

SIYB Phase II Evaluation Meeting

19 June 2006, Beijing

Remarks by Ms. Constance Thomas

Mr. Zhang Xiaojian, vice minister of MOLSS,

Mr. Adrian Davis, director of DFID China,

Mr. Yoshikazu Takekuma, first secretary of the Embassy of Japan,

Representatives from ACFTU and CEC

Colleagues from ILO and MOLSS,

Delegates from SIYB project cities all over China,

1. Today, we meet to jointly review the achievements of the Second Phase of the Start and Improve Your Business China project – A Fair Deal for Migrants – which was implemented over the past year thanks to the funding of DFID and the Japanese ILO Cooperation Fund.

Let me take this opportunity to 1) very briefly highlight once again the link between the SIYB China project and the broader SIYB China programme, 2) to note some of the achievements of the second phase of the project, and 3) to give you a sneak preview of the third project phase.

About the SIYB China programme

2. The national SIYB China programme is facilitated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS). The overall programme objective is to contribute to poverty alleviation and employment creation. The immediate programme objective is to enable the urban unemployed to start and run their own businesses and to create quality jobs for others in the process. As described in detail by the Minister, the programme was launched in July 2004, is now covering about 100 cities, and will by end 2007 reach out to the entire country.

3. The SIYB China programme is supported by the SIYB China project. Under the umbrella of the SIYB China programme, the project intervenes *selectively* in certain provinces, targeting specific social groups and emphasizing on technical support in certain strategic fields.

About the SIYB China project phase II

4. In Phase II, the project turned its attention to target migrant workers in South-Western Provinces in China. At the same time, the project continued to support start-up training for laid-off workers (the target group of the first project phase).

5. The core service proposition of the project was to facilitate access of local training institutes to the SIYB business management training packages and the SIYB trainer and master trainer development programmes.

6. In the last year, the project has thus strengthened the capacity of 280 private and public sector training institutes and more than 700 trainers. Through these training institutes, the project reached more than 90,000 SIYB trainees, among them more than 30,000 migrants. Almost 60% of all trainees were women.

7. To complement the basic training material of GYB, SYB and IYB and thus strengthen the overall SIYB Programme, Phase II introduced the high-end 'Expand Your Business' (EYB) training package to China. It is expected that the EYB training package will significantly boost the employment creation rate in the SIYB programme since empirical evidence indicates that growth-oriented small-scale entrepreneurs (the target group of EYB training) tend to create up to five times more jobs per business than average small-scale entrepreneurs.

8. With an eye on reaching the special target group of Phase II, the project developed a tele-drama for migrants to raise their entrepreneurship awareness and to attract them to register for SIYB training. The SIYB tele-drama is the first of its kind in the global ILO SIYB programme. It will be launched on a pilot basis in Sichuan Province in July with an expected audience of up to 1 million people. If all goes well, the programme will be aired throughout the country, reaching an audience of tens of millions of migrants with the entrepreneurship promotion message.

9. Phase II also facilitated access of local stakeholders to information on international best practice in the provision of start-up training and other business development services. To this end, a number of study tours were undertaken (e.g. to Russia and Vietnam) and members of the national programme coordination unit were sponsored in international conferences and training seminars in Egypt, Thailand and Scotland.

10. To strengthen the link between training institutes and credit providers at the local level, the project sponsored research on the current operations of Credit Guarantee Funds catering for small-scale entrepreneurs in China. The final research report is in front of you. Based on the research findings, the project provided local Credit Guarantee Funds under MOLSS with technical support to improve their fund management systems.

11. Finally and importantly, Phase II of the project has aimed at facilitating a more conducive political and legal environment for migrant workers to start their own small business. To this end, research was undertaken on the local policy environment for business starters and recommendations were developed for fine-tuning the regulatory framework in support of migrants-cum-entrepreneurs. You have a copy of the final report in front of you. It contains case studies of local cities that have taken the lead in unlocking the entrepreneurship potential of the migrant population.

12. So in Phase II we can see that many products and services have been delivered and many seeds have been sown in unlocking this entrepreneurship potential which we have definitely identified as being present in the migration population. Within the ILO Office we are inputting these various findings from Phase II into other cooperation work with MOLSS on internal migration, non discrimination, micro-finance and employment policy development and implementation.

About SIYB China phase III

13. From July onwards, the project will enter into its third phase. As the SIYB China programme matures and SIYB training is independently delivered through local training institutes, the project will further focus its technical support on the least developed Western provinces in the country and on most vulnerable target groups, among them female migrants in selected service industries and people with disabilities.

14. The next Phase will contribute to the efforts of the Chinese Government to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS by way of imbedding a HIV/AIDS awareness-training component into the standard SIYB training courses. Thus, MOLSS will be able to reach hundreds of thousands of owner-managers of small-scale businesses with an HIV/AIDS awareness message in an extremely cost-effective and sustainable manner.

15. Today, the ILO reaffirms its technical support to the SIYB China programme throughout the upcoming third project phase. Employment creation remains a very important challenge over the next five years. This project, in each of its distinct yet complementary phases, serves to promote the ILO Decent Work Agenda in China. I would like to congratulate MOLSS for its very impressive achievements in the promotion of self-employment under the umbrella of the SIYB China programme. I would like to thank the British and Japanese donor for their

financial support to the programme and we look forward to continue the successful collaboration. Finally, I would like to record recognition and gratitude to the excellent work of the project staff in both the ILO and the national office.