***IOE General Council Meeting & IOE Centenary Celebration***

***Virtual Event***

***Thursday, 24th November 2020, 13.00-15.30 (CET)***

ICEA Intervention from Tehran-Iran

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of this auspicious occasion on the IOE Centenary.

The Centenary is an important opportunity both for the IOE to commemorate its achievements and reaffirm its position as the credible global voice of business, but also for its members to express their views, concerns and expectations.

In fact, this is an exceptional opportunity to bring the voice of business’ organizations to the IOE in order to examine which challenges, from business’ view, does the Organization (IOE) need to improve response to.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

The business aspects of the COVID-19 crisis are unprecedented, as economic activity is being curtailed by direct governments action and business decisions to close in order to limit the spread of the coronavirus in many countries. The IOE will require a very different set of policy responses to those used in previous situations, in order to support business and employers’ organizations.

***New Vision for the IOE in its Future Centenary will*** allow the Organization to focus on national business and employers’ organizations’ concerns and future priorities, as far as technical assistance and cooperation is concerned. The new IOE Centenary should serve as a basis for this purpose.

In my country, the first two weeks of coronavirus outbreak have been similar to those in other countries. Authorities were NOT swift to take COVID-19 prevention measures, but as the number of confirmed cases surged, the government made required decisions to deal with the problem. The government-imposed lockdowns, border closures and restrictions in movement inevitably resulted in many of our businesses operating below normal capacity.

In response to ongoing [Covid-19](https://www.devex.com/news/search?query%5B%5D=COVID-19) pandemic, my organization, ICEA, along with our private companies have donated cash to humanitarian domains, supplies, and medical and hygiene equipment, and set their research capacity toward developing a new normality to ensure business continuity.

New work arrangement adopted and advised by our businesses to their employees to stay at home, to work from home, until further notice, with full pay. This new work arrangement has been adopted by ICEA, too, advising the staff as well as the members to follow the new arrangements.

The business’ efforts to date have met with huge barriers due to the difficulties presented by Covid-19 crisis in the country, and by the US policy of maximum economic pressure on the country, as well.

We should be grateful if the Secretary-General would kindly liaise with the ILO ACT/EMP in order to facilitate the process of our earlier requested technical assistance.

In the meantime, Mr. chairman, we call on the IOE to continue its evolution and to make necessary adaptations, and to devise more effective ways in exploring new and enhanced ways of meeting and even exceeding the expectations of members.

We believe the strength and further success of the IOE largely depends upon the degree of commitment of its members; hence the IOE need to concentrate more on increasing "capacity", "representability" and "performance" of its members, highlighting future priorities for technical assistance and cooperation.

We take pride that the IOE established an efficient mechanism which ensures that they are accessible, effective, independent, and importantly free from political influences, as far as sustainability of enterprises is concerned.

Mr. chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

People all over the world are hoping, waiting and wishing for the period of post-COVID-19. We are very much looking forward to human triumph over the COVID-19 crisis.

Thank you for patiently listening.

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