



Sub-Sahara Africa – Arab States Labour Migration Corridor: Exploitation Crisis and Emerging Trends of Protection for Migrant Workers

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Abstract

The sub-Sahara Africa – Arab States labour migration corridor has witnessed huge traffic from African migrant-sending countries in view of the restrictions on Africa – Europe corridor. The labour migration situation in the Arab States or Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has attracted the attention of African governments in order to promote the inflow of remittances to boost economic development. Therefore, this paper examined the international migration governance contradictions arising from Arab States labour laws, the practice of sponsorship of low-skilled workers, and lack of access to justice, which promote pervasive exploitation and physical abuse of African migrant workers. The few initiatives of sub-Sahara African major migrant-sending countries to protect their citizens in the Arab States were examined, with Nigeria having no such protective measures in place. It was recommended that new efforts should be put in place to develop more bilateral labour agreements, and there was the need for an inter-regional collaboration platform by the African Union and the GCC for partnerships for the protection of migrant workers from sub-Sahara Africa.

Keywords: Migrant Workers, Exploitation, Kafala, Labour, Agreements

Introduction

The structural perspective takes a critical view of international economic migration as a consequence of the underdevelopment engineered by the global inequality and division of labour by wealthy and poor countries. Thus, skilled and low-skilled workers in poorer countries of the world migrate to seek better economic well-being, technological and financial resources in direct reflection of the differential material conditions in core and peripheral countries. Besides, labour from the peripheral countries in different international migration corridors is priced low to sustain the economic wealth and financial proceeds of those with levers of the economy in capitalist nations. Thus, low-

skilled migrant workers from sub-Sahara Africa to the more economically endowed locations of Europe, the United State of America and now the oil-rich Arab States has followed similar trends of being priced low and exploited. The nexus of the push and pull factors, the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath of global recession as well as growing unemployment rates in the African continent, have accentuated the economic vulnerability of African low-skilled migrant workers, who dominate the domestic work and gig economy in the wealthy countries in the Middle East.

Labour migration, which is dynamic, is not just about people moving, but the movement of workers across locations or national borders in

search of decent work and better employment opportunities for men, women and their families. ILO (2020) Global Estimates on International Migrants Workers indicate that there are 169 million international migrant workers globally. International migrant workers comprise 60% men, and 40% women. Both men and women constitute 5% of the global workforce. They are found in temporary, informal and unprotected jobs globally. Women are overrepresented in the low-skilled sector, and the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened their vulnerabilities. The volume of youth migrant workers has increased relative to high unemployment in many developing countries. ILO (2018) reports that labour migration distribution, especially of migrant workers, show that 68.9 per cent of all migrant workers are found in three sub-regions, namely North America (23 per cent), Northern, Southern and Western Europe (32 per cent) and the Arab states (13.9 per cent). The volume of migrant workers in other regions shows that Asia has 13.3 per cent, African (7.9 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (2.7 per cent) and South East Asia and Pacific (7.1 per cent).

The Migration for Employment Convention (C097) defines migrant workers as “a person who migrates from one country to another to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment.” (ILO, 2017:1) Migrant workers move across national borders are either regular or irregular migrants in the migration process, depending on their legal status in relations to the migration laws in countries of origin, transit and destination. For many migrants, the desire for decent work or employment is the central reason for migrating. Labour migration, therefore, has remained a critical part of humanity for self-determination, economic power and social well-being. African labour migration, though more intra-continent in volume have been faced with exploitative labour recruitment, with the recruiters subjecting them especially, female migrants to inhuman working conditions, human trafficking and forced labour (AU, ILO & IOM, 2017).

ILO (1999) has responded to the globalization of working life with the concept and agenda of decent work to promote employment and social protection of migrant workers. According to ILO

(1999:1), decent work refers to “productive work of women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families, offer prospects for personal development and encourages social interaction, gives people the freedom to express their concerns, and organize and participate in decisions affecting their lives and guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment for all.” Gender non-discrimination and equality are cross-cutting principles of decent work. ILO (2019) states the four pillars that the Decent Work Agenda and its implementation, rest on as follows: To promote and implement the standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; enhance opportunities for men and women to obtain decent employment and wages; expand the scope and heighten the effectiveness of social protection of all, and strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

The critical issue has been to what extent has African migrant workers benefited from the principles of decent work in their countries of destination, as a significant proportion of them are in the informal sector and poorly regulated sector of the economy as domestic workers, caregivers, health services, agriculture and construction and ‘gig economy’ services. This paper, therefore, addresses the situation in the oil-rich Arab countries of the enormous challenge of sub-Saharan Africa low – skilled migrant workers in obtaining decent work as they have been exposed to various forms and degrees of exploitation that include paying exorbitant recruitment fees to private employment agencies or labour recruiters with their brokers or agents. Deception with regards to contracts, working and living conditions, as well as failure to obtain relevant and adequate information of the work being recruited for, physical and sexual violence, especially for the female migrant workers; verbal and psychological abuse, restriction of freedom of movement, seizure of national passport and other identity documents, recruitment into unsafe and hazardous work, and seizure or underpayment of wages signed in the contract (ILO 2020).

The African – Arab States Migration Scenario

The African – Middle East migration corridor has been aptly described as “the other migrant crisis,” (European Union and IOM, 2015), after the Mediterranean Sea – Europe migration upheavals in terms of deaths and risks. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states that host the majority of African migrant workers are the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (ILO, 2019). The other Arabic-speaking countries outside the African continent that are destination countries for African migrants are Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine,

IOM (2020) reports that migrant workers account for 59 per cent of international migrants who are engaged in high income and upper-middle-income countries, and the GCC countries host 13.9 per cent of international migrant workers who are employed, with one out of every international migrant in the region being a domestic worker. In Oman, migrant workers account for over 85 per cent of the total population of the country. Similarly, Qatar has 88 per cent and the United Arab Emirates 80 per cent of migrant workers in relation to their population. Most of the migrant workers in GCC countries are from the Asian nations of the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and India (ILO, 2019). Several African countries contribute migrant workers to the Gulf Countries from North Africa, (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Egypt and Libya) as well as the Sub-Sahara African region (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, Sudan, and Liberia) (Bisong, 2021).

The African Union estimates that over 3 million Africans live and work in the Gulf countries (AU, 2020; IOM, 2019). As of 2017, 12 per cent of the 28.1 million migrant workers in the Gulf countries were Africans (Atong, et al, 2018). The majority of the sub-Sahara African migrant workers are employed in Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait, with fewer numbers in Oman, Bahrain and Qatar.

The gender dimension of the Arab labour market is distinct, as migrant workers are very strategic to the economic development of the Gulf Countries. Male migrant workers are employed in skilled and professional services,

while the majority of the female migrant workers serve in private homes as domestic caregivers, housekeepers, cleaners and cooks. The few males in blue-collar jobs are found in the construction sites as drivers and gardeners. The immediate implication of gendered roles is that the female migrant workers are perceived as unskilled, cheap labour and prone to abuse by their employers (IOM, 2019).

ILO (2020) estimates that the Middle East region hosts over 27 per cent of migrant domestic workers globally. Studies jointly undertaken in 2015 by the Walk Free Foundation, IOM, European Union, and the Italian Ministry of Interior reported that the challenges of vulnerable and exploited migrant workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council States were enormous, and significantly dehumanized them, especially those in the domestic and informal sectors, not covered by any labour laws in those Arab countries. The challenges in these labour-receiving countries indicated that: 100 per cent of all the workers have their national passport identity documents withheld; 87 per cent were forcefully confined to the place of employment; 76 per cent had their wages withheld; 73 per cent experienced psychological abuse; 61 per cent suffered sexual assault and physical abuse; 52 per cent were subjected excessive working hours, and 48 per cent were deprived of their legitimate food and drinks. (McCormack, Larsen and Husn, 2015).

The scenario above strongly indicates that labour migration and employment to the rich Arab countries comes with great risks of poor protection and welfare of migrant workers. African migrant workers experience exploitation working and living conditions that lead to human trafficking and forced labour.

The labour laws in the Arab States are carefully crafted to exclude the rights of migrant domestic workers, who constitute a large population of migrant workers from sub-Sahara Africa (Atong, Mayah and Odigie, 2018). In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the 2005 Labour Law is the principal governance framework for employment and labour relations in the country. It came into force in 2006 after the Royal Decree. Specifically, Chapter 3 (Articles 32 – 35, 37 – 39) deal with international labour recruitment issues such as the prohibition of recruitment from abroad without approval; regulations for granting

work permit to non-Saudis; the non-substitution of a licence required by a recruitment agency for work permit for foreigners; the conditions for work permit renewal; the processes and time frame of work contract; prohibition of recruitment agencies from engaging a migrant worker to work in the specific profession or area of need other than the one stated on work permit earlier issued; and regulations on change of employer. The Amendment to the Saudi Arabia Labour Law (SALL) in 2015 demanded that employers should provide copies of employment contracts to migrant workers, prohibited the confiscation of migrant workers' passports or national identity documents, and imposed compulsion on employers to pay the monthly emoluments of migrant workers on schedule. In relation to international labour good practices, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is yet to ratify and domesticate the basic Conventions that govern the social protection of migrant workers such as the ILO Convention on Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) (C019), 1925; Social Security (Minimum Standards) (C102), 1952; and Maintenance of Social Security Rights (C157), 1982; International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 2003; the International Labour Organization Migration for Employment (Revised) Convention (C097) 1949; the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (C143), 1975; the Private Employment Agencies Convention (C181), 1997; the Domestic Workers Convention (C189), 2011; and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. The international migration governance framework in Saudi Arabia excludes critical and exploitation issues of domestic workers, as the Kafala (sponsorship) system is deliberately allowed as policy in the Kingdom to enslave migrant domestic workers. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has encouraged the policy of imposing exit visa requirements for migrant workers, especially domestic workers, to compulsorily seek and obtain their employer's formal approval before leaving the country of residence (Saudi Arabia) or even prospects of changing jobs in the country. Besides, migrant workers' access to justice and enforcement of their human rights are virtually non-existent as law enforcement agents refuse to intervene or

prosecute their nationals who sexually assault and physically abuse migrant domestic workers. The 2013 regulations issued by Royal Decree demands that migrant domestic workers must obey the orders of their employers under all circumstances, maintain the secrets of the employer's family and compulsorily respect the teachings of Islam in their places of work (Atong, Mayah and Odigie, 2018).

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Federal Law No. 8 of 1980 has remained the fundamental labour law that governs labour migration and was amended in 2007. The Federal Law has been complemented by Ministerial Decrees of 2010 and 2015 which attempted to regulate the licensing and operations of private recruitment agencies in the Arab State, by forbidding the imposition of recruitment fees on migrant workers and prohibiting contract substitution that is so prevalent in UAE. The Federal Law No. 15 of 2017 was targeted at domestic workers, especially issues of operations of recruitment agencies, obligations of employers and workers, wages, work schedules and rest hours (paid and non-paid). The United Arab Emirates has not ratified international labour conventions that deal with migrant workers like the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 2003; the International Labour Organization Migration for Employment (Revised) Convention (C097) 1949; the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (C143), 1975; the Private Employment Agencies Convention (C181), 1997; the Domestic Workers Convention (C189), 2011. In the UAE, the potential gains of the legal Federal Law 2017 are wiped out by the Kafala System prevalent in the country, as migrant domestic workers are not legally permitted to leave their employers or the country without the employers' express permission, and the domestic workers must have served a minimum of two years of the contractual period. Within this period, and beyond, sexual abuse and physical assaults are not grounds for the migrant domestic worker to seek redress and terminate the contractual obligation. Thus, the traditional practices and government policy of sustaining the Kafala system allows the dehumanization of migrant domestic workers, denial of freedom to seek redress in any form.

The Arab State of Qatar has the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 as the principal legal framework for labour issues, complementing the 2004 Permanent Constitution. Article 3 of the Labour Law specifically regulates labour standards and employment issues, but it is silent on the rights and protection of migrant domestic workers. With collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Qatar began in 2017 a reform process that led to the Domestic Workers Law to offer some leverage to the work of migrant workers. Law No. 13 of 2018 sought to abolish exit permits from employers before the departure of migrants from the country. The challenges have been the effective implementation of the reform regulations and the access to justice of abused and exploited migrant domestic workers in the country.

Kuwait has made considerable improvement in the legal and social protection of migrant domestic workers, despite the sponsorship system, with Ministerial Order No. 640 of 1987 which demands that every migrant worker must be sponsored by a local employer in the country. Ministerial Decree No. 313 of 2004 demanded that private recruitment agencies should execute a standard contract with prospective employers and workers while in their countries of origin, while Decrees of 2007 and 2009 prohibit employers from the practice of confiscating national passports of migrant domestic workers and directed employers to allow their workers to change jobs if they so desire and without the consent of the sponsor. Decree 68 of 2015 went further to stop the charging of fees in exchange for employment by the recruiting agencies.

In Oman, the Royal Decree No. 35 of 2003 governs labour migration issues but excludes the protection of the human and labour rights of migrant domestic workers. The sponsorship system is also practised in Oman, and irregular migrants that populate the domestic work sector suffer exploitation and abuse.

Exploitation Crisis of African Labour Migrants in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States

In the GCC States, the majority of African labour migrants are in the domestic work sector. The vulnerability of African labour migrants to the Arab States are in two major perspectives – in the country of residence and country of destination.

Exploitation of migrant workers begins in the home country by the recruitment agents. This is done in the form of false or deceptive information provided to the migrant workers by the recruiting or employment broker or agency by overstating the monthly wage. Low-skilled migrant workers are always deceived as regards their monthly salaries. Worse still, the recruitment agencies also engage in contract substitution which is the process of presenting unenforceable employment contracts that are substituted with an alternative contract written in Arabic and signed upon arrival in the destination country. Besides, brokers and agencies charge exorbitant recruitment fees, with very high-interest rates leading to the migrant worker's debt bondage. This situation forces the workers to remain in exploitative conditions in the destination country.

Exploitation of migrants in destination countries in the Arab States is dominantly perpetuated by the Kafala (sponsorship) System. The unifying exploitative tendency of international labour migration of sub-Sahara Africa to the Arab States or GCC countries is the obnoxious and stifling Kafala (sponsorship) system that completely denies the African migrant workers their basic human rights. This exploitative system that amounts to modern slavery is a fundamental challenge in international labour migration. The Kafala System "comprises a suite of laws, policies, practices and customs that characterise the governance and accommodation of the migrant workforce" (ILO, 2020:1). The Kafala system, which is exploitative and amounts to modern slavery, is largely a way the governments of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Iraq and the other Arab States have delegated oversight and responsibility for migrants to citizens. The practice is that migrant workers should be sponsored by local citizens who are legally owed a contractual period of continuous service from these workers. The laws tie the legal residency of the migrant worker to their employer. The worker's legal status is effectively tied to the employer, as the migrant worker cannot leave or change job, even in the face of abuse, without the consent or permission of the employer, who may report such worker to immigration authorities (IOM, 2020). Atong, Mayah and Odigie (2018) explain that despite the

various legal regulations and labour policy reforms in the Arab States, the Kafala sponsorship system binds low-skilled migrant workers to a so-called sponsor for visa and employment as an accepted practice of employment in the private sector. The Kafala system is deliberately allowed in the Arab States as an inherent policy to sustain the strategic power imbalance between the employers and migrant domestic or low-skilled workers to perpetuate servitude, derogation of the human rights, and no legal and social protection. Gulf Cooperation Council Countries have weak domestic labour and institutional frameworks that encourage negative treatment of migrant low-skilled or domestic workers. For instance, employers of migrant workers are rarely held accountable for abuses against migrant workers. This situation creates gaps for the continued exploitation and abuse of migrant workers.

Languages barrier has always been erected in the employment contract documentation between the African migrant workers and the sponsors, and employers, which perpetuates the practice of migrant workers' contract substitution. Most Sub-Saharan African migrant low-skilled workers do not write or understand the Arabic language that is used in the contract. The employment documents are first presented to migrant workers in their official languages in their countries of origin and signed before such contracts are re-written in countries of destination usually in the Arabic language with false information and reduced wages and the migrant workers are forced to re-sign such new documents. Besides, the Arabic language is spoken in most homes and offices where migrant workers are employed (ILO, 2009; Amanda, 2021).

Freedom of association of migrant workers is denied in most Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and as a consequence, the inability of migrant workers to bargain collectively. There is the significant exclusion of migrant workers, especially domestic workers, from labour laws protection, and where offered, inferior and at the discretion of the sponsor or employers. There exists very limited access to justice from the national legal system and the governmental operations do not promote such rights and benefits for migrant workers, especially in the

informal sector and the gig economy (ILO, 2009, 2019).

In the dynamics of economic power relations, the majority of the African unskilled and female migrant workers are uneducated and undertook the migration exercise to seek greater financial empowerment. Psychologically, migrant low-skilled workers who populate the domestic work sector could see themselves as economically inferior and become subservient to the wealthy Arab families despite the abuses and exploitation. The essentiality and impact of remittances from migrant workers on their families in their home country, in the forms of fund transfer, constitute safety nets for food security, education for children and siblings, better health and housing conditions.

African countries have a weak negotiating position in bilateral labour migration engagement with the Gulf countries in view of the economic power dynamics not in favour of Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO 2019; IOM 2020; Bisong 2021). Exploitation during the Covid-19 Pandemic increased cases of abuse of African migrant workers mostly females, while others lost their jobs in the tourism, agriculture and construction services, and were excluded from benefiting from government social protection measures and welfare packages offered as pandemic assistance. The Covid-19 pandemic increased cases of wage theft by employers of migrant workers, in the forms of unlawful intentional under – or nonpayment of their wages or entitlements by their employers (or recruitment agency) or termination of employment without paying severance or outstanding wages (AU 2020; Bisong 2021).

Migrant-Sending African Countries' Initiatives in Protecting Citizens

In the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, the major migrant-sending sub-Saharan African States are Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. The economic migrants who populate the international labour migration spectrum as low-skilled workers occupy the domestic work and construction sector in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. There are fewer African migrant workers in Qatar, Oman and Bahrain (Atong, Mayah and Odigie, 2018; Bisong, 2021). For the African migrant-sending countries, the

major challenges have been how to effectively regulate the deluge of private recruitment agents and their proxies in the rural communities as well as bilateral efforts to protect the human and labour rights of their nationals to enjoy some measure of decent work.

In Ethiopia, ILO (2019) reports that migrant workers' influx into the Middle East started in the 1980s, especially to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE and Lebanon, and so far 86% of the migrant workers are females. Between May 2017 and February 2020, Saudi Arabia deported 360,000 migrant workers back to Ethiopia for being irregular migrants and engaging in illegal activities (IOM 2020). In order to promote the protection of Ethiopian migrant workers, the government amended the Overseas Employment Proclamation (OEP) in 2019, which defines the roles of public and private employment agencies, promotes the rights, safety and dignity of intending Ethiopian migrant workers, and requires bilateral agreement as a prerequisite for overseas deployment. Besides, Ethiopia signed a bilateral agreement on labour migration with Saudi Arabia in 2019 (Bisong, 2021).

By 2019, Uganda migrant has over 165,000 migrant workers in the Arab States, and locally over 151 private recruitment agencies are in operation, while between 2016 and 2019, 21,716 Ugandan domestic workers were registered in Saudi Arabia and Jordan (Assumpta and Laiboni, 2019). However, not all migrants use the services of the registered agencies, as some migrants prefer cheaper alternative routes by migrating through neighbouring countries. In 2020, the Ugandan government signed bilateral labour agreements with Saudi Arabia and Jordan in order to improve the recruitment conditions and protection of her migrant workers in both countries.

Kenya has put in place legal and institutional frameworks that govern the migration of low-skilled workers to the GCC countries. Between 2014 and 2017, Kenya initially banned private recruitment agencies from sending domestic workers to the Gulf countries following exploitative practices, but in 2018 the ban was lifted, and 65 agencies were accredited with new regulations (Mutambo 2019; AU 2020).

Kenya signed bilateral labour migration agreements with Saudi Arabia (specific to

domestic workers), and UAE and Qatar (for all categories of workers) so as to improve on the protection of their migrant citizens working in those countries. In 2019, Kenya signed another bilateral agreement with Saudi Arabia specifying a minimum wage of USD 400 (Keenan and Rugene, 2019; Mutambo, 2019). Kenya has also deployed labour attaches to Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar to protect migrant workers' rights and welfare, and monitor the implementation of the bilateral labour agreement (Bisong, 2021). The Kenyan government has also introduced the Labour Migration Website to educate potential migrant workers on safe migration to the Arab States.

Nigeria sends the highest number of domestic workers to the GCC States from West Africa (Awumbila, Benneh, Teye and Atim 2014). The emigration of low-skilled migrant workers is regulated by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment which legally registers licenses and is empowered to monitor the recruitment agencies. Nigeria had imposed a travel ban to some Gulf countries for low-skilled workers in 2014, but the ECOWAS free movement protocols defeated the ban. Saudi Arabia deported over 1,900 Nigerians in 2021 as irregular migrants with expired work permits

Nigeria has a prototype bilateral labour agreement concerning low-skilled labour from Nigeria, but no signed bilateral agreements with any Arab country yet owing to intergovernmental politics, and refusal of the Arab countries to allow Labour Unions and Civil Society Organizations observer status in the negotiation process. The bilateral agreement between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia being developed is yet to be signed. Similarly, Nigeria has no labour attaches formally deployed in any of the Arab countries due to the disagreements between the Nigeria Immigration Service and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment. The former whose legal duties are in the areas of entry and exit issues such as visas and approval of work permits has posited that immigration officers in embassies in the Arab States could handle the tasks of labour attaches, while the latter insists that it has the legal oversight over work-related issues locally and internationally as it concerns Nigerian citizens. The disagreement is yet to be resolved in the interest and welfare of Nigerian

migrant workers who suffer severe exploitation and abuses in the Middle East countries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Africa – Middle East labour migration corridor has become a veritable alternative to millions of sub-Saharan African migrant workers seeking economic empowerment, in view of the increased surveillance and restriction of the African – Europe migration route, as well as the huge risks on the Mediterranean Sea. The African – Arab countries' alternative has been embedded with the crisis that directly attacks the human rights and protection of Africa's huge population of low-skilled migrant workers who dominate the domestic work arena in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries. The Kafala (sponsorship) system which has been directly and indirectly promoted by state policy in the Arab States tantamount to modern slavery with attendant severe exploitation of the migrant domestic workers and other low-skilled African labour migrants.

The bilateral labour agreements by the few sub-Saharan African countries with few Arab States are steps in the right direction, but the critical issues are monitoring the implementation of the instruments in the countries of destination. Nigeria, which is the highest migrant-sending country in sub-Saharan Africa to the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, urgently needs bilateral labour agreements with any of the Arab States yet. And labour attaches in the embassies to attend to the welfare and protection of Nigerian migrant workers, with a significant population in the domestic work sector.

It is also important that an inter-regional collaborative platform is structured between the African continent and the Arab States on issues of labour migration. The African Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries' collaborative platform could be designed like the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, otherwise known as the Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia. This platform with seven states in the Middle East as members, along with other Asian countries, is to promote partnership and shared responsibility to prevent irregular recruitment of migrant workers, encourage measures to manage and protect

temporary contractual workers in both countries of origin and destination, share knowledge on labour market trends on supply and demand, as well as policies to encourage remittance flows.

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