

## Policies and plans for workers' protections in Bangladesh

Policy or plan	Year	Aim and activities
International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions	1972, 1998, 2001, 2022	Bangladesh has been a member of the ILO since 1972. Eight out of the 10 core conventions have been ratified, including legally binding standards on forced labour, the right to organise, discrimination and child labour.
Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA)	2006. Amended in 2013 and 2018	<p>The Act replaced 25 existing Acts and has a broad coverage. It aims to introduce standards of labour rights in the recruitment process and in labour-employer relationships. It set standards for of minimum wages, wage payments, health, safety, occupational hazards, youth employment, maternity benefits, working hours, wages and payments, trade unions, working conditions, etc.</p> <p>The first amendment, in 2013, was passed after the collapse of the Rana Plaza complex, which raised safety and health issues.</p> <p>Both amendments contained an expansion of labour rights to move more towards International Labour Standards.</p> <p><i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> The Labour Act has been criticised for not covering the informal sector and for failing to include some employees, particularly mid-level managers. It is also criticised for not promoting gender integration sufficiently and for not addressing sexual harassment at the workplace.</p> <p>The 2013 amendment was criticised by the ILO for falling short of several issues they had called for, particularly concerning the freedom of association.</p>
Bangladesh Labour Rules	2015. Amended in 2022	<p>Mandatory rules were introduced to enforce the implementation of the Labour Act. The amendment contained additional measures for example on empowering trade unions and preventing sexual harassment at work.</p> <p><i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> The aim of enforcing the Labour Act has not been achieved in several areas. For example, the Labour Act outlaws threatening or dismissing a worker for joining, wanting to join or persuading others to join a trade union. However, the law is poorly enforced and there are widespread reports of harassments, threats and people losing their job due to joining or attempting to form a trade union. Furthermore, almost half of all union registration applications get rejected by the Department of Labour and union meetings are frequently banned by the police.</p> <p>The 2022 amendment to the Labour Rules has been criticised for largely ignoring the recommendations of that had been called for by worker representatives and labour leaders.</p>

Labour Policy	1980. Latest update in 2012	The aim of the policy is to ensure a healthy, productive, non-discriminatory, and non-exploitative work environment for all. It provides a framework for labour rights and welfare, and decent work, and it determines minimum wages.
National Child Labour Elimination Policy	2010	This policy was introduced with the goal of eliminating risky child labour by 2021 and all other types of child labour by 2025.  <i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> While the policy is an important step towards eliminating child labour, it has not been effective in reducing the number of working children in Bangladesh. According to the ILO, child labour among children between five and 11 years old has increased by 16.8 million from 2016 to 2020. One of the main challenges is the implementation of the policy in the informal sector, where the majority of working children are employed.
National Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Policy	2013	The policy was adopted to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Next to protecting workers, the aim was also to help increase industrial productivity. The policy applies to formal as well as informal sectors of the economy.  <i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> The implementation of OSH standards is not sufficient in many areas. There are widespread reports of inadequate sanitation and water services in factories, which is particularly affecting the health of women in the ready-made garments sector. Accidents at the workplace are also frequent, especially in the construction and transport industries. The committees that were introduced to enforce workplace safety have been criticised to be largely powerless.
Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP)	2018	This Plan aims to provide guidance towards building resilience to the impacts of climate change on health. One of its key components is the health of the workforce. The proposed focus within this component lies on strengthening the health system and promoting collaboration between health and other sectors.
National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)	2005 Updated 2009	The NAPA was prepared following COP7. It attempts to incorporate responses to climate change into the overall objectives and development plans of Bangladesh. It identifies loss of life from increased heat stress as one of the main vulnerabilities.  <i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> The programme was criticised by stakeholders for insufficiently addressing the impacts of climate change on the country. The NAPA was therefore updated in 2009, building on new findings on climate impacts and vulnerabilities, but is seen by some to be focused on international policy and financial incentives rather than on domestic political will. Furthermore, the project-based approach fails to address adaptation comprehensively.

Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)	2008 Updated 2009	<p>In support of the Bali Action Plan of COP13, a strategy to coordinate activities addressing climate change was designed. The BCCSAP includes programmes based on six pillars of intervention: food security, social protection, and health; comprehensive disaster management; infrastructure such as coastal and river embankments; research and knowledge management; mitigation; capacity building; and institutional strengthening.</p> <p><i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> The Plan is said to lack the population’s engagement and participation. Critics who found that the implementation of the proposed actions was not successful called for a new plan to address climate change.</p>
National Adaptation Plan of Bangladesh (NAP)	2023– 2050	<p>The NAP was designed to comprehensively address climate change and it includes recommendations for regional and local level solutions as well as national strategies on adaptation actions. The main aim is to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to protect the most marginalised communities. Extreme heatwaves are identified as a major threat, especially to urban areas, and the loss of productivity is mentioned as one of the consequences. Eco-engineering and bioengineering measures, climate-resilient construction materials, expanding green and blue infrastructures and renewable energy-based utility facilities are proposed as possible adaptation measures.</p> <p><i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> The implementation of the NAP faces several challenges such as ineffective coordination, insufficient transparency and lack of capacity among government institutions. Furthermore, the planned adaptation actions require large investments which need to come from the government as well as from the international community. The ability to access global funds and the effective use of secured funds remains a further challenge for Bangladesh.</p>
Nationally Determined Contribution of Bangladesh (NDC)	2015. Updated 2021	<p>The initial NDC was submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015 for the three sectors: power; industry; and transport. It proposed 12 million tons (5%) unconditional greenhouse gas reduction from BAU by 2030 and 24 million tons (10%) conditional reduction with international support. An Action Plan was prepared in 2018 for implementation. The updated NDC, submitted in 2021, calls for further mitigation actions to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Since some adaptation actions also benefit mitigation, Bangladesh’s NDC includes adaptation priorities as well.</p> <p><i>Criticisms and unintended consequences:</i> Bangladesh’s NDC relies on natural gas as the main energy source to transition away from the more emissions-intensive sources of oil and coal. Using gas as a ‘bridge fuel’ allows Bangladesh to cut down emissions to some degree while maintaining economic growth. However, the expansion of natural gas has been criticised to be</p>

		<p>inconsistent with the Paris Agreement as gas consumption needs to decline to meet its goals.</p> <p>Expanding renewable energy production would allow a larger reduction in emissions, but this would require vast investments in the energy grid system. A further criticism concerns the failure of the NDC to address loss and damage sufficiently. Considering the rising costs of climate hazards, Bangladesh's response to climate change could be more effective by integrating loss and damage into its strategy.</p>
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