GFMD / ADD regional consultation
Closing session
13 July 2020

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As employers our concerns are twofold:

1. An **effective and efficient recruitment, migration and labour permit mechanism** (this is for employers based in receiving countries who are employing migrant workers to fill gaps in domestic worker availability).

2. **Skills recognition** (both for receiving country employers who are employing migrant workers AND for sending country employers who find themselves in the situation of employing returning national migrant workers who are being reintegrated back in their home countries after working abroad).

It goes without saying, and the private sector certainly recognises, that **migrant labor is of enormous benefit to both the sending and receiving countries**. The receiving countries get the benefit of adequately skilled workers who fill gaps left, for whatever reason, by the domestic workforce. As such they are able to maintain production levels in all industries even where the necessary workforce for such enterprises is not readily available.

For sending countries it provides employment for their nationals where there may not be adequate employment locally. And of course, the remittances sent home by their migrant workers are oftentimes a substantial contribution to the nation's GDP.

As employers, our issues are that the **mechanism for hiring migrant workers is effective and efficient in a commercially viable sense.**

The problems we face is that such hiring cannot be done without substantial interfacing with government authorities and this oftentimes leads to delays, or even failures in hiring. Here I am talking about the issue of work permit and visas.

This is not a problem when hiring local national workers and as such makes the hiring of national worker more practical and efficient. There is no need for work permits for nationals (or if there is it is usually a routine and easily attended to measure – usually simply a matter of submitting a list of workers to the labour ministry). It is not really a burden on the employer at all.

However, where national workers are not available and migrant workers are hired, there is a need to **interface with usually two arms of government** (at least): those that the deal with

visa issuance (a department of immigration) and those that deal with work permits (a department or ministry of labour).

The problem is that usually **neither of these government authorities have specific mechanisms laid out to deal with migrant workers**. They either deal with migrants (ministry of immigration) or workers (ministry of labour). All workers are then treated the same (worker permit for foreigners are the purview of the labour ministry but their requirements may not be in sync with the visa requirements set out by immigration departments).

Having then to deal with both departments **separately leads to inordinate delays when trying to hire**.

The example that springs to mind is of our **Malaysian member of the ASEAN CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS** who relayed the experience of one of their factory members who operates a factory in KL. They had a need to hire some 150 migrant workers and found that the lag time from identifying the need for the new hires and the actual time of getting them on the factory floor was some 3 months. This time was made up of dealing with the different government authorities which do not coordinate amongst themselves.

What we see as needed is for **migrant workers to be looked at separately from usual national workers or regular visitors/migrants**. A separate and distinct group. The increase in migrant labour as a % of the workforce in South East Asia and the pacific region year on year, warrants that for those **workers a separate government department should be set up that combines both the visa requirements and the work permit requirements so that all work in sync and that the requirements for both of these (the visas and the work permits) do not conflict in any way.**

This may be easily **done through technology** (and therefore done **remotely and efficiently**). But it really needs **a will on the part of government** to help with the process (recognising that migrant labour is of benefit for both countries involved). Which we have not really seen when the two relevant government ministries work separately.

Skills recognition is something that **technology could be used** to track the work experience of the Migrant labour and then **relayed to potential employers back home.**

Thank you.