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IOE-ATIA WORKSHOP ON PROMOTING YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYER & BUSINESS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Oranjestad, Aruba

14-15 November 2019

Rationale:

Employment, skills development, enterprise creation and entrepreneurship lie at the heart of sustainable development, economic prosperity and social stability. Despite general improvements in living standards, 1 in 5 Caribbean people live below the poverty line¹, and youth unemployment rates are nearly 25% on average. Ensuring that business have an enabling environment to create jobs and that young people have access to high-quality, professional education are indispensable elements of poverty eradication.

Employability coupled with the mindset and ability to embrace life-long learning are two important attributes which more and more businesses are looking for in current and prospective employees, especially in the context of the Future of Work. Cognitive skills, such as complex problem-solving and critical thinking, and socio-emotional skills, such as teamwork, resilience, self-confidence, negotiation and self-expression, are highly valuable as these skills cannot be imitated by technology. According to the World Bank Group, workers involved in routine tasks that are “codifiable” are most vulnerable to replacement.

Background:

The aim of this workshop, which is being co-organised by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Aruba Trade and Industry Association (ATIA), hosted by the latter, and generously supported by the European Union is to ensure that IOE members Caribbean strengthen their cooperation on youth employability and skills development. An integrated regional effort is key to tackle the issues of youth employment (and unemployment in general), skills development, diversification of production, climate change, sustainable development etc. in the Caribbean. Small geographical sizes and small populations mean that unilateral/individual efforts may be ineffective. However, if the region can work together collectively, it may be possible to achieve economies of scale and improve regional integration

¹ Latin America Economic Outlook 2019



Co-funded by the European Union

in terms of education systems, mutual recognition of qualifications, harmonised regional standards for trades and professions, etc.

Target audience for participation:

Employer and business member organisations (EBMOs).

Planned activities:

- One two-day workshop for EBMOs from the region to review and assess current work done in each country and to anticipate and plan work that is outstanding. The specific focus will be on the role EBMOs can play in enhancing and contributing to youth employability and skills development policy and practice.
- Establish a youth employment and skills development network among EBMOs and promote youth employability to policymakers and to EBMO company affiliates.

Expected outputs:

- One paper that takes stock of current youth employment policy and programme implementation in the region and sets out lessons learned, and next steps.

Expected outcomes:

- National EBMOs are equipped with information on international best policy and practice on youth employment and skills development and are better positioned to advocate for policy and implementation improvement in their country and region on behalf of their constituents and society at large.
- National EBMOs are more aware of their role as key contributors to poverty alleviation through skills development, job creation and sustainable development.
- Further opportunities for organised, representative groups of young people to participate in multi-stakeholder policy-recommendation and decision-making processes.

Format and working methods:

- Business-school style workshop under Chatham house rules
- An evaluation will be made before and after the meetings to capture participants' comments.

