

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Training on Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers

24 – 27 October 2023

The International Labour Organization (ILO), through the Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) programme, is organising a *Training on Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers* from 24 – 27 October 2023 in Mombasa, Kenya. The training aims to enhance the capacity of stakeholders in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region to extend social protection to migrant workers. Specifically, it seeks to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and practical tools to develop and implement inclusive and sustainable social protection policies and programs that address the unique challenges faced by migrant workers and their families, ultimately ensuring that they have access to essential social services and benefits, including health protection.

Government agencies responsible for labour and social security, workers' and employers' organizations, Private Employment Agencies (PrEAs) from Djibouti, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, as well as international organizations such as ECOWAS, SADC, AU, IGAD, EAC, ECCAS, ITUC Africa, Business Africa, CSOs, and other organizations involved in social protection programming and policy development will be in attendance. Additionally, representatives from other RECs with practical experiences in extending social protection to migrant workers will also participate and share their insights.

Migration in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region is a complex phenomenon, encompassing refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons, and labour migrants pursuing various opportunities. According to the AU 2019 report on labour migration statistics (third edition), EHOA holds the second largest share of Africa's population with an estimated 357 million. Similarly, the region also hosts the highest number of migrant populations (7.7 million).

The region faces significant social and economic challenges that is also a pushing factor for migration, such as persistent poverty, inequality, high levels of informality in labour markets, and vulnerability to various shocks such as conflicts, natural disasters, and health emergencies. In response to these challenges, social protection has emerged as a critical policy area to alleviate poverty, enhance social inclusion, and build resilience among individuals and communities.

Social protection is a human right defined as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the lifecycle. It is one of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda and targets 1.3 and 3.8 of the SDGs. Social protection contributes to enhancing the economic and productive capacity even in the poorest and most marginalized contexts. However, the potential impact of social protection is constrained by its lack of coverage, particularly in Eastern Africa, where coverage reaches only 11% of the population. This coverage gap is even wider among certain categories of workers, such as migrant workers and their families,

domestic workers and people working in the informal economy, who tend to be excluded from even the most basic forms of social protection, including health protection.

"Migrant workers are essential to the global economy, but they are too often excluded from social protection. We need to ensure that all migrant workers have access to the social protection they need, regardless of their status or nationality."

- Gilbert Hounqbo, Director-General, ILO - 109th ILC, 2021

These marginalised populations often lack access to even the most basic social protection benefits, such as healthcare and unemployment benefits, leaving them at greater risk of exploitation, poverty, and vulnerability to various shocks, including conflicts and natural disasters. Addressing this coverage deficit is crucial not only for the well-being and dignity of these vulnerable groups but also for promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

In light of this, the upcoming training program will address these challenges by enhancing participants' understanding of policy measures and strategies for extending social protection to all in the region, with a particular focus on migrant workers and their families, drawing upon existing research, best practices, and international standards to provide policymakers with the necessary knowledge and tools to design and implement inclusive social protection policies in the region.

Where: Sarova Whitesand Beach Resort and Spa, Mombasa - Malindi Road - Near Bamburi, Mombasa, Kenya

When: 24 – 27 October 2023

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