

## Programme Update

August/September 2010

Welcome to this edition of Better Work's Programme Update, designed to keep you up-to-date with Better Work activities across the globe. If you would like more in-depth information on any of the topics below, contact Chandra Garber at [garber@ilo.org](mailto:garber@ilo.org).

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### Global Activities

#### Better Work Governance Meetings in Vietnam Explore Programme Progress and Look to the Future

For the first time, Better Work held its semi-annual governance meetings in a project country the week of 20 September. Better Work donors, global Advisory Committee members and the Management Group convened in Ho Chi Minh City to review programme progress, discuss strategy going forward and see one country programme—Better Work Vietnam—in action. All meeting participants were also able to visit a factory to see and hear about the programme from the local enterprise perspective.



Technical Specialist Amy Luinstra addresses participants at the Better Work Advisory Committee meeting.

This was also the first set of meetings with new Better Work Global Director Dan Rees. During the event, Better Work staff provided an update on all country programme activities, and also reported on impact assessment results from Cambodia and a proposed research framework moving forward. In addition, a proposed review of the Better Work Phase II strategy, including the development of an optimal growth plan for new country and sector programme rollout, was approved by the Management Group. Other discussions touched on capacity building of constituents, and Better Factories Cambodia's transition to Better Work and eventual transition to a local foundation. The next round of meetings will take place in March 2011.

### Country Activities

#### Cambodia

Better Factories Cambodia has welcomed the recent landmark agreement reached by unions and manufacturers aimed at improving relations in the Cambodian garment industry following a nationwide strike to demand a higher minimum wage. On 28 September, the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia, which represents some 300 of the largest factories employing about 300,000 workers, and six major union confederations and federations who together represent the vast majority of those workers, signed a Memorandum of Understanding that covers key aspects of collective bargaining, arbitration, productivity, and specific measures for implementation. For more information on the agreement, please [click here](#).

In late August and early September, Better Factories Cambodia, in partnership with the Provincial Departments of Labour and Vocational Training, led consultative meetings on maternity protection. The two meetings offered the opportunity for garment and footwear factory representatives to discuss challenges and identify solutions for how to share information on maternity protection with workers. Plans of action developed by participants include ensuring that women workers can take leave prior to and after child delivery, and that working mothers do less strenuous work and have specific time to breastfeed. For more information on the training, please [click here](#) and [click here](#).

## Haiti



The Better Work Haiti team.

Better Work Haiti is happy to welcome four new enterprise advisors to its country programme team! Ms. Nayanka Xavier, Ms. Lysa Thybulle, Mr. Rolf Berthold and Mr. Richard Dieudonné are currently completing their induction on advisory services and factory assessments. In addition, following relocation efforts in the wake of the January earthquake, on August 27, Better Work Haiti moved into its new location at 29 Villate Street in Pétionville.

Better Work Haiti's first biannual report under the US HOPE II legislation is complete. To view the report, please [click here](#).

In coordination with an occupational safety and health (OSH) specialist, on September 9, Better Work Haiti offered an OSH training at the newly opened Haiti Apparel Center. Twenty-six participants representing 18 factories attended. Following the training, the programme's four new enterprise advisors joined the OSH specialist in conducting hazard assessments in an effort educate OSH committee members and management team representatives about how to assess factory hazards and identify corrective measures. In the coming months, Better Work Haiti will assist factories to address particular OSH issues through the creation of OSH committees and policies.

## Jordan

The Ministry of Labor has drafted a regulation to implement the Cabinet decision made last March to require all apparel factories in Jordan to participate in Better Work. It is anticipated that the regulation will be finalized and adopted in October. The number of factories that have joined Better Work Jordan should increase by over 50% by the end of the year, putting the programme well on the path toward industry-wide participation.

## Lesotho

In September, Better Work Lesotho held a 1-day workshop for its government partners—the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Trade—to increase awareness among key ministry delegates regarding Better Work objectives, operating mechanisms, services and benefits, and the importance of social dialogue in the programme. Following the workshop, labour inspectors indicated that they will support the implementation of an industry-wide approach by working as “ambassadors” for the Better Work programme when visiting factories. In addition, a first training on enterprise assessment and advisory techniques for labour inspectors will be conducted by Better Work Lesotho in October.

Also in September, Better Work Lesotho joined ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation in organizing a 2-day workshop for the five trade unions active in the garment sector and two affiliated union federations. The workshop introduced union leadership and enterprise-level representatives to the programme, emphasizing the unions' role as key partners of Better Work Lesotho (together with the government, the employer associations and the buyers). A second workshop, to be held in mid October, will build on the outcome of the September workshop and address unions' specific needs for intersectoral cooperation. The International Trade Union Confederation will support union capacity development efforts in the coming months, as well.

## Vietnam

Better Work Vietnam has recently released its first public compliance synthesis report. This baseline report provides an overview of labour conditions at 32 factories assessed by the programme between December 2009 and June 2010. With respect to national labour law, the majority of findings relate to occupational safety and health, as well as working hours. In the area of compensation, assessments did not find issues with non-compliance of paying the minimum wage, though some findings did show improper payment of leave entitlements. Key findings in international labour standards are in the area of freedom of association and collective bargaining. Better Work Vietnam has begun advisory services in 30 of the 32 factories. The goal of advisory services, as well as the programme's stand-alone training services, is to assist factories in making improvements in the areas of non-compliance covered in this report. To view the entire report, please visit the Better Work Vietnam web site at [www.betterwork.org/vietnam](http://www.betterwork.org/vietnam).

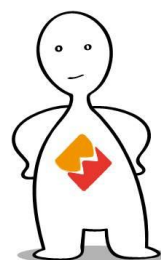
On 28–29 September, Better Work Vietnam hosted a Buyers' Forum in Ho Chi Minh City. Following on the Buyers' Forum in Phnom Penh in May, the programme invited representatives of buyers, Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work global, employers, workers and government to continue the dialogue from and respond to ideas raised in that meeting. This latest conversation helped all parties understand how the Better Work programme currently works with a large industry in a "voluntary participation" country. Other discussion highlights included: clarifying Better Work's value proposition; strengthening communication between Better Work, buyers and factories; and enhancing buyer commitment through better alignment of compliance programmes to Better Work. Specific actionable steps, which were identified for both buyers and Better Work, will provide the basis for continued dialogue on the programme at the upcoming meeting in New York in November.

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## Highlights

### Better Work Distance Learning Pilot Launched

In September, Better Work launched a new distance-learning platform currently being piloted with enterprise advisors across the programme. Four e-learning modules—covering industrial relations, discrimination, forced labour and child labour—have been developed to reinforce compliance assessment in these areas and ensure consistency across countries. Following the pilot period, Better Work will consider developing new modules for use by the programme and its partners.



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## Jobs

Better Work is continually looking for qualified professionals to work with the global and country programmes. All available posts are listed on our web site. [See vacancies and tenders >>](#)

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## About Better Work

Better Work is a unique partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). It unites the expertise of the ILO in labour standards with that of the IFC in private-sector development. Better Work brings together local enterprises, international buyers, governments, and workers' and employers' organizations to improve labour standards and competitiveness in global supply chains. [See our brochure >>](#)

**Better Work is supported by the governments of Australia, Canada, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.**