COVID-19 in Africa: experience sharing and recommendations for the private sector

Thursday 9 April 2020
Mthunzi Mdwaba

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IOE Covid-19 Response

Wednesday 8 April 2020
Mitigating the impact of the crisis

• The health and livelihoods of workers and the sustainability of enterprises are at risk on the global level

• The impact of Covid-19 on the business world is unprecedented

• Employers have a key role to play in helping flatten the curve and in supporting political decision-makers with mitigation efforts

• IOE has mobilised to provide its full support to members:
  ✓ A series of specific digital conferences
  ✓ A dedicated digital platform
  ✓ Engaging different forums and partners internationally
Informations appropriées et partage de solutions

• Digital conferences
  o Employer and business organisations: COVID-19 response (18/3)
  o How to develop effective Human Resource telework policies (23/3)
  o Economic advocacy and ensuring business continuity (25/3)
  o Private sector contributions in health emergency situations (26/3)
  o Insights on diverse labour measures implemented by employers in response to Covid-19 (1/4)
  o IOE-ITUC Digital Summit: What needs to happen next in Covid-19 response (2/4)
  o IOE digital conference on the impact of COVID-19 on global trade, supply chains and employment (8/4)

• Regional exchanges: Asia (27/3), Latin America(2/4), Africa (8 and 9/4), Europe (21/4)

• Online sessions of our Business Networks:
  o Global Occupational Safety and Health Network (GOSH) (24/3)
  o Global Industrial Relations Network (GIRN) (30/3)
Partnerships and joint action

• Social dialogue: joint statement IOE-ITUC
  o Commitments for coordinated action on a global problem
  o Specific measures for business, employment, and salary support
  o Call for a joint meeting with labour and finance ministers to strengthen coherence and collective action

• Alignment with WHO: Coordinating private sector action
  o Mobilising members’ engagement and action with governments and in support of health systems
  o Raise awareness of WHO’s COVID-Solidarity Response Fund and support the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan

• Continued engagement with UN
  o Supporting the UN Secretary-General’s Covid-19 action plan
Thank you!

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Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM)
African Exchange Conference on COVID 19

Presentation made by George Khaki, Executive Director
Country context (Malawi)

• Landlocked country
• Mainly agriculture dependent
• Largely informal economy
• A large number of SMEs
• Hand to mouth economy
Challenges

• Multiplicity of information sources
• Political landscape hindering information dissemination
• Disruption of supply chains
• No unemployment benefits
• No laws to support temporary lay-offs of workers
• Weak health infrastructure
• No direct participation by private sector in Government decision making
• No common understanding of essential services
Employer/Private sector responses

- ECAM took lead making proposals to Government
- ECAM in the process of transitioning from physical to virtual meetings
- ECAM doing a study on the impact of COVID-19
- Business formed a broad coalition to be talking to Government as one entity
- Businesses working with Government to complement its health infrastructure and response
- Flexible working arrangements by employers
- Provision of PPEs
- Businesses moving into manufacturing of COVID-related materials
Lessons

• Working together as one voice helps industry build strength and allows dealing with multiplicity of ideas very quickly

• Besides industry/sector specific responses, the industry can play a big role in complementing Government efforts in crises

• Such crises open up further business opportunities

• Members are looking up to employers organizations to navigate through the crisis and bring their views to government
Israel Murefu

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Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA)
Thank you!

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