# A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF LABOUR EXPORT ON THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF UGANDA

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UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
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**DECLARATION**

I, WAISWA HENRY declare that this research is my original work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief; it has not been previously submitted to any other university/college for an award of a degree or diploma. Other works cited or referred to are appropriately acknowledged.

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**APPROVAL**

This research paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as Uganda Christian University – School of Law Supervisor.

This ......28th......day of......August......2025.

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Signed: ..........................................................................

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all orphaned children whose hope seems to be all shuttered, whose little candle light is greatly troubled by the winds of sorrow. You seem to be alone but you are never alone; the Lord God is your caretaker. If it were not for this solid assurance, it would not have been possible for me to make it this far. Whenever I called aloud for help and nobody answered, God heard my voice from the depth of my sorrow; he answered me and changed my story. He turned my sorrow into dancing!

There is still hope for a tree that has been cut, and its roots dried up in the ground, and its stamp is rotten, but at the scent of water, that it shall sprout again and live like a new plant. (Job 14:7)

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I render to the Almighty God my heartfelt gratitude and thanksgiving for bringing me this far. I attribute all my victories, small and big to His unmerited grace, providence and protection to me.

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Special thanks go to my family, wife – Nassozi Mariam, children – Glenn, Ada and Liel, for being patient with me, when I cheated on your time and space, to undertake this course and research. I shall pay up, obviously in kind and love.

Lastly but not least, special thanks to the School of Law of Uganda Christian University for the opportunity you have given me to explore my potential in academia. I started as an inexperienced teaching assistant, to now a confident professional advisor to the still budding host of future legal professionals.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation critically examines the contribution of labour export to economic growth in least developed countries, using Uganda as a case study. It adopts a doctrinal legal approach complemented by a desktop empirical review of primary and secondary sources, including national statistics, policy documents, legislation, and international labour migration literature.

This study maps out Uganda's labour outflow or migration starting from the early 1970s, late 1980s, 1990s to the present and critically analyses the legal, regulatory, and institutional framework of the country in the governance of labour migration.

The findings of the study show that the contribution of the labour export sector to economic growth of Uganda's economy goes without saying, stemming primarily through rising remittance inflows that is used to support household consumption, financial inclusion, and small-scale investment. Suffice to note however, these gains remain uneven and insignificant or negligible due to gaps that exist within the country's governance of its labour export sector. Uganda's legal, regulatory, and institutional framework demonstrates strengths in relation to a structured licensing regime for recruitment agencies, standardized contracts, pre-departure training, bilateral labour agreements, and increasing inter-agency coordination. The foregoing strengths notwithstanding, there are persistent weaknesses presenting in form of institutional corruption, limited worker protection in destination countries, inconsistent data systems, and weak reintegration mechanisms which have gravely compromised and/or undermined the sector's optimal developmental potential.

The study concludes that LDCs can better exploit the full potential of their labour export sector and earn its best advantage to significantly support economic growth by adopting strong and quality legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks, ensuring cross-border protection, and boosting domestic reintegration capacity. The study immensely contributes to scholarship and policy formulation by recommending reforms targeting strengthening legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks, buttressing enforcement mechanisms, improving bilateral labour standards, enhancing migrant protection, formalizing remittance systems while lowering cost of transacting in remittances, and developing structured reintegration and skills-recognition pathways. It further proposes ratification, domestication and effective implementation of relevant international standard labour migration covenants to align Uganda’s labour export legislative regime with global standards and promote sustainable, inclusive growth.

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## ACRONYMS/LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **BLAs** | Bilateral Labour Agreements |
| **DFID** | Department of International Development |
| **EAC** | East African Community |
| **ESO** | External Security Organisation |
| **GDP** | Gross Domestic Product |
| **IFAD** | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organisation |
| **IOM** | International Organisation for Migration |
| **ISO** | Internal Security Organization |
| **LDC** | Least Developed Countries |
| **LFPR** | Labour Force Participation Rate |
| **MGLSD** | Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development |
| **SDG1** | Sustainable Development Goal 1 |
| **SPSS** | Statistical Package for Social Science |
| **SSA** | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| **Stata** | Statistics and Data |
| **UAE** | United Arab Emirates |
| **UAERA** | Uganda Association of External Labour Recruitment Agencies |
| **UBOS** | Uganda Bureau of Statistics |
| **UGX** | Uganda Shillings |
| **UK** | United Kingdom |
| **UN** | United Nations |

| | |
|---|---|
| **UNCTAD** | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| **URA** | Uganda Revenue Authority |
| **URSB** | Uganda Registration Service Bureau |
| **USA** | United States of America |
| **USD** | United States Dollars |

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0. Introduction

This research study has its principal focus on the labour export sector as an increasingly significant and globally recognized economic manifestation, especially amongst least developed countries also commonly known as LDCs according to UN Classification. In the recent past decades, the labour export sector has evolved from an informal survival device into a deliberate and structured economic activity supported by national legislative regimes, policies, international covenants and/or bilateral agreements, and institutional regulation. The growing interconnectedness and oneness of the global economy, followed with disparities in labour supply and demand across nations across the globe, has fueled the cross-border movement of workers from economies with labour-surpluses to those suffering labour-deficits. Consequently, labour export has become a pivotal feature of globalisation, presenting with not only economic opportunities but also legal, social, and governance challenges, for the LDCs, especially, whose labour force bases are rapidly and monstrously ever expanding without proportionate absorptive capacities.

Globally and across divides LDCs have increasingly embraced labour export as a strategic and proactive response to persistent structural economic challenges of unemployment, underemployment, perennial poverty, and the slow paced domestic industrial absorptive capacity. LDCs are generally characterised by low levels of per capita income, widespread perennial poverty, and regrettable levels of income inequality, massive unemployment, and weak political institutionalisation.

Most of them are former colonies of former superpowers, and their economies are predominantly characterized and heavily dependent on peasant agriculture as the substantive source of employment. These countries have limited diversification in the industrial and technological sectors. They also commonly grapple with low levels of saving discipline largely attributable to perennial poverty, inadequate capital accumulation avenues, weak and poor technological advancement, and rapid humongous, unplanned population growth. In addition, the predominance of youthful populations and expanding labour forces continues to exert pressure on already constrained domestic labour markets.[1]

As a natural consequence, countries characterized by high population growth, weak industralisation, low technological progression, and meager employment opportunities have resorted to external labour markets as the most feasible alternative source of employment creation and foreign exchange earnings. In many of such countries, labour export is increasingly becoming an important development strategy aiming at greasing and easing domestic labour market pressures while cushioning household incomes through remittances. The commercial significance of labour export sector is particularly reflected in the growing role of remittances, which in numerous LDC economies now comprises one of the most stable sources of foreign exchange, household welfare, consumption, education, healthcare, and small-scale investment.

[1] E Wayne Nafziger, *Economic Development* (4th edn, Cambridge University Press 2006) 95–120.; Available: https://ugess3.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploas/2015/08/economic-developmnet.pdf Accessed:10 June 2024; Deepali Pal, '7 Main Characteristics of Less Developed Countries (LDCs)' *Economic*' Available: https://www.economicdiscussions.net/economic-growth/7-main-characteristics-ofless-developed-countriesldcs/14142 Accessed:15 June 2024

Uganda presents a particularly relevant case within this broader global and regional context. Correspondingly, Uganda, like may LDCs, possesses a massively and rapidly growing and predominantly youthful population, with a substantial proportion falling within the productive working-age bracket. Conversely, despite various economic reforms and development initiatives, the country continues to grapple in persistent high rates of unemployment and underemployment, particularly amongst its youthful and productive population entering the labour market annually. Uganda's economy remains largely agrarian, notably at rudimentary peasantry levels, with low industralisation and deficient formal sector job creation to absorb its ever bulging labour force. According to national labour statistics from Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the country continues to suffer significant levels of youth unemployment and underemployment, which conditions have increasingly pushed many Ugandans, especially the youth and productive to seek for greener pastures abroad.

Resultantly, labour export is increasingly emerging not only as an individual survival strategy, but also as an institutionalised economic and policy response to domestic labour market difficulties.

The increasing importance of the labour export sector in Uganda is now reflected in the deliberate and candid measures being undertaken by the Government to have an oversight and regulating hand thereon to promote economically logical external labour migration, in the recent past decades These measures include but not limited to the establishment of recruitment and licensing frameworks for migrant worker agencies, the negotiation and execution of bilateral labour agreements with destination countries, and the creation of institutional mechanisms aimed at managing outward labour migration.

The Country's migrant labour out-flows have increasingly been directed to the Middle East and other labour-deficient regions, specifically in the domestic work sectors, construction, security services, hospitality, and healthcare, among others. Comparatively, at the same time, remittances from Ugandan migrant workers abroad have grown steadily and become an important contributor to household income, foreign exchange earnings, financial inclusion, and small-scale investments.

Notwithstanding these developments, significant concerns still subsist pertaining to the extent to which the contribution of the labour export sector translates into sustainable economic growth and structural transformation for Uganda. Much as the labour export sector generates substantial remittance inflows and continues to contribute to reduction of domestic unemployment and underemployment pressures, persistent governance and regulatory weaknesses continue to hold grip and hence undermine the sector's full developmental potential.

Concerns relating to exploitative recruitment practices, excessive recruitment costs, worker abuse in destination countries, high costs of remittance transactions, weak enforcement of labour protections measures, institutional corruption, inadequate reintegration systems for returning migrant workers, and gaps in migration data management systems raise and leave critical questions regarding the effectiveness of Uganda's legal, policy, regulatory and institutional framework in managing labour export unanswered. These concerns create uncertainty as to whether the economic benefits derived from labour export are sufficiently translating and/or precipitating into long-term national development and meaningful economic transformation.

This research study therefore, focuses principally on a critical examination of the impact of labour export on the economic growth of Uganda an LDC. The research evaluates both the economic contributions and the legal-regulatory dimensions of labour export sector, with particular emphasis on remittance inflows, labour governance, migrant worker protection, and the broader developmental implications of labour outward migration. By examining Uganda's evolving labour export framework, the study seeks to contribute to scholarly and policy discourse on whether labour export constitutes a sustainable pathway for economic development in least developed countries.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

This research draws its perspective from the history of movement of people across borders which has for decades been a common manifestation along Uganda's borders.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the movement of people across the borders of Uganda was mainly attributed to the political instability that characterized the country's political atmosphere creating large numbers of asylum seekers escaping the terror and violence of the time.

In the late 1980s and early 1990's when Uganda regained its political calm, many people's movement persisted, this time round not shunning the political calm and stability at home but in search for greener pastures (employment and/or economic emancipation) leading to the now famous phrase *"Nkuba Kyeyo".*

An overwhelming number of emigrants are reported to have moved to the UK, USA, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and even as far away as Australia, usually on students, sports events, medical treatment visas and while others went under the excuse of visiting and joining family.

In the most recent decades, the most famous and easily accessible destination for Uganda outward migrant workers has been and continues to be the Middle East countries of Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the UAE.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Most, if not all LDCs, especially in Africa have the biggest percentages of their population composed of the young and most productive ages. In Uganda's case for instance, the working or productive age population was estimated at 19.3 million persons in 2017/18 rising slightly above the 18.8 million estimated for 2016/17.[22] Ideally with the above figures, Uganda ought to be enjoying the most advantage in economic growth rates if it optimally employed all its productive labour stock.

On the contrary, however, the country continues to grapple in law rates of economic growth. This phenomenon across the board is mainly attributed to high levels unemployment and underemployment. The country's unemployment levels amongst its youthful and productive population, that is ages 15- 24 years stood at 12.5% in 2024, while the proportion of the Country's youths not employed, not in education or under training (NEET) was 42.6% according to the UBOS report.[3]
The situation has prompted Uganda to embrace labour export to mitigate the problem of unemployment and underemployment by sending its surplus labour to other parts of the word where they can earn revenue for the country yet with the least burden.

[2] Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2018, The Annual Labour Force Survey 2017/18 – Main Report, Kampala, Uganda.
[3] National Population and Housing Census Report 2024. Available: https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/National-Population-and-Housing-Census-2024-Final-Report-Volume-1-Main.pdf Accessed: 18 August 2025

The benefits of labour export to Uganda's economy go without saying, in terms of the revenue directly collected from migrant workers abroad, lessening the figures of the unemployed youth, etc. According to the Uganda Association of External Labour Recruitment Agencies (UAERA) report on Thursday, 28 July 2022, while appearing before the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development Uganda collects a whopping annual tax revenue of UGX 4.5 trillion from the labour export sector.

This research paper focuses on pointing out the reasons as to why, even with the above highlighted benefits flowing from labour export to the economies of LDCs, there are many questions left un answered as to why the sector's contribution to economy is not felt, and if felt, why its impact does not translate into proportionate rates of economic growth.

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are broken down into two that is, the general objective and specific objectives.

### 1.4. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to critically analyse the impact of labour export to the economic growth of Uganda as a Least Developed Country.

### 1.5. Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the factors influencing labour mobility and export in Uganda as a Least Developed Country (LDC).
2. To critically assess the sufficiency of the labour laws in regulating labour export in Uganda as a Least Developed Country (LDC).

3. To critically analyse the relationship between labour export and economic growth in Uganda, including the contribution of labour export to Uganda's development as a Least Developed Country (LDC).
4. To formulate recommendations for the better management of the labour exportation in Uganda as a Least Developed Country (LDC).

### 1.6. Research Questions:

1. What are the factors influencing labour mobility and/or export in Uganda?
2. To what extent is Uganda's legal framework sufficient in regulating labour export?
3. To what extent does labour export contribute to the economic growth of Uganda as a least developed country?
4. What are the possible recommendations for the better management of labour exportation sector in Uganda?

### 1.7. Scope of the Study

#### 1.7.1. Thematic Scope

The study focuses on a comparison of the contributions by the labour export sector to the economic growth in countries with best practices, vis-a-avis, the contributions by the sector in LDCs.

According to ILO[4] the LDCs' vulnerability and low human development are largely the natural consequence of weak productive capacities coupled with lack of human

[4] International Labour Organization, *Present and Future of Work in Least Developed Countries* (ILO 2020). https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/publication/wcms_844025.pdf, Accessed: 18 April 2023

capabilities, deficient infrastructure and limited access and capacity to use technologies, exacerbated by weak institutions, including the institutions of work and social protection systems.

According to the ILO report[5] these factors are the source and conduit of decent work deficits, perennial poverty and income insecurity. The also constitute obstacles to structural transformation in the LDCs that would be both growth- and employment-enhancing.

### 1.7.2. Geographical Scope

The study focuses on Uganda which is one of the most vulnerable LDCs with low human development. The country is characterised by weak productive capacities associated with limited and sometimes total lack of human capabilities, insufficient infrastructure, limited capacity to access and use of technologies, as well as weak institutions, including the institutions of work and social protection systems. Accordingly, the country inevitably continues to register one of the highest rates of migrant workers abroad in the recent decades as a mitigating approach and quest for an equilibrium for its labour stock.

### 1.7.3. Time Scope

The study considered the period from 2012 to 2024, a duodecennial (12 years' period) that has recorded the highest number of migrant workers from Uganda.

[5] Ibid

## 1.8. Justification of the Study

There is a lot of speculation regarding the contribution of the labour export sector to the LDCs' economies. Different stakeholders in the sector have variant view point about the achievements out of exportation of labour. Governments in these countries for instance still regard the sector as a key contributor to economic growth.

On the other hand, the labourers themselves believe more than necessary taxes are collected from their hard-earned incomes abroad without proper and transparent accountability in form of services rendered to them in return. Opinion leaders and observers think that the sector is poorly regulated as a consequence of lack of satisfactory legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks. This research therefore focuses on addressing the highlighted concerns.

## 1.9. Significance of the Study

The results of this study are a rich stock of information and knowledge for future researchers about the labour export sector.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study are a guide to policy makers to be able to manage and regulate the labour export sector.

The study also considers and highlights best practices elsewhere in the world, thereby bringing close into perspective and proximity for benchmarking on how the sector of labour exportation can be best regulated.

## 1.10. Hypothesis

Labour export has had a positive impact on economic development in Uganda from 2012 to 2024.

### 1.11. Research Methodology

A mixed-methods research approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis was adopted in this study. The research combined doctrinal legal analysis with empirical review of secondary data obtained from institutional reports, legislation, policy documents, scholarly literature, and international instruments relevant to labour export and economic growth.

The sources of data for this study included reports of the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO), Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Bank of Uganda, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and other relevant institutions. The methodology further involved documentary review, policy analysis, and examination of legal and regulatory frameworks governing labour export in Uganda. A detailed research methodology discussion is captured under Chapter Three.

### 1.12. Theoretical Framework

The study was hinged on theories of unemployment and the low rates of economic growth in LDCs, which include but not limited to:

#### 1.12.1. Unplanned Population Growth

According to Nabukeera,[6] Uganda continues to face high levels of unemployment due to an ever-increasing population growth rate. She further notes that Uganda's population has progressively increased from 9.5 million in 1969 to 34.6 million in 2014, with a projection to reach 75 million by 2040. Uganda has the third fastest growing population in the world with a growth rate of 3 per cent per annum. This

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[6] M Nabukeera, 'Population Growth and Economic Development: Unemployment Challenge for Uganda' (2020) 7(3) *World Journal of Social Science Research*.. https://www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/wjssr Accessed: 22 April 2024

high rate of population growth is attributed to many factors, including but not limited to high fertility, poverty, unemployment, and environmental factors.

That notwithstanding, it is important to note that the government of Uganda has not undertaken the necessary proactive measures to regulate and control (plan) its population growth. The existing measures for controlling birth rates, for example, such as family planning, come in as afterthoughts and/or reactive measures if not merely mitigating measures.

Conclusively, unplanned population growth has inevitably led to surpluses in the labour stock.

### 1.12.2. Law levels of Industrialization

Uganda continues to majorly rely on an agrarian economic system,[7] which has increasingly become too small to absorb all its available and ever-growing working-age population. Industrialization in Uganda is still at its crawling stage, yet to take serious walking step. In the absence of corresponding interventions to create employment opportunities such as industrialization, the country inevitably continues to grapple with high risk of unemployment and underemployment in the eyes of its able population.

### 1.12.3. Poor Education Systems

Uganda's education system continues to be more theoretical in most modes of delivery of information rather than the most desired practical modes.

Mr. Rukwengye[8] notes that: "It doesn't take a genius to see that part of the reason

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[7] Ibid

[8] Rukwengye, This is how our education is aiding unemployment, Sunday, January 21, 2018 — updated on January 12, 2021 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/here-is-how-our-education-is-aiding-

for our staggering unemployment has a lot to do with how we are educated. By the time one completes the full education cycle, they will be between 23 and 25 years old, but without work or life experience – because our education system emphasizes memorization of facts instead of analysis and application of concepts".

Consequently, the largest portion of learners are trained to become job seekers rather than job creators. Uganda's economy has capacity to create only about 8,000 jobs a year as against over 40,000 young Ugandans[9] who graduate with a formal education from institutions of higher learning. This inevitably leaves a disproportionate surplus in the labour stock, who can only hope to be employed elsewhere in the world but not home.

### 1.13. Research Frameworks

There are two major research frameworks, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The conceptual framework sets the standards used to define a research question and find appropriate, meaningful answers to the same. It connects the theories, assumptions, beliefs and concepts informing the research and presents them in a pictorial, graphical or narrative format. The conceptual framework establishes the nexus between the dependent and independent variables, the factors and other ideologies affecting the structure of research.

On the other hand, the theoretical framework focuses on the timing when a theoretical roadmap has been established about a certain topic and the research being undertaken by the researcher, carefully analyses it, and works on similar lines to attain successful results.[10]

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unemployment-1736788 Accessed: 22 April 2023

[9]Ibid

[10] 'What is a conceptual framework?' 'What are frameworks in research?' (AJE) https://www.aje.com/arc/what-is-a-conceptual-framework/ Accessed: 10 June 2024

In this research, the conceptual framework shall be employed due to its relevancy to the topic under research.

### 1.14. Conceptual Framework

In this study, labour export is considered the independent variable and economic growth is the dependent variable. Government policies, geographical factors, political factors among others were considered as intervening variables as seen in figure 1 below:

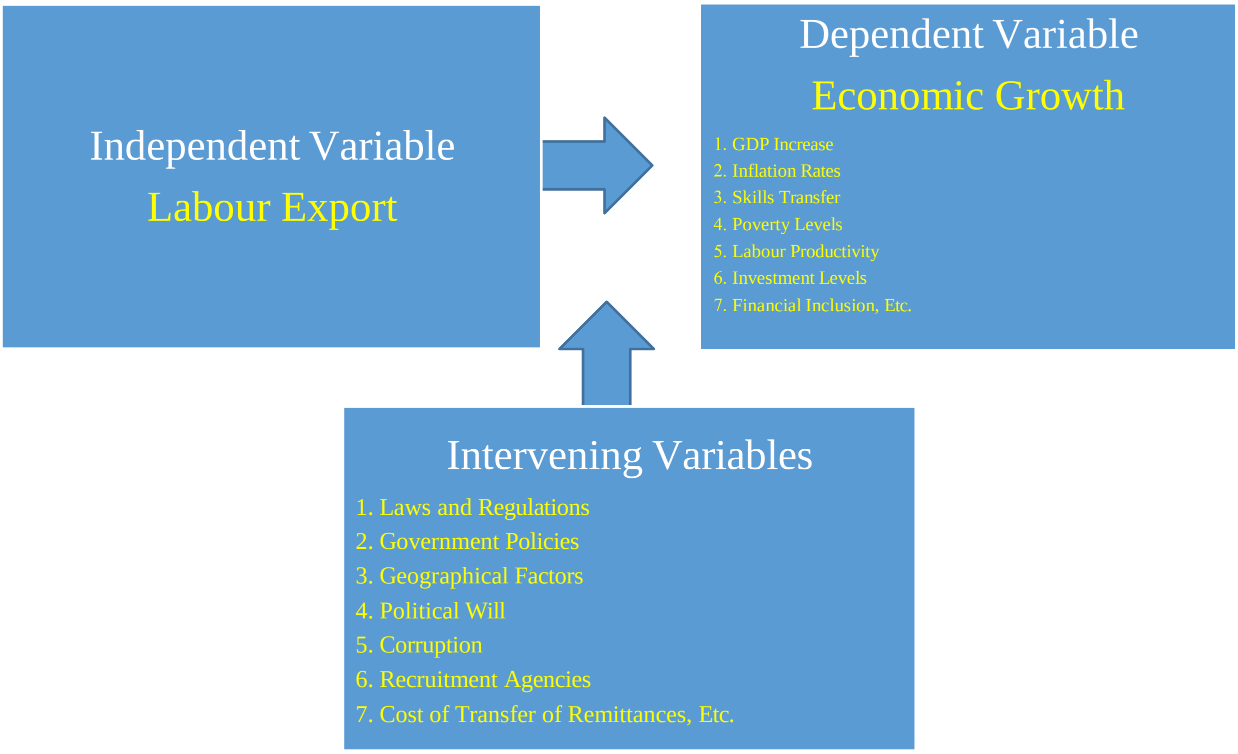


**Figure 1:** Illustration of the Impact of the Labour Export Sector to Economic Growth Uganda, an LDC.

### 1.20. Limitations

In this study, the following are foreseeable limitations and the possible mitigating measures:

### 1.20.1. Privileged and/or classified information.

In this study, required inquiry into unique categories of sources of information in the possession of selected government departments which may contain classified information on Uganda's relationship with other countries where Uganda exports labour and the whole or part thereof may be restricted in accessibility.

As a mitigation to this limitation, the purpose for requiring the examination of such source was clearly defined, including signing a commitment not to inquire beyond what is necessary for the study.

### 1.20.2. Biased Responses

In this study, some of my respondents came from the Ministry of Labour, Gender and Social Development, the Labour Externalization Unit, and the Uganda Association of External Labour Recruitment Agencies (UAERA). These are all entities that are in the limelight for their short falls in ensuring protection of Ugandan Migrant Workers abroad. It is therefore likely that respondents from these bodies may not be willing to give their responses with the degree of objectivity necessary to obtain unbiased data.

In mitigating this, Anonymity of the respondent/source was emphasized to guarantee the safety of the respondents who felt unsafe to make 'self-incriminating' statements.

### 1.20.3. Time Constraint

Most, if not all, targeted source were busy scheduled entities. As such, there was a limitation of not getting the necessary information within time.

This was mitigated by ensuring that requisitions for the required appointments were lodged with the relevant authorities, way ahead of time in order to cater for eventualities.

### 1.21. Chapter synopsis

**Chapter I:** Contains the introduction and background of to the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, both the general and specific, the research questions, significance and justification of the study, hypothesis, scope of the study, a snapshot of the methodology, the theoretical and conceptual framework, and the chapter synopsis.

**Chapter II:** This chapter contains the Literature Review; this ideally includes the summary of the existing literature by former researcher. It also highlights the lope holes identifiable in such literature and indicate workable alternatives to bridge such loopholes.

**Chapter III:** This chapter contains the Research Methodology, where I demonstrated study/research design to be adopted, and area of study, data collection strategy/methods, case study, the analytical framework, ethical considerations, the expected outcomes, limitations and conclusions.

**Chapter IV:** This chapter contains the results and analysis of the study. This chapter also recaps on the objectives of the study is made and connected to the primary and secondary findings.

**Chapter V:** This chapter showcases the conclusions and recommendations for the better legal, regulatory, policy and institutional framework to achieve a proactive labour export sector whose impact to Uganda's economic growth can be vividly felt.

## CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0. Introduction

Labour export has emerged as a noteworthy phenomenon in the global economy, particularly concerning the development trajectories of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The ever-rapid population growth rates in African LDCs are a continuing signal for future potential of labour export. The population African LDCs grew by 83 per cent, from about 400 million in 2000 up to more than 730 million in 2021, and the same is projected to continue expanding at a rate of 2.7 per cent per annum between 2022 and 2025.[11]

It goes without saying that the rise in population presents with a rising inflow of numbers into the labour force. According to the ILO[12] about 132 million people entered the labour market over the period between 2000 to 2021. This translated into an annual average labour force increased by 6.3 million people, with the number of entrants rising to about 12 million between 2020 and 2021 alone. It is consequently projected that by 2025, the population will have increased by 176 million people since 2000; and hence an additional 45 million people are expected to join the labour force between 2022 and 2025. According to the ILO average Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of 72.3 per cent, this means that the African LDC economies will have to generate 8 million to 11 million new jobs every year.

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[11]International Labour Organization, 'A Regional View of Population and Labour Force Trends' in *Present and Future of Work in the Least Developed Countries* (29 April 2022) 36. Available: https://www.ilo.org/publications/present-and-futurework-least-developed-countries Accessed: 06 December 2024
[12]Ibid

It is, nonetheless, evident that African LDCs, particularly Uganda, has a mismatch between labour force growth and their jobs generating capacities. This is clearly demonstrable by alarming levels of employment and underemployment, leaving labour export as the only consolation and harmonizing option.

The attractiveness of the remittances benefits is a major catalyst for labour export for the LDCs. For example, in 2023 alone remittances from labour force grew by 5 per cent of GDP.[13]

The literature surrounding the impact of labour export to LDCs present with numerous ranges of themes, including but not limited to: economic impacts, social ramifications, and the interplay of remittances with local development. Proponents of labour export often highlight its potential to reduce on the levels of unemployment and enhance the livelihoods of emigrants' families through the remittances sent back home. Furthermore, studies indicate that the remittances from emigrant labour force are potential stimuli for advancement for local economies, as they improve access to education and healthcare, and contribute to poverty reduction, thereby fostering sustainable economic growth.

According to Adam and Page,[14] cited by Barakat[15] remittances are a powerful tool in the fight against poverty as they have a direct impact on Sustainable Development

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[13]United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, *The Least Developed Countries in Facts and Figures* (February 2024). Available:>https://www.un.org/ohrlls/sites/www.un.org.ohrlls/files/ldcs_facts_and_figures_2024.pdf< Accessed: 06 December 2024

[14] Richard Adams and John Page, 'Do International Migration and Remittances Reduce Poverty in Developing Countries?' (2005) 33(10) *World Development* 1645. Available:https://econpapers.repec.org/eeewdevel/v_3a33_3ay_3a2005_3ai_3a10_3ap_3a1645_1669.htm Accessed: 28 December 2024

[15] Karim Barakat et al, 'Achieving the Development Sustainable Goals in Developing Countries: The Role of Remittances and the Mediating Effect of Financial Inclusion' Vol. 95 (September 2024) International Review of Economics and Finance Available: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1059056024004520< Accessed: 06 December 2024

Goal 1 (SDG1) as they provide financial resources to the recipient households. When individuals or families obtain remittances from relatives working abroad, they quite repeatedly experience an increase in their disposable income. The additional income helps in lifting the recipient households above the poverty line, hence reducing their vulnerability to extreme poverty. Remittances also have the potential to contribute to the diversification of income sources in the recipient communities through asset-building. For example, families can invest remittances in income-generating activities, such as starting small businesses or agricultural ventures. Consequently, this economic empowerment helps reducing the reliance on subsistence farming and informal labour.

However, the positive narratives must be weighed against the challenges posed by brain drain, as skilled workers leave their countries in pursuit of greener pastures abroad, potentially undermining local capacity-building efforts, hence hindering national development. This is due to the dearth effect that brain drain has on the productive labour stock of the LDCs. Professionals migrant workers who go elsewhere in the world end up leaving a big gap behind, one that is not always easy to attorn for in any amount of money. For instance, medical professionals in LDCs who move to other parts of the developed world for better chances leave such an enormous gap for qualified people to replace them after they leave which consequently impact on the overall quality of health care sector.[16]

The socio-cultural dimensions of labour export sector also merit attention, revealing nuanced impacts on family structures, gender roles, and community dynamics as we

[16] Julie Young, 'Brain Drain: Definition, Causes, Effect and Examples' (updated 20 June 2024) Available: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brain_drain.asp Accessed: 28 December 2024

understand them. Emigration can lead to drastic shifts in societal norms and expectations, as those who leave and those who remain behind navigate the emotional and economic implications of separation from their kindred associations. This dimension raises important questions about the long-term effects of labour export on social cohesion and cultural identity within LDCs.[17]

This literature review aims to synthesise existing research on the multifaceted causes and impact of labour export on economic growth of LDCs, highlighting key findings, identifying gaps in the literature, and laying a firm ground for this research.

### 2.1. Unemployment and Inter-Regional Mobility of Labour:

According to Pissarides et al[18] unemployment affects labour mobility in three perspectives:

Firstly, the status of a worker/person influences their movement; employed persons do not move frequently as unemployed persons since the cost of movement for them is fewer. Unemployed workers give up employment-related benefits (if any) in the region of residence. The majority of these can be claimed in the region of destination if a migrant is still unemployed. Employed migrants on the other hand have to be compensated if they give up their jobs in the region of origin, which is certainly more worthful than any unemployment-related benefit given up by an unemployed worker. Secondly, regional unemployment differentials have an effect on mobility; regions with above average unemployment are expected to lose people while moving to settle in other regions, even after control for the consequence of unemployment on those who suffer from it. This consequence, which may definitely be weak controlled

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[18] Christopher Pissarides and Jonathan Wadsworth, 'Unemployment and Inter-Regional Mobility of Labour' (1989) 99(397)

for the effect of unemployment status, works mostly through the possibility of finding a job.

According to Christopher and Jonathan, regions where unemployment is above the average in general have below average chances of job placements. To them, ceteris paribus, this forces the high unemployment regions less attractive than otherwise similar regions especially for the unemployed.

Thirdly, at higher aggregate levels of unemployment, migration probabilities are decreased. According to authors, this is particularly factual with the unemployed migrants, much as it is also expected to be the case for employed migrants. People value their jobs in times of high unemployment. This is because new jobs are scarcer and the job security combined with them is not in general good as the job's security offered by existing jobs. Therefore, employed workers have more to lose if given up at times of high unemployment than at times of low unemployment while their market power is high.

According to the authors, individuals who are unemployed and migrate are less likely to relocate during periods of high unemployment, due to various reasons. For instance, when unemployment rates are substantially high, those who are unemployed anticipate to spend a longer period in unemployment, irrespective of their geographical location.

Therefore, any benefit in projected income, anticipated after a move, is partially mitigated, as expected employment probabilities diminish.

However, their conclusions fall short, firstly, in as far as they only compare labour mobility in regions where there are actual or presumed unemployment benefits which is not the case in most LDCs such as Uganda. Secondly, labour mobility can be influenced by quite a number of other dynamics such as the prevalent factors affecting the labour market of a given region, Viz, wages, salaries, working conditions, government policies, political stability, inter alia. Hence, this study aims at examining in detail all the potential factors for labour mobility LDCs.

### 2.2. Economic Justification of Trade in/Labour Export:

Winters[19] asserts that temporary migration and trade in labour benefits both the least developing and developed countries similarly contribute to quicker increase in the rates of growth of the World's GDP and quicken poverty eradication in the LDCs. The author further claims that developing countries likely benefits from unskilled labour export through remittances more than they offset the exported labour's original (low) contribution to home output, so that the wellbeing of those who stay behind concomitantly increases as well.

On the other hand, Winters discovered that developed regions of the world that have higher inflow of the unskilled labourers benefit more in terms of welfare than are those on skilled workers, to which extent I agree.

However, Winter fails to put into perspective the continued disproportionate disparity in the rates of economic growth between developed countries and their counterpart LDCs even with the ever-growing labour export sector.

In the premises therefore, it is the objective of this study to critically analyze and examine the impact of the labour export sector to the economic growth of LDCs like Uganda and to address the root cause of the disparities.

### 2.3. What can Africa do to spur Economic Growth and create more well-paying Jobs?

[19] L Alan Winters, 'The Economic Implications of Liberalizing Mode 4 Trade' (paper presented to the WTO, World Bank and others, April 2004). Available:https://researchgate.net/publication/228548745/The_Economic_Implications_of_Liberalizing_Mode_4_Trade Accessed: 21 November 2024

Fafchamps et al[20] claim that in Africa the decrease of poverty has been delayed for many years due to stagnant economic growth which has slowed and in worst cases totally unsuccessful to come up with adequate good paying jobs to boost the income of workers in Africa's rapidly growing labour force. This is indeed more so with the least economies of Africa.

More so, the authors emphasize that the insufficient demand for labour among employers within the formal sector imposes a range of constraints on wages, education, and investment, including the lack of flexibility in wages across sectors, the deficiency of workers possessing the requisite skills - skills that necessitate postsecondary education, the low productivity of labour, the weak investment climate, and the poor quality of infrastructure in most African countries.

In light of the above, a simple and obvious conclusion cannot be avoided, there is a lot left to be desired about the education systems and structures which are the bedrock for attaining competences that are required in the job market.

Accordingly, the authors recommend that, it will only take becoming internationally competitive and exporting more can Africa accelerate its economic growth and create enough formal sector jobs to reduce poverty.

It is the authors' conclusion call for a rethinking of existing policies. Labour regulations need updating so that businesses can freely adjust pay in response to real shifts in productivity and market demand. Education systems need to produce more graduates at both the secondary and tertiary levels, with an emphasis on skills that the economy actually needs. Beyond that, the institutions that underpin business

[20]Marcel Fafchamps et al, *What Africa Needs to Do to Spur Growth and Create More Well-Paid Jobs* (World Bank Working Paper, 1 November 2006) Available:https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/911591468194349410/what-africa-needs-to-do-to-spur-growth-and-create-more-well-paid-jobs Accessed: 23 April 2023

activity like banks, courts, and professionals need to evolve so they can better support investment in new technologies and open doors to competitive export markets.

In the same vein, this study aims at collecting more empirical data that will further enrich the observation, discoveries and recommendations in this paper and more, which will produce the much-desired solutions to the unsolved question of surplus and unproductive labour force in LDCs that is currently disguised as productive through labour exportation.

### 2.4. Growth Creates Jobs:

According to the Department of International Development (DFID),[21] economic growth creates chances for jobs, therefore a greater need for labour, which is undoubtedly usually the main and often the sole asset of the poor. The department emphasizes that delivering higher economic growth has been an impact of increasing employment. It is also alleged that strong growth in the global economy over the past decades means that the majority of the world's working age population is now in employment.

It is the report's further observation under the report that, at the same time, in every region of the world, in Africa youth are the biggest number of unemployed. According to the report, this is reflected in the higher-than-average unemployment rates. The youth make up to 25 per cent of the working population worldwide however a whole 47 per cent of them are unemployed or under employed.

I am in total agreement with this finding. It is therefore aimed in this research to paint a more vivid picture of what really is of this narrative and to propose viable

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recommendations for the alleviation of this social-economic problem for LDCs like Uganda.

### 2.5. Do International Migration and Remittances Reduce Poverty in Developing Countries?

Adams, Jr. and Page[22] emphasise that both international migration and remittances have a strong, statistically significant impact on reducing poverty in the LDCs of the world. They also assert that the fact that both international migration and international remittances reduce poverty in the developing world is important because data on each of these variables is incomplete and subject to under-reporting in many developing countries. By analysing samples which include information on each of these variables, it has become possible to test the migration-remittances poverty relationship for the largest number of labour-exporting countries possible. According to the authors, the results provide strong, robust evidence of the poverty-reducing impact of both international migration and remittances in the developing world.

According to the authors, from the standpoint of future work on the topic, more attention has to be paid to collecting and publishing better data on international migration and remittances. Regarding international migration, the authors suggest that developing nations should take practical steps toward recording and openly sharing information about how many of their citizens are living and working in other countries, as well as which destinations those workers are choosing. What makes this recommendation especially pointed is the authors observation that many least

[22] Richard H Adams Jr and John Page, 'Do International Migration and Remittances Reduce Poverty in Developing Countries?' in *Migration, Remittances and Development* (OECD Publishing, Paris, ch 13).Available: https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264013896-en or https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264013896-17-en Accessed: 21 November 2024

developed countries are already sitting on this kind of data. They simply are not releasing it to the public, which the authors see as a missed opportunity.

On the matter of remittances, the authors turn their attention to IMF, arguing that the institution needs to do considerably more to account for money that travels through informal and unofficial pathways. Their concern stems from the reality that poorer households, particularly those in countries situated close to high demand labour markets, are far more inclined to move money through channels that go undetected like mobile money services, cash brought back by visiting relatives, or exchanges tied to informal trade. Since these transfers rarely show up in official records, the broader picture of how remittances shape poverty outcomes in developing countries remains distorted. The authors conclude that producing a genuinely reliable assessment of remittance impacts demands a much more thorough and honest accounting of the enormous volume of funds moving through these unofficial routes.

Basing on these findings, the authors seem to suggest that only improper data collection and reporting mechanisms on migration and remittances challenge the impact of remittances from labour export in contributing to economic growth of LDCs.

The authors do not account for other factors that hinder resonance of remittances from labour export and economic growth of LDCs, such as weak legal regimes and their enforcement mechanisms, corruption, political instabilities, brain drain effects and the poor business atmosphere orchestrated by poor tax regimes.

This research will cast light to the other reasons why the colossal revenue collection from remittances from labour export does not translate into proportionate levels of economic growth for LDCs in the flashlight above.

## 2.6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the impact of labour export on the economies of LDCs is complex and a double-edged sword, with both positive and negative dimensions. While it goes without saying that remittances serve as a critical lifeline for many families and have great potential to stimulate economic growth, the paws of brain drain and social disruption cannot be underestimated in negating the advantages derived from the sector. Effective policies that protect migrant workers and harness their potential through structured migration programs can enhance the benefits of labour export, ensuring sustainable development for LDCs. Future research should continue to explore innovative frameworks that balance the economic needs of LDCs with the social wellbeing of their citizens in the context of a global labour market.

## CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METODOLOGY

### 3.0. Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the following: - the research framework, the study/research design adopted, area of study, data collection strategy/methods, case study, the analytical framework, ethical considerations, the expected outcomes, limitations and conclusion.

### 3.1. Research framework

A Research Framework is a conceptual or methodological skeleton that guides the whole process of carrying out research. It creates a systematic road map to defining research questions, gathering data, analysing the findings, and making sense of the results of the research. Research frameworks are essential tools for ensuring that research is coherent, logical, and aligned with its objectives. They serve as 'blueprints' that help researchers organise their studies and make informed decisions throughout the research process.[23]

There are several types of research frameworks, used in research, depending on the type of research being conducted, for example, Conceptual Frameworks, Theoretical Frameworks and Methodological or Analytical Frameworks.

The relevant type to this research framework is the Conceptual Frameworks, which entails key concepts, theories, and variables relevant to the study which is instrumental in forming hypotheses and structuring the research direction.[24]

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[23] Berlin International Klingmann Library – '*What is a Research Framework?*' Available: https://libguides.berlin-international.de/books/faqs-nVB/page/what-is-a-research-framework Accessed: 03 April 2025

[24] Ibid

### 3.2. Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to ensure comprehensive analysis, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights which captured both macroeconomic trends and individual experiences.

### 3.3. Data Collection Methods

#### 3.3.1. Quantitative Data

This is data that can be expressed in numbers or numerical values, or put otherwise, anything that can be counted in definite units and numbers.[25] In this research, data was drawn from World Bank reports, International Labour Organization (ILO) reports, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) reports, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) reports, Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) reports, among others.

#### 3.3.2. Indicators

The indicators guiding the data collection included remittance inflows, GDP growth, unemployment rates, poverty levels, and labour force participation.

#### 3.3.3. Time Frame

Data was collected from the past 12 years to identify long-term trends of labour export vis –a-vis economic Development rates for Uganda.

[25]Fullstory Blog – *'What Is Quantitative Data? How to Collect, Understand and Analyze It'*. Available: https://www.fullstory.com/blog/quantitative-data/#examples-of-quantitative-data Accessed: 03 April 2025

### 3.3.4. Analysis Tools

The analysis tools employed were Statistical software such as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Statistics and Data (Stata), and Persons Correlation Coefficient (R), for regression analysis and trend identification.

## 3.4. Qualitative Data

### 3.4.1. Methods

In this research, a documentary and digital ethnography-based approach was adopted to collect qualitative data

### 3.4.2. Sources

The target sources in this research included but not limited to: National Legislations (Employment Act, and the regulations made thereunder); Migrant worker reports from the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Bank of Uganda, International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Uganda Association of External Labour Recruitment Agencies reports and statements to Parliament; and International Instruments like the ILO Conventions, and UN instruments.

### 3.4.3. Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sources selected are a fair representation across key stakeholder entities.

### 3.4.4. Themes

Socioeconomic benefits, challenges of labour migration, and policy responses.

## 3.5. Case Studies

### 3.5.1. Selection Criteria

The geographical case study for this paper is Uganda, an LDC in the Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically located in East Africa, and a member of the East African Community. The country has a significant labour export sector, as the biggest percentage of its population is constituted of the youth in their labour productive ages. The labour export sector is ever on the raise for the Ugandan economy due to its failure to match the job creation with the high levels of the productive population.

Therefore, it is strategically important to examine the impact of labour export, as an alternative source of employment, on the country's economy.

### 3.5.2. Approach

An in-depth case study was employed to explore specific national contexts and policies.

## 3.6. Analytical Framework

### 3.6.1. Economic Impact Analysis

The economic impact analysis focused on the examination of remittance contributions to

Uganda's GDP, poverty alleviation rates, and the country's economic stability.

### 3.6.2. Social Impact Analysis

The Social Impact Analysis focused on an investigation of social changes, including but not limited to gender dynamics (the ratio of men to women in employment), education, and healthcare improvements.

### 3.6.3. Policy Analysis

This involved an evaluation of existing labour export policies and recommendations for future policy frameworks. Recommendations were drawn from among others, the study of policies from countries considered to have best practices in the field or labour export, such as the India, Mexico, China, the Philippines, and Pakistan.

## 3.7. Ethical Considerations

### 3.7.1. Informed consent

Prior consent was obtained from source owners and all other participants were properly explained to the purpose of the research, how the information obtained from them would be applied.

### 3.7.2. Anonymity and confidentiality

In data reporting, the anonymity and confidentiality principles were strictly observed to the highest degree possible, for especially sensitive sources, some of which required nondisclosure of identity and confidential information accessed during the investigation was utilized in the most deserving confidential manner.

## 3.8. Expected Outcomes

a) Comprehensive understanding of the economic and social impacts of labour export on Uganda's economy.

b) Policy recommendations to maximize benefits and mitigate challenges hindering the translation of benefits from labour export to bear a positive impact on the levels of economic growth for Uganda.

c) Enhanced awareness among policymakers and development practitioners regarding the significance of labour export for Uganda.

## 3.9. Conclusion

This research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of labour export and its transformative potential for Uganda's economy, by contributing to policy formulation and sustainable development initiatives.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## FINDINGS: LEGAL AND NON-LEGAL ISSUES

### 4.0. Introduction

Labour export, or labour migration, is a strategy used by many LDCs to reduce unemployment and boost foreign exchange through remittances. LDCs, particularly Uganda, has actively pursued this through bilateral labour agreements with labour export destination countries such as the Middle East and beyond.

However, the practice raises both legal and non-legal (social, economic, and political) issues that influence economic growth. This chapter therefore, focuses on both of them, and seeks to highlight the country's successes and failures in managing both the legal and none-legal issues as it forges the best way to handle the labour export sector.

### 4.1. Non-Legal Issues

While this dissertation is focused on the legal implications of labour export for Uganda, it is essential to understand the economic and social dynamics that frame the issue. Labour export has been increasingly promoted as a strategy for economic growth, particularly through remittances. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach encompassing economic and legal analysis is adopted to evaluate its broader impact on Uganda's development. Non-legal issues of the subject include but not limited to: Economic factors (remittance, and its concomitant GDP Contributions), Social dimensions (like brain drain effect on the country's economy, and family impact) and Political policies (including but not limited to bilateral labour agreements, migration laws). These are discussed in detail in the subsequent subsections.

### 4.1.1. Economic Factors or Issues

Economically, the labour export or labour migration sector has implications that cannot be over emphasized, stemming from remittances inflows to the sending country and the overall contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In this section, emphasis is laid on the statistics of the remittances inflow, the proportionate percentage contribution to Uganda's GDP, the successes derived and challenges of managing the country's remittances economy.

Remittances from the migrant workers abroad form a big proportion for the Uganda's foreign exchange and Balance of Payment as highlighted below:

According to the World Bank, workers' remittances and compensation of employees comprise current transfers by migrant workers and wages and salaries earned by nonresident workers.[26] Remittances represent significant foreign exchange inflows to domestic households arising from individuals' temporary or permanent move to foreign economies. The two items in the balance of payments that specifically relate to remittances are compensation of employees and personal transfers.[27] Compensation of employees represents remuneration in return for the labour input to the production process contributed by an individual in an employer-employee relationship with an enterprise. It encompasses the income of border, seasonal and other short-term workers working in an economy where they are not residents; or residents employed by non-resident entities such as embassies, international organizations and non-resident entities.

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[26] https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/global-financial development/series/gfdd.oi.13#:~:text=Workers'%20remittances%and%20compensation%20of,%5E Accessed 25 April 2025

[27] Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), *Inward Personal Transfer Report 2022* (November 2023). Available: www.ubos.org Accessed: 11 March 2025

Personal transfers, on the other hand, consist of all "current transfers" in cash or in-kind sent or received by resident households to or from non-resident households, independent of the source of income of the sender and the relationship between the sender and the recipient households. Previously, the term "workers' remittances" was used to describe such "current transfers".

According to Bank of Uganda,[28] Money remittance inflows increased by 4.0 percent or USD 22.2 million year on year to USD 571.4 million in 2019. Outflows on the other hand decreased by 3.2 percent or USD 10.6 million from USD 334.7 million to USD 324.1 million over the same period.

According to the Annual Personal Transfers Survey,[29] volume of remittances as a proportion of total GDP, recorded for the period of seven years (2015 – 2020) indicate a growing percentage contribution of remittances to Uganda's GDP of 3.6, 4.1, 3.9, 4.2, 4.1, and 2.8 respectively. The reduction in the year 2020 was attributable to the effects of the Covid19 pandemic on the global economy.

Remittances inflow for Uganda has since resumed stability in the last four years (2021 – 2024) to the tunes of USD 1.08 billion representing about 3% of Uganda's GDP in 2021, USD 1.3 billion representing a 2.82% contribution to the GDP in 2022, USD 1.4 billion[30] representing approximately 3% in 2023, and a slight decline in 2024 of USD 1.29 billion representing an estimated 2.5% contribution to the country's GDP.[31]

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[28]Bank of Uganda, *Annual Supervision Report, Issue 10* (December 2020). Available: www.bou.org.ug Accessed: 11 March 2025

[29]Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), *Inward Personal Transfer Report 2022* (November 2023). Available: https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/upload/publications/05_20232022_Statistical_Abstract.pdf Accessed: 25 April 2025

[30]Government of Uganda, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, *International Day of Family Remittances (IDFR) Observance Flash Report* (13 June 2024).Available: https://familyremittances.org/idfr-2024/eventsactivities/uganda/ Accessed: 26 April 2025

[31]Government of Uganda, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, *Macroeconomic and Fiscal Performance Report, Financial Year 2023/24* ix, 29.Available: www.finance.go.ug or www.mepd.finance.go.ug Accessed: 26 April 2025

Despite this decline, remittance earnings are back to pre-Covid19 levels. This is mainly attributed to the recovery of the job markets in high-income countries.[32] It goes without saying that remittances remain a vital source of foreign exchange for Uganda, underscoring their importance in the nation's economic landscape. Remittances have been and remains a significant source of foreign exchange and household income for Uganda.[33]

In 2020, the Rome, 1 June 2021 report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy and job security for Ugandan migrant workers around the world report a reduction in the amount of money those migrant workers sent back home to their families. Despite the impact of the Covid19 Virus on the global economy, remittances still provided a crucial support for some of the world's poorest people, Uganda inclusive.

The data from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), May Migration and Development Brief[34] showed that remittance flows to Uganda declined by 26 per cent, from USD 1.4 billion in 2019 to USD 1.1 billion in 2020. However, despite the decline, Uganda was ranked among the top ten recipient countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

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[32]Ibid

[33]African Development Bank Group, *Driving Uganda's Transformation: Country Focus Report 2024, pg.* 29. Available:https://vcda.afdb.org/en/system/files/report/uganda_final_2024.pdf Accessed: 26 April 2025

[34]Ugandan remittances decline but still are a lifeline for rural people, Available: https://www.ifad.org/en/news/ugandan/remittances-decline-but-still-are-a-lifeline-for-rural-people#:~:text=Recent%20data%20from%20the%20May,-Saharan%20Africa%20(SSA). Accessed: 24 April 2025

**a. Benefits derived from Uganda's Remittance Inflow**

Uganda's remittance inflows, hit its all-time high in Financial Year 2022/23 totaling USD 1.43 billion.[35] This may seem modest compared to global giants like India, Mexico, China, the Philippines, and Pakistan[3636]. However, in the context of Uganda's economy, which is valued at USD 53.3 billion, these inflows are significant. Here's how:

**i. Economic Growth and Stability**

Remittances contribute to Uganda's foreign exchange reserves, strengthening the country's ability to manage external shocks and stabilize its currency. By offsetting the trade deficit (where imports exceed exports) remittances provide the much-needed foreign currency, ensuring that Uganda can meet its international obligations.[37]

The steady inflow of funds also supports economic stability. In times of economic uncertainty or reduced foreign aid, remittances act as a buffer, ensuring a continuous injection of cash into the economy.

**ii. Increased Income and Poverty Alleviation for Households**

Remittances are a critical source of income for many Ugandan families, particularly those living in rural areas where formal or white-collar job opportunities are

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[36]Bank of Uganda (BOU), Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), *"Inward Personal Transfer Report 2022"* pg.6 Available: www.bou.org.ug Accessed: 27 April 2025

[37]IMF Country Report No. 24/290, Uganda. Uganda: 2023 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by Executive Director for Uganda. Available:https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CP/Issues/2024/09/11/Uganda-2024-Article-IV-Consultation-PressRelease-Staff-Report-and-Statement-by-the-554753 Accessed: 27 April 2025

Limited.[38] These monies are often used to finance basic needs such as food, education, healthcare, and housing among others, hence directly improving living standards of the beneficiary households, services that would otherwise, without remittances would be unaffordable.

**iii. Supporting Consumption and Investment**

Beyond meeting basic needs, remittances support small-scale investments in agriculture small businesses, education, offering pathways to economic growth in rural areas, micro-enterprises, and housing.[39] This drives local economic activity and job creation, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.

**b. Challenges Facing Uganda's Remittance Economy**

Despite their benefits, reliance on remittances presents certain challenges:

**i. Economic Vulnerability**

A significant portion of Uganda's remittance inflows comes from diaspora workers in regions that are themselves economically volatile, and some are politically unstable. World Bank notes that many African countries, including Uganda, receive remittances from places like the Middle East and parts of Africa regions that have shown economic and political instability.[40] Any downturn in host economies can directly impact these inflows. Such downturns do not only affect the larger economy but also precipitates all the way to negatively altering the livelihood of the families and dependents of

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[38]Supra

[39]International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), *The FFR Brief: Five Years of the Financing Facility for Remittances, pg.* 6.Available: https://www.ifad.org/documents/d/new-ifad.org/ffr-brief-five-years-of-the-financing-facilityfor-remittances-pdf Accessed: 27 April 2025

[40]World Bank Group and KNOMAD, *Migration and Development Brief 38: Remittances Remain Resilient but Slowing* (June 2023). Available: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099755208142498760/pdf/IDU188f10cd71ae72148f11b63b16ef304800a43.pd f Accessed: 28 April 2025

the remitters.

**ii. High Transaction Costs**

According to the World Bank's Remittance Prices Worldwide Database, the global average cost of sending USD 200 to low- and middle-income countries was 6.2 percent in 2022, more than twice as high as the Sustainable Development Goal target of 3 percent. Among developing country regions, the cost was lowest in South Asia, at about 4.9 percent, while Sub-Saharan Africa continued to have the highest average cost, at about 8.0 percent.[41] Sending remittances to Uganda remains costly, with fees often exceeding 10 percent of the amount transferred.[42] This reduces the funds available to recipient families, and consequently the cumulative effect slows down the economy's growth.

**iii. Limited Financial Inclusion**

Many Ugandans, particularly in rural areas, are unbanked or underbanked, that is to say, they completely lack or have uneasy access to formal banking systems. The major barriers to formal banking include but not limited to; high banking fees, long distances to bank branches, lack of documentation (for instance, National IDs, proof of address), and limited financial literacy.[43]

Secondly, most remittances are received in cash, either through informal channels (friends on return home trips, bus drivers, traders returning from host countries) or even mobile money.[44] While mobile money has improved access, and according to

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[41]Ibid

[42]Supra

[43] World Bank, *The Global Findex Database 2021: Financial Inclusion, Digital Payments, and Resilience in the Age of COVID-19*. Available: https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalfindex Accessed: 29 April 2025

[44]Ggombe Kasim Munyegera and Tomoya Matsumoto, 'Mobile Money, Remittances, and Household Welfare: Panel Evidence from Rural Uganda' (2016) 79 *World Development* 127. Available: https://econpapers.repec.org/article/eeewdevel/v_3a79_3ay_3a2016_3ai_3ac_3ap_3a127-137.htm Accessed: 29 April 2025.

researchers, Ggombe Munyegera and Matsumoto,[45] it was found that adopting mobile money services increased the total value of remittances by 36 per cent and was associated with a 13 percent increase in per capita consumption. Despite the positive impact of mobile money transfers on the volume of remittances, it is not a full substitute for formal savings or investment tools. As such, lack of formal banking inclusion remains a major hindrance to the ability to save or invest remittances effectively.

**iv. Over-reliance on Consumption**

While remittances support household spending, their potential to drive broader economic development remains underutilized.

According to surveys in Uganda, 64.8 percent of personal transfers received is used for consumption-related expenses, including general household purchases and payment of fees to education institutions. Non-consumption expenditures accounts for only 33.8 percent, most of which is spent on building works and land purchases to establish family residences.[46]

Government has paid less attention to formulation of policies to direct the remittance inflow to long term and more profitable investment like agriculture, small scale industries and other forms of entrepreneurship. Consequently, the lack of structured policies to channel these funds into productive investments hinders long term growth.

[45]Supra: The Global Findex Database 2021 Editions, pg. 9.

[46]Supra

### 4.1.2. Social dimensions or Issues

The labour export sector has had both positive and negative social impact on Uganda, as highlighted below:

**a. Positive Social Impact**

The sector has had great positive social impact on Uganda in numerous ways, including but not limited to:

i. **Women's Empowerment;** many Ugandan women work abroad (especially in domestic and care work) for gain. The old age Ugandan cultural and traditional notion that labeled women as only good for their maternal and domestic caregiver roles, and limitations to only a local economic sector characterized by the sale of agricultural produce and other commodities around the homesteads,[47] had rendered women over dependent on men for most, if not all, their financial needs. Conversely, the growth of the labour export sector has opened women to opportunities to work for gain outside the country, hence gaining financial independence and negotiating power in family decision making.

ii. **Skills Transfer;** Returnee migrant workers bring back home new skills, language abilities, and work ethics that are so beneficial to Uganda's local communities. Returning professionals, for example, bring diverse expertise, spanning healthcare, governance, technology and business management skills. Their exposure to best

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[47] Julius Kikooma, *Gender and Entrepreneurship in Uganda: Women Maneuvering Economic Space* (Makerere University) 18.Available: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Julius-Kikooma/publication/221928371_Gender_and_Entrepreneurship_in_Uganda_Women_Manoeuvring_Economic_Space/link s/53d216440cf220632f3c63a3/Gender-and-Entrepreneurship-in-Uganda-Women-Manoeuvring-Economic-Space.pdf?origin=publication_detail&_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6Il9kaXJlY3QiLCJwYWdlIjoicHVibG ljYXRpb25Eb3dubG9hZCIsInByZXZpb3VzUGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19&__cf_chl_tk=_ujK6vc66PBsLX8z5W4Me5cVhK1cVYHvikneCvOqNe0-1751721487-1.0.1.1-5MHeOXUMdCSH8Fg6EUQmgJgwAhUk3lDUnkG8vljLYTU Accessed: 05 July 2025

practices and accountability standards serves as a foundation for fostering productivity, entrepreneurship and improved service delivery across both public and private sectors.[48] Additionally, the business, technical and language skills acquired abroad by returnee migrant workers, often bolster their reintegration, self-employment, and promote local economic growth.

**iii. Youth Employment and Hope;** Labour export offers an alternative livelihood, especially for educated but unemployed youth, reducing frustration and potential for unrest. Labour externalization plays a great part in addressing youth unemployment and frustration. At the means level, remittances from abroad contribute substantially to solving the country's social problems, as they benefit both individuals in bolstering their means for livelihood and the nation as a whole, by reducing on insecurities caused by poverty.

**b. Negative Social Impact**

Notwithstanding the non-exhaustive list of the positive impact as highlighted, the labour export sector, has had serious adverse and devastating social impact on Uganda, including but not limited to:

**i. Family Disintegration;** Long separations lead to broken families, strained marital relationships, and poor child-parent bonding. When one or both parents migrate for work abroad, the children are often left behind with extended family members or guardians. This renders children of migrant workers vulnerable to suffer emotional neglect and distress, or behavioral problems as a result of lack of parental guidance, not to mention a weakening of the parent-child bond as a result of long separation. Marital breakdown is also a natural consequence of labour export in Uganda, as long

[48]Michael Muhoozi, 'Harness Skilled Talent from US Deportations' *Daily Monitor* (Kampala, 6 February 2025).Available: https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/harness-skilled-talent-from-us-deportations4915318?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 05 July 2025

separation erodes marital relationship and affection. Divorces and case of infidelity[49] are common reports at, during and after migration both by the migrant and the partner left behind, as a result of loneliness and lack of intimacy.

ii. **Exploitation and Abuse;** Many Ugandan migrant workers, especially in the Middle East, face forced labour, poor working conditions, wage theft, physical abuse, and even death. Lack of legal protection and weak regulation of recruitment agencies worsens the situation. Forced labour dawns on the migrant workers at recruitment, as a Female, 32, hospitality sector migrant worker, in Qatar reports: "We were promised different jobs while in Uganda, but on reaching here, we were told that we were going to work as house maids, receptionists, and cleaners in hotels and restaurants which was different from what I had been promised while still in Uganda. I immediately started crying, tried calling the agent who was nowhere to be seen. He had disappeared".[50]

Many host countries of migrant workers run very stringent and exploitive labour regimes that dehumanize migrant workers, trashing the workers' human rights as rags. For instance, Countries under the Gulf '*Kalafa'* (sponsorship) System, like United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Lebanon Kuwait, and Jordan are reported have the most violation of workers' rights. Under the system, the migrant worker's rights are tied to their employers who confiscate their travel documents (passport, Identity Cards), impose contract restriction, wage violations, physical and sexual abuse hiding behind the veil of realizing the labour value worth of the investment in buying the

[49]Ritu Verma, *Gender, Land and Livelihood in East Africa Through the Farmers' Eye* (International Development Research Centre, Ottawa). Available: https://idrc-crdi.ca/sites/default/files/openebooks/283-x/?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 05 July 2025.

[50]Holly Koogler, *Ugandan Labor Migrants to the Middle East: Labor Conditions, Final Report* (United States Department of Labor, February 2024) 12.Available: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/reports/Uganda-FL-Labor-ReportFINAL-508.pdf Accessed: 06 July 2025

migrant worker. Without the sponsor's approval, workers often cannot change jobs or leave the country, making them extremely vulnerable. This is a clear violation of the employee's freedom of movement. For a migrant worker to regain their freedom under this system, reports have it that they would have to fast meet hefty financial requirements.

Absconding from work is criminal under the system, as Kevin Bales, professor of contemporary slavery at the University of Nottingham, says: "The whole concept of 'absconding' simply reflects a system of very serious physical control that is part of the window-dressing of enslavement. These workers are being treated as if they are property, the fundamental defining characteristic of enslavement".[51]

According to Freamon, a US law professor and human trafficking expert, kafala gives a "veneer of legality to slaveholding". He says: "The kafala system facilitates slavery because it keeps people from having any rights. It keeps them under an absolute regime of control. It enables the citizens of the country to have huge amounts of leisure and not do serious work," says Freamon. "It creates a caste system, where mostly brown, dark-skinned people are running the society in terms of labour but not getting any benefit."[52]

Worst of all, it is not uncommon for domestic workers in the Middle East countries to die or go missing. Their families can rarely access justice, or sometimes even get clear answers on the cause of death of their relatives.[53]

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[51]Katie McQue, 'Every Day I Cry: 50 Women Talk about Life as Domestic Workers under the Gulf Kafala System' *TheGuardian* (London, 25 April 2024).Available: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/apr/25/kafala-laboursystem-gulf-women-talk-about-life-as-a-domestic-worker-in-the-gulf?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed 06 July 2025

[52]Ibid

[53]'Why Should Fit Young Men Be Dying? Migrant Worker Deaths Spark Concerns over Saudi Arabia World Cup' *The Guardian* (London, 20 March 2024).Available: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/mar/20/why-shouldfit-young-men-be-dying-migrant-worker-deaths-spark-concerns-over-saudi-arabia-world-cup Accessed: 06 July 2025

**iii. Brain Drain;** Skilled labour migration poses a risk of depletion of human capital in key sectors like health, education, and IT in Least Developed Countries like Uganda.

Much as it goes without saying that skilled labour migration has a positive influence on intellectual capital as confirmed by scholars like Gary S. Becker;[54] and Githaiga & Kilong'i.[55] There is overwhelming evidence showing the great adverse effects of the migration of professionals, often referred to as the "brain drain," on economic growth and innovation in Sub-Saharan African Countries. Usman et al[56] note that human capital flight and brain drain continue to be a serious challenge in developing countries, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, underdeveloped countries already have low human development indices, and further human resource movement only exacerbate the countries' plight. It is true that the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries are in shambles, and the trend of young people fleeing goes beyond the factor.

**iv. Cultural Disruption and Return Cultural Shock;** Migrant workers usually adopt new cultural norms that conflict with traditional Ugandan values, creating reintegration challenges upon return.

Migrants and their families who return home after spending time in a host country often face difficulties in finding work, housing, and reintegrating into society. In

[54] P N Githaiga and A W Kilong'I, 'Foreign Capital Flow, Institutional Quality and Human Capital Development in SubSaharan Africa' (2023). Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366723753_Foreign_capital_flow_institutional_quality_and_human_capital_devel opment_in_sub-Saharan_Africa/link/65845e9c3c472d2e8e77f148/download Accessed: 06 July 2025

[55] Gary Becker, 'Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis' (1962) 70 *Journal of Political Economy* 9. Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/258724 Accessed: 06/07/2025

[56] M. A. M. Usman and others, 'On the Sustainable Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: Do Remittances, Human Capital Flight, and Brain Drain Matter?' (2022) 14 *Sustainability* 2117, 6.Available: https://www.mdpi.com/20711050/14/4/2117/pdf Accessed: 07 July 2025

particular, returnees who have experienced sexual or gender-based violence in the host country, children born to migrants who lack connection to their parents' home culture, or those who have spent prolonged periods abroad face significant reintegration challenges.

In addition, social stigma, usually severely hits migrant workers returning home, especially for women. This leads them to relocate elsewhere rather than return to their community of origin.[57]

Migrant returnees also find their realities on return clashing with their internalized memories of home. Worst of all, their communities often have high expectations of success and prosperity that the returnees can't fulfill.[58] These mismatches generate resentment from others and alienation in the returnees themselves.

### 4.1.3. Political Policies

The Role of Political Regulation in Labour Export and Economic Development in LDCs cannot be over looked. Good political will for any sector of the economy plays a significant part in promoting the sector and its contribution to the economy's growth and the reverse is true. In this section, I examine how political policies have affected the labour export sector and its contribution to Uganda's economic growth, and the limitation to their success.

a. **Regulation of Recruitment Agencies and Labour Markets;** for any economy, regulation of recruitment agencies and labour markets is central to protecting the

[57]Nicola Piper, 'The Complex Interconnection of Migration-Development Nexus: A Social Perspective' (2009) 15 *Population, Space and Place* 93. Available: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/psp.535 Accessed: 11/07/2025

[58]P Wanki, I Derluyn and I Lietaert, '"Let Them Make It Rain and Bling": Unveiling Community Expectations towards Returned Migrants in Cameroon' (2022) 12 *Societies* 8.Available: https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12010008 Accessed: 11 July 2025

country's labour force. In least developed countries (LDCs) like Uganda,[59] where excess labour is constantly on the move due to high unemployment levels as a major characteristic such countries, the need is more urgent and critical to ensure protection of migrant workers from exploitation, trafficking, and sub-standard working conditions. In Uganda, according to report between 2016 to the mid - 2022 over 220,000 Ugandans left the country in search for employment in the Middle East.[60] However, not all Ugandans leaving the country leave through proper channels, many are victims of human trafficking and other illegal means.[61]

Political oversight, therefore, comes in handy to ensure ethical recruitment practices and aligns labour export systems with international labour standards. These protections not only safeguard the rights and welfare of workers abroad but also enhance the attractiveness of formal migration pathways. This, in turn, stimulates higher remittance inflows and reduces state expenditures on crisis interventions such as repatriation, reintegration challenges and victim support.

b. **Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs);** these are agreements between two countries aimed at ensuring fair and ethical recruitment of workers. They regulate the condition of a migrant worker in a host country.[62] BLAs negotiated with destination countries serve as political instruments for securing better wages, working conditions, and legal protections for migrant workers. When effectively implemented and enforced, these agreements strengthen Uganda's credibility in global labour markets and increase the demand

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[59]Patricia Namakula, *An Overview of the Existing Labour Mobility Policies and Gaps in Uganda* (Centre for Multilateral Affairs, 13 October 2023). Available: https://thecfma.org/2023/10/13/an-overview-of-the-existing-labor-mobility-policiesand-gaps-in-uganda/?utm_source=chatgpt.com accessed 12 July 2025.

[60]Sebastian Bigabwenkya, 'Female Ugandan Labour Migration to Middle East: Is it a reflection of a Non-Resilient Public Sector?' (2024) 25(1) *Ugandan Journal of Management and Public Policy Studies* 130. Available: https://ojs.umi.ac.ug/index.php/ujmpps/article/view/122 Accessed: 12 July 2025

[61] W O Balikuddembe, 'Middle East: Uganda's New Garden Where "Everyone Wants to Try Their Luck"' (Danish Development Research Network, 28 March 2023). Available: https://ddrn.dk/12751/ Accessed: 13 July 2023

[62] https://diaspora.gm/bilateral-labour-agreements/#:~:text=Bilateral%20labour%20agreements%20(BLAs)%20are,worker%20in%20a%20host%2 0co untry Accessed: 13 July 2025

for its workforce. Economically, BLAs enhances the developmental impact of labour migration by increasing remittance volumes and improving long-term socio-economic returns.
As at December 2023, the Government of Uganda had signed three Bilateral Labour Agreements with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and a Memorandum of Understanding with United Arab Emirates.[63]

Uganda's foreign policy and diplomatic engagements play a significant role in accessing and sustaining foreign labour markets. Strong bilateral relations and alignment with host country interests facilitate the expansion of labour migration corridors and enables a continuous and strategic inflow of remittances and foreign earnings, further contributing to economic growth. To this end, the Government of Uganda has embarked on a process of expanding the external employment prospects through Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) by exploring opportunities in Canada, Turkey, UK, German, Poland, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait for semi-skilled and skilled labour. Negotiations on signing of Bilateral Labour Agreements with those these countries are on-going. These steps are expected to increase job opportunities abroad, boost remittances and ultimately the labour export Sector's contribution to the economic growth.[64]

c. **Corruption and Government Labour Policies;** corruption is the greatest rain on the parade of effective labour migration policies highlighting the weakness governance. Systematic corruption manifests in fraudulent recruitment practices, leakages in remittance management systems and mismanagement of reintegration funds. This erodes public trust, discourages the use of formal channels, and limits

[63]Government of Uganda, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, *Microeconomic Indicators and Developments, Financial Year 2023/2024, December Edition: Safe, Orderly and Decent Migration for All Ugandan Workers* para (a), 2. https://development.finance.go.ug/sites/default/files/DECEMBER%202023%20MIND%20REPORT.pdf Accessed: 13 July 2025.

[64]Ibid

the developmental impact of labour export sector on the economy.

Worse still, there is a recurrence of narratives in media reporting on the growing problem of human trafficking from Uganda, as number of licensed and unlicensed Kampala-based recruitment agencies continue to exploit weak regulation and law enforcement oversight to recruit Ugandans for work overseas, particularly to Persian Gulf countries such as Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).[65] Many of the agencies are reported to be owned by persons holding top government offices that give them the unfair advantage to circumvent due process in the business. Victims may originally travel with these agencies willingly and eager to take up promised employment opportunities predominantly in the service sector and in domestic help in the case of women, and in the construction, agriculture and service sectors for men,[66] only to be shocked that upon arrival, these promises transpire to be false. This will be discussed in detail under the next section on legal issues.

By and large, the extent to which labour export contributes to economic development in LDCs is heavily influenced by political will and regulatory capacity. In Uganda for instance, the *'Promised Land'* of a proactive, transparent, and migrant centered policy environment once reached will maximize the benefits of migration such as increase in remittances, skills transfer, and diaspora investment. Conversely, as the situation still subsists, poor governance, weak enforcement, and exploitative practices continue to cripple and undermine the intended benefits, exposing migrant

[65]Laura Secorun Palet, 'Rising in the Middle East: Forced Labour from Africa' *OZY* (7 January 2019).Available: https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/middle-east-forced-labor-africa Accessed: 13 July 2025
[66]Rosebell Kagumire, 'Stranded in the Middle East: Uganda Must Do More to Prevent Trafficking' *Heinrich Böll Stiftung* (10 October 2019). Available: https://za.boell.org/en/2018/10/10/stranded-middle-east-uganda-must-do-more-preventtrafficking Accessed: 13 July 2025

workers to unregulated work risks abroad and the national economy to retardation in growth.

### 4.2. Legal Issues

Uganda's legal framework on labour export is moderately sufficient but has several gaps that need to be addressed to ensure better protection for migrant workers. This section analyses the legal and regulatory framework on labour export, highlighting its strength, and the weaknesses therein. It also gives a snapshot of the dynamic recommendations for reformation of the regime which are detailed under chapter five.

#### 4.2.1. Critical Analysis of the Legal and Regulatory Framework

Uganda' legal and regulatory framework on externalization of labour is made up of the following:

**a. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995;** forms the primary legal and policy foundation underpinning labour mobility and labour export in Uganda. Although the Constitution does not expressly provide for "labour export" as an economic sector, several of its provisions collectively establish the constitutional basis upon which external labour migration and employment abroad are facilitated and protected. In particular, the Constitution guarantees the freedom of movement, the right to practice one's profession, and the freedom to engage in lawful economic activity, rights which indirectly support the participation of Ugandan citizens in overseas employment opportunities.

Article 29(2) (a)[67] of the Constitution guarantees every Ugandan citizen the right to

[67]The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995. Article 29(2)(a) and (b)

move freely throughout Uganda, to reside and settle in any part of the country, and to enter, leave, and return to Uganda. This provision constitutionally legitimizes cross-border labour mobility and supports the right of Ugandan citizens to seek employment opportunities outside the country. In addition, Objective XIV[6868] obligates the State to fulfill the fundamental rights of all Ugandans to social justice and economic development, while Objective XXVIII[69] places a duty upon the State to promote decent employment opportunities and economic participation.

Further, Article 40[70] guarantees every person the right to practice his or her profession and to carry on any lawful occupation, trade, or business. This provision is particularly significant to the labour export sector because it constitutionally protects the ability of Ugandan workers, both skilled and unskilled, to engage in lawful employment opportunities beyond Uganda's borders. Read together with Article 21 on equality and freedom from discrimination, the Constitution establishes an important rights-based framework that supports labour migration as an aspect of economic liberty and individual autonomy.

The Constitution also contains broader governance principles relevant to the management of the labour export sector. Article 20[71] imposes an obligation on all organs and agencies of government to respect, uphold, and promote fundamental rights and freedoms, including the rights of migrant workers. In the same vein, Objective XXIII[72] categorically emphasizes the protection of vulnerable groups and social justice. These principles are relevant in safeguarding migrant workers from being exploited, human trafficked, subjected to forced labour, and getting entangled

[68]National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy
[69]Ibid
[70]Supra, Article 40(2)
[71]Ibid
[72]Supra

in unsafe recruitment practices.

Conversely, notwithstanding all these strengths exhibited by the Constitution, there exists notable deficiencies within the constitutional order supporting and regulating labour export as an emerging economic sector of immense national importance, these include but not limited to:

First, lack of an express constitutional provision recognizing labour migration or labour export as a strategic component of national economic development. This shortcoming has consequently created a loophole, as there is no explicit constitutional obligation imposed upon the State to establish comprehensive systems for protection, welfare, reintegration, or economic empowerment of migrant workers and their families.

Secondly, while Article 40[73] guarantees the right to work and practice one's profession within Uganda and across its boarders, the Constitution falls short of specific provisions addressing the unique vulnerabilities common to and suffered by migrant labour, like exploitative recruitment practices, extortionate recruitment fees, contract substitution, human rights abuses faced by labourers in destination countries, or the insufficient access to legal redress while at work abroad. The lack of express constitutional safeguards for migrant workers goes a long way in limiting the strength, effectiveness and enforceability of the specific subordinate legislations that regulate the labour export sector.

Thirdly, the Constitution does not come out boldly on the State's obligations regarding critical aspects of the labour export sector such as remittance governance,

[73]Supra

diaspora investment promotion, reintegration programs for returning migrant workers, and institutional coordination in labour migration management. This deficiency has created a policy and constitutional gap in linking labour export to long-term national economic transformation and sustainable development planning.

Additionally, much as the Constitution creates the broad skeletal principles of accountability and good governance under the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, it fails at specifically providing for specialized constitutional oversight mechanisms to address institutional corruption, trafficking in persons, illegal or unlicensed recruitment agencies, and abuse within the institutions charged the labour export sector regulation. This lapse weakens the enforcement efforts and ends up contributing to chronical and persistent governance challenges that undermine migrant worker protection.

The above limitations notwithstanding, the Constitution remains an important foundational legislation upon which labour export regulation and management in Uganda is built. However, given the increasing economic significance of labour export to Uganda's economy, there is need for constitutional and policy-oriented reforms to buttress the State's capacity to regulate and maximise the benefits of the sector.

Therefore, the following constitutional reforms are recommendable:

The Constitution should expressly provide for recognition of the labour export sector as an integral and legitimate component of national economic development and employment policy. Such recognition would go a long way in strengthening the constitutional basis for legislative and institutional interventions geared toward protecting migrant workers and promoting labour export governance and management.

The constitution should be amended and/or progressively interpreted through legislation, to impose clearer and stricter obligations upon the State as far as the protection and welfare of migrant workers both within and outside Uganda is concerned. This may include, but not limited to, creating constitutional provisions establishing and recognising the State's duty to provide consular protection, regulate recruitment practices, combat trafficking, and facilitate safe and orderly labour emigration.

Deliberate steps should be taken towards expansion of the constitutional principles relating to social and economic rights to support reintegration, transfer of skills and productive investment of remittances into the home economy. This would go a long way in helping to transform labour export from being merely a survival mechanism into a strategic tool for sustainable economic growth and structural transformation.

Finally, Uganda should strengthen constitutional governance principles relating to transparency, accountability, and institutional oversight to support stricter regulation of recruitment agencies, set up enhance anti-corruption measures within labour migration administration, and improve protection of migrant workers from exploitation and abuse.

Conclusively, while Uganda's Constitution provides a very important rights-based framework that supports freedom of movement and economic participation, these constitutional provisions remain insufficiently specialised to address the complex realities of labour export as a modern economic sector. Therefore, strengthening constitutional and legislative support for labour migration governance would produce the much-needed significant improvement to Uganda's ability to manage the labour export sector more effectively, efficiently and derive greater economic and developmental benefits therefrom.

b. **The Employment Act;**[74] this is the parent legislation governing employment relations and labour administration in Uganda. Whereas the Employment Act was primarily enacted to regulate domestic employment relationships, it contains provisions that indirectly touch, support and regulate the labour export sector. This is through provisions relating to licensing and regulation of recruitment agencies, labour officers, forms and contents of employment contracts, and protection of the rights of workers. Therefore, the Act establishes a very important statutory foundation upon which Uganda's labour export regime upon which the subsequent Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations are built. Notably, section 37 of the Act[75] prohibits any person, agent, or messenger from operating a recruitment agency without a valid recruitment permit issued by the Commissioner responsible for Labour. This provision is so important because it establishes State control and regulatory oversight over labour recruitment activities, including recruitment for employment outside Uganda. By requiring licensing and authorisation of recruitment agencies, the Act aims at regulating labour intermediaries, minimize fraudulent and illegal recruitment practices, and promoting accountability within the labour recruitment process.

The Act further empowers labour officers and the Commissioner for Labour to provide supervision over labour export practices, monitor compliance with labour standards, and enforce employment-related obligations. The institutional structures and enforcement powers provide an important administrative mechanism for regulating and management of recruitment agencies and ensuring that labour migration

[74]The Employment Act, Cap 226. section 36
[75]Ibid, section 37

processes are conducted within the legal framework.

More so, the Act recognises and promotes fundamental labour rights such as fair and non-discriminative treatment at work places, protection from forced labour, and access to contractual protections, which principles are much equally relevant to Ugandan migrant workers seeking or are already in employment abroad.

The Act's greatest strength among others lies in its establishment of a formal licensing regime for labour recruitment agencies. The framework enables the Government of Uganda to screen and regulate entities involved in labour export, hence reducing the risk of illegal recruitment operations and human trafficking practices that would otherwise escalate the vulnerability of migrant Ugandans in pursuit of employment abroad. The checklist of requirement for recruitment permits within the Act also creates a legal basis for monitoring compliance and imposing sanctions against unauthorized and illegal recruitment operations and practices.

However, eve with these strengths, the Employment Act remains deficiently responsive to the growing complexity and economic significance of labour export in Uganda in various ways, including the following:

Firstly, the Act does not contain a dedicated and comprehensive provision specifically regulating labour export or migrant labour governance. The subject of labour export is only addressed indirectly through general recruitment provisions for the requirement of licensing, leaving such a significant void within the law regarding overseas employment management, migrant worker protection, and cross-border labour regulation.

Secondly, sections 36 and 37 focus primarily on licensing recruitment agencies, but they fall short of substantive legislation regarding the conduct, obligations, and accountability of recruitment agencies after license being granted. The Act lacks comprehensive legislation touching pertinent issues in the labour export processes such as excessive recruitment fees, fraudulent recruitment practices, contract substitution, exploitation of workers in destination countries, management of remittances, mandatory welfare obligations, and/or reintegration of returning migrant workers.

Thirdly, there subsists relatively weak and inadequate enforcement mechanisms under the Act to address the realities of the modern labour export sector. For example, the penalties for operating without recruitment permits or violating labour regulations are deficiently deterrent compared to the enormous financial benefits derived from illegal recruitment operations and activities. Consequently, illegal recruitment agencies, trafficker networks, and informal labour brokers continue to operate despite the existence of penalties for such violations within the legal framework.

Moreover, the Act lacks comprehensive protection mechanisms for Ugandan migrant workers deployed or placed in employment abroad. There exists no express provisions within the Act relating to several other crucial aspects of employment and labour export, such as mandatory insurance coverage, emergency repatriation obligations, compensation mechanisms, psychosocial support, or legal assistance for migrant workers facing abuse in destination countries. These gaps create significant protection difficulties for Ugandan migrant workers employed outside its jurisdiction.

Therefore, there is argent need for several reforms within the Employment Act framework to make it more sufficient to support the labour export sector for better economic gain, and these may include but not limited to:

Amendment of the Act to create dedicated and specific provisions to regulate labour export and migrant worker governance and management. The new provisions should comprehensively address recruitment procedures, worker protection standards, welfare obligations, dispute resolution mechanisms, reintegration frameworks, and responsibilities of recruitment agencies and foreign employers.

Secondly, stricter regulatory obligations should be imposed upon recruitment agencies under the law. These obligations may include mandatory disclosure of recruitment fees, standardized employment contracts, financial security bonds, compulsory worker insurance, and periodic compliance reviews and audits.

Thirdly, the Act's enforcement mechanisms should be strengthened through the introduction of heavier administrative and criminal sanctions against illegal recruitment, trafficking, contract substitution, and worker exploitation. Employment Act should also empower labour authorities to suspend or permanently revoke licenses of non-compliant agencies and publicly blacklist offending recruiters.

More so, there is need to amend the Act to introduce a specialized labour migration inspectorate under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with express statutory powers to investigate and prosecute non-compliant recruitment agencies, monitor migrant worker welfare, coordinate with foreign missions, and enforce compliance with labour export regulations.

Furthermore, the Employment Act should be amended to provide for integration of digital labour migration management systems to facilitate registration of migrant workers, monitoring of contracts, tracking of recruitment agencies, complaints management, and data collection for policy and enforcement purposes. This would go a long way in significantly improving transparency, reduction of corruption, and enhance regulatory efficiency within the labour export sector.

Lastly, but not the least of course, the Employment Act should be amended purposely to harmonise and bring it to life with the relevant international labour standards, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions relating to migrant workers, forced labour, recruitment practices, and decent work principles. The harmonisation would go a long way in strengthening the Country's labour migration legal framework and improve protection of Ugandan migrant workers abroad.

c. **The Workers' Compensation Act;**[76] this piece of legislation exists to address risks of injuries commonly sustained by workers in the course of their employment, including for migrant workers within Uganda. Section 3 of the Act is to the effect that if personal injury by accident arises out of and in the course of a worker's employment, the injured worker's employer should be liable to meet all compensation requirements in accordance with the law.

The strength of the Act among others is its recognition of the employer's duty to compensate workers for injuries sustained in the course of employment. This creates a legal safeguard against economic hardship for workers resulting from workplace accidents and it promotes accountability on the part of employers for all injuries sustained by their workers during the course of their employment. The Act also provides for compensation in cases of death, permanent incapacity, temporary incapacity, and occupational diseases. Such provision therefore brings under recognition socio-economic impact of workplace injuries on workers and their dependents.

One other important strength of the Act lies in its social protection function. By providing compensation mechanisms, the law contributes to income security and financial stability for injured workers and bereaved families. These provisions are particularly significant within the labour export sector where migrant workers, often

[76]The Workers Compensation Act, Cap225. Ss. 2 and 3

the breadwinners for extended families and remittance-dependent households.

However, even with the cited strengths, the Workers' Compensation Act remains substantially inadequate in addressing the realities and complexities of the modern labour export sector, as seen below:

Firstly, the Act lacks express extended protection framework for Ugandan migrant workers under employment beyond the borders of Uganda. Its wonderful provisions are largely territorially confined and primarily designed for employment relationships operating within Uganda's local jurisdiction. As a result, migrant workers who suffer injuries, abuse, disability, or death abroad are left to suffer significant legal uncertainty regarding the applicability and enforceability of compensation rights under Ugandan law within the jurisdiction.

Secondly, the law falls short of provision to establish clear mechanisms for enforcement of compensation claims against foreign employers or recruitment agencies operating transnationally. Since most Ugandan migrant workers are employed under foreign legal systems and contractual arrangements, the absence of cross-border enforcement mechanisms manifestly undermines the practical protection offered by the Act. As a result, many migrant workers and their families struggle to obtain compensation emanating from workplace injuries sustained while abroad.

Moreover, the Workers Compensation Act does not sufficiently provide for the role and liability of recruitment agencies in cases involving migrant worker injuries or deaths while abroad. With all the notable role played by recruitment agencies in facilitating labour export, the law does not impose clear statutory obligations upon them regarding promotion of workers welfare, compensation support, emergency repatriation, or legal assistance for injured workers and bereaved families.

In order to effectively strengthen the Workers' Compensation Act in the labour export sector, several reforms are necessary, including but not limited to:

The Act should be amended expressly create provision that extends workers' compensation protections to Ugandan migrant workers employed abroad. This amendment should clarify the rights of migrant workers and their dependents to compensation for employment-related injuries, disability, or death sustained outside Uganda.

The law should be amended to create and impose joint liability upon licensed recruitment agencies and foreign employers for compensation obligations involving migrant workers. This would go a long way in strengthening accountability and ensuring that Ugandan migrant workers abroad and their families are not left without remedies due to jurisdictional or contractual limitations.

More so, the Act should be upgraded through amendment to strengthen institutional coordination between labour authorities, recruitment agencies, foreign missions, insurers, and destination-country authorities to improve monitoring and enforcement and access to compensation by migrant workers abroad and their dependent families in case of death.

In conclusion nutshell, much as the Workers' Compensation Act establishes an important framework for compensating work-related injuries, it remains inadequate in addressing the unique challenges of Uganda's growing labour export sector. The lack of specific protections provisions within the law for migrant workers, cross-border enforcement mechanisms, mandatory insurance requirements, and specialised compensation systems weakens its effectiveness in safeguarding migrant workers and maximising the economic benefits of labour export. In the premises, targeted legislative and institutional reforms are therefore necessary to strengthen worker protection, improve labour migration governance, and enhance the sector's contribution to Uganda's economic growth

**d. The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act;**[77] this law plays an important role in regulating cross-border movement of persons and safeguarding national immigration interests. Whereas the Act was not specifically enacted to regulate labour export, it has significant implications for the governance, management, control, and protection of migrant labour flows from Uganda. The law contributes to labour export management primarily through immigration control mechanisms, prevention of illegal migration, regulation of travel documentation, and measures aimed at combating trafficking in persons and transnational exploitation associated with labour migration that would ultimately have influence on labour outflow.

Particularly, the significant aspect of the Act on labour migration is in its prohibition of trafficking-related activities. The law addresses labour trafficking as a form of human trafficking and criminalises the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons for purposes of exploitation.

These provisions are manifestly relevant to Uganda's labour export sector since irregular labour migration and unregulated recruitment practices increasingly expose Ugandan migrant workers to immense risks of trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, exploitation, and abuse while in host countries.

One of the greatest strengths of the Act, among others, is traceable in its criminalisation of trafficking and irregular migration which are a great threat to the sector of labour export requiring the State's intervention through legislative intervention. By criminalising trafficking-related conduct, the Act provides a legal

[77] The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, Cap 313. Ss. 50 – Powers of Immigration Officer; and 54 – Grant of Entry Permits

foundation for combating exploitative recruitment networks, illegal labour brokers, and transnational criminal activities that target vulnerable migrant workers.

This goes a long way in contributing to the protection of Ugandan migrant workers seeking employment abroad and enhances the credibility and legitimacy of Uganda's labour export sector.

More to the strength of the Act, lies in its role of controlling the lawful movement of persons across borders through issuance of passport, visa, among other immigration control procedures. The effective immigration regulation is helpful in ensuring that migrant workers travel through legal and documented channels, thereby reducing irregular migration and enhancing government oversight of labour mobility, especially on return of Ugandan Migrant workers from abroad. Proper immigration documentation also improves the ability of the Government to collect migration data, monitor labour inflow and outflows, and coordinate migrant worker protection efforts.

Conversely, despite the stated strengths, the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act remains insufficiently tailored to comprehensively regulate and support the labour export sector. Its weaknesses subsist in the following forms:

Firstly, the Act primarily focuses on immigration control and national security concerns rather than labour migration governance and migrant worker protection. Consequently, its provisions do not comprehensively address the broader realities and operational dynamics of labour export.

To strengthen the effectiveness of the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act in supporting the labour export sector, several reforms are necessary, these may include:

Amendment of the law to expressly recognise labour export as a regulated economic activity. Such recognition would strengthen institutional responsibility and improve legal clarity regarding management of labour migration.

The Act should also be amended to incorporate stronger migrant worker protection measures, including dedicated provisions relating to emergency repatriation of victim workers abroad back home. Such protections would enhance the safety and sustainability of Uganda’s labour export sector.

In conclusion, while the Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act provides an important legal framework for regulating cross-border movement and combating trafficking in persons, its provisions remain insufficiently specialised to comprehensively govern Uganda’s growing labour export sector. Therefore, strengthening the law through targeted amendment to make provision for labour migration, would significantly improve the management of labour export and enhance its contribution to Uganda’s economic growth.

**e. The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act**;[78] the law specifically addresses the issue of labour trafficking, which is a form of human trafficking. It prohibits various activities related to trafficking, including recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a person for exploitation, which can occur in the context of labour export.[7979]

One of the key strengths of the Act is that it has a broad criminalization of trafficking-related conduct connected to labour migration. By targeting exploitative recruitment and transportation practices, the law provides a legal basis for combating illegal labour brokers, fraudulent recruitment agencies, and transnational trafficking

[78]Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, Cap 131
[79]Ibid, Ss.2(r) and 3(a) and (b)

networks operating under the guise of labour export. This strengthens the integrity and credibility of Uganda's labour export sector and promotes safer migration pathways for Ugandan workers seeking employment abroad.

Specifically, section 8(c) of the Act[80] makes it an offence to recruit, transports, transfers, harbours, provides or receives a person for domestic or overseas employment or training or apprenticeship with the intention of trafficking the person. A person that contravenes the provision is liable on conviction to a custodial sentence (imprisonment) of five years or a fine of one hundred and twenty currency points or to both such imprisonment and fine, and on subsequent conviction for the same offence, is liable to imprisonment of seven years without the option of a fine. The Act is therefore very relevant in ensuring that labour is only exported out of Uganda through legal channels.

Another important strength is the Act's victim-centred approach. The law recognises trafficked persons as victims requiring protection, rehabilitation, repatriation, and reintegration support rather than merely treating them as immigration offenders. This recognition is significant in supporting migrant workers who are often subjected to exploitation abroad and require State protection upon return to Uganda.

The Act also provides for inter-agency cooperation and enforcement by empowering law enforcement agencies to investigate trafficking offences and prosecute offenders. These provisions facilitate coordination between immigration authorities, labour officers, police, and other agencies involved in migration governance.

Additionally, the law aligns Uganda with international anti-trafficking obligations under instruments such as the Palermo Protocol[81] and international human rights

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[80]Ibid

[81]Palermo Protocol (adopted 15 November 2000, effective 2003) UN General Assembly Resolution 55/25; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Purnish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children.

standards.

On other side, despite these strengths, the Act remains inefficiently irresponsive to the broader governance realities of Uganda's labour export sector in numerous ways, such as:

The law primarily focuses on criminalisation of trafficking rather than comprehensively regulating the labour migration processes. As a result, many exploitative practices within formal labour export arrangements may not easily meet the strict legal threshold of "trafficking," yet still expose migrant workers to abuse and exploitation.

The law also presents with the weakness of insufficient enforcement mechanisms, which significantly undermines its effectiveness. Inadequate investigations, weak cross-border enforcement, and insufficient victim support systems continue to hinder effective prosecution of trafficking offences and protection of migrant workers. Many trafficking cases linked to labour export remain underreported or poorly investigated.

**f. The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations 2021;** the instrument has the objective to protect the rights of migrant workers through stringent licensing requirements and placement procedures.

The instrument provides for among other key aspects of labour export, qualification and licensing process and requirements of Recruitment Agencies, (a person cannot carry out the business of a recruitment agency without a valid license from the Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development),[82] the qualification and disqualification of a recruitment agency, (one must be registered with the Uganda Registration Service Bureau (URSB) as a company, maintaining a share capital of at least Fifty Million Shillings;[83] and companies involved in travel agency business or

[82]Regulation 4 of the Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers) Regulations 2021
[83]Regulation 5(1) and (3)

holding political offices, being religious or traditional organisation are disqualified from carrying out the business as recruitment agents).[84] The Regulations also provides for the standardization of the employment contract to prevailing labour and social legislations, other applicable laws, regulations, collective bargaining agreements and international conventions.[85] Recruitment Agencies are responsible to ensure that workers deployed overseas are amply protected and their interests and well-being are promoted. Furthermore, the instrument obliges recruitment agencies to be fully responsible for all claims and liabilities arising from the use of their license and guarantee compliance with the applicable international labour standards.[8686]

The weaknesses of this piece of legislation are akin to those discussed under the Employment Act, Cap 226, and its parent law. If properly addressed under the parent law, the regulations would fit in to give practical application.

**4.2.2. General strength of Uganda's governance framework in achieving a safe, regular, orderly and productive labour export sector.**

Uganda's labour migration governance framework has progressively evolved to address the vulnerabilities of migrant workers, enhance institutional coordination, and align national practices with international labour migration standards. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) has spearheaded several reforms and administrative measures to promote safe labour migration and safeguard the rights of Ugandan workers abroad,[87] and has registered milestones as follows:

[84]Regulation 6(a) (b) (c) (d) and (e)
[85]Regulation 7(6)(c)
[86]Ibid, Regulation 7(6)(f) and (g)

[87]Government of Uganda, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, *Statement to Parliament on Externalisation of Labour Issues* (16 May 2019).Available: https://mglsd.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Statement-to-Parliament-onExternalisation-of-Labour-Issues-16th-May-2019.pdf Accessed: 13 July 2025

a. **Institutional and Inter-Ministerial Coordination;** a notable strength of Uganda's regulatory framework is the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Labour Migration, chaired by the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and comprising Ministers responsible for Security, Internal Affairs, Works, Local Government, Foreign Affairs, and East African Cooperation. This multi-sectoral platform enhances policy coherence and fosters joint responses to labour migration challenges. Moreover, coordination with enforcement agencies, including the Directorate of Immigration, the Internal Security Organization (ISO), and the Airport Police—has been enhanced. This collaboration is reported to have yielded tangible results, for instance, between January and June 2019 over 2,334 victims of human trafficking were rescued at Entebbe International Airport, demonstrating an operational commitment to curbing trafficking in persons linked to labour migration.[88]

b. **Contractual Safeguards and Bilateral Labour Agreements;** Uganda has adopted a labour migration governance and management system with stringent contractual obligations aimed at protecting Ugandan migrant workers' rights while abroad. Notably, Uganda adopted a four-party employment contract which requires, recruitment agencies both in Uganda and in the host country to jointly and severally be liable for breach of contract. This framework creates a shared accountability mechanism that discourages exploitation

[88]Ibid

Additionally, Uganda has concluded Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) with key destination countries like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates, and negotiations with Qatar have been concluded. Draft agreements have also been prepared for Oman[89] and Kuwait. These agreements provide a formal basis for the protection of migrant workers and enable state-to-state dialogue on labour rights.

c. **Regional and International Cooperation;** Uganda has strengthened regional cooperation against human trafficking through the East African Community (EAC). National coordination task forces in Uganda and Kenya have shared intelligence. Uganda and Kenya have entered an agreement to work towards harmonizing the legal regimes of the two countries as a way of putting up a joint fight against human trafficking. Several hundreds of Ugandan girls, boys and women believed to be victims of human trafficking,[90] have since been rescued in Busia, Malaba and at the Jomo Kenyata International Airport and handed over to the Ugandan authorities.[91] This regional approach reflects Uganda's commitment to collective security and migrant protection.

d. **Monitoring and Enforcement Mechanisms;** the MGLSD conducts regular monitoring visits to major destination countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar,

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[89]International Labour Organisation, *Third National Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting on Labour Migration in Uganda: "Enhanced Stakeholder Coordination for Improved Labour Migration in Uganda"* (Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala, 28 June 2024, published 4 November 2024).Available: https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/enhanced-stakeholdercoordination-improved-labour-migration-uganda#:~:text=This%20initiative%20has%20been%20instrumental,of%20the%20labour%20migration%20landscape Accessed: 15 July 2025

[90]Supra

[91]Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, *Trafficking Victims Rescued* (25 September 2018). Available: https://caa.go.ug/traffickingvictims-rescued/#:~:text=Uganda%20and%20Kenya%20have%20entered,over%20to%20the%20Ugandan%20authorities> Accessed: 16 July 2025

and Jordan. Such oversight allows the government to evaluate the welfare of workers and engage with foreign recruitment agencies on compliance issues. Furthermore, only foreign recruitment companies accredited by the MGLSD, based on recommendations from Ugandan Missions in recipient countries, are authorized to recruit domestic workers.

To enhance due diligence: All demand letters and powers of attorney from foreign agencies are vetted by Ugandan Missions; each employment contract is authenticated before clearance for deployment; and foreign recruitment agencies are prohibited from transferring responsibility for domestic workers to private individuals, ensuring workers remain under corporate rather than personal oversight.

Collectively, the legal provisions and measures above highlight represent the strengths of Uganda's legal and regulatory framework, specifically, as they have emphasis on multi-sectoral coordination, bilateral diplomacy, contractual accountability, and worker support systems. However, the framework's effectiveness still need buttressing through the proposed amendments to take care of the gaps still subsisting therein. Particularly, there is need for consistent updating of enforcement mechanisms, designation of adequate funding, and devotion of political will by both Uganda and the recipient countries.

### 4.2.3. Weaknesses & Gaps in Uganda's Legal, Regulatory and Institutional Framework in Labour Export.

It goes without saying that Uganda has made great strides in towards effective management of the labour export sector, aiming at making the best out of the sector for economic growth through the legal, regulatory and institutional milestones highlighted above. However, the sector continues to be among the low performers due to the following weaknesses and gaps:

a. **Limited Enforcement & Regulation;** Weak enforcement of labour laws leads to exploitation, illegal recruitment, and human trafficking. Most of the country's legal strength in the labour export sector can only be felt on paper, as less is done about their enforcement. Poor enforcement poses a challenge of exploitation not only against the labourers, but also government in terms of under declaration of incomes that recruitment agencies earn from the business. This has a direct negative effect on the tax collections from the recruitment agencies.

The weak penal framework in the enforcement structure also leaves many questions unanswered, as even in circumstances of glaring violations, little or nothing has been seen to be done to satisfactorily bring the violators to book to serve as an example to rest.

The Poor enforcement of labour export laws, regulations, and bilateral agreements remains a critical obstacle to maximizing the labour export sector's contribution to Uganda's economy.[92] Poor institutional capacity, inadequate oversight of recruitment agencies, and insufficient monitoring of bilateral agreements undermine the protection of migrant workers, which culminates into exploitation, wage theft, and loss of potential remittances.[93] Consequently, the economic benefits of labour migration, such as increased foreign exchange inflows, skills transfer, and poverty reduction, are significantly reduced.

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[92]Patricia Namakula, CfMA, Supra

[93]Kenneth Kazibwe, 'Government to Blame for Ugandans Suffering in the Middle East – Labour Export Companies' *NilePost* (11 May 2022).Available: https://nilepost.co.ug/news/133662/labour-export-companies-under-their-umbrella-bodythe-uganda-association-of-external-recruitment-agencies-uaera-have-accused-government-of-neglecting-its-role-ofmonitoring-the-welfare-of-ugandans?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 18 July 2025

b. **Corruption allows unlicensed agencies to operate;** Corruption in the authorities charged with the regulation of the labour export sector is the breeding site for fraudulent recruitment and/or labour export agencies in Uganda. Immigration and labour ministry officials take bribes to issue forged documents or turn a blind eye to illegal migration.

Corruption does not only put the migrant workers at risk but also opens wider the revenue leakage points, since workers who are place in employment through illegal means cannot send remittances through legal and formal channels. Additionally, it increases workers' upfront costs and reduces net earnings abroad, which naturally lowers remittance inflows. The unregulated or illegal labour export agents take advantage of the corrupt system to charge and/or extort exorbitant fees from the intending migrant works. Worst of all, many workers are unduly influenced to enter into unfair 'sponsorship' agreements that bind them to pay the exorbitant fees throughout the employment term abroad.[94]

Corruption has also adversely affected the sectors reputation and potential for investment. The repeated scandals of fraud and human trafficking among others has damaged the sector's legitimacy, deterring safer recruitment models and institutional investors. According to a report, U.S. firms consistently identify corruption as a major hurdle to business and investment in Uganda. "In practice, endemic corruption often enables companies to engage in harmful or illegal practices with impunity. Regulations on human and labour rights, and consumer and environmental protection, are seldom and inconsistently enforced."[95] Trust crisis

[94]Supra, Katie McQue, The Guardian

[95]Frank Kisakye, 'USA: How Corruption is Destroying Uganda' *The Observer* (31 July 2024). Available: https://observer.ug/news/usa-how-corruption-is-destroying-uganda/?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 19 July 2025.

dissuades regulated, large-scale operators.[96]

c. **Inadequate Protection for Migrant Workers**; many Ugandan migrant workers face abuse, poor working conditions, and wage theft in destination countries, with limited legal recourse,[97] particularly those who find themselves working in host countries without bilateral labour agreements with Uganda. The situation even gets worse when the workers find themselves placed in employment through illegal channels.

It is important to note that even destinations where Uganda has subsisting Bilateral Labour Agreements, the agreements lack effective enforcement mechanisms to protect workers and revenue collection for the Country. For example, in Saudi Arabia, a country with whom Uganda has a Bilateral Labour Agreement (General Labour Recruitment Bilateral Agreement, signed in 2018), it is an interesting observation that the minimum wage for Ugandan workers is lower than the minimum wage set for Filipino, Indian, and Bangladeshi domestic workers.[98]

The inadequate protection of the migrant workers abroad also has a cumulative negative effect on the quality of the returnee labour force for Uganda, as exploited workers return with trauma, poor skills, and lower productivity. This compound Uganda's problem of low labour productivity that is, according to the International

[96]Victoria Nyeko, 'Uganda: Columnist Attributes Rise in Human Trafficking to Failure to Regulate Recruitment Agencies'
*Daily Monitor (Uganda), Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (2019.)*Available: https://www.businesshumanrights.org/en/latest-news/uganda-columnist-attributes-rise-in-human-trafficking-to-failure-to-effectively-regulaterecruitment-agencies/?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 19 July 2025

[97]Ibrahim Lutwama, 'Exorbitant Fees Entrap Ugandan Workers in the GCC' *Migrant Rights* (15 September2022).Available: https://www.migrant-rights.org/2022/09/exorbitant-fees-entrap-ugandan-workers-in-the-gcc/?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 18 July 2025

[98]Danish Trade Union Development Agency, *Uganda Labour Market Profile 2019* pg. 14. Available: https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Uganda_lmp_2019.pdf Accessed: 19 July 2025

Labour Organisation (ILO) is at USD3.53 (UGX 13,200),[99] per one hour of work, way lower than the global average USD41 (UGX153314), per one hour of work.[100100]

### 4.3. Conclusion

The analysis of Uganda's legal, regulatory and institutional labour export framework reveals that limited enforcement and weak regulation remain critical bottlenecks that continue to undermine the sector's potential to meaningfully contribute to the country's economic growth. While substantive legislations, subsidiary legislation, observance of international labour migration instruments and bilateral labour agreements exist, their practical implementation is crippled by the inadequate institutional capacity, fragmented oversight, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. This regulatory vacuum allows for fraudulent recruitment practices, human trafficking, and unlicensed intermediaries to flourish, thereby leading to regrettable exploitation of the unemployed and desperate migrant workers with impunity.

Corruption remains a grave compounding factor for the regulatory weaknesses, as officials within key institutions, immigration, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), and law enforcement, often accept bribes to facilitate illegal labour migration practice and licensing of undeserving recruitment agencies, issue forged travel documents, and/or shield exploitative agencies from sanctions. This pervasive graft erodes public trust, delegitimises the formal labour export system, and fosters a parallel informal network that operates beyond the reach of state protection mechanisms.

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[99]International Labour Organisation, *ILOSTAT: Statistics on Labour Productivity*. Available: https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/labour-productivity/ Accessed: 19 July 2025

[100]Medard Kakuru, *Why Low Labour Productivity Persists in Uganda* (Economic Policy Research Centre, 7 June 2023). Available: https://eprcug.org/eprc-in-the-news/why-low-labour-productivity-persists-in-uganda/?utm_source=chatgpt.com Accessed: 19 July 2025

As a result, migrant workers face heightened vulnerability, with many subjected to exploitative contracts, debt bondage, and human rights abuses in destination countries. The lack of credible legal recourse, weak monitoring of bilateral agreements, and absence of structured reintegration programs further exacerbate their precariousness. Moreover, repeated scandals involving trafficking and fraud have tarnished the sector's reputation, hence discouraging safer recruitment models and deterring institutional investors who could otherwise professionalise and stabilise the industry.

On the whole, the intertwined weaknesses of poor enforcement, systemic and institutionalised corruption, coupled with inadequate worker protection, limit negate the contribution and impact of Uganda's labour export sector to the country's economy. Instead of serving as a reliable source of remittances, skills transfer, and poverty reduction, the sector risks becoming a channel for exploitation and revenue leakages. Therefore, unlock its full economic potential, Uganda must prioritise transparent governance, stronger institutional oversight, and comprehensive protection mechanisms for its diaspora migrant workforce.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.0. Introduction

In this final chapter focus is had to the synthesis of the findings of the preceding analysis on the labour export sector and its contribution to Uganda's economic growth purposively contextualized and customized for Uganda as a Least Developed Country. The research study has critically examined the legal, regulatory and institutional framework governing labour emigration, the economic benefits derived from the sector, particularly through migrant worker's remittances; and the economic-socio-political dynamics influencing the sector as a whole. The study has further explored and examined the structural weaknesses within the governance and management of the sector such as limited or weak enforcement of the legal and regulatory requirements and obligations of the various stakeholders, systematic corruption within the mandated labour management institutions, inadequate protection for migrant and poor a reintegration regime for returning migrant workers that undermine and/or compromise the sector's development potential.

As clearly demonstrated, labour export remains a double-edged sword for Uganda, on the one hand, providing the much needed critical employment opportunities for the surplus unemployed labour force, generating substantial remittance inflow for the economy, and facilitating skills transfer; while on the other, it is a conduit for exposing migrant workers to exploitation, perpetuating informal and/or illegal recruitment practices, and suffers from institutional deficiencies that erode public trust and ends up deterring substantial legitimate investment within the sector. The persistent challenges of regulatory gaps, weak bilateral labour agreements, and governance failures limit the sector's ability to meaningfully contribute to the poverty reduction, foreign exchange stability, and long-term capital development.

Therefore, this Chapter, consolidates the key conclusions derived from the study, while highlighting the core lessons learnt on the relationship between labour export and economic growth for Uganda as a Least Developed Country. It then brings out the diligently proposed actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening and revamping the legal and institutional framework, enhancing the protection of migrant workers, while maximising the sector's contribution to inclusive and sustainable economic growth for the country. The recommendations are framed within both the national governance context and the international labour migration discourse, offering pathways for reform and strategic intervention.

## 5.1. General Conclusion

This research study sets out to critically examine the impact of Uganda's labour export sector on Uganda's economic growth in the context of an LDC, with particular focus on the adequacy or at least sufficiency of its legal, regulatory and institutional framework. The findings demonstrate a paradoxical reality: while the sector contributes significantly to creation of employment opportunities for the country's surplus unemployed productive youth, increase remittance inflows, and promotes foreign exchange stability, its potential to deliver sustainable development is undermined by governance weaknesses, regulatory gaps, and entrenched corruption.

### 5.2. Labour Export as a Driver of Economic Relief but Not Sustainable Development

The labour export sector has provided a short-term economic lifeline and cushion for Uganda's surplus unemployed youthful labour force. The remittance inflows have accounted for an average of approximately of USD 1.2675 billion for Uganda from 2021 to 2024 as the global economies recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.[101] These inflows have been applied to support household consumption, meet education and health needs for beneficiary dependent relatives and small-scale investment. However, the reliance on low skilled migrant labour, primarily concentrated in the politically unstable and unreliable Middle Eastern countries, largely in domestic work and manual occupations, limits broader developmental gain such as technology transfer, human capital upgrading, or long-term structural transformation of the Ugandan economy.

### 5.3. Weak Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Employment Act, Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, Workers Compensation Act, and the Employment (Recruitment of Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulation, among others substantially fall short of specific provisions for the proper governance and management of the sector necessary for deriving the best economic advantage from the sector; and the Bilateral Labour Agreements exist in form but lack effective enforcement. The Regulatory Institutions remain under resourced, fragmented, and often compromised by political patronage. As a result, unlicensed recruitment agencies, trafficking

[101]Supra

networks, and fraudulent intermediaries thrive. The consolidated effects of these gaps ultimately undermine both the protection of migrant workers and the credibility of the sector.

### 5.4. Corruption as a Structural Constraint

In this research, corruption was found to be a systematic impediment across the board of the labour export value chain. Bribery at the issuance of recruitment agencies licenses, forged contracts, and collusion between officials and unscrupulous agencies facilitate exploitive migration practice. This not only leads to workers' abuse and trafficking but also erodes public trust, deter legitimate institutional investors and perpetuates informality in the sector.

### 5.5. Inadequate Protection of Migrant Workers

The lack of effective monitoring of recruitment agencies, weak enforcement of BLAs and absence of strong reintegration mechanisms leaves migrant workers vulnerable to debt bondage under the '*Kafala*' system in the Middle East, wage theft, inhumane working conditions, and cultural isolation. Returnee migrant workers face reintegration challenges, as many of them return without a saving, their earning having been stolen by relatives and unscrupulous agencies and intermediaries or some return with no viable skills to support domestic economic participation.

### 5.6. Limited Contribution to Structural Economic Transformation

While the sector injects remittances into Uganda's economy, it has not significantly contributed to structural economic transformation. Much of the remittance inflow is consumed rather than invested into productively sustainable income generating ventures.

The remittances have literally exacerbated the informal nature of Uganda's economy. Migrant worker and returnee workers are eternally bound to the salaried working mindset, and only negligible numbers of them gain the liberation into investor mindset, which is crucial for structural economic transformation.

By and large, the labour export sector provides economic relief but remains a missed opportunity for meaningful sustainable economic development due to the legal, regulatory and governance weaknesses. Therefore, addressing structural challenges is crucial for Uganda to leverage labour migration as a genuine tool to poverty reduction and economic transformation.

### 5.7. Policy, Legal and Regulatory Recommendations

To strengthen the labour export sector's contribution to Uganda's economic development, this dissertation makes the following policy, legal and regulatory recommendations:

#### 5.7.1. Strengthen Legal and Institutional Framework

There is need for a comprehensive reform of the labour migration laws; the Employment Act and the migrant workers' regulations made thereunder should be revised and harmonized to address the labour migration dynamics, explicitly outlaw exploitive recruitment practice, and provide for stronger sanctions against unlicensed recruitment agencies and intermediaries.

Better still, fast-track the policy formulation with the intension of coming up with a complete stand-alone substantive legislation that exhaustively address issues of labour migration.

Enhance Institutional Capacity; equip the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Internal Security Organisation (ISO) and External Security Organisation (ESO) and other oversight bodies with adequate resources, skilled personnel and digital systems for licensing, monitoring and data management.

Centralise Recruitment Oversight; there is need to establish a single, transparent digital platform for all recruitment and placement processes to help minimise opportunities for fraud and bribery that so easily entangles the conventional systems and decentralised system.

**5.7.2. Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms in the Regulation of Labour Export**

There is need for targeted legal and institutional reforms aimed at strengthening regulatory oversight, enhancing worker protection and increasing transparency in labour migration governance in order to improve enforcement and accountability within Uganda's labour export. This can be done in many ways that can include the following:

Government should amend the Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations to provide for stronger enforcement powers to regulatory authorities particularly within the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The amendment should include introduction of clearer statutory obligations for recruitment agencies, through mandatory periodic compliance audits, stricter licensing renewal conditions, and enhanced disclosure obligations, relating to recruitment fees, employment contracts and destination-country employers.

Secondly, the law should be amended to establish a comprehensive digital labour migration management system through statutory regulation. The system should be made to facilitate mandatory electronic registration of migrant workers, display and make accessible to the public licensed recruitment agencies, employment contracts templates, establish a user-friendly complaints procedure, and maintain periodically updated returnee records. This would improve transparency, reduce fraudulent recruitment practices, strengthen monitoring of migrant workers welfare and enhance data collection for policy formulation and enforcement purposes.

Thirdly, stronger punitive sanctions against illegal recruitment practice, human trafficking, contract substitution, excessive recruitment charges and operation of unlicensed recruitment agencies should be introduced within the legal and regulatory framework. This is because the existing penalties under the current legal and regulatory framework are manifestly deficient to deter violations effectively. Accordingly, reforms should provide for heavier administrative fines, suspension and permanent revocation of licenses, blacklisting of offending agencies, and criminal liability for serious offences involving exploitation or trafficking of migrant workers.

Fourthly, Uganda should establish a Migrant Workers Protection Fund, or a fund by whatever name known, and enact mandatory migrant worker welfare and protection provisions requiring licensed recruitment agencies to mandatorily contribute to the fund. The fund would go a long way in supporting emergence repatriation, legal aid, compensation claims, psychosocial support, and reintegration programs for distressed migrant workers returning home from destination countries.

Additionally, the laws should strengthen labour inspection and compliance monitoring mechanisms by creating a specialized labour migration inspectorate within the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The inspectorate should be legally empowered to conduct regular inspection of recruitment agencies, investigate complaints, monitor compliance with labour export regulations, and coordinate with foreign missions regarding migrant worker welfare abroad. Furthermore, new reforms should require all bilateral labour agreements entered into by Uganda to contain enforceable minimum standards relating to wages, working conditions, dispute resolution mechanisms, medical protection, insurance coverage, and access to legal redress in destination countries. Such agreements should also establish joint implementation and monitoring committees between Uganda and destination states to ensure effective enforcement of migrant worker protections More so, the Government should also strengthen whistleblower and complaint-handling mechanisms through legally protected reporting channels for migrant workers and their families. This should include confidential reporting systems, anti-retaliation protections, and legally mandated timelines for investigation and resolution of complaints against recruitment agencies and employers.

Finally, there is need for harmonization of Uganda’s domestic labour migration framework with relevant international legal instruments, including International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Full domestication and implementation of these international standards would strengthen Uganda’s regulatory framework and improve protection of migrant workers throughout the migration cycle.

### 5.7.3. Combat Corruption in the Sector

Government should institutionalize anti-corruption mechanisms by strengthening accountability systems, establishment of an independent complaints tribunal, and enforce regular audits of recruitment agencies and government departments involved in labour migration.

Enforce a transparent revenue management system, earmark and reinvest a portion of government revenue from labour export licensing, placement fees and remittances into migrant workers' welfare and sector development.

Implement legal safeguards for whistleblowers protection reporting corruption and trafficking within the sector.

### 5.7.4. Enhance Migrant Workers' Protection

Bilateral Labour Agreements with destination countries should be renegotiated to include enforceable workers' protection clauses, grievance redress mechanisms and clear employer liability provisions in the destination countries.

Consular and legal support abroad at the Uganda consular services in key destination countries should be expanded and funded with the aim of enhancing migrant workers' protection. Government should also create migrant welfare attaché offices dedicated to handling labour disputes and rescue missions.

Institutionalise pre-departure training and awareness orientation programme to equip workers with knowledge of their rights, cultural adaptations skills and legal recourse options abroad.

There should be developed a structured reintegration programme that provides psychosocial support, entrepreneurship training and access to microfinance services to returnee migrant workers.

### 5.7.5. Promote Safe and Productive Labour Migration

There is an urgent need for Uganda to diversify migration destinations by exploring new bilateral engagements with countries offering higher-skilled labour opportunities and better working conditions to move away from over-reliance on domestic and menial work placements.

Uganda should leverage remittances for development by encouraging migrant workers' families and beneficiaries to channel the money received in remittances into productive investments. This can be possible through financial literacy programs, savings cooperatives and targeted diaspora bonds.

Uganda should encourage its youthful labour force to upgrade their skills through vocational training programs that align with international labour market demands.

This will enhance the country's bargaining power in securing better terms for its workers abroad.

### 5.7.6. Foster Regional and International Cooperation

The East African Community labour mobility network should be fast tracked, where member states can develop a regional; labour mobility protocol to enhance collective bargaining power and protect workers' rights.

Uganda should also domesticate and implement key international instruments such as the ILO conventions on migrant workers; the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration[102] and the UN convention No. 143.[103]

The UN global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration is the first intergovernmental agreement to cover all dimensions of international migration, and forges opportunities to improve migration governance.[104] This Multilateral

[102]International Labour Organisation, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (2018). Available: <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180711_final_draft_0.pdf> Accessed: 23 July 2025

[103]International Labour Organisation, *Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (Convention No 143)* (adopted 24 June 1975, entered into force 9 December 1978).

[104] <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>

Agreement aims at achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda of the United Nations.

Convention No. 143, for instance, is the first attempt of the international community to address the problems arising out of irregular migration and illegal employment of migrants. It lays down the general obligation to respect basic human rights of all migrant workers. In fact, it aims to prevent all forms of irregular migration in abusive conditions, including the unlawful or unauthorized employment of migrant workers. The Convention includes targeted provisions to address the problems arising out of irregular migration flows and illegal employment of migrants and on suppressing the activities of organizers of clandestine movements of migrants and their accomplices.[105]

Domestication of these international instruments will go a long way in ensuring compliance with internationally acceptable migrant employment standards for sustainable economic development.

### 5.8. Final Reflection

For Uganda as a Least Developed Country, the labour export sector remains a double-edged sword, on one hand serving as an economic necessity and on the other a governance challenge. It offers critical livelihood opportunities and remittance inflows, yet without stronger legal, regulatory and institutional safeguards, it risks perpetuating exploitations, informality and limited development returns. The pathway forward requires a holistic approach that integrates legal and regulatory reforms, institutional strengthening, anti-corruption measures, and international

[105]International Labour Organisation, *Ratification and Implementation of ILO Conventions 97 and 143 on Migrant Workers to Achieve Fair Labour Migration Governance*. Available:<https://www.ilo.org/media/407116/download> Accessed: 23July 2025

cooperation. If only these systematic weaknesses were addressed, Uganda would transform labour emigration from a survival strategy into a strategic pillar for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development.

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