

NEWSLETTER

AFRICAN EMPLOYERS' INSIDER



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BUSINESS AFRICA EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATION SPEAKS AT THE LAUNCH OF ACCEL AFRICA PROJECT

"We must enhance supply chain transparency and accountability, maintaining ethical standards at every stage. Educating employers and workers about their rights empowers them to fight exploitation." Jacqueline Mugo Secretary General BUSINESSAfrica remarks during her speech at the launch of ACCEL Africa Project in Nairobi, Kenya. Ms Mugo In her statements urged governments to implement comprehensive policies to eradicate child labour.

The event which was held on April 11 brought senior government officials from Kenya and across the world. Present during the launch was Amb. Maarten Brouwer, Kingdom of Netherlands to Kenya, Hon. Florence Bore, Kenyas' Cabinet Secretary Labour & Social Protection, Ms. Caroline Mugalla, ILO Country Office Director, Governors of the republic of Kenya and other special guests.

Amb. Maarten Brouwer noted, "the Netherlands is happy to be supporting ACCEL Project. Agriculture and tea are very important to our countries and no one wants to take tea or coffee that is produced through child labour."

The objective of the project. "Accelerate the elimination of child labor in Africa" is to accelerate the elimination of child labour in supply chains across Africa particularly in countries such as ivory coast, Egypt, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, and Nigeria. The



Ms Jaqueline Mugo Secretary-General of BUSINESSAfrica during the launch of ACCEL Africa project launch in Nairobi, Kenya

project, which has an overarching goal to speed up the elimination of child labour in Africa targets various value chains such as Cocoa, Tea, Gold, Coffee, and Cotton.

According to estimates from ILO, globally nearly 152 million children are engaged in child labour and half of them are in the worst form of child labour handling hazardous work that places their health, safety, and

normal development as children at risk.

Global policy measures, raising awareness and government efforts are paying off, but the progress has slowed over the last years and the challenge is still huge especially in Africa.

The project will work closely with governments, employers and workers' organizations, civil society organizations, African union, UN agencies, supply chain stakeholders, and research institutes.

REGIONAL TRIPARTITE MEETING ON LABOUR MIGRATION IN ECCAS AND COMESA



Research, Advocacy and Partnership officer of BUSINESSAfrica Mr. Stephen Obiro (3rd from right) during tripartite conference on labour migration

Under the theme "Synergies for improved Labour Migration Governance", BUSINESSAfrica had the honour to participate at the Regional Tripartite Conference on Labour Migration in Economic Communities in Central African States (ECCAS) and

Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA), in Kampala, Uganda.

The conference which was attended by Mr. Stephen Obiro who is the head of Advocacy, Consultancy and Partnership for BUSINESSAfrica, aimed at strengthening labour migration

governance and promoting cooperation between ECCAS and COMESA on labour migration issues. It also presented an opportunity to discuss the implementation of a key policy instruments, guidelines, and initiatives on protecting African migrant workers within and outside the continent. Moreover, it explored ways to strengthen cooperation among key stakeholders working on Labour Migration in ECCAS and COMESA where BUSINESSAfrica is a key player in labour related issues with its members within East and Southern Africa.

Labour migration is clearly articulated in the 1991 Abuja Treaty¹ which urged African Member States to foster mutual economic, social, and cultural development amongst African States through sharing its human resources and skills as well as allowing free movement within the African Economic Community.

The first aspiration of the African Union Agenda 2063² aims to build a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Incomes, jobs, and decent work have been identified as critical indicators for achieving this objective.

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECTOR SKILLS BODIES (SSBS)

The ITCILO, ACTEMP, the ILO Skills Department and BUSINESSAfrica organized a workshop to discuss the establishment of Sector Skills Bodies in seven countries, namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Lesotho, Rwanda and the Seychelles.

The workshop took place in Nairobi, Kenya from the 14th-15th May and aimed to tackle three pertinent questions: what SSBs are, why they are important and how to establish them. The participants of the event acknowledged the establishment of SSBs as a potential solution to skills mismatches, youth unemployment and a lack of productivity within the labour market. Further, they agreed that a multistakeholder approach bringing together industry associations, employers, labour movements, relevant government bodies and academic institutions would be most effective in the realisation of SSBs.

In her opening remarks, Dr Wanjiru Kariuki, Secretary of the State Department for Labour and Skills Development of Kenya, highlighted the need to promote demand driven education and training which will in turn guarantee improved labour market transitions. When discussing the case of Kenya, she emphasised that the Government mandates the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to promote decent work, skills development and sustainable job creation. As such, National Guidelines for Sector Skills Committees have been developed to help in the attainment of sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

In the discussion on how to establish Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), Carmel Marock, a research associate at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) at the University of Witwatersrand, shared insights from the South African experience. She emphasized the importance of focusing on sectors that align with development priorities and offer significant employment opportunities. Regarding Skills Industrial Training Authorities (SITAs) in South Africa, she noted: SITAs with a narrower focus tend to be more effective as they ensure that the employer voice is heard and employer needs are met.

For example, in the manufacturing SITA, which encompassed a wide range of subsectors, employers felt distant from decision-making. In response, SITAs created smaller, sector-specific spaces to ensure that constituents directly involved can engage and have their voices heard.



ITCILO, ACTEMP, ILO Skills Department and BUSINESSAfrica workshop discussing the establishment of Sector Skills Bodies

This has been a key lesson for South Africa”.

Participants were given the opportunity to discuss the state of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) in their countries. Speaking for Uganda, Jeanne Byamugisha, CEO of the Uganda Hotel Owners Association, highlighted urgent issues to be addressed through SSBs.

She said, “Uganda, like many African countries, has a very young population, with approximately 80% under 20 years old. SSBs could help tackle the significant challenge of youth unemployment. Additionally, there is also the issue of outdated curricula that do not meet labour market needs. Therefore, there needs to be a council consisting of industry players to approve curricula, ensuring quality assurance and better job market absorption for students”.

When discussing the risks associated with establishing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), Kennedy Edward Mollel, CEO of the Hotels Association of Tanzania (HAT), identified five key challenges: “Firstly, setting up these bodies is time-consuming, requiring extensive engagement with key partners and navigating various legislative processes. Secondly, there are significant cost implications, raising questions about whether employers, the government, or employees will bear these costs. Thirdly, there is often a lack of expertise within specific sectors. Then, a lack of political can hinder progress. Finally, there is a risk of insufficient resources and funding, both in terms of financial support and human capital”.

From the ILO side, Skills and Lifelong Learning Specialist Alice Vozza emphasized the importance of identifying specific problems before establishing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). She stated: “Different issues such as unemployment, lack of productivity, skills mismatches, industry competitiveness, and informality impact the skills system at the country level. These factors must be considered when defining the scope of work for SSBs. Additionally, it should be noted that SSBs are not a one-size-fits-all solution due to the dynamic nature of labour market needs. While SSBs are important, a comprehensive strategy involving various stakeholders and approaches is necessary to effectively address these issues.”

The event brought together international experts, private sector representatives, government officials, industry associations, and Employer and Business Membership Organisations (EBMOs) to share best practices from countries that have successfully established Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) and to discuss the current state of SSBs in the represented countries. In the final session of the two-day workshop, delegates had the opportunity to present national roadmaps for establishing SSBs over the next six months. ILO specialists and technical experts will support the implementation of these action plans through ongoing projects in the represented countries.

BUSINESSAFRICA PRESENT DURING THE LAUNCH OF DOHA DIALOGUE ON LABOUR MOBILITY BETWEEN GCC AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES



"Doha Dialogue" on labour mobility between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Africa

BUSINESSAfrica participated in a two-day conference in Doha under the chairmanship of HE Shaikha Najwa bint Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labour Affairs at the Ministry of Labour, Qatar.

Present during the conference in Doha, Qatar was Mr. Stephen Obiro, Head of Advocacy, Consultancy and Partnership for BUSINESSAfrica. The conference had participants from 33 countries representing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jordan, Lebanon and 25 African countries, in addition to representatives from the African Commission, the Executive Council of GCC Labour Ministers, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), experts, academics, and representatives of civil society.

The "Doha Dialogue" which took place from 21st to 22nd May 2024 arises from an agreement between the State of

Qatar and the African Union aimed at establishing a consultative mechanism between Gulf and African nations. This mechanism is aimed at fostering the implementation of best practices to bolster regional collaboration and partnerships, with a focus on improving the recruitment processes for labour from African countries.

BUSINESSAfrica was keenly interested in the Ministerial Dialogue which seeks to establish a regional consultative process on Labour Migration between Africa and the Gulf which will position the two regions in a strategic realm to promote regular pathways as well as present an opportunity to comprehensively address the protection challenges of African Migrant workers in the GCC+ Countries. International migration is indeed one of the key factors to be considered in the strategies of human resource development.

The meeting which also brought together Excellencies the Ministers of Labour

affirmed in the Doha Declaration need to improve the management of labour mobility, the contractual labour cycle and the promotion of fair employment, based on the principles of mutual respect, partnership and shared responsibility, as well as labour and human rights policy frameworks.

They highlighted the recent increase of African expatriate workers in the GCC region, Jordan and Lebanon, representing 12 percent of the total expatriate workers in the region, leading to increasing coordination and enhanced cooperation between the two regions.

It was discovered that the Doha Dialogue represents a unique opportunity to address the challenges related to the African labour mobility to the Gulf States, Jordan and Lebanon, enhance its governance, and increase its contribution to sustainable development and inclusive growth, while enhancing regional and international cooperation in this regard.

MS. JACQUELINE MUGO ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF EMPLOYERS (IOE)

Mrs. Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary-General, BUSIENESSAfrica was unanimously elected as the first African female Global President of the 155-member organization of the International Organization of Employers (IOE) during the General Assembly held on Sunday, June 2, 2024. Ms. Mugo will serve in this role for a three-year term starting 2024 to 2027.

Ms. Mugo, who has been an integral part of the IOE since 2007, expressed her gratitude and vision during her acceptance speech, recognizing the significant role the organization has played in her professional journey. "I have witnessed and actively participated in the remarkable evolution of the IOE; together, we have steadfastly upheld the principles and resilience of employers worldwide."

She further highlighted her longstanding relationship with the IOE and the collaborative spirit that has defined her experience within the organization. "Our journey of collaboration, resilience, and unwavering commitment has been a source of immense encouragement for me. Together, we have successfully navigated through unprecedented times," she said.

Ms. Jacqueline Mugo, a seasoned lawyer and Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her new role as President of the International Organization of Employers (IOE). With decades of leadership experience in both the public and private sectors, including senior positions in the judiciary, multinational enterprises, FMCG companies, and the aviation sector, Ms. Mugo is a transformational leader. She is also a Titular member of the Governing Body of the International Labour



Mrs. Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary-General of BUSINESSAfrica during her election as the President of IOE

Organization (ILO), the Executive Director (ED) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), and a former Vice President for Africa of the IOE. Her extensive contributions to global employment policy, including her roles at the International Labour Conference and various board-level positions, have earned her numerous Presidential and international awards, underscoring her dedication to advancing employer interests worldwide.

Ms. Mugo is taking over from Michele Parmelee who has led the organization for the past four years. IOE members expressed their deep appreciation for the many significant achievements during her tenure. During her tenure, Ms Parmelee played a pivotal role in significantly advancing IOE's gender and just transition

policy agenda, leaving a strong foundation for the new leadership to build upon.

Renate Hornung-Draus was re-elected as IOE Vice-President of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Ms. Hornung-Draus, from the Confederation of German Employers' Associations, served for many years on the ILO Governing Body and as IOE Vice-President for Europe.

The General Council also elected five Regional Vice-Presidents for the new term: Alexandre Furlan (Brazil) for Latin America; Sonya Janahi (Bahrain) for the Asia-Pacific; Blaise Matthey (Switzerland) for Europe & Central Asia; Hicham Zouanat (Morocco) for Africa; and Thomas MacKall (USA) for North America.

STEPS TO ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION: HIGHLIGHTS FROM MS. JACQUELINE MUGO DURING THE INAUGURAL FORUM OF THE GLOBAL COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) held its inaugural forum, featuring prominent voices including Ms Jacqueline Mugo EBS, the Secretary General of BUSINESSAfrica and Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo the Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In his address, Director General of ILO emphasized the importance of global cooperation in addressing labour challenges amidst evolving economic landscapes. "Our actions have the power to change our world. Together, let us embark on this journey of collaboration, on this journey of actions", he said. He also emphasized that in the era of rapid technological advancement and globalization, the collective efforts of the members are crucial to achieve decent work and social justice for all.

Echoing these sentiments, Ms Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary General of BUSINESSAfrica, during her presentation on the topic "Steps to enhance partnerships and collaboration" at the Inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, said the main actionable steps to enhance partnerships and collaboration were:

- I. Resource mobilization** - to have a well-coordinated approach for resource mobilization to support partnership initiatives,
- II. Build capacities of coalition partners** to enhance the quality of participations and contributions and
- III. Create platforms for stakeholder engagements** to promote social dialogue.

Ms Mugo highlighted the role of private sector engagement in fostering sustainable development across the African continent.

She added, "businesses in Africa are committed to advancing inclusive growth and enhancing job creation through innovative partnerships and investments in human capital."

The forum, which brought together government officials, employers' and workers' representatives, and civil society organizations, served as a platform for constructive dialogue on advancing labor rights, promoting gender equality, and addressing youth employment challenges globally.

The 112th ILC2024 continues to explore avenues for international collaboration and policy development to navigate the complexities of the modern labor market and achieve the ambitious targets set forth in the ILO's Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

112TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (ILC)

The 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) took place in Geneva, from June 3 to 14, 2024. This year's conference has drawn delegates from the ILO's 187 member states, including representatives of workers, employers, and governments, and social partners to address several critical issues affecting the global labour market.

Delegates from the member states deliberated on critical issues ranging from workers' rights in the digital age to climate-friendly employment practices.

Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo the Director-General of ILO praised the productive debates that had underpinned the ILC's discussions.

A significant outcome that was anticipated from this session was the potential adoption of an international labor standard on protection against biological hazards. The discussions on protection against biological hazards, has been a recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of fundamental principles and rights at work and a general discussion on decent work and the care economy.

One of the standout achievements of this session was the unanimous adoption of the "Geneva Accord on Digital Labor Rights," a groundbreaking framework aimed at safeguarding the rights of workers in the rapidly evolving digital economy. The accord establishes guidelines for fair wages,

job security, and access to social protections for workers engaged in digital platforms and remote work arrangements.

In another significant development, the ILC2024 endorsed the "Green Jobs Initiative," signaling a global commitment to promoting employment opportunities in sustainable sectors. This initiative is expected to drive investments in renewable energy, environmental conservation, and green technology, creating millions of new jobs while mitigating the impact of climate change.

Furthermore, the conference addressed challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need for resilient labor markets and universal access to healthcare and social protection. Delegates reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of decent work and social justice, underscoring the role of international cooperation in building back better from the pandemic's economic disruptions.

The Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), hailed the ILC2024 as a testament to multilateralism and solidarity in addressing global labor challenges. He called upon member states to translate the conference's resolutions into concrete actions that improve the lives of workers worldwide.



Photo courtesy

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (ILC) MARKED WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR ON JUNE 12

During the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), which took place from June 3 to 14, 2024, the International Labour Organization (ILO) marked World Day Against Child Labour on June 12. This year's observance was particularly significant as it celebrated the 25th anniversary of the adoption of ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the first ILO convention to achieve universal ratification in 2020.

The high-level side event focused on assessing the progress made and the challenges faced in the fight against child labour, aiming to enhance the implementation of ILO conventions No. 182 and No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Employment.

Notable speakers included Gilbert F. Hounbo and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, who highlighted the need for accelerated global efforts to eradicate child labour by 2025, as per Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7.

"Today, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ILO Convention 182 on the worst form of child labour the only ILO Convention to be ratified. Yet, 160 million children are still in child labour. That one in ten children. Of them 79 million are still in hazardous work", the ILO Director-General said.

The event also featured discussions on strategic partnerships and initiatives such as the "Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour" initiative, celebrating its 10th anniversary. Representatives from various countries and organizations shared insights on effective strategies to combat child labour and the importance of international cooperation in these efforts.

Despite significant strides in reducing child labour, recent years have witnessed a reversal in global trends. Now more than ever, it is crucial to unite and intensify efforts to eradicate child labour in all its forms.



MEMBERS' SPOT

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FÉDÉRATION DES ENTREPRISES DU GABON (FEG)

At the heart of Gabon's economic ecosystem, the Fédération des Entreprises du Gabon (FEG) stands out for its constant commitment to promoting and protecting the interests of the country's businesses. Recently, during the transition marked by the investiture of General Brice Clotaire OLIGUI NGUEMA, the FEG was honoured to take part in this major event, putting forward 13 proposals to promote economic development.

Four of these proposals were selected for their potential impact, two of which are already being actively implemented:

1. Accounting Day: The FEG is working for the effectiveness of a regular accounting day to improve the transparency and

financial management of companies, thereby promoting a healthy and balanced economic environment.

2. Entrepreneurship Bank: An ambitious project to support and encourage Gabon's entrepreneurs by facilitating access to the financing and resources they need for their initiatives.

Alongside these external initiatives, the FEG is also focusing on internal networking. Networking activities are regularly organised, such as the recent Business Brunch in honour of women entrepreneurs, held on 27 April. These events strengthen links within the business community, encouraging the exchange of ideas and best practice.

The Fédération des Entreprises du Gabon thus continues to embody its commitment to the economic development and prosperity of Gabonese businesses, by promoting innovation, collaboration and dynamism within its network and beyond.

BUSINESSAfrica is the employers' confederation that brings together a number of employers' organizations across the African continent. BUSINESSAfrica, as the recognized voice of employers in Africa, is looking to work closely with the Fédération des Entreprises du Gabon as part of its strategic plan for the year 2023-2027.



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