

Country plan Tunisia 2014

1. Introduction

After the Jasmin revolution in January 2011, Tunisia continues to go through many changes. Different actors are looking for a new balance and trade unions, local stakeholders and media are restructuring their positions. Expectations from the populations are high.

On January 14th 2013, two years after the revolution started, a social forum was established by the UTICA (employers' organisation of Tunisia), UGTT (Tunisian General Trade Union) and government with the help of ILO and Belgium labour ministry. The social agreement will change many things in the labour law and the definition of the labour relation. The social contract, covering industrial relations and social protection, employment and vocational training policy, underlines the importance of social dialogue as a genuine pillar of a democratic transition towards greater social justice. The hope is that this will be a step towards tackling unemployment, labour disputes and labour rights that are still threatened across the country.

In February 2014, Tunisia's national assembly approved a new constitution after two years of negotiations. It was a difficult process for both the majority Islamist Ennahda party and the more secular opposition, compounded by the assassination of two prominent opposition politicians.

Common issues found during audits by the FWF audit team concern problems such as freedom of association, wages and occupational health and safety. A specific problem found often relates to (in)security of employment. A common practice in Tunisia is to provide workers with very short contracts for several continuous years. This is even allowed legally, but causes several problems for workers.

Currently, approximately 40 factories are supplying 13 affiliates.

In 2014 the work of FWF in Tunisia will focus on completing the Country Study and the implementation of the FWF Workplace Education Programme in Tunisia. This program works to raise awareness on labour rights and grievance mechanisms. Trainings will be arranged for both management and workers over the year.

FWF will also meet with local stakeholders. The verification will focus on factory audits with the local FWF audit teams and effective complaints handling.

2. Country study

To remain aware of recent trends in the Tunisian garment industry, to support member companies in the process of code implementation, and to contribute to the dissemination of information that supports local stakeholders in their work, FWF will publish a report on the important challenges in the Tunisian garment industry based on stakeholder interviews and desk research.

Deliverables

- Country study published on www.fairwear.org (end of 2014).
- New benchmarks are collected for FWFs wage ladder (Jan-Dec 2014).



3. Audit training and audits

FWF verifies the process of code implementation in production countries. This includes audits done by local audit teams.

Deliverables

- Auditors are updated on new FWF developments (May 2014).
- During 2014, about 15 factory audits will be carried out in Tunisia.

4. Complaints procedure

FWF has a complaints procedure enabling workers or their representatives in garment factories supplying FWF member companies to make complaints about their working conditions and the way the code is implemented. FWF has a local complaints handler.

Deliverables

- The complaints handler is functioning well.
- During factory visits and audits, it is checked if the Code of Labour Practices is posted (Jan - Dec 2014).
- Develop and distribute business cards with information for workers with the complaints handlers telephone number in local languages, which contributes to an increased awareness of FWFs complaints procedure among workers (Jan - Dec 2014).
- Implementation of a pilot program of the Workplace Education Programme (basic module) in at least one factory to explain functioning of FWF complaints hotline and to explain benefits of setting up functional grievance mechanisms. Trainings will be carried out in cooperation with the use of input of local stakeholders (Jan – Dec 2014).

5. Stakeholder consultation and engagement

Cooperation with stakeholders in production countries is aimed at improving labour conditions in the countries where production for affiliates takes place. FWF cooperates with stakeholders in production countries particularly for consultation on FWF policies and on local labour conditions. Thus, the stakeholders FWF works with are organisations that have a role in influencing or shaping the social dialogue in a production country. Stakeholders in production countries can provide policy advice to FWF. Advice can be solicited and unsolicited. FWF will consult the stakeholders in production countries on important issues within their field of competence.

FWF tries to find a workable and effective way to involve local partners in the work of FWF in Tunisia.

For 2014 FWF hopes to meet relevant stakeholders in Tunisia.

Deliverables

- Stakeholder dialogue included in the country study.



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- One visit by verification coordinator (May 2014).
- Input from local stakeholders is integrated into support/advice given to companies in the process of improving working conditions.