

IMRF ROUND TABLE ONE

Tuesday, 17 May 2022, 10:00 to 13:00

Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters

Co-Chaired by Egypt and Germany

Co-led by ILO and UNDP



Roberto Suarez Santos, Secretary General, International Organisation of Employers

Excellencies,

- As the SG of IOE, I am pleased to represent the voice of our members, employers' organisations and businesses, based in more than 140 countries.
- The recent world developments (pandemic and Ukraine war) have highlighted longstanding migration policy and governance gaps; exacerbated the skills shortages that persist in every region of the world; and intensified human rights vulnerabilities. They call for urgent review of labour migration processes to adapt to new realities. They call for a drastic shift in the way we look at migration.
- I don't mean to sound pessimistic. On the contrary. The business community looks at the mobility of skills with great optimism. Employers around the world are convinced that the access to foreign workers is one of the solutions to reduce the skills shortage that many industries face. Global employers are convinced that their operations benefit from a diverse and complementary workforce. Yet the existing immigration systems hinder employers from attracting, hiring and retaining the skills/talent they need, with serious consequences on sustainable development and economic growth.
- The world is changing fast. The world of work is evolving even faster. Digital transformation, the growth of remote work, the ability to collaborate online, new consumer trends and e-commerce demands, gig work are developments with important implications for labour mobility.
- Migration law, policy and administration were built for a now-obsolete economic model based upon fixed work locations and contracts for structured employment and have not kept pace with such workplace changes. This collision of business needs with dysfunctional and outdated policies means that businesses face significant impediments to accessing the global workforce, while governments forgo migration-fuelled economic development.

- IOE hosts the Business Advisory Group on migration. It serves as a platform for private sector engagement at the Global Forum for migration and development (GFMD). We have launched yesterday a publication which highlights the business positions on migration and provides guidance to governments in the implementation of the GCM.
- The paper focuses on three objectives which are of interest to this roundtable.

Objective 5 on legal pathways: employers increasingly face hurdles in obtaining visas and work permits in particular for short- and medium-term assignments – those most characteristic of the evolving workplace. According to UK research, businesses employing highly skilled workers, particularly in high tech sectors, generate 19 to 25 new jobs in their industry for every 10 positions they create.¹

Objective 6 on cross-border recruitment: Business has long argued that appropriate and effective national regulation that promotes responsible recruitment practices will serve to create a level playing field for the legitimate recruitment industry and to protect vulnerable migrant workers.

Objective 18 on skills development and recognition: Hiring and retaining employees with appropriate skill sets for any given position are obviously key company objectives. In drafting or reviewing migration policies, policymakers should raise these critical questions:

- ➔ Which sectors and occupation are projected to grow and where?
- ➔ What skills will be in demand for companies in the short-medium-long term?
- ➔ What re-skilling or upskilling is necessary to meet the new market needs?
- ➔ What is the migrant population already active in the labour market?
- ➔ Where are skills being lost?

We invite you to read our paper which provides in depth analysis on these three objectives.

Let me conclude with two points:

1. Reemphasizing Michelle's point: engagement with the private sector and in particular with the representative and organised voices of employers at national level will be one of the components for successful implementation of the GCM. At global level, this is repeated, supported, endorsed. But at the national level, the private sector does not feel part of the implementation strategies, nor of the migration policy making decision process.
2. It is no secret that Employers' tend to shy away from politically sensitive issues. But in this case, we see the economic impact that migration policies have on business. We see the opportunities in hiring a global and diverse workforce. And

¹ Centre for cities, "What's the impact of high-skilled jobs on the employment opportunities of people with few or no qualifications?", 2019, available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/whats-the-impact-of-high-skilled-jobs-on-the-employment-opportunities-of-people-with-few-or-no-qualifications>.



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we see a response to serious skills shortages in many industries. There is a real business case for well-regulated migration. We therefore need to shift our mindset to a more positive vision of the benefits that well regulated migration can bring to our economies and societies.

Thank you.