

Third ILO Employment Policy Research Symposium

THE FUTURE OF FULL EMPLOYMENT

ILO, Geneva (Room V, R3 South)

12-13 December 2019

Agenda

Day 1

0915-1100

Opening Session

Welcome remarks - Deborah Greenfield, ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy, DDG/P

Introduction to the Symposium - Sangheon Lee, Director, Employment Policy Department (EMP), ILO

Keynote addresses – The future of full employment

- Rathin Roy, Director and CEO, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi
- Charles Sabel, Maurice T. Moore Professor of Law, Columbia Law School, New York

Q&A

1100-1130

Coffee break

1130-1300

Session 1: The political economy of full employment

The lessons from the crisis have led to a rethinking of conventional macroeconomic approaches and a renewed appreciation of how monetary and fiscal measures can be used to manage aggregate demand and employment levels. Yet distrust in fiscal activism and a preference for austerity remain strong in the policy practice and the political debate on full employment in many countries. How to foster a pragmatic, non-ideological approach to fiscal and monetary policy? What does evidence say about the size of fiscal multipliers in different settings and their short and long-run impact on employment and productivity? Can the effects on employment be accurately assessed and monitored? How can fiscal measures help address key challenges for the future of work – fragmented labour markets, demographic transitions, greener growth?

Chair: Aurelio Parisotto, Head, Country Policy Development Unit, EMP/ILO

Panellists:

- Francesco Saraceno, Deputy Department Director, OFCE Sciences-Po Paris
- Richard Kozul-Wright, Director, Globalisation and Development Strategies UNCTAD
- Anuradha Seth, Senior Advisor on macroeconomic Policy, UN WOMEN
- Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song, Senior Specialist, EMP/ILO

Q&A

1300-1400 Lunch break

1400-1530 **Session 2: New approaches to structural transformation**

Structural transformation and workforce shifts to higher-productivity activities are key to the sustainable generation of decent and productive jobs. A combination of policies aimed at providing fundamentals such as infrastructure and institutions while supporting physical capital, technology, skills and innovation, are usually put in place to foster structural transformation and job creation. In both developed and developing economies, the trend towards the emergence of polarized production structures - where advanced activities concentrate mainly in some vanguard sectors/areas and coexist with a large tail of less productive activities and communities - is creating an appetite for more interventionist measures that target the generation of productive employment in selected sectors and locations. At the same time, traditional views of structural transformation are in question as illustrated in the debate on “premature de-industrialization”. And success of policy interventions seems to have highly contingent nature. Should sectors be targeted for the purpose of employment creation, particularly in light of changes in global production structures and technological advances? Can fiscal and financial policies and structural reforms play a role? Are there arrangements that can foster public-private strategic interactions and pragmatic policy choices that evolve and adapt to the local context?

Chair: Claire Harasty, Special Advisor to the DDG/P on Economic and Social Issue, ILO

Panellists:

- Bartholomew Armah, Macroeconomic Policy Division, UNECA
- Marc Bacchetta, Economics Research and Statistics Division, WTO
- Juan Gamboa, Orkestra Basque Institute of Competitiveness
- Juan Chacaltana, Senior Employment Specialist, EMP/ILO

Q&A

1530-1600 Coffee break

1600-1730 **Session 3: Full Employment: Beyond simple job counting**

Unemployment is a devastating experience and monitoring the unemployed population is an essential policy task. In advanced economies in particular, the unemployment rate is commonly used as a succinct benchmark to assess labour market conditions and whether shifts in monetary and fiscal policies are necessary to move to full employment. There is growing recognition however that the unemployment rate *per se* can be an insufficient measure of how tight the labour market is. Several alternative or complementary measures are being proposed, which aim at better taking into account the demand for work of the growing numbers of those who move in and out of the labour force, or who are registered as employed but would like to work more hours or move to a better job. Widespread evidence that low unemployment rates in most advanced economies are associated with stagnant wages and low inflation is also making the inadequacy of the unemployment rate as a

measure of tightness a key policy concern. To what extent do unemployment rates, as currently measured, overstate labour market conditions in different country settings? How effective are broader measures in improving our assessments of labour market slack? Should a dashboard of indicators be used to guide policy changes for full employment? To what extent do measurement issues explain the changing relationship between labour market conditions, wage growth and inflation?

Keynote address - Where have all the good jobs gone

- David Blanchflower, Bruce V. Rauner Professor of Economics, Dartmouth University

Chair: Renate Hornung-Draus, Managing Director, Confederation of German Employers' Associations

Discussants:

- Janine Berg, Senior Economist, INWORK/ILO
- Kieran Walsh, Senior Statistician, STATISTICS/ILO

Q&A

1800-1930 **Reception** – Gobelins Area (R2 South)

Day 2

0900-1000 **“Meet the authors” of the ILO Global Employment Policy Review (GEPR)**

1000-1030 Coffee break

1030-1200 **Session 4: Making sense of full employment in developing countries**

In developing countries, in general, unemployment figures are low simply because people cannot afford to be unemployed. There are not enough good jobs for all those who are looking for work, and nor are there social protection measures that protect those who are out of jobs. Unemployment benefits, where they exist, are inadequate. Yet, most people have to eke out a living – to survive and to look after their families. Many do so in the informal economy – where working conditions are poor, and entry is relatively easy. In other words figures of low open unemployment are correlated with higher rates of informality, underemployment and disguised unemployment. This session will discuss and debate the relevance of ‘full productive and freely chosen employment’ in developing economies. Are there different ways of looking at full employment in a developing country context? Do we need to look at other indicators that are more relevant for full employment in such contexts? What is the role of macroeconomic and sectoral policies in promoting decent jobs in developing countries?

Chair: Sukti Dasgupta, Chief, Employment and Labour Market Policies Branch, EMP/ILO

Panellists:

- Rizwanul Islam, former Special Adviser in the Employment Sector, ILO
- Neil Coleman, Co-Director, Institute for Economic Justice, Johannesburg
- Ashwani Saith, Professor Emeritus, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
- Laura Barbosa de Carvalho FEA, Associate Professor of Economics, Universidade de São Paulo

Q&A

1200-1300 Lunch break

1300-1430 **Session 5: Attaining SDG8 – National and international action**

Recent evidence for the indicators on full employment and the other targets which constitute SDG 8 suggests progress is uneven and slower than required. At its current pace, SDG 8 is unlikely to be achieved. This is of special concern given the central role that SDG8 plays in the 2030 agenda and the inter-linkages it has with other goals such as eliminating poverty and hunger, promoting health and wellbeing and reducing gender and other inequalities. We need to launch a new generation of national employment policies in order to accelerate progress. What does country practice suggest? How can development donors and international agencies best support those efforts?

Chair: Prince Asafu-Adjaye, Trade Union Confederation of Ghana

Panellists:

- Valeria Esquivel, Employment and Gender Specialist, EMP/ILO
- Jacob Assa, Policy Specialist, Human Development Report Team, UNDP
- Elina Scheja, Lead Economist, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Francoise Millecam, Senior Expert, European Commission, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO).

Q&A

1430-1600 **Session 6: The Future of Work – Transitions over the life course for women and youth**

Wide-ranging technological change, demographic trends and climate change account for new opportunities and challenges in the labour market in all countries - either as a result of the growth of the gig economy and digital platforms, population ageing, the greening of businesses or the dire reality of migration. More and more, people are faced with changes in their careers and transitions from job to job and in and out of jobs. What do we know about the way those multiple labour market transitions are taking place? What policies can best support women, youth, older and disadvantaged workers?

Chair: Srinivas Reddy, Chief, Skills and Employability Branch, EMP/ILO

Panellists:

- Sher Verick, Senior Employment Specialist, EMP/ILO
- Werner Eichhorst, Professor, IZA Institute of Labour Economics
- Susanne Kraatz, Analyst (SNE), European Parliament
- Carmen Menendez, Deputy Director, State Public Employment Service of the Government of Spain - SEPE

Q&A

1600-1630 Coffee break

1630-1730 **Session 7: The future of full employment – Take away lessons and steps forward**

This session will recap the main conclusions of the symposium and provide an occasion for the ILO's tripartite constituents and other policy-makers to share their perspective and offer their insights on the key items of a renewed employment policy research agenda.

Chair: Sangheon Lee, Director, Employment Policy Department, EMP/ILO

Panellists:

- Jacqueline Mugo, Executive Director, Federation of Kenya's Employer - FKE
- Kelly Ross, Policy Director, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations - AFL/CIO
- Filipe Nunes, Permanent Mission of Portugal to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva
- Elias Amunyele, Permanent Mission of Namibia to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva

Q&A

1730

Closure