



# ▶ The United States

## ILO Cooperation

May 2023

The United States Government (USG) is the largest multi-bilateral development partner of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and contributes to its regular budget through assessed contributions and to its development cooperation programme through earmarked voluntary contributions. It has ratified fourteen ILO conventions, including two fundamental conventions on the Abolition of Forced Labour and on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the governance convention on Tripartite Consultation, and eleven technical conventions. Through funding and inter-organizational collaboration, the United States supports the Decent Work Agenda.

## ▶ The United States and the ILO

The US and the ILO have long shared common interests in helping to secure universal human rights through improvements in global living and working conditions, mutually pledging to instill awareness of and respect for democratic principles around the world. Thanks to the USG, the ILO has support for programming on themes such as decent work, occupational safety, and health, forced and child labour prevention, and collective bargaining.

### ▶ Key ILO Partners in the US Government

1. The **United States Department of Labor (USDOL)**, within which the ILO works closely with the **Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB)**, including:
  - ▶ The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking;
  - ▶ The Office of Trade and Labor Affairs; and
  - ▶ The Office of International Relations and Economic Research.
2. The **United States Department of State (US-DoS)** is a key partner supporting programmes that promote workers' rights and combat human trafficking. For these purposes, the ILO works with USDOS':
  - a. Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL);
  - b. Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM);
  - c. Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA); and
  - d. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office).
3. **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** is committed to a range of development issues that are consistent with ILO priorities and work, and supports the ILO through specific projects in the Asia and Pacific region and the Latin America and Caribbean region.

## ► The United States Government's contributions to the ILO

### United States Funding Contributions:

Between 2018-2022, the USG contributed a total of US\$ 616.6 million to the ILO.

- **Assessed contributions** to the ILO's Regular Budget paid by all member states totaled **US\$ 424.6 million**.
- **Voluntary contributions** earmarked for priority themes and projects totaled **US\$ 192.0 million**.

### ► The United States Government's contributions, 2018-22 (US\$ 616.6M)



## ► Active United States Government funded projects



## ► A selection of US-supported initiatives

### ► Better Work



Since 2009, USDOL has allocated over US\$ 44 million to **Better Work**, the ILO's **flagship programme** to improve working conditions in the garment industry while simultaneously making the sector more competitive. As of 2020, 1,400 active factories were registered in USDOL-funded Better Work activities, benefitting 2 million workers.

Worldwide, Better Work has contributed not only to increasing productivity and profitability (up to 22% and 25% respectively), but also to reducing the gender pay gap (17%), improving women's access to prenatal care (26%) and reducing sexual harassment (18%).

In 2021, Better Work Jordan introduced a new mental health project aimed at building garment workers' resilience against mental health risks, ensuring factory-level support for mental health, and increasing access to mental health referral systems for all workers.

## ► Improving occupational safety and health in supply chains in Mexico: A Vision Zero Fund Project



With support from USDOL, a new [Vision Zero Fund](#) project started activities to improve occupational safety and health in

Mexico's chilli pepper and tomato supply chains. The project has two main objectives: (1) to enhance COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measure and (2) to increase compliance with health and safety laws and policies.

Employers' and workers' organizations participate in designing project interventions that promote

ownership and sustainability with the Mexican Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Agriculture. To ensure efficacy, the project is evaluated through two assessment priorities. The first involves the extent to which the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was managed appropriately, while the second facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the scale and scope of safety and health challenges based on two target supply chains. Ultimately, the project addresses safety and health challenges not only at the workplace but also at the sectoral and national levels, benefitting the entire economy.

## ► The Bridge Project: A bridge to global action on forced labour

In Kanchanur, Nepal, Pushpa Lohar used to work as a daily wage labourer. She would break stones into fine pebbles for very little pay, having no other job opportunities. In her community, bonded, or forced, labour is common and, until recently, was a status passed-down from generation to generation.

Pushpa enrolled in a house-painting training course with other women in her village, supported by the project "[From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labour \(Bridge Project\)](#)."

Since 2015, USDOL and the ILO have been working to combat forced labour through the Bridge Project, which is, now active in six countries: Malaysia, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger,

Peru and Uzbekistan and focused on raising awareness about 2014 ILO Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention.

Initial results of the trainings in Nepal show:

- 88% of participants actively use skills they have learned in their employment
- 60% started their own business within eight months of completing their training
- 48% of programme beneficiaries' income increased



## ► Advancing workers' rights in the palm oil sector in Indonesia and Malaysia



Indonesia's [palm oil project](#) aims to enrich the knowledge of 130 local trade union functionaries on fundamental rights at work, focusing on collective bargaining and freedom of association. As a result, 15 collective bargaining agreements are being negotiated in palm oil plantations and enterprises, impacting approximately 7,000 workers. A negotiated district-level sectoral wage in one palm oil producing district in West Kalimantan province was secured, and a formal, national-level agreement on respecting freedom of association and collective bargaining involving a major palm oil company was signed.

Moreover, the project has improved the capabilities of 20 labour inspectors from three provinces to develop strategic compliance planning, including a specialized field guide for inspectors assessing working conditions in the palm oil sector. During the pandemic, provincial labour inspectors in South Sumatera, North Sumatera and West Kalimantan carried out 131 workplace inspection visits using the guide.

In Malaysia, the project aims to contribute to improved labour recruitment and management systems in the Malaysian palm oil industry, strengthening the capacity of employers to mitigate the risks of forced labour and child labour in palm plantations. This makes possible migrant workers' participation in trade unions in the sector, allowing for the piloting of a community-based complaints mechanism and sensitizing community leaders, employers and workers on forced labour and child labour issues.



## ► Economic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees under decent work conditions in Ecuador and Peru



Since 2020, 1,150 vulnerable migrants and refugees from Venezuela —more than 60% of them women— successfully completed entrepreneurship training through the [Emprende Segur@ Programme](#). Despite the COVID-19 crisis, entrepreneurs like [Carmen](#), an empanada vendor, and [María Elisa](#), a pastry chef, have been able to establish and maintain their businesses due to this training and support.

Emprende Segur@ is part of the project [Promotion of socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Ecuador and Peru](#), financed by the United States Agency for Development (USAID). The project adopts an intervention model designed by the ILO in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of recovering livelihoods, especially of people affected by compulsory social isolation measures and those with limited access to government emergency response programmes.

During 2021, the second phase of the Emprende Segur@ Program was implemented in both countries with reinforced advocacy and technical assistance components to strengthen public policies on entrepreneurship and employability routes at both the local and national levels.

## ► Economic empowerment of refugees and host communities in Ayorou, Niger

Since 2019, USDOS has supported the ILO in promoting sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities in Niger through a *market systems analysis approach*, which has generated profound impacts on social cohesion.

More than 1,748 beneficiaries, including 589 refugees (50% women), have been trained and organized into cooperatives based on employment opportunities in the fish farming, sustainable waste management and onion value chains.

In addition, **two waste valorisation units were installed and equipped**, allowing the cooperatives of the waste value chain to ensure the transformation of waste into several by-products for sanitation works and agricultural improvement. Thanks to the use of a credit system called Warrantage, 40 key actors in the onion value chain were trained in cooperative and farm management, allowing them to store 23 tons of onions and generate more than US\$ 8,500 in profit.



## ► Addressing child labour and forced labour in the coffee supply chain in Honduras



This project has built a social compliance system based on the ILAB Methodology [Comply Chain](#). A Toolkit was

developed with the Honduran Coffee Institute (IHCAFE) to prevent child labour and improve working conditions in the coffee supply chain. The project was implemented in six departments of Honduras. Around 49 per cent of IHCAFE technical staff were trained in this methodology and 420 coffee producers adopted a code of conduct and completed a self-assessment. Three cooperatives were audited to ensure their

compliance. The project thus continues to strengthen the IHCAFE's capacity to implement the social compliance system.

The code of conduct has 11 standards [El Café de Honduras si Cumple | Esfuerzo local para el fin del trabajo infantil \(cafehondurascumple.org\)](#), including No Child Labour, No Discrimination, No Forced Labour, and Freedom of Association, promoting a new compliance culture in the Honduran coffee sector. The initiative also enabled the coffee sector to develop a national strategy to prevent and eradicate child labour in the coffee supply chain, which includes the inputs of producers, cooperatives, exporters, and roasters from across Honduras.

### Contact details

International Labour Organization  
Route des Morillons 4  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland

T: +41 22 799 7239  
F: +41 22 799 6668  
E: [PARTNERSHIPS@ilo.org](mailto:PARTNERSHIPS@ilo.org)  
[ilo.org/partnerships](http://ilo.org/partnerships)