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**ILO LAUNCHES INITIATIVE FOR “PROMOTING THE EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION”**

BEIJING (ILO News) - To augment efforts of the Government Of China for the promotion of the rights of the disabled, as reiterated in the 11th five year plan, the ILO has launched a project entitled “Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation”. Building on its earlier work already accomplished in China for persons with disabilities, the ILO in collaboration with national partners will implement the project and conduct activities aimed at enhancing capacities of government, employers’, workers’ organizations, disabled persons’ and NGOs’, to enable them promote legislation on employment of persons with disabilities, as well as improve employment environment that allows the increase of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in China. The project, funded by the Government of Ireland, is part of ILO’s work in twelve countries of the world. In Asia and the Pacific region, China, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam are the participating countries, while the remaining eight are in the African region.

The development objective of the project, to enhance the employability and employment prospects of persons with disabilities, contributes to the reduction of poverty and the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in the countries concerned. Furthermore, it supports the growing global movement towards promoting the integration of job-seekers with disabilities into competitive employment, rather than arranging for them to work in special centers. This movement has received fresh impulse through the declaration of several regional decades of persons with disabilities (2<sup>nd</sup> Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 1999-2008 and Arab Decade of Disabled People, 2004-2013), the adoption of the ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace in 2001 and its widespread dissemination, and the preparation of a new UN Convention to Protect and Promote the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

This trend is reflected in legislation and policies concerning the training and employment of persons with disabilities introduced by many countries and also in the increasing explicit mention of workers with disabilities in the general labour legislation. While the aim of many recent laws and policies is to promote the integration of disabled persons into the open labour market, evidence indicates that the impact of these laws and policies has been limited to date. To improve the effectiveness of existing laws and policies, more attention needs to be given to the

introduction of effective implementation measures, as well the review of existing legislation. Governments also need to consult the social partners and organizations of disabled persons in the process of developing policy measures to give effect to laws.

In China, the project will be implemented in cooperation with the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS) involving in particular the Department of International Cooperation. China's Enterprise Confederation (CEC) and the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) represent key stakeholders in the project development and implementation. A National Project Advisory Group (NPAG-China) has been established to guide and facilitate project activities. During its implementation over a period of two years, the project will, conduct national overview of employment legislation in China concerning disabled persons; conduct training activities through workshops and seminars to build capacities of stake holders and policy makers hold training activities for key stake holders to contribute to the development and implementation of effective legislation and policy; materials such as Guidelines, manuals, training and promotional materials concerning employment policies and legislation will be prepared, adapted and translated for use in China and communication strategy engaging the media so as to increase public awareness of the rights and work capacity of persons with disabilities and to promote their social and economic inclusion, including targeted initiatives concerning their employability and employment.

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