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South-South Cooperation and Artificial Intelligence, Digitalization in the World of Work

Thursday, 29 May 2025, 9:00-10:30 am

ILO Office for the United Nations, 885 Second Avenue, 30th Floor, New York

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Governments of Brazil and Indonesia is pleased to convene this side event on the margins of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation (HLC) to explore how South-South Cooperation can drive science, technology, and innovation (STI) solutions, including AI, to accelerate the 2030 Agenda and to build a bridge towards the review of SDG8 in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2). This discussion comes at a decisive moment, as 2025 marks a turning point in global efforts to reinvigorate the social agenda and ensure that economic policies are firmly anchored in social justice.

Background and Rationale

South-South Cooperation (SSC) has emerged as a critical mechanism for fostering solidarity, mutual learning, and collaboration among developing countries. As nations strive to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, leveraging science, technology, and innovation (STI) becomes imperative in addressing pressing global challenges such as poverty eradication, climate change, employment generation, and digital inclusion. In this context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents unprecedented opportunities to enhance productivity, improve service delivery, and drive socio-economic transformation.

The rapid advancement of AI and other emerging technologies is reshaping the world of work, presenting both opportunities and challenges for developing countries. While AI has the potential to boost productivity, create new job opportunities, and improve working conditions, it also raises concerns about job displacement, skills gaps, and the need for regulatory frameworks that ensure decent work for all. Through South-South Cooperation, countries can exchange best practices on labour market policies, skills development strategies, and social protection measures to harness AI for inclusive growth. Strengthening institutional capacities and fostering dialogue among governments, workers, and employers will be essential in ensuring that AI contributes to just transitions and decent work in the Global South.

This side event aims to explore how SSC can facilitate knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and collaborative action in deploying STI, particularly AI, to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. The event will showcase best practices, highlight policy frameworks, and discuss strategies to enhance SSC's role in enabling inclusive and sustainable development.

Expected Outcomes:

This side event is expected to enhance understanding of the critical role that SSC can play in STI, particularly AI, in support of sustainable development. By drawing on the example of the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting, the discussion will aim to raise awareness of how peer learning and shared initiatives among developing countries can help unlock the potential of AI for inclusive and equitable growth. Participants will work toward identifying actionable policy recommendations that can guide and strengthen AI-driven cooperation across the Global South. These insights will contribute to the development of forward-looking roadmaps that prioritize knowledge sharing, ethical AI governance, and the alignment of digital transformation efforts with the SDGs. Another expected outcome is the reinforcement of partnerships among governments, international organizations, and private sector stakeholders. By fostering inclusive, multi-stakeholder collaboration, the event seeks to promote the responsible adoption and scaling of AI and STI solutions to support decent work, productive employment, and broader social development objectives across the Global South.

Key Discussion Topics

- The **role of STI and AI in addressing major development challenges** such as employment, skills development, social protection, climate resilience, public services, agriculture, healthcare, and education.
- **AI in the Global South:** lessons learned from BRICS EWG and G20 EWG discussions on AI, as well as implementations of Ministerial Declarations therein.
- **Social Dialogue and AI:** Job quality improves when workers are involved in the design and integration of digital technologies through collective bargaining and social dialogue.
- **Policy Issues:** Prioritizing worker redeployment and training over job loss, strengthening active labour market policies, and investing in the care and green economies.

Moderator: Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon – **ILO Special Representative to the UN**

Panellists: Mr. José Gilberto Scandiucci – Minister-Counsellor, **Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN** (Focussing on the Brazilian Presidency of BRICS, LEMM, and AI as a critical topic)

Mr. Dwi Wisnu Budi Prabowo – First Secretary, **Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the UN** (AI in Indonesia, the ASEAN context)

Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang – Trust Fund Director of the **UN Office for South-South Cooperation** (South-South Cooperation and AI: Challenges and Opportunities)

Ms. Muserref Yetim– Clinical Professor, Program in International Relations, **New York University** (An Academic perspective)

Discussants: Ms. Anita Amorim – Head, Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit, **ILO IOE representative**, Mr. Datuk Shamsudin, MEF Advisor. Datuk Hj. Shamsuddin Bardan
ITUC representative, TBD

Brief Q&A: Audience

Wrap-up: Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon – **ILO Special Representative to the UN**



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Speakers



Moderator:
Ms. Cynthia Samuel- Olonjuwon

Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon is the Special Representative to the UN and Director of the ILO Office for the UN. She is a distinguished leader in advancing social justice and decent work worldwide. With nearly 40 years of experience, she has held key roles within the ILO, including Assistant Director-General for Africa. A champion of strategic collaboration, she has spearheaded groundbreaking initiatives such as the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance and efforts to boost decent jobs in Africa's digital economy. Recognized among the 100 Most Influential African Women in 2019, she continues to shape global and regional policies that promote inclusive growth and social equity.



Mr. José Gilberto Scandiucci (Brazil)

Mr. José Gilberto Scandiucci is a seasoned diplomat from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serving since 1999. Currently, he holds the position of Minister-Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations, overseeing economic, social policy, environmental, and budget issues. His extensive career includes roles such as International Affairs Advisor to Brazil's Federal Supreme Court and Superior Electoral Court, Special Advisor to the Minister of Finance, and Head of the Financial Policy Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Internationally, he has served in various capacities, including Chargé d'Affaires in Doha, Minister-Counsellor in Rabat, and Advisor to the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank in Washington. He holds a PhD in Economics from UNICAMP and degrees in Law and Economics.



**Mr. Dwi Wisnu Budi Prabowo
(Indonesia)**

Mr. Dwi Wisnu Budi Prabowo is a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, currently serving as First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations in New York. In his role, he focuses on multilateral diplomacy and development cooperation, contributing to Indonesia's initiatives within the UN framework, particularly in South-South and Triangular Cooperation.



Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang, UNOSSC

Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang currently serves as Trust Fund Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), overseeing management of the UN Fund for SSC, the India-Brazil-South Africa Facility, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, and the G77 Perez Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF). Prior to her current role, Ms. Wang served as Officer-in-Charge/Director a.i. during transitions (2022-23), and Deputy Director (2017-22) for UNOSSC. In these capacities, she led policy support, system coordination, knowledge management, programme and operations.



**Muserref Yetim, New York
University, TBC**

Professor Yetim is a Clinical Professor in the Program in International Relations at New York University. Raised in Istanbul, Turkey, she obtained a BA with honors in Economics and International Relations from Istanbul University, and an MA in Politics and International Relations from Bogaziçi University in 1998. She also has a PhD in Government from the University of Texas at Austin in 2006.



Discussant 1:
**Anita Amorim, Head Emerging and
Special Partnerships Unit**

Anita Amorim is the Head of the Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit in the Partnerships and Field Support Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO). She leads the promotion and development of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) within the ILO, fostering strategic alliances with emerging economies, BRICS countries, and regional organizations. With extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy, South-South and triangular cooperation, and social justice, she has played a key role in mainstreaming SSTC across ILO policies and programs to advance the Decent Work Agenda globally.



Discussant 2: Mr. Datuk Shamsudin, MEF Advisor. Datuk Hj. Shamsuddin Bardan is a key figure in Malaysia's labor sector, serving as Advisor and former Executive Director of the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), representing over 5,500 member organizations. He plays an influential role in shaping labor policy nationally through bodies such as the National Labour Advisory Council and the National Wages Consultative Council. Internationally, he contributes to employer advocacy as Secretary-General of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Employers (CAPE) and is active in the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), promoting sustainable employment and employer perspectives across the region.