NEWS RELEASE

IOE BRINGS THE VOICE OF BUSINESS TO THE 2013 ECOSOC SUBSTANTIVE SESSION IN GENEVA

5 – 9 July 2013

IOE representatives have been participating over the past few days in ECOSOC’s annual Substantive Session/Coordination Segment and related events in Geneva, bringing the global business perspective to discussions ranging from tackling youth employment, to understanding the role of international labour standards in achieving decent work.

The side event organised by the ILO on 5 July, following up on the call for action adopted at the 2012 International Labour Conference on the youth employment crisis, looked at the role of partnerships. Joining distinguished panellists from the ILO and the Brazilian government, IOE Deputy Secretary-General Roberto Suárez Santos argued that high youth unemployment rates would not be alleviated by governments implementing measures which failed to recognise the need for a regulatory environment that promoted business confidence. “Business wants flexibility to grow and to create jobs for all sectors of the community, including young people, and stands ready to actively engage in partnership with governments to address skills mismatches, such as by contributing to the design and implementation of apprenticeship programmes.” He noted, in this regard, that the B20–L20 had delivered a statement outlining the key elements of quality apprenticeships to the labour ministers and heads of state and government of the G20. Mr Suárez also announced that the IOE was leading a Global Apprenticeships Alliance with the participation of business to look precisely at these issues.

During the discussion on partnerships for productive capacity, IOE Senior Adviser Ms Maria Paz Anzorreguy stressed that the engagement of UN agencies with the private sector needed to take into account the business way of approaching challenges and to recognise the expectations of business when entering into alliances. Engaging with representative business organisations was a key means for the UN system to have the global input of business, as they could reflect the range of needs of companies - large and small - wherever they may operate around the world.

The ECOSOC segment also explored the role of human rights and international labour standards in achieving decent work. Joining ILO Director-General Guy Ryder on this panel, Roberto Suárez reaffirmed the commitment of business to international labour standards, and argued for the ILO’s mandate in this area to be respected, with the adoption as well as the supervision of ILO standards lying squarely with the tripartite constituents. “Business needs a stable environment to create decent work, and this includes certitude as to the practical consequences that international labour standards have for companies operating in a global environment,” concluded the IOE’s Deputy Secretary-General.