

National Tripartite Policy Dialogue to design coherent Social Protection and Employment Policies in Cambodia

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(ILO-EU, Cambodia) A two-day National Tripartite Policy Dialogue will be held on March 28-29 in Phnom Penh. The event is part of an International Labour Office (ILO)-European Union (EU) Project with the aim to support the design of a coherent social protection and employment policy in order to reduce poverty in Cambodia.

Organized by the Ministry of Labour with the cooperation of the ILO and EU, the national dialogue will count on the participation of government, employer and worker representatives to discuss a draft action plan, collect ideas and recommendations from the dialogue members.

“Two major challenges for Cambodia are policies to fight poverty and to extend the coverage of social protection in Cambodia. Another challenge is to design a National Employment Strategy (NES),” said the ILO-EU Project manager Helmut Schwarzer. “The participation of government, workers and employers at the same table is important to bring broad political and social support to the policies in the future.”

The dialogue will elaborate on important aspects like linking the existing National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) with employment policies, how to include more workers into formal employment, how to increase labour productivity in Cambodia, and how a coordination mechanism could be designed at ministerial level to enhance social protection and employment policy outcomes.

ILO technical advisor Arthur van de Meerendonk highlighted the crucial role of a National Employment Strategy, to be developed over 2012-13: “The Cambodian government has already put in place a consistent and cohesive framework. The NES is the missing piece to link between the economic and sectoral policies with the social protection strategies right now, playing a key role in Cambodia”. He also said that “economic growth alone will not lift people out of poverty. Cambodia needs the integration of National Social Protection and Employment Strategies to accomplish that.”

The ILO-EU Project was launched in November 2009 and is funded by the EU. It is a joint initiative with the International Labour Office and works in partnership with the Cambodian government, employers’ and workers’ representatives.

The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Cambodia, Ambassador Jean-François Cautain, noted that “The EU and its member States are strongly supportive of social protection schemes, particularly recent calls in the context of the United Nations and the G20 for developing nationally-defined social protection floors. In this regard we hope that our partnership with the ILO will assist the Government of Cambodia in making informed policy decisions about social protection measures”.

Ambassador Cautain further informed that the European Commission was currently drafting a Communication on “Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation” to be adopted in 2012.

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