



SIR ARTHUR LEWIS
INSTITUTE OF
SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC
STUDIES



The future of work in the Caribbean

What do we know? What do we need to know?

ILO – SALISES Research consultation

Monday 4th of December 2017

Room 2, Institute of Critical Thinking

UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

The Future of Work in the Caribbean

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Introduction and rationale

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and its Members have decided to implement a Future of Work Initiative that will culminate at the centennial International Labour Conference in 2019. The rationale behind the Future of Work Initiative¹ is to reflect on the transformational changes taking place in the world of work, to understand the processes of change and to respond effectively so as to advance the shared commitment to decent work for all as reflected in the global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and ILO's mandate of social justice.

Against this backdrop, the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean together with the ILO Research Department, in partnership with the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES²) at the University of the West Indies, were interested in determining the current knowledge on selected key themes - as well as research orientation in the region for the near future - with the ultimate goal of determining research gaps in order to address them in the most suitable way.

Purpose and objectives

The consultation on the Future of Work in the Caribbean was intended to further inform on a related and relevant research agenda with this report on the consultation's findings contributing to the ILO Global Initiative, including a constituent meeting to be convened by the ILO in 2018. Further research initiatives would be targeted to ILO constituents (government, employers and workers) in the Caribbean. This also responds to the Conclusions of the 10th ILO Meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour in February 2017, to mainstream decent work in national development plans; linking research with policy-making.

The objectives of the research agenda

1. Identify key transitions and issues in relation to the role of work in society, the creation of decent jobs for all, emerging ways of organizing work and production, and the governance of work in the Caribbean;
2. Fill knowledge gaps concerning the drivers of change in employment (and related rights and protection) specific to Caribbean country contexts;
3. Generate a shared understanding of the forces transforming the world of work and a new vision for the future that the ILO constituents would like to see; and
4. Provide guidance and recommendations for the tripartite constituents on how to successfully advance the cause of social justice in the Caribbean region.

Modality

The research consultation on the Future of Work in the Caribbean consisted of a one-day event organized at the University of the West Indies St Augustine campus in Trinidad and Tobago. The goal was to share relevant findings from the latest research, propose an orientation for future undertakings

¹ ILO <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/future-of-work/lang--en/index.htm>

² Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI: <https://sta.uwi.edu/salises/>

and determine new research ideas. Round table discussions were organized around the following three specific themes:

- 1) Future of work and demographic patterns.
- 2) Future of work and innovation.
- 3) Future of work and non-standard forms of employment - governance challenges.

Discussions, findings and implications for the research agenda

Roundtable 1 – Future of Work and Demographic Patterns

Participants:

Mr. Lawrence Jeff Johnson, Deputy Director, ILO Research Department (Chair); **Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard**, Senior Fellow, SALISES, UWI, St. Augustine; **Dr. Keith Nurse**, Senior Fellow, SALISES, UWI, Cave Hill; **Professor Patricia Mohammed**, Institute for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, St. Augustine; **Ms. Lydia Rosa Geny**, Associate Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean (Discussant).

The ILO-SALISES Research Consultation commenced with a panel discussion focused on the future of work in the Caribbean given shifting demographic patterns. More specifically, the panel tackled the issues of population ageing, migration and the Caribbean diaspora, and the evolution of the care economy.

1.1.1 *An Ageing Caribbean*

Fertility rates have been continuously declining – with the average woman now expected to have around two children – as has the probability of dying before aged 50 having reached age 15. The median age of the population has been steadily on the rise and now stands at about 30 years old, while the region continues to experience net out-migration with the exception of a few countries where net migration levels are close to zero³ and some, where immigration dominates⁴. The result has been that for many Caribbean countries, population sizes are expected to plateau and subsequently fall within the next 20 years, happening much sooner for countries experiencing ageing at faster rates.

Concomitantly, most countries are expected to see falling working age (25-64) populations by 2050. This will be accompanied by a more than doubling of the elderly population (65+), which will then constitute a larger percentage of the population than youth (15-24). Even those countries not forecasted to experience an outstripping of the youth population by the elderly nor a fall in the working age population by this time, will see a doubling of the elderly (65+) cohort over the same period. It was also noted that the Caribbean is characterised by the phenomenon of the “feminization of ageing” with the elderly projected to comprise more females in the future.

1.1.2 *“Clogging” of the Labour Market and Youth Unemployment*

Population ageing may be one possible explanation for high current youth unemployment rates as well as high ratios of youth to total unemployment in the region. In a phenomenon described as “clogging”, Caribbean youth enter, and will continue to enter for the next several decades, a labour market in which the working age population comprises large and growing cohorts of older workers as the population ages. The result of this dynamic is that jobs take longer to be vacated for young people

³ Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and St. Lucia

⁴ Belize is among these due to high immigration from its Central American neighbours as are the Dutch and French Caribbean countries (with the exception of Haiti).

to move into, leading to higher youth unemployment and underemployment rates in the future if left unaddressed.

1.1.3 High Fertility in Marginalised Classes - A Marginalised Future Workforce?

Although national fertility rates are falling, they are doing so unevenly with children born into poorer socioeconomic circumstances accounting for an increasingly larger share of annual births. Given that children from such backgrounds tend to face greater challenges in education and thereafter in the labour market due to stigmas and lack of skills, policies need to be developed and tailored to address this problem in order to guarantee decent work for the youth of the future.

1.2.1 A Migrating Caribbean

The Caribbean has been and continues to be one of the regions of the world most afflicted by the challenge of “brain-drain”, with most countries seeing more than 50 per cent of their tertiary educated populations migrating to OECD countries in 2000⁵.

Factors driving these trends include (i) labour shortages and population ageing in high and middle-income countries, (ii) a culture of emigration and the export of labour from small and under-developed economies, and (iii) the feminization of migration and the growth of global care chains.

1.2.2 The Diasporic Economy: Opportunities for Decent Work

Instead of being perceived exclusively as a challenge, net emigration and the resulting evolution of a “diasporic economy” presents new and untapped opportunities for the sub-region including for job creation. The Caribbean diaspora generates demand for goods from the home countries, as well as demand for services such as tourism, telecoms, and money transfer operations. This is in addition to contributing to the development of intellectual property, generating finance and investment via mortgages, savings and remittances, and facilitating knowledge transfers⁶.

Caribbean economies, however, have yet to recognise this opportunity⁷. At the same time, it was noted that such opportunities vary across the region with, for example, the diasporic economy in Trinidad and Tobago being very small and much larger in Jamaica and Guyana.

1.2.3 Immigration: A Threat to Decent Work?

The prospect of merchant class immigration from more populous countries such as India, China and those in Latin America raises the question of who the future owners of capital in the region will be. Along with this comes the possibility of an exploitative arrangement with the domestic workforce which is likely to be constituted of more marginalised classes if appropriate corrective interventions are not made as mentioned previously.

Similarly, the issue of deportee immigrants and their reintegration into work and society was raised as an issue for discussion and must be addressed to prevent criminal avenues becoming more attractive to unemployed youth especially where job opportunities are limited.

⁵ This figure reaches as high as 80-90 per cent for countries like Suriname, Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica.

⁶ The diaspora accounted for as much as 70 per cent of all tourism in countries like Guyana while remittances accounted for 16 per cent and 26 per cent of GDP in Jamaica and Haiti, respectively. Income accruing to the diaspora was also shown to amount to as much as USD \$30 billion for Jamaica while diaspora savings were equivalent to 77 per cent of GDP for Guyana, 56 per cent for Haiti and 42 per cent for Jamaica.

⁷ It was highlighted, for example, that resources are being pumped into the tourism industry in Jamaica which accounts for 10 per cent of GDP while the diasporic economy which accounts for an estimated 25 per cent of GDP has received almost no resources

Analysis of data on immigrants to the region showed that more males immigrate than females while the majority of immigrants are of working age. There is, however, a jump in the number of both male and female immigrants aged 75 and above, possibly capturing the cohort of immigrant retirees to the sub-region especially to the Dutch and French Caribbean (excluding Haiti).

1.3.1 The Care Economy: At the Intersection of Ageing and Migration

With ageing populations, the demand for care work in the Caribbean is growing. There is evidence that patterns within the region are increasingly resembling those in OECD countries with migrant workers within CARICOM, especially female workers, being drawn on to meet this demand as well as the demand for domestic workers in general. There is further evidence that this is resulting in the development of racial and gender hierarchies with such work often being devalued as “women’s work” in the region. Discrimination against migrant care workers⁸ and the supply of unpaid care work by retirees⁹ are also developing features of the care economy in the sub-region.

1.3.2. The Future of Work and Society

The relationship between work, the individual, and society must be acknowledged. More and more people, in particular Millennials view work as more than a means of making a living, but as a way of living. For instance, it is important for the education system to meet the needs of workers. Currently in the Caribbean, the school and work schedule are out of sync with parents having to leave work early to pick up children or children being left unsupervised until parents finish work. Also, there is a need to implement flexible schedules and flex time and work from home opportunities since a significant loss of productivity occurs because of heavy traffic in small economies with poorly developed transportation networks. Of course, this view of striking a work-society balance varies by one’s socioeconomic circumstance with the importance of balance being higher among high income households and the need for paid work for satisfying material needs being higher for low income households.

Emerging areas for future research

1. Social inequality, educational outcomes and labour market experiences

The relationship between these three variables in the region must be investigated and understood in order to address the issue of the future workforce containing a larger constituency from marginalised classes.

2. Emigrant and immigrant profiles

In order to fully assess the impact of out-migration on the labour supply and economic equilibria, research is needed to determine the profiles of emigrants from the region. Such information would also be valuable to establish in which sectors jobs need to be created in the region if we are to reduce emigration as well as to identify the areas in which diasporic resources exist. Similarly, more information on immigrant profiles is needed to determine

⁸ For example, in the Cayman Islands, domestic work accounts for the largest share of female employment with a significant proportion of this work being carried out by Jamaican migrants. Much like in the OECD, there has been resistance to providing work permits for these women or allowing them to bring their children to live with them.

⁹ Insights from the Work-Life Balance and Ageing Project in Trinidad and Tobago have confirmed that with population ageing, retired persons continue to supply a great deal of unpaid labour including taking care of young children.

whether an immigrant merchant class is likely to emerge as well as to determine how immigrants affect the labour supply in the region (skilled or unskilled labour).

3. *Diasporic economy and job creation*

If further development of the diasporic economy is to become an avenue for decent work creation in the region, research is needed to determine which countries stand to gain the most, what opportunities exist for decent work in this area, and whether the benefits of net emigration outweigh the costs.

4. *The care economy*

With the care economy currently evolving and likely to play a significant role in the region in the future, extensive research is needed if the region is to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities it presents and to mitigate any potential threats which may arise.

Firstly, debates over how care work is defined in the context of the Caribbean must be settled, including how care work must be factored into national accounts. The care economy must be analysed to determine: (i) who is conducting care work (ii) whether this work is paid or unpaid (iii) what racial and gender hierarchies exist or are emerging in care work (iv) what models of care work and training for care work are appropriate for the Caribbean.

5. *Gender, demographic changes and the future of work*

The issue of gender and demographic change was recurrent in discussions on the future of work. Specific phenomena such as the feminization of ageing, and the feminization of migration, as well as dynamics surrounding gender and the care economy, mentioned above, require further investigation to determine their implications for future work in the Caribbean.

Recommendations to tripartite constituents for addressing the future of work and demographic change

1. *Legislation and institutional arrangements for dealing with an ageing population*

(i) Development and implementation of ageing policies

While 12 Caribbean countries have implemented laws, policies or strategies on ageing, 13 countries have yet to do so.

(ii) Policies and regulatory institutions for the care economy

As the care economy evolves, the Caribbean is in need of appropriate institutions and legislation to certify and regulate care work, offering protection to both the consumer and supplier. Both the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (1981) and the Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011) must feature prominently in any policy development initiatives in this area. Priority areas for the development of a care economy also include developing home care services, and providing support to care givers, providing adequate training for care-givers, and seeking to redress the gender imbalance in who provides care. Greater emphasis must also be placed on elderly and palliative care in the training curricula for medical professionals.

2. *Addressing youth unemployment and underemployment*

(i) Creation of cooperatives, protective legislation and fostering entrepreneurship

With “clogging” of the labour market likely to occur and the contraction of the public sector across the regions, the formation of youth cooperatives, fostering of entrepreneurship and protective legislation for youth in sectors such as creative

industries may be some avenues by which decent opportunities for work can be secured.

(ii) Adaptation of education systems for skills and entrepreneurship

Since Caribbean nations are consumers of technology as opposed to drivers of technological change, the skills demanded of our youth in the future will also be externally driven. The region must examine how countries abroad are preparing their workforces for technological change and adopt suitable measures to prepare ours, in particular, by shifting focus from professional training to skills training at each pedagogical stage. A similar approach should be taken for entrepreneurship.

(iii) Acquisition and development of multilingual skills

Tracking the development of multilingual skills in the region and identifying the role the education system should play are critical to enabling the region to access new trading opportunities. It is also necessary for increasing the stock of immigrants with acceptable levels of national official language competencies.

3. Data needs - strengthening of statistical offices and monitoring and evaluation systems

To support ageing and migration policies and mechanisms, data must be regularly collected and disaggregated by relevant variables such as age, migratory status, sex and disability, in addition to strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems. Time use surveys and surveys specific to investigating care work would be valuable to understanding the care economy.

Roundtable 2 – Future of Work and Innovation

Participants:

Dr. Hamid Ghany, Director, SALISES, UWI, St. Augustine (Chair); **Dr. Preeya Mohan**, Research Fellow, SALISES, UWI, St. Augustine; **Dr. Roger Hosein**, Senior Lecturer and Coordinator, Trade and Economic Development Unit, UWI, St. Augustine; **Professor Winston Moore**, Head of Department of Economics, UWI, Cave Hill; **Ms. Renata Tulsie**, President, Caribbean Centre for Leadership Development (Discussant).

This panel focused on the implications of firm innovation in the region, the evolution of the green economy, and make-work programmes, for the future of work in the Caribbean.

2.1.1 Firm Innovation in the Caribbean

The relationship between employment and innovation centres on the employment reduction effect of technological change versus the employment expansion effect of market compensation. More recently, the qualitative effect of innovation in terms of increasing workers skills versus the quantitative effect in terms of worker lay-offs has been emphasized. Also, it has been acknowledged that firms can implement different types of innovation, which can have different employment impacts. The relationship between innovation and employment is therefore complex with diverse outcomes. Also, human capital is identified as a key source for driving innovation.

Across the region, low innovation is an acute constraint to growth. When firms do innovate, most of them engage in product innovations with energy innovations and marketing innovations being the next most common. Innovation is also more frequent among larger and export-oriented firms as well as in the larger resource-based economies of Guyana and Suriname.

2.1.2 Firm Innovation and Employment

There is a lack of empirical evidence on how employment and innovation interact in the Caribbean, although this is not unusual for other developing countries. One explanation for this is the lack of data in the region, in particular, micro firm level data.

The data shows, however, that 13 per cent of firms in the region implemented process innovations, which tend to be employment-reducing, while 21 per cent of firms implemented product innovations which tend to be employment enhancing. 16 per cent and 11 per cent of firms introduced energy and environmental innovations, respectively, possibly pointing to the potential for more green jobs in the region in the future¹⁰.

Additionally, while the largest proportion of the workforce in the Caribbean is engaged in non-production, it is worth noting that there is a higher percentage of workers engaged in skilled production versus unskilled production in the region¹¹. This may have implications for the future competitiveness of firms in the face of global technological change, and by extension the continued existence and growth of decent work opportunities, as well as the ability of the region's workforce to adapt to innovation.

Few firms in the region engage in workforce development as a result of innovation. In countries where there are more innovative firms, however, there are more opportunities for workforce development (modification of existing skills, new skills, training and recruiting new employees) as a result of firm innovation.

It was also noted that although increasing the number of skilled workers and improving worker training increased the amount of innovation in firms, other types of innovation such as research and development spurs innovation more than workforce development.

2.1.3 Female Employment and Innovation

The fact that women are over-represented in service and other low-skill industries which tend to be less innovative may be a cause for concern to the extent that women are unable to engage in innovation and take advantage of the economic opportunities brought to the region by technological change. It is possible, however, that women are more engaged in innovation in the informal economy or social innovations not captured by existing data or women face greater barriers to firm innovation.

2.2.1 Green Economies: The Future for the Region?

Using Barbados as a case study, the development of green economies was identified as a viable and sensible option to pursue for small economies lacking natural resources. This is especially important since this sector covers a number of critical areas including water management, renewable energy, clean transport and land management.

2.2.2 Green Jobs Now and in the Future

Barbados now has around 10 per cent of its employed persons working in the green sector with the majority of these having post-secondary and secondary education giving a general indication of the national education levels needed in other countries hoping to achieve similar success.

In particular, Barbados has seen a rise in demand for electrical and mechanical engineers, solar photovoltaic design skills, photovoltaic cell installers and energy auditors among others. Skills

¹⁰ This potential may be greater in the natural resource-based economies of Suriname and Guyana where environmental innovations were carried out by 26 per cent and 44 per cent of firms, respectively.

¹¹ 29 per cent in skilled production versus 20 per cent in unskilled production.

expected to be needed in the future include knowledge of hybrid systems, batteries and fuel cell technologies, micro grids, waste energy systems, and smart and sustainable farming. Other skill sets will also be needed with the development of wind energy and other types of renewable energy throughout the region.

It was also suggested that job destruction resulting from transitions to renewable energy should be viewed more from the lens of a need for retraining as jobs are created in the new sector.

2.2.3 Female Employment in the Green Economy

Almost half of those employed in Barbados' green sector are female. Many unskilled females have found employment in L.E.D bulb assembly plants with further evidence suggesting that a significant proportion have used these wages to retrain and reskill themselves. The green sector may therefore provide an avenue for decent work and mobility for low-skilled females in other Caribbean countries, especially where female decent work deficits are high. It was also noted that the main electric vehicle company in Barbados is female-headed.

2.2.4 Institutional Environment for Greening

The success of the green sector in Barbados has been the product of a social partnership between the private sector, civil society and government.

Government

The Barbadian government has led the way with a sustainable energy policy in addition to the restructuring of the cane industry, and the greening of agriculture and tourism. TVET in renewable energy has been developed in alignment with the regional vocational qualification (CVQ) along with an apprenticeship programme. Further, the government has used incentives such as lower duties to promote greening, however, evidence suggests that this has been important primarily as a signal of the government's commitment to greening as well as an awareness-building mechanism since the savings from greening itself compensate for the costs.

Private Sector

The private sector has been an engine for the green economy in Barbados, being responsible for investments in electric car charging stations and in the near future electric buses, and with private financial institutions facilitating lending for green goods such as photovoltaic cells. The sector also engages in training staff, dialogues with the government on skills needs, and engages with schools in the country.

Civil Society

The Barbados Renewable Energy Association provides education, training, and capacity-building, in addition to conducting research and development.

Make-Work Programmes and the Future of Work

2.3.1 Less Decent Work Opportunities

Present in the larger resource economies of the region¹², the existence of make-work programmes has stifled and may continue to stifle private sector growth, and economic growth in general, as unskilled labour is pulled away from industry. Combined with the fact that employment in these

¹² Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname with plans for such programmes in Guyana.

programmes is part-time with limited benefits, this may lead to less decent work opportunities in the future if businesses are unable to find an alternative labour supply needed for survival.

2.3.2 *The Structure of Work*

It was also suggested that such programmes have contributed to the erosion of the 40-hour work week with participants working less hours on average. Further discussion suggested that this effect may be in the opposite direction, however, as make-work participants may engage in a number of other part-time jobs to supplement their income.

2.3.3 *Making Make-Work Programmes Work*

Despite the negative effects on the economy identified, it was agreed that more careful programme design and management, including possible conditionalities, could see make-work programmes being used as a public good for single mothers or as a means of labour supply for industries such as agriculture.

Emerging areas for future research

1. *How do different types of innovation affect employment? How does employment (quantity and quality) affect innovation?*

Currently, there is a lack of microlevel data on employment to evaluate the relationship between firm-level innovations and employment including the impact on job creation and/or destruction and skills training. This question is also an interesting avenue for research at the macro-level examining, for example, the relationship between green innovations and employment creation, quality and structure. The question of how worker quantity and quality and employee cognitive skills affect firm innovation is also pertinent.

2. *Research gaps on the green economy*

(i) What types of training are needed for the green economy?

Currently, industry in Barbados conducts most of the training in this sector. If governments are to play a supporting role by providing a skilled workforce in Barbados as well as in other economies seeking to develop green sectors, research is needed to answer this question.

(ii) How can green skills be made transferrable?

Evidence in Barbados suggests that persons who become unemployed in the green sector tend to experience longer unemployment spells given the inability to transfer their skills to other industries/sectors. Research into innovative ways to address this problem will help ensure the sustainability of decent work for persons who enter the green industry in addition to making jobs in the sector more attractive.

(iii) What gender gaps exist in the green economy?

While evidence has been presented that a large proportion of green workers are female, further research is needed to determine the quality and type of jobs secured by men and women in this sector.

(iv) What is the impact of the green sector on the macroeconomy?

As yet, no study has addressed this question in Barbados. Doing so will help assess the industry's profitability and potential profitability for other countries.

3. *How can make-work programmes in the region be made to work?*

Given the absence of programme evaluation studies, much of the evidence on the impact of make-work programmes in the region remains anecdotal. A systematic evaluation is needed to determine: (i) who benefits from these programmes, (ii) how women and single mothers are impacted, (iii) how the structure of work has changed as a result of these programmes, (iv) what the long-term employment outcomes of participants are, (v) how these programmes can be tailored to ensure decent work opportunities in the future.

Roundtable 3 – Future of Work and Non-Standard Forms of Employment: Governance Challenges

Participants:

Ms. Claudia Coenjarts, Director, ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (Chair); **Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine**, Dean, Faculty of Law, UWI, St. Augustine; **Mr. Gerard Emile Pinard**, CEO and Managing Director, Zatopek Solutions Inc; **Mr. Keston Nancoo**, Chairman, the Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (Discussant); **Mr. Michael Annisette**, General Secretary, National Trade Union Centre of Trinidad and Tobago (Discussant).

The final thematic panel addressed the issues of labour legislation, social dialogue and tripartism and their relation to the future of work in Trinidad and Tobago, and by extension the region.

3.1.1 Gaps in Labour Legislation: A Threat to Future Decent Work

Focusing on Trinidad and Tobago as a case study in the Caribbean, it was agreed that labour legislation has failed to evolve with changes in the structure of work over the past several decades.

Some of the issues identified included the lack of fair dismissal laws, the lack of adequate regulation for severance pay funds, and the lack of social security and unemployment insurance. Although health and safety legislation has been put in place, it was deemed defective.

3.1.2 Protecting the Vulnerable

More specifically, the law has focused too heavily on unionised workers to the disadvantage of other groups including part-time, seasonal and home workers who are unable to access the benefits safeguarded for full-time workers. This imbalance particularly affects women and marginalised groups who are more likely to fall into these categories and who are disproportionately found in the informal sector. Further, with the development of the “gig economy”, this focus on full-time workers will become an even greater problem. The law has also failed to guarantee equity across racial and gender lines in general.

3.1.3 Exploiting Legal Loopholes

The trend of exploiting legal loopholes was also identified as a major cause for concern. One example highlighted was the practice of using “permanently temporary” fixed-term contract relationships to treat workers as temporary for legal purposes to avoid benefit provision and employer responsibilities when they are, in practice, permanent employees.

3.1.4 Labour Legislation and the Business Environment

While labour law should guarantee basic rights for workers, it was argued that the current structure of labour legislation is more punitive than enabling for businesses. Specifically, the law has yet to evolve from the notion of work as employment to one of work as performing a job, not necessarily on a full-time basis.

As businesses have come to need greater flexibility to remain competitive, for example, by being able to hire seasonal workers or to make use of fixed-term contracts, it was further argued that

governments should take the responsibility to facilitate this while themselves ensuring protection and benefits for workers. One avenue suggested for this was the formation of labour cooperatives and other worker pools to be regulated by the government. While employers should still be concerned with workers' rights, it was also argued that shifting some of the responsibility to government would enable the survival and growth of more small businesses which ultimately create jobs in the country.

3.1.5 Millennials and the Future of Work

Equally, it was contended that millennials entering the workforce desire greater flexibility in their work arrangements, further supporting the argument for government to adapt labour legislation to a newer model of work.

3.2.1 Tripartism, Social Dialogue and the Future of Work

While there were some opinions that trade unions have become less relevant due to an increase in non-unionised workers, it was generally felt that social dialogue remains integral to the governance of work and to securing a future of work that satisfies all parties. One suggestion was for the evolution of tripartism to "tripartism +" which would involve the creation of a model indigenous to Trinidad and Tobago, and by extension the region, that embraces all in society.

The main obstacle to the success of social dialogue was repeatedly identified as a lack of political will with some suggestions emerging that business and workers should come to the table first as has been done in Barbados.

Alignment of research agendas and scope for partnerships: partner reflections

To conclude the consultation, development partners were invited to share their reflections including their current projects and research activities, as well as highlighting avenues for partnerships.

1. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat – Ms. Myrna Bernard, Director of Human Development

Contributing directly to the preparation of the region's workforce for the future, Ms. Bernard outlined the recently adopted Human Resource Development Strategy (2030). With successive four-year action plans developed, the HRDS is set to revise and reinvigorate the education system in the region, aligning it with current and future realities in the world of work. The strategy is structured by the four key principles of (i) Access and participation, (ii) Quality, (iii) Relevance, and (iv) Equity, with strategies for (i) Basic Education, (ii) Lifelong Learning, (iii) the Skill Sector, and (iv) the Tertiary Sector.

2. Association of Caribbean States (ACS) – Ms. Lisa Robinson, Human Resource Manager

Projects related to the future of work currently underway at the ACS include a project to improve disaster preparedness and risk management in the region especially among youth. The project also seeks to evaluate the impact of natural disasters on the labour force. Additionally, the ACS is engaged in a sustainable tourism project with a particular focus on developing microenterprise in the craft sector. Youth, women and migrants have also been mainstreamed into all the organisation's projects.

3. United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean – Ms. Lydia Rosa Geny, Associate Social Affairs Officer

With the Lisbon Declaration on Programmes and Policies for Youth soon to be reviewed, UNECLAC in the Caribbean will be focusing on youth with special attention to the future of work and intergenerational programmes, in light of population ageing.

Research gaps:

Attention was drawn to research gaps related to the issue of migration and the future of work; in particular, the issue of migrants (both within the region and the diaspora) and the informal sector as well as the need to strengthen regular intra-regional migration systems.

Conclusion and the way forward

The ILO-SALISES Consultation brought to the fore several issues pertinent to the future of work in the Caribbean. Among these, however, emerged a particular set of research themes which reappeared throughout the day's discussion, arguably constituting the most promising avenues for future research in the region.

Key themes for the future of work research agenda in the Caribbean

1. *Ageing in the Caribbean and the Evolution of the Care Economy*
 - (i) How can the region best prepare its workforce for the realities that come with an ageing population as highlighted in the consultation?
 - (ii) What are the current dynamics of the evolving care economy in the region and how should governments shape its development?
2. *Migration and the Future of Work*
 - (i) What are the dynamics of migration into and out of the region and how will this shape the future of work? Who migrates? What are their destinations? What types of work are they engaged in? What are the dynamics of intra-regional migration?
 - (ii) What opportunities and threats are posed to the future of work in the region by migration? What opportunities do the diaspora present in creating jobs in new sectors?
 - (iii) How can governments in the region best adapt to these opportunities and threats in order to secure the optimum future of work for all?
3. *Youth Unemployment and Underemployment and the Future of Work*
 - (i) Given high youth unemployment and underemployment rates, what are the challenges faced by young people as the nature of work becomes increasingly contractual and temporary? What opportunities are there for youths in new sectors such as the digital economy and creative sector?
 - (ii) How can the education system and training institutions be made more effective in reducing skills mismatch? How can the traditional education system be restructured to cater to lifelong learning?
4. *Innovation and the Future of Work*
 - (i) What is the impact of technological change on employment quantity and quality? Is technological change employment reducing or employment enhancing? How does technological change differ in developing Caribbean countries given that it mainly takes the form of imitation and technology transfer rather than embodying technical change?

- (ii) What role does human capital play in firm innovation? How does increasing workforce quantity and quality affect firm innovation?

5. *Green Economies and the Future of Work*

- (i) What opportunities exist for the region in the development of the green sector? Who stands to benefit and who stands to lose?
- (ii) What measures are needed to prepare the region's workforce for a "green" future of work?

6. *Gender and the Future of Work*

While this issue could, in itself, constitute a topic for research, the discussion emerging from the consultation suggests that gender should be incorporated into the analysis for all of the aforementioned topics for research. Fertility and the future of work is another important area which may be placed under gender.