



“INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE LABOUR RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS”

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**Workshop: “Migrant Workers: Protection of Labour Rights &
Labour Market Programmes**

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Mr/Madam Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, allow me the opportunity to:

1. Extend my gratitude to the Business Technical Advocacy Committee on Labour Matters (CEATAL) through the International Organization for Employers (IOE) for having selected me to represent them on an issue of international importance.
2. Also to laud the OAS for championing this social dialogue on migrant workers and its attendant issues not simply as a Plan of Action, but rather as a "***Stated Plan in Action***".

My presentation today will focus on:

1. Pertinent migrant labour issues;
2. Benefits of migration to sending and receiving countries;
and
3. Roles for stakeholders in the protection and promotion of migrant labour rights;

I will field your questions at the end of the presentation.

Pertinent Migrant Labour Issues

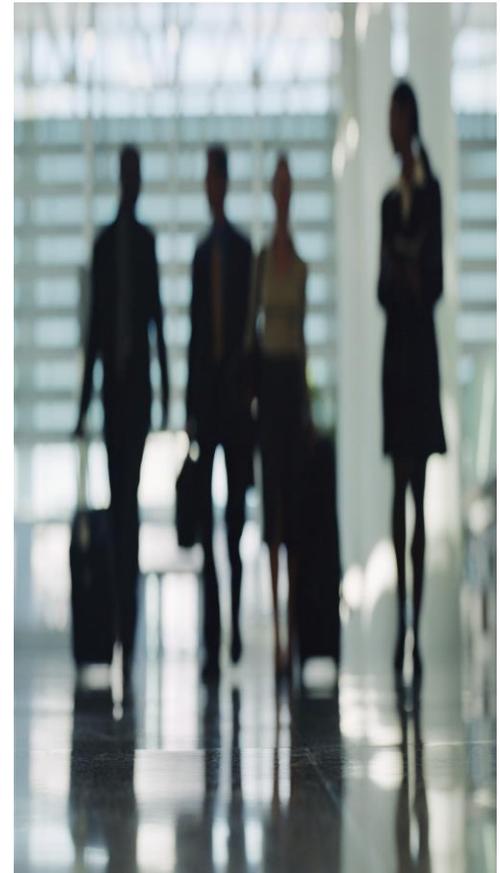
1. Globally, 1 in every 35 person is a migrant (International Organization for Migration, 2003).
2. Challenges experienced by employers: identifying, recruiting and ensuring entry of foreign workers through regular channels; compliance with complex and lengthy administrative procedures; addressing document control; managing relations in multi-ethnic workplaces; and assuring proper training and workplace protection in multilingual contexts

(2004 Resolution concerning a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in a Global Economy)



Pertinent Migrant Labour Issues Cont'd

3. Economic reasons remain the impetus driving migratory practices.
4. Migration attracts skilled workers and professionals leading to a decline in available human resources and in some instances a shortage, often referred to as '*brain drain*'.



Pertinent Migrant Labour Issues Cont'd

- Sending countries often experience a negative ***return on investment (ROI)*** when brain drain occurs, due to re-investment in training a new work force.
- Some countries experience what is commonly referred to as "***brain overflow***" which represents a lack of national capacity to absorb the local available labour.



Benefits of Migration to Sending Countries



The benefits to sending countries include:

- Reduction in rates of unemployment;
- Increase foreign exchange primarily through remittances;
- Improved skill of labour force (migrants);
- Opportunities towards career advancement;
- Facilitates the absorption of an oversupply of labour.

Benefits of Migration to Receiving Countries

Some benefits to be derived by receiving countries include, but are not limited to:

- Affordable labourers;
- Assuage the negative gap between labour demand and supply;
- Facilitates labour mobility;
- Provision of scarce skills (professional cadre or cohort), thereby increasing the human capital stock.



The International Migration and Development Initiative: Labour Mobility for Development (IMDI)

The IMDI provides:

- 1. A framework for labour migration and development programmes and policy advice drawing on inter-agency, governmental and private sector partnership and participation.**
- 2. The IMDI is established as a welcomed intervention, in the absence of a commitment to action by all major stakeholders, we would have walked ten steps backwards into history.**

Roles for Stakeholders in the Protection of Migrant Labour Rights

There is a significant role for all major stakeholders, in respect of the protection of the labour rights of migrant labourers. Some such roles include:

1. Coordination among government agencies to deal with control and entry, humanitarian issues and employment integration

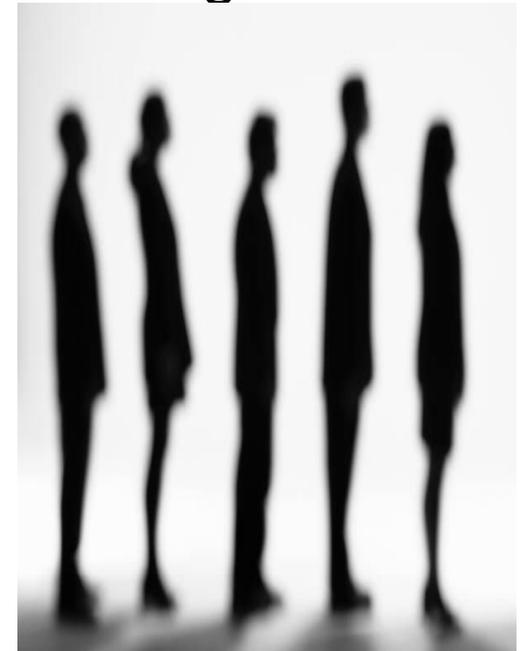


Roles for Stakeholders in the Protection of Migrant Labour Rights Cont'd

2. Cooperation on measures to create avenues for regular migration, temporary migration, and meet labour needs of certain sectors.
3. Collaboration between government bodies and employers on the matter of migration. The result is that government policies on migration do not take sufficient cognizance of the employer needs.
4. Technical assistance is required from organizations with expertise in the area of migration to review and update national legislations.

Roles for Stakeholders in the Protection of Migrant Labour Rights Cont'd

6. The European Union's introduction of '*migration profiles*', is benchmarked as a model in best practice. A migration profile represents an overview of the migratory situation in a country, migratory trends, skills shortages and surpluses, policies, administrative and legal framework.
7. A Partnership between the government and private sector to establish a review panel that will facilitate the speedy movement of migrants required to support business. This would be at the national level in each jurisdiction.



Roles for Stakeholders in the Promotion of Migrant Labour Rights

Initiatives in respect of the promotion of the welfare of migrant workers include:

1. Integrative policies which seek to reduce social and exclusionary practices which may emerge due to cultural and social differences.
2. The need for the creation of bilateral or multilateral arrangements among members states for the movement of certain categories of workers through the exemption of work permit requirements e.g. certain categories of workers in the Caribbean Single Market, the EU and Canada - Chile Free Trade Area .



Roles for Stakeholders in the Promotion of Migrant Labour Rights Cont'd

3. Facilitate the collating and sharing of best practices in relation to migration and policy frameworks, the provision of technical cooperation and capacity-building assistance.
4. Facilitate a smooth/hassle-free migration process: e.g. favourable entry conditions, relative accessibility to housing and work permits.
5. National jurisdictions need to have a mechanism in place which identifies periodically a country's labour force needs.

Roles for Stakeholders in the Promotion of Migrant Labour Rights Cont'd

6. There is a need for policies aimed at the standardization of training and certification among states.
7. Nation states need to promote the recognition and accreditation of skills and qualifications of migrant workers as appropriate, in order to enhance their employability.
8. Innovative incentives for the investment of remittances may be devised by nation states to ensure optimal productivity of remittances.

Roles for Stakeholders in the Promotion of Migrant Labour Rights Cont'd

9. Return migration and reintegration programmes can be developed to attract migrants back to their country of origin. These programmes could include incentives in specific areas such as housing and health care, the provision of an enabling environment for the facilitation of the transfer of know-how, skills, expertise, technology and capital.

**In closing Ladies and gentlemen,
distinguished guests, I would like to:**

- 1. Advance the position that globalization has facilitated the further liberalization of trade in services across national borders.**
- 2. Like most facets of life there are both negative and positive outcomes for individual and collective actions.**
- 3. The onus is on this august body as well as other major stakeholders, who may not be present with us today, to ensure that the environment we are creating in which migrant labourers work is enabling and harmonious.**

Whereas there are numerous initiatives which may be developed for migrant labourers, the aforementioned presents a banqueting table of adequate 'food for thought'.

I thank you!