

Media Update

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ILO

PRESS RELEASE

Sindh advances Labour Law Reform with ILO support

KARACHI, Pakistan (ILO News) – The Government of Sindh is leading efforts to consolidate and simplify labour laws and ensure they comply with International Labour Standards through social dialogue. Geir Tonstol, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Director for Pakistan met with Syed Murad Ali Shah, the Chief Minister of Sindh, on Friday, 31 May 2024 to update on progress.

The ILO responded to the request for technical assistance from the Government of Sindh province in drafting a Labour Code that would help to consolidate, simplify and rationalize existing labour laws, and comply with International Labour Standards through social dialogue.

Currently, 21 labour laws address different aspects of labour relations in Sindh, creating difficulties in understanding the legal framework on labour relations and its implementation for employers, workers and other stakeholders.

The Government of Sindh believes that this initiative will facilitate the understanding and implementation of the labour legislation for all parties involved. It is expected to improve the country's image in the global market, make the legal framework more transparent and clearer for foreign partners and investors, enhance enforcement, broaden coverage and strengthen the protection of workers.

Following the request of the Government of Sindh province, the ILO helped bringing all existing labour laws into a single, modern and comprehensive Labour Code that aligns with Pakistan's international obligations.

This effort was significantly advanced in Sindh on 27-31 May 2024, through the European Union-funded International Labour and Environment Standards in Small and Medium Enterprises project. During this period, the draft Labour Code was presented by the Department of Labour and Human Resource and the ILO to social partners and discussed with representatives of employers and workers.

The Chief Minister of Sindh met with Geir Tostol to discuss progress on the matter. Both the Chief Minister and Mr Tostol highlighted the strategic importance and relevance of the Labour Code as a way to provide stronger regulatory stability to Sindh's business environment and create a good climate for investments, extending fundamental labour rights to all workers, including in the informal sector, strengthening the defence of fundamental principles at work and enhancing Pakistan's ability to comply with the international obligations of the country, including GSP+ commitments.

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IOM

PRESS RELEASE

IOM and NCHR Urge Direct Investment to Address Root Causes of Irregular Migration in New Report

IOM Chief of Mission, NCHR Chairperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark representative, and other stakeholders pose for a photo with the reports.

Islamabad, 21 May — Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched a report titled "Perilous Journeys: Unravelling Irregular Migration from Pakistan."

The report examines the landscape of irregular migration originating from Pakistan, highlighting the distinction between human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and shedding light on the drivers of migration, gaps in policy and legislation, and associated human rights abuses. According to the report, while Pakistan was not among Europe's top ten countries for migration in 2022, it became the fifth most prominent by mid-2023, with arrivals reaching 8,778 in December. Currently, a significant portion of Pakistan's population, particularly in urban areas, expresses a desire to leave the country.

The report identifies economic opportunity as the primary driver of migration from Pakistan, with factors such as job availability, access to education, and social networks influencing destination choices.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, the Chief Guest at the event, praised the report, noting that such studies are crucial for guiding efforts to curb irregular migration, a significant global issue. He emphasized that it is primarily the state's responsibility to provide an environment where citizens can envision their future in the country. However, he added that creating this environment requires the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.

Speaking at the launch, NCHR Chairperson Rabia Javeri Agha noted the complexity of deterring irregular migration, stressing the importance of addressing its root causes. "By addressing the underlying factors driving

migration and ensuring the protection of migrants' rights, we can work towards creating a more secure and prosperous future for individuals and communities affected by irregular migration," she said.

IOM Chief of Mission, Mio Sato, remarked, "This report is not merely a diagnosis; it offers a roadmap for change. The recommendations outlined provide a blueprint for action, from establishing dedicated awareness units to fostering labor migration channels. We must work together – government, civil society, and international partners – to address the root causes of irregular migration and ensure the protection of those most vulnerable."

The report provides comprehensive operational and policy recommendations to address irregular migration, offering clear guidance on legal responsibilities. It calls for a multifaceted approach involving collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and international stakeholders to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration.

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