

Labor and Employment Ministers Extraordinary Meeting on COVID-19

23rd April 2020

Draft Intervention IOE President Erol Kiresepi

Dear Ministers

Let me briefly add to the speech of Dr Ilham.

Of course, the health of workers and employers has the highest priority. As the representative of the IOE, representing more than 50 million companies, I assure you that the business community fully shares this approach. Companies have not only implemented strict measures to protect their workforce, but have also supported WHO and governments in addressing the health impact of the pandemic.

But as we all know, the pandemic has also disastrous economic and employment impacts. The IOE has highly welcomed the commitments made by the G20 during the Leaders' Summit of 26 March. However, the economic stimulus packages that were pledged have too often not reached the real economy. We need more targeted efforts and easily accessible support to ensure business continuity. Large scale companies' collapse will have catastrophic employment impact - nationally and also globally.

In today's interconnected global economy, the spill-over effects are dramatic. IOE together with brands and retailers, ITUC and the ILO launched just yesterday an initiative to address the impact of the pandemic in the garment industry. We committed to support manufacturers to survive the economic disruption caused by the Covid-19 and to protect garment workers' income, health and employment. We call on the G20 to support this important initiative. We are also highly engaged in promoting a sector approach, coordinating and cooperation with sector associations. I would like to thank ILO Director General Guy Ryder for discussing with us what needs to be done to support these sectors.

Let me finally highlight the key role employers' organisations can play at all levels, in the negotiation, implementation and follow-up of the crisis response. We are keen to engage and to support you. COVID-19 requests a collective response and the IOE and the global business community is deeply committed to help.

Thank you