



## **ILO Forum broadens knowledge and awareness on the role of skills development in promoting trade, employability and inclusive growth**

SIEM REAP, Cambodia – An inter-regional forum concluded here today following two days of intense discussion that have broadened knowledge and awareness among a wide spectrum of stakeholders from different countries on skills development strategies for promoting trade, employability and inclusive growth in the developing world.

Representatives from governments, workers' and employers' organizations, the private sector and development partners agreed that the forum had provided a unique opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and lessons learned that highlighted the challenges and potential for skills development to reap the benefits of trade and promote inclusive growth.

In concluding remarks, Olga Strietska-Ilina, ILO Skills Policies and Systems Specialist, said the Forum had been “very useful from the point of view of regional perspectives, the side of employers, the side of workers, international organizations, and development partners. Everyone agrees we need to institutionalize to help the private sector and the world of training work together.”

The Inter-regional Technical Forum on Skills for Trade, Employability and Inclusive Growth was organized within the framework of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) funded “Scaling up Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED)” project and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) funded “Skills for Employment and Productivity in Low-Income countries” project.

Speaking in behalf of SIDA, Magnus Saemundsson, First Secretary of the Embassy of Sweden in Cambodia noted that the discussions had highlighted the “many similarities” in experiences, while at the same time exposing the challenges of skills development systems in various countries and sectors.

“An issue related to these challenges is the difficulties of engaging not only of stakeholders, but different ministries' and parts of ministries to cooperate,” he said.

The representative of KOICA, Hyungkyoo Kim, Country Director of the KOICA Office in Nepal, said: “There are two words on my mind after observing this two day forum. One is outcomes ... more decent work, more jobs to the people, poor people

that are excluded. Another word is reality: each country has their own situation. We should consider the reality of these countries, so we need to tailor the approach to the problems in these countries.”

Ms. Strietska-Ilina of the ILO said the Forum could be summarized by five key themes: *targeting* of disadvantaged groups, including women, people with disabilities, young people and aging workers and developing appropriate strategies for them; *systematizing*, or making sure there are forward looking approaches and active labour market policy measures; *synergizing* between different policies, including sectoral, industrial and national policies, and skills development strategies; *creating institutional platforms* for the private sector, education, training and collecting labour market information; and *incentivising* the private sector to take part in the provision of vocational training and hands on experience for the youth people.

Addressing the challenge of greater policy coordination for skills development, Makiko Matsumoto, an employment specialist in the ILO Bangkok office added “It is easy to say coordinate on the policy front, but this is not easy in practice. We need to involve the local authority, and local government. This also involves building capacity to monitor and evaluate the success of the policy, particularly in reaching the most vulnerable.”

The ILO projects that some 40 million people enter the labour market each year, underscoring the urgent need for job creation and related skills development policies. While globalization has driven significant economic development and diversification in sectors with potential for growth in productive and higher value-added jobs, both enterprises and workers constantly face the challenge of having the right skills to match the demands of globalization, technological change and other factors in the labour market.

This Technical Forum builds on the discussion of the previous regional knowledge-sharing workshop on Trade and Skills organised in Cairo in October 2014 and also highlights the vast experiences obtained in implementing the G20 Training Strategy.

Participants were also invited to engage with a wider global audiences by sharing their knowledge and experience on the ILO’s Global Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP).

The Forum discussed good practices in bridging skills to trade, employability and inclusive growth; opportunities and challenges due to globalization and trade; skills strategies that diversify economies and improve employment opportunities; skills, technology and the changing work organization; inclusive growth involving disadvantaged groups, including women, youth and rural communities; and, the role of skills in environmentally sustainable and inclusive development. Forum participants also discussed boosting economic resilience to climate change through

improved skills. A number of specific projects were detailed, including responsible tourism and the training of tour guides in Myanmar, sustainable tourism in Viet Nam, and the rolling out of new skills for green power generation in Mozambique.