

Federal Republic of Nigeria

National Employment Policy

An Overview

**Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association
(NECA)**

- Between 1980 and 1986, the ILO embarked on two employment missions in Nigeria aimed at addressing the unemployment situation in the country.
- In 1995, the Nigerian Government invited the International Labour Organization (ILO) to contribute to its efforts to formulate a comprehensive National Employment Policy which aims:
 - *at accelerating employment generation,*
 - *reducing high rates of unemployment, and*
 - *ultimately attaining full productive, and freely chosen employment.*

In response to the invitation, the ILO despatched an Employment Policy and Strategy Mission to Nigeria in October, 1996.

- At the end of the assignment, the mission submitted to the government two reports titled “
 - a) *Meeting the Challenges of Rising Unemployment and Underemployment” and*
 - b) *“National Employment Policy Framework”.*
- These reports were discussed at a national workshop on National Employment Policy held in Abuja on 5th to 7th May, 1998, which brought together the social partners and other stakeholders.
- The revisions proposed at the workshop were incorporated in the final draft of the National Employment Policy which was approved by government in 2002.

- Over the space of 14 years of the existence of the National Employment Policy, series of development have taken place locally and internationally in the labour market which were not anticipated when the policy was developed. The document gradually became out-dated and ineffective in directing national efforts toward full and productive employment.
- In recognition of this reality, the Government sought and secured the active support of the ILO to review the National Employment Policy in 2013.
- After series of consultation between the social partners and other stakeholders, on 27th October, 2016 these stakeholders jointly reviewed and unanimously validated this document as well as the accompanying implementation matrix at a validation workshop held in Abuja. The suggestions proposed by the workshop were incorporated into the final draft of the reviewed policy.

- The policy adopts the definition of National Employment Policy (NEP) espoused by the ILO (2015), which states that NEP is:

“A vision and a practical plan for achieving a country’s employment goals, ...it is not just a job creation programme. It takes into account a whole range of social and economic issues. It affects many areas of government – not just the areas in charge of labour and employment – and every part of the economy. It brings together various measures, programmes and institutions that influence the demand and supply of labour and the functioning of labour markets”

- **The philosophy** behind the NEP in Nigeria is that employment creation is dependent on the enabling environment created by policies and regulatory regimes. To this effect, the design of employment policy is driven by the need to create decent and sustainable work in the Nigerian economy.

- **The Goal** of the National Employment Policy is to create the enabling environment for productive and employment-intensive growth in Nigeria.

- **Objectives of the National Employment Policy**

There are 11 articulated objectives, some of which are:

- *Promote the goal of full employment as a priority in national, economic and social policy, and to enable all men and women who are available and willing to work, to attain secured and sustainable livelihood through full productive and freely chosen employment and work;*
- *Provide the fullest possible opportunity to each worker to qualify for and to use his/her skills and endowments in a job for which he/she is well suited, irrespective of race, sex, religion, political opinion, physical disabilities, national extraction, ethnic or social origin;*
- *Highlight the multi-sectorial character of employment generation and the collective responsibility of key stakeholders through harmonized efforts toward achieving this goal;*
- *Design strategies that will promote skills and competencies for those in the formal and informal sector especially in rural areas; vi) Promote conducive and enabling environment to enhance the growth of the private sector and transformation of the informal sector into formal sector; vii) Enhance the integration of migrant labour on employment outcomes in the Nigerian labour market, and within the West African sub-region;*
- *Promote the creation and maintenance of a functional labour market information system (LMIS) in Nigeria;*

- **Scope of the National Employment Policy**

The following issues and topics are covered in the National Employment Policy in Nigeria:

1. *Human capital development, employability of labour force and skills acquisition in Nigeria*
2. *Private sector growth, cooperatives, MSMES and job creation in Nigeria*
3. *Sectoral value-chains and employment generation in Nigeria*
4. *Prospects of environmentally friendly (Green) Jobs*
5. *Labour-based public works projects and employment creation in Nigeria*
6. *Infrastructural development and maintenance as a key strategy in job creation in the economy*
7. *Vulnerable groups (i.e., women, youth people with disabilities) in employment generation in Nigeria*
8. *The governance of labour migration and employment generation*
9. *Macroeconomic policies and job creation*
10. *Creating sustainable and decent jobs*
11. *Strengthening labour inspection to enforce existing labour laws in the country*
12. *Creating safe environment for employment generation*
13. *Vocational Skills Acquisition/upgrading and certification*
14. *Licensing of Private Employment Agencies.*
15. *Employment of People with disabilities*
16. *Implementation plan, including monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tools with proposed timelines for policy review.*

Conclusion

- Implementation of the NEP is on-going.
- Stakeholders (Government at all levels, Social Partners, relevant institutions and the ILO) have demonstrated commitment to drive the Policy within the context of the Federal Government's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) – the Economic Blueprint of the Government.