

The Future of Work

Session 1 of the *Future of the World*: *Global Policy Dialogues on Preparing for What's Next*

Wednesday, 15 September 2021
8:30-10 a.m. EDT

In line with the United Nations Secretary-General's efforts to enhance global preparedness for future challenges and crises, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) are hosting a six-part Global Policy Dialogue Series on "The Future of the World" from September 2021 to February 2022 to share insights and experiences to reduce risks and make our future systems more resilient¹. Coordinated and improved preparedness measures implemented across all levels of government and in partnership with stakeholders are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The "Future of the World" series will kick off in September with a high-level discussion on "The Future of Work." As the world continues to deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, speakers will consider the ramifications of the changing nature of work and lifelong learning—and what we need to do now in order to be better prepared for the future of work. Speakers also will debate crucial issues such as economic insecurity, the gig economy, informal work, fair wages, the role of artificial intelligence and policies to support workers. Across all issues, special attention will be paid to the needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, older persons, indigenous persons and persons with disabilities.

The September dialogue will draw from the key messages of UN DESA's upcoming policy briefs on the future of work, as well as from other UN resources. In partnering on this initiative, UN DESA and UNDP hope to enhance the preparedness of the UN system to respond to multi-dimensional and systemic risks in today's interconnected world.

Overall, this series will provide foresight analysis and address multidimensional risks such as economic and financial instabilities, rising inequalities, digital and frontier technologies, and climate change.

Format

The event will be a 90-minute fully virtual event, comprised of one 50-minute, moderator-led discussion among six high-level speakers, with about 30 minutes reserved for audience questions.

Platform

¹ This series is made possible by the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund.

The event will be held online and coordinated by Transcendent Enterprises, a video production company based in New York. The audience can watch via Zoom or a Facebook Live stream.

Language

The event will be held in English with captioning available in the six UN languages. American Sign Language translation will also be available.

Host/moderator

The professional moderator Aminda Leigh will moderate the event.

Panelists

- **Mr. Elliott Harris**, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, UN DESA
- **Mr. Luis Felipe Lopez-Calva**, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC), UNDP
- **Ms. Akustina Morni**, Senior Adviser, International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
- **Mr. Saúl Gómez**, Founder, Ni Un Repartidor Menos, an advocacy group for the rights of delivery workers
- **Ms. Lindsay Sanneman**, PhD candidate and member of the Interactive Robotics Group, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- **TBC**

Draft programme

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| I. | Introduction | 5 minutes |
| | a. Moderator remarks | |
| | b. Interactive poll of audience- Where are you from? (Word cloud) | |
| | c. Interactive poll – Are you worried about the future of work? (Multiple choice) | |
| II. | Video welcome | 4 minutes |
| | a. Video from UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin | |
| | b. Video from UNDP USG and Associate Administrator Usha Rao-Monari | |
| III. | Moderator transition | 2 minutes |
| | a. Interactive poll: What topic do you want to discuss first? A) Economic insecurity; B) Informal work and the gig economy; C) AI and automation | |

IV. Discussion on the Future of Work

63 minutes

a. Topic 1: Economic insecurity

15 minutes

- i. Panelists: Elliott Harris and Luis Felipe Lopez-Calva
- ii. Interactive poll: Do you think there is economic insecurity in the workplace right now? (multiple choice)
- iii. Moderator asks the guiding questions. Examples:
 1. *Broadly speaking, what is the status of the global job market a year and a half into the COVID-19 pandemic?*
 2. *What are some growth areas in the global workforce, and how do we empower people of all ages to take advantages of them?*
 3. *How can present skills and capabilities be transformed to address the future employment demand?*
- iv. Moderator allows time for 1-2 questions from the audience.

b. Topic 2: Informal work and the gig economy

15 minutes

- i. Panelists: Akustina Morni and Saul Gomez
- ii. Moderator to launch interactive poll: Should more be done to improve working conditions for people in the gig economy?
- iii. Moderator asks the guiding questions. Examples:
 1. *What are some examples of how digital labor platforms are providing opportunities for people to make money?*
 2. *How has the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the risks and inequalities for workers in informal work and the gig economy?*
 3. *What can be done to improve working conditions for these people?*
- iv. Moderator allows time for 1-2 questions from the audience.

c. Topic 3: Role of AI and automation

15 minutes

- i. Panelists: Lindsay Sanneman and TBC
- ii. Moderator to launch interactive poll : Are you concerned about AI and automation in the future of work?
- iii. Moderator asks the guiding questions. Examples:
 1. *What are some real-world examples of automation and human-robot interaction driving economic growth and opportunity?*
 2. *How do we ensure that technological advances don't leave anyone behind?*
 3. *What kinds of skills are useful and what kind of trainings can we put in place now to prepare the hybrid human-robot workforce?*
- iv. Moderator allows time for 1-2 questions from the audience.

d. Topic 4: Policies to support workers

23 minutes

- i. All panelists welcome to respond
- ii. Moderator to launch interactive poll: Who should be involved in developing policies to ensure fair treatment in the workplace?

iii. Moderator asks the guiding questions. Examples:

1. *What policies are required to ensure fair working conditions for people over the long term?*
2. *How can labor unions be used in the most beneficial way?*
3. *How do we ensure that productivity growth aligns with wage growth?*

iv. Moderator allows time for 1-2 questions from the audience.

V. Lightning round audience Q&A 8 minutes

- a. Questions posed by registrants both in advance and live in the conference platform
- b. All panelists welcome to answer.

VI. Wrap-up and next steps 4 minutes

- Interactive poll: Are you worried about the future of work? (Repeat of earlier poll, to see if people are more confident)
- Moderator final remarks
- Exit survey will launch upon end of Zoom