



শ্রম ও কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়

WORKSHOP ON PROGRESS REVIEW OF NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR



Venue: Hotel Westin, Dhaka
Date: 05 December 2022

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AGENDA

- Welcome, introduction and objective of the workshop
- Speeches by guests
- Session 1:
 - Presentation of NPA
 - Discussions
- Session 2:
 - Identifying key responsibilities and progress, gaps and challenges by each ministry and other stakeholders
 - Plenaries/ presentation of outcome of group exercise
- Open discussions
- Vote of thanks and closing

Background

A Workshop on the Progress review of the National Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labour was held on 5th December 2022, at the Westin Dhaka Hotel as a follow-up to the 5th Global Conference against child labour held in Durban, South Africa. Participants from over 15 ministries and organizations attended the program. They participated in presentations, group work exercises, and discussions.

According to a global report published on June 2021 by ILO and UNICEF states that Globally 160 million children are engaged in child labour, Child labour has increased during the last four years, and in Bangladesh, 6.8% of children from 5 to 17 years are engaged in child labour (MICS, 2019). Also, the report states children who engage in child labour and/or hazardous work can become victims of mental and physical harm.

The Government of Bangladesh has pledged to eliminate child labour in the country and adopted policies and laws (e.g. Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010; Labour Law 2006, amended 2018, etc.) to prevent child labour. In 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and the Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishment (DIFE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF to eliminate child labour in the country through programming, capacity building, and policy reforms.

Bangladesh has also adopted a National Plan of Action (NPA) to end child labour from 2021 to 2025.

Objectives of the workshop

The objectives of the workshop are as follows:

1. Review the progress of the NPA and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the concerned ministries and focal point points on the NPA implementation.
2. Enhance coordination among stakeholders and identify effective strategies to accelerate the results towards achieving the national goal to end child labour by 2025 and the SDG target.

Participants of the event

There were participants from ministries, NGOs, INGOs and private organisations.

Mr Md. Towfiqul Arif, Additional Secretary, MoLE (Labour Wing), **Mst. Hazera Khatun**, Joint Secretary (Labour), MoLE, **Julia Jasmine**, Joint Inspector, DIFE, **Abu Asif Mahmud**, DoL, **Advocate Salma Ali**, Chairperson, BNWLA, **Kamrul Anam**, Secretary, Bangladesh Labour Foundation, **A. K. M. Masud Ali**, Executive Director, INCIDIN Bangladesh, UNICEF Child Protection Team including **Ms Natalie McCauley**, Chief of Child Protection, **Ms Elisa Calpona**, Child Protection Manager and lead for VACW and HP prevention program, **Ms Fatema Khyrunnahar**, Child Protection Officer, **Md. Raihanul Haque**, Child Protection Officer and 100 participants from 14 ministries, NGOs, INGOs and private sectors were present at the workshop.

Welcoming Remarks by

Mst. Hazera Khatun

Joint Secretary (Labour)

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)



Image 02: Welcoming remarks were carried out by Mst. Hazera Khatun.

Welcoming remarks were carried out by Mst. Hazera Khatun, Joint Secretary (Labour), MoLE. In her speech, she stated that Bangladesh had made progress during the last few decades.

He also emphasized that Labour law has been amended, and various projects have been undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh to work towards the elimination of child labour.

In her speech, Ms Hazera mentioned that despite all this progress, in Bangladesh still, 6.8% of children from 5 to 17 years are engaged in child labour, whereas 20.2% of 15-17 years are engaged in hazardous child labour in Bangladesh.

Ms. Natalie McCauley

Chief of Child Protection Section

UNICEF Bangladesh



Image 03: Ms Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF reminded only two years left to fulfil the target.

Ms Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection at UNICEF, greeted everyone and gave thanks to the Government of Bangladesh for its firm commitment to eliminate child labour and endorsed National Plan to realise its commitments, and she reiterated.

She also said that there are only 2 years left to fulfil the target of eliminating child labour. She also states that not all forms of child labour are specific. Ms Natalie McCauley added during covid-19 world has seen an increase in child labour. She urged that the relevant parties need to do more; much more ministry involvement is needed to solve this problem. She emphasised that “we need to strengthen the child protection system up to the village level with a more social workers.

Furthermore, the Chief of Child Protection at UNICEF highlighted the importance of birth registration and mentioned that more than 10 million adolescents are still unregistered in Bangladesh. She concluded her speech with the hope of some plan regarding eliminating child labour.

SESSION-01: PRESENTATION OF A. K. M. MASUD ALI ON THE PROGRESS OF NPA TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR



Image 04: A. K. M. Masud Ali Executive Director, ICIDIN Bangladesh.

At the start of this session A. K. M. Masud Ali Executive Director, ICIDIN Bangladesh, presented a presentation of the National Plan of Action (NPA). Through the presentation, insight into the NPA was highlighted. The presentations also include the role of different ministries in achieving the NPA objectives.

Mr Masud also hailed the day as very special and said that though 2025 is not very far away, Bangladesh had made noteworthy progress, and relevant parties must not lose hope in this battle for the elimination of child labour. Even if the target is not achieved by 2025, it won't be the end.

In his presentation, Mr Masud said that in the national plan of action to eliminate child labour (2021-2025) strategy approaches have been promoted. One is a sector-based strategy, under which actions can be planned to target a specific sector in which child labour is identified, such as; the Domestic Work Sector or Agricultural Sector etc. On the other hand, the second area-based approach will allow actions to be planned for a specific geographical location, such as; Upazilas.

He also mentioned that there are five objectives, those are - Reducing vulnerability to child labour, withdrawing children from hazardous and worst forms of child labour, increasing capacity to protect children at the workplace, Partnership, and multi-sectoral engagement, and Monitoring and evaluation of NPA implementation.

Mr. Masud assured the participants that the plan of action is implementable. He also says that the previous program regarding the elimination of child labour ran from 2012 to 2016. And it helped to create a national-level structure.

Furthermore, he pointed out that a few plans of action which are known as additional SDG plans of action, are yet to receive funding.

Guest Speech

Z.M. Kamrul Anam, Director General, Bangladesh Labour Foundation



Image 05: Z.M. Kamrul Anam, Director General, Bangladesh Labour Foundation.

Z.M. Kamrul Anam, Director General of Bangladesh Labour Foundation, highlighted in his speech that the achievements regarding child labour elimination is not done in a day. He also stated that to make a national plan of action a reality, everyone's involvement is necessary. A regular meeting is needed to evaluate the progress. Regarding funds, he expressed that, the labour ministry should monitor the fund.

He also mentioned a crucial point that personnel from the ministry have frequent transfers while the project runs, which delays the whole process. He proposed a special wing to be established so that the program can be completed.



Image 06: Advocate Salma Ali said that people’s mindsets need to change towards child labour.

In her speech, Advocate Salma Ali said that people’s mindsets need to change towards child labour and emphasised the implementation of laws and policies to eliminate child labour. Salma Ali also stated that there was a gap regarding the work of NPA implementation in the last 3 to 4 years.

Ms Julia Jasmine, Joint Inspector, DIFE

Julia Jasmine, Joint Inspector, DIFE stated that the government took various steps to implement NPA. DIFE also plays several roles. Such as, the body does a special inspection to find out about child labour, provides training to personnel for capacity building, and arranges motivational programs with stakeholders.

In 2021-2022, around 3,000 special inspections were done, and 922 motivational programs were arranged.

Abu Asif Mahmud

Director, Department of Labour (DoL)

In his speech, Abu Asif Mahmud, Director of the Department of Labour, highlighted that everyone gathered with two main objectives. One is regarding National Action Plan. And the other one is about how to increase coordination among stakeholders. He also states that in Bangladesh, child labour in the agriculture sector is the most, almost at 40 to 45%.

He emphasised reducing child labour in this sector. Furthermore, he mentioned that DoL is working to eliminate child labour in the stipulated time.



Image 07: Abu Asif Mahmud, Director of the Department of Labour.

Ms Elisa Calpona,

Child Protection Manager, Child Protection Section, UNICEF Bangladesh



Image 08: Ms. Elisa Calpona, Child Protection Manager, UNICEF.

Ms. Elisa Calpona said in her speech that Bangladesh and the partners working to eliminate child labour within 2025 are lagging. She mentioned that in 2022, UNICEF and the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment (DIFE) and MOLE signed a memorandum of understanding to join forces in eliminating child labour to meet SDG -8. Target 8.7.

She also noted in 2022, UNICEF supported two representatives from MoLE and DIFE to participate in the 5th Global Conference against child labour in Durban, South Africa. This workshop is the follow-up to the Global Conference. She also expressed that the workshop would be concluded with a clear plan of action which will contribute to the objectives.

Mr. Md. Towfiqul Arif

Acting Secretary and Additional Secretary, MoLE (Labour Wing)



Image 09: Mr. Md. Towfiqul Arif, Acting Secretary and Additional Secretary, MoLE.

Mr Md. Towfiqul Arif mentioned in his speech that Mr Masud Ali from ICIDIN is very optimistic, and the target is very tight. But the plan must be implemented by 2025. The Child Labour Welfare Committee should work more collaboratively.

Mr Towfiqul Arif also said, the initiative was taken in 2021, and now we are standing in 2022, in the meantime, nothing remarkable happened. But almost two years have passed. Effectiveness should be increased, and regular meetings should be arranged by ministries, and we will follow up accordingly.

SESSION-02: GROUP WORK

In session 2, workshop participants were divided into five groups. The main purpose of these was to encourage them to participate in group work. The group work aimed to identify key interventions, gaps, and challenges and what to do to mitigate them.

After the group work, every group was given a chance to present their work to the rest of the participants. That was followed by a Q&A session.

Some information highlighted on group works is given below-

Ministry of Labour and Employment

The Ministry of Labour and Employment highlighted three key interventions in their presentation, those are- Monitoring and Evaluation of NPA, reducing the vulnerability of child labour, and Increasing the capacity to protect Child Labor.

Three gaps were mentioned as well; those are No online monitoring systems, No data available, and the Strengthening amendment of BLA /BLR/ Labour Code.

The ministry proposed to - establish online monitoring systems and tools, conduct a survey and develop a policy on code of conduct for informal sectors – as measures to mitigate the gaps.

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

According to Ministry of Women and Children Affairs also highlighted that awareness raising among the community people needs to be increased. But they highlighted that the limited duration of the project is a challenge to mitigate it regular programs need to be undertaken.

Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education identified Basic Literacy Project as their key intervention. They also highlighted that Covid-19, Poverty, and Time-Bound are the challenges. They proposed a project extension to mitigate this challenge.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

According to the Ministry of information and Broadcasting, advocacy and communication for children and women, the 6th Phase, July 2021 to June 2025, is the key intervention. They also identified that Funding sources, Logistics support, no free access to media except BTV, and Videos/ documentaries are not made available for publicity are the challenges.

Employers Association

Employers Association listed awareness sessions for the industry owners and stakeholders and monitoring not to engage child labour as the key interventions. They highlighted that the challenges are lack of awareness and poverty. The body also thinks that expanding awareness sessions for the industry owners and stakeholders and proper implication of laws and policies will be able to mitigate the challenge.

Cabinet Division

Law, policy development, amendments, and Support to implication were listed as key interventions by Cabinet Division. The body also listed – the challenge of taking sufficient opinion from relevant ministries and stakeholders as a gap. They proposed to organise regular meetings to solve this.

Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Home Affairs identified - child trafficking, which mostly involves child labour - as the project to eliminate. They also highlighted the challenges like receiving authentic data for the victim of child trafficking, the challenge of establishing a data hub, and the challenge of ensuring the justice system for the victim as gaps. They proposed - creating a data hub for child labour and child trafficking, speeding up the process for child welfare services, and proper implication of laws and policies with the justice system – as mitigation.

Ministry of Social Welfare

In their presentation, the Ministry of Social Welfare emphasised dealing with the problem on the individual, sub-national and national levels. They pointed out several interventions and proposed measures like; bringing all the child protection committees under one umbrella and providing capacity-building training for service providers, etc. The ministry has also highlighted several gaps, like; child protection-related committees need to be more effectively functional etc.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr Monowar Hossain,

Project Director

Hazardous Child Labor Elimination Project

Joint Secretary, MoLE

Mr Md. Monowar Hossain said that child labour elimination-related efforts are running in 14 districts under the Hazardous Child Labor Elimination Project. The project is working with children aged 10-16 years. In total, they have provided nine pieces of training to children. The purpose is to make the children skilled in safe trade so that they can move away from hazardous child labour. In total, 112 NGOs are working on the project.

Dr Mohammad Abdul Kader

Deputy Secretary, MoLE

In a vote of thanks, Dr Mohammad Abdul Kader, Deputy Secretary, MoLE, thanked every participant for joining and making the event successful.

Media Coverage

- Prothom-Alo: <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/yeigtjhx>

Keraniganj to become first child labour-free zone

Prothom Alo English Desk
Published: 06 Dec 2022, 40:59

The work of building the first model child labour-free district by implementing the Keraniganj project on the outskirts of the capital is already underway. Therefore, Keraniganj is about to become first child labour-free zone," the stakeholders said in a meeting held at a Dhaka hotel Monday.

The meeting was held on the progress of the national action plan prepared in the context of Bangladesh to eliminate child labour by 2025 to achieve Sustainable Development Goal-8 under the initiative of UNICEF Bangladesh and the Ministry of Labour and Employment, reports UNB.

It highlighted five strategic plans to free the country from child labour within the next three years.

Ministry of Labour and Employment joint secretary Hazera Khatun said Bangladesh has made significant progress in eliminating child labour in the last few decades. Despite that, 6.8 percent of the country's children aged 5-17 is still involved in child labour."

"So, these plans have been adopted to protect children from violence, deprivation of rights and torture under the national five-year plan to build a child labour-free Bangladesh by 2025," she added.



UNICEF Bangladesh chief of child protection, Natalie McCauley said if Bangladesh is to be free from child labour, the scope of social activities should be extended to the village level.

She also urged the relevant ministries to work in a coordinated manner to keep records of the children who fell out of primary school.

Elisa Calpona, UNICEF child protection manager, said: "In 2022, UNICEF and the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment and the Ministry of Labour and Employment signed a memorandum of understanding to join forces in the elimination of child labour to meet the SDG Target 8.7."

Md Towfiqul Arif, additional secretary at the Ministry of Labor and Employment, emphasised the formation of a national committee for the implementation of a child labour-free Bangladesh.

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- UNB: <https://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/keraniganj-about-to-become-first-child-labour-free-zone/105970>

Keraniganj about to become first child labour-free zone

UNB NEWS • DHAKA • PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 05, 2022, 09:14 PM • UNB NEWS
UPDATED: DECEMBER 05, 2022, 09:20 PM

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Read: "Children can and should be powerful change-makers in their families, schools and communities"

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Read: Heatwaves to impact almost every child by 2050: UNICEF report

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- Dhaka Tribune (EN): <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2022/12/05/keraniganj-about-to-become-first-child-labour-free-zone>



Keraniganj about to become first child labour-free zone

6.8% of the country's children aged 5-17 are still involved in vulnerable child labour, says Hazera Khatun



UNB

December 5, 2022 9:42 PM

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- Jago News: <https://www.jagonews24.com/national/news/815432>



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