Determinants of Irregular Labour Migration

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Determinants of Irregular Labour Migration

The ready availability of employment in the informal economy, where no documents are required, promotes unauthorized, irregular migration.

- Thus, irregular labour migration is essentially a labour market issue.

- Informal economy:
  All income-earning activities that are not regulated by the State in social environments where similar activities are regulated.

- Informality affects:
  (i) Registry of employment relationships
  (ii) Conduct of economic activity
Determinants of Irregular Labour Migration

Labour market determinants: Essential determinants of irregular labour migration.

- **Other determinants:**
  They interact with the labour market determinants:

  - Geographic determinants
  - Immigration conditions: entry and residence
  - Cultural/historical ties
  - Social networks
Labour Market Determinants

Demand for irregular migration is determined by:

• Low-productivity, low-technology, low-wage activities: but higher wages for workers relative to wages in countries of origin
• Reducing labour cost and sustaining competitiveness
• Tendency towards increased flexibility of labour
• Higher Labour Force Participation rates (LFPRs) for women
• Labour market control
Branches of Economic Activity where these Determinants Apply and Irregular Migration is Widespread

The relative importance of these branches varies between countries.

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Domestic work
- Care for the elderly
- Small enterprises
- Hotels, Restaurants, Catering
- Low-skill services
Other Determinants

- **Geographic determinants**: Contiguity, long coastal lines
- **Immigration conditions**: Visa requirements, residence permit conditions
- **Cultural/Historical ties**: Colonial ties, linguistic affinity, existence of migration system
- **Social networks**: Existence of social networks in country of destination, extent of validity of this determinant
- **Criminal activity**: Trafficking, smuggling
Policy Measures to Face Up to Irregular Labour Migration

Labour market measures:

• Expanding avenues for regular labour migration, taking into account labour market needs and demographic trends.

• An orderly labour migration process in both countries of origin and destination should be promoted.

• Raise the productivity and technological level of economic activities employing irregular migrant workers.

• Reinforcing effectiveness of labour inspection.

• Enforcing equality of rights and non-discrimination: For the protection of both national and migrant workers.
Policy Measures to Face Up to Irregular Labour Migration

Other policy measures:

• Effective border control respecting human and labour rights.

• Introducing visa systems and residence schemes that promote regular and discourage irregular labour migration.

• Combating criminal activities [trafficking and smuggling].