



GLOBAL LABOR MARKET CONFERENCE

2nd Edition Report

January 29-30, 2025

King Abdul Aziz International Conference Center
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

#GLMC2025

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H.E. Eng. Ahmad bin Sulaiman AlRajhi
Minister of Human Resources and Social Development,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Our commitment to international collaboration is reflected in the initiatives we’re unveiling at the GLMC, which aim to transform challenges into opportunities, ensuring the prosperity of our economies, communities, and workforces.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE GLOBAL LABOR MARKET CONFERENCE (GLMC)



The Global Labor Market Conference (GLMC) is a dynamic platform that drives insights and updates on the global labor market. It facilitates an ongoing exchange of knowledge on labor development and trends worldwide, by leveraging research and thought leadership to explore evolving landscapes, enabling discussions on outlooks, creating more opportunities, and overcoming challenges.

Launched in 2023 in Riyadh by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, GLMC was established to address the need for a collaborative global labor platform. GLMC brings together specialists, experts and decision-makers to discuss crucial changes aiming to future-proof the global labor market against current and potential challenges, while proposing innovative solutions to address them.

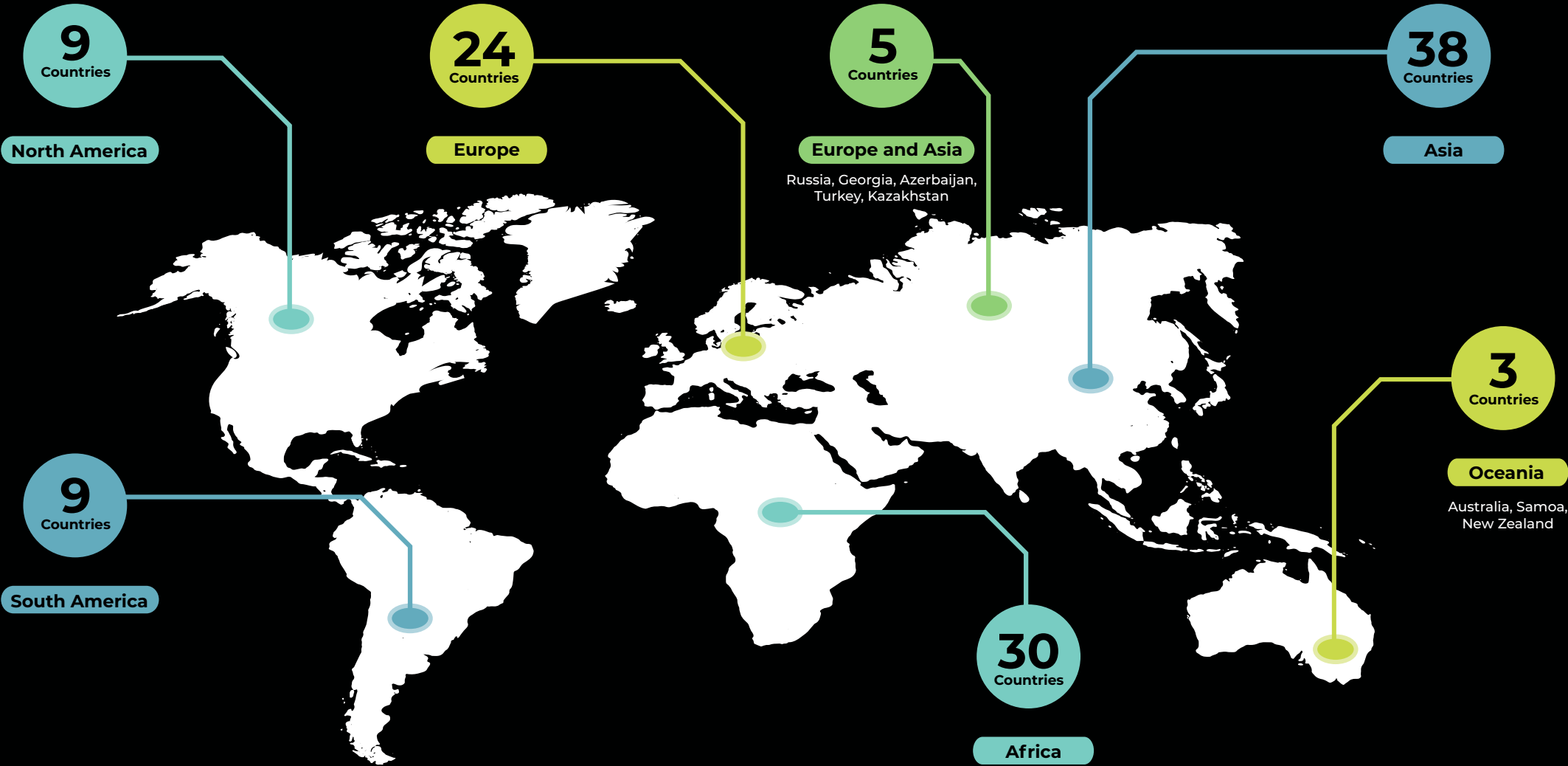
The event brings together government officials, ministers of labor from various countries, leaders of multinational organizations, policymakers, academics, business leaders, and global labor representatives. As a premier international platform, the conference focuses on equity-centered policies and best practices shaping labor markets worldwide. It highlights the critical roles of both the public and private sectors in fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable workforce ecosystem.



WHY GLMC MATTERS

As the global labor market undergoes rapid transformation, the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC) stands as the premier independent platform where policymakers, business leaders, employee representatives, researchers, and youth from all over the world come together to shape the future of work. More than just a conference, GLMC serves as a dynamic hub for insights, research, and discussions that drive meaningful change in the workforce. GLMC plays a critical role in addressing some of the most pressing labor market challenges, from tackling skills mismatches that contribute to youth unemployment to equipping workers with the skills needed to adapt to technological advancements. The platform also explores ways to unlock the potential of an aging workforce,

support the emergence of green jobs, and future-proof economies through innovative labor policies and practices. Through ongoing analysis and thought leadership, GLMC facilitates a continuous exchange of labor developments and trends worldwide. By convening decision-makers and industry experts, GLMC provides a space to explore evolving labor landscapes, exchange best practices, and develop strategies that foster a more inclusive and resilient global workforce. At its core, GLMC is committed to empowering employees and employers alike, encouraging learning, understanding, and action that drive sustainable economic growth.



VISION

To advance empowering and innovative labor markets that attract top talent, foster dynamism, and serve as global benchmarks for excellence.

MISSION

To spearhead a global dialogue on future labor matters, providing a unique platform of exchange, fostering collaboration, and delivering positive impact on labor practices worldwide.

GOAL

To establish GLMC as the premier platform and independent think tank dedicated to the future of labor markets - and a comprehensive global labor market ecosystem.

02 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

This Year's Six Focus Plenary Pillars

Through six key pillars, GLMC 2nd Edition explored strategies to bridge skills gaps, empower youth, enhance workforce mobility, boost productivity, accelerate the green transition, and support SMEs in job creation. The discussions underscored the need for proactive policy-making, cross-sector collaboration, and innovative workforce solutions to ensure economic resilience and inclusive growth.

Each pillar provided valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of employment and the opportunities ahead. From rethinking how we skill and hire to fostering more sustainable and equitable labor markets, GLMC 2nd Edition set the stage for actionable change.



Forever Skilling



**Productivity on
the Mend. Maybe**



Youth in a Bind



**Growing Green Jobs
for a Just Economy**



**The Win-Win of a
Mobile Workforce**



**SMEs and New Work
Models as Job Creators**



Pillar 1 - FOREVER SKILLING

From rapid technological advancements, the rise of green jobs, to the higher demand continuous upskilling and reskilling due to an increased life expectancy, 'Forever Skilling' examined strategies for minimizing skills mismatches and fostering a culture of lifelong learning. How can employers take a more active role in skills development? What are the implications of digital technologies on employment opportunities and wage structures? Would a shift toward skill-based hiring over traditional credentials create a more efficient and inclusive workforce? Those were among the key questions covered during the plenary sessions.



Pillar 2 - YOUTH IN A BIND

As young workers face an uphill battle in the labor market, skills mismatches contribute to underemployment, limited mid-level management opportunities cause early career stagnation, and the lack of formal training result in the further expansion of informal economy, "Youth in a Bind" explored how to better align youth's skills and aspirations with market needs, equipping them to transition into stable, rewarding careers and contribute meaningfully to economic growth.



Pillar 3 - THE WIN-WIN OF A MOBILE WORKFORCE

While attracting skilled workers helps address labor shortages, brain drain remains a challenge for many economies. 'The Win-Win of a Mobile Workforce' explored how smart policies could optimize talent flows by identifying in-demand skills and ensuring mutual benefits for both sending and receiving markets. Discussions revolved around crucial measures to improve the integration of job seekers where they are needed most, along with sustainable approaches to create workforce mobility solutions that benefit all stakeholders.



Pillar 4 - PRODUCTIVITY ON THE MEND. MAYBE

While some economies are witnessing a rebound in productivity, the landscape remains uneven. 'Productivity on the Mend' examined the key drivers of productivity growth—ranging from technology adoption and improved work conditions to organizational restructuring and reskilling programs. Leaders shared advice and lessons about productivity, while showcasing how their insights could be applied on a broader scale. The conversations aimed to uncover strategies that ensure productivity gains are not limited to select markets but could be widely replicated.



Pillar 5 - GROWING GREEN JOBS FOR A JUST ECONOMY

Green transitions are reshaping labor markets, presenting both challenges and opportunities. While climate change leads to job displacement in certain sectors, it also drives demand for new, often better-paying roles that contribute to a more sustainable economy. This pillar explored how to ensure the transition is inclusive and equitable—maximizing green job creation while equipping workers with the skills needed to thrive.



Pillar 6 - SMES AND NEW WORK MODELS AS JOB CREATORS

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for over 90% of businesses worldwide and nearly half of all jobs, making them essential drivers of employment. While SMEs may not always match the salaries of larger corporations, they offer agility, innovation, and opportunities for faster career progression—making them particularly attractive to young workers. This pillar focused on how SMEs can access better support for growth, digital transformation, and sustainability initiatives to generate more meaningful and productive jobs.



GLMC 2nd Edition in Numbers

GLMC 2nd Edition brought together an influential global audience, reinforcing its role as the premier platform for shaping the future of labor worldwide. These numbers underscore the growing impact of GLMC as a catalyst for actionable change in global labor markets.

+10,000

IN-PERSON
ATTENDEES

+50

IMPACTFUL
SESSIONS

+200

INFLUENTIAL
SPEAKERS

+45

GLOBAL LABOR
MINISTERS

+100

COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

6

TRACKS

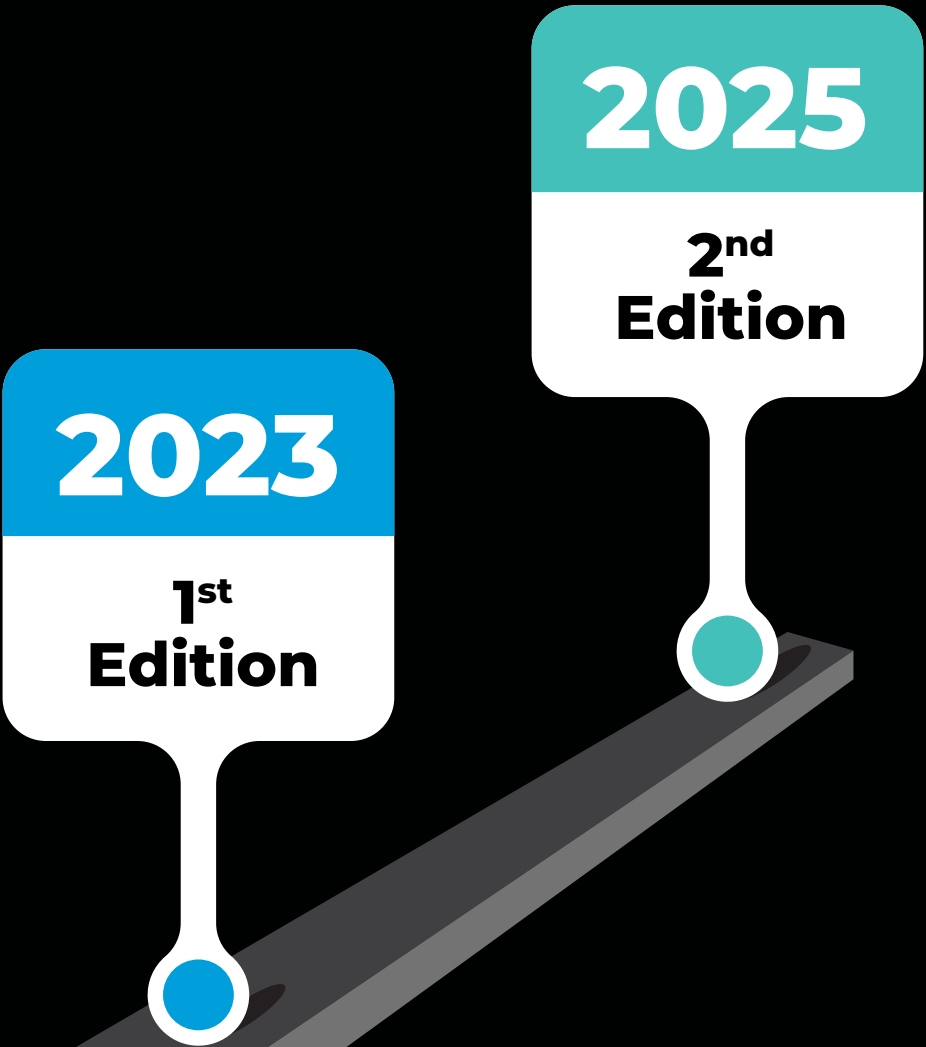
GLMC 2nd Edition Success Partners

The success of GLMC would not be possible without the unwavering support of valued partners. Their contributions have played a crucial role in shaping insightful discussions, fostering innovation, and driving meaningful change in the global labor market. Between its first and 2nd Editions, GLMC has witnessed remarkable growth, reflecting its ever-evolving impact and role in shaping the future of the global workforce.

In its first edition, GLMC attracted a diverse network of partners across key categories, laying the foundation for collaboration and innovation in the labor market. However, by its 2nd Edition, the conference significantly expanded its partner base, reinforcing its status as a leading platform for workforce transformation.

Introduction of the “Partners of the Future” category: NEOM joined as the inaugural partner, reflecting GLMC’s commitment to next-generation workforce solutions.

Knowledge Partners: Global institutions, including The World Bank, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the United Nations, participated, contributing to evidence-based discussions and policy recommendations.



100% Growth in Strategic Partners: The number of Strategic Partners doubled compared to the first edition, demonstrating stronger institutional backing.

Expansion of Knowledge Partners: OECD and Misk Foundation joined alongside returning partners (The World Bank, ILO, and UN), further strengthening the conference’s ability to drive data-driven discussions and global policy alignment.

Introduction of New Partner Categories: The Tourism and Automobile categories were introduced, broadening industry representation and visibility.

Stronger Presence of Industry and Government Leaders: The participation of new industry leaders, government bodies, and multinational institutions underscored GLMC’s growing influence in shaping labor market policies and fostering high-level strategic partnerships.

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS



STRATEGIC PARTNERS



PLATINUM PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS



AUTOMOTIVE PARTNER



TOURISM PARTNER



03 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ministerial Roundtable



Under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, GLMC 2nd Edition commenced with a high-level Ministerial Roundtable in Riyadh. Chaired by H.E. Eng. Ahmed bin Suleiman Al Rajhi, Saudi Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, the roundtable gathered 45 ministers to address pressing labor market challenges and opportunities in an era of rapid transformation.



During the discussion, ministers and global leaders shared insights on shaping resilient, adaptive, and inclusive labor markets. Recognizing the need for bold, coordinated action, the Chair announced eight decisive actions aimed at fostering a more dynamic and future-ready workforce:

- 1 Enhance Youth Transition Programs:**
Bridge education and employment gaps.
- 2 Empower the Workforce for the AI Era:**
Equip workers with AI and automation skills.
- 3 Invest in Human Capital Development:**
Expand skilling, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives.
- 4 Improve Labor Market Flexibility:**
Promote remote work and diverse employment models.
- 5 Drive SME Job Growth:**
Strengthen mechanisms for SME-driven employment.
- 6 Leverage Technology for Workforce Connectivity:**
Use technology to connect job seekers, employers, and educators.
- 7 Advance Inclusive Employment Initiatives:**
Integrate marginalized groups into the workforce.
- 8 Build a Comprehensive Labor Market Data System:**
Improve workforce analytics for policy decisions.

The Inauguration of GLMC 2nd Edition

The 2nd Edition of GLMC commenced with an opening speech by H.E. Eng. Ahmad bin Sulaiman AlRajhi, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development of Saudi Arabia, who addressed attendees on behalf of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

In his speech, AlRajhi emphasized the urgency of tackling global youth unemployment, highlighting that 67 million young people worldwide are jobless, with nearly 20% disengaged from both work and education. He underscored the need for labor market flexibility, skill alignment, and lifelong learning programs to bridge the widening gap between workforce needs and available talent.

The Minister also showcased Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030-driven labor market reforms, which have significantly increased workforce participation, particularly among Saudi citizens and women. He pointed to global best practices, such as Germany's dual vocational training model, Singapore's SkillsFuture initiative, and Kenya's Ajira Digital program, as examples of innovative workforce development strategies.



Additionally, AlRajhi introduced two key initiatives:

1. The GLMC Labor Market Academy – A new Riyadh-based institution, developed in partnership with the World Bank and Takamol Holding, aims at training policymakers worldwide on effective labor market strategies.
2. The “Navigating Tomorrow” report – A comprehensive analysis of global labor market trends and actionable recommendations for skill development and economic resilience.

Concluding his remarks, AlRajhi reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's commitment to fostering international collaboration, transforming workforce challenges into opportunities, and building a future-ready, inclusive labor market that supports sustainable economic growth.

“Today, in Riyadh, we gather with a distinguished group of participants from over 100 countries. As government leaders, experts, innovators, and policymakers, we are all united in our efforts to discuss current challenges and draw a roadmap for the future of labor markets, globally.

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is taking pioneering steps under Vision 2030 to empower its workforce and stimulate transformation in the labor market. The private sector workforce now exceeded 12 million, with Saudi employment rising from 1.7 million in 2020 to over 2.4 million in 2024, adding 724 thousand new jobs for Saudis in the private sector.

Opening Remarks of Day Two

The second day of the conference commenced with a gripping speech by H.E. Dr. Abdullah Nasser Abuthnain, Vice Minister of Human Resources and Social Development for Labor, Saudi Arabia. H.E. Dr. Abuthnain’s speech reaffirmed Saudi Arabia’s commitment to shaping a more dynamic, inclusive, and resilient labor market. He emphasized the critical role of data-driven policies and collaboration in addressing evolving workforce challenges, particularly in the face of rapid technological advancements. Highlighting key insights from GLMC’s newly published Navigating



H.E. Dr. Abdullah Nasser Abuthnain
Vice Minister of Human Resources and Social
Development for Labor, Saudi Arabia

Tomorrow report. Moreover, H.E. Dr. Abuthnain took pride in discussing the launch of the GLMC & World Bank Labor Academy in Riyadh, which is set to become a global hub for labor policy development, aiming to equip policymakers with the tools to enhance youth employment, integrate social protection measures, and build adaptive labor ecosystems. The Vice Minister also highlighted the remarkable expansion of the Labor Award, a recognition program celebrating best practices in workplace quality and labor market contributions.

H.E. Dr. Abuthnain concluded his speech by urging stakeholders to translate today’s discussions into actionable strategies that ensure sustainable employment growth and workforce resilience. As Saudi Arabia continues to lead the way in labor market transformation, he emphasized that fostering an adaptive, skills-based economy is essential for future prosperity.



Together with the Human Resources Development Fund, the Saudi Arabian Ministry has implemented significant employment strategies, facilitating more than 430,000 private sector jobs, and supporting over 179,000 entities last year alone.



Saudi Arabia has undergone three significant milestones crucial for its shared progress: The Navigating Tomorrow report published by GLMC, the launch of the GLMC & World Bank Labor Academy, and the Labor Award for private sector establishments.

2024 Highlights

430K

Jobs Facilitated by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development

>179K

Entities Receiving Support from the Human Resources Development Fund



1.5 MN

Employees responded to the Labor Award survey in 2024

The GLMC Labor Market Academy



Main Objective: Develop policymakers' capabilities globally, with a focus on the member states of the World Bank where such capacity-building opportunities are not available.

In partnership with the World Bank and Takamol Holding, Saudi Arabia has launched the Global Labor Market Academy, reinforcing its commitment to global transformation and addressing labor market gaps by providing policymakers with training programs along with other crucial resources and empowering them to make informed and effective decisions. The Academy is also considered a strategic milestone for the Kingdom as it aims to transform the policymaking process on a global scale.

It is worth noting that the first round of sessions for the GLMC Labor Market Academy took place in Riyadh on 26-28 January 2025, with a total of 77 participants, including 37 international figures and 30 World Bank representatives. The sessions covered several comprehensive topics that include but are not limited to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Women Empowerment, Migration and Labor Markets, and Green Transition. Sessions will continue to run across multiple countries worldwide, whereas regular sessions will take place in Riyadh alongside the Global Labor Market Conference.

Driving Workforce Transformation Through Strategic Partnerships

At the GLMC 2nd Edition, a series of pivotal Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and government agreements were inked, reinforcing Saudi Arabia’s commitment to advancing employment, skills development, and industry-academia collaboration. Spanning key sectors such as education, defense, logistics, tourism, energy, and entertainment, these agreements underscore the Kingdom’s vision of building a dynamic, future-ready workforce and fostering a globally competitive labor market.

Bringing together government entities, private sector leaders, and academic institutions, these strategic partnerships emphasize cross-sector collaboration to drive job creation, workforce upskilling, and economic growth. To illustrate their impact, the MoUs have been categorized based on their core objectives—Human Capital Development, Industry Advancement, SME support, and Economic Growth—providing a structured overview of how they contribute to shaping the future of the labor market. The following chart details these transformative agreements and their expected outcomes.

	Human Capital Development	Employment & Economic Growth	SME Support	Advancing Industries
Strengthening Employment & Economic Growth		●		
Aligning Training with Industry Needs	●			
Bridging Academia & National Defense				●
Advancing the Hospitality & Tourism Industry				●
Empowering Saudi Arabia’s Logistics & Maritime Workforce				●
Developing Academic Programs for the Entertainment Sector	●			
Enhancing Cooperative Training in Aviation	●			
Strengthening Human Resources Development & Municipal Services	●			
Elevating Business & Technology Education			●	
Solidifying International Cooperation for a Competitive Labor Market		●		

Solidifying International Cooperation for a Competitive Labor Market



On the sidelines of GLMC 2nd Edition, and stemming from its commitment to fostering global partnerships and enhancing the capabilities of local talent, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) signed a landmark cooperation agreement with the International Labour Organization (ILO). Marking a major step in expanding the pool of international opportunities for Saudi professionals, the agreement came to reinforce the Kingdom's efforts to develop a dynamic and globally competitive workforce.

Partners' Representatives

- 1 His Excellency Eng. Ahmad bin Sulaiman Al-Rajhi, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
- 2 Mr. Gilbert Hounbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization

Strategic Impact

The collaboration aligns with the Saudi Vision 2030 goals to enhance the representation of local professionals in international organizations and bolster the nation's workforce competitiveness. Through joining forces with the ILO, Saudi professionals will gain exposure to global labor policies, employment strategies, and workforce development practices, ultimately contributing to the country's long-term economic growth and labor market sustainability.

Deep Dive into the Memorandums of Understanding at GLMC 2nd Edition

At the GLMC 2nd Edition, a series of pivotal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and government agreements were signed, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's commitment to advancing employment, skills development, and industry-academia collaboration. These agreements span multiple sectors; education, defense, logistics, tourism, energy, and entertainment, whereas each sector plays a crucial role in shaping the future of the labor market. The MOUs and agreements reflect the Kingdom's vision of building a dynamic and future-ready workforce, emphasizing cross-sector partnerships that promote job creation, skills development, and sustainable economic growth.

Strengthening Employment & Economic Growth

PARTNERS

- 1- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Saudi Arabia
- 2- Red Sea Authority of Saudi Arabia

OBJECTIVE

Enhance employment opportunities and skills development in alignment with Saudi Arabia's economic growth agenda.

Aligning Training with Industry Needs

PARTNERS

- 1- Sector Skills Councils
- 2- SABIC Academy
- 3- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development

OBJECTIVE

Align training programs with the evolving needs of the energy and utilities sector, ensuring a highly skilled workforce.

Bridging Academia & National Defense

PARTNERS

- 1- King Khalid University
- 2- Ministry of Defense

OBJECTIVE

Foster cooperation between academia and the defense sector to advance research and workforce readiness in security-related fields.



Deep Dive into the Memorandums of Understanding at GLMC 2nd Edition

Advancing the Hospitality & Tourism Industry

PARTNERS

- 1- Ministry of Tourism
- 2- Marriott Hotels Group

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen Saudi Arabia's booming hospitality sector by enhancing workforce training and employment opportunities.



Empowering Saudi Arabia's Logistics & Maritime Workforce

PARTNERS

- 1- Saudi Logistics Academy
- 2- Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) Saudi Arabia

OBJECTIVE

Align training programs with the evolving needs of the energy and utilities sector, ensuring a highly skilled workforce.



Developing Academic Programs for the Entertainment Sector

PARTNERS

- 1- General Entertainment Authority (GEA)
- 2- Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University

OBJECTIVE

Establish specialized academic programs to support and grow Saudi Arabia's entertainment industry.



Deep Dive into the Memorandums of Understanding at GLMC 2nd Edition

Enhancing Cooperative Training in Aviation

PARTNERS

- 1- Jeddah University
- 2- Saudi Arabian Airlines Corporation (Saudia)

OBJECTIVE

Expand cooperative training programs to prepare students for careers in aviation and airline operations.

Strengthening Human Resources Development & Municipal Services

PARTNERS

- 1- Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF)
- 2- Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing

OBJECTIVE

Foster collaboration to improve training programs and employment initiatives in the municipal and housing sectors.

Elevating Business & Technology Education

PARTNERS

- 1- University of Business & Technology
- 2- General Secretariat of Sector Skills Councils
- 3- Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development

OBJECTIVE

Enhance educational curricula to better align with labor market demands and sector-specific skill requirements.



GLMC 2nd Edition: From Dialogue to Action, From Vision to Reality

GLMC 2nd Edition offered a multi-layered experience, combining high-level sessions on stage with interactive knowledge-sharing hubs.



On the one hand, the Plenary sessions took center stage, featuring high-profile leaders, policymakers, and industry pioneers tackling global workforce challenges. Through keynote speeches and messages, panel discussions, and one-on-one chats, these sessions set the strategic agenda, shaping the future of work with bold insights and transformative solutions.

In contrast, the Co-Creational spaces provided interactive hubs for hands-on learning, mentorship, and deep-dive discussions. Designed for researchers, professionals, and job seekers, these spaces fostered collaboration, practical skill-building, and grassroots dialogue—complementing the high-level conversations from the main stage.

A Walk Through Co-Creational Spaces

GLMC 2nd Edition provided a dynamic range of co-creational spaces designed to foster collaboration, spark engaging discussions, and encourage knowledge exchange through interactive and hands-on methods. Each space was thoughtfully curated to empower participants to connect, innovate, and contribute to shaping the future of work while addressing different facets of the labor market landscape. The conference featured dedicated tracks catering to diverse audiences: the Academic Track, where researchers and scholars showcased their latest findings and engaged in thought-provoking discussions; the Silver Track, which brought together experienced professionals and industry leaders to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by seasoned talent in today's evolving job market; and the Youth Track, an interactive space designed to give young professionals and aspiring leaders a platform to engage with experts, share ideas, and explore solutions to the pressing challenges shaping the future workforce. These co-creational spaces ensured that every participant, regardless of background or experience, had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue on the future of global work.

8 Career Compass Sessions (Silver & Youth Track)



An interactive space designed to guide young professionals and job seekers through career development pathways, featuring expert-led sessions, mentorship opportunities, and insights into emerging job markets, skills requirements, and workforce trends.

10 Skills Hub Sessions



A hands-on learning and upskilling environment where participants can engage in interactive workshops, simulations, and live demonstrations, focusing on future-ready skills, technological advancements, and practical tools to enhance employability and career growth.

12 HRDF Sessions



An exemplar of the Human Resources Development Fund's initiatives, programs, and partnerships that drive workforce empowerment, skills development, and employment opportunities, offering attendees access to adequate resources and tailored solutions.

9 Academic Majlis Sessions (GCC Room)



A dedicated intellectual hub for academics, researchers, and policymakers to exchange insights, present groundbreaking studies, and discuss evidence-based strategies that shape labor market policies and workforce development in the GCC region and beyond.

Deep-Dive into the Plenary Sessions

As the central stage of GLMC 2nd Edition, the Plenary sessions brought together global labor market leaders, policymakers, and industry pioneers to tackle the most pressing workforce challenges. Designed to engage, challenge, and inspire, the Plenary sessions featured a dynamic mix of formats that fostered meaningful debate and actionable insights, driving forward solutions that shape tomorrow’s labor markets.

4 Rapid Fires

Rapid Fires deliver fast-paced, concise, impactful insights from industry leaders. These short, focused sessions cut through complexity, offering key takeaways on pressing global labor market issues.

6 Keynotes

Delivered by distinguished experts or influential figures, Keynotes sets the stage for thought leadership, providing a compelling vision and strategic outlook on the future of work, economic trends, and labor market transformation.

4 Fireside Chats

Through intimate and engaging dialogues, Fireside Chats features candid one-on-one conversations between a moderator and a high-profile speaker. These sessions allow for deeper reflections and unique perspectives on the most pressing challenges and opportunities in the global workforce.

8 Panel Discussions

Bringing together diverse voices, Panel Discussions explore critical topics from multiple perspectives. Industry leaders, policymakers, and experts engage in in-depth conversations, offering practical solutions, data-driven insights, and forward-looking strategies.

2 Face-Off

Through controversially dynamic and thought-provoking debates, the Face-Off challenges conventional thinking. Experts with differing viewpoints engage in a structured exchange, presenting compelling arguments that push boundaries and spark new ways of thinking.

7 In Conversations

A structured yet fluid dialogue between two experts, In Conversation sessions offer deep dives into key labor market topics. Such discussions blend expertise and storytelling, providing fresh perspectives on challenges, policies, and innovations.

2 Launch Conversations

An exclusive platform for unveiling groundbreaking initiatives, reports, or partnerships, the Launch Conversation introduces new ideas that shape the future of work, highlighting key findings, objectives, and potential impact.

1 Special Address

Distinguished speakers take the stage to deliver high-impact speeches on a critical labor market issue. The Special Address brings forward authoritative insights, setting the tone for discussions that drive meaningful change.

2 Special Messages

A brief yet powerful statement from either a global leader or visionary figure, the Special Message delivers key insights, calls to action, or strategic reflections that resonate with the conference’s mission and audience.

04

GLMC
2nd EDITION
IN ACTION

INTRODUCTION

This section captures the key discussions and insights from each track of the 2nd Edition of GLMC, highlighting main points and perspectives from expert speakers. It offers a clear and engaging overview of the various topics covered, weaving together essential ideas and standout quotes from the conference. This narrative presents an informative and easy-to-follow look into the challenges and opportunities in the global labor market, as seen through the eyes of global industry leaders. Ideal for anyone looking to grasp the core themes and ideas that emerged during the conference, it serves as an insightful guide to understanding the current state and future directions of labor market dynamics.

DAY ONE 1

GLMC & WORLD BANK ANNOUNCEMENT

PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

- **Speaker: Safaa El Tayeb El-Kogali**
Country Director for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), World Bank Group

This speech highlighted the World Bank's longstanding partnership with Saudi Arabia and its pivotal role in supporting the Kingdom's labor market reforms in alignment with Vision 2030. While focusing on job creation, particularly for youth and women, Saudi Arabia has witnessed a surge in female labor force participation, serving as a global benchmark for workforce inclusion. The speech also underscored the significance of knowledge exchange platforms such as GLMC and the GLMC Labor Market Academy in shaping effective labor policies.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has driven significant labor market reforms, creating more and better jobs, particularly for youth and women, with female labor force participation rising from 13% to 36%.
2. The World Bank has been a key partner in Saudi Arabia's transformation, providing technical assistance, knowledge exchange, and evidence-based solutions to support labor market reforms.
3. Initiatives like GLMC and the GLMC Labor Market Academy facilitate global knowledge exchange on effective labor policies and programs.
4. With 400 million unemployed and 1.2 billion entering the workforce in the next decade, addressing youth employment and job creation is a critical global priority.
5. Work plays an important role in empowering individuals and combating poverty, aligning with the belief that "true work makes a person free, while idleness is humiliation."



Look at what Saudi Arabia has done: Female labor has risen from 13% to 36% in the workplace. Saudi is a leading example for the world, and the kingdom continues learning from best practices.

TAKING THE LONG VIEW: GOVERNMENTS' ROLE IN BALANCING SHORT AND LONG-TERM LABOR MARKET CHALLENGES

The panel delved into a thorough discussion about how governments play a crucial role in navigating the complexities of labor market challenges, balancing immediate economic needs with future workforce sustainability. It also explored how policymakers are addressing the rapid impact of technology, the evolving nature of skills, and the need for agile education and training programs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1.

Collaboration between governments and the private sector is essential in addressing workforce challenges, fostering economic growth, and ensuring policies are adaptable to future needs.
2.

The mismatch between education and job market needs is a pressing issue. Governments must invest in modernized education, short-term training programs, and curriculum reforms to equip youth with relevant skills.
3.

Policymakers must balance immediate job creation with long-term economic sustainability. Engaging youth in policy creation ensures that labor market interventions align with real needs.
4.

The labor market transformation must be multi-dimensional, integrating industry, education, and social policies. Countries like Turkey are developing national employment projects focusing on digital and green transitions to align workforce skills with evolving economic demands.



H.E. Sandra Pettovello
Minister of Human Capital, Argentina



H.E. Narek Mkrtchyan
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Armenia

“Argentina underwent a big transformation, from having significant structural poverty to driving access to social programs. We started to implement policies tailored to address our own workforce. People have to understand: Dignity is realized through work.”

H.E. Sandra Pettovello
Minister of Human Capital, Argentina

“With formal education as a challenge and in a labor market transition, you need to work on implementing behavioral changes to engage more people in training. Create incentives for employers and opportunities for youth to gain more skills.”

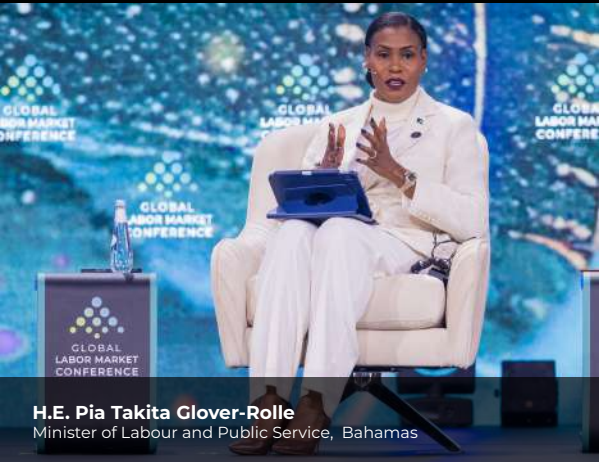
H.E. Narek Mkrtchyan
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Armenia

MINISTERIAL PANEL

- **Speaker:** H.E. Sandra Pettovello
Minister of Human Capital, Argentina
- **Speaker:** H.E. Narek Mkrtchyan
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Armenia
- **Speaker:** H.E. Mónica Recalde De Giacomi
Minister, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Paraguay
- **Speaker:** H.E. Pia Takita Glover-Rolle
Minister of Labour and Public Service, Bahamas
- **Speaker:** H.E. Prof. Dr. Vedat Işikhan
Minister of Labour and Social Security, Turkey
- **Moderator:** Tumi Makgabo
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media



H.E. Mónica Recalde De Giacomi
Minister, Ministry of Labour,
Employment and Social Security of Paraguay



H.E. Pia Takita Glover-Rolle
Minister of Labour and Public Service, Bahamas

“We need to consider institutional cooperation and basing our policies on social dialogue, and giving youth the space to plan their own policies. We wonder: Are we really searching for new methods, or sticking to more traditional ones?”

H.E. Mónica Recalde De Giacomi
Minister, Ministry of Labour,
Employment and Social Security of Paraguay

“The best way to balance interests and prepare for tomorrow is collaboration; it is key for our labor markets, particularly between the government and private sectors. This has been successful in The Bahamas, ensuring sustainability as we develop future programs.”

H.E. Pia Takita Glover-Rolle
Minister of Labour and Public Service, Bahamas

“The most vital thing in the Turkish view is social dialogue; it facilitates our endeavors and solves problems. Different sectors are collaborating to discuss the current situation and evaluate opportunities and risks.”

H.E. Prof. Dr. Vedat Işikhan
Minister of Labour and Social Security, Turkey



H.E. Prof. Dr. Vedat Işikhan
Minister of Labour and Social Security, Turkey

SCALING SKILLS – WHEN TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

- **Speaker:** H.E. Dr. Rumaih Al Rumaih
Vice Minister of Transport and Logistics Services, Saudi Arabia

It is no secret that Saudi Arabia's transport and logistics sector is rapidly evolving under Vision 2030, with a focus on privatization, workforce localization, and specialized training. During his keynote speech, Dr. Al Rumaih showcased key initiatives aiming to better equip the sector's diverse and local workforce.



I am proud that Saudi female participation in the logistics and transport sector has grown by 84% over the last four years, which the support of the Ministry of Human Resources ecosystem, particularly the Human Resources Development Fund, made possible.

CONSECUTIVE RAPID FIRES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Under Saudi Vision 2030, the Ministry of Transportation and Logistics has developed a comprehensive strategy to expand the aviation, maritime, rail, and logistics sectors.
2. Recognizing the importance of skilled labor, Saudi Arabia is partnering with local and international universities to promote technical and vocational training.
3. Since the implementation of Saudi Vision 2030, the mobility sector has seen a remarkable 100% increase in total employees, with Saudi participation rising by 47% and Saudi female participation growing by 84%.



THE PRODUCTIVITY CONUNDRUM

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. A strong patent system ensures that innovation is widely accessible, allowing talent from all backgrounds to contribute. Historically, societies with open institutions, like 19th-century America, have been more innovative and economically successful.
2. Countries at the global tech frontier, such as the US and South Korea, leverage cutting-edge advancements, while others lag due to weak institutions. Bridging this gap requires more inclusive policies to unlock latent talent.
3. AI is accelerating technological progress at an unprecedented rate, with potential global GDP gains of 7%. However, its rapid adoption reshapes industries, displacing traditional roles while creating new ones.
4. Technological shifts, like AI and automation, disrupt labor markets, reducing demand for low-skilled jobs. Without policy intervention, these changes can lead to social and political instability, as seen in past economic shifts.
5. The race for AI dominance overlooks its broader societal impact. To prevent large-scale job displacement, AI must be designed to enhance human productivity rather than replace workers entirely.



Patents are about inclusion. The US became an innovative society because its patent system was open to all. Ideas, talent, creativity, and energy are everywhere in society, so create a set of inclusive institutions that connect its talent.

KEYNOTE

- **Speaker:** Prof. James A. Robinson
Nobel Laureate, The Reverend Dr. Richard L. Pearson Professor of Global Conflict Studies; Institute Director, The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts, University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, 2024 Nobel Laureate

The speech explored the link between inclusive institutions and innovation, highlighting how open patent systems fuel productivity by unlocking society's latent talent. It also underscored the need for proactive policies to ensure AI enhances human productivity rather than merely replacing jobs.



REALITY CHECK: AI AND THE GLOBAL LABOR MARKET

FIRESIDE CHAT

- **Speaker:** Dr. Andy Xie
Independent Economist
- **Moderator:** Aaron Heslehurst
Former News Anchor & Presenter BBC World News

The session explored AI's evolving impact on the global labor market, emphasizing that while AI enhances productivity and automates tasks, it is not yet replacing human workers at scale. The real disruption lies in AI's integration with robotics, which could transform industries depending on cost and accessibility. Open-source models like DeepSeek are making AI more widely available, challenging big tech's dominance.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. While AI is often portrayed as a major disruptor to jobs, its actual impact on the labor market so far has been relatively small. AI is primarily enhancing productivity and automating repetitive tasks rather than completely replacing human workers.
2. AI is not outright replacing humans but is serving as a tool to augment human capabilities. It can assist with coding, optimize workflows, and improve efficiency, but it lacks originality and creative thinking. The key is learning to work with AI effectively, similar to learning how to drive a car.
3. The biggest transformation comes when AI is combined with robotics and other hardware innovations. The cost of AI-driven hardware will determine how fast these changes scale globally.
4. Open-source AI models like DeepSeek are making AI more accessible, reducing costs, and challenging the dominance of major tech firms. AI is shifting from a high-cost, centralized resource to an affordable and widely available tool that anyone can use, leading to increased global competition and innovation.



With DeepSeek, the Chinese punched a hole in the myth; AI is demystified, democratized, and cheap. All you need to do is know how to use this model to work with it. It's a tool; it's not replacing humans.

Dr. Andy Xie
Independent Economist



AI is reshaping the global market. In one future, it takes the mundane jobs, ultimately leaving humans happier with rewarding work. In the other, it causes more inequality. In reality, it will fall somewhere in the middle

Aaron Heslehurst
Former News Anchor & Presenter BBC World News



LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL? LABOR MARKET MISMATCHES AND SKILLS GAPS

- **Speaker:** Dr. Badr Al Badr
CEO, Misk Foundation
- **Speaker:** Dr. Evan Shellshear
Managing Director, Ubidy
- **Speaker:** Stefano Scarpetta
Director, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS) Directorate, OECD
- **Moderator:** Becky Anderson
Anchor and Journalist, CNN

This session explored the growing discrepancy between skills and the evolving demands of the labor market, emphasizing the urgent need for upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning. Experts highlighted how traditional education models struggle to keep pace with rapid technological advancements, particularly in AI and automation, leading to widespread skill shortages. The discussion underscored the importance of employer-education collaboration, with initiatives such as job shadowing, employer-designed curricula, and microcredentials emerging as key solutions. Panelists also addressed the shift from a linear career model to one of continuous learning and adaptation, stressing that AI is more about augmenting human capabilities than replacing jobs.



The status of AI remains to be seen, regardless of whether it's another hype cycle. We need to build with what we have, use it as a basis. A lot of things have been disrupted, and we need to be prepared.

Dr. Badr Al Badr
CEO, Misk Foundation



We want to use AI in businesses, but day-to-day life is very difficult for AI to enhance. I think we're approaching a cusp of overcorrection in the next few years where its true merits will be shown.

Dr. Evan Shellshear
Managing Director, Ubidy



We need to provide guidance to people choosing their field of study, helping them understand labor market changes. Additionally, we need to support those already in the workforce. The notion of studying, working, and retiring is no longer applicable.

Stefano Scarpetta
Director, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS) Directorate, OECD



We're discussing the future of the workforce in AI and automation. What's your perspective—are we in an era of AI hype? What's the impact of the significant price improvement in efficiency we discussed in Davos, given what we see with DeepSeek?

Becky Anderson
Anchor and Journalist, CNN

PANEL DISCUSSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. A significant gap exists between traditional education systems, which focus on knowledge acquisition, and the practical skills demanded by the modern workforce. Rapid technological advancements require faster adaptation through microcredentials, upskilling, and reskilling programs.
2. The traditional model of “study, work, retire” is outdated. Continuous learning and career-long guidance are essential to help individuals adapt to evolving job markets, particularly in leveraging AI and technology for human-augmented roles.
3. Bridging the skills gap requires closer collaboration between educational institutions and employers. Initiatives like job shadowing, employer-designed curricula, and real-time feedback ensure that training aligns with market needs.
4. AI is more about augmenting human capabilities than replacing jobs. Intermediate-skilled workers equipped with AI tools can enhance productivity, but this requires targeted training and policy support to ensure no one is left behind.
5. The rapid pace of technological change creates uncertainty in the job market. Staying current through microcredentials, tech-enabled skills, and a passion-driven approach is critical for the next generation to thrive in the evolving workforce.

THE TASK OF FINANCING RESKILLING – HERCULES MET SISYPHUS?



“It is important to maintain a mindset of life-long learning to keep up with changes after a university degree. The key is sustainability; it’s not just about entering the labor market.

Feras Abdulaziz Abalkhail
Deputy Director General of the Human Resources Development Fund for Business

- **Speaker:** Feras Abdulaziz Abalkhail
Deputy Director General of the Human Resources Development Fund for Business
- **Speaker:** Sumanta Roy
President & Regional Head, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Middle East and Africa
- **Speaker:** Renate Hornung-Draus
Vice-President, IOE; Vice-Chair, ILO
- **Speaker:** H.E. Azar Bayramov
Director General of the Labour Centre of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation
- **Moderator:** Aaron Heslehurst
Former News Anchor & Presenter BBC World News

This session explored the complex challenge of financing reskilling, likened to the combined labors of Hercules and Sisyphus—immense and ongoing. Speakers emphasized that no single entity can shoulder the cost alone; instead, a collaborative approach is essential, with governments providing infrastructure and policy support, businesses investing in workforce competitiveness, and individuals embracing lifelong learning.

“As you reskill, people will benefit and might leave, but that’s okay. If you don’t reskill, you will be left with a bunch of workers who never leave—and you don’t want that.

Sumanta Roy
President & Regional Head, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Middle East and Africa

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. No single entity is responsible for financing reskilling. It needs a collaborative approach, where governments provide infrastructure and policies, companies invest in keeping their workforce competitive, and individuals take ownership of their continuous learning.
2. The pace of change driven by technology, automation, and sustainability is unprecedented. Lifelong learning is essential to maintain economic resilience.
3. Successful reskilling initiatives rely on partnerships between the public and private sectors. Companies need support to invest in training while ensuring that programs align with market demands.
4. By 2030, investment in skilling, reskilling, and upskilling is expected to increase significantly. Organizations that prioritize reskilling will retain a competitive edge, while individuals must cultivate a lifelong learning mindset to stay relevant in the evolving job market.
5. Reskilling isn’t just about technical expertise but also cognitive skills like critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability. Employees must develop the ability to assess new technologies, ensuring they add value rather than merely following trends.

FACE-OFF



Prof. Elsa Fornero
Honorary Professor of Economics, University of Turin

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The growing population of older adults brings both challenges and opportunities. Rather than being seen as an economic burden, it offers the potential for a silver dividend.
2. To ensure older adults remain active and contributing members of society, lifelong learning and reskilling are essential. This allows them to adapt to changing job markets, stay engaged, and find fulfilling roles.
3. Combining the strengths of younger and older generations can lead to increased productivity and innovation. Younger individuals bring tech skills, while older adults offer valuable experience and wisdom.

“In the age of technology, in countries where access to education remains a challenge, we must think about how to make continuous training accessible through technology.

Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Founder & President, Umlambo Foundation

LEVERAGING THE "SILVER" DIVIDEND

- **Speaker:** Prof. Elsa Fornero
Honorary Professor of Economics, University of Turin
- **Speaker:** Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Founder & President, Umlambo Foundation
- **Moderator:** Sagar Goel
Managing Director & Partner, Boston Consulting Group

IN CONVERSATION

This session explored how aging populations, often seen as economic challenges, can instead be leveraged as assets through the concept of the “silver dividend.” Discussions highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, reskilling, and flexible work arrangements in ensuring adults remain active contributors to the economy. The panel emphasized that integrating older workers alongside younger talent fosters innovation, with the former bringing experience and wisdom while the latter contributes technological expertise. Additionally, policymakers were urged to rethink traditional welfare and retirement systems to support longer, more productive careers.

“Combining teams with both young and older individuals does not diminish productivity. Productivity can be enhanced by the young’s greater competencies, particularly in technology, and the valuable experience of the older generation.

Prof. Elsa Fornero
Honorary Professor of Economics, University of Turin

“Generative AI gives you expertise at your fingertips, but it doesn’t provide wisdom. This is where the silver generation comes in, offering a balance between the young and the old. Together, we can reap the dividends of this synergy.

Sagar Goel
Managing Director & Partner, Boston Consulting Group

NUMBERS DON'T LIE – THE GLMC RESEARCH STUDY NAVIGATING TOMORROW: MASTERING SKILLS IN A DYNAMIC GLOBAL LABOUR MARKET

ROUNDTABLE

- **Speaker:** Dr. Ahmed A. Alzahrani
Deputy Minister for Skills and Training,
Ministry of Human Resources and Social
Development, Saudi Arabia
- **Speaker:** Johannes Koettl,
Senior Economist, Social Protection
and Labor Global Practice, World Bank
Group
- **Speaker:** Dr. Séamus McGuinness
Research Professor, ESRI Dublin, Adjunct
Research Professor, Department of
Economics, Trinity College Dublin
- **Speaker:** Roberto Suarez Santos
Secretary General, International
Organization of Employers
- **Moderator:** Ben Thompson
Anchor & Presenter



If skilling is solely supply-driven, it is difficult to keep up with technological changes. At the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, we take a demand-driven approach, working with employers to shift the labor market from job to skill dominance.

Dr. Ahmed A. Alzahrani
Deputy Minister for Skills and Training,
Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Saudi Arabia



The challenge lies in developing foundational skills that foster a desire to learn through the tertiary years, focusing on essential soft skills like numeracy and literacy. Later, too, we still need an educational system flexible enough to adapt to market changes.

Johannes Koettl
Senior Economist, Social Protection and Labor
Global Practice, World Bank Group

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The labor market is shifting from job dominance to skill dominance, emphasizing reskilling and upskilling. Governments and businesses need to collaborate on a demand-driven approach to workforce development.
2. AI may not just replace jobs but could assist middle-skilled workers, potentially reducing labor market polarization. However, digital skills remain a key challenge, and AI should be viewed as a tool rather than a replacement.
3. These forces are driving upskilling and creating anxiety. While 60% of workers have upskilled due to tech changes, 40% worry about their skills becoming obsolete due to globalization.
4. Critical thinking, creativity, and social skills are becoming more valuable in the workplace. Businesses, rather than education systems alone, play a crucial role in fostering these skills.
5. With longer life expectancy, older workers are staying in the labor market longer. Societies must rethink skill development and policies to support lifelong learning and adaptability.



Around 40% of workers say they can see their skills becoming obsolete as a result of globalization. Technological change is the biggest driver of that anxiety, where 60% think their skills may become partially or fully obsolete over the next five years.

Dr. Séamus McGuinness
Research Professor, ESRI Dublin,
Adjunct Research Professor,
Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin



GLMC's research study spanned 14,000 participants across 14 countries. It's a comprehensive look at how people are feeling about the changing world of work. An overwhelming response in the study is about how skills need to be reprioritized.

Ben Thompson
Anchor & Presenter



In the past, we used to refer to creativity and communication skills as “soft skills,” and now we realize that calling them “soft” makes no sense. They are human and social skills.

Roberto Suarez Santos
Secretary General,
International Organization of Employers

LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S
BIGGEST LABOR MARKET IN
TRANSFORMATION

KEYNOTE

● **Speaker:** Bu Yulong
Chairman, CIIC Group

This session explored the evolving dynamics of the Chinese labor market amid economic shifts and technological advancements. With economic growth slowing and unemployment remaining high, AI is transforming the workforce by boosting efficiency while displacing repetitive jobs.



Bu Yulong
Chairman, CIIC Group

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Economic growth is slowing, with unemployment remaining high. AI is reshaping jobs by increasing efficiency but also replacing repetitive roles. By 2030, AI will contribute \$20 trillion to the economy, making reskilling essential.
2. Digital jobs in ride-sharing, live streaming, and e-commerce are replacing traditional work. In China, 200 million people engaged in flexible employment in 2023, expected to reach 400 million by 2026.
3. China's 2024 GDP hit 134.9 trillion yuan, with job-first policies creating 12.6 million new urban jobs. Industrial and technological growth is driving employment and labor market stability.
4. Labor laws have improved worker protections, with 2025 employment plans focusing on key industries and SMEs. The human resources sector is growing, with 70,000 agencies supporting over 331 million workers.
5. There is a push for global collaboration to create quality jobs, protect workers, and eliminate discrimination. China remains committed to opening its economy, improving business conditions, and encouraging investment.

“ AI significantly impacts the supply and demand structure of the labor market. It boosts labor efficiency, creating new industries, business models, and job opportunities, freeing workers from repetitive tasks and allowing them to engage in high-value work.

FROM TRADITION TO TRANSFORMATION:
ARAMCO'S JOURNEY IN UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
THROUGH TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

FIRESIDE CHAT

- **Speaker:** Faisal Al-Hajji
Senior Vice President - Human Resources, Aramco
- **Moderator:** Tumi Makgabo
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

This session explored Aramco's pivotal role in advancing Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 through strategic investments in training and development. With a legacy spanning 90 years, Aramco has established diverse educational pathways, from STEM programs for high school students to in-house Master's degrees, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled talent. The discussion highlighted the company's commitment to Industry 4.0 and AI, with 300 employees currently enhancing their expertise in these fields and the development of Meta Brain, a groundbreaking industrial AI platform. Emphasizing lifelong employment and a collaborative workforce, Aramco showcased its approach to integrating AI as a complement to human talent rather than a replacement, reinforcing its position as a leading employer and contributor to the broader labor market.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Aramco plays a key part in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 by driving skill development through e-learning, in-house Master's programs, and STEM education, offering opportunities from high school to postgraduate levels.
2. Aramco is investing in education focused on Industry 4.0 and AI, with 300 employees currently enhancing their expertise in these fields, while building groundbreaking AI platforms like Meta Brain to lead in the digital space.
3. Aramco's commitment to its employees, and a focus on lifelong employment, strengthens its role as an attractive employer, complementing the workforce with AI while fostering collaboration over competition.



Faisal Al-Hajji
Senior Vice President - Human Resources, Aramco

“ I believe there needs to be a greater understanding of AI. It will not replace the workforce, but it will complement it. More dialogue is needed around these areas, and this will ultimately benefit the kingdom as a whole.

WOULD YOU WANT TO BE YOUNG TODAY?!

PANEL DISCUSSION

- **Speaker: Stephen Cotton**
General Secretary, ITF
- **Speaker: Bettina Schaller**
President WEC, Word Employment Confederation
- **Moderator: Tumi Makgabo**
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

This session examined the evolving realities young people face in today’s labor market, balancing opportunity with significant challenges. Speakers highlighted the gap between education systems and the digital skills employers demand, as well as the rise of precarious work, where job security and work-life balance are often unattainable. The discussion underscored young workers’ increasing demand for the right to disconnect, even as competitive job markets discourage stepping away. The panel also called for systemic reform, emphasizing that post-World War II labor models are outdated and must evolve to reflect modern workforce dynamics. Achieving meaningful change requires inclusive collaboration among governments, employers, unions, and educators to create a labor market that supports youth aspirations while ensuring fair employment conditions.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Education systems are failing to equip young people with the digital skills needed in today’s labor market, creating a disconnect between training and workplace demands.
2. Young workers are increasingly advocating for the right to disconnect from work, especially in competitive environments where constant availability is expected.
3. A significant portion of the global workforce, particularly young people, faces precarious employment with no guaranteed work-life balance or job security.
4. Labor market systems, designed post-World War II, are outdated and must evolve to address modern realities, including the aspirations and needs of younger generations.
5. Effective solutions require bringing all stakeholders—governments, employers, unions, and educators—to the table, with a focus on inclusivity for women, youth, minorities, and people with disabilities.

“
Young people today have been exposed to more of the world than their predecessors, raising their aspirations. This challenges all stakeholders. Balancing forms of employment is key; young people we survey seek a comfortable life without the constraints of a 9-to-5 job.

Stephen Cotton
General Secretary, ITF

“
This is the mic drop moment—the system must change, not just for youth, but for the economy. Today’s labor markets were largely built after WWII, in a world that no longer exists. Its institutions are no longer fit for purpose.

Bettina Schaller
President WEC, Word Employment Confederation

THE NEXT GENERATION IN NUMBERS: GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM?

KEYNOTE

- **Speaker: Dr. Angus Hervey**
Founder, Fix The News

During his keynote speech, Dr. Hervey explored the paradox of crisis and optimism, highlighting how, despite global challenges, a majority of people—especially youth—remain hopeful about the future. While Gen Z faces challenges like AI disruptions and climate change, their adaptability, education, and global connectivity position them to navigate the future with confidence.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Despite living in an era of global crises, most people remain optimistic about the future. A global study by IPSOS in 2023 found that 71% of people believe 2025 will be better than 2024, with youth being the most resilient and optimistic group.
2. Gen Z is the first generation in history where the majority are likely to live a middle-class lifestyle or better. Progress markers shape a fundamentally different reality than the narratives of doom often presented in the media.
3. The way people perceive the world is heavily influenced by the media, which prioritizes fear-based, negative headlines over positive global progress. While crises dominate the news cycle, significant advancements in healthcare, education, and sanitation go largely unreported.
4. While Gen Z will face challenges like AI disruptions and climate change, their resilience and adaptability suggest they may be better equipped to handle the future than older generations assume.



“
Our world isn’t just a series of crises; beneath that, progress continues in the background. It’s real and happening, and, once you realize that, the future will appear brighter.



Kersti Kaljulaid
Former President of Estonia & President, Estonian Olympic Committee



We talk about technology taking jobs away. That's true for the old jobs, but all the new technologies have created far more new ones; they're just jobs my grandmother wouldn't have considered real.

Kersti Kaljulaid
Former President of Estonia & President, Estonian Olympic Committee

TAKE A CHANCE ON ME

- **Speaker: Kersti Kaljulaid**
Former President of Estonia & President, Estonian Olympic Committee
- **Speaker: Yvonne Watson**
Executive Dean, Parsons School of Design

As digital transformation reshapes employment, the session explored how employers and policymakers can better support new labor market entrants by embracing evolving work models. The discussion highlighted the need for governments to modernize labor policies to accommodate independent workers and digital nomads while ensuring social security frameworks remain relevant. Speakers also noted that educational institutions must shift from rigid curricula to becoming incubators of creativity and adaptability, equipping graduates with the skills to thrive in roles that do not yet exist.



Yvonne Watson
Executive Dean, Parsons School of Design



Platforms like GLMC are crucial as an international think tank. From my experience here, cross-collaboration is key. The goal isn't just to solve youth challenges—it's about creating new opportunities together.

Yvonne Watson
Executive Dean, Parsons School of Design

2 CONSECUTIVE RAPID FIRES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Young professionals increasingly reject traditional job constraints, opting for a global labor market enabled by digital transformation. Governments and institutions must adapt to this shift.
2. While automation displaces old jobs, it simultaneously generates new opportunities—many of which challenge traditional definitions of “work” but are valid in the evolving economy.
3. The skills required in today's workforce differ from what traditional education emphasizes. Institutions must become hubs of innovation to prepare students for roles that do not yet exist.
4. Governments need to accommodate digital nomads and independent workers by modernizing labor policies and social security frameworks beyond industrial-era structures.
5. Both employers and employees must adapt to uncertainty, with graduates increasingly evaluating job opportunities rather than relying on employers to take chances on them.

WANTED: DECENT JOBS FOR OUR YOUTH

PANEL DISCUSSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Today's youth are not only seeking jobs but want roles with purpose, learning opportunities, and faster career growth. They value dignity, respect from employers, and control over their work.
2. Governments and private sectors must collaborate to provide targeted training and education. Programs must focus on bridging skills gaps, particularly in digital and green skills, to equip youth for future job markets.
3. The shift to a global workforce is reshaping job expectations. Young people are increasingly interested in entrepreneurship and global opportunities, and they expect to contribute to causes larger than themselves.

- **Speaker: Will Straw**
Chief Executive Officer, King's Trust International
- **Speaker: Jamal Al Kishi**
Chief Executive Officer Middle East & Africa, Deutsche Bank AG
- **Speaker: Maha Mofeez**
CEO, Tamkeen
- **Speaker: Mayank Patel**
SVP & Head of EEMEA, Adecco
- **Moderator: Aaron Heslehurst**
Former News Anchor & Presenter BBC World News

As youth unemployment and underemployment remain critical global challenges, the session explored the urgent need for creating decent and sustainable jobs for young people. Discussions highlighted the growing demand for roles that offer purpose, fair wages, and career growth, as well as the shift in youth expectations toward entrepreneurship and global opportunities. Panelists underscored the importance of public-private partnerships, targeted training programs, and digital and green skills development to bridge the gap between job seekers and market demands.



For the youth, dignity in employment means earning a fair wage for a fair day's work, being treated well, and having respectful managers and employers.

Will Straw
Chief Executive Officer, King's Trust International



The future is driven by people. By providing them with experience, we begin to approach skilling from a forward-looking perspective and equip them with the training they need.

Mayank Patel
SVP & Head of EEMEA, Adecco



Will Straw
Chief Executive Officer, King's Trust International



When I speak with young people, I often see a desire to go beyond what we aimed for in our youth—a good job, salary, benefits, and health coverage. They're focused on causes larger than themselves, which is truly gratifying.

Jamal Al Kishi
Chief Executive Officer Middle East & Africa, Deutsche Bank AG



THE FUTURE OF WORK IS FEMALE

- **Speaker:** Silvina Moschini
CEO, Unicorns

This session explored how Saudi Arabia is emerging as a leader in female economic empowerment, where female participation has surged due to progressive policies and digital transformation. However, systemic challenges remain, including inflexible work conditions that drive a high percentage of women out of the workforce and a glaring disparity in venture capital funding. Tech visionary, Silvina Moschini, showcased how digital platforms like SheWorks and Transparent Business are addressing these gaps by enabling remote work, fostering financial independence, and providing women with greater access to economic opportunities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Women's participation in the Saudi workforce has surged, with 57% holding advanced degrees and 40% leading SMEs, positioning the country as a leader in female economic potential.
2. With 51% of women leaving jobs due to inflexible work conditions, digital platforms enabling remote work are key to retaining female talent and expanding economic opportunities.
3. Despite evidence that women-led businesses yield 20% higher returns, only 2% of VC funding goes to female entrepreneurs, highlighting the need for systemic change.
4. Platforms designed to empower women, such as SheWorks and Transparent Business, are bridging gaps in financial independence, workforce participation, and entrepreneurial success.



Many women leave the workforce due to lack of flexibility, but if their work is computer-based, then there is no reason to leave their kids and go to the office.

KEYNOTE

WRAP-UP OF DAY 1

Moderator: Tumi Makgabo
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

MC REMARKS



Today challenged me and made me think differently. Tomorrow, on the second day of GLMC 2025, we will continue exploring the best ways to shape the future of work.

DAY TWO 2

LABOR MARKET TRANSFORMATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

FIRESIDE CHAT

- **Speaker:** H.E. Gilbert F. Hougbo
Secretary-General,
International Labor Organization (ILO)
- **Moderator:** Ben Thompson
Anchor & Presenter

This session explored how Saudi Arabia is emerging as a leader in female economic empowerment, where female participation has surged due to progressive policies and digital transformation. However, systemic challenges remain, including inflexible work conditions that drive a high percentage of women out of the workforce and a glaring disparity in venture capital funding. Tech visionary, Silvina Moschini, showcased how digital platforms like SheWorks and Transparent Business are addressing these gaps by enabling remote work, fostering financial independence, and providing women with greater access to economic opportunities.



H.E. Gilbert F. Hougbo
Secretary-General, International Labor Organization (ILO)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. While global unemployment is at a 15-year low (5%), youth (13%) and women (17-18%) face higher rates, and 240 million full-time workers can't meet basic needs, underscoring the need for living wages and social protection.
2. Insufficient investment in upskilling and reskilling, especially in the informal economy, creates a mismatch between education and job market demands, leaving many unprepared for evolving labor needs.
3. The informal sector makes up 60% of the global economy (up to 80-90% in some regions), complicating data collection and policy implementation, particularly with AI reshaping labor markets.
4. Many youth have left the labor market due to skill mismatches and lack of opportunities, requiring targeted incentives, public-private collaboration, and education aligned with market needs.
5. Sustainable job creation relies on supporting SMEs and fostering private sector growth, as seen in initiatives like Saudi Arabia's 20 million SAR annual investment in private sector development.



ILO data shows that 240 million people work full-time yet still struggle to meet their basic needs. One of the ILO's key concerns is the level of inequality, highlighting the need to strengthen social protection—an area where Saudi Arabia excels.

H.E. Gilbert F. Hougbo
Secretary-General, International Labor Organization (ILO)



GDP growth is everyone's go-to metric. We know it's not that simple. A growing economy with a rising GDP does not equal more jobs. Is there a better metric for success?.

Ben Thompson
Anchor & Presenter

SPECIAL MESSAGE

● **Speaker:** Amina J. Mohammed
Deputy Secretary-General,
United Moderator

Emphasizing the need for collective action, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed called for stronger global partnerships to align education with labor market needs, foster innovation, and create equitable opportunities. With key global summits ahead, the message reinforced the importance of reaffirming commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring inclusive economic progress.



Amina J. Mohammed
Deputy Secretary-General,
United Nations

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Saudi Arabia's reforms have increased women's workforce participation, supported young entrepreneurs, and expanded education and skills training, driving economic progress.
2. Conflicts, climate crises, and economic turmoil are reducing labor force participation, with job displacement and unequal access to technology affecting women and youth.
3. Global partnerships are essential to align education with labor market needs and foster innovation, with key summits providing opportunities to advance SDG commitments.



Through the GLMC, we can further align policies that promote decent jobs, social justice, digital connectivity, education, and social protection. In this moment of change and possibility, let's unite to build labor markets that work for everyone.

SPECIAL MESSAGE



Prof. Carl Benedikt Frey
Associate Professor for AI & Work, Oxford University

KEYNOTE

● **Speaker:** Prof. Carl Benedikt Frey
Associate Professor for AI & Work, Oxford University

This session explored the paradox of labor mobility in a world with unprecedented job market data. Despite abundant information, significant barriers—economic, political, and social—still prevent people from moving to better opportunities. According to Prof. Frey, removing such barriers could unlock trillions in global economic growth, particularly as advanced economies increasingly rely on immigration to sustain income levels. According to him, AI is reshaping the future of work by narrowing skill gaps, particularly benefiting lower-skilled workers and enabling them to compete globally. He also delved into how the next wave of globalization will be service-led rather than manufacturing-driven, favoring countries with linguistic and cultural compatibility. While concerns remain about AI replacing jobs, its potential to democratize access to professional services is already reshaping global labor markets.

NOT WORKING: DECODING MARKET SIGNALS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WORK

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Despite the availability of job market information, significant barriers prevent people from moving to better opportunities. Removing these barriers could unlock trillions in global economic growth.
2. Advanced economies require immigration to maintain income levels, yet political and social challenges hinder movement. Addressing these barriers is essential for long-term economic stability.
3. AI is reducing skill disparities, especially benefiting low-skilled workers. This “Uber moment” for professional services allows talent from different regions to compete in global markets.
4. The next wave of globalization will be led by professional services rather than manufacturing, favoring countries with linguistic and cultural compatibility for remote work.
5. Real-time translation and AI-driven work platforms are reducing the need for physical migration, enabling “virtual migration” and expanding job access worldwide.



The most costly barrier is the barrier to labor mobility. If the 1.1 billion people who wanted to move to the jobs they wanted could, earnings would rise by about \$15,000 a year. Collectively, this means leaving trillions on the sidewalk.

LEVERAGING AI & TECH CROSS-BORDER TALENT

- **Speaker:** Dr. Mishari Almishari
Deputy Director, National Information Center (NIC)
- **Speaker:** Cenly Chen
Chief Growth Officer, SVP & MD, Supermicro
- **Speaker:** Mana Mohammed
Chief Executive Officer & Board Member, The Financial Academy
- **Speaker:** Ed Williams
President, International, Edelman
- **Moderator:** Omar Christides
CEO & Founder, Arabnet

The session explored how AI and technology are transforming cross-border talent management, enabling companies to access a global workforce while navigating challenges like regulation, data security, and cultural integration. Panelists highlighted the exponential impact of AI on workforce structures and the shift in work patterns accelerated by the pandemic. Key discussions revolved around the need for digital maturity, governance frameworks, and AI-driven recruitment systems to optimize remote work efficiency. The session also highlighted the importance of balancing agility with compliance, ensuring data sovereignty, and preparing the workforce for the evolving digital landscape.



I think there are two pillars to remote work: Digital maturity and a strong governance framework. Businesses need robust communication channels, infrastructure, and employee awareness to operate effectively. At the same time, prevent misuse by measuring performance.

Dr. Mishari Almishari

Deputy Director,
National Information Center (NIC)

PANEL DISCUSSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The pandemic has fundamentally shifted work patterns, with remote work becoming a new reality. Companies must focus on digital maturity, governance, and infrastructure to effectively manage cross-border teams and ensure productivity.
2. AI is reshaping the workforce exponentially, not linearly. This, combined with remote work trends, is forcing organizations to rethink traditional structures and adapt to new ways of working and collaborating globally.
3. Key challenges include time zone logistics, data security, cultural understanding, and fostering teamwork and collaboration. Building trust and human connection remains critical in a remote environment.
4. As AI automates lower-level jobs, upskilling and reskilling are essential to prepare the workforce for future roles. Human-centric practices, such as mentorship and team-building, are vital to maintaining engagement and purpose in remote teams.
5. Ensuring data sovereignty and security is a top priority for cross-border teams. Organizations must balance agility with adherence to local regulations and policies to protect sensitive information.



Ed Williams
President, International, Edelman



Cenly Chen
Chief Growth Officer, SVP & MD, Supermicro



Two powerful forces are reshaping work: Cross-border dynamics and AI. For 150 years, the office environment was the primary workplace, but the pandemic changed that in just three years. The second wave is AI. Unlike past revolutions, AI's impact is exponential.

Ed Williams

President, International, Edelman



Hiring globally has never been easier, bringing benefits and challenges. Communication and face-to-face interaction can be difficult, especially across time zones, requiring flexibility in scheduling meetings and working hours. There's also data security—we need to protect business data and employee information.

Mana Mohammed

Chief Executive Officer & Board Member, The Financial Academy



For entry-level and graduating students, it's crucial to build a talent pipeline, setting up talent systems across various sectors. Emphasizing the importance of humanity and purpose has value. Effective onboarding strategies can play a key role in reinforcing this mission.

Cenly Chen

Chief Growth Officer, SVP & MD, Supermicro

(TARGETED) IMMIGRATION – IS THAT EVEN A THING?

PANEL DISCUSSION

- **Speaker:** Dr. Deepak Nayyar
Professor Emeritus of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University; President, Indian Society of Labour Economics
- **Speaker:** Dr. Philani Mthembu
Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)
- **Speaker:** Kholoud Saif Abdullah Alkubaisi
Executive Director, Workers' Support and Insurance Fund
- **Speaker:** Dr. Çağlar Özden
Lead Economist in Development Economics, World Bank Group
- **Moderator:** Tumi Makgabon
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Me

This panel discussion explored the evolving role of targeted immigration in addressing labor market shortages and demographic shifts. Speakers also underscored the importance of designing policies based on skill requirements rather than nationality, creating legal pathways to prevent undocumented migration, and fostering social and economic integration. While targeted immigration has been a long-standing practice, recent political upheavals and economic shifts have posed new challenges, requiring more flexible, transparent, and inclusive frameworks to attract and retain global talent effectively.



“The only way forward is to ultimately establish a multilateral framework governing cross-border movement of people. Immigration laws here will be communicated more transparently. We need to think long-term.

Dr. Deepak Nayyar
Professor Emeritus of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University; President, Indian Society of Labour Economics

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Skilled labor often doesn't match demand in certain regions. Solutions include targeted immigration to fill gaps in areas with labor shortages. Governments, employers, and markets need to work together to address this.
2. While immigration can support labor markets, governments struggle with balancing citizen concerns and labor needs. Skilled immigration needs to be based on job requirements, not just nationality or qualifications.
3. Successful immigration requires social and economic integration. Immigrants must have job access and cultural inclusion, and legal pathways should be facilitated to prevent resentment and undocumented migration.



Dr. Deepak Nayyar
Professor Emeritus of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University; President, Indian Society of Labour Economics



A key to targeted migration is sending the message that immigrants are not competing with locals for jobs. It's an effort to address the need for specific skills while helping citizens understand it brings economic benefits, though that's not always easy to convey.

Dr. Philani Mthembu
Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)



Kholoud Saif Abdullah Alkubaisi
Executive Director, Workers' Support and Insurance Fund



Dr. Çağlar Özden
Lead Economist in Development Economics, World Bank Group



Financial stability is one of the most important factors affecting worker productivity. It also plays a key role in attracting skilled and highly qualified labor.

Kholoud Saif Abdullah Alkubaisi
Executive Director, Workers' Support and Insurance Fund



The government's role in targeted immigration is to set overarching parameters and allow the market and employers to select the right people—without micromanagement. Targeting criteria should be based on skills and occupation, not connections or arbitrary factors.

Dr. Çağlar Özden
Lead Economist in Development Economics, World Bank Group



Dr. Philani Mthembu
Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)

WORLD BANK YOUTH REPORT

This session explored the findings of the joint GLMC-World Bank new approach paper, Making Labor Markets Work for the Youth, highlighting the pressing employment challenges facing the Global South’s growing youth population. The discussion emphasized the urgent need to create quality first jobs, expand apprenticeships, and align education with labor market demands. The conversation also addressed global labor market imbalances, with developed nations facing workforce shortages while Global South experiences a surplus. Digital platforms and managed migration were identified as key solutions to bridge this gap, underscoring the importance of large-scale, systemic interventions to prepare youth for the future of work.

- **Introductory**
Keynote: Jamele Rigolini
Senior Advisor, Social Protection and Jobs, World Bank Group
- **Speaker:** Dr. Cristobal Ridao Cano
Practice Manager for MENA SPJ Global, World Bank Group
- **Speaker:** Jude AlThagafi
MA Candidate, Johns Hopkins University
- **Speaker:** Olubunmi Olusanya,
Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Nigeria
- **Moderator:** Omar Christides
CEO & Founder, Arabnet

“Factors affecting the youth transition include a lack of opportunities, the absence of the right skills, and no access to the labor market. But we can create opportunities for youth, even something temporary, like a good first job.

Jamele Rigolini,
Senior Advisor, Social Protection and Jobs,
World Bank Group

LAUNCH CONVERSATION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The Global South’s youth population will reach 1.2 billion by 2033, with nearly 300 million remaining inactive. Lack of education and a poor first job can result in lifetime income losses of up to 30%, costing governments 1-2% of GDP in social expenditures.
2. Youth face job shortages, skill mismatches, and social norms that restrict access to work. Addressing these requires creating quality first jobs, expanding apprenticeships, and aligning education with market demands.
3. Countries like Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia are linking youth to jobs through profiling, partnerships, and gender-sensitive training. Large-scale programs are needed to meet the demands of 1.2 billion youth.
4. Developed nations will face labor shortages by 2030, while the Global South will have a surplus. Digital platforms and managed migration offer win-win solutions for connecting youth to global job markets.
5. Countries like Nigeria and Saudi Arabia are integrating internships, apprenticeships, and education loans to ease the school-to-work transition. Stronger connections between education, training, and private sector needs are essential for success.



Jude AlThagafi
MA Candidate, Johns Hopkins University



Jamele Rigolini
Senior Advisor, Social Protection and Jobs, World Bank Group

“In Nigeria, we help youth with accessing job opportunities with government initiatives where we encourage them to gain new skills and prepare them for life; we have many success stories of people who are now self-employed.

Olubunmi Olusanya
Permanent Secretary,
Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Nigeria

“The MENA region has the second largest youth population, with more youth entering the labor force. The region is also aging fast; the window of opportunity to realize the potential dividend is short. There’s a big challenge, but little time.

Dr. Cristobal Ridao Cano
Practice Manager for MENA SPJ Global,
World Bank Group

“Educational systems need to better prepare youth for the labor market by increasing focus on practical knowledge, better alignment between curricula and economic planning, and focusing on soft skills, communication skills, and teamwork.

Jude AlThagafi
MA Candidate, Johns Hopkins University

PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT: IGNORE AT YOUR PERIL

- **Speaker:** H.E. Daniel Maurate Romero
Minister of Labor, &
Promotion of Employment , Peru
- **Speaker:** Marc Giannoni
Managing Director, Chief US Economist, Barclays
- **Speaker:** Dr. Erica L. Groshen,
Senior Economic Advisor, Cornell University
- **Speaker:** Amb. Dr. Valérie Berset Bircher
Deputy Head Labour Directorate,
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
- **Speaker:** Prof. Cho Dongchul
President, Korea Development Institute (KDI) & KDI
School of Public Policy and Management (KDIS)
- **Moderator:** Jorg Schubert
Partner and Expert in Labor, McKinsey

The discussion underscored the critical role of productivity in driving economic growth, innovation, and resilience, emphasizing that neglecting productivity improvements can lead to stagnation and lost opportunities. Panelists also highlighted key strategies to enhance productivity, including upskilling, fostering equal opportunities, and ensuring fair reward systems. Additionally, the role of immigration in labor supply was discussed. The session concluded with a call for a balanced approach that integrates technological advancements, workforce empowerment, and collaborative policymaking to sustain long-term productivity gains.



Globalization is something no country could prevent or evade. Countries that were not able to adapt to globalization were left behind, whereas those who could are at the forefront. It's the same with AI; whether we like it or not, we need to adapt.

H.E. Daniel Maurate Romero
Minister of Labor, & Promotion of Employment , Peru

PANEL DISCUSSION



We anticipate that the labor force growth rate will shrink, potentially reaching zero. However, we expect productivity to compensate for this decline, with AI driving productivity increases. It will take time for these improvements to positively impact the economy.

Marc Giannoni
Managing Director,
Chief US Economist, Barclays

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Productivity is essential for economic growth, innovation, and resilience. However, global productivity has stagnated or declined in many regions, necessitating strategies like upskilling, fair reward systems, and adapting to technological disruptions like AI.
2. Ensuring equal opportunities for all genders and social groups, along with fair reward systems based on contribution, boosts productivity. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Korea are making strides in increasing women's labor participation and narrowing wage gaps.
3. Improving labor conditions and fostering social dialogue enhances productivity, creating a sustainable cycle of better wages, stronger economies, and safer workplaces.
4. In the US, immigration has been a key driver of labor supply and economic growth. However, restrictive immigration policies could slow GDP growth, making productivity gains through AI and innovation even more critical.
5. Productivity growth often leads to job displacement, causing income losses for workers. Mitigating these effects requires robust labor market data, upskilling programs, and worker-centric policies to ensure shared benefits.



To have wage growth, you need both productivity growth and workers' share of output to stay the same or increase. No matter how the benefits of productivity growth are shared, the people who lose their jobs lose on their lifetime incomes.

Dr. Erica L. Groshen
Senior Economic Advisor,
Cornell University



Decent work and productivity are interlinked. We have data that supports that, if you improve labor conditions, you improve productivity, and if you improve productivity, you improve labor conditions.

Amb. Dr. Valérie Berset Bircher
Deputy Head Labour Directorate,
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs



When creating a fair rewarding system, note that fair does not mean equal; fairness is aligned with the worker's contribution to producing value.

Prof. Cho Dongchul, President
Korea Development Institute (KDI) & KDI School of Public
Policy and Management (KDIS)

GLOVES OFF: IS AI/ TECHNOLOGY REALLY IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY?

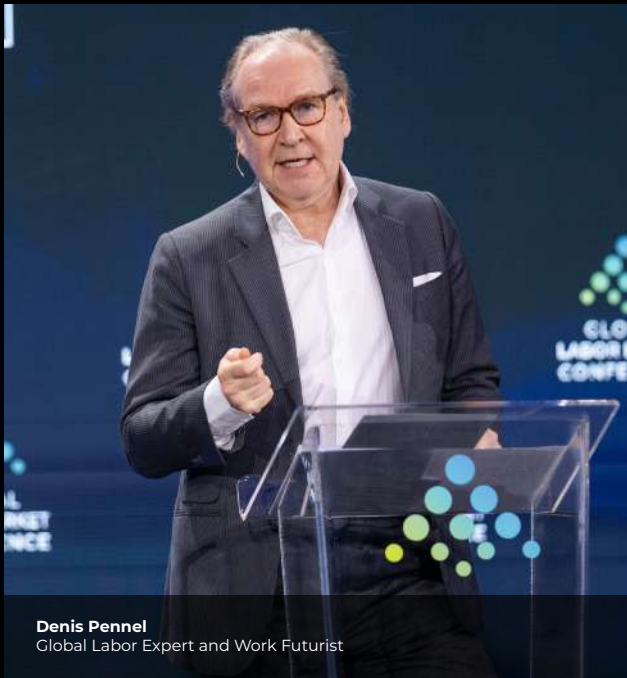
- **Speaker: Denis Pennel**
Global Labor Expert and Work Futurist
- **Speaker: Sven Otto Littorin**
Former Minister of Employment, Sweden
- **Speaker: Eng. Khalid Alhogail**
MD & CEO, SAPTCO Group
- **Speaker: David Barnes**
Workforce Policy Consultant, DNBGlobal Consulting
- **Speaker: Christopher Warhurst**
Professor & Director, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
- **Moderator: Tumi Makgabo**
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

The discussion critically examined whether AI and advanced technologies are truly enhancing productivity or simply adding another layer of complexity. Panelists explored the historical evolution of labor markets, reflecting on how past technological advancements have ultimately led to job creation and higher efficiency. The discussion also emphasized the need for AI to be implemented as an enabler rather than a disruptor. While concerns over job displacement and skills gaps persist, speakers highlighted the importance of reskilling, education, and early AI literacy to bridge digital divides.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. AI should empower workers by enhancing skills and creating new opportunities, not replacing jobs. Education and training systems must prepare workers for this shift. AI can open up new professions rather than eliminate existing ones.
2. AI must be implemented with a focus on people, ensuring it benefits both employees and businesses. Reskilling and employee-driven innovation lead to productivity gains. Leaders should prioritize making AI work for individuals, not just corporations.
3. Addressing the skills gap is crucial, especially in areas with low internet access. Early education in AI and programming can help bridge this divide. International organizations must help ensure global access to these resources.

FACE-OFF



Denis Pennel
Global Labor Expert and Work Futurist



Sven Otto Littorin
Former Minister of Employment, Sweden



“In Sweden, we learn English from an early age—and I think that we should start learning programming skills and AI even earlier.

Sven Otto Littorin
Former Minister of Employment, Sweden



For new technologies to deliver productivity gains, they must be properly managed, with workers involved in their introduction, use, and distribution.

Christopher Warhurst
Professor & Director, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick



Each generation is born with readiness for technology. This is life; I don’t worry about AI. This generation will come ready for that and will enhance their skills. Life will continue and generations will live with it.

Eng. Khalid Alhogail
MD & CEO, SAPTCO Group



The implementation of AI is not up to politicians; it is up to employers. They have the incentive and the relationship with workers to implement this. At IBM, I’m estimating 70% of suggestions for new AI apps come from reskilled employees.

David Barnes
Workforce Policy Consultant, DNBGlobal Consulting



Eng. Khalid Alhogail
MD & CEO, SAPTCO Group

IT’S ALL ABOUT SKILLS (GAPS)

- **Speaker:** Dr. Rama Chandra Khuntia
National Vice President, INTUC
- **Speaker:** Con Kittos
Executive Chairman, Asuria
- **Moderator:** Tumi Makgabo
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

This conversation explored the persistent challenge of skills gaps in the labor market, emphasizing the growing demand for soft skills. While technical skills can be taught, many employers struggle to find candidates with the right foundational skills, particularly SMEs with limited training budgets. The discussion highlighted a significant mismatch between university graduates’ qualifications and labor market needs, contributing to high youth unemployment. Panelists underscored the need for better coordination between education systems and industry demands, urging businesses to invest in upskilling rather than relying on external labor.

“
The skills gap creates unemployment, and is caused by several factors, including rapid technological advancements, a change in demand, a lack of educational training, globalization and competition, a shift towards soft skills, increased specialization, and economic conditions.

Dr. Rama Chandra Khuntia
National Vice President, INTUC

“
The challenge with youth unemployment is people are graduating universities without the degree or skills that meet the demand of employers. Employers now have two choices: Either train youth, or choose not to hire and businesses will fall back.

Con Kittos
Executive Chairman, Asuria

IN CONVERSATION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. While skills gaps have always existed, today’s biggest gap is in soft skills—problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity—essential for both SMEs and large corporations. Employers can train technical skills, but core work skills remain a challenge.
2. Many graduates, including 60% in Saudi Arabia, are leaving universities with qualifications that don’t align with labor market demands, leading to high youth unemployment and long-term joblessness. Bridging this gap requires better coordination between education and industry.
3. Countries like Saudi Arabia and India are working together through skill training councils, but large-scale implementation is still lacking. Sending and receiving countries must align training efforts to ensure skilled workers meet labor market needs.
4. Businesses face a choice: invest in training local talent or struggle with skill shortages. The COVID-19 experience showed that when immigration slowed, employers had to hire and upskill locally—proving investment in training is critical for workforce sustainability.
5. Initiatives like Saudi Arabia’s Skills Taxonomy and global partnerships with the World Bank and HRDF aim to create a common framework for defining skills, helping employers and policymakers address workforce challenges more effectively.



Gerd Leonhard
Author & CEO, The Futures Agency

WHAT TOMORROW WILL BRING – A SNEAK PREVIEW

- **Speaker:** Gerd Leonhard
Author & CEO, The Futures Agency

KEYNOTE

This keynote speech explored the transformative impact of AI and renewable energy on the future, emphasizing that the nature of the outcome depends on how these advancements are managed. AI should be seen as a tool to augment human capabilities rather than replace them, with social, emotional, and creative skills becoming increasingly valuable. As automation eliminates routine tasks, the future of work will demand adaptability, imagination, and human-centric problem-solving.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Advancements in AI and renewable energy will reshape the world, but whether they lead to progress or crisis depends on how we manage these changes.
2. AI must be treated as a tool to enhance human capabilities, not as a substitute for human intelligence, creativity, and emotional understanding.
3. AI will eliminate repetitive tasks, making social, emotional, and creative skills the most valuable assets in the future job market.
4. The future requires a shift from knowledge-based education to one that fosters imagination, adaptability, and human-centric problem-solving.
5. The unchecked pursuit of AGI by tech companies could threaten human agency, making it critical to establish ethical frameworks and global oversight.

“
There are IQ tests for ChatGPT and DeepSeek, but it doesn’t matter how intelligent the system is; intelligence alone is not enough. It takes a lot more to be a human than intelligence.

GREEN JOBS ABOUND. TALENT IN SHORT SUPPLY - WHY THE LAG?

IN CONVERSATION

- **Speaker:** Omar Shahzad
Group CEO, Meinhardt Group
- **Moderator:** Omar Christides
CEO & Founder, Arabnet

This one-on-one conversation explored the growing demand for green jobs in the global transition to a sustainable economy and the challenges of bridging the skills gap. While industries seek skilled talent in renewable energy, sustainability, and low-carbon technologies, many workers and graduates lack the necessary expertise due to outdated curricula and insufficient reskilling programs. The discussion highlighted key barriers, including the prestige gap between green jobs and traditional sectors, slow industry adaptation, and inadequate government incentives.



To support digital urbanism, we need world-class infrastructure. Currently, global infrastructure spending stands at \$3 trillion per year, projected to rise to \$6 trillion. Net-zero carbon goals mean it must reach \$9 trillion—around 10% of global GDP. Progress, though commendable, hasn't been enough.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The global shift to a green economy is creating millions of jobs annually, but there's a significant gap in graduates with relevant skills, particularly in sustainability and renewable energy sectors.
2. To meet net-zero commitments, global infrastructure spending needs to triple to \$9 trillion annually, highlighting the urgent need for skilled workers in green industries.
3. A major barrier to green job uptake is the lack of awareness and training. Many workers and graduates lack the necessary skills, and educational institutions are slow to integrate green-focused curricula.
4. Green jobs often lack the prestige and visibility compared to traditional sectors like finance, which affects their appeal. However, green skills are increasingly in demand, offering strong job security and growth potential.
5. Bridging the gap requires reskilling and upskilling initiatives, government incentives, and industry collaboration. Programs like Singapore's SkillsFuture, which funds training for workers, serve as effective models for addressing the skills shortage in green industries.

YOU LOSE SOME, YOU WIN SOME - THE UNEQUAL JOB IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

PANEL DISCUSSION

- **Speaker:** Prof. Enrico Giovannini
Professor, University of Rome &
Former Minister of Labour and Social Policies
- **Speaker:** Prof. Joseph Akinkugbe Adelegan
Secretary-General & Executive Head,
International Rubber Study Groups
- **Moderator:** Ben Thompson
Anchor & Presenter

This panel discussion delved into the uneven impact of climate change on employment, highlighting both risks and opportunities across industries. While renewable energy investments are driving job creation, many traditional sectors face decline due to environmental regulations and shifting demands. Panelists also emphasized the importance of upskilling and training programs to prepare the workforce for the green transition, with governments playing a key role in providing financial incentives and regulatory support. Moreover, they underscored the need for coordinated policies that align economic, social, and environmental goals, stressing that a successful transition requires proactive investments and long-term commitments rather than reactive measures.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Global investment in renewables reached \$2 trillion in 2024 and is expected to grow further, creating significant job opportunities. Renewables generate up to 15 jobs per \$1 million invested, compared to just 5 in fossil fuels.
2. The green transition benefits both high- and low-skilled workers. While high-tech roles are expanding, investments in areas like energy-efficient construction can create jobs for low-skilled workers, reducing economic disparities.
3. Training must be prioritized to match the growing demand for renewable energy jobs. Governments should provide financial incentives and regulatory support to encourage workforce upskilling, as seen in Italy's fiscal bonuses for green and digital transformation.
4. Achieving a successful green transition requires strong, coordinated policies across sectors. Governments must move beyond GDP as a sole measure of success and implement long-term strategies to align environmental, economic, and social goals.



Investing in energy is not enough to get net-zero by 2050. If you frame energy transition as part of a full innovation package and don't assume someone's fixing the problem, the result can come by 2030.

Prof. Enrico Giovannini

Professor, University of Rome &
Former Minister of Labour and Social Policies



To make policy work, governments need to determine measures and incentivize in the right way, using a strong institutional and regulatory framework, and they must set a target for renewables to determine the mitigation efforts needed.

Prof. Joseph Akinkugbe Adelegan

Secretary-General & Executive Head,
International Rubber Study Group

FROM BRAIN DRAIN TO BRAIN GAIN: INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

FIRESIDE CHAT

- **Speaker: Marek Benio**
Co-Founder & Vice-President,
European Labour Mobility Institute
- **Moderator: Omar Christides**
CEO & Founder, Arabnet

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Brain drain and “overskilled drain” are ongoing issues as companies compete globally to attract top talent, often leaving home economies deprived of essential skills.
2. Beyond financial incentives, social ties and a sense of belonging strongly influence whether people return to their home countries, making emotional engagement crucial.
3. Hybrid models, remote work, and temporary placements allow individuals to contribute without permanent relocation, fostering a win-win situation for talent and employers alike.

“
To bring back the talent to your country, it’s essential to have continuous policy, regardless of who is in government, with a focus on future development.”

This insightful one-on-one conversation examined how innovative strategies are transforming brain drain into brain gain by fostering knowledge exchange, attracting returning talent, and leveraging global expertise. The talk highlighted how financial incentives alone are insufficient, while emotional ties, social belonging, and meaningful engagement play a critical role in whether individuals choose to return to the workplace. Hybrid work models, remote opportunities, and temporary placements were presented as viable solutions that allow talent to contribute without full relocation, benefiting both individuals and employers.



Marek Benio
Co-Founder & Vice-President,
European Labour Mobility Institute



Dean Turner
Chief EMEA Economist,
UBS Global Wealth Management

- **Speaker: Dean Turner**
Chief EMEA Economist,
UBS Global Wealth Management
- **Speaker: Melina Taprantzi**
Founder, Earth & Co Consulting
- **Moderator: Ben Thompson**
Anchor & Presenter

The session highlighted the increasing demand for purpose-driven work, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z, who prioritize values, sustainability, and well-being over financial stability. According to the guest speakers, companies must integrate social responsibility into their core strategies to attract and retain talent. They also underscored how a purpose-driven workforce not only enhances job satisfaction but also drives productivity and profitability. The role of the pandemic was also marked as prevalent in accelerating the shift toward flexible work models, reinforcing the need for organizations to adapt to evolving employee expectations. At the end, it became evident that organizations that align their mission with employees’ sense of purpose will gain a competitive edge in talent acquisition and long-term success.

JOBS WITH A PURPOSE: TRUE OR FALSE

IN CONVERSATION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Younger generations, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, prioritize jobs with purpose over financial stability. They seek employers that align with their values, prioritize well-being, and offer growth opportunities, even if it means lower pay.
2. Companies must embed sustainability and social responsibility into their DNA to attract and retain talent. Lip service is no longer enough; organizations must demonstrate genuine commitment through actions and policies.
3. A purpose-driven workforce increases productivity and profitability. Studies show that happier, purpose-aligned employees contribute to double-digit productivity gains, benefiting the company’s bottom line.
4. The pandemic accelerated the demand for flexible work models, such as hybrid and remote work. Companies that adapt to these preferences while maintaining work-life balance will better attract and retain talent.
5. Organizations are moving from “know-it-all” to “learn-it-all” cultures, co-designing values and strategies with employees. This collaborative approach fosters engagement and ensures employees feel invested in the company’s mission.

“
Purpose was once associated mainly with non-profits, but the shift toward purpose-driven work has been underway since the financial crisis, long before the pandemic. Attracting top talent now requires organizations to offer meaningful work.”

Dean Turner
Chief EMEA Economist,
UBS Global Wealth Management

“
There is a shift from a “know-it-all” company to a “learn-it-all” company. In the past, companies dictated and employees followed. Now, the approach is: “We don’t know everything—we will co-design this with you.”

Melina Taprantzi
Founder, Earth & Co Consulting



- **Speaker: Amanda Pullinger**
Founder & Principal,
Global Female Investors Management
- **Speaker: Alin Ioaneș**
CEO, Rombat SA
- **Speaker: Dr. Ayth Al Mubarak**
CEO, The National Center for Family Business
- **Moderator: Ben Thompson**
Anchor & Presenter

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. To grow successfully, SMEs must innovate strategically, optimize limited resources, and foster a strong workplace culture that attracts and retains talent.
2. With 95% of businesses being family-owned, transitioning from informal entrepreneurial models to structured corporate governance is key to sustainability and job creation.
3. Female fund managers often lack access to capital and support systems. Increasing their visibility and connecting them to investment networks is essential for breaking barriers.
4. Future-proofing businesses is unrealistic, but strong governance frameworks and preparing the next generation can mitigate risks and ensure stability.
5. Governments, family businesses, advisory bodies, and communities must work together to create an environment that fosters SME and family business growth.

This discussion explored how SMEs can maximize their job creation potential by scaling strategically, fostering innovation, and strengthening governance. Panelists highlighted the importance of leveraging limited resources efficiently, building strong workplace cultures, and forming strategic partnerships—such as collaborating with universities for R&D and tech transfers. The discussion also emphasized the unique challenges faced by family businesses, and the need for structured governance to ensure sustainability. Additionally, the panel addressed the barriers female fund managers face in accessing capital and the importance of increasing their visibility within investment networks. While future-proofing businesses may seem unrealistic, strong governance frameworks and succession planning can mitigate risks and enhance long-term stability.



SMALL BUT MIGHTY: MAXIMIZING SMES' JOB CREATION POTENTIAL

PANEL DISCUSSION



When I ask women who are impact investors or hedge investors which, between performance or purpose, they would choose, every woman chose purpose. They know they need returns, but they want to make a difference.

Amanda Pullinger
Founder & Principal,
Global Female Investors Management



With the right culture and environment and no gap between what you promise and what new employees are seeing, it's easier to retain talent. Align your selection process with the company's values and culture; that's how you create a success story.

Alin Ioaneș
CEO, Rombat SA



A key challenge for SMEs, especially family businesses, is moving from entrepreneurial practices to structured corporatized practices that enable saving existing jobs, exploring new opportunities, and forming new partnerships. Saudi Arabia has done well in creating an infrastructure for that.

Dr. Ayth Al Mubarak
CEO, The National Center for Family Business



SMES - THE FRONTRUNNERS OF ‘GOOD WORK’?

IN CONVERSATION

- **Speaker:** Virginia Reese Coles
Co-founder, Aretas AI
- **Speaker:** Waleed Fatani
Group CEO, Savola Group
- **Moderator:** Tumi Makgabo,
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

This fireside chat explored how SMEs are shaping the future of “good work” by fostering innovation, adaptability, and employee engagement. SMEs’ flat structures and open communication channels empower employees to scale their skills and contribute meaningfully, creating dynamic work environments. The discussion demonstrated the importance of leadership accessibility within larger organizations while recognizing the need for SMEs to develop structured growth strategies. Collaboration between SMEs and corporates can bridge the gap, fostering inclusive, agile workplaces that prioritize purpose-driven work and employee development. Speakers concluded with a call for organizations to integrate the best practices of both sectors to build resilient, people-centric work cultures.



Employees today in SMEs want to know their voices are being heard, driving change and feeling empowered. They have the ability to adapt more regularly and play an active role in shaping the direction of the business.

Virginia Reese Coles
Co-founder, Aretas AI



SMEs should leverage government support, training, and development opportunities. It’s crucial to prioritize time for training, and Saudi Arabia serves as a great example, offering extensive support to SMEs through the HRDF.

Waleed Fatani
Group CEO, Savola Group

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. SMEs excel at fostering innovation and adaptability by maintaining flat structures and fluid environments. Their culture encourages employees to scale their skills and contribute meaningfully, leading to better engagement and collaboration.
2. Accessible leadership and open communication are key lessons from SMEs. Large organizations should institutionalize regular interactions and break down hierarchical silos. Employees thrive when their voices are genuinely heard and valued.
3. SMEs need structured growth strategies and support for employee development, while corporates can adopt more agile, inclusive practices. Collaboration between the two sectors fosters mutual growth and innovation-driven environments.



Virginia Reese Coles
Co-founder, Aretas AI



Richard Rothenberg
CEO, Global AI



SMEs need to learn how to adopt new technology, because this change is permanent. Assign dedicated people to implement AI, learn from global examples, and use local resources; this will be an opportunity to succeed and increase productivity and efficiency.

Richard Rothenberg
CEO, Global AI

AI IN SMES DRIVER OR ROADBLOCK FOR JOB CREATION?

- **Speaker:** Richard Rothenberg
CEO, Global AI
- **Speaker:** Sarita Patil
Producer, Matchbox Shots
- **Moderator:** Omar Christides
CEO & Founder, Arabnet

This conversation explored whether AI can either serve as a driver or a roadblock for job creation. While SMEs play a crucial role in global employment, their slow AI adoption poses a risk to their long-term competitiveness. Not only is AI automating many traditional roles, but it is also creating new job opportunities, particularly in content creation and emerging industries. To remain relevant, SMEs must focus on upskilling, reskilling, and moving up the value chain rather than competing on cost alone. Additionally, governments have a crucial role in facilitating AI adoption by investing in training, easing regulations, and fostering public-private partnerships.



Sarita Patil
Producer, Matchbox Shots



SMEs are going and they need to upskill, reskill, and be in sync with all the technological changes happening. The best way is to maintain high-level talent to capture opportunities for success.

Sarita Patil
Producer, Matchbox Shots

IN CONVERSATION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. SMEs are lagging in AI adoption due to high costs, lack of training, and regulatory challenges. However, those that fail to adopt AI risk becoming redundant as industries rapidly evolve.
2. AI is automating many traditional roles, but it also creates new job opportunities, such as AI-powered film festivals and content creation. The key is upskilling and reskilling to stay relevant.
3. To avoid job losses, SMEs must focus on higher-value production. Countries that expand their industries beyond raw material extraction, like semiconductors, will create more employment.
4. Governments should invest in AI training, public-private partnerships, and regulatory frameworks to help SMEs compete. Creating data-sharing platforms and easing regulations can accelerate AI adoption.
5. AI provides SMEs with access to advanced knowledge and automation, enabling them to scale and compete globally. Assigning dedicated AI teams within SMEs can boost productivity and efficiency.

GENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY OR RACE FOR THE JOBS?

- **Speaker:** Hasan Faisal Hammad
Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Saudi National Bank
- **Speaker:** Amani Alkhiami
Initiatives and Coalitions Senior Manager, FII Institute
- **Moderator:** Tumi Makgabo
Broadcaster and Founder, AfricaWorldwide Media

This discussion explored the evolving dynamics of generational collaboration in the workplace, emphasizing the shift from age-based hierarchies to skill-based team structures. As Saudi Arabia served as an example for integrating young workforce into organizations, the discussion focused on the necessity of enabling and empowering talent. Speakers highlighted the importance of fostering knowledge exchange between experienced professionals and younger employees through structured mentorship, hands-on learning, and inclusive work environments. Organizations were also urged to prioritize cross-generational collaboration, leveraging diverse perspectives to drive innovation and meaningful impact.



“Today, we have three to four generations in the workplace, each with different expectations. Universities provide specialized expertise, and organizations benefit from diversity, especially through cross-functional teams and task forces. Many innovative ideas come from younger colleagues.

Hasan Faisal Hammad
Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Saudi National Bank

IN CONVERSATION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Saudi Arabia's young workforce is already integrated into organizations, shifting the conversation from generational gaps to empowerment and enablement in the right roles.
2. Multi-generational teams fuel innovation and organizational success, with employers responsible for fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange between seasoned professionals and young talent.
3. Experience gaps among youth can be bridged by leveraging older employees as mentors, emphasizing structured mentorship and hands-on learning to accelerate career growth.
4. Organizations must prioritize skill-based team structures over age-based divisions, ensuring diverse perspectives contribute to meaningful impact and innovation.
5. Knowledge-sharing models must evolve beyond traditional mentorship, creating intentional, inclusive environments where power is distributed, and all employees contribute to driving progress.



Mentoring is challenging for both mentors and mentees. It requires intentionality, avoiding power gaps and sharing authority. Success depends on managing resources, driving progress, and valuing every opinion. In our organization, assessments ensure the right mix of skills and perspectives.

Amani Alkhiami
Initiatives and Coalitions Senior Manager, FII Institute

05

GLMC 2nd EDITION
OVERARCHING THEMES

INTRODUCTION

GLMC 2nd Edition served as a crucial platform for fostering global dialogue on future-proofing labor markets. While discussions reinforced the urgent need for adaptive policies, lifelong learning initiatives, and innovative workforce strategies, key insights emerged across multiple discussions, converging into overarching themes that define the future of work. This section distills the collective wisdom and shared insights at the conference, grouping the outcomes into comprehensive themes that reflect the evolving employment landscape. These themes encapsulate the core takeaways from GLMC 2nd Edition, offering a strategic roadmap for labor market resilience and growth.

The Future of Work & Employment Trends

As global labor markets evolve at an unprecedented pace, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience have become non-negotiable. The discussions underscored the importance of adapting to new work models, where **remote work, gig opportunities, and hybrid employment structures allow for greater workforce participation**. Data-driven policies are being prioritized to track labor trends and workforce needs, ensuring that employment strategies remain responsive and proactive. Several speakers highlighted that **demographic shifts**, particularly the increasing number of youth and marginalized workers, **require new initiatives to help them navigate a changing job market**. The conversations also emphasized that **governments and businesses must foster a culture of lifelong learning and digital adaptation** to ensure that employees remain competitive in an era of technological transformation.



Global Employment Rate in 2024



Youth Unemployment Rate in 2024



Global Economic Growth Rate Predicted for the Next Two Years according to the World Bank

Upskilling & Workforce Development

With automation and AI reshaping industries, upskilling and reskilling have become critical to maintaining employability. Across multiple sessions, experts highlighted the need to scale workforce training programs, emphasizing partnerships between governments, universities, and private enterprises to bridge skills gaps. The introduction of the GLMC **Labor Market Academy**—developed in collaboration with the World Bank—**aims to equip policymakers with the expertise needed to craft sustainable and future-ready employment policies**. Drawing inspiration from global best practices, case studies from **Germany’s dual vocational model, Singapore’s SkillsFuture initiative, and Kenya’s Ajira Digital program** were presented as blueprints for skills-based economic empowerment. The discussions also made it clear that learning must be continuous, and organizations should invest in lifelong learning ecosystems that prepare employees to adapt to rapid industry changes.

Policy & Regulations in the Evolving Labor Market

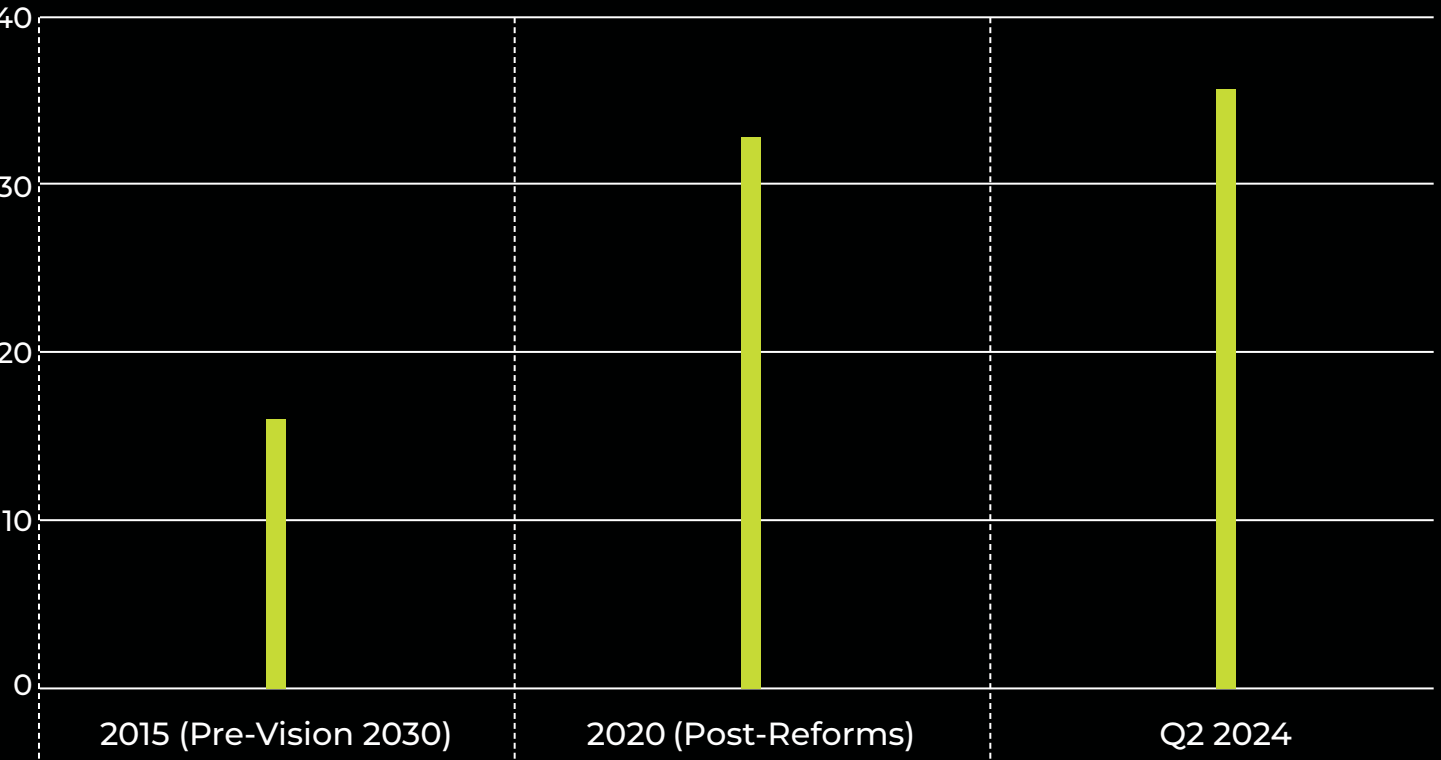
Conversations highlighted the increasing complexity of labor market regulations, particularly in light of gig work, AI-driven automation, and cross-border employment. Policymakers stressed the urgency of **redefining labor laws to align with emerging job structures**, ensuring that workers’ rights are protected while promoting economic flexibility. One of the major recommendations was the **development of robust labor market data systems that would track employment trends, wage fluctuations, and workforce demographics**—providing governments with real-time insights for policy decisions. With the rise of automation, panelists discussed the importance of worker rights and protections while acknowledging that **regulations must balance innovation with social responsibility**. There was also a strong push for international labor mobility agreements, which could facilitate cross-border employment opportunities, particularly in industries facing talent shortages.

Youth & Women Employment

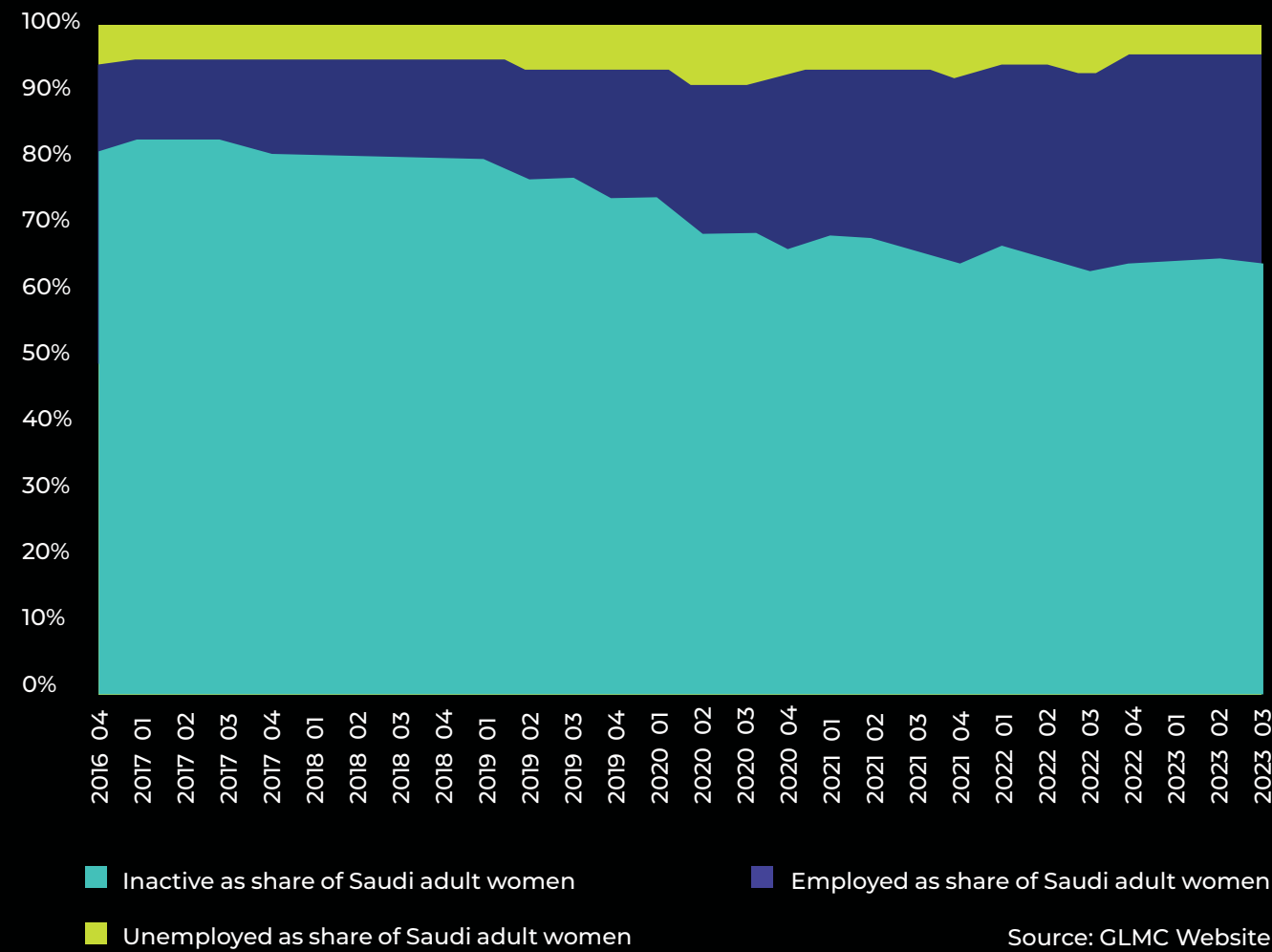
According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), a staggering **67 million young people around the world remain unemployed**, with nearly **20% disengaged from both work and education**. This alarming statistic was a focal point throughout the conference, with speakers stressing the importance of youth employment transition programs to create clear pathways from education to the workplace. The discussions also celebrated the increasing workforce participation of women, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where labor market reforms under **Vision 2030** have

significantly **increased female representation**. However, barriers remain, and there were calls for more inclusive hiring practices and targeted employment initiatives. Additionally, the conference emphasized the integration of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and long-term unemployed individuals, into mainstream economic activities. The message was clear—**building an equitable labor market requires bold action, targeted policies, and sustained investment in human capital development**.

Y Female Labor Force Participation Rate (%) by X year



Source: Arab News

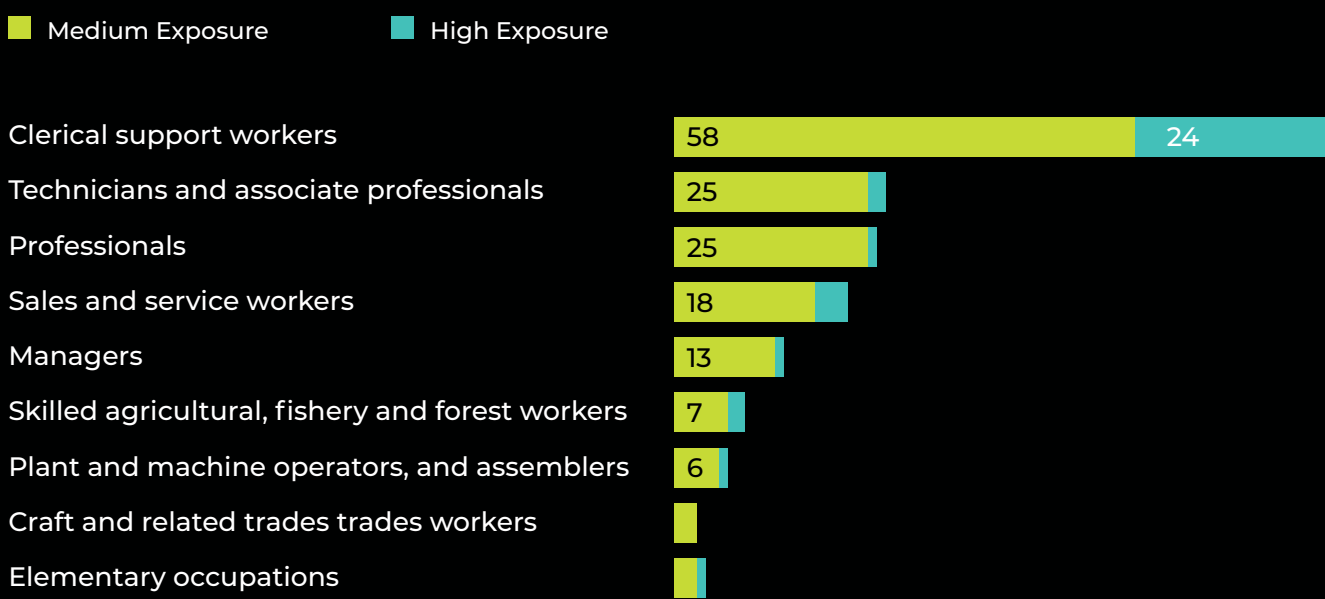


Source: GLMC Website

Tech, AI & Digital Transformation in the Workplace

AI and technical automation are no longer futuristic concepts—they are actively reshaping job markets. The conference explored how businesses and governments can harness AI-driven solutions to optimize workforce productivity while mitigating job displacement risks. Speakers championed digital transformation strategies that focus on equipping workers with AI fluency, technical skills, and data literacy to thrive in tech-driven economies. Several case studies showcased the power of digital workforce platforms, which can match job seekers with employers based on real-time skills taxonomies and market needs. However, concerns over job displacement due to automation were raised, with experts emphasizing that policymakers must intervene to ensure equitable digital adoption. Ethical considerations in AI-driven recruitment and workplace automation were also discussed, reinforcing the need for transparent and inclusive employment policies.

Number of tasks with medium to high exposure to generative AI, by occupational group



Source: ILO Working paper 96

USD 320 billion

Potential impact of AI for the Middle East

USD 135.2 billion

In absolute terms, the largest gains are expected to accrue to Saudi Arabia’s economy in 2030

75 million

Jobs at risk of automation because of high exposure to generative AI technology

Public & Private Sectors Synergy

The conference reinforced the notion that economic growth and employment generation depend on strong collaboration between the public and private sectors. Several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed between governments, industries, and academic institutions, aiming to align workforce training with labor market demands. These partnerships are set to drive job creation, enhance workforce readiness, and develop specialized skills pipelines across key industries such as logistics, energy, entertainment, and defense. Furthermore, corporate leaders underscored the importance of businesses aligning their hiring and skilling strategies with national employment goals, ensuring a cohesive approach to workforce development. The GLMC Labor Market Academy and other policy-driven platforms were positioned as global knowledge-sharing hubs, allowing for the exchange of expertise and best practices across different markets.

06 GOING FORWARD

GLMC 2ND EDITION CLOSING REMARKS

The Global Labor Market Conference 2nd Edition brought together over 5,000 participants from 100 countries, including policymakers, business leaders, and experts, to address the most pressing challenges shaping the future of work. Across 50+ sessions and discussions led by 200+ distinguished speakers, the conference focused on key themes such as youth employment, reskilling, digital transformation, and sustainability.



H.E. Dr. Abdullah Nasser Abuthnain
Vice Minister of Human Resources and Social
Development for Labor, Saudi Arabia

A major highlight was the Ministerial Roundtable, where labor ministers from 40+ countries shared workforce strategies, emphasizing global cooperation. Additionally, the launch of the GLMC & World Bank Labor Market Academy marked a significant step toward fostering collaboration in critical areas like labor market adaptability and youth employment.

The unveiling of the ‘Navigating Tomorrow’ report provided data-driven insights into global labor market trends, key skills gaps, and the role of public-private partnerships in shaping workforce resilience. Discussions on the impact of AI, workforce transitions, and investment in green jobs underscored the urgency of proactive policy making and skills development.

As GLMC 2nd Edition concluded, a clear message emerged: global challenges require collective solutions. The discussions and commitments made at the conference will serve as a foundation for action in the coming year, with all stakeholders urged to continue fostering collaboration, innovation, and workforce development on the road to GLMC 3rd edition.



The GLMC has reinforced a clear message: Global challenges require global solutions. As we close this year’s edition, let us carry forward its momentum. The themes we explored—youth employment, reskilling, sustainability, and digital transformation—require bold decisions and collective action.

CALLS TO ACTION

For Policymakers & Government Representatives	For Researchers & Academics	For Business & Industry Leaders	For Job Seekers & Young Professionals	For Employees
• To Shape the Future of Work: Contribute to policy discussions that drive labor market transformation. • To Collaborate for Impact: Join forces with global stakeholders to develop labor policies that foster sustainable economic growth.	• To Contribute to Data-Driven Solutions: Share insights that inform evidence-based labor policies. • To Engage in Cutting-Edge Discussions: Join expert panel discussions and workshops shaping the future of employment.	• To Drive Workforce Innovation: Explore strategies to build resilient, future-ready workforces. • To Partner for Progress: Connect with government and industry leaders to implement workforce solutions.	• To Future-Proof Their Careers: Learn about emerging job trends and upskilling opportunities. • To Expand Their Networks: Connect with industry leaders and potential employers.	• To Leverage AI as a Tool, Not a Threat: Learn how to integrate AI assistants and automation into their workflow to improve efficiency and productivity. • To Evaluate Employers, Not Just Jobs: Choose workplaces that prioritize employee development, innovation, and long-term career growth.

ROADMAP TO GLMC 3rd EDITION

Building on the momentum of GLMC 2nd Edition, the roadmap to the 3rd edition will be centered around collaboration, policy innovation, and workforce development to address the evolving challenges in the global labor market. The commitments made during the conference will drive tangible actions over the next year, guided by the following key priorities:

1 Closing the Skills Gap & Promoting Lifelong Learning

- Implement strategies adopted from the Navigating Tomorrow report, identifying key skills and outlining solutions for reskilling and upskilling.
- Expand sector councils to develop customized training programs tailored to industry needs.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships to bridge the gap between academia and job market needs.

2 Enhancing Youth Employment & Workforce Transitions

- Scale up initiatives that help young people enter and thrive in the labor market.
- Leverage insights from the Ministerial Roundtable, where 40+ labor ministers shared best practices on workforce integration.
- Strengthen career guidance programs and apprenticeships to create smoother transitions from education to employment.

3 Embracing Digital Transformation & AI in the Workplace

- Explore policies that maximize the benefits of AI and automation while mitigating potential workforce disruptions.
- Support businesses and workers in adopting digital skills to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving job market.
- Promote inclusive digital transformation strategies that ensure no worker is left behind.

4 Advancing Green Jobs & Sustainable Workforce Strategies

- Encourage bold investments in green jobs to create more sustainable employment opportunities.
- Align labor policies with global sustainability goals, ensuring that workforce development contributes to environmental resilience.
- Foster cross-industry collaboration to integrate green skills training into existing workforce programs.

5 Strengthening Global Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing

- Expand the role of the GLMC & World Bank Labor Market Academy, which is set to become a global hub for labor policy development—equipping policymakers with the tools to enhance youth employment, integrate social protection systems, and build adaptive labor ecosystems.
- Deepen engagement with international organizations like the ILO and UN, ensuring alignment with global labor policies.
- Continue cross-border initiatives that enable knowledge exchange and joint policy frameworks to address global labor market challenges.

6 Engaging with Sponsors & Knowledge Partners

- Strengthen collaboration with strategic sponsors and knowledge partners to co-create impactful content, initiatives, and policy dialogues.
- Mobilize expertise, resources, and networks from the private sector, think tanks, academic institutions, and international agencies.

The GLMC 3rd Edition agenda will be shaped by the commitments and initiatives launched this year. By fostering strong partnerships and implementing forward-thinking policies, GLMC 3rd Edition will serve as a pivotal milestone in shaping the future of work.





THANK YOU

January 29-30, 2025
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