

MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT IN PAKISTAN

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It gives me great pleasure to represent Employers Federation of Pakistan in this media briefing on the United Nations Global Compact in Pakistan. Employers Federation of Pakistan is functioning since 1950 as the only employers organization in Pakistan representing over 550 member enterprises and 14 trade bodies spread over the four provinces on matters relating to industrial relations and social dialogue. EFP is also a member of the International Organization of Employers based in Geneva and the Confederation of Asia Pacific Organization of Employers (CAPE) with its current head office in Tokyo.

Mr. Ashraf W. Tabani, the President of Employers Federation of Pakistan who was also then the President of the International Organization of Employers along with the distinguished group of CEOs and high executives from the private sector worldwide attended the meeting called by the Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan on July 26, 2000 in the United Nations New York when the Global Compact was formally launched.

Our President Mr. Tabani had the distinct opportunity of meeting the Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan again along with the President and Secretary General of the IOE and the Vice Presidents from Argentina, Kenya and the United States on 26th April 2002 in the follow up meeting held in New York to review the progress and discuss ways and means of promotion of the nine principles of Global Compact.

Since the US Secretary General's call for the Global Compact with the world business community in year 2000, the Employers Federation of Pakistan has been closely working with IOE, the ILO office in Islamabad and the regional federation of employers for promoting the principles of Global Compact. On 1st September 2000 our President addressed a letter to all our member organizations introducing the principles of Global Compact and throwing the challenge to enterprises to show their response and reactions. The EFP through articles in its regular publications of Industrial Relation Journal has been reinforcing the awareness of the concept which is relatively new in the Pakistani context,

As the first case study of its kind in Pakistan, the Employers Federation of Pakistan in collaboration with the ILO undertook a project in 2001 to develop "Enterprise level case studies of selected Pakistani enterprises on Implementation of Fundamental Principles & Rights at work in which four enterprises were studied whose record of adherence to the FPRWs as tools for organizational excellence could be termed as "best practices" in the Pakistan context of enterprise response to global compact. During this study a need was felt to assess the level of enterprise awareness about the nine principles of global compact as a tool for organizational development on a much larger scale so that an exclusive awareness programme may be targeted. The survey also revealed that there was a need of much wider dissemination of their practices besides the need for extensive training of managers and trade union officials and workers for creating and enlarging the mind set necessary for responding to the call of Global Compact.

The Employers Federation of Pakistan joined the Employers Organization of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka in passing a unanimous resolution at the South Asian Employers Organization/NICC Joint Study meeting on follow up of Implementation of the Principles of Global Compact held at Dhaka Bangladesh on 16-18 October 2002 showing its whole hearted support to the nine principles of Global Compact in pursuing the vision envisaged by the UN Security General for making globalization more inclusive, stable and equitable.

Employers Federation of Pakistan firmly believes that the nine principles of Global Compact define the new code of business and industrial relations in the 21st century in the wake of growing challenges of globalization. Out of the 9 principles of Global Compact, two relate to human rights, four relate to labour and three to environment. These principles form the basis of eight core ILO Conventions which all member states of ILO are obliged to implement even if they have not ratified all or any of these conventions. Pakistan has ratified seven out of eight core ILO Conventions concerning Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Enterprises in Pakistan, which is on the verge of an economic take off, have a unique opportunity to gain competitive advantage in the new world trade order by their steady adherence to the principles of global compact.

Employers Federation of Pakistan therefore finds itself rightly poised to formally launch the global compact initiative for the Pakistani enterprises by organizing a one day workshop on Principles of Global Compact followed by a gathering of CEOs and heads of enterprises from the private & public sector to show their positive attitude towards the principles of Global Compact. This formal launching ceremony EFP proposes to organize on 22nd August 2003 at Karachi which will be followed by a series of training and awareness program and search for success stories in all the four provinces of Pakistan.

EFP is extending invitation to the President of Pakistan for being the Chief Guest at the Global Compact launching ceremony and award Global Compact Banners specially designed for the occasion to the enterprises who sign to voluntarily subscribe to promote the principles of Global Compact.

We are very glad that the UNDP has convened this media briefing at a time when the iron is hot to present a joint platform for public & private stakeholders to express their aspiration in pursuit of these principles. We take this opportunity to specially mention the outstanding support the ILO office from Geneva, the multidisciplinary team at New Delhi, the ILO office at Islamabad and the IOE is extending to EFP in its efforts to promote the Global Compact in Pakistan. We wish to assure that EFP will strengthen the synergy being generated by the stakeholders including UNDP and ILO in preparing employers in Pakistan to rise and meet this challenge of Global Compact and to devise ways and means to define as to how the nine principles of Global Compact can be used at the work place and in the communities around us to improve our organizational performance as well as national image. We may thus turn globalization from being a threat to our survival into an opportunity for achieving excellence in the comity of nations.

I thank you,