



MRC Implementation Agreement Signing and Motorbike's Handover Ceremony

2 February 2024

1. Background

South Sudan is a source, transit, and destination country for international labour migration. As a destination country, the number of migrant workers in South Sudan increased from 45,408 migrant workers in 2016 to 88,335 workers in 2017. Only in 2018 a total of 63,166 workers migrated to South Sudan from neighboring countries. The United Nations International Migration of 2020 Report, estimate that South Sudan is hosting around 882,000 migrants, mainly from Sudan, Uganda, DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya, however, number likely to be much higher: Association of Ugandans in South Sudan estimates that there are alone more than 1.5 million Ugandan citizens in South Sudan. In 2020 49.7 percent of immigrants were female, 34.4 percent were under the age of 20, and 3.4 percent were aged 65 and older¹. The majority of international migrants in South Sudan are from East and Horn of Africa, however, due to the mobility usually being irregular, there is no accurate data on numbers of migrants. There are challenges in issuing work permits and most work informally.

South Sudan is also one of the countries with the highest number of nationals forcibly displaced in the region, with an estimated four million South Sudanese refugees abroad². South Sudan has experienced growth in inflowing remittances from about US\$ 2 million in 2014 to US\$ 211 million in 2019, representing 6.7% of the country's GDP³. This indicates that migration is a major contributor to the country's GDP, and socio-economic development. Remittance inflows into South Sudan is also an important counter cyclical tool for the country's fragile economy. The remittances promote resilience and help the local economy to recover from emergencies.

As noted above, the country has a very high number of migrant workers from the neighboring IGAD countries working as humanitarian workers, expatriates, traders, and investors in various sectors of the economy as well as majority being engaged in low skilled sector. Irregular migration and lack of awareness contributes to the vulnerability of particularly low skilled workers from neighboring states. Many do not migrate through regular channels, for several reasons, including the relatively higher costs, time, and complexity. Many migrants and potential migrants are unaware of the practical and regular processes involved in labour migration across boarder and have a limited understanding of their rights at work and how to protect those rights.

With the growing unemployment among the native South Sudanese, South Sudanese workers are also starting to explore new opportunities in countries like the Gulf states and have the potential to face similar challenges like other labour sending African countries, such as payment of

¹https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ret=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjWiLrRxKKAxWCGuwKHUcJCgUQFnoECAgQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2Fdevelopment%2Fdesa%2Fpd%2Fsites%2Fwww.un.org.development.desa.pd%2Ffiles%2Fundesd_pd_2020_international_migration_highlights.pdf&usq=AOvVaw0g56szKBpj0UQAAO1cq2mU&opi=89978449

² International Labour Organization (2021). *Labour market assessment with focus on migrant workers from the IGAD region: South Sudan country report*, Geneva: International Labour Office

³ International Labour Organization (2021). *Labour market assessment with focus on migrant workers from the IGAD region: South Sudan country report*, Geneva: International Labour Office



exorbitant recruitment fees, deception on the type of work, withholding of wages, working conditions, etc. Besides, there is no documented mechanism to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration of South Sudanese migrant workers to various countries of destination. Unethical recruitment practices are prevalent among unlicensed private recruitment agencies (PrEAs) who contribute to high cases of labour and human rights violations among migrant workers from the region. The PrEA's often charge illegal recruitment fees and impose additional costs on migrant workers, they also do not divulge real terms and conditions of employment contracts, and often do not carry out due diligence over employers thereby putting migrant workers at risk of forced labour and human trafficking. These together with other challenges calls for a streamlined and meaningful government engagement in labour migration.

Moreover, migrants' vulnerability is compounded by limited access to reliable information and support services. They tend to rely on acquaintances or brokers for information, and do not know where to seek help, cannot reach services, or are reluctant to approach the authorities for assistance for fear of harassment and abuse. In this regard, there is a need for the establishment of a Migrant Resource Centre so that migrants in South Sudan and potential South Sudanese migrant workers have easy access to information at will. A Migration Resource Centre is a physical space where migrants can access critical information and services throughout the migration cycle. These centres provide support such as skills training, access to legal aid, health awareness, and protection against sexual harassment. Through the MRC, the GOSS will continue to work on awareness creation, sensitization and capacity building on regular labour migration for migrant workers in and out of the country.

Currently the Government of South Sudan has identified a location for the MRC in an easily accessible location, to ensure that the MRC is a welcoming space. Accordingly, the ILO, through the Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) programme, collaborates with the GOSS to establish the first MRC in Juba, aiming to provide accurate information and timely support to potential migrants, returnees, and their families, fostering informed decision-making. The fully furnished Migration Resource Centre will serve as a focal point for potential migrants, returnees, migrant workers in South Sudan, South Sudanese migrant workers' families and the community at large. Beneficiaries will be able to obtain accurate information and counselling on safe and regular migration and rights at work. Accordingly, the MRC will help counter misleading information provided by unscrupulous brokers, agencies, and employers. Counselling will be provided at the MRC, through face-to-face, outreach activities, online and over the phone. Moreover, the MRC will also assist migrants and returnees in settling grievances.

In line with these objectives, an Implementation Agreement will be signed between the Ministry of Labour (MOL) in South Sudan and the ILO. The agreement signifies a formal commitment to the renovation and furnishing of the Migrant Resource Centre in Juba, South Sudan. The ceremony marks the confluence of efforts to create a conducive and empowering environment for migrants, ensuring their access to essential information, training, and support services. This pivotal agreement reflects the shared dedication of the MOL and the ILO to the principles of safe and regular migration, social inclusion, and the protection of migrant workers' rights.

Concurrently, the ILO will also hand over 15 motorcycles to the Ministry of Labour, which signifies an additional dimension to the collaborative efforts. These motorcycles, generously provided by the ILO, are intended to fortify the mobility and efficacy of labour inspectors in South



Sudan. The motorbikes will enable inspectors to travel various areas and respond promptly to labour-related concerns, thus increasing the effectiveness of labour governance in the country.

In this regard, on 2 February 2024 at the Ministry of Labour, the ILO, through BRMM phase II, is organising a signing and foundation stone laying ceremony with the presence of the Minister H.E. James Hoth Mai to officially mark the beginning of the renovation and furnishing of the MRC. In tandem, the ILO will handover ceremony the 15 motorbikes to the Ministry of Labour.

2. Objective

- To officially mark the beginning of the renovation and furnishing of the MRC;
- To increase visibility of ILO's engagement in South Sudan
- To reinforce the principles of safe and regular migration through the formal commitment of the Implementation Agreement;
- To establish a conducive and empowering environment for migrants by establishing the fully renovated and furnished MRC;
- To ensure that the equipment being handed over is received and used appropriately to improve labour inspection in South Sudan; and
- To increase the capacity of the MoL to deliver services and fulfil its mandate.

3. Expected Outcome:

- Successful signing of the Implementation Agreement, reinforcing the commitment to safe and regular migration principles.
- Official start of the renovation and furnishing of MRC.
- Improved visibility and awareness on ILO's initiatives in South Sudan.
- Improve labour inspection by enhancing labour inspectors' mobility and efficacy.
- Increased capacity of the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to deliver services and fulfil mandates related to labour migration and labour inspection.

4. Participants

This signing and handover event is scheduled to have 10 to 15 participants. High-Level Officials from the Ministry of Labour are anticipated to attend the event, including H.E. James Hoth Mai, Minister of Labour in South Sudan. The event will also feature participation from the ILO Country Office - Addis Ababa. 15 Media personnel will also be in attendance.

5. Venue

Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs

2 February 2024



6. Tentative Agenda

Time frame	Discussion Agenda	Organization/ Institution	Experts
09:00 – 09:30	Opening Remarks	MoL	H.E. James Hoth Mai
	Keynote Address	ILO	Ms Aida Awel
09:30 – 09:40	Signing Ceremony	ILO and MoL	Ms Aida Awel and H.E. H.E. James Hoth Mai
09:40 – 10:00	Handover Ceremony	ILO to MoL	Ms Aida Awel to H.E. James Hoth Mai
10:00 – 10:10	Group photo	All participants	The Ministry
10:10 – 10:30	Cocktail and official clothing		