

Enhancing public-private collaboration for migrant worker protection in global supply chains

BACKGROUND

Migrant workers make valuable contributions to society. They support the development of their countries through remittances, and they help facilitate the transfer of skills and creation of business and trade networks. In countries of destination, migrant workers fill critical labour shortages, especially within the context of ageing populations and changing labour market trends and demographics. Migrant workers also contribute during times of emergency and crisis, such as providing frontline health and essential services, including the supply of food and health equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While many migrant workers have positive migration and employment experiences, they can be vulnerable to discrimination, abuse and exploitation throughout the migration process. The latest estimates on modern slavery indicate that migrant workers represent almost a quarter of the 25 million victims of forced labour globally. Around the world, migrant workers move and migrate in irregular conditions and are therefore exposed to increased risks to experience harm during their journeys.

It is well established that addressing the exploitation of migrant workers requires multi-stakeholder action including governments, civil society, and the private sector. In recent years, significant steps have been taken to promote supply chain accountability across economic sectors to enhance migrant worker protection, particularly noting the strong effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers. Many migrant workers experienced exclusion from or loss of social protection, health and safety risks, loss of employment leading to irregular status and were stranded in countries of destination, among other affects.

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE MIGRANT WORKER PROTECTION IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Transnational Crime

Longstanding global efforts such as the [Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Transnational Crime](#) illuminate how the private sector can contribute positively to expanding regular opportunities for labour migration and to combating human trafficking and exploitation within supply chains. The 20th anniversary of the Bali Process in 2022, coinciding with the International Migration Review Forum, is an important opportunity to reflect on how the forum has strengthened the region's capacity to respond to the challenges of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime. Since it was first established in 2002, the Bali Process, co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia, continues to be the premier regional forum for consultation between source, transit and destination countries.

Over the past two decades, the Bali Process has raised regional awareness of the consequences of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime and developed strategies and practical measures in response.

In practice, by bringing together enterprises at various stages of maturity in their due diligence, the Bali Process Business Network facilitates knowledge-sharing, tools and resources to help tackle challenges of labour exploitation and unethical recruitment, and to better protect migrant workers. Through this joint forum, the private sector

works together with governments and other key stakeholders to establish best practices and strengthen safe and regular migration pathways.

IOM's IRIS: Ethical Recruitment Initiative

Migrant workers may experience exploitation or violations of their rights prior to their employment during the recruitment process. Understanding the importance of comprehensive actions which cover the entirety of a migrant worker's labour migration journey, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) created [IRIS](#), a global multi-stakeholder initiative designed to promote ethical recruitment and support the transformation of the international recruitment industry. IRIS activities have been carried out in 70 countries, of which 22 are members of the Bali Process, with over one thousand private sector entities participating. Significantly, more than 50 public authorities representing both national and sub-national jurisdictions, also participate in the IRIS Global Policy Network on Recruitment. The initiative directly contributes to IOM's broader efforts to promote safe, orderly, and regular labour migration, as well as combat forced labour and exploitation as called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). IRIS, in partnership with government, civil society actors, and the private sector have worked to enhance ethical practices to prevent and mitigate these effects, advocating for migrant worker protection and inclusion in COVID-19 responses.

Global private sector coordination and action

Other key initiatives include the commitments made by the private sector such as the [Responsible Business Alliance \(RBA\)](#), [Consumer Goods Forum \(CGF\)](#), the [Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment's \(LGRR\)](#) Employer Pays Principle, and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance's [Principles on Forced Labour](#). Outside of business associations, private sector actors are increasingly adopting policies and practices which align with global efforts to prevent labour exploitation.

In line with these efforts, the Bali Process and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have developed strategic partnerships with the private sector to enhance migrant worker protection and encourage alignment with ethical recruitment principles. These include the [Bali Process's Government and Business Forum](#) which has developed Acknowledge, Act, Advance (AAA) Recommendations, endorsed by both business and government leaders, outlining actions to strengthen and implement policy and legal frameworks and advance long-term efforts to improve supply chain transparency, the treatment of workers, ethical recruitment, and victim support. IOM has additionally strengthened collaboration through an [MoU signed between IOM and H&M Group](#) to promote cooperation and assistance in relation to ethical recruitment and protection of migrant workers in global supply chains; the [IOM and Fair Labor Association MoU](#) which has been critical in facilitating knowledge-sharing, and engagement across FLA members' supply chains; and a [partnership and joint initiative between IOM and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance](#) to promote ethical recruitment and protection of migrant workers in the tourism and hospitality sector.

RATIONALE

Through its global programming and public-private partnerships, the Bali Process and IOM aim to strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation to prevent human trafficking and unethical recruitment practices and to promote the protection of all migrant workers in global supply chains. To this end, the Bali Process and IOM propose a panel discussion between the Government Australia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chair of the Bali Process and industry representatives from the electronics and tourism sectors, represented respectively by membership from the Responsible Business Alliance and the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, or their members who are close partners with IOM on ethical recruitment.

This event will showcase how **robust private-public dialogue** regarding safe migration can improve the protection of migrant workers and promote fair and ethical recruitment (in line with SDG 10.7, SDG 8.7 and GCM objective 6), in line with demonstrable actions taken on ethical recruitment by Bali Process Countries, noting its 20-year anniversary, and results from related private sector actors in recent years. It will **facilitate the sharing of best practices** related to proactive labour migration governance, **examine opportunities and challenges for developing strong public-private partnerships to counter labour exploitation and trafficking**, and **strengthening coordination** in migration corridors to encourage safe and orderly migration.

OBJECTIVES

This event is designed to align with global calls for collaboration and multi-stakeholder action on ethical recruitment and will showcase the potential that productive public-private relationships hold in achieving safe migration and protection of migrant workers. The primary objectives of this panel discussion are to:

- Showcase positive dialogue between industry sectors and governments and share best practices and initiatives on ethical recruitment.
- Reaffirm the need for multi-stakeholder action to counter unethical recruitment, labour exploitation and human trafficking and create voluntary initiatives which are informed by and reinforce good governance.
- Examine opportunities and challenges for developing public-private partnerships across recruitment corridors.
- Discuss how coordination between employers and countries of origin and destination can ensure ethical recruitment and migrant protection in line with the business and human rights agenda and global best practice.

GCM OBJECTIVES

This event aligns with and supports the Global Compact on Migration Objectives 5) Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration; 6) Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work; 7) Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration; 9) Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants; 10) Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration; and 23) Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants: Government of Australia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representing the Bali Process; high-level representatives from the membership of the [Sustainable Hospitality Alliance](#) and the [Responsible Business Alliance](#). Proposed moderation by the Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration.

DRAFT AGENDA

| Time (Total 60 minutes) | Agenda |
|-------------------------|---|
| 5 Minutes | Welcome and opening |
| 4 Minutes | Introduction of the importance of public-private collaboration on migrant protection, labour standards, ethical recruitment, and counter trafficking – setting the scene |
| 7 Minutes | Government (Bali Process) presentation on legal and regulatory efforts to improve national recruitment practices and protection of migrant workers |
| 7 Minutes | Presentation by RBA member on initiatives regarding implementation of ethical recruitment and migrant worker protection |
| 7 Minutes | Presentation by Sustainable Hospitality Alliance Member on industry initiatives to promote ethical recruitment practices |
| 20 Minutes | <p>Discussion and Q&A</p> <p><i>Proposed discussion areas and questions below:</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities and challenges for developing public-private partnerships in recruitment corridors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is the impact of voluntary initiatives in the private sector in improving labour recruitment practices?</i> • <i>What are barriers the private sector face in achieving ethical recruitment?</i> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How has COVID-19 affected migrant workers and what steps have been taken to protect workers during the pandemic?</i> • <i>What role does the government see the private sector playing in strengthening safe labour migration?</i> • <i>How can the private sector support solutions to enhancing migrant protection across recruitment corridors?</i> • <i>How can due diligence processes be strengthened by public-private partnership?</i> <p><i>Strengthening coordination between actors in countries of origin and actors in countries of destination to encourage safe migration post-pandemic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what ways do you envision the private sector strengthening government action in ensuring safe labour migration?</i> • <i>What opportunities does the private sector see in closer collaboration with the government?</i> • <i>Where are areas of opportunity for future coordination between the private sector and governments in countries of origin?</i> |
| 10 Minutes | Concluding remarks |