

# THE JLMP DISPATCH

A quarterly update of key activities of the AU-ILO-IOM Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP)

APRIL – JUNE 2024



International  
Labour  
Organization



**INSIDE:**

Time for Africa to  
deliver on Labour  
Migration

**PI**

EAC Partner States  
Adopt Comprehensive  
Regional Labour  
Migration Policy

**P8**

ECCAS and COMESA  
Unite to Enhance  
Employability of African  
Migrant Workers in the  
Digital Age

**P3**





**Ministers from African Union Member States and GCC+ Countries at the Inaugural Doha Dialogue on Labour Mobility.**

Photo: AUC / Innocent Vuga

# Time for Africa to deliver on Labour Migration

“

*Whereas the world continues to witness polarizing debates and unpopular decisions about labour migration, we believe migration is a positive catalyst to integration and development, that only needs good governance.*

“

Last month, 31 States from African Union (AU) Member States and the GCC+ met in Doha to forge a way forward on the protection of African Migrant workers in the Gulf. In what would later be dubbed the ‘[Doha Dialogue](#)’, most ministers echoed a need for fair and ethical recruitment strategies, making it clear what direction in labour mobility they want to witness in the years to come.

Their choice to initiate this dialogue was based on the increasing number of African migrant workers in the Gulf, who most often in the mainstream media, social media and embassies have called for their protection. By 2017, over 28 million migrants resided in GCC countries, with 12% from Africa. Since then, estimates show that numbers have significantly increased, and now, it is time to deliver on protection of migrants — and to do so in a manner that is orderly, safe, humane, and dignified.

There is overwhelming evidence that migrant workers play a crucial role in filling labour shortages and driving innovation. Beyond their direct contributions to the workforce, migrant workers significantly impact global economies through their remittance flows. In 2022 alone, migrants sent an estimated USD 831 billion in international remittances globally, as reported by the International Organization for Migration, marking a notable increase from USD 791 billion in 2021 and USD 717 billion in 2020. These remittances serve as a vital source of income for families in their home countries, supporting basic needs, education, healthcare, and local investments.

As Africa looks laser-focused on protection of its people migrating within and outside to work, key issues emerge. Labour migration is a delicate and intertwined phenomenon, connected to various social, economic, and political factors. The puzzle here is to have coordinated efforts of many



actors between sending States and receiving States, including ministries of labour, foreign affairs, immigration, civil societies, and multilateral organizations.

Only by listening to the voice of migrant workers and establishing international cooperation can these actors leverage existing labour migration opportunities, balancing the benefits and challenges of labor migration while ensuring a fair and equitable process for all parties involved.

The good news is that Africa and the GCC+ are ready to fix this. The dialogue issued a set of joint recommendations, tagged the Doha Declaration, of how they plan to protect African migrant workers.

Some of the critical recommendations include improving data and research to better understand labour market trends and future skills demands, particularly in the face of technological advancements; enhancing cooperation to protect migrant workers from illegal practices; collaboration with trade unions, employers' organizations, public and private sectors to promote decent work conditions; as well as giving

special attention to specific needs and vulnerabilities of female migrant workers to ensure their socio-economic wellbeing.

These recommendations — and even bigger dreams the joint initiative has — may go unfulfilled if planned interventions if they are not backed by an efficient programming with the involvement of migrant workers themselves. This is why the AU and GCC+ will establish a secretariat in Doha, to operationalize this vision.

Whereas the world continues to witness polarizing debates and unpopular decisions about labour migration, we believe migration is a positive catalyst to integration and development, that only needs good governance. In the wake of new geopolitical tensions and economic shifts, the world is tasked with creating legal pathways by which migration can be enabled in a dignified manner.

---

By Sabelo Mbokazi,  
The writer is the Head of the Labour,  
Employment and Migration Division at the AUC



**H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development (HHS) at the AUC (right), with the Qatari Minister of Labour, H.E. Ali bin Saeed bin Samikh Al Marri, during the Inaugural Doha Dialogue.** Photo: Innocent Vuga





Migration Experts from ECCAS and COMESA at the Regional Tripartite Conference on labour migration held in Kampala, Uganda from 16-18 April. Photo: AUC / Innocent Vuga

## ECCAS and COMESA Unite to Enhance Employability of African Migrant Workers in the Digital Age

Member States from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have merged efforts to enhance safe and dignified recruitment and employment in the digital age. This was one of the many recommendations and areas of joint intervention the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) agreed to work on during the Regional tripartite conference on labour migration in ECCAS and COMESA held in Kampala, Uganda from 16-18 April, supported by the JLMP.

“We must bridge the digital divide, provide essential skills training, and ensure tailored protection mechanisms against exploitation to empower them [migrant workers] to thrive in an increasingly digital workforce,” said Hon. Davinia Esther Anyakun, Uganda’s State Minister for Gender Labour and Social Development (Employment and Industrial Relations).

The conference, attended by 68 experts, assessed the labour migration situation in the selected RECs, recent trends and persistent gaps in migrant workers protection, and issues related to skills recognition, free movement, data and research as well and international collaboration.

“Member States are now implementing all-party-benefiting alternatives like skills mobility

partnerships (SMPs) to address mismatches between labour supply and demand through targeted policies and programmes,” said Mr. Sanusi Tejan Savage, the IOM Uganda Chief of Mission as he implored experts to take advantage of existing efforts to enable skills movement.

Other than recommendations on employability in the digital age, Member States agreed to work towards the ratification of essential labour migration instruments and guidelines, establish technical working groups on labour migration, as well as enable free movement by simplify visa applications and requirements. According to the second edition of the Africa Migration Report, only three African countries—Benin, The Gambia, and Seychelles—allow visa-free travel for citizens from all other African nations. Furthermore, 14 countries offer a visa on arrival to citizens of 35 or more African countries. Conversely, 32 countries still require nationals from at least half of the continent's countries to obtain a visa prior to traveling.

Experts also agreed to strengthen tripartite task forces at regional and national levels and to conduct situational analyses to develop improvement strategies. They emphasized the importance of conducting situation and gap analyses, reviewing social protection frameworks, and promoting bilateral and multilateral agreements within the region.





Children's representatives outline their vision for a safe world that fully protects children's rights.

Photo: UNICEF Lesotho

## AUC and Partners Launch Consortium on Children on the Move and Child Labour



The Consortium is comprised of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



Four years into the Implementation of the African Union Plan of Action on Eradication of Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Africa (2020-2030), the African Union Commission (AUC) and its partners working on protection of children's rights have launched a consortium to safeguard the rights of African children in vulnerable spaces, especially those on the move and in child labour.

Launched in Maseru, Lesotho, on 12 April, this collaboration brings together key partners including the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Data obtained by ILO shows that Africa exhibits high incidences of economically active children, with 41 percent of children on the continent at work. The root causes of child labour in Africa are multifaceted, including pervasive poverty, lack of access to quality education, forced migration

and displacement, and weak enforcement of child protection and social protection laws, policies, and programs.

These factors are exacerbated by socio-economic challenges and crises, such as pervasive conflicts and natural disasters, which push vulnerable families to resort to child labour and migration/mobility as a survival strategy. Notably, children engaged in child labour are also subjected to forced labour and human trafficking, although the available data on these forms of exploitation is limited.

The number of children on the move is also higher in Africa. Reports indicate that, while 1 in 45 children are on the move globally, 1 in every 5 of these children are in Africa. Between 2015 and 2017, an estimated total of 18.2 million children were on the move across the African continent. Given that this figure only represents official figures of children registered either as refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum seekers, or who were otherwise seeking protection, the scale of movement is likely much higher.



Despite unprecedented levels of attention, political will, strong partnerships and action to address children on the move and to end child labour at continental, regional, and national levels, the situation remains alarming as it is complex and has unique causes and drivers.

Accentuated in the direction of the Division of Labour, Employment and Migration under the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, to calibrate themes into Programmes, the AUC, working with the Consortium developed a Proposal creating Programmes for the Children on the Move and Child Labour thematic areas.

The Proposal is grounded on Agenda 2063[1] and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan,

Agenda 2040, specifically aspiration 7[2] and the evidence based on the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) Mapping Study on Children on the Move within the Continent[3] and the African Union Ten Year Action Plan on Eradication of Child Labour, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Africa (2020-2030): AGENDA 2063-SDG TARGET 8.7[4].

The impact of these efforts is anticipated to help harmonize and institutionalize effective policies and processes across the continent.

[1] <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

[2] [https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/agendas/africas\\_agenda\\_for\\_children-english.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/agendas/africas_agenda_for_children-english.pdf)

[3] <https://reporting.acerwc.africalen/resources/publications/mapping-children-move-within-africa>

[4] [https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/40112-wd-child\\_labour\\_action\\_plan-final-english.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/40112-wd-child_labour_action_plan-final-english.pdf)



Experts from the AUC, Government of Lesotho, ACERWC, IOM, ILO, and UNICEF, together with children representatives, at the launch of the Consortium on Children on the Move and Child Labour in Maseru. Photo: UNICEF Lesotho





## AU Calls for a Holistic Approach to Protect and Promote Rights of Migrant Workers

Labour migration in Africa is a multifaceted and urgent issue that requires coordinated efforts and collaboration at regional and continental levels. Recognizing this, the African Union (AU) has called for a holistic approach to bolster bilateral and multilateral cooperation to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers. This call was made during a two-day inter-regional parliamentary workshop on labour migration governance held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 7 – 8 May, organized by the JLMP.

“Many of our people on the move continue to face vulnerabilities. Therefore, it is imperative for us to cooperate and work towards alleviating these vulnerabilities,” said Mr. Sabelo Mbokazi, the Head of the Labour, Employment and Migration Division (LEMD), addressing the parliamentarians.

The workshop was organized by the African Union Commission through the AU/ILO/IOM/UNECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP), in collaboration

with the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF). It brought together representatives from SADC PF, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the National Parliament of Namibia, and the Government of Botswana, which currently chairs the Pan-African Forum on Migration (PAFoM).

The event focused on the first two pillars of the JLMP and the recommendations from the eighth PAFoM, emphasizing the need for enhanced dialogue and improved knowledge and capacities on labour migration governance among national and regional stakeholders, including Parliaments.

"The Pan-African Parliament, during its Ordinary Session held in November 2022, resolved to develop a Model Law on Labour Migration in Africa. This Model Law is intended to provide a legal tool that will serve as a guiding framework for African Union Member States in managing labour migration," stated Hon. Wavel Woodcock,



representative of the Chairperson of the PAP Committee on Trade, Customs, and Immigration, as he highlighted the collaborative efforts of parliaments to enhance labour migration governance.

Ms. Odette Bolly, the JLMP Coordinator, emphasized the crucial role of Regional Parliaments in advocating and building capacity among members, RECs, Member States, and national Parliaments on labour migration governance aligned with regional and international standards. She highlighted their role in disseminating and popularizing AU, RECs, and international legal instruments on labour migration, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling. Additionally, she noted that Regional Parliaments promote the incorporation of regional and international human rights and labour standards into national legislation and support methodological approaches for collecting labour market and mobility data.

The Parliaments recommended continuous training by the AUC for new members, strengthening collaboration with RECs Secretariats, and creating platforms for social dialogue on labour migration governance. They emphasized raising awareness about African migrant workers, allocating more resources for labour migration, combating xenophobia, and improving advocacy for the ratification and implementation of relevant legal frameworks. They also urged for positive advocacy on the free movement protocol, addressing trafficking in East and Southern Africa, and supporting harmonization of migration data for better comparability and exchange.

The workshop concluded with Members of Parliaments reaffirming commitment to work collaboratively towards tracking gains made in labour migration across different regions of Africa.

# **New to the JLMP ? Press the button**



**Pressing this button on your phone or any device will open JLMP's official email. Send us a message to receive a new edition of the *JLMP Dispatch* every quarter.**





## EAC Partner States Adopt Comprehensive Regional Labour Migration Policy

*Development of the policy has received immense support from the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP)*

After initially approving the East African Community (EAC) Labour Migration Policy in January 2024, the partner states adopted the regional comprehensive policy and its Implementation Plan on 10th June during the 33rd Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers Responsible for EAC Affairs and Planning.

The policy provides for objectives and key strategies for the Regional Economic Community (REC) partner states on labour migration governance to strengthen labour migration policy, legal and institutional frameworks in the EAC Partner States; harmonization of labour migration policies in order to align Partner States' labour migration policies with regional, legal and institutional frameworks; promote intra and inter-regional cooperation on labour migration; adopt basic human rights-based and gender responsive approach to developing and implementing Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs) and mainstream measures

for identifying, accepting, readmission and reintegration of returning migrant workers.

The regional policy will adopt a rights-based approach to prevent and protect against unfair labor practices, strengthen legal enforcement and social protection systems, and harmonize national policies on social protection. It will also facilitate mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications, recognize skills acquired through experience, and enhance linkages between informal and formal skills. It promotes ethical recruitment, decent work, and access to remedies for migrant workers. It aims to regulate private employment agencies, reduce remittance costs, foster young worker exchanges, and develop an Integrated Labour Market Information System. The policy, developed with support from the Joint Labor Migration Programme (JLMP) and the IOM Development Fund, will be harmonized with national policies to ensure implementation across partner states.





# Malawi Adopts Employment (Labour Migration) Regulations

*The new regulations aim to promote ethical recruitment by enhancing recruitment processes, upholding the dignity and rights of migrant workers.*

The Government of Malawi, along with key stakeholders, validated the Employment (Labour Migration) Regulations during a meeting held from 21-23 May 2024. The new regulations aim to promote ethical recruitment by enhancing recruitment processes, upholding the dignity and rights of migrant workers, and improving social protection and decent work standards. They will facilitate the deployment of Malawian workers abroad while protecting the welfare of migrant workers and their families.

The regulations will also oversee the licensing of private employment agencies, ensuring the safeguarding of migrant workers' rights and establishing minimum criteria for agency licensing.

The three-day meeting saw active participation from various sectors, with 46 participants (31 men, 15 women) on Day 1, 50 participants (36 men, 14 women) on Day 2, and 13 participants (8 men, 5 women) on Day 3. Attendees included representatives from government ministries and departments, the Employer's Consultative

Association of Malawi (ECAM), the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU), and the Private Employment Agencies Association.

Discussions during the meeting deepened participants' understanding of ethical recruitment practices and the roles of the government and private recruitment agencies (PRAs) in protecting migrant workers. The workshop highlighted the need for a collaborative, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to tackle unethical recruitment practices. Participants shared best practices, case studies, and lessons learned from their contexts, enriching the discussions and promoting mutual learning.

Through interactive sessions and group discussions, participants identified gaps and shortcomings in existing recruitment practices, ensuring these issues were addressed in the new regulations.

The development of the Employment (Labour Migration) Regulations was facilitated by the JLMP.





**Government of Uganda and JLMP teams discussing the draft Feasibility Report on the Establishment of a Migrant Welfare Programme in the Country.** Photo: IOM / Ssemakula Brian

## Uganda Validates Feasibility Study for Migrant Welfare Programme Development

*Uganda is poised to develop and implement the Migrants Welfare Programme, with the MoGLSD coordinating the next steps, including a One-Year Roadmap and capacity building for the Technical Working Group to enhance stakeholders' knowledge.*

National stakeholders, comprising 15 women and 27 men, gathered in Entebbe on 14-15 May to validate a Feasibility Study for the Development and Implementation of a Migrant Welfare Programme (MWP) in Uganda. Facilitated by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) and the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP), the meeting aimed to enhance understanding of Migrant Welfare Systems, Labour Migration trends, and AU Guidelines on developing such programmes for African member states.

Participants reviewed and discussed the draft Feasibility Report, leading to key recommendations, including the establishment of a Technical Working Group to oversee the

MWP's development and implementation. This group will consider existing institutional and policy frameworks in Uganda and regionally, particularly regarding social protection extension. Uganda is poised to develop and implement the Migrants Welfare Programme, with the MoGLSD coordinating the next steps, including a One-Year Roadmap and capacity building for the Technical Working Group to enhance stakeholders' knowledge.

Migrant Welfare Programmes are mechanisms that enable governments of countries of origin to provide additional welfare benefits and services to their migrant workers at the countries of destination, to ensure the protection of their rights.





Ethiopia's Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Affairs (MoWSA) together with JLMP team in Tigray during the Capacity Building Session. Photo: ILO / Solomon Abebe

## JLMP Focus on Ethiopia: Capacity Building on Labour Migration Governance Held in Tigray

*Given the recent irregular migration situation in the Tigray region, there is an urgent need to strengthen governance and regulation of labour migration.*

Ethiopia, the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa, has become a significant player in labour migration, acting as a source, transit, and destination for migrant workers. Labour migration from Ethiopia has notably increased towards the Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, where there is high demand for domestic workers. However, Ethiopian migrant workers often face challenges including low wages, poor working conditions, limited social protection, denial of rights, discrimination, and social exclusion.

To address these issues and enhance labour migration governance, stakeholders are working to maximize benefits for migrant workers and their families while minimizing risks and social costs. The JLMP supports Ethiopia in developing evidence-based, rights-based, and gender-sensitive policies and practices. Given the recent irregular migration situation in the Tigray region, there is an urgent need to strengthen governance and regulation of labour migration.

The programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Skills (MoLS) and with support from the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), conducted a three-day capacity-building training from 4 - 6 in Tigray. The training focused on the Overseas Employment Proclamation and international labour migration governance. It brought together 57 participants (15 women and 42 men), including coordinators and experts from regional, zonal, and wereda levels, private employment agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and federal representatives from MoLS, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Affairs (MoWSA).

The primary objectives of the training were to deepen participants' understanding of overseas employment regulations, improve the enforcement of labour standards, and develop a robust framework for managing labour migration. Through interactive sessions, participants explored current labour migration trends,



government priorities, and the challenges faced by Ethiopian migrants, particularly women and girls. The discussions also emphasized the importance of aligning with ILO standards and addressing gaps in existing practices.

The training sessions covered a broad range of topics, including the national Overseas Employment Proclamation and global labour migration dynamics. Stakeholders highlighted the significance of effective governance and collective action in tackling irregular migration issues. The workshop provided valuable insights into ILO's

role in promoting fair migration and the need for a comprehensive, rights-based approach to labour migration.

By the end, participants had developed strategies for implementing and enforcing the Overseas Employment Proclamation, setting the stage for a more secure and regulated labour migration framework in Tigray. The capacity-building efforts aim to reduce irregular migration risks and support Ethiopia's goal of creating a safer, more equitable labour migration system.

## PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

The latest JLMP resource: **Training Modules on Gender-Responsive Labour Migration Policies in Africa**

The modules aim to support Member States in integrating gender-responsive actions in their labour migration policies and frameworks. This is based on the understanding that well managed labour migration has the potential to offer a win-win scenario for all parties involved, including countries of destination, countries of origin, migrant workers and members of their families. The learning outcome is for users of the module, including state and non-state actors to be equipped to address the different and unique needs of African male and female migrant workers at various stages of their migration process.






# SOME OF OUR PARTNERS

JLMP activities are made possible with key support and collaboration from some of the following:



The Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP), implemented by the African Union (AU), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is structured to provide support / closely work with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States, and other relevant actors in labour migration with the aim of enhancing labour migration governance across the African continent.

Our Objective: Contribute to improved labour migration governance to achieve safe, orderly, and regular, migration in Africa as committed in relevant frameworks of the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as relevant international human rights, labour standards and other cooperation processes.

-  @JLMPCoordinator
-  JLMP Coordinator
-  AU\_IOM\_ILO\_JLMP
-  JLMP Channels





African Union 

African Union Headquarters  
P.O. Box 3243, Roosevelt Street  
W21K19 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
<http://jimp.au.int/en>