

**Launch of the Project to
Prevent Trafficking for Labour Exploitation (CP-TING II)
March 17, 2010, Beijing**

**Opening Remarks
by Ms. Ann Herbert,
Director, ILO Office for China and Mongolia**

Good afternoon,

Thank you Ms. Meng for your welcoming remarks!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to speakers and to participants from national ministries, ILO social partners, the international community, and representatives of girls and young migrant women.

Today, I am extremely pleased to announce a new and important partnership for the ILO, which recognizes our longstanding relationship with the All-China Women's Federation, and welcomes the opportunity to work more closely with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in a new project entitled Preventing Trafficking for Labour Exploitation.

By way of introduction, the ILO is a specialised agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. Within the UN and world community, the ILO has the mandate to set international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations.

As you know trafficking, forced labour and child labour are pressing issues that require global attention. The ILO estimates that world-wide there are 12.4 million victims of forced labour, and within this 2.4 million are trafficked for forced labour and sexual exploitation. Three-quarters of the world's forced labour occurs in the Asia-Pacific region. Forced labour and trafficking represent the underside of globalization and deny people their basic rights and dignity. The exploitation suffered by victims of trafficking is the antithesis of Decent Work advocated by ILO, and detracts from efforts to pursue full, productive, and freely chosen employment in accordance with ILO Employment Policy Convention (No.122).

In China, most trafficking occurs in the context of mass rural-to-urban internal migration. A growing proportion of the migrant worker population is young women. They migrate informally with limited awareness that uninformed and unregulated migration increases the risk of deception or coercion, resulting in sexual exploitation or forced labour conditions.

But we did not always understand it this way. When ILO first started its anti-trafficking partnership with the Women's Federation in Yunnan province in 2000, the public understanding of the nature of human trafficking was limited. Most people thought that trafficking only referred to forced prostitution or the abduction of infants – mainly boys – to sell to childless families. But together we managed to broaden the understanding to include young women migrating for work and vulnerable to labour exploitation and forced labour. Also to acknowledge that adolescent boys can be trafficked, most frequently into workshops and brick kilns.

From our work in Yunnan province, we learned that a preventative approach reduces the risk factors and vulnerabilities of target groups in source, transit, and destination, and enables young migrants to have a clear path to employability and stability. And that prevention involves a systemic and multi-dimensional approach, which enhances its effectiveness as a sustainable solution.

In 2004, we built on the learnings from Yunnan province, and expanded trafficking prevention strategies to five provinces with high migration rates (Guangdong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Hunan, and Henan) as well as to the national level. This marked the beginning of CP-TING –the project to prevent trafficking of girls and young women for labour exploitation in China (2004-2008). Both projects operated within a broader vision of poverty reduction through decent work, and represented concrete commitments on the part of the Chinese government to implement ILO Convention 182 on Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labour (including trafficking), as well as the Minimum Age Convention, 138, and serve to promote application of the Forced Labour Conventions (29 and 105).

Both projects promoted strategies of safe migration, and employment and employability for thousands of young migrant women. In the workplace, the projects supported unions and employers to play a role in rights protection, and

in building a harmonious labour-management environment where young workers can work productively and develop skills. At the final joint-project meeting in 2008, we heard from government at all levels, non-government organisations, beneficiaries, and practitioners that delivery of targeted services to vulnerable groups is a priority within China's development plan, and that CP-TING practices of trafficking prevention are especially relevant. We heard that the 'practices' had moved to the level of commitment that trafficking prevention has been prioritized within the work of the ACWF and that prevention has been mainstreamed within provincial government workplans.

And so today, we acknowledge the beginning of a new phase of programming that builds on the commitments of governments, Women's Federations, ILO social partners, and other agencies. The project to Prevent Trafficking for Labour Exploitation, will also bear the short name of CP-TING, because CP-TING is a recognized brand in pilot provinces for effective trafficking prevention approaches and safe migration. But there is more work to do. China is a large country and we need to expand the good practices to reach more of the young migrating population (including boys, ethnic minorities and left-behind children). ILO research indicates increased vulnerability for women and young people seeking jobs in an environment of economic downturn. Now more than ever we need to take advantage of synergies from international cooperation projects, and broader partnerships with ILO tripartite constituents (government, workers' associations, employers associations) to better protect the human and labour rights of China's migrating youth.

If I may say a word about ILO's partner, the All-China Women's Federation. ACWF represents the rights and interests of women and children across the country, and they are a tireless advocate for gender equality in China, and world wide. For ILO 'Fulian' is an important and engaged member of the ILO China "3+1" dialogue (with tripartite constituents) where they play a lead role in the promotion of gender mainstreaming skills and processes. They are well positioned to work in communities, workplaces, and labour markets across China in effective anti-trafficking partnerships with labour bureaus, employers, and workers associations. We look forward to continuing our important work with you.

May I thank also, the Canadian International Development Agency for their support, not only their financial contribution, but also the experience and

learning they bring from managing a portfolio of labour rights projects in China, and their more than 25 year legacy in China as an important development partner.

I also want to thank the government ministries and agencies present today for your commitment and support, which is key to combating human trafficking in a comprehensive manner.

I appreciate the interest and commitment of the UN agencies and embassies present. We look forward to strengthening our cooperation with you. To representatives of young girls and migrant women, thank you for your participation and experience sharing. Your voices will help to design more services and programs to meet your needs and to prevent more young people from being trafficked for labour exploitation.

I wish the CP-TING Project every success!