

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Ministry of Labour and Employment  
Planning Cell (Labour-1)

**Subject:** Annual Review Under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Country Baseline Update –The Effective Abolition of Child Labour (**August 2012**).

**Question 1:** What are the prospects for ratification of Convention No. 138?

- The existence of child labour in Bangladesh is closely linked to poverty. Unless the poverty situation of the country is improved at a satisfactory level it is very difficult to abolish child labour. This also depends largely on the achievement of high and stable growth of the country's economy for which the country is striving for long. However, with all its limited resources the Government of Bangladesh has been implementing programmes/projects on regular basis for abolition of child labour. The development partners have also come with funds to implement programmes on child labour. With all these efforts there has been remarkable success. At present there is no child labour in Readymade Garments (RMG) sector. Children are engaged mainly in informal sectors. It is expected that the volume of child labour in the country will be reduced to a considerable level if the present trend of promotional activities and participation of the social partners continue. Child labour issues have been incorporated in all major national development projects and plans (like Poverty Reduction Strategy-PRS, national plan of action for education and reflection in annual budget etc.). The country has gradually been increasing coverage of social safety net programmes for its citizens which directly or indirectly affect abolition of child labour.
  
- The most significant challenge is to strengthen the institutional capacity and to get required resources to combat child labour. There are 157 Inspectors in the Department of Inspection for Factories & Establishment under the Ministry of Labour & Employment. They are responsible to enforce laws against Child Labour as part of their duties. The number of inspectors are not sufficient to address the child labour issues. Very recently the Government has taken measures to strengthen inspection machineries in Bangladesh by increasing number of inspectors. The Parliamentary standing committee of the Ministry of Labour and Employment is working for restructuring and strengthening of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE). The restructuring and strengthening process includes establishment of district level offices all over the country.

In the process of restructuring and strengthening of this department, technical assistance is needed.

- Considering the level of socio-economic development of Bangladesh, particularly the limitations in terms of manpower and resource constraints of the implementation authorities to address the large informal sector where children are engaged, it would take more time for Bangladesh to ratify Convention No. 138 and effectively monitor proper implementation. Bangladesh requires technical support for improvement of socio-economic conditions in addition to technical assistance for undertaking programmes on abolition of child labour.

**Question 2:** What have been the changes in law and practice in your country as regards the effective abolition of child labour? (policy initiatives, legislative documents, labour inspection/monitoring, judicial decisions, other related practice)

- Bangladesh has formulated “National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010” in March, 2010.
- The Government has finalized National Plan of Action (NPA) for eliminating child labour.
- Adoption of a list of hazardous works is at final stage. Once the list is finalized, the number of children engaged in hazardous work would significantly decrease.
- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has drafted “Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy”. This will obviously help to protect the rights of domestic workers as well as child domestic workers from the worst forms of child labour. This policy will be adopted in due course of time.
- The Ministry Social Welfare has drafted “Children Act 2010” where the age of a child has been proposed to be 18 years.
- National Education Policy, 2010 formulated by the Ministry of Education, which aims to ensure compulsory and free primary education for every child up to grade eight (average age 14 years).
- A standing committee titled “Central Committee on Implementation and Monitoring of National Education Policy 2010” (CCIMNEP) headed by the Hon’ble Education Minister has been constituted to coordinate among various functionaries and actions related with implementation of the new education policy. This committee has already developed plan of actions needed for proper implementation of the NEP.

- The process of implementation of the core NEP goals relating to primary and non-formal education began soon after the National Education Policy 2010 was adopted. In January 2011 a committee headed by the Primary and Mass Education Secretary was formed with specific tasks to draw up necessary scheme(s) with required action plan, financial implications and methodologies to be adopted for implementation of the policy targets relating to primary and non-formal education enumerated in the document. This committee has submitted its recommendations which are currently under consideration of the CCIMNEP.
- In the meantime, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has already accomplished the following short term targets in line with the plan of actions endorsed by the CCIMNEP: (a) 100% enrolment at primary level; (b) Primary Completion Examination at the end of grade V; (c) One year pre-primary education for 5 year plus children at all government primary schools; (d) Distribution of free books among all primary students; and (e) Introduction of lottery for enrolment in primary schools at grade-I level.
- Besides, necessary steps are underway to implement the following decisions of the CCIMNEP: (a) Mid-day meal for primary students; (b) Introduction of information technology at all levels of primary education; (c) Use of computers as a means of education delivery at primary level; (d) Curbing drop-out rate; (e) Decentralization of management authority to local levels involving community members in all spheres of education delivery; (f) Reforming curricula and improving teaching quality; and (g) Developing appropriate code of conduct for primary teachers with a view to establishing student-friendly environment at schools.
- Bangladesh has ratified the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution in July 2002. In line with the provisions of this Convention the The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) has enacted a new law on human trafficking namely 'Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act-2012'.
- Following the National Plan of Action, 2008 to combat child trafficking the Ministry of Home Affairs has adopted a National Plan of Action 2012-2014 to continue combat human trafficking in Bangladesh.
- RRRI (Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Integration) Task Force has been formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. During the reporting period, 02 bilateral Task Force meetings were held between the Govt's of Bangladesh and West Bengal of India to combat human trafficking specially trafficked and recovered children of both sides. Anti Human Trafficking database cell has been established at MoHA.

- Under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, led by the Department of Women Affairs, an Alliance to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children (ACTWC) has been formed consisting of Government, international NGO and NGO bodies, prime initiators and activists to ensure safe migration and combat trafficking. The alliance is to address and cover social aspects of trafficking such as information dissemination, awareness raising, training, and rehabilitation and provide referral services for victims of trafficking.
- The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) has formed an inter ministerial/inter-agency Vigilance Task Force (VTF) in July 2010 to monitor the migration process, ensure the accountability and transparency of recruiting agencies and check irregular practices in labour migration. The VTF comprises of the representatives of relevant ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Special Branch of Bangladesh Police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) and Coast Guards Bangladesh. It also includes two members from the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA).
- The Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) has been working as a pioneer human rights organization in Bangladesh in addressing the challenges of trafficking especially in women and children. The organization has also been working to provide legal assistance to ensure rights of women and children by delivering legal aid, psychosocial support, shelter support, rescue, repatriation, research on various issues regarding women and children, capacity building of relevant stakeholders and advocacy for reform/amendment/enactment of existing laws and policies. The BNWLA has been playing an important role within the Go-NGO National Coordination Committee of Combating Human Trafficking.

**Question 3:** What have been the efforts made to promote the effective abolition of child labour in your country? (you may separately mention activities related to research, compilation of information/data, training activities, public awareness-raising and other related action)

- Bangladesh has ratified ILO convention 182 (the worst forms of child labour).
- The Government has planned to establish Child Labour Welfare Council (CLWC) at National/Divisional/District levels to coordinate all

promotional activities carried out in the country by government organizations, non government organizations as well international organizations.

- The National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010 has the objective of abolishing hazardous child labor from the country by 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goal.
- Implementing an action programme namely "Enhancing the Capacity of the Child Labour Unit (CLU) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment". The CLU will serve as the secretariat to deal with all child labour related issues. The CLU will compile and disseminate child labour data collected by different ministries/ departments/ organizations. The CLU has developed Child Labour Monitoring Information System (CLMIS) which will be available through CLU website ([www.clu-mole.gov](http://www.clu-mole.gov)). The CLMIS and the CLU website has been launched on 29 June 2011.
- The MOLE has initiated process to place the Child Labour Unit of MOLE in the regular budget of the government.
- In July 2010, the MOLE has started implementation of a 3rd phase of the project "Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour in Bangladesh" targeting to withdraw 50,000 children through non-formal education and skill development training. The project is being funded by the Government through Annual Development Programme (ADP) amounting about US \$9.00 million for a period of three-year.
- With the assistance of ILO, implementation of the "Urban Informal Economy (UIE) Programme of the Project of Support to the Time Bound Programme towards the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Bangladesh" has been completed in December, 2011. The implementation period of the project was 2007-2011.
- Workshops/Seminars on different issues of "Child Labour Elimination" have been organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in collaboration with other social partners.

- The members of taskforce/monitoring team inspect the factory of RMG sector, Fish and Shrimp Sector regularly for enforcing labour law 2006 to accelerate the effective abolition of child labour.
- For the shrimp sector Government has formed 3 special inspection teams in Khulna division and 2 special inspection teams in Chittagong division. The inspection teams, during inspections, emphasize application of Labour Act and protection of labour rights and labour welfare.
- The Government has Poverty Reduction Strategy-PRS and Sixth Five Year Plan which indirectly help eliminating child labour. In line with these strategy or plan different Ministries/Departments implement various types of development project/ programmes for the wellbeing of child labour through reducing discrimination, economic empowerment, livelihood improvement.
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform (TVET) project: The TVETP is funded by the European Commission for a period of five years (2008–2012). The project aims to assist Bangladesh in reducing poverty through reforms of technical and vocational education and training policies and systems so that more people can acquire employable skills and thus generate income through wage-earning jobs or self-employment. The rationale for the project stems from the national poverty reduction strategy. The project is intended to contribute to the improvement of productivity in industry and services through better responding to their skills needs; to ensure rapid formation of the national human capital and improved employability of vocational education and training graduates; to enhance labour market participation, social inclusion and empowerment of disadvantaged groups—low literate youth, child labourers, women, and rural communities. The project objectives expected to be achieved through: (i) TVET policy, management and systems; (ii) Quality and relevance of TVET; (iii) Management of TVET institutions and teacher training; (iv) Workplace skills development; and (v) Access to TVET by underprivileged groups including working children.
- The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has adopted National Plan of Action (NPA II, 2003-2015) for Education For All (EFA) to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and identifies Quality Education (particularly in primary, secondary and vocational levels with strong emphasis on girls' education). It has emphasized the critical importance of education and learning for empowering people with knowledge and skills as key elements of human development and poverty reduction. Commensurate with PRS framework and EFA priorities, National Plan of

Action (NPA II, 2003-2015) gives pre-eminence to improving the quality of education, gender equity for both girls and boys, making education accessible, inclusive and provided for all. NPA II has set targets on enrolment, dropout, completion, and literacy rate for achievement of EFA goals by 2015. It proposes programmes for specific groups covering pre-school, and school age children, adolescents, young adults, adults, literacy and NFE leading to lifelong learning. It emphasizes the high value of livelihood skills as part of literacy and NFE to make the learning meaningful and ensure learners have access to wage or self-employment and micro-finance as needed to improve the quality of their lives.

- **Primary Education Development Programme-II:** PEDP-II officially ends in 2009 but in a transitional period. Built upon the lessons from General Education Project (GEP) 1990–95 and the PEDP-I ended in 2004, PEDP-II is a six-year project from 2004 to 2009. There are 11 development partners (DP) involved in PEDP-II, led by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and including the Government of Bangladesh. The other partners include the World Bank, CIDA, DFID, EC, IDA, Norway, The Netherlands, UNICEF/Australia, and JICA. There are five components in the PEDP-II structure. Of them, the fourth one is for improving and supporting equitable access to quality schooling with some special provisions for promoting equal access of indigenous and children with special needs. The fifth component is about management and monitoring. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the programme has recently been instituted.
- **The Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) project:** The ROSC aims to address children in Bangladesh who do not have access to formal education mainly due to poverty. The project is co-financed by the GoB, the World Bank, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is responsible for the project. Under this project a total of 253 working children in Dhaka have been provided with vocational training in different trades during last three years.
- **Female Secondary School Assistance Project-II:** The Second Female Secondary School Assistance Project, funded by the World Bank, aims to improve the quality of, and girls' access to, secondary education in rural areas of Bangladesh.
- **Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC):** Basic Education for the Hard-To-Reach Urban Working

Children (BEHTRUWC) Project, 2nd Phase, a USD 20 Million project, has been planned to achieve quality life-skills based basic education, livelihood education, and advocacy for improved environment for working children in six divisional cities in Bangladesh over a period of five years. The project targets 200,000 working children of ages between 10-14 years for basic education through establishing 8,000 learning centres (LC) for a period of 40 months each and targets 20,000 children of age 13+ for livelihood education. Besides, activities is also planned to advocate for and build the capacity of the families of the children and stakeholders of the project. Under this project, 146,942 working children of ages between 10 and 14 years have already been provided with basic education against targeted number of 166,150. A sizable segment of them, namely 31,089 in number, have been enrolled at primary schools. In addition, livelihood skills training has been imparted to 3,402 children against targeted number of 12,630 children of 13 year plus age. This programme utilises 6,646 learning centres for these purposes.

- **Protection of Children at Risk (PCAR) Project:** A follow-on project of the former ARISE (Appropriate Resources for Improvement of Children’s Environment) under the MoSW supported by UNICEF, the PCAR targets the children without parental care and living in streets in 6 Divisional Cities Bangladesh. It also implements national level activities for Policy and information management system on child protection, institutional capacity development on professional social work and alternative care system and pilot implementation of child protection system in urban and rural areas.
- **Empowerment & Protection of Children (EPC) Project:** Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) through NGOs. This project is targeting the orphans and otherwise marginalized children – such as, street children, drug users, victims of sex exploitation, acid survivors, and disaster affected children and adolescent boys and girls (Kishori Avizan).
- **Community Based Working Child Protection Project (CBWCP):** This project is being executed by MoHA. The project has been initiated to combat human trafficking in Bangladesh by enhancing preventive and protective measures, improving victim care and strengthening the GOB’s capacity to prosecute traffickers and trafficking related crimes.
- **Actions for Combating Trafficking-in-Persons (ACT):** Funded by USAID through IOM, this program has been initiated as an effort to assist the GOB to combat human trafficking in Bangladesh through the prevention of trafficking-in-persons, enhancing the protection of the victims and improving victim care, and strengthening the GOB’s capacity



to prosecute traffickers and trafficking related crimes to help ensure that the rule of law and human security are improved.

- The border police and law enforcement personnel, including the female personnel, are getting training to deal with trafficking.
- The employers organization actively advocates against child labor in all its activities and public relations events.
- Ongoing awareness campaign against hazardous child labour by the government, private sector, NGOs, and particularly by the media.
- The programmes targeting children or child labour receive both cash and in-kind support from the Government. The contribution of the Government in the social safety net showed gradual increase representing around 2.76 percent of GDP in recent years. The social sectors programmes are indirectly contributing elimination of child labour. The areas of support include: Children in the Urban Informal Economy, Street Children, Stipend for Primary students, School Feeding, Dropout Students, Stipend for Female Students, Stipend for Poor boys, Maternal health voucher scheme, Rural Employment, Community Nutrition Programme, Poor lactating mother, Students for Government and Non-Government Orphanages, Stipend and grants for disable students, Cash/Food for Work, Housing Support, VGD, VGF, TR, Food Assistance in Hill tracks, Employment Generation for Hard-core Poor in SIDR Area, Micro-Credit for Women Self-Employment, Micro-Credit for Self-Employment of Youth, Micro-Credit in Social Sector Services, Welfare of Acid Burt and Disables, Garments Workers Training and Support, Small and Poultry Farming, Small Entrepreneurship, Housing for Homeless, Agro-based industries. For expanded implementation of these programmes technical assistance may play a vital role.

**Question 4:** Can you please indicate any initiatives resulting in successful examples or good practice in promoting the effective abolition of child labour?

- A national consultation workshop in determining the list of hazardous works was held in August, 2010 in an attempt to finalize the list of hazardous works, as required by the Conventions No. 182, ratified in March 2001. Once this list is finalized, the number of children engaged in hazardous work would significantly decrease through the process of vigorous inspection and enforcement of law in the workplace.
- In the past. BEF actively supported the ILO to implement its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) during the period

of 1995-2005, which successfully eliminated child labor in the Ready Made Garments sector of Bangladesh.

**Question 5:** Can you please indicate whether any particular attention has been paid to specific groups of population, workers or sectors of activity in the efforts to promote effective abolition of child labour?

Particular emphasis has been paid to the RMG and fish processing sectors. While under the ILO-IPEC project priority has been given to withdraw and mainstream the children engaged in hazardous works. “Appropriate legislative provisions would be framed in the light of the Child Labour Elimination Policy, 2010 for abolition of child labour in hazardous jobs.”

**Question 6:** What are the challenges and difficulties faced in the effective abolition of child labour?

Poverty and unemployment of adults are the major challenges. The centralized monitoring and implementation efforts are inadequate to reach the informal sector where child labour is prevalent. “The informal sector is very wide and in disguise. It is difficult to adopt action plan for such sector.”

**Question 7:** What are the technical cooperation needs in your country to promote the effective abolition of child labour?

- In addition to the ongoing technical cooperation in abolishing child labour on Urban Informal Economy, more assistance is required to address this issue among the street children, and in semi-urban and rural economy. However, since poverty has been the main challenge for effective abolition of child labour, technical assistance from overall socio-economic development of the country is very crucial. Unless the socio-economic conditions of the vast population of the country can be improved at a satisfactory level the goal of effective abolition of child labour will remain unachieved.

**Question 8:** Please provide any other information or documentation you may deem necessary.

- Bangladesh may be assisted with the good practices or modern concepts of programmes for effective abolition of child labour.

**Question 9:** Please indicate the name of employers' organizations and workers' organization to which a copy of this updated information has been sent? (please attach the responses and comments of the employers' and workers' organizations to the above questions, if you have received them)

- (a) The Bangladesh Employers' Federation, and
- (b) National Co-ordination Committee of Workers' Education (NCCWE).

The observation received from the Bangladesh Employers' Federation is attached herewith.

**Question 10:** You may wish to add your comments on the observations made by the employers' and workers' organizations.

- The observations of the BEF are included in the report.