

# Government to export one million labour abroad

By **Severious Kale-Dery**



THE government is targeting to export between 800,000 and 1.2 million skilled and non-skilled labour to Western economies in high demand for labour.

The arrangement, under the “Ghana Labour Exchange Programme (GLEP)”, is expected to rake in between \$10 billion and \$20 billion to the country as foreign exchange inflow accruing from labour export.

“Labour export holds immense potential, estimated to bring in between \$10 billion and 20 billion for Ghana,” the Minister of State in charge of Special Initiatives, Emmanuel Kwadwo Agyekum, said, citing international examples to back his statement.

Mr Agyekum, who announced this at a media engagement in Accra, explained that the labour export to countries in dire need of workers was part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at reducing unemployment, increasing foreign exchange inflows

and improving the skills base of Ghana's workforce.

He further explained that labour export was part of the vision of President John Dramani Mahama to tackle three major challenges in the country, identified as high unemployment, low foreign exchange inflows, and limited skills development.

Refuting the notion of labour export as “brain drain”, Mr Agyekum instead described it as a “brain gain” that solved unemployment and enhanced skills.

## Skills areas

He explained that the initiative adopted a holistic approach, encompassing both skilled and non-skilled labour, and listed the skilled labour to include professionals such as doctors, nurses, carpenters, steel benders, lab technicians, pharmacists, bricklayers, welders, fabricators and chefs.

For the non-skilled, he said the opportunities included helpers, labourers, and farm assistants, adding that there were opportunities in the

marine industry on cruise and cargo ships, even with basic training.

The minister said, aside from the Caribbean, where Ghanaian workers were needed, other countries included Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), South Korea and, indeed, the Western world, which was now experiencing an ageing population.

“There is a huge gap in the Western world. Japan, for instance, needs a lot of people to work in various areas, such as in the farm, the construction industry and the health industry, among others,” he told journalists.

He identified other countries looking to recruit workers from Ghana to include South Korea, the United Kingdom (UK), and Germany, adding, “all the countries in the world are in high demand for labour.”

## Potentials

Mr Agyekum said when properly managed, labour export had the potential to generate far more revenue than the country's traditional exports, such as cocoa and gold.

Referencing some international

best practices, he cited the Philippines, which made approximately \$135 billion annually, while India accrued \$126 billion in 2023 and \$130 billion in 2024 from labour exports alone.

Others, he added, that benefited from labour export were the North African countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, citing, for instance, that Egypt generated about \$35 billion, currently surpassing Suez Canal revenue.

## Registration

To ensure that every Ghanaian job seeker was properly documented and eligible for international placement under GLEP, individuals were required to register to be captured in the National Labour Database.

“Registration is currently done through physical submission of applications received in our office and or email submissions via our official email: [projects@mosi.gov.gh](mailto:projects@mosi.gov.gh),” the minister said.

Mr Agyekum hinted that “a dedicated online link/form is being finalised as part of the ministry's

new digital platform, which will allow applicants to submit details directly”, adding that “this will be announced publicly once it is ready”.

He said information regarding the registration had been sent to all metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives and Members of Parliament (MPs), “to support the dissemination of GLEP information nationwide”.

Mr Agyekum added that as a result, a significant volume of applications had been received both at the ministry's office and through the official email channels.

He said individuals interested in the opportunity were thereby required to register on the national database, “and once vacancies or foreign requests arise, qualified applicants will be contacted based on their skill set”.

