

**LABOUR (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026**

**ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS**

**Section**

1. Citation
2. Amendment of the Labour Act, 2023
3. Insertion of a new section “**24A**”

**LABOUR (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026**

**A BILL ENTITLED**

**AN ACT** to amend the Labour Act, 2023 to cater for Gambians to work abroad in jurisdictions that do not have bilateral labour agreements with The Gambia, and for connected matters.

[Act No.6 of 2023]

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**ENACTED** by the President and the National Assembly.

**1. Citation**

This Act may be cited as the Labour (Amendment) Act, 2026.

**2. Amendment of the Labour Act, 2023**

The Labour Act, 2023 (hereafter referred to as the “Principal Act”) is amended as set out in this Act.

[Act No.6 of 2023]

**3. Insertion of a new section “24A”**

The Principal Act is amended by inserting a new section “**24A**” –

**“24A. Ministerial license to deploy a worker to non-bilateral labour jurisdictions**

(1) Notwithstanding section 24 (1) (b), the Minister may grant a license to permit the deployment of a worker to a country with which The Gambia does not have a bilateral labour agreement, upon application by a licensed employment agency and subject to such conditions as the Minister may determine or as set out in the Regulations made under this Act.

(2) Without prejudice to subsection (1), the Minister may grant a license where he or she is satisfied that –

- (a) adequate measures are in place to safeguard the rights, welfare, and security of a worker;
- (b) the terms and conditions of employment in the receiving country meet or exceed the minimum standards prescribed under this Act; and
- (c) the employment agency has demonstrated the capacity to monitor and ensure compliance with the authorised deployment.

(3) A license is valid for a period specified on it and may be renewed, varied, or revoked by the Minister in accordance with this Act.”

## **OBJECTS AND REASONS**

This Bill seeks to amend the Labour Act, 2023 to address a critical regulatory gap concerning the recruitment and deployment of Gambian migrant workers to countries where Bilateral Labour Agreements are not yet in place.

The Labour Act, 2023 prioritises safe migration through formal Bilateral Labour Agreements with receiving countries. However, negotiating and concluding Bilateral Labour Agreements is a lengthy diplomatic and legal process, while significant employment opportunities continue to exist in non-Bilateral Labour Agreements countries. The absence of a licensing and monitoring framework for Private Recruitment Agencies operating in these corridors has left Gambian workers vulnerable to unregulated practices, including contract substitution, excessive recruitment fees, poor working conditions, and lack of legal recourse. It has also limited the ability of the Government to monitor recruitment activities, enforce standards, mandate pre-departure orientation, and provide effective consular support to distressed workers abroad.

This Bill therefore seeks to introduce a regulated pathway for recruitment to non-Bilateral Labour Agreements countries by establishing a licensing, monitoring, and accountability framework for Private Recruitment Agencies. The amendment will move migrant workers from informal and unregulated channels into the formal sector, thereby granting them access to Government protection, standardised contracts, and legal remedies. It will also enable the Government to proactively manage risks associated with migration to non-Bilateral Labour Agreement countries by introducing safeguards to ensure recruitment is responsible and ethical.

The objectives of the amendment are to –

- (a) facilitate safe labour migration and protect Gambian workers from exploitation;
- (b) strengthen remittance inflows and skills transfer, thereby supporting national development and household resilience;
- (c) align The Gambia's labour migration framework with the National Employment Policy and Action Plan (2022–2026) and the National Development Plan (2023–2027); and
- (d) enhance accountability by licensing Private Recruitment Agencies, enforcing compliance, and ensuring that recruitment practices meet international labour standards.

The overarching objective of this Bill is to secure a balanced and protective labour migration system that expands opportunities for Gambian workers abroad while safeguarding their rights, strengthening national oversight, and contributing to economic growth and social stability.

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**HONORABLE MOD K. CEESAY**  
**MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT**