



NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AUTHORITY (NEA)

NATIONAL INTERNSHIP POLICY STAKEHOLDERS VALIDATION

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Ladies and gentlemen, Kenya Vision 2030 aspires to create a globally competitive and adaptive human resource base that can meet the demands of a rapid economy. To realize this, the country needs to ensure availability of an adequate and highly qualified workforce.

Most employers have reported in the past that a majority of graduates from tertiary institutions in the country lack the prerequisite skills required by the job market. The mismatch between skills possessed by graduates of training institutions and those demanded by industry is one of key reasons behind the high unemployment rates in the country, especially amongst the youth.

In order to address these skills mismatch, there is need to provide internship opportunities to students, school graduates and the unemployed youth to enable them gain practical skills in their areas of training. The major goal of internship programmes is to increase the students' knowledge of workplace skills by providing them with on-the-job training that integrates education, career development and work experience, thus allowing them the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in a professional setting.

The relatively high rates of unemployment amongst entry groups into the labour market emphasize the magnitude of the country's employment

problem. One of the contributing factors to this state of affairs is lack of practical work-based experience among the graduates.

Ladies and gentlemen, in Kenya, internship has been implemented in an uncoordinated manner by various players and without any clear policy structure or direction. Some organizations, especially in the private sector and amongst some major state corporations, have developed well-coordinated internship programmes with clear guidelines and policies in place. However, most organizations in both the public and private sectors implement ad hoc internship programmes without adhering to any policy standards.

In 2016, the Public Service Commission developed the Internship Policy and Guidelines for the Public Service. The policy provides a framework for engagement and management of internship programmes in the public sector. It recognizes that various sectors in the public service implemented

internship programmes in the past without a clear policy to guide engagement and management of interns.

Internship programmes in the private sector in Kenya can broadly analyzed along the formal and informal sectors' dichotomy. In the formal sector, most large enterprises have clear and formal policies guiding internship programmes at their workplaces. Some of these programmes have been implemented for a long period of time resulting in strong organizational internship cultures. They include the Graduate Management Trainee programmes implemented by key players especially in the manufacturing and services sectors of the economy. Whereas there is little evidence of the effectiveness of these programmes especially in the long term, their popularity and longevity may suggest that employers in the private sector find them beneficial to both the graduates and the enterprise.

Ladies and gentlemen, The National Employment Authority Act, 2016 provides for a comprehensive institutional framework for employment creation in terms

of enhancing employment promotion interventions, and promoting access to employment by the youth, minorities and marginalized groups. It further provides for placement for internship and monitoring of all placements to ensure that intern's rights are not violated. The Act therefore provides a solid legal framework for developing and implementing a National Internship Programme in the country.

This Policy recognizes that an intern's experience at work can be a valuable advantage to a student's educational development. It recommends that graduates take advantage of available internship opportunities to enable them explore career options and enhance their employability. This will assist in mitigating skills mismatch and enhancing the efficiency of the labour market, thereby reducing unemployment.

The internship policy shall apply to both public and private institutions and organizations in the country. However, the policy shall not apply to the Defence Forces or the Reserves, the National Police Service, the Kenya

Prisons Service or the National Youth Service as respectively defined in the Constitution. Internship will be provided to students and graduates whose education requirements include an internship programme, and graduates from tertiary institutions who have not secured employment within three years of graduation.

Through this policy, the Government of Kenya is committed to providing a framework for implementation of internship programmes in the country and to ensure proper coordination of the same for the benefit of both employers and interns. Interns will be provided with quality experience that involves meaningful activities and the opportunity to learn and gain practical work experience in their field of study. They will further be provided with quality supervision and evaluation by the employer during and after internship.

Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome all the stakeholders to this important occasion to give suggestions to the improvement of the policy.