



**Advancing Decent Work and
Labour Standards in Somalia:
A Practical Guide for
Implementing ILO Conventions**

Index

INTRODUCTION.....	1
SECTION 1: TRIPARTITE CONSULTATION AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE (ILO CONVENTION NO.144).....	3
SECTION 2: SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WORKERS AND FAMILIES.....	6
SECTION 3: HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK (ILO CONVENTIONS 187 AND 155).....	10
SECTION 4: ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE (ILO CONVENTION 190).....	13
SECTION 5: STRENGTHENING LABOUR INSTITUTIONS IN SOMALIA.....	16
CONCLUSIONS.....	19
APPENDICES.....	20

INTRODUCTION

This manual has been carefully developed to assist in implementing key International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions ratified on 6 April 2021. It reflects Somalia's commitment to improving labour standards, promoting decent work and ensuring the protection and well-being of workers across the country. The conventions - focused on tripartite consultation and social dialogue (ILO Convention No. 144), violence and harassment in the workplace (ILO Convention No. 190) and health and safety at work (ILO Conventions Nos. 187 and 155) - provide a vital framework for fostering an equitable and inclusive labour environment.

This manual was designed to help Somalia through its tripartite constituents: the Federal Government of Somalia, the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry. These three entities, representing government, workers and employers respectively, are central to ensuring the conventions are effectively implemented and tailored to Somalia's unique context.

The development of this manual was generously supported by Nexus Emilia Romagna and the Italian trade union CGIL, with the backing of the **Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AICS)**. This collaborative effort aims to empower all Somali stakeholders with practical tools, actionable steps and best practices for adopting these conventions and translating them into measurable progress on the ground.

The manual is not just a guide but a transformative tool designed to empower the Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry to address labour challenges, advance workers' rights and create safe, fair and productive workplaces. By fostering compliance with international labour standards, raising awareness among stakeholders and offering practical solutions, the manual seeks to create a solid foundation for lasting improvements in Somalia's labour market.

Scope and Relevance

The manual focuses on three essential ILO conventions, each addressing critical aspects of labour standards and worker protection:

1. **ILO Convention No. 144 (Tripartite Consultation and Social Dialogue):** This convention underscores the importance of meaningful consultation among the government, employers and

workers. Social dialogue serves as a powerful mechanism for consensus-building, fostering mutual understanding and ensuring inclusive decision-making that benefits all parties.

2. **ILO Convention No. 190 (Violence and Harassment in the Workplace):** Violence and harassment in the workplace undermine productivity, mental health and overall morale. This convention provides a framework for eliminating such behaviours, promoting gender equality and ensuring every worker feels safe and respected at work.
3. **ILO Conventions Nos. 187 and 155 (Health and Safety at Work):** Ensuring workers' health and safety is a cornerstone of decent work. These conventions define the obligations of employers and governments to minimise workplace hazards, prevent accidents and promote both physical and psychological well-being.

Alignment with Regional and Global Goals

The implementation of ILO conventions in Somalia aligns with broader regional and international frameworks, including:

- Supporting Somalia's adherence to AU labour goals strengthens its role in regional economic development.
- The conventions contribute directly to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), as well as SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

This manual's scope is specifically tailored to Somalia's socio-economic and labour realities. It acknowledges the challenges of a predominantly informal workforce, limited institutional capacity and the lingering impacts of conflict and instability. By aligning with international standards, the manual provides actionable, context-specific solutions for advancing labour rights and improving workplace conditions.

Somalia's Labour Landscape

Somalia's labour market is dynamic yet faces significant challenges. Most workers are employed in informal sectors such as agriculture, construction and small-scale trade. While these sectors are vital to the economy, they often lack formal protections, leaving workers vulnerable to exploitation and unsafe conditions.

The absence of robust labour institutions, weak enforcement of labour laws and limited access to social protection systems exacerbate these vulnerabilities. Gender inequality is a pressing issue, with women often excluded from decision-making roles and facing heightened risks of harassment and discrimination. Furthermore, the lack of health and safety measures contributes to workplace accidents and occupational illnesses, creating significant challenges for the workforce.

The ratification of ILO conventions provides an opportunity to address these systemic issues. The manual highlights the importance of social dialogue, as promoted under Convention No. 144, to foster collaboration between the Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Social dialogue creates an environment where stakeholders can work together to design policies and initiatives that reflect the realities of Somalia's labour market.

Similarly, the adoption of health and safety measures, as outlined in Conventions Nos. 187 and 155, is critical for reducing workplace hazards. This manual provides practical tools for employers to assess risks, implement safety protocols and promote a culture of prevention. The health and well-being of workers are essential for ensuring economic growth and resilience in Somalia.

Addressing violence and harassment in the workplace, as required by Convention No. 190, is equally vital. This manual offers guidance on identifying, preventing and addressing workplace violence and harassment, with a particular emphasis on gender dynamics. By promoting equal opportunities, recognition and leadership roles for women, Somalia can advance gender equity and foster more inclusive workplaces.

SECTION 1: TRIPARTITE CONSULTATION AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE (ILO CONVENTION NO. 144)

Understanding Tripartite Consultation

Tripartite consultation is a foundational mechanism of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that facilitates collaboration among three key actors in the world of work: government, employers and workers. It is built on principles of equality, participation and mutual respect, ensuring that decisions on labour-related matters are inclusive and reflect the interests of all stakeholders. In the context of Somalia, tripartite consultation serves as a critical tool to strengthen the country's labour governance, address workplace challenges and promote the rights and responsibilities of all parties.

Key principles of tripartite consultation include:

- **Inclusiveness:** Ensuring that all stakeholders - government, employers and workers - have a voice in policy discussions.
- **Consensus-building:** Fostering agreement through dialogue and negotiation rather than unilateral decision-making.
- **Transparency:** Promoting openness and accountability in decision-making processes.

The Role of Government, Employers and Trade Unions in Somalia

- **The Government:** As the policymaker and regulator, the Federal Government of Somalia plays a leading role in initiating and supporting tripartite consultations. Its responsibilities include creating an enabling environment for dialogue, ensuring adherence to international labour standards and enforcing the outcomes of consultations.
- **Employers:** Represented by the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, employers contribute to consultations by providing insights into economic realities, business conditions and the challenges they face in implementing labour laws. Their involvement is essential for ensuring that labour policies are practical and beneficial to the economy.
- **Trade Unions:** Represented by the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), trade unions bring the voices of workers to the table. They advocate for fair labour practices, improved working conditions and the protection of workers' rights. FESTU's role is particularly significant in Somalia, where workers in informal and precarious jobs often lack representation.

Tools and Best Practices

Effective tripartite consultation relies on structured and well-functioning mechanisms that encourage dialogue and collaboration. In the Somali context, some key mechanisms include:

1. Establishing joint committees composed of representatives from the government, employers and workers to address specific labour issues. For example, a National Labour Advisory Committee could be formed to discuss policy reforms and monitor progress on ILO conventions.
2. Organising regular roundtable discussions to provide an open platform for stakeholders to share their concerns, ideas and feedback. These forums can be thematic, focusing on issues like health and safety, social protection, or gender equality in the workplace.

3. Conducting capacity-building activities to strengthen the negotiation and advocacy skills of all parties involved. Such initiatives can empower stakeholders to engage more effectively in the consultation process.

Establishing Platforms for Participatory Decision-Making

Participatory decision-making is key to the success of tripartite consultations. To achieve this, the following approaches can be adopted:

- Developing online platforms where stakeholders can share information, track the progress of discussions and provide feedback.
- Tailoring consultations to specific industries, such as agriculture, construction, or trade, to address their unique challenges and opportunities.
- Involving local communities in consultations to ensure that the voices of informal workers and marginalised groups are heard.

Implementation Roadmap

The successful integration of tripartite consultation into national and workplace policies in Somalia requires a strategic and phased approach:

1. Building Institutional Capacity

- Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to lead and coordinate tripartite consultations.
- Provide training for representatives from the government, employers and trade unions to enhance their understanding of ILO Convention No. 144 and the principles of social dialogue.

2. Developing Legal and Policy Frameworks

- Incorporate tripartite consultation mechanisms into national labour laws and policies.
- Develop guidelines and protocols to formalise the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the consultation process.

3. Establishing Regular Consultation Mechanisms

- Institutionalise regular meetings of a National Labour Advisory Committee or similar body to discuss and address labour issues.
- Set up sectoral committees to address specific challenges faced by industries such as agriculture, fisheries and construction.

4. Promoting Awareness and Inclusivity

- Launch public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of tripartite consultation and its benefits for the Somali workforce and economy.
- Ensure that the consultation process is inclusive by actively involving informal workers, women and other marginalised groups.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Develop a monitoring framework to track the outcomes of consultations and assess their impact on labour policies and practices.
- Conduct periodic evaluations to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the consultation process remains effective and relevant.

SECTION 2: SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WORKERS AND FAMILIES

Social protection is a cornerstone of sustainable development and decent work in Somalia. By addressing vulnerabilities, reducing inequalities and enhancing resilience, effective social protection systems can transform the lives of workers and their families. This section provides the tools, strategies and roadmap to guide Somalia's tripartite constituents - Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry - in building a comprehensive and inclusive social protection system that leaves no one behind. Through collaborative efforts and a commitment to equity and justice, Somalia can create a labour market that supports its people and fosters long-term prosperity.

Understanding Social Protection

Social protection encompasses a range of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty, vulnerability and inequality by providing security and support to workers and their families. In Somalia, where poverty levels are high and informal employment is widespread, social protection is essential for building resilience and ensuring access to basic services such as healthcare, education and income security.

Social protection serves as both a safety net and a springboard for economic and social development. For workers, it offers security against risks such as illness, unemployment and workplace injuries, enabling them to focus on productivity and innovation. For families, it ensures that children can access education and healthcare, creating opportunities for future generations.

Key Challenges in Somalia

Somalia faces several challenges in delivering effective social protection. The predominance of informal employment means that many workers are excluded from formal social protection systems. Women, in particular, often face barriers to accessing benefits, leaving them vulnerable to economic shocks.

Institutional capacity is another major issue. Government agencies tasked with implementing social protection programs often lack the resources and technical expertise to reach the population effectively. This is further complicated by Somalia's economic and political instability, which disrupts program delivery and limits funding for social protection initiatives.

Tools and Good Practices for Ensuring Social Protection

To address these challenges, Somalia can adopt a range of tools and practices tailored to its specific context. Establishing social insurance schemes, such as pensions, maternity leave and disability benefits, is a key step. These contributory programs can be designed to include informal workers through simplified registration processes and flexible contribution options.

Social assistance programs, such as cash transfers and food aid, can provide immediate support to the most vulnerable groups. Leveraging technology, particularly mobile money platforms, can improve

the efficiency and transparency of these programs, ensuring that benefits reach the intended recipients.

Labour market programs, including vocational training and public works initiatives, can enhance workers' skills and create employment opportunities. These programs not only provide income but also contribute to community development by building infrastructure and services.

Community-based approaches are also effective in Somalia, where local networks often play a central role in supporting vulnerable populations. Collaborating with trade unions, civil society organisations and local leaders can help design and deliver programs that reflect the needs of specific communities.

Promoting Gender-Inclusive Social Protection

Women in Somalia often face additional barriers to accessing social protection, making targeted measures essential. Specific initiatives should include:

- Develop policies that provide paid maternity leave and ensure job security for mothers.
- Implement vocational training and small business grants for women, particularly in rural areas.
- Establish community-based childcare services to enable women to participate in the labour market.
- Promote understanding of gender equality and women's rights in the workplace, targeting both employers and workers.

Best Practices in Social Protection

The Baxnaano Project, launched by the Federal Government of Somalia in partnership with the World Bank, exemplifies how a well-structured social protection initiative can address poverty and build resilience in vulnerable communities.

Meaning "uplifting" in Somali, Baxnaano represents the country's first large-scale effort to establish a formal social safety net system. The project provides direct cash transfers to poor households, focusing on families with children under five. This approach not only addresses immediate needs

like food security but also promotes long-term developmental outcomes, such as improved health and education for children.

The project leverages mobile money platforms to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, even in remote areas. Each eligible household receives \$20 per month, disbursed quarterly, enabling families to meet basic needs. By targeting the most vulnerable populations, Baxnaano has reduced reliance on emergency aid and fostered greater resilience to shocks, such as droughts and economic instability.

Baxnaano highlights the importance of collaboration between national institutions and international partners. It also demonstrates the potential of digital solutions to overcome logistical challenges in delivering social protection services. For Somalia, Baxnaano serves as a foundational model for expanding and institutionalising social protection systems nationwide.

Learning from successful models in other countries can help Somalia strengthen its social protection systems. For instance, Kenya's voluntary pension scheme for informal workers has significantly increased coverage by offering flexible and accessible options. This approach could be adapted to Somalia's context, with support from trade unions and cooperatives.

Public-private partnerships have proven effective in improving service delivery. In Somalia, these partnerships could involve mobile money providers to streamline the distribution of social assistance. Similarly, Rwanda's emphasis on gender-inclusive policies, such as maternity benefits and economic empowerment programs for women, provides a model for reducing gender disparities in access to social protection.

Implementation Roadmap

Building an effective social protection system in Somalia requires a strategic and phased approach. The first step is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to design, implement and monitor programs. This includes training personnel, developing technical expertise and establishing clear lines of accountability.

A comprehensive policy framework is essential for guiding social protection efforts. This framework should define the objectives, scope and mechanisms for delivering benefits, ensuring alignment with international labour standards. It must also prioritise inclusivity, with specific measures to reach women, informal workers and other marginalised groups.

Collaboration with international organisations, such as the ILO and UN agencies, can provide technical and financial support for program development. Partnerships with trade unions and employers are equally important for ensuring that programs are practical and widely accepted.

Public awareness campaigns can help workers and employers understand the importance of social protection and how to access available services. These campaigns should use multiple platforms, including radio, social media and community meetings, to reach diverse audiences.

Monitoring and evaluation systems must be established to assess the impact of social protection programs and ensure continuous improvement. These systems should include indicators such as coverage rates, benefit adequacy and program efficiency, providing data for evidence-based decision-making.

SECTION 3: HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK (ILO CONVENTIONS 187 AND 155)

Health and safety at work are fundamental to achieving decent work and sustainable development in Somalia. By addressing risks, enforcing standards and promoting a culture of prevention, Somalia can protect its workforce and improve economic resilience. This section of the manual provides practical tools, strategies and a roadmap to guide the Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry in fostering safer workplaces. With collective effort and commitment, Somalia can build a future where every worker has the right to return home safely and in good health at the end of the day.

Understanding Health and Safety at Work

Health and safety at work encompass measures designed to protect workers from hazards, prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and ensure a safe and healthy working environment. In Somalia, where many industries such as construction, agriculture and fishing operate in high-risk settings, health and safety are not only critical for worker well-being but also for economic productivity and sustainability.

ILO Conventions Nos. 187 and 155 provide a framework for creating workplace safety standards that address both physical and mental health. For Somalia, these conventions represent an

opportunity to institutionalise practices that mitigate risks, foster a culture of prevention and promote accountability among employers and workers alike.

Key Challenges in Somalia

Somalia's unique context presents several challenges to implementing effective health and safety practices. Informal employment dominates the labour market, leaving many workers without access to even the most basic protections. Limited awareness about occupational risks and safety standards among both employers and workers further exacerbates the issue.

Resource constraints are another significant barrier, with many workplaces lacking the equipment, infrastructure and financial resources needed to implement safety measures. Gender disparities in the workforce also introduce specific health and safety concerns for women, particularly in agriculture and domestic work, where protections are often minimal or absent.

Tools and Practices for Ensuring a Safe and Healthy Workplace

To address these challenges, Somalia must adopt practical tools and practices tailored to its labour environment. Risk assessments are a key starting point, enabling employers to identify hazards in the workplace and implement strategies to mitigate them. These assessments should be routine and involve input from workers to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) is another critical measure. Employers should ensure that workers have access to helmets, gloves, safety boots and other essential gear appropriate for their specific industries. Alongside this, training on how to use PPE effectively is vital to maximise its benefits.

Developing workplace health and safety policies is a foundational step. These policies should outline roles and responsibilities, establish safety protocols and provide a clear framework for reporting and addressing incidents. Integrating these policies into employment contracts ensures accountability and compliance.

Worker participation is essential for creating a culture of safety. Establishing workplace safety committees that include representatives from management and workers fosters collaboration and empowers employees to take an active role in identifying and solving safety issues. Regular training

sessions and workshops further build awareness and skills, ensuring that everyone in the workplace is equipped to contribute to a safe environment.

Best Practices for Somalia

Somalia can draw from successful practices implemented in other contexts. For example, locally tailored safety guidelines, such as those developed in Kenya for informal workers, can provide practical solutions for Somalia's informal workforce. These guidelines often focus on cost-effective and accessible measures, such as using locally available materials for PPE.

Collaboration with trade unions like FESTU is another effective approach. Trade unions can advocate for stronger safety regulations, provide training for their members and monitor compliance in workplaces. Sector-specific safety programs are particularly relevant, as they address the unique risks faced by workers in industries such as agriculture, fishing and construction.

Community-based safety initiatives are also valuable, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. Engaging local communities to develop safety protocols and establish emergency response teams ensures that interventions are context-sensitive and sustainable.

Implementation Roadmap

To institutionalise health and safety practices, Somalia must first develop a national framework aligned with ILO Conventions Nos. 187 and 155. This framework should outline safety standards, define employer and worker responsibilities and provide mechanisms for enforcement.

Strengthening labour inspection systems is a critical next step. Labour inspectors must be trained to identify safety risks, assess compliance and provide technical support to employers. Equipping inspectors with the necessary tools and resources, such as risk assessment checklists and mobile data collection systems, enhances their effectiveness.

Awareness campaigns are essential for fostering a culture of prevention. These campaigns can use radio, social media and community outreach to educate workers and employers about the importance of health and safety, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

Integrating health and safety training into vocational education and on-the-job training programs ensures that workers are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to protect themselves and their colleagues. Certification for completing these training programs can serve as an incentive for employers and workers to participate.

Monitoring and evaluation systems must be established to track workplace incidents, assess the effectiveness of interventions and identify areas for improvement. These systems provide data that can inform policy adjustments and ensure continuous progress.

SECTION 4: ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE (ILO CONVENTION 190)

Violence and harassment in the workplace are not just violations of workers' rights - they are barriers to productivity, equity and social progress. By implementing the tools, practices and roadmap outlined in this section, Somalia can create safer, more inclusive workplaces. The Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry must work together to foster a culture of respect, dignity and accountability. Addressing workplace violence and harassment is a crucial step toward achieving decent work and sustainable development for all workers in Somalia.

Understanding Violence and Harassment in the Workplace

Violence and harassment in the workplace are pervasive issues that harm workers' dignity, well-being and productivity. Defined under ILO Convention No. 190, these behaviours include physical, psychological and sexual abuse, as well as threats and discriminatory practices that undermine a safe and respectful work environment. In Somalia, where workplace protections are limited and cultural norms can discourage victims from speaking out, addressing violence and harassment is essential for creating equitable and supportive workplaces.

These issues disproportionately affect women, who often face gender-based violence and harassment in sectors such as domestic work, agriculture and informal employment. Workers in these situations frequently lack access to mechanisms for reporting abuses or seeking support. Implementing protective measures is not just about compliance with international standards - it is about ensuring that every worker in Somalia feels safe, respected and valued.

Challenges Facing Somalia

Somalia faces specific challenges in tackling workplace violence and harassment. Gender-based violence remains a significant issue, with women bearing the brunt of discriminatory practices and harassment in many industries. Societal stigma further complicates the issue, as victims are often discouraged from reporting abuses due to fear of backlash or ostracisation.

The lack of comprehensive laws and enforcement mechanisms exacerbates the problem, leaving many workers unprotected. Awareness about workers' rights and the responsibilities of employers under ILO Convention No. 190 is also low, particularly in the informal sector, which employs a large percentage of Somalia's workforce. These challenges highlight the urgent need for a concerted effort to combat violence and harassment in the workplace.

Tools and Practices to Combat Violence and Harassment

Addressing workplace violence and harassment requires clear and enforceable policies. Employers and organisations should develop comprehensive workplace policies that define unacceptable behaviours and establish zero-tolerance standards. These policies must include clear procedures for reporting incidents and outline the consequences for perpetrators.

Confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms are essential for ensuring that victims feel safe coming forward. Employers should provide hotlines or designate officers to handle complaints discreetly and effectively. These systems should protect victims from retaliation and offer support throughout the process.

Training and awareness programs are another critical tool. Employers, managers and workers must be trained to recognise, prevent and respond to incidents of violence and harassment. Public awareness campaigns can challenge harmful cultural norms and empower workers to speak out against abuse.

Promoting gender equality is also key to addressing harassment and violence. This includes ensuring equal pay, creating opportunities for women in leadership roles and establishing women's committees in workplaces and unions to advocate for gender-specific concerns. By fostering an inclusive culture, workplaces can reduce the prevalence of harassment and discrimination.

Best Practices for Somalia

Somalia can learn from effective approaches adopted in other contexts. For instance, Rwanda's establishment of gender desks in workplaces and police stations provides a model for addressing complaints of violence and harassment. Adapting this model to Somalia's labour context could help create dedicated units to handle workplace-related issues, offering victims a safe space to report incidents.

Collaboration with religious and cultural leaders is another effective strategy. In Somalia, these leaders hold significant influence and can play a pivotal role in promoting messages of respect and dignity in the workplace. Engaging them in awareness campaigns can help shift societal attitudes and reduce stigma for victims.

Grassroots advocacy is particularly important for reaching informal workers and those in remote areas. Partnering with community organisations and trade unions like FESTU can help ensure that all workers have access to resources and support systems tailored to their needs.

Implementation Roadmap

To effectively address workplace violence and harassment, Somalia must first prioritise legislative and policy reforms. This includes working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to draft laws and regulations that align with ILO Convention No. 190. These laws should define violence and harassment clearly, establish penalties and outline the responsibilities of employers and workers.

Building institutional capacity is also critical. Labour inspectors and legal professionals need training to identify, investigate and respond to cases of workplace violence and harassment. Strengthening the capacity of trade unions like FESTU to advocate for workers and support victims is equally important.

Raising awareness is an essential step in changing workplace culture. Nationwide campaigns should educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities, while also addressing the cultural norms that enable harassment and violence. Using mass media, social media and community meetings can help reach a wide audience.

Establishing support systems for victims is vital for creating an environment of trust and accountability. Victims need access to counselling, legal aid and medical support to rebuild their

confidence and re-enter the workforce. Reintegration programs can also help ensure they are not stigmatised or marginalised.

Finally, monitoring and accountability are crucial for ensuring long-term progress. Developing systems to track incidents of violence and harassment and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of policies and programs, will help identify gaps and make necessary improvements.

SECTION 5: STRENGTHENING LABOUR INSTITUTIONS IN SOMALIA

Strengthening labour institutions is not merely a bureaucratic exercise but a transformative step toward creating a fair, safe and productive labour market in Somalia. By addressing structural challenges, building capacity and fostering collaboration, these institutions can fulfil their mandate to protect workers' rights and promote decent work. The Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry must work together to implement the strategies outlined in this section, ensuring that labour institutions become agents of positive change. With strong and effective institutions, Somalia can build a labour market that supports its people, aligns with international standards and contributes to a more equitable and prosperous future.

Understanding the Role of Labour Institutions

Labour institutions play a vital role in shaping a country's labour governance system. These institutions, which include government ministries, labour inspectorates, trade unions and employer organisations, are the pillars that uphold workers' rights, regulate employment conditions and foster a balanced labour market. In Somalia, strengthening these institutions is an urgent priority, given the country's predominantly informal workforce and limited enforcement of labour laws.

Effective labour institutions are not only enforcers of regulations but also key actors in fostering trust and collaboration between workers, employers and the government. For Somalia, where informal employment dominates and workers often face unsafe and exploitative conditions, these institutions have a crucial responsibility to protect rights, resolve disputes and implement international labour standards like those in the recently ratified ILO conventions. Strong institutions are a cornerstone for achieving decent work, economic stability and long-term social development.

Challenges Facing Labour Institutions in Somalia

Labour institutions in Somalia face several structural and operational challenges that hinder their effectiveness. Many institutions operate with limited funding, outdated infrastructure and insufficiently trained personnel, making it difficult to enforce regulations or provide essential services. The dominance of informal employment further complicates their work, as these workers often fall outside the purview of traditional labour laws and protections.

Gender inequality also poses a challenge, with women often underrepresented in leadership roles and vulnerable to exploitation. Additionally, trade union membership remains low, weakening workers' ability to advocate for improved conditions collectively. These challenges are compounded by economic and political instability, which limits the government's ability to prioritise and invest in labour institutions.

Tools and Strategies for Strengthening Labour Institutions

Building effective labour institutions requires a multifaceted approach that addresses capacity gaps, promotes collaboration and integrates modern practices. Capacity building is a critical first step, involving the training of labour inspectors, mediators and other officials to improve their understanding of labour laws and enforcement practices. By equipping these personnel with up-to-date knowledge and tools, institutions can more effectively regulate working conditions and resolve disputes.

Developing a robust labour inspection system is another essential strategy. Regular workplace inspections, supported by clear reporting mechanisms, can help identify and address violations. This system should also extend to the informal sector, where many workers currently lack protections. Engaging workers and employers in the design and implementation of inspection frameworks ensures relevance and compliance.

Collaboration between stakeholders, particularly the Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, is fundamental to strengthening labour institutions. By working together, these actors can establish joint committees and forums to address specific labour challenges and develop inclusive policies. Digital tools, such as online reporting platforms, can further modernise institutions and improve their accessibility and efficiency.

Best Practices for Labour Institution Strengthening

Learning from successful models in other countries can provide valuable insights for Somalia. For example, Rwanda's labour reforms demonstrate the impact of investing in labour inspection systems and training programs. Somalia can adapt these practices, focusing on tailoring solutions to its unique cultural and economic context.

Another promising approach is fostering regional cooperation, where Somalia can engage with neighbouring countries and international organisations for technical support and knowledge exchange. This collaboration can strengthen institutional capacity and ensure alignment with international labour standards. Promoting social dialogue through regular forums and consultations with workers, employers and the government is another proven method for building consensus and trust in the labour market.

Implementation Roadmap

Strengthening Somalia's labour institutions requires a clear and actionable roadmap. The first step involves updating labour laws to align with international standards, ensuring they provide a strong foundation for institutional reforms. This should be accompanied by targeted capacity-building initiatives, including training programs for labour inspectors, trade union leaders and employer representatives.

Securing funding is critical to these efforts. Mobilising resources from domestic and international sources, including partners like the ILO, **Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AICS) and other development partners**, can help address resource constraints. Investments should prioritise infrastructure modernisation, digital tools and the recruitment of skilled personnel.

Collaborating with employers and trade unions is essential for successful implementation. The Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry can help ensure that employers understand their responsibilities under labour laws, while FESTU can represent workers' interests and advocate for fair practices. Outreach programs to engage informal workers and raise awareness about their rights should also be prioritised.

Monitoring and evaluation are key to sustaining progress. Establishing performance metrics and regularly assessing the effectiveness of labour institutions will ensure that reforms remain impactful and responsive to the changing needs of the labour market. Feedback from workers, employers and other stakeholders can help refine policies and address emerging challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

The successful implementation of Somalia's recent ratifications of key ILO conventions marks an important milestone in advancing workers' rights, fostering social dialogue and creating safer and more equitable workplaces. This manual, designed to guide the Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, serves as a practical tool for turning these commitments into measurable progress.

Through focused efforts in tripartite consultation, social protection, workplace safety, combating violence and harassment and strengthening labour institutions, Somalia has the opportunity to transform its labour market. These reforms are not only essential for improving working conditions but also for promoting economic stability, gender equality and social cohesion in the country.

The manual's emphasis on monitoring and evaluation ensures that these initiatives remain dynamic, inclusive and responsive to the needs of workers and employers. By adopting a collaborative approach and leveraging the tools, strategies and roadmaps outlined in each section, Somalia can build a labour environment that reflects the principles of decency, fairness and opportunity for all.

Moving forward, it is essential for the Government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry to sustain their commitment to these reforms, engage stakeholders at every level and continuously strive for improvements. With the support of international partners and the collective will of Somali society, these efforts will contribute to a brighter and more equitable future for the country's workforce.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Glossary of Key Terms

- **Decent Work:** Work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families [<https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/decent-work>].
- **ILO Conventions:** International labour standards established by the International Labour Organisation to promote rights at work and social justice [<https://www.ilo.org/international-labour-standards/conventions-protocols-and-recommendations>].
- **Tripartite Consultation:** A mechanism involving representatives of government, employers and workers to ensure inclusive decision-making on labour matters [<https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/social-dialogue-and-tripartism>].
- **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS):** Measures and practices that ensure the physical and mental well-being of workers in the workplace [<https://www.ilo.org/resource/occupational-safety-and-health-osh>].

Appendix 2: Templates and Tools

- **Sample Workplace Safety Policy:** A template for employers to develop their own health and safety protocols.
- **Complaint Reporting Form:** A form for workers to report incidents of violence, harassment, or unsafe working conditions.
- **Risk Assessment Checklist:** A tool for employers to identify and address workplace hazards.

Appendix 3: Case Studies and Best Practices

- **Kenya's Informal Worker Pension Scheme:** A model for extending social protection to informal workers.
- **Rwanda's Gender Desk Initiative:** A system for addressing gender-based violence in the workplace [<https://www.migeprof.gov.rw/>].
- **Somalia's Cash Transfer Programs:** An example of leveraging mobile technology for social assistance [<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P171346>].

Appendix 4: Resources and Contacts

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Somalia): [<https://molsa.gov.so/>]
- Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU): [<https://www.festu.org/>]
- Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry: [<https://somalichamber.so/>]
- Nexus Emilia Romagna: [<https://www.nexusemiliaromagna.org/>]
- ILO Country Office: [<https://www.ilo.org/ilo-office-addis-ababa>]

Appendix 5: Relevant ILO Conventions

- **Convention No. 144:** Tripartite Consultation [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C144].
- **Convention No. 190:** Violence and Harassment in the Workplace [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3999810].
- **Convention Nos. 187 and 155:** Health and Safety at Work [<https://www.ilo.org/resource/c187-promotional-framework-occupational-safety-and-health-convention-2006>;https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312300].

This manual is designed to be a living document, evolving as Somalia’s labour landscape develops. By continuously updating and adapting the tools and strategies outlined here, Somalia can remain on the path to achieving decent work for all.

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