

Improving Labour Relations for Decent Work and Sustainable Development in the Myanmar Garment Industry (ILO - GIP)



Introduction



Coming out of decades of military rule and isolation, Myanmar is now referred to as one of the “top 10 performers in developing Asia”. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that the current growth rate of 7-8 per cent could continue until 2030, raising GDP per capita from \$900 to between \$2,992 and \$3,603 by then.

Along with local investors, interest from international investors is growing rapidly, with both the ADB and the World Bank identifying foreign investment as an important driver of economic growth. Myanmar’s garment industry is leading the country manufactured goods export sectors. Its export value reached \$912 million in 2012 (up from \$349

million in 2010), and the garment manufacturing is estimated to employ around 300,000 workers, 90% of them are young women. The Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA) claims that the industry could achieve exports of \$8-10 billion by 2020, if all the stakeholders (factory owners, workers and their respective organizations, various ministries, even international brands and their agents) can work together to develop the industry in a responsible and ethical manner.

Owing to its recent past history, Myanmar is yet to develop an efficient legal and institutional framework for the sound labour market governance needed to sustain the promises for sustainable growth and development for all.

Aims & Objectives

The ILO-GIP aims to contribute to the overall reduction of poverty and the empowerment of women workers in Myanmar by improving labour relations, social dialogue and gender equality in the garment industry.

More concretely, the project’s objectives are to:

1. Assist employers and workers in selected enterprises to build sound labour relations practices, including (but not exclusively) occupational health and safety and collective bargaining, through training programmes with a particular focus on identifying and overcoming barriers to women’s participation in social dialogue
2. Deliver a health education programme targeted at women workers, and The ILO-GIP aims to contribute to the reduction of poverty and the empowerment.
3. Support employers’ and workers’ organizations at sectoral level in developing practices of bi-partite social dialogue through capacity building for each party.

The Project

Against this backdrop, the ILO in Myanmar has recently been awarded a 3-year project entitled “Improving labour relations for decent work and sustainable development in the Myanmar garment industry” (ILO-GIP).

Main Stakeholders

The project will be implemented in collaboration with the main industry stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MoLIP) and other relevant ministries when needed, the relevant trade unions including the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM) affiliated to the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM) and the Myanmar Industries Craft and Services Unions Federation (MICS). The project is equally reaching out to and seeking the involvement of the garment relevant private sector actors and the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA). The project will be implemented in approximately 20 garment factories (yet to be identified).

Governance structure: Project Advisory Committee

The implementation of the project will be overseen by a tripartite Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) exists to provide general guidance and advice on the project implementation and execution of the project. It will help to resolve problems that might arise during the implementation. While the PAC will not exercise responsibility for project execution or day-to-day implementation of project activities, it has important monitoring and evaluating functions in addition to its advisory role. It will be composed of the main stakeholders mentioned above. The PAC will meet at least every six months. The ILO-GIP will act as the secretariat.

Indicative Activities

Enterprise level activities

At the enterprise level, the project will work with employers and workers' representatives in participating factories via an existing labour relations institution, the Workplace Coordinating Committee (WCC). WCCs are intended to have both a dispute settlement and a social dialogue function. Training and coaching activities will deal with issues such as: workplace cooperation/bipartite social dialogue, occupational health and safety at work (OSH), women's health and safety and empowerment. Individual action plans, based on the baseline assessment, will guide the WCC in targeting areas for interventions, including a gender equality and OSH action plans.



Sectoral activities

The ILO-GIP will work with workers' and employers' organizations to build their capacity to deliver services to members, to build high trust relations between the social partners and to develop and improve structures and practices of social dialogue. The project will carry out a series of capacity building activities with trade union and employer representatives, including awareness raising and basic skills for labour relations (negotiation skills, grievance handling, representing members through the conciliation and arbitration processes, and collective bargaining). It will also organize policy development workshops with a view to building a shared vision and action plans on decent work and sustainable development in the sector through improved labour relations. Policies that require national action will be submitted to the National Tripartite Dialogue Forum.

Gender as a mainstreamed priority

Gender equality is a cross-cutting objective of the project, integrated into all of its activities. The project will aim to encourage participation of women in all project activities and at a level.

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Components

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Acronym: ILO-GIP

Start Date: 16 June 2016

End Date: 30 September 2019

Budget: \$ 2.1 million

Partners: Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population; Other relevant ministries; IWFM/CTUM, MICS; relevant garment private sector stakeholders

Project Sites: Yangon, Myanmar