

Concept Note - Luncheon Dialogue
2019 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development

“The future of work and job creation”

Tuesday, 16 April 2019, 1:15 PM – 2:30 PM

Delegates Dining Room, UN Headquarters

The Luncheon Dialogue convened by H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC, **provides the opportunity to engage in a frank, informal and interactive dialogue** on issues relating to the future of work and job creation in the realm of financing for development. The luncheon immediately precedes the afternoon Special High-level Meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, World Trade Organization (WTO) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The Luncheon will be attended by high-level representatives of the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and UNCTAD, as well as ministers, vice ministers and high-level government officials and other guests invited by the President of ECOSOC. The Luncheon is co-sponsored by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the South Centre.

Background

It has been estimated that, over the coming decades, a **large portion of all current jobs will either change significantly or disappear entirely**. This trend will have a profound impact on societies in developed and developing countries alike, and – while benefits of the transition may be significant – it has the potential to disrupt the social contract and exacerbate inequalities. Against this background, the question of how to make the future of work positive for all is emerging as a central policy issue.

As labor markets change, **the problem of inequalities persists**, with the distribution between capital and labour and between individuals widening in many countries. Although workers have become increasingly productive, the benefits of their work have increasingly accrued to capital income and to those at the top of the income distribution. The digital economy generates substantial gains in productivity and profits from larger, global markets, but the technological dividends have not spilled over to the rest of the economy and thus risk deepening some of the prevailing inequalities.

Given the considerable uncertainty about the future of employment, there is a **need to rethink policies** with a focus on protecting the vulnerable, while promoting employment growth. Moreover, social assistance and insurance systems need to be adapted to the changing nature of work. To achieve this goal, governments are considering policy menus that include strengthened social insurance, complemented by reforms in the labour markets.

To ensure that no one is left behind, there is a need **to create fiscal space for the public financing of human capital development and social protection**. At a time of growing economic and financial insecurity, social protection can play a key role in ensuring essential support to the most vulnerable people. While some progress has been achieved in the last years, there is significant scope to strengthen social protection mechanisms. Fiscal space to do so, however, is severely limited in many countries, including due to an unfavourable fiscal and global economic environment.

Issues connected to the future of work and job creation are **closely aligned with SDG 8 on decent work for all and SDG 10 on inequality**. The report on “Work for a Brighter Future” by the International Labour Organization’s Global Commission on the Future of Work and the World Bank Group’s *World Development Report* on “The Changing Nature of Work” are important and timely contributions to the debate on the future of work.

Focus questions

Following introductory remarks, the Luncheon dialogue **will engage participants in an interactive discussion**, with a focus on the following guiding questions:

1. Technology-driven transformations of the labour market has happened multiple times in history. What is different this time?
2. What policy options can governments pursue to support their citizens during transitions in labor markets?
3. How can countries address distributional challenges connected to the future of work to ensure that no one is left behind?
4. Which approaches can be pursued by governments to mobilize resources for investing in human capital to ready societies for the future of work?
5. How can the benefits of technology be harnessed for growth and productivity, while ensuring that gaps in technology are narrowed, including between developed and developing countries?

Logistics

The Luncheon will take place in the West Terrace at the Delegates Dining Room at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, located on the fourth floor of the UN's Conference building. The Delegates Dining Room can be reached through the main elevators located on the second and third floors of the Conference building.

Focal Points:

Mr. Philipp Erfurth
Financing for Sustainable Development Office, UN DESA
Email: erfurth@un.org
Phone Number: (1) 917-367-4938

Ms. Sara Burke
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)
Email: sburke@fesny.org
Phone Number: (1) 212-687-0208

Programme - Luncheon Dialogue
2019 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development

1:15-1.25 PM

Welcome remarks by:

H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC

Opening remarks:

Mr. Kwabena Osei-Danquah, Chef de Cabinet, President of the General Assembly on behalf of H.E. Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, President of the General Assembly

Mr. Zhenmin Liu, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, DESA

Moderator:

Ms. Louise Levonian, IMF Executive Director for Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Ireland, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

1:25 - 1:45 PM

Guest Speakers:

Ms. Federica Saliola, Director of the World Development Report 2019, World Bank Group

Ms. Susan Hayter, Senior Technical Advisor on the Future of Work, International Labour Organization

Respondent:

H.E. Ms. Gloria Alonso Mesmela, Minister of National Planning, Colombia

1:45 - 2:30 PM

Interactive Discussion