



International Organisation of Employers
Organisation Internationale des Employeurs
Organización Internacional de Empleadores
The Global Voice of Business



Bahrain Declaration

Accelerated globalisation and interconnectedness, coupled with exponential technological progress and innovation, have afforded our time a wealth of opportunities. However, many societies still face obstacles to progress, including persistent unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, weak or unstable growth, high levels of informality, poverty and human rights challenges.

Against this background the global employer community fully supports the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8, which calls for *“sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”*, and its important targets of achieving higher levels of economic productivity, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. Everyone must have a fair chance of entering the labour market - a job is a basic condition for providing for oneself and one's family, developing personally and growing in prosperity.

Economic and social progress are not achieved without concerted effort. Governments must act now to make the SDGs a reality by fully unleashing the opportunities that globalisation, new technologies and innovation create. The global employer community calls on governments and heads of state to deliver on their promises of more jobs, decent work and sustainable growth by:

I. Fostering job creation - especially through policies for an enabling business environment that encourage companies to hire

- Removing barriers to starting, operating, and growing a business.
- Creating easy-to-understand, employment-friendly labour law.
- Promoting the variety of forms of employment needed to allow companies maximum opportunities to hire as many people as possible.
- Decreasing the burden of non-wage labour costs - in many cases an obstacle to employing people.

II. Creating opportunities for young people and women in the labour market

- Creating attractive regulatory framework conditions that stimulate the establishment of apprenticeships systems.
- Enhancing cooperation between business and vocational education and training (VET) institutions, as well as universities. Employability has to be a key focus of education systems to avoid skills mismatches.

- Ensuring apprenticeship systems respond to the development of new professions.
- Equipping VET institutions with the latest in learning tools.
- Focusing on gender equality in education and skills training from an early age.

Addressing obstacles to women's employment, such as lack of access to or high cost of child care, social norms that stigmatise working mothers, and restrictive and discriminatory legislation.

II. Ensuring employment is safe and occurs in the formal economy

- Fully implementing ILO Recommendation No. 204 on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy and ILO Social Protection Recommendation No. 202.
- Stepping up efforts to improve national OSH frameworks to establish a preventative safety and health culture.
- Establishing efficient and effective labour inspection and administration systems.

IV. Making labour migration a win-win situation

- Focusing on migration as an opportunity rather than a risk
- Developing predictable, efficient and flexible policies that are in line with labour market needs in order to minimise barriers to mobility.
- Improving transparency with regard to the competences and qualifications linked to different degrees in order to facilitate mutual recognition arrangements. Different certification systems should not be a barrier to migration.
- Making it easier and cheaper for migrants to send remittances which play an important role in the economy and development of countries of origin
- Raising public awareness of the importance of migration for the wealth and competitiveness of host countries.

V. Fostering open markets

- Promoting multilateral economic cooperation and eschewing protectionism.
- Pursuing policies that favour the freer entry and exit of goods, services and investments and promote greater competition and openness.

VI. Strengthening implementation of international commitments

- Effectively implementing and enforcing at national level commitments made with regard to human rights and international labour standards, especially the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work.
- Continuing to promote the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Supporting companies, especially SMEs, in their efforts to implement the UN Guiding Principles, especially with regard to due diligence and human rights impact assessments.

The contribution of business to the concerted effort towards shared progress

Business plays an essential role in the concerted effort to build a prosperous and sustainable global economy. Nine out of ten jobs are in the private sector. Business, often hand-in-hand with academia, is the incubator of new technologies and innovation, and delivers jobs, incomes, purchasing power and livelihoods, allowing community integration and facilitating greater economic and social equity, inclusiveness and political stability.

The global employer community reaffirms

- Support for the SDGs and its readiness to work and cooperate at national and international level to reach the targets.
- Commitment to engage with trade unions and all other stakeholders in dialogue and negotiations that contribute to more and better jobs, growth and prosperity.
- Endorsement of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the ILO MNE Declaration and firm commitment to their implementation.

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