

Mr. O. P. Lohia at the International Labour Conference



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Presidents: Mr. Alsalim, Mr. Chiriboga

Excerpts of the speech/paper of Mr. Om Prakash Lohia, Chairman & Managing Director, Indo Rama Synthetics (India) Limited, India and his reaction on the Second Global report on forced labour:

Poverty remains the basic and root cause of forced labour. In under developed countries, economic exploitation is the common form of forced labour.

He stressed on the sustained approach needed for the elimination of this menace, since after sometime, the identified and freed labourers go back to debt bondage. He also highlighted that in an excess-labour economy, like India, where employment avenues are scarce, higher unemployment depresses wage levels, and this cannot be termed as forced labour.

He also pointed out that migration of workers from one part to the other in search of jobs, seasonal industries, it is difficult to keep track of all the workers and ascertain whether they are forced labourers. The need of a cohesive migration policy to curb illegal practices such as exploitation as commercial sex workers or working in hazardous condition/low wages of illegal migrants to overseas countries.

In order to have meaningful debate on the subject, some more aspects need to be looked into which are - the need for ILO to understand the issue in its entirety, and multiply its resources to eliminate this issue, considering Asia Pacific Region as the thrust of ILO's action programmes. Poverty and unemployment being core issues, poverty reduction programmes, vocational training, entrepreneurship development programme and youth employment should receive sharp focus. Replicate micro financing of projects in rural areas.