Diversity, Equality & Inclusion in the Workforce of the Future - outcomes of the 5th Annual IOE Forum during the International Labour Conference

Dear Members and Corporate Partners,

As you are aware, we organised a special IOE event for our members and partners during the recent International Labour Conference for the fifth consecutive year. With a keen interest in deepening our discussions on the Future of Work, we chose as our theme: Building a Workforce for the Future with Diversity, Equality & Inclusion. The outcomes will inform our ongoing contribution to the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, and other relevant forums dealing with this important topic going forward.

Many thanks go to IOE President Erol Kiresepi, who took on the task of setting the scene with his opening remarks, and chairing the discussion, and to my fellow moderator Mr Kris de Meester of the Federation of Belgian Enterprises (FBE).

As in previous years, we had a full house, with more than 120 participants joining us for an intense three-hour session of interventions and interaction.

Such events provide the perfect showcase for the IOE’s diversity of membership, expertise and experiences. Distinguished panelists from IOE-member organisations, in order of appearance, were Mr Robson Braga de Andrade (CNI, Brazil), Ms Kristin Skogen Lund (NHO, Norway); Mr Kaiser Moyane (BUSA, South Africa); Mr Rajeev Dubey (Indian Employers), Mr Hiroshi Tokumaru (Keidanren, Japan) and Ms Saïda Neghza (CGEA, Algeria). From our Corporate Partners, we were delighted to welcome to the podium Ms Ellen Yost of Fragomen. Further valuable insights were provided by Mr Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General, Ms Deborah France-Massin, Director of ACT/EMP, and Ms Britta Gross of Deloitte Consulting. As last year, we welcomed a national employment
minister, in this case, Ms Patricia Hajdu, who set out Canada’s policy agenda for ensuring that “everyone has a fair shot at success”.

I am pleased to be able to share with you, via the link in the side panel, our comprehensive report of the Forum, which includes links to presentations, complementary material and the programme.

You will see that many important points were emphasised. We heard ample data from a raft of respectable and reliable sources which further support the business case for diversity, equality and inclusion in the workplace.

But there was also agreement that there is still a great deal of work to be done by everyone. Employers, workers and governments need to come together to agree on, design and adopt regulatory frameworks that increase the incentives and decrease the risks associated with including more people in the workplace; it will have to become profitable to hire, train and include more people - because at the end of the day, higher rates of inclusion will have to be good for business and society as a whole to be sustainable; and employers’ organisations and their affiliates have to be in the vanguard in identifying skills needs for the future so that governments can design and deliver, including through PPPs, education and training that produces a diverse range of skills across all segments of society. As our President said in his opening remarks, how well we, as business, perform this role will determine the outcomes in terms competitiveness and growth.

I hope you enjoy reading our report. As always, your feedback and comments are most welcome.

Roberto Suárez Santos
Acting Secretary-General