

# ECOSOC Partnership Forum

## Side-Event SUMMARY TWO PAGES MAXIMUM

### *Summary of Side-Event - Changing the Landscape by breaking down Silos: Cross-cutting business partnerships:*

2 February 2022, 08:00 – 08:50 AM (EST)

#### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

The IOE side-event to the 2022 Partnership Forum focused on two relevant workstreams that showcase multi-stakeholders' partnerships and provide concrete and practical examples of collaboration with the private sector that can enhance recovery and reaching the SDGs:

- IOE is leading a continuous dialogue between national employers and UN Resident Coordinators in various countries with the aim of enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing. The aim of this initiative is to ensure that businesses at the local level have the capacity and knowledge to engage with the UN and understand the opportunities and relevance of the SDGs to their activities.
- IOE is part of the Advisory Group for the Private Sector Forum to be held at the 5th upcoming UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5). Although postponed, IOE, through its national employers' organisations in LDCs, is working on analysis and providing recommendations for action in 26 LDC countries. This work will provide detailed guidance and evidence-based policy recommendations to accelerate economic development, increase capacity to reach the SDGs, and ensure effective collaboration between public and private sectors.

#### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator for India, focused on the importance of developing frameworks for closer collaboration across silos and to really learn from the experiences of the ongoing crises through working together. Working together in the current difficult context is crucial for improving resilience, implementing lessons learned, and better preparing for potential future shocks. Furthermore, fully grasping the opportunities of technological innovation as well as innovative sustainable practices need to be key components of recovery efforts and business development globally in order to reach the SDGs. The development and implementation of efficient new solutions requires significant financing in a large part from the private sector so a strong focus on funding and innovative ways of securing funds will also be key.
- Douglas Opio, President of the Federation of Ugandan Employers, focused on the issue of business continuity and stressed the importance of governments and UN agencies working with the private sector to ensure survival of vulnerable businesses. Furthermore, the issue of responsible business conduct and the business case for sustainability are some of the most important areas today.
- Anetha Awuku, IOE Project Manager, focused on the issue of business and private sector development in least developed countries (LDCs). Debt relief, development assistance and supporting private sector growth are some of the priorities for these countries and IOE has been closely working with 26 national employers' organisations to produce an analysis of the economic situation and potential for

business development. This work will result in recommendations and practical guidance on how local policies, labour markets, and economic frameworks could be improved and what are the main challenges.

- Dawit Moges, President of the Ethiopian Employers' Federation (EEF), focused on the different issues facing employers and business in Ethiopia, how they as a business service provider can create a better environment for business and what are the main challenges for business owners and for enabling better policies for job creation and economic growth. One of the issues businesses face in Ethiopia is a strong skills mismatch between labour market needs and the level of skills available in the population. Another significant issue is access to finance, very often it is not easy to reach credit lines and establish appropriate funding for business growth. Finally, infrastructure is often lacking and businesses can sometimes not develop due to lack of access to electricity or other necessary services.

**Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- Improve skills frameworks and increased action on mismatches between available skills and labour market needs.
- IOE is focused on its work with UN Resident Coordinators, in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and will continue developing recommendations for improving business conditions and close collaboration between governments, UN and local business.
- Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator for India, highlighted many different initiatives that the UN is working on with various Indian institutions and organisations with the main recommendation being to focus further and scale up such public-private initiatives on a local level.
- Douglas Opio, has focused on the need of local communities, refugee and migrant workers, and strongly recommended a reinforced multilateral approach to support business development of some of these vulnerable communities.
- Least Developed Countries need international support in three main areas in order to achieve stronger economic growth, job creation and business development which would allow stronger progress on SDGs: education and skills, access to finance, and improved infrastructure. IOE's project on LDCs and how to improve the business environment on a country-level will provide detailed and country-specific recommendations.