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MEETING REPORT

High-Level Dialogue & Employer Workshop on Africa's Readiness for the Platform Economy

This report summarises the two-day engagement held on **March 11–12, 2026**, in Johannesburg. Hosted by **Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)**, the workshop aimed to consolidate an African business voice ahead of the **114th International Labour Conference (ILC)** in June 2026.

Executive Summary

The workshop brought together African employer federations, platform companies, and government representatives to discuss the rapid growth of the platform economy. Key discussions focused on balancing worker flexibility with social protections, the need for tailored African regulatory frameworks rather than importing European models, and the role of digital platforms in addressing youth unemployment.

Participant Overview

A broad range of stakeholders participated in the dialogue.
Notable identified attendees and organisations include:

NAME	ORGANISATION
KHULEKANI MATHE	CEO: BUSA
NONKQUBELA JORDAN-DYANI	DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DCDT, SOUTH AFRICA
ALEXIO MUSINDO	ILO PRETORIA DIRECTOR
PHUTHI MAHANYELE-DABENGWA	GROUP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: NASPERS & PROSUS
STÉPHANIE WINET	HEAD OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: IOE
WILLIAM BENTHALL	GM GLOVO AFRICA / HEAD OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS: DELIVERY HERO
MAYANK FRANCIS DIAS	ASSISTANT SECRETARY: EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
MAPASEKA SETLHODI	MANAGEMENT NETWORK LEAD: THE PRESIDENCY (SOUTH AFRICA)
BOITUMELO MBAANYAKI	CEO: BUSINESS BOTSWANA
EILEEN VAN DER EST	SADC PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM (SPSF)
NESTER MUKWEHWA	ED: EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION OF ZIMBABWE
ADEWALE-SMATT OYERINDE	SECRETARY GENERAL: NECA
ELIA SHIKONGO	PRESIDENT: NAMIBIAN EMPLOYERS FEDERATION
GEORGE KHAKI	CEO: EMPLOYERS CONSULTATIVE FORUM OF MALAWI
LINDIWE SEPHOMOLO	CEO: ASSOCIATION OF LESOTHO EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS
SYLVESTER KASONDE	ZAMBIAN FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS
RENATUS MBAMILO	ASSOCIATION OF TANZANIAN EMPLOYERS
PATRICIA GIESKES	PRESIDENT: DRC SOCIAL COMMISSION
LIONEL OMONDI	BUSINESS AFRICA

Note: While invited, the Department of Employment and Labour did not attend this engagement.

Day 1: High-Level Dialogue (March 11, 2026)

Theme: Policy Context and Technological Change

Strategic Objectives

- BUSA CEO Khulekani Mathe emphasised the need for a differentiated framework that recognizes varying development stages across African countries while prioritizing employment creation for youth.

The "10 Commandments of JobTech"

- Chris McClay (JobTech Alliance) highlighted that job tech in Africa solves for labour market failures, not just information gaps, and acts as a primary driver for new job creation.

Government Initiatives

- **DCDT:** Outlined the **Digital Economy Master Plan** and amendments to the Electronic Communications Act (ECA) to support digital transformation.
- **The Presidency (PYEI):** Shared a goal to place **100,000 young people** in platform economy jobs, utilising "Policy Action Labs" to coordinate across departments.

Investment Realities

- Uber's Ofentse Madisha discussed how platform work offers low barriers to entry and income diversification for the 84% of platform workers who are under 35 years old.

Day 2: Employer Technical Workshop (March 12, 2026)

Theme: Regulatory Strategy and Global Standards

International Perspectives

- Mayank Francis Dias shared India's model, which created a "third category" for gig workers. In this model, workers contribute **5% of earnings** toward social security, with matching contributions from platforms.

African Regulatory Approach

- William Benthall (Glovo) cautioned against copying European regulations, emphasizing that African policies must be evidence-based and country-sensitive to ensure they don't stifle growth.

ILO "Blue Report" & ILC Prep

- Stéphanie Winet (IOE) and Ewa Staworzynska (USCIB) led a deconstruction of the latest ILC draft text. They stressed the importance of a category-agnostic approach in global instruments to accommodate diverse national models.

Technology as an Enabler

- The group agreed that algorithms should be presented as tools for safety and efficiency rather than as "enemies" to worker rights.

Key Outcomes and Next Steps

The workshop concluded with a series of time-sensitive actions to ensure African interests are represented in Geneva:

Global Taskforce

- All member federations and partners are urged to register for the Global Taskforce on Platform Economy via the provided QR code.

Language Proposals

- Participants must submit comments and language amendments regarding the ILO "Blue Report" to the IOE by March 19, 2026.

National Briefings

- Use the forthcoming IOE advocacy materials to brief national governments in April to align positions before the ILC.

ILC Attendance

- Employers are encouraged to join the negotiations in Geneva in June 2026 to directly influence the setting of international labor standards.

Compiled by Jahni de Villiers
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