Introduction

The Engagement of Employer Organizations in the 2030 Agenda – priorities, activities and expectations

Reaching SDG 8 – where do we stand, what are the challenges and opportunities, what needs to happen

Challenges, opportunities and actions

Appendices
Introduction

To achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, it will be essential to involve all areas of the economy and society. This must include the private sector, which employs 9 out of 10 people globally and provides the goods and services that form the global economy. Business has an imperative to ensure that economic growth is sustainable and inclusive. To do so, it needs to proactively engage to find and develop solutions to the SDGs.

Around the world, Employer and Business Organizations (EMBOs) are committed to engaging with national governments and the UN system to create the right framework conditions to achieve the goals. This engagement takes many forms, including awareness raising, capacity building, facilitating the creation of partnerships and engaging with governments for conducive framework conditions.

One of the most important annual events for engagement on the SDGs is the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. The HLPF serves as a platform for United Nations (UN) Member States to present a voluntary review of progress made at the national level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. By bringing together government officials, as well as relevant UN agencies and stakeholders from business, academia, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the HLPF provides a unique opportunity to advance the SDGs.

The 2019 HLPF will be held in New York from 9-18 July 2019. The theme for the HLPF is “Empowering people, ensuring inclusion and equality” and will focus on six of the SDGs:

1. **Goal 4**: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
2. **Goal 8**: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, integral and productive employment and decent work for all
3. **Goal 10**: Reduce inequalities in and between countries
4. **Goal 13**: Take urgent measures to combat climate change and its impacts
5. **Goal 16**: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
6. **Goal 17**: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Ahead of the 2019 HLPF, it is important to first understand what actions business, through the EMBOs, have taken to advance the SDGs. This report analyzes their activities and efforts, and makes recommendations for ways to expand their engagement.

Additionally, the report takes a deep dive into SDG 8, which focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, integral and productive employment and decent work for all. Although engaging on all SDGs is essential for business, SDG 8 is at the heart of the EMBOs and business community as a whole.

1. [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019/]
The Engagement of Employer Organizations in the 2030 Agenda – priorities, activities and expectations

The 2030 Agenda is a key priority for EBMOs. In 2015, at the Global Employers’ Summit in Bahrain\(^2\), the worldwide employer community affirmed their full support for the 2030 Agenda and committed to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs. To better understand the extent and level of engagement of EBMOs in the implementation of the SDGs, the IOE organized a Global Business Forum on the SDGs. Held in Madrid in October 2018, the Forum had participation from representatives of EBMOs from more than 35 countries. Following the Forum, the IOE conducted a survey of its global members on the SDGs with responses from 25 countries. The outcomes of the workshop\(^3\) combined with the findings of the survey, provide the basis for the following assessment.

The workshop and the survey findings reveal that **EBMOs are highly engaged in the 2030 Agenda and sustainability is at the core of business:**

1. Although businesses have long embraced the idea of sustainability for their own survival, a focus on sustainability in a much broader framework is an imperative for businesses today. A recent survey\(^4\) of more than 500 companies, which was jointly undertaken by the IOE and the International Labour Organization’s Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ILO ACT/EMP), identified that sustainability is one of the five megatrends impacting business most. The survey also confirmed that companies are looking for support from their representative organizations. EBMOs will only remain relevant if they are involved in the implementation of the SDGs and offer related services to their member companies.

2. EBMOs widely acknowledge that sustainability is critical to long-term business success. This is why the 2030 Agenda is a priority even during economic recession. By incorporating the social and environmental criteria into their business strategies, leading sustainable enterprises maximize their performance for stakeholders, society, and the environment, safeguard and enhance their reputation (inclusion in global sustainability rankings for example), improve their access to financing, and respond to the societal dynamics that increasingly call on businesses to pursue purpose as well as profits. The SDGs present a business opportunity for companies to commit, engage, invest, innovate, cooperate, and communicate their efforts towards sustainable growth. The SDGs are aligned with creating a conducive environment to do business and create a level playing field for businesses at national and international level.

3. The SDGs are a universal language, applicable to all players, in all countries, based on an international agenda. As such, they are not only an important reference framework to which companies can align their products, policies, and impacts, but employers want and must be a part of this global movement to combat exclusion and inequality.

4. The 2030 Agenda is permeating all national policies, including national and foreign development policies, and trade strategies. It also addresses different goals that are relevant to the world of work. To engage in the SDGs is a part of EBMO’s work to represent the interests of business vis-à-vis government. Moreover, there is a broader acknowledgement that employer organizations must be involved; otherwise they will be abandoned by their members, viewed by the mainstream society in a negative light, dismissed by policy makers for lacking credibility and representativeness, and will miss out on opportunities that arise in the process of achieving SDGs.

5. EBMOs are an important multiplier. They have a key role to play in raising awareness among company members about the SDGs as well as on the business and human rights agenda to promote a responsible business conduct. They are also important in promoting the development of multi-player partnerships that are intrinsic to the achievement of the SDGs. Governments, businesses and civil society have to work together in order to comprehensively and coherently tackle systemic issues.

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2. IOE, Bahrain Declaration, 2015
3. IOE-CEOE, Global Business Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, 2018
4. IOE, Changing Business and Opportunities for Employer and Business Organizations, 2019
While EBMOs recognize the challenge set by the SDGs, they also see them as an opportunity. Responses from the IOE survey, as well as the discussions in the 2018 IOE SDG Global Forum, highlight that opportunities and challenges are often the two sides of the same coin.

1. The 2030 Agenda has the potential to transform the mindset of businesses, governments and the civil society alike and to become an engine for reforms. When focusing on SDG 8 (Economic growth and decent work) and SDG 10 (Reducing inequalities), it is clear that there are major opportunities to make labour markets more open, dynamic, and inclusive, bringing more vulnerable groups into employment. Moreover, employers are particularly focused on the achievement of SDG 4 (Education) and SDG 8 because of the lack of a qualified and educated work force, mainly due to the mismatch between qualifications, education, skills and the needs of employers. However, there is a common perception that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has been too slow. There is a widespread assessment that governments need to “walk the talk”.

2. The ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda will require a massive funding and resource mobilization. They will open opportunities for innovative financing and new partnerships. More efforts are needed to develop these new approaches and to secure the necessary resources to reach the targets.

3. Cohesion and coherence need to be strengthened between actors as well as between different policies. Effective partnerships will be essential to the achievement of the SDGs. More efforts are needed to agree on national targets and strategies. The 2030 Agenda opens up opportunities to collaborate on solutions of which EBMOs can be a part.

4. Capacity building will be a key requirement to better equip stakeholders to play their role in the 2030 Agenda and implement the SDGs.

5. Lack of awareness of the 2030 Agenda, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as other stakeholders, such as local authorities and administrations, remains a major challenge to be addressed in order to unleash the full potential of the SDGs.

6. There is concern that the 2030 Agenda may create more red tape, triggering a wave of unnecessary bureaucratic regulation that will not only hinder sustainability, but also hamper entrepreneurship and innovation, and undermine the competitiveness in the global market.

7. Better ways must be found to measure progress vis-à-vis the SDGs and enhance national capacities to collect and analyze relevant and updated data.

8. At company levels, there is a need for relevant and practical toolkits, practice-sharing and examples of business cases that can serve to guide, inspire, and motivate.

9. There is also a challenge for businesses to clearly identify the SDG-related activity, as the scope of the 2030 Agenda is very broad and many activities of EBMOs and companies are linked to different SDGs.
EBMOs are already contributing extensively when it comes to engaging in the 2030 Agenda. Examples of best practices, according to IOE, include:

1. **Participating in the elaboration of national development policies**. strategies, and action plans, through the formal, institutional participation of social partners in SDG-dedicated national committees.

2. **Raising awareness and building capacity** through workshops, conferences, the establishment of SDG working groups, programs to reach out to SMEs, creation of SDG-related websites, guidance documents in local languages and the establishment of specialized SDG centers of excellence.

3. **Undertaking research** on the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and on the potential barriers and solutions to adopting the SDGs at company levels.

4. **Promoting responsible business conduct** and relevant tools and instruments. Many EBMOs also partner with the UN Global Compact to this end.

5. **Promoting best practice** through SDG award schemes, sharing and showcasing best practice, using the organization’s media channels and contacts to publicize the contribution of business to the SDGs.

6. **Advocating for an enabling environment for businesses** to play their full role in the achievement of the SDGs. Creating an environment where there is legal and regulatory certainty; investment in infrastructure, including digital infrastructure; support for the anticipation of new skills, upskilling and reskilling; new frameworks that support new business models and diverse forms of work such as the gig economy.
The activities listed above mirror companies’ expectations when it comes to services from EBMOs. The survey jointly conducted by the IOE and ILO ACT/EMP revealed that companies expect engagement from their representative organizations on several levels:

1. Analysis, insights and perspectives on how the world is changing at the macro level (megatrends) and on societal trends and developments.
2. Safe space for peer-to-peer learning.
3. Advice on legal, industrial and political developments.
4. Assistance/introductions to create partnerships.
5. Sectoral knowledge on SDG-related topics.
6. Support on how best to measure impact and how to communicate and report on the SDGs.
7. Engagement in developing an appropriate regulatory framework for reaching the SDGs, including strengthening the rule of law and good governance.
8. Practical tools and guidance.
9. Help with the identification and replication of best practices.
10. An environment that encourages the development of multi-stakeholder activities in support of the achievement of the SDGs.
SMEs play an important role in the 2030 Agenda, as they are the backbone of basically all economies in the world and employ the majority of the workforce. SMEs have a number of particular advantages when it comes to contributing to the SDGs, such as their agility enabled by more horizontal hierarchies and structures, their ability to implement more quickly; their close connections to local communities and knowledge of the needs of their local environment; and their tendency to hire workers belonging to vulnerable groups. However, they also have particular challenges of their own, notably a lack of resources to monitor trends and developments related to the 2030 Agenda, lack of capacity and management training and skills, and difficulty in accessing finance. EBMOs have, therefore, developed services7 with a focus on helping SME members to proactively engage in the 2030 Agenda. These include:

1. Conducting awareness-raising campaigns targeted to SMEs, also working with sectoral SME organizations.

2. Advocating for SMEs in national debates.

3. Helping SMEs to access global value chains.

4. Sharing experiences, methodologies and toolkits.

5. Delivering training workshop for SMES and enlisting training institutions to also focus on SDGs.

6. Encouraging and helping SMEs to prioritize and focus on the SDGs that are most relevant to their business, rather than trying to address them all – which can be overwhelming.

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7. IOE-CEOE, Global Business Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, 2018
SDG 8 is at the heart of what EBMOs do. In order to achieve sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, the following priorities are of particular importance:

1. **A regulatory and policy framework** which encourages companies to grow and employ people. What are needed are open, dynamic and inclusive labor markets that respect fundamental principles and rights at work, with simple, transparent, flexible and predictable legal employment frameworks. Also needed are efficient, speedy and corruption-free processes to register businesses. Incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to operate in the formal sector are key to encouraging companies to create opportunities for underrepresented groups in the labor market.

2. **More action on women’s economic empowerment** is necessary. This might include removing legal restrictions that hinder women from participating in the formal labor market, improving access to finance for female entrepreneurs, increasing supportive mechanisms such as accessible and affordable child care and elderly care, and ensuring access from a very early age for all girls and women to compulsory, high-quality education systems with proper acquisition and application of core competences, particularly in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

3. **Better targeted initiatives aimed at increasing youth participation in the labor market.** This includes the creation of regulatory framework conditions that encourage the establishment of apprenticeship systems, and enhancing cooperation between business and vocational education and training (VET) institutions as well as colleges and universities and public high/secondary school districts.

4. **More concerted efforts to integrate persons with disabilities into the labor market.** These should focus on practical measures that contribute to facilitating employment retention and return-to-work opportunities. Support and advice should be provided on how to address the barriers that often prevent persons with disabilities from obtaining jobs in the private sector.

5. **More efforts to address the challenge of informality generally.** ILO Recommendation 204 provides a detailed road map, including lowering entry barriers such as those associated with the burdens of bureaucratic procedures; simplifying taxation schemes by reducing the complexity of tax codes; and creating progressive tax structures that encourage small businesses to enter the formal sector.

6. **Education systems to align with tomorrow’s labor market needs.** For example, ensuring access to compulsory, high-quality education systems that deliver proper acquisition and application of a broad range of essential skills. These range from core competences (particularly literacy, numeracy and STEM subjects) to more complex reasoning, critical thinking, social and behavioral capabilities. Additionally, targets and metrics should be designed to be centered around the learner’s acquisition of this range of skills. Education investment should focus on early childhood education, especially in low-income countries where preschool attendance is very low. This might include revamping teachers’ professional development, and improving how they are recruited, paid, rewarded, assessed, and trained.
7. **Effective lifelong learning systems.** Governments need to formalize the role of “learning to learn” in childhood education systems as a fundamental competence and to prioritize the role of lifelong learning in training and education systems. Governments should collaborate formally with businesses, employers and business organizations in the design of skill-building and re-skilling initiatives to ensure relevance to future workforce needs. Where possible, they should leverage opportunities brought by new technologies, engaging in new teaching approaches adapted to adult realities, and encourage more formal on-the-job training approaches within businesses.

8. **Stronger partnerships** between governments and business on SDG 8-related matters. EBMOs have a key role to play as a bridge between the private and public sector. These organizations also need to be fully involved in labor market and education policies at national level.
Reaching SDG 8 – where do we stand, what are the challenges and opportunities, what needs to happen

Where do we stand with regards to SDG 8?

Of the 17 sustainable development goals that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (referred to as 2030 Agenda hereafter) pledged to achieve, one of these goals, SDG 8, is specifically aimed at promoting decent work and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Being one of the broadest in scope, SDG 8 includes a large number of indicators and targets (as suggested by the UN) including inclusive and sustainable economic growth, efficiency and environmental sustainability, eradication of forced labor and modern slavery, and increased financial inclusion.

Through a series of figures, this chapter explores the progress that has been made over the years on the indicators and targets listed in the SDG 8 framework. It focuses on 36 countries, including the G20 countries and a selection of developing and least developed outside of the G20. These countries have been categorized into four income classes per the World Bank’s 2018-19 income classifications—high, upper-middle, lower-middle, and low. To improve readability of the figures, the G20 countries are included either as averages of all (high, upper middle, and lower middle) or a representative from each of the four groups. The 16 additional non-G20 countries are shown individually subject to data availability.

Data challenges are many and it is important to mention that updated data is not available for several parameters and countries. Even though some of the information dates back to years before SDGs were implemented, latest information that was made available by the sources has been used in order to determine the larger trend, assuming not much changed in the past four years.

9. The SDG tracker, https://sdg tracker.org/about
High-income (G20) countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, EU, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States
Upper-middle-income (G20) countries: Brazil, China, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Turkey
Upper-middle-income (non-G20) countries: Malaysia, Thailand, Peru
Lower-middle-income (G-20) countries: India, Indonesia
Lower-middle-income (non-G20) countries: Bolivia, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam, Georgia
Low-income (non-G20): Ethiopia and Rwanda
The findings are discouraging, as the rate of global progress has, so far, not kept pace with the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. While per capita income levels have narrowed between high- and lower-income countries over the past decade and labor productivity has marginally improved in the latter, very little success has been achieved with respect to:

- Increasing employment opportunities, especially for the young workforce;
- Reducing informal employment, labor market inequality, and gender discrimination;
- Improving resource efficiency in consumption;
- Promoting safe and secure working environments, and
- Improving access to financial services.

These development goals will be necessary for sustained and inclusive economic growth.

The slow and unequal pace of progress in achieving the various aspects of this wide-ranging SDG across countries points to the inability of policymakers in translating and incorporating this shared agenda and vision into national development plans and strategies. The findings validate the conclusion of a recent research by International Labour Organization, which suggest the world being off track in achieving many SDG 8 targets. 

**Progress against goals and challenges**

**Target 8.1. Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries**

UN suggested indicator: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita

Strong economic growth is a necessary first step to enable the various aspects of prosperity. Over the years, countries around the world have steadfastly focused on improving growth per capita, and most of them have achieved success as well. In the sample of countries studied in this chapter, high-income G20 countries have had a much higher per capita GDP relative to the middle-income G20 countries (both upper and lower). That said, over the past two decades, stronger GDP per capita growth among middle-income G20 countries relative to high-income counterparts narrowed the gap between the two income groups progressively (chart 1).
Chart 1. Real GDP per capita of G20 countries (aggregated per income levels), growth and absolute (2010 USD)

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
A similar trend of strong per capita growth was seen among the middle- and low-income non-G20 countries. While middle-income G20 countries fared better, with China, India, and Indonesia topping the growth chart consistently, a few non-G20 countries, such as Vietnam, Philippines, and Ethiopia also recorded strong growth (chart 2). However, the 2008 global financial crisis did impact the growth momentum as several middle-income countries failed to replicate a growth rate similar to pre-crisis years.

**Chart 2. Growth in real GDP per capita of developing and least developed economies relative to G20 countries (aggregated by income levels)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>G20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>G20</td>
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<td>Upper-middle</td>
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<td>Lesotho</td>
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<td>Lower-middle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
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</table>

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Countries belonging to the Asia Pacific region consistently fared better in terms of per capita growth than their peers from other regions. In fact, this was the only region to have posted over 4.5 percent growth (excluding Japan) in 2008 when all other regions were reeling under recession due to the financial crisis. While G20 countries outperformed the non-G20 countries in all regions historically, over the past 2 years non-G20 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean and Africa and Middle East regions have seen stronger growth.\textsuperscript{12}

**Target 8.2. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value-added and labor-intensive sectors**

UN suggested indicator: Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person

Level of productivity is one of the most fundamental pillars to sustained growth and a better standard of living. Rising productivity ensures increased compensation to workers, better employment opportunities as well as improved working conditions, all of which are core to SDG 8. Yet, levels of productivity across countries have widely varied. On average, labor productivity in high-income G20 countries was five times the upper-middle-income G20 countries and 10 times the lower-middle-income G20 countries, with the gap barely converging over the past two decades (chart 3). However, as we observed in the charts above, the levels of per capita income have narrowed substantially between these two income groups (high- and middle-income). The middle-income countries are enjoying economic growth propelled primarily by demographic factors, including a growing labor force. Two of the most populated countries, India and Indonesia (lower-middle-income G20 countries), have the lowest levels of productivity among G20 countries.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} As per data from the World Bank, 2019
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid
Chart 3. Labor productivity in high-income nations is way higher than middle-and low-income countries

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Over the past decade, high-income G20 countries have recorded a very poor productivity growth, which is worrying since these are also the countries with declining workforce and rising population age. Middle-income G20 countries, which started the century with strong productivity growth rates, have also struggled to improve productivity in the decade after the 2008 crisis. Note that productivity has doubled in India, Bangladesh, and Georgia since 2000; however, the absolute levels are very low. Their demographic dividend is aiding in strong growth, but growth sustainability will likely be a question in the long-run as several of these countries may lose their demographic advantages in the coming decades.

The situation is dire in non-G20 lower-middle and low-income countries and is a concern since growth in most of these countries has also declined over the past decade (chart 4). India and Indonesia are the only G20 countries with productivity as low as non-G20 countries covered in this report.

Chart 4. Labor productivity in upper- and lower-middle income countries, 2017
Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

UN suggested indicator: Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex

Well-functioning and transparent institutions are essential to better working conditions and improved employment opportunities. In absence of these, business environment and investment suffer, which results in growth of informal employment and vulnerable employment conditions. Over the years, very few G20 countries managed to keep the proportion of informal employment below 50 percent and even improved the formalization of jobs over the past decade, albeit marginally (chart 5). India and Indonesia had over 75 percent of the population working as informal employees and were among the worst performing countries, including non-G20 countries. A few non-G20 countries, such as Vietnam and Peru, did well by bringing in more people within the ambit of the formal sector in the recent years, yet overall, their share of informal employment remained very high.

Chart 5. Share of informal employment between two decades*

* annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined range.

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Gender discrimination was not very evident as the proportion of men and women employed in the informal sector was similar, except in Peru, Egypt, and Ghana. While the informal sector had more women employees in Peru and Ghana, more men were hired in the sector in Egypt (see appendix).

**Target 8.4. Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead**

Deloitte proposed indicators: GDP Per Unit of Energy Use (2011 PPP/Kg of Oil Equivalent) measuring the efficiency of energy usage and CO2 Emissions (Metric Tones Per Capita) measuring environmental degradation.

This target is motivated from the compelling evidence that it is not climate action, but rather inaction that will likely destroy jobs and livelihoods of millions of people. A recent ILO report identifies key obstacles in raising productivity levels, including environmental vulnerability and limited economic diversification.

There are several proposed methods to evaluate decoupling environmental degradation from growth. This study proposes two measures based on the availability and coverage of the latest information;

- The efficiency in utilization of energy resources, measured by GDP per unit of energy use, and
- Exposure to environmental risk factors such as pollution, measured by carbon dioxide emissions.

The proposed variables have more recent information than what is proposed by the UN, although the latest available data dates back to years before SDGs were implemented. Data suggest that all the 36 countries strived for better utilization of energy resources between 2000 and 2014 and while they succeeded to some extent, it was not enough to keep greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from rising (chart 6, 7).

High-income G20 countries had relatively higher resource usage efficiency. On the contrary, despite improvement, middle-income countries had very low energy usage efficiency, except for China, India, and Indonesia, which fared much better than their counterparts.

The carbon footprint per capita in high-income G20 countries was significantly higher than middle-income countries, although the gap narrowed between 2000 and 2014 owing to falling per capital emission levels in high-income countries (mostly in Europe) and sharply increasing levels in upper-middle-income countries.

The lower-middle-income countries (across G20 and non-G20 countries) witnessed low environment degradation. At large, G20 countries recorded higher emission levels than non-G20 countries. African countries and Vietnam had both low per capita energy usage efficiency as well as emission levels.

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Chart 6. Resource usage efficiency and environment degradation in G20 countries (aggregated by income), 2014

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Note: The latest data is available until 2014, which is before SDGs were implemented. However, the trend is indicative of the progress over the past one-and-a-half decade.
Chart 7. Resource usage efficiency and environment degradation in G20 countries (aggregated by income) and non-G20 countries, 2014

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Note: The latest data is available until 2014, which is before SDGs were implemented. However, the trend is indicative of the progress over the past one-and-a-half decade.
Target 8.5. By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

This goal catered to the vision of equal opportunity permitting full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity, with the objective of empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. However, despite the progress achieved by the countries individually, the disparity across countries in terms of earnings, and employment across gender and age continued to increase.

First UN suggested indicator: Average hourly earnings by sex and occupations

Labor in high-income G20 countries was twice as expensive as labor in the upper-middle-income G20 countries and 3 to 5 times as expensive as that in middle-income non-G20 countries. (Data on India and Indonesia is not available). While males earned significantly higher than their female counterparts in the high-income G20 countries, gender disparity was not as prominent in middle-income G20 and non-G20 countries (chart 8).
Chart 8. Mean nominal hourly earnings 2014-16, by gender

Source: International Labour Organization

Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The latest data is available until 2016, which is just a year after SDGs were implemented.
Earnings by occupation differed greatly between countries. Professionals in services and manufacturing among high-income countries earned multiple times more than those in middle- and low-income countries. While employees earned the most in Germany and France, labor cost was much lower in Vietnam, Mexico, and Pakistan across professions (chart 9). On average, plant and machine operators and assemblers earned more than service and sales workers.

**Chart 9.** Mean nominal hourly earnings 2014-16, by occupation

![Chart showing mean nominal hourly earnings by occupation and country, with data points for various countries and professions.](chart.png)

Source: International Labour Organization

Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The latest data is available till 2016, which is just a year after SDGs were implemented. Of the eleven professions listed, two of them have been selected—Plant and machine operators and Service and sales workers—representing wages for professionals in the manufacturing and services sectors.
Second UN suggested indicator: Unemployment rate, by sex and age (youth)

Employment among youth is a challenge for all countries, with most countries having a youth unemployment rate as high as two to three times their total unemployment rate. Most countries saw an increase in the youth unemployment rate since 2007 despite a steady, but slow global economic recovery (chart 10).

Chart 10. Total vs. youth unemployment rate, 2018, in G20 countries (aggregated by income) and non-G20 countries

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
The unemployment rate among young females in high-income G20 countries declined while more young men found themselves unemployed after a decade of the financial crisis (chart 11). In contrast, G20 upper-middle-income countries suffered a growing share of youth unemployment in the past 10 years, with young females bearing the brunt of the economic downturn. While the total unemployment rate declined in the lower-middle-income G20 countries (India and Indonesia), the youth unemployment rate increased over the past 10 years, which could be an indication of fewer low value-added jobs available (those that employ mostly young and relatively low-skilled people in these countries) owing to improved technology and increased automation.

**Chart 11. Change in unemployment rate within genders and age groups between 2007-18**

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Target 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

UN suggested indicator: Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (Gender)

Acknowledging that youth employment is an important vehicle for a nation’s social, economic, and political inclusion of groups and individuals, and a lack of jobs can lead to discontent and unrest among affected young people, this target particularly aims at providing opportunities through employment, education, and training and sets a precedent to better earnings in their future.

In response to rising youth unemployment, high-income G20 countries improved such opportunities to a larger proportion of young male and female equally over the past decade (chart 12). In contrast, a large proportion of young populations continued to remain unemployed, or was not in education, or training, in a few middle-income G20 countries, specifically in India and Indonesia, over the past decade. This pose worries for middle-income countries with a booming young population as poor investment in developing productive skills reduces their employment opportunities further. Gender disparity in this group of youth was prevalent as more young males availed these opportunities than young females and it varied across the middle- and low-income countries. The low uptake among women is the result of several factors, including their primary role in households and families as well as societal norms that limit their participation in working life.17

Overall, G20 countries outperformed their non-G20 counterparts both with respect to providing opportunities to their young population and reducing gender discrepancies.

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Chart 12. Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, genderwise between 2015-17 and the change since 2007

Low
- Rwanda
- Bangladesh
- Ghana
- Bolivia
- Vietnam
- Egypt
- Philippines
- Pakistan
- G20 (Low-m) (G20 (Lower-middle), -4%)

Lower-middle
- Malaysia
- Thailand
- G20 (Upp-m) (G20 (Upper-middle), 1%)
- Peru

Upper-middle
- Vietnam
- G20 (high)

High
- G20 (high), -1%

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The rectangles indicate the change in the past decade.
Target 8.7. Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms

UN suggested indicator: Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labor

While all forms of modern slavery are a horrific denial of human rights, the enslavement of children is particularly egregious. The ILO estimates that 1 in 4 victims of modern slavery are children and since data on the actual numbers in forced labor and marriage is lacking, the SDG framework recommends a focus on child labor generally.

As expected, lower-middle- and low-income countries employed a greater proportion of children in economic activities than upper-middle-income countries, with the exception of Peru (chart 13). Vietnam, which has attracted jobs that are low in the value chain from its neighboring countries lately, employs a significantly high number of children. Except for a few countries, the proportion of children employed was similar across genders. Overall, G20 countries fared better than non-G20 countries with respect to child labor issues. However, not much should be inferred with certainty given the possibility of reporting errors by several of these countries.

Chart 13. Proportion of children (aged 5-17 years) engaged in economic activity, total and by sex, 2011-15

Source: International Labour Organization

Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The latest data is available until 2015, which is the year SDGs were implemented.
Deloitte suggested indicator: Number of victims of human trafficking

Since 2011, Deloitte has worked with clients to help prevent human trafficking, prosecute its perpetrators, and protect its victims. We believe a strong relationship exists between the force for good through societal programs, such as ending human trafficking, and effective business strategies. It’s not just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing for our business, our communities, and our people. Our partners in the fight include governments, corporations, research institutions and civil society. More than just understanding the enormous challenges faced by these organizations, we have leveraged our subject matter expertise in areas like forced and child labor to make a difference: from training service providers on trauma-informed care to working with law enforcement to disrupt illicit networks to eliminating human rights abuses in commercial supply chains, we are dedicated to helping end modern day slavery and support SDG 8.7.
According to the ILO, “At any given time in 2016, an estimated 40.3 million people are in modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labor and 15.4 million in forced marriage.”\(^1\) Given the illegal or secretive nature of these activities, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) has focused its efforts on tracking the number of victims who have been discovered and reported. In their most recent report, they found that the detection of victims of human trafficking has been on the upswing over the few years, with the increase in victims detected in the Americas and Asia being the most pronounced (chart 14). However, according to the UNODC, the increase could be because of the enhanced national abilities to detect, record, and report data on trafficking victims, or, rising trafficking incidents in recent years.\(^2\) A majority of victims detected are from their sub-region of origin; only in North Africa and the Middle East and central and south-east Europe have a substantial portion of detected trafficking victims from outside the region. It may be noted that just for this particular goal, the regions are broader and not just include the G20 and the selected non-G20 countries.

**Chart 14. Human trafficking across regions**

Shares of detected victims of human trafficking by area of origin and of detection (% of total detected victims)

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime elaboration of national data.

Note: The boundaries and names shown on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The regions are broader and not just include the G20 and the selected non-G20 countries.

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19. Ibid.
Target 8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

UN suggested indicator: Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex

The 2030 agenda recognized the impact of climate change and shrinking access to resources pushing indigenous people into the informal economy with a high risk of exposure to discrimination, forced labor, occupational health and safety hazards, and other kinds of unacceptable forms of work. Thus, in addition to the goals of containing environment degradation and growth of the informal sector, emphasis was given on protecting labor rights and promoting safe and secure working environments, even though these goals are interconnected.

As expected, high-income countries reported much lower fatal occupational injuries than middle-income countries indicating safer working environment in the former group of countries (chart 15). Although it appears that non-fatal occupational injuries were higher in high-income countries relative to the other groups of countries, it could be because of reporting irregularities in the latter and differences in the industry composition among countries. Argentina (from high-income countries) and Mexico (from upper-middle-income countries) reported exceptionally high occupational injuries.
Chart 15. Fatal versus non-fatal occupational injury, per 100,000 employees, 2015

Source: International Labour Organization

Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The latest data is available until 2015, which is the year SDGs were implemented.
Evidently, males were more susceptible to occupational injuries than females across all countries (chart 16). The proportion of fatal occupational injuries among males was, on average, 15 to 20 times higher than those of females; the ratio was as skewed as 40 times for men over women in Argentina. However, this could be because women were less likely to be employed in occupations that were more precarious and dangerous than men (due to societal norms that limit female participation in certain jobs).

Chart 16. Non-fatal and fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, gender ratio, 2015

Source: International Labour Organization

Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The latest data is available until 2015, which is the year SDGs were implemented.
Target 8.9. By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

UN suggested indicator: Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate and proportion of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs

Tourism is often associated with rural poverty reduction in developing countries through a widely used organizing framework often addressed as the sustainable livelihoods approach. When tourism is introduced into a community, it complements existing and local economic activities, directly, as well as through indirect externalities. It not only boosts revenue, but also generates employment opportunities for the local population creating new sources of livelihood. So, it is not surprising that promoting sustainable tourism has found its place as one of the goals in SDG 8.

Tourism has lately experienced robust growth in several middle-income countries. The Philippines, Thailand, Mexico, and Malaysia have seen tremendous growth in both domestic and international tourism due to the rising per capita disposable income of the global population (chart 17). Among the high-income countries, European countries have been the preferred destination for tourism, resulting in a large contribution to their GDP and employment.

Chart 17. Contribution of tourism to GDP and employment, 2018

Source: World Tourism and Travel Council, 2019
Target 8.10. Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

UN suggested indicator: Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

In order to empower people, it is important that individuals are able to manage and enhance their incomes, assets, and investments, which is possible through enhanced access to financial services. The broader is the network of financial access points with wide geographic coverage, the more empowered are the people of that nation.22

People in high-income countries had a far better access to financial institutions and services (chart 18). Even though, these countries did not see a significant improvement in number of account ownership or banking services between 2011 and 2017, they were far ahead of the other income group countries. That said, the capacity of financial institutions and access to their services improved among middle-and low-income countries. G20 countries fared better in strengthening the capacity of their domestic financial institutions relative to non-G20 counterparts.

Chart 18. Account ownership at a financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

- **High income**
  - G20
  - Malaysia
  - Thailand
  - G20
  - Peru

- **Upper-middle income**
  - Kenya
  - G20
  - Georgia
  - Ghana
  - Bolivia
  - Bangladesh
  - Lesotho
  - Tunisia
  - Philippines
  - Egypt
  - Vietnam
  - Pakistan

- **Lower-middle income**
  - Rwanda
  - Ethiopia

- **Low income**

% of population, ages 15+

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
UN suggested indicator: Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults

A similar trend was seen with respect to the access to financial services, such as banking through number of commercial bank branches and automated teller machines (ATM) per 0.1 million people (chart 19). Evidently, ATMs were the preferred way to improve the access to banking than opening new commercial banks, as the jump in the former was much larger than the latter in 2017 among middle- and low-income countries.

Chart 19. Access to banking through automated teller machines and commercial bank branches (per 100,000 person)

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Target 8.a. Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries

Trade plays a crucial role in economic growth and development through regional and multilateral trading systems. After all, trade is an engine of growth that creates jobs, reduces poverty, and increases economic opportunity. Thus, it made sense that the SDG 8 included the goal of promoting trade as one of the means to achieve all the other goals mentioned above. To reduce the disparity across countries, it was important that countries that were better off (primarily, high-income countries) supported developing countries (belonging to the middle- and low-income countries) through aid for trade to promote goods and services exports, increase market access, and integrate them into the multilateral trading system.

As such, aid has grown substantially over the years. According to OECD creditor reporting system, total official flows by G20 high-income donors increased to USD 26,176 million at constant prices in 2014-2016 from USD 13,818 million in 2005-2007. India was the highest recipient of such aids followed by Vietnam during 2014-2016. On average, the top five non-G20 countries received a larger proportion of aids relative to G20 countries, suggesting that donor countries are increasingly committed to integrate lower-middle and low-income countries more into the world’s trading system, thereby, assisting in their economic growth and poverty alleviation.

23. There is an additional target goal, 8.b, which is “By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization,” that is not covered here because of lack of data.
Chart 20. Total official flows (commitments) for aid for trade to top 5 recipients in G20 and non-G20 countries


Note: These are annual data, with the latest year considered for the chart in the defined time interval. The latest data is available until 2016.
Challenges, opportunities and actions

It has been four years since the SDG recommendations were implemented and the findings in this report suggest that the progress against the goals has been, at best, modest. The SDG agenda calls for an economically and environmentally sustainable structural transformation. Challenges to this approach are many. Unless all countries rethink and re-strategize their economic and social policies soon, and commit to achieving these goals by incorporating them in their regional policies, the path from the vision to reality within the timeline seems increasingly difficult.

SDG 8 in particular is at the heart of EMBOs. They have formulated some key priorities for governments, which are absolutely necessary if we want to reach SDG 8 and its targets. Governments must not fail to properly address the outlined issues. Time is running-up for doing so. This report is a call for action to determinedly undertake the necessary reforms. Business stands ready and is committed to helping in this.

Governments can explore several opportunities to expedite the process. One of the ways is to join hands with the private sector and local businesses. They play a pivotal role in job creation, entrepreneurship, and innovation which, in turn, facilitate the production of higher value goods and services in an economy. Thus, their participation can go a long way in shaping the labor market and job opportunities, which can help countries in achieving SDG 8. With greater collaboration and partnerships, more businesses and entrepreneurs will likely incorporate SDGs in their own annual as well as long-term business strategy and agenda.

EMBOs have a key role to play in awareness raising, promoting peer-to-peer-learning, and linking the private sector with public institutions at local, national and UN level. Moreover, they have the legitimacy as the consolidated voice of business to shape policy and ensure that policies create conducive environments for reaching the SDGs. If the UN wants the SDGs to be successfully implemented on the ground and make a difference to people's daily lives, it needs to engage with the representative employers and business federations. They understand the realities and can advise and implement accordingly. Employers federations have a key role to play in the negotiations, implementation and follow-up mechanisms of the 2030 Development Agenda at both the UN and national levels. The survey for this study has shown that the Agenda 2030 is already integral part of the work of EBMOs.
Appendices

Real GDP per capita growth (% year over year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2017</th>
<th>G20</th>
<th>Non-G20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-8.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Change from 2007
- Positive
- Negative

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle
- Low Income

GDP per person employed (real 2011 PPP $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2018</th>
<th>G20</th>
<th>Non-G20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Change from 2007
- Positive
- Negative

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle
- Low Income
Informal employment as proportion of nonagricultural employment (%)

Year 2014-17

Non-G20

G20

% Change from 2007-2009
Positive    Negative    Data not available
Income Groups
High Income    Upper-middle    Lower-middle

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

GDP per unit of energy use (2005 PPP $ per kg of oil equivalent)

Year 2014

Non-G20

G20

% Change from 2007
Positive    Negative
Income Groups
High Income    Upper-middle    Lower-middle    Low Income

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
CO2 emissions (metric tones per capita)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2014</th>
<th>3.00</th>
<th>16.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>G20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-G20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Change from 2007
- Positive
- Negative

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle
- Low Income

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Average hourly earnings (constant 2011 PPP $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2014-16</th>
<th>2.00</th>
<th>43.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>G20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-G20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Change from 2005-08
- Positive
- Negative
- Data not available

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle

Note: Most recently available data for each country from the specified range has been used.
Source: International Labour Organisation
Average hourly earnings- by occupation (constant 2011 PPP $)
(Plant and machine operators, and assemblers)

G20

Non-G20

Note: Most recently available data for each country from the specified range has been used.
Source: International Labour Organisation

Average hourly earnings- by occupation (constant 2011 PPP $)
(Service and sales workers)

G20

Non-G20

Note: Most recently available data for each country from the specified range has been used.
Source: International Labour Organisation
Unemployment rate (% of total labor force age 16 years and above)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2014</th>
<th>Non-G20</th>
<th>2.00%</th>
<th>G20</th>
<th>27.00%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

% Change from 2007
- Positive
- Negative

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Unemployment rate, youth (% of labor force, age 15-24 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2018</th>
<th>Non-G20</th>
<th>1.00%</th>
<th>G20</th>
<th>55.00%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

% Change from 2007
- Positive
- Negative

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Proportion of youth (age 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2011-15</th>
<th>Non-G20</th>
<th>G20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Proportion of children engaged in economic activity (% of population, age 5-17 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2011-15</th>
<th>Non-G20</th>
<th>G20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Labour Organisation
Shares of detected victims of human trafficking by area of origin and of detection (% of total detected victims)

Year 2011-15

Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Frequency rates of fatal occupational injuries (per 100,000 persons insured)

Year 2015

Source: International Labour Organisation.
Frequency rates of non-fatal occupational injuries (per 100,000 persons insured)

Year 2015

G20

Non-G20

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle

Source: International Labour Organisation

Tourism output as proportion of GDP (%)

Year 2008

G20

Non-G20

Income Groups
- High Income
- Upper-middle
- Lower-middle

Source: World tourism and travel council, 2019
Contribution of tourism to employment (% of total employment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Groups</th>
<th>Year 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Income</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-middle</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: World tourism and travel council, 2019

Number of automated teller machines (ATM) per 100,000 Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Groups</th>
<th>Year 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Income</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-middle</td>
<td>276.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.

Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider (%)

Source: World Bank, Haver Analytics L.P.
### Total Aid for trade, by donor and recipient countries (millions of constant 2016 $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Recipient</th>
<th>2005-07 vs 2014-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>11,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>4,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United states of America</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>6,069</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2,487</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
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</tbody>
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The IOE is the largest network of the private sector in the world, with more than 150 business and employer organization members, representing more than 50 million companies. For almost 100 years, in social and employment policy debate taking place in the ILO, to which the IOE is the sole representative of business, and across the UN, G20 and other emerging forums, the IOE is recognized for its unique expertise, advocacy and influence as a powerful and balanced voice for business at the international level.