



# Promoting Migrant Worker Rights through Regional Dialogue

*IOM Kuwait Organises a Regional Symposium on Corporate Social Responsibility towards Labour in the GCC*

**Kuwait** - A landmark three-day regional symposium on the role of corporations in promoting social responsibility towards labour in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries ended on 9 January at the UN House in Misref, Kuwait.

This event was the first of its kind in the Middle East and provided a platform for companies, NGOs, charitable organizations as well as government agencies in Kuwait and the GCC countries to network and share their approaches and activities relating to the protection of employees, their communities, the environment and society at large.

The symposium was organized by IOM in cooperation with the Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation (KAPF) and the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands. It took place under the auspices of Thikra Ayed Rashid, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour of Kuwait.

“It is through the development of public private partnerships in humanitarian and social economic developments projects that we all succeed,” said Minister Thikra Ayed Rashid.

The Dutch Ambassador Nicholas Beets encouraged companies to adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies.

“I believe that the better labour regulations, CSR policies and their implementation by the more successful states will enable continued economic growth and social progress in the years ahead.”

IOM’s Chief of Mission in Kuwait Iman Ereqat highlighted role of the United Nations Global Compact initiative urging companies to adopt a number of values



and principles regarding human rights, labour standards, the environment and combating corruption. IOM noted that as the importance of migration in the global economy continues to grow, international political and media interest in issues such as ethical recruitment and the need to enhance the impact of migration on development was bound to increase.

With an estimated foreign worker population of around 20 million, the importance and the potential of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in GCC countries is considerable and offers a unique opportunity for the private sector to play a leadership role and achieve international recognition by addressing the challenges in the recruitment process through a series of measures.

Those include integrity clauses within recruitment contracts, careful selection and audits of recruitment part-

ners, and surveys of employees on their recruitment experiences. Awareness campaigns can play a particularly important role in addressing the concerns of foreign workers.

In addition, private companies can enhance the contribution of labour mobility to development by reducing transaction costs and facilitating access to remittances, by reducing transaction fees for employees and by providing financial literacy training for foreign workers and their families.

IOM reiterated its readiness to engage with the private sector, governments, NGOs, academic institutions and other actors to find effective solutions for the benefit of all actors involved, including national and expatriate labour workers, their communities and countries of origin.

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