

Concept Note and Agenda
16 April 2021

***Partnerships for Recovery: The UN and Employers collaborating to
#BuildBackBetter***

Launch of publication, *Playbook: Building Momentum in the Decade of Action through Collaboration between Employers and UN Resident Coordinators*

The challenges facing today's global community are numerous and daunting – from the health and socio-economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, to stalled progress on sustainable development, accelerating climate change, and questions of equal access to opportunity – just to name a few. Now, more than ever, finding solutions to these problems will require a collaborative, “whole of society,” approach as envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). Active engagement of all stakeholders – governments, the UN System, employers, workers, and civil society, among others – will be key to address these pressing issues.

With the United Nations Development System Reform well underway, there is an opportunity to build new bridges and collaborative relationships at country level. Newly empowered UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and Employers and business member organizations (EBMOs) are natural partners. As the highest-ranking representatives of the UN development system at the country level, RCs coordinate all UN activities relating toward supporting a country's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). National employers' federations, as the representative and legitimate voice of the private sector at the national level, bring the perspective and expertise of their members who are key and real actors in the economy and therefore sustainable development.

“The Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda cannot succeed without the full engagement of the private sector.”

– UN Secretary-General, António Guterres

The Decade of Action calls for accelerating sustainable solutions to the world's most pressing challenges, which can best be implemented through collaboration and partnerships that bring all the stakeholders to the table. Collaboration between UN RCs and EBMOs, despite its great potential to be a catalyst for progress towards achieving the SDGs, is still limited. Indeed, in many cases, RCs and EBMOs may not be fully aware of each other's roles, the numerous areas in which they have shared values and priorities, and the added value each brings to a potential partnership.

Working with the newly empowered RCs, the IOE and KAS formed a partnership aimed at spurring private sector engagement with the UN development system's reformed structure to achieve the SDGs. Several dialogues, surveys, and analyses have been conducted to better understand

different perspectives and encourage collaboration and engagement on the ground. The Playbook evolved from the dialogues and deep dives organised under the IOE-KAS partnership, in collaboration with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO), to give employers and RCs the understanding and tools to needed to collaborate and build partnerships on the ground toward sustainable development.

Taking place at the start of the 2021 UN Partnership Forum, the event will launch the IOE-KAS-DCO publication, *Playbook: Building Momentum in the Decade of Action through Collaboration between Employers and UN Resident Coordinators*. The aim of the Playbook is to fill gaps in understanding and to help RCs and EBMOs find the common language needed for conversations that lead to positive action on the ground. Engagement is a two-way street; RCs and EBMOs both need to take meaningful steps to reach the other and build the partnerships needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The event will bring together leaders from the public and private sectors – Ministers, leaders of the UN Sustainable Development System, employers’ organisations, CEOs, and experts – to discuss the ways in which partnerships can be nurtured and how they can accelerate momentum towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, the event will feature two panels – one will discuss the practical steps that can be taken to include the private sector, particularly EBMOs, as a collaborating stakeholder in the UN’s sustainable development planning and programme implementation. The second panel will explore some of the biggest challenges to sustainable development and COVID-19 recovery and identify the best practices of tackling them through partnerships. The aim is to highlight the importance of multistakeholder collaboration in sustainable development and recovery while also providing practical and actionable information on how to translate dialogue into action, including through the guidance of the Playbook.

DRAFT Agenda

3 May 2021, 7:30– 9:00 (EST) / 13:30 – 15:00 (CET)

Interpretation services will be available in English, Spanish, and French.

7:30- 7:45	Master of Ceremonies Shea Gopaul , <i>Special Representative to the United Nations, IOE</i> <i>[Video on the Playbook]</i> Welcome
7:45-7:55	Keynote speaker: Amina J. Mohammed , <i>Deputy Secretary-General, UN</i> [between 5-7 minutes]

7:55-8:25	<p>Panel 1 - <i>It is critical from VNRs to SDG Cooperative Frameworks that all players are at the table to design, develop and implement programs to achieve the SDGs. What is the secret formula to ensuring the process is inclusive?</i></p> <p>Dialogue Moderated by Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa, Executive Director New York, KAS</p>
8:25-8:55	<p>Panel 2 – <i>Informality, lack of social protection systems, health services, debt relief and job creation are some of the socio-economic challenges governments and employers are facing in trying to #Buildbackbetter. What are some of the best practices in resolving these challenges?</i></p> <p>Dialogue Moderated by Lisa Kurbiel, Head of the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat, UN</p>
8:55- 9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Commitment to Action: How do we ensure partnerships between public and private sectors are solidified to ensure SDGs are achieved? Erol Kiresepi, President IOE and Rosemary Kalapurakal, Deputy Director, Development Coordination Office (DCO)

Background on organisers

The **International Organisation of Employers (IOE)** is one of the leading voices for business at the global level and on the ground. With more than 150 EBMO members in 148 countries, IOE represents the interests of over 50 million companies. Quite simply, it is the largest global community network of the private sector. For over 100 years, it has been a powerful and balanced voice of business and offers a diverse and unique perspective based on members that include companies ranging from large multinationals to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and a vast collection of industries. Together with trade unions, IOE plays a vital role in shaping labour markets and providing support to its members.

IOE is integrally involved with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other UN entities, G20, and other emerging forums, and contributes to the 2030 Agenda. In its Centenary Manifesto, IOE fully supported the 2030 Agenda as the most effective path to sustainable human development. IOE stressed its commitment to particularly work towards the ambitious targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 for “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all,” together with SDG 17 for a revitalisation of the global partnership.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is one of Germany’s six political foundations. With more than 100 offices worldwide, KAS acts as a bridge between state and non-state actors in the promotion of democracy, rule of law and a social market economy. Being closely associated with, though independent from, the party of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the CDU, KAS has traditionally been a strong advocate for a rules-based international order and for the concept of a social market economy where government, employer and employee representatives are partnering to provide systems of social protection, engage in collective bargaining and advocate vocational training. Hence, KAS and IOE are natural partners in fostering private sector engagement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For KAS, multilateralism in the 21st century has to move beyond mere intergovernmental relations, with non-state actors becoming stakeholders in their own rights. KAS considers it equally important that private sector engagement for the 2030 Agenda is not reduced to funding opportunities or corporate social responsibility initiatives but is shaped as a strategic collaboration that addresses key issues such as capacity building and skills development, research and innovation as well.

UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) - The United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO) serves as the secretariat for the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)–34 agencies, funds and programmes working on development—at the regional and global levels. At the regional level, five UN Development Coordination Office Regional Directors and their teams in Panama, Addis Ababa, Amman, Istanbul and Bangkok provide Resident Coordinators with regional-specific support, with a secretariat role for the UN Sustainable Development Group. At the global level the UN SDG is chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General. The Vice-Chair is the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator.

The **Resident Coordinator system: coordinated and managed by the Development Coordination Office**, a UN Secretariat entity as of 1 January 2019. a) DCO provides substantive guidance and support to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, in addition to daily backstopping to resident coordinator offices on the ground. b) DCO also provides troubleshooting, quality assurance and dispute resolution services in close cooperation with the relevant regional teams of the UN Sustainable Development Group. c) DCO and the UNSDG - DCO provides managerial and oversight functions for resident coordinators. Its activities are advanced through collective ownership by the UNSDG. The Office acts as a key conduit for supporting the UN’s activities for sustainable development, which inform policy, programme and operations on the ground.