



The Future of Work

Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

22 MARCH 2019, 11:35-13:00

International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG)



OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this round tables are:

- to provide a mutual learning space where participants from governments can interact with their peers and other relevant stakeholders in order to exchange experiences, propose solutions to address identified problems and anticipate future developments; and
- to identify main lessons and compile a set of key messages that can be shared with a wider audience.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Impact of technological innovations, globalization and environmental challenges

What are the policies required to ensure full and productive employment in view of technological innovations, globalization and environmental challenges while leaving no one behind? How will new technologies and environmental challenges change and/or shape the nature of jobs in different occupations and different levels? What is the role of social protection in this changing environment?

2. Tackling youth unemployment

How can national institutions and/or Governments work together to tackle youth unemployment? What are the range of policy instruments available? What is the role of education and training throughout the lifecycle?

3. Effective governance framework

How do norms, institutions and social dialogue shape an effective governance framework to support employment and decent work for all? How can the challenges posed by the current technological revolution be addressed to improve the functioning of labour markets and avoid exclusion? What is the role of labour and other standards in fostering equity and inclusiveness? What policy mix is needed to ensure that private sector contributes to sustainable development and how should we measure economic success that contributes to the SDG's?



BACKGROUND

The world of work is constantly evolving. But the pace, scale and depth of the transformations that we are witnessing, particularly related to technological change, is unprecedented. There are a number of mega-trends that are crucial in shaping the future of work. One is globalization. We have been living over the last decades with the assumption that globalization, whether we like it or not, is an irreversible fact and the context in which the future of work plays out. However, we are now witnessing a growing scepticism, if not defensiveness towards globalization. Demographic trends are also critical, population ageing is leading to growing pressure on labour markets and social protection systems. In Europe and elsewhere, the issue of refugees and migrants and their access to labour markets is also of great concern. On the other hand, new job opportunities will arise in certain sectors, particularly the care economy. Also crucial are environmental issues, the greening of the economy can result in both job destruction and creation. Providing new skills to workers coming from the “old” and often dirty industries and moving them to the green economy will be key in mastering this challenge. The future of work is a complex phenomenon which needs to be looked at from different angles.

Putting humans at the centre

Some of the technological changes will be positive for many workers. For example, we will get rid of some repetitive and hard tasks which will be performed by robots. However, as new jobs are created, and existing ones disappear, there is a need to be prepared and make sure workers receive adequate training. The aim is to understand what is going on in the world of work, renew our commitment to social justice and draw up, together, potential solutions for future action that put humans at the centre. Strong social dialogue between government, employers and workers and other civil society groups is the bedrock of this exercise.

Forging the future we all want

It is important to underline that the future of work is not pre-determined. It is up to societies to forge the kind of future we all want. This means that we should not reduce the discussion to whether the ongoing structural changes will create or destroy jobs. We have to think beyond that and focus on what it takes to steer change in a way which will safeguard the quality of jobs, will allow everyone to adjust to the changing work realities, while preserving the role of work in our lives.

Various Future of Work publications, briefing notes and reports can be found [here](#).



SDG LINKAGES



Goal 4: Education, as well as an end in itself, is also a means to getting a decent job, especially for young people, while lifelong learning is needed to keep up with the changing skills needed for the labour market.



Goal 3: Health as well as being an end in itself is a predictor of labour market productivity and prolongs participation in work. Decent work reduces prevalence of mental illness, while active labour market programs reduce both inequities in poor health and the risk of fatal and non-fatal cardiovascular episodes.



Goal 5: target 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate; target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; and target 5C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.



Goal 10: Decent work, with its emphasis on a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for individuals and families, is a direct means to reduce inequalities in income, wealth and economic influence.



Goal 13: Climate change action will require active involvement from the world of work and will benefit greatly from the application of the Decent Work Agenda, including by following the ILO's "Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all".



Goal 16: Effective and inclusive institutions that promote decent work for all, based on respect for international labour standards and shaped through social dialogue are fundamental to just and peaceful societies and participative decision-making.



PARTICIPANTS

This round table is of particular relevance for Ministries of Labour, Ministries of Finance/Economy, Ministries of Education, Ministries of Environment, national SDG coordination councils/bodies, employers' organisations, trade unions, youth organizations and the private sector.



ORGANIZERS

This round table is organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN Women and World Health Organization (WHO).