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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PROMOTING DECENT FUTURE OF WORK APPROACH WITH A FOCUS ON GENDER EQUALITY

(TREESP1.3. FoW/P-01)

TÜRKIYE

**INTERVENTION 14: ESTABLISHMENT OF FUTURE OF WORK COMMISSION
REPORT OF THE 4th MEETING OF THE FUTURE OF WORK COMMISSION
HELD ON 12 APRIL 2023
MAY 2023**





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1. INTRODUCTION

This Report provides a summary of the 4th Meeting of the Future of Work Commission Meeting, held on 12 April 2023, under Intervention 14 (Establishment of Future of Work Commission).

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Project ToR

The Project's Terms of Reference (ToR) for Intervention 14 require the following:

“Future of Work Commission will be established to discuss new strategies and legislations in accordance with the Future of Work approach. The Commission will be gathering 5 times on a six-monthly basis during the implementation of the operation with the participation of stakeholders, social partners, academicians, professional vocational associations, representatives of the private sector, etc. 50 participants will attend each meeting and will last one day. 10 participants out of 50 will be outside of Ankara. After completion of each meeting, a detailed report will be prepared by the Contractor”.

2.2 MOLSS Focus

The Operation Beneficiary (OB) requested that the 4th Meeting of the FoW Commission should focus on the rebuilding the economic infrastructure in the aftermath of the earthquake which hit eastern Türkiye on 6 February 2023.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

3.1 Venue

The Meeting was held as a physical event at the Ankara Hilton Hotel. As the Meeting was held during the Ramadan period, it began in the early afternoon, and lasted until the early evening when it was followed by an official Iftar. The event was an eligible item in the Project's Incidental Budget and the overall cost of the event was just over 10,000 EUR.



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3.2 Agenda

TAT and OB worked together on the agenda for the Workshop: the final version was as follows:

Time	Focus	Presenter
13.00-13.30	Registration and Coffee Break	
13.30-14.00	Opening Speeches	Mr. Sadettin AKYIL, General Manager Ministry of Labour and Social Security
14.00-15.15	Economic Impact of the Disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Mr. Giovanni Di COLA, Acting Director of ILO Türkiye International Labour Organisations (ILO) ii) Mr. Cengiz DELİBAŞ, Deputy Secretary General Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye iii) Mr. Mustafa IŞIK, Deputy Development Agencies General Manager Ministry of Industry and Technology iv) Mr. Hakkı ŞEKERBAY, Deputy General Manager Ministry of Labour and Social Security
15.15-15.30	COFFEE BREAK	
DISCUSSION SESSIONS		
15.15-17.00	Sectoral Overview Post-Disaster	
17:00-17:15	BREAK	
17.15-18.30	Effects of Earthquake-Related Migration on Working Life	
18.30-19.00	Evaluation and Closing	Mr. Sadettin AKYIL, General Manager Ministry of Labour and Social Security
IFTAR DINNER (starting at 19.30)		

3.3 Participants

TAT drafted an e-invitation to the event which was distributed by OB. **71** participants joined the workshop, representing different organisations and institutions, of which 49 were public sector, 7 were the private sector, and 15 were other institutions/organisations. 14 MoLSS staff were present and 5 persons from TAT. (See Annex 2 for the full list of participants).

Of the total of participants, **57** participants were from Ankara, and **14** participants were from outside of Ankara.



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3.4 Visibility

The Project's visibility materials were displayed:

- A 'spider' was used as a backdrop for the registration table.
- 2 sets of banners (Turkish flag; HRDOS logo; MoLSS logo) were hung in the meeting area;
- Visibility kits were issued to all participants comprising: a bag; notepad; pen; factsheet; folder; USB stick; mug.

4. 4th MEETING OF THE FUTURE OF WORK COMMISSION (FoWC)

4.1 Opening Remarks

The General Manager of Labour, MoLSS, Mr. Sadettin AKYIL, opened the Meeting, welcoming all participants, and making the following comments:

- The Meeting was the 4th in a sequence of Meetings of the Future of Work Commission: previous Meetings had focused on the Youth Employment Strategy; the importance of Care Services; and the transition to a Green Economy;
- The current focus on the aftermath of the 6 February earthquake was highly relevant but the issues were tough;
- Everyone in Türkiye had, to some degree, been affected by the earthquake, with the private sector being especially hard-hit, and all participants at the Meeting had, in some way, provided valuable assistance to the relief efforts following the 6 February earthquake;
- The process of re-building the economic ecosystem should seek to embrace the principles of 'decent' work, and lessons learnt from the past (e.g. the pandemic) with regard to modern working practices should be embraced in the rebuilding processes.

4.1.1 ILO (TÜRKİYE)

The Acting Director of ILO (Türkiye), Mr. Giovanni DI COLA, made the following comments:

- He and his team had been greatly affected by the courage and resilience shown by the Turkish people in the light of the February earthquake;
- ILO had long and deep ties with Türkiye – the Centenary Declaration had been formed in the country which was focused on recovery from the pandemic, but elements of which were very relevant to the earthquake recovery processes;
- ILO was a needs-driven organisation, part of the UN family, and he would seek to ensure that ideas generated during the Meeting were communicated with the relevant UN organisations.

Responding, Mr. AKYIL said that Türkiye was highly experienced in crisis management, and he anticipated close and constructive teamwork with ILO as the earthquake recovery progressed.



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4.1.2. TOBB

The Deputy Secretary-General of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), Mr. Cengiz DELİBAŞ, expressed deep condolences for all earthquake victims and their families, before introducing a PPT (see Annex 3), the main aspects of which were:

- The earthquake had affected 10 provinces of which 4 had suffered catastrophic damage, with 30-40% of buildings and equipment badly damaged or destroyed;
- Exports were important from the affected areas and \$1.1m had since been lost;
- Imported goods were currently being partly offset by using pre-existing stocks;
- The Government plan was to build 350.000 new homes, but there was a need for an additional 150,000 construction workers;
- There was a need for more and better quality temporary shelters – TOBB had donated 1m TL to assist this;
- Education in the region had stalled, health care services was being overwhelmed, and people needed to have hope to counteract inevitable feelings of desperation;
- TOBB's initial specific actions had included:
 - Establishment of a Disaster Coordination Centre;
 - Conducting meetings with all TOBB's provincial teams;
 - Close contact with AFAD to determine immediate pressing needs;
 - Deploying previous experiences in coordinating multi-discipline teams
 - Consideration of a campaign (with Chamber of Commerce) to prioritise and source goods and material from affected areas as part of economic rebuilding, together with monitored financial aid packages.
- Regarding the workforce, TOBB was proposing:
 - Psychological workplace support;
 - Provision of 1 year of financial support based on the unemployment rate with a waiver for social contributions;
 - Use of short-term contracts to encourage workers to remain in the area and not be tempted by offers from neighbouring areas, thereby depleting the quantity and quality of the local labourforce;
 - Better childcare provision to enable more women into the workforce, together with specific skills training targeting potential women workers;
 - Incentives for private investment in the affected areas;
 - Application of discounts and debt-relief to reduce financial concerns.

Mr. AKYIL commended TOBB's actions and proposals and indicated that it would be important to consider further what could be achieved through working closely together.

4.1.3. DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

The Deputy General Manager of Development Agencies, Ministry of Industry and Technology, Mr. Mustafa IŞIK, also expressed condolences to all bereaved families and to all affected by the earthquake. The following are the main elements from his subsequent comments:

- Of the organisation's 26 development agencies, 2 were located in the affected area;



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- The earthquake area represented 10-15% of Türkiye's main economic indicators and 35% of the country's exports;
- The cost of earthquake damage was estimated at 2tr TL;
- The 15,000 registered companies in the area had been canvassed with a questionnaire to assess the the greatest impact of the earthquake: from the 8,500 responses, the following emerged as the key focus for action (with damage estimated at 155bn TL):
 - Repairs to the badly-damaged physical infrastructure (gas pipes, sweage, etc.);
 - Replacement of badly-damaged machinery;
 - Repairs/replace, emt of badly-damaged/detsroyed building;
 - Replacement of damaged holdings of stocks and material.
- Looking forward, development agencies were helping with the development of medium-term strategies, components of which could include:
 - Revival of social and economic life;
 - Increasing rehabilitation activities;
 - Reversing the migration trends away from the affected areas;
 - Expediting the establishment of temporary and permanent worksites (e.g. shopping areas);
 - Provision of workshops for women (aimed at local production supported by state guarantees – ('Rehabilitation through Production')).

Mr. AKYIL expressed gratitude for the work undertaken by the development agencies and indicated that his team had been in regular contact with al the relevant agencies.

4.1.4. MoLSS

The Deputy Director-General of Labour, MoLSS, Mr. Hakkı ŞEKERBAY, added the following:

- The February earthquake had been devastating in socio-economic terms;
- The recovery processes were only achievable through concrete social dialogue;
- MoLSS provincial offices had been quick to react to local needs arising from the earthquake;
- Policy changes relating to workplace and common labour agreements had been introduced during the pandemic and these would provide a valuable basis for the overall recovery efforts;
- Some 20,000 people were now under community care arrangements and medical provision was being fast-tracked with reduced levels of bureaucracy;
- Pre-fabricated housing would soon be established in the affected areas.

5. PARTICIPANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. AKYIL then invited contributions from participants, and the main points to emerge were as follows:

Mr. Can CANÇAKIR from İNGEV, said that research into the needs of SME/mico-businesses broadly agreed with the TOBB findings, but he highlighted the following:

- 61% of equipment had been badly damaged and was in need of repair;
- 40% of entrepreneurs had left the city of Hatay;
- Some 13% of businesses were not covered by earthquake insurance;
- A significant problem was looming in agri-businesses regarding persihable materials (e.g. milk);



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- The textile sector had suffered major losses of equipment, but was not a particular exception and discussion was needed on a sector-by-sector basis to determine an holistic strategy.

Mr. AKYIL agreed that a sector-by-sector analysis was needed and MoLSS could carry this out with possible support from international agencies.

Ms. Gül EFEOĞLU from the Ministry of Industry and Technology, referred to grant-supported projects, in partnership with development agencies, and stated that agri-businesses had immediate need of equipment, fertilisers and containers if agriculture was to recommence in time for the growing season. There was a need to assess the robustness of agricultural cooperatives as these too had suffered.

Ms. Ceyhan KARADUMAN from İNGEV, had visited the affected areas: rural people were reluctant to leave their homes, however, damaged, to live in the provided tents. 'Rural people stay in rural areas' was the clear message from the people she had interviewed.

Ms. Gökçen ÖZKAN from İŞKUR, asked if any detailed work had been undertaken into the impact on the 'grey' economy. Responding, Mr. Can CANÇAKIR from İNGEV said that this had not been done, but was aware that the grey economy engaged more women than men and therefore women would be particularly affected. Continuing, he said that 56% of employers in his research had indicated that they might have to close their businesses.

Mr. Şafak Ceren from SPARK, said financial support needed to be carefully distributed and monitored. Not all of the affected provinces had suffered equally, and not all had been on an equal footing prior to the earthquake. Continuing, he agreed that agri-businesses were a special concern, with many having lost international customers and were facing unreliability of supplies.

Ms. Gülbin ÇALIŞKANTÜRK from Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, said that the main aim for the city was to encourage migrants to return, although accommodation remained an important barrier. Gaziantep had had low unemployment prior to the disaster, although had been experiencing a shortage of higher-skilled workers. She considered that it was not the time for special new initiatives but, rather, to rebuild the previous ecosystems with a systematic, synchronised approach, and to place greater emphasis on value-added production: Gaziantep would, for example, resume and refocus its pre-disaster initiative to transition to a green economy. Gaziantep had established a Redevelopment/Reconstruction Centre to coordinate all these efforts. At a business level, she revealed that some workers were not working night shifts because of fears of a recurrence of the earthquake, and psychological support was needed for them and for many others still in shock. A considerable number of businesses were now working at 25% capacity, with many having lost data, including payroll data, to the earthquake. Agreeing with the previous speaker, she said that her Chamber of Commerce would conduct sectoral research into 10,000 to closely assess needs, and would share the findings with all relevant stakeholders.

Mr, AKYIL undertook to become involved in the new Centre, and to organise a follow-up stakeholder meeting in the city (under the auspices of the Future of Work project).

Mr. Recep ATAR from HAK-İŞ, said that HAK-İŞ had been to the affected areas soon after the disaster and had remained. He agreed that there was an urgent need for labour, with families facing deprivation and poverty because of loss of income. He said that, in such circumstances, it was important to guard against the use of child labour as a 'quick fix' solution by families as a means of survival.

Mr. Lütfi SUNAR from Medeniyet University, said that disasters could herald opportunities, but at a cost. Rebuilding the economic ecosystems should be done with the principles of a decent future of work in mind. There was an urgent need for more and better data to be made available so that data-based solutions could be formulated. He/she cautioned against the application of long-term individual financial support, as this could



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create dependence and inhibit a return to normal working life. Rather, there should be a shift towards corporate support, with priority given to sectors providing greater added value. Also, it was important to be aware that the middle classes were normally the most impacted by disasters, while aid packages frequently overlooked the: this should be considered in short/medium term strategies under consideration.

Mr. Barış İYİAYDIN from TÜRK-İŞ said that, with estimates of 300,000 job losses following from the earthquake, the General Manager of TÜRK-İŞ was proposing increases in the levels of unemployment and disability payments. Agreeing that more and better data was needed, he said that it was important to focus analysis on what enterprises in the region considered that they could not do now, in the aftermath, that they could do previously, to form a basis for strategic interventions.

Ms. Pınar AKÇAYÖZ DE NEVE from UN Women, said that there should be a focus on child and elderly care service provision, especially in Hatay and Antakya.

Ms. Aysel ESKİCİ from Moringantep, said that women's cooperatives had been established, some of which had been gearing up for exports prior to the disaster. Immediate issues included a need for containers for raw materials and machinery, and they were suffering from serious workforce shortages. While they had been badly affected, they could, nevertheless, provide a model for the future, and she urged prioritisation and a form of positive discrimination in their favour.

Mr. Emre İLYAS from UN, said that direct/indirect losses of \$6bn in agriculture were estimated. Key issues to address included the rural populations and the reversal of migration. This accorded with the UN's 3-Year Action Plan, which prioritised: Agricultural Production; Food Security; and Rural Development/Improvement.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Thanking all contributors for their valuable comments and insights, Mr. AKYIL said that many of the ideas could form the basis of future initiatives and could attract appropriate funding.

Continuing, he proposed to establish the Future of Work Commission as a sustainable entity, a sort of Central Board, which could function physically and virtually, which would have a series of sub-Boards, each focused on different issues/areas of interest, and in each of which all participants at the current Meeting could be involved, along with other stakeholders. He also envisaged a website for the entity, which would provide a common workspace/forum, and include a databank into which all stakeholders could add information and documents to be shared with others.

There being no further comments, Mr. AKYIL closed the Meeting, inviting all participants to an Iftar Dinner which was served in the same hotel.

7. DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

The stakeholder's commitment and involvement in the Meeting were very obvious. After the scenario-setting Opening Remarks, a genuine and interactive discussion took place and many useful contributions were made by stakeholders on a wide range of topics relevant to the earthquake recovery processes.

8. CONCLUSION

The 4th Future of Work Commission Meeting showcased MoLSS's interest in coordinating and harnessing stakeholders' commitments to the economic recovery process following the February earthquake. A follow-up



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stakeholder meeting in Gaziantep is not planned (as part of the FoW project's Intervention 13 (New Employment Strategies)).

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