

## State of workers' welfare

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ILO actively promotes policies and provides assistance to countries to help extend adequate levels of social protection to all members of society. The experience of setting up a mechanism to deliver compensation in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza highlighted the need for a universal and compulsory

that is heading towards middle income status needs to provide such minimum guarantees, and it is the right time for Bangladesh to be actively pursuing this area of work.

**Workplace inclusivity and skills**  
Greater efforts also need to be made to create more inclusivity in the workforce. For example, Bangladesh

to do so, Bangladesh will seriously hamper its potential to develop further on both the economic and social fronts.

The welfare of workers is very much linked to their ability to find decent work. Where will we find two million jobs for young people entering the labour market in Bangladesh every

development and undertaking a series of measures to improve the national skills system. Skills reform has focussed on the national skills policy and strategies for inclusion as well as improved legislative, institutional, and financial capacities to sustain a robust skills system for Bangladesh. Providing skills demanded by the market is the key. Employers and their organisations have to be part of the decision making process to decide what skills should be imparted by the skills training institutions to bridge the gap between supply and demand for skills. Technical schools and colleges should run vocational training programmes in full partnership with the industry. Market forecasts within both Bangladesh and outside are critical steps to develop skills of young workers.

These efforts are vital to help Bangladesh capture higher level jobs in all segments of the economy. In certain industries, many supervisory or management jobs are held by expats. Support and opportunities need to be provided for young men and women in Bangladesh to prepare to assume those roles through proper skills development and serve the needs of the industry.

### Skilled and safe migration

The issue of skills is also closely linked to that of migration. Last year, some 750,000 workers migrated from Bangladesh, the vast majority of who were low skilled or unskilled. Better skills lead to higher salaries and better lives. This will benefit migrants, their families, local communities and the nation. Substantial research efforts are needed to determine the job needs of destination countries and to develop a credible and dynamic labour market information system upon which informed decisions can be made. Prospective migrants need skills training to match labour market

demand and the government should be able to negotiate government-to-government agreements so that skilled workers are sent on a needs basis. The goal should be for safe, skilled and fair migration. Costs of migration should be reduced. This will have a huge impact on remittances, as well as the quality of life and welfare of many millions of migrants and their families.

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### Looking to the future

Bangladesh has made great progress in many areas as it strives to reach middle income status. While many challenges still remain, ILO is committed to support the government, employers, and workers alike, so that each and every Bangladeshi can share in the country's growth and that decent work can be achieved for all.

The writer is Country Director of ILO Bangladesh.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

national Employment Injury Protection and Rehabilitation scheme to be established.

ILO is working closely with the government of Bangladesh and Germany to establish such a scheme. This would provide treatment or compensation in the event of a workplace accident or illness. An inclusive society

continues to have a lower proportion of women in the labour market compared to global averages. Certain industries, such as RMG, have created huge opportunities for women, who make up the majority of staff. They can also help drive forward the economy of Bangladesh in many other areas, if only they too are given the chance. By failing

year? Opportunities are needed to help both young women and men to find jobs in new sectors, and for this reason, skills development is critical.

To escape the "low skills, low productivity" trap, the government of Bangladesh, with the support of ILO and a number of development partners, is on the right track by prioritising skills



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