

Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop**'Promoting Sound Industrial Relations & Collective Bargaining in MNEs' (A3-57328)****4 – 7 August 2014, Bangkok**

Organized by the Programme for Workers' Education, ITC-ILO (ACTRAV-Turin) in cooperation with Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) for Asia-Pacific region trade unions

1. BACKGROUND OF THE WORKSHOP

This training workshop, jointly organized with the support of Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF), aims at providing opportunity for trade union representatives for learning and sharing experiences of organizing, collective bargaining and industrial relations practices and strategies for employment and income security for workers in MNEs. Within this context, participants will also learn about ILO MNE Declaration and standards as instruments for improving industrial relations & working conditions in MNEs. It will also be an opportunity to learn about JILAF initiatives in Asia and the experiences of the Japanese trade unions in promoting employment security & decent work for workers in Japan.

MNEs operations in Asia are not new but in recent years, as economic liberalization and globalization gathered pace, the MNEs have become major players within the national contexts. MNEs not only exercise major influence on policies and practices in the areas of investment and production but also in employment, labour standards and industrial relations - both at enterprise and at national levels. Pressures for increasing efficiency and competitiveness often lead to work place conditions that cause industrial relations conflicts. It is well known that competitiveness does not necessarily result from low wages and increasing work intensity but from innovation, skills of the workforce and productivity – and for this sound industrial relations system and practices are important, rather than conflict driven environment. Pre-condition for sound industrial relations is respect for freedom of association, meaningful social dialogue and the rights to collective bargaining for workers organizations.

It is important that as Asian countries develop, their needs for attracting foreign capital into the country and/or prevent capital flight to other countries do not lead to a situation where the labour standards and trade union rights of workers become a casualty. The responsibility to protect & respect workers trade union and other human rights is a global standard expected from the Governments and Corporations wherever they operate. In this context ILO's 'Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) and OECD guidelines to promote socially responsible behaviour of MNEs' are useful tools for public policy that promotes respect for labour standards in the corporate world.

For the labour movement, Globalization requires also the internationalization of collective bargaining and industrial relations practices. Multinational companies and their global supply chains need to be engaged nationally and internationally by trade unions, in close cooperation with national and sectoral trade unions. Unions' priority in particular is to ensure freedom of association and the rights to collective bargaining in MNEs and its supply chains - which remains a major challenge in Asia-Pacific countries. To face the challenges of organizing and collective bargaining for decent work in this age of flexible employment and high capital mobility requires not only united actions and international labour solidarity but also review of unions organizing, bargaining and industrial actions. What worked in relatively closed economy earlier need not be as effective in today's globalised world.

The training programme will therefore provide the union representatives from Asia-Pacific with

opportunities to review and learn from the on-going initiatives of dealing with MNEs, deepen their understanding on the impact & responses to globalisation, share experiences on strategies for organizing, collective bargaining & representing workers interests in MNEs. As part of this, the participants will also learn about international instruments like ILO's MNE Declaration, OECD Guidelines for MNEs, International Framework Agreements signed by Global Unions, UN initiatives and role of trade unions. Within this context, the participants will also have the opportunity to know about experiences of Japan and Japanese trade union movement in promoting sound industrial relations through social dialogue and collective bargaining. The overall aim is to improve the abilities of trade unions in Asia for social dialogue, dispute prevention/resolution and effective collective bargaining with MNEs.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

This workshop will contribute to:

- Promoting the understanding of the trade unions on the lessons from globalization for Asian development model & role of trade unions in promoting socially inclusive & sustainable economic growth;
- Strengthen unions' capacities for effective social dialogue and collective bargaining for employment security and decent work for workers in MNEs;
- Build understanding of the changing management policies in regard to production, employment and employment relations and develop key areas for collective bargaining and labour law reforms to protect workers interests;
- Gain knowledge of & understand how to use ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning MNEs and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), OECD Guidelines for multinationals & IFAs that seek to regulate MNE practices;
- Learn from the experiences of Japan and Japanese labour movement on the initiatives for promoting sound industrial relations, employment security and decent work;
- Improve union capacities for taking into account needs of women workers in the labour relations systems and trade union programs and actions;
- Share experiences and learn about initiatives in different countries for organizing, employment security and social dialogue & based on these develop follow up action plans to influence law, policies & union initiatives for decent work for workers in MNEs;

4. WORKSHOP STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The workshop will comprise the following sessions:

A) Growth Strategies, MNEs & Decent Work: Challenges for TUs

This session aims at setting the background and builds understanding of the participants on the changes in employment market, lessons from crisis for development policies, role of MNEs in developing countries, relevance of Decent Work approach for promoting employment security, sustainable development and trade union work.

B) Review of Country Situations: Based on the country reports to be prepared by participants in advance, participants will work in regional groups to present the key issues facing trade unions in regard to employment security, industrial relations, FoA & organizing and issues for reforms for promoting decent work & stable industrial relations in MNEs.

C) Promoting Labour Standards for Sound Industrial Relations: Session to focus on role of ILO standards, labour law, social dialogue & collective bargaining in promoting work place

democracy, for improving work place relations, increase efficiency, productivity & competitiveness while meeting worker's needs. The session will be followed by group work – to tap into country experiences of dispute resolution mechanisms and MNE practices.

D) Experiences of the Japanese Labour movement – sessions on Japanese Employment Security and Industrial Relations policies, social development and trade union's role and union policies on prevention on labour disputes in MNEs.

E) Changing Management Policies & Negotiating for Decent Work: Session to focus on new management policies of MNEs, key areas for social dialogue & collective bargaining for sharing in growth and productivity – session will build understanding on changing world of work & union strategies for collective bargaining to protect workers interests and working conditions

F) ILO's MNE Declaration, OECD Guidelines and other international initiatives for promotion of respect for workers' rights in MNEs – Session will focus on updating union representatives on employment and industrial relations guidelines for MNEs under international instruments and how these can be used by unions to defend fundamental workers' rights in MNEs and its supply chains. Participants will also be updated on other international initiatives such as ISO 26000 on social responsibility & UN's Protect, Respect, Remedy framework for Business and Human Rights.

G) Trade Union's Organizing initiatives: The session will focus on enabling conditions & organizing strategies for workers in MNEs and their supply chains – to promote exchange of experiences on organizing workers in MNEs and those in precarious non-standard employment – Presentation, followed by Group Work & Summary Discussions.

H) Promoting Freedom of Association & Collective Bargaining in Asia: Group discussion on current situation, state of the unions and union strategies for ratification & respect of FoA rights.

I) Preparation of follow up work plan: Participants will prepare a follow up work plan – to strengthen the work of their trade unions in the areas of organizing, collective bargaining and/or decent work in MNEs. These plans will be used by the Programme for future evaluations and for follow-up activities.

J) Evaluation of the workshop:

Activities included in this workshop will be reviewed through an end-of-workshop evaluation.

Note:

Emphasis will also be placed on learning and sharing experiences on women workers issues and understand how to mainstream gender issues in all policies of trade unions; Sessions will also entail group work & presentations by the participants to tap into their own knowledge & experiences and to promote the applicability of the ideas presented to their national situation.

5. PARTICIPANTS:

25 trade unions from Asia-Pacific will be invited to nominate two candidates, at least one of whom must be a woman, out of which one would be selected. Participant must be either:

- Office bearer/member of the national/industrial union involved with organizing and collective bargaining in MNEs;
- Trade Union educator/staff responsible for organizing training programmes in the field of labour standards, organizing and collective bargaining rights;

Nominees should preferably be 45 years or under. The nominating organisation is strongly urged

to place a special emphasis on the nomination of appropriate women candidates. It is necessary that the nominated participants have basic skills in spoken and written English since this would be the language of the workshop. However, advanced English skills are not a requirement.

From the two nominated participants only ONE participant will be chosen by ACTRAV, keeping in view the workshop requisites and the objectives.

6. WORKSHOP PREREQUISITES

It is expected that every participant will prepare in advance a country report, no longer than 3 pages. The report should cover at least the following areas:

- Major MNEs operating in your country, any special concessions given by government policy to MNEs,
- MNE policies towards production and labour?
- Description of the major problems facing workers & trade unions in MNEs – in regard to terms of employment & employment relations, right to organize, collective bargaining & social dialogue, training & skills opportunities for workers & situation of women workers;
- Consultation mechanisms in MNEs – policy & practices in MNEs in your country?
- The state of trade unions in the country, including – extent of unionization, number of national centres, structure and organization of trade unions, main challenges facing trade union movement;
- Three top priority areas for future actions/programmes in the area protection of workers' fundamental rights.

Kindly also focus on the situation of the women workers and union policies/strategies to address the gender dimensions of the identified problems.

Each participant is expected to email in advance (*by or before 25 July 2014*) the copy of the country report: actrav_turin@itcilo.org

One copy of this country report should also be brought along for the workshop.

7. DURATION AND STARTING DATE

The workshop is scheduled from 4-7 Aug 2014 in Bangkok. The accommodation and the venue of the workshop will be informed later.

8. THE PROGRAMME FOR WORKERS' ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF THE ILO (ACTRAV-TURIN)

The Programme for Workers' Activities of the International Training Centre of the ILO (ACTRAV/Turin) is an integral part of the Bureau for Workers' Activities based at the ILO Geneva. Through a programme of training conducted at the Turin Centre, in the field and through distance/online education, Actrav-Turin seeks to strengthen training capacities of trade unions for improving their effectiveness in social dialogue, collective bargaining and to represent and defend the interests of their members. For more information, please visit <http://actrav.itcilo.org>

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