

# Media Update-2

20 September 2016

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## ILO

Press Release

### Promoting Safe Migration from Pakistan: Pakistan's Second Migrant Resource Centre Inaugurated in Lahore

**20 September:** Lahore (joint press release) – One of the most effective ways to combat common abuses of migrants such as underpayment of wages, confiscation of passports, substandard working conditions and confinement in the workplace, is to ensure that migrants are equipped with knowledge and strategies to safeguard their labour- and human rights throughout the migration cycle.

Recognizing this, the Department of Labour and Human Resource Punjab established the Migrant Resource Center (MRC) in Lahore in 2015 with the support from the EU funded “South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project” (SALM) implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the EU funded project “Silk Routes Partnership for Migration” implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. While MRCs already exists in other labour sending countries in South Asia, the center in Lahore was the second to be established in Pakistan. The MRC provides a range of support services to (potential) migrants, migrant workers, and their families including information, counseling, referral and pre-departure orientation.

The Centre was inaugurated today by the Honourable Minister for Labour and Human Resource, Punjab Mr. Raja Ashfaq Sarwar, , along with the Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Pakistan, Mr. Bernard Francois; Mr. Ottó Fábrik, Representative of the Ministry of Interior of Hungary; Ms. Tomoko Nishimoto, Assistant Director General/Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization; Ms. Ingrid Christensen,



Country Director, ILO Country Office for Pakistan and Ms. Sedef Dearing, Senior Regional Advisor, Silk Routes, ICMPD.

**Mr. Saleem Hussain, Director General, Labour Welfare, Department of labour and Human Resource Department, Government of Punjab** welcomed the participants and said in his remarks that his department is very much concerned about the protection and welfare of migrant workers and believe that *“Solution of problems of migrant workers lies in formulation of better governance of labour migration by both the labour sending and receiving countries and by providing more and more information to the migrant workers under one roof”* he also showed commitment to replicate the MRC model in other parts of the province.

In his presentation on the MRC, **Mr. Tahir Manzoor**, Senior Director, Industrial Relations Institute, L&HRD Punjab mentioned that *“from 1971 till today about 9 million Pakistanis have proceeded abroad for employment, mostly go to GCC countries. The majority of workers are low skilled workers and lack of information on safe migration, access to support mechanisms and justice add to their vulnerabilities and thus they face exploitation and abuse during recruitment and employment process”*. He emphasised that *“the main purpose of the MRC is to provide accurate and timely information on safe and legal migration, referral and counselling, as well as raising awareness on irregular migration and the related serious risks”*.

**Ms. Sedef Dearing, Senior Regional Advisor, Silk Routes, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)** mentioned in her speech *“that these MRCs are an outcome of partnership of not only EU, ILO and ICMPD but also several other countries as well, namely Bulgaria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom”*. She recalled the series of events held under Budapest Process which resulted in decision to support the establishment of MRCs and mentioned that *“providing the correct information to the right people is crucial when smugglers attempt to fill in the deficit of information. It is important that right skills are matched with the right jobs so that migrants and the countries of origin and destination make best use of these skills”*.

**Ms. Ingrid Christensen, Country Director, International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for Pakistan** congratulated the the Department of Labour and Human Resource Punjab for the successful establishment of the Migrant Resource Centre in Lahore. She said that *“migrant workers are important drivers of development not only in their county*

*of destination where they take on jobs that local workers are unable or simply do not want to do, unfortunately they face various types of exploitation and abuses at all stages of migration cycle” She emphasised that “partnership is a key, to achieve tangible and sustainable results to promote safe migration and this MRC is a good example of an effective partnership”.*

**Ms. Tomoko Nishimoto, Assistant Director General/Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization (ILO)** she said that *“The ILO is the only UN agency with a constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers. The ILO Constitution – which will be one hundred years old in 1919 – speaks to the needs of protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, they should be treated as human beings not as a commodity”.* She also said that the government should consider the ratification of international standards related to labour migration, including the two ILO Conventions Nos. 97 and 143. She stressed that *“to achieve sustainable development, it must address inequalities in all areas and must apply to all social and economic groups. A powerful means to reduce inequality, particularly affecting migrants, is through the protection of human rights and labour rights, which form the cornerstone of fairer migration policies”.*

**Mr. Ottó Fábrik, Representative of the Ministry of Interior of Hungary** expressed his great pleasure to officially launching the MRC and congratulated the department and stakeholders. Talking at the event, he said that *“people migrate in search of employment and study so that can contribute to the welfare of their families, unfortunately the well-organized human smugglers and traffickers group take advantage of this, and trap them by providing false information to the vulnerable migrants in order to mislead them and gain more profit without bothering about the future of their victims and their families”.* In concluding his speech, he said that *“the MRCs here in Lahore will be a good source of information for potential migrants to get information on safe migration and consequences of irregular migration”.*

Addressing the inaugural event, **Mr. Bernard Francois, Head of Cooperation, European Union Delegation to Pakistan** said that *“historically, Europe has been both a source and a destination for migration, and labour migration is also very much at the heart of the European Union today and while migration can benefit societies in many ways, it can also pose problems, in particular if it takes place illegally, and at the moment Europe is in the middle of an unprecedented crisis of illegal migration, which*

*constitutes a serious test of our cooperation. Illegal migration is not only a problem for the recipient country but also pose a serious threats to migrants themselves, therefore we look forward an effective partnership with the government of Pakistan to combat with this menace”. He continued by saying “We are also in favour to promote legal opportunities as our populations are aging and in the future there will be a growing number of jobs that it will be difficult to fill from within Europe. Therefore, it is in our interest to be able to draw on qualified and interested candidates from the rest of the world”. He concluded by emphasising that these MRCs will help the potential migrants to make informed decision about migration and that the wished that this initiative will be a success.*

In his closing remarks, **Mr. Raja Ashfaq Sarwar, Minister for Labour and Human Resource, Punjab** stated that “my department is very much concerned about the protection and welfare of migrants and also putting lot of efforts to increase employment opportunities in the domestic market, we are very much concerned about our youth and I expect that MRC will raise awareness among them about safe migration. He also mentioned that “alone we cannot do anything, we need to establish a strong coordination among all provinces and with the federal ministry, ratification of international conventions and research is a key to improve migration governance”. He thanked the EU, ILO and ICMPD for their support to set up this MRC. He together with the speakers of the event unveiled the inaugural plaque of the MRC.

### **For further information please contact:**

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# United Nations

## Secretary-General Message

### THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

**21 September 2016**

Every year on the International Day of Peace, the United Nations calls on warring parties to lay down their arms and observe a 24-hour global ceasefire. The symbolism of a day without fighting is a crucial reminder that conflict can and must come to an end.

But peace is about much more than putting weapons aside. It is about building a global society in which people live free from poverty and share the benefits of prosperity. It is about growing together and supporting each other as a universal family.

The theme of this year's Peace Day highlights the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – the SDGs – as Building Blocks for Peace. Conflict often starts when people compete over limited resources. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our blueprint to prevent such conflicts from arising by making sure no one is left behind.

When the 193 Member States of the United Nations unanimously adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals last September, their message was clear.

Sustainable development is essential for lasting peace, and both depend on respect for human rights. We need to protect our planet. And only by working together can we make our common home safe for future generations.

All of us can be sustainable development advocates and spread the word about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. And we can all hold our governments to account for keeping their pledge to the future.



Let us all work together to help all human beings achieve dignity and equality; to build a greener planet; and to make sure no one is left behind.

On this International Day of Peace, express your commitment to peace by becoming a champion of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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