



INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS

*Chemin de Joinville, 26 - P.O. Box 68 - CH-1216 Cointrin / Geneva
☎ (+41) 22 929 00 00 - Fax (+41) 22 929 00 01 - E-mail: ioe@ioe-emp.org - Internet: www.ioe-emp.org*

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PRESS RELEASE

World Employers Elect New Leader

Geneva , May 30, 2006 – At today’s general assembly meeting in Geneva of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), representatives of IOE’s national member federations elected Abraham Katz, a former U.S. career diplomat and emeritus president of the United States Council for International Business (USCIB), as IOE president.

Ambassador Katz, who has extensive experience leading U.S. business on international economic policy issues, succeeds François Perigot of France, a former Chairman of Unilever France and head of MEDEF, the French and UNICE, the European employers organizations, who has served for the past five years in the role. (a copy of Mr Perigot’s Biography is attached)

IOE officially represents leading employers federations from around the world in the International Labour Organization and other United Nations bodies. USCIB, based in New York and with some 300 leading U.S. multinational companies and other organizations among its membership, serves as the U.S. affiliate of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC).

“Employers individually, and through their representatives federations, must intensify their efforts to counter the mounting

backlash against globalization,” said Ambassador Katz upon his election. “They must do so by putting a human face on this irreversible process. The IOE can lead in this by building on the legacy of François Perigot, helping member federations and speaking out for them on labour and social issues, in the ILO and other world forums.”

Mr Perigot reiterated his firm belief in the important role the IOE plays in the ILO and elsewhere. “International debates today affecting business are accelerating, be they in the International Labour Organisation, within ISO or in the area of Human Rights. It is important for all employers, be they multinational or small and medium-sized that their voices are heard in those discussions. It is only through a well focused organization that we will be able to ensure that the voice of world business is clearly and consistently heard through the IOE”.

In his 14 years as USCIB’s president, Ambassador Katz served as the IOE’s vice chairman for North America, as a member of the ILO’s governing body and as vice chairman of the IOE economic and social committee and from 1995 - 96 served as IOE General Council President. In the context of USCIB’s support for trade liberalization through agreements like the Uruguay Round and the North American Free Trade Agreement, he advocated a cooperative approach to labour and environmental issues.

On his initiative, the ILO promulgated the 1998 Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as a cooperative and peer-based alternative to trade sanctions and he sparked the development of the ILO’s convention prohibiting the worst forms of child labour. To help meet global environmental challenges, he has also put forward policy recommendations for accommodating environmental agreements in the World Trade Organization’s rules.

In a 34-year career in the U.S. foreign service, capped by his appointment as U.S. representative to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as in his leadership of USCIB, Ambassador Katz dealt with a wide variety of economic, labour and social policy matters. (a copy of Ambassador Katz’s Biography is attached).

The IOE is a network of 141 national employers organizations from 136 countries which has for the last 86 years represented the interests of employers at the international level in all labour and social policy debates. In that role the IOE also acts as the secretariat to the Employers' Group within the tripartite International Labour Organization.

Contact: Antonio Peñalosa
Secretary-General
Tel: +4122 929 00 00
Fax: +4122 929 00 01
Email: ioe@ioe-emp.org

Or Jonathan Huneke, USCIB
Tel. +1212 703 5043
Email: jhuneke@uscib.org