

## **Status of Labour and Human Rights in Pakistan in the Context of International Obligations**

Pakistan obtained Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)-Plus facility to export its products in the European Union (EU) markets without duty from January 2014. By accepting GSP+ status, Pakistan has committed to ratification and compliance with 27 international conventions and covenants regarding labour and human rights, environmental protection, good governance and non-discrimination.

While GSP+ status has yielded a significant positive impact on Pakistan's economy in almost four years, however, the country's progress towards improving labour and human rights and other standards did not match the commitment the country made while accepting the GSP+ status. Upon granting the status, the European Union closely observes the state's performance and after every two years, it reviews the progress and presents a report to the European Parliament. Now Pakistan's second review is due in early 2018. In the first review, the EU had raised a number of pertinent issues on the implementation of human rights and labour rights conventions. In the light of the first review, Pakistan had to take serious measures to improve its performance on implementation of all 27 international commitments, especially the human and labour rights conventions.

To discuss the situation regarding implementation of seven human rights related Covenants and Conventions or Declarations and eight Core Labour Rights Conventions of the United Nations bodies, SDPI is organizing a panel discussion at its Twentieth Sustainable Development Conference.

The following key questions will be addressed in this session:

- What is the performance of government's line departments regarding implementation of international treaties?
- What role is the United Nations and its organizations including ILO playing to mobilize the government to get the relevant UN Conventions/Covenants implemented?
- What is the current state of the right of association and collective bargaining in Pakistan amid shrinking role of the trade unions?
- What are the concerns of the employers on improving the labour standards?
- How can the EU and its member countries can play their role in getting international treaties implemented by the countries benefiting from GSP+ status?

Outcomes of the session:

- Generate a tangible discussion on the state of implementation of international treaties and the roles of government, private sector and workers in this regard
- Seek recommendations from all stakeholders on improving the state of human and labour rights standards in the country.

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