

50TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA) AFRICA REGION

THEME TOPIC: IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH POLICIES AS A TOOL TO COMBAT MIGRATION

The parliament of Lesotho second the parliament of Rwanda on the theme topic.

I. Introduction

In support of the topic herein, we wish to highlight some of the merits and demerits that can be caused by migration and their impacts.

As the proposer has alluded in their presentation, migration if not well managed can have a negative impact both on the country of origin and as well as the receiving country. Migration in our continent is to a large extent caused by absence of good governance which if not curbed on time develops, inter alia into political instability and nepotism resulting in socio economic disaster in a country.

This is in view of the fact that, many factors can be attributed to the migration within the country of origin and hosting countries. Migration is among most complex topics to deal with so is its management. The more reason migration has to be addressed by countries of origin and host countries; showing the same level of commitment to address this socio economic phenomenon.

As Rwanda opined, there are two sides to migration problem. Commitment from all countries; origin, host countries and donor countries to address the problem need to be cognisant of the fact that migration if well managed can be beneficial and very detrimental if not. Pros and cons of migration remains the same in Africa and Lesotho presentation will try to dwell more on its policy as a tool to curb migration among youth.

2. Lesotho case study: Implementation of youth policies as a tool to combat immigration

The government of Lesotho is not an exception in Africa, of countries faced with high numbers of its people migrating to other countries for various life opportunities. It is worth noting its endeavors in and out of the country to manage migration.

At National Level:

- The Constitution of Lesotho, 1993
- Lesotho Youth Policy 2017- 2030
- Lesotho Migration and Development Policy, 2013
- Immigration and Citizenship Bill, 2018

At International Level:

The country has ratified the convention of protection of migrant workers and members of their families.

In a nutshell, constitution requires that, Lesotho should adopt policies that are designed to assist and protect children and young persons. Furthermore, chapter III of the constitution under **section 29 (2) (a)** provides that;

“Lesotho shall adopt policies aimed at achieving and maintaining as high and stable a level of employment as possible”.

It is on the basis of these provisions of the constitution and many others that, Lesotho adopted policies in different line Ministries to address the issue of migration and youth such as the Lesotho National Youth Policy 2017-2030.

3. The Lesotho National Youth Policy 2017-2030

The Policy was adopted in line with the government of Lesotho’s vision to empower young people through the effective integration of youth into socio-economic development issues of the country¹. This current National

¹ See page 6 of the National Youth Policy 2017-2030.

Youth Policy 2017 - 2030 has been developed with and for all youth in the kingdom of Lesotho as a step forward to invest in the youth².

The policy strengthens the need to promote entrepreneurship amongst youth as this is a key driver towards the structural economic transformation envisioned in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II). It is through entrepreneurship that millions of jobs can be generated in fields such as technology, agriculture, and transportation³.

Furthermore, the policy aims at addressing high youth unemployment which is attributed to slow economic growth that is projected to 2.6% (World Bank, 2016) which limits the country's ability to generate significant new jobs.

Therefore, on the basis of the foregoing, it may be noted that, the implementation of this National Youth Policy will be of significance to Lesotho to address the high level of unemployment faced by the youth who hold degrees but without jobs.

One other policy in place is:

4. The Lesotho Migration and Development Policy, 2013

It is through this policy that the government of Lesotho has indicated its support to harness migration for human and economic development.

It has further entered into bilateral arrangements with South Africa which is our only neighbour on a number of key areas, including Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) focusing on cooperation in the field of labour and access to social security benefits by Lesotho migrants, and a bilateral agreement on the facilitation of cross border movement of citizens⁴.

One other policy that stands to benefit the youth in Lesotho at the moment is the recent policy though not yet legislated, whereby 30 000 Basotho youths stand to gain employment with the government's strategic plan for

² See page 6 of the National Youth Policy 2017-2030.

³ See page 14 of the National Youth Policy 2017-2030.

⁴ See page 10 of Migration and Development Policy, 2013.

19.9 million-worth of private investment projects kicks off by the financial year 2022/23⁵.

5. Immigration and Citizenship Bill, 2018

And finally, the recently passed Bill termed Immigration and Citizenship Bill, 2018, provides for the implementation of cross-border migration management system with the neighbouring countries by developing and implementing a cross border migration system to ensure national and regional security and stability⁶.

Though the bill does not specifically deal with migration and youth, it is an important bill that is going to enhance migration by ensuring that dual citizenship is permitted so that the Lesotho diaspora is able to openly bring their remittances home, invest in Lesotho and transfer of skills to the youth for economic development of the country. The issue of brain drain will also be addressed in that, Basotho professionals who have now acquired citizenship of other countries will openly come out and be granted restitution of citizenship.

6. In Conclusion

Migration today is seen as contributing positively and negatively to the economy of both the country of origin and host. We do support that it is imperative to apply inclusive and broad approach to the management of immigration for both countries of origin and host.

I thank you for your attention.

⁵ Kabelo Masoabi: Maseru Metro: August 2019

⁶ Sub-clause 112 (1) and (2).