

Access to Employment for Persons with Disability

26th March 2020

The Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) notes that promotion of employability of Persons with Disability is a shared responsibility. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), FKE is establishing the Kenya Business and Disability Network (KBDN) which will be a single voice for businesses in Kenya on disability vis-à-vis other stakeholders, including government and workers. This will also be a network for showcasing business leadership in Kenya on the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and a space for sharing and learning about good practices for purposes of replication.

With support from the ILO, companies and associates, the KBDN will push the business case for the inclusion of persons with disabilities into mainstream corporate plans and priorities and shift the dialogue from charity to social investment and to ensure that no one is left behind.

“FKE remains at the forefront in encouraging employers to support initiatives that make it possible for persons with disability access employment. In addition, FKE has continued to engage different stakeholders to support and build the capacity of employers on issues of disability,” said Mrs. Jacqueline Mugo, Executive Director, Federation of Kenya Employers while opening a virtual session on Promotion of Employability of People With Disability.

She noted that during and post the Covid-19 crisis and as businesses begin to rebuild, new ways of work are being developed and new industries are growing therefore Persons with Disabilities must be fully included to ensure that employers “build back better, into a better future”.

“Employers are open to hiring persons with disabilities – but we may first need support because we may not know “how” and “where” to begin. We are therefore happy about the technical support that the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Innovation to Inclusion Project is providing by identifying qualified persons with disabilities and linking them with prospective employers,” said Ms. Mugo

“The cost of employing and making workplace conducive for Persons with Disability is not quantified in Kenya. This at times makes employers hesitant to employ such person. Leonard Cheshire programme will conduct a study to establish the additional cost to employers in order to improve access to employment, retention and progression of Persons with Disability at the workplace,” said Ms. Nancy Gitonga, Country Representative, Leonard Cheshire.

The inclusion of persons with disabilities into the Labour Market has both a human rights and economic perspective. It is the right of every individual, with or without disability to have access to decent employment and it also makes good business sense to employ persons with

disabilities. They represent a large, educated, skilled yet untapped labour pool. Employers were urged to tap into this critical pool. The business case for employing persons with disabilities include reduced employee turnover, increased industry tolerance and improvement in productivity. Further, companies hiring people with disabilities often discover that they have a competitive advantage and access to new markets and products

Ms. Mugo urged employers to raise the level of awareness on disability and engage all employees in understanding the obvious physical barriers as well as attitudes, biases and misconceptions that may hinder employees with disabilities from thriving in the workplaces. She also asked employers to keep up-to-date with current legislation, information and concerns on disability inclusion laws, and tax provisions in order to successfully promote the business case for hiring persons with disabilities.

Other Participants: Mr. Isaac Manyonge, Ag. Executive Director, National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Employer Organizations who are Members of FKE and representatives from Association of Persons with Disability.

For more information, please contact:-

Ruth Chitwa, +254 707 364 739