

GFMD “A Dialogue on Global Migration Compact” – 14 November 2016

Session II:

Economic aspects of the Global Migration Compact

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I have the honour today of representing the International Organisation of Employers (IOE). On behalf of Linda Kromjong, Secretary General of the IOE, I would like to thank our hosts for convening a meeting that brings all stakeholders to the table.

The business case for migration is positive and well-documented. My co-panelists today have presented a compelling overview of the benefits and challenges of migration and the very ambitious agenda that lies before us at very politically-challenging time.

I would like to focus my remarks on three areas: the employers I am representing today and the lens through which they view migration issues; the role of employers in the development of the Global Compact; and the need for coordination of this effort with numerous and diverse other initiatives that are addressing many of these same issues.0

IOE is the world’s largest and most representative private sector business association. Its members are some 150 business and employer organisations from over 140 countries. The IOE represents Employers in the ILO, and is recognized as the voice of business in social and labour policy debates across the UN system, as well as in the G20.

I serve as the Executive Director of the Council for Global Immigration, a not-for-profit organization that has worked on employment-based migration policy in the United States since 1972. CFGI became involved in the global discussions during the Global Commission on International Migration. On a day to day basis we provide education and resources for the legal and HR professionals who must ensure compliance with employment, migration, tax and other laws as they build a global workforce.

CFGFI is a partner of the IOE and a strategic affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management which represents 290,000 HR professionals in 160 countries. At a time when companies are struggling to build workforces for today and tomorrow, our combined experience and expertise on international employment and migration policy and trends enriches our contributions to this discussion

Much research in the field of human resources shows that when employees are happy and healthy, and their families are happy and healthy, they are more productive. As we engage the private sector

in this discussion, we must recognize that migrant workers are a small, but important part of the workforce necessary to accomplish business objectives. Human resource professionals continue to report difficulty filling a variety of positions. This skills mismatch is often hard to explain in the face of persistent unemployment and underemployment.

In developing solutions to the challenges presented by migration, however, it is necessary to distinguish among the types of migrant workers in the workplace and the various ways employers encounter the migration system. Solutions must be tailored to address the variety of employment situations.

The most common means employers encounter the migration system is through intercompany transfer of employees either for business trips or short or long term assignments.

Employers encounter the widest variety of migrants through the local hire process. The applicants who present themselves may have migrated through family or as refugees or through another employer or as a student. They may have work authorization or may require sponsorship by the employer. Depending on local laws, such sponsorship may or may not be a possibility.

Finally, we have the shortage occupation workers. They may be high-skilled or low-skilled and recruited through a third-party or directly by the employer. This is where the need for fair recruitment standards is most urgent.

The Global Compact on Migration is a historic opportunity to devise a blueprint for creating a more responsible, predictable system for responding to large movements of refugees and migrants.

The private sector has an important role to play in these discussions as both employers and as providers of services to migrants. Last year, the Global Forum on Migration and Development endorsed the creation of a GFMD Business Mechanism, coordinated by the IOE and the WEF Global Agenda Council on Migration.

The Business Mechanism's aim is to facilitate sustained interaction between migration policy makers and business leaders. In December in Dhaka, the Business Mechanism will release principles that will help governments to better understand how migration policies and practices affect business operations. These principles will begin to address some of the challenges to creating a robust Global Compact on Migration which have been identified.

In particular, we are focused on creating fair and efficient migration systems that enable employers to access talent necessary to be competitive in today's global economy, while protecting migrant and local workers from abuse. And employers have a stake in countering the current climate of negative rhetoric that is having a devastating impact on rational policy-making.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that migration is just one piece of a complex web of policies necessary to ensure fruitful employment opportunities for all workers in our fast-changing, uncertain and global economy.

Employers are engaged in many initiatives to promote skills development, apprenticeships and life-long learning; diversity and inclusion and flexible work; and to promote respect for human rights. We have an important stake in ensuring fair labour conditions and decent work for our workforce – whether migrant or local -- a responsibility shared among governments, employers and trade unions

Employers are active in a large number public and private sector initiatives relevant to the Global Compact on Migration. For example, the IOE and the International Organization on Migration (IOM) are working together to develop IRIS- the International Recruitment Integrity System. The ILO has also launched the Fair Recruitment Initiative which aims to prevent human trafficking, promote safe migration and reduce the costs of labour mobility.

Employers also participated in the discussions on Migrants in Countries in Crisis, lending our expertise both as employers of migrants and service providers to migrants.

And the private sector has been active in the 2030 sustainable development goals and the G20. It is essential that we ensure better synergy and effectiveness among these and numerous and diverse other global and regional initiatives, particularly as we seek to engage SMEs that lack time and resources to sort through multiple layers of policymaking.

In conclusion, we all have a vital interest in working together on the global compact. Companies benefit from open and modern migration policies that facilitate skills' transfer and human mobility. But individuals, economies and societies as a whole throughout history have benefited from the ability of human beings to migrate to seek better lives and opportunities. We hope and trust that our efforts can contribute to a public discourse that better reflects this reality.