

# Media Update

7 July 2015

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## ILO

PRESS RELEASE

### **ILO and the Royal Kingdom of Netherlands Sign 3 year agreement on “Strengthening Labour Inspection Systems for International Labour Standards Compliance in Pakistan”**

**Islamabad 7th July 2015-** The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands have embarked on a unique partnership aimed to support the Government of Pakistan, workers and employers organizations in developing measures to revitalise the country’s Labour Inspection machinery. Such improvements are imperative to keep Pakistan’s textile sector attractive internationally, especially given the advantageous trade conditions offered to Pakistan under GSP+.

During a press briefing on the Project in Islamabad, the Netherlands Acting Ambassador Renate Pors stated “I am encouraged to see that the Pakistani authorities are conscious about what is at stake for the economy, for employment and for the rights of its citizens. The Netherlands is contributing its share through this programme. And as a friend of Pakistan, we ask the Pakistani government, both federal and provincial, to assume its responsibilities, too.”

The Federal Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development (OPHRD), Mr Sikandar Ismail Khan highlighted that “Labour inspection is one of the core functions of labour administration system and a key element for enduring the implementation of labour policies, providing feedback and allowing for readjustment of these policies as necessary.”



Responding to a question by the media persons, Mr Khan said that the in the spirit devolution of Labour subject after 18th Constitutional Amendment, the Federal Government is actively supporting all Provincial Governments in strengthening their labour administration system for ensuring well-being and economic development of the people of Pakistan. He thanked the ILO and the Government of Netherlands for partnering with the Government of Pakistan on this important initiative.

Speaking at the same event, ILO Country Director, Mr. Francesco d'Ovidio outlined the main building blocks of the project saying “this project is designed to revitalise Labour Inspection System to enhance its effectiveness, outreach and coverage in line with international labour standards and also responds to GSP Plus which the country put into operation in January 2014”.

The ILO’s partnership with the Kingdom of Netherlands in Pakistan has gained strength over the last twelve months. Notable collaborations include the 2014 round table meeting hosted by the ILO at which Mrs Ploumen, the Netherlands Minister of International Trade and Development, stressed the need for SMEs in Pakistan’s textile sector (the country’s main economic enabler after agriculture), to provide better working conditions as a prerequisite for enhanced exports to the EU. This was immediately followed by an initiative on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) under which over 100 Labour Inspectors were trained in foundational concepts. The most current collaboration between the ILO, Kingdom of Netherlands and International Finance Cooperation (IFC) includes the establishment and operationalization of the first Buyers Forum in Pakistan comprised of major international brands such as H&M, Li& Fung, V&D, Gap India, Hema and C&A. Since December 2014, three meetings have been convened and the Buyers Forum has reaffirmed its commitment to better labour and environmental practices Pakistan’s textile sector. This has been complemented by analytical work on assessing the status of compliance and existing good practices in the sector.

The targets of this cooperation are: Strengthening institutional mechanisms for effective labour inspections; enhancing national human resource capacities resources to enforce the law on Labour Inspections informed by a needs assessment and; Partnering with the private sector to promote and ensure ILS compliance at enterprise level. The Netherlands contribute a total of 128 million USD to the overall effort of the ILO to support the Government of Pakistan on compliance with ILS. The signing of a three year support program on strengthening Labour Inspection in Pakistan is a show of



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commitment to enhancing labour market governance in Pakistan through ILS compliance within the GSP plus Framework and beyond.

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