African Exchange Conference on COVID 19

Presentation made by George Khaki, Executive Director
Country context (Malawi)

• Landlocked country
• Mainly agriculture dependent
• Largely informal economy
• A large number of SMEs
• Hand to mouth economy
Challenges

• Multiplicity of information sources
• Political landscape hindering information dissemination
• Disruption of supply chains
• No unemployment benefits
• No laws to support temporary lay-offs of workers
• Weak health infrastructure
• No direct participation by private sector in Government decision making
• No common understanding of essential services
Employer/Private sector responses

- ECAM took lead making proposals to Government
- ECAM in the process of transitioning from physical to virtual meetings
- ECAM doing a study on the impact of COVID-19
- Business formed a broad coalition to be talking to Government as one entity
- Businesses working with Government to complement its health infrastructure and response
- Flexible working arrangements by employers
- Provision of PPEs
- Businesses moving into manufacturing of COVID-related materials
Lessons

• Working together as one voice helps industry build strength and allows dealing with multiplicity of ideas very quickly
• Besides industry/sector specific responses, the industry can play a big role in complementing Government efforts in crises
• Such crises open up further business opportunities
• Members are looking up to employers organizations to navigate through the crisis and bring their views to government