

During the 337th session of the Governing Body of the ILO held between 24 October 2019 and 7 November 2019, the second annual progress report on the technical cooperation programme agreed between the Government of Qatar and the ILO in 2017 was made public. It highlighted a number of developments since October 2018:

### **1. Improvement in the payment of wages**

- The enactment of a draft law on a non-discriminatory minimum wage applicable to all workers, including domestic workers
- Agreement on recommendations for improving the Wage Protection System to encompass additional categories of workers and to identify and redress non-compliance faster
- The establishment of a Workers Support and Insurance Fund designed to provide workers with financial assistance and overdue wages when employers fail to comply by court orders in labour disputes. The Fund established by law in October 2018 is not yet fully operational.

### **2. Labour Inspection and health and safety**

- The adoption of a labour inspection policy in April 2019 designed to harmonize inspections, improve data collection and analysis, increase transparency and accountability, and build the awareness and capacity of inspectors; and the subsequent establishment of the Strategic Unit in the Department of Labour Inspections
- The adoption of an occupational health and safety policy and the involvement of 20 companies and 15,000 workers in related training and awareness-raising activities.

### **3. Reforms to the kafala system and improvements in worker welfare**

- Decision by the Ministry of Interior to abolish exit permits for additional categories of workers expected by the end of 2019 [NB On 16 October, ILO announced decision already signed].
- Council of Ministers approved draft legislation to allow workers to change employers after reasonable notice following the probationary period. If workers chose to change employers before the probationary period, the new employer is to reimburse the original employer a portion of recruitment costs.
- Commitments by a number public clients made in May 2019 to ensure ethical recruitment and due diligence in selecting contractors.
- Initiation of dialogue with the hospitality sector in Qatar and other stakeholders on areas of fair recruitment, due diligence mechanisms and worker mobility, and engagement of 40 hotels in a working-group for sustainable growth and decent work.

### **4. Efforts to combat forced labour**

- In addition to reviewing its National Action Plan to combat trafficking in persons and relevant legislation, the government has established six locations to be used as shelters for victims of trafficking and exploitation, to be run by the Qatar Red Crescent. These shelters are scheduled to be fully operational by the end of 2019.

## **5. Promoting Workers' Voices**

- The adoption of a decision in April 2019 by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MADLSA) to regulate elections of worker representatives to joint committees to allow all workers to run or vote in such elections. Since, six elections have taken place for the establishment of joint subcommittees (five by companies contracted by the Qatar Foundation).
- Supporting the filing of 72 complaints involving 1,870 workers to MADLSA