

Regional Workshop of GFMD Business Mechanism in North Africa

Business and Migration: Strengthening the dialogue between the Private Sector and Governments

Access to Skills: business perspective on regional mobility – learning from the now to shape the future

2-3 July 2019, Tunis, Tunisia

Background Note

Introduction

The International Organisation of Employers (IOE), strives to improve the dialogue between businesses and governments on migration related issues. For that purpose, IOE hosts the Business Mechanism, which provides inputs to global State-led initiatives, including the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) since 2016. The Business Mechanism will organize a regional workshop **for North Africa, in Tunis, Tunisia on 2-3 July 2019** on “Business and Migration: strengthening the dialogue between the private sector and governments”. The focus of the workshop would be on the business perspective on regional mobility and access to skills.

The Business Mechanism represents companies and employers’ organisations in various industries, of all sizes and from all regions of the world. It mobilises business, organises its positions on migration issues and facilitates its participation in government-led processes to provide the private sector perspective on migration policies, thereby raising awareness among governments of businesses’ needs.

Over the past three years, the Business Mechanism has published various documents with a global dimension¹. In view of the implementation of the GCM, it aims at analyzing how these global recommendations can be implemented at regional level and inversely how the regional issues can have significance in framing the global agenda.

Background

Labour mobility at national, regional and international level is a key component of growth and competitiveness both for companies and economies. Private sector, as a major employment provider, contributes to both an individual’s and the economy’s growth and prosperity. The recent geopolitical changes in North Africa has affected it both economically and international migration. The demographic changes have given rise to diverging trends, increase in new skills and talent within a country and simultaneously flight of talent resulting in brain drain, creating skills gaps and making it difficult for the business to harness local talent. Governments and the private sector have a strong mutual interest in promoting more transparent, effective and humane migration policies taking into account labour market needs.

At the global level, some of these countries are committed to implementing the SDGs (2016), the Europe-Africa Dialogue (2017), the Protocol on the Free Movement of the African Union (2018) and the Global Migration Compact (2018). The GCM and the GFMD are engaging in dialogue with different stakeholders including the private sector, to address issues relating to migration

¹ Link to the publications: <https://gfmdbusinessmechanism.org/polar/>

and development. The regional workshop in North Africa will provide a platform to both the governments and businesses in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia to enhance dialogue to better understand the challenges towards well-managed pathways for migration.

Objectives

While the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) are championing the cause of providing safe and regular pathways for high, low and medium skilled migrants not only in their country but also within the region, the challenge is to regulate entries into national labour markets according to the skills needed in each country². The Business Mechanism through this workshop would address the need for regulatory frameworks in the areas of skills mobility, development, assessment, recognition and training, to be adapted to businesses' needs and realities within the region. Functioning regular pathways responding to employers' needs will help reduce illegal activities, including corruption, human trafficking and people smuggling.

The outcome of the workshop will feed into the regional and global dialogue including the Rabat Process, the GFMD and the GCM. A research paper will also be presented to complement the report of the workshop.

Structure

The workshop will be held over two days. The morning of the first day businesses will have a roundtable to assess, analyse and evaluate existing migration policies and regulations, identify improvements needed especially for skills mobility; assess the local and regional skills needs and requirements, skills development; provide feedback on the design and implementation of the existing migration programmes, including regional integration; and find ways to promote entrepreneurship in value-added sectors.

With this information, the private sector would discuss with the government representatives the ways and means to address migration regulatory frameworks that respond to labour market realities. Well-managed migration systems can help reduce the skills gaps, provide skills recognition and certifications, skills-matching programmes, and training for migrants and local workers. The discussions would enable governments to understand how migration policies and practices affect business operations, the job market requirements, and the need to take the businesses' considerations as employment and service provider into account while framing the rules and regulations.

A report on the discussions would be shared with the governments and businesses.

Guiding questions for the workshop

Overview of migration policies in Maghreb and their impact on business

- How are the migration policies and legal frameworks impacting labour mobility and the businesses – recruitment, hiring or relocation of regional and global talent?
- To what extent are businesses affected by migration policies?
- What regulatory framework would businesses need to meet their skills requirements?
- What role does the private sector play in supporting orderly and regular migration?
- How are businesses working with their governments to explain their skills requirements? What research or other tools are needed?
- What are common contradictions and conflicts within regulations that govern skills mobility? What policies restrict or facilitate skills mobility?

² Labour Migration Strategy and Action – ILO country office Algiers for Maghreb Countries

How to address future migration trends - youth employment and brain drain - retaining talent and/or ensuring its return

- What political actions are needed to retain talent and increase economic opportunities to address the drivers of migration?
- Can circular migration contain brain drain?
- How to ensure that university curriculum and training programmes are adapted to labour market?
- To promote modern economies (green economy, digital economy), how to foresee and adapt to the future needs?

Skills mobility and access to cross-border skills to address businesses' needs

- Use of innovation to identify skills requirements and matching it to the job market
- Ways to ensure regular pathways for short-term assignments (construction, training, transfer of skills)
- Facilitate the mobility of labour through easy and flexible visa procedure between Maghreb and EU.

Participants:

Multinationals based in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, major national and regional employers, chambers of commerce; representatives of the four governments (department dealing with migration) as of the first afternoon.