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REPORT

IOE/KAS Virtual Workshop
20 May 2020: 13:30 – 15:00

**Enhancing Cooperation between United Nations Resident Coordinators and
Employer and Business Membership Organisations and their Company
Members, and strengthening collective Action to address COVID-19 Impacts**

Executive Summary

The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Foundation share a common mission of supporting a rules-based, social market economy and contributing through robust partnerships to the global goals set out in the 2030 Agenda. To this end, IOE and KAS joined forces to host a virtual conference to explore opportunities for partnerships between United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and IOE member organisations and their company affiliates with a view to enhancing cooperation for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda, as well as measures to address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

Panellists were the heads of the two hosting organisations, UN Resident Coordinators, or their representative, and the leadership of employer and business membership organisations (EBMOs) from the Maldives, Serbia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda.

It was decided to have limited participation in this first virtual conference and therefore advertisement of the conference was restricted. There were 57 registered participants from IOE, KAS, IOE member organisations and their affiliates, ILO, and other organisations.

The exchange was a follow-up to an IOE communication addressed to UN leadership on behalf of IOE's global membership in early April 2020. This communication expressed the willingness of IOE to engage with UN RCs at local level and set out IOE's added value as a partner, particularly in the context of UN Reform, the [Decade of Action](#) and COVID-19 response. Chief among IOE attributes are its global representativity of businesses, large and small, across all sectors and in almost 150 countries; experience and expertise in socio-economic policy advocacy at the international level and on the ground; and in-depth knowledge of the specific challenges and needs of the local business community.

For the New York office of KAS the cooperation with IOE falls into the broader context of not only promoting the concept of a social market economy, but also to support a multi-stakeholder approach in striving to further the SDGs, and in particular Goal 16. The latter's aim to provide rule of law as well as policy and governance frameworks conducive for sustainable development are key for a private sector that has taken on its social responsibilities.

Key Takeaways:

The private sector and its representative EBMOs at national and international level were closely involved in the elaboration of the SDGs and remain deeply committed to contributing to the 2030 Agenda, including the Decade of Action, particularly through multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with actors in the multilateral system. Many examples were given of private sector initiatives that evidence this commitment, though it was agreed that much more could be done if the right policy frameworks and dialogue structures were in place to support private sector efforts, and if more buy-in could be secured from SMEs. The latter requires more effective outreach and communication in plain business language of the value of engaging in the 2030 Agenda. While the financial contribution of the private sector to the SDGs is highly valued, developing and transferring technology, sharing innovation, engaging in advocacy, and nurturing skills and talent are also sought. Enhanced visibility should be given to joint efforts in progressing the SDGs with a view to creating impact and inspiration.

Within the context of the reform of the UN Development System and the unprecedented socio-economic challenges created by COVID-19, there is no time to lose in setting up structures for regular dialogue forums between the UN RCs and local EBMOs, and other stakeholders, and in stepping up joint advocacy to governments for conducive policy frameworks and measures to restore and accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda, and to meet the post-COVID needs of the private sector, especially SMEs.

The “new normal” offers a window of opportunity to approach the world’s challenges differently, including re-imagining business and societal models that align more closely with the 2030 Agenda, that contribute to “greening” the economy, and to re-orienting skills development towards the needs of the digital economy. Addressing pre-COVID issues of inequalities, which are exacerbated by the crisis, and climate change remain high priorities globally.

The UN Global Compact, with which IOE enjoys a longstanding and constructive relationship, provides a valuable network for engagement between the UN system and business. However, the Global Compact does not engage in work on policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks that are crucial for the system changes that are required as we move from advocacy to implementation of the SDGs, i.e. the Decade of Action. Also, while an important convenor, the Global Compact is not present in every country and cannot provide the bridge to the SME sector that is needed to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the sector’s needs in response to COVID-19. This is called for in the UN Secretary-General’s Response and Recovery Fund initiative. Such a bridge is provided by IOE’s member network, which represents around 50 million companies in close to 150 countries.

Next Steps

- Establish a schedule of similar exchanges between UNRCs and EBMOs in various countries;
- Follow up with UNRCs and EBMOs in the participating countries, i.e. the Maldives, Serbia, Uganda, Trinidad and Tobago, to learn about the development of their relationships, as well as any outcomes such as joint advocacy, that can be replicated in other geographies;
- Develop a playbook with pilot case studies and circulate to RCs and EBMOs;
- Further promote the engagement of business and EBMOs in efforts to achieve the SDGs, including through effective partnerships with UNRCs, as well as concrete policy measures to support enterprises, especially SMEs, in the post-COVID recovery phase;
- Give visibility to IOE partnerships with UNRCs through all media: IOE website, blog posts, social media accounts and publications;
- Explore the elaboration of joint IOE-KAS-UN publications in plain business language to further promote private sector engagement in and reporting on the SDGs, and in advocacy for measures to meet/implement the SDGs and overcome COVID-19 challenges;
- Continue to encourage the ongoing active engagement of IOE member organisations with the UNRCs to support the UN’s COVID assessment initiative and co-create measures for the recovery of businesses and livelihoods.
- Create guidance for businesses on navigating the post-COVID environment and working collaboratively during this Decade of Action.

Introductory Remarks and Setting the Scene

IOE Secretary-General Roberto Suárez Santos welcomed the panellists and attendees to the first of what he hoped would be many virtual conferences jointly hosted by IOE and the KAS Foundation. The exchange aimed to enhance cooperation between UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and IOE members in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda, as well as strengthening collective action to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ IOE members are national employer and business membership organisations (EBMOs) in almost 150 countries around the world, with more than 50 million corporate affiliates - companies large and small, across all sectors. The crisis raised the need to strengthen partnerships, as well as the opportunity to explore new business and societal models for the future that aligned more closely with the 2030 Agenda.

Mr Suárez noted that this exchange took place within the context of UN Reform, which IOE had been discussing within and beyond the International Labour Organization over the past year. The support of IOE members for the reform of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) for its potential to enhance UN policy coherence, efficiency and impact had been affirmed on many occasions, including in discussions with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. With a global network of members who were being called upon by national governments to input COVID response measures, IOE was uniquely placed to add value to UN efforts on the ground.

KAS' Executive Director in New York, Ms Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa extended warm greetings and introduced the KAS as a champion, *inter alia*, of a rules-based social market economy which, while holding up the value of the free market, also supported the need for a social safety net that catered particularly for the excluded. Given this alignment of values, Ms Ostheimer said it was natural for KAS to reach out to the private sector through IOE in support of the 2030 Agenda and the global goals (SDGs).

Ms Ostheimer observed that the timing could not be better to explore cooperation between the UN RCs and EBMOs. The reform of the UNDS was underway, and while it mainly concerned internal UN structures and processes, it was clear that the success of the UN country teams and the interaction on the ground between agencies, funds and programmes, and the teams' support to countries' efforts towards the SDGs, largely depended on bringing together all the key actors, including the private sector and civil society. Ms Ostheimer illustrated that the private sector was holding governments to account in advancing the SDGs by quoting the statement of the [Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance](#) (October 2019) that business could do much more if they had the adequate policy frameworks.

An additional factor favouring the timing of this exchange was the status of multilateralism, which Ms Ostheimer viewed as probably facing its most serious threat since its establishment in 1945, even as the COVID-19 crisis highlighted that nations had to work together in order to contain the spread, develop vaccines, and address the social and economic challenges. For Ms Ostheimer, multilateralism had to move beyond its mere intergovernmental character and embrace relationships between state and non-state actors to advance the common good as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda.

The Role of business and employer membership organisations (EBMOs) in the 2030 Agenda

¹ Please see attached Annex 1

UNRC for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten Ms Marina Walter began by expressing her appreciation for the exchange, which, she agreed, came at a propitious time.

Ms Walter noted that the critical role of the private sector in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda had been acknowledged pre-COVID, but that the crisis had once again put the spotlight on Goal 17 and the need for “real partnership”. When it came to partnerships with the private sector, Ms Walter underlined that, while the transfer of private sector funds was critical, it was also a matter of co-creating approaches and working together on sustainable models for the future. She recognised the private sector’s track record of producing innovative solutions that addressed the world’s challenges. While the private sector had at times contributed to environmental problems, it had also proven to be part of the solution. Simply put, Ms Walter believed that the private sector had talent, technology, and finances to move the needle on any given SDG more than any single government, even if implementation fell to governments.

For Ms Walter, the ten principles of the UN Global Compact provided a framework for business action in support of the SDGs, in terms of respecting human rights, labour rights, environmental considerations, and anti-corruption measures. These principles were largely respected in the formal business sector in Trinidad & Tobago.

It was clear that the SDGs represented a historic, win-win opportunity for businesses, which she had experienced first-hand in her previous role as head of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in India. Ms Walter shared the best practice of the Tata Group, one of many examples around the globe, which had not only used the SDGs for internal guidance but also to benchmark all their business activities across India. Evidence showed that sustainable businesses very often outperformed their competitors and supported stable societies.

When it came to Trinidad and Tobago, Ms Walter said that the private sector was vibrant and had already played a key role in the country’s, and indeed the region’s, progress towards the 2030 Agenda. While there had been few entirely private, or public-private, SDG-related initiatives to report, the situation was changing. BP Trinidad and Tobago, together with Shell, were embarking on a PPP to establish solar energy facilities that would power between 20 and 40 per cent of the country’s homes.

Between 2015 and 2017, much of the private sector’s financial contribution (of around 12 million USD) to the country’s development had been channelled through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The significance of this was appreciated when one considered that the social programme budget of the Ministry of Social Development was around 4.5 million USD in 2018. Ms Walter said that a CSR approach was much appreciated but less effective than engaging business in creating shifts in financial instruments, business models, and co-creating (with partners such as government and the UN) the overall business and socio-economic context of the country. This was because CSR initiatives were often siloed and disconnected from the global as well as the country’s own development agenda.

With respect to adherence to the ten principles of the UN Global Compact, Ms Walter added that the private sector had even been something of a trailblazer in defending the rights of migrants and refugees (from Venezuela) by advocating that the government legalise this group by providing registration documents allowing them to take up private-sector employment opportunities. In a further example of proactive behaviour, companies had pushed for the country to become a member

of the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#) to promote more clarity in the country's decision-making around extractive resources. In addressing the current crisis, two weeks previously the UN had met with key CEOs of companies operating across the Caribbean to get down to examining the potential long-term impact of COVID-19 and the urgent role the private sector could play in getting back on track with the SDGs. Ms Walter was keen to underline the positive and constructive attitude of the private sector, particularly when it came to the longstanding issue of food security. It had been agreed that a white paper would be jointly elaborated by the private sector, public authorities and the Food & Agriculture Organisation of the UN (UNFAO), to try to change the set-up of the country to restore the positive trajectory towards the SDGs.

Mr Suárez noted that IOE enjoyed a constructive relationship with the UN Global Compact as a member of the advisory board, adding that IOE members could add complementary value because of their seat at the national policymaking table due to their representation of the private sector as a whole, as well as their influence on their companies in terms of promoting new business models.

On behalf of the **Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECATT)**, interim CEO **Ms Stephanie Fingal** began by saying that Ms Walter's contribution had covered many of her key points, including that the SDGs were primarily targeted to governments, who were expected to translate the global goals into national action plans, policies, and initiatives in line with national capacity. They provided a framework around which to rally a wide range of stakeholders. Ms Fingal said that the private sector in her country could play a key role in the achievement of the nation's vision for the future by prioritising those SDGs where the most impact could be made – not all 17 goals would be relevant for all businesses. Echoing the win-win nature of involvement in the SDGs for business, Ms Fingal enumerated benefits such as discovering new growth opportunities, lowering risk profiles, enhancing corporate sustainability, strengthening stakeholder relations. While Trinidad and Tobago could be proud of its many positive attributes, barriers to achieving the goals included a high crime rate, an inconsistent level of law enforcement in certain areas, weak social partnerships which were the focus of improvement efforts, economic decline exacerbated by a lack of diversification in the economy and the current pandemic, resulting in lack of financing. The nation's five focus areas for development in their 2030 vision, designed to align with the SDGs, were: human capital investment, good governance and service excellence, quality infrastructure and transportation, globally competitive businesses and placing the environment at the heart of social and economic development. There was an opportunity for the private sector to be involved in the infrastructure development component. Companies could contribute to the goals in many cases simply by respecting environmental laws. As an EBMO, ECATT was involved in the formulation of labour laws and encouraged their business affiliates to contribute their views when ECATT advocated for reform.

Mr Suárez highlighted the point made about approaching the SDGs as a business opportunity. He also underlined the need to find a common language when discussing the 2030 Agenda, which at times had proven a challenge among different stakeholders. He felt this challenge could be overcome by enhancing relationships.

What does the COVID-19 pandemic mean for collaboration and for the 2030 Agenda?

UNFPA representative in Uganda Mr Alain Sibenaler stepped in for UNRC Ms Rosa Malango, who had been prevented from participating at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances.

Mr Sibenaler began by saying that the COVID-19 response in Uganda has stimulated a good deal of repurposing of resources. Businesses and EMBOs had responded to the government's calls for financial and in-kind contributions, but, more importantly, had adjusted by reorienting factory production to make hand sanitisers and masks. The second urgent need was to address the employment impact, especially in light of the country's high percentage of youth (78% under the age of 30). Already pre-COVID, the labour market could not absorb the annual cohort of new entrants, many of whom lacked the skills demanded by the market. Mr Sibenaler said that the private sector had the most potential to employ these young people productively, and to address the skills gap through mentoring and internships. For its part, the UN was partnering with the government of Uganda's labour ministry on a graduate volunteer scheme enabling new graduates to work with government and/or UN organisations.

In terms of the COVID-19 impact, Mr Sibenaler predicted that the "new normal" would require new skills (particularly digital skills) and urged the private sector to establish training institutions, or partner with academic and training institutions, to provide these skills.

He went on to say that the private sector contribution to the SDGs required maintaining best practices to promote the global goals, including in terms of respecting labour laws. He commended the work of IOE member, the Federation of Uganda Employers, for their partnerships with the ministry of labour to provide the business perspective in the development of sector-specific COVID-response measures such as tax wavers for patents for the production of PPE, rescheduling the national social security fund, and interventions to revamp business-continuity support during and after lockdown. Company responses also included encouraging teleworking and issuing health and safety guidance.

Further examples of partnership with the private sector in the past had included a contribution in 2017 by South Africa's MTN of one billion UGX through UNHCR for medical facilities to support the 1.4 million refugees in the country. Alibaba's Jack Ma had recently contributed a large consignment of PPE and there had been a 316 million USD response from a range of contributors, including the private sector, to an emergency appeal. The Uganda Chamber of Commerce had, with UNDP, established a private sector foundation, which had endorsed the [Gender Equality Seal Initiative](#), a workplace gender equality programme implemented in 42 public and private enterprises. There was a Uganda Private Sector Platform for the SDGs, and Kampala Innovation Week, and the new generation UN country team were involving multi-stakeholders in regular meetings.

Mr Suárez noted the interesting examples, which illustrated that sometimes private sector response was not only about funding, but about re-orienting resources and expertise, and about bringing its perspectives to the formulation of government policy.

President of the National Federation of Maldivian Employers (NFME) Mr Mohamed Ali Janah gave a detailed [presentation](#) of the situation in his country, in terms of the economic and demographic landscape; the ex-patriate community made up about 50% of the population, involved in the construction, and tourism and hospitality sectors, which had ground to a halt as a result of the pandemic. Although the fisheries industry had continued, export markets had been closed off. The Maldives had been identified by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asia Development Bank (ADB) as one of the countries hardest hit by the impact of COVID.

Employers were taking austerity measures but trying to mitigate the impact to the extent possible. The government was providing the unemployed with a stipend of around 300 USD for the next three months. Landlords had reduced rents, although people were still struggling to pay. Day labourers, who were largely illegal immigrants, were particularly vulnerable and the government had started to build temporary accommodation. Private sector operators in the tourism industry had allocated some of their properties for quarantine and isolation purposes.

Mr Janah explained how heads of various EBMOs, including sectoral, had prepared a detailed, data-based report of the impact of the crisis on various business sectors and the economy as a whole, which had been well-received by the government at the highest level to inform response measures. As most construction companies were SMEs, this sector was on the verge of collapse.

With this dramatic emergence of social issues, Mr Janah believed that a campaign was needed to create awareness around navigating the “new normal”. OSH was a top priority and had to be instilled across all industries and workplaces. The NFEM had come up with and shared its own guidance in this regard and began training sessions (with the participation of 100 business representatives the previous week.) The over-reliance on expat labour because of a lack of skills locally had also raised social issues and Mr Janah believed that it was necessary to identify sectors where Maldivians could be better trained and he saw a role for the private sector in assisting the government in regularising or repatriating illegal migrant workers.

A further issue was the Maldives lack of a tripartite culture, though it had joined the ILO in 2009. The time was now right for putting this concept into practice so that both employers and workers could be formally involved in policymaking processes, including with regard to the SDGs, as increased poverty and hunger were a consequence of the pandemic.

UNRC in the Maldives, Ms Catherine Haswell expressed her hope that the current exchange would provide a foundation for more sustainable interaction going forward. She said that if only one statistic were to be retained, for example that 74% of the Maldives’ budget was generated by tourism, the magnitude of the impact of COVID on the country’s development was clear. Not only this, the crisis had exposed many existing inequalities and the critical needs of vulnerable people in particular, highlighting serious structural and systemic weaknesses in various government policies. There was now urgency in coming together as different stakeholders to address those difficult discussions in order to put the country back on track.

Ms Haswell referred to the five pillars of the UN Secretary-General’s [Response and Recovery Fund initiative](#) and particularly pillar 3, which focussed on protecting jobs and SMEs. While by no means minimising the impact of the crisis on health and lives, Ms Haswell recognised that it also provided an

opportunity to do things differently and to deal in much more robust and comprehensive partnerships with segments of society where in the past a common language may have been lacking. She believed that the crisis could be a catalyst for developing partnerships that could help to spread the cost and build resilience, boost “greening” and diversification of the economy, and create jobs.

Reverting to the matter of implementing effective social dialogue in the country, Ms Haswell was keen to point out that this did not just mean a simple conversation; it meant jointly defining and developing sustainable solutions that could be concretely implemented. She commended NFEM’s advocacy work to date. It was crucial now to capitalise on that progress by involving NFEM in UN discussions with the government, through the recently established national task force, on recommendations for the socio-economic policy response.

How can we improve cooperation and increase impact?

UNRC in Serbia Ms **Françoise Jacob** began by alluding to the UNSG’s overall strategic framework highlighted by Ms Haswell, which called for a large-scale assessment of the socio-economic impact of the crisis, and therefore wide engagement with the private sector.

While recognising the value of the UN Global Compact, Ms Jacob underlined the importance of reaching out to the EBMOs who represented the SME business sector who had been most negatively impacted by the crisis and employed the most people globally. The key question was to find out what SMEs needed beyond the immediate support packages that government had put in place. She understood that ILO was reaching out with dedicated surveys, at least in the western Balkans, to identify and assess this need.

Ms Jacob agreed that there had never been a better time to increase cooperation and to explore new solutions. She reported that UNDP and UNICEF had launched innovation challenges to SMEs to come up with solutions for dealing with the “new now”, particularly in the green economy, health sectors and the future of work. This would require a step change in interaction with the private sector. Acknowledging that many bodies had committed to investing billions, Ms Jacob believed that international and regional funding would have to be integrated with the knowledge of the UN and the feet on the ground, including those of the private sector, to achieve the desired outcomes.

Reverting to the issue of the need for a common language, Ms Jacob believed there was still a lot of communication to share with SMEs, and the general public, on the means, the value, and the benefits, of engaging with the SDGs. There was a great deal of scope for communicating jointly.

Referring to the social impact of migrants returning to Serbia, Ms Jacob said that these individuals were viewed as an asset in terms of skills provision – the government wanted to keep them in the country and there was potential to work with the private sector on a retention plan.

Finally, Ms Jacob called attention to the [UN75 Survey](#) to identify the number one priority of people globally. The survey found that climate change remained top of the list and she cautioned against forgetting about the climate change agenda in the rush to respond to the crisis. This was an additional area where the UN and the private sector, companies large and small, would have to work together.

Mr Suárez announced that IOE intended to conduct its own complementary survey of members on joining forces for the SDGs.

Ms Nataša Pavlović Bujas, board member of the Serbian Association of Employers and SME owner, expressed her optimism about the future of partnerships and cooperation as heralded by the exchange, as well as her hope of meeting Ms Jacob soon in Belgrade to further discussions.

As time was now short, Ms Bujas succinctly captured the action necessary to improve cooperation and increase impact: repositioning, stepping up advocacy, and increasing visibility. Recalling Ms Ostheimer's words, she said that all organisations needed to reposition themselves, whether businesses, UN agencies or NGOs. As an SME, repositioning had been a feature of the behaviour of her company, and her clients, over the past two decades, with the private sector increasingly taking active responsibility for employees and the environment, local communities, and society in general. This led her to conclude that the private sector was not only interested in contributing, but that it was also ready to play an active role in policymaking. On the matter of a common language, she felt that progress had been made once common goals were established.

Stepping up advocacy efforts meant that all stakeholders had to work together and continue to exhort governments to create policies that would help not only to survive the crisis, but also to create a better world for everyone.

And to increase impact, partnerships had to be visible. This meant elevating and more widely communicating UN-EBMO partnerships.

Question and Answer Session

Questions were grouped to ease response. The first question was addressed to the UNRCs: how to better plan and organise engagement with national EBMOs to make the assessment of needs on the ground to complement the work of other valuable networks such as the Global Compact? The second was how to ensure food security, and the third related to skills development for those who had lost their jobs as a result of the crisis, particularly digital skills development. How to support SMEs in moving into a more digital environment?

Mr Sibenaler advocated for good strong consultations to be set up with different organisations, EBMOs etc. and to create development partner coordination groups to facilitate dialogue and review the situation because everything had changed.

Ms Haswell agreed that it would be important going forward to create opportunities for better engagement, such as a regular UN-civil society forum (which she had recently instituted in the Maldives) for monthly meetings around specific issues. Such forums provided an opportunity for a reality-check, so that all parties understood the real-world concerns of each other. This allowed the UN to bring other perspectives to the table in discussions and policy recommendations with government; the Maldives would be pleased to pilot such an initiative. On the matter of food security, the international fund for agricultural development was coming in with a 20 million USD programme, which was launching in June. As the Maldives imports most of its food, COVID had highlighted the need for more sustainability within the Maldives itself and the government had now set aside a number

of islands for agricultural production. Mr Janah noted that the private sector would be interested in becoming involved in this initiative at the policy and practice level, such as the warehousing and logistical aspects.

When it came to skills development post-COVID, Ms Haswell agreed that this was an area where partnerships with the private sector were essential. The UN relied on ILO for labour policy, and on UNDP for working with the business sector and SMEs, but the private sector had to be more involved in the day-to-day conversations. While the UN could come up with policies and proposals for best practices, these had to be checked against the reality on the ground.

In conclusion, Mr Suárez recalled that the exchange had taken place as a follow-up to a communication to the UN expressing the interest of IOE and its members to liaise with the UNRCs to improve the delivery of UN goals on the ground as well as COVID-19 response measures; it was, he hoped, only the beginning of such engagement.

He thanked KAS Foundation for their support and said that IOE would produce a report on the exchange, including action-oriented follow-up points to promote and progress the partnership between IOE member organisations and UN RCs and to move the needle on advancing the SDGs as well as post-COVID socio-economic recovery measures.

Agenda
Staying on track with the 2030 Agenda:

Enhancing Cooperation between United Nations Resident Coordinators and Employer and Business Membership Organisations and their Company Members, and strengthening collective Action to address COVID-19 Impacts

Virtual Workshop on 20 May, 13:30 – 15:00

COVID-19 and its disastrous impact on health, employment and the economy call for collective action. Business has a key role to play in preventing the spread of the virus, protecting lives and livelihoods, and building resilient economies and societies. The aim of this digital meeting is to gather first impressions from UN Resident Coordinators about their expectations on business and business federations with regards to the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the wider implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to hear from business about their experiences in engaging with UN agencies and institutions.

AGENDA

Introductory remarks and setting the scene

Mr Roberto Suárez Santos, *IOE Secretary-General*

Welcome and setting the context

Ms Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa, *Executive Director New York Office, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)*

The role of business organisations in Agenda 2030

Matthias Thorns, *IOE Deputy Secretary-General*

- The Caribbean:
 - Ms. Marina Walter - *UN RC - Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten*
 - Ms. Stephanie Fingal - *Interim CEO Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago*

What does the COVID-19 pandemic mean for collaboration and for the 2030 Agenda?

- Uganda:
 - Ms Rosa Malango - *UN RC Uganda, represented by Mr Alain Sibenaler, UNFPA representative in Uganda*
- Maldives:
 - Mr. Mohamed Ali Janah – *President, National Federation of Maldivian Employers*
 - Ms Catherine Haswell – *UN RC Maldives*

How can we improve cooperation and increase impact?

- Serbia:
 - Ms. Françoise Jacob – *UN RC Serbia*
 - Ms. Nataša Pavlović Bujas - *Serbian Association of Employers (SAE)*

Tour-de-table

Conclusions and next steps

CONNECTION DETAILS

Meeting with UN RCs and employer federations

Wed, May 20, 2020 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM (CEST)

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/257788125>

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