

## **GFMD Summit – Common Space opening ceremony**

**10 December 2016, Dhaka**

**Ms. Linda Kromjong, Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers**

- I would like to thank our hosts for convening a meeting that brings all GFMD stakeholders to the table.
- My co-panelists today have presented a compelling overview of the benefits and challenges of migration and the very ambitious agenda that lies before us at very politically-challenging time. The Global Compact on Migration is a historic opportunity to devise a blueprint for creating a more responsible, predictable system for responding to large movements and migrants.
- I represent today the voice of the private sector, and more specifically of the members of the International Organisation of Employers. The IOE is the world’s largest and most representative private sector business association. Its members are some 150 business and employer organisations from over 140 countries. The IOE represents Employers in the ILO, and is recognized as the voice of business in social and labour policy debates across the UN system, as well as in the G20.
- I would like to focus my remarks on three areas: (1) the employers I am representing today and the lens through which they view migration issues; (2) the role of employers in the development of the Global Compact; and (3) the need for coordination of this effort with numerous and diverse other initiatives that are addressing many of these same issues.
- (1) The business case for migration is positive and well-documented. Employers regard migration as a necessary and positive phenomenon. Inclusive growth and sustainable development require open markets, competitiveness, and innovation – and all of these imply robust and coherent policies to facilitate the movement of people. Migration is a vehicle for fulfilling personal aspirations, for balancing labour supply and demand, for sparking innovation, and for transferring and spreading skills.
- Much research in the field of human resources shows that when employees are happy and healthy, and their families are happy and healthy, they are more productive. As

we engage the private sector in this discussion, we must recognize that migrant workers are a small, but important part of the workforce necessary to accomplish business objectives. Human resource professionals continue to report difficulty filling a variety of positions. This skills mismatch is often hard to explain in the face of persistent unemployment and underemployment.

- (2) The private sector has an important role to play in these discussions as both employers and as providers of services to migrants. As you all know, the GFMD endorsed last year the creation of a Business Mechanism. The IOE and the WEF Global Agenda Council were given the task to coordinate the work of the business mechanism - in other words to ensure that the voice of the private sector was brought in a meaningful way to the GFMD table.
- The Business Mechanism's aim is to facilitate sustained interaction between migration policy makers and business leaders. We will release tomorrow principles that will help governments to better understand how migration policies and practices affect business operations. These principles will begin to address some of the challenges to creating a robust Global Compact on Migration which have been identified.
- In particular, we are focused on creating fair and efficient migration systems that enable employers to access talent necessary to be competitive in today's global economy, while protecting migrant and local workers from abuse.
- In the past year, the Business Mechanism brought together a significant number of companies from all regions, all sectors and of different sizes. They all share a common interest in migration-related issues. While the Business Mechanism serves as a public-private dialogue in the framework of the GFMD, its expertise and network (in terms of both business knowledge and public-private partnership) could be used in other relevant dialogues, including the Global Compact on migration.
- The IOE and the GFMD Business Mechanism stand ready to work with all stakeholders on the development of the Global Compact on migration. In particular, we look forward to engaging with all governments to explore ways in which the GFMD

Business Mechanism can be helpful as we collaborate in working towards the same goal.

- (3) At the same time, it is important to recognize that migration is just one piece of a complex web of policies necessary to ensure fruitful employment opportunities for all workers in our fast-changing, uncertain and global economy.
- Employers are engaged in many initiatives to promote skills development, apprenticeships and life-long learning; diversity and inclusion and flexible work; and to promote respect for human rights. We have an important stake in ensuring fair labour conditions and decent work for our workforce – whether migrant or local -- a responsibility shared among governments, employers and trade unions.
- Employers are active in a large number of public and private sector initiatives relevant to the Global Compact on Migration. For example, the IOE and the International Organization on Migration (IOM) are working together to develop IRIS - the International Recruitment Integrity System. The IOE also supports ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative which aims to prevent human trafficking, promote safe migration and reduce the costs of labour mobility.
- Employers also participated in the discussions on Migrants in Countries in Crisis, lending our expertise both as employers of migrants and service providers to migrants.
- And the private sector has been active in the 2030 sustainable development goals and the G20. It is essential that we ensure better synergy and effectiveness among these and numerous and diverse other global and regional initiatives, particularly as we seek to engage SMEs that lack time and resources to sort through multiple layers of policymaking.
- In conclusion, we all have a vital interest in working together on the global compact. Companies benefit from open and modern migration policies that facilitate skills' transfer and human mobility. But individuals, economies and societies throughout history have benefited from the ability of human beings to migrate to seek better lives and opportunities. We hope and trust that our efforts can contribute to a public discourse that better reflects this reality.