



**Economic and Social Council and the Economic and Financial Committee
(Second Committee) of the General Assembly**

Special Joint Meeting

The future of employment: The world of work in 2030

8 November 2013

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Background

Important changes are taking place in the world economy with long term consequences for the nature of employment. In particular, fast developments in information and communication technology are reshaping business. The "digital revolution", including 3D printing, will accelerate the process further by changing the global supply chains and allowing people everywhere to become entrepreneurs, provided that appropriate skills are developed to make full use of this new production and consumption system.

Job markets will be impacted by this evolution in both developed and developing countries. These trends need to be fully taken into account in the context of the current fragile recovery from the jobs crisis and given the global challenge to create 470 million jobs between 2015 and 2030 just to keep up with the growth of the world's working age population.

A vision and great effort will be needed to anticipate the skills for the future of employment and to start preparing the future generation of workers for the challenges ahead, including investment in education, technical and vocational training and lifelong learning, to enhance productivity and minimize skills mismatches.

Megatrends in population dynamics may also affect the future labour market. While some countries are facing the challenge of adapting the world of work to an increasingly aged working force, others have to cope with the youth bulge and need to enhance employment prospects for the youth. Rural – urban national migration and international migration will also pose additional challenges and opportunities.

For the decades ahead structural changes in the labour market might coexist with traditional problems, such as underemployment, working poor, forced and child labour and lack of respect for the fundamental rights at work. Future policies should be able to cope both with 21st challenges and with 19th century unresolved problems.

In addition, these shifts can have drastic social consequences, in as much as the life time employment and pension models may be called into question and inequalities may increase because of the wage gap between skilled and unskilled workers. This could lead to social disruption in societies, aggravated by the fact that technologies will increasingly replace human beings.

Objectives of the joint special event

The joint special event would provide an opportunity to analyse these trends and to draw a picture of what the world of work could look like in 2030. It would also consider possible policy options that would help anticipate these changes and plan for the future in a concerted manner. This is of particular importance at a time when the United Nations works on the elaboration of a future development agenda, which will necessarily be impacted by these changes.

Proposed questions for discussion

- How are megatrends such as new technology, including artificial intelligence, demographic change and emerging dimensions of global inter-dependence likely to impact the world of work in the horizon 2030?
- What are the policies that should be developed to adapt to this evolution/revolution while tackling inequalities?
- What are the implications for development policies, in particular in middle income and least developing countries where the working age population is growing fast?
- How can the private sector and trade unions anticipate these changes and their consequences on working conditions?
- How should the UN development agenda take into account these changes and adjust accordingly?

Possible speakers

The joint event, which will be co-chaired by the President of ECOSOC and the Chairperson of the Second Committee, will feature a mix of thinkers, trade union representatives, Government officials as well as a high level official from the ILO. The following panelists and lead discussants are considered:

- Mr. Raymond Torres, Director, International Institute for Social Studies, ILO
- Mr. Paul De Civita, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister and Mr. Peter Padbury, Director, Scanning and Foresight, Policy Horizons Canada
- Mr. Marcio Pochmann, Professor, Economist and Professor at the Institute of Economics and the Centre for Trade Union Studies and Labor Economics at the State University of Campinas (Unicamp), Brazil
- Ms. Barbara Birungi, Founder/Director – Women in Technology Uganda
- Mr. Adam Greene, United States Council for International Business (USCIB)
- Mr. Peter Bakvis, Director, ITUC/Global Unions