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## Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council

*The future of work: towards a productive, inclusive and sustainable global society*

23-24 January 2024  
ECLAC Headquarters – Santiago, Chile

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### Background

Since the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration in 1995, countries have made significant strides in reducing poverty and advancing social development. Average levels of income, education, health and other markers of wellbeing have reached historical highs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reinforced the importance of the commitments made in Copenhagen, including through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prioritizing poverty eradication, education, health, gender equality, decent work and the reduction of inequality, to ensure that no one is left behind. It also emphasized that the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - are mutually reinforcing and indivisible.

Despite this, persistent inequalities within and between countries, rising economic insecurity, the intensifying impacts of climate change, escalating conflicts and the widening digital divide continue to represent roadblocks to achieve prosperity for all. Halfway through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, progress on critical social sectors has stalled and, in many cases, reversed. The commitment to leave no one behind is in peril.

With the [Political Declaration](#) of the 2023 SDG Summit as a roadmap for the future, there is a need to take a critical look at levers of transformation towards more sustainable and inclusive development. Decent work is one of those key levers; it can reduce poverty and inequalities while promoting inclusion. Furthermore, it is recognized that decent jobs and social protection constitute one of the transformative entry points - or key transitions - that can have catalytic and multiplier effects across the SDGs and an outsized determinant impact for achieving the Goals.

Labour markets are undergoing unprecedented transformation, owing to factors such as technological change, new production paradigms, demographic change, human mobility and migration in addition to global economic integration and the green transition. While

rapid changes in the labour market can garner significant benefits, labour market transitions are a difficult and complex process.

These global trends, together with institutional and policy changes, have benefited some sectors of the labour market while creating disruption in others, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, including low-skilled workers, especially those in the informal sector, among whom youth and migrants are overrepresented.

Gender gaps and barriers to women's full and equal participation in the world of work still persist and the growth of the informal sector has resulted in precarious employment and limited access to social protection. The changing nature of work calls for decisive action.

### **Objective and outcome**

The Special Meeting of ECOSOC will serve as an opportunity to discuss policy recommendations to:

- (i) Harness the opportunities that changes in the labour market bring and manage the challenges they pose to decent work;
- (ii) Explore the opportunities and limitations of technological advances and digitalization, including AI, and their impacts on the labour market while addressing the challenges of the digital divide;
- (iii) Identify policy options for advancing skills acquisition to build resilience and increase adaptation to labour transitions, with a view to accelerating progress on the SDGs; and
- (iv) Distill targeted efforts toward specific groups such as women, youth and migrants.

The outcome of the meeting will be a summary by the President of ECOSOC, which will serve as an input to the 2024 high-level political forum (HLPF), the Summit of the Future and proposed World Social Summit in 2025.

### **Format, modalities and participation**

The Special Meeting will be organized as informal plenary meetings of the Council. Member States are encouraged to be represented at the level of Permanent Representative or Ambassador. The President of the Economic and Social Council will deliver brief opening remarks followed by keynote speakers to set the stage for the discussions. The meeting will include interactive roundtable discussions with experts, inviting a dialogue with Member States and other stakeholders.

### **Supporting institutions**

Substantive support to the organization of the meeting has been provided by UNDESA, ECLAC, ILO and UNDP.

## Programme of activities

<b>Arrival Day: Monday, January 22, 2024</b>	
2:00 PM	<p><b>Off-site visit – more details will be forthcoming.</b> Field trip to see SDG implementation in practice (organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Transportation will be provided to and from the venue.</p> <p>This will be the only official activity for the day.</p>

<b>Day 1: Tuesday, January 23, 2024</b>	
8:00 - 9:00 AM	<b>Registration</b>
9:00 - 9:30 AM	<b>Welcome Coffee</b>
<b><i>Special meeting of ECOSOC on “The future of work: towards a productive, inclusive and sustainable global society” (meeting 1)</i></b>	
9:30 – 10:10 AM	<p><b>Opening of Special Meeting of ECOSOC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Paula Narváez</b>, President of the Economic and Social Council</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Alberto van Klaveren Stork</b>, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Amina J. Mohammed</b>, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations</li> <li>• <b>Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs</b>, Executive Secretary, ECLAC</li> </ul>
10:10 – 10:30 AM	<p><b>Keynote Address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Mariana Mazzucato</b>, Professor of Economics of Innovation and Public Value, University College London and founding director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (<i>virtual</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Jeffrey Sachs</b>, Director, Earth Institute, Centre for Sustainable Development, Columbia University (<i>virtual</i>)</li> </ul>

10:30 AM– 1:00 PM

**Round Table 1: Balancing the opportunities and challenges of a changing labour market to ensure decent work for all**

***Description:***

Technological innovation, the greening of economies, global integration, demographic change and other global trends bring opportunities for employment creation but, without decisive, course-correcting policy action, they may also continue to bring uncertainty and widen inequality within and outside of the labour market.

This interactive session will address recent and ongoing trends in the world of work, their main drivers and the opportunities and challenges these bring for decent work, as well as effective policy responses.

***Guiding questions:***

- *What are the main drivers of recent transformations in the world of work?*
- *How are these transformations impacting the quality of jobs, the expansion of decent work and other factors?*
- *What types of workers and groups of the population are being positively or negatively affected by such transformations? What policies can be put in place to address these impacts?*

***Chair:*** H.E. Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin, Vice President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations

***Moderator:*** H.E. Ms. Claudia Fuentes-Julio, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva and former chair of the ILO Governing Body.

***Keynote:***

- **Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo**, Director-General, ILO (*virtual*)

***Speakers:***

- **Ms. Camila Vallejo Dowling**, Minister Secretary General of Government, Republic of Chile
- **Ms. Shea Gopaul**, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, International Organization of Employers
- **Mr. David Acuña Millahueique**, President CUT Chile, International Trade Union Confederation

***Discussant:***

- **H.E. Ms. Anna Karin Eneström**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

***Interactive dialogue*** (*requests from the floor*)

1:00 – 3:00 PM	<b>Lunch Break</b> (Explanada Norte, ECLAC HQ)
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***Special meeting of ECOSOC on “The future of work: towards a productive, inclusive and sustainable global society” (meeting 2)***

3:00 – 6:00 PM	<b>Round Table 2: Harnessing the impacts of emerging technologies to support inclusive labour markets</b>
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***Description:***

Technological change, including the digital transformation, brings promise for improved labour market performance but also many challenges. Highly skilled workers are benefiting the most from technological innovation. Job disruption is affecting mainly low- and middle-skilled workers. While the speed of innovation challenges the ability of workers and employers to adjust, governments can help manage transitions by implementing the right policies and strengthening institutional frameworks. Governments can also set the norms and standards needed to ensure that technologies are steered towards helping and empowering workers.

This interactive discussion will discuss the possibilities and limitations of technology in the labour market and policy options to address them.

***Guiding questions:***

- *How does technological advancement impact jobs and wage polarization? What role do macroeconomic policies play?*
- *What are the changes required in education and vocational training to meet the need for new skills brought about by technological advances?*
- *How might closing the digital divide benefit low-skill workers, particularly in developing countries and marginalized communities?*

***Chair:*** H.E. Mr. Tarek Ladeb, Vice President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations

***Moderator:***

- **Mr. Robert Kirkpatrick**, Senior Adviser on Tech and AI, Dataminr

***Keynote:***

- **Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin**, Secretary General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) *(virtual)*

***Speakers:***

- **Ms. Aisén Etcheverry**, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Republic of Chile
- **Mr. Felipe Paullier**, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, United Nations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Alex Mavuti</b>, SENDAI Stakeholder Mechanism</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz</b>, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica</li> </ul> <p><b>Interactive dialogue</b> (<i>requests from the floor</i>)</p>	
6:00 – 6:15 PM	<b>Group Photo</b>
6:15 – 8:00 PM	<p><b>Reception</b> (Floor 17, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile)</p> <p>Buses will be departing from ECLAC to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</p>

<b>Day 2: Wednesday, January 24, 2024</b>	
9:00 – 9:30 AM	<p><b>Ceremony of commemoration of 75th Anniversary of ECLAC</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs</b>, Executive Secretary of ECLAC</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Paula Narváez</b>, President of the Economic and Social Council</li> <li>• <b>Representatives</b> of member countries of ECLAC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz</b>, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica</li> <li>○ <b>Mr. Jorge Faurie</b>, Ambassador, Argentina</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
9:30 – 9:40 AM	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b><i>Special meeting of ECOSOC on “The future of work: towards a productive, inclusive and sustainable global society” (meeting 3)</i></b>	
9:40AM – 12:00 PM	<b>Round Table 3: Shaping a future of decent work and social protection for all</b>
<p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>Given current global trends in poverty and inequality, policy responses for social protection, labour market transitions and impacts of technology on the changing world of work are needed to bring about poverty and inequality reduction. Shaping a</p>	

future of work that is more inclusive calls for promoting jobs and enterprise that guarantee rights at work, while extending social protection to all workers and promoting social dialogue. Skills training and a focus on specific groups including women and girls, youth and migrants, are critical to realizing a future with decent work for all and labour markets that can sustain shocks. Beyond labour market policies, building more inclusive societies calls for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, as well as greater international coordination and cooperation.

This session will examine policy measures at the national and regional levels that can best support these efforts, and multilateral actions that can advance progress towards decent work, the reduction of poverty and inequalities while enhancing social protection.

***Guiding questions:***

- *How do emerging technologies bring opportunities to reduce poverty and inequality, and promote the labour market inclusion of women and disadvantaged groups? What policy measures are needed?*
- *What strategies are needed to address persistent informality and promote the wellbeing of workers in informal employment?*
- *How can greater international coordination and cooperation help promote labour rights and access to social protection? How can it be strengthened?*

***Chair:*** H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Vice President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations

***Moderator:*** Mrs. Georgiana Braga-Orillard, Resident Representative of UNDP to Chile

***Keynote:***

- **H.E. Mr. Juan Somavía**, President of Permanent Forum on Foreign Policy of Chile, Honorary Club de Madrid Member, Former Director-General of ILO

***Speakers:***

- **Ms. Luz Vidal Huiriqueo**, Vice-Minister of Women and Gender Equality, Republic of Chile
- **Ms. Maria Noel Vaeza**, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, UN Women
- **Ms. Saru Duckworth**, Next Generation Fellow for Jobs & Economic Opportunities, UN Foundation
- **Ms. Robeliza Halip**, Representative, Indigenous Peoples Major Group

***Discussant:***

- **Ms. Gladys Mokhawa**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations

<b><i>Interactive dialogue</i></b> (requests from the floor)	
12:00– 12:05 PM	<p><b>Presentation of Key Messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Bob Rae</b>, Vice President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations</li> </ul>
12:05 – 12:30 PM	<p><b>Conclusion and Closing of Special Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Alberto van Klaveren Stork</b>, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Li Junhua</b>, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations</li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Georgiana Braga-Orillard</b>, Resident Representative of UNDP to Chile</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Paula Narváez</b>, President of the Economic and Social Council</li> </ul>
12:30 – 1:30 PM	<p><b>Special event</b> – Celebration of the legacy of Mr. Hernán Santa Cruz on the republishing of his memoirs “Cooperate or Perish: The Dilemma of the World Community”</p>
1:30 – 2:00 PM	<p><b>Cocktail</b> (Explanada Norte, ECLAC HQ)</p>
2:30 PM	<p><b>Cultural visit (optional)</b> Transportation will be provided to and from the venue.</p>