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Cross-border recruitment of workers is a vital part of facilitating international labour mobility. When it is done in a fair and transparent way, recruitment contributes to safe, orderly labour migration which benefits countries of origin and destination, employers and migrants. However, when it is conducted in a manner inconsistent with international standards, unethical recruitment can lead to fraudulent behaviour, exploitation and, in the worst cases, conditions of forced labour.

In many migration corridors, the vulnerability experienced by migrant workers is exacerbated by weaknesses in regulation and enforcement. Inconsistencies across jurisdictions, coupled with uneven enforcement capacity, can lead to gaps in migrant protection.

To address this, IOM will establish a new Global Policy Network on Recruitment, a Member State-led collaboration to bring together senior policy makers, regulators and thought leaders to address challenges, identify solutions and highlight promising practices to strengthen recruitment regulation and migrant worker protection.

The Policy Network will adopt a “whole of government” approach and include representatives of national and sub-national authorities, relevant ministries, departments and public agencies. The Network will establish a robust and sustainable vehicle for policy dialogue that is solutions- and impact-oriented. It will:

- Provide clear, practical guidance to promote policy coherence and good practice;
- Encourage operational and regulatory cooperation across participating jurisdictions; and
- Establish a mechanism through which guidance and strategies can be tested and scaled, and actions taken.

To enhance the success, scale and sustainability of the Network, IOM will adopt a multi-pillar approach that includes 1) awareness raising and communications; 2) capacity building for effective regulation; 3) strategic advocacy; and 4) data and research.

**PILLAR 1: ENHANCING POLITICAL COMMITMENT THROUGH AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Levels of awareness and understanding about ethical recruitment vary across governments and regions. In some jurisdictions, expertise is deep and socialized across different agencies and authorities, while in other jurisdictions, awareness is nascent, but political commitment is strong. To meet these diverse circumstances, the Network will implement a global awareness and communications campaign, which will serve to elevate understanding where needed, promote parity and consistency of understanding and establish the intellectual and ethical foundations for public commitment and action.

**PILLAR 2: STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE REGULATION**

Building on enhanced levels of awareness and commitment, the Network will strengthen government capacity to develop better policies, actions plans, programs and services for ethical recruitment and migrant protection. Capacity will serve as the bridge between commitment and action and, in practical terms, will be enhanced through global tools, guidance material, online learning and modular training, which will be tailored to the needs of regulators and practitioners at various levels.



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### PILLAR 3: STRATEGIC ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

With enhanced awareness, commitment and capacity, the Network will lead a targeted campaign of advocacy and engagement, which will serve to translate new commitments into actions and lead to the adoption of new policies and action plans on recruitment as well as new programs and services to promote migrant worker welfare and protection. Strategic advocacy will involve global, regional and national programs to stimulate coherence, synergies and cooperation both horizontally and vertically across governments. A primary goal of this engagement will be the establishment of National Action Plans (NAPs) based on the global framework provided by *The Montréal Recommendations on Recruitment: A Road Map towards Better Regulation*. (see below).

### PILLAR 4: STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

The global community faces significant gaps in data and knowledge related to international recruitment practices and trends. To address this, the Network will lead a robust research program to inform policy dialogue, decision-making, public commitments, policies and action plans. This will include corridor-level reports, comparative research and the creation of a global database to collect and maintain up-to-date data on recruitment fees, costs, practices and trends.

### GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIP

The Policy Network will be led by an International Advisory Committee (IAC) composed of leading policy makers, practitioners and experts drawn from IOM Member States. The IAC will provide strategic guidance and direction to the Network Secretariat based at IOM headquarters on all matters related to its development and will serve as an embryonic governance structure. The Network will be jointly implemented by IOM with participating States, in close coordination with other global initiatives on ethical recruitment. This includes the [Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment](#) and the ILO's [Fair Recruitment Initiative](#). The Policy Network will also coordinate closely with regional migration platforms such as the Bali Process, Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

### THE MONTRÉAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON RECRUITMENT

The foundation for the Policy Network was laid with the success of the June 2019 Global Conference on the Regulation of International Recruitment, which was held in Montréal, Canada. The Conference brought together 100 policy makers from over 30 countries around the world and resulted in *The Montréal Recommendations on Recruitment: A Road Map towards Better Regulation*, a set of global guidance articulating good practice in recruitment regulation and protection of migrant workers. *The Montréal Recommendations* reflect growing consensus among policy makers that governance gaps in international recruitment require deliberate, robust and coordinated action by regulators. To support this, the guidance addresses a range of policy issues, including recruitment fees and costs; registration and licensing of recruitment agencies; the role of labour inspectors, consular officials, migrant welfare officers and labour attachés; strategies to incentivize legal compliance; migrant welfare and assistance; enhancing access to grievance mechanisms, dispute resolution and remedy; and bilateral, regional and multi-lateral engagement.

### IRIS: ETHICAL RECRUITMENT

The Policy Network is a program of IRIS, the IOM's flagship initiative to promote ethical recruitment. IRIS is a global multi-stakeholder initiative that supports governments, civil society, the private sector and recruitment agencies to establish ethical recruitment as the norm in cross-border labour migration. The goal of IRIS is to make international recruitment fair for everyone involved: migrant workers, employers, recruiters and countries of origin and destination. It does this by: 1) promoting respect for the rights of migrant workers; 2) enhancing transparency and accountability in recruitment; 3) advancing the employer pays principle; and 4) strengthening public policies, regulations and enforcement mechanisms.



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To join the Policy Network or learn more about its activities, please contact the IRIS Secretariat: [iris@iom.int](mailto:iris@iom.int).

