



Ministry of Labour
and Employment



International
Labour
Organization



Promoting Safe Migration from Nepal: Foreign Employment Information and Counselling Center inaugurated at the Kathmandu Labour Village

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Press Release

KATHMANDU (Joint press release) – One of the most effective ways to combat common abuses of migrant workers such as underpayment of wages, confiscation of passports, substandard working conditions and confinement in the workplace, is to ensure that migrants are equipped with knowledge and strategies to safeguard their labour- and human rights throughout the migration cycle.

Recognizing this, the Foreign Employment Promotion Board has partnered with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Union (EU) and the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) to open a **Foreign Employment Information and Counselling Center at the Labour Village in Kathmandu**. The center was inaugurated today by the Honorable Minister of State Mr Tek Bahadur Gurung, from the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Mr Andreas Roettger, Mr Andreas Roettger, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Nepal; Mr Shesh Ghale, President, Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and Mr José Assalino, Country Director, International Labour Organization Nepal also spoke at the launch of the centre.

“The Ministry of Labour and Employment is very pleased to partner with the ILO, the EU and the NRNA to establish this Foreign Employment Information and Counselling Center here at the Kathmandu Labour Village” says the Honourable Minister of State, **Mr Tek Bahadur Gurung, Ministry of Labour and Employment** in his inauguration speech. He then continued: “The Government of Nepal opened the Labour Village in 2014 to promote a more transparent migration process by bringing together the range of services the government offers in one geographical area. The Labour Village currently conducts the labour migration administrative processes and holds country specific sections such as the Malaysia section, Qatar section and the Saudi Arabia section which has contributed towards a smoother migration process.”

With a high volume of migrant workers visiting the Labour Village every day to either receive labour permits before going abroad for foreign employment or to get registered, the Labour Village has become a hub for migrant workers. On a regular day, about 500-600 migrant workers visit the Labour Village. As all of them can make use of the services offered by the Foreign Employment Information and Counselling Center free of charge, this of course make it a very strategic location to provide reliable information and various services ultimately increasing their protection.

Mr José Assalino, Country Director, ILO Nepal says in his remarks that “the ILO considers well-governed labour migration a triple-win; a win for countries of origin like Nepal because it lowers unemployment and brings in remittances and skills; a win for destination countries, like the GCC countries, that can support a level of economic activity that would be impossible without foreign workers; and a win for the migrants who can earn higher incomes and escape poverty. However, before this triple-win can be realized, we need to ensure that all parties benefits equally. And today, it is clear that the migrant workers are being short-changed. Ensuring that migrant workers have access to information and support services so that they are better prepared for what lies ahead of them is crucial, and this Foreign Employment Information and Counselling Center is one important part of such a strategy.”

Bringing in a partner like the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) can be very powerful when it comes to safe-guard the rights of migrant workers. **Mr Shesh Ghale, NRNA President** stated in his remarks that “the NRNA is very proud to collaborate with the Foreign Employment Promotion Board and the International Labour Organization to delivery neutral information to potential migrant workers. The NRNA is contributing three personnel including a lawyer to the MRC that will provide valuable legal support to migrant workers. It also has a very extensive network of professional Nepali with establishments of National Coordination Councils in 71 countries globally, including in all the major destination countries for Nepali labour migrants. These Councils will play in important role in providing valuable information to support Nepali migrant workers. Through this MRC, we will be able to link migrants to other Nepalis already working in the destination country before they go abroad. In a similar way, a family member that has lost contact with a migrant, can receive support from the NRNA networks in the country where the worker was last heard from to locate the missing migrant.”

Addressing the inaugural function, **Mr Andreas Roettger, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Nepal** said that “the EU welcomes the establishment of the Foreign Employment Information and Counselling Center. The EU is well aware that while labour migration generates substantial benefits for countries of origin and destination, it can negatively impact the lives of migrant workers. Abuse of migrant workers during recruitment and employment is a common, well-documented issue. Women face barriers in finding overseas employment, and female migrant domestic workers are among the most vulnerable to abuses. The EU is looking forward that the centre inaugurated today will be a real and effective contribution to better the lives of migrant workers.” Mr Roettger added.

Note for editors:

The **ILO South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project** is funded by the European Union. The project – which has a total budget of € 2,407,186 of which EU is contributing € 1,925,749 – will run until September 2016. It aims to ensure effective protection of the rights of vulnerable migrant workers, enhance the development impact of labour migration and reduce unregulated migration. It has a migrant-centred approach and will provide support to at least 20,000 migrant workers. This includes access to reliable information on overseas employment opportunities; reduced migration costs and abuses by improving recruitment services; and increased protection in countries of origin and destination.

The key project partners are the Ministry of Labour and Employment in Nepal and in particular its Department of Foreign Employment (DOFE), the Foreign Employment Promotion Bureau (FEPB), workers’ and employers’ organizations, private recruitment agencies, NGOs, migrant associations and diaspora organizations, embassies, banks, micro-finance institutions and researchers in reaching its objectives.

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