

The impact of new technologies on labour markets and the jobs of the future

3 October 2017, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., UNHQ CR 8

Introduction and background

In the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the 2017 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, Member States called on the Inter-agency Task Force 'to further examine the transformative and disruptive potential of new technologies on our labour markets and on the jobs of the future'.¹

In response to this mandate, the Task Force is holding a technical meeting on 'The impact of new technologies on labour markets and the jobs of the future'. The main purpose of the meeting is to

- (i) share Task Force members' perspectives and ongoing work on this issue, and to
- (ii) discuss potential focus areas, key issues, messages and recommendations that would add value to the discussion in the context of the Financing for Development process, and that could be included in the 2018 Task Force report.

The deliberations at the meeting will inform the drafting of a dedicated section on technology and labour markets in the chapter on 'Science, technology, innovation and capacity building' of the 2018 report of the Task Force. This chapter annually assesses progress in implementation of the STI-related commitments and actions in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as part of the overall assessment of the Task Force on the state of implementation of the Financing for Development outcomes.

Annotated programme and guiding questions

Each of the sessions will open with brief substantive inputs by Task Force members, followed by an interactive discussion among participants.

10:00 - 10:15 a.m. Introduction

- Ms. Shari Spiegel, Financing for Development Office, UN DESA

The session will serve to situate the meeting in the overall work programme of the Task Force for its 2018 report and will lay out expectations from Member States for this work.

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Tour de table of ongoing work in the Task Force

- ILO, UNCTAD, World Bank, DESA and other Task Force members

This session will provide an opportunity for Task Force members to report on ongoing work on new technologies, labour markets and jobs, and to reflect on how this work can add value in the context of the Financing for Development process.

¹ E/FFDF/2017/3, available from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/FFDF/2017/3

10:45 – 11:05 a.m. Overview of key recent technological developments

- Michael Keenan, OECD
- Matthias Bruckner and Marcelo Lafleur, UN DESA DPAD

The session will provide an overview of key recent technological developments. It will also address situate these developments in longer historical trends and address whether recent innovations are different in quality from previous technological revolutions, and if so, how they differ and how their impacts on employment, jobs, productivity growth and other areas may differ.

Relevant publications:

- *OECD STI Outlook 2016, available from <http://www.oecd.org/sti/oecd-science-technology-and-innovation-outlook-25186167.htm>*
- *DESA Frontier Issues Paper: The impact of the technological revolution on labour markets and income distribution, available from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/frontier-issues-artificial-intelligence-and-other-technologies-will-define-the-future-of-jobs-and-incomes/>*

11:05 – 11:45 a.m. Impact of new technologies on labour markets and jobs

- Ekkehard Ernst, ILO
- UNCTAD

This session will discuss the implications of key recent technological developments (and their interaction with other megatrends) on labour market developments, both at the aggregate level (employment and wages), and at the level of individual sectors and occupations, and for the type of employment available (working conditions, e.g. casualization and digital labour platforms). Key questions include whether we expect major rise in technological unemployment or whether sufficient new jobs are or could be created; whether further job polarization could lead to deepening in income inequality; to what extent technological developments will impact on the evolution of labour market institutions, notably on social protection systems and wage bargaining institutions; and the potential for the emergence of new forms of collective agreements and binding labour standards.

Relevant publications:

- *Meeting background note*
- *UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2017, Chapter 3: Robots, industrialization and inclusive growth, available from: http://unctad.org/en/PublicationChapters/tdr2017ch3_en.pdf*

11:45 – 12:15 p.m. Impacts on developing countries

- Marcio Cruz, World Bank
- Richard Roehrl and Clovis Freire, UN DESA DSD
- Shahid Yusuf, Center for Global Development

The session will explore to what extent major technology developments may impact upon the capacity of emerging and low-income countries to develop, e.g. by reducing the scope for developing countries to specialise in low-skilled, labour intensive manufacturing, through the impact on SMEs and global value chains, or other factors.

Relevant publications/ material:

- DESA DSD EGM on Exponential Technological Change, Automation, and Their Policy Implications for Sustainable Development, available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/unsystem/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=2042&menu=23>, and TFM, available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/tfm/>
- World Bank, *Trouble in the Making? The Future of Manufacturing-Led Development*, available from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/competitiveness/publication/trouble-in-the-making-the-future-of-manufacturing-led-development>
- Yusuf, *Automation, AI and Emerging economies*, available from: <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/automation-ai-and-emerging-economies>

12:15 – 12:45 p.m. Policy implications and recommendations for a successful transition

- Moderated discussion

This session will serve to discuss policy options for a successful transition, both in developed and in developing countries. They include policy responses to technological developments in areas such as learning, education and training policies, social protection, working time, and labour relations; as well as development strategies, innovation and industrial policies. The session will also discuss the potential of innovations to improve policy planning, implementation and monitoring.

12:45 – 1 p.m. Conclusion – STI and capacity building chapter of the 2018 IATF report

- UN DESA DSD and UNCTAD (as co-chairs of the IATT) and UN DESA FfDO

The concluding session will serve to discuss how to incorporate the findings of the meeting and subsequent work on technology and labour markets in the chapter, and to discuss other possible focus areas for the chapter in the 2018 report. The co-leads of the chapter will introduce and moderate this discussion.