



**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

TALKING NOTES BY

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**DURING THE MEETING WITH INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) ON REGIONAL AND
COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND AREAS OF POTENTIAL
COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

JULY, 2021

The Chief Administrative Secretary, Hon. Jackson Kalla

Principal Secretary, Peter Tum

IOM Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa, Mr. Mohamed Abdiker

IOM Chief of Mission, Ms Sharon Dimanche

Other IOM Staff

DG National Employment Authority, Edith Okoki

Other Ministry Staff

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

I welcome you all to this meeting as we deliberate on various issues towards enhancing labour migration management. I wish to thank, International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the continued support to the Ministry over the years.

Labour migration has immense socio-economic benefits to both countries of origin and destination. It is a source of employment and livelihoods for migrant workers, bridges skills gaps in destination countries, supports skills development and technological transfer in the countries of origin and a source of the much-needed remittances in the migrant workers' countries of origin.

Over the years, Kenya has continued to experience migration of its citizens to different parts of the World, including Europe, United States of America, Asia, Latin America, Canada, Australia, Middle East and the Gulf Region including some key African countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa. The bulk being the youths who are seeking employment opportunities in international markets where their skills are in demand. As a result, there is need to effectively manage labour migration and ensure protection of Kenya migrant workers.

Kenya, remittances in the last decade have significantly grown reaching USD 3.1 Billion in 2020 compared to USD 104.6 Million 2004. Diaspora

remittances is currently Kenya's highest foreign exchange earner having overtaken tea, coffee and tourism. However, Kenya lags behind Egypt (USD 29.6 billion), Nigeria (USD 17.2 billion) and Ghana (USD 3.6 Billion). Currently Kenya is ranked fourth (4th) highest remittance-recipient country in Africa.

Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data shows that Kenyans in foreign countries sent home a monthly record Sh34 billion (\$315.8 million) in May, a 22 percent jump from the corresponding month last year, supported by higher flows from the US and Saudi Arabia. This is the first time diaspora remittances have crossed the \$300 million mark, continuing to defy expectations of a dip due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The cumulative inflows in the 12 months to May 2021 totalled KShs. 363.3 billion (\$3.365 billion). With proper management and strategies, we can increase these figures and we believe IOM will come in handy in this endeavour.

Despite the significant benefits accrued by the country from labour migration, the sector still faces a number of challenges, which include weak coordination of labour migration management; inadequate information on labour migration; inadequate policy and legal framework on labour migration; limited Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements; inadequate social protection for migrant workers; inadequate regulatory framework for private employment agencies; low skilled cadres constituting a high proportion of Kenyan migrant workers especially in the Gulf Region and high cost of remittances.

My Ministry has put in a lot of efforts to try to address challenges in labour migration, these include but not limited to; reviewed the regulations on private employment agencies; signed three (3) Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs), and is negotiating additional seven (7) BLAs with key labour destination countries; established an inter-ministerial committee to vet Private Recruitment Agencies; finalization of labour migration policy and labour migration management bill currently at advanced stage and pre-departure training and orientation.

In addition, the Ministry is conducting regular assessment of skills demand in foreign labour market to increase job opportunities for Kenyans. Towards this, the Ministry has identified several cadres of skills requirement in Qatar, Poland and the United Kingdom and is in the process of negotiating with the respective Governments to enable Kenyans access jobs in these countries. For instance, the Government is

currently in the process of finalizing modalities for export of trained Medical Professionals in the United Kingdom.

Towards enhancing labour migration, the Government has prioritized key initiatives these include:

- Recruitment of skilled workers
 - i. exploring emerging and new labour markets for professional and skilled cadres
 - ii. Enhanced collaboration and partnership between our training institutions and those in the target destination countries
 - iii. Negotiation and signing of Bilateral Labour Agreements with key labour destination countries with special focus on professional and skilled cadres
 - iv. Review the scope of the functions of labour attachés and build capacity of existing Labour Attaches offices

- Safe Movement
 - i. pre-departure training and orientation for all migrant workers;
 - ii. Development of information system to capture data on migrant workers
 - iii. Develop mechanisms for authentication of job offers
 - iv. Enhance surveillance at point of departure including establishment of special desks for clearance of migrant workers

- Protection of Migrant Workers
 - i. Promotion of ethical recruitment of migrant workers;
 - ii. Increasing access to labour migration information;
 - iii. Establish safe houses to act as temporary shelters for distressed migrant workers
 - iv. Develop an online mechanism for reporting of labour migration complaints
 - v. Develop a mobile phone application system for reporting on the operations of the Private Employment Agencies by members on the public
 - vi. Operationalize the Migrant Workers Welfare Fund

- vii. Establish a toll-free hotline, mobile application and social media platforms for Kenyan migrant workers
 - viii. Promote formation of sector-based Private Employment Agencies, Associations for self-regulations
- Return and Re-integration of migrant workers;
 - i. Identify the skills and expertise possessed by the migrant workers
 - ii. Identify the programmes and projects for participation of in the migrant workers
 - iii. Developing strategies to enhance the Diaspora Remittance inflows to the country

It is important to note that to undertake these initiatives; we will require concerted efforts amongst key players to realize the expected outputs and outcomes.

I'm happy to note that IOM is supporting the Ministry in undertaking some of key initiatives outlined in the adopted Road Map on the implementation of the Regional Ministerial Forum on Harmonization of Labour Migration (RMFHLM) in East and Horn of Africa. These initiatives include;

- Capacity building support for the Government of Kenya to develop a labour migration policy and labour Migration Management bill to enhance protection of Kenyans working abroad
- Capacity Building of Private Recruitment Agencies on International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS);
- Piloting and establishment of Private Recruitment Agencies oversight and community feedback mechanism to responds to existing challenges in monitoring of Private Recruitment Agencies (PRA) operating in Kenya and ensuring ethical practices are adhered to throughout the recruitment supply chain;
- Strengthening the availability and quality labour migration data to inform evidence based and gender sensitive policies and dialogues around labour migration governance.

The Ministry appreciates the continued support received from IOM towards streamlining labour migration in Kenya and look forwards to our enhanced cooperation.

On the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration and other labour migration developments, we had agreed on periodical meeting to appraise ourselves on the progress made. Today I am looking forward to receive an update from IOM on the progress made so far on the on-going regional and country programmes and explore other possible areas of collaboration.

Thank you and God bless you all.