

Media Update

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PRESS RELEASE

ILO and Pakistan Workers' Federation join hands for protection of the rights of domestic workers

Discussions consider the ratification of ILO's Domestic Workers' Convention and recognise the many benefits this would bring.

Quetta, Baluchistan (ILO News) – Ratification of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention would confirm the labour rights of Pakistan's 8.5 million domestic workers and recognize them as workers and essential service providers, participants at a consultative workshop heard today.

Supported by ILO, the consultation was organized by the Pakistan Workers' Federation (PWF) in Quetta, Baluchistan. Representatives of Government departments, at both federal and provincial levels, met along with employers' and workers' organizations, to discuss ways to promote the formalization of domestic workers and advocate for ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

This step will extend social security benefits and services to domestic workers and improve their working conditions across the country.

"ILO is thankful to the PWF for their commitment to making this dialogue process a reality and carving a way forward for making Decent Work a reality for all domestic workers in Pakistan", said Geir Tonstol, Country Director of ILO Pakistan. "There is no social justice without decent work for domestic worker".

“Takeaways from this discussion will serve as important input to both legislative and policy reforms that will ultimately support the ratification of Convention No. 189 by Pakistan and increase the protection of domestic workers across the country,” he added.

“The vast majority of domestic workers in Balochistan are excluded from labour protection and are vulnerable to exploitation by employers, intermediaries and sometimes even their own families”, said Zahoor Awan, Chairman Steering Committee PWF and Worker Member of the ILO Governing Body.

He further said it is high time that all the stakeholders continue to come together and take comprehensive measures to protect and enhance the welfare of domestic workers, aligning with the ongoing global efforts to promote fair and just labour practices.

The informal economy in Pakistan is characterised by low levels of education and skills, a lack of capital resources, lower incomes, and a high degree of segregation. Domestic workers are also at risk of exploitation due to their high reliance on intermediaries to find domestic work opportunities in the cities.

According to ILO estimates, there are at least 8.5 million domestic workers in Pakistan, the vast majority of whom are women and young girls. Although domestic work is one of the biggest sources of employment in the informal economy, it is unregistered and excluded from the scope of labour legislation as it takes place in private households.

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