Shea Gopaul, IOE Permanent Representative to UN
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ECOSOC special meeting on Harnessing AI intelligence for SDGs

Thank you Chair. Excellencies, distinguished guests, I am representing the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) which represents 50 million companies in some 150 countries. Of these companies most are SMEs in developing economies or LDCs. All our members are concerned about the challenges and opportunities linked to the deployment of AI. My comments today are based on our recent study in consultation with our constituents on the impact of AI on work and employment.

1 With regards to questions around governance frameworks, I would like to highlight 3 key challenges for employers:

Employers recognize the complexity with **Algorithmic management.** Policymakers are concerned with potential problems when designing, developing or launching algorithms for the purposes of work-related monitoring systems. These systems are meant to promote increase productivity (which is estimated to increase between 0.2% to 3.3%) and even enhance work-life balance. Therefore, maintaining confidentiality in the algorithm formulas is essential to preserve intellectual property rights, with some degree of transparency.

Cybersecurity is critical at the workplace. With AI expanding, cybersecurity and data management at the workplace have become a more challenging and relevant area of potential policy action.

With AI there will be **Job losses and job creation-** which can be expected with any disruptive technological change. The key policy challenge is to ensure successful **just transitional -job and income** opportunities for more individuals globally. The Adecco Group has estimated in advanced economies some 46% of workers have undertaken some AI training. There needs to be a joint venture between employers and government to address the just transition **where youth and older workers are given reskilling opportunities, and a culture of learnability is promoted**.

2 Concerning the questions on AI being harnessed to promote inclusivity in a human centric manner. For employers what is required?

We need to:

Promote a culture of innovation
Elaborate an AI strategy within our organisations
Invest in knowledge and skills development of our workers and future work force
Evaluate ethical risk assessments of AI tools
Implement transition programmes for the workforce and have an open dialogue with all stakeholders.

3 However, Good Governance works in tandem with good SMART policies and regulation. Employers are looking to governments for Policy recommendations in the following areas -

- General **risk mitigation** should be given more prominence*: particularly in respect of conducting periodic risk assessments and developing appropriate contingency plans, including investments in suitable cybersecurity infrastructure.
- Governments also have a responsibility, in terms of **facilitating digital literacy programmes across all levels of society**. This will ensure that its citizens are better prepared for the realities of working in an AI-based workplace or economy.
- Providing **unemployment relief support** (social protection) or other types of retraining or employment programmes for workers who are in transition.

Finally, the key to success of Harnessing AI is **social dialogue** with all parties at the table and building multistakeholder partnerships – local Skills Council such as in Germany and South Africa are excellent examples where public and private come together to jointly decide on AI within the Skills agenda. No doubt that AI is an area where there is huge potential - but we must leverage the expertise of all to succeed and be inclusive so that we leave no one behind.
Thank you.