
Culmination Conference of the PSI Project on Decent Work and Social Protection for Migrant Workers in the Public Services – South Africa

13th January 2017, Reef Hotel, Johannesburg

A: Background

The South African chapter of the “Decent Work and Social Protection for Migrant Workers in the Public Services” Project, which is a three (3) year initiative having started in 2014 to 2016, has steadily evolved since inception, getting to the stage where project information materials have been developed and ready for distribution. The initiative is a pilot project in some few African and other countries globally, namely, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Sierra Leone, and the Philippines, as well as Sri Lanka. Material development in this initiative is considered a pertinent cornerstone to information-dissemination to migrant workers in relation to advancing their rights, promoting their welfare and working towards achieving decent work, for decent life. These materials are to be distributed through varying channels available within the South African public sector unions’ context, and shall also be extended further to organisations and other stakeholders involved in advancing the aspirations, interests and rights of migrant workers in South Africa. It is therefore in that regard that, amongst other priorities of this culmination conference, the compilation of these Project Information Kits (PIKs) assumes a central position to the South African pilot project.

It is an undoubted fact that through information-dissemination and provision, migrant workers (themselves and their families) as well as trade unions, are in a better position to advance their rights, through a two-pronged strategy of simultaneously providing convenient information to the migrant workers, whilst embarking on a process of conscientising local union members (of PSI affiliates) to respect and promote the interests and rights of these workers on the move. But the pertinent question begging attention is: why is it important to avail such information and what kind of information is this? The provision of these PIKs therefore is an important response to this critical question – both in terms of purpose and content of the materials produced. Furthermore, the compilation of the materials demonstrates the connection between such materials – as a project-specific activity - and the entire project expected outcomes. Needless to say, such information should be made available at an arm’s length and it should be user-friendly, as well as compatible with the needs of these workers as they need it.

In addition, there seems to be an intention by the South African government to privatise border management services, and this shall imminently result in potential, as well as, possibly highly effective marginalisation of migrant workers through a system of border control that is not a part of the public service, but left to the whims of private hands, whose primary focus is profiteering. The discussions at the Public Service Bargaining Council (PSBC) bear testimony to these intentions, and now these deliberations are in the South African Parliament. It is without doubt that it is critical priority for modern governments to be concerned about efficient, cost-effective and corruption-free border controls. However, all these efforts should be premised on people-centred border management efforts, and not those intending of criminalising the movements of workers across borders. That is therefore why it is such an issue of importance for public service trade unions involved in this initiative to make its own contributions and ensure that these initiatives of privatising such services do not take assume an anti-worker character as they shall adversely affect further the welfare and interests (including rights) of migrant workers. This is yet another primary focus area of the meeting.

Coupled with this emerging challenge, is the issue of recruitment fees charged to migrant workers, which entrap workers in debt and continued spiralling poverty, because of exorbitant recruitment fees that labour recruiters charge on these desperate migrant workers for them to get placed into jobs. With the privatisation of border management services, we are likely to have an increasingly severe problem of the mobility of migrant workers in and out of South Africa, particularly in the context of the recruitment fees charged by these recruiters. It is also worth noting that most public service trade unions in South Africa are advocating for the total ban of these labour recruitment agents/labour brokers. These are some of the obtaining challenges that the migration project intends to confront. On the overall, the project seeks to promote access to decent work and social protection for migrant workers in the public services by working towards the following **desired outcomes**:

Project Desired Outcomes (2014-2016):

1. Migrant workers in the public services have access to decent work and social protection with the support of the unions.
2. Unions contribute to reforming the labour recruitment industry through the promotion of ethical recruitment and compliance with UN and ILO standards.
3. Unions embark on innovative ways to reach out to and organise migrant workers.
4. Unions contribute to improving the global governance of labour migration through the promotion of rights-based labour migration policies, decent work and access to quality public services for all.

These PIKs specifically include the following:

- a. Banners,
- b. Posters,
- c. T-shirts
- d. A South African Passport for Workers' Rights, and
- e. A Return and Reintegration Kit for South Africa

The continued efforts of the National Working Group (NWG), the NWG Task Team and the PSI Southern Africa Sub-Regional Office have yielded some positive results, which have necessitated that, amongst other tangible results produced, there is need for these PIKs to be unveiled and ultimately launched ahead of distribution to the intended beneficiaries. This therefore becomes the primary objective of the culmination conference. In more detail, therefore, the objectives of the conference are specified below:

Objectives of the Conference:

1. To unveil and launch the developed PIKs to all stakeholders participating in the conference, and involved in issues of migration.
2. To effectively roll-out the **“No Recruitment Fees Campaign, (NRF)”** in South Africa, as part of the global initiative on the abolishment of recruitment fees to the employment of migrant workers.
3. To pursue the reversal of the proposed privatisation of border management by the South African government.
4. To sensitize relevant stakeholders and other such organisations to be a part of the initiative to aggressively share information with migrant workers and be part of uplifting their livelihoods.
5. To continue to efforts of building a strong movement of organisations that advance the rights, aspirations and interests of migrant workers so as to lobby government departments on these matters.
6. To concretely identify feasible and effective channels of distributing the materials to migrant workers through a workable distribution plan that reaches all geographic and institutional concentrations of migrant workers.

Participation in the Conference:

To participate in the conference are the following organisations and institutions:

- a. All PSI affiliates in South Africa shall forward delegations.
- b. South African National Centres (COSATU, FEDUSA & NACTU).
- c. Government departments (departments of Labour, Home Affairs)
- d. Migrant workers organisations
- e. Academics,
- f. Professional legal and other bodies
- g. Civil society organisations involved in the welfare of migrant workers
- h. International bodies
- i. NGOs.

B: Provisional Programme:

08:30 – 09:00 hours	Arrival and registration of delegates
09:00 – 10:00 hours	Opening Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Welcoming Remarks – by SA NCC Chairperson, Pat Mphela. ○ Keynote Address – by NWG National Chairperson/PSI Vice-President for Africa and Arab Region, Ritta Thandeka Msibi. ○ PSI & Migration Issues – by NUPSAW General Secretary, Success Mataitsane.
10:00 – 10:15 hours	Brief Migration Project Progress Update & Purpose of the Conference – by NWG Task Team Member, Koena Ramotlou (SAMWU International Secretary).
10:15 – 10:30 hours	Tea Break
10:30 – 12:00 noon	Session 1: Analysing the Unfavourable Context and Circumstances of Migrant Workers in South Africa: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trends and Patterns of International Migration in and Out of South Africa: Ascertaining the Push and Pull Factors, by IOM Chief of Mission in South Africa, Richard Ots. ○ The Harsh Realities Confronting Workers on the Move, by Butholezwe Nyathi, MWASA Secretary General. ○ The proposed Privatisation of Border Management: Possible Implications of The Resurgence of the Anti-Worker Phenomenon, by COSATU Parliamentary Office, Matthew Parks. <p>Discussions:</p> <p>Moderator: NEHAWU 2nd Deputy President, Nyameka Macanda.</p>
12:00 noon – 13:00 hours	Session 2: Assessing Progress in the Application of the International Migration Legislative Framework of South Africa: Promoting the Rights & Protection of Migrant Workers in SA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhancing Protection, Promoting Sustainable Development and Facilitating Fair and Effective Labour Migration: The Role of the Department of Labour, by Dept. of Labour, Director: Labour Migration & ESB, Mantombi Bobani.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An Overview of the Trends of the Response of the South African Government to International Migration into SA, by MiWORC (t.b.c). <p>Discussions:</p> <p>Moderator: NUPSAW Gauteng Provincial Chairperson, Rachel Puleng Mphaga.</p>
13:00 – 14:00 hours	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:00 hours	<p>Session 3: Introducing Campaign Work for Effective Collaboration on Migration Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation of the South Africa Passport to Workers' Rights, by Janet Munakamwe, Wits University. ○ Presentation of the Framework of the Return & Reintegration Kit for South Africa, by Miriam di Paola, Wits University. ○ Presentation of PSI's No Recruitment Fees (NRF) Campaign, by NWG National Chairperson/PSI Vice- President for Africa and Arab Region, Ritta Thandeka Msibi. ○ Reading of the PSI 18th December 2016, International Migrant's Day Statement, by PSI Project Coordinator, Percy Masuku. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watching of 30 seconds Video on Migration <p>Discussions:</p> <p>Moderator: SAMWU International Secretary, Koena Ramotlou,</p>
15:00 – 15:30 hours	<p>Session 4: Signing of the "No Recruitment Fees" Manifesto by leaders of present organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leaders from the various organisations present shall sign and commit to the Manifesto. <p>Facilitator: NUPSAW Gauteng Provincial Chairperson, Rachel Puleng Mphaga,</p>
15:30 - onwards	Interview with Lindelani Migration/Deportation Centre