



Thursday 21 July 2011
For immediate release

Jordan seeks to close gender pay gap through a National Steering Committee for Pay Equity

Committee aims to increase women's labour market participation and promote equal pay for equal value of work

Beirut (ILO News) – Jordan has stepped up efforts to combat gender discrimination in the workplace through a National Steering Committee for Pay Equity (NSCPE) set to be launched in Amman on Monday (July 25).

Co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour and the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) and supported by the ILO, the Committee aims to promote women's participation in the labour market, particularly through the implementation of ILO Equal Remuneration Convention No. 100 and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention No. 111.

Jordan's pay equity initiative is the first of its kind in the Arab states, and may serve as a model for other countries in the region looking to close the gender pay gap such as Egypt and Lebanon.

"Jordan is once again leading the way in regional efforts to promote fundamental rights at work," said Nada Al-Nashif, ILO Regional Director for the Arab States. "The pay equity initiative is integral to the National Employment Policy, which targets the enhancement of women's contribution to social and economic development."

Dr. Mahmoud Kafween, Minister of Labour said "increasing the percentage of women's participation in the Jordanian economy is considered one of the most important priorities of the Ministry of Labour. This is well reflected in Jordan's National Employment Strategy, where efforts will be made to amend legislation to remove obstacles that women face in entering the job market and limits their ability to work. One the most crucial challenges women face includes fairness and equal remuneration for work of equal value."

The decision to establish the Committee follows the recommendations of a Policy Roundtable on Pay Equity held in Amman in March 2010. The NSCPE comprises representatives from trade unions, professional associations, civil society, government bodies, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Industry, and

the private sector. It will draft a national strategy and an action plan for achieving equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value in Jordan.

It is worth mentioning that Jordan has ratified several international conventions which assert the right to equal pay for work of equal value. The Jordanian Constitution also specifies that “all workers shall receive wages appropriate to the quantity and quality of the work achieved”. However, Jordan’s Labour Law does not explicitly prohibit pay discrimination that occurs in situations where men and women perform different work that is nevertheless of equal value. The Ministry of Labour is working closely with the ILO in reviewing the labour law to identify the revisions needed specific to this issue.

In the words of Asma Khader, Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Committee for Women and co-chair of the committee, “when skill levels are taken into account, it becomes clear that women in Jordan are paid much less than men, as much as 33 per cent less.” Khader cites unemployment and the absence of legislation as “major challenges to pay equity,” adding that, as a result, “discrimination often goes unpunished.”

The launch event at 10am on Monday July 25 at the Landmark Hotel will:

- Launch the National Steering Committee for Pay Equity
- Establish a consensus on its mandate, key objectives and next steps.
- Disseminate a policy brief, policy roundtable report, and a gender-neutral job evaluation guide.

For event registration, contact NSCPE.JOR@gmail.com

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