

# Consultative Meeting on “Labour Working Hours Amendment Bill 2006”

Friday 7 July 2006, by [UR-REHMAN Zia](#) (Date first published: 5 July 2006).

Karachi,

A consultative meeting on “Labour Working Hours Amendment Bill 2006” was arranged jointly by National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) and Labour Education Foundation (LEF) at local hotel on July 5, at Karachi. The meeting was presided by veteran labour leader and Secretary of NTUF, Saleem Raza and representatives from 18 trade unions federations and labour law experts participated the meeting.

The labour leaders criticized the said bill and stressed the need for launching a united and unified movement against it and to convene a meeting of all labour federations and unions of the country to chalk out a joint strategy.

They were unanimous in opinion that this bill was made without considering rights of labourers and it was aimed at benefiting employers and industrialists. They charged that the procedure for amendments adopted in this regards was totally unconstitutionally and illegal. “These amendments would result into an unprecedented and worst labour exploitation”.

They said the amended laws were made in haste and the flaws have led to certain misinterpretations and misunderstandings that need to be rechecked. The amended laws seem ambiguous because different interpretations have been derived. An increase in the working hours of labour class has created resentment among many but in truth, the twelve hours shift is not mandatory on any worker and a worker cannot make to stay more than eight hours.

Regarding the women, under conditions where it is required for them to stay for longer hours, they are being provided the transport from decided common point. “But what needs to understood is that is house, if it is at a distant and these are important issues but that is the time when she is at the greatest risk of being harassed” Participants said.

Legal experts told dimensions of amendment in said eight laws.

- (1) Workers Compensation Act, 1923
- (2) Factories Act, 1934
- (3) Minimum Wages for Unskilled Workers Ordinance, 1969
- (4) E.O.B.Act, 1976
- (5) W.P Industrial & Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Ordinance, 1968
- (6) Companies Profits (Workers Participation) Act 1968
- (7) W.P Shops and Establishments Ordinance, 1969
- (8) Workers Welfare Fund Ordinance, 1979

This amendment was presented inserting them into Finance Bill and not giving to copy of bills of Members of National Assembly, which is totally illegal and unconstitutional. Also this bill is not presented in the house of Senate, which is beyond the provincial autonomy.

Participants demanded, regarding the minimum wages, that these be increased from Rs 4,000 to Rs 8,000 Per Month so the workers could meet their daily expenses in the face of sky-rocketing inflation. Similarly Pension has increased from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,300, which is not enough in this inflation.

Criticizing the increase of working twelve hours, he termed it a violation of Section 36 of the constitution, which allowed only nine-hour long working day.

In the meeting, to start a countrywide massive movement against these labour-enemy amendments, Privatization Process and other anti-workers laws, an eight-member committee including representative from trade unions federations was formed under conveyance of Saleem Raza.

Participants who expressed their views in the meeting were Saleem Raza from National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), Ghayoor-ul-Hassan, Director, National Institute of Labour and Training (NILAT), Nasir Mansoor from Labour Education Foundation (LEF), Shela Rizwan from Labour Party Pakistan (LPP), Muhammad Ahmed from Pakistan Workers Federation (PWF), M. Sajid from Mutahida Labour Federation (MLF), Karamat Ali from PILER, Habib-ud-din Junedi from All Pakistan Trade Union Organizations (APTUO), Makhdoom Ayub Qureshi from Pakistan Trade Union Federation, Manzoor Razi from Pakistan Railway Workers Federation, Shoukat Ali from All Pakistan Trade Union Congress, Ehsan Ali from Progressive Labour Organization, Ahmed Khan from National Labour Federation (NLF), Fareed Awam from All Pakistan Trade Union Federation, Eminent Labour Law Expert M.A.K Azmati, Akbar Khan, Sherbaz from Progressive Youth Front, LEF Project Coordinators Zia-Ur-Rehman, Zehra Akbar Khan, and others.

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## **In the news**

### **'Amended labour laws need to be rechecked'**

**Daily News, June 6, 2006**

*By our correspondent*

[\[http://thenews.com.pk/arc\\_news.asp?id=4\]](http://thenews.com.pk/arc_news.asp?id=4)

KARACHI: Ghayoor-ul-Hassan, Director National Institute of Labour and Training said that amended labour laws were made in haste and the flaws have led to certain misinterpretations and misunderstandings that need to be rechecked. He was speaking in a consultative meeting on Working Hours Amendment Bill 2006, organised by Labour Education Foundation on Wednesday, in collaboration with the National Trade Union Federation.

Hassan said that the amended laws seem ambiguous because different interpretations have been derived. An increase in the working hours of labour class has created resentment among many but in truth, the twelve-hour shift is not mandatory on any worker and a worker cannot be made to stay for more than eight hours.

However, under conditions where it is required for them to stay for longer hours, they are being provided with transport from decided common points. "But what needs to be understood is that it is

unsafe for a woman to walk to her house, if it is at a distant and these are important issues but that is the time when she is at the greatest risk of being harassed," he said.

Shafiq Ghori, President National Trade Unions Federation also argued that the minimum wages of workers be increased to Rs4,000 a month and participation fund be given to them, regardless of the salary package.

He added that most of the workers continue to receive salaries below the minimum amount of Rs3,000 because they are unaware of the recent law amended for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers and even those employers, who do know of the law fail to implement it because there is no check and balance. Similarly in the recent bill of 2006, pension has increased from Rs1,000 to Rs1,300.

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## **KARACHI: Working hours bill termed contrary to workers' rights**

**Daily Dawn, June 6,2006**

[<http://dawn.com/2006/07/06/local12.htm>]

KARACHI, July 5: Labour leaders at a moot here criticized the Working Hours Amendment Bill 2006 and stressed the need for launching a united and unified movement against it and to convene a meeting of all labour federations and unions of the country to chalk out a joint strategy.

They were speaking at a consultative meeting on "Working Hour Amendment bill 2006", organized jointly by the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) and the Labour Education Foundation (LEF) at a local hotel on Wednesday.

They were unanimous in opinion that this bill was made without considering rights of labourers and it was aimed at benefiting employers and industrialists. They charged that the procedure for amendments adopted in this regard was totally unconstitutional and illegal. "These amendments would result into an unprecedented and worst labour exploitation".

Karamat Ali, Director of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research (PILER), said rather than providing relief to Wapda workers, a hefty amount of Rs52 billion was being given to Wapda so that it could be made even more lucrative for private buyers.

He was of the view that federations of all industrial zones had to play their active role to nip this evil in the bud, adding "for labour friendly laws, we have to choose two ways, firstly to approach courts and secondly in case of failure, we have to show our power".

Ahmed Khan, General Secretary, National Labour Federation (Karachi chapter), called for participation of each federation to submit petitions separately against these oppressive laws before the Chief Justice of Pakistan so that this serious problem could be brought to his attention.

Shafiq Ghauri, president of NTUF, said this bill was against international laws and in confrontation of ILO Conventions.

M A K Azmati, prominent labour law expert, told dimensions of amendment in Workers Compensation Act, Companies Profit Participation Fund (CPPF), Minimum Wages Act, Workers

Welfare Fund Ordinance 1971 Factories Act 1934, Shops and Establishment Ordinance, 1969, West Pakistan Industrial & Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Ordinance 1968 and EOBI Act 1976.

Regarding minimum wages, he demanded that these be increased from Rs4,000 to Rs8,000 so that workers could meet their daily expenses in the face of sky-rocketing inflation.

Criticizing the increase in working to 12 hours, he termed it a violation of Section 36 of the Constitution, which allowed only nine-hour long working day.-PPI

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[The above article is not available in English]

**Daily Jang, June 7,2006**

[<http://jang.com.pk/jang/jul2006-daily/07-07-2006/karachi/index.html>]

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