Thematic Workshop on Labour Migration and Skills

3 May, 2018
Salle XXI, Building E, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Concept Note for Discussion

Rationale and Objectives: The UN SG in his report "Making Migration Work for All" points out that 'If Member States open more diverse and accessible pathways for regular migration at all skills levels, meeting the demands of properly managed labour markets, combined with inter-State cooperation on matching the supply and demand for foreign workers, there would be fewer irregular border crossings, fewer migrants working outside the law and fewer abuses of irregular migrants.' (para. 37, page 9, A/72/643).The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants states that a future Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) should include, among other elements, the: '(w) Recognition of foreign qualifications, education and skills and cooperation in access to and portability of earned benefits'(page 23, A/RES/71/1) .

The planned thematic workshop on labour migration and skills is intended to inform the GCM negotiations, knowledge and ideas, based on experience and good practice from different parts of the world and reflecting the point of view of different stakeholders – policy makers, workers' and employers' representatives, and women and men migrant workers. The Business Mechanism's survey of global organisations illustrates the impact of demographic changes and skills gaps on private sector employers worldwide. 80% of respondents report that their organisations hire foreign workers to fill key positions within the organisation, and 66% cited the need to address skills gaps in the domestic labour market as a reason for hiring or transferring foreign employees.[1]

The main goals of the workshop are as follows:

1.   To discuss and make concrete proposals on how the Global Compact on Migration can take forward the commitments and actions laid out in Objective 18;

2.   To explore the role of the GFMD in showcasing state-led initiatives and experiences on the implementation of skill partnerships;

3.   To foster cooperation in the establishment of a Global Skill Partnership by bringing together all relevant stakeholders to discuss skills development, anticipation and recognition for migrant workers.

In this context, clarification of several concepts is required. In general, the recognition of qualifications serves two main purposes: academic and professional. Academic recognition of qualifications allows for the continuation of studies at the appropriate level, while in the case of professional recognition, the purpose is related to the opportunity to practice acquired professional

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[1] **The Business Case for migration**, GFMD Business Mechanism report presented at the 2016 GFMD Summit in Dhaka, available here.

skills in a particular labour market. With regard to labour mobility, the attention should be focused more on skills recognition since it appears that often there are few recognition processes available for skills acquired outside of the formal education and training systems.

The on-going preparatory process of consultations and negotiations for the development of the Compact has discussed the possible establishment of global skills partnership to empower migrant workers to gain access to safe mobility and reach their potential as agents of innovation and development. Paragraph 32.e under Objective 18 of the Zero-Draft of the GCM on 'Invest in skills development and facilitate recognition of skills, qualifications and competences' identifies the need to: "Build global skills partnerships amongst countries that strengthen training capacities and foster skills development of prospective migrants in countries of origin with a view to preparing the trainees for the labour markets of all participating countries."

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

09.30 – 10.00	**Opening plenary**

10.00 – 11.15	**Session I: Understanding Skill Demands for Labour Mobility**

This session will focus on the need for improved systems for understanding the current and future demand for skills in destination countries and matching systems in countries of origin. In many countries, information on skills demand is either non-existent or implemented on a limited basis, often due to gaps in available data. Data issues are further exacerbated by the dynamic nature of labour markets due to economic globalization, technological change and the presence of large informal sectors which present additional challenges for skills identification and skills matching, including for migrant workers.

Focus issues:
- o Key concepts of skill demand and supply, including data needs and the role of labour market and migration information systems, where they exist
- o Understanding the role of institutions, including at sector level
- o Matching local supply to current local demand for skills
- o Mechanisms for skills matching for mobility, including the role of employment service providers, and addressing skills mismatch (over/under-skilled)
- o Increase coordination among all stakeholders to facilitate businesses' ability to fully utilize migrant talent, and to turn brain drain into brain gain

11.15 – 11.45	**Coffee break**

11.45 – 13.00	**Session II: Responding to Skill Demands for Labour Mobility and Local Labour Markets**

This session will focus on how skill needs and gaps could be effectively addressed by both potential and returning migrant workers, including as part of bilateral/multi-lateral labour migration arrangements. It will also cover how the quality and relevance of training could be improved to respond to skill demands in a timely manner. The session will also cover how required skills are linked to the

employment offer needs since the skill requirements of migrant workers are often not well articulated nor closely linked to the eligibility for employment. Labour migration policies, should be well-governed and in line with international labour standards. Further, they should be timely and flexible to accommodate new and long-standing business models, but also predictable and transparent so that employers can effectively manage compliance.

Focus issues:
- o Developing pre-departure training and certification to address skills gaps (both for soft and occupation-related skills)
- o Addressing training needs of return migrants (e.g. financial literacy training)
- o Fostering greater engagement of the social partners to improve the relevance and responsiveness of training to meet labour market needs at home and abroad

13.00 – 14.30	**Lunch**

14.30 – 15.45	**Session III: The Recognition of Skills and Qualifications**

This session will focus on understanding the relevance of skills recognition and its impact on the labour market, in the context of labour mobility. Employers and their associations can be a valuable partner in identifying skills needs and support establishing frameworks for assessing foreign qualifications. The discussion will focus on both skills acquired through the formal education and training systems, as well as in informal and non-formal settings. Examples of good practices from different countries and regional economic communities (e.g. ASEAN, Colombo Process, ECOWAS, etc.) will be shared.

Focus issues:
- o Building awareness and participation in skills recognition systems
- o Providing quality, accessible and cost-effective skill recognition services
- o Providing recognition of qualifications through national legislation, bilateral and multilateral agreements and developing guidelines on mutual recognition policies and procedures
- o Measuring the impact of skills recognition on labour market outcomes for migrant workers.

15.45 – 16.45	**Session IV: Way forward towards a Global Partnership on Skills and Migration**

This session will build on the previous three panel discussions, and will focus on possible actionable commitments on skills development and recognition to be included in the Global Compact on Migration. In this context, the added-value of global skills partnerships will also be discussed.

Guiding questions:
- o How can improved systems of skills anticipation and matching for migrant workers be implemented in line with international labour standards and good practices?
- o How can systems for the recognition of skills and qualifications more effectively support labour mobility in line with international labour

standards and good practices?
- o How can social dialogue in education and training be further strengthened?

  How cooperation can be fostered at regional level regarding skills partnerships, and what could be examples of good practices in this area?

16.45 – 17.00	Closing Plenary and Wrap-up