

TOWARDS A FUTURE OF MIGRANT *WORKERS RIGHTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST*

Proposals to the First International Migration
Review Forum 2022, Middle East countries, labour
exporting countries and the United Nations



PUBLISHED BY THE TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS
NETWORK- AFRICA ON BEHALF OF THE
GLOBAL MIGRANT NETWORK (GLOMINET)

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Published by the Transformative Leaders Network- Africa on behalf of the Global Migrant Network
(GLOMINET)

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BRIEF ABOUT THE GLOBAL MIGRANT NETWORK (GLOMINET)

Founded in 2017, the Global Migrant Network- (GLOMINET) is hosted and coordinated by the Transformative Leaders Network- Africa (TRANET-Africa), and has been promoting the rights of migrant workers and believes that ensuring safe and orderly migration, fair and safe workplaces should be at the core of all migration and economic development efforts. We advocate for living and working conditions that provide migrant workers with more alternatives in their countries of origin, and to develop and disseminate information to potential migrants about migration, labour laws, working conditions and their rights as well as responsibilities. We further aim to undertake migration, employment and similarly trade policy research and advocacy in the area of migration and economic development reforms to ensure that governments, intergovernmental agencies as well development partners have a wider perception of the migration issues to inform their decision making in that regard. This network brings together organizations from across the Globe from the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Europe.

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ACRONYMS

AU.....	African Union
BRELA.....	Business Registration and Licensing Authority
EAC.....	East African Community
GCC.....	Gulf Cooperation Council
ILO.....	International Labour Organisation
MWHRDs.....	Migrant Workers Human Rights Defenders
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SMEs.....	small and medium enterprises
TRA.....	Tanzania Revenue Authority
TRANET-Africa.....	Transformative Leaders Network- Africa
UAE.....	United Arab Emirates
UN.....	United Nations
URA.....	Uganda Revenue Authority
URSB.....	Uganda Registration Services Bureau

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document, “TOWARDS A FUTURE OF MIGRANT WORKERS RIGHTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, Proposals to the First International Migration Review Forum 2022, Middle East countries, labour exporting countries and the United Nations” is part of the outcomes of the planned activities of the Campaign, “Migrant Workers matter, End Modern Slavery” by the Global Migrant Network (GLOMINET) geared towards creating a secure, safe and convenient environment for migrant workers while upholding their human rights. It is also an outcome of the research study conducted by the Transformative Leaders Network-Africa and the Global Migrant Network on the situation of migrant workers in the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC).

The document provides a background to the issues being raised here, offers critical, insightful and concise policy proposals to the labour exporting countries, migrant workers host countries, the United Nations as a global intergovernmental agency, both labour and exporting countries. The document nonetheless offers alternative proposals that can be adopted by the labour exporting countries to mitigate rapid outward movement of young men and women.

Last but not least, it gives a concise and precise analysis of the implication of the proposals and logical conclusion on the matters raised.

The document further acts as a foundational piece of information for TRANET-Africa’s social justice advocacy work as well as the Global Migrant Network.

BACKGROUND

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that in 2017 the Arab States hosted 23 million migrant workers, with 9 million (39 per cent) women migrant workers. The majority of these workers are from Asia, with a sizeable number also coming from Africa, especially Egypt, and increasingly from East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda).

In 2018 however, UN member countries adopted the Global Compact for Migration anchored on several instruments and conventions that seek to address issues of human rights, migration, refugees as well as labor. These include among others; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the other core international human rights treaties; the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; the Slavery Convention and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; the Paris Agreement; the International Labor Organization conventions on promoting decent work and labor migration; as well as on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the New Urban Agenda.

This Compact however presents a non-legally binding, cooperative framework that builds on the commitments agreed upon by Member States in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It fosters international cooperation among all relevant actors on migration, acknowledging that no State can address migration alone, and upholds the sovereignty of States and their obligations under international law. This however leaves the security, peace, safety and protection of migrants at the mercy of the host countries.

Refugees and migrants are entitled to the same universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, which must be respected, protected and fulfilled at all times. However, the Global Compact for Migration recognizes migrants and refugees as distinct groups governed by separate legal frameworks. The compact further reiterates that only refugees are entitled to the specific international protection as defined by international refugee law.

Ever since the launch of the Global Compact for Migration several migration challenges especially for the migrant workers in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) commonly referred to as the Middle East continue to manifest in various dimensions. Despite several countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council having ratified the ILO internationally recognized labour standards abuse of migrant workers continues to be apparent with minimal labour, immigration and workers' rights policy reforms.

While the challenges for migrant workers seem to manifest at almost every stage of the migration process, the situation in the host country after departure is alarming.

The UN has initiated the International Migration Review Forum, a four yearly event meant to review matters of regular and irregular migration. It is on that brief background that Global Migrant Network (GLOMINET) is developing this document for possible consideration by the First International Migration Review Forum taking place on the 16th -20th May 2022 in New York, United States of America. This document and its components can, at the same time, be used by several entities now and beyond the first International Migration Review Forum for purpose of informing policy and migration issues pertaining to worker's migration, the future of work and migrant workers' rights among others.

This document therefore proposes possible policy alternatives that can be explored. The document seeks to provide guidance to the first ever International Migration Review Forum, Labour Exporting Countries, Gulf Cooperation Council, host countries and United Nations as a global intergovernmental agency. The proposals contained here are anchored on the findings of the study conducted by the Transformative Leaders Network- Africa on the situation of migrant workers' rights in the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC).

KEY PROPOSALS TO THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM 2022 AND OTHER ENTITIES

1. TO HOST COUNTRIES

We propose that host Countries;

- a. Revise visa issuance policy that grants the rights to nationals to sell visas to a certain number of migrants and transfer this power to the immigration department of the respective governments as the practice poses high threats to the legality of an immigrant whose visa may be sold to anyone else and the immigrant considered illegal.
- b. Investigate human rights violations of the rights of migrant workers in their countries, produce a report and bring to book culprits who are found to have perpetuated human rights violations of the migrant workers in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms.
- c. Establish an authority/ agency/ bureau that is responsible specifically for handling matters of migrant workers.

This agency should be given mandate to:

- Register all migrant workers entering and leaving the specific country,
 - Register all potential sponsors/ employers and the nature of the jobs so that labour exporting countries are able to verify the availability of the jobs and or if they will meet the desired standard,
 - Monitor the situation of migrant workers as well as coordinate labour unions of migrant workers,
 - Register all the prospective employers (kafeels),
 - Take note of all the jobs registered by potential employers,
 - The agency will then communicate to countries exporting labour about the available jobs, this agency shall be given copies of the contracts, and details of the employees/their employers or sponsors among others,
 - The agency will work closely with the consular missions of the labour exporting countries for coordination purposes in cases of repatriation, renewal of travel documents among others,
- d. Institute relevant immigration policy reforms to cater for emergency and or unforeseen circumstances such as pandemics, natural disasters, wars among others. Covid-19 presented a typical example of unforeseen natural pandemics whose effects were not only devastating to the labour export sector, but also to the entire world. Migrant workers who were already in the Middle East and whose travel documents and visas among others had expired suffered and there is apparent evidence they may have been considered illegal immigrants.
 - e. Domesticating internationally recognized labour standards in the Gulf Cooperation Council
 - f. Repeal and or drastically reform the kefalaa system to conform to the internationally recognized labour standards.

While labour exporting countries can play a significant role in strengthening national legal frameworks to streamline and regulate the labour export business, human rights violations of migrant workers in the Gulf State Council and some Arab countries is largely attributable to the Kafala System.

The Kafala System is believed by far to be largely an exploitative and restrictive system used to monitor migrant labourers, working primarily in the construction and domestic sectors in the Gulf Cooperation Council Member States and a few neighbouring countries, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It remains the routine practice in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and also in the Arab states of Jordan and Lebanon. The system perpetuates modern day slavery by ensuring that all unskilled labourers have an in-country sponsor, usually their employer, who is responsible for their visa and legal status. This practice puts the employer in a position of power and robs the migrant worker the right to freedom of expression, choice and decision.

Through this system, workers are easily exploited. The system grants the employer the right to be responsible for the decisions and or choices the worker has to make. Many employers take away passports and abuse their workers with little chance of legal repercussions.

Quite surprising is that all these practices are ongoing amidst the presence of the UN Declaration on Universal Human Rights and Freedoms, ILO International Labour Standards and UN Human Rights Council among others yet most probable is that all these countries have ratified the UN Declaration on Fundamental Human rights and freedoms, the ILO International Labour Standards and are members of the UN Human rights council with some of them occasionally being elected chairs of the council hence posing the question of “universality of rights”

If not repealed or drastically amended, the reality is...the system puts migrant workers in a situation where they have to live with the threat of having unpaid wages, being liable to arrests, detention and ultimately deportation should they complain or leave. As a result, it is believed that so many migrant workers are being held in detention centers and prisons in Dubai and others after they attempted to leave before the expiry of their contracts or were found without travel documents that were confiscated by their sponsors. If the migrant worker decides to leave the workplace without the employer's written consent they may be charged with ‘absconding’, which is a criminal offense. Even if a worker leaves in response to abuse they remain at risk of being treated as a criminal rather than receiving appropriate victim support. The migrant worker is unable to leave the country given this would require the employer's consent and possession of their passport.

The migrant worker is constrained further by the structure of the Kafala system to make a complaint or seek protection. In all the GCC countries and Lebanon the Ministry of Interior rather than the Ministry of Labour is responsible for managing their employment in addition to the sponsor. This structure contributes to the securitisation of migration and denies migrant workers the cover afforded by the protections of domestic labour law and the opportunity of entering a labour dispute process to address their complaints. The destination countries governments' focus is on the costly, bureaucratic flawed restrictive immigration regulations rather than the plight of the migrant workers tied to a sponsor. The power that the Kafala system delegates to the sponsor over the migrant worker, has been likened to a contemporary form of slavery. The kafeel meets their labour needs in the context of immense control and unchecked leverage over workers

creating an environment ripe for human rights violations and erosion of labour standards. Inherent in the Kafala system is the assumption that workers are considered temporary contract labour reflected in the GCC official use of ‘guest workers’ and ‘expatriate manpower’ to refer to migrant workers. The Kafala system serves a social purpose by emphasizing the temporary nature of a migrant workers presence in the country, so that even if the worker is present for a long time s/he doesn’t acquire the rights of citizenship, with its alleged negative impact on social cohesiveness etc. The restrictive immigration policies of the Kafala system act in theory to limit the stay of overseas workers to the duration of their contract. Non-compliance by both employers and migrant workers in response to demand for labour has led to a significant minority of long-term or permanent residents, along with a significant number of second-generation migrants and development in irregular employment.¹

Specifically, the amendments should;

Remove the power from the potential individual sponsor and transfer the power to the government agency that shall be given the powers to oversee contract negotiations

- g. Host countries establish a mechanism for allowing migrant workers to open bank accounts where their salaries can be deposited. These accounts can be closed after the expiry of the contract of the migrant worker and when it has been established that he/she will be leaving the countries and not seeking for another job.
- h. Host countries allow migrant workers to obtain internet enabled SIM cards from the host countries to ease access to the internet as a cheaper means to communication with the family members back in the countries of origin. Access to these SIM cards can as well enable migrant workers to remit their money home through mobile banking and or mobile money transfers.

2. TO LABOUR EXPORTING COUNTRIES

Specifically, we propose that;

- a. Labour exporting countries only sign bilateral agreements with countries that have domesticated internationally recognized labour standards or that have laws and policies already in place for protecting workers.
- b. Labour exporting countries should establish and maintain a data base of recruitment companies, available job listings, details of the employers who shall employ the people leaving the country, the migrant workers applying for jobs abroad, those leaving the country, those who have returned, those stranded among others. The department shall work with foreign missions which shall also be required to maintain a data base of migrant workers in those countries.
- c. Labour exporting countries establish legal teams that shall be based in the foreign missions who shall be obliged to take up legal cases in those countries to understand the legal procedures of those countries and be permitted to practice law in those countries so as to represent migrant workers who may be in need of legal support due to perhaps torture, non-salary payment, harassment, sexual abuse and or breach of contract agreement among others.

¹ Policy Brief No. 2: Reform of the Kafala (sponsorship) System. Migrant Forum Asia

- d. Labour exporting countries that have not yet made legal reforms in regard to labour export enact laws to streamline labour export and set procedures that shall be followed by recruitment companies, employers, host countries and potential migrant workers before and while leaving the country and while already in the host countries.

The laws should specifically;

- Establish both government and private recruitment where the government can recruit directly to countries where it has bilateral arrangements and on the other hand through accredited recruitment companies and or individuals.
 - Regulate and monitor the work of the recruitment companies and ensure they abide by or stay in line with the set laws and standards and monitor the signing of work agreements which should actually be a one off and shall be deemed final for both the employer and the recruitment company and the employee.
 - Establish a four party recruitment approach a government overseen recruitment arrangement where the country exporting labour, and the country receiving the migrant worker, the potential sponsor as well as the recruitment firm all get involved in the recruitment processes, oversee negotiations and all the parties become signatories to the contracts. This arrangement will work in a way that the bureau shall be responsible for soliciting for job opportunities and entering into contracts for and on behalf of the employees directly with the employers.
 - Establish insurance in its breadth and clearly define the parameters of the insurance and define when and how one shall be eligible and how it is obtained. This insurance should be job insurance, medical insurance and or insurance to cater for unforeseen hazards. The act should clearly stipulate who pays for the insurance.
 - Define how much skilled and unskilled migrant workers should be paid
 - Establish how much potential migrants are to pay, who they pay to and what they are should be for. The legal reforms should clearly state if and whether it is the sponsor meting the air ticket, visa and or medical insurance among others, and or if it is the company or the potential migrant work to so as to eliminate cases of fraud and lose of money to recruitment companies where there are hardly jobs available.
- e. Labour exporting countries establish departments or agencies responsible for domestic employment, job creation and labour whose mandate shall be among others to; Handle matters of domestic/ internal employment, workers' rights violations, arbitration and administration of justice for affected persons among others, research on avenues to improve employment opportunities internally, research and development of employment and labour policies and or laws
- f. Labour exporting countries establish a migrant's protection fund to;
- Support only workers recruited through government- government arrangement and travelling to countries that have signed Bi-lateral agreements on Migrant Workers with labour exporting countries or those that are signatories to **ILO** and **UN** Conventions on Migrant Workers and have domesticated the same standards.

- The Fund will among others be used for; repatriating Migrant workers abroad in cases of emergencies, Work on pre departure arrangements such as travel and settlement costs abroad, family upkeep, facilitate post return, counselling etc.
- Facilitate the running and maintenance of a shared system of Records between labour exporting and host countries with master list of departing/arriving migrant workers, an inventory of pending cases abroad involving migrant workers including those serving prison sentences, statistical numbers of Migrant workers, blacklisted labour exporters, lists of Labour and Human Rights Instruments where the receiving countries are signatories, lists of overseas contacts which can render help to migrant workers overseas.

3. TO THE UNITED NATIONS

We propose that the United Nations;

- a. Establishes a globally coordinated mechanism to track, manage and safeguard migrant workers most especially those at most risk. This may include an integrated platform where immigration agencies, airport authorities and or host countries and labour exporting countries can have concrete information on who is leaving the country and who is coming back to the country and be able to provide a timely means to verify who has been cleared to leave the country as a means to address human trafficking and abuse of migrant workers. This platform can also be established to include civil society organizations involved in fostering migrant workers' rights so that can easily lodge human rights violations complaints.
- b. Imposes labour embargos on countries where there is apparent rampant migrant workers' rights violations and declare any company and or individuals recruiting migrants to such countries illegal until when those countries have reformed the Kafala System and or domesticated internationally recognized labour standards and implemented appropriate labour and worker protection reforms.
- c. Establishes a uniform global decorum on externalization of labour specifying the conditions for externalizing labour and requirements for a family/ company to employ a foreigner.
- d. Establishes standard security measures to be undertaken to foster the safety and wellbeing of the migrant workers.
- e. Establishes a standard contract template to be used during the exportation of labour in accordance with the internationally recognized labour standards
- f. UN Human Rights Council votes out countries where violation of migrant workers' rights is rampant until they have made significant labour and human rights reforms in regard to migrant workers.

4. TO LABOUR EXPORTING COUNTRIES, HOST COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED NATIONS

We propose that;

- a. Both host and labour exporting countries investigate and bring to book perpetrators of migrant workers' rights and anyone involved in breach of the laws that shall be put in place and those already in place.

- b. Host as well as the labour exporting countries put in place deterrent measures to safe guard migrant workers in cases where there has been breach of contract or in instances where false contracts are issued. These deterrent measures should target sponsors and recruitment agencies.
- c. Labour exporting as well as host countries provide pre-departure and arrival orientation to migrant workers on the elaborate procedures to lodge complaints of human rights violations, immigration and labour laws of the host countries. Better still migrant workers are issued with copies of written guidelines in the language they understand best with relevant contacts.
- d. Both labour exporting and host countries as well as the united Nations respect, protect and uphold the rights of Migrant Workers Human Rights Defenders (MWHRDs) in their diversity doing work on the issue of the migrant workers' rights violations both in the host countries and in countries exporting labour in accordance with UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Specifically, we call on countries to create a favourable working environment for human rights defenders who are peacefully either in groups and or as individuals advancing migrant workers' rights and investigate, bring to book those palpable for torture, harassment, intimidation and disappearance of MWHRDs.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR LABOUR EXPORTING COUNTRIES

Labour export is unsustainable and casts a lot of uncertainty on the migrant worker's future. With the constant evolution of the labour market is imperative for the labour exporting countries to think critically about the future of work and put in place safeguards to foster descent job creation as well as enhancing self-employment for both the literate and illiterate majority of whom are mostly young people. Social injustice will be perpetrated unless countries exporting labour enhance equitable job creation and access for all, eliminate factors that foster unfair job distribution and the unfavourable working conditions for both workers in the country and those hosting migrant workers. Therefore, majority of the migrant workers in the gulf corporation council are suffering because they have gone there on the first note. Therefore, since making the necessary labour, immigration and social protection policy advancement for migrant workers who are already in those countries solely relies on the political will of the host countries, it is important for the labour exporting countries accelerate descent job creation amid the skyrocketing use of technology and mechanization. This is because to a greater extent, labour exporting countries are unlikely to have influence over the ability of the host countries to make the necessary reforms to protect and safe guard the migrant workers.

It is therefore imperative for the labour exporting countries, instead of lamenting and waiting for the countries hosting the migrant workers to make the necessary legal and policy amends, to reduce on especially the exportation of unskilled labour and create descent jobs so as to reverse external movement of people in search for "good jobs":

How can labour exporting countries achieve this?

1. PUT IN PLACE INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE INTO COMMERCIALIZED MODERN AGRICULTURE.

Many of the labour exporting countries have a great deal of arable land of which a higher percentage is lying idle, unutilized, and or underutilized. Putting this land into gainful use through commercialized

modern agriculture will provide many jobs to young people are prevent them from going to countries where they might not be paid and or subjected to all kinds of inhumane treatment.

a) Agricultural loans

Labour exporting countries need put in place mechanisms to enable young people to get access non interest agricultural loans. These loans need be given to young men and women who have previous records of having ventured into agriculture and who can demonstrate that with the loans, they can employ at least two-three young men and women and sustain the ventures. These loans can be given to both individuals and groups. The giving of loans to groups need be minimized as group dynamics and difference in interest will cast a huge blow to the groups and consequently lead to misuse and or collapse of the groups leading to inability to pay the money. Young people who have benefitted from the youth livelihood funds, the capital venture funds in Uganda and the youth loans in Tanzania have already reported the challenges they face in accessing the loans as groups. While dispensing these loans, bureaucracy, corruption and nepotism need be minimized.

b) Addressing climate change challenges

The past few recent years have witnessed a drop on crop productivity due to climate changes that have led to constant fluctuations in rainfall amounts and high rise in temperatures. Therefore, for agriculture to be sustainable, labour exporting countries as well as those that might not be exporting need to critically examine and mitigate the climate change challenges by enhancing environmental protection and conservation by educating the masses on the dangers of encroaching on wetlands, destruction of plant and forest cover as well as uncontrolled quarrying activities that will consequently affect the agricultural productivity.

While doing so will to enough, labour exporting countries need put in place mechanisms and or incentives to foster local irrigation solutions to enable farmers undertake commercialized agricultural and food productivity during uncertain times and regions such as in semi-arid areas and during times of the year when the weather is usually hot.

This should involve giving groups of farmers with irrigation materials such as water pumps, tanks for harvesting and or storing water that can be used to water the gardens, improvising mechanization tools such as tractors to address the lack or continue lack of oxen for communities that rely on the same for ploughing land.

c) Proper food and agricultural produce handling

For a number of young men and women who venture in agriculture, and for many of them who happen to harvest in large quantities, most times, access to markets is limited and for those dealing imperishable goods such as horticultural products, proper storage and handling is a very big challenge hence leading to wastage of mostly perishable agricultural products.

d) Enhancing Value addition.

If access to reliable markets for raw agricultural produce might be a big challenge, there is need to invigorate the use of value addition to address unnecessary wastage of products. This means that governments should put in place mechanisms to either support the formers with resources to put in place the necessary systems to enhance valued addition or set such infrastructure in almost every district depending on the nature of the foods and crops mostly grown in such areas. Government therefore need think of a social market economy whey not everything is left in the hands of bureaucrats and capitalists so as to eliminate social discrimination in socio-economic development processes and programmes.

e) Enhancing access to markets for both processed and unprocessed food and agricultural products.

Many farmers are faced with the challenge of access to reliable markets for their produce. This phenomenon is perpetrated by the lack of reliable information on where to sell what products and how much they could gain by selling to such markets. Lack of access to reliable markets leads to wastage of improperly managed produce leading farmers to making losses. These losses discourage many young people from participating in commercial agriculture.

f) Changing the mind-set of the youth and the general public about educated people being involved in agriculture.

Many young people who go for these jobs in the idle east and or those languishing in the streets of major cities in such of jobs most of them do not even qualify for report on a very biased attitude towards them by their communities of origin. Most young people have reported having been mocked by their communities and even most times their family members for finishing perhaps university and return undertake agriculture rather than get high paying green jobs which hardly exist in the current setting as thousands of graduates have to compete for the few available jobs.

2. PUT IN PLACE MECHANISM TO PROMOTE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES;

It has been observed in several countries that the costs of starting, operating and sustaining a business in its early days are high and easily lead to the demise of such businesses. Three quarters of people were also unlikely to start a business due to the threat and fear of high costs of starting a business. About three quarters of the business die before their 3rd birth day. Among the key factors that lead to increased collapse of businesses and or prevent people from staying businesses are fear of taxes, high costs of starting a business and legalizing it. In Uganda for instance for a business to be considered to be legal, it must be registered with the Uganda registration services bureau (URSB), thereafter get a tax identification number, get a trading license and soon begin to file tax returns

Therefore, labour exporting countries need create favourable job creation environment and reliable self-employment avenues by;

a) Reviewing laws on legalization and licensing of companies and businesses

Countries need institute frameworks that enable registration of companies and business names, acquisition of trade licenses, copyright and patents and opening of bank accounts for indigenous start-ups and personal accounts free especially for the youth and women in business. This is because the process of acquisition and formalization of businesses, acquisition of copyrights and patents is expensive and tedious yet youngest people do not have that much money, yet have brilliant ideas that can turn economies round. Consequently, there is also need to create at least a three-year tax free holiday for newly created indigenous ventures and businesses as a way of boosting local investments and encouraging young people to pursue self-employment and job creation rather than job seeking. This approach shall go a long way in enabling many companies and businesses to be formalized hence widening the tax base when most of these businesses have grown and expanded. This way, the tax base of the country shall expand and many jobs shall be created which shall ultimately reduce youth unemployment, improve social economic livelihoods and standards of the youth and purchasing power which is currently almost none existent. If this is implemented, it shall boost SMEs development which in the case of Singapore for instance was very instrumental in growing from a low income country to among the world's biggest economies.

Labour exporting countries need work closely with financial institutions and review account opening and account maintenance fees and procedure and institute a policy to ensure that opening bank accounts for indigenous businesses is free and subsidize account maintenance fees to encourage as many people as

possible to formalize their businesses and enhance financial discipline. Many recipients of the Youth Livelihoods Funds in Uganda for instance have decried the enormous amounts of money they lose to the Stanbic Bank as part of the monthly account maintenance fees yet at the time of disbursement of the funds, the account maintenance fees are not budgeted for by the government. Altogether, labour exporting countries need establish an integrated system for banks, registration agencies, revenue agencies and national identification agencies so as to minimize on the time, costs and processes for opening bank accounts especially for businesses.

b) Scrapping taxes for newly created companies and foster tax holiday for newly registered companies/ business to provide a window of hope.

For most countries legalizing a business means beginning to be taxed. In Tanzania for instance, business names and or companies have to be registered with the Business Registration and Licensing Authority (BRELA). Immediately a business has obtained a tax identification number, it is liable to getting tax assessments. In Uganda the moment a business has been formalized, after six months it is expected to file tax returns. If it is registered as company limited by liability or guarantee, they must, after twelve months' file annual returns with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau and at the same time file tax returns with the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA).

c) Establishing business incubation centres and development fund

Countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa among others already have funds meant to foster business development and job creation among young people, but the funds are too minimal and most accessible to only individuals who have formed themselves into groups. The funds should be accessible to youth start-up companies, youth groups and or individuals with viable business ideas. Furthermore, the time and processes of the assessment and funds disbursement criteria and process should be shortened.

For countries already having youth business funds programmes, there is need to redesign the programmes and rethink the terms and conditions of accessing the money. THERE IS Need to revise the amounts that an individual and or groups can borrow as the current amounts are meagre and hardly facilitate sufficient job creation for the group members. For instance, the youth livelihoods programme gives money of about 5-15 million to a group of about 12-15 members to start a business. How visible is this in the economic sense with the ever rising costs of living and doing business? This programme lends to only young people in groups who are hardly trained in business development and leave individuals who would like to borrow to get the money through the Youth Capital Venture Fund that is disbursed in partnership through Centenary Bank and the Post Bank. Literally, these banks lend the money to the government at a certain rate that is slightly high and unfair for business start-ups since it increases the cost of doing business. Therefore, while the government would like the funds to be received through the banks, there is need to make annual budgetary allocations so that this money doesn't come as loans from the banks but job creation funds through the selected banks. There is need to critically examine the terms and conditions. This should be done by allocating funds to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development the line ministry that is responsible for youth and children affairs since relying on the banks to lend the money to youths is cumbersome and unreliable. The loans are subjected to the same lending terms and conditions for other loans of the bank. Worse still, banks prioritize young people who already have established businesses with records of about one year so as to determine how much they can lend to the individual youth. This is discriminative and will foster social injustice as only the well placed young men and women with security are likely to get the loans as those without will miss out hence perpetrating the cycle of unemployment and consequently poverty.

PROPOSAL IMPLICATIONS

With vibrant and flourishing small scale and medium enterprises, many jobs shall be created and many young people shall be employed rather than seek for jobs that look well-paying but in reality come in with unmentioned implications on the migrant workers.

Free businesses registration and acquisition of trade license and bank accounts: Within the first year of formalization of the businesses, tax bodies may not generate in as much as possible revenue and hence the country shall not generate tax from the newly opened businesses however, eliminating those costs lowers the cost of starting and doing business hence providing a window of hope for the business to generate slightly higher profits and consequently be able to remit taxes in a greater quantity.

CONCLUSION

Generally, labour export as a whole has not be disadvantageous to all those going to the middle East for jobs, but that fact cannot be a cover up for all the suffering of the majority. It is apparently inevitable to stop migration since the world has rapidly transcended into a global village where people are interconnected in various ways. Factors fueling labour migration vary from country to country, but there are cross cutting issues that influence the processes. Some of these factors can be mitigated and therefore while we should consider putting in place safeguards for migrant workers and foster the enjoyment of their rights, we should all the same be thinking and putting in place mechanisms to address the factors increasing rapid labour movement and encourage migrant workers to perform their duties and undertake their obligations as they demand for their rights to be upheld.



Call To Action

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SUPPORT OUR WORK.

Donate to enable us continue to champion reforms to safeguard our brothers and sisters and foster their human rights while away from home. You can donate to us via the telephone number +256777260171

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