

Fourth ILO Employment Policy Research Symposium

Employment policies for job-rich recovery and a better future of work

ILO, Geneva (Room II, R3 South and online)

15-16 November 2021

Concept Note

Background

To respond to the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the world of work, ILO Member States and their employer and worker representatives adopted in June 2021 a **Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery**.¹ The Global Call set forth a comprehensive agenda of measures to be taken by governments and social partners to achieve sustainable, inclusive and job-rich recovery from the pandemic crisis. It also called for international cooperation and support from multilateral institutions to national “human-centred” recovery strategies.

Integrated national employment policies that are tailored to the needs and circumstances of each country are key to attain the goal of an inclusive job-rich recovery. Those policies should encompass supportive macroeconomic as well sustained public and private investment in hard-hit economic sectors and sectors with strong potential to expand decent work opportunities. They should also account for substantive support to workers and enterprises coping with structural transformation and sweeping changes in the world of work.

Recovery and structural transformation involve challenging processes of transition for workers and business that need coordinated public support. One lesson learnt from the past and recently from the unprecedented economic policy responses of many (mainly advanced) economies to the outburst of the pandemic, is that policy coherence and coordination are a condition for success – i.e., where fiscal stimulus is supported by monetary accommodation, it includes relief measures for workers and firms as well as a sectoral focus to stimulate supply response and adaptation to production constraints. As the response to the pandemic in all countries is shifting from immediate relief to transformative economic and social recovery, it will indeed be critical to maintain a similar policy momentum. At the same time, international cooperation is an important condition for making such recovery genuinely *global*, as there is a risk of a “great divergence”, where developing countries with limited fiscal space and technical capacities are left behind while advanced countries bounce back relatively quickly.

The ILO has an array of tools and programmes in the area of employment and decent work, which have been used to assist its constituents in responding to the pandemic crisis - from timely monitoring of the labour market impact to facilitating national employment recovery strategies, reaching out to vulnerable workers and enterprises, providing employment and skills programmes for immediate relief, and supporting policy design based on social dialogue. An employment policy facility is also being established to act as a repository that countries can conveniently access. **The ultimate purpose of this symposium will be to review available evidence and discuss how those tools and programmes**

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_806092.pdf

could be adapted and strengthened in order to assist ILO constituents in their efforts to promote labour market recovery and the shift to a new and better normal.

Key questions tackled at the symposium will include:

- *Which combinations of fiscal and monetary policies can help set economies on a strong job-recovery path while ensuring inclusiveness and stability?*
- *How to mobilize domestic and international resources in emerging and developing countries where fiscal and financial space is more constrained?*
- *How to stimulate transformative investments and productive jobs in critical sectors, eg infrastructure, green, digital and care services?*
- *How to assist sustainable enterprises and support workers of all ages in their transitions to new tasks and new jobs?*
- *How to ensure timely and reliable labour market information to monitoring and assess the employment impact of policies and improve policy design?*

The ILO Employment Policy Research Symposium is held every two years to collect and share knowledge on employment policies and to identify issues for future research and policy development. It draws on the views and expertise of ILO constituents, ILO specialists, the donor community and researchers from academic institutions and international organizations. Earlier meetings looked at the questions of jobs and skill mismatch in 2017 and full employment in 2019. This year's symposium is focusing on the means to follow up on the Global Call to Action in the areas of inclusive economic growth and employment.

Objectives

- *Take stock of the experience with the economic and employment policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic;*
- *Review conceptual and analytical foundations behind those responses and how they can help shape recovery strategies;*
- *Discuss main challenges to job-rich recovery in developed and developing economies and possible solutions;*
- *Share lessons from good practice and innovative approaches;*
- *Identify key items for future policy research work;*
- *Foster a global knowledge network amongst policy-makers, international experts and academia, upon which the ILO can rely in its follow-up to the Global Call for Action.*

The symposium will also provide the occasion to discuss preliminary ideas and possible topics for the second ILO Global Employment Policy Review (GEPR) report, planned to be published in the second half of 2022 and focusing on macroeconomic policies for job-rich growth and structural transformation.

Participants

This symposium will bring together ILO staff, tripartite constituents, policy-makers and experts from international agencies and the donor community, development partners and academic and research institutions.

Further information and contact

Regular updates about the conference will be provided at the following webpage:

<https://www.ilo.org/employment/lang--en/index.htm>

Queries can be made to jobssymposium@ilo.org (to be created)