

KHALID ABBAS SAIF

Better work programme to help improve Pakistan's compliance: ILO official

FAISALABAD: The Country Director International Labour Organization (ILO) Ingrid Christensen has said that the Better Work Programme (BWP) will help improve Pakistan's compliance and exhibit its commitment to improve labour welfare.

Enlightening the core aspects of Better Work Programme during a consultative session at Pakistan Textile Exporters Association on Thursday, she said that BWP is successfully running by ILO and IFC in 8 countries benefiting 2.5 million work force as 1700 factories & 150 international brands are linked with this programme. This programme includes a comprehensive framework on improving industrial relations through training and compliance with International labour standards including occupational safety and health, nature of employment, discrimination and other forms of labour practices as well as strengthening employers' and workers' organizations in textile industry, she said. Emphasizing the importance of ratifying and implementing International Labour Standards for the business community, she elaborated the situation of working conditions in terms of employment, child labour, informality of work and wages.

Addressing the session, Joint Secretary Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development Atika Riffat highlighted the recent interventions carried out by federal and provincial governments to improve working conditions in the country and elaborated various ILO Conventions which are ratified. She identified a number of avenues where the Textile Industries in Pakistan in collaboration with ILO, can bring improvements in the work practices thus enabling more exports to Europe.

Earlier, Group Leader Pakistan Textile Exporters Association Khurram Mukhtar appreciated the concerted efforts of the government to pave the way for enhanced sourcing of Pakistani products by leading international buyers by initiating ILO's Better Work Program in Pakistan. Foreign trade has a lot of attached responsibilities as the international buyers are increasingly getting sensitive about ethical sourcing and international compliances. BWP should be aimed to improve working conditions in textile industry and make the sector more competitive by enabling collaboration between the government, global brands, factory owners and workers.

PTEA Chairman Sohail Pasha said that Pakistani textile Industry has seen some setbacks in its international exports due to lack of compliance with International Labour Standards which includes the withdrawal of Walt Disney Corporation from Pakistan as it dropped Pakistan from its list of 'Permitted Sourcing Countries' and stopped sourcing on account of low WGI ranking.