



Over 350 Nepali Migrant Workers Assisted By Qatar Development Fund in Past Two Years: IOM

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Kathmandu - Over 350 vulnerable Nepalis, including victims of human trafficking, stranded and irregular migrant workers have been helped to return home from abroad over the past two years through a project implemented by the UN Migration Agency (IOM) and funded by the Qatar Development Fund (QDF.)

The project: 'Return Assistance to Stranded Nepali Migrants,' which ends in January 2018, has provided voluntary return and reintegration assistance to destitute, undocumented Nepali migrants in situations of abuse and exploitation in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, UAE, Oman, Syria, Iraq and Malaysia.

It ensured that almost 90 percent of the returnees got direct assistance on arrival in Nepal, in coordination with the local partner NGOs. Aid included reception, temporary shelter support, psychosocial counselling, medical support, and tracing/reunification with family members.

Over 200 returnees also received a USD 500-equivalent reintegration package. Most used the money for income generation and livelihood support, spending it on their farms, buying livestock, or setting up a small business, like a grocery store, tea shop or tailor. The payment was designed to help them to sustainably reintegrate back into their local community.

National stakeholders met in Kathmandu on 21 Dec at a consultation organized by IOM to discuss the outcomes of the project, best practices, challenges and the way forward on return reintegration assistance for vulnerable migrants.

Over half of all Nepali households now have at least one migrant family member currently abroad or living in Nepal as a returnee, according to data from the Department of Foreign Employment.

Many Nepali migrants suffer abuse and over 6,800 complaints were registered between FY 2014/15 and FY 2016/17 by labour migrants against institutions or individuals regarding fraud and malpractice during their employment process. Over 400 rescue requests were received in FY 2016/17 by the Department of Consular Services.

"While the goal of IOM and its partners is the promotion of the benefits of migration and the inherent dignity and rights of migrants, there nevertheless remains a need to be able to assist those who may have been exploited or otherwise stranded through circumstances beyond their own control," said IOM Chief of Mission Paul Norton speaking at the Inaugural Session of the Consultation meeting.

Qatari Ambassador to Nepal Yousuf Bin Mohammad Al-Hail said, "The State of Qatar spares no effort to support international community to combat human trafficking and its related phenomena such as forced labour, modern day slavery and child labour. It has established the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking with the purpose of unifying efforts of government institutions and civil society in dealing with the phenomenon of human trafficking. The State of Qatar is satisfied with the formal adoption of the Political Declaration about implementation of UN global plan to combat human



trafficking, which is agreed upon thanks to the political will of the member countries in order to engage in consolidated and crucial resolutions to execute the Plan of Action. Recently, the state of Qatar has hosted international conference on combat of human trafficking on 6-7/12/2017.”

He further said, “The State of Qatar has taken a number of measures and procedures in this regard such as issuing of Law No. (15)/2011 about combatting human trafficking which bans human trafficking in all its forms, Law No. (15)/2015 that abolished Kafala (sponsorship) system, and Law No. (15)/2017 regarding domestic workers.

“Government of Nepal has always been very much concerned on the protection of rights and welfare of the Nepalese workers in and away from home,” said the Joint Secretary Bhuwan Acharya of Government of Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment.

He further said, “The Government of Nepal has been able to make several attempts at all global, regional and national levels to make the labour migration safe, managed, orderly, regular and dignified.”

The project also organized an orientation programme for newly appointed Nepali Labour Attachés/Labour Counselors, including officials from the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women Children & Social Welfare, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Department.

The training aimed to strengthen their role in the identification of trafficking victims, referral, return, and reintegration mechanisms. Other trainings included victim protection, referral mechanisms and shelter management for local NGOs and government officials.

The project, which was launched in September 2015, was implemented by the IOM in close coordination with Ministries of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of the Government of Nepal and diplomatic Missions of host countries, Nepali embassies in destination countries, and consulates in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Middle East.

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