



Ministry of Justice
Division for Migration and Asylum Policy

Thematic consultation 6: Irregular migration and regular pathways, decent work and labour mobility

Panel 1: Irregular migration and regular pathways

- Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the EU Delegation on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
- Addressing irregular migration and facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration are two of Sweden's main priorities for the Global Compact on Migration.
- For the global compact to be successful, we need a comprehensive and balanced approach to these issues.
- No country benefits from the spread of corruption, organized crime or erosion of the rule of law. No country wants to see their own citizens – or those of fellow nations – perish along dangerous journeys or be exploited in the parallel structures of society.
- On the contrary, all countries have an interest in effective labour markets that guarantee decent working conditions for their workers – whether at home or abroad.
- While the working age population is growing in many countries in the South, many countries in the North face demographic developments that will bring about a declining labour supply and critical skills shortages at different skills levels.
- Through the Global Compact, we should find common ground and make operational commitments in these areas.
- By enhancing the capacities of countries of origin, transit and destination to manage migration we can address irregular migration.
- This could include commitments to support the consular capacities of countries of origin along key corridors.
- It could also include a voluntary funding stream to enable Member States with the least capacity to deliver on the global compact to do so more effectively.

- Similarly, the Global Compact should include concrete measures to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration for decent work.
- As suggested in the Sutherland Report, multi-agency support could be provided for facilitating bilateral and regional labour mobility agreements.
- In this regard, it is important to recall that ILO's core conventions constitute a benchmark for basic rights in the world of employment, for domestic as well as migrant workers.
- The right to form associations and join trade unions must be respected regardless of migration status. It is a fundamental right and an enabling condition for the realization of decent work.

Panel 2: Decent work and labour mobility

- Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the EU Delegation on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
- Let me briefly highlight two fundamental aspects of Sweden's view of international labour migration.
- Labour migration is something fundamentally positive, with potential benefits for countries of origin and destination, as well as for individual migrants. It can be a strong and important driver of development, not least from a gender perspective.
- But labour migration also comes with potential risks. Labour migration must never lead to social dumping, exploitation or abuse of people.
- It must be regulated, fair and orderly in order to ensure proper protection of labour and human rights for all working people, regardless of their country of origin.
- In Sweden, we have tried to keep a balance between potential benefits and risks by ensuring that migrant workers enjoy the same rights as Swedish employees.
- This entails, amongst other things, allowing migrant workers to bring their families, and allowing spouses to work. This increases the developmental potential and promotes gender equality and integration.
- The Swedish system also provides an avenue to go from temporary to permanent migration status once firmly established on the labour market.
- But as international migration for work continues to increase, there is a growing need to find new ways to address the many risks and challenges in this area.

- This calls for increased collaboration and multi-stakeholder cooperation, through intergovernmental and state-led structures, as well as private initiatives.
- That is why Sweden supports the establishment of normative standards set by the international community through structures such as the ILO, as well as innovative initiatives focused on the private sector such as the IOM's International Recruitment Integrity System.
- It is vital that such a multitude of tools and approaches are included in the Global Compact on Migration.
- In this context, I would like to give two concrete examples: The Swedish Prime Minister's initiative Global Deal aims to increase the global dialogue between employers and employees, thus safeguarding and promoting the interests and rights of all stakeholders, including migrant workers.
- Likewise, Mr Sutherland's recommendation to facilitate multi-agency support for bilateral and regional labour agreements constitutes an example of the kind of collaboration that is needed when we face the future of international labour migration.

Panel 3: Recognition of skills and qualifications and relevant measures

- Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the EU Delegation on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
- Facilitating skills mobility is a key component of more effective labour markets, nationally, regionally as well as internationally.
- Public employment services play an important role in this regard, as they establish and publicise the demands and available skills on the labour market.
- In the case of Europe for example, partnership between public employment services in the EU Member States, forms a fundamental part of facilitating regional labour mobility.
- For this to function, we need effective public employment services at a national level as well as effective partnerships between such services.
- The Swedish Public Employment Service supports capacity-building of public employment services in a number of partner countries in primarily Africa and Asia. This can contribute to more effective labour markets nationally, regionally as well as internationally.
- A recent OECD study called *Making integration work* highlights a number of important lessons in the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications that could be of relevance as we elaborate this point in the Global compact on Migration.

- The Swedish Public Employment Service supports job seekers including newly arrived immigrants to ease their way to work or studying. Identification and validation of skills are two examples of support that is offered.
- We have a fast-track system for sectors with skills-shortages. Through this system, immigrants can have their skills validated, be offered complementary education and training where this is required and offered internships to gain a foothold on the labour market.
- This system relies on a public-private partnership, whereby branch associations provide guidance on competencies required for their respective fields of work. This forms a basis for assessing potential areas of complementary education or training required for immigrants to enter the labour market.
- Such complementary education can be offered to job seekers with foreign qualifications in order to have their degrees fully recognized in Sweden.
- The Swedish Public Employment Service has also developed a digital tool for asylum seekers who want to prepare for work by presenting their skills and competences to employers in Sweden. Such tools could also be suitable for newly arrived migrants more generally.
- This shows us the potential for how operational tools developed for refugees may be relevant for migrants and vice-versa.

Side event on “Ensuring Access to Decent Work and Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Workers”, 13 October

- It is crucial that human rights and gender equality feature prominently throughout the global compact on migration.
- The Global Compact should be about delivering real change on the ground. It needs to include operational commitments, be supported by measures of success and a robust follow-up mechanism.
- Sweden has three main priority areas for its engagement with the Global Compact:
 - Facilitating sustainable labour migration with decent work
 - Enhancing the capacity to manage migration in countries of origin, transit and destination; and
 - Promoting more effective international cooperation on and governance of migration
- I will focus on the first of these priorities in today’s side-event.
- A well-functioning system of labour migration must include measures for preventing exploitation and other abuses against all migrant workers,

including women migrant workers. Measures that promote and ensure decent work contribute to social and economic integration and equality of treatment.

- In this context, we need to recognize the role of business, civil society and the social partners in international co-operation and governance of migration.
- It is important to address obstacles that migrant workers face, in law and in practice, to organise and bargain collectively.
- The freedoms to associate and to bargain collectively are fundamental rights and thus the respect for fundamental rights and principles at work is not limited by a worker's nationality or immigration status.
- The human rights of all migrant workers, regardless of their status, should be promoted and protected.
- In particular, all migrant workers should benefit from the principles and rights in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which are reflected in the eight fundamental ILO Conventions, and the relevant United Nations human rights Conventions.
- The ILO and IOM initiatives for promoting fair recruitment practices, which Sweden supports, are other measures to deliver on the political commitment of the 2030 Agenda – to end exploitation of migrant workers and reduce recruitment costs.
- It is also important to incorporate a gender-sensitive perspective in legislation, policies and programs.
- The Government of Sweden is a feminist government. Gender equality is central to decision making and resource allocation in all of its policy areas and decisions, including the national budget process.
- The overarching objective of the Swedish Gender equality policy is that women and men shall have the same power to shape society and their own lives.
- This calls for ensuring that migrant women and men are empowered as well as that their rights are fully protected through a regulatory framework. Let me share some illustrations of what this can mean in practice:
- Spouses of migrant workers coming to Sweden are entitled to work. This empowering policy is good for gender equality and it is good for integration.
- However, there can be no positive effects if no information about the rights is directed to the migrant workers. It must be stressed that empowerment requires well-informed migrants. Information carriers may be authorities, institutes or NGOs (civil society)

- Research suggests that female dominated occupations suffer from more stressful work environments and that women are overrepresented in work related diseases. Accordingly, a gender perspective is needed to address these challenges.
- The Swedish Work Environment Authority has therefore been tasked with an inspection initiative for the work environment of elderly care, which is traditionally dominated by women workers.
- Looking more broadly, workers in Sweden enjoy the same labour rights regardless of their country of origin. This means, for example that migrant workers have equal access to parental leave and child care; that they have access to the same level of health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Such rights are crucial for decent work in general and for gender equality in particular.
- I say this because policies of individualised taxation and parental insurance, combined with an extensive system of public child care and elderly care, have enabled parents to combine work and family life. It is a key factor to women's high participation in the labour market in Sweden.
- Gender equality is not a "women's issue".
- Economic and social welfare systems can empower women's participation and independence in the labour market, enable men to take part in care-work and active fatherhood and facilitate a more even distribution of paid and unpaid work within families.

Side event on "Ethical Recruitment in Global Labour Mobility", 13 October

- From the Swedish Government's point of view, labour migration is something fundamentally positive.
- In the best of worlds, it can be good for all parties involved.
- For someone who moves for work, it can be a way to improve their individual situation, both financially and through new opportunities.
- For countries of origin, labour migration often leads to financial remittances, but also long-term gains such as future trade and investments.
- And for countries of destination, it can fill needs for specific talent on domestic labour markets.
- International labour mobility is a trend that is expected to grow because of the demographic challenges faced by many developed economies.

- In short, labour migration can be a strong and important driver of economic growth and development.
- But labour migration also comes with potential risks. Labour migration must never lead to social dumping, exploitation or abuse of people.
- Labour migration must be regulated, fair and orderly in order to ensure proper protection of labour and human rights for all working people, regardless of their country of origin.
- If such order is not ensured, we risk the creation of a parallel structure within our societies, which in turn could become a breeding ground for social tension and racism.
- It is within this context of development and labour protection, of opportunity and risk, that the Swedish government supports IOM's International Recruitment Integrity System – IRIS.
- Here, I would like to highlight what we consider a key element of this initiative.
- While fundamental aspects of international migration are, and must be, regulated by states, employers are often key stakeholders with the power to ensure positive effects of migration.
- Responsible employers can play an important role by ensuring good recruitment practices that benefit migrant workers, who are often exposed to additional vulnerabilities on the labour market.
- This is especially true in this day and age, where production is global, and manpower increasingly crosses borders.
- That is why IRIS, based on cooperation between public and private stakeholders, is such a timely and important initiative.
- Sweden believes in the long term potential of the IRIS certification system.
- But as previously stated, fundamental aspects of international migration must be regulated by states.
- It is therefore important that different stakeholders come together and contribute from their respective entry points.
- Here, the International Labour Organisation plays a central role as the foremost actor setting the normative framework with regards to labour standards.
- The ILO's core conventions constitute a benchmark for basic rights in the world of employment, for domestic as well as migrant workers.
- By combining these fundamental rights with more business oriented mechanisms such as the IRIS system and other innovative initiatives we

can ensure ethical recruitment practices on an exceedingly global labour market.

- Such a holistic approach and multi stakeholder collaboration is very much in tune with the global debate on migration, and a key to ensuring that the Global Compact on Migration will lead to concrete advances in this area.