



IOE contribution to UN75 survey

Global business community views

August 2020



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International Organisation of Employers

Input to UN75 survey

Marking the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the organisation decided to launch a survey that focuses on building a truly global partnership for a just, peaceful and sustainable future. The International Organisation of Employers (IOE), representing more than 50 million companies, is a key partner in the multilateral systems for 100 years as the voice of business at the ILO, across the UN, G20 and other emerging forums. The international employer community had supported the Agenda 2030 from the outset and is highly committed to work with all actors at national, regional and international level for its success. In a joint effort with partner organisations, such as USCIB, IOE has launched a series of high-level interactions to strengthen an inclusive multilateralism to advance policy dialogue, implementation and partnership for the SDGs.

It is in this spirit that the IOE and its member federations submit this brief input to the UN@75 survey.

Summary of survey results

Some 45 employer and business federations from all parts of the world have taken part in the survey. These institutions collectively represent millions of businesses from across the globe. The overriding feedback from employers is that they are committed to helping to build a sustainable future that addresses current global environmental and human development challenges.

Specifically, survey results confirm that employers are extremely preoccupied with global health risks such as we are currently experiencing with the coronavirus. In the longer-term, employers reiterated their concerns about climate change – much as they did in a survey done in 2019 by [IOE and the International Labour Organization](#).

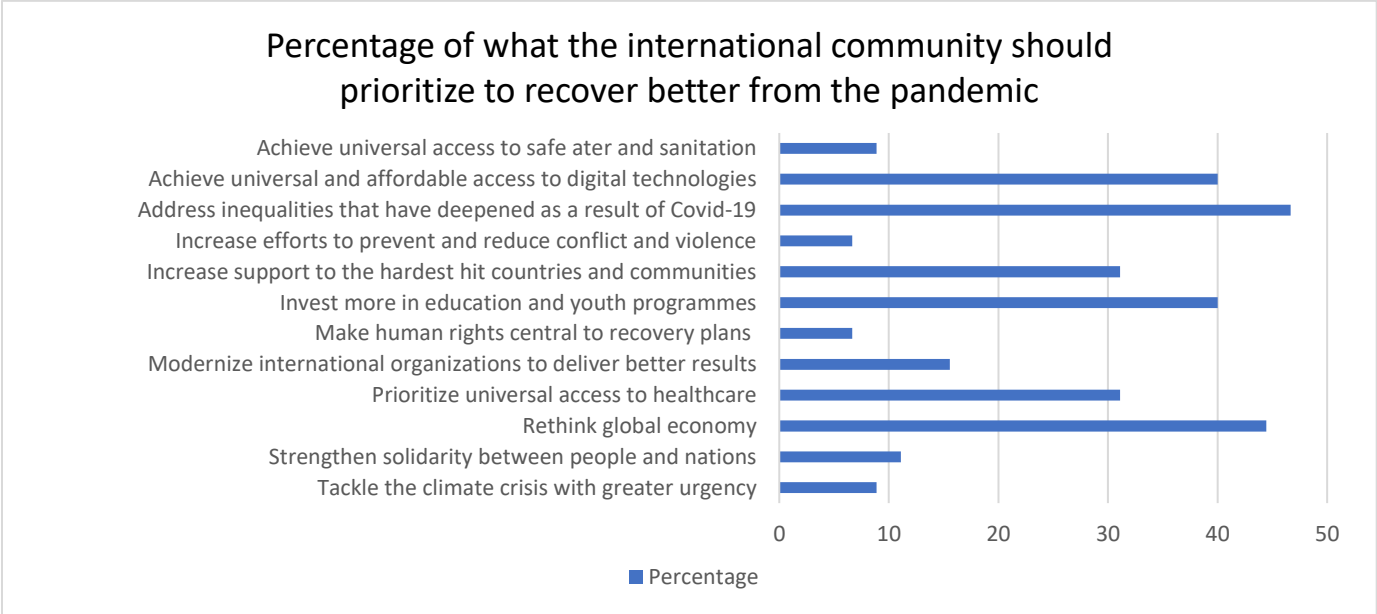
The results also reveal that businesses want equal attention given to addressing inequality and rethinking the global economy to build a sustainable future for all. An additional layer to this is the widespread support by the employer community for better education. This emerges as the key driver for future development.

Importantly, the outcomes from the survey clearly show the commitment and support of the global business community – small, medium and large businesses combined - for the pursuit and promotion of multilateral relations. They deemed these relations essential.

Q1: What should the international community prioritize to recover better from the pandemic?

Covid-19 has had a disastrous impact on the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people. The business community has stood up to the challenge and has engaged at local, national, regional and international level to address the impact of Covid-19. A particular focus has been thereby also the engagement within the multilateral system. Looking to the question, what priorities employers have in the recovery of the pandemic, the Employers are expecting the international community particularly to:

- rethink the global economy
- address inequalities that have deepened as a result of Covid-19
- achieve universal and affordable access to digital technologies
- invest more in education and youth programmes

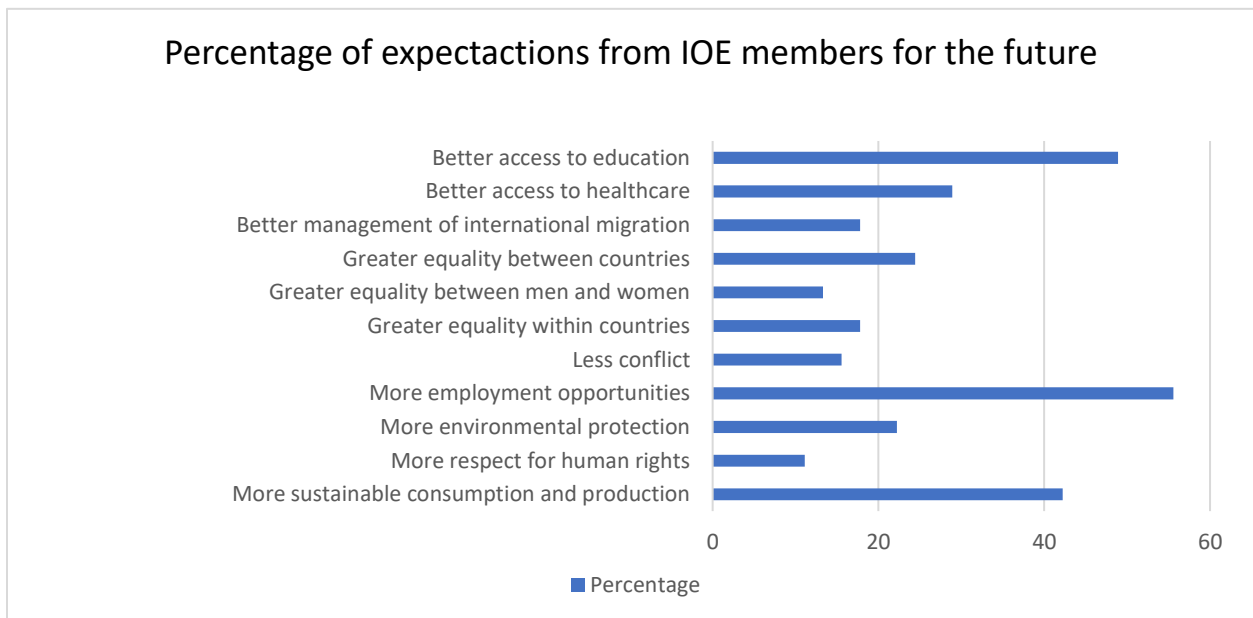


Q2: What three things would employers most want to see in 25 years?

We need to address the immediate crisis, but we also need to ensure when coming out of the crisis that we have better and more conducive policy frameworks for job creation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Business does not wish to return to business-as-usual. And because of the devastating employment and economic effect of the pandemic, it is even more important to undertake comprehensive reforms in this regard.

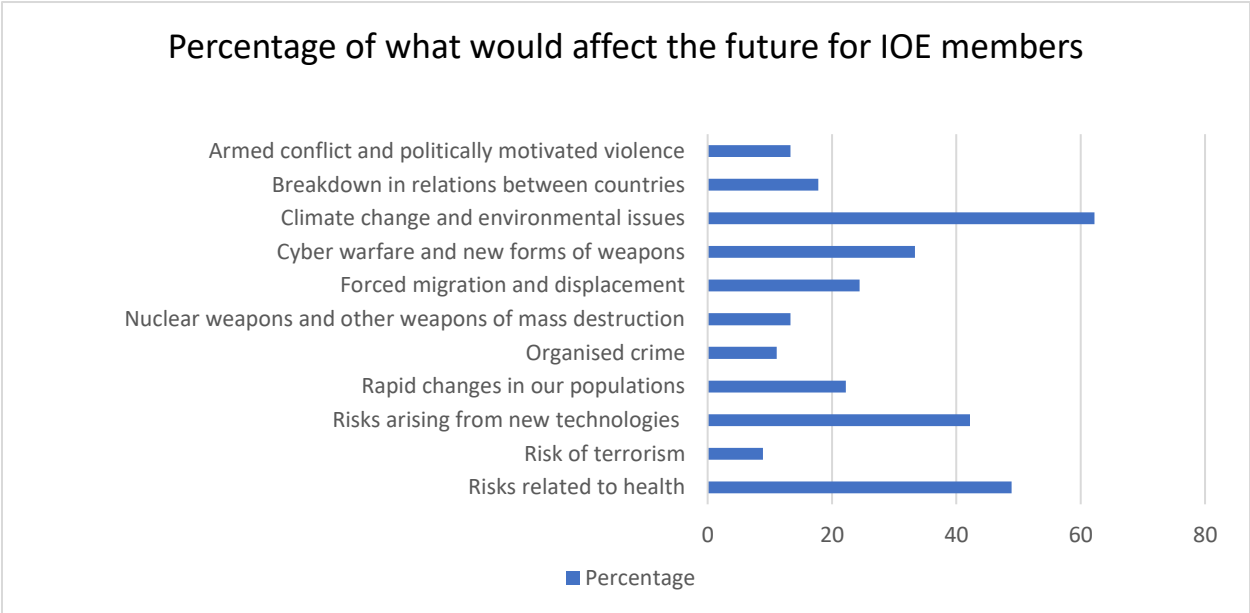
For the future, main priorities for business are:

- more employment opportunities
- better access to education
- more sustainable consumption and production
- more environmental protection



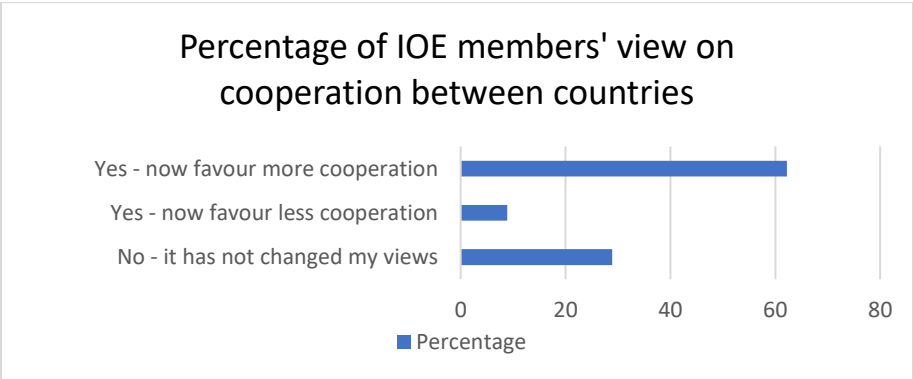
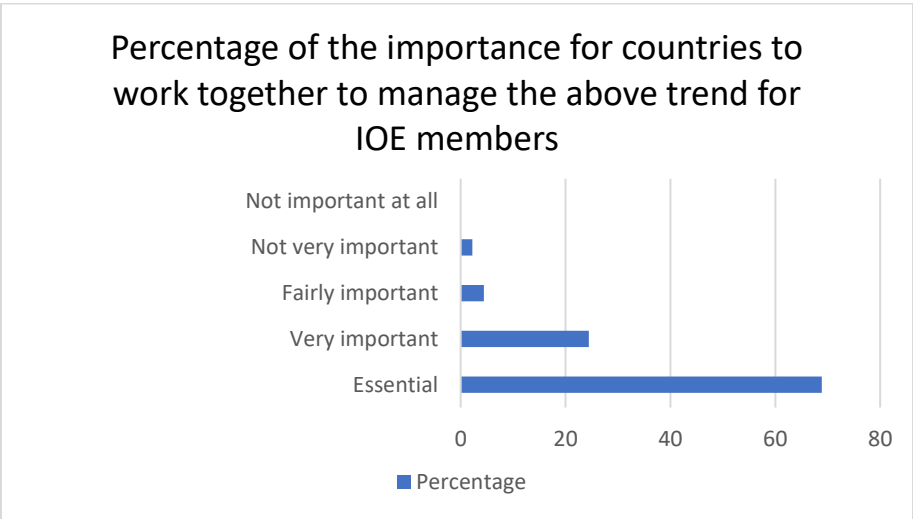
Q3 Which of these global trends do you think will most affect our future?

This is closely linked to the fact that climate change and environmental issues, the risks related to health (such as pandemics) and the cyber warfare and new forms of weapons are regarded as trends, which will highly affect our future.



Q4: How important – or not – is it for countries to work together to manage the above trends? And Q5: Has Covid-19 changed your views on cooperation between countries?

To build this better future, the business community do realise how essential it is for countries to work together. Nearly half of the federations attach even more importance to multilateral cooperation based on the experience with COVID-19. The message coming from the survey is clear: we need not only closely cooperate in the crisis management, but also in building a better future.



Employers call particularly for better and direct engagement between UN Resident Coordinators with the private sector. Employer and business federations play a key role in this regard, as they are not only bringing SMEs perspective to the table, but also have the convening power to build alliances for collective action by business, UN and national actors.

Clearer commitments by countries to the Agenda 2030, which are operationalized and implemented through National Action Plans have been a key concern. Linked to that are calls for better implementation of human rights, increased efforts to mitigate the worst effects of climate change, the promotion of gender equality and labour migration policies that support business and ensure sustainable development. Crises are the best opportunities to come forward with new ideas. This is the time to breathe new life into the multilateral system by ensuring that it better responds to the needs of people, societies and economies. This is the time for the UN and the UN agencies to deliver. This is the time to shape these intuitions to make them fit for purpose and able to meet expectations.

A stronger engagement with the representative employers' organisations is important in this regard. They have a key role to play in the negotiations, implementation and follow-up mechanisms of the 2030 Development Agenda at both the UN and national levels, as well as serve as a bridge between policy makers and companies.

The multilateral system will need to rebalance and listen to the social partners to come up with effective solutions and responses that could be implemented. In the end, any global strategy will have to land at the national level where social partners are crucial for an effective implementation. It is only with the active involvement of social partners we can enhance policy coherence and effective implementation.

Q6: Overall, do you think that people in 2045 will be better off, worse off, the same as you are today?

While fully recognising the massive challenges the global community is currently experiencing from significant health threats to climate change and political headwinds, the business community remains resolutely optimistic about the future. Nearly half of the survey respondents said that we will be better off in the future with an additional 20 per cent saying the situation would be the same.

In Q7 which was optional, employers provide numerous concrete suggestions about how the UN led by the Secretary-General can build a better future for all. The majority of the inputs concentrated on expanding efforts inside the UN to work with the private sector, increasing focus by the international community on creating decent employment and an enabling environment for business, strengthening multilateral relations that include business, and optimising sustainable development outcomes.

Conclusion

IOE and its members for over 100 years have been committed to working with the UN to bring business insights to the international multilateral system. The inputs to the UN75 survey confirm this enduring commitment and reaffirm private sector views that global cooperation is a pillar of sustainable economic development.

In addition, the participants to the UN75 survey represent millions of businesses - large, medium and small enterprises. The majority view is that business puts as a priority expanding active engagement with the UN and further contributing to meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN Secretary-General spotlighted the critical importance of private sector contributions: “Corporate leadership can make all the difference to creating a future of peace, stability and prosperity on a healthy planet.” IOE and its global network have shown in the UN75 survey results that they want to be part of creating a future that works for all.



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