This was a strange month, one full of twists and turns. One that presented serious challenges with the lockdown being extended for 21 days, however, on the positive side over 70% of those infected with COVID-19 in Uganda have fully recovered and they have been discharged.

On the employment front, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the COVID-19 crisis is expected to wipe out 6.7% of working hours globally (equivalent to 195 million full-time workers). Thus, the future of jobs will depend largely on the innovative measures that shall be adopted by workers, employers and governments.

The Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) has supported employers in various ways during this pandemic period. We have been in consultation with members through various means including telephone, email and physical visits. We prepared employers’ guides to help you deal with employment relations issues such as leave, discipline handling and termination during this period. We have equally prepared a business continuity guide in partnership with ILO. In addition, we presented a policy paper to the government on the immediate policy actions that could be undertaken to ease the wage pressures and other employment issues that employers are experiencing at this time.

Innovation is essential to the continued success of any organization especially during this crisis time. This is because a lot of things will change or have already changed so we have to approach business in a different way. Most organizations tend to focus on product and service innovation, but we would like to encourage you to look at other areas such as your business model, network, structure, process, platform, label and customer involvement. Innovation could be incremental or radical depending on the circumstances.

NSSF has been considerate and has provided a level of flexibility for employers for the next three months with effect from 31st March 2020; the fund will allow Ugandan businesses facing economic distress to reschedule their NSSF contributions without accumulating penalties. Affected businesses are advised to send an email to “amnesty@nssfug.org” to work out the detailed modalities.

We are currently undertaking several surveys to understand how your organization has been affected by this pandemic so that we design appropriate courses of action to support you both directly and through our policy engagement with the government. We are counting on your support to be able to complete these surveys in a timely manner.

As an employer, you can count on us; we are here to support you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at any time, it could be because you need to validate your thoughts or you simply want to talk to us to let us know how your business is doing or you need our help. Lastly, I would like to invite all CEOs to join our recently created “CEO WhatsApp group” to support each other, to share ideas, thoughts and much more. Just get in touch with us.

Thank you.

Together for Employers!

Douglas Opio
Executive Director, FUE

WORD FROM THE ED

Dear Member,

Welcome to the April newsletter edition.

This was a strange month, one full of twists and turns. One that presented serious challenges with the lockdown being extended for 21 days, however, on the positive side over 70% of those infected with COVID-19 in Uganda have fully recovered and they have been discharged.

On the employment front, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the COVID-19 crisis is expected to wipe out 6.7% of working hours globally (equivalent to 195 million full-time workers). Thus, the future of jobs will depend largely on the innovative measures that shall be adopted by workers, employers and governments.

The Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) has supported employers in various ways during this pandemic period. We have been in consultation with members through various means including telephone, email and physical visits. We prepared employers’ guides to help you deal with employment relations issues such as leave, discipline handling and termination during this period. We have equally prepared a business continuity guide in partnership with ILO. In addition, we presented a policy paper to the government on the immediate policy actions that could be undertaken to ease the wage pressures and other employment issues that employers are experiencing at this time.

Innovation is essential to the continued success of any organization especially during this crisis time. This is because a lot of things will change or have already changed so we have to approach business in a different way. Most organizations tend to focus on product and service innovation, but we would like to encourage you to look at other areas such as your business model, network, structure, process, platform, label and customer involvement. Innovation could be incremental or radical depending on the circumstances.

NSSF has been considerate and has provided a level of flexibility for employers for the next three months with effect from 31st March 2020; the fund will allow Ugandan businesses facing economic distress to reschedule their NSSF contributions without accumulating penalties. Affected businesses are advised to send an email to “amnesty@nssfug.org” to work out the detailed modalities.

We are currently undertaking several surveys to understand how your organization has been affected by this pandemic so that we design appropriate courses of action to support you both directly and through our policy engagement with the government. We are counting on your support to be able to complete these surveys in a timely manner.

As an employer, you can count on us; we are here to support you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at any time, it could be because you need to validate your thoughts or you simply want to talk to us to let us know how your business is doing or you need our help. Lastly, I would like to invite all CEOs to join our recently created “CEO WhatsApp group” to support each other, to share ideas, thoughts and much more. Just get in touch with us.

Thank you.

Together for Employers!

Douglas Opio
Executive Director, FUE
Congratulations are in order for our Executive Director, Mr Douglas Opio who has been appointed as steering committee member of the ILO Business Network on Forced Labour. Douglas is the only representative selected from the entire African region and will represent Employers’ interests, sharing knowledge and expertise for solutions to end child labour.

Globally there are over 25 million people in forced labour, of these, 16 million are women and girls and 4.3 million are children.

There are a number of initiatives worldwide that prove businesses are serious about eradication forced forced labour. However new forms of collaboration are needed to tackle the root causes of forced labour.

Uganda has embarked on its journey as an Alliance 8.7 pathfinder country and your support as Employers in the country is imperative to achieve SDG target 8.7 (End child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking) by 2030.
In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development has called on Employers to provide labor returns and statistics of employees as stipulated in the letter below.

Kindly refer to the letter for action by 15th May 2020.

30th March 2020

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALL EMPLOYERS IN UGANDA

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is documenting the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Labour, Productivity and Employment Relations.

In accordance with Section 19 of the Employment Act, 2006, the Ministry requires all employers to submit labour returns and statistics on the number of employees, the rates of remuneration by category and any other condition affecting their employment.

This is therefore to call upon all employers to provide the labour returns and statistics with details of the name of employee, designation, monthly salary and national ID number of all the workers who have or are likely to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The information should be sent through email: clirp@mglsd.go.ug or to the Office of the Commissioner Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity.

For Enquiries Contact
Tel: 041-4 347855 / 041-4 343572
Website: www.mglsd.go.ug
Facebook: @Mglsd
Twitter: @Mglsd_UG

James Ebitu
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY
TRIPARTITE MEETING ON EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON EMPLOYMENT

H.E the President directed the National Taskforce on COVID-19 to discuss and advise on the effects of COVID-19 on employment.

Consequently, the Hon. Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development organized a tripartite meeting with social partners i.e the MGLSD representing Government, the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) representing Employers, and the National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU) and Central Organization of Free Trade Unions (COFTU), representing Workers, on Thursday, 23rd April 2020 at the office of the Prime Minister in preparation for the cabinet meeting.

The meeting noted that COVID-19 has affected both workers and employers in more or less equal measure;

A few issues that arose include low demand for goods and services, low or no cash flow and termination of workers.

Mitigation measures to curb the effects were discussed as follows:

**Employer-Employee Relationship:**

i) Whereas employment relations are regulated by law, mitigating the effects of COVID-19 on employment relationships is more than a legal matter. Therefore, employers and workers should be encouraged to find win-win solutions through dialogue as far as is reasonably practicable;

ii) The COVID-19 situation is temporary. Accordingly, employers should be encouraged/ advised to the extent possible, not to terminate employees. This is because the employers will require these employees when normal economic activity resumes.

Furthermore, from a psychosocial perspective, hope is a necessary condition for coping with challenging situations like COVID-19. It is a Research tested truism that, termination of employees diminishes hope and may lead to depression among working families.

In addition, termination of employees will occasion more costs to employers through the payment of terminal benefits (payment in lieu of notice, leave days not taken and severance pay among others).

However, employers who despite the associated costs and lengthy procedures opt for collective termination should strictly adhere to the law (Sections 58, 65 and 81 of the Employment Act, 2006, as well as Regulation 44 (a) and (b) of the Employment Regulations, 2011).

iii) Employees should be encouraged to take pending annual leave.

iv) Employers and workers should be encouraged to negotiate/renegotiate wages before considering lay-offs or terminations.

v) Employers may also consider laying-off workers temporarily. In the circumstances, the employment relationship is not terminated but the employer is not required to provide work or pay employee wages or other benefits. However, when the situation normalizes, workers return to work (See 84 (1), Employment Act, 2006).

vi) Employers should ensure that any process of termination or lay-off should have a humane face. Workers should be counselled prior to termination or lay-off.

vii) Government should take interest in employers to address the issue of part-time workers and other
workers who by the time of the COVID-19 lockdown had no contracts, especially in the private and public education institutions.

viii) Employers should consider taking care of the basic needs (e.g. food) of the staff whom they lay-off during the COVID-19 period. This is especially so, because some workers get agitated when they see their employers making “big” contributions to the National Task Force when they have been sent home with nothing on account of “no money”.

ix) The Food Distribution Guidelines should be revised to include vulnerable formal sector employees especially casual workers (Mere ya leero) as well as workers who have lost employment as a result of COVID-19.

x) Employees should take advantage of Bank of Uganda approved moratoria on loan repayment issued to Banks to reschedule repayment of their salary loans.

xi) Employers should provide training of workers on preventive and response measures for COVID-19 and also provide personal protective equipment.

xii) In line with Section 19 of the Employment Act, 2006, the Ministry issued a circular requiring all employers to provide returns and statistics on the number of workers whose employment relationships have been affected or are likely to be affected during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Business Continuity

The Social Partners urged Government to support the affected Employers to survive and stay in business in order to maintain jobs and continue to contribute to growth and development of the national economy. To ensure this, the following measures were recommended:

i) Government should consider granting tax credits to employers who retain and continue paying their employees during the COVID-19 period;

ii) Government should allow employers to defer statutory payments/remittances including PAYE and NSSF during the period of the lock-down;

iii) Government should prioritize payment of outstanding domestic arrears owed to private companies that have provided services to Government;

iv) Banks should implement the proposed restructuring of loans to companies and individuals and the COVID 19 Taskforce should strengthen communication and sensitization of the public on this matter. In addition, Government should ensure that Banks do not impose penalties on those who apply for early retirement of their loan facilities;

v) Government should re-emphasize promotion BUBU (or Local Content) in public procurements;

vi) Government should increase recapitalization of the Uganda Development Bank;

vii) Government should expedite the process of amendment of the NSSF Act to allow for mid-term access, and additional benefits including medical care and unemployment benefits; and

viii) Government should increase investment in infrastructure projects to create more opportunities for workers and employers.

Other Recommendations

i) Government through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should expeditiously undertake the Rapid Assessment on the effects of COVID-19 on labour, employment and productivity, and consequently develop a Labour Market Risk Management Plan in consultation with the social partners; and

ii) Government should consider including the Representatives of the Employers and Workers on the COVID 19 National Taskforce.

FUE ENTERPRISE SURVEY

We are conducting an enterprise survey to understand your situation and challenges due to the ongoing crisis of COVID-19. We will use the survey response to channel your concerns to Government authorities, Banks and other stakeholders and also align our services to you, among others.

If you have not yet completed the survey, kindly take 10 minutes to have it done.

Scan QR Code below;

We thank you for your support, we are fully operational during the pandemic and will continue to provide the services you depend on.
In an effort to fight COVID-19, Employers have been making monetary and in-kind donations. Every Contribution counts and is highly appreciated.

Let’s fight corona together!

Many thanks to:

1. Abacus Pharma
2. African Initiatives for Relief and Development
3. Airtel Uganda
4. Atiak Sugar Factory
5. Balaji Group EA
6. Bandwidth and Cloud Services Group (BCS) Ltd
7. Centenary Bank
8. Century Bottling Company Ltd. (Coke)
9. Chickstax
10. China Railway 7th Group
11. Chongqing International Construction Cooperation (CICC)
12. Cipla Quality Chemicals Ltd
13. Com Foam
14. Compassion International
15. Crest Foam
17. Delight Supplies
18. DFCU Bank
19. Diamond Trust Bank
20. Divine Bamboo Group Ltd
21. Dott Services Ltd
22. East Africa Roofings Ltd
23. East African Breweries Ltd
24. Euroflex
25. Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA)
26. Fincredit Uganda Ltd
27. Fresh Diary /Brookside Uganda Ltd
28. Gateway Delta
29. Gateway Metroplex Ltd
30. Great Lakes Brands Ltd
31. Hima Cement Ltd
32. JESA Dairy
33. The Judiciary
34. Junia Uganda
35. Kafeero Foundation
36. Kakira Sugar Ltd
37. Kamuli Sugar Ltd
38. Kazi Foods Ltd
39. Kazinga Channel Office World Ltd
40. Knight Frank Uganda
41. Madhvani Group
42. Master Grain Milling Ltd
43. Mayuge Sugar Industries Ltd
44. Megha
45. Milton Obote Foundation
46. Modern Industries Ltd
47. MTN
48. Mukwano Group of Companies
49. Mukwano Industries
50. Multichoice Uganda
51. Mulwana Group of Companies
52. National Social Security Fund (NSSF)
53. National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC)
54. NC Bank
55. Nile Agro
56. Nile Aluminum Ltd
57. Only You International Ltd
58. Plascon
59. Raghbr Sandhu
60. Riham/Harris International Ltd
61. Rocket Health
62. Roofings Uganda Limited
63. Rose Foam
64. Ruparelia Foundation
65. Safeboda
66. Sights Travels
67. Skynet Worldwide Express Uganda Ltd
68. Stanbic Bank Uganda
69. Steel and Tube Industries Ltd
70. Sybl
71. Tembo Steels Uganda Ltd
72. The Innovation Village Kampala
73. Tilex Imports Ltd
74. TopBet Sports Betting
75. Toyota Uganda
76. TransEast Forwarding Ltd
77. UAP Old Mutual
78. Uganda Development Corporation (UDC)
79. Uganda Insurers Associations
80. Uganda Red Cross Society
81. Vision Group
82. Vivo Energy
83. Xsabo Foundation
84. Zhong Kai Electronics Co. Ltd
MEDIA APPEARANCES

Morning @NTV Show
Topic: Labour Relations Amidst COVID-19

UBC Morning Show
Topic: The Pandemic in the Word of Work

KFM VPN Show

NBS Live News
Topic: Employee Relations Amid COVID-19

The New Vision E-Paper
Topic: Layoffs and Government Support
# How to Successfully Work from Home Keeping a Healthy Mind and Body

## How to Successfully Work from Home

- **Set Goals** to accomplish daily
- **Use online technology** to work like phone calls, virtual meetings, emails and social media platforms
- **Keep informed** by reading a book, online articles and watching news
- **Have designated work space** in your house
- **Schedule specific hours** for work
- **Practice social distancing**
- **Have an exercise timetable** to keep fit
- **Take time to catch up with colleagues during the day**

## Physical Health

- **Hydrate** - Take up to at least 2 litres of water a day
- **Stand up for at least an hour a day** - do you really need to sit to word that report or to take that phone call?
- **Remember, housework counts as exercise** - whether you're mowing the lawn or cleaning the carpets, changes of activity can add up to your 150 hours a week.
- **Carry out simple physical exercise** - e.g. walking around the house, squats, skip a rope.
- **Design your own schedule** - this helps you fit your physical activity into your daily work schedule

## Mental Health

- **Think positive** - This promotes feelings of self-worth and personal power
- **Eat a good meal with a balanced diet** with lots fruits and vegetables.
- **Have enough sleep** - at least 8 hours a day
- **Have time to laugh, relax and be kind to others**
- **Regular exercise** for stress relief and mood-boosting.
- **Open up to someone**. Knowing you are valued by others is important for helping you think more positively
- **Attend virtual events** on YouTube and Facebook live for entertainment
- **Learn something new everyday**. Like handy work, cooking and professional skills
- **Create a routine**. This helps you accomplish your tasks with a plan in mind
- **Build online friendships** on social networks
TAKE NOTE

PRESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES
TO MANAGE THE SPREAD OF
CORONAVIRUS
Effective 1st April 2020

SUSPENDED
- Movements in and out of country 32 DAYS
- Public Transport 14 DAYS
- Private Transport 14 DAYS
- Boda Bodas 14 DAYS
- Tuk-Tuks 14 DAYS
- Coaches 14 DAYS
- Buses 14 DAYS
- Air Transport 32 DAYS

CLOSED
- Shopping Malls 14 DAYS
- Arcades 14 DAYS
- Hardware shops 14 DAYS
- Lodges 14 DAYS
- Salons 14 DAYS
- None Food stores 14 DAYS
- Non-Food Markets 32 DAYS
- Garages 14 DAYS

ALLOWED (WITH PRECAUTION)
- Food markets - 4 metres circumferential distance, workers must stay at camp
- Supermarkets - Regulate numbers that come and leave
- Construction sites - workers must stay at camp
- Factories - workers must camp
- Pharmacies
- Vet shops
- Agric stores
- Banks
- Judiciary
- Media houses
- Private security companies
- Garbage collection services
- Fuel stations
- Water departments
- KCCA staff
- Telecommunication
- Door-to-door delivery
- Cleaning services
- Medical centres
- Agriculture

PROHIBITED
- Gatherings of more than 5 people
- Parties
- Bars
- Communal weddings
- Churches
- Political rallies and events
- Movements of any form between 7:00pm and 6:30am

FOOD
Government will provide food for those affected

BUSINESS
- URA shall not close businesses on account of not paying taxes in these 14 days.
- Cargo transport must continue
- No disconnection of WATER and ELECTRICITY during this time.
- No seizing properties due to non loan payment

SECURITY & HEALTH
- The vehicles of the Army, Police, ambulances utilities vehicles, Prisons, UWA, etc., will continue to move on orders of the competent authorities
- Government cars to help deliver people to hospitals

GOVT’ WORKERS
- Stay Home
- Army, the Police, the Health workers, the Electricity, Water and Telephone workers allowed
- People in barracks should not get out.

CURFEW
7:00pm - 6:30am