



BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS United States Department of Labor

Division of Trade Agreement Administration and Technical Cooperation (TAATC)

Who We Are...

Trade Agreement Administration involves TAATC's role in the labor side of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), through the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC) and all bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) signed by the U.S., and participating through an interagency coordination process with the State Department, U.S. Trade Representative, the Commission for Labor Cooperation (Mexico and Canada) and other contact points on international labor issues. TAATC coordinates the public "submissions" process, which means oversight of any communications from the public containing specific allegations that a Party has failed to meet its commitments or obligations arising under a labor chapter of the NAALC or other bilateral free trade agreements. Other FTA countries include Australia, Bahrain, Chile, Dominican Republic-Central America (CAFTA-DR: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica), Jordan, Morocco, Oman and Singapore.

What We Do...

TAATC funds and manages technical assistance projects primarily in support of the free trade agenda, including trade preference countries, focusing on:

- Increased compliance with national labor laws and international labor standards;
- Expanded economic opportunities in both the formal and informal sectors;
- Improved labor management relations;
- Improved working conditions, including wage and hour, safety and health and gender equity;
- Reduced number of HIV/AIDS cases and decreased stigma and discrimination in the workplace.



Afghanistan Micro-enterprise: 96% of trainees reported improved economic well-being six months after training ended.



Ukraine Mine Safety: After installation of new equipment, the percentage of non-combustible material (opposed to combustible coal dust) increased to 84.8% in areas that had been rock dusted.



Romania – Disability Employment: Employment centers were made accessible and employment specialists were trained resulting in 124 disabled job seekers finding employment through the centers.

Since 2000, TAATC has assisted over 72 countries with more than \$200 million in project funding. In providing assistance, TAATC partners with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for-profit firms, and multilateral organizations such as the International Labor Organization. TAATC also taps into the expertise of other DOL agencies to help in the implementation of its projects related to labor law compliance, including occupational safety and health, mine safety, workforce development, and labor management relations. TAATC programs include:

Worker Rights and Better Work: In addition to the worker rights initiative which promotes adherence to core labor standards, TAATC is expanding the Better Work program implemented by the International Labor Organization in cooperation with the International Finance Corporation (ILO/IFC). Currently, TAATC is funding Better Work projects in Haiti and Lesotho and will fund additional projects with the FY2010 Congressional appropriations. Better Work employs innovative strategies to promote labor law compliance with the use of trade incentives. The program focuses on the apparel sector with plans for possible expansion to other areas, including the hospitality sector and agri-business.

Central America – Dominican Republic (CAFTA): Through an interagency process, TAATC has received State Department funding to launch projects in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. Implementation includes strengthening inspection and mediation systems, increasing public awareness of national labor laws, reducing gender discrimination, worker support centers, labor justice training, improving compliance in the agricultural sector, and strengthening the civil service.

Achievements: Examples include the installation and active use of electronic case management systems for inspectors and mediators; the opening of 13 worker rights centers that provide free legal advice; and the development of a website with information on labor laws, including a benefits calculator (*see www.levlaboral.com*).

Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI): Working with the Department of State, TAATC has funded activities in Morocco, Oman, Bahrain, and Egypt. Supported by MEPI resources, these projects promote freedom of association and collective bargaining, social dialogue, and free trade policies in Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) countries and help Free Trade Act countries meet the labor requirements of their labor chapters.

Achievements: TAATC supported a Labor Dialogue in Oman in which Morocco, Bahrain and Jordan shared their experiences under their respective U.S. FTAs with Middle Eastern TIFA countries considering a free trade relationship with the U.S. Nine labor ministers, from Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Yemen and Oman, participated in the discussions. Technical assistance provided to Bahrain and Oman resulted in developing greater capacities in both countries to enforce labor laws and, in Oman, supported the emergence of seventy new trade unions – the first in the history of Oman.

HIV/AIDS Workplace Education: Launched in February 2000, TAATC has established the workplace program in over 30 countries primarily in partnership with the International Labor Organization. TAATC works closely with the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC), which manages the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and has received support from OGAC for workplace programs in Haiti, Vietnam, Nigeria, Guyana, India, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (for additional information, see separate fact sheet on HIV/AIDS Workplace Education on this web site).