NEWS RELEASE

IOE and IOM in New Initiative Launched to Combat Unethical International Recruitment

A Public Private Alliance for Fair and Ethical Recruitment is being launched to help protect migrant workers and their employers from abusive practices and combat unscrupulous recruitment practices. The announcement follows agreements recently signed between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) to work on a global level on reducing exploitative recruitment practices in international labour migration and on implementing the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS).

Overseas workers often arrive saddled with huge debts after paying extortionate fees to unscrupulous intermediaries in order to secure jobs abroad. With an estimated 105 million persons working in a country other than their country of birth – 21 million of whom are victims of forced labour according to the International Labour Organization - the potential for recruitment-related exploitation and abuse is rising. These recruiters are often unregulated and skim billions of dollars from unwitting migrants, sometimes equaling more than one-third of their pay.

Reducing abusive practices in the recruitment process, such as crippling recruitment fees paid for by migrant workers, is necessary to protect migrant workers and domestic labour markets, and to ensure well-functioning immigration systems. The absence of fair and transparent recruitment creates serious problems for employers, who often have no way of knowing what kind of recruitment practices are taking place overseas and what workers have been subjected to or promised by intermediaries.

The Public Private Alliance for Fair and Ethical Recruitment will create a community of like-minded partners committed to finding operational solutions to unscrupulous recruitment practices. IRIS is a voluntary accreditation system for recruitment intermediaries so that they can demonstrate their commitment to fair and ethical practices.

Companies, corporate reputations and brands can also be seriously damaged by allegations of exploitation and abuse of workers. In order to combat this problem, the Public Private Alliance will develop practical and operational tools for use by governments and business, beginning with the creation of an international accreditation process for employers and recruitment intermediaries.

“Safe labour migration that benefits migrants, employers, governments and society at large is a process that is only as strong as its weakest link. The international recruitment process urgently demands international attention and broad collaboration between governments, the private sector, international organizations and civil society,” said the Director-General of IOM, Mr. William Lacy Swing.

Ensuring that international recruitment is ethical and fair requires innovative approaches and broad partnerships. IOM and IOE are committed to working together with governments, employers, like-minded intermediaries and civil society to develop practical solutions to this global problem.

“Innovative approaches and broader partnerships are needed to address long-standing challenges in international recruitment. The business sector has an important role to play in labour mobility and is committed to working with governments and other stakeholders to try to eliminate unethical recruitment practices,” said the Secretary-General of IOE, Mr. Brent Wilton.

IOM is the leading international organization concerned with migration, committed to improved migration governance through safe, efficient and orderly migration.

For more information, please contact Frederick Muiia, IOE Senior Adviser for Africa