

International
Labour
Organization



The ILO in Afghanistan

Afghanistan and decent work



Located at the crossroads of central, south and west Asia, Afghanistan is of significant geostrategic importance. However, this has made the country the victim of war and instability for more than 30 years, and has impeded the development of the Afghan economy and the improvement to peoples' livelihoods.

According to the 2015 *Human Development Report*, Afghanistan ranked 171st out of 188 countries overall. The labour market has the typical features of a less developed economy. More than 90% of jobs can be classified as vulnerable employment. Gender inequality and child labour are pervasive.

Afghanistan has been a Member of the ILO since 1934 and has ratified **19 international labour Conventions**. The Liaison Office in Kabul was re-established in 2003.

Strategic framework: the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) aligned with national priorities

The first **Decent Work Country Programme for Afghanistan (2010-15)** was designed with the Government and the social partners and is aligned with national development strategies such as the **Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)** and **National Priority Programmes (NPPs)**, inter-linked to the **United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2010-2013 (UNDAF)**.

Key challenges

- **77 %** of Afghans live in rural areas
- **21 %** of the population live in extreme poverty and **38 %** of households face food shortages
- More than **48 %** of the population is under **15** years old

ILO contact

Manzoor Khaliq
Senior Coordinator ILO Office for Afghanistan
UNOCA Compound, Jalalabad Road, Kabul
Tel : +93 (0) 790 493 775
khaliq@ilo.org
ilo_kabul@ilo.org

Tripartite constituents

Government: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled

Workers' organization: National Union of Afghanistan Workers and Employees (NUAWE) and Central Council of Labour Unions of Afghanistan (CCLUA)

Employers' organization: Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI)

Find out more

ilo.org/afghanistan

The Decent Work Country Programme priorities are

- 1 Promoting productive employment through labour market indicators and skills development
- 2 Promoting and applying international labour standards with a focus on ILO core Conventions
- 3 Strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations, including sectoral organizations, contributing to national policy formulation processes and better industrial relations at all levels.

Main actions and key results

Strengthening labour law governance in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been at war for over 30 years and is still in the midst of fighting an insurgency. Terrorist violence is being compounded by a range of irregular and illegal activities such as wide-scale corruption, trade in illegally exploited resources, arms trafficking, and the narcotics trade. On the whole, governance

and the rule of law are severely undermined. To that end, the ILO worked to strengthen labour law governance in the country from 2011 to 2014.

Key results include draft amendments to regulations on labour dispute settlement, which have been reviewed and

sent to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for processing. The Handbook on Islamic Labour Law Principles and International Labour Standards has been completed, and draft amendments to labour inspection regulations have been finalized and sent to MoJ for further processing.



Improving job creation and employability for men and women

The ILO in 2013 facilitated a national conference, in partnership with the World Bank, on jobs in Afghanistan attended by 200 participants from the Afghan Government, workers' and employers' organisations, civil society organizations and the international community. Several thematic areas were discussed

and the discussions contributed to the development of key policy options on employment and job creation.

The ILO has contributed to the improvement of labour market information. In line with Government requests, the ILO has analysed and formulated the

key modules of the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2013-14 on labour, child labour and labour market outcomes. A key report on labour market outcomes and a policy brief on the labour module of ALCS 2013-2014 was developed and will be officially released and published by the Government.

Improving Afghan competitiveness for job creation – agricultural value chains

Agriculture plays a vital role in the Afghan economy and employment sector, contributing to more than 80% of GDP. The ILO carried out a cross-border study (Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran) on the competitiveness of key sectors: wheat, rice, tomatoes, potatoes, grapes and raisins).

The study identifies competitive sectors in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran - the country's major regional trade partners – and explores appropriate measures to address key constraints in competitive sectors to foster their growth.

Key Afghan policy-makers, including the Minister of Agriculture and his senior advisers, welcomed the findings, as they will enable them to design specific measures to improve the competitiveness not only of the five sectors covered by the study, but also other sectors which are losing competitiveness.

Next steps



The new DWCP covering the period from 2016 to 2019 is under negotiation and the ILO is organizing regional tripartite consultations.

In Afghanistan, the youth employment promotion challenge is further exacerbated by political volatility, fragmented education systems, and weak labour market governance institutions. Therefore the ILO, in partnership with the **International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO)**, will implement a programme funded by Norway (2016-2018) to promote rural youth employment

through entrepreneurship education and vocational training.

In line with the results of the first **National Conference on Sustainable Jobs**, and based on a request by the Minister of Labour, the social partners and the Office of the President

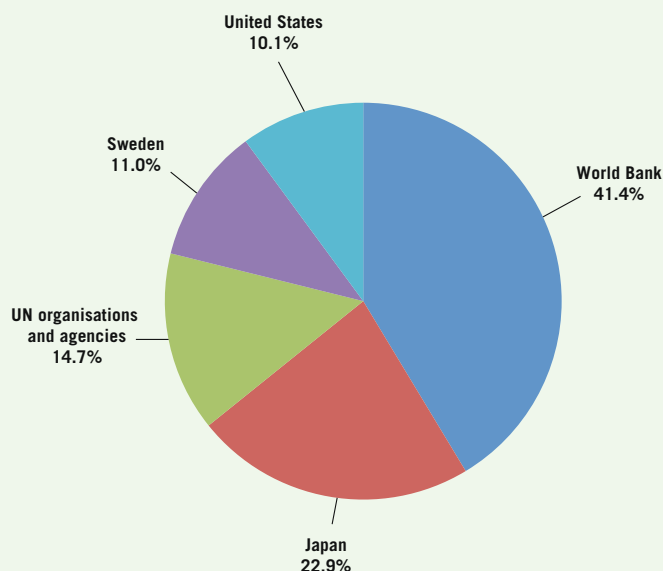
in 2015, the ILO has completed all the technical preparations, including some key policy options on decent employment and “quick-impact” job creation, labour migration and youth employment, for the second **National Conference on Sustainable Jobs** in January 2016.



Partnerships for decent work

Since 2003, the **ILO Office for Afghanistan** has continuously engaged and worked with the Government, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs, national and international partners. These include the **UN Country Team**, and the main **ILO resource partners** in Afghanistan.

Major ILO resource partners in Afghanistan (2012-2015)



THE ILO AND DECENT WORK — A MANDATE FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity. Today, the ILO helps advance the creation of decent work and the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. Its tripartite structure provides a unique platform for promoting decent work for all women and men. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

Selected Country Programme Results for Afghanistan in 2014 and 2015

COUNTRY PROGRAMME OUTCOME AND RESULTS ACHIEVED	ILO CONTRIBUTION (OUTPUTS)
Skills development systems deliver improved employability for men and women	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The national TVET strategy has been revised, giving additional emphasis to improving access to training and assessment services in rural areas. > The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, Martyrs and Disabled have agreed to establish assessment centers in key regional locations > Existing NOSS and curriculum have been revised and benchmarked with international certification to provide enhanced mobility for people in rural communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The ILO contributed to development and finalization of the new strategy by providing extensive comments and facilitating the involvement of social partners, assisting UNESCO as lead agency. > Establishment of the assessment centers forms the core of an ILO proposal and project subsequently funded by DMTVET (Deputy Ministry of Technical Vocation & Educational Training) under the World Bank supported ASDP 2 Program (ASDP).
Promoting Productive Employment through Labour Market Information and Skills Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Labour Market Information Unit of the Ministry of Labour and the Central Statistics Organization of the Government of Afghanistan designed a specific Labour module under the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2013-2014. > The Ministry of Labour and the Central Statistics Organization of the Government of Afghanistan, recognizing the labour market information gap, started discussions to implement regular labour force surveys in Afghanistan with the technical support from the ILO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The ILO developed a concept note and a plan for conducting more regular Labour Force Surveys in Afghanistan. The concept was shared with the Office of the President, Ministry of Labour and the Central Statistics Organization and the UN and donor agencies. > The ILO tabulated and analysed the Labour Force Chapter of the ALCS 2013-2014 and a final report, Labour Market Outcomes, and a policy option was submitted to the CSO.
Enhanced conducive environment for developing micro and small enterprises	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Area-based economic studies were implemented in order to understand the current business environment, opportunities and challenges for labour-intensive programmes and job-rich economic growth. > A cross-country study was implemented in order to explore competitiveness situation of key agricultural value chains in Afghanistan—in order for the government to address erosions in specific sectors and built on the gains in others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The ILO started the implementation of enterprise development and job creation project in the north of Afghanistan, covering Balkh and Samangan provinces. The project aims to unleash the economic potential of agrarian communities—connecting them to the markets, investors and processing facilities using the recently built infrastructure (roads). > The ILO carried out a cross-border study, “Afghan Competitiveness for Job Creation—Agricultural Value Chains. The findings of the study were shared with the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Office of the President, the UN and donor agencies.
All forms of Child Labour progressively eliminated	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Afghan government in collaboration with its social partners and the ILO revised the existing labour law to bring it in line with the ILO standards ratified by Afghanistan including the ILO C138 and 182. > A list of hazardous sectors for children was also developed as part of the labour law reform and development of policies on eliminating all forms of child labour. > The Afghan government continued discussions with its social partners, donor and partner agencies to develop policy options to eliminate child labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The ILO contributed to the revision of the Afghan Labour Law and the follow-up discussions on the formulation of a child labour policy. > The ILO, in collaboration with UNICEF Country Office for Afghanistan, carried a study, entitled “Breaking the mould: Occupational safety hazards faced by children working in the brick kilns in Afghanistan.”

Contact

International Labour Organization
4, Route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva-22 – Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 799 7239 / Fax: +41 22 799 6668
E-mail: pardev@ilo.org
www.ilo.org/pardev

DEPARTMENT
OF PARTNERSHIPS
AND FIELD SUPPORT