

COVID-19 and ENTERPRISES

Briefing Note [No. 15]

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The COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting enterprises of all sizes and types in unprecedented ways. This brief aims to highlight key information resources available on the functioning of enterprises in the crisis, including its impact on enterprises, responses by enterprises and policy measures to support affected enterprises.

Disclaimer: Due to the rapid evolution of the situation around the COVID-19, there has been a large and growing amount of information resources related to enterprises and the pandemic. Therefore, this brief contains not only the resources of the ILO, but also those from external organizations. Reference to those external resources does not constitute an endorsement by the ILO of the opinions expressed in them.

Visit the ILO website for regular updates on responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

► ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus

1. Resources for enterprise response

[ILO Learning Webinar: Business, non-discrimination and gender equality in the time of COVID-19](#) | 29 April 2020

This webinar will provide participants with an overview on how to implement policies and practices that promote non-discrimination and gender equality in the workplace, taking into consideration the challenges that businesses around the world may be facing once the current pandemic subsides. This includes an overview of relevant resources and practical tools available on the ILO Helpdesk for Business. This webinar will also include knowledge sharing from companies with illustrative policies and practices that champion diverse workplaces.

[ILO World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020 - Stop the pandemic: Safety and health at work can save lives](#) | 28 April 2020

Recognizing the great challenge that governments, employers, workers and whole societies are facing worldwide to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Day for Safety and Health at Work will focus on addressing the outbreak of infectious diseases at work, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic. A [webinar](#) will also be organized on 28 April from 3.00 PM CEST to stimulate dialogue on the importance of ensuring safety and health at work, not only to protect the lives of workers but also to ensure business continuity.

[OECD - COVID-19 and responsible business conduct](#) | 16 April 2020

Taking a responsible business conduct (RBC) approach, based on the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and using risk-based due diligence would bring short and long-term benefits. Company RBC approaches could include the following measures: 1) Social dialogue and stakeholder engagement; 2) Environmental, health and safety management; and 3) Supply chain management that addresses vulnerabilities in the supply chain.

Government RBC approaches could entail the following strategies: 1) Conditioning emergency or relief funds to compliance with RBC standards; 2) Using emergency and relief programmes to support companies in creating long-term economic, social and environmental value; 3) Using RBC standards as

a framework for identifying the environmental, social and governance risks and vulnerabilities in the supply chains; 4) Leveraging public procurement; 5) Enabling dispute resolution and access to remedy in the event that companies or government responses fail to meet RBC standards.

[OECD - How can fashion brands mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on garment workers? | 15 April 2020](#)

With the COVID-19 pandemic provoking a global health and economic emergency, the OECD's Dorothy Lovell looks at how OECD guidance on responsible business conduct can help governments and business address the impacts of COVID-19 in a way that mitigates harm to workers and supply chains in the garment sector.

[UNCTAD - Ten-point plan to bolster global transport, ease trade during COVID-19 | 27 April 2020](#)

UNCTAD proposes 10 policy measures to cover maritime transport, customs operations, transit, transparency and legal issues, as well as technology to enhance paperless trade processes.

[ICC and WCO call for customs and trade facilitation action | 27 April 2020](#)

In a joint statement ICC and the World Customs Organization (WCO) say effective trade facilitation – based on international standards – will play a central role in enabling business continuity and renewed economic growth. The statement calls for a coordinated customs response to the COVID-19 crisis – including through active participation in multilateral efforts and an open dialogue with neighbouring countries.

[ICC launches COVID-19 web portal | 24 April 2020](#)

The new knowledge-sharing website contains vetted advice for businesses, policymakers and chambers on how to overcome the unfolding global health and societal emergency presented by COVID-19. It serves as a one-stop-shop for users featuring practical policy recommendations, resources for businesses to understand, prepare for and respond to the unprecedented disruption, and actions undertaken by chambers of commerce in response to COVID-19.

ICGN publishes open ‘Statement of Shared Governance Responsibilities’ to companies and investors | 23 April 2020

The International Corporate Governance Network, an investor-led coalition of governance professionals with members responsible for assets of \$54 trillion, published an open letter to companies, regulators and stakeholders setting out governance priorities during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. The letter sets out governance priorities for executive management, board directors and investors alike to safeguard company sustainability during the Covid-19 pandemic and clarifies the need to: 1) Prioritize employee safety and welfare while meeting short-term liquidity requirements; 2) Pursue a long-term view on social responsibility, fairness and sustainable value creation and to publicly define a social purpose; 3) Take a holistic and equitable approach to capital allocation decisions in relation to the workforce, stakeholders and providers of capital; and 4) Communicate comprehensively with all stakeholders to instill confidence and trust in resilience is instilled in strategy and operations.

BGI - COVID-19 and contract non-performance: wise companies are guided by business and human rights thinking | 4 April 2020

Here are five tips for guiding good decisions on contract performance during the COVID-19 crisis: 1) Focus on limiting the company’s contribution to the health and economic crisis; 2) Engage with suppliers and customers to identify the potential impacts of continued performance or non-performance; 3) Mitigate any impacts of continuing contractual performance; 4) Mitigate any impacts of contractual non-performance; and 5) Work collaboratively, build and use leverage to mitigate impacts.

GFMD COVID-19 Information Hub

To support human-centric approaches to the formulation and implementation of national responses towards migrants during the crisis, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has set up an Ad Hoc Working Group, launched a series of webinars, and released the online information hub to publish guidance, best practices, and case studies from our partners and stakeholders around the world.

[Webinar: IOE - Impact on the business and human rights agenda](#) | 29 April 2020, 2:00 PM CEST

The IOE will host a digital conference with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet. Mthunzi Mdwaba, Chair of IOE Policy Working Group on Human Rights and Responsible Business Conduct will open the session. Additional participants include Global Labor & Human Rights Director of Samsung Electronics; Executive Director of IHRB; Senior Adviser of Shift.

[Webinar: HSBC, LGIM, SGP, BCG - ESG and Sustainable investing in the midst of Covid-19](#) | 30 April 2020, 3:30 PM CEST

To what extent is the investment community staying the ESG course? Speakers from HSBC Global Asset Management, LGIM, Sustainable Governance Partners and Boston Consulting Group will discuss the impact Covid-19 is having on the sustainable investing conversation, and the practical next steps for the investment community.

2. Government support to enterprises

[ILO portal on the country policy responses](#)

This ILO portal is being frequently updated to provide recent updates on the measures implemented by governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and the ILO by country and territory.

[UK - Coronavirus Future Fund](#) | 20 April 2020

This scheme will issue convertible loans between £125,000 to £5 million to innovative companies which are facing financing difficulties due to the coronavirus outbreak. It will be launched in May 2020 and delivered in partnership with the British Business Bank.

EU privacy body urges anonymization of location data for COVID-19 tracking | 22 April 2020

The European Data Protection Board (EDPB) has published guidance for the use of location data and contacts tracing tools intended to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The European Commission and the EU parliament have already weighed in with their own recommendations in this area, including a toolbox to help guide contacts tracing app developers. The Commission has also urged Member States to take a common approach to building such apps, and has been leaning on local telcos to provide “anonymized and aggregated” metadata for modelling the spread of the virus across the EU.

U.S. payroll protection program: What has changed in round two? | 27 April 2020

The Small Business Administration began to allow lenders to process \$310 billion in funds for the second round of its program that aims to help small businesses, hurt by the novel coronavirus disruption, to cover their payroll costs. After concerns that some of the first tranche of money bypassed small businesses in favor of Wall Street companies and big business, Congress, the SBA and the U.S. Treasury Department have made changes to program rules.

Indonesia - More than 300,000 workers eligible for unemployment benefits in Jakarta | 20 April 2020

The government has been collecting data on workers that have been laid off or put on unpaid forced leave during the pandemic. According to Andri, a total of 323,224 workers from 39,664 companies affected by the pandemic had registered with the Jakarta provincial government. They will need to register on the site and verify their identification number (NIK) and e-mail, fill in their personal data, then take motivation and basic ability tests to receive a pre-employment card which the government has prepared for 5.6 million workers in 2020. The pre-employment card is the first public service program to use an end-to-end online system, from registration to training and payment of incentives.

[Indonesia - Almost all business sectors will get tax breaks](#) | 22 April 2020

The government is looking to finalize next week Rp 35.3 trillion (US\$2.26 billion) in new tax incentives for 18 sectors including those hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic such as tourism and the food and beverage sector. It will also introduce new tax breaks for the healthcare sector.

[Bank of Japan expands stimulus as pandemic pain worsens](#) | 27 April 2020

The Bank of Japan expanded monetary stimulus and pledged to buy an unlimited amount of bonds to keep borrowing costs low, as the government tries to spend its way out of the growing economic pain from the coronavirus pandemic. The step, which follows monetary easing only a month ago, puts the BOJ in line with other major central banks that have unleashed unprecedented amounts of monetary support as the health crisis stokes fears of a deep global recession.

[Workers risking infection deserve payouts too, says Japan minister](#) | 26 April 2020

Supermarket cashiers who risk infection by going to work deserve government cash payouts just as much as those at home on furlough, said the minister leading Japan's fight against the coronavirus in an interview with the Financial Times.

[Australia - Modern slavery Act information sheet: Coronavirus](#) | 21 April 2020

This information sheet issued by the government provides guidance for entities about how to reduce the risk of vulnerable workers in their operations and supply chains becoming exposed to modern slavery as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This information sheet also explains how reporting entities under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Modern Slavery Act) can address the impact of COVID-19 in their modern slavery statements.

[Dubai labour affairs committee delivers COVID-19 awareness guidelines for workers](#) | 19 April 2020

Dubai's Permanent Committee of Labour Affairs, PCLA, has distributed COVID-

19 awareness guides to workers, drivers and accommodation supervisors, across 500 companies in the emirates. PLCA teams carried out field visits to workers at their accommodation, providing individuals with educational materials and guides on preventative measures to protect themselves against coronavirus, and to ensure that they are familiar with health and safety regulations.

How coronavirus threatens North Africa's informal workers | 15 April 2020

In designing economic relief packages, governments across North Africa have recognised that the informal economy is in need of support, and have advanced some targeted measures, usually in the form of cash transfers. In Tunisia, a cash transfer programme was announced that would pay 200 dinars (\$70) to more than half a million households unaffiliated with any social security schemes, alongside additional funds for vulnerable families with elderly dependants and some utility bill relief. Morocco announced a direct cash transfer programme for vulnerable households, citing in particular those operating in the informal sector. Morocco is focusing on recipients of RAMED, a subsidised health insurance regime for vulnerable households that covers about 20% of the population. Egypt is expanding cash transfers, both by seeking to add 60,000 new households to its pre-existing Takaful and Karama Programme and by providing a one-off payment of 500 Egyptian pounds (\$32) to informal workers.

Congo - baisses d'impôts, défiscalisation des dons et suspension des contrôles fiscaux | 16 April 2020

La République du Congo compte ramener l'impôt sur le bénéfice des sociétés (IS) de 30 % à 28 %, ainsi que l'impôt global forfaitaire de 7 à 5 % du chiffre d'affaires des opérateurs vendant des produits à marge libre, et de 10 à 8 % pour les produits à prix réglementé. Ces mesures, ainsi que la défiscalisation totale des dons effectués dans le cadre de la lutte contre le Covid-19, seront insérées dans la loi de finances rectificative en préparation. Le gouvernement mettra en place un mécanisme de garantie pour secourir les entreprises ayant des difficultés à honorer leurs engagements à l'égard des banques.

Côte d'Ivoire - trois fonds de soutien pour les entreprises | 16 April 2020

Le plan de soutien du gouvernement aux entreprises prévoit notamment la création de trois fonds de soutien, l'un de 100 milliards de francs CFA (152 millions d'euros) pour les grandes entreprises, un autre de 150 milliards F CFA pour les PME, et un troisième de 100 milliards F CFA pour l'appui au secteur informel.

Côte d'Ivoire - le gouvernement soutient la filière cacao en période de coronavirus | 24 April 2020

En ce moment où la crise sanitaire a provoqué un ralentissement des activités économiques dans le monde, le gouvernement ivoirien a répliqué avec un méga plan de soutien à tous les secteurs économiques, sans oublier les Ivoiriens les plus pauvres. Un plan de 1 700 milliards de francs CFA, dont 15%, soit l'équivalent de 380 millions d'euros, serviront à soutenir les grandes productions agricoles d'exportation ; en tête le cacao, mais aussi la noix de cajou, le café, l'hévéa ou encore le coton.

Perú - EsSalud pagará subsidio a trabajadores de mypes en suspensión perfecta | 24 April 2020

El Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo (MTPE) señaló hoy que EsSalud será la entidad encargada de pagar el subsidio de 760 soles al mes para los trabajadores del régimen laboral de la microempresa, con un sueldo mensual de hasta 2,400 soles, cuya empresa donde laboran se acoja a la suspensión perfecta de labores (licencia sin goce de haber).

Perú - Bono rural para agricultores: consulta AQUÍ cómo obtener los 760 soles | 27 April 2020

El bono rural se otorgará a todas las familias agricultoras del Perú durante el contexto del coronavirus. El Gobierno aún no establece los lineamientos de entrega, pero indicó que lo hará la última semana de abril.

3. Enterprises response

Employee protection

[Samoa businesses forced to cut hours for staff](#) | 7 April 2020

Hundreds of businesses in Samoa have been forced to cut working hours of staff because of loss of revenue due to the covid-19 pandemic. Majority of the businesses have preferred to cut working hours rather than laying off employees as the latter would place them at a financial disadvantage.

[Accor launches ALL Heartist Fund, a COVID-19 special purpose vehicle](#) | 2 April 2020

Accor has decided to allocate 25% of the planned dividend (EUR 70m) to the launch of the “ALL Heartist Fund”, a fund to support the Group’s employees who do not have social security or medical insurance; furloughed employees and individual partners facing financial difficulty; and front-line healthcare professionals and non-profit organizations.

Internal operation management

[UK - Firms receiving coronavirus help told to cut executive pay](#) | 27 April 2020

Companies that have received government support to help them through the coronavirus crisis should cut executive pay and consider clawing back bonuses from bosses, according to new remuneration guidelines from the Investment Association (IA), a group representing the biggest British investors.

[UK - Marks & Spencer scraps shareholder payout amid Covid-19 crisis](#) | 28 April 2020

The major British multinational retailer has scrapped next year’s dividend as it looks to cut costs and preserve cash, warning that disruption from the coronavirus crisis may last for the rest of 2020.

Production innovation and adaptation

Mobile phone location data used to track Australians' movements during coronavirus crisis | 5 April 2020

Vodafone has provided the mobile phone location data of several million Australians in an anonymised and aggregated form to the federal and NSW governments to monitor whether people are following social distancing restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. "No personal information has been provided, and no personal information could be derived from it".

FairPrice launches mobile supermarket in Singapore | 23 April 2020

Singapore supermarket chain FairPrice has launched a mobile grocery service dubbed 'FairPrice on Wheels', delivering essential groceries closer to customers' homes.

Ces entreprises de luxe qui s'engagent face au Covid-19 | 4 April 2020

De nombreuses entreprises du secteur du luxe ont transformé leurs manufactures pour produire du gel hydroalcoolique, des masques et des blouses afin de participer à la lutte contre la pandémie de Covid-19. Les parfumeurs adaptent leurs chaînes de production.

Support to customers and communities

Airbnb frees up housing for health workers as Covid-19 guts growth | 9 April 2020

The short-term rental company Airbnb has been opening its doors free of charge to overworked health workers fighting the Covid-19 pandemic in France and Italy. Airbnb said it was prompted to launch its free housing scheme for medical staff fighting the coronavirus to offer comfort to "heroic first responders". The scheme has so far helped nearly 6,000 healthcare staff across both France and Italy, with an end goal of housing 100,000 first responders and healthcare workers around the world.

La marque "C'est qui le patron" lance un mouvement de solidarité en reversant les gains additionnels dus à la crise du Coronavirus | 16 April 2020

La marque "C'est qui le patron", face à l'explosion de ses ventes, a décidé de créer un fonds de soutien des citoyens et consommateurs pour y verser ses gains additionnels soit 200 000 euros. Elle appelle les autres entreprises à ne pas profiter de la crise, et à faire de même. Panzani et Carrefour ont déjà répondu à l'appel.

Multiple/other responses

Institutional Investors tell big pharma to cooperate on coronavirus | 17 April 2020

A group of institutional investors - which holds more than 1.9 trillion euros (\$2.1 trillion) in assets and includes Nordea, Nomura, Boston Common Asset Management and Dutch pension fund PGGM - said it will send pharmaceutical companies including Roche, Johnson & Johnson and Gilead, a list of principles it wants them to abide by for the coming year. The list includes prioritising the development of tests, medicines and vaccines, working together on data-sharing, paying suppliers on time, understanding if customers have financial hardship and ensuring supply lines are working.

Germany - 68 companies call on Govt. to ensure COVID-19 recovery measures are in line with Paris Agreement | 27 April 2020

Ahead of this week's digital Petersberg Climate Dialogue, an annual ministerial summit organised by the German government in preparation for the UN climate conference, both top German politicians and an alliance of 68 large German and international companies, separately urged the German Government to ensure COVID-19 economic stimulus packages are climate-friendly. The Green Recovery Alliance was launched in the European Parliament earlier in April by 79 MEPs and civil society groups, including 37 CEOs, 28 business associations, the European trade union confederation, 7 NGOs and 6 think tanks.

Des centaines de milliers d'entrepreneurs engagés appellent à une relance économique verte et inclusive | 21 April 2020

400 000 entrepreneurs représentant trois millions d'emplois, réunis sous le collectif Nous sommes demain, appellent à une relance économique verte et inclusive. Pour ne pas refaire les erreurs du passé et penser un mode d'après plus durable, ils demandent aux entreprises aidées par l'État de s'engager à travers une dizaine de propositions allant de l'emploi des travailleurs fragiles à 25 % du placement de l'entreprise dans des fonds socialement responsables en passant par un minimum de 90 à l'index de l'égalité femmes-hommes.

Bpifrance, Tech For Good, CJD... Les réseaux au chevet des entreprises | 22 April 2020

Depuis la crise du Covid-19, ils sont sur le pont pour informer, guider, accompagner les entreprises dans la gestion de l'urgence sociale et économique mais aussi pour penser l'après. Avec leur hotline, leur groupes whatsapp ou leurs webinars, les fédérations d'entreprises, réseaux spécialisés, associations du patronat, CCI et agences régionales mobilisent toutes leurs forces pour aider petites et grandes entreprises à passer le cap, économiquement mais aussi psychologiquement.

Viajala - 'Logramos adaptar la caja para 9 meses' | 26 April 2020

Con una dependencia total de la actividad de aerolíneas y agencias de viajes, la plataforma de búsqueda para turistas Viajala ha visto una drástica reducción de sus ingresos en el tiempo de restricciones. Sin embargo, Thomas Allier, director de la compañía, le dijo a Portafolio que con las estrategias que vienen implementando podrían resistir hasta nueve meses

4. Workers/multi-stakeholders response

[WFTU demands security of Nepali immigrant workers amid COVID-19](#) | 24

April 2020

The World Federation of Trade Unions coordination committee, Nepal has demanded security of Nepali immigrant workers across the globe amid coronavirus pandemic. The committee demanded the government and diplomatic missions manage food, accommodation and health services to the immigrant workers across the globe since the pandemic is taking its toll (...). The International Labour Organisation could extend assistance in this regard, the release stated.

[Bolivia - La COB pide al Gobierno respuesta a su propuesta del incremento salarial](#) | 26 April 2020

La organización matriz sindical demandó un incremento del 15% al haber básico y 10% al salario mínimo para este año. A una semana del 1 de mayo, la Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) pide la respuesta formal del Gobierno a su propuesta para el incremento salarial de este año. El secretario ejecutivo del ente laboral, Juan Carlos Guarachi, informó que pese a la emergencia por el coronavirus los trabajadores no renunciarán a su derecho.

[Resilience in the corona crisis - strongest where workers enjoy collective power](#) | 14 April 2020

Oliver Roethig, Head of UNI Europa, suggests that where workers have a voice through collective bargaining and social dialogue, emergency measures are more swiftly implemented. UNI Europa recently examined two examples of supermarket unions working together with retail businesses. In Hungary, workers at the Spar food chain negotiated equipment improvements as well as job security and improved access to self-isolation. In Austria, workers successfully negotiated similarly improved conditions and even better equipment and infrastructural measures. The Austrian unions also secured application to all supermarkets in the country.