

BUSINESS AFRICA

NEWSLETTER

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PG 1.

leaders from IOE's global network of 150+ employers' organisations at the IOE Conference on Empowering Women in Business, in Casablanca, Morocco.

HIGHLIGHTS

PG 2.



PG 5.



PG 4.



PG 3.



BUSINESS WORKSHOP FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN IN BREAKING BARRIERS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

- *Greater involvement from financial institutions to support women entrepreneurs.*
- *Enhanced access to digital skills, financial literacy, and business management training for women.*



Ms. Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary General of BUSINESSAfrica and IOE President underscored the urgency of addressing systemic barriers to women-led businesses at the IOE Conference on Empowering Women in Business, held in Casablanca, Morocco, on 10-11 December. She cited the absolute underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, she called for:

- Greater involvement from financial institutions to support women entrepreneurs.
- Enhanced access to digital skills, financial literacy, and business management training for women.

The event brought together leaders from IOE's global network of 150+ employers' organisations to share innovative practices, tackle cultural obstacles, and amplify awareness of the opportunities and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and professionals worldwide.

The conference emphasised the urgent need for reliable international and local data to understand the realities of women in business better. A strong spotlight was also placed on the pivotal role of mentoring, illustrated by success stories like Uganda's Federation of Ugandan Enterprises programme. This initiative enhanced participants' financial management and leadership skills, empowering them to thrive in competitive markets.

Nancy Chenard, Secretary-General of Unicongo, inspired attendees with a personal account of her journey. Through mentorship, she cultivated confidence as a leader, showcasing the transformative impact of such initiatives.

Other initiatives spotlighted during the event were the Mexican Women's Association for Lawyers, local Moroccan initiatives, the work of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines and two critical Business20 initiatives - One Global Women's Empowerment and SheLeads.

BUSINESSAfrica Employers' Confederation Signs MoU with Business at OECD during B20 Summit in Brazil

The recent B20 Summit in Brazil held from the 23rd October to 25th October 2024 served as a landmark event in global economic collaboration, bringing together leading voices from business, government, and civil society to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Among the significant event that took place during the summit was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the BUSINESSAfrica Employers' Confederation (BUSINESSAfrica) and Business at OECD (BIAC), which represents private-sector interests within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The MoU which has been a continuous conversation since 2023 marks a pivotal step in promoting Africa's role in the global economy and strengthening the ties between African and OECD countries.

Present during the signing was Ms Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary-General of BUSINESSAfrica and Business at OECD, Executive Director Hanni Rosenbaum. Ms Mugo expressed her enthusiasm for the partnership, noting that it represents a substantial opportunity for African



employers to have a more significant voice in global economic conversations.

Ms Hanni Rosenbaum of Business at OECD highlighted the importance of integrating African perspectives into OECD policy recommendations.

The signing of the MoU symbolizes a shared commitment to collaboration, economic growth, and inclusive development. Representatives from both organizations expressed optimism that this partnership will drive meaningful progress across multiple fronts.

BUSINESSAfrica, the leading continental organization representing employers and the private sector in Africa, aims to leverage this partnership to amplify African businesses' influence in OECD discussions, ensuring that Africa's unique challenges and opportunities are represented.

Key Areas of Focus Under the MoU:

1. Cooperate in the context of the OECD's engagement with Africa.
2. Exchange best practices and foster cooperation between Africa and the OECD business communities on areas of mutual interest.
3. Maintain regular contact on activities of common interest.
4. Collaborate on joint initiatives related to the OECD-Africa Partnership based on mutual priorities, drawing on input from the respective networks of the Participants.
5. Build capacity of participants to advance the OECD-Africa partnership.
6. Support participants advocacy initiatives related to OECD-Africa partnership.
7. Support participants' initiatives aimed at advancing the above areas.

BUSINESSAfrica Joins Executive Course on Labour Migration in Africa

BUSINESSAfrica actively participated in the Executive Course on Labour Migration in Africa, held as part of a hybrid program spanning from October 28 to December 6, 2024. Organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), African Union (AU), and International Training Centre (ITC), the course was designed to enhance the capacity of African stakeholders to govern labour migration effectively. The residential phase of the program took place from November 25 to November 29, 2024, in Cape Town, South Africa.

The course, which combined online and in-person sessions, focused on equipping participants with advanced knowledge to address the complexities of labour migration in Africa. Topics ranged from governance, gender dynamics, and fair recruitment to regional integration, social protection, and the migration-development nexus.

Participants included representatives from BUSINESSAfrica, employer organizations, trade union, government officials, worker organizations, and regional bodies.

By engaging in workshops and collaborative simulations, attendees explored real-life cases and policy tools, culminating in assignments that reflect their

learnings and practical applications.

With over 26 million international migrants within Africa, labour migration is a vital yet challenging phenomenon. Workers frequently face precarious conditions, social exclusion, and a lack of social protection, particularly in informal and low-skilled sectors. The course aimed to address these gaps by fostering rights-based, gender-responsive, and evidence-informed policies to ensure fair migration pathways and better integration into the labour market.

The program emphasized several critical themes:

- **Fair Recruitment Practices:** Enhancing transparency and ethical standards in hiring migrant workers.
- **Gender Equality:** Tackling structural challenges faced by women migrants, who account for nearly half of Africa's international migrants.
- **Regional Integration:** Supporting AU protocols for free movement of persons and fostering economic cooperation through Regional Economic Communities (RECs).



In the opening session of the course in South Africa, Mr. Stephen Obiro, from BUSINESSAfrica, highlighted the organization's commitment to ensuring that employers' voices are integral to policy discussions, especially given the growing inter-regional mobility and its economic implications.

- **Social Protection:** Advocating for portable benefits and improved access to social safety nets for migrant workers.

The participants also worked on developing strategies to align labour migration governance with broader development goals such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Harnessing the Power of Private Sector Engagement to Advance Regular Migration Pathways in Africa

A Consultative and Pre-validation Workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, on December 5–6, 2024. In the face of global migration challenges, Africa is emerging as a hub of opportunities, with 80% of its migration occurring within the continent.

Regular migration pathways, supported by robust legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks, are essential to unlocking the socio-economic potential of these movements. However, with limited regular pathways available, irregular migration persists, exposing individuals to exploitation and unsafe practices.

The Role of Regular Pathways and Private Sector Involvement

The African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other partners, underscores the critical role of private sector engagement in transforming migration governance across Africa. Regular migration pathways provide solutions to pressing challenges, such as labor shortages and unemployment, while fostering skill development and technological innovation.

The private sector employs about 90% of Africa's working-age population, with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) accounting for over 63% of employment in low-income countries. Recognizing this influence, the AUC has established key structures, such as the African Economic Platform and the African Private Sector Forum, to address persistent skills



mismatches and enhance private sector participation in skills development and industrialization.

The Workshop Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The workshop aims to solidify the role of private sector partnerships in advancing migration pathways and ensuring gender-sensitive skills assessment.

The workshop intends to achieve several objectives:

- **Pre-validation of Draft Guidelines:** The guidelines for Member States' engagement with the private sector will focus on building regular migration pathways that address labor mobility and skills alignment.
- **Discussion of Gender-Sensitive Skills Assessments:** Participants will review and refine assessments conducted in Mauritius, South Africa, and Mozambique, aiming to foster equity in skills training and recruitment.
- **Multi-stakeholder Engagement:** Governments, private entities, and other stakeholders will collaborate to develop innovative migration strategies, blending protection, labor mobility, family reunification, and education opportunities.

Key outcomes include an increased understanding of public-private collaborations in migration governance, finalized draft documents incorporating diverse perspectives, and actionable recommendations for scaling up regular migration pathways.

BUSINESSAFRICA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HOLDS MEETING TO CHART 2025 AND FUTURE PRIORITIES

The BUSINESSAfrica Executive Council held a pivotal virtual meeting on November 22, 2024, chaired by Mr. Hamidou Diop, the BUSINESSAfrica interim President and Secretary General of Conseil national du Patronat du Sénégal (CNP-Senegal), and facilitated by Ms. Jacqueline Mugo, Secretary General of BUSINESSAfrica. The meeting brought together key executive members to address governance matters, review organizational progress, and set priorities for the coming year.

The session began with opening remarks by Ms. Mugo, who acknowledged the lengthy interval since the Council's last meeting due to leadership changes in Employer Organisations. She highlighted that Mr. Hamidou Diop's appointment as interim President had been approved during the International Labour Organization (ILO) meeting in Geneva. His nomination was confirmed during the session by members, including Mr. EL Mahfoudh Megateli and Mrs. Zeinabou Sacko Keita. Mr. EL Mahfoudh Megateli was also approved to the position of the 1st Vice President on interim basis.

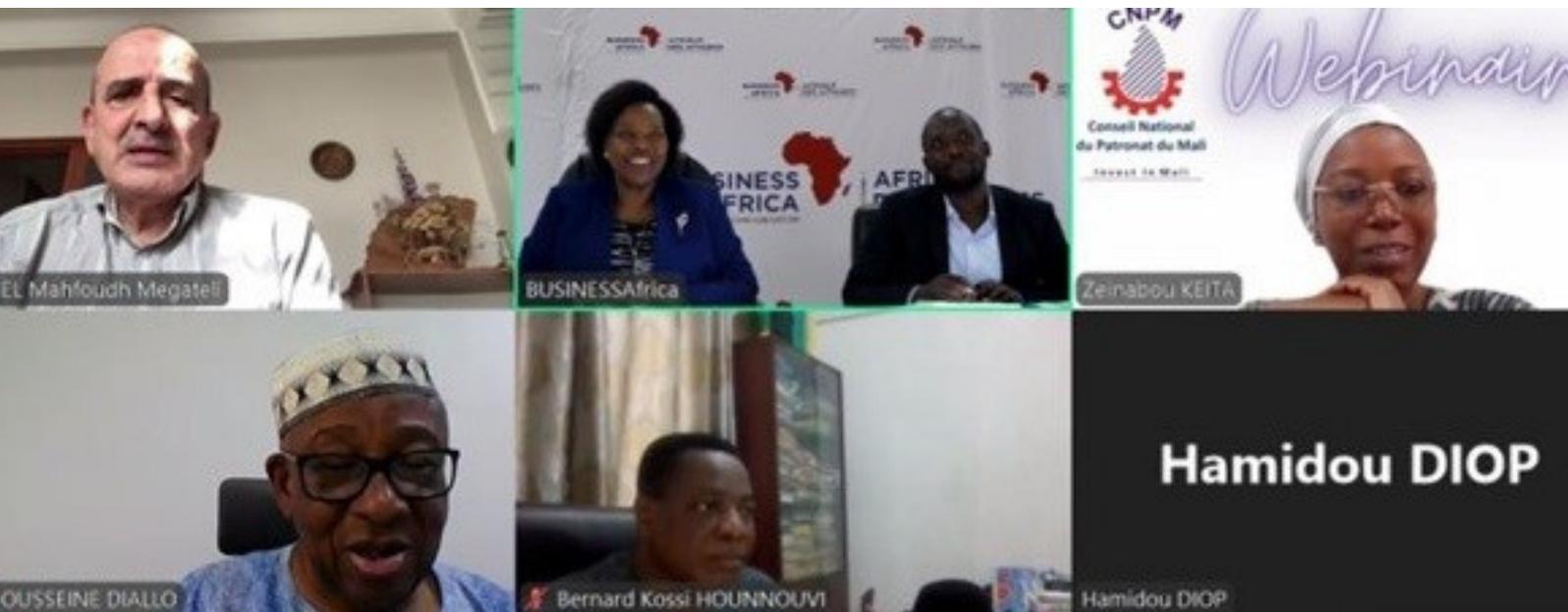
Accepting the role, Mr. Diop outlined his commitment to strengthening BUSINESSAfrica's

voice globally and emphasized the need for collaboration. He also proposed engaging the ILO to plan upcoming activities.

Ms. Mugo presented a detailed report on the Secretariat's activities, noting significant engagements such as her meeting with ILO Director General Mr. Gilbert Hungbo, where critical issues like informality, unemployment, and the Abidjan Declaration's priorities were discussed. She also highlighted BUSINESSAfrica's participation in global forums, including the B20 Summit in Brazil and preparations for the 2025 B20 Summit in South Africa.

Further updates included BUSINESSAfrica's representation in African Union affairs and courtesy visits by key partners, such as Mrs. Nancy Chenard, Secretary General of UNICONGO and Mr. Coffi Agossou, the ILO Africa's Deputy Regional Director. The Council also focused on strengthening organizational strategies starting next year on improved member collaboration.

The Council expressed optimism about the organization's future under the interim leadership of Mr. Diop and Ms. Mugo's continued guidance. With upcoming events and critical policy discussions on the horizon, BUSINESSAfrica aims to solidify its position as a key voice for African businesses.



Members' SPOT

MALI



Visit by the Subcontracting and Partnership Exchange to the ATC industrial unit



As part of its programme to carry out a diagnostic survey of companies, the Mali Subcontracting and Partnership Exchange (BSTP-Mali) paid a visit to ATC, a company based in Niamana-Bamako, Mali, on 27 November 2024.

The purpose of the visit, led by Mr Thierno BA, CNPM Vice-President in charge of Industry, was to present to ATC the framework for the relaunch and revitalisation of BSTP-Mali.

The BSTP-Mali delegation was welcomed by ATC managers, in particular the Managing Director, Mr Jean-Guy MONNERET, and the General Secretary, Ms Muriel MONTEIRO.

The discussions began with a presentation of the two organisations (ATC, BSTP-Mali) and the partnership framework that may exist between them.

ATC, founded in 1998, is a Malian company specialising in mining and

oil works, boiler making, metal constructions, transport and handling, etc. To date, the company has operations in Guinea, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Mauritania and France. ATC has a number of assets, in particular the construction of mines in Mali and in the West African sub-region.

The #BSTP-Mali, created in July 2011 by the Conseil National du Patronat du Mali (CNPM), is a technical centre for information, promotion of subcontracting and partnership and development of local content in all economic sectors.

In 2024, the CNPM embarked on its revitalisation process, one of the main tasks of which is to carry out a diagnostic survey of national companies.

BSTP-Mali and ATC have agreed to further strengthen their joint actions within a partnership framework that will focus on training and capacity-building for the operational resources of SMEs/SMIs, labelling/certification and the operationalisation of BSTP-Mali's digital intermediation platform.

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