





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