

**Global Forum on Migration and Development
2017 GFMD Business Mechanism Meeting**

Venue: Federal Foreign Office, (Unterwasserstrasse 10 – 10117 Berlin)

Co-hosts: International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and WEF Global Future Council on Migration

Theme: A global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration that takes into account labour market needs

29 June 2017

**DDG for Policy, Deborah Greenfield
International Labour Organization
“Setting the scene”**

- Labour migration has become a defining feature of contemporary labour markets around the world. This is likely to remain the case as we head into the future of work.
- Demographic changes, such as the aging of the workforce in regions, and the need to match jobs and skills, will continue to ensure that migration is high on business agendas.
- According to ILO estimates, over 70 per cent of all working-age migrants are migrant workers. Lack of employment, conflict, and environmental change have been powerful drivers of mobility.
- Some migration corridors are experiencing more rapid flows than others, including corridors that with historically low migration. For example, migration from Asia to the Arab States more than tripled from 5.7 million in 1990 to 19 million in 2015.
- South-south migration is one of the fastest growing trends – 80% of all migration in Africa remains within the region.

- Many countries are now countries of origin, destination, as well as transit.
- These changes have generated significant challenges in governing labour migration at all levels.
- These challenges prompted the ILO to dedicate its General Discussion this year at its International Labour Conference to labour migration governance.
- In addition, participants in the discussion underscored its timeliness as we move towards the Global Compact on Migration. This is the right moment to have the conversation on labour migration governance.

- The Conference recognized that well-governed labour migration can bring many benefits to migrant workers and their employers in countries of origin, transit and destination. It can balance labour supply and demand, help develop and transfer skills at all levels, and contribute to social protection systems, fostering innovation and enrich communities both culturally and socially.
- At the same time, the Conference noted that as labour migration becomes ever more temporary, it entails specific risks and costs, especially for low-skilled migrant workers, including risks of trafficking in persons and debt bondage.
- Policies that are not grounded in international labour standards, can cause migrant workers to suffer denial of fundamental principles and rights at work, high recruitment

fees and related costs, wage penalties, poor working conditions, skills waste, and a lack of social protection.

- Poorly governed labour migration equally concerns business and employers because it can entail skills mismatch, persistent labour shortages and an overall decrease in productivity.
- The ILC's General Discussion conclusions underscore the critical role of the private sector in serving as an engine for enterprise and job growth that can help make migration a choice, not a necessity, and ensure that migrant workers have access to fair recruitment processes and decent work opportunities.
- The Conference conclusions provide direct guidance for ILO's future work in these areas and can inform the Global Compact on Migration, implementation of the migration-related SDGs, and global debates such as in the GFMD. A number of areas warrant particular attention.

- I want to highlight a few of the Conclusions for you:
 - Achieving policy coherence requires the adoption of comprehensive policy frameworks for labour migration governance, based on ILO standards. This is a priority. It means properly balancing labour market needs, addressing skills and training gaps-- including for national workers—and greater protection and equality of treatment for migrant workers at all skill levels. In this regard, the Conference reaffirmed the ILO's Agenda for Fair Migration.
 - Decent work should be a central aim of labour mobility policies and strategies. Better social and economic integration, and equality of treatment make labour

markets more inclusive and resilient for nationals and migrants. One enabling condition is the fundamental right to freedom of association. The obstacles that persist in too many countries should be removed.

- Ensuring fair recruitment practices is another priority area. Surveys undertaken by the ILO and the WB show that migrant workers can pay up to a year's salary for their job. We are continuing our work to provide member States with a methodology for measuring recruitment costs across migration corridors and to support SDG indicator 10.7.1. The ILO has now adopted key guidance in this area: the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment.

- Skills recognition remains another area critical for improving economic productivity and protecting migrant workers' rights. Migrant workers -- especially low- and medium-skilled migrant workers -- have limited access to skills recognition processes, according to a recent report ILO released this year.
- A key challenge is to improve cooperation across migration corridors. Effective skills recognition schemes, at national and regional levels, could contribute to enhanced mobility within regional economic communities and bilateral labour agreements where they exist.
- We need to combine efforts to improve skills identification and matching with broader efforts to enhance coherence among employment, skills and migration policies. The ILO will soon release a user's

guide on recognizing prior learning of migrant workers” (forthcoming, 2017).

- Systematic data collection and exchange are essential for maintaining effective labour migration governance frameworks.

- Successful governance models also take a ‘whole of government’ approach that includes all relevant government agencies.
- In addition, evidence shows that the involvement of the social partners -- employers’ and workers’ organizations – strengthens the effectiveness of and sustainability of labour migration policies..
- The involvement of employers’ organizations can help to ensure that national social and economic objectives are properly and effectively formulated and enjoy wide support among the business community which they represent.
- Social dialogue can also support more effective bilateral and regional agreements or arrangements concerning labour migration. The ILO will work to support platforms that can help foster social dialogue in these contexts and serve to exchange good practices.

- Addressing the complexities and policy challenges of contemporary labour migration will require stronger cooperation at all levels, between workers, employers, government officials and other key stakeholders.

- The GFMD Business Mechanism plays an important role in promoting exchanges of good practice within global debates.
- The ILO remains committed to working with the Business Mechanism, and all of our constituents to promote fair and effective labour migration governance.