

Abu Dhabi Dialogue High-level Symposium: The Future of Work

Background note

ILO's centenary initiative on the future of work

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. Since its creation, the ILO has responded to global economic and social changes and played a role at key historical junctures – the Great Depression in the 1930s, decolonization, the creation of Solidarność in Poland, the victory over apartheid in South Africa – and today in the building of an ethical and productive framework for a fair globalization.

With the ILO entering its Centenary year, a wide range of drivers are transforming the world of work, such as technological advancements, climate change, demographic shifts, and globalization. These transitions call for decisive action. In 2013, the Director-General of the ILO launched the *Future of Work Centenary Initiative* in order to understand and to respond effectively to the new challenges and opportunities in the world of work.

The initiative is divided into three phases. In the first phase, all ILO members States were invited to undertake national dialogues on the Future of Work. More than 120 countries, including 14 ADD members¹, followed this invitation and organized or participated in (supra-)national dialogues, with the participation of governments, workers' and employer' organizations.

The establishment of a Global Commission on the Future of Work in 2017 marked the second stage in the initiative. The Global Commission was co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven and the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa. They were joined by 25 Commissioners – all accomplished individuals, from every region, with different interests, backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, but all with a strong expertise in the world of work. The Commission undertook an in-depth examination of the challenges and opportunities, and discussed recommendations for action by all stakeholders, including governments, employers' and workers' organizations. Its landmark report *Work for a Brighter Future* outlines the steps needed to achieve a future of work that provides decent and sustainable work opportunities for all (For easy reference, the executive summary of the report is attached in both Arabic and English)².

¹ Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Nepal, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Vietnam.

² The full version of the report is available at: <https://www.ilo.org/brighterfuture> (English and Arabic).

The launch of this Report in January 2019 marked the beginning of the centenary celebrations of the ILO which will culminate at the International Labour Conference in June 2019 with the possible adoption of a centenary declaration on the future of work.





A human-centred agenda

The Global Commission calls for a human-centred agenda for the future of work that places people and the work they do at the centre of economic and social policy and business practice. This agenda consists of three pillars:



- Increase investment in people’s capabilities;
- Increase investment in the institutions of work;
- Increase investment in decent and sustainable work.





There are 10 recommendations, which in combination could deliver decent work, inclusive growth, equality and sustainability for present and future generations.

Increasing investment in people’s capabilities

	<p>1. Recognize a universal entitlement to lifelong learning and establish an effective lifelong learning system that enables people to acquire skills, upskill and reskill throughout their life course.</p>
	<p>2. Step up investments in the institutions, policies and strategies that will support people through future of work transitions, building pathways for youth into labour markets, expanding choices for older workers to remain economically active and proactively preparing workers for labour market transitions.</p>
	<p>3. Implement a transformative and measurable agenda for gender equality by making care an equal responsibility of men and women, ensuring accountability for progress, strengthening the collective representation of women, eliminating gender-based discrimination and ending violence and harassment at work.</p>
	<p>4. Strengthen social protection systems to guarantee universal coverage of social protection from birth to old age to workers in all forms of work, including self-employment, based on sustainable financing and the principles of solidarity and risk sharing.</p>

Increasing investment in the institutions of work

	<p>5. Establish a Universal Labour Guarantee that provides a labour protection floor for all workers, which includes fundamental workers’ rights, an “adequate living wage”, limits on hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces.</p>
	<p>6. Expand time sovereignty by crafting working-time arrangements that give workers greater choice over scheduling and working hours so that they can balance work and private life, subject to the company’s needs for greater flexibility, as well as guaranteed minimum hours.</p>

	<p>7. Actively promote collective representation of workers and employers and social dialogue through public policies.</p>
	<p>8. Harness and manage technology in support of decent work and adopt a “human-in-command” approach to technology.</p>
<hr style="border: 2px solid #003366;"/>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Increasing investment in decent and sustainable work</p>	
	<p>9. Create incentives to promote investments in key areas for decent and sustainable work.</p>
	<p>10. Reshape business incentive structures to encourage long-term investments in the real economy and develop supplementary indicators of progress towards well-being, environmental sustainability and equality.</p>

The recommendations proposed by the Global Commission are designed to benefit all employers and workers, regardless of their origin. As a way forward, the Commission recommends that “all countries establish national strategies on the future of work, relying for their development on existing institutions for social dialogue or, as necessary, establishing new ones. These strategies should put into action the recommendations in the report, responding to specific national circumstances.”

The ADD high-level symposium on the future of work

In light of these significant developments concerning global debates on the future of work and the recent progress in the policy dialogue among Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) members, the ADD offers a great opportunity to examine how the recommendations of the Commission can be reflected or integrated into their respective employment and labour policies and in particular, labour mobility policies.

It is thus proposed that the high-level symposium on the future of work be organized in the following way.

09h00 – 09h15: ADD Opening and introduction

09h15 – 09h45: Session 1 – The Global Commission on the Future of Work report: Work for a brighter future

This session will begin by the presentation of the commission report by Sangheon Lee (ILO), with focus on its major recommendations (three pillars of investments: people's capabilities, institutions of work, and decent and sustainable work) which are of particular relevance to the ADD participating countries. It will be followed by general and broad comments by the participants, which will set the scene for more policy- or action-oriented discussions in Session 2. The participants are also invited to ask questions for clarification and further information concerning the commission report and, more broadly, the ILO centenary and beyond.

09h45 – 13h00: Session 2 – Integrating the three pillars of investment into national policies for better future of work

This session will invite the participants to discuss strategies and approaches of improving national employment and labour policies in light of the three pillars of investments and share good or promising practices with the symposium. In doing so, the session will develop common understanding of what are possible future policy options and how these policies can be operationalized and implemented in different circumstances. ILO's technical expertise will be made available to facilitate the debates.

Given the breadth of the issues for discussion and the importance of making the discussion manageable, it is proposed that the session be organized by major thematic blocs such as labour protection, skills and training (lifelong learning) and social protection. The session will discuss these themes in sequence, with each theme being introduced by the relevant expert who will focus on how the recommendations of the commission report could be integrated into national policies. The participants are invited to share their observations and insights with others, ideally with reference to latest policy developments in their respective countries. If time allows, the participants can also introduce new issues for discussion.

This session will be moderated by Sangheon Lee (ILO) and supported by ILO experts including Janine Berg, Patrick Daru, Luca Pellerano, and Martin Ostermeier.

(This session includes a 30 minutes break)

13h00 - 14h00: Lunch

14h00 - 15h45: Session 3 - Cooperating on the Future of Work in the ADD's collaborative agenda on the governance of labour mobility

This session will concentrate on how to strengthen the governance of labour mobility in light of the commission report, especially through more effective cooperation and partnership within the region and between regions. Good practice guidance and examples will be shared. The participants will also be invited to discuss specific areas for cooperation, including on skills development/recognition, fair recruitment and social protection. ILO's technical expertise will be made available to facilitate the debates.

The format of this session is similar to Session 2. Following a quick overview of the labour mobility aspects of the commission report, the session will discuss how to develop skills, and certification and recognition of skills across borders, promote and support fair recruitment practices, and how to secure social protection entitlements across labour mobility corridors. Each thematic discussion will begin with a short presentation by the relevant ILO experts. The participants are invited to share their observations and insights with others, ideally with reference to latest policy developments and innovative practices. If time allows, the participants can also introduce new issues for discussion.

This session will be moderated by Michelle Leighton (ILO) and supported by the ILO experts including Ryszard Cholewinski, Shabarinath Nair, Christine Hofmann, and Clara van Panhuys.

15h45 - 16h00: Break

16h00 - 17h00: The way forward

This session will identify major take-away messages, especially with a view to preparing for the forthcoming ministerial meeting, and discuss how to continue to elaborate them in the coming months.

This session will be jointly moderated by Sangheon Lee and Michelle Leighton (ILO).

17h00 - 17h15: Closing