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President’s Foreword

“The IOE Centenary Manifesto: a shared vision for the future of our organisation”

It gives me great pleasure as President to present the IOE Annual Report on behalf of the Management Board in this our centenary year. As always, the report provides a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, account of our many activities, outcomes, and achievements over the year and we trust that it will meet your expectations.

This centenary milestone calls for a reflection on our past, an assessment of our achievements, a reaffirmation of our values and mission, but also for a shared vision of IOE’s role and objectives in a rapidly evolving and interconnected world going forward. The ongoing and far-reaching impact of Covid-19 on all sectors of society makes such an exercise all the more important if we are to be confident of future resilience and relevance.

To this end, we embarked on the elaboration of the IOE Centenary Manifesto by way of a comprehensive and inclusive process designed to capture the perspectives of our more than 150 members across the globe. Recently arrived members alongside longstanding members, large and small employer and business membership organisations located in both developed and developing economies, members who count mostly MNEs among their affiliates, and others for whom SMEs make up the majority - all were invited to contribute. I am proud to report that you responded to our call with enthusiasm, strong convictions, firm values, and determination to succeed well into our second century.

What emerged from this comprehensive exercise is that the global business community speaks with one voice when it comes to upholding the principles of a rules-based, free market economy. It is united in advocating for well-informed social and employment policy and regulatory frameworks that create a conducive environment for sustainable and competitive enterprises that in turn engender shared and inclusive growth, as well as employment opportunities for all sectors of society.

Our community commits to conducting itself responsibly in line with global expectations and guidelines, and it welcomes the role it is called to play in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It values robust partnerships with other actors in the international community represented in the UN and other multilateral agencies, the G7 and G20 processes and other intergovernmental groups, and with trade union and other civil society counterparts, to ensure coherence, efficiency and impact as we address our many challenges, including Covid-19 response and recovery, together.
In short, the IOE Centenary Manifesto does a sound job in encapsulating where we have come from, what we stand for today, and where we are heading as we embark on our second century. Achieving this Manifesto has required a truly collective effort and when it is formally adopted in the near future, I feel confident that we will all be proud to share it with our affiliates, partners and the wider world.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the IOE Management Board and Secretariat for their support to me in discharging my duties as President, and also to IOE members and partners around the world for their steadfast and ongoing commitment as we navigate the future together.

Erol Kiresepi
President
Message from the Secretary-General

“Paving the way for ongoing resilience and success”

While we have been preparing special events for some time to ensure a memorable centenary year for IOE and its members and partners, we could never have imagined that 2020 would go down in the history of all our organisations for other reasons entirely – the impact and repercussions on lives and livelihoods of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like other organisations, and companies, IOE has always maintained a Business Continuity Plan and adapted it to foreseeable risks and new technologies. We have had a tried-and-tested teleworking policy in place for some time that ensures continued productivity and collaboration and, as many of you are aware, we have also been organising webinars over the past few years to bring more of us together more often around issues of common concern.

While we never specifically planned for the impact of a global pandemic, we hope you will agree that the IOE Secretariat was quick and productive in responding to the needs of our members and partners by moving more services online and organising effective and extensive digital exchanges with critical stakeholders, including ILO, WHO, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, among others. You will find information in the Highlights chapter of this report on the digital conferences that we have organised since the outset of the crisis, as well as on our web-based platform that serves as a Covid-19-response resource hub to support members with safety and health measures, preventative actions to minimise disruption to productivity, strategies for mitigation of financial losses, an overview of government initiatives to reduce economic stress on businesses, and, more recently, advice on easing out of lockdown and preparing strategies for the “new scenario” ahead.

No one knows what the new situation will look like, but there is a growing consensus that navigating the aftermath of Covid will be one of the biggest business challenges of our time and that there will be no “one-size-fits-all”, for employer and business organisations, or for companies. However, what is clear is that a great deal of support will be needed and IOE will continue to ensure that members and partners are equipped with information on the latest employer best practices, and government measures, wherever they are being rolled out around the globe, to ensure a safe and sustainable resumption of activities. Our programme of digital conferences will continue to strive to meet your needs in real time and we count on your continued participation.
It is widely recognised, within IOE and beyond, that the strength of our organisation lies in our capacity to network and collaborate on key business and employer issues on a global scale. We can take special pride in our 100th year that these strengths have served us well in the current crisis, as in the past, and will continue to pave the way for ongoing resilience and success.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

Roberto Suárez Santos
Secretary-General
I Highlights

The period covered by this report runs from June 2019 to May 2020 inclusive. The "Highlights" chapter provides an overview of selected activities throughout the year; others are more fully described in the chapters on our policy priorities, engagement with ILO and other organisations, and on our business networks.

Whenever possible, we co-organise and contribute to meetings and training sessions with our members on their home ground, often accompanying them in discussions with their employment ministries or in other decision-making forums at national and regional level. To this end, we travelled to members’ headquarters in more than 30 countries until travel was suspended in response to the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus.
June

The period kicked off with the 43rd Annual Conference of IOE Members in East, Central & Southern Africa, which took place in Lilongwe, Malawi. IOE co-organised the Conference with our member, the Employers’ Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM), with the support of the IOE-EU Partnership Project. The theme “The Future of Work: Responsive Skills for Decent Work and Enterprise Development” attracted wide regional participation, including a cohort of youth represented by the African Youth Commission to ensure that those most affected by the unemployment crisis have a voice in the relevant policy discussions.

Also in early June IOE was invited to the G7 Social Ministerial in Paris on the theme “Social Justice in a Global World”. Alongside G7 labour and employment ministers, and IOE’s social partner counterparts, President Erol Kiresepi led the employer and business contribution to the outcome communiqué of the ministers, as well as to the G7 Social Declaration. For the first time in the history of the G7, a tripartite statement was signed that also focused on creating conducive framework conditions for innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation. With G7 engagement a key element of IOE’s employment policy work, more details on the outcomes of this high-level meeting are reported in the Employment & Skills section.

From 10-21 June, IOE supported the employer participation in the centenary edition of the International Labour Conference, including in the negotiation and adoption of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which will guide the activities of ILO and its constituents for the foreseeable future. The Employers’ perspectives on the Declaration may be found in the ILO chapter of this report.

The Presidents of Ibero-American employers’ organisations came together to discuss the political, economic and social situation in the region with the Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), Ms Rebeca Grynspan. Also on the agenda was preparation for their XXX Meeting, which will take place in Andorra in November 2020 in parallel to the Summit of heads of state and government. IOE member, the Business Confederation of Andorra, will host the organisations’ Presidents with the support of IOE.

As usual, IOE organised a special event for members during the ILC. The 2019 IOE Presidents’ Forum took place on 17-18 June and explored the theme “Business Leadership in Changing Times”. The gathering kicked off with a networking reception generously hosted by the Swiss Employers’ Union (UPS) at their Geneva headquarters. Mr Klaus Schwab, Founder and CEO of the World Economic Forum (WEF), gave the keynote address, highlighting the need for heads of enterprises and organisations to exercise their leadership responsibilities with ambition in order to ensure resilience and success in a rapidly changing world. With IOE’s centenary just around the corner, IOE President Erol Kiresepi encouraged the IOE-member Presidents to share their vision for IOE 2.0 as a re-energised, future-ready organisation.

As coordinator of the Business Technical Advisory Committee (CEATAL) of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML) of the Organisation of American States (OAS), IOE brings together and supports the business participation in related meetings. At the end of June, IOE was involved in the elaboration of CEATAL’s messages to the 49th OAS General Assembly dialogue with the private sector, civil society and workers, which took place in Medellín, Colombia. CEATAL argued for policies to boost productivity in the industrial, agricultural and services sectors, as well as to promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy – these being essential in ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth in the Americas.

July

Engagement in the B7 process continued, with IOE participation in the B7 Summit in Aix-en-Provence, France, where, alongside the L7, we
underscored the role of the social partners in shaping the future of work and putting people at the heart of economic growth and social progress. The joint B7/L7 statement called for the fight against inequality to be supported by more funding for education and training systems, for help for businesses and employees to adapt to a digitally interconnected world, for environmental sustainability, and for incentives for long-term ecologically responsible investments to promote growth and full employment.

At the UN High-Level Political Forum (UNHLPF) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in New York in July, IOE engaged in a number of high-level discussions to review progress on the SDGs – and particularly Goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. IOE’s key messages centred on the business contribution to the achievement of SDG 8 for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In partnership with Deloitte and USCIB, a flagship report was presented and an SDG business lab launched that focused on progress achieved since 2015 on SDG 8 and recommendations to accelerate action. Please see the Sustainable Development chapter of this report to learn more.

Towards the end of July, IOE Secretary-General Roberto Suárez Santos joined the Federation of Kenya Employers to mark the federation’s 60th anniversary. The theme was “Shaping the Future of Work and Enterprises in Africa”, with interactions aimed at generating fresh resolve, inspiration and frameworks for employer and business membership organisations, and enterprise leaders, to play their full role in society.

August

To mark the ILO’s Centenary, and its 60-year anniversary in Africa, the ILO Global Youth Employment Forum took place in Abuja, Nigeria. IOE coordinated and supported the participation of young representatives of IOE member organisations from Colombia, the Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mongolia, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Tanzania and Uganda to ensure the voice of employers informed the call for action on youth employment. The three-day event attracted more than 200 participants and aimed to accelerate progress towards the youth employment-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Also in August IOE Vice-President to the ILO Mthunzi Mdwaba joined the celebrations at The National Association of Entrepreneurs of Colombia to mark the 75th anniversary of the Colombian organisation at a special event in Medellín.

With the G20 under the presidency of Japan now in full swing, IOE President Erol Kiresepi participated at the end of the month in the L20 Summit in Tokyo, which was convened by International Trade Union Confederation and Trade Union Advisory Committee, to give a speech on “Reforming multilateralism with a Social Justice Agenda”.

September

IOE’s President and Secretary-General took part in meetings at the G20 Labour Ministerial in Matsuyama, Japan and contributed to the business recommendations that are set out in our Employment & Skills section.

During the trip, Roberto Suárez Santos seized the opportunity to interact with Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) on the work of IOE on behalf of its members, and to learn more about the needs and expectations of Japan business with regard to the international policy arena.

September also saw IOE partner with USCIB, the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN), Wilton Park USA and the S&R Foundation to deliver a workshop on the Future of Work (FoW) in Washington, DC. The event launched a joint IOE-USCIB report on policy and practice on the FoW and provided a space to discuss challenges and opportunities, such as getting internal buy-in, alignment and
planning for FoW programmes; scaling FoW programmes across different national contexts; and measuring and communicating impacts to diverse internal and external audiences. The report set out ten recommendations for companies to harness FoW opportunities as reported in our Future of Work section.

Between 22 and 27 September, IOE joined global leaders of government, business and civil society in New York for the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly (please refer to our Sustainable Development section for more details on the SDG and Climate Action elements of the programme). IOE also took advantage of many events in the sidelines of the UNGA to give the business perspective on a range of topics, such as strengthening institutions of work, next steps for the recently adopted ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment, occupational safety and health, the future of work and business, youth employment and skills development.

**October**

IOE President Erol Kiresepi was extensively involved this month in supporting key events organised by members. To mark the 30th Anniversary of the Employers of Poland, Mr Kiresepi was in Warsaw to provide a keynote address to mark the historic occasion. From there, he delivered opening remarks at a Joint Dialogue Forum organised by our member TISK, in Antalya, Turkey, and he was also a keynote speaker at the Gala Dinner event and at the opening of the Annual Congress of the Confederation of Portuguese Industry, where he underlined the importance of taking a positive approach to the future of work by focusing on the opportunities for business and job creation.

IOE’s strong focus on involving members in the global public-private dialogue on labour migration continued with the IOE-hosted Business Advisory Group on Migration’s regional workshop for South America, which took place in Buenos Aires in early October.

October also saw the Secretary-General undertake a series of high-level meetings in India, which were facilitated by IOE Management Board member, Mr Rajeev Dubey, who also chairs IOE’s Future of Work Policy Working Group.

The mission provided useful insights into the local situation and the support ACT/EMP provides on the ground, as well as deepening understanding of the needs and expectations of IOE’s members in India (SCOPE, EFI and AIOE) and encouraging their active engagement in IOE work, particularly on skills development in the context of the Future of Work.
Back in Geneva, IOE coordinated and represented business at the session of the Intergovernmental Working Group to establish a binding UN treaty on business and human rights. Supported by Gabriella Rigg Herzog from IOE member organisation USCIB and colleagues from IOE partner company Littler, IOE strongly defended the principle that any draft text must be fully aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Mid-October, Madrid was the location for a session on the Future of Work at the Cuatrecasas Institute, a Spanish forum to promote legal innovation in the area of employment and labour relations law. The Secretary-General shared the IOE perspective on the human-resources impact of the future world of work with a gathering of senior HR directors from leading Spanish multinationals.

The first annual meeting of the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour took place in Berlin. With a seat on the Steering Committee, IOE participated in the discussion on innovative tools and approaches that support scale and promote bottom-up momentum (with a focus on smaller enterprises) in the fight to eradicate forced labour and promote fair recruitment.

November

Again in support of members, in early November, President Erol Kiresepi participated in a conference of top business leaders in Monterrey, Mexico, which was organised by COPARMEX. Mr Kiresepi took part in a panel discussion on the key role of employment stability in achieving economic development, prosperity and social peace, emphasising also the pivotal role of social dialogue in enhancing productivity and business competitiveness. He took the opportunity to meet with the President of CONCAMIN during his Mexico trip to underscore the support of IOE for the organisation’s work.

Mid-November saw IOE organise a two-day workshop in Oranjestad with the Aruba Trade & Industry Association, exploring the role of employer and business membership organisations (EBMOs) in youth employability and skills development policy and practice in the Caribbean. The event had the full support of the Caribbean Employers’ Council and the European Union. This was a rare occasion for representatives of almost 20 Caribbean EBMOs to come together with IOE, ILO and other key players in the region, such as the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Examination Council, to explore solutions to the many shared challenges – despite the varied geographies. The meeting concluded with a concrete list of next steps to maintain the momentum, including closer collaboration with IOE on skills research and with the Caribbean Examination Council on shaping curricula that meet labour market needs. The first of regular follow-up webinars organised by IOE took place in February 2020.

Being the lead organisation in the representation of business with regard to all human rights issues, IOE organised key events linked to the treaty process and human rights due diligence, and participated in important panel discussions, during the annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights. Immediately prior to the Forum, IOE also had a leading role in the Sporting Chance Forum of the Centre of Sport and Human Rights, of which it is a founding member.

Towards the end of the month, IOE coordinated and supported the participation of IOE members from Brazil, Egypt, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Spain and Suriname in the ILO Global Social Protection Week on “Achieving SDG 1.3 and Universal Social Protection in the context of the Future of Work”, which took place in Geneva.

Our members were among the approximately 300 delegates that included ministers of labour and finance from countries striving to implement national social protection systems, development partners, international financing institutions,
regional bodies, ILO and other UN agencies, worker organisations, academia and civil society.

The aim was to chart the way towards achieving universal social protection and to provide a roadmap for the future of social protection within the framework of the recently adopted ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

While the business case for social protection is clear, there were nevertheless several messages from the IOE side, including the need for better measurement and assessment of the impact of investing in social protection in order to understand what does and does not work. While the Employers’ Group agreed that social protection gaps must be closed, they emphasised that social protection systems must be affordable and sustainable, which may require reforms given the megatrends shaping the new social realities.

Fostering an environment that is conducive to productivity and economic growth is therefore pivotal in reaching social protection goals. Finally, the Employers insisted that social protection schemes should be employment-orientated in order to stimulate job seeking and the transition to formality.

Also in November IOE joined with the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) to deliver two training sessions in Johannesburg and Kuala Lumpur aimed at building the capacity of some 50 employers’ organisations in Africa and Asia to advocate with governments on labour migration.

And in further activity in this area of work, IOE participated in an ILO- Spell out United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees hosted meeting in Bogotá of Labour Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean to support the Quito process, which provides a roadmap for the integration of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

**December**

IOE coordinated and supported the participation of members in the 14th African ILO Regional Meeting in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire at the beginning of December. This was the occasion to take stock of progress since the 13th regional meeting in the implementation of the ILO Decent Work agenda in light of the 2030 Development Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063. The meeting recognised the need for an integrated mix of policies to promote inclusive development, full and productive employment and decent work for young women and men in the current and future labour markets, as well as the need to rethink the future of work in the informal and rural economy, to revamp social protection, promote effective social dialogue, enhance the application of international labour standards, and ensure fair and effective labour migration governance. IOE and members in Africa welcomed the landmark outcome Declaration calling for concrete ILO actions in four areas of critical importance: creating an enabling environment for sustainable business; adopting practical measure to enhance productivity; providing comprehensive skills development policy guidance and technical support; and taking comprehensive measures towards removing policy and regulatory barriers to formalisation.

Also in early December, IOE Deputy Secretary-General Matthias Thorns delivered an intervention on the Future of Work at the 14th Annual Forum of the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association, which took place in Dubai on the theme of “Winning through Strategic Partnerships”.

At the same time, two events were taking place in Latin America. The first, in Quito, Ecuador, was the preparatory meeting for the XXI Inter-American Conference of OAS Ministers of Labour (CIMT).

As coordinator of the permanent consultative business body (CEATAL) to the ministers, IOE supported the Employer contribution to the recommendations to address the priorities of the Bridgetown Plan of Action. Defined at the XX CIMT ministerial in 2017, these priorities included the future of work and the platform economy, enabling environments for sustainable enterprises, child
labour, gender equity and labour mobility. The preparatory meeting also began to set out the aims and priorities for the next OAS labour ministerial which is scheduled to take place in December 2020. The second event, coordinated and supported by IOE, was an Employers in the ILO Regional Forum and Workshop on “Lessons learned and challenges in the implementation of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal People in Latin America”, which was held in Lima, Peru on 5-6 December.

Barcelona was host to the 9th Meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) High-level Working Group to take stock of the status of the labour and employment recommendations agreed at the April 2019 Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial, namely to support decent job creation and entrepreneurship, mobilise public and private stakeholders to create partnerships and synergies, build inclusive labour markets to integrate potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to invest in quality education and training systems, and to develop skills and employability in a changing world of work. The HLWG also agreed a roadmap for the period to 2022. IOE aligned with BusinessEurope and BusinessMed in calling for clear strategies to address the informality challenges and to enhance productivity and skills in the region.

As part of ILO’s Centenary programme, the Labour Law Academy of São Paulo, Brazil celebrated “100 years of ILO” with a special seminar. Mr Alexandre Furlan, IOE’s Regional Vice-President for Latin America, made a contribution on the realities and challenges ahead for ILO from an employer perspective.

Also during December IOE participated as an Observer Organisation, and part of the Business and Industry constituency (BINGO), in the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCC) Conference of the Parties (COP 25) in Madrid. We were involved in different sessions for the Group, as well as in several key events in which the global voice of employers was needed. The IOE message in high-level panels centred on the need to promote and incentivise entrepreneurship, innovation and skills development to respond to the challenges and to seize the opportunities of climate change for a just transition.

On 19 December, the IOE President participated in the G7 SOCIAL Labour and Employment High-level Meeting in Paris, which had been organised to follow up on the G7 SOCIAL Tripartite Declaration – the first such declaration in the history of the G7 - adopted on 6-7 June. The overarching goal is for the social partners to act together to tackle inequalities, promote decent work, and achieve inclusive growth, shared prosperity and a fair globalisation. In his intervention in a roundtable discussion alongside other business, as well as trade union, counterparts, Mr Kiresepi highlighted the urgency to act as one through existing networks and initiatives, rather than re-inventing the wheel. On behalf of the global employer community, he committed to work with G7 governments, Business at OECD, ITUC and TUAC colleagues to create better labour market frameworks for job creation, modernise skills development systems, generate opportunities in a more targeted way for young people and other marginalised groups, and create more efficient institutions and realistic regulations that promote transition to the formal and green economies. He called for these priorities to continue to feature prominently on future agendas of the G7.

December ended with IOE’s participation in the OSCE event in Vienna on “Advancing Human Capital Development through Migration and Innovation”. OSCE’s agenda on labour migration aligns in many respects with IOE’s, signalling potential for further cooperation.
January

Activities for the auspicious year 2020 – IOE’s Centenary - kicked off with the inception event of the Saudi Arabia presidency of the G20 in Riyadh. IOE’s role in the G20/B20 is outlined in the Employment & Skills section of this report.

In Geneva, IOE presented the Employers’ views in tripartite consultations to prepare two important topics tabled for the March session of the ILO Governing Body. First were the proposals to consider occupational safety and health in the framework of the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the second related to ensuring legal certainty in the interpretation of ILO conventions.

February

An overview of IOE’s Centenary Summit on the Future of Work, which took place in Kuala Lumpur during the first week of February may be found in our Future of Work section.

A second meeting of EPIC took place, in Berlin, and, as a member of the Steering Committee which drives the work of the Coalition globally, IOE was involved in the discussions of the work plan for the next two years and participated in the exchange of information on good practices in advancing equal pay for work of equal value. During 2020, IOE published two important position papers for members and partners that will positively contribute to the main objectives of EPIC. (Please see our Diversity section.)

The second IOE Centenary Summit took place in Lagos, Nigeria for IOE members in Africa. The main objective was to provide an opportunity for the members to give the regional perspective on the IOE Centenary Manifesto, which sets out the organisation’s vision for the future. Their contribution was reflected in the final version of the Manifesto to be launched later this year.

The Centenary event was followed by the 6th African Social Partners’ Summit, which brought together more than 40 representatives of EBMOs, trade unions, national ministries and training institutions, ILO, and IOE, to explore the challenges and barriers, as well as some of the current and future actions that will set the continent on a path to more productive and sustainable enterprises, inclusive growth and job creation.

Key references were the outcomes from previous Social Partner Summits, such as the Blueprint for Jobs in Africa and the Tunis Action Plan, as well as regional and international frameworks, including the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, the Abidjan Declaration emanating from the 14th African Regional Meeting (December 2019), and the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA)(May 2019).
While it was agreed that much remained to be done, there were encouraging examples of actions and measures to address some of the shared challenges, such as setting up observatories to gather data by sector and by region to capture and anticipate skills gaps and inform training policies and systems; establishing Public Private Partnerships for enhanced Technical and Vocational Education and Training outcomes; institutionalising formal social dialogue; crafting specific development plans to diversify economies and create jobs; setting up GAN networks to promote work-based learning; and introducing policies to stimulate entrepreneurship, to name but a few.

March - May

Due to heavy restrictions placed by national authorities on large gatherings and travel in an attempt to curb the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus, IOE made a swift transition to organising regular webinars and teleconferences as set out below to deliver real-time responses to members’ needs.

The programme of work was also adapted to optimise the continuity of member organisations’ services, including by providing a dedicated digital IOE platform for sharing experiences and best practices in responding to the crisis.

Digital Conferences on Covid-19 Business Response

- **Covid-19 business response (18 March):** Addressed the current situation and the likely economic impact of Covid-19, and explored the early measures taken by governments to mitigate the impact on the private sector and the risk of job losses.

- **How to develop effective teleworking policies (23 March):** Addressed human resources challenges raised by the crisis and evaluated the sustainability of teleworking as a technological tool to contribute to business continuity.

- **Economic advocacy to ensure business sustainability and avoid massive job losses: what works, what does not (25 March):** Considered a range of strategies from the private sector and government to protect employees, ensure business continuity and minimise the financial impact.

- **Private Sector Contribution on Health Emergency Situations (26 March):** Addressed the Covid-19 situation in different countries from a workplace-health perspective and considered measures that could be taken jointly with the private sector to mitigate the impact.

- **Asia Regional Digital Conference: Covid-19 Business Response (27 March):** a regional
overview of the impact of the crisis and related policy measures and responses.

- **Insights into diverse labour-related measures implemented by employers in response to Covid-19: what works and what does not (1 April):** Discussed different industrial relations measures adopted by companies and governments for the sustainability of enterprises in the context of the emergency.

- **IOE-ITUC Digital Summit: What needs to happen next in Covid-19 response (2 April)**

- **LATAM Digital Conference: Latin America and the effects of the coronavirus (2 April)**

- **IOE digital conference on the impact of Covid-19 on global trade, supply chains and employment (8 April):** Discussed the prospect of businesses having to rethink their entire supply chains to deal with heavy restrictions on international trade. Addressed the disruption generated by these measures representing a major challenge for the global economy, especially for the low-income and emerging economies that will suffer the most from the decline in global demand, production and investments all at the same time.

- **Covid-19 en Afrique : partage d’expériences et des recommandations pour le secteur privé (8 April):** A regional overview of the impact of the crisis and related policy measures and responses dedicated to IOE members in francophone Africa.

- **Covid-19 in Africa: experience sharing and recommendations for the private sector (9 April):** A regional overview of the impact of the crisis and related policy measures and responses dedicated to IOE members in anglophone Africa.

- **IOE and Worldwide ERC digital conference on global mobility and Covid-19: impact for businesses (14 April):** Held in collaboration with the workforce mobility association Worldwide ERC. Addressed the impact and implications for business due to entry or travel restrictions, quarantine upon entry in a country, and the closing of consular posts and visa application centers and other migration-related measures implemented by governments to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Fostering Skills and Productivity during Covid-19 (15 April)**

- **GFMD webinar on the impact of Covid-19 on migrants, migration and development. (28 April)**

- **ILO Stop the pandemic: safety and health at work can save lives (28 April 2020)**

- **Covid-19: Impact on the business and human rights agenda (29 April):** Joint digital session with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. Additional participants included Linda Kromjong, Global Labor & Human Rights Director, Samsung Electronics; John Morrison, Executive Director, Institute for Human Rights and Business; David Vermijs, Senior Adviser, Shift.

- **IOE Digital Conference on back-to-work policies (6 May):** The Directors-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and the International Labour Organization, Guy Ryder, took part in a high-level panel together with the President and CEO of Society for Human Resource Management, the CEO of Randstad and the General Secretary of the ITUC. The dialogue aimed at mapping out the most effective business plans to get back to work safely in an unpredictable health environment.

**IOE outcome documents during this period included:**

- IOE guidance on teleworking in the time of Covid-19

- IOE guidance on human resources: surviving Covid-19 and coming out strong

- IOE information paper on diverse labour measures implemented by employers in response to Covid-19

- IOE-World Employment Confederation guide on return to work
• IOE information document on economic advocacy to ensure business sustainability and avoid massive job losses: what works, what does not

**IOE joined forces with partners to publish statements on crisis response:**

• IOE-ITUC Joint Statement on Covid-19 (23 March)

• Covid-19: Joint Call for Action in the Garment Industry (22 April)
International Labour Organization and other international forums

As illustrated in the Highlights chapter, advocacy efforts take IOE to the four corners of the world and into a wide range of discussions and international forums that impact employers and enterprises in a variety of ways.

In Geneva, we dedicate significant resources to our work in the International Labour Organization: the International Labour Conference (ILC), the Governing Body (GB), ILO Sectoral and Experts’ meetings, ILO Regional Meetings and to specific ILO departments, chief among which is the ILO Bureau for Employers’ Activities, ACT/EMP, an invaluable IOE partner in serving the interests of the global employer community.
108th Session of the International Labour Conference


IOE prepared and supported the participation of the Employer representatives, who joined their Worker and Government counterparts – nearly 6,000 delegates in total from 187 ILO member States - to discuss transformative changes in the world of work, and to elaborate and adopt the ILO Centenary Declaration in a Committee of the Whole.

On the technical agenda was the second part of the discussion on violence and harassment at the workplace with a view to adoption of a new international agreement. The standing committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) conducted the three components of its business as usual.

Given the significance of the Centenary ILC, dozens of world leaders addressed the Conference over the two-week period.

An innovation for this year’s ILC to mark the historic occasion was a series of Thematic Forums and other events in which IOE participated. These were linked to the future of work and provided opportunities for debate and for sharing inspiring and thought-provoking perspectives on the future of the world of work. High-level speakers from among IOE members and partner companies provided valuable inputs to the thematic forums, raising the profile of the business contribution to topical debates.

Committee of the Whole – ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work

Under the leadership of Ms Renate Hornung-Draus (BDA, Germany, and IOE Regional Vice-President for Europe), the Employers approved the Declaration and accompanying Resolution following two weeks of intense discussion. From an Employers’ point of view, the ILO Centenary Declaration is both a formal celebration of the ILO’s 100 years, as well as a valuable statement of priorities and actions for the ILO and its constituents going forward. The Resolution contains concrete follow-up measures to ensure that the Declaration moves from words to action. The Employers welcomed many aspects of the Declaration, notably that it:

- Expresses the urgent need to reinvigorate the International Labour Organization.
• Recognises – uniquely in a text of this nature – the role of sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work.

• Calls on the ILO to harness the full potential of technological progress and productivity growth.

• Places significant focus on skills, urging ILO to become a global leader in providing concrete policy guidance to Member States to address the skills gap.

• Highlights the need for ILO to support the role of the private sector as a principal source of economic growth and job creation by promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises to generate decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all.

• Promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full productive employment and decent work for all.

Welcome too is the progressive approach to diverse forms of work, which aligns with the reality of the modern world, as is the inclusion of the term “adequate minimum wage”, which is a more widely defined concept than “living wage” and takes into account the particularities of the economic environment in which enterprises operate, to pay. In the accompanying Resolution, the Employers advocated for the ILO’s 2020-2021 Programme & Budget to allocate the appropriate resources to the newly defined priorities.

Committee on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work

Over the course of this two-year discussion under the leadership of Ms Alana Matheson (ACCI, Australia), the Employers were firm in their commitment to effectively address the unacceptable behaviours of violence and
harassment at work, as well as in their objections to certain elements of the proposed Convention and Recommendation.

Notably, the Employers did not agree with the proposed definition of “violence and harassment” as a violation of human rights, given that no international human rights instrument supports this recognition, and they achieved more tentative wording. Similarly, the Employers argued that “violence and harassment” should be defined at national level and as separate concepts, if Member States so wished, in order to better tackle the distinct phenomena in the most appropriate manner. The Employers also achieved recognition that employers, and not only workers, should be protected against unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. Another success for our Group was the limitation of employers’ responsibilities to areas within their practical control (i.e. largely within the workplace itself, without extending to the commute to work for example).

Notwithstanding these successes, the Employers were disappointed not to achieve special protection for LGBTI individuals, especially given that no international instrument explicitly protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and the Employers would have preferred more clarity on the responsibility for measures to prevent domestic violence. Ultimately a majority of the Employer constituents voted in favour of the instruments, which were adopted by the Conference.

In October 2019, IOE published an Employers’ Guide to the new instruments to help IOE members reflect on their position on the ratification of the Convention and the implementation of both the Convention and the accompanying Recommendation, and to properly assess the attendant opportunities and implications for business.

Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS)

Ms Sonia Regenbogen (CEC, Canada) led the Employers in the CAS. The work of the committee was conducted in a constructive and respectful manner despite diverging views on some issues among the tripartite groups. The Employers called on the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) to ensure a balanced approach to the supervision of standards, which should embrace the twin priorities of worker protection and the need for sustainable enterprises to develop and create employment opportunities. The work of the 2019 CAS included the General Discussion on the general part of the Report of the CEACR; the discussion on the General Survey on the Social Protection Floor Recommendation (R.202, 2012); and the examination of 24 individual cases.

The General Discussion provided the opportunity for IOE to commend the many positive developments underway in the regular supervision of standards, and to make proposals for continued improvements related to transparency, effectiveness, relevance and the tripartite governance of supervision. However, the Employers expressed concern over the persistent failure of governments to comply with the reporting obligations by the deadline, as well
as the CEACR’s lack of adequate differentiation between “direct requests” to governments and “observations”. Once again, the Employers called for stricter legal assessment of compliance with ratified Conventions, and in particular with Convention 87, which in the Employers’ long-held view does not regulate a right to strike despite the CEACR’s observations to the contrary.

The discussion on the General Survey on the Social Protection Floors Recommendation underlined the importance of this topic for its supportive role in the development of productive economies and stable and cohesive societies. While the State has overall responsibility for setting social protection floors, the Employers echoed the need for measures that promote private initiatives to ensure the financial sustainability of social protection systems. The Employers recalled the need to combine preventative, promotional and active measures, as well as coherent policies to support productive economic activity, formal employment, entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises. They also shone a light on the role of social protection in helping to overcome poverty, vulnerability and exclusion.

The third component of the CAS, the examination of the cases, was conducted successfully, with one case of progress included. As in previous years, the published conclusions included only those recommendations addressed to governments that had been reached by consensus; observations that attracted diverging views were reflected only in the official Record of Proceedings.

IOE continues to work with member organisations to ensure appropriate follow-up to the CAS conclusions, as well as encouraging members to submit comments to the CEACR to ensure that their feedback on compliance at national level is officially recorded and acted upon.

**Governing Body**

As the first GB session following the adoption of the ILO Centenary Declaration, agreement on the 2020-2021 Programme and Budget (P&B) was crucial to translating the ambitions enshrined in the historic Declaration into concrete actions.

However, for the Employers the P&B proposal lacked clarity regarding the allocation of resources to deliver on the Declaration’s pledges, particularly investing in skills and productivity development to address the challenges of the future of work. Despite strong calls from the Employers’ side, a review of the budget’s shortcomings was ruled out and, for the first time in decades, the Employers did not support the P&B, which was nevertheless adopted without tripartite consensus. The Employers reaffirmed their strong commitment to continue to engage in constructive dialogue to reach the ambitious goals of the Declaration and, in this regard, gained support for including a general discussion on skills and lifelong learning on the Agenda of the 2020 ILC to provide an opportunity to argue further for a robust ILO strategy on skills.

Also related to the Declaration, this GB approved a procedural roadmap, as a planning tool that would be subject to GB review and modification, for the consideration of proposals for the inclusion of safe and healthy working conditions in the ILO’s framework of fundamental principles and rights at work. For the Employers, the initiative erroneously assumed a consensus among tripartite constituents on the need for such inclusion and raised a raft of substantive questions, such as what would such proposals mean for the 1998 Declaration; what are the implications for ILO Member States beyond reporting to ILO; what might the repercussions be for references to the 1998 Declaration in Trade Agreements and for human rights guidance? It was agreed that the GB would need to carefully address these concerns and begin analysing the pros and cons of the proposals. The Group was joined by a number of Governments in emphasising that the process should not pre-empt the outcome of the discussion.

Follow-up also took place in October/November on the two newly adopted international instruments on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (C190 and R206), with the endorsement of a comprehensive strategy to ensure wide ratification of C190 and the effective implementation of the new standards through a series of activities over a six-year timeframe.

Such activities are to include support to constituents through awareness-raising initiatives, promotional materials, research and technical assistance, bringing the instruments to the attention of relevant international and regional organisations, and promoting partnerships and joint initiatives to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work; allocation of resources within existing and future programmes and budgets; and mobilisation of extra-budgetary
resources to carry out the activities with the tripartite constituents.

While largely supporting the strategy, the Employers urged the Office, when undertaking the activities, to take into account the concerns of the Group over the broad scope and high-level of prescription inherent in the Recommendation. The Employers also advocated for an approach that first helps to ensure understanding of the challenges and implications of ratification through tripartite consultation with the most representative organisations of workers and employers before fully implementing the activities. Finally, the Employers rejected the notion of integrating C190 into the human rights multilateral system because such integration exceeded the mandate of the Resolution, and because harassment did not always constitute a violation of human rights.

The GB reviewed progress in the Office’s implementation of the five-pillared programme of action on decent work in global supply chains at this mid-term stage and provided guidance on the way forward prior to a final report in October 2022. The pillars consist of knowledge generation and dissemination; capacity-building; effective advocacy for decent work in global supply chains; policy advice and technical assistance; and partnerships and policy coherence.

As advised by the GB, the Office had prioritised implementation in the first two areas of action and taken steps to advance the other three areas, particularly where there are close linkages between actions on capacity-building and policy advice and technical assistance.

And returning for a fifth time to the discussion on addressing decent work deficits in the tobacco sector, the October/November 2019 GB finally endorsed an integrated strategy that does not exclude private sector funding, recalling previous GB decisions “to continue efforts to mobilise various sustainable sources of funding from the public and private sector with appropriate safeguards”. Of particular note is that the adopted strategy must be implemented with the close involvement of the social partners and the tobacco industry.

And finally, for some time the Employers’ Group has been calling for an ILO research strategy that involves the tripartite constituents regarding orientation, substance and format of research in order to address issues of bias and incoherence. This session took some steps in the right direction, but the Employers insisted that there was still much work to be done.

The March 2020 Session of the GB was cancelled due to the Covid-19 coronavirus. However, a
number of urgent decisions were taken by the GB Officers in consultation with the GB Screening Group, including the decision to defer the 109th session of the International Labour Conference and related May/June GB sessions.

14th ILO African Regional Meeting in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

At four-yearly intervals, the ILO African Regional Meeting brings together the political, economic and social actors of the continent. From 3 – 6 December 2019 the 14th African Regional Meeting took place in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. ILO’s tripartite constituents from 49 African countries, as well as representatives of international organisations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, took part in the discussions aimed at forging a regional framework to unleash Africa’s potential for inclusive growth and shaping a future of work with social justice in line with the human-centred approach advocated in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

With more than 40 employer and business membership organisations in Africa affiliated to IOE, we had a key role to play alongside our colleagues at ILO ACT/EMP in preparing and supporting the Employer participation in panel discussions on “Making decent work a reality for Africa’s Youth”; “The Role of International Labour Standards, Social Dialogue and Gender Equality in the realisation of the Decent Work Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals”; and “Skills, Technological Pathways and Productivity for a Brighter Future of Work in Africa”.

The Employers’ Group benefitted from the leadership of Ms Jacqueline Mugo (FKE, Kenya) and the key support and guidance of IOE Regional Vice-President for Africa, Mr El Mahfoudh Megateli (CGEA, Algeria) as well as our member locally, the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d’Ivoire (CGECI). Our Group fully supported the adoption of the landmark Abidjan Declaration and, in particular, welcomed the call to the ILO Office for an implementation plan – for presentation to a future session of the GB - for concrete action in four critical areas: creating an enabling environment for sustainable business, practical measures to enhance productivity growth, comprehensive policy guidance and technical support for skills development, and comprehensive measures for removing policy and regulatory barriers to formalisation. The Declaration provides for a mid-term review of progress in 2021, and a report on the implementation of the plan for review by the next African Regional Meeting, which will take place in 2023.

Sectoral Activities

IOE continued to add value to employer participation in ILO Sectoral Activities during this period, coordinating and guiding more than 20 experts nominated by IOE member organisations to ensure that the points of consensus, as well as recommendations for the ILO and its constituents, reflect the perspectives and expectations of employers.

During this period, we supported the participation of Employer representatives from Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, Guatemala, Peru, Spain and Tunisia in the ILO Meeting of Experts to adopt a code of practice or guidelines on best practices in road transport safety, which took place in Geneva from 23 – 27 September. In advance of the meeting, IOE published a blog post entitled “Road Safety is everyone’s business”, setting out employer priorities for action to reinforce accident prevention. The meeting itself provided an opportunity for IOE
members to reiterate the need for practical actions to strengthen occupational safety and health in the commercial road vehicle sector. Such actions include prioritising government investment in sustainable and resilient infrastructures, given that the quality of infrastructures (roads, parking and service areas) is a key factor in road safety; more training, especially because workforce training in digital technology is key to fostering a safe working environment; effective enforcement of safety laws and prevention programmes through well-resourced labour inspectors; and raising public awareness to implement preventative measures and minimise risks. The Employers recognised that the full realisation of these actions involved a joint commitment from workers, employers and governments. They welcomed the contribution of the adopted guidelines to the promotion of best practice, and to several SDG targets - particularly SDG target 3.6, which aims to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.

From 20-22 January, attention turned to the ILO Global Forum on Decent Work in the World of Sport. This was the first time the world of sport had been the topic for such a Forum, and it looks set to be considered again in the future. IOE again supported the participation of the Employer cohort. The Group was led by IOE Vice-President to the ILO, Mthunzi Mdwaba of South Africa, who was joined by Employer colleagues from Egypt, Germany, Iran, Jamaica, New Zealand, Norway, Spain and Zambia in exploring with their worker and government counterparts current and emerging issues related to the promotion of decent work in the world of sport. Of particular note from an Employer perspective was the importance of maintaining the diversity and specificity of social dialogue involving athletes. The Employers insisted on taking into account the different organisational and employment structures, the differences between professional individual sports and professional team sports, and they highlighted that social dialogue can take place in various settings besides collective bargaining, such as through consultation, exchange of information, negotiation and tripartite cooperation. The adopted points of consensus included recommendations for future action by the ILO and its constituents.

**Technical Meeting**

The ILO Technical Meeting on Achieving Decent Work in Global Supply Chains took place in Geneva from 25 - 28 February. Please refer to our chapter on Human Right and Responsible Business Conduct to read about the outcomes of this important meeting for employers.

**Other International forums**

For many years, the scope of IOE activities has extended into scores of other forums, at regional and international level, within the UN system and beyond, to advocate on behalf of business and ensure that the perspectives of the global employer community are taken into account in the decisions and outcomes. Engagement beyond the ILO is covered in both the Highlights as well as the relevant sections of the Policy Priorities chapters of this report.
III Policy Priorities

IOE’s policy priorities are closely linked to crucial issues for business today, such as international labour standards; industrial relations; employment creation and skills development; the future of work; responsible business conduct; international labour migration; sustainable development; occupational safety and health, diversity and more.

We have created policy working groups (PWGs), and benefit from our business networks as well as partnerships with other organisations, think-tanks, and companies, to analyse trends and help shape the global agenda through an evidence-based and practical approach. This helps to ensure that policy debates and outcomes in these areas reflect the interests of business and employers.
International Labour Standards (ILS)

When ratified, an ILO Convention sets the framework for national law and practice on a certain work-related area. If existing national law or practice do not comply with the Convention, new labour laws, amendments of existing laws, or new implementation directives may ensue, and businesses may be required to change their practices, sometimes at significant expense. Even if ILS are not taken up by national law, collective agreements, international framework agreements (IFAs) and codes of conduct are increasingly inspired by them. This has a direct impact on business decisions.

IOE works to ensure that employers’ organisations and their members are well informed and play a role in the ILO and at national level in formulating, implementing and supervising ILS, and in ensuring that due account is taken of the range of business perspectives and needs in policymaking circles. Most of our work in this area therefore takes place in the ILO, for example, during the Governing Body, the International Labour Conference, the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group meetings and at ILO technical meetings and global dialogue forums, where IOE coordinates, guides and supports the contribution of the Employer constituency.

During this reporting period, IOE coordinated the participation of employer representatives, who joined with their social partner counterparts, from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Paraguay and Peru in the first ILO Global Dialogue Forum on ILO Convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples) since the convention’s adoption in 1989. The aim of the Forum, which included a workshop, was to promote awareness and understanding of the scope and content of the Convention, the only international standard on this issue, including through the dissemination of the work of the ILO supervisory bodies and the sharing of practical experiences and lessons learned in the convention’s application. The event, which took place in Lima, Peru, brought together stakeholders from across the region to celebrate progress and opportunities arising from the convention, while exploring how to address pending challenges.

Industrial Relations

Industrial relations have profound repercussions on the working environment and the production of goods and delivery of services. For IOE there can be “no one-size-fits-all” industrial relations model - each is grounded in the historical, economic, and political context of the respective country.

Through its Industrial Relations Policy Working Group (IRPWG), IOE provides members with a platform for sharing information and discussing topics such as industrial action, collective bargaining systems, the collective rights of independent contractors, mediation, and dispute resolution mechanisms. These discussions inform IOE policy guidance for members.

During this reporting period, the IRPWG launched a comprehensive “IOE Policy Paper on Industrial Relations and Independent Contractors”, which provides an overview of the situation of independent contractors from around the world. The paper illustrates that in the many countries that have started to examine the issue, the key question remains as to whether independent contractors, including self-employed workers in the platform economy, are so dependent on a
single contractor that they should be considered as quasi-employees.

The paper discusses the status of independent contractors and highlights the importance of such a classification in terms of law and practice. It presents examples of how national legislations and case law define the status of independent contractors across different regions. It goes on to examine the industrial relations situation for independent contractors in terms of collective representation and collective bargaining, drawing on useful examples of new initiatives of representation and collective agreements that have been signed to date.

To satisfy the growing demand for timely information on developments in industrial relations and national labour law. IOE is partnering with the World Employment Confederation (WEC) to establish an industrial relations observatory tasked with producing a periodic news bulletin (the first edition launched in May). The partnership will leverage IOE’s technical experience and expertise in this area, and WEC’s recognised human resources management practice. The bulletin will report on relevant industrial relations matters and labour law developments arising from changes in industrial relations regulations, policies and practices, important court decisions, workplace arrangements or collective agreements. It will include practical and specific insights from IOE and WEC members and there will be a section dedicated to the members’ responses and strategies to overcome the economic and social consequences of the fallout from the Covid-19 coronavirus crisis.

Human Rights and Responsible Business Conduct

IOE leads the engagement of business and employers across the range of international human rights policymaking forums. These include:

- ILO: Global Supply Chains, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, MNE Declaration, Social Dialogue.
- Other initiatives/organisations: UN Global Compact, GRI, ISO, OECD, B20, Benchmarks/ranks, Mega sporting events, Bali Process.

In bringing the business realities to these processes and initiative, we advocate for reasonable, realistic and workable solutions to the world’s myriad human-rights challenges. We also work to ensure policy coherence between international organisations and help companies to understand what they need to do to meet the evolving standards of conduct.

While it is impossible to report here on all the engagement in this area over the year, of note is our work in the UN Treaty process, which is being led by the Government of Ecuador. IOE has been engaged since 2014 alongside members, such as USCIB, and other business organisations, in the work of the UN open-ended intergovernmental working group (OEIGWG) on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights. The OEIGWG met in Geneva for its fifth session from 14 – 18 October 2019 to engage in State-to-State negotiations on a revised zero draft legally binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, as well as a zero draft optional protocol. In advance of the meeting, IOE worked alongside BusinessEurope and Business at OECD, with input from members, on a response to the revised zero draft, setting out both the firm commitment of business to respect human rights, as well as the business community’s substantive concerns with the text.

These concerns were delivered by the business community during designated speaking slots. They included that the draft treaty is not compatible with the UNGPs and other authoritative global standards. Its scope is unclear, its approach coercive and punitive, it sets out several confusing provisions, and jeopardises the consensus and progress achieved by the UNGPs to date. Crucially, it does not offer solutions to encourage States to meet existing obligations and to address the human rights challenges in their own jurisdiction, which lie at the root of most human-rights harms. Instead, it disregards State sovereignty and seeks transnational businesses to fill the on-the-ground
governance gaps that exist in many parts of the world.

The business message aimed to ensure that the business and human rights movement evolves along the same principled and pragmatic lines as the UNGPs and does not undermine its broad consensus.

The Chair (Ecuador) will release a “second Revised Draft Treaty” by end of June 2020, as well as a “document that contains an outline of the key issues and a structure of the revised draft which can serve as a tool to assist direct negotiations.” A 6th session of the OEIGWG will likely be held in October 2020. Of note is that Ecuador is inviting “a group of experts from different regions, legal systems and fields of expertise to provide independent expertise and advise” in relation to preparing the second Revised Draft Treaty. IOE will continue to engage in this and other business and human rights processes on behalf of members and partners.

The much anticipated ILO Technical Meeting on Achieving Decent Work in Global Supply Chains took place in Geneva from 25 – 28 February, with the participation of an Employer delegation, supported by IOE, from Cambodia, Canada, France, Germany, Mexico, Uganda, and the US, led by the IOE Vice-President to the ILO, Mr Mthunzi Mdwaba. IOE invested a huge amount of time and effort before and during the meeting to achieve a result that would have seen the ILO better address the root causes of decent work challenges linked to both domestic and global supply chains. However, we were disappointed by the lack of support for the Employers’ position, specifically that the tripartite Working Party, not the ILO Office, assess any gaps; and that any strategy to address such gaps cover both domestic and global supply chains in line with the 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration, and with all available evidence on decent work deficits in supply chains. A report of the meeting is expected to be discussed at the November 2020 ILO Governing Body, and, in the meantime, the ILO Office will continue to implement its existing programme of action on global supply chains.

**International Labour Migration**

IOE’s work in the area of international labour migration involves engagement and output of various kinds. As host to the Business Advisory Group on Migration, IOE coordinates the input of the private sector to the intergovernmental Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which aims to enhance the understanding of governments as to how migration policies and practices affect business operations at national level. (More on this in our Business Networks section.)

IOE also works with the International Organisation for Migration as a member of the Advisory Board of IRIS, a global initiative designed to promote ethical international recruitment. IRIS works by defining and setting a benchmark for ethical recruitment and through establishing a voluntary certification scheme for ethical labour recruiters, and a compliance and monitoring mechanism. IOE acts as a bridge between IOM regional offices and our members.

IOE is also involved in ILO’s migration workstream and regularly contributes to their meetings across the globe, which are often attended by IOE members.

Collaboration also takes place with the UN Network on Migration, created after the formal adoption of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) in December 2018, by contributing to various working groups. Deliverables in the pipeline will include guidance for governments to support the implementation of the GCM. IOE’s input focuses on ensuring outreach to national employers’ organisations.

At meetings of IOE members around the globe, IOE delivers presentations on the business case for
migration: the need for workforce mobility; filling skills shortages; contributing to the protection of the most vulnerable migrant workers through responsible recruitment practices; ensuring social stability through public discourse; and positively influencing perceptions in support of members’ engagement in the labour migration debate at national level.

**Sustainable Development**

In this major area of work, IOE focuses on the impact of sustainable development policies and measures on employment and social conditions and helps to ensure that policymakers are aware of the business perspective. IOE demonstrates its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a range of activities, publications, forums, training sessions, working groups, and international conferences, and seeks to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the role of the private sector in the achievement of the Goals. IOE also analyses and communicates both the challenges and opportunities for business that are generated by the SDGs, provides effective employer advocacy, and argues for the involvement of employers’ organisations in accountability mechanisms.

IOE participated in several high-level events throughout this reporting period that had the sustainable development agenda as their focus. The first was the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in early June on the theme “Creating a Sustainable Development Agenda”. Private sector representatives, high-level government delegates, heads of corporations and international organisation came together to discuss the role of economic actors in the sustainable development agenda. IOE Vice-President for Europe, Renate Hornung-Draus participated in the session “Co-creating the future: Business solutions for realising the Sustainable Development Goals”, underlining the need for an enabling environment for businesses to be able to contribute to the realisation of the SDGs. She also called for a consolidated approach to stimulating business innovations that will support the achievement of the Goals, while highlighting skills and employment as key to addressing the twin priorities of economic and sustainable development. The role of public-private partnerships was also central to her intervention, and Ms Hornung-Draus called for the public sector and the UN system to develop more streamlined
approaches to cooperating with the private sector on joint initiatives in pursuit of the SDGs.

IOE went on to participate in the 2019 session of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) which took place in July under the auspices of ECOSOC to review progress on SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17, including cross-cutting issues and interlinkages, and to identify challenges and gaps in the Goals’ achievement. The overall theme was “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.

Over 2,000 participants gathered in New York for the event. As the representative and legitimate voices of the world of work, employers’ organisations and trade unions had a key role to play among the stakeholders, bringing the first-hand experiences of their constituents to the table. IOE’s focus was on communicating the perspectives of business on SDG 8 and its targets, challenges and opportunities, both in official HLPF meetings, as well as in multi-stakeholder side events, some of which IOE had organised or co-organised.

IOE President Erol Kiresepi, USCIB President and CEO Peter Robinson, IOE Secretary-General Roberto Suárez and Deputy Secretary-General Matthias Thorns took part in several of the discussions. Focusing on decent work and economic growth, IOE messages underlined the need for improvement in three essential areas to maximise private sector impact on the achievement of the SDGs: improved governance and rule of law, inclusive multilateralism and facilitation of public-private partnerships.

An IOE-USCIB-Deloitte side-event on 17 July gathered corporate leaders, small-business executives, top UN officials, as well as employer and worker representatives at the “SDG 8 Business Dialogue” to map out the path to increase private sector involvement in SDG 8 targets. The co-organisers’ Report “Reaching SDG 8: Challenges, Opportunities and Risks” launched at the event showed that the rate of global progress has not kept pace with the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, and that without major inputs from the private sector, SDG 8 will not be met.

This event provided a timely opportunity to launch a new initiative by the USCIB Foundation – “Business Partners for Sustainable Development”, which aims to create more public-private partnerships in support of the 2030 Agenda; to facilitate and streamline the process of establishing partnerships; and to provide an efficient framework for stakeholders to share, discuss and coordinate.

In addition, IOE presented the findings of a recent survey of members on their insights, experiences, perspectives and actions in the context of the 2030 Agenda, chief among which are that the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda are critical to employers, and that the private sector is committed to achieving this agenda. The findings highlighted the factors influencing the achievement of progress i.e. an enabling environment for business, improved and efficient governance, and capacity building for social partners.

Between 22 and 27 September, IOE joined global leaders of government, business and civil society in New York for the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly. High on the agenda were climate action and progress on the SDGs. On 23 September, the IOE Secretary-General was a panellist at an ILO-organised discussion involving high-level UN and government figures on the topic of a just transition in the context of climate action.

While underscoring business support for the aims of a just transition, Mr Suárez highlighted the need to keep in mind that SMEs may be struggling in this process and that a crucial component of a successful transition is SME capacity building. He called on governments and civil society actors to provide the appropriate frameworks, incentives and capacity building for SMEs to ensure they can thrive through the transition.

Ahead of the SDG Summit on 24-25 September, IOE made a joint video appeal with ITUC, stressing the key role of social dialogue, partnerships and inclusive multilateralism in advancing the 2030 Agenda. The joint call raised the alarm at the slow pace of government and multilateral action on meeting SDG targets, especially those linked to the world of work. It also articulated the readiness of IOE and ITUC to share their longstanding representativeness, experience and expertise to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through more formal and regular involvement in global initiatives impacting the world of work. The two organisations have requested UN Observer Status to facilitate such enhanced involvement.

IOE work on sustainable development goes beyond advocacy in the UN system; IOE supports the participation of members in the European Union Policy Forum on Development, bringing the business perspective to discussions at regional and global level on innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges as encapsulated in the SDGs and advocating for the involvement
of the private sector and its representative organisations in the design and implementation of EU development programmes.

A strong IOE-member delegation from China, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam, supported by IOE’s regional adviser, contributed to the 3rd Asia Regional Meeting of the EU Policy Forum on Development (PFD) in Kathmandu, Nepal from 24 – 26 September, underscoring IOE’s ongoing commitment to the private sector contribution to development.

The meeting gathered around 80 representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) from the region to share experiences of and insights into the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes; the conditions that make for an enabling environment; and the localised implementation of the SDGs.

While recognising the diversity of the region’s cultures, societies and natural environments, the assessment concluded that if the current trajectory were maintained, Asia would not meet any of the 17 SDGs by 2030. Despite relative progress towards some of the Goals (1, 4 and 7), progress towards others had stagnated or even declined. Lack of progress towards Goal 17 (strengthening global partnership), a key priority of IOE, was likely to impact negatively on the achievement of the Agenda overall.

IOE joined forces with the other stakeholders in setting out in the concluding communiqué some global recommendations for the EU’s uptake:

- Increase support to enable mechanisms for more meaningful engagement at grassroots level
- Simplify procedures and requirements at this level for accessing and reporting on funding support
- Increase support for data gathering, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs with a view to documenting and facilitating the replication of good practices, especially at the regional and sub-national levels
- Continue to provide spaces for learning and sharing on SDGs with more inclusive participation of constituencies and a mechanism for follow-through and feedback on joint commitments

When it came to specific Employer-related recommendations, our delegation successfully pushed for the inclusion of the need for the EU to engage the private sector and employer organisations, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises (which make up 96% of companies in Asia) with capacity-building programmes and knowledge-sharing opportunities to ensure equitable economic development and climate responsiveness.

IOE recognises that the contributions of many important stakeholder groups will be key to the achievement of the SDGs. One is the Business and Industry Major Group recognised by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and co-chaired by IOE and USCIB, as a channel to ensure consistent, coherent and constructive business input to the UN system and other forums on SDG-related matters. IOE convenes virtual meetings of the B&I MG, which consists of leaders of employer organisations, businesses, and climate change and sustainability think-tanks and advisory firms. Among other activities, the group plans the business approach and engagement in major SDG-related events such as HLPF 2020, which will be on the theme “Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realising the UN Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development”.

On 15 May, IOE organised a virtual dialogue entitled “UN@75” involving business and UN Under-Secretary-General Fabrizio Hochschild on global cooperation, partnerships, knowledge sharing and inclusive policy-making in response to the global consensus that countries need to work together to manage global trends. Executives from IOE membership and the B&I MG, and other IOE partners, brought the voice of business to the consultation.

As previously highlighted, IOE’s focus is primarily on SDG 8, and to this end, we are a member of the Global Coordination Group of Alliance 8.7, a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at contributing to reaching the SDG target to eradicate forced labour, and to end modern slavery and human trafficking. With the ILO as the Secretariat, it provides a platform for partners to share information, positive practices and lessons learnt, and to demonstrate progress.

A key pillar of Alliance 8.7 is encouraging “pathfinder” countries that are committed to accelerating efforts and to trying new approaches to eradicate child and forced labour. So far, more
than 20 pathfinder countries have signed up to organise tripartite strategic planning workshops to discuss possible approaches and initiatives, which may ultimately pave the way for countries to develop supply chain and transparency legislation. IOE members in the pathfinder countries are strongly encouraged to get engaged in the initiative to provide the employer perspective at national level.

With climate change identified in the 2019 IOE/ILO ACT-EMP report as one of the five megatrends impacting the future of employer and business membership organisations, keeping abreast of developments related to SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate and its impacts) is also a key focus of IOE’s sustainability work. Consequently, both the IOE Secretary-General and Adviser for Sustainable Development attended COP25 in Madrid in December 2019 to follow the debates and developments, to engage with the wider business community and beyond, as well as to participate in several high-level sessions.

Together with ILO and other organisations, IOE took part as a founding partner in the launch of the new Climate Action for Jobs initiative spearheaded by the UN Secretary-General. The annual Major Economies Business Forum (BizMEF) Forum on the sidelines of the COP, which was organised by USCIB and hosted by our member in Spain, CEOE, provided a further opportunity to exchange with the wider business community, to share experiences, and coordinate efforts and commitments. IOE’s key messages focused on the need to promote and incentivise entrepreneurship, innovation and skills development to respond to the challenges and seize the opportunities of climate change in pursuit of an efficient, quick and just transition to a more climate-friendly economy.

**Future of Work**

For IOE, the discussion on the Future of Work (FoW) on the international stage is a fundamental means for governments, workers and employers to shape policies in response to the changing nature of work; to encourage reskilling and upskilling for the future; and to respond to the governance of work as it evolves. A major outcome during this period was the adoption of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work to guide the action of ILO and its constituents in this area. (Please see ILO chapter for the Employers’ contribution and response to the Declaration.)

Beyond the ILO, IOE represents the employers’ views on digitalisation, innovation, new business models, and all other changes affecting employment and the world of work in policy debates at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Business at OECD, the G7 and G20, and elsewhere.

Highlighting the importance of this policy area for IOE and its members, the Future of Work (FoW) was the chosen theme for the first of five IOE Centenary Summits planned throughout 2020. The global Summit was jointly organised with the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Employers (CAPE) and the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE) and supported by the European Union. It brought together around 70 representatives of business and industry, international organisations, employer and business membership organisations (EBMOs) and experts from around the world, to talk about key actions for harnessing the opportunities of the future of work. The format included panel discussions, presentations and group brainstorming sessions and the key takeaways were captured in a dedicated report and toolkit to inform future business decisions and policy recommendations of IOE members and partners. These include the need for direct contact at the highest level between EBMOs, TVET institutions and Ministries of Education to improve the balancing of labour-market supply and demand, and for policies that improve the business environment for SMEs to start up, innovate and grow.

As in other areas, IOE welcomes the opportunity to join forces with other partners to share expertise and experiences on shared priorities. In January, IOE was invited by the Digital Futures at Work Research Centre in the UK to give the employer perspective in a discussion designed to begin mapping out the aims, ambitions, obstacles and opportunities being encountered by different types of organisations as they confront the challenges of work in the digital age. Jointly led by the business schools of the Universities of Sussex and of Leeds, in partnership with the Universities of Aberdeen, Cambridge and Manchester in the UK, and Monash in Australia, the Centre aims to advance understanding of how digital technologies are reshaping work, impacting on employers and employees, and on job seekers and governments. Talks are underway on a potential joint research project with IOE for a publication on how the platform economy is affecting informality.
A further notable collaboration is the jointly produced and comprehensive IOE-USCIB publication "Moving ahead: the future of business in the US". While based on a survey of US companies, the findings have wider application. Recalling the megatrends impacting the future of work and business that were highlighted in the 2019 IOE-ILO ACT/EMP report, the joint IOE-USCIB publication finds that the companies surveyed understand the importance of networking and working with external stakeholders that can help them on their Future or Work journey. Some have not waited for government to respond to the already looming challenges and are rolling out extensive training programmes for upskilling, with HR departments being the most engaged business unit addressing FoW issues. Of particular relevance are the recommendations to companies seeking to harness FoW opportunities:

1. Create a conducive, open and attractive IT culture
2. Determine how to balance human with machine
3. Treat workers as customers
4. Understand that taking small steps at a time is better than none
5. Understand the importance of attracting a diverse workforce
6. Find ways to cultivate loyal and engaged employees
7. Understand that the workforce is more agile than employers think
8. Value the importance of creating a learning culture,
9. Be open to adopting environmentally sustainable processes,
10. Embrace regular engagement with external support sources, such as the representative business and employer membership organisations and government. Together collective solutions can be developed that improve workforce skills, infrastructure and the business environment.

**Employment and Skills**

IOE’s broad employment workstream covers labour market policies, the informal economy, youth employment, skills development, the Future of Work, productivity, social protection and sustainable wages, in short, all aspects of work and the policies that govern them.

IOE’s leadership role on behalf of business and employers in this area extends to the ILO, OECD,
the G7 and G20 and beyond, framing political discussions and international legal negotiations, and contributing the business input to the design, development, implementation and monitoring of employment policies. Our network consistently advocates for inclusive, active labour market policies that increase employment opportunities for all men and women, in all groups.

The IOE’s Employment and Skills Policy Working Group gathers members’ views to inform both the global discussion on topics ranging from the minimum wage, to skills for the future, as well as IOE publications on employment and skills, such as the blog post in the G7 France magazine highlighting the importance of soft skills as the foundation for a successful career in the next generation of jobs.

A highly visible example of IOE “Employment and Skills” output is our regular contribution to the recommendations for employment and education policy and action for the B20 employment workstream.

As official “Networking Partner” of the B20 Employment and Education Task Force (EETF) under the Japan and Saudi Arabia G20 presidencies in 2019/2020, and with IOE President Erol Kiresepi as co-chair of the EETF, IOE was once again instrumental in bringing the business recommendations to the G20 employment process which culminated in the G20 labour ministerial in Matsuyama in early September 2019. With the theme “Shaping a Human-Centred Future of Work”, the labour and employment ministers discussed global developments with respect to employment, progress on their previous commitments, and agreed policy priorities to address demographic change, new forms of work, and global efforts to realise gender equality. Of particular note in the ministers’ declaration was the recognition that action and cooperation with social partners is key to ensuring that the future of work builds on appropriate responses to demographic transitions, further progress in gender equality, and the sound development of new forms of work.

IOE President Erol Kiresepi delivered the recommendations from the business and employer community for concrete actions from the G20 employment ministers and their leaders, notably calling for:

1. Simple, transparent, flexible and predictable regulatory and policy frameworks that create open, dynamic and inclusive labour markets and encourage companies to grow and employ people.

2. More action on women’s economic empowerment, removing legal and other barriers that hinder women from participating in the formal labour market, improving access to finance for female entrepreneurs, increasing support mechanisms such as accessible and affordable child care and elderly care, and ensuring early access for all girls and women to compulsory, high-quality education.

3. Better targeted initiatives for increasing youth participation in the labour market, including the creation of regulatory frameworks that encourage apprenticeship systems.

4. Additional efforts to address the challenge of informality, including lowering barriers such as excessive bureaucracy.

5. Education systems that align with the labour market needs of today and tomorrow. For example, ensuring access to compulsory, high-quality education systems that deliver a broad range of essential skills.

6. Effective lifelong learning systems and the promotion of a new attitude to learning as a means to ensure ongoing employability.

7. A “think-small-first-approach”, which means fully analysing the potential impact of regulations and policies on SMEs before they are enacted or approved.

### Occupational Safety & Health (OSH)

Since 2008, the IOE Global Occupational Safety & Health Network (GOSH) has been attracting members and their corporate affiliates to twice-yearly meetings around a range of topics that are decided by the network. Please see the Business Networks chapter for more on this.

Work on OSH also means closely following relevant initiatives being developed by the International
Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), and providing guidance to members on recommended action at national level. One example is the creation by ISO Technical Committee (TC) 283 of ISO 45003 guidance on “Psychological health and safety in the workplace” as a follow-up to ISO 45001 “Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems”, which was published in 2018. ISO 45003 is currently at the “working draft” stage and IOE will continue to follow, influence through members, and report on developments.

IOE is also involved in the Global Coalition for Promoting Safety & Health at Work, which was launched by international organisations, OSH institutes, and others, at the 2017 XXI World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Singapore. The Coalition aims at fostering global collaboration, promoting knowledge sharing and identifying practical solutions to address common challenges.

ILO is chairing the Secretariat, which is guided by a Steering Committee of ten representatives of ILO Member States (Ministries, Inspectorates and/or national Occupational Health institutions) and one representative from each of the international employers’ and workers’ organisations. Country members to date include Chile, Croatia, Finland, Iraq, Portugal, Singapore, and South Africa; Austria, Guatemala, Korea, Spain, Thailand, and Zambia have expressed interest in joining.

Seven focus areas are under consideration:

• Development of a multi-regional OSH information system (data)
• Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) at work
• Promoting decent work and productive employment through education and training programs
• Introduction of the “Vision Zero” concept at enterprises
• Psychosocial risk at work
• OSH and migrant workers
• Safety and Health in the Future

At the recent Steering Committee meeting, IOE reaffirmed that safety and health at work is of utmost importance to employers, and that there is room for reinforcing synergies and streamlining the many existing initiatives to avoid duplications and fragmentation of efforts. Specifically, IOE advocated for the Coalition to adopt a practical approach, to ensure that SMEs are kept within the scope of the initiative as they struggle most to meet OSH requirements; to strengthen the culture of prevention, while taking into consideration national conditions; to bring companies on board through their national EBMOs to better respond to real needs and enhance outcomes on the ground. The next meeting is likely to take place in the margins of the next World Congress on Safety and Health at Work (October 2020).

IOE also supports the aspirations of the Vision Zero Fund (VZF), which was created on the proposal of the G7 German presidency in 2015 as a donor-driven, workplace injury and disease prevention fund. VZF’s objectives are zero fatal and severe work-related accidents, injuries and diseases in global supply chains (in particular, in low income countries). Aims include linking research to policy; strengthening legal and policy frameworks; and accelerating workplace improvements. VZF was launched in Myanmar in June 2016 and will be rolled out in Ethiopia and Lao. The Garment & Textiles and Agriculture Sectors have been the entry points for improving systems at the national level. VZF priorities for 2020 are as follows:

• Putting into practice the model for multi-stakeholder action to ensure industry-wide change
• Increased emphasis on research
• Integration of “Gender” into VZF’s work
• Potential expansion to new countries and value chains
• Attracting additional support

The VZF Secretariat is run by the OSH department of the ILO. The Steering Committee (SC) meets twice a year to approve work plans and reports (including budgets), to consider and approve proposals from the VZF Secretariat for new projects (including country and sector selection), and to oversee the implementation of the strategy.
SC membership consists of donors, a government member of a potential recipient country serving on the ILO Governing Body (currently Turkey), and a representative of ILO GOVERNANCE. IOE has participated in an advisory role in several consultative meetings and is arguing to have greater influence (alongside other social partners) on the strategic decisions.

And to mark the 2020 ILO World Day on Occupational Safety and Health on 28 April, IOE released a statement highlighting that protecting lives and ensuring business continuity to protect employment were our top priorities. The statement emphasised that the expertise and practical guidance being issued by WHO, ILO and IOE were key to developing safe back-to-work strategies to recover from the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

**Diversity**

As businesses throughout the world face the challenge of attracting and retaining employees, we are working to provide guidance to our members and their corporate affiliates to effectively harness the best possible mix of experience, skills, perspectives and strengths in their workforces to enhance competitiveness, productivity and profitability, as well as informing the diversity debate with the employer and business perspective. This entails developing IOE-centred initiatives, as well as participating in multi-stakeholder efforts to promote diversity.

The IOE Gender Network, which has more than 50 members, was created in 2019 as an experience-sharing platform to encourage members and corporate partners to:

- promote and advocate for gender equality and diversity at the workplace
- share best practices, robust ideas and arguments to promote gender equality
- discuss what works and what doesn’t in advancing gender equality
- contribute to the elaboration of IOE gender-related publications
- create a repository of data and publications, and an expert hub on the topic among IOE members and partner companies
Within the framework of the Network, IOE has hosted webinars; the first to discuss the ILO report “Women in Business and Management: the business case for change”, and the second to update members of the Network on the latest research and findings on gender quotas. As an outcome of the Network’s activity, two position papers were released on “Recommendations to foster female talent in top managerial positions” and “Harnessing female talent for the digital economy”.

On 8 November, IOE participated in the ILO event to commemorate 100 years of the first international labour standards to guarantee maternity protection. As we look to the future of work, IOE made the business case for maternity protection and reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality measures.

IOE is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), which is committed to reduce the gender pay gap and make equal pay for work of equal value a reality across all countries and sectors. Led by the ILO, UN Women and OECD, the Coalition engages with governments, employers, workers and their organisations, the private sector, civil society and academia to take concrete steps to accelerate the closing of the gender pay gap and the achievement of pay equity. EPIC contributes to the achievement of SDG 8.5 (equal pay between women and men for work of equal value).

IOE’s participation demonstrates a further affirmation of our organisation’s commitment to addressing gender-based discrimination. On 16-17 December, IOE provided an intervention at the launch of EPIC in the Arab States at a symposium in Amman titled “towards reducing the gender pay gap”, which was organised by the Jordanian National Commission for Women and EPIC under the patronage of Jordan’s Prime Minister. IOE’s key messages included that engaging a diverse workforce increases productivity and competitiveness, whilst at the same time enabling companies to harness more valuable skills sets; and boosts innovation and consumer brand loyalty/brand strength. We underlined that clients and shareholders themselves are diverse; that if women’s talents were fully harnessed in the workforce, there is potential to increase global GDP by USD 12 trillion (an 11% increase– equivalent to the combined economies of the US and China); companies that have women executives produce 20% more patents than companies without; men’s wages also increase when women’s wages increase thanks to higher productivity levels, which has a significant economic impact.

IOE joined governments, workers and employers’ organisations in making pledges to promote gender equality and non-discrimination good practices among members and partners in all regions.
IV Business Networks

Corporate Partners

Since the creation of an IOE corporate partner programme in 2013, we have been increasingly involving companies in our activities alongside our business and employer organisation members. Today, 18 corporate partners – affiliates of IOE member organisations in the country of their headquarters – formally support IOE. While not involved in IOE governance, our corporate partners enrich our discussions with their experiences and best practices. The corporates benefit from IOE expertise through individualised support and services, and knowledge-sharing activities on standards, human rights and responsible business conduct, industrial relations, labour migration, sustainability, diversity, skills development and much more. They enjoy opportunities to exercise leadership in employment and social policy circles and networking opportunities with peer-level companies in a confidential environment.

Global Industrial Relations Network (GIRN)

Since 2008, IOE’s GIRN has helped the affiliates of IOE member organisations to identify and anticipate industrial relations and human resources issues and trends so that they can better prepare for and address them.

Today, almost 40 GIRN members from Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America, tap into IOE’s expertise and experience in international employment and human rights matters. Global meetings, usually held twice a year, provide an opportunity to share the latest insights and analyses of UN and other multilateral initiatives impacting the global IR and HR environments. They enable the exchange of best-in-class practice, validate strategy and action, and foster impact.

During this reporting period, GIRN met in Bentonville, USA around an agenda set, as always, by the members themselves with the support of the IOE Secretariat. The event looked at industrial relations situations in different countries, as well as workplace rights for temporary agency workers. The second physical gathering of the year was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic; it will be rescheduled and is expected to explore the labour relations landscape in Japan, due diligence in the context of labour migration, and the management of sponsorship risk in the context of mega-sporting events.

Global Occupational Safety and Health Network (GOSH)

For more than ten years, IOE has organised two meeting per year for members of the GOSH network, which is comprised of occupational safety and health, and sustainability professionals, to exchange experiences and best practices on topics ranging from pandemics, business continuity and emergency preparedness; accident reporting and investigation; contractors safety, health, wellbeing and resilience; office and warehouse safety; and supporting frequent business travellers.

Again, member-driven agendas optimise participation, content and outcomes. Hosted by the Federation of Belgian Enterprises (VBO-FEB) in Antwerp, Belgium, the September 2019 meeting explored questions such as how to maintain a firm’s corporate culture with regard to OSH in the context of contracted employees and how the adoption of new technologies (VR, AI, AR) can support a preventative OSH culture, and more.

The April 2020 meeting to be hosted by Veolia in Paris was postponed to Spring 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, on 24 March, IOE hosted a teleconference on the pressing issue of managing the virus in the workplace, with the participation of 34 representatives of companies who belong to the GOSH and GIRN networks, as well as IOE member organisations. Dr S. Briand, Director, of Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness at the World Health Organization provided a presentation on Covid-19 mitigation, underlining the key role of employers and workers in stopping the spread of Covid-19 and reducing the impact of the disease on society. Joaquim Nunes of ILO’S LABADMINOSH department highlighted the need for collaborative efforts to contain the spread and address occupational health risks. Dr Philippe Guibert of IOE partner International SOS underlined the role of company communications in bolstering those of Public Authorities.

Business Advisory Group on Migration

The governments of UN Member States participating in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) formally endorsed the creation of the GFMD Business Mechanism at the 2015 GFMD Summit as a platform for businesses to engage with governments and other stakeholders on migration. The GFMD designated IOE to coordinate this work through a Business Advisory Group. Housed at IOE, the Business Group addresses issues of workforce mobility, skills
development and labour market needs-matching, responsible recruitment and the use of technology and migration.

IOE led the delegation of more than 60 business representatives who attended the 12th GFMD Summit, which took place under the chairmanship of Ecuador from 20 – 24 January on the theme “Sustainable approaches to human mobility: Upholding rights, strengthening state agency, and advancing development through partnerships and collective action”. A business-delegation meeting on the first day provided an opportunity to share some of the challenges to communicate to governments represented at the Summit.

At the high-level opening ceremony, and in recognition of the importance of leveraging technology to find solutions for the governance of migration, IOE Secretary-General Roberto Suárez launched the first migration-related tech and innovation program in partnership with the Swiss start-up incubator Seedstars. The finalists of the Migration Challenge competition, whose business ideas were selected from more than 80 applications, comprised ten young start-ups from Africa and South America with a varied focus on EdTech, Fintech, Human Resources and visa processes.

The Business Advisory Group on Migration delivered a programme dedicated to the impact of migration policies on businesses, with a view to strengthening the dialogue between businesses and governments on business priorities linked to skills mobility and skills development.

During his interventions in several of the Summit’s sessions, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of the engagement of business with the GFMD and presented selected contributions and business initiatives. At the same time, he advocated for public-private dialogue on skills mobility, skills matching and skills recognition/equivalence. Finally, he reiterated the call for a smart and transparent legal framework on migration and applauded the recent business-led activities involving three regional/national workshops, and two research studies for Africa and Latin America.
Our Team

Based in Geneva, the IOE Secretariat, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, is responsible, inter alia, for implementing the annual work plan within the Strategic Framework adopted by the General Council. It is also responsible for the day-to-day administration and financial management of the organisation under the supervision of the Treasurer.

MAY 2020

Secretary-General
Roberto Suárez Santos

Deputy Secretary-General
Matthias Thorns

Director of ILO Coordination
María Paz Anzorreguy

Director of Communications
Jean Milligan

Senior Advisers
Luis Rodrigo Morales
Pierre Vincensini

Roberto Suárez Santos
Matthias Thorns
María Paz Anzorreguy
Jean Milligan
Luis Rodrigo Morales
Pierre Vincensini
Our Governance

General Council

The General Council is the IOE’s principal governance body. Meeting once a year, and chaired by the President, the Council brings members together to take decisions proposed and recommended by the Management Board and to exchange views. It formally adopts IOE policy positions, the budget and accounts, the annual work plan and the affiliation of new members, as well as electing the officers of the board in accordance with the Statutes.

The 2019 General Council endorsed the affiliation of the Business Confederation of Andorra, the Iraqi Federation of Industries, the Business Association of the Kyrgyz Republic (JIA), the Union of Myanmar Federations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, warmly welcoming the new members to the global employer community.
Two of the new members’ representatives were present. Ms Rosalind Nwe, joint Secretary-General of the Union of Myanmar Federations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), announced that 2019 was the centenary of her organisation. Becoming a member of IOE at this milestone was a significant achievement and she felt UMFCCI was now part of the global employer family. Mr Ali Sabeeh Alsaaadi, President of the Iraqi Federation of Industries (IFI), said that he was honoured to address the General Council on behalf of his organisation which was the largest employer and business membership body in Iraq. He thanked the members for accepting IFI into their global organisation.

The 2019 General Council also saw the election by acclamation of Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja as Honorary President. Mr Kiresepi recapitulated Mr Funes’s many years in the service of IOE members as an Employer Member, as well as Employer Chairperson, of the ILO Governing Body. He had also been President of the 103rd Session of the International Labour Conference and played a key leadership role as IOE Executive Vice-President from 2001-2014, and President from 2014-2017.

The high-level panel discussion following the General Council’s administrative business had as its theme “Employers’ organisations of the Future: being in business tomorrow” and was chaired by Mr Suárez Santos. The discussion explored the findings of the recent IOE-ACT/EMP report “Changing business and opportunities for employer and business member organisations” which had been undertaken to help employer and business member organisations (EBMOs) adapt their services to the current global trends impacting businesses: technological innovation; global economic integration; demographic shifts; climate change and the pressure of sustainability; and global skills shortages. Of note was that 70% of the companies surveyed for the report, of which only 25% were currently EBMO members, had expressed readiness to join if EBMOs demonstrated an ability to understand and navigate global trends, and provided leadership in advocating for an adequate business environment.

The conclusion was that the organisations that would be in business tomorrow would be those that provided thought-leadership, raised the awareness of their members of the impact of global trends on their businesses and workforces, provided practical services to address disruption, influenced the environment for skills development and promoted awareness of the positive role business can play in sustainable development.

**Management Board**

The Management Board includes elected and co-opted officers drawn from the IOE’s membership, ensuring a geographical balance that reflects the global nature of the organisation. Sessions of the Board generally take place three times a year, in March, May/June and October/November.

Management Board responsibilities include ensuring that IOE’s objectives and the General Council’s decisions are implemented and that the organisation functions in line with its Statutes.
## MEMBERS OF THE IOE MANAGEMENT BOARD AT MAY 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Erol Kiresepi</td>
<td>President (Turkey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja</td>
<td>Honorary President (Argentina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Mthunzi Mdwaba</td>
<td>IOE Vice-President to the ILO (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Alexandre Furlan</td>
<td>Regional Vice-President, Latin America (Brazil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Renate Hornung-Draus</td>
<td>Regional Vice-President, Europe (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr El Mahfoudh Megateli</td>
<td>Regional Vice-President, Africa (Algeria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Matsui Hiroyuki</td>
<td>Regional Vice-President, Asia Pacific (Japan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Peter Robinson</td>
<td>Regional Vice-President, North America (United States)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Blaise Matthey</td>
<td>IOE Treasurer (Switzerland)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Ousseine Diallo</td>
<td>Member (Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Rajeev Dubey</td>
<td>Member (India)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Alberto Echavarría</td>
<td>Member (Colombia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Liu Hansong</td>
<td>Member (China)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr José Maria Lacasa</td>
<td>Member (Spain)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Khaliffa Mattar</td>
<td>Member (United Arab Emirates)</td>
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<td>Ms Marina Moskvina</td>
<td>Member (Russian Federation)</td>
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<td>Ms Jacqueline Mugo</td>
<td>Member (Kenya)</td>
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<td>Mr Henrik Munthe</td>
<td>Member (Norway)</td>
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<td>Mr James Pearson</td>
<td>Member (Australia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Jože Smole</td>
<td>Member (Slovenia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Anne Vauchez</td>
<td>Member (France)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Fernando Yllanes Martinez</td>
<td>Member (Mexico)</td>
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VII Our Membership

We thank our membership for their support and commitment.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Africa (41)</th>
<th>Asia (36)</th>
<th>Americas (34)</th>
<th>Europe &amp; Central Asia (45)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confédération Générale des Entreprises algériennes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antigua &amp; Barbuda Employers’ Federation</td>
<td>Biznes Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conseil National du Patronat du Bénin</td>
<td>Bahrain Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry</td>
<td>Unión Industrial Argentina</td>
<td>Business Confederation of Andorra</td>
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<td>Business Botswana</td>
<td>Bangladesh Employers’ Federation</td>
<td>Aruba Trade and Industry Association</td>
<td>Federation of Austrian Industry</td>
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<td>Conseil national du Patronat Burkinabé (Burkina Faso)</td>
<td>Cambodian Federation of Employers &amp; Business Associations</td>
<td>Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers’ Confederation</td>
<td>National Confederation of Entrepreneurs (Employers’) Organizations of Azerbaijan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groupement Inter-Patronal du Cameroun</td>
<td>China Enterprise Confederation/China Enterprise Directors Association</td>
<td>Barbados Employers’ Confederation</td>
<td>Fédération des Entreprises de Belgique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conseil National du Patronat Tchadien (Chad)</td>
<td>Fijí Commerce &amp; Employers’ Federation</td>
<td>All India Organisation of Employers</td>
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