

## GFMD workshop - Rabat, 18 April 2018

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- Je souhaite remercier le gouvernement marocain pour son invitations adressée au secteur privé et souhaite saluer la présence du patronat marocain dans la salle.
- The Business Mechanism was created in 2015 to bring the voice of business to the table of the GFMD. Led by the IOE and the WEF Future Council on Migration, the Business Mechanism comprises a large network of employers' organizations and companies of all sizes across the world. The Business Mechanism has contributed advice and input to the GFMD, and we are currently engaged in offering advice, based on the experience of our members on the ground, to the governments negotiating the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) <sup>1</sup>.
- Our message is based on the critical importance to our businesses and to our economies of well-regulated national migration systems. Let me take a moment to explain why, linked to today's focus on labour and skills.
- I will focus on three points that are very much interlinked:
  1. The importance for migration policies to respond to labour markets needs to ensure effective skills mobility
  2. We have to consider migration policies as part of a broader skills strategy
  3. Poverty reduction (yes) through remittances, but also through entrepreneurship
- These three points are linked to SDG 8 and will help achieve some of the targets linked to youth employment, sustained economic growth, employment and decent work, eradication of forced labour and responsible recruitment practices.

1. On the importance to develop migration policies that respond to labour market needs:

Global skills mobility is integral to business and economic growth. Companies know the value of skills mobility in their workplaces: In a recent survey by the Council for Global Immigration, 74% of corporate respondents reported that access to global skills is critical to their business objectives.<sup>2</sup> Migrants bring skills that mitigate gaps in native workforces. They introduce energy, new ideas and

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<sup>1</sup> GFMD Business Mechanism, *Toward a Global Compact on Migration: Perspectives on Labour Migration* (June 2017) and *Targeted Action for the Global Compact for migration* (September 2017), both available at <http://gfmdbusinessmechanism.org/polar/>

<sup>2</sup> Council for Global Immigration, *Employer Immigration Metrics: 2016 Survey Results*, available at [https://www.cfqi.org/us-immigration/our-advocacy/Documents/16-0559%20CFGI\\_EmpMetricsReport\\_FullFNL.pdf](https://www.cfqi.org/us-immigration/our-advocacy/Documents/16-0559%20CFGI_EmpMetricsReport_FullFNL.pdf)

new perspectives. They help business compete, innovate, and expand. An expanding business creates jobs for local populations as well.

- Migration policies should be timely and flexible to accommodate new and long-standing business models, but also predictable and transparent so that employers can effectively manage compliance.
- A range of migration options should be available to facilitate mobility in all skill levels, including dedicated programs for short-term assignments, as well as client-site placements and other forms of remote work. Link migration to Future of work. Policies must also be flexible enough to adapt to changing skills needs, and specifically to accommodate the need for lower-skilled workers in shortage occupations and for seasonal needs.
- Systems often inadequately consider these labour needs because there is a perception that local workers are available. In reality, low-skill labour needs are often met by foreign workers who lack proper status; this is one of the key drivers of irregular migration.
- We suggested a number of practical solutions, including trusted employer programs to facilitate processing for organizations with a record of compliance, and work authorization mobility to allow foreign workers to change employers with fewer formalities. These programs conserve resources for government and business and protect migrants.
- The absence of sound low-skill mechanisms has serious consequences. Promoting legal avenues for low-skilled migration tends to reduce the incidence of trafficking, irregular migration, informal employment activities, unethical recruitment practices and forced labour. Governments should work closely with the private sector in identifying skill shortages and long-term measures to address those shortages.
- Responding to labour market needs and thus promoting regular channels for migration may help to curb irregular channels and the toxic related consequences. It may also build public trust. Sharing compelling migration success stories can help to humanize an issue that is too often distorted.

## 2. On a broad skills strategy

- Around the world, businesses are working with governments to invest in education and training, bring women, youth, and underrepresented groups into the labour market, and develop domestic policies to ensure that all citizens are equipped to participate in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Migration is a complement to the native workforce, not a substitute for it. When migration is part of a broader skills strategy,

ALL workers can be better equipped to take new jobs created by business expansion.

- Employers can be a valuable partner in identifying skills needs and establishing frameworks for assessing foreign qualifications. Policies should avoid rigid qualification requirements and skills definitions, trusting employers to identify the most-qualified candidate. Employers rely on soft skills as well.
- Employers should be able to set requirements. Rigid skills assessment frameworks and occupational qualifications are often in conflict with labour market realities and with the business judgments of employers.
- Access to vocational training – engagement with the private sector.

### 3. Thirdly, on poverty reduction:

- As we know remittances are used for private purposes, mainly education. Some major payment service providers work with universities and schools to enable direct payment from families to the schools, an innovation which enables a reduction in cost while enhancing educational opportunity.
- FinTech industries use digital innovation to reduce costs and expand access. Yet there is a lack of physical infrastructure and financial literacy. The GCM could fill this gap by promoting accessible financial education.
- Most importantly remittances are also used to start micro-enterprises, which create new jobs locally.
- The GCM should recognize the positive contributions of migrant entrepreneurship. Countries should facilitate the immigration of qualified entrepreneurs and investors. Many countries like Canada, the UK, New Zealand, Ireland and Singapore have adopted measures such as Start-up visas to facilitate the inward mobility of entrepreneurs. In other cases, migrants who enter a country on a work or student visa are unable to transition easily to setting up enterprises because of permits constraints. Unless these issues are addressed, any measures to attract entrepreneurial talent will remain inadequate. The GCM could consider instituting mechanisms for facilitating access to capital, promoting social networks, providing education on local laws and regulation.
- PPP have set up skills development programs to upskill migrants with entrepreneurial skills. Those programmes provide tools for migrants to create their companies. These efforts need to be promoted. Yet careful attention should be paid to reverse discrimination. A balance should be found.

- In conclusion, I am here to assure you of the interest and intention of the international business community to find strategies for businesses and governments alike to partner to both advance skills mobility and protect the human rights of migrants. Instead of fearing migrants as competition for jobs, we hope that more of society can appreciate their contributions and the value of skills mobility. And when appropriate legal and regulatory mechanisms are in place to meet low and semi-skilled needs, we hope that an important driver of exploitation can be eliminated.
- That said, we hope that the GCM will take these priorities into account. But more importantly, we encourage governments to keep the dialogue with their respective national employers' federations and business communities.