

Annex 2

(Labor Rights)

Bangladesh has around 60 million workforce comprised of 40 million agricultural jobs (growing at one percent a year) and 20 million non-agricultural jobs (growing at six percent a year). Industrial jobs mainly fall under non-agricultural jobs. The Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (revised in 2013 repealing 25 different laws) specifies employment conditions, working hours, wage levels, leave policies, health and sanitary conditions, and compensation for injured workers but its implementation is still a grey area. Furthermore there is a huge informal sector employing nearly 86% of the entire labour force where these provisions are not noteworthy. Child labour also exists particularly in the sub supply chains of compliant industries and subcontracting agencies. The process of turning child labour into skilled labour forces in a systematic way engaging private sector and social partners has a long way to go. Approximately 4% of Bangladesh's work force are unionized. Labor unions remain strongest in the jute, textile, and transportation sectors. Workers Welfare Association (WWA) in the export processing zones (EPZ) do not have the same rights as the TUs have in non EPZ factories. Freedom of association, the right to join unions, expediting the registration process of trade unions (TU) and addressing the unfair labour practices (ULP) are the areas where international communities and social partners have huge concern. However the government of Bangladesh has been trying hard to address these issues in partnership with the ILO and development partners.

Key steps undertaken by the government in this regard are:

- A Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC) has been formed for the RMG Sector which will monitor worker rights, safety and all relevant RMG issues.
- Steps have been taken by the Government of Bangladesh review its legislative framework. A tripartite technical committee was formed to review the Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) 2006. Meanwhile the Government also withdrew the EPZ Labour Act from parliament for review. Amended versions of the BLA and EPZ Act have been submitted to ILO for review by the Committee of Experts.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the registration of trade unions were adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) which should bring more clarity and consistency to the union registration process.
- SOPs for Unfair Labour Practices (ULP) were adopted by the Government of Bangladesh in July 2017.
- The total number of trade unions in the RMG sector continued to increase, reaching 644 by September 2017. Some 524 new garment industry trade unions have been registered since 2013
- Progress in the remediation of RMG factories has continued under all three inspection initiatives: the Bangladesh Accord for Fire and Building Safety, Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety and the Government of Bangladesh's National Initiative. The launch of a Remediation Coordination Cell to oversee the remediation process in National Initiative factories is a major step forward.