**RIAL/OAS Hemispheric Workshop**

**“Enhancing Labor Law Compliance in the Americas”**

**December 5 and 6, 2023 – Washington D.C. and on-line**

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO KEEP IN MIND:**

Request for financial assistance: October 20th

Responses to Guiding Questions: November 15th

Registration (depends on funding request): October 20th/ November 15th

**Venue:** Organization of American States, Washington, D.C.

**Address:** 1889 F St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, USA.

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8. **Background and justification**

The Ministries of Labor of the Americas have identified labor law compliance as a national and regional priority and committed to taking actions to enhance it, including by strengthening labor inspection and increasingly incorporating a preventive approach. The Declarations and Plans of Action of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS are a testament to this commitment.

At the IACML, Ministers of Labor recognized labor inspection as the quintessential mechanism for ensuring compliance with labor legislation and international labor standards. They stressed the importance of ensuring the effectiveness, independence, modernization, and professionalization of labor inspection. Additionally, they agreed that inspection should be complemented by education and awareness-raising strategies to promote a culture of compliance across the Americas.

In recent years, labor authorities have increasingly committed to incorporating innovative approaches and intensifying the use of new technologies to expand the scope and effectiveness of labor inspection. These actions are particularly relevant considering the transformations in the world of work and the need for labor inspection to respond to emerging forms of employment.

Responding to the priorities and commitments of the Ministries of Labor mentioned above, the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) -as the cooperation mechanism of the IACML- has undertaken a series of actions to support the Ministries of Labor in enhancing labor inspection, such as conducting bilateral cooperation activities and hemispheric workshops. Notably, the RIAL Workshop on “Strategies to improve compliance with labor legislation” was held in December 2018 in Costa Rica with the participation of Directors of Labor Inspection and practitioners from across the Americas to exchange best practices and develop policy recommendations. Among the key recommendations of the Workshop, countries widely endorsed the need to deepen the use of new technologies in the planning, programming, and practice of labor inspection. Ministries identified need to use big data more intensively to plan labor inspections, proposed using “heat maps” or “georeferenced alerts” to identify regions and economic sectors to prioritize in inspection activities and highlighted the use of electronic devices to capture inspection information digitally. Finally, they agreed on the importance of complementing the punitive or sanctioning role of labor inspection with a preventive approach that reinforces awareness-raising and educating workers and employers regarding their rights and obligations at work.

In the most recent IACML, held in September 2021 against the backdrop of the pandemic and considering the lessons and recommendations set forth in the 2018 RIAL Workshop, the Ministers of Labor stated:

“We reaffirm our commitment to continue strengthening the role of our Ministries in reviewing, formulating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating employment and labor public policies; as well as in enforcing labor laws and advancing effective observance of fundamental principles and rights at work. We also agree on the urgent need to strengthen labor inspection due to the increase in job precariousness and informality levels caused by the pandemic and the new forms of work.” (Declaration of Buenos Aires, XXI IACML, Art. 24)

The Ministers of Labor also recognized the link between labor inspection and health and safety of workers, and set to provide more resources, including technological tools, to strengthen it, as indicated in the Plan of Action:

**“**Strengthen labor inspection as one of the central institutions for safeguarding the health and safety of workers and guaranteeing compliance with labor legislation in both urban and rural areas. Provide the appropriate training and resources to inspectors, including technological tools to facilitate and increase the effectiveness of their work, including the ability to reach the most vulnerable populations. Employ a preventive approach for labor law enforcement, through information campaigns and innovative strategies.” (Plan of Action of Buenos Aires, XXI IACML, Art. 9,d)

Recently, countries in the region have made considerable efforts to strengthen labor inspection, either by increasing number of inspectors, incorporating new technologies into their processes and practices, modernizing internal procedures, enhancing training and professionalization of inspectors, and developing a preventive approach to complement sanctions to augment deterrence. As stated in the outcomes document of the RIAL/OAS of 2018: “Throughout the region there is a greater use of electronic systems and new technologies in labor inspection, although in different stages. For example, some countries are planning on how to develop electronic case follow-up systems, while in others these systems have been in operation for some years. In other countries, the case management system has different uses, such as statistical information production, inspection visits programming, and information on inspectors´ regular activities.” Considering five years have passed since these findings, it is timely and pertinent to analyze how much countries have advanced in this area.

Additionally, in discussions at the regional level—including IACML and RIAL meetings—labor authorities expressed particular interest in the use of new technologies and the preventive approach for labor law enforcement; thus, these will be the areas of emphasis of the Workshop described in this document.

1. **Description and objectives**

The Workshop “Enhancing Labor Law Compliance in the Americas” will be held in Washington D.C. under a hybrid format on December 5 and 6, 2023, and bring together representatives of Ministries of Labor, workers and employers -through COSATE and CEATAL- and international organizations to exchange and analyze strategies and tools to improve compliance with labor laws per the objectives set forth below.

This workshop is an activity of the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL), hosted by the OAS and the United States Department of Labor, and stems from the 2022-2024 Work Plan of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML).

**General objective:** Strengthen the capacities and increase knowledge of Ministries of Labor to improve compliance with labor laws by enhancing innovative labor inspection practices and a preventive approach to law enforcement.

**Specific objectives:**

* Identify, exchange, and analyze innovative labor inspection strategies, particularly those incorporating the use of new technologies in the planning, programming, and deployment of inspections.

* Exchange information regarding the types of new technologies utilized by Ministries of Labor to enhance labor inspection.
* Identify, exchange, and analyze strategies from Ministries of Labor to prevent non-compliance with labor laws, including awareness-raising, communication, and education strategies for workers and employers.
* Prepare recommendations to strengthen labor inspection and develop a preventive approach to law enforcement to support Ministries of Labor in enhancing compliance with labor laws.

**Participants:**

* + Directors of Labor Inspection and officers involved in labor law compliance efforts in the OAS Ministries of Labor. Other officials of said Ministries interested in participating.
  + Representatives of workers and employers, grouped in the advisory bodies of the IACML - COSATE AND CEATAL -.
  + Representatives of international organizations and other stakeholders will be invited as observers.

1. **Preliminary Agenda**

**Day 1 – December 5**

9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome and opening remarks**

* Authorities from Ministry of Labor of Argentina (IACML Chair), USDOL and OAS

9:30 – 12:30 **1st Session – Innovative technologies in labor inspection**

* Introductory/contextual presentation from the ILO (15 minutes)
* Presentations from 3 Ministries of Labor (15 minutes each)
* Perspectives from COSATE and CEATAL (15 minutes each)
* Open dialogue among all delegations (1 hour 30 min)

*(Presentations and dialogue based on Guiding Questions)*

12:30 – 2:00 Lunch Break

2:00 – 5:00 **2nd Session – Complementing labor inspection: a preventive approach to law enforcement**

* Introductory/contextual presentation – USDOL (15 minutes)
* Presentations from 3 Ministries of Labor (15 minutes each)
* Perspectives from COSATE and CEATAL (15 minutes each)
* Open dialogue among all delegations (1 hour 30 min)

*(Presentations and dialogue based on Guiding Questions)*

**Day 2 – December 6**

9:00 – 11:00 **3rd Session** – **Exercise in sub-groups** – based on guiding question

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break (sub-group rapporteurs define conclusions)

11:30 – 12:15 Presentation of sub-groups conclusions

12:15 – 12:30 **Closing remarks** (Ministry of Labor of Argentina, USDOL, and OAS)

1. **Guiding Questions**

The following questions will guide presentations and spaces for dialogue and are an important input to dynamize the debate. Therefore, participants are kindly requested to prepare their answers beforehand and send them to the Technical Secretariat ([trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org)) no later than November 15, 2023. We thank you in advance for your collaboration.

**Session 1 - Innovative technologies in labor inspection**

1. What innovative practices and/or new technologies is your Ministry of Labor employing to improve the effectiveness of labor inspection in urban and rural areas? Please be as detailed as possible and share challenges and main results.
2. Which elements of success or lessons learned can be drawn from the innovative practices outlined in question 1? What works and why?

**Session 2 - Complementing labor inspection: a preventive approach to law enforcement**

1. What strategies or initiatives is your institution developing to encourage compliance with labor laws? Please consider including awareness-raising, communication, and education strategies for workers and employers, among other.
2. Which elements of success of lessons learned can be drawn from the strategies or initiatives outlined in question 3? What works and why?

**For the sub-groups:**

1. What key lessons learned, and policy recommendations can be identified, based on the discussions during the Workshop, to strengthen labor inspection and develop a preventive approach to law enforcement?
2. **Logistics and travel information**

**Registration**: Participants must fill out the Registration Form enclosed in this bulletin and send it to the IACML Technical Secretariat by **November 15**at [trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org) or before **October 20,** if financial assistance is requested. Government delegates must send the registration form through the **Permanent Mission** of their respective countries to the OAS.

**Financing**: Travel expenses shall be covered by the participating institutions. The OAS, with resources from the RIAL and the Government of the United States, will be able to fund airfare and accommodation for Directors of Labor Inspection or officers involved in labor law compliance efforts from some Ministries of Labor. Funding will also be available for one representative of COSATE and one representative of CEATAL.

Resources are limited, thereby applications will be reviewed and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, and considering the responsibilities of the designated officers. Those participants who wish to request co-financing must indicate this in the Registration Form and send it as soon as possible, no later than **October 20.**

**Lodging:** Each participant is responsible for booking a room in the hotel of his or her preference, except for those who will be granted financial assistance, in which case, the OAS will make reservations at the State Plaza Hotel.

**Recommended hotels, close to the OAS (Workshop’s venue):**

**State Plaza Hotel (preferred hotel)**

2117 E St NW, Washington, DC 20037

Average nightly rate: USD $209/night

Contact: David Manalang, dmanalang@stateplaza.com

**Lombardy Hotel**

2019 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20006

Average nightly rate: USD $246/night

Contact: ReShell L. Smith, rsmith@hotellombardy.com

**Club Quarters Hotel White House, Washington, DC**

839 17th St NW, Washington, DC 20006

Average nightly rate: USD $269/night

Contact: Mridul Trehan, mtrehan@clubquarters.com

**Transportation to and from the airport:** Each delegate is responsible for making his/her transportation arrangements. The best means of transportation in Washington, DC: Uber, Lyft, Metro, or taxi.

**Arrival and departure requirements:** According to US regulations, citizens of the region require a tourist visa to enter the United States. It is suggested that, for participants that require a visa, to head with anticipation to the corresponding diplomatic representation to request it.

More information: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>

**Health considerations:**

1. It is suggested that participants consult with their respective migratory authorities if they are required to present a vaccination card to enter the United States.
2. Although it is not mandatory to enter the United States, it is suggested that participants acquire medical insurance for the duration of the visit.

**Language:** The meeting will have simultaneous interpretation into English and Spanish.

**Currency:** The currency of the United States is the US dollar.

**Weather:** In early December, the temperature in Washington is cold with a gentle breeze, with highs of 17°C (64° F) and lows of 10°C (50° F).

1. **Information for on-line participants**

**Registration**: As for those who attend virtually, please complete the attached Registration Form and send it to the Technical Secretariat before November 15 [to trabajo@oas.org](mailto:to%20trabajo@oas.org). For delegations of Ministries of Labor, please also submit this form through the **Permanent Mission** of your country to the OAS.

**Access to the platform and connection:** The virtual part of the meeting will be held through the ZOOM platform of the Organization of American States. The connection link will be distributed closer to the event date.

**Note. Only duly accredited delegates will be allowed to enter the virtual room.**

**Audio tests:** The dialogue includes some presentations, but it will mainly consist of spaces in which the participation of all the delegations is encouraged. Therefore, we thank the delegates for connecting between 1 hour and 30 minutes before the start of the meeting to do audio tests, test connection, and interpretation.

For more information on this event, please contact:

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

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1. **Registration Form**

**RIAL/OAS Hemispheric Workshop**

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Last Name | | First Name | |
| Title | | | |
| Organization | | | |
| Country | | | |
| Telephone | Fax | | E-mail |

Will participate

\_\_\_\_\_ In person

\_\_\_\_\_ On-line

In case of participating in person, please indicate if you require co-funding (airfare and accommodation) from the RIAL/OAS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Should you wish to request financial assistance, please submit this Registration Form as soon as possible, and no later than **October 20**, to: [trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org). If you do not request financial assistance, the deadline is **November 15**.

Government delegates should send this Form **through the Permanent Mission of their country** to the OAS.

\*The OAS, with resources from the Inter-American Network of Labor Administration (RIAL) and the Government of the United States may co-fund travel costs of some Ministries of Labor and representatives from COSATE and CEATAL. Resources are limited, which is why the requests for funding will be analyzed and granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

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