

## **ILO/ACTRAV/SOLIDARITY CENTRE WORKSHOP ON PROMOTING A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO LABOUR MIGRATION IN ORIGIN AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES**

**Kuwait, 30 June- 1 July, 2010**

### **Concept Note**

#### **Background**

As a follow-up to the ILO Resolution on a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in a Global Economy adopted by the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) held in 2004, the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO/ACTRAV) has been implementing a programme of activities for protecting and promoting the rights of migrant workers. These activities are in support of the ILO Action Plan for Migrant Workers contained in the same Resolution. The ILO/ACTRAV programme focuses on the wider ratification and implementation of the two ILO migrant worker Conventions (Migration for Employment, 1949 (No.97) and Migrant Workers (Supplementary provisions), 1975 (No.143)), advocacy for the implementation of principles and guidelines of the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, and enhanced cooperation between trade unions in both origin and destination countries.

To meet these objectives and develop an effective trade union response, the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities has been active in bringing together representatives of trade unions from both countries of origin and countries of destination of migrant workers and encouraging their cooperation in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. The efforts have been supported by the ILO International Migration Programme and have created linkages and synergies with related projects and programmes in the regions.

#### **The ILO model trade union cooperation agreement**

On 7 May 2009, three separate bilateral cooperation agreements on the protection of the rights of migrant workers were signed in Colombo (Sri Lanka). The signatories were on the one hand, leaders of three national trade union centres in Sri Lanka and, on the other, their counterparts in Bahrain, Jordan, and Kuwait. The signature of the agreements was the first tangible result of an initiative launched by the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities to develop, with the international trade union movement, a model trade union agreement on migrant workers' rights.

The ACTRAV model trade union agreement is aimed at promoting a coherent and rights-based policy framework for activities by trade union organisations in dealing with issues related to the protection and organizing of migrant workers. It has since been used in bilateral agreements in Asia and Africa and was adopted for promotion at a recent meeting of the ITUC Americas regional

organisation (TUCA). The model agreement is not an end in itself and forms part of an integrated policy – which is developed in the ACTRAV trade union manual “In Search of Decent Workers – Migrant Workers’ Rights” – aimed at assisting trade union organisations in carrying out activities based on the ILO instruments, and resolutions by the international trade union movement.

### **Follow-up to visit in Bahrain and Kuwait**

Following a visit in December last year to Bahrain and Kuwait (as part of a mission to implement the cooperation agreement with Sri Lankan trade union leaders) there was an interest in the part of workers’ organisations in those countries to host an event with the participation of trade union organisations from countries of origin of migrant workers and those in the countries of destination in the Gulf.

### **The proposed meeting**

This would be the first ever such meeting in a Gulf country.

The meeting would be hosted by the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) and will be sponsored by the ILO (ACTRAV and MIGRANT) and jointly organized with support from the Solidarity Centre. Invitations will be sent to trade unions in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines and their counterparts from workers’ organisations in Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and possibly Qatar. The ITUC and ITUC-AP will be invited to participate.

The proposed dates for the meeting are 30 June to 1st of July 2010.

#### **Purpose of the Meeting**

The meeting in Kuwait, will aim at:

- Facilitating a discussion between trade unions from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines and their counterparts from workers’ organisations in Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and possibly Qatar on the situation of migrant workers and identify areas of cooperation based on the ILO/ACTRAV model agreement;
- Helping trade unionists from both countries of origin and destination to familiarize themselves with the purpose, scope and potential benefits of ILO instruments on migrant workers, including ILO Conventions 97 and 143, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, the ACTRAV manual “In search of Decent Work” and the ACTRAV model trade union agreement.
- Identifying good practices and existing obstacles related to trade union cooperation as well as areas where additional capacity building activities in Asia and in the Arab states would be required to ensure improved partnership; and
- Considering possible follow-up activities including the signing of bilateral trade union cooperation agreements based on the experience and information gained during the meeting.