



CALL FOR PAPERS

POST-COVID LABOUR SUPPLY CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES: NEW CONSIDERATIONS FOR LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

4th Joint IMF-OECD-World Bank Conference on Structural Reforms

May 15, 2023 | OECD Conference Centre, Paris.

The COVID-19 pandemic has induced fundamental shifts in labour markets, working arrangements and business models. At the crisis' peak, many employees teleworked on a full-time basis, and businesses moved their entire operations away from the office. The acceleration of automation and digitalisation, substantial fiscal and monetary support, and extensive use of job retention or furlough schemes in some countries have all buttressed the economy in a situation of extreme duress.

Many workers have now returned to the office, but the pandemic has left its mark, pointing to both opportunities for policy reform and risks of scarring. On the one hand, the digitalisation and broader technological change that gained impetus during the pandemic could put economies on a higher productivity path, while providing greater flexibility for workers and employers alike. On the other hand, many workers are still not back in the labour force, resulting in a tight labour market. Gaps in the education of youth, who went through extended school closures, particularly in lower-income countries, are becoming apparent and raise the question of their impact on future labour markets and productivity. The current weakening of the economy and high inflation in the context of the war in Ukraine also raise concerns for labour markets and adverse distributional effects, while simultaneously putting a premium on accelerating the green transition.

In a post-Covid world, where inflation is high and growth fragile, structural policies and technological change can play an important role to ensure a dynamic, green and inclusive economy. Against this background, the conference will explore: (i) options to minimize the risk of scarring from the pandemic, (ii) policy lessons to boost resilience from the pandemic, and (iii) the mechanisms through which technological change is shaping the labour market and impacting firm dynamics. The conference will also discuss how policies can support technology and good jobs simultaneously and how government can prepare workers for a more digital and connected labour market.

AIM OF THE CONFERENCE AND TOPICS COVERED

The aim of the conference is to bring together policymakers and practitioners, international institutions, and leading academics to shed light on these issues from both practical and research perspectives and draw robust and novel policy implications. Some of the key questions the conference will cover include:

- How can we minimize scarring from the pandemic and build more resilient labour markets for the future? What lessons can we draw from the experience with job retention and furlough

schemes? How permanent are the changes in labour supply (e.g., great resignation) and how can they be addressed? How can we minimise long-term impacts of school closures, especially in lower-income countries?

- How are new technologies shaping the labour market? Are workers ready to participate in a more digital, automated and green labour market? What are the implications of these technologies for labour productivity and income inequality across workers and countries? Should governments adopt labour market policies for a more digital and green economy? How can governments support a fair and inclusive labour market at home and quality jobs?
- How are mega trends (e.g., impacts of the pandemic, challenges and opportunities linked to technological and climate change) influencing structural change and creating better job opportunities in low- and middle-income countries?

The conference will also feature a high-level policy panel and keynote speakers.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- Florence Jaumotte (IMF) and Marina Mendes Tavares (IMF): Fjaumotte@imf.org and mmmendestavares@imf.org
- Luiz de Mello (OECD) and Alain de Serres (OECD): luiz.demello@oecd.org and alain.deserres@oecd.org
- Marcello Estevão (World Bank): mestevao@worldbank.org

The organising committee is soliciting papers in the areas outlined above. In addition to academic research quality, preference will be given to policy-relevant papers that focus squarely on the impact of (one or several) key structural policies on labour market in the post-COVID environment.

SUBMISSIONS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Please submit papers by **15 January** to the following address (pmr_conference@oecd.org), with Mrs Ines Gomez Palacio on c.c. (Ines.gomezpalacio@oecd.org). Extended abstracts will also be accepted but preference will be given to full drafts.

Only authors of accepted papers will be notified of the decision, which will be communicated by **15 February**

Final drafts will be due by **30 March**.

CONTACT

Please address any queries you may have to:

- Mrs Ines Gomez Palacio (pmr_conference@oecd.org)