



Ministry of Labour and  
Foreign Employment

A stylized world map with a blue and orange color scheme. Dashed lines represent flight paths connecting various locations. Four circular icons, each containing a white airplane silhouette, are placed along these paths: one in the top left (orange), one in the top right (purple), one in the bottom left (blue), and one in the bottom right (blue).

# **NATIONAL POLICY AND ACTION PLAN ON MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT SRI LANKA**

**2023 -2027**



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Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment

September 2023



# Message from the Hon. Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment

I am delighted to unveil the "National Policy and Action Plan on Migration for Employment Sri Lanka 2023 – 2027". This policy has been diligently crafted in response to current trends in national, regional, and global migration and has earned the endorsement of our Cabinet of Ministers.

Over the past half-century, migration for employment has emerged as a global trend, pivotal in propelling our nation's development. Our workforce's international movement has alleviated our government's employment provision challenges and significantly contributed to human capital development and the mitigation of socio-economic disparities. This diasporic exchange has fortified our society, bringing a rich tapestry of diverse cultures and viewpoints and enhancing our collective resilience.

In 2008, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) rolled out the National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP), a beacon guiding the governance and management of employment migration. As time progressed, we bolstered our commitment to the welfare of our migrant workers, devising strategies such as the Sub Policy on Return and Reintegration in 2015. Our partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) was invaluable when we outlined in 2017 to refresh our National Policy and create a five-year National Action Plan (NAP) on Migration for Employment.

The revised Policy and NAP revolve around the "Decent Work" ethos, zeroing in on three pivotal arenas: Investment, Innovation, and Inclusion. Our vision transcends the immediate benefits of remittances. Instead, we perceive migration for employment as an investment in our collective future. Our aspirations include leveraging the prowess of Overseas Sri Lankans, spurring

innovation via digital technologies, precise skills matching, and enhancing information management. Reflecting the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goal, "Leaving No One Behind," our unwavering commitment remains to democratize opportunities and benefits.

This document delineates core policies aimed at amplifying governance, fortifying rights, and welfare provisions for migrant workers, creating robust frameworks for skill development, and positioning employment migration as a cornerstone of our national development strategy.

I am confident that this National Policy and Action Plan will chart a promising course for our migrant workforce and their kin. I earnestly seek the steadfast support of all stakeholders to actualize this Policy and Action Plan, embodying our shared dedication to the flourishing and prosperity of our invaluable migrant community.

I convey my deepest gratitude to the Secretary and Staff of the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, esteemed stakeholders, Ms. Simrin Singh (Country Director) and the dedicated team of the International Labour Organization, Colombo Office, as well as the commendable staff of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Their collective input has been instrumental in framing this policy. United in purpose, we strive towards realizing the vision outlined, crafting a thriving and inclusive Sri Lanka.

**Manusha Nanayakkara (M.P)**

Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment



# Message from the Secretary of Labour & Foreign Employment

It is my pleasure to introduce the National Policy and Action Plan on Migration for Employment Sri Lanka 2023 – 2027 as the guiding document for the foreign employment sector in the country for next five years.

This comprehensive document is a testament to our commitment to addressing the complex and multifaceted challenges and opportunities presented by labor migration in our nation. Migration for employment has played a pivotal role in our economic growth, human capital development, and socio-economic equality. It has allowed our citizens to pursue their dreams, gain valuable experiences, and contribute to the well-being of their families and communities. It has also brought diverse perspectives and cultures together, enriching our society in numerous ways.

Our journey towards effective policy governance and management of migration for employment began in 2008 with the introduction of the National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP). This pioneering policy framework has guided our efforts to support and protect our migrant workers. Additionally, in 2015, we recognized the specific needs of returning migrants and developed a Sub Policy on Return and Reintegration for Sri Lankan Migrant workers.

A review on the implementation of the existing National Labour Migration Policy was done in 2017 and this review highlighted the need for updating this policy developed in the year 2008 and preparing a Policy and a National Action Plan in line with the current situation and the recent trends of national, regional and global migration in consultation with all key stakeholders in the foreign employment sector in the country who are actively involved in the advancement of lives of migrant workers and their families.

This monumental undertaking of updating policy was made possible through the invaluable technical and financial support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The Policy and the Action Plan was updated with the contribution of all key stakeholders in the labour migration sector that includes sectorial ministries, migrant workers and their family members, Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies, Private sector, Civil Society Organizations, Trade unions, academia, research institutions and development partners, including INGO and the UN Agencies. Further to that, public views were also taken into consideration. The revised National Policy and the Action Plan has been validated by the National Advisory Committee on Labour Migration that consist of all the key stakeholders in the labour migration sector in the country.

The updated policy has four core areas focusing on the migrant worker as well as the family members of migrant worker. Such; Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment. Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families, Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies and Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development.

The rights and obligations of the migrant workers form the foundation of the Policy which has formulated in accordance with national and international legal and policy frameworks. The “Whole of Government” approach and “Whole of Society” approach were applied in developing the strategies covering all stages of migration cycle. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the Policy and National Action plan at national, provincial and district levels,

involving with relevant stakeholders has also been developed and included.

This document outlines our core policy areas, strategies, and objectives that will guide our actions over the next five years, starting from 2023. As we move forward, we will strengthen the institutional framework for skill development, strategically position migration for employment as a productive sector in our national development, and effectively manage remittances while actively engaging Overseas Sri Lankans in our country's development.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Hon. Minister Manusha Nanayakkara, Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment for his visionary leadership and guidance and also to the staff of the Ministry, Team of Experts, Working group members, and all key stakeholders who have contributed to the formulation of this National Policy and Action

Plan on Migration for Employment. I greatly appreciate the technical support extended for the policy formulation by the International Labour Organization, Colombo office, Ms. Simrin Singh, the Country Director and the staff, Mr. Benil Thavarasa and the staff of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and two ILO consultants Ms Sriyani Perera and Ms Padmini Ratnayake.

With determination and collaboration, we can realize the vision set forth in this plan and build a more resilient and inclusive Sri Lanka.

**R.P.A. Wimalaweera**

Secretary of the  
Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration for employment is a global phenomenon which contributes to economic growth, builds human capital, reduces socio-economic inequalities, and facilitates interaction among different societies and cultures. Migration for employment supports individuals and families to realize their dreams, it strengthens societies to accept and respect diverse perspectives and experiences of the migrant workers while benefitting from their skills and competencies and, most importantly, it powers the development of countries, regions and the entire world.

Sri Lanka has been a recipient of myriad gains from migration for employment for the last five decades. Numbers of migrant workers have increased since the inception of migration for employment in the 1970s, and according to the provisional data of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), to date 1.7mn migrant workers are employed abroad. On average, 230,000 to 250,000 workers leave Sri Lanka annually to work abroad, easing pressure on the government to find employment for its productive labour force. By end of 2022, this number has increased up to 311,161.

In response to the growing need for Policy and institutional provisions to govern and manage migration for employment, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) set in place the national machinery and formulated its first Policy on labour migration, the National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) in October 2008. Since 2008, the NLMP is in implementation supported by a range of state and non-state actors who contributed to meet the needs of the migrant workers and supported the redress of their issues. In 2015, a Sub Policy on Return and Reintegration was developed to focus on the needs and aspirations of returnee migrants.

In 2017, a review on the implementation of the existing policies was completed. The review

highlighted the need to update the 2008 Policy and to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) with the participation and contribution of the multiple stakeholders who are actively engaged in the advancement of the lives of migrant workers and their families.

The Policy update and formulation of the NAP on migration for employment was initiated by the then Ministry of Telecommunication, Foreign Employment and Sports in 2018, and facilitated an emphatic consultative process throughout, which was technically and financially supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The updated Policy and NAP has analysed the present status of migration from the lens of “Decent Work” and acknowledged that the “Decency” of work affects decisions through the migration cycle.

The updated Policy also carefully considered the three I’s: Investment, Innovation and Inclusion needed to create a new paradigm in labour migration in Sri Lanka. (ODI, 2018)

- **Investment:** The Policy focus beyond remittances and aid. Stressing the investment in future societies, as well as harnessing the potential of Overseas Sri Lankans.
- **Innovation:** The Policy and plan emphasize the need to build and expand on initiatives at country level to global skills partnerships, financial inclusion through new digital technology, training and skills matching and better data management.
- **Inclusion:** Incorporating the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of “Leaving No One Behind”; the Policy and plan facilitates access to services, ensuring portability of benefits and expansion of rights and opportunities.

The Policy sets out its vision as: “A globally competent labour force engaged in decent and productive work that ensures their rights, freedoms, dignity and effective contributions to development.” The vision is to be achieved through its mission of: “Effective governance of migration through collaboration and cooperation with destination countries and key stakeholders to secure migrant worker rights, strengthen and streamline skilled and semi-skilled migration in accordance with decent work standards, and ensure equitable and gender sensitive service delivery, protection and well-being of migrant worker families.”

The President of Sri Lanka highlighted in his Throne Speech 2023, that by the end of 2022 the remittance through migration has reached USD four billion. In the 2023 Budget Speech the President also called for economic reforms and modernization with a specific focus on creating an internationally competitive workforce with high skills in the next ten year period.

The updated Policy has four core areas focusing on the individual migrant worker as well as members of the migrant worker family. The rights and obligations of the migrant workers form the foundation of the Policy which is formulated in accordance with national and international legal and Policy frameworks. The two approaches, namely “Whole of Government approach and Whole of Society approach” were applied in developing the strategies covering all stages of the migration cycle.

### **The first core Policy area:**

Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment, has its Policy objective: “Sri Lanka benefits from a well governed labour migration sector that promotes decent, safe and productive employment.” The strategies under this Policy area are formulated to ensure an institutional landscape that is effective and efficient in the governance of migration for employment within the legislative and regulatory framework stipulated nationally and internationally. Such compliance will ensure conforming to international standards and promote decent work principles:

rights at work, employment promotion, social protection and social dialogue. The strategies also include coordination among development sectors to facilitate Policy coherence, collaborative planning and budgeting, joint implementation and monitoring of the NAP. Recognising the importance of a fair and ethical recruitment system, a separate strategy is incorporated to strengthen the ongoing procedures and introduce a grading system to evaluate Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (LFEAs).

### **The second core Policy area:**

Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families, has its Policy objective: “Sri Lanka strengthens all rights of migrant workers ensuring protection, social security and wellbeing of migrant workers and their families in all stages of labour migration.” This core Policy area affirms the need to facilitate “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration” as outlined in SDGs 8.8 and 10.7 and in other UN Conventions. The strategies under this core Policy area aim at well-coordinated service delivery, promoting dignity of migrant workers and ensuring protection and security and collaborative multi-sectoral response mechanism. Social security is considered as a right of migrant workers and their families. Under this Policy area, a specific strategy is developed to facilitate the empowerment of migrant workers, their societies, and build alliances among the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), trade unions and employers working to realize the rights of migrant workers.

### **The third core Policy area:**

Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies aims at fulfilling the Policy objective: “Sri Lanka facilitates its labour force to effectively access global labour market opportunities and benefit from better socio-economic gains.”

The recent trends in the global labour market show an increased demand for skilled labour, especially in knowledge-based economies. The local labour force needs to be up-skilled to

meet such global demands and benefit from employment opportunities. Therefore, the emphasis of the strategies under this core Policy area is to strengthen the institutional framework for skill development. The strategies promote collaboration with the foreign employment sector, standardize the national qualification frameworks in par with regional and international frameworks, and proactively support the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of returnee migrant workers and their skill certification. The strategies under this core Policy area include new technologies in the skill development industry and focus on diversification of job opportunities for the Sri Lankan labour force.

### **The fourth core Policy area:**

Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development has outlined the Policy objective as : “Sri Lanka effectively positions migration for employment as: a productive sector in the development of the country.” Labour migration has the potential to deliver a triple win for Countries of Destination (CoD): it contributes to economic growth through the provision of labour, skills and ideas and for Countries of

Origin (CoO), the movement of women and men across borders, reduces unemployment pressures and increases remittances. In overcoming the challenges of the current economic crisis, foreign employment is identified as a high potential sector.

Thus, the fourth core area includes key activities to strategically incorporate migration for employment as a key area in national plans and budgets. Considering the importance of reintegration of migrant returnees, the sub policy and national action plan for return and reintegration (NAPRR) is to be amalgamated to this policy and ensure effective implementation. The other two strategies under this core area are linked to remittance management and promoting engagement of Overseas Sri Lankans (OSL) in the development of the country. Sri Lanka stands to benefit from the social and professional diversity of OSLs by tapping into their expertise and resources and has planned to setup institutional framework for the same.

Each core Policy area is detailed into strategies, outcomes, outputs, with key performance indicators for a five year period starting from 2023 under the overall responsibility and coordination by Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment.

# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAA	Airport Aviation Authority
BLAs	Bi-Lateral Agreements
BOI	Board of Investments
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CAASL	Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka
CENWOR	Center for Women's Research
CoD	Country of Destination
CoEC	Code of Ethical Conduct
CoO	Country of Origin
CP	Colombo Process
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCS	Department of Census and Statistics
DO	Development Officer
Dol&E	Department of Immigration and Emigration
DoME	Department of Manpower and Employment
DRP	Department for Registration of Persons
DS Division	Divisional Secretary's Division
DSS	Department of Social Services
FEDO	Foreign Employment Development Officer
FGD	Focus Group
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GN	Grama Niladari
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
ICTA	Information & Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka
IRIS	International Recruitment Integrity System
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LFEA	Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MIS	Management Information
MoFES&NP	Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ,PA&CR	Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms

MoL&FE	Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment
MoM	Ministry of Mass Media
MoPA,HA,PC&LG	Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Council and Local Government
MoS&YA	Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs
MoUD&H	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
MOUs	Memorandums of Understanding
MoW,CA&SE	Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment
MRA	Mutual Recognition of Qualifications
MRC	Migrant Resource Center
MW	Migrant Worker
NACLM	National Advisory Committee on Labour Migration
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPRR	National Action Plan of Return and Re-integration
NCP	North Central Province
NCPA	National Child Protection Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSL	Overseas Sri Lankans
PIP	Public Investment Programme
RGD	Registrar General's Department
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAARC	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
SLFEA	Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Agency
SLP	Sri Lanka Police
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOP	Standard Operational Procedures
TC	Training Centers
TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UGC	University Grants Commission
UN	United Nations
VTa	Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka
WWF	Workers' Welfare Fund





# Introduction

Migration for employment also reduces unemployment by providing foreign employment opportunities to Sri Lankans. By end of 2022, the total departures for employment were 311,161 out of which 124,180 were females and 186,981 were males.

The Sri Lankan economy is supported by migration for employment in two definite ways. Migration for employment brings in much needed foreign income to the country which by end of 2022 amounted to Sri Lankan Rupees (SLR) 1,252.5 billion, nearly 8 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>1</sup>

The migration for employment sector is to be placed firmly within the country's vision and development agenda, expanding global spaces for Sri Lankan labour. Accordingly, the National Labour Migration Policy for Sri Lanka (NLMP) 2008 was updated after ten years of implementation and the new National Policy and the Action Plan 2023-2027 was formulated. The entire process of Policy formulation and development of the NAP was spearheaded by the line ministry in-charge of subject of foreign employment with technical assistance from International Labour Organization (ILO) in Sri Lanka.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Provisional data.

The National Policy on Migration for Employment (NPME) is formulated on the evidence collected through consultations with multiple stakeholders, namely, migrant workers and their families, migrant societies and networks, civil society, trade unions, recruitment agencies, sectoral ministries and agencies within the migration sector, academia and research institutions, corporate sector, development partners including INGOs and UN agencies. (Annex I and II). The consultations were supplemented by a comprehensive context analysis on the emerging trends in labour migration in the region and beyond. Further, an in-depth review of the implementation of NLMP 2008 was conducted to assess the gaps in line with the key Policy pillars of the NLMP 2008: governance of the migration process, protection and empowerment of migrant workers and their families and linking migration to development.

**"The migration for employment sector is placed firmly within the country's vision and development agenda, expanding global spaces for Sri Lankan labour."**

The review highlighted positive outcomes in the implementation of the NLMP 2008 and a number of good practices were identified. Under the Policy area of **Governance of the Migration Process**, the best practices were: the setting up of a National Advisory Committee and the Programme Advisory Committee chaired by the Ministry handling the subject of foreign employment, openness to involve civil society actors in the implementation of the NLMP 2008, the appointment of Development Officers at ground level to support migrant workers and their families, and improvement of services at local levels.

Under the Policy area of **Empowerment and Protection of migrant workers and family members**, the key achievements were: the setting up of migrant relief centres "Sahana Piyesa" in the vicinity of the international airports, conducting pre-departure orientation, establishing

an increased number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) with destination countries to secure job opportunities, standardizing minimum wages for skilled worker categories, and strengthening migrant worker grievance handling processes.

As for the **Migration and Development Policy** area, the achievements are: the formulation of the Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in 2015, setting up of the reintegration unit at the SLBFE and the use of technology for recruitment processes.

The review recommended the following strategic actions to be incorporated in the updated Policy and NAP on migration for employment: i) new Policy and programmes be in line with SDG targets and GCM objectives ii) ensure Policy coherence, institutional and sectoral collaboration, iii) skill development and training to be responsive to labour trends and demands in destination countries, iv) strengthen responses to issues of irregular migrant workers, especially those in difficult situations overseas, v) include migrant networks and advocacy groups in the Board of the SLBFE and ensure gender balance and; vi) consider the issues of in-bound migration. These recommendations have been taken into consideration in the formulation of the updated NPME.

The review has also highlighted the following areas:

- need for balancing the objectives of protecting the rights and dignity of migrant workers and the continuation of a healthy financial flow from worker remittances for the development of the country,
- develop the competitiveness of human resources through skill development and cater to the skill demanded by the global market,
- develop an effective labour market information system and real-time data for the migration sector,
- move away from high dependency on traditional labour markets and explore

potential labour markets through Global Skills Partnerships and ensure coordination among key players in the sector.

As part of the formulation of the new NPME, a stocktaking of the implemented activities of the NAP on Return and Reintegration was conducted and the recommendations were as follows:

- i) set up a coherent mechanism at district and divisional levels for better cooperation between MoL&FE and SLBFE in service provision to migrant returnees and to improve collaboration among the officials at the district and Divisional Secretariat (DS) level,
- ii) establish and capacitate “Migrant Resource Centres” at district and divisional levels that can ensure coordinated services to migrant returnees,
- iii) strengthen the Reintegration Unit at the SLBFE and develop capacities for effective coordination with relevant sectoral ministries and agencies for collaborative programme implementation,
- iv) develop an operational plan to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the NAPRR and strengthen the steering committee to direct and monitor implementation,
- v) firm action to be taken to establish and strengthen country-specific skill standards of occupations and facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL),
- vi) provide case specific career counseling to youth of migrant families.
- vii) MoL&FE and the SLBFE to collaborate with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and trade unions at district and divisional levels to mobilize and organize the returnee migrant workers and empower them.

The recommendations of policy reviews were incorporated to the updated NPME.

Field assessments and interactions with migrant workers and their family members has highlighted

a range of welfare measures provided by the Government. These measures encompass:

- assistance to children of migrant families in the form of providing school equipment, scholarships, awareness and prevention of drug addiction,
- supporting prospective migrant workers through subsidized loan facilities to meet departure costs,
- setting up of insurance schemes,
- ensuring protection of migrant workers through the “Shramika Surakuma Programme” with special relief packages, and compensation
- special relief and support through “Sahana Piyesa”,
- health related assistance through health camps with migrant families,
- easy loan facilities to migrant families to construct houses, and;
- legal counseling and legal aid for workers who face harassment at the workplace and subjected to trafficking, to ensure effective grievance redress etc.

The field assessment also proposed:

- i) a school based performance upgrading programme for children of migrant families jointly worked out with Ministry of Education (MoE) and supported by Foreign Employment Development Officers (FEDOs),
- ii) implement family development plans and ensure information flow to and from migrant families facilitated by FEDOs,
- iii) ensure standardized house construction for the needy,
- iv) develop strong bilateral relationships with destination countries to assure protection and security of migrant workers,
- v) ensure effectiveness of the conciliation service, and develop capacities of the staff of different agencies involved in migration management.

The updated NPME has given due consideration to the above reviews and assessments, and has strategically included the recommendations to make the migration for employment sector effective and productive for the development of the country and to benefit and fulfil the aspirations of migrant workers and their families.

# Process of formulating the Policy and National Action Plan on Migration for Employment



The Policy formulation process was consultative in nature from the start, and involved multi-sectoral stakeholders including 10 sectoral ministries, government institutions, representatives of the migrant community, international organizations working on migration, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community-based organisations, trade unions, recruitment agencies, private sector agencies, financial institutions, researchers, experts on migration and academia. Taking into consideration the importance of skilled migration, a separate consultation was held with government and private sector officials and experts in the skills sector.

The ILO's "General practical guidance on promoting coherence among employment,

education/training and labour migration policies" (ILO, 2017) was used to direct the step-wise process of Policy and NAP formulation.

Four working groups were established to detail out the core policy areas through a consultative process. The working groups were representative of multiple stakeholders in the migration sector such as sectoral officials, representatives of the corporate sector, civil society groups working with migrant workers, trade unions, recruitment agencies, researchers, and academia.

Upon the direction of the Cabinet of Ministers the policy and the NAP was revisited in 2023 to ensure alignment to the current socio-economic context of the country.



# NATIONAL CONTEXT OF MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN SRI LANKA

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Sri Lanka's labour force consists of about  
8,429,503 of a total population of  
22.81 mn by 2020.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sri Lanka Labour force survey 3rd quarter 2022 and Mid-year population estimates 2022, Registrar General's Department

## 1) Profile of Sri Lanka's labour force and vision for the future

Sri Lanka's labour force consists of about 8,429,503 of the total population of 22.81 mn. with a rate of 49% in third quarter 2022 and it is a marked decline in labour force participation compared to 52.3 rate in 2019. In 2022, out of the total Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), female LFPR is 34.3 per cent whereas male LFPR is 65.7 per cent which is almost double. In comparison to 2019 figures, female LFPR was 34.4 per cent and male LFPR was 74.60 per cent which marks a decline in 2022. Unemployment rate in 2022 was 5.0 in total (female 6.4 and male 4.2) and in 2019 the unemployment rate was 4.8 (female 7.4 and male 3.3).

By 2022, the economically inactive total population was 8.7 mn out of which 73.4 per cent were females and 26.6 per cent were males. In 2019, the total economically inactive population was 7.8mn out of which females were 73.7 per cent and males were 26.3 per cent.<sup>3</sup> However, females engaged in household chores are not calculated as workers. Interestingly migrant workers are not taken into consideration in calculations either.

Despite the increasing number of educationally and professionally qualified females, a substantial proportion of working age females are not contributing to the national economy due to a lack of marketable skills, narrowed choices in the labour market, gender discrimination in employment opportunities, wages and promotions, workplace harassment, unfavourable social norms and inadequate and affordable child care facilities. The highest LFPR by age group is between 40-44 yrs.

Among males it is 40-44 yrs. and among females it is 45-49 yrs.<sup>4</sup>

The distribution of the workforce by major industry group by 2022 was 26.9 per cent in agriculture, 25.9 per cent in industry and 47.2 per

cent in services. By 2022, own account workers were 2.7 mn.

In 2022, contributing family workers were 477,878.

By 2022 third quarter, the unemployment rate by level of education depicts a picture as follows: GCE O/L 6.8% | total and female 9.1% and male was 5.7%. GCE A/L and above total 8.7%, and female 10.0% whereas male was 7.4%.<sup>5</sup>

A slight increase in the employment of females is discerned by last quarter 2022.

### Vision and Policy Directions

Global labour market trends are shifting and it can have an impact on the status of the Sri Lankan labour force. The recent publication, OECD Employment Outlook 2022: The Future of Work has highlighted the transition agenda founded on the megatrends:

- Labour market remain tight in OECD countries and shortage of workers
- Intense pressure of cost of living
- Wage growth is struggling to keep pace with price rise
- Real wages are falling
- Lower income group hit harder
- Recovery has been low for young people, low skilled workers, migrants and other vulnerable groups<sup>6</sup>

The ILO publication on World Employment and Social Outlook - Trends 2022 highlights:<sup>7</sup>

- global labour market struggle to recover
- temporary employment is as a buffer in times of economic uncertainties
- East-Asia's lagging labour market recovery weighs on the overall recovery across the Asia-Pacific Region
- Total working hours per person are still below pre-pandemic levels

3 Dept. of Census & Statistics. 2019, 2020, and 2022 Sri Lanka

4 Dept. of Census & Statistics. 2019, 2020, and 2022 Sri Lanka

5 Dept. of Census & Statistics. 2022. Sri Lanka Labour Demand Survey 2022.

6 OECD Employment Outlook, 2022

7 ILO publication on World Employment and Social Outlook - Trends 2022



- A greater policy focus on expanding social protection is crucial for informal workers and the ability to sustain future economic shocks
- On-going shortage of migrant workers in ASEAN Countries of Destination

This report calls for a human-centered policy agenda. The mega trends on the global labour markets as presented in the above publications are important

for consideration in making policy directions and overcoming the forthcoming challenges. This updated Policy has given sufficient consideration to such trends.

## 2) Recent trends in migration for employment in Sri Lanka

International labour migration has been a popular phenomenon in Sri Lanka since the 1970s and has provided the country with five decades of experience. The pattern of migration is constantly changing to face emerging trends in the local, regional and global labour market environments.

In 2021, total number of departures for foreign employment declined from 211,211 in 2018 to 122,264 in 2021 which is a significant decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. However, this status changed remarkably in 2022 with a total departure of 311,161.

In 2018, the female departures was 81,685 whereas, in 2021 it was 41,154 which was a profound decline. This status changed positively in 2022 with 124,180 of female departures. In contrast, the male departures being 129,774 in 2018 and by 2021 it was 81,110 which was a decline of approximately one third. This number increased to 186,981 in 2022 due to positive measures taken by the Sri Lankan government.

As per the low-skilled migrant workers it was 33.08 per cent in 2018, 30.77 per cent in 2021, and 34 per cent in 2022. The skilled migrant worker category in 2022 was 66 per cent compared to 58 per cent in 2018.

The feminisation of labour migration is also a unique feature of Sri Lankan labour migration. From 1993 to 1997, over 70 per cent of the migrant workers were females. This gradually decreased over the years and by 2017 2018 it was 34 38.58 per cent, 2021 it was 33.66 per cent, by 2022 it was 40 per cent.

It is observed that more females have departed since 2021 and this could be attributed to the impact of economic crisis as well as the recent measures taken by the government to promote Safe and orderly migration for employment.

### Skill Levels

Migration for employment involves a range of skill levels: low-skilled, semi-skilled, skilled and high-skilled.

There is an increased demand for professionals and skilled workers in many countries including the Gulf countries, which are highly focused on creating knowledge-based economies. At present, developed countries are experiencing skilled labour shortages due to reduced growth of their population and an aging population which also contributes to an increased demand for care-givers, nurses, doctors and other healthcare workers. Therefore, future demand in the global labour market is for high- skilled and professional categories as well as care workers, especially female care workers.

In the future, technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, robotics and automation will create vast implications to the global demand for labour, creating greater demand for human-only skills that cannot be automated and jobs in high-skilled categories.

## Destinations

In 2017, Sri Lankans obtained employment opportunities across 108 countries with the Middle East region continuing to be the main destination for Sri Lankan migrant workers accounting for around 88.2 per cent of the total departures. About 97.4 per cent of domestic workers and 78.0 per cent of

low-skilled workers were concentrated in Middle East countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE. In terms of departures, by gender, 85.0 per cent of male departures and 93.3 per cent of female departures were concentrated in the Middle East region. However, there was an overall decrease in departures to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, U.A.E., Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan and Bahrain in 2017. Qatar became a major destination country accounting for 28 per cent of total departures recorded. The highest female departures for clerical and related foreign employment were recorded to the U.A.E during the period 2013 to

2017.

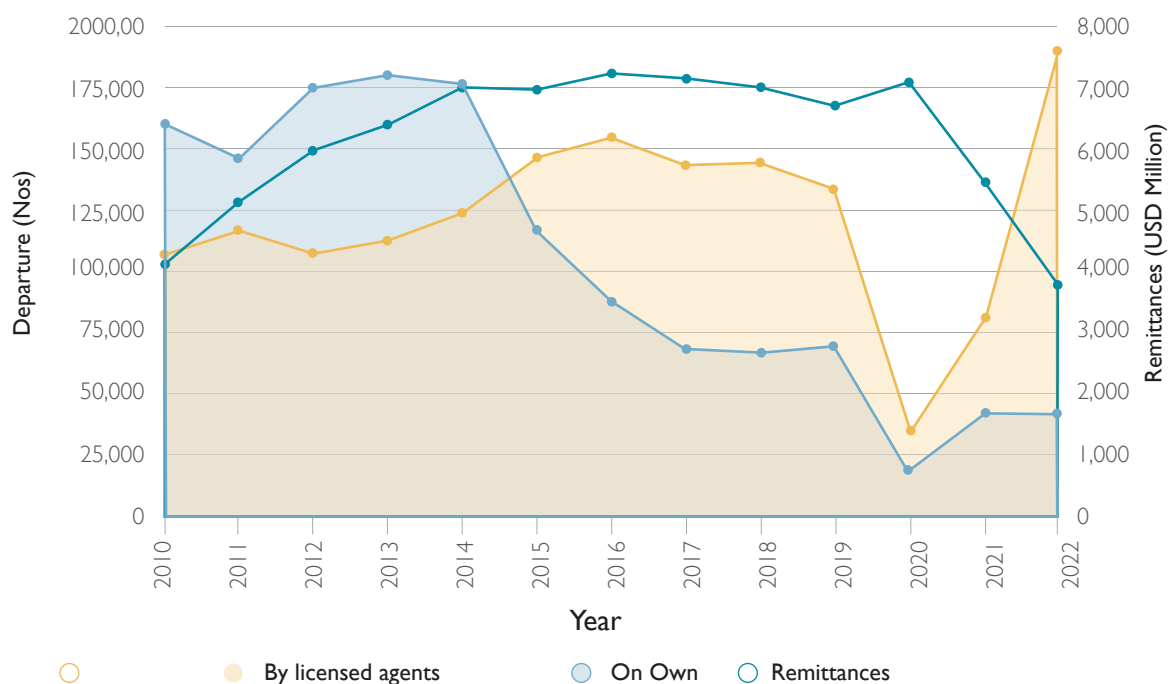
In 2022, the GCC countries saw an influx of 251,314 migrant workers which is almost 80 per cent of the total. Smaller number of migrant workers, 9,394 to South Korea and 9,916 to Maldives and 40,537 to other countries departed in 2022.

Sri Lanka has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) related to labour migration with countries of destination, eighteen of which are actively implemented as of August 2021.

Migration for educational purposes with part-time or full-time employment opportunities are offered by a few Western and Asian countries and Sri Lankan youth are increasingly taking advantage of such opportunities. However, such migration linked with educational purposes are not tracked and monitored. This can be judged as a new wave of brain drain or even a way to attract much needed human capital in the destination countries.

## Remittances

Worker remittances and foreign employment



\* නාවකාලය

Source: Annual reports CBSL 2018, 2021, 2022 SLBFE Annual Statistical Report 2021

**Figure I** shows the total private remittances received from migrant workers during the period 2010 to

2022. Despite minor fluctuations, remittances have consistently been the top source of foreign exchange income to the economy. In 2015, for the first time, receipt of remittances to Sri Lanka declined by 0.5 per cent, while again in 2017 it declined by 0.9 per cent and 2.1 per cent in 2018. The fluctuations experienced during 2014 to 2018 are reflective of a number of external and domestic factors affecting foreign employment. One of the possible reasons for this drop is the decline in worker departures. Between 2014 and 2018, departures declined by 30 per cent.

Workers' remittances, which recorded a healthy growth in the first five months of 2021 recorded a gradual decline from June 2021 onwards. This resulted in a decline of workers' remittances of 22.7 per cent in 2021 compared to a growth of 5.8 per cent recorded in 2020. The decline could primarily be attributed to the reduction in remittances received through official channels due to the notable difference in the exchange rate which prevailed in the grey market compared to the official rate. (CBSL, ANNUAL Report 2018 & 2021).

In addition, remittances in 2022 reached to US Dollar 3789.5 with the sharp depreciation in the exchange rate since March 2022, together with the increasing number of migrant workers leaving for foreign employment.

The highest volume of worker remittances is received from the Middle-Eastern region. In 2021, the remittances from Middle-Eastern region amounted to 51.6 per cent. Sri Lanka is in a crucial juncture where the foreign reserves have fallen to unprecedented levels. The government has set high targets to increase the private remittances through migration for employment. The one key plan is to create an internationally competitive workforce with high skills in the next 10 years.

In order to facilitate workers' remittances through the banking sector, the Central Bank established a new department named the 'Foreign Remittances Facilitation Department' while also

introducing a number of incentive schemes for workers remitting money through the banking sector. Further, a mobile application to facilitate the convenient transfer of remittances named 'Lanka Remit' was launched by LankaClear with the participation of most Licensed Commercial Banks (LCBs). A temporary monetary incentive above the official exchange rate was provided for remittances converted into rupees while several other incentive schemes are in the pipeline to be introduced to promote workers' remittances focusing on improved welfare of migrant workers and their families. (CBSL 2021)

In view of these targets the government of Sri Lanka has taken affirmative measures to encourage worker remittances through legal channels by offering higher exchange rates, providing additional duty free allowances, and permits to import electrical vehicles, bank loans at concessionary interest rates, etc.

## COVID-19 impact on the migration for employment sector

Sri Lankan migrant workers were severely affected by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the labour receiving countries. With the spread of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the European region, a large number of Sri Lankan migrant workers returned to the country in panic in the beginning of 2020 from Italy, South Korea and other European countries. Since the closure of the airports to incoming commercial flights in order to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 into Sri Lanka, a considerable number of migrant workers looked forward to being repatriated. The need for repatriation amplified amidst the panic with regard to health risks, and contract expirations, job losses and pay cuts resulted from the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. The establishment of appropriate social security measures are imperative to face future distresses in the international labour market.<sup>8</sup>

In view of the above situation created by the pandemic, a working group led by the SMFEMD, and comprising of SLBFE, ILO, and IOM had a series of consultations to prepare a

<sup>8</sup> (CBSL annual report 2020).

National COVID-19 Response Plan for Migrant Workers. Recommendations from Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions and Association for Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (ALFEA) were taken into consideration at these meetings. **All these suggestions call for comprehensive contingency planning in the migration for employment sector.**

### 3) Migration Policy in coherence with other national policies

The issue of Policy coherence has evolved in relation to the migration and development nexus. The literature refers to the need for a 'holistic government approach', to ensure mainstreaming, consistency and coordination at the national level to optimize benefits of migration for development. Additionally, it refers to Policy areas working together mutually-reinforcing ways, to achieve the common overarching goals of consistency, systematic support, synergy, and long-term planning. Successful Policy coherence contributes to leveraging the benefits of migration, while mitigating negative consequences.

Migration impacts many sectors – from health to education and from housing to social security. Therefore, migration policies need to be coherent with sectoral policies that are relevant to meeting the needs and rights of migrant workers. The multi-sectoral nature of labour migration makes it mandatory to promote collaborative programme planning and implementation, and ensure effective coordination.

#### Migration Policy Domain

##### i. National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) for Sri Lanka 2008

The National Labour Migration Policy is the first Policy response of the GoSL to the migration sector. Its goal was to develop a long-term vision for the role of labour migration in the economy and enhance the benefits of labour migration to the economy, society, and to migrant workers and

their families, minimizing its negative impacts and ensuring fulfillment and protection of all human and labour rights of migrant workers. This Policy has three sections: i) Governance of Migration Process, ii) Protection and empowerment of migration workers and their families, iii) Linking migration and development processes. These three Policy areas outlined challenges and Policy responses in each respective area in regard to labour migration, and proposed action plans to address such challenges.

##### ii. Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers (NAPRR) Sri Lanka 2015

The overall goal of the Sub-Policy and NAPRR of 2015 is to link migration and development, as stipulated in the 2008 National Policy on Labour Migration. The National Labour Migration Policy has outlined the State response to return and reintegration as: "The State shall duly recognize the contribution made by migrant workers and facilitate their return and reintegration with opportunities for skill transfer, productive employment and conflict-free social integration."

#### The strategies in NAPRR include:

**Social reintegration of returnees:** Institutionalizing a mechanism to ensure safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrant workers; broad-based positive image building of migrant workers; social security scheme for migrant returnees; welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with special focus on children; skill development and career counseling for migrant worker children.

**Economic re-integration of returnees:** Under this theme, strategies include; quality standardization and certification of skills of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return; promoting a savings and financial management culture amongst migrant workers; promoting entrepreneurship amongst migrant returnees and family members; securing local employment for returnees through public-private partnerships.

**Physical and Psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members** encompass strategies that include; ensuring accessibility to

health services stipulated under the Sri Lanka National Migration Health Policy; and development of a Psycho-social support programme for migrant workers and family members.

**Mobilization and Empowerment of migrant returnees** has incorporated the empowerment of migrant workers through rights awareness; legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination countries and upon return; promoting safety and return of migrant workers; and, effective management of return and reintegration process as key strategies.

**Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle** focuses on need to implement strategies such as capacity building of all key stake holders in the labour migration sector; and inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination for effective management of return and re-integration.

A review of the implementation of NAPRR was conducted in 2017 as part of updating the Policy and NAP on Migration for Employment.

### **iii. Sri Lanka National Migration Health Policy 2012**

The vision of the Policy is to safeguard the health of all categories of migrants throughout the migration cycle, and thereby contribute to the development goals of the country. This Policy stems from Sri Lanka's overall vision for the protection of rights of all migrant populations, including outbound migrants and the families left behind as part of the country's vision for development.

## **Horizontal Policy Linkages**

### **i. National Policy for Decent Work in Sri Lanka 2006**

The vision of this Policy is "A future of peace and prosperity in which all Sri Lankans enjoy a better quality of life free from poverty and deprivation, through promotion of opportunities for women and men to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity." Under this policy, forth generation of the Decent Work Country Programme 2018-

2022 (DWCP) is being currently implemented. It provides a framework for the national development initiatives and promotion of decent work in the wider development and poverty alleviation context, ensuring 'no one is left behind'

### **ii. The National Human Resources and Employment Policy for Sri Lanka 2017**

This Policy has placed priority on foreign employment, with a view to bridging the demand-supply gaps in labour, and ultimately meeting the rapidly increasing global demand for highly skilled personnel.

### **iii. National Youth Policy 2014**

The overall vision of the Youth Policy is to develop the full potential of young people to enable their active participation in national development for a just and equitable society. This Policy includes strategies for developing soft and hard skills of youth to increase their employability. The National Youth Policy focuses on promotion of non-traditional employment opportunities for the youth in newly emerging economies.

### **iv. National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education, 2018**

This policy prioritize the development of Sri Lanka NVQ framework in line with the national, regional or global qualification frameworks widely accepted in regions where Sri Lankan workers seek foreign employment. Further this policy recognizes the access to TVET by vulnerable and disadvantaged youth as of great importance.

### **v. SME Policy 2017**

The Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector has been identified as an important strategic sector in the overall Policy objectives of the GoSL. It is seen as a driver of change for inclusive economic growth, regional development, employment generation and poverty reduction. The SME Policy outlines the Policy provisions for economic reintegration of migrant returnees and provides opportunities

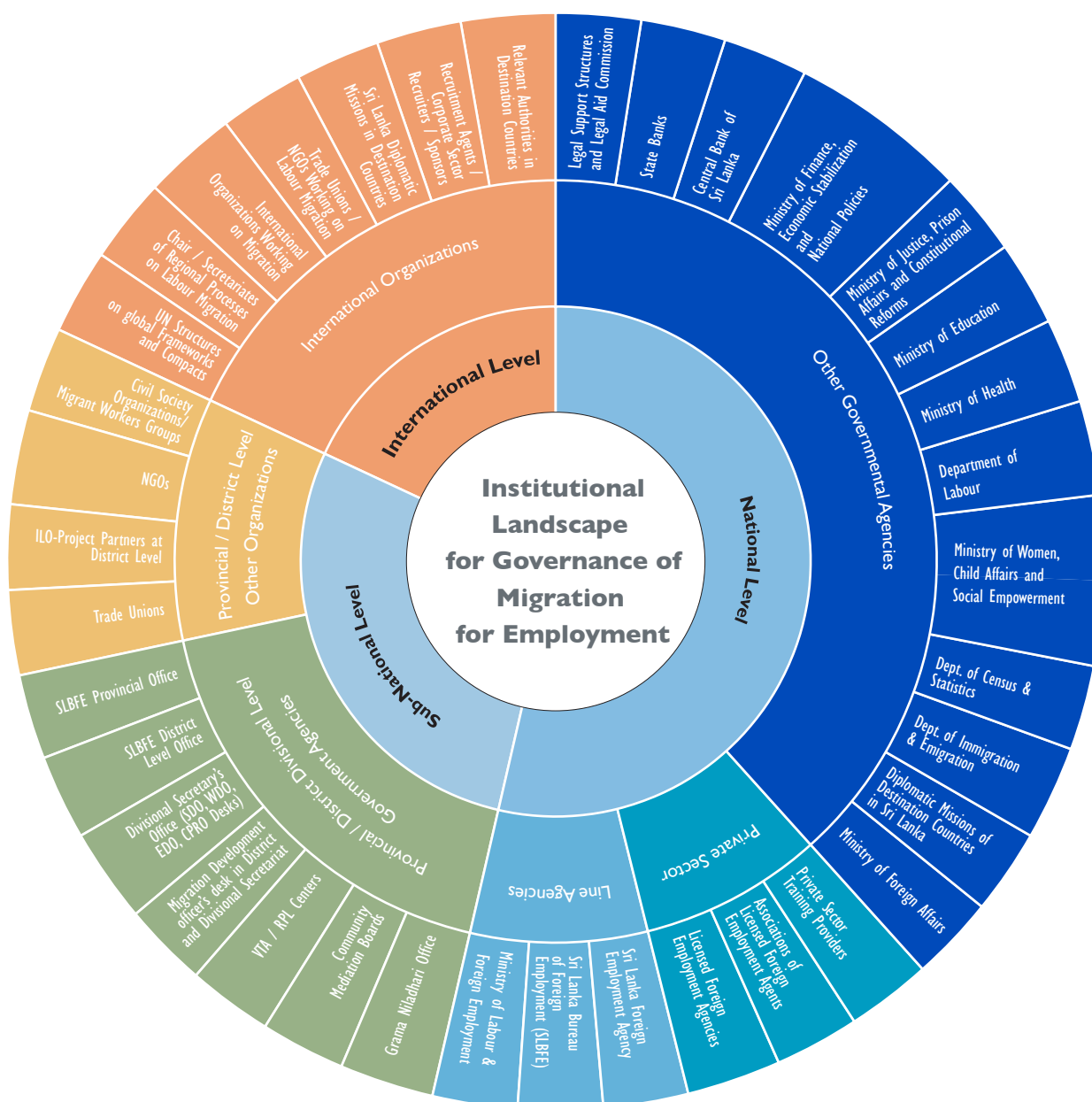
for returnees with knowledge and skills to start their own enterprises.

In addition to the above, the following policies and plans have taken the issues of migrant workers on board and have developed strategies to address the same:

- Mental Health Policy of Sri Lanka 2005-2015.
- National Policy on HIV and AIDS in the World of Work in Sri Lanka 2010.
- National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking (2021-2025)
- Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to Address SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence) in Sri Lanka 2016 – 2020.
- National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2017 – 2021.



## 4) Institutional landscape for governance of migration for employment







## **INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, FRAMEWORKS, GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES ON LABOUR MIGRATION**

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International standards provide a framework for national legislation, Policy and practice that ensure effective governance of migration, protection and for safeguarding the rights and interests of the migrant workers.

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Migration for employment is not just left to market forces alone but is subject to compliance of international labour standards and frameworks. International standards provide a framework for national legislation, Policy and practice that ensure effective governance of migration, protection and for safeguarding the rights and interests of the migrant workers.

## 1) The ILO Instruments on Rights of Migrant Workers

The ILO has pioneered the development of International Labour Standards for migrant workers since the 1930s. There are two main ILO Conventions and related Recommendations, which provide specific protection to migrant workers and aim to regulate the conditions under which the migration process takes place.

- i. Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)
- ii. Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)

Apart from these two conventions, there are other frameworks and resolutions: a.) A Fair deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy, b.) Non-binding Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, c.) ILO General Principles & Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, and d) ILO Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs. These frameworks and guidelines also set standards for better governance of migration and securing decent work. The “Fair deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy” is a framework that specifically aims at developing a sound migration Policy that ensures Coherence, Transparency, and Broad Consultation.

### Key human rights instruments that are directly linked with migration for employment:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948.
- The International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979.
- UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000.
- UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially women and Children, 2000.
- UN Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000
- ILO Eight fundamental rights conventions in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998
- ILO Protocol on Forced Labour, 2014.
- ILO Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies, 1997
- ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers, 2011
- ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206.

The essence derived from these international instruments and laws is the recognition of the vulnerability of migrant workers, the need to protect their basic human rights and dignity, prevent, remedy and eliminate violence and harassment in including gender-based violence and harassment in the work place, irrespective of their status as regular or irregular.

Sri Lanka has ratified Universal Human Rights Instruments and the ILO eight fundamental rights conventions in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, (1998) which are applicable to all migrant workers. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families has also been ratified by Sri Lanka more than 23 years ago.

Even though Sri Lanka has not ratified the two ILO Conventions specific to labour migration (C97

and C143) and related C189 and C181, Sri Lanka respects the principles and guidelines embodied in those conventions.

## 2) Recent Global Initiatives

### i. Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 SDG Agenda includes 17 goals out of which 15 are linked with migration for employment recognising the close relationship between migration and development. The following are the SDGs and targets that have a direct link with migration for employment:

- Goal 10 on reducing inequalities with the specific Target 10.7, on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
- Goal 5 on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment.
- Goal 8 on growth and decent work, specifically Target 8.8. on protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers
- Goal 16 on peaceful, inclusive societies and access to justice for all.
- Goal 17 on global partnership on sustainable development which includes improving data.

The concept of “Decent Work” is promoted through all the above SDGs. In addition to being specifically included in Goal 8, “decent work” is also a cross-cutting topic in the SDG framework, with a strong presence in many other goals.

### ii. Global Compact for Migration (GCM)

The UN's landmark, Global Compact for Migration (GCM) agreed upon in December 2018 is consistent with target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. The non-binding GCM adopted a framework for

cooperation which encompasses 23 objectives and appropriate actions for better governing migration at local, national, regional and global levels. It fosters cooperation between States and acknowledges that no individual State will be able to resolve the challenges posed by global migration. Sri Lanka is one of the 164 countries that adopted the GCM

## 3) Frameworks from UN agencies

### i. ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative

The Initiative (2015), aims to foster fair recruitment practices, prevent human trafficking and reduce the costs of labour migration. The initiative recognizes that despite existence of international labour standards related to recruitment, national laws and their enforcement often fall short of protecting the rights of workers, migrant workers in particular which can result in human trafficking and forced labour.

### ii. ILO Fair Migration Agenda

The Agenda (2014) aims to respect the fundamental rights of migrant workers, and offers them real opportunities for decent work. This means sharing fairly, the prosperity they help create, and building migration regimes which respond equitably to the interests of countries of origin and destination, migrant workers, employers and nationals.

### iii IOM Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF)

The IOM Migration Governance Framework presents a set of three principles and three objectives in a consolidated, coherent and comprehensive way ensuring that migration is humane, orderly and benefits migrants and society.

- Adherence to international standards and fulfilment of the rights of migrants.
- Formulate Policy using evidence and Whole-of-Government approach.
- Engage with partners to address migration and related issues (Whole-of-Society approach).

#### iv. IOM International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS)

IRIS is designed to serve as a practical tool and guidance to labour recruiters and employers in ensuring ethical recruitment. The IRIS Standard has been developed based on international human rights instruments and labour standards such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity, as well as, recruitment industry best practices.

## 4) Regional Consultative Processes Related to Labour Migration

### i. Colombo Process

The Colombo Process (CP) is a Regional Consultative Process on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour for 11 countries of origins (CoO) in Asia including Sri Lanka. It is a member state-driven, non-binding and informal forum to facilitate dialogue and cooperation on issues of common.

It provides a forum for Asian Countries of Origin with the following thematic areas:

- Skills and qualification recognition process.
- Fostering ethical recruitment practices.
- Effective pre-departure orientation and empowerment.
- Promote cheaper, faster, and safer transfer of remittances.
- Enhancing capacities of participating countries to track labour market trends.
- Enhancing consular support for migrant workers.
- Promoting migrant health.
- Operationalizing the migration-related goals in the SDGs.
- Promoting equality of women migrant workers. The updated Policy and NAP on Migration for Employment has taken the

above thematic areas when formulating strategies.

### ii. Abu Dhabi Dialogue

The Abu Dhabi Dialogue, a states-led regional consultative process initiated in 2008 as a forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asian countries of labour origin and destination, aims to enable safe, orderly and regular labour migration in one of the world's largest temporary labour migration corridors.

Three principles, namely, a) Ensuring protection of migrant workers; b) Empowering workers to fulfil their goals and aspirations; c) Affording workers the opportunity to benefit equitably from the outcomes of temporary labour migration, guided the development of the collaborative programmes that were adopted at the Ministerial Consultation held in Colombo in 2017. The programmes were:

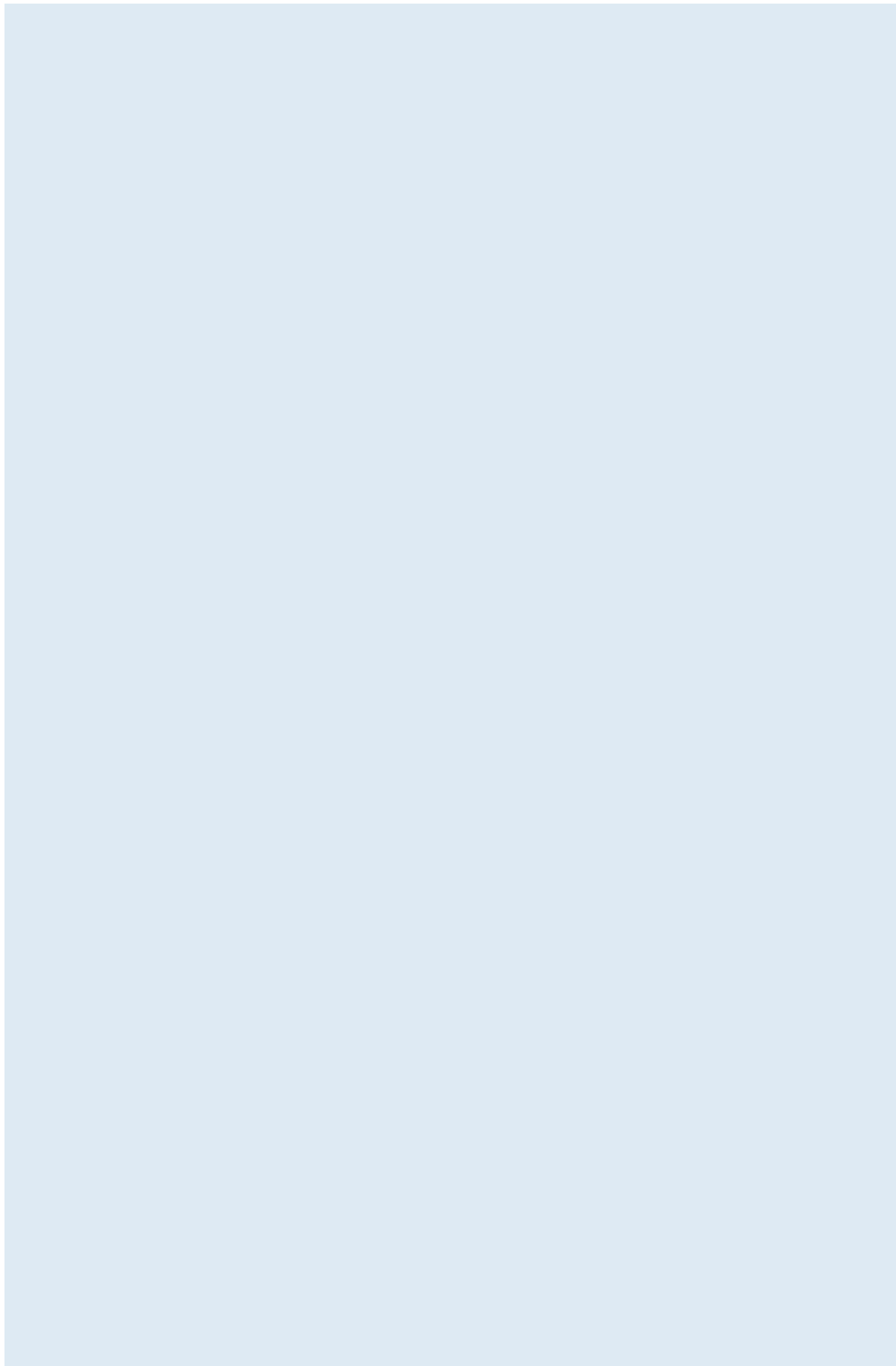
- An alternative model of Labour Recruitment.
- Skilling, Skill Certification and Mutual recognition of skills.
- Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme (CIOP).
- Technology in the governance of labour migration.

Most of these programmes are included in the updated Policy and NAP on Migration for Employment.

### iii. SAARC Initiatives

The 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2014 concluded with the adoption of the SAARC Declaration, which recognises labour migration as an issue in need of collective action. Article 21 states that SAARC countries agree to collaborate to ensure the protection of migrant workers from South Asia. The draft programme of action includes the following provisions:

- Formulation of a standard employment contract.
- Ensuring fair and ethical recruitment.
- Establishing a regional platform for sharing information and knowledge building.





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03

## **NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK ON MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

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A globally competent labour force  
engaged in decent and productive work  
that ensures their rights, freedoms,  
dignity and effective contribution to  
development.

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## Vision Statement

A globally competent labour force engaged in decent and productive work that ensures their rights, freedoms, dignity and effective contribution to development.

## Mission Statement

Effective governance of migration through collaboration and cooperation with destination countries and key stakeholders to secure migrant worker rights, strengthen and streamline skilled and semi-skilled migration in accordance with decent work standards, and ensure equitable and gender sensitive service delivery, protection and well-being of migrant worker families.

### Guiding Principles

- The Sri Lanka National Policy on Migration for Employment is founded on the rights and commitments enshrined in all key national and international instruments
- The National Policy stems from overall commitments to the rights of people enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.
- The National Policy respects all rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of Sri Lanka.
- The National Policy specifically endorses commitments stipulated in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 1990, ratified by Sri Lanka in 1996, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.
- The National Policy endorses key conventions and frameworks promoting

decent work and labour migration of the International Labour Organization, specifically the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow Up (1998), the Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No. 97), the Migrant Workers (supplementary provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), the non-binding Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006), and the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment (2019). The National Policy is also guided by the Migration Governance Framework of the International Organization for Migration.

- The National Policy endorses Sri Lanka's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 including its primary commitment enshrined in Goal 10.7 which commits to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people including implementation of planned and well manage migration policies.
- The National Policy derives its commitments from the National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (2016-2021), the National Policy for Decent Work in Sri Lanka (2006) and the Decent Work Country Programme ( 2018-2022).



- The National Policy incorporates guiding principles, objectives and standards contained in all global and regional processes on labour migration including the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Colombo Process, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Agenda 21 on Migration and the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity.

## Overall Policy Commitments

- The National Policy commits to recognise Sri Lanka's outbound migrant labour force as a key partner in Sri Lanka's development and values its significant contribution to the economy.
- The National Policy incorporates principles, approaches and strategies to provide equal opportunities for Sri Lanka's outbound migrant workers and commits to the protection, security, welfare and empowerment of all outbound migrant workers.
- The National Policy upholds the fundamentals of fair, equitable, ethical and safe labour migration at all stages of the labour migration cycle. Thus the National Policy commits to ensuring fair and ethical recruitment, recognition of temporary/ contract/ circular labour migration and the need for additional formal processes to ensure safe migration.
- The Policy recognises the need for effective regional and global platforms for sharing information and knowledge building leading to the protection of rights including legal rights within the broad aim of empowering migrant workers to fulfill their goals and aspirations and for countries of destination and of origin to ethically benefit from labour migration.
- The National Policy commits to transparent and accountable governance of the outward labour migration process in line with the principles of good governance.
- The National Policy commits to the recognition and respect of diversity and strongly commits to ensuring gender equality and the effective gender responsiveness of all the Policy provisions and strategies. The Policy pays greater attention to gender based vulnerabilities of migrant workers and recognizes the significant contribution made by women migrant workers to the national economy.
- The National Policy commits to promoting professional and skilled labour migration thus reducing the impact of vulnerabilities faced by outbound migrant workers.
- The National Policy commits to all aspects of safe labour migration including combatting all irregularities in the outward labour migration process including the eradication of human trafficking.
- The National Policy recognises social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers as an integral part of the labour migration cycle and commits to the effective inclusion of sustainable return and reintegration policies and strategies.
- The National Policy recognises the value of real time data and the use of information as maximizing good governance and commits to comprehensive information gathering and information sharing and dissemination systems.

## CORE Policy AREAS

The Sri Lanka National Policy on Migration for Employment sets out four core Policy areas with distinct Policy statements, key considerations in each core Policy area and strategies for action.

### Core Policy Area 1:

Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment.

### Core Policy Area 2:

Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families.

### Core Policy Area 3:

Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies.

### Core Policy Area 4:

Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development.

## CORE 01 Policy AREA

01

### Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment

#### Policy Objective

Sri Lanka benefits from a well-governed labour migration sector that promotes decent, safe and productive employment.

#### Key considerations

- Well-governed outward labour migration will contribute to sustainable development in Sri Lanka by maximizing the benefits of migration for employment and minimizing the risks and social costs for migrant workers and their families. Effective governance will ensure the freedom, dignity, and equality of Sri Lanka's migrant workers, thus safeguarding international and national commitments made by Sri Lanka in diverse instruments which ensure ethical, inclusive and decent work.
- Migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon with numerous inter-linkages with other areas of development. Thus, governance of labour migration encompasses strong legislative, regulatory and institutional frameworks that reflect international standards, and ensure effective labour migration governance.
- Evidence suggests that effective labour migration governance improves development outcomes. Therefore, effective

Policy coordination between institutions needs to be strengthened through greater awareness on the nexus between labour migration and development. Effective governance of labour migration requires a “whole-of-government” approach ensuring coherence between economic and socio-political policies to achieve shared goals through mutually reinforcing coordination among relevant government agencies. These agencies include those responsible for, among others, labour, foreign affairs, economic development, health, and tertiary and vocational education.

- Labour migration intersects with other development sectors committed to the empowerment of citizens and economic development. Recognising this, the National Policy stresses its commitment to Policy coherence, collaborative programme planning and implementation, and effective institutional coordination in sharing resources.
- The labour migration sector needs to recognize the importance of cooperation at all levels namely bilateral, multi-lateral and regional ties between governments, social partners and other stakeholders in development. This encompasses proactively strengthening existing engagement with destination countries including management of bilateral agreements on labour migration. The need for exploring new labour markets and entering into bilateral agreements with other advanced economies are imperative to reduce the exposure of Sri Lankan foreign remittances being sourced largely from one single region.
- The National Policy recognises the importance of a ‘whole of society approach’ in labour migration governance. Enhancing partnerships with local partner organizations in the recruitment sector, represented by Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (ALFEA), non-governmental organizations, CSOs including those directly representing

migrant workers, employers, and trade unions, are important to ensure effective governance of the labour migration process.

- The National Policy, acknowledges that a legislative and institutional framework to govern labour migration exists. It however recognizes that gaps exist and must be addressed. Thus, there is recognition that legislative reform including revisions to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act no 21 of 1985 and subsequent amendments are essential for a fully-fledged regulatory process for labour migration. Further the need to streamline the mandate, vision, goals and strategic commitments of the sectoral ministry for outward labour migration is recognised. This includes the need to set out clear demarcation and lines of function, reporting and accountability of the diverse institutions and agencies which exist between the different ministries.
- The National Policy recognizes the need for accurate data to facilitate informed and evidence-based Policy-making. Thus, the National Policy identifies the need for accurate, current, reliable and comparable labour migration data, disaggregated by age, sex and other variables, as an integral part of national data collection plans. Such data, with particular attention to vulnerable groups of women, youth and other marginalised groups, should include, but not be limited to; advancement of rights and empowerment of migrant workers, responding to changes in the recruitment industry and skills enhancements.
- The National Policy recognizes the need for institutional strengthening and capacity development of all stakeholders involved in the labour migration sector. This includes the need for better service delivery through a more systematic and institutionalized process which is consistent and coherent across all sectors. The need for using modern methodology is recognised. Specifically in data management, service provision, including psychological services, community

mobilization and skills for empowerment of migrant workers.

- The National Policy recognizes the role of licensed foreign employment agents to ensure ethical and responsible recruitment sector responses to foreign employment opportunities, and in matching such opportunities with migrant worker capacities, needs and aspirations. Within this process, the National Policy recognises commitment to fair and ethical recruitment by recruitment agencies through adherence to Sri Lanka's Code of Ethical Conduct (CoEC) (SLBFE, 2013) and the Standard Operational Procedure and Training Manual. These instruments aim to professionalize the recruitment industry and provide better services by enhancing monitoring and accountability.
- Significant efforts have been taken by the GoSL to eliminate human trafficking and irregular migration to safeguard Sri Lankan workers from vulnerable situations. Despite these efforts, irregular departures for foreign employment continue such as, undocumented departures of workers and violation of foreign employment laws and regulations.

### **Strategies to achieve and maximize benefits from a well governed labour migration sector that promotes decent, safe and productive employment**

#### **Strategy 1:**

Strengthen the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for governance of labour migration.

#### **Strategy 2:**

Promote Policy linkages, institutional coherence and multi-sectoral coordination.

#### **Strategy 3:**

Capacity development of key stakeholders to support an effective labour migration sector.

#### **Strategy 4:**

Strengthen structures and systems to ensure professionalisation of the recruitment sector.

## **Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure the wellbeing of their families**

### **Policy Objective**

Sri Lanka strengthens rights of migrant workers ensuring protection, social security and wellbeing of all migrant workers and their families in all stages of labour migration.

### **Key considerations**

- The protection, wellbeing and empowerment of migrant workers and their families in all stages of the labour migration cycle; pre-departure, transit, in service and return and reintegration, must be ensured. Measures to ensure decent work, wellbeing, protection and empowerment of workers and their families will contribute to social and economic gains and promote dignity and security for the migrant worker.
- Sri Lanka upholds commitments on decent work and protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families as set out in international conventions and treaties. This includes commitments to the ILO Decent Work agenda, ILO Fundamental Conventions and other relevant ILO conventions, including: C97, C143, C181 and C189; the ILO Non-Binding Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, and the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment. The UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers, Sustainable Development Goal 10.7 on orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies, and Goal 8.8 on protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers. Commitments to the GCM objectives are also considered in the new plan.

- To realize this commitment, a well-governed and coordinated approach is required from Policy makers and institutions directly and indirectly active engagement of key stakeholders including migrant workers. In promoting safe and productive labour migration, both male and female low-skilled workers, particularly low-skilled female domestic workers, must be protected. It is imperative to understand and address the risks of exploitation, abuse and violence faced by this vulnerable group.
- Coordinated service delivery among different key stakeholders including Policy makers, ministries and departments, private sector, service providers, recruitment agencies, law institutions and CSOs, is key to ensuring the protection of rights and wellbeing of migrant workers and their families. The Policy notes the current gaps in coordination and seeks remedial action by supporting coordination mechanisms between stakeholders.
- Access to information, especially on welfare service for migrant workers and their family members, is a request expressed by migrant communities. This is due to the lack of coordination among stakeholders at the provincial, district, divisional and Grama Niladhari levels. Continuous monitoring systems and other measures to support families left behind, such as childcare and education support for children are required at the grass root level.
- The need for a formal grievance handling and dispute resolution system for migrant workers and their families has been acknowledged by Policy makers and other actors working in the labour migration sector. This is despite a number of previous interventions in Sri Lanka and in countries of destination to handle grievances and disputes and efforts to develop capacity of officers serving on these initiatives.
- To meet Sri Lanka's national and international obligations on migrant worker rights, the GoSL is committed to ensure

migrant workers benefit from an affordable and accessible social security system. In accordance, Sri Lanka will work towards providing an accessible and well managed social security and social protection system covering healthcare, pensions, credit and other forms of security for all workers to enhance productivity.

- Empowering migrant workers is a strong focus of the Policy. The National Policy recognises the need for a comprehensive and digitalized data management system which would provide adequate and comprehensive data on migrant workers from departure to return. The recording and use of this information will support strategic and systematic interventions to empower migrant workers.
- The right to vote is a fundamental right of all citizens. Ensuring voting rights for migrant workers will enable voices of migrant workers to be reflected in national politics and ensure recognition of migrant workers and their contribution to national social and economic development.
- The sub-policy on the Return and Reintegration of the National Labour Migration Policy highlights the need to identify potential civil society organisations and trade unions to facilitate mobilising and organizing migrant worker returnees. This Policy takes cognisance of the freedom of association of all migrant workers and commits to ensuring an enabling environment for collective organisation and empowerment of returnees and prospective migrant workers.

### **Strategies to strengthen rights of migrant workers, ensuring protection, social security and wellbeing of migrant workers and their families in all stages of labour migration**

#### **Strategy 1:**

Strengthen and promote well-planned, coordinated, efficient and gender responsive service delivery to migrant workers and their family members.

#### **Strategy 2:**

Strengthen grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanisms for the protection and security of migrant workers.

#### **Strategy 3:**

Establish social security systems for migrant workers in-country in collaboration with host country governments and employers.

#### **Strategy 4:**

Educate and empower migrant workers and build alliances to influence Policy and programmes on migration.

## **CORE Policy AREA**

**03**

### **Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi- skilled migrant workers in local and global economies**

#### **Policy Objective**

Sri Lanka facilitates effective access to global labour market opportunities and benefits from better socio-economic gains.

#### **Key considerations**

- Skills driven labour migration is a feature of knowledge-based economies, focusing on production, distribution and use of knowledge and information. Such economies promote high-technology investments and industries, highly skilled labour and associated productivity gains.
- The National Policy recognizes the predominant theme in global and regional frameworks and processes and individual destination countries of moving away from low-skilled and low value expatriate labour in the transition from local economies to knowledge economies.



This is reflected in:

- Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, 10, and 17 focus specifically on skill enhancement and drive migrant employment.
- The Colombo Process (CP) Thematic working group on Skills and Qualification Recognition aims to contribute to enhance employability and providing decent work terms and conditions for migrant workers from CP member countries through increased recognition of skills.
- The Abu Dhabi Dialogue calls for improving labour mobility outcomes through the implementation of skill-driven policies.
- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) initiatives focus on development of a regional framework for skills recognition and referencing.
- The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 aims to promote “Abu Dhabi as a sustainable, diversified, high-value-added economy that encourages enterprises and entrepreneurs and is well integrated in the global economy leading to better opportunities for all”.
- Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aims at “attracting the talent we need; the necessary skills and capacities”.
- Vision 2030 of Bahrain aspires to “shift from an economy built on oil wealth to a productive, globally competitive economy”.
- Vision 2030 of Qatar recognizes “the needs for a highly skilled and productive labour force with a knowledge-based economy characterised by innovation”.
- The National Human Resources and Employment Policy for Sri Lanka 2012, primary strategy is to promote skilled migration through better skills training and diversification of skills through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. It further states that National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) standards will be developed on par

with international standards (equalization and accreditation) and will introduce Mutual Recognition of qualifications (MRA) into bilateral agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) will be revised so as to accurately calibrate the mainstream degrees and NVQ degree qualifications.

The National Human Resources and Employment Policy commits to investment in training women for higher skilled occupations such as in the information technology sector, nursing, and hospitality industries. The National Human Resources and Employment Policy further recognizes that the National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system needs to be strengthened and systematized. Qualified persons will receive a “Skill Passport” subsequent to the final assessment based on National Competency Standards. It is expected to develop a “Skill Pool” with the implementation of the skill passport project.

The recently introduced programme “Integrated Guidance & Referral System” (IGRS) brings all stakeholders involved in the worker upskilling process for foreign employment into a single integrated platform to deliver end-to-end upskilling process in a coordinated manner. A unified system for VT with VT institutions, SLBFE and foreign employment agencies to send skilled labor is enabled through IGRS.

- The National Youth Policy 2014 includes provisions for skills development and vocational training. The National Youth Policy responds to the needs of Sri Lanka’s youth population who opt for and seek non-traditional employment opportunities. The National Youth Policy recognizes the multi-ranged employment opportunities in newly emerging economic areas for which high quality skills development and training is essential.
- The National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education (NPTVE) Policy 2018

and strategies outlined therein directly relate to skilled migration for employment.

- The 2019 review on the implementation of the current Sri Lanka National Policy on Labour Migration emphasises the importance of the strong link between human resource development and migration for employment.
- In promoting foreign employment, Sri Lanka needs to be forward thinking to achieve a competitive edge. Promoting skilled workers is one key aspect in achieving this. In developing current and potential migrant workers' skills, it is essential to explore global labour migration trends, particularly understanding demographic changes which create employment opportunities.

The increase in the ageing population for example is resulting in an increased demand for elderly care workers. In addition it is important to improve employability of low- skilled and semi-skilled workers and investigate opportunities for reintegration of experienced low-skilled migrant worker returnees into the local labour market. This circular migration coupled with reintegration will build human and social capital.

- The National Policy highlights need for strategic coordination between labour migration and skill development institutions in Sri Lanka. This linkage will enable integration of labour migration targets and strategies to skill development sector national plans, thereby strengthening the institutional capacity of the skill development sector to enhance the labour migration sector. Pursuance of this strategy is supported by findings from a 2016 study on skills profile of migrant workers and labour market trends in the Gulf Region<sup>9</sup> which found a disconnect between skills provided by Sri Lankan migrant workers with skills demanded by Gulf countries.

- The study highlights the need for skills upgrading, certification and licensing of Sri Lankan migrant workers.

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission formulated a five year national development plan 2023-2027 for the TVET sector. This plan outlines the following six themes.

- a. Accessibility to technical vocational education and training programmes
- b. Training and development and rationalization of training
- c. Labour market information, training, information and digitalization
- d. Industry linkages and workforce development
- e. Quality assurance and recognition in TVET
- f. Management of human resource perspectives of TVET, physical and financial resources

- The National Policy highlights the need to recognise skills of returnee migrant workers and to promote use of Sri Lanka's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system. The system adopted in 2017, provides a mechanism to formally recognize skills obtained by in-service migrant workers. However, presently returnee migrants are not benefitting by destination the skills certification under the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) due to a lack of awareness of the system. The RPL system is supported by the MoL&FE at the national level and by Divisional Secretariats at sub-national level. The RPL system falls within the scope and objectives of the Sub-Policy on Return and Reintegration illustrating that implementing the RPL system requires a multi sectoral implementation plan for effective results.

<sup>9</sup> Labour Market Trends and Skills Profiles of Sri Lankan Migrant Workers in the Construction Industry in GCC Countries, 2016, ILO and IOM joint publication.

## **Strategies to promote migrant employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled Sri Lankan migrant workers**

### **Strategy 1:**

Strengthen sectoral coordination and invest in skills development to meet global and local labour market demands.

### **Strategy 2:**

Strengthen and upgrade national skill development plans and the qualification framework in line with regional and international standards.

### **Strategy 3:**

Expand the scope and institutional capacity to facilitate the local labour force to take up diverse opportunities in the global labour market.

### **Strategy 4:**

Facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and other schemes for returnee migrant workers.

## **CORE Policy AREA**

04

## **Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development**

### **Policy Objective**

Sri Lanka positions migration for employment as a productive sector in national development.

- Migration for employment sector is to be effectively positioned in the broader development agenda of Sri Lanka as a leading and productive sector. The macro-economic framework and the public investment programme needs to ensure the benefits of migration sector to be promoted, expanded and sustained.
- The existing national machinery for the promotion of migration sector is to be reviewed and structural changes to be introduced to make it a profit-oriented and human centric business model.

- Enhance mutually beneficial engagement with Overseas Sri Lankans and harness their investment potential, human and social capital and technology/ skill and knowledge transfer.
- Restructure the recruitment mechanism and introduce a productive, client friendly, efficient and technology based business model.
- Promotion of entrepreneurship among potential migrant returnees and encourage youth and women in businesses.
- Recognition and promoting women's economic contribution to the development of the country. Measures to be taken to support household entrepreneurs through public private partnership and market development.
- 2023 budget speech emphasize the need for establishing ten agro entrepreneurship villages with a specific focus on export-oriented products. Such entrepreneurship promotions can be opportunities for migrant returnees to invest and engage.

### **Key considerations**

- Effectively managed labour migration can support a country's economic development. As outbound migration is a key factor in Sri Lanka's economic development contributing to foreign remittances and addressing unemployment. However, labour migration Policy needs to be carefully balanced to avoid over-dependence on remittances and over-reliance on migration of low and semi-skilled workers.
- Annually around 200,000 - 250,000 workers (of whom 40 per cent were women) leave the shores of Sri Lanka for foreign employment. There is an annual ebb and flow in this number as well as in the type of migrant employment. Sri Lanka is committed to ensuring safe and skilled migration.
- Remittances from migrant workers are a key contributor to the economy. Workers'



remittances as a per centage of GDP, which averaged around 5.7 per cent during 1981-2000 period, increased to around 8.0 per cent of GDP during the period from 2001-2020, reflecting the increased importance of workers' remittances in relation to Sri Lanka's GDP.

- The ILO commissioned a study titled A Comprehensive Analysis of Remittances in Sri Lanka as an evidence base for Policy formulation. The study identified the following challenges in remittance management: a) high direct and indirect cost of remittance transfers, at 5 per cent of the amount remitted; b) low awareness of mobile money transfer technologies such as FinTech, Ezy cash, M cash; c) unhealthy competition amongst banks created by exchange houses who dictate fee incomes; d) rigid procedures in the formal financial sector push migrant workers towards informal remittance channels; and; e) the lack of discussion on remittance use prior to departure results in poor remittance management at the household level. These findings highlight the lack of awareness amongst migrant workers and their families on remittances channels and management. The study also highlights the need to improve financial management through investments to translate benefits of remittances to economic development. These findings call for strategic interventions in remittance management.
- Worker migration must be managed to strike a balance between labour demands nationally and supply of labour to foreign markets. To facilitate this, an analysis of sectors such as education, higher education and vocational training is required to ensure that domestic labour shortages are avoided due to the supply of labour to overseas markets. A mismatch between existing domestic employment opportunities and the available supply of domestic labour is discerned and it needs to be further established through a multi-pronged analysis looking at key sectors like education, higher education, and vocational training with a focus on changing the profile of the Sri Lankan labour force. In the context of domestic labour shortage in specific sectors, the import of labour has become inevitable.
- Voices of migrant workers must be heard and mechanisms to facilitate collective voices must be strengthened. In recent years, it has become evident that the communities of the migrant returnees and their family members organize themselves into small groups and societies at village level to voice their concerns and lobby for their rights. It is a healthy phenomenon, and such collective voice is needed to influence Policy makers. Strengthening these groups, and empowering them to realise their own potential and supporting their peers would make a significant contribution to the migration sector.
- A substantial number of Sri Lankans live and work in foreign countries on either temporary or permanent basis. These Overseas Sri Lankans (OSL) are a rich source of tacit know-how with links to foreign labour markets. Sri Lanka can benefit by engaging with these OSL, economically and non economically, through remittances, inter-cultural experiences, support of domestic and nuclear economies through families, friends and kinship networks, expand opportunities for export diversification, new business initiatives and human capital formation through exchanging know-how and training. To facilitate contributions from OSL, an enabling environment must be created to attract international investments by; granting dual citizenship and specialized visa categories for investors domiciled in foreign countries, designing retirement, social security, health plans for expatriates, university placement system for children of OSLs, revision and amendments to property laws to facilitate legal rights to own and manage property and specific laws to facilitate OSL to contribute to development. These opportunities must be developed locally and implemented

globally through the active involvement of Sri Lanka's diplomatic missions under the strategic guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- Border control management and institutional mechanisms to combat money laundering and terrorism in the context of labour migration must be strengthened.
- The recent proposals by the Government that will impact on the nexus between migration and development includes:
  - Establishing a contributory pension scheme for migrant employees
  - Pay Rs. 2 per dollar above the normal exchange rate for the foreign exchange remittances converted at licensed banks.
  - Increasing of duty free allowance for migrant returnees
  - Issuing of car permits based on remittances
- Special Deposit Account scheme to attract more inward remittances to the country.
- Promoting financial inclusion to improve access to the banking sector; strengthening competition and developing financial infrastructure that reduces remittance costs, increase remittances through formal financial channels.
- Incentivising digital money transfers such as online remittance channels, mobile money

and transfers through Fintech would also contribute to reduce transaction costs.

- In order to fill the data gaps and lapses in monitoring of remittances, the Central Bank is in the process of implementing an International Transactions Reporting System (ITRS), which is a comprehensive designing retirement, health, social security plans, cross border and foreign currency transactions monitoring system that will be executed through licensed banks.

### **Strategies to Enhance benefits of labour migration by strengthening the nexus between labour migration and national development**

#### **Strategy 1:**

Migration for Employment is a development goal in national strategies and action plans.

#### **Strategy 2:**

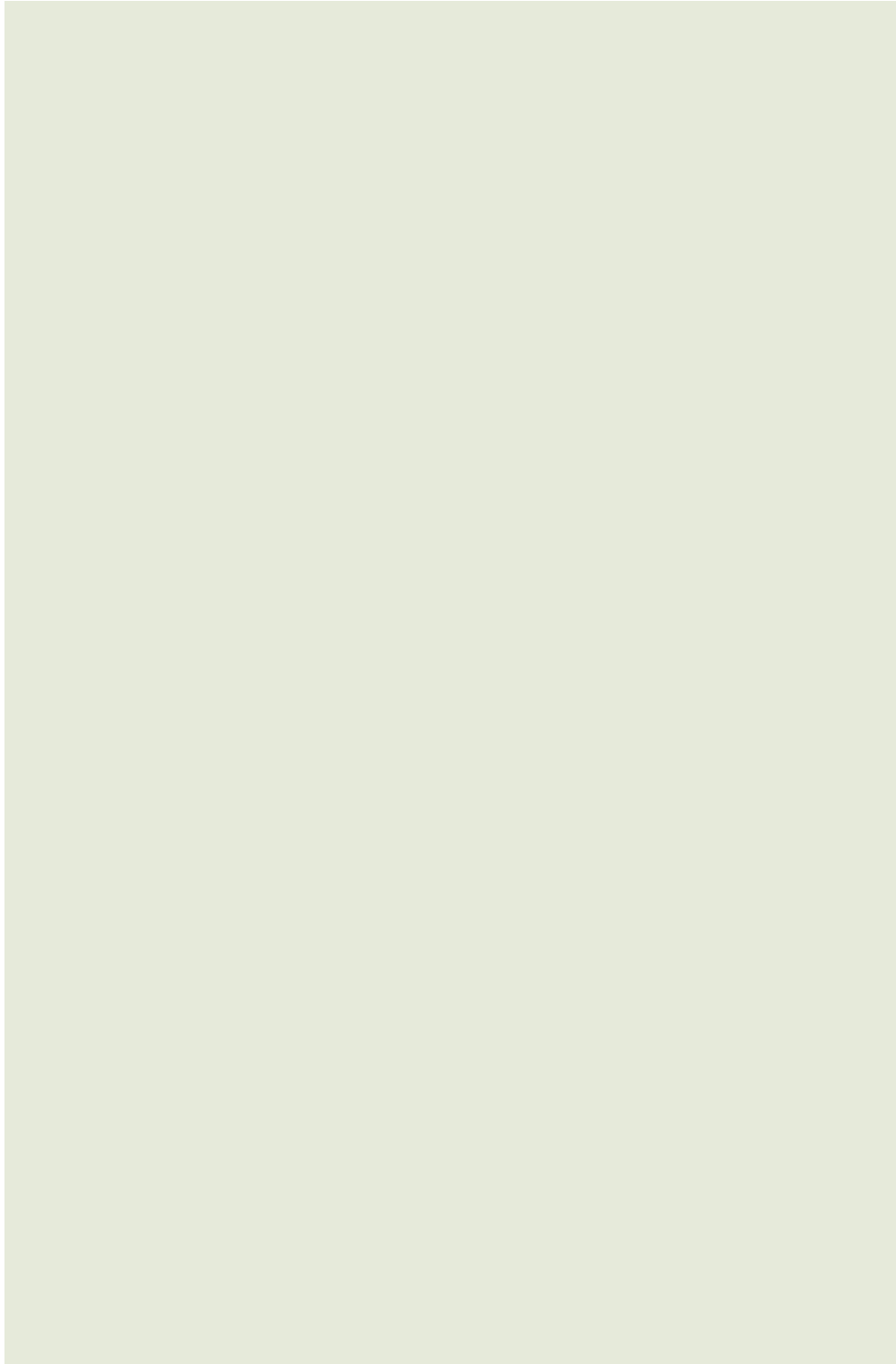
Multi-sectoral facilitation of reintegration of migrant returnees and development of human and social capital.

#### **Strategy 3:**

Engage migrant communities and overseas Sri Lankans as partners in development.

#### **Strategy 4:**

Increase and manage migrant worker remittances for productive investment





## **MONITORING MECHANISM FOR THE POLICY AND NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

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The National Action Plan has also identified different stakeholders from government agencies, the corporate sector, trade unions, CSOs, OSLs and Development partners as having a role and responsibility in this process.

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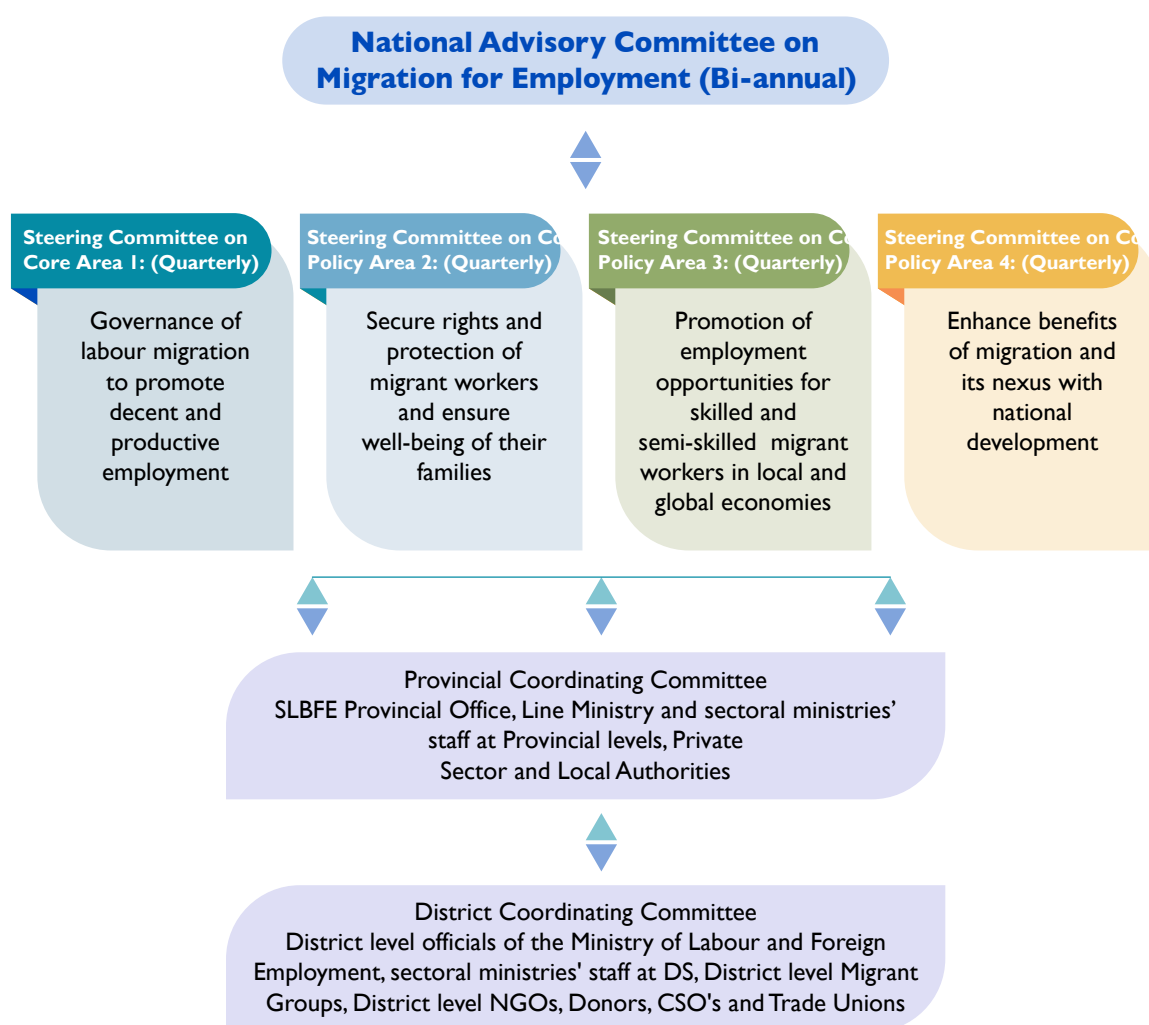
Due to the nature of multi-sectoral accountability in labour migration, the implementation of the Policy and NAP requires; collaboration and institutional coordination with other sectoral ministries and institutions, sharing of budgets and resources, and periodic joint monitoring to ensure outcomes are met and migrant workers and their families benefit. The NAP will help implementation of the Policy, provisions, cutting across different government structures at the national, district and local levels and with a multitude of stakeholders including government agencies, the corporate sector, trade unions, CSOs and development partners, OSL each with roles and responsibilities. Hence the implementation of the Policy and NAP involves a wide range of actors requiring both centralized

and decentralized monitoring systems.

### Monitoring mechanism:

- I. National Advisory Committee on Migration for Employment (NACME): This committee is to be representative of all key stakeholders in the migration sector and appointed by the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment jointly with the SLBFE. The committee will function according to Terms of Reference (TOR) for a two-year term. Key functions of the Committee include: Policy guidance and strategic direction to steering committees under each core area, review by annual progress reports and provide feedback

## PROPOSED MONITORING MECHANISM



to respective steering committees and; ensure timely implementation of strategies and activities as stipulated in the NAP and advise on all aspects of the labour migration sector. The NACME will also assure that international commitments made by Sri Lanka are met and national and international labour standards followed.

2. **Steering Committees on Core Policy areas (SCME):** The main role of a steering committee is to oversee implementation of the NAP by relevant sectoral ministries and agencies. The steering committee needs to adhere to the annual planning and budgeting cycle of the government. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the steering committee needs to coordinate and compile an annual plan based on the outcomes of the NAP in collaboration with all sectoral ministries and other institutions. The key role of the steering committee is to track the progress and monitor the implementation of the plan. The steering committee is also expected to troubleshoot where necessary and submit quarterly progress reports to the National Advisory Committee.
3. **Provincial level Coordinating Committee (PCCME):** This Committee will be led by the provincial office of the SLBFE. The PCCME is assigned the task

of developing provincial activity plans in accordance with the outcomes and outputs of the NAP. This annual exercise need to involve all relevant stakeholders and the respective line ministry and sectoral ministries. The provincial Coordinating Committee will submit progress reports to the steering committees on a quarterly basis. Such progress reports will include information gathered by ground level staff of relevant ministries at provincial level.

4. **District Level Coordinating Committee (DCCME):** This Committee will comprise of district level officials of the line ministry and other relevant ministries, migrant groups/ societies, and district level NGOs, development partners, private sector, CSOs and trade unions. DCCME tasks will include timely implementation of NAP through effective coordination at district and divisional levels, troubleshoot where needed, ensure two-way information flow, collection of data, and submission of monthly progress reports to District coordinating committee (DCC) and the line ministry.

The overall NAP implementation will be reviewed through a mid-term evaluation to make necessary revisions as commissioned by the line ministry. The final evaluation of the NAP implementation will be conducted by an independent evaluation team.

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5. Profile of Sri Lanka Labour Force

6. Status of Inbound Migrant Workers to Sri Lanka  
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# **ANNEXES**

## ANNEX I

### List of Members of the Expert Group

The following members constitute the Expert Group appointed by MoL&FE to be the sounding Board during the formulation of the NPME+

1. Dr. Nisha Arunatilake, Director of Research, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka.
2. Prof. Sunil Chandrasiri, Prof. in Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.
3. Mr. J.A.K Gajaweera, Consultant Skill Development Sector/ former Director VTA, Sri Lanka.
4. Dr. Ramani Jayasundara, Director, Justice & Gender, The Asia Foundation, Sri Lanka.
5. Dr. Ramani Jayatilaka, Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo.
6. Dr. Piyasiri Wickramasekera, Former Migration Specialist of the ILO, Geneva.
7. Dr. Bilesha Weeraratne, Research Fellow and Head of Migration and Urbanization Research, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS).
8. Dr. Hiranthi Wijemanna, Vice-Chairperson of the United Nation's Monitoring Committee on the Rights of the Child.

## ANNEX II

### Members of Working Group

The following members constitute the working group under the four (04) core policy areas. These members contributed in the development of the NAP.

#### Core Policy Area 1:

Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment.

1. Ms. Yamuna Perera, Additional Secretary (Development), State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions and Market Diversification.
2. Dr. Nisha Arunathilaka, Director of Research, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka.
3. Mr. W. Aponsu, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. Mr. M.R.C.B Ekanayake, Deputy General Manager (Approvals & Airport), Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.
5. Prof. Siri Hettige, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.
6. Ms. Miyuru Gunasinghe, Senior Programme Officer, American Solidarity Centre, Sri Lanka.
7. Dr. Ramani Jayathilaka, Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo.
8. Mr. Ajith Kaluarachchi, Programme Coordinator, HELVETAS, Sri Lanka.
9. Mr. Ravi Sandarasekara, Ceylon Workers' Congress.
10. Mr. Andrew Samuel, Executive Director, Community Development Services.
11. Mr. P.P. Weerasekara, Deputy General Manager (Admin & HR), Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.

#### Core Policy Area 2:

Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure wellbeing of their families.

1. Mr. W.M.V Wansekara, General Manager, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.

2. Mr. D.P.P. Senanayake, Additional General Manager, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
3. Dr. Ramani Jayasundara, Director, Justice & Gender, The Asia Foundation, Sri Lanka.
4. Mr. Michael Joachim, President, Plantation Rural Education Development Organization (PREDO).
5. Ms. Avanthi Kalansooriya, Project Officer, UN-Women, United Nations Sri Lanka.
6. Dr. Kelum Liyanage
7. Ms. Dilshani Nugawela, Programme Officer, American Solidarity Centre, Sri Lanka.
8. Dr. Susie Perera, Deputy Director-General, Public Health Services ii, Ministry of Health.
9. Dr. Sepali Kottegoda, Executive Director, Women and Media Collective.

### Core Policy Area 3:

Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies.

1. Mr. Nissanka M. Wijeratne, Former Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Employment and Chief Executive Officer, The Chamber of Construction Industry, Sri Lanka.
2. Mr. R.K.K.M.P Randeniya, Deputy General Manager (Training, Marketing & Recruitment), Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.
3. Mr. M.I Amir, Additional Secretary (Administration), State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions and Market Diversification.
4. Mr. Sampath Dayaratne, (Policy Planning), Ministry of Finance and Planning.
5. Mr. Prasad De Silva, Director-General, Employer's Federation of Ceylon.
6. Mrs. P. Denagama, Development officer, State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions and Market Diversification.
7. Mr. E.L.K Dissanayake, Director, Department of Manpower & Employment.
8. Mr. M.FM Fanoor, Board Member of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.
9. Dr. Susitha Liyanage, Medical Doctor, Ministry of Health.

10. Ms. Amritha Muttiah, Project Coordinator, International Organization for Migration, Sri Lanka.
11. Mr. S.T Seelan, Deputy Director, Human Resource Development Council.
12. Mr. N. Wijesundara, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.

### Core Policy Area 4:

Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development.

1. Ms. Kisholi Perera, Additional General Manager (Local Affairs), Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.
2. Mr. G.W Kularathne, Ministry of Finance and Planning
3. Mr. L.K Ruhunage, Former Addl. General Manager, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.
4. Ms. Manori, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Mr. M.FA Arshad, Board Member of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Licensed Foreign Employment Agent.
6. Ms. J.H.K.Vasuki Chandrakumar, Assistant Secretary, State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification.
7. Mrs. Devmi Dampella, Programme Coordinator, Regional Labour Migration, IOM.
8. Dr. R.L Fernando
9. Mr. Wasantha Gamage, Development Officer, State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions and Market Diversification.
10. Mr. D. Hewage
11. Mr. Nadeesha Jayasinghe
12. Mr. M.F Marikkar, President, Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies.
13. Mr. P. Navaratne, Secretary, Wages Board, Department of Labour.
14. Mr. U.G.Ratnasiri, Additional Secretary (Economic Affairs), Ministry of National Planning & Economic Affairs.
15. Dr. Bilesha Weeraratne, Research Fellow and Head of Migration and Urbanization Research, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka.





# **NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

## 01 CORE Policy AREA

### Governance of labour migration to promote decent and productive employment

#### Overall Objective: Sri Lanka benefits from a well governed labour migration sector

**Strategy: 1.** Strengthen the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for governance of labour migration

**Strategy: 2.** Promote Policy linkages, institutional coherence and multi-sectoral coordination

**Strategy: 3.** Capacity development of key stakeholders to support an effective labour migration sector

**Strategy: 4.** Strengthen structures and systems to ensure professionalization of recruitment

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy: 1. Strengthen the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for governance of labour migration (Whole of Government approach)										
1.1.1 Update relevant national laws and regulations according to the ratified and acceded International conventions/SDG 2030 agenda and GCM objectives.	Provisions of international conventions are incorporated in national laws and regulations.	Strong legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks in place to support effective governance of the migration sector.	SDG – 5.2, 8. 5, 8.7,8.8, 10.7, 16.3,16.6,16.7, 16.b, 17.14  GCM –5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10, 11, 14, 17, 23  # provisions incorporated in national laws  # of laws/regulations amended  # of new laws enacted in case of ratification of new conventions  # of new regulations introduced	Revised laws  UN periodic Review reports  MoL&FE reports	MoL&FE (Lead)  SLBFE  MoFA  MoJ,PA&CR  Attorney General's  Department, Legal  Draftsman's  Department					
1.1.2 Operationalize steps to achieve the Identified Migration Governance Indictors(MGIs)						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
I.1.3 MoL&FE incorporates provisions on the shared responsibilities and accountability in migration management and dispute resolution in BLAs and MOUs after a review.	BLAs/MoUs articulate shared responsibility and accountability.	Enhanced protection and welfare of migrant workers.	# of BLAs/MOUs signed between Sri Lanka and CODs that have incorporated shared responsibility	Review reports BLAs/MOUs signed/ revised  Joint committee meeting reports	MoL&FE (Lead) MoFA SLBFE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.1.4 MoFA and MoL&FE set up a joint mechanism to monitor the effective implementation of the BLAs and MOUs.	Joint monitoring mechanism is established and operational.		# of BLA and MOUs monitored  # of revisions introduced to BLAs/ MOUs	BLAs/MOUs  Minutes of joint committee meetings  Revisions to BLAs/ MOUs	MoL&FE (Lead) MoFA SLBFE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.1.5 Implement the amendment incorporated to the SLBFE Act.	Amended SLBFE Act is incorporated for provisions of effective governance of labour migration.	Effective governance of labour migration.	# of changes made to the structure and operations of MoL&FE and SLBFE and other institutions in line with the revised ACT.	Amended Act	MoL&FE and SLBFE (Lead)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
I.1.6 SLBFE develop and implement a business model to enhance its productivity and contribution to the country's development	SLBFE business model is in effective implementation	SLBFE operates effectively as a profitable and service oriented governance structure in migration sector.	SLBFE operationalize as a business model  # of capacity building programmes conducted  # of institutions capacitated  Feedback given by institutions on the effectiveness of capacity development programmes.	Reports of Training programmes  Training curriculum	Mol&FE and SLBFE (Lead) MoFA D/I&E MoW,CA&SE SLP RGD CAASL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.1.7 MoL&FE and SLBFE set up a provincial and district level coordination committee to liaise between institutions at different sub-national levels for effective migration management.	Institutional Coordination mechanism established and operationalized at provincial level in collaboration with district, divisional and GN levels.		Structures of governance established to well manage migration for employment.	Progress reports of coordination mechanism	Mol&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoPA,HA, PC&LG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame			
						2023	2024	2025	2026 2027
I.1.8 Strengthen Consular cooperation between Sri Lanka and CoD to safeguard rights and protection of migrant workers.	Mechanisms established for strengthened Consular cooperation between Sri Lanka and CODs.	Migrant rights and protection are ensured through consular cooperation.	# of joint committee meetings held with COD authorities  # of special measures taken to safe guard migrant worker safety and protection	Consular section reports  MoFA and MoL&FE progress reports	MoFA & MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.1.9 MoD in collaboration with MoL&FE continue to Implement the Strategic National Action Plan on Combatting Human Trafficking /Human Smuggling.	Collaborative mechanisms established and operationalized for combating human trafficking / Human Smuggling.	Labour migration sector benefits from strict control of irregular and unethical human trafficking / Human Smuggling.	% of reduction of trafficking in persons, especially vulnerable females  # of victims identified/detections/ investigations conducted/convicted	Diplomatic mission reports  SLBFE Reports  Reports of Dept. Of immigration  Police reports  Court cases	MoD (Lead) Member agencies of National anti- human trafficking taskforce	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.1.10 MoL&FE and SLBFE set up an Integrated Information management System that links key sectors/ stakeholders and covering the end-to-end processes in migration management.	Inter-Agency MIS in operation.	Effective management of information and enhanced sectors/ stakeholder participation in labour migration through information sharing.	# of Key agencies inter connected  # of agencies using MIS	Data sheets Reports Progress reports	MoL&FE and SLBFE (Lead) ICTA DoI&E MoD, MoH MoPA,HA, PC&LG MoFA RGD DRP	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy: 2. Promote Policy linkages, institutional coherence and multi-sectoral coordination										
I.2.1 MoL&FE establish multi-sectoral steering committees under 4 core areas of NAP to oversee their implementation, monitoring and ensure reporting to the NACLM.	Steering committees are functional and monitor the implementation of the NAP.	Policy coherence and effective coordination through NACLM and multi-sectoral steering committees contribute to the successful implementation of NAP.	SDG – 8.3, 8.8, 10.7, 16.7	Minutes of the NACLM meetings. # of multi-sectoral steering committees established	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE					
			GCM – 15,16, 17		MoL&FE (Lead) Sectoral Agencies					
			# of sectors represented in National Advisory Committee on Labour Migration. (NACLM)	TOR of steering committees	Private sector NGOs/CSOs					
			# of sectors represented in steering committees	Progress reports		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of sectoral progress reports reviewed by steering committees	Monitoring reports						
			# of implementation gaps and issues identified and rectified by the steering committees							

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
I.2.2 MoL&FE develop a well-coordinated multi-sectoral mechanism at sub national level for better service provision.	Services for migrants are delivered through well-coordinated mechanism at different levels.	Migrant workers benefit from better coordinated service delivery.	# agencies in coordination  # of services provided through these mechanisms.	District and DS level progress reports  Reports of FEDOs  Feedback from migrant workers and family members	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoPA,HA, PC&LG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.2.3 Engage civil society/ trade Unions/ networks of migrant workers in the migration management agenda and promote regular consultations.	Migrant workers and their alliances are invited to decision making forums and their needs/ideas are inclusive in agenda setting process.	Voice and propositions of migrant workers are included in the migration management processes.	# of key migrant worker networks linked to migration management process  Minutes of committee meetings/forum agendas	Minutes of committee meetings/forum agendas	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE  Migrant worker networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame					
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
Strategy: 3. Capacity development of key stakeholders to support an effective labour migration sector											
I.3.1 MoL&FE in collaboration with SLBFE Identify the competency requirement of all stakeholders and formulate a national labour migration Competency Development plan in line with the new business model.	National labour migration sector competency development plan in place.	Competencies of key stakeholders enhanced towards better management of migration.	SDG;10.2, 10.7, 16.7	Report of needs capacity assessment	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE						
			GCM 16, 19,	National competency development plan	Other key stakeholders in migration sector						
			# of stakeholders involved in developing a national competency development plan		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
			# of resource persons in the training pool								
I.3.2 Implement the competency development plan through public and public-private partnerships.	Effective competency development plan/training delivery system in place.		# of stakeholders whose competency is enhanced	Assessment report/s.	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE						
			% of resources/ budgets allocated for competency development plan	Reports of capacity building programmes	Key stakeholders of migration sector						
				Curricular		✓	✓	✓	✓		
			# of training programmes conducted	Attendance sheets							
				# of partnerships developed							

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy: 4. Strengthen structures and systems to ensure professionalization of recruitment										
I.4.1 SLBFE ensures monitoring and evaluation of licensed Foreign Employment Agencies through relevant provisions of the SLBFE Act, regulations and the Code of Ethical Conduct.	Licensed Employment Agencies comply with the code of ethical conduct.	Professionalized recruitment sector that ensures ethical recruitment practices.	SDG –5.2, 8.3, 8.7, 8.8, 10.7, 16.2  GCM –3, 4, 5.6, 7, 9  # of LFEAs complying with COEC	Minutes of the committee monitoring CoEC compliance  COEC committee reports	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE SLFEA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.4.2 SLBFE regularly build and update capacities of the LFEAs in accordance with national, regional and global frameworks on migration	LFEAs equipped with necessary competencies to implement ethical recruitment practices.		# of training programmes  # of LFEA received training	#of training programs  Syllabuses  ToT manual	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE SLFEA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.4.3 SLBFE implements the monitoring and evaluation system on compliance of CoEC that is linked to a grading system.	Grading system established and in operation based on CoEC compliance.		# of graded LFEA	Reports of evaluation Committee  Evaluation criteria  Certificates issued	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE SLFEA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.4.4 SLBFE operationalize an improved user-friendly digital platforms to interact with LFEAs.	Digitalized interactive process is used efficiently by LFEAs.		# of activities convert to web-based processing  # of users of web-based system	SLBFE reports  SL Diplomatic Mission progress Reports	SLBFE(Lead) MoL&FE SL Diplomatic Missions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
I.4.5 SLBFE facilitate clients to use the e-recruitment system.	E-recruitment system being used for job matching and recruitment.	Professionalized recruitment sector that ensures ethical recruitment practices.	# of users of E-recruitment system for job matching.	SLBFE reports  SL Diplomatic Mission progress Reports	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE SL Diplomatic Missions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.4.6 SLBFE facilitates strengthening of cooperation among recruitment agencies, their local and regional associations, trade unions and regulatory bodies to promote ethical recruitment practices.	SLBFE facilitated mechanism is in operation to strengthen cooperation to promote ethical recruitment.		# of co-operation agreements/ MOUs established amongst relevant parties	Minutes of meetings  Agreements/ MOUs	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE SLFEA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I.4.7 SLBFE regulates the foreign employment intermediaries.	Regulations are in place to monitor recruitment intermediaries.	Recruitment intermediaries are brought within the legal framework.	# of meetings/ negotiations conducted by relevant parties.	SLBFE Reports						
I.4.8 MoL&FE and SLBFE along with the relevant stakeholders make changes to existing rules and regulations to promote accessible regular migration pathways to prospective migrant workers.	Easy and accessible migration pathways are available for prospective migrant workers.	Safe, orderly and regular migration enabled.	# of intermediaries regulated	Amended Act of SLBFE  IDs issued	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE LFEAs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			Per centage of increase regular /documented migration  # of Revisions introduced in to recruitment related rules and regulations	SLBFE Reports  SL Diplomatic Mission reports  DOFE reports.	SLBFE and MoL&FE (Lead)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## 02 CORE Policy AREA

### Secure rights and protection of migrant workers and ensure well-being of their families

#### Policy Objective: Ensure migrant worker rights, Health & Safety, protection, social security and wellbeing of them and their families at all stages of migration

- Strategy 1.** Strengthen and promote well-planned, coordinated, efficient and gender responsive service delivery to migrant workers and their family members
- Strategy 2.** Strengthen grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanisms for protection and security of migrant workers
- Strategy 3.** Establish social security systems for migrant workers in-country and in collaboration with host country governments and employers.
- Strategy 4** Educate and empower migrant workers and build alliances to influence Policy and programmes on migration

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy: 1. Strengthen and promote well-planned, coordinated, efficient and gender responsive service delivery to migrant workers and their family members										
2.1.1 Incorporate inclusive, gender responsive and effective service delivery to migrant workers and their families in the relevant multi-sectoral policies, plans and budgets.	Multi-Sectoral policies, plans and budgets have integrated inclusive, gender responsive and effective service delivery to migrant workers and their families.	Enhanced multi-sectoral coordination for well-functioning service delivery to migrant workers and their families.	SDG – 1.4, 3.8, 4.1, 4.3, 8.5, 8.8, 10.2, 10.7, 13.1  GCM – 2, 3, 14, 15, 16, 22,  # of collective decisions taken on planning and resource allocation by sectoral ministries for the well-being of the migrants and their families.	Sectoral strategic plans, corporate plans and annual plans	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoH MoE					
				Annual budgets of relevant agencies	Dept. of Social Services MoF, ES&NP MoPA,HA, PC&LG MoJ,PA&CR	✓	✓	✓	✓	
				Progress reports						

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
			<p># of sectoral ministries that have allocated budgets and programmes for migrant workers and their families.</p> <p># of access points functioned by different sectors for migrant workers and families to acquire services at national and sub-national levels</p> <p># of migrant workers and families who have accessed services/benefit/entitlements</p>	Reports of opinion polls, survey reports	MoW,CA&SE, PS&PE,SI&ES MNPED, MoE					
2.1.2 Address issues of delivery and accessibility of services by migrant workers and their families at sub-national level through migrant resource centres (MRCs)/ one stop centers/ divisional secretariat.	<p>Mechanisms functioning to address issues of service delivery at the migrant resource centres and divisional secretariats.</p>	Improved access to services by migrant workers and families.	<p>Level of satisfaction expressed by migrant workers and their families on the services rendered.</p>	<p>Reports on complaints, inquires received by relevant agencies</p> <p>Reports on referrals</p>	<p>MoL&amp;FE (Lead) SLBFE MoH Dept. of Social Services MoPA,HA, PC&amp;LG MoF,ES&amp;NP MoJ,PA&amp;CR</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
					MoW,CA&SE, PS&PE, SI&ES MNPED MoE					
2.1.3 “Multi-sectoral Steering Committee on migrant’s rights and welfare” coordinates and ensure implementation of services to migrant workers in the sectoral plans	Mechanisms set in place to coordinate and monitor the implementation of sectoral annual plans and budgets.	Ensured the service provision for the migrant workers by the multi-sectoral steering committee		Steering committee-minutes, quarterly reports,  Bi-annual reports to National Advisory Committee by sub- committee	Steering committee comprising of the following agencies: MoL&FE(Lead) SLBFE MoH Dept. of Social Services MoPA,HA, PC&LG MoF,ES&NP MoJ,PA&CR MoW,CA&SE, PS&PE, SI&ES MNPED, MoE and other relevant stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.1.4 SLBFE collaborates with NCPA, and Women and child Development unit at district and DS levels and schools to ensure protection and security of children of migrant workers.	Protective measures are collaboratively operationalized at national and sub-national levels.	Migrant worker families benefit from effective implementation of family development plans/measures of SLBFE and NCPA/ Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment	# of measures operationalized for the security and protection of children		MoL&FE & SLBFE (lead)  MoH MoE MoS&YA Social Services Dept. MoW, CA&SE PS&PE, SI&ES NCPA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			% of family development plans effectively implemented and monitored							
2.1.5 Develop holistic family development plans incorporating all aspects of family welfare health & education of children and operationalize at sub-national level.	Each migrant worker family has a family development plan implemented.		# of referrals done							
			# of family development plans developed  # of families that have followed the FDPs	Family development plans  Progress reports of family development plan implementation	MoL&FE & SLBFE (Lead) MoH MoE Social Services Dept. MoPA, HA, PC&LG MoW, CA&SE, PS&PE, SI&ES NCPA State banks MoUD&H	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.1.6 Establish an easy payment scheme for migrant workers to purchase houses in new housing complexes/schemes	Migrant workers have access/affordability to purchase houses through the easy payment schemes.	Migrant family housing needs are addressed with specific attention to migrants who were disabled due to workplace accidents.	# of beneficiaries have houses through easy payment schemes/compensation schemes	Housing sector ministry performance reports  SLBFE annual reports  State / non-state bank progress reports	SLBFE State Banks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.1.7 Review and improve the accessibility of the existing housing programme for disabled migrant workers						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.1.8 Take special measures to redress difficulties faced by migrant workers and family members in all stages of migration cycle in times of crisis/pandemics/health crisis and natural disasters include the same in the national response strategies.	Migrant workers/family members receive quick and timely responses/services in crisis/pandemic situations.	Migrant workers and their family member are included as a distinct group in national crisis and pandemic strategies.		Disaster Management progress reports  SLBFE progress reports	MoL&FE & SLBFE (Lead) MoH MoE Social Services Dept. MoPA,HA, PC&LG MoW,CA&SE NCPA State banks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.1.9 Provide timely consular assistance and protection to the migrant workers by the Diplomatic Missions in close coordination between MoFA and MoL&FE.	Diplomatic mission staff are equipped with competencies and adequate resources to provide effective consular services to migrant workers.	Migrant workers' rights and protection are ensured through effective state and non-state mechanisms.	# of migrant workers who sought consular assistance  # of referrals done	Periodic progress reports of diplomatic missions	Mol&FE and MoFA (Lead) SLBFE Dept. of Labour	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.1.10. Civil Society actors, and migrant societies support migrant communities to make claims and advocate for effective service delivery.	Migrant workers are organized and apexed into networks that promote migrant rights/services.		# of migrant community members/societies who are members of migrant worker network	Profile of the network  Reports of migrant networks  Reports of advocacy events	Mol&FE and SLBFE (Lead) Migrant Societies/ MPA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame					
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
Strategy: 2. Strengthen grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanisms for protection and security of migrant workers											
2.2.1 Update and develop effective and digitalized grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanism.	A comprehensive grievance handling system is in place and accessed by migrant workers and their family members.	Migrant workers and their families benefit from a competent, well-coordinated and efficient grievance handling / dispute resolution/ SGBV redress	SDG – 5, 16, 16.2, 16.3 17.17	Gap analysis report	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE						
			GCM – 3.5, 7, 10,17			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of grievances resolved through an efficient system								
			# of cases of SGBV and exploitation of women handled by grievance handling mechanisms	Progress reports on improvements made to the grievance handling system	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE						
			# of cases handled through the on-line complaint management system	Feedbacks from migrant workers Case reports		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.2.2 Strengthen the existing grievance handling and response mechanisms to address exploitation of migrant workers and stop SGBV/abuse.	Migrant workers and family members have easy access to SGBV response mechanism.	Migrant workers and their families benefit from a competent, well-coordinated and efficient grievance handling / dispute resolution/ SGBV redress	# of survivors who received compensations							
			Staff and migrant worker perceptions on the grievance handling mechanisms							
			# of revised agreements/ contracts and new agreements with clauses of grievance handling provisions							
			# of SGBV cases handled by grievance handling mechanism	Procedural guidelines	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoJ,PA&CR MoW,CA&SE, MoH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of referrals done							
			# of migrant workers accessing 24 hour hotline services							
			# of migrant workers accessing on line counselling services for migrant workers							



Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.2.3 Train the labour section of diplomatic mission on Operational Manual on Grievance Handling. SGBV redress Mechanism and operationalize guidelines.	Diplomatic mission staff are equipped and competent to handle grievances/ do referrals on issues of migrant workers.	Migrant workers and their families benefit from a competent, well-coordinated and efficient grievance handling / dispute resolution/ SGBV redress		Reports of Trainings  Periodic progress reports of labour section staff	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoFA (Consular Division)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.2.4 Include specific clauses of grievance handling and dispute resolution into employment contracts and strengthen same through review of bilateral agreements and MoUs	Provisions for grievance handling are endorsed through Standard employment contracts and comprehensive agreements.			Signed MoUs, agreements and standard contracts	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoFA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy 3: Establish social security systems for migrant workers in-country and in collaboration with host country governments and employers										
2.3.1 Develop a comprehensive social security/pension scheme programme for migrant workers within the existing social security framework.	Contributory pension scheme and insurance scheme established for migrant workers to enroll and benefit.	Economic and social vulnerabilities of migrant workers and the families are reduced.	SDG – 1.3, 1.4, 3.8, 8.3, 8.8, 10.4, 10.7  GCM – 7, 15, 22	Social Security schemes for migrant workers  Operational modalities	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoPA,HA, PC&LG Dept. of Pensions Central Bank	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3.2 Include provisions for social security and portability of benefits in BLAs/MoU with countries of destination and in employment contracts and effective follow up.	BLAs/MoU include provisions for social security and portability of benefits.  Employment contracts include social security provisions.  Effective follow up of contracts/BLA established with MoL&FE / SLBFE		# of awareness/media programmes conducted on the available society security programme  % of migrant workers enrolled # of BLAs/MoUs that specify provisions on social security	BLAs/MoU and employment contracts	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoFA					
						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
	A program set in place to motivate migrant workers to enroll in social security scheme			Reports on awareness programmes conducted  Media programmes	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE Social Services Dept. CSOs  Migrant Societies					
<b>Strategy 4: Educate and empower migrant workers and build alliances to influence Policy and programmes on migration</b>										
2.4.1 SLBFE strengthens the rights perspective of the pre-departure orientation and informs migrant workers of their obligations.	Migrant workers are developed with increased understanding of their rights and responsibilities.	Migrant workers benefit from civil society and trade union engagement and lobbying with state bodies.	SDG – 4.7, 5.5, 5 a	SLBFE training curriculum	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.4.2 SLBFE includes basic life skills/ health related instructions in the pre - departure training and inform the migrant workers of their responsibilities.	Migrant workers are equipped with basic life skills and knowledge. Opened spaces for rights education of migrant workers.		GCM – 3, 16, 23  # of revisions/ improvements included in the pre-departure orientation curricular	Reports of programmes conducted SLBFE training curriculum						
			# of civil society actors and trade unions conduct programmes with migrant workers		SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoH TVEC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of CSOs/networks collaborate with SLBFE							

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
2.4.3 MoL&FE and SLBFE recognize, and engage migrant worker societies and networks to participate in Policy dialogues and NAP implementation.	CSO actors engage in the forums on migration policy dialogue.	Migrant workers benefit from civil society and trade union engagement and lobbying with state bodies.		Guidelines for registration of migrant societies  Reports of Policy dialogue	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoPA,HA, PC&LG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.4.4 SLBFE and the Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions register the service providers and support the associations, trade unions and NGOs based in destination countries to provide urgent services for in-service migrant	The organizations in destination countries individually and collectively act on urgent needs of migrant workers.	In-service migrant workers have access to services during times of distress and emergencies	# of CSO and trade unions registered in diplomatic missions  # of in-service migrant workers who access services/urgent welfare support	List of registered organization/ trade unions with Diplomatic missions  Profiles of trade unions and associations	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoFA Trade unions NGOs CSOs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## 03 CORE Policy AREA

**Promotion of employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers in local and global economies**

**Policy Objective:** Enable the Sri Lankan labour force to access labour market opportunities and facilitate better socio-economic gains

**Strategy 1.** Strengthen sectoral coordination and invest in skills development to meet global and local labour market demands

**Strategy 2.** Strengthen and upgrade national skill development plans and qualification framework in line with regional and international standards.

**Strategy 3.** Promote institutional collaboration to secure diverse employment opportunities in the global labour market

**Strategy 4.** Facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and other schemes for returnee migrant workers

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame					
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
Strategy: 1. Strengthen sectoral coordination and invest in skills development to meet global and local labour market demands											
3.1.1 MoL&FE and SLBFE coordinate with TVEC to identify global and local sector-wise skills requirements.	Periodic sector wise skill requirement and projections Identified.	Sri Lankan workers benefit from skilled and productive employment secured through improved institutional coordination SLQF /NVQF and skill partnership.	SDG – 4.3,4.4,4.5,4 a, 8.3, 8.6,8.8, 8.9, 8.b,9.2,9.3,10.7	Reports on identified skills	MoL&FE and SLBFE (Lead)						
			GCM -1, 3, 18, 16,17,19, 23	projections and requirements	MoS&YA TVEC						
			% of increase in the number of skilled and semi-skilled workers departed for foreign employment.	Labour Market Bulletin by TVEC		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
			% of increase in demand for Sri Lankan workers locally and in destination countries in diverse sectors.	SLBFE data on departures							

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.1.2 Support VT providers and private sector institutions through concessionary bank loans to provide high quality VT in meeting labour market demand and skill projections.	Collaborative skill development programmes designed and implemented in line with One TVET policy.	Increased employability through skill development and standardization.	# corporate sector institutions in partnership for skill development under One TVET Policy		MoE (Lead) MoL&FE SLBFE MoFA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.1.3 Implement female and youth friendly non-traditional courses to meet industry demand with relaxed entry requirements.	Skill partnerships established and operationalized.  Mutual Recognition of Qualifications agreements signed with countries of destination.  South Asian Regional qualification Reference framework developed.		# of skill development agreements entered with CoDs  increased # of females in non-traditional employments  increased rate of youth employment							

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.1.4 Enter into skills partnerships with countries of destinations in accordance with international/ regional qualification frameworks to meet the demands of 21st century	South Asian Regional qualification Reference framework developed.	Increased employability through skill development and standardization.	# of destination countries agreed on MRA	Bi-lateral skill recognition agreements	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoFA MoE					
			# of skilled migrant workers entering new destinations	South Asia Regional Qualification framework		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of migrant workers have benefitted from NVQF/SLQF/MRQ	SLBFE data TVEC reports						
3.1.5 Improve pre-departure training and orientation to enhance competencies/soft skills enabling smooth job placement.	SLBFE pre-departure curriculum is focused on imparting competencies and soft skills needed for smooth job placement.		# of soft skills included in pre-departure training (language skills/ financial literacy/cultural preparation etc.)	Pre-departure training curriculum SLBFE data	SLBFE (Lead) MoE TVEC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy 2: Strengthen and upgrade national skill development plans and qualification framework in line with the regional and international standards										
3.2.1 Compare national SLQF/NVQ framework with regional and international skills qualification frameworks and make necessary updates.	SLQF/NVQ framework made compatible with regional and international standards.	Labour migration sector benefit from increased demand for Sri Lankan skilled labour in the regional and global labour markets.	Upgraded and endorsed NVQ framework	Skill development plan	MoL&FE SLBFE					
			% of increase in skilled worker departures	Annual progress reports of SLBFE	MoE (Lead) UGC/ MoE TVEC					
			# of skill bridging programmes implemented			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	SLQF is updated to calibrate the mainstream degrees		% of budget allocations to capacitate training institutions/providers							
			# of technological innovations introduced to training institutions							



Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.2.2 Review and revise the national skills development plan in accordance with updated SLQF / NVQF framework.	VT providers access National Skills Development plan to organize their VT provision in accordance with updated SLQF / NVQ frameworks.		# of agencies involved in implementing national skill development plan  % of allocation of budget for implementation of national skill development programmes	SLQF/NVQF  Revisions introduced to NVQ  IGRS programme document  One TVET policy  SLBFE data base on skilled departures	MoE (Lead) MoL&FE SLBFE MoL – DoME IOM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2.3 Develop a pathway for skilled migration under Integrated Guidance & Referral System (IGRS) for prospective migrant workers in collaboration of relevant stakeholders.	Skilled migration of prospective migrant workers are facilitated through IGRS.  Skill bridging programmes for VT courses in demand available with VT providers.	Labour migration sector benefit from increased demand for Sri Lankan skilled labour in the regional and global labour markets.	# of prospective migrants benefitting through IGRS			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2.4 Prioritize and conduct short-term skill bridging programmes on the basis of job demands.	Newly introduced skill passport system is available for NVQ holders with minimum of one year verified experience.					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2.5 Develop a procedure to issue skill passports to migrant workers through verification of work experience of the NVQ holders.			# of skilled migrants who have entered the skill pool.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.2.6 Improve capacity of training institutions/ providers to facilitate skill development plan implementation.	Training institutions/ providers are equipped with human, technology and financial resources to implement national skill development plan.	Labour migration sector benefit from increased demand for Sri Lankan skilled labour in the regional and global labour markets.	# of updated and graded capacity development institutions		SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoE MoL – DoME	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Skills recognition agreements entered with countries that require upgrading of VT courses according to the mutually recognized skills standards.									
3.2.7 Enter in to bi-lateral, regional and multi-lateral mutual skill recognition (MRA) agreements labour force.			# of new agreements for mutual skill recognition	Mutual Skill Recognition Agreements	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoFA					
			# of countries involved in MRA programmes			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy 3. Promote institutional collaboration to secure diverse employment opportunities in the global labour market										
3.3.1 Strengthen the institutional coordination to access and expand job opportunities in the foreign labour markets.	Coordination mechanism/ technical committee for securing diverse job opportunities is strengthened and operationalized.  Links established with international process of establishing International Labour Market Observatory.	Diversified employment opportunities are available and facilitated through state, private sector and destination country collaborations.	# of jobs secured annually  # of job orders available for Sri Lankan job seekers  # of new destinations identified and coordinated  # of linkages established with global labour markets/companies/ employment providers/ International Labour Market Observatory  LMIS with digital system is institutionalized to analyses on labour market trends and training needs.	TOR of the coordination mechanism as stipulated in the circular  Mission reports  SLBFE annual statistical reports  Meeting minutes	MoL&FE and SLBFE (Lead) MoE, MoFA  Associations of recruitment agents  Private sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.3.2 Disseminate information on available job opportunities and skills requirement at national and sub-national level through existing government structures.	Information on job opportunities and skills requirements available through national and sub national government structures.	Job seekers benefit from timely and accurate information on available job opportunities and required skills.	# of state agencies that have information outlets  # of information packages/leaflets disseminated to public	Progress reports  Information packages  IEC materials	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.3.3 Develop Integrated Digital common platform on existing job sites/ job banks by MoL&FE & SLBFE in collaboration with other agencies and make it accessible to all job seekers/recruitment agencies/employers.	All job sites accessible through a single digital portal.  Effective job matching system in place  Emerging labour market trends identified.	Technologically facilitated system of labour supply under One TVET policy effectively meets the demand in the foreign labour market.	# of job sites registered in the portal  # of job seekers accessing the sites/banks  # of recruiting agencies/ employers accessing the site/banks  # of changes/ innovations introduced to the TVET system	# of viewers who have accessed the job portals	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoPA,HA, PC&LG, MoE, MoS&YA, MoL – DoME Corporate Sector Dept. of Manpower Ministry of Youth & Sports Recruitment agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.3.4 Build capacity of licensed foreign employment agents to seek diverse job opportunities through enhanced linkages and digitalized platforms.	Linkages with employment providers established by licensed foreign employment agents to secure jobs in diverse sectors/ destinations.		# of job orders for new destinations  # of new job categories	Job orders  SLBFE data	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoFA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame			
						2023	2024	2025	2026 2027
3.3.5 TVEC, MoE, MoL&FE, SLBFE coordinate with trade guilds and sector skills councils to screen and assess credentials to issue trade licenses.	Systems and procedures established to facilitate trade licensing and support efficient job application Partnerships and linkages developed between local and foreign skills councils/bodies.	Enhanced skills mobility	# of linkages established with international & national professional bodies/authorities.  # of job seekers who have benefited from fast track system and trade licensing  # of credential screened	Report on the trade licenses issued annually.	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoE MoL – DoME	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategy 4: Facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and other schemes for returnee migrant workers</b>									
3.4.1 Create awareness on the opportunities and advantages of obtaining the RPL and skills passport and develop user-friendly electronic RPL system.	Increased publicity given to opportunities and advantages of obtaining RPL certification of skills acquired by potential and returnee migrant workers.  VT providers are equipped with facilities to cater to the increased demand for RPL. RPL/upskilling.  Gap filling programmes are established	Migrant workers both potential and returnee benefit from RPL certification and skill passport that provides for better employment status and remuneration.	# of RPL certification issued to returnee migrant workers  # of agencies collaborating for skill screening and upskilling at national and sub national levels  # of skill passports issued annually	Annual reports of RPL mechanism  TVET reports  Lists of TVEC skill passport	MoE (Lead) MoL&FE SLBFE VTA/NAITA, DTET,TVEC	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.4.2 SLBFE will secure the authority to certify the occupation and work experience abroad to fast track the documentation process of RPL.	SLBFE set up mechanisms for certification of overseas experience of migrant workers.	Speed up the RPL certification process	# of migrant returnees who have received RPL NVQ certificates	SLBFE data	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoE (Lead) MoPA,HA, PC&LG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.4.3 SLBFE coordinates with relevant authorities through diplomatic missions to expedite certification of work experience of Sri Lankan workers.						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## 04 CORE Policy AREA

Enhance benefits of migration and its nexus with national development

**Policy Objective: Effective positioning of migration for employment as a productive sector in the development of Sri Lanka**

**Strategy 1.** Migration for Employment is included as a development goal in national strategies and action plans

**Strategy 2.** Multi-sectoral facilitation of reintegration of migrant returnees and promote development of human and social capital

**Strategy 3.** Engage migrant communities and overseas Sri Lankans as partners in the development of the country

**Strategy 4.** Increase and management of migrant worker remittances for productive investment in collaboration with financial institutions

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy: I. Migration for Employment is included as a development goal in national strategies and action plans										
4.1.1. MoF implement measures to incorporate labour migration as a key development area in Public Investment Plan and in long-term national development plans of Sri Lanka.	National development agenda and plans have included targets on migration for employment as a key development sector.	Migration for employment as a sector is well positioned in the national development plans through the implementation of NPME.	SDG – 8.3, 8.8, 17.17	Annual progress reports	MoF,ES&NP (Lead)					
			GCM – I, 16,	National Development Plans	MoNP&EA (Lead)					
			# of sectors that have included migration for employment in their plans and budgets		MoL&FE (Lead)					
			% of allocation for migration for employment in annual budgets	Central bank reports	CBSL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of Key documents like Annual Central bank reports include contributions from migration sector.	Annual budgets	SLBFE MoH MoE Dept. of Social Services MoPA,HA, PC&LG, MoJ,PA&CR MoW,CA&SE					

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.1.2 Sectoral ministries include relevant activities and targets of NPME in their annual sectoral plans and budgets.	NPME activities and targets are implemented and reported through the core area sub committees.	Budget allocation of sectoral ministries to ensure implementation of the National Action Plan	# of activities of NPME implemented  # of targets achieved  % of allocations for NPME implementation from sectoral budgets	Annual action plans of sectoral ministries	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoH MoE Dept. of Social Services MoPA,HA, PC&LG MoF,ES&NP MoJ,PA&CR MoW,CA&SE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.1.3. Conduct comprehensive research and business analysis on on different aspects of labour migration to make the sector more dynamic and productive.	Systems in place for comprehensive research, data and information and generation and management on labour migration.  Data and information on labour migration is collected through National census and other related surveys/studies.	Strategic interventions on national development is well informed by the findings of action researches/ data analysis.	# of action researches conducted  # of recommendations of researches taken on board for national strategies  # strategic interventions initiated	Research Reports National Plans	MoF,ES&NP MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE IPS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.1.4 DCS includes migration for employment as a key sector in National Censuses, surveys and special studies.				2021 census report, Survey reports	DCS (Lead) MoL&FE SLBFE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.1.5 Re-structure and re-organize the SLBFE research library as a fully equipped resource centre on labour migration.	Comprehensive information on labour migration is available in one central point	Strategic interventions on national development is well informed by the findings of action researches/ data analysis.		Research reports	SLBFE (Lead)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.1.6 Update the on-line data base of SLBFE and include it in the integrated MIS	Effective on line system in place for collection, analysis and updating data on labour migration.			Annual Statistics report of SLBFE	SLBFE (Lead)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategy 2: Multi-sectoral facilitation of reintegration of migrant returnees to productively utilize their human and social capital</b>										
4.2.1 Strengthen and capacitate the reintegration unit of SLBFE to effectively implement the NAPRR in coordination with other sectors.	Reintegration unit equipped with adequate human resource to undertake the effective implementation and monitoring of the NAPRR and monitoring.	Returnee migrant workers/families benefit from implementation of NAPRR activities.	SDG 1.4, 3.8,4.3, 5.2, 5.3 .8.7,10.4  GCM: 14, 15, 16, 21,22,  # activities of NAPRR implemented  % of budget allocations from SLBFE budget  # of strategies of NAPRR incorporated in corporate plans and annual plans	Annual plans and reports  Corporate plans  Minutes of the coordination committee on the implementation of NAPRR  Resource directory of service providers	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE Relevant sectoral ministries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.2.2 Incorporate key components of the NAPRR in the Annual Action plans of the MoL&FE and Corporate Plan and business model of the SLBFE.	Reintegration strategies are incorporated in the corporate plan, annual plans and budgets of MoL&FE and SLBFE and other relevant sectors.	Returnee migrant workers/families benefit from implementation of NAPRR activities.	Number of returnees seeking and utilizing reintegration services (gender disaggregated)	Corporate plans  Annual Action plan	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoF,ES&NP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	A system established to monitor and report the implementation of activities under the NAPRR.									
4.2.3 Facilitate the migrant returnees entry to the local labour market in collaboration with corporate sector and manpower agencies	Diverse and effective mechanisms established to enable migrant returnees access to employment opportunities		# of joint programmes implemented with different stakeholders  % of migrant returnees integrated into the local labour force	Progress reports of joint programmes  Monitoring reports	SLBFE (Lead)  Civil Societies, NGOs, corporate sector and trade unions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategy 3: Engage migrant communities and Overseas Sri Lankans as partners in the development of the country										
4.3.1 Government recognizes and registers migrant worker networks / associations in Sri Lanka.	Spaces created for migrant workers to contribute in the development of Sri Lanka.	Migrant worker perspectives and contributions have supported the development strategies of Sri Lanka.	SDG:16.7, 17.14  GCM:16, 19  # of migrant worker groups and associations registered.	Registry of migrant worker groups/ association	Mol&FE (Lead)  SLBFE					
	Migrant worker associations and networks act as a funnel in information dissemination.	Migrant worker perspectives and contributions have supported the development strategies of Sri Lanka.	# information channels established			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3.2 Government engages registered migrant associations to contribute to Policy dialogue/programme implementation.			# of interactive spaces created for dialogue and discourse with migrant worker associations	Minutes of meetings.						
				Minutes of national Labour Migration Advisory Committee		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.3.3 MoL&FE in collaboration with print and electronic media promotes dignity and recognition of migrant workers as partners in development.	Migrant workers are projected as partners in development through media programmes/ campaigns.	Migrant workers are recognized as partners in development of the country	Media sector code of ethics includes principle of migrant sensitive reporting  # of print and electronic media programmes that highlight migrant worker contributions to the development  # of success stories of migrant workers highlighted in media  Special reports on remittances	Print and electronic media reports	MoL&FE (Lead) Ministry of Mass Media SLBFE Media agencies  Editors Guild Sri Lanka Association of Journalists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.3.4 SLBFE jointly with BOI and other investment promotion authorities support migrant worker economic ventures.	Procedures and regulations are in place to facilitate migrant worker economic ventures.	Sri Lankan economy benefit from profit oriented migrant worker investment.	# of new procedures, regulations introduced for promote migrant returnee investment	BOI progress reports	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoF,ES&NP BOI Dept. of Inland Revenue					
	Special entrepreneurship programme is implemented to economically strengthen returnee female and youth migrant workers		# Information channels on investment opportunities available for migrant workers	Procedures and rules and regulations						
			# of economic ventures established and in operation	SLBFE progress reports		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
				Income tax exemption reports						
			# of female returnees joining the special entrepreneur scheme							
4.3.5 Introduce a special loan scheme for returnee migrants to start tax-exempted enterprises	Special loan scheme will benefit the migrant workers to start tax exempted enterprises.		# of migrant returnees have obtained loans							
			# of migrant returnees who have started economic ventures			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
4.3.6 Sri Lankan Missions to compile a Registry of Overseas Sri Lankan Associations.	Policies, procedure and guidelines available with relevant ministries /agencies to facilitate OSL to engage in the development of Sri Lanka.	Overseas Sri Lankans are increasingly contributing to the development of Sri Lanka.	Directory of registered associations  # of OSLs registered with contact Sri Lanka portal	Concept paper of MoFA on OSL engagement  Performance reports of diplomatic missions	OSL unit in MoFA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3.7 MoL&FE in collaboration with, MoFA, MoF /BOI and relevant authorities develop schemes to engage Overseas Sri Lankans to use their expertise and resources in country's development plans.	Schemes, such as BOI one stop centre is in operation for OSL engagement		# of joint initiatives established and operationalized  # of OSL who avail service of one stop centre at BOI	Report on incentives/ initiatives introduced  Central bank reports	MoL&FE (Lead) MoFA (Economic Affairs Division) BOI and other key stakeholders/ authorities MoF,ES&NP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3.8 Implement concessionary schemes and investment opportunities to engage OSL in country's development	Concessionary facilities for OSLs are established and in operation.		# of OSL who have availed the concessionary facilities  # visa relaxation  # of dual citizenship offered to OSL  # of long term residence permits issued  # of tax rebate/ duty free vehicle permits issued  # of social security schemes initiated		MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoFA MoF,ES&NP Dept. of Immigration BOI					
						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame				
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
			# of university placements offered to children of OSL							
<b>Strategy 4: Promote and manage migrant worker remittances for productive use and investment</b>										
4.4.1 SLBFE in collaboration with state banks continue to provide guidance to departing migrants and family members on effective financial management and remittance transfers / concessionary facilities.	Education on remittance management to migrant workers.	Migrant workers and families benefit from proper management of finances/ remittances and concessions for formal remittances.	SDG 1.1 , 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1a, 1b, 8.1, 10.c, 10.7 GCM 20,21	Annual report of state Bank	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE Central Bank					
	Migrant workers and family members engage in productive use of remittances.		% of increase in migrant savings	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reports	MoF,ES&NP State Banks					
			% increase expenditure on education and health of children	Research report						
	Migrant workers use formal channels for remittance transfer.		# of houses built	SLBFE progress reports		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			# of productive assets owned by migrant worker	Progress reports of FEDOs		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Migrant workers access the incentives / tax rebate provided for remittances through formal channel		# of vehicle permits issued to migrant workers	Family development plans						
			# additional duty free allowances							
			Increased access of legal channels for remittance transfer by # of informed migrants							

Activities	Output	Outcome	KPI/ SDG target/ GCM objective	Means of Verification	Responsible Agency	Time Frame			
						2023	2024	2025	2026 2027
4.4.2 Incentivize digital money transfers such as online remittance channels, mobile money and transfers through Fintech to reduce transaction costs.	Reduction of cost of remittances through digitalized schemes.	Reduced cost for remittance transfer.  Migrant workers benefit from easy and accessible system of remittance transfer.	% of reduction of transaction cost to less than 3% in line with the 2030 agenda.	Annual progress reports of state and central bank  Central bank regulations	MoL&FE (Lead) Central Bank SLBFE MoF,ES&NP State Banks	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.4.3 Operate an easy and migrant friendly and formal remittance transfers and put in place International Transaction Reporting System (ITRS) to effectively monitor cross boarder transaction.	Minimized use of illegal channels for remittance transfers by migrant workers.	system of remittance transfer.	% of increase of remittance transfer through state and private banks  # of authorities engaged in real time remittance management and monitoring	Annual reports of State Banks	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE Central Bank MoF,ES&NP State Banks	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.4.4 MoL&FE in collaboration with MoF develop a 'Customized Benefit Package' (CBP) based on the amount of remittances channeled through formal sources.	State banks and private banks offer " Customized Benefit Packages" that are availed by migrant workers.	Migrant worker remittances and savings are increased.	% of increase of migrant saving  # migrant workers registered in the special deposit account scheme	Central bank reports  SLBFE reports  Feedback from migrant workers	MoL&FE (Lead) SLBFE MoF,ES&NP Central Bank State Banks	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.4.5 SLBFE facilitates through state banks for the migrant to access concessionary loans to reduce the cost of migration.	Concessionary loans available and accessible for prospective migrant workers.	Migrant workers benefit from reduced cost of migration.	# of migrant workers who have availed the facility of concessionary loans  % of collateral funding provided to banks by SLBFE	Annual reports of state banks  SLBFE reports	SLBFE (Lead) MoL&FE MoF,ES&NP Central bank State banks MoFA	✓	✓	✓	✓







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