

Geneva 18 and 19 July 2017

“Understanding migrant vulnerabilities: a solution based approach towards a global compact that reduces vulnerabilities and empowers migrants”

Mirela’s notes and preparation

Format

- Mirela expected to contribute to a panel discussion on “Towards a global compact on migration: comprehensive and coordinated initiatives to reduce vulnerability and empower migrants”
- Scheduled from 15.00 to 16.30 on 19 July 2017
- Presentation to be no longer than 8 minutes
- Presentation can be in the format of power point or written statement: (send no later than 14 July)
- It will be given to the moderator and interpreters and posted on the website after the workshop.
- Venue: Room XVIII Palais des Nations, Geneva

Background

- The session will discuss how to operationalise the protection of migrants in vulnerable situations in the GCM (Global Compact for Migration). The session will discuss how to successfully mainstream specific challenges of vulnerable populations, mobilise international coordination to address migration governance, and reflect on concrete policies and programmes to prevent, address and sustainably resolve migrant vulnerability. Discussion will look into different regional (ie ECOWAS) and international approaches (ie MICIC) to address migrant vulnerability and explore how to mainstream these approaches in the development of the GCM. The session will equally provide the opportunity to look into the roles of various actors approach and how to engage them while maximizing the coordination and cooperation opportunity and avoiding duplication of efforts and resources (ie whole of government approach, role of civil society: inclusion, changing narrative; diaspora contribution in empowering migrants, reducing vulnerabilities).

Guiding questions:



- What are the roles of different actors in preventing and addressing migrant vulnerability?
- How better to strengthen international cooperation and coordinate efforts to face migrant vulnerability and empower migrants?
- How can the multilateral system foster discussions and consensus on inclusion of these issues in the GCM?

Written statement from a private sponsor perspective

Introduction

The workshop to date has sought to define the concept of vulnerable migrants, understand what factors exacerbate the vulnerabilities and, what actions can be taken to mitigate the issues faced by vulnerable migrants (eg racism, marginalisation of migrants and human rights abuses). From a private sector perspective, we tend to deal with migrants who arrive in the host country through legitimate and regular routes. Thus, this means the extent of migrant vulnerability encountered is not at the same level as those who engage with migrants arriving into a host country as refugees, victims of trafficking or irregular routes. However, this does not mean to say that migrants arriving to work for a private company through a work permit operated scheme are not vulnerable. It is simply that the challenges they may face and the means to address these may be slightly different. Nonetheless the empowerment of migrants in whatever capacity they arrive into a host country can be achieved through the same means.

Challenges

Migrants coming to a host country in order to take up pre-approved employment or join family members (eg spouses) may have the support of their employers and families together with financial support, however they may still face the following challenges which can result in them becoming vulnerable and marginalised members of our communities:

- Racism and xenophobia
- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers for example, not being familiar with the work ethic, working patterns, work processes, day to day cultural norms and traditions of the host country (this could be something as simple as queueing)
- Administrative processes relating to registration, school, banking
- Understanding the requirement to obtain certain types of insurance eg medical insurance, car insurance etc
- Understanding operational procedures for accessing medical and health care services
- Accessing emergency services
- Social etiquette for example, engaging socially with work colleagues outside of work etc.



- Exploitation at work (being underpaid, forced to work overtime etc)

These challenges are broadly the same as those experienced by migrants arriving via irregular migration routes. However, it is acknowledged that migrants arriving as for example, refugees, victims of trafficking etc are more likely not just to encounter these challenges but, also to face them in a much harsher form given that they do not have the support circles comprising of their families, colleagues and employers. It is important to recognise however, that even some migrants arriving via regular migration routes may be exposed to challenges in a harsh form particularly if they are being exploited by unscrupulous employers or victims of for example, forced marriage.

Solutions

Private sector organisations/employers must ensure that they operate processes and policies which provide full support and opportunity for migrants to address the challenges they face, whilst empowering them to assist others in the same situation. Private sector organisations/employers must firstly acknowledge the challenges that may be faced by migrants who are either permanent hires or on international assignment, and secondly operate the following processes:

- Pre arrival cultural orientation sessions and full relocation support for migrants who will be arriving in the host country
- Provision of local host country HR/Global Mobility contact point with whom migrants can raise their concerns/seek support and guidance
- Arrival orientation, training and guidance with regards to local customs, work processes and signposting to services such as health care, schools etc
- Regular points for a 6-12 month period at which the host country HR/Global Mobility contact checks in with the migrant to discuss any concerns, issues, well being and obtain general feedback
- Ongoing communication, training and engagement with all staff regarding diversity and discrimination policies to ensure that migrants feel welcome and host country employees understand the necessity for respect and toleration
- Engagement with government bodies and policy makers through responding to consultations and requests for contribution to policy making to ensure that immigration rules and regulations (both existing and proposed) will not be discriminatory to migrants and afford the same employment rights (as far as practicable) to migrants as those applicable to resident workers. Whereas immigration conditions may be imposed on migrants, it is important for the private sector to challenge and represent the interests of both the business and its migrant workforce to ensure migrants do not suffer detriment from a career perspective and any immigration policies allow migrant integration into the host country. Conversely, private sector organisations/employers should not make recommendations to policy makers which will result in undercutting



the resident labour market, whilst enabling exploitation of migrant workers. Legislative and government bodies charged with immigration policy making must ensure that in incorporating the interests of the private sector into any immigration laws, any vulnerabilities faced by migrants will not be exacerbated.

- Private sector organisations/employers must also ensure that there is an educational strategy in place which enables stakeholders to recognise and support particularly vulnerable migrants who may be employed within the organisation for example, refugees. Private sector actors need to be aware of, and acknowledge the different support mechanisms that will be necessary to address the vulnerabilities of specific types of migrants eg refugees or victims of trafficking. For example, additional counselling services, confidential advice and support contacts for particularly vulnerable migrants should be made available. Further, stakeholders involved in the recruitment and retention of particularly vulnerable migrants must have the appropriate training and support available to them so that they can address the vulnerabilities of such migrants, whilst enabling their empowerment.

The private sector can play a key role in helping empower migrants through: (1) their internal processes and support procedures; and (2) advocating on behalf of migrants and the value they bring to the workforce. For example, migrants may suffer xenophobia and by advocating on behalf of migrants, private sector actors can outline the benefits of having a diverse and multicultural workforce that can compete in an increasingly globalised market, whilst emphasising migrants' contribution to the economic and industrial strategy of a host country (eg addressing demographic challenges/soft power and cultural and language skills). In doing so, private sector actors with the power of their brands can reassure the public and help address negative perceptions of migrants which in turn can lead to empowering migrants as they will feel more included and integrated into the host community.

It is important for private sector organisations/employers to share best practice and engage with one another with regards to the mechanisms and processes that can address migrant vulnerabilities. Sharing of best practice at local, national and international level can lead to a consistent and efficient approach in addressing migrant vulnerabilities and empowering migrants. Private sector engagement with policy makers at all levels is also important as reviewing practices in other jurisdictions can lead to international cooperation, international coordination of consistent policies and also avoid duplication of efforts.

Conclusion

In the last 12-24 months there has been an increased focus on engaging the private sector on thought leadership with regards to the integration and empowerment of migrants (both regular and irregular). It is crucial that this engagement continues as private sector organisations can use the power of their brands to support integration and inclusion initiatives



as they pertain to migrants. Further, private sector organisations operate on a global level and can utilise their extensive networks and experience to share best practices and advise on not just the theoretical aspects of addressing migrant vulnerabilities but also the practical steps that can be taken to implement mechanisms to empower migrants. Inclusion of private sector organisations in multilateral systems, roundtables and conferences is an ideal opportunity for the sharing of ideas with NGOs, government agencies and those operating on the ground.

Further, the private sector can learn from those directly involved in the humanitarian and policy arenas as they relate to migrants. In doing so, private sector actors can better focus their CSR and HR strategies not just for employing migrants, but for the benefit of talent acquisition. Specifically, if private sector actors can better understand the push and pull factors which instigate migrant movement from their home countries, they can look at their global expansion and business strategies to evaluate whether they can take advantage of/provide opportunities to individuals based in jurisdictions which are the focus of any such strategic plans. This can potentially lead to business growth for private sector organisations in countries of interest, whilst assisting with the economic development of those countries. This can in some ways stem the flow of migration where this is instigated by lack of economic opportunities.

