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NEA

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Upscaling Access to Labour Market Information through Job Fairs: NEA hosts the Inaugral National Job Fair at Sarova White Sands Hotel, Mombasa:



The National Employment Authority (NEA), held a successful inaugural regional Job Fair between 26th - 28th June 2022 at Sarova White sands Beach and Resort Mombasa, under the theme "Towards Self-Reliance with Decent Job opportunities".

This event, which was both physical and virtual brought together more than 2,500 participants who comprised of; Job seekers, employers, training institutions, social partners as well as development partners among other stakeholders to re-think, re-energize and together re-strategize for the future of Kenyan labour market, taking into account effort made so far in the sector.

The job fair was timely and significant in that it came at a time when access to reliable labour market information as well as employment opportunities has become a major challenge faced by job seekers. In Kenya, close to 1.2 million Kenyan youth join the labour market every year, some with skills and others without any skill. Prior to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country's economy was only able to create 800 thousand jobs in both formal and informal sectors, out of which the informal sector accounted for 83 percent of all jobs created. The Job Fair therefore provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on trends in employment promotion, share experiences, perspectives and responses to those challenges and at the same time to give thought to setting the directions for the future.



THE ROAD SHOW



On day 1 of 26th June 2022 , the job fair kicked off on a high momentum through road shows . The caravan was flagged off at 8:30am from Sarova White sands beach and Resort by the NEA Ag. Director General, Edith Okoki together with NEA Board Members and the Ministry of Labour Officials. The main objective of the road show was to: Allow NEA Staff to interact with the Public and respond to questions and concerns directly, Raise awareness on NEA's Mandate, activities and programs, Direct job seekers to access job and internship opportunities through the NEAIMS



These road shows were divided into two routes each lead by a team leader as follows;

White Sands Sarova Beach & Resort- Bamburi-Kisauni-Mshomoroni-Sabasaba-Makupa- Kibarani-Changamwe-Mikindani- Kwa Shee-Catholic-Namakazi-Jomvu-Mikanjuni-Mtaa wa waswahili- KTDA-Miritini Mwisho-Railways-Miritini Estate- WorldBank Primary School-Chaani-Portreiz-Airport-Kipevu-Magongo-Kibarani-Tudor

White Sands Sarova Beach & Resort-Kenol-Nyali-Mkomani-Buxtan-Tononoka-Oldtown-Railways-Majengo-Ganjoni-Shelly Beach-Likoni Caltex-Shika Adabu Primary School-Mtongwe-Bofu-Ferry-Kisimani-Bombolulu-Shanzu-Whatesands Hotel

During the road shows, members of the public were informed on NEA's commitment in provision of employment services, promoting self-reliance and decent job opportunities. The key messages included:- NEA's readiness to offer professional guidance, work towards promoting ethical recruitment practices, NEA's commitment to offer timely and reliable labour market information and NEAIMS platform being a one stop Shop on employment matters .These activities were hyped by MC, disc jockey and dancers.

EXHIBITIONS



The exhibitions which attracted participation from Private Recruitment Agencies, Employers, Training Institutions, government agencies and Social Partners kicked off on 27th June 2022 at White Sands Hotel and rolled out for 2 days. The exhibitors seized the needed moment to market their products and services to their respective clients and the public in general - which was in line with organizer's objective of according the opportunity to the stakeholder to showcase their services.

Specifically, National Employment Authority (NEA) got the opportunity to share with members of public Labor market information that empowers young people to fulfil their potential. Some of the other exhibitors at the job Fair included; the Federation of Kenya Employers, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), National Social Security Fund (NSSF),

Kenyatta University, Private Employment Agencies (PRA), Kenya Association Private Employment Agencies (KAPEA) and Association of Skilled Migrant Agencies pf Kenya (ASMAK) among others.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SESSION



The apex of the second day was the side event which brought together more than 400 returnee Migrant Workers and Job seekers to share experiences and challenges on Job searching, working in foreign countries, return and re-integration, and safe labour migration. Those who had gone to work abroad shared experiences while giving recommendations on safe labour migrations practices.

During the return and re- integration session, it was noted that while stakeholders usually focus on the earlier stages of the migration cycle, such as the development of effective migration laws and policies, pre-departure training, and working conditions, limited attention is given to return and reintegration of migrant workers. As a result, the return and reintegration was described as the 'unwritten chapter in the history of migration.

The youth got an opportunity to learn about effective reintegration which means successful reintegration of returning workers into their families, communities, the economy, and society.



LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL JOB FAIR

The climax of the entire job Fair was on 28th June 2022 when the National Job Fair was officially launched. The day was guided by three thematic areas namely; Creating Job opportunities and access to labour market, Skills development for enhanced employability and entrepreneurship as well as Advancing for Safe, Regular and Orderly Labour Migration.



The day was graced by Hon. Simon Chelugui, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour, as the chief guest. NEA was also privileged to host Ms. Aida Awel, Representing, ILO Country Director, Mr. Emrah Guler, Representing Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mr. John Elungata, Regional Commissioner, Coast Region Representing the Principal Secretary, Interior, Eng. Peter Tum, MBS., Principal Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Hon. Jackson Kalla, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Labour among other guests



In her opening remarks, Mrs. Okoki introduced NEA to the delegates and highlighted the mandate and

objectives of the Authority noting among them: the Need to Create awareness on NEA's (Mandate, Functions, Services offered); the need to create awareness on services offered by Private Employment Agencies; the need to bring together all the actors in the labour market (Employers, Trainers. Jobseekers, Government); the need for increased collaboration and partnerships in employment promotion; and the need to share information on the dynamics of the labour market. She lauded the support received from the Ministry of Labour and other Ministries and Government Agencies. She also appreciated ILO/ IOM for Financial & Technical Support, the Employers for participating in the event, the Private Employment agencies and all the participants for creating time for the Job Fair.

The second Speaker of the day was Ms. Machayo Joan, Board Member, National Employment Authority. She took the opportunity to voice the Authority's mandate among them: advising on formulation of employment policies and strategies for national and county governments; advising both the national and county governments on any policy matter concerning employment; developing methodologies for employment measurement, management and promotion; conducting periodic surveys on labour market skills requirements and advice training institutions and job seekers appropriately to ensure that training and skills match the job market requirements; monitoring implementation of employment policies and programmes; facilitating cooperation with the national government, the private sector, the informal sector and foreign governments and institutions to promote and increase access to employment; facilitating continuous training and other activities of Kenyans to improve of their chances of employment and work skills; registering persons seeking employment; maintaining an integrated and up-to-date database of all persons seeking employment; facilitating the employment and placement of job seekers in formal and informal or any other form of employment, locally and internationally; circulating in a timely manner job vacancies advertised to job seekers throughout Kenya through appropriate means including use of social media, internet, and published materials; providing counseling to the unemployed and undertake activities to promote employment; facilitating the implementation of national policies on employment; taking necessary steps to encourage equal opportunity employment practices for the benefit of the unemployed; and performing such other function as may be assigned to it by any other written law.

She opined that the Job fair provided an opportunity for NEA to create awareness on the services it offers and assured that the Board remained committed to ensuring that the Authority's mandate is met. Ms. Machayo thanked the Ministry and the CS for the support accorded to the Authority.

Doubling as NEA Board Member and FKE Executive, Mrs. Jacqueline Mugo cited lack of jobs as one of the problems the Country was facing and that as part of the NEA Board membership, they have been grappling with how to convene the job fairs. Mrs. Mugo was optimistic that with the success of the inaugural job fair, the future of work was guaranteed and solutions to lack of jobs will be realized. She also highlighted issues of skills mismatch as among issues the labour market is grappling with. She noted that some of the jobs created in the country do not match the graduates from training institutions.

Pleasured to represent Mr. Wellington Chibebe, the Director of ILO Country Office for the United Republic of Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, Ms. Awel shared the ILO Statistics (2019) that revealed Kenya's overall unemployment stood at 5%. In the case of the youth, 12.8%. The average labour force participation stood at 67.8%. Despite the fact that most of countries in Africa have a young population, creating adequate jobs for these youth has remained a challenge. She opined that for over a century, the unemployment rate has not painted a rosy picture in Kenya. It further worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic that led to lay-offs in both formal and informal sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing jobs crisis have highlighted the critical role of employment services actors - public employment services and private employment agencies - in matching jobseekers with available vacancies, helping employers find the workers they need, and supporting both sides in adapting to labour market disruptions, that is why we are here today in this job fair.

Mr. Emrah Guler, who was representing Chief of Mission, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), commended the Government of Kenya for taking strides to ensuring safe, orderly, and humane migration through the Ministry of Labour and other key partner ministries and agencies such as Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, National Employment Authorities (NEA) among others. He posited that the MOL has taken progressive steps including signing of the Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements with the governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, and United Kingdom.

Mr. Guler made reference to some key protocols put in place to promote safe labour migration such as: (i) The East African Common Market Protocol (CMP), which provides the free movement of labour, has helped to facilitate labour mobility within the sub-region. Countries in the East African Community (EAC) have prioritized the freedom of movement of their citizens within their respective regions as integral to accruing the development benefits of migration; (ii) Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region has ambitions to promote the mobility dimensions of regional integration as articulated in its recently endorsed Free Movement of Persons Protocol (FMP).

Mr. Guler also pointed out that Kenya had continued to witness the significant growth of diaspora remittances which stood at 3 Billion U.S dollars by end of 2020. With proper management and strategies, the GoK can increase these figures. Current data informs that Diaspora remittances is currently Kenya's highest foreign exchange earner having overtaken tea, coffee and tourism



While making his remarks, Eng. Peter Tum, MBS., Principal Secretary, Ministry of Labour registered his delight to join the launch of national Job Fairs terming it the government's commitment to inform and educate the public on employment services provided by the Ministry through the National Employment Authority (NEA). He underscored the importance of employment services in labour markets worldwide, especially in linking jobseekers with employment opportunities thus helping to alleviate the challenge of unemployment. In his words, many countries across the world have designed and implemented both public and private employment services which have played a key role in keeping unemployment figures low while providing critical information to policy makers for improved design of employment policies and programmes. Kenya is no exception to these efforts. He affirmed that, the Ministry of Labour in particular oversees a public employment service implemented by the National Employment Authority (NEA) which is then complemented by Private Employment Agencies. This dual approach enhances the scope and coverage of employment services locally and abroad.

On his part, Hon. Jackson Kalla, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Labour alluded to the progress made in the Ministry of Labour that could be christened by the success of this Job Fair. Lauding the skill that had just been performed, Mr. Kalla stated that the Country has invested in skills as was evident from skit and underlined that now it was time to convert these skills into jobs. He reiterated that the job fair was an opportunity for the youth and potential job seekers to link with the portals that will help them access information about jobs. He further lauded NEA for building strong partnerships with the training institutions such as NITA, TVETs and the development partners.

While making the note address, Mr. Simon Chelugui, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Labour observed that Labour is one of the most critical factors of production and plays a central role in economic growth of any economy, and in an economy like that of Kenya, having a decent jobs was critical. He highlighted some of the steps taken by the government to create decent jobs. In particular, in the last ten years, the government had implemented a number of strategies meant to create a better investment climate in the country, hence creating enabling environment for employment creation. Some of these strategies include reduction in the cost of doing business; expanded democratic space which has kept political risks low; improved governance; simplification of business registration processes; improvement in physical infrastructure; the last mile connectivity; promotion of science, technology and innovations; and improved ICT connectivity.

The Government has also enhanced the affirmative action funds such as the Uwezo Fund, and Women Enterprise Fund, and initiatives such as Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) with the twin objective of creating opportunities for self-employment and economic development.

At the Ministry of Labour, the CS intimated that the government has enhanced the capacity of NITA to offer relevant industrial skills training, and encouraged industrial collaboration through curriculum development. The government has also enhanced data collection to identify skills gap in the industry, promoted productivity practices, strengthened social dialogue through tripartism, promoted need for investing in occupational health and safety and strengthened the capacity of NEA to provide employment services, through online jobseeker's registration, and placement of jobseekers both in the local and foreign market.

He noted that even though the government has done a lot to promote decent work, lack of timely, reliable and up-to-date labour market information has sometimes hampered the efforts. Mr. Chelugui therefore intimated that this job fair was an attempt by the Ministry of labour through National Employment Authority to address this information gap. He appreciated that searching for job is normally very frustrating for most jobseekers, especially when they do not know where to start. The CS therefore encouraged all job seekers to register through the NEAMIS (online jobseekers portal), this will give you an opportunity to see all available jobs. Hon. Chelugui added that NEA has established employment promotions centers at the county level. He therefore encouraged all Employers to take advantage of these employment promotion centers to advertise available vacancies through NEA online portal. Through this portal, you will attract job seekers from all corners of our country. I also want to encourage employers to recruit employees through the NEAMIS, a service which is available at no cost at all.

The Cs encouraged employers also to use the online NEAMIS to file employment returns and source for employees. The system, he remarked, has been made very user friendly that one does not need to wait until the end of the year to file returns. This system has been designed to allow employers to file their returns monthly, hence easily fulfilling their statutory obligation, with ease.

PLENARY SESSION



Mr. Stephen Ogenga, the Director General, National Industrial Training (NITA) was the Expert presenter of the first topic. "Skills Development for Enhance Employability" The panelist of the topic included: Mrs. Maren Omondi, a member of the NEA Board representing TVET. Mr. Francis Mitiambo, Acting Director, NHRDP, Ministry of Labour, Dr. Kelly Oluoch, CEO, Kenya Medical Training College, Dr. Juma Mukhwana, Director Deneral, Kenya National Qualifications Authority and Ms. Phillipa Mary, Head Partnership, Global Development Incubator.Their expatriate presence enriched the deliberations that focused on ; acceleration of job creation in the digital space, enriching digital skills in the labour sector and maximizing digital space for better work environments.

The second topic of the panel discussions was guided by the theme; "Creating Job Opportunities and Access to Labour Market," and was delivered by Dr. Jacob Omolo who is the Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Applied Economics at Kenyatta University. The panel discussion session further brought together industry captains who shared best practices and latest developments in regards to: the changing megatrends in the world of work and the human capital development, the future of work, Job opportunities in the digital trends as well as creating a self-reliance generation. They included: Ms. Caroline Mungai, Deputy Director, State Dept. for Youth Affairs and Innovation, Mr. Nelson Gacheru, Board Member, Youth Alive Kenya and Ms. Joan Machayo, Board Member, NEA

The last session of the day was guided by Ms. Aida Awel, Chief Technical Officer, ILO BRMM Project deliver an elaborative expert presentation on Advancing for Safe, Regular and Orderly Labour Migration. She pointed out some of the policy initiatives put in place to protect migrant workers which include; Ratified

the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers(Supplementary Provisions) Convention,1975 (No. 143), Draft National Migration Policy-BLAs with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates & UK, Currently, labour migration governance is guided by the 2013 National Employment Policy and Strategy for Kenya, and the 2014 Diaspora Policy. The panelist included; Dr. Linda Adhiambo Oucho, Executive Director, African Migration and Development Policy Centre, Ms. Pravina Gurung, Programme Manager, Labour Mobility, Human Development and Migrant Protection and Assistance, IOM, Ms. Hellen Apiyo, Ag. Commision for Labour, Ministry of Labour, Ms. Fatma Jabir, Representative, Association of Private Enployment Agencies and Mr. Peter Kamindu, Representative Migrant Workers.

At the end of the panel discussions, there was an interactive Question and Answer session led by the moderator of the day Mr. Jonson Mwakazi which enabled participants to seek clarifications and understand more in regards to the plenary sessions

RESOLUTIONS

At the end of the panel discussions there we satisfactory recommendations that were propose and were thematically read by a NEA Board Member, Mr. Vincent Kigen. The resolutions were thematically as follows

Sub-Theme 1: Creating Job opportunities and Access to Labour Market

Government of Kenya (Ministry of Labour, NEA) commitment

a) Promote decent work, skills development and sustainable job creation in the country

b) Designing and implementing relevant and responsive employment policies and programmes for Kenyans, to promote local productive employment.

c) Conduct more Job Fairs in across all the 47 counties through the 8 administrative regions to provide a platform bringing together all the actors in the labour market (Employers, Trainers, Jobseekers, Government)

d) Integrate ICT in Job Creation.

e) Strengthened social dialogue through tripartism - (Government, COTU-K, FKE)

f) Strengthened the capacity of NEA to provide employment services, through online jobseeker's registration, and placement of jobseekers both in the local and foreign market.

g) Ensure Provision of timely, reliable and up-to-date labour market information.

h) Commit to circulate in a timely manner job vacancies advertised to job seekers throughout Kenya through appropriate means including use of social media, internet, and published materials;

i) Create awareness on existing government programmes that promote self-employment and business development – AGPO, UWEZO Fund, Youth Fund among others

Jobseekers and Employers

a) Job seekers to take initiative to register themselves through the NEAMIS online job seekers portal and the County Employment Offices; and constantly check for available job vacancies.

b) Employers to take advantage of the employment promotion centers and the NEA online portal to advertise available vacancies.

Sub-Theme 2: Skills Development for Enhanced Employability and Entrepreneurship

Government of Kenya (Ministry of Labour, NEA) commitment

a) Enhance the capacity of NITA to offer relevant industrial skills training, and encouraged industrial collaboration through curriculum development.

b) Develop skilling, reskilling and up-skilling programmes for enhanced employability and adapt to changing world of work.

c) Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning

d) Enhanced linkages between the training Institutions and Industry for up to date skills demanded in the labour market.

e) Build Capacity of training Institutions to adapt to the new and emerging technologies such as Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (future of work) among others

f) Develop a career navigator to encourage the students focus their career at an early age.

g) Enhance access to training institutions, consequently create awareness on the existing ones

Jobseekers and Employers

a) Job seekers take the initiative to get information on skills in demand in the labour market and strive to acquire them to remain relevant in the labour market.

b) Employers to create opportunities for their employees to upgrade their skills through skilling, reskilling and up-skilling programmes.

Sub- Theme 3: Advancing for safe, regular and Orderly Labour Migration

Government of Kenya (Ministry of Labour, NEA) commitment

a) Adequately Create awareness on The National Employment Authority (Mandate, Functions, Services offered) in the country.

b) Adequately create awareness on services offered by Private Employment Agencies

c) Strengthen policy, legal and institution framework on Labour migration in the country.

d) Enhance coordination, collaboration and partnerships among all key agencies involved in labour migration in the country.

e) Ensure protection on rights and welfare of Kenyan migrant workers through negotiation for Bilateral Labour Agreements with key labour destination countries; securing foreign decent jobs for Kenyans; establish mechanism for reporting of Kenyan Migrant workers in distress.

f) Establish safe houses for distressed Kenyan Migrant Workers in the countries of destination.

g) Establish Oversight and Community Feedback mechanism for the Kenyan Recruitment Agency.

h) Provide reliable labour migration data.

Jobseekers and Employers

a) All Jobseekers to ensure they use registered private employment agencies during job search and placement, both locally and abroad. Take initiative to check on the full list of registered agencies that can be accessed through the website of the National Employment Authority (NEA).

b) All Private Employment Agencies be licensed through the National Employment Authority and strive towards ethical recruitment.

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DINNER

The dinner was held on 28th June 2022 at coco's beach, White Sands Sarova Beach & Resort hotel.

The dinner cocktail was presided over by the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Labour Hon. Simon Chelugui accompanied by the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Labour Eng. Peter Tum and Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Labour Hon. Jackson Kalla. They all congratulated the Authority for organizing the 3-day event that brought together all stakeholders and social partners to dialogue on the best approaches in addressing the problem of youth unemployment and increase awareness on available job opportunities both in and outside the country. The Cabinet Secretary also emphasized the need to hold job fairs across all the Authority's branches as this will improve NEA visibility and its mandate.

The Job Fairs will also be platforms to provide information on labour market dynamics and discuss development and implementation of sustainable labour market policies especially in the prevailing dynamic environment. They will be implemented through public engagement forums (such as road shows), panel discussions and exhibitions by employers, employment services providers and training institutions. They will be rolled out countrywide to ensure maximum reach.