

Media Update

7 January 2016

ILO

Press Release

Studying examples of good labour migration governance: A Pakistani government delegation visits Sri Lanka

Monday 4 January, 2016

Islamabad - Three government officials from the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and the Punjab Department of Labour and Human Resource visited Sri Lanka on 21-23 December 2015 to study their labour migration management system. The Pakistani delegation was hosted by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), the regulatory authority of foreign employment which falls under the Ministry of Foreign Employment. The Pakistani delegation was particularly interested in the Sri Lankan experiences from management information systems; pre-departure training, ethical recruitment and return & reintegration systems. The visit was supported by the ILO South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project, funded by the European Union and conducted in partnership with the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

The Pakistani delegation visited a government managed Migrant Resource Centre located in Tangalle. This centre is considered a state of the arts facility with hostel facility for women. The centre provides a five days pre-departure training course which is compulsory for low skilled workers going abroad for first time. It also offers a comprehensive 22 and 30 days skills training course for women going abroad as domestic workers. The 22 and 30 days training programme is designed at level 3 of National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) which is mandatory to seek employment as a domestic worker abroad. Given that two migrant resource centres have just been established in Pakistan (in Lahore and Islamabad) this visit was highly interesting.

The delegates also got the opportunity to study the Sri Lankan experiences of investigating and settling complaints and grievances from migrant workers. In addition to complaints from migrant workers, the system also allows individual recruitment agencies to register complaints against other agencies that are deemed conducting unscrupulous activities. The Sri Lanka model was concluded more effective, efficient and transparent and participants brought back lots of ideas for how to improve the current system in Pakistan.

The Pakistani delegation was inspired by the comprehensive Sri Lankan return and reintegration sub-policy supplemented by a time-bound implementation plan which clearly defines the role and responsibilities of all concerned stakeholders as well as the support system the government has set-up in key destination countries through comprehensive training of its labour division officials, by establishing safe rooms for women, and clear procedures for how foreign missions should handle grievances abroad.

With the technical support of ILO, the Government of Pakistan and the Provincial Government of Punjab are committed to implement some of the good practices learnt from the study visit for Pakistani workers aspiring to work abroad.

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