

ILO Side Event “Skills for Competitiveness”

9 July 2013, 9:00-11:00

Room W, World Trade Organization

DRAFT AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

Trade openness and globalization can expand markets, heighten competition and increase exposure to new technologies which can stimulate economic growth and development. However, these benefits do not derive automatically. Experience of successful developing and emerging countries demonstrates that trade openness can promote GDP growth and employment creation when accompanied by appropriate complementary policies.¹

Skills development is one of these key policy areas. Well designed and pro-active education and skills development policies are required to complement trade openness in general, and to enable small enterprises, in particular, to adopt new technologies and new ways of organizing work.

There is growing interest in how small and medium enterprises (SMEs) participate in, and benefit from, global value chains and what effect this has on the quality and quantity of their employment. Policies that improve their access to a skilled labour force will make it easier for smaller firms to participate in global value chains and adjust to changing conditions in global markets, as well as to survive and thrive in domestic ones. Skills is thus an important determinant of countries’ ability to diversify exports and integrate more fully in the global economy.²

The importance of workforce skills in increasing productivity, enhancing competitiveness and promoting sustainable and inclusive growth is borne out by the experience of countries that have succeeded in accruing benefits from globalization for broad segments of their societies.³ These countries turned effective coordination among trade, investment, employment and skills policies into a competitive advantage.

New research by international organizations and emerging results of policy innovations points to practical ways to address the complex question of how to anticipate and meet skill demands in sectors with high trade integration. These findings and experience highlight the importance of strategic policy coordination by government and private actors to integrate skills development in growth and export strategies, and therefore in trade-related technical assistance.

¹ OECD, ILO, World Bank, WTO (2010) ; “Seizing the Benefits of Trade for Employment and Growth, Report for the G20 Seoul Summit”.

² Cadot, Carrere and Strauss-Kahn (2011), “Trade diversification: Drivers and Impacts,” in Jansen, Peters and Salazar-Xirinachs: Trade and Employment : From Myths to Facts, ILO.

³ ILO Report (2008), “Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development”.

This side event provides an opportunity for sharing research findings and policy approaches on the role of skills development in translating trade openness into sustainable growth of productive and decent work.

PANEL

Moderator: Ms Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Director-General of Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida)

9:00-9:20 Keynote speakers:

Mr. Guy Ryder, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Mr. Pascal Lamy, Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO)

9:20-10:10 Panelists:

Ms. Marion Jansen, Economic Research and Statistics Division, WTO: "Skills and export competitiveness for SMEs"

Ms. Christine Evans-Klock, Director, Skills and Employability Department, ILO: "Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification"

Mr. Sylvain Giguère, Head LEED Division, OECD "Skills for Competitiveness"

Mr. Jeffrey D. Lewis, Director, Economic Policy, Debt and Trade Department Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network (PREM), The World Bank, "The Right Skills for the Job?: Rethinking Training Policies for Workers"

10:10-10:30 Country representatives:

Mr. Hong Choeun, Head of National Employment Agency (NEA), Cambodia

Mr. Md. Fazlul Hoque, President of Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), Bangladesh

10:30-11:00 Q&A

Location and Date:

Tuesday, 9 July 2013, 9:00-11:00

Room W, World Trade Organization, Geneva

Organized by the ILO, Skills and Employability Department

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