Regional Webinar for Chinese Employers in East Africa

The Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) joined the China Enterprises Confederation (CEC) and other Employer Federations in East Africa for discussions on the impact of Covid-19 on Employment Relations and what Chinese Employers in the region need to know.

This first Chinese - Africa engagement gave the employers federations an opportunity to give a status update on emerging labour relations challenges and possible solutions towards this as provided for by each country.

Mr. Douglas Opio, the Executive Director of the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) noted that the situation in Uganda has been relatively stable with the Government allowing businesses to operate under strict regulations. “This has had a positive response on employers. However, employee issues are emerging and the Federation continues to issue advisories on a needs basis,” he said.

The Deputy Director Chinese Employers Confederation, Mr. Yu Wu noted that the China Africa Program sought to encourage Chinese employers to carry out responsible business in Africa, build harmonious industrial relations and build sustainable businesses.

Dr Aggrey Mlimuka, the Executive Director, Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) noted that the employers rallied Government to address Covid - 19 urgently due to its impact on businesses. ATE proposed a raft of measures to lobby government to make policy changes to cater for the unprecedented situation.

“The Federation will continue to engage with Chinese Employers in Kenya & other stakeholders on matters concerning employment, employers and employees’ challenges with the view of finding real time solutions for enterprise survival,” said Ms. Jacqueline Mugo, the Executive Director, FKE.

From the discussions, Employers agreed that the pandemic had impacted Industrial Relations in the highlighted ways

• Compliance with government Protocols and Guidelines
• Ongoing Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) negotiations were put on hold in order to observe social distance protocols.
• Meetings for resolution of trade disputes at the labour offices were all suspended.
• Implementation of financial clauses in CBAs were suspended due to the unbearable wage bill on employers.
• Employers could no longer operate normal shift work as workers had to leave their stations by 1600 hours.

To understand the options Chinese employers’ have in resolving industrial relations issues under these circumstances, ensure business continuity and save jobs, FKE led social partners in formulating Continues ......
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a Framework Agreement providing for consultations through good will, trust and mutual understanding.

Social partners agreed that employees could be sent on normal leave, leave in advance, unpaid leave and where inevitable subjecting employees to temporary pay cuts as part of survival strategies.

In the foregoing, Chinese employers in the East Africa region were called upon to constitute a forum for lobbying & advocacy on issues of common business interest and join to Apex Employer Organizations in their respective countries of operation in order to protect and promote their rights & interests.

For more information on Industrial Relations, please email fkehq@fke-kenya.org or Moses Omboka on mombokh@fke-kenya.org

Rethinking Business Contribution to the UN and the Multilateral System

BUSINESSAfrica- Employers Confederation congratulates the International Organization of Employers (IOE) on its centenary year.

During the IOE summit held on 2nd September 2020, speakers voiced strong support for social dialogue as a means of addressing industrial relations matters worldwide. There were also calls for governments to adopt an institutional framework for social partners and the business community to participate in multilateral decision-making organs.

“This is the time for the UN, Governments and Employers to work together to ensure that the pandemic does not become a Humanitarian Catastrophe,” said Mr. Erol Kiresepi, President of The International Organizations of Employers (IOE).

In determining the path for the future of business action at the United Nations and the entire multilateral system, these were the emerging issues:

- The commitment by employers to continue engaging in Social dialogue and tripartism with governments and workers which is gradually becoming an accepted way of conducting business in the World of Work.
- The rationale and business case for the employer’s commitment to the International Labour Organization has to be renewed.
- The role and influence of employers within the United Nations system is important in influencing policy and improving relations between the business community and the UN.
- Policy makers must not assume the informal sector and must make the environment attractive for the informal sector to get into the mainstream formal business operations.

Leaders from different employer and business organisations joined the UN Secretary General António Guterres to examine why the multilateral system is important for business, discuss the challenges from business’ view that the UN needs to improve its action on, and how Employers can support the UN – in New York and Geneva and at the country level. “The SDGs cannot succeed without the full engagement of the private sector. To build a better future, we need a global multilateral system that answers the real anxieties of people with practical responses,” said Mr. Guterres.

The Secretary General BUSINESSAfrica, Mrs. Jacqueline Mugo led African employers in participating in the forum. This unique summit was very important in furthering the calls to bring the Global Voice of the Employers to the United Nations and the entire multilateral system.

Find more about this discussion on these links

‘This is the time for the UN, Governments and Employers to work together to ensure that the pandemic does not become a Humanitarian Catastrophe,”
The Federation has launched a Masterclass Training on Workplace Ethics and Culture to help employers and employees navigate and create proper responses in this changing environment at the workplace occasioned by the Pandemic.

This is premised on the fact that in the long run the changes and disruptions caused by Covid-19 pandemic have an adverse impact on those who do not appropriately respond to it. The main goal of this masterclass is to promote ethical behaviour and culture that drives performance at the workplace.

The module sought to build the capacity of delegates to identify the building blocks of a good value system in the reality of Covid-19, appreciate the evolving culture and how Covid-19 has impacted the workplace and appreciate the role that leadership plays in building the desired organizational culture.

**Emerging culture**

In this phase everybody is learning because of the emerging culture, this requires a new mindset and a new orientation for all. The new workplace culture provided emphasis on experimentation and a state of continuous learning because we are not sure of the efficacy of what we are doing now.

We note that employers must create psychological safety net for their employees. Giving them an opportunity to communicate, air their views freely and appreciate their concerns. A new paradigm shift on what to do, how to reengineer business and employee relations.

In the learnings, it appeared that culture is cascaded from the top therefore leaders must ask themselves what they are doing to set the stage for change in culture and ethics in this new environment.

They must put a deliberate effort to institute the desired culture with good value systems and ethics to sustain performance and productivity.

What must companies do in this changing workplace environment? Employers should resolve to address emerging challenges quickly, remain resilient, think of a strategy to get the business back to normal, re-imagine the possibilities and opportunities in the new normal and decide what reforms to take to sustain their enterprises and protect livelihoods.

This is the time to ACT! Improve our infrastructure, change our system and come up with strategies in managing the Pandemic. This calls for a change in our culture and ethics.

Thank you to all the participants. Register for the next module taking place on [4th September, 2020](#). For more information, please contact fkehq@fke-kenya.org

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**FKE in the Media**

**Business Daily 31st August 2020**

FKE observed that the crisis has caused untold human suffering and may be the worst financial crisis faced so far. So far, 604 member companies have declared redundancies and the situation may worsen.

**A quarterly labourforce survey by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) published in early June suggested that some 287,481 Kenyas lost their jobs in the first three months of the year...**

**Business Daily 31st August 2020**
**FKE establishes business network for persons living with disability**

**BY GOK DEGUTU**

The Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) has established the Kenya Business and Disability Network (KBDDN) to become the single voice for businesses in Kenya that mentor persons living with disability as an integral part of their workforce policies, including government and social programs.

With support from the ILO, USAID, and National Assembly, the KBDDN will push for the inclusion of persons with disabilities into mainstream corporate plans and priorities and shift the dialogue from charity to social investment and to ensure that no one is left behind.

FKE executive director Mrs. Jacqueline Ngigi (above) during a virtual meeting on Employment of People with Disability on 24th August. FKE is establishing a Disability Network aspiring to be a single voice for businesses in Kenya on disability, demonstrating business leadership in Kenya on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

**Hygrotech EA Limited**

Hygrotech Sustainable Solutions was founded in 1984 with origins from Roode Lyon Company that dealt with vegetable seed and agricultural industries of South Africa. Hygrotech pioneered the development of F1 hybrids in the South African vegetable industry. It also introduced technologies such as the Seeding system and polystyrene stickers etc and distribution in both South Africa and East Africa.

http://www.hygrotech.co.ke/

**Welcoming a New Member!**

4th September, 2020

Hygrotech EA Limited

The Times, 1st September 2020

The Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) notes that promotion of employability of Persons with Disability is a shared responsibility. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), FKE is establishing the Kenya Business and Disability Network (KBDDN) which will be a single voice for businesses in Kenya on disability vis-à-vis other stakeholders, including government and workers. This will also be a network for showcasing business leadership in Kenya on the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and a space for sharing and learning about good practices for purposes of replication. With support from the ILO, companies and associates, the KBDDN will push the business case for the inclusion of persons with disabilities into mainstream corporate plans and priorities and shift the dialogue from charity to social investment and to ensure that no one is left behind.

**NTN News 3rd September 2020**

In the feature on Life after Prison for ex-convicts, FKE brought to the light some of the issues employers face while trying to offer employment opportunities to ex prisoners. The Federation proposed proper linkage between the court system and the world of work to ensure rehabilitation programs help ex-prisoners to re-integrate into the society. Find a recording of this on our FKE Youtube Channel or https://youtu.be/zG2UOZuaD8Q

**Standard Newspaper 1st September 2020,**

The Federation provided a picture of the member companies that have declared redundancies to date. However, we noted that for the previous year 2019, 7000 employees were declared redundant and not 700,000 as quoted in the papers. This means that in the year 2020 the numbers will rise tremendously.

**NTN News 3rd September 2020**

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