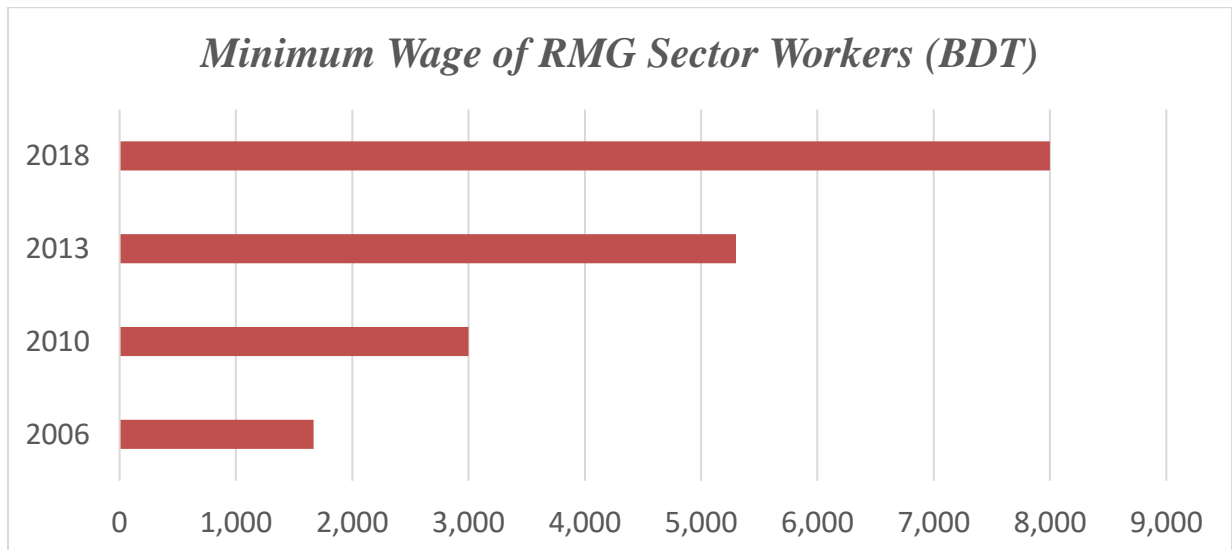


MINIMUM WAGE



**Minimum wages
declared/re-fixed for 43
sectors**

**Minimum wage for the
RMG sector workers
increased by 380%
during 2006 to 2018**



STRENGTHENING LABOUR ADJUDICATION

A labour appellate tribunal and 3 labour courts are functional in the country of which 3 labour courts have been established recently

A three-member Conciliation and Arbitration Cell established in September 2021

15 conciliators have been appointed and a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for Conciliation has been developed

A SoP for arbitration is being developed

Free legal aid service is being provided to the workers



TRADE UNION REGISTRATION



Minimum membership requirement to form a trade union has been reduced from 30% to 20% of total work force of an establishment in 2018.



Trade union registration process is fully online with pre- application service.



Success rate of trade registration against valid applications increased from 60% in 2013 to 90% in 2022.



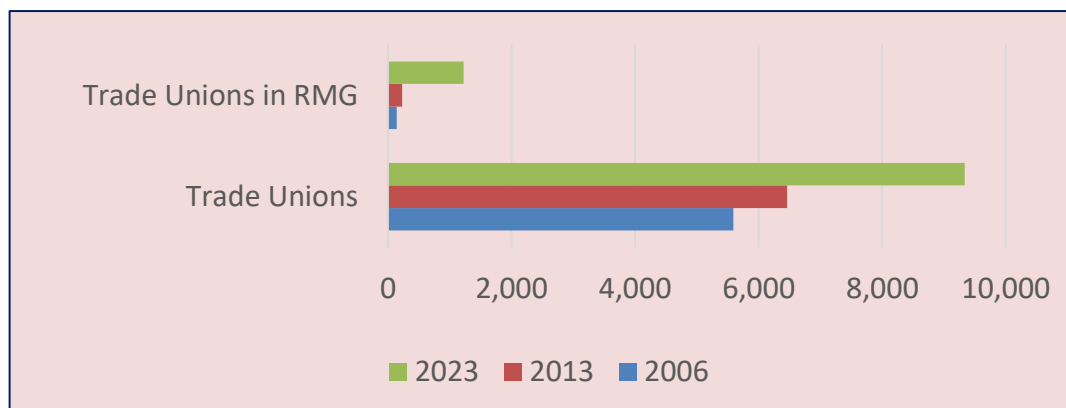
There were 5,591 trade unions in 2006 which increased to 6,459 in 2013 and to 9,334 in May 2023 covering 3.06 million workers.



Number of trade unions in RMG has increased from **144** in 2006 to **227** in 2013 to **1,223** in 2023.



Publicly accessible database on trade union registration established including all information of union registration application.





SOCIAL DIALOGUE



A 60-member National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC) with equal representation from workers, employers and government has been formed.



RMG Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC) formed with equal representation from workers, employers and government.



25,661 workers, management staff, and government officials trained on industrial relations with nearly 45% of female participants during July 2020 to 31 December, 2022.



INDUSTRIAL POLICE

- ✓ Industrial Police is working as a specialized unit of Bangladesh Police to maintain law and order in industrial area and to ensure an industry-friendly and conducive environment for production.

EMPLOYMENT INJURY SCHEME

Introducing Employment Injury Scheme has been a priority of the government and highlighted the same in 2nd Phase Action Plan of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS).

The country's first ever Employment Injury Scheme for the export-oriented garment sector workers has been launched in June 2022 on pilot basis.

The scheme is being governed by a tripartite board.

The sub-committee to the Board has already recommended the 1st batch of beneficiaries on 1 June 2023.



BANGLADESH LABOUR WELFARE FOUNDATION

The workers and their family members from formal and informal sectors are provided financial support from the Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation.

Coverage of the Fund: Financial support in the cases of death due to workplace accident, permanent disability, treatment for acute diseases, maternity and stipend for education of children.

Disbursement: As of 31 May 2023, about Taka 876 million has been provided from this fund to 18 thousand and 956 workers and their family members.

CENTRAL FUND

A 'Central Fund' has been established for the workers of export-oriented industries.

Coverage of the Fund: Compensation for death due to accidents and workplace death, medical assistance to sick workers and education scholarships for meritorious children of workers and financial support to factories during emergency.

Disbursement: Taka 824 million paid to 17,129 workers.



SUPPORT TO WORKERS DURING COVID-19



31-point directives were issued to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on affected communities including workers.



About USD 25.6 billion was allocated as a recovery package including US\$ 1 billion earmarked for workers' salaries.



23 Crisis Management Committees were formed with representatives from government departments, employers and workers.



“Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health in the Prevention and Response to Covid-19 at Work” was issued.



Telemedicine services were provided through 29 labour Welfare Centres.



Taka 90 million has been paid as unemployment allowances for three months to 9,972 workers who were unemployed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Govt is working to create a digital database of all workers in the formal and informal sectors.



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

A Gender Roadmap for DIFE has been developed for DIFE in July 2020.

Operational Strategy to prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence and Gender Discrimination in the workplace adopted.

The proportion of female labour inspectors in DIFE rose from 11% in 2013 to 21% in 2017.

DIFE also has 21 gender master trainers who provided gender sensitization training to 237 labour inspectors and other DIFE officials in 23 district offices.



ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR

Bangladesh has ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) on 22 March 2022. The ILO Convention 182 concerning worst forms of child labour was ratified earlier.

Through implementation of the government funded project “Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour from Bangladesh in 4th Phases about 190 thousand children have been withdrawn from hazardous work.

The list of 38 hazardous work has been updated with five new sectors in April 2022.

Work for conducting a Feasibility Study has been started to undertake a mega project to eliminate child labour.

50 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP OF BANGLADESH AND ILO ON PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DECENT WORK



Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP and ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa with other participants at the seminar. © ILO



Sheikh Hasina, M.P.

Hon'ble Prime Minister
Government of Bangladesh

“Effective measures should be taken to provide accommodation for women workers near their workplaces. Apart from this, effective steps should be taken to ensure their safety.”

ANNEXURE

“World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All”

14–15 June 2023, Palais des Nations

Geneva, Switzerland

Tentative Agenda

► Wednesday, 14 June 2023

Time	Session
9.45–10.20 a.m.	Opening: Addresses by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the ILO Director-General
10.20–11.30 a.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government, Employers’ representative and Workers’ representative
11.30 a.m.–1.00 p.m.	Panel: Addressing inequalities, informality and facilitating inclusion
2.00–3.20 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of States/Governments
3.20–4.40 p.m.	Panel: Fostering equal opportunities and full, freely chosen and productive employment for all through education, lifelong learning and skills development
4.40–6.40 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government

► Thursday, 15 June 2023

Time	Session
9.30–10.40 a.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government
10.40 a.m.–12.10 p.m.	Panel: Jobs and social protection for just transitions
12.10 p.m.–12.50 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government
3.00–4.30 p.m.	Panel: Trade, employment and sustainable development: Advancing human and labour rights
4.30–5.20 p.m.	Addresses by Heads of State/Government
5.20–5.30 p.m.	Closure by the ILO Director-General