

Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights

“Working together to promote due diligence and protect workers’ rights during recruitment”, 16 November 2015, 16:40 to 18:00

Organized by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB), International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Global Compact (UNGC) and Verité

Background Description

In today’s globalized economy, workers are increasingly looking for job opportunities beyond their home country in search of decent work. In addition, millions of workers migrate within their own country. Public and private employment agencies, when appropriately regulated, play an important role in the efficient and equitable functioning of labour markets. However, concerns have been raised about the growing role of unscrupulous labour recruiters, private employment agencies, and other operators acting outside of the legal and regulatory framework especially targeting low-skilled workers. Reported abuses include: deceitful practices; retention of passports; deposits and illegal wage deductions; debt bondage linked to repayment of recruitment fees and costs.

Increased concern about fraudulent and abusive recruitment practices has encouraged key actors to take concrete steps to curb and put an end to these malpractices. This panel will discuss how to improve the protection of workers, particularly migrant workers, from such exploitative recruitment practices and ensure compliance with national and international human rights and labour standards. It will present collaborative efforts to promote due diligence and highlight promising practices to prevent and eliminate abusive and fraudulent recruitment. It will also draw attention to innovative laws, policies and enforcement mechanisms enhancing fair recruitment processes.

Session Focus

The panel discussion will provide an opportunity to:

- offer insights on recruitment-related provisions contained in the new international treaty on forced labour¹;
- share results of research on regulatory and enforcement models on recruitment;
- discuss different innovative models by business fostering fair recruitment and their potential for replication;
- exchange experience on how to best support due diligence efforts of labour market intermediaries to ensure their recruitment practices do not have a negative impact on the human rights of migrant workers and other vulnerable groups.

Session Format

The session will consist of a panel discussion with speakers from governments, employers’ organizations, companies, trade unions and civil society organizations followed by a Q&A session with the participants.

¹ Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29).

Target audience

- Business/employers/companies/brands
- Governments
- Workers' organizations
- Intergovernmental and regional organisations
- National human rights institutions
- Human Rights Organizations fighting forced labour and trafficking
- Others

Key questions for discussion

- What are the main international human rights and labour standards governing labour recruitment and what are the different approaches to regulate labour recruitment? What are the most recent trends in terms of statutory regulation?
- How can enterprises undertaking human rights due diligence ensure compliance with national and international standards related to fair recruitment? What are the obstacles they face and how can they overcome them?
- How can different stakeholders join forces to prevent and eliminate abusive and fraudulent recruitment across key labour migration corridors?

Moderator

- John Morrison, Executive Director, Institute for Human Rights and Business (TBC)

Speakers

- Beate Andrees, Chief, ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch
- Sarah Fox, United States Government representative
- International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
- A brand representative or a garment factory owner
- Philip Hunter, Program Director, Verité
- Neha Misra, Senior Specialist Migration and Human Trafficking, Solidarity Center

Concluding remarks