

The governance of labour migration in the context of changing employment landscapes

Report on regional consultations

Identified gaps

Capacity building for improved governance of labour migration

Lack of institutional capacity, at regional, national and local level, on areas that can improve policy coherence and institutional responses for implementing rights and labour protection of migrant workers, that are also gender sensitive, and to ensure a workforce trained to meet future demand. Inter-institutional cooperation, through a whole of government approach and one that links employment and migration policies, and the ministries of labour, is particularly pertinent. There remains poor awareness of the value of effective training or lifelong learning programmes, with the need to broaden capacity for ministries, including education/training institutions and public employment services. Key needs include supporting migration and other institutions on the “how to” of integration and reintegration of women and men migrant workers and strengthening government regulations and oversight of private recruitment agencies and labour brokers to promote fair recruitment practices. Moreover, large gaps exist in capacity to adopt models for expanding social protection to include migrant workers, and innovations in social security portability.

More adaptable governance systems

Business and innovation call for political structures and governance systems to better reflect changes at the work place: there is too much complexity, duplication and inconsistency among legal procedures. Regional frameworks and free movement agreements can help reduce this inconsistency and foster adaptability to economic growth. Labour migration is a key tool for labour markets and skills and a source of innovation. Need to improve transparency, consistency and effectiveness of regulatory frameworks, based on international human rights and labour standards, while keeping economies open and fostering regular pathways. Investing in technology can help upscale and modernize governance mechanisms, including examining e-visa systems and recruitment, systems allowing for mobility of workers among jobs.

Data

Large gaps in data exist, including in labour market and labour force surveys. Capacity to utilize new tools such as ICLS and ILO statistical standards could improve collection of data more consistently on labour mobility, as can examining labour force participation, including for women migrant workers, labour market shortages and changing employment among occupations and sectors.

Skills and changing market needs

There is need to consider migration patterns in the perspective of widening global skills gaps and global unemployment, to develop national policies on skills development, upskilling and reskilling and to address skills and jobs mismatch. Stronger support to governments and business to make the transition from informal to formal economy would strengthen recovery from COVID-19 pandemic impacts. There is gap in understanding of how automation and technology will affect certain sectors and occupations, and how will

that redefine skills needs in different sectors and within different countries where migrants work, including their home countries.

Regional and bilateral cooperation on admission, skills and social protection

Need for stronger cooperation and harmonization between origin and destination countries to meet business changing needs and bilateral labour migration agreements, if rights based, could be examined as a more substantive tool for closing gaps on admission and visa policies. Examination for short and longer term visas and admission is an area that would benefit from greater world of work stakeholder inputs, and particularly stronger adopting systems for recognition of skills, qualifications and prior learning through cooperation between origin and destination countries. Bilateral cooperation is further critical to developing mechanisms that foster portability of entitlements such as social security, in turn helping reintegration, as well as reducing costs of remittance transfers critical to development.

Decent work is central in shaping new models of governance

The protection of migrant workers rights in many contexts remain a key decent work deficit, with migrant workers not able to equal treatment, or realize their fundamental rights at work, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining. Gaps exist in schemes that put migrant workers at their center, such as systems that allow the possibility to change their employers, gain regularization, access justice for claims of abuse, nonpayment of wages, discrimination, etc such as via complaints mechanisms, and to have their family life taken in consideration. Labour inspection should reflect a new model of governance upholding decent work, fundamental rights at work and gender equality and relying on policies which both protect migrant workers and meet labour market needs

Social dialogue and engaging business, employers` and workers organizations, and trade unions among other stakeholders such as cities, CSOs, etc in policy development and its implementation

Gaps exist in both the space to engage nongovernmental actors in policy dialogue. Such actors can help governments to improve implementation and as COVID-19 responses have shown, help migrant workers and business with direct services that promote economic recovery and social justice. Gaps exist in implementing a truly ``whole of society approach`` as called for the Global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, including engaging businesses and trade unions who are often on the frontlines of world of work issues.

Groups in more vulnerable situations, such as women and youth

There are high levels of unemployment and informality rate among women youth in a large number of countries, particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Gaps exist in current policy structures to address their specific needs but such gaps should be closed to more effectively address future challenges in the world of work, including to improve labour force participation.

Municipalities, cities and local authorities

Gaps exist in the engagement of administrators and local authorities who have critical roles in fostering legal and policy reform with a view to addressing migrant workers` integration and reintegration and business needs. Partnerships and engagement of mayors promotes exchange of lessons and experiences among cities.