



Global Labor Market Conference

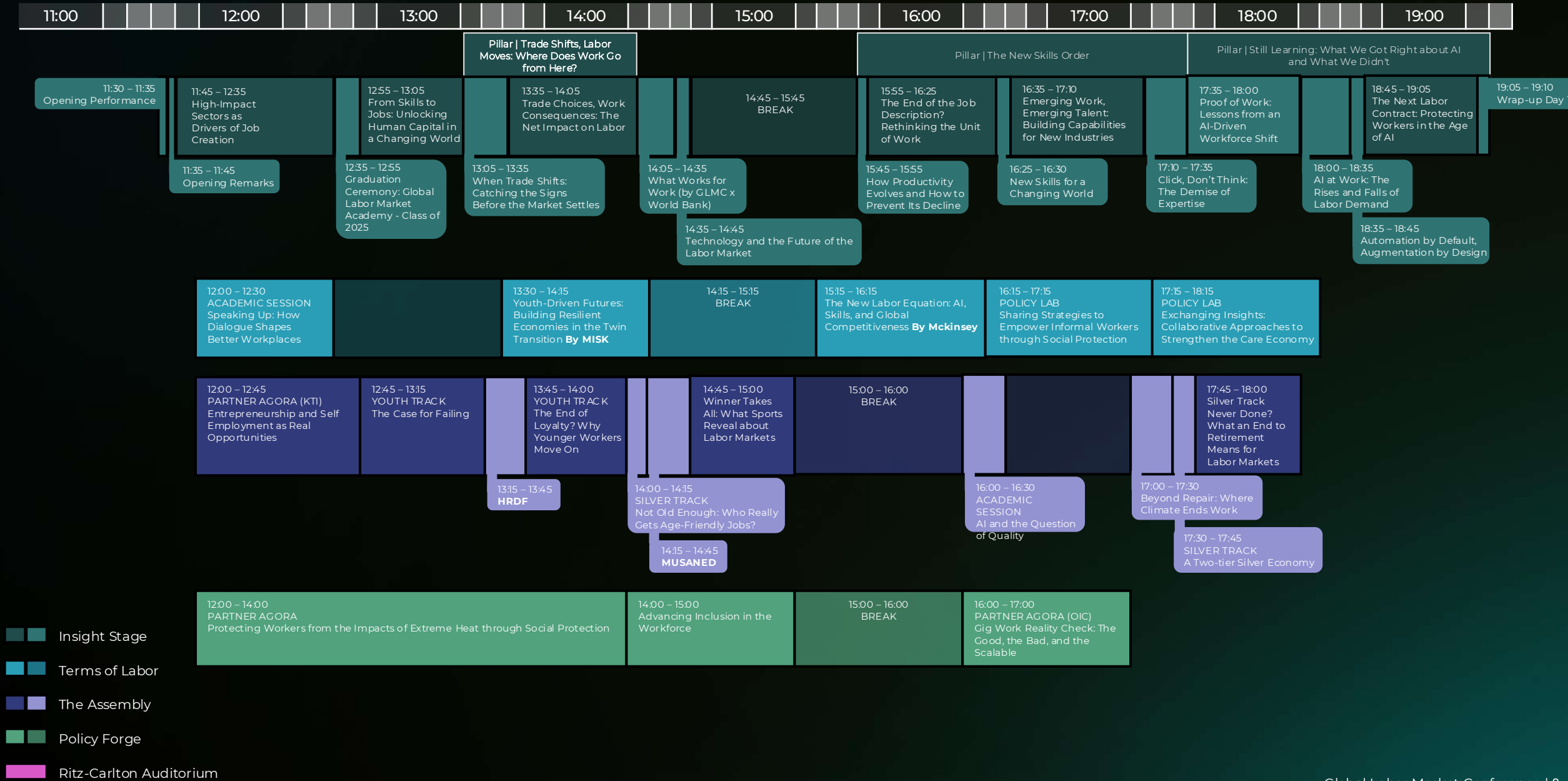
GLMC 2026 – DETAILED PROGRAM



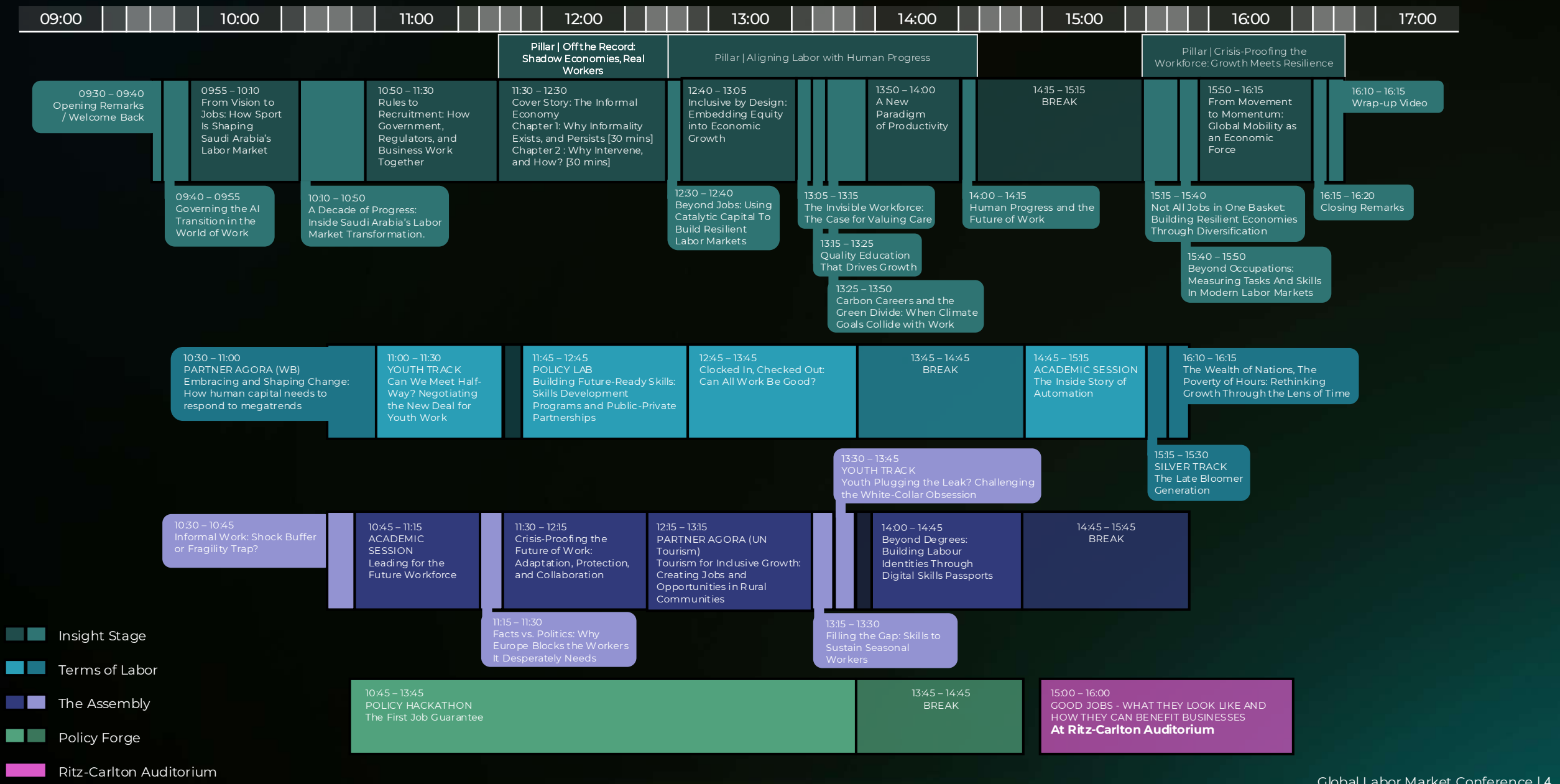


Program at-a-Glance

Day 01 | January 26



Day 02 | January 27



- Insight Stage
- Terms of Labor
- The Assembly
- Policy Forge
- Ritz-Carlton Auditorium



Insight Stage



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
11:30 – 11:35	PERFORMANCE	OPENING CEREMONY
11:35 – 11:45	OPENING REMARKS	OPENING REMARKS
11:45 – 12:35	MINISTERIAL PANEL	HIGH-IMPACT SECTORS AS DRIVERS OF JOB CREATION This ministerial panel will examine how high-impact sectors can drive job creation and inclusive growth. Ministers will discuss how targeted policies, strategic investments, and stronger collaboration between governments, the private sector, and other key stakeholders can unlock employment opportunities across both established and emerging industries. The conversation will also explore how better alignment between skills development, innovation, and workforce planning can strengthen labor markets and support sustainable economic diversification.
12:35 – 12:55	GRADUATION CEREMONY	GRADUATION CEREMONY: GLOBAL LABOR MARKET ACADEMY - CLASS OF 2025
12:55 – 13:05	KEYNOTE	FROM SKILLS TO JOBS: UNLOCKING HUMAN CAPITAL IN A CHANGING WORLD
PILLAR TRADE SHIFTS, LABOR MOVES: WHERE DOES WORK GO FROM HERE?		
13:05 – 13:35	INTRODUCTORY KEYNOTE + PANEL DISCUSSION	WHEN TRADE SHIFTS: CATCHING THE SIGNS BEFORE THE MARKET SETTLES Policy changes that alter market access may filter into labor markets only slowly, if at all, and their effects can be as beneficial as they are disruptive. The impacts on employment, skills, and wages often emerge unevenly and with delay, making it difficult to separate noise from genuine signals. Yet decisions on workforce planning, training, and adaptation cannot wait for perfect clarity. The challenge is how to read these signs with enough confidence to act before opportunities are lost or disruptions become entrenched. This conversation will focus on how to identify early cues and reliable metrics, and how to interpret them to anticipate and navigate labor market change.



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
TRADE CHOICES, WORK CONSEQUENCES: THE NET IMPACT ON LABOR		
13:35 – 14:05	PANEL DISCUSSION	The general discourse on trade shifts - protect vs. liberalize - is framed around blunt choices often shaped by interests. This debate will examine the full complexity of their implications for labor markets. Strategic questions include how decisions to reshore or nearshore production affect competitiveness and employment, how costs can be managed while sustaining growth, and whether the priority lies in shielding vulnerable sectors or cultivating new markets and capabilities. The central issue is what these choices imply for work, and whether, in the end, the net effect will be positive or negative.
WHAT WORKS FOR WORK		
14:05 – 14:35	INTRODUCTORY KEYNOTE + PANEL DISCUSSION	An introductory presentation drawing lessons on program design and implementation from a new catalogue of 103 successful labor market programs. The presentation will be followed by a moderated discussion exploring the key findings of the report, their implications, and opportunities for adapting these insights to future labor market policies.
TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF THE LABOR MARKET		
14:35 – 14:45	KEYNOTE	This keynote examines the reciprocal relationship between technology and the labor market as a “dual-impact loop”: how digital transformation and artificial intelligence are reshaping tasks within jobs, and how the tech-driven economy is redefining work models and required skills. It builds on the shift “from jobs to tasks,” exploring the redesign of roles into hybrid forms that combine human and machine capabilities, while highlighting AI as a “co-worker” with clearly defined responsibilities in high-impact decision-making. The session presents a practical approach to building a skills-based economy grounded in human-in-the-loop models, supported by flexible skills portfolios that shape professional career narratives and outcome-linked micro-credentials, alongside governance frameworks for trust and algorithmic transparency. It concludes with forward-looking tools such as labor-market digital twins, early-warning systems, and transition pathways for reskilling and redeployment.
14:45 – 15:45	LUNCH BREAK	



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
THE NEW SKILLS ORDER		
15:45 – 15:55	KEYNOTE	HOW PRODUCTIVITY EVOLVES AND HOW TO PREVENT ITS DECLINE
		As populations age, assumptions about declining productivity are proving too simplistic. Evidence shows that output at later stages of working life changes more than it falls, with experience, judgment, and stability often offsetting physical or pace-related limits. However, this resilience does not occur by default. A central and growing challenge for employment is the impact of AI on the demand for labor and the nature of work itself. Employment systems are still largely built around outdated models, creating the paradox of willing and capable older workers being sidelined. This session examines how deliberate policy choices and firm-level practices, including how AI is deployed alongside human capital from job design and training to hiring and retention, are essential to prevent productivity decline and to harness later-career talent in line with what the data actually shows.
15:55 – 16:25	PANEL DISCUSSION	THE END OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION? RETHINKING THE UNIT OF WORK
		Work structures are already diversifying but now even the traditional job itself is being rethought. Skills-based organizations promise more fluid ways of deploying talent, where work can be broken into projects, broadened into problem-solving, or organized around outcomes and value. But this transformation raises pressing questions: Does it create more opportunity for workers, or fragment careers into short-term tasks? How can skills be measured, validated, and rewarded fairly across industries and borders? And what role should governments, firms, and institutions play in setting standards and ensuring fairness as the very unit of work is redefined?
16:25 – 16:35	KEYNOTE	NEW SKILLS FOR A CHANGING WORLD
		As Vision 2030 accelerates the Kingdom's fast-growing economic evolution, the aerospace sector is emerging as a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's diversified and decarbonized future. In this session, Airbus CHRO Carmen-Maja Rex explores the "golden age of aerospace" and the critical role of human capital in driving global innovation. With the Middle East projected to require 265,000 new skilled personnel over the next two decades— including pilots and maintenance engineers — a strategic framework to build a sustainable pipeline of talent is essential.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
16:35 – 17:10	INTRODUCTORY KEYNOTE + PANEL DISCUSSION	EMERGING WORK, EMERGING TALENT: BUILDING CAPABILITIES FOR NEW INDUSTRIES
		New industries rarely start with an existing talent base. Companies have to decide how to build the capabilities these sectors require: what to prioritize, how to structure roles, and how to work with education and training systems as they take shape. This session focuses on the practical side of developing talent for sectors that are still forming: how organizations identify the skills they need, how they build them, and what it takes to get a workforce off the ground when the sector is still taking shape.
17:10 – 17:35	PANEL DISCUSSION	CLICK, DON'T THINK: THE DEMISE OF EXPERTISE
		Deskilling was once a concern of industrial work, where routine tasks were automated and expertise stripped from the shop floor. Today, the same dynamic is reaching professional and white-collar jobs. Intelligent systems take on routine cognitive tasks, leaving fewer entry-level roles where new workers build experience, while professionals themselves risk over-reliance on automated decision-making. If work no longer teaches, how do workers build experience? How can we restore career progression? And how should education and training systems adapt to keep pace with these changes?
STILL LEARNING: WHAT WE GOT RIGHT ABOUT AI AND WHAT WE DIDN'T		
17:35 – 18:00	FIRESIDE CHAT	PROOF OF WORK: LESSONS FROM AN AI-DRIVEN WORKFORCE SHIFT
		What happens when an organization becomes the first testing ground for its own AI transformation? This session shares hard-earned insights from the frontlines—on upskilling at scale, rethinking productivity, and navigating the future of work from the inside out.



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
18:00 – 18:35	PANEL DISCUSSION	AI AT WORK: THE RISES AND FALLS OF LABOR DEMAND AI promises short-term productivity gains but raises longer-term questions about employment itself. Rather than the “barbell” labor market of the 2000s, with growth at both the high and low ends, recent trends show an upward ramp: concentrated gains for highly skilled, well-paid workers, with shrinking opportunities elsewhere. The result is a labor market less polarized but more exclusive, where access to training and advanced skills determines who thrives and who is displaced. What does this shift mean for overall employment levels? Is the narrowing of opportunity a temporary adjustment or a structural break? And what policy or institutional levers could expand the pathways for workers at risk of being left behind?
18:35 – 18:45	KEYNOTE	AUTOMATION BY DEFAULT, AUGMENTATION BY DESIGN AI development today is largely shaped by private incentives: firms seek cost-cutting, and vendors deliver automation. Left to markets alone, these dynamic risks displacing work rather than expanding it. Yet policy can tilt innovation in another direction, toward technologies that create new tasks, complement worker skills, and enable more effective training and re-training. The question is whether governments should actively steer AI in this way, and what tools, from tax policy to R&D investment, can shift the balance from replacing labor to augmenting it.
18:45 – 19:05	PANEL DISCUSSION	THE NEXT LABOR CONTRACT: PROTECTING WORKERS IN THE AGE OF AI AI has pushed creative industries to the frontlines of labor disruption. Performers and writers face the prospect of digital replicas replacing their work, while technicians and designers see routine tasks automated away. Unions and guilds have responded with demands for new protections, but can these institutions adapt fast enough? Are current bargaining frameworks enough to govern issues like consent, likeness, and hybrid creative-technical roles, or do we need entirely new mechanisms of representation and regulation? This session uses creative labor as a test case for how unions and contracts must evolve to defend workers in the age of AI.



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
9:30 – 9:40	OPENING REMARKS	OPENING REMARKS
9:40 – 9:55	FIRESIDE CHAT	GOVERNING THE AI TRANSITION IN THE WORLD OF WORK
9:55 – 10:10	FIRESIDE CHAT	FROM VISION TO JOBS: HOW SPORT IS SHAPING SAUDI ARABIA’S LABOR MARKET Under Vision 2030, sport has evolved from a niche activity into a fast-growing economic sector and a new engine for employment in Saudi Arabia. This conversation explores how the sports value chain has professionalized, where the most promising job opportunities are emerging, and how international events and global talent are interacting with local workforce development. It will also look beyond headline events to the systems, institutions, and partnerships—across education, tourism, and government—that are building skills, supporting Saudi talent, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the sports sector.
10:10 – 10:50	PRESENTATION + PANEL DISCUSSION	A DECADE OF PROGRESS: INSIDE SAUDI ARABIA’S LABOR MARKET TRANSFORMATION Discover how Saudi Arabia's labor market is transforming-and what it means for inclusive growth. Drawing on a decade of change under Vision 2030 and the Labor Market Strategy, this session reveals how modernized institutions, bold reforms, and a revitalized private sector are opening pathways for all-especially within micro and small enterprises. Explore how inclusion, skills, and evolving norms are accelerating job creation and diversification, and learn practical lessons policymakers can apply in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
RULES TO RECRUITMENT: HOW GOVERNMENT, REGULATORS, AND BUSINESS WORK TOGETHER		
10:50 – 11:30	MINISTERIAL PANEL	This session examines how job creation happens at the intersection of government policy, regulation, and business decision-making. Bringing together senior government, regulatory leadership, and the private sector, the discussion will focus on how rules, incentives, regulatory frameworks, and skills systems translate into real hiring decisions. Speakers will explore where alignment between policy intent and business reality matters most, what enables firms to hire at scale, and how government, regulators, business, and education stakeholders can work together more effectively to deliver jobs.
OFF THE RECORD: SHADOW ECONOMIES, REAL WORKERS		
CHAPTER 1: WHY INFORMALITY EXISTS, AND PERSISTS		
11:30 – 11:55	PANEL DISCUSSION	Informal work varies in scale across regions and takes very different forms. It can emerge from weak enforcement, barriers to formal employment, rapid migration, or social norms. In some contexts, it cushions shocks when formal jobs disappear; in others, it locks workers into insecurity. This segment asks why informal systems arise, why they persist, and when they function as a buffer versus a trap.
CHAPTER 2: WHY INTERVENE, AND HOW?		
11:55 – 12:20	IN-CONVERSATION	When action is taken on informal economies, the objectives can vary widely. What exactly are we trying to change when we intervene? Is the goal to extend protections, expand revenues, improve productivity, or create paths into formal work? This segment examines the aims behind intervention, the difficulty of acting without solid data, and the frequent gap between policies designed in theory and the realities they meet on the ground.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
ALIGNING LABOR WITH HUMAN PROGRESS		
12:20 – 12:30	KEYNOTE	THE INFORMAL ECONOMY
		Informal economies are vast, yet sit outside the reach of data, policy, and protections. This session looks at how they can be accurately mapped, the trade-offs they create, the interventions that work, and what effective progress looks like in practice.
12:30 – 12:40	KEYNOTE	BEYOND JOBS: USING CATALYTIC CAPITAL TO BUILD RESILIENT LABOR MARKETS
		As global trade patterns shift, climate shocks intensify, and artificial intelligence reshapes labor markets, millions of workers and small enterprises remain exposed to volatility, informality, and exclusion from capital. In this keynote, Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Secretary of UNCDF, will explore how innovative finance and blended capital can play a decisive role in crisis-proofing the workforce and bringing much needed public and private capital, both domestic and international, to create jobs in early stage and last mile markets. Drawing on UNCDF's on-the-ground experience across Least Developed Countries and fragile contexts, the session will highlight how de-risking instruments, catalytic concessional finance, guarantees, and digital financial solutions can preserve jobs, sustain MSMEs, and accelerate recovery during shocks, while expanding opportunity for informal and underserved workers. The address will offer practical insights on how finance can move beyond stabilization toward building resilient, inclusive, and future-ready labor markets.
12:40 – 13:05	PANEL DISCUSSION	INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN: EMBEDDING EQUITY INTO ECONOMIC GROWTH
		Too often, economic growth comes first, and inequality is addressed only after the fallout. But can growth itself be designed to be inclusive from the start? Today, youth are nearly three times as likely to be unemployed as adults (ILO), while the top 10% of earners capture over half of global income (World Inequality Database). These gaps show that growth left on autopilot deepens divides. By contrast, the IMF finds that reducing inequality lengthens growth spells, proving inclusivity is not only fairer but also more sustainable. This session challenges policymakers and business leaders to rethink how jobs are created and distributed. Should inclusivity be built into trade, industrial, and tech policy by design, or will labor markets continue to clean up after disruption? Are current growth metrics (GDP, productivity) outdated, given that they overlook fairness, autonomy, and resilience?

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
13:05 – 13:15	KEYNOTE	THE INVISIBLE WORKFORCE: THE CASE FOR VALUING CARE Unpaid care work, from childcare and elder care to domestic chores and emotional support, contributes enormously to households and economies, yet receives no compensation. Most of it is excluded from GDP and unprotected in policy, and the burden falls disproportionately on women, who perform nearly three-quarters of it worldwide. According to the ILO, 16.4 billion hours of unpaid care are carried out every day, equivalent to 2 billion full-time jobs. At the same time, paid care work, such as nursing, remains undervalued despite its essential economic and social role. Nurses face chronic shortages, rising workloads, and structural challenges, even though their contribution is central to resilient health systems. Recognizing both unpaid and paid care is vital to gender equality, economic growth, and societal wellbeing. This session will examine how governments, employers, and communities can value care more fairly, strengthen professions like nursing, and build systems that transform care work, visible and invisible, into a foundation for shared prosperity.
		QUALITY EDUCATION THAT DRIVES GROWTH Aspiring to be “a globally pioneering and high-impact Saudi quality model for education and training that contributes to national development and economic growth,” the Saudi Model for Quality Assurance and Control drives system-wide transformation across K-12, higher education, and vocational training. Its integrated frameworks and standards ensure that evaluation results become actionable evidence that guides policy, enhances institutional performance, and delivers measurable improvement. Grounded in the belief that quality education is achieved when graduates succeed in the labor market, ETEC’s model looks beyond short-term learning outcomes to long-term indicators of employability and productivity. Using data, diagnostics, and advanced analytics, it captures how education translates into workforce impact. By engaging employers and sectoral leaders in defining national learning standards, the model ensures that program evaluations directly strengthen workforce readiness and support sustained economic growth.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
13:25 – 13:50	PANEL DISCUSSION	CARBON CAREERS AND THE GREEN DIVIDE: WHEN CLIMATE GOALS COLLIDE WITH WORK Climate change is disrupting labor markets, lifestyles, and livelihoods, creating challenges and opportunities for households, employers and policymakers. As governments accelerate decarbonization, vulnerable households may be confronted with burdens that they cannot easily absorb. Some workers in carbon-intensive sectors may find their skills abruptly devalued. At the same time, new employment opportunities are created in growing sectors, leading to labor shortages. Similar tensions are unfolding across societies, labor markets and industries worldwide.
		The challenge is not whether transitions will happen, but whether labor systems and support measures can adapt quickly enough to make them just and inclusive. This session will debate how workers and households can be protected, supported and re-skilled during green transitions. Should policies include wage protection and guaranteed reemployment for displaced workers? Can governments and industries build rapid retraining pipelines to channel talent into climate-resilient sectors? And how can they ensure that the global pivot to sustainability does not leave vulnerable households and communities behind?
13:50 – 14:00	KEYNOTE	A NEW PARADIGM OF PRODUCTIVITY The world of work is changing, fast. Technologies like generative AI are reshaping how value is created, elevating the importance of human judgment, creativity, and adaptability. The old industrial-era approach to productivity—focused on reducing the cost of labor—no longer serves. The frontier now lies in increasing the value of human output: enabling people to build and renew their skill capital over the course of their lives. This requires rethinking public and corporate infrastructures that support continuous learning, shifting from a schooled society (where development is front-loaded in youth) to a lifelong learning society where every worker can grow. It also calls for employers and nations to view investment in talent not as a cost to minimize, but as a strategic imperative in a world where competitive advantage will come from skill, not just scale. In this keynote, Matt Sigelman, President of the Burning Glass Institute, will examine the latest labor market trends and challenge the audience to envision how they can broaden access to skill-building, advance upward mobility, and unlock human potential at scale in the emerging Human Economy.



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
CRISIS-PROOFING THE WORKFORCE: GROWTH MEETS RESILIENCE		
HUMAN PROGRESS AND THE FUTURE OF WORK		
14:00 – 14:15	FIRESIDE CHAT	This session explores the evolving role of artificial intelligence in shaping the future of work within regulatory-driven sectors, particularly in the food and pharmaceutical industries. It highlights how AI technologies are influencing workforce models, governance practices, quality and risk management, and decision-making, while supporting more efficient and responsive organizational operations. The discussion also addresses the implications for human capital development, emerging skills, and role evolution, emphasizing the importance of responsible adoption and human-AI collaboration. Drawing on regulatory perspectives, the session reflects how intelligent technologies can enhance human capabilities, strengthen institutional effectiveness, and contribute to sustainable growth and competitiveness in the labor market.
14:15 – 15:15	LUNCH BREAK	
NOT ALL JOBS IN ONE BASKET: BUILDING RESILIENT ECONOMIES THROUGH DIVERSIFICATION		
15:15 – 15:40	PANEL DISCUSSION	Labor markets concentrated in a few industries are far more vulnerable to shocks. During COVID-19, for example, countries dependent on tourism saw job losses spike by more than 70% in the sector (ILO), while more diversified economies rebounded faster. This session examines whether diversification is always the best path, or if specialization in high-value industries can also provide resilience. How should policymakers weigh sectoral balance against competitiveness and comparative advantage? Can diversification be actively designed through policy, or does it evolve organically from markets? And what role should international cooperation play in supporting countries as they transition from dependence to adaptability?



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
15:40– 15:50	KEYNOTE	BEYOND OCCUPATIONS: MEASURING TASKS AND SKILLS IN MODERN LABOR MARKETS Technological progress, including AI, is transforming work by changing what people actually do on the job. Remote work and platforms are reshaping how and where work is performed. Yet our labour market data has not kept pace. Traditional surveys tell us who workers are and which occupations they hold, but offer limited insight into their tasks, skills, and technologies, which are the drivers of productivity, wages, and inequality. Task-based approaches help bridge this gap, but with a critical flaw: most countries rely on measures developed for the United States, implicitly assuming jobs are the same everywhere. This can lead to misleading conclusions, particularly across economies that differ in technology adoption, skill supply, and institutions. In this session, Dr. Piotr examines how labor market surveys and information systems can be modernized to better capture technological change and new forms of work and presents new evidence on cross-country differences in workers' exposure to emerging technologies.
15:50 – 16:15	IN-CONVERSATION	FROM MOVEMENT TO MOMENTUM: GLOBAL MOBILITY AS AN ECONOMIC FORCE Global mobility and the economic impact of migration are critical topics in today's interconnected world. As people move across borders in search of better opportunities, they bring diverse skills, perspectives, and innovations that can significantly enhance economic growth. This migration contributes not only to the labor market but also to cultural exchange, fostering creativity and entrepreneurship. However, the effects of migration are multifaceted, leading to both opportunities and challenges for host countries, such as labor shortages in certain sectors and pressure on public services. Furthermore, the economic contributions of migrants can vary widely based on their skills, education, and integration into the local economy.
16:15 – 16:20	CLOSING REMARKS	CLOSING REMARKS
16:20 – 16:35		SPONSORS' RECOGNITION



The Policy Forge

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
PROTECTING WORKERS FROM THE IMPACTS OF EXTREME HEAT THROUGH SOCIAL PROTECTION		
The session provides a focused platform to explore how social protection systems can adapt to the growing risks associated with extreme heat stress. It has the following objectives:		
12:00 – 14:00	WORKSHOP	• Explore the potential role of different social protection benefits, including partial unemployment, sickness benefits, work injury compensation and access to health care in addressing the impacts of extreme heat on workers and employers. • Share experiences and best practices from countries that are already working to strengthen their social protection schemes to better address the impacts of extreme heat. • Highlight the challenges faced by workers in accessing social protection in the context of extreme heat, including those faced by migrant workers, both in their host country and country of origin. • Identify research and knowledge gaps, opportunities for and challenges of policy reform, especially in the GCC, for integrating heat-related contingencies into existing or potential social protection schemes, as well as potential next steps.
ADVANCING INCLUSION IN THE WORKFORCE		
14:00 – 15:00	PANEL DISCUSSION	This session will explore practical and effective approaches to advancing inclusion in the workforce, with a particular focus on increasing female participation. Drawing on policy perspectives and organizational experience, the discussion will highlight best practices, enabling frameworks, and concrete actions that have supported women's entry, retention, and progression in the labor market. Speakers will also reflect on the positive economic and social impact of greater female participation, and the role of leadership, workplace design, and institutional collaboration in sustaining progress.
GIG WORK REALITY CHECK: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE SCALABLE		
Gig work is expanding rapidly, creating new income opportunities and flexible ways for people to participate in the labor market. At the same time, the pace of growth is outstripping many existing labor frameworks, which can leave protections and enforcement uneven as policymakers and platforms adapt. This Reality Check session uses the Pillar 2 frame to separate:		
16:00 – 17:00	POLICY IN A FLASH	• The Good: what's genuinely improving opportunity and access, • The Bad: what repeatedly fails workers or regulators in real life, and • The Scalable: reforms that are feasible to implement at national or platform scale without driving work further into the shadows.



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
		THE FIRST JOB GUARANTEE
10:45 – 13:45	HACKATHON	• Framing: The first job is more than a paycheck: it sets the trajectory for a young person's entire career. Yet too many graduates and school-leavers face long spells of unemployment before getting that first foothold, leaving effects that persist for years: lower wages, weaker prospects, and slower progression. • Guiding questions: ◦ How can labor markets ensure every young person transitions quickly into their first job? ◦ Should solutions focus on public employment guarantees, incentives for firms, or new transitional pathways? ◦ How can first-job programs build not just employment, but also skills, confidence, and upward mobility? • Output: A First Job Guarantee Framework, co-created by youth, policymakers, employers, and academics, setting out actionable mechanisms to make early entry



The Assembly

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELF EMPLOYMENT AS REAL OPPORTUNITIES		
12:00 – 12:45	PANEL DISCUSSION	Formal job creation is not keeping pace with the growth of the youth population so self-employment and entrepreneurship will have to fill the gap. What support - including finance, networks and skills - are needed to turn informal side hustles into sustainable livelihoods?
THE CASE FOR FAILING		
12:45 – 13:15	PANEL DISCUSSION	With fewer financial burdens and dependents, young people are often the group best placed to take risks: starting companies, testing ideas, and exploring non-traditional career paths. Early setbacks can be recovered from and even provide valuable experience. But how do we turn this risk-taking potential into a genuine labor-market advantage? This session will ask: How can we build a greater appetite for risk among youth rather than steering them into conventional jobs? Is it fair to encourage risk-taking if it means some young people may re-enter the labor market later, competing with peers who chose safer, more stable paths? And what kinds of support - financial, educational, cultural - are needed so bold choices don't translate into long-term penalties?
13:15 – 13:45	ANNOUNCEMENT	HRDF
THE END OF LOYALTY? WHY YOUNGER WORKERS MOVE ON		
13:45 – 14:00	IN-CONVERSATION	Younger workers are often seen as less loyal to employers, moving more frequently between jobs. But is this a matter of generational preference, or the result of structural changes in labor markets, from rising precarity and fewer pensions to the decline of long-term contracts? This session examines how job loyalty has changed across cohorts, whether it reflects values or circumstances, and what the implications are for retention, productivity, and organizational design.



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
14:00 – 14:15	KEYNOTE	NOT OLD ENOUGH: WHO REALLY GETS AGE-FRIENDLY JOBS? Research shows that jobs considered “age-friendly”, with more flexibility, stability, and lower physical strain, are not primarily filled by older workers. Instead, they have been taken up by women and college graduates. This is not necessarily a problem, but it does limit the ability of such jobs to extend working lives while minimising the broader labor market impact. The challenge is how to direct these opportunities more effectively toward older workers. Should broad age-based policies be complemented with targeted measures? Is the answer to make specific occupations more age-friendly, or to better support transitions into them?
14:15 – 14:45	ANNOUNCEMENT	MUSANID
14:45 – 15:00	FIRESIDE CHAT	WINNER TAKES ALL: WHAT SPORTS REVEAL ABOUT LABOR MARKETS Sports often display labor market dynamics in their purest form. A few superstars earn outsized rewards while most players face strict limits on mobility through drafts, contracts, or salary caps. This combination of extreme inequality and restricted bargaining power offers a clear window into how markets work. This session explores what sports can teach us about how talent is valued, how markets concentrate rewards at the top, and what policies or designs might make other labor markets fairer and more balanced.
16:00 – 16:35	PANEL DISCUSSION	AI AND THE QUESTION OF QUALITY AI promises productivity gains, but its outputs often raise questions of quality. What is the net effect when work is faster but not always better? Are workers truly more productive, or are we seeing a trade-off between quantity and quality? And does quality even matter equally across contexts: from high-stakes fields like data analysis, research, and legal work, to lower-stakes uses such as drafting presentations or generic marketing copy? This theme invites research on how AI adoption reshapes quality standards and the value placed on different kinds of work

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
17:05 – 17:30	PANEL DISCUSSION	BEYOND REPAIR: WHERE CLIMATE ENDS WORK The ILO estimates that 80 million jobs could be lost by 2030 due to heat stress alone, particularly in agriculture and construction, sectors that employ some of the world's poorest workers. Beyond heat, floods, wildfires, droughts, and storms are destroying livelihoods, displacing millions, and intensifying inequality. The World Bank warns that without action, climate change could push over 100 million people into poverty by 2030, much of it through lost work opportunities. This session will debate how labor systems can adapt to the upheavals caused by major climate shocks — when lakes dry up, farmland becomes unusable, or entire regions can no longer sustain traditional industries. Who should decide whether disaster-response policies include guaranteed reemployment and wage protection? How can reskilling programs redirect displaced workers into climate-resilient sectors? And what new forms of labor mobility and social protection are needed when whole communities are forced to abandon their livelihoods at once.
17:30 – 17:45	FIRESIDE CHAT	A TWO-TIER SILVER ECONOMY For some older workers, extended careers open opportunities: consulting, entrepreneurship, or part-time leadership roles that turn experience into an asset. For others, longer working lives mean low-wage service, gig, or physically demanding jobs: underpaid, under protected, and often in direct competition with younger workers. This divide raises a central policy dilemma: when governments and employers encourage later retirement, which older workers are they talking about? Are policies designed around the privileged few who thrive or do they risk exposing vulnerable groups to prolonged insecurity? This session will ask: How is longevity deepening inequality within the older workforce itself? What are the labor-market consequences of a two-tier silver economy? How should policy be designed to support longer working lives without widening divides?
17:45 – 18:00	KEYNOTE	NEVER DONE? WHAT AN END TO RETIREMENT MEANS FOR LABOR MARKETS Aging populations, fiscal pressures, and longer lifespans are pushing governments to raise retirement ages or encourage part-time work beyond traditional thresholds. For some, extended working lives are framed as empowerment and purpose; for others, they are a necessity in the face of inadequate pensions. This session will ask: What happens to labor markets if retirement becomes gradual, optional, or disappears altogether? How can older workers remain active without constraining opportunities for younger entrants? What changes to pensions, healthcare, and workplace design are needed if longer working lives become the norm? Is this shift about extending choice or shifting the burden onto workers?



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
INFORMAL WORK: SHOCK BUFFER OR FRAGILITY TRAP?		
10:30 – 10:45	IN-CONVERSATION	Informal work often expands rapidly during downturns, absorbing displaced workers when formal jobs disappear. Does this flexibility make labor markets more resilient, or does it mask deeper fragility by leaving workers without protections during recovery? Understanding whether informality stabilizes or destabilizes economies is key to anticipating the role it will play in future crises.
LEADING FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE		
10:45 – 11:15	KEYNOTE	What leadership and management practices are required currently and for the future of organizations? How do leaders manage the evolution of their workforce? How can organizations maintain being “human” with the adoption of AI and technology? Organizations are always changing as they adapt to evolving environments. The people within the organizations have also been impacted by a combination of external and internal factors. Leaders are faced with these challenges to chart the way forward for the future. Based on decades of experience in being within organizations and also working with executives globally, this session will reflect from latest experience in the field and thinking in academia on how the challenges can be addressed, with a focus on leadership style, having a human-centered approach and with a focus on improving the understanding of institutional decision-making. The session will provide inspiration for leaders who are actively involved in pursuing management excellence within their institution.
FACTS VS. POLICY: WHY EUROPE BLOCKS THE WORKERS IT DESPERATELY NEEDS		
11:15 – 11:30	KEYNOTE	Europe is aging, shrinking, and facing structural labor shortages—yet political decisions often move in the opposite direction. Poland illustrates this paradox vividly: despite reliable data confirming severe demographic decline, policymakers recently chose to restrict access for non-EU workers, undermining sectors that depend on them for survival. This keynote explores why evidence is no longer enough to shape labor policy, how political incentives overshadow demographic reality, and what this means for Europe's economic resilience. Using Poland as a case study, the session highlights the urgent need to reconnect labor mobility policy with facts, not fear.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
CRISIS-PROOFING THE FUTURE OF WORK: ADAPTATION, PROTECTION, AND COLLABORATION		
11:30 – 12:15	PANEL DISCUSSION	Crises—whether health-related, economic, or environmental—cause significant disruption to workplaces by altering operations, accelerating shifts in work practices, and exposing vulnerabilities in labor markets. They often force rapid adoption of new technologies, flexible arrangements, and safety measures. Crises can deepen existing inequalities and highlight the need for stronger worker protections. Long-term impacts typically include increased focus on employee well-being, organizational resilience, and the development of adaptable, inclusive policies to better prepare for future challenges.
TOURISM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: CREATING JOBS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN RURAL COMMUNITIES		
12:15 – 13:15	WORKSHOP	As the United Nations specialized agency for tourism, UN Tourism works to position tourism as a driver of sustainable development, inclusive growth, and decent employment. Through its Tourism for Rural Development Programme, UN Tourism supports rural communities in harnessing tourism to create jobs, strengthen local value chains, and improve livelihoods while safeguarding cultural and natural heritage. Organized under this framework, the session will explore how tourism can contribute to more inclusive labour markets. It will examine case studies, support modalities, and best-practices that enable employment generation and foster social inclusion in rural areas. By sharing and discussing concrete experiences and good practices, the session aims to highlight actionable pathways for integrating tourism into broader labour market and rural development strategies.
FILLING THE GAP: SKILLS TO SUSTAIN SEASONAL WORKERS		
13:15 – 13:30	IN-CONVERSATION	Millions of workers build their livelihoods around industries that peak at certain times of the year - harvesting crops, construction, serving tourists, staffing festivals, or working holiday retail. While these jobs create vital opportunities, they also leave workers navigating long stretches of instability and uncertain career paths. This session asks: how can labor markets turn temporary opportunities into sustainable livelihoods? Should policy focus on off-season reskilling, mobility between sectors, or is volatility an unavoidable feature of seasonal employment?

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
13:30 – 13:50	PANEL DISCUSSION	YOUTH PLUGGING THE LEAK? CHALLENGING THE WHITE-COLLAR OBSESSION Education systems and families have pushed young people toward college degrees and white-collar jobs. But in the process, artisanal professions, from skilled trades to craft-based work, have lost status and appeal, even as many societies face shortages in these fields. This session will ask: Have we undervalued artisanal and creative careers by focusing too narrowly on academic pathways? How do young people themselves view the future of trades and crafts? What would it take to restore dignity, opportunity, and innovation in artisanal professions, and can youth lead that shift?
14:00 – 14:45	WORKSHOP	BEYOND DEGREES: BUILDING LABOR IDENTITIES THROUGH DIGITAL SKILLS PASSPORTS A truly skills-first labor market depends on strong alignment across all actors in the national skills development and recognition ecosystem. This session explores the emerging role of digital skills passports as a trusted signal of an individual's verified competencies—providing employers with evidence of what a person can do, not only what they studied. Complementing, rather than replacing, the traditional CV, skills passports translate learning, experience, and assessment outcomes into meaningful, real-world indicators of capability. They offer a new, more transparent form of labor identity that supports mobility, employability, and lifelong learning. Led by the Saudi National Centre for E-Learning (NELC), this panel brings together policymakers and lifelong learning leaders to examine good practice from Saudi Arabia and discuss the policy frameworks needed to build and sustain an integrated national skills ecosystem.

Terms of Labor

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
SPEAKING UP: HOW DIALOGUE SHAPES BETTER WORKPLACES		
12:00 – 12:30	ROUNDTABLE	From formal consultation mechanisms to emerging models of dialogue, approaches that give workers a voice are being revisited for their impact on job quality and firm performance. Research shows that meaningful voice can raise productivity and reduce separations, though effects vary by context, legal environment, and workforce composition. Benefits often emerge over time and are strongest where cooperation and trust are present. This theme invites research and perspectives on how worker voice and participation influence productivity, retention, and equity; which approaches to dialogue are most effective; and under what conditions voice can strengthen both organizations and workers.
YOUTH-DRIVEN FUTURES: BUILDING RESILIENT ECONOMIES IN THE TWIN TRANSITION		
13:30 – 14:15	PANEL DISCUSSION	The twin transition -simultaneous green and digital transformation- is reshaping global labor markets, creating unprecedented opportunities and risks for youth. While these transitions promise 170 million new jobs by 2030, they also threaten to displace 92 million, amplifying vulnerabilities for young people entering the workforce amid economic volatility and climate crises. This policy paper explores youth resilience as the capacity to absorb shocks, adapt to evolving conditions, and anticipate future disruptions. Drawing on mixed-method research, youth co-creation workshops, and expert consultations, the study identifies four major manifestations of youth vulnerability: informal and precarious employment, persistent unemployment, exclusion from education and training (NEET), and job polarization. It further examines disparities across youth profiles—those in low-income and crisis contexts, upper-middle and high-income countries, and marginalized groups—highlighting structural barriers such as infrastructure deficits, outdated education systems, and systemic discrimination. The paper proposes youth-led policy recommendations anchored in four pillars: Education (competency-based recognition and work-based learning), Coordination (centralized youth affairs entities), Funding (leveraging green transition for infrastructure and unified humanitarian gateways), and Inclusivity (remote work, mentoring networks, and mobile knowledge hubs). Building resilient youth is not only a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for sustainable development. Without systemic reforms and inclusive strategies, the twin transition risks deepening global divides rather than fostering shared prosperity.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
THE NEW LABOR EQUATION: AI, SKILLS, AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS		
15:15 – 16:15	ROUNDTABLE	This 45 min. session examines how AI is reshaping labor markets across regions, focusing on the speed and scale of workforce transitions. Speakers will assess where AI complements work, where it substitutes tasks, and how these shifts affect productivity, skills needs, and employment structures. The discussion will draw on early lessons from countries already adapting (i.e., national skills strategies, regulatory approaches, workforce redeployment models, and partnerships). We will close with practical implications for policymakers and business leaders on managing workforce risk, capturing productivity gains, and building resilient labor-market institutions for an AI-driven economy.
SHARING STRATEGIES TO EMPOWER INFORMAL WORKERS THROUGH SOCIAL PROTECTION		
16:15 – 17:15	POLICY LAB	This policy lab will explore innovative approaches to extend coverage to informal workers, focusing on strategies that address the unique barriers faced by this segment of the workforce. Through case studies and expert insights, the discussion will highlight initiatives, policy frameworks, and technological solutions that have been implemented to bridge the gap in social protection coverage. This policy lab session discusses experiences from various countries' individual approaches. The session will include one short introductory session, four short country lightning talks featuring practitioners in the field, followed by a panel discussion on best practices and implications for social protection programs for informal workers globally. The Lab will include a Q&A session with the audience.
EXCHANGING INSIGHTS: COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO STRENGTHEN THE CARE ECONOMY		
17:15 – 18:15	POLICY LAB	The care economy is increasingly recognized as a key driver of inclusive growth, especially for women's economic empowerment, and as a vital response to demographic shifts and the rising demand for care services. This session will explore how strengthening the care sector can create employment opportunities and improve overall human well-being. It will also provide a platform for countries to exchange experiences and practical approaches to expanding the supply of affordable care services and enhancing skills development in that sector. This policy lab session discusses experiences from various countries in their approach towards strengthening the care economy in the country. The session will include one short introductory session, four short country lightning talks featuring practitioners in the field, and a video from one country, followed by a panel discussion on best practices and implications for care programs globally. The Lab will include a Q&A session with the audience.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
EMBRACING AND SHAPING CHANGE: HOW HUMAN CAPITAL NEEDS TO RESPOND TO MEGATRENDS		
10:30 – 11:00	IN CONVERSATION	The world is entering a period of profound transformation, driven by three powerful megatrends: demographic, climate, and technological change. How can governments and societies prepare? This session explores the impact of megatrends on people and propose a three-pronged policy response agenda. First, countries will need to introduce novel, “future-fit” policies across their Human Development (HD) sectors to manage risks, harness opportunities, and to some extent shape these megatrends. Second, institutional and governance reforms can make education, health and social protection agencies more effective and responsive to change. Finally, governments can explore several approaches to build fiscal space for the needed investments for a more prosperous future and to avert the costs of inaction.
CAN WE MEET HALF-WAY? NEGOTIATING THE NEW DEAL FOR YOUTH WORK		
11:00 – 11:30	ROUNDTABLE	For young people, work is expected to deliver purpose, flexibility, and fair pay. Employers, however, emphasize skills, stability, and readiness. This session will ask: Where should compromise come from? Should young workers adapt their expectations, or should employers adjust job design and career pathways? How can youth voices be brought directly into shaping training, recruitment, and workplace practices? What happens if neither side shifts: do we risk persistent frustration, skills mismatches, and disengagement?
BUILDING FUTURE-READY SKILLS: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS		
11:45 – 12:45	POLICY LAB	Labor markets are being transformed by rapid technological advances, the shift toward green economies, and ongoing globalization. As a result, skills mismatches are becoming more pronounced. In this context, skills development programs, especially employer-driven with a competency-based approach, play a vital role in aligning workforce skills with market demands, thereby enhancing both employability and productivity. Effective public-private partnerships (PPPs) are essential for equipping workers with market-relevant and future-ready skills. The session will feature country experiences in skills development programs with private sector engagement. By highlighting practical examples and lessons learned, the discussion will explore how governments, educational institutions, and the private sector can work together to create sustainable pathways for skills development, foster economic growth, and address the challenges of a rapidly changing labor market. This policy lab session discusses experiences from various countries in their approach towards building skills development programs and private sector collaboration, including through PPPs, that support workforce development in the country. The session will include one short introductory session, four short country lightning talks featuring practitioners in the field, followed by a panel discussion on best practices, challenges and lessons learned. The Lab will conclude with Q&A session with the audience.

TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
CLOCKED IN, CHECKED OUT: CAN ALL WORK BE GOOD?		
12:45 – 13:45	ROUNDTABLE	Not all jobs are created equal. Labor market strategies have long focused on job creation, but the quality of jobs, particularly at the lower end of the wage and skill spectrum demands more attention. Several structural forces continue to generate low-quality employment: global competition, offshoring, technological substitution, the weakening of labor institutions, and the continued growth of sectors that rely on low-wage work. These trends persist even in times of record corporate profits, suggesting that economic success doesn't automatically translate into better jobs. The central question is not only whether low-quality jobs can be eliminated, but how to ensure that workers in them can learn, reskill, and progress. What tools - from training systems to labor standards to employer practices - can transform routine jobs into stepping stones for growth? And how should we measure success when the real challenge is not just creating jobs, but enabling mobility through them?
THE INSIDE STORY OF AUTOMATION		
14:45 – 15:15	ROUNDTABLE	Automation reshapes firms' occupational mix, reducing employment in roles that can be substituted and increasing employment in those that complement technology. But how do firms actually manage this transformation? Do they change their workforce by hiring and firing, or by reallocating tasks among existing workers? And how does the broader labor market environment influence those choices? This session looks inside firms to understand the mechanisms of occupational reallocation and their implications for polarization, productivity, and worker outcomes.
THE LATE BLOOMER GENERATION		
15:15 – 15:30	FIRESIDE CHAT	The popular image of entrepreneurship is shaped by a handful of young tech founders, but the data tell a broader story. In consumer-facing software, founders often start young. In industries such as oil and gas, biotechnology, or advanced manufacturing, successful entrepreneurs are typically in their late 40s or older. These fields demand not just ideas, but deep experience, extensive networks, and access to capital, qualities that accumulate with age. This session challenges the stereotype that innovation belongs to the young and will explore the reasons why older entrepreneurs dominate in certain industries? Is it financial resources, industry knowledge, or credibility built over time? And what kind of support is needed to increase their chances of success so they create more jobs?



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
		THE WEALTH OF NATIONS, THE POVERTY OF HOURS: RETHINKING GROWTH THROUGH THE LENS OF TIME
15:30 – 15:45	KEYNOTE	Over the last two decades, global wealth has risen, but material affluence has not translated into time affluence. Instead, most people today report feeling persistently “time poor,” believing they have too much to do and not enough time to do it. This matters not only for well-being, but for productivity: research shows that time poverty reduces focus, creativity, and output, undermining labor efficiency across income groups (Harvard Business School). An analysis of 2.5 million Americans found that subjective time poverty harmed well-being more than unemployment itself, with overextended professionals reporting declining health, satisfaction, and productivity. Time scarcity in this context erodes focus, creativity, and labor efficiency, undermining both individual well-being and economic performance. This session asks: Should national statistics track time equity alongside wages? Can flexible work, shorter workweeks, and better autonomy policies truly restore balance, or simply redistribute the burden in new ways? And is time equity the next frontier of productivity in developed economies?



Ritz-Carlton Auditorium



TIME	SESSION TYPE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
		GOOD JOBS - WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE AND HOW THEY CAN BENEFIT BUSINESSES
		Prof. Chris Warhurst, Professor & Director, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
		<i>With an introduction by Dr. Ahmed Alzahrani, Deputy Minister for Skills, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD)</i>
15:00 - 16:00	LECTURE	As labor markets evolve under the pressures of technological change, demographic shifts, and new forms of work, attention is increasingly turning from the quantity of jobs created to their quality. This lecture examines what constitutes a "good job" and how job quality can be rigorously defined, assessed, and compared across sectors and economies. The session will highlight the shift of job quality to the centre of labour market policy, and explore the multiple dimensions that shape job quality: pay and security, skills use and development, working time, autonomy and voice, health and wellbeing, and opportunities for progression. It will consider how institutional settings, employer practices, and public policy interact to produce very different job quality outcomes, even within similar labor markets. The lecture will also reflect on the business performance benefits to be gained from good jobs in terms of innovation, productivity and employee wellbeing, and how clearer frameworks for measuring "good work" can inform more effective labor market policy and employer decision-making.

Thank you