

Namibia validates Labour Migration Policy

Windhoek Namibia – May 18, 2017 - The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Namibia's Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation (MLIREC) validated Namibia's draft labour migration policy on 18 May 2017 during a validation workshop in the capital Windhoek.

The workshop was attended by more than 90 participants from key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, as well as by representatives of the wider UN family in Namibia.



The policy aims at strengthening rules and regulations for effective and efficient administration of labour migration and optimizing the benefits of labour migration on development. The policy also aims at ensuring the sound development and implementation of a labour migration system, which can have a positive impact on human resource development, economic growth and decent work in Namibia.

The labour migration policy is a result of collective efforts from the Technical Working Group (TWG) committee under the leadership of the MLIREC which took about 8 months. The committee comprises of representatives from eight line ministries, non-governmental organizations, civil society and labour unions in Namibia.

The validation of Namibia's national labour migration policy is aligned with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Regional Labour Migration Policy Framework, the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan, and Article 19 of the Protocol on Employment and Labour dedicated specifically to labour migration and migrant workers.

“With these well-established linkages at the national and regional levels, Namibia has taken a significant step towards better management of labour migration, which should translate into tangible actions for countries of origin and destination, migrants, their communities and employers”, said Mr. Jason Theede, IOM's Regional Labour Migration Programme Manager.

In 2013, the Southern African region recorded over 4 million migrants, excluding irregular migrants. Flows remain therefore mainly informal and undocumented or irregular, which has prevented countries from leveraging the full benefits of labour mobility. Skills development, unemployment and extreme poverty or underemployment, urbanization, environmental changes, instability constitutes important determinants of economic migration in the region. In this context, national, bilateral and regional labour migration agreements play a crucial role in strengthening the regulatory framework aimed at the protection of migrant workers in the labour migration process.

Mr. Erkki Nghimtina, Namibia's Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation, in his speech read by the Permanent Secretary of MLIREC, commended the TWG for

their work on drafting the policy and referred to the development of a labour migration policy as a milestone in the social and economic development of Namibia. He further added that “If well managed, labour migration offers opportunities for economic development and acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for the overall development of our country.”

Namibia is one of four African Countries IOM has supported in drafting their own national labour migration policies. The development of a national labour migration policy for Namibia is also linked to a broader regional initiative on labour migration «Facilitating South-South Labour Mobility within Southern Africa», which aims to strengthen the capacity of the ministries of labour in selected SADC Member States to implement rights-based and protection-sensitive labour migration policies and programmes.

IOM also supported the development of a set of “Regional Guidelines for the Development of Bilateral Labour Agreements in the Southern Africa Development Community” and “Regional Guide to Facilitate South-South Labour Mobility in Southern Africa”. These two guides offer tools, strategic information and a direction for the creation of rights-based labour migration policy and programmes that strengthen the protection of the rights of migrant workers and mainstream labour migration in the national and regional development plans.

The regional as well as this national initiative are funded by the IOM Development Fund.

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