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IOE DIGITAL CONFERENCE ON BACK TO WORK POLICIES

6 MAY 2020 (13:30-15:00 CET)

WELCOMING REMARKS FOR IOE PRESIDENT EROL KIRESEPI

Hello good afternoon, good morning or good evening where you are.

I am very pleased to see all of you again, joining us virtually from different parts of the world. It has been a challenging few months, to say the least, for all of us.

I take this opportunity as President of the IOE family and global business community to pay tribute and appreciation to all Healthcare workers who have been unrelenting on the frontline in carrying out their risky duties.

It is clear that the pandemic not only impacts lives, but also livelihoods. Various stakeholders at the global and national level are trying to coordinate efforts to contain the spread of the virus, mitigate risks and actively move towards a smooth recovery phase.

As countries begin to ease restrictions in the coming weeks, employers of all sizes and from all sectors will be looking for guidance and expert advice on how to implement safe and effective back to work policies. Policies will aim at mitigating risks for all staff and prevent further possible spread of Covid-19, and at the same time, offer a strategy to restore the economy in a responsible manner.

This is why we have organized various digital conferences since the outbreak, so that we can have a platform to share best practices and lessons learned.

And today, I am honoured to welcome both the Director-Generals of WHO and ILO – I would say the busiest UN agencies at the moment – as the virus affects health and jobs – the two essential things we need in life, among many.

The IOE is part of the WHO business response platform. We hope to continue to complement each other's work and we stand ready to be engaged with WHO on the global fight against this virus. It's important for all of us to stay engaged, learn from each other and collaborate for a faster health and economic recovery.

I am also privileged to have with us, ITUC and industry leaders – SHRM and Randstad - who are here to share their perspectives and guidance on safe and effective back to work policies. The SHRM-IOE Guide on Return to Work which we will officially launch today will provide members and company partners guidance on how to go back to work safely.

Thank you very much to all.

Back to you, Mthunzi.