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A Briefing Workshop for Nurses on Implementation of the Bilateral Agreement Between Kenya and UK for Collaboration on Health Care Workforce



Kenya is in the process of implementing the Bilateral Labour Agreement signed with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for collaboration on health care workforce. The first batch of Health Care Professionals targeted for recruitment to the UK under the Agreement are Nursing Professionals. In the process of implementing the Agreement, it has been realized that there are information gaps amongst prospective candidates regarding requirements for recruitment of Nurses to the UK.

To address this challenge, the Ministry of Labour organized a one-day briefing workshop on 18th November, 2021 at the Kenya School of Government (KSG), Nairobi Campus with over 650 nursing professionals interested in working in the UK under the Agreement were in attendance. **The workshop aimed at sensitizing interested nursing professionals on the registration, recruitment and migration processes (requirements, timelines and responsibilities) as well as deliberate on challenges faced in so doing. Additionally ,it was aimed at agreeing on strategies for addressing challenges and emerging issues in the implementation of the Agreement and Chart a way forward in realizing the goal of facilitating the first batch of Nurses to work in the UK under the Bilateral Agreement. The meeting also provided a much-needed opportunity to receive feedback from the nursing professionals regarding their experiences with the registration and recruitment processes so far.**

While making his opening remarks, the Labour Cabinet Secretary Hon. Simon Chelugui said the nurses who will get opportunities to work the UK will be expected to transfer the skills acquired to local hospitals in the long run as part of knowledge transfer program. He noted that besides the nurses, the country was also negotiating agreements for other skilled professionals with key labour markets " Kenya will

continue to sign agreements with other countries in the world that are sourcing out labour from the country. This includes nurses, aviation and teaching fraternity" the CS said. He further said that the Brexit for instance, is an opportunity for Kenyan professionals in the UK market.



Ms. Winnie Karingithi, the Director of Planning in the Ministry of labour updated the participants on the progress of the process. **A total of 3,329 applicants had expressed interest with 2,024 being females and 1,305 being males. This list was submitted to the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health for screening and verification of the applicants' registration by the Nursing Council of Kenya (NCK). A Total of 644 candidates were disqualified for various reasons among them those with Expired licenses and not registered with the Nursing Council of Kenya. Consequently. a total of 2685 candidates were shortlisted and are at the various stages of compliance on English Test and the Computer Based Test required for the UK market.** For candidates to qualify there is a requirement that they must have passed the English Language Tests: International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Occupational English Test (OET) and Computer Based Test (CBT).





On her part, the NEA Ag. Director General Mrs. Edith Okoki underscored the role played by National Employment Authority (NEA) in the recruitment process. **The Authority has developed a specialized portal on the NEA website for registration by qualified Nurses interested in working in the UK under the Bilateral Agreement and further published a request for expression of interest from qualified Kenyan Nurses (COHORT 1) for employment in the United Kingdom under the Bilateral Agreement for collaboration on Health Care Workforce.** Mrs. Okoki urged all nursing professionals interested in working in the UK under the Agreement to register on the NEA platform *www.neaims.go.ke.* She further reiterated the importance of engaging with only licensed recruitment agencies in this process. The list of accredited agencies can be accessed through

https://neaims.go.ke/EmploymentAgencyList.aspx however under this agreement a new list would be provided soon on the NEA site.

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