



GLOBAL
LABOR MARKET
CONFERENCE

Global Labor Market Conference

3rd Edition

26-27 January 2026

**King Abdulaziz
International Conference Center**
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS

GLMC.COM





GLOBAL LABOR MARKET CONFERENCE



INTRODUCTION

The **Global Labor Market Conference** is the premier platform for dialogue within the global labor community. It is designed to advance solutions to the most pressing workforce challenges in ways that are not only effective, but also fair and sustainable.

Inclusive by design, the GLMC brings together a diverse coalition, from youth voices to the highest levels of government leadership, ensuring that all perspectives are represented.

Now in its third edition, the GLMC is both continuing the movement it began and evolving to reflect the profound changes shaping today's labor markets.

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OUR VISION

To shape a future-ready global labor market that generates quality jobs and delivers inclusive prosperity built on sustainable growth.

MISSION

To be the leading global knowledge hub and driver of labor market progress through a flagship event and year-round initiatives that engage different perspectives from the world of work, policymakers, regulators, business leaders, academics, and voices from different generational cohorts – advancing solutions that balance quality employment and productivity amid ever-changing market dynamics.

OBJECTIVES



Generate and Transfer Knowledge

Unveil, debate, and share cutting-edge theoretical and practical insights that can shape the future of labor.



Bring Every Voice to the Table

Ensure no one is left behind by bringing together diverse voices from across the globe - particularly those that are underrepresented - to collaborate and innovate solutions.



Promote Transparency and Courageous Dialogue

Confront complex and sensitive labor issues head-on, fostering open and honest conversations that lead to meaningful, evidence-based knowledge.



Drive Impact Through Action

Transform bold ideas into tangible change by translating dialogue into concrete initiatives, policies, and partnerships.



PREVIOUS EDITION ACHIEVEMENTS

Opened dialogue on sensitive labor issues

Provided a high-level platform to address sensitive and complex topics such as migration, unemployment, and the challenges of aging demographics.

Established the GLMC Labor Market Academy

A Riyadh-based institution, developed with the World Bank and Takamol Holding, already training policymakers worldwide to enhance youth employment, integrate social protection, and build adaptive labor ecosystems.

Launched global research

Navigating Tomorrow: Mastering Skills in a Dynamic Global Labor Market surveyed 14,000 participants in 14 countries to explore adaptation strategies in the evolving labor market.

Convened minister-level policy discussions

Hosted ministers from around the globe in exclusive roundtables to share insights, exchange perspectives, and explore collaborative approaches to emerging labor market challenges and opportunities, with discussions that could inform future policy directions.

Catalyzed partnerships

Over 70 MoUs signed in the last edition, benefiting an estimated 300,000 people.

Facilitated strategic collaboration

150 bilateral meetings between government, business, and institutional leaders during the last edition.

Expanded global participation

Most recent event brought together representatives from 120 countries.

Achieved significant media visibility

3.4 billion people reached through international media coverage.



WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THIS YEAR?

200+

Speakers

7000+

Global & Local
Attendees

50+

Conference Sessions
Across Multiple Tracks

NEW FORMATS

POLICY IN A FLASH

Spotlights where speakers present their biggest workforce challenge and their boldest policy experiment to solve it. Sharp, comparative, and highly engaging.

POLICY HACKATHON

Closed, 6-hour working sessions bringing together youth, policymakers, business leaders, and academics to co-create innovative responses to labor challenges, culminating in a single joint solution presented back to the conference.

PASSING THE TORCH

A top academic selects a pressing topic or issue and invites emerging scholars from diverse schools and countries to present their findings or proposed solutions. Senior academics then provide feedback, challenge assumptions, and spark debate.



© OPENING REMARKS





ON THE AGENDA – 6 NEW PILLARS

TRADE SHIFTS, LABOR MOVES: WHERE DOES WORK GO FROM HERE?

1 New tariffs and rising protectionism are disrupting long-standing global trade relationships, with hard-to-predict consequences layered onto already complex, highly diversified value chains. What does this mean for productivity, for jobs, for wages and skills?

Which industries are most exposed? Can domestic labor markets keep up? Will migration patterns shift? Do we fight to protect existing jobs or invest in new ones? And above all, how can policymakers and companies shore up in a time of uncertainty, while also keeping sight of the longer-term need for innovation, skills, and collaboration across borders?

OFF THE RECORD: SHADOW ECONOMIES, REAL WORKERS

2 While informality often signals weak enforcement or institutional capacity, it can also reflect structural realities: low productivity sectors where formal employment are difficult to sustain, regulatory burdens, or situations where workers prefer informal jobs for their flexibility or higher take-home pay.

Should full formalization be the goal, or is a certain degree of informality inevitable, and even beneficial, in some contexts? How do policymakers weigh the costs of enforcement against the potential downsides of informality, such as tax loss and limited protections? And what strategies work best for managing the transition: accelerating formalization where possible, or designing protections that function within informal structures?

THE NEW SKILLS ORDER

3 Is the global economy sufficiently supplied with the skills it needs? The answer is uneven: some regions face critical shortages while others struggle with underutilized talent; some sectors are expanding rapidly while others contract; some workers are locked out by lack of experience while others are stuck in roles beneath their capabilities.

Addressing these mismatches requires rethinking traditional structures and embracing unconventional solutions: from understanding what hampers skills development and creates shortages, to questioning whether traditional remedies are enough, if today's flexible systems can truly resolve skills shortages over the long run, and if the very notion of the job as the basic unit of work has reached its limits.



STILL LEARNING: WHAT WE GOT RIGHT ABOUT AI AND WHAT WE DIDN'T

4 AI's impact on the labor market is yet to fully unfold. Questions about the quality of AI-generated work are prompting some companies to walk back automation decisions, bringing humans back into roles that had been automated. Furthermore, recent labor market trends show growth in high-skill, well-compensated roles, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math, while employment in many low-paid service jobs has flattened or declined – shifts that are emerging alongside growing AI adoption.

Is AI truly augmenting human work, or is it creating more pressure to produce, emotional detachment, and lower-quality output? Will the current gains for high-skilled roles last, or give way to displacement by more tech-savvy workers? And how should we respond to the decline in low-paid service work?

CRISIS-PROOFING THE WORKFORCE: GROWTH MEETS RESILIENCE

5 Crises, whether climate shocks, pandemics, recessions, or financial crashes, expose the limits of today's labor markets. This pillar examines how governments, policymakers, and companies can intervene effectively in the face of disruption, and how labor systems can adapt to recover and reallocate talent quickly.

This pillar explores the critical tools and strategies needed to build resilience: portable protections that follow workers across jobs, sectors, and borders; rapid retraining models that enable quick transitions; and job diversification to reduce systemic risk. It also raises key questions: How can these protections be designed to ensure no worker is left behind? What models of retraining best prepare workers for sudden shifts? Does diversification across sectors reduce systemic risk, or simply spread vulnerability differently? And above all, should policymakers design crisis-response measures with the post-crisis labor market in mind?

ALIGNING LABOR WITH HUMAN PROGRESS

6 Labor markets are too often measured by the quantity of jobs, not their quality. Yet, research shows that high-quality jobs are crucial drivers of productivity and innovation. Companies that invest in worker well-being and development often outperform their peers, demonstrating that investing in human capital is a key driver of commercial efficiency.

This pillar explores how labor market policies can be recalibrated to balance job quality with economic performance - shaping working conditions, job security, benefits, and the welfare of workers. It raises the question of whether success should be measured not only in output, but also in well-being, trust, and purpose. And it asks how wages, benefits, and regulation can evolve to support growth that is sustainable for businesses, workers, and societies alike.



CORE FEATURES OF GLMC

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Ministerial Roundtable | Controversial Conversations & Debates |
| Impactful Keynotes | Thought-Provoking Panel Discussions |
| Bilateral Meetings | Youth, Silver, and Academic Track |
| Co-creative Sessions | The Labor Market Awards |

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE

Year after year, the GLMC Ministerial Roundtable has proven to be the place where the world's labor leaders come together for meaningful dialogue on the future of work. Now convening for the third consecutive edition, it gathers the highest-level authorities whose collective voice translates directly into impact.

More than 45 international ministers will once again meet under one roof in Riyadh. This assembly not only carries forward the momentum of past editions, it responds to the urgent need for action in a rapidly changing global labor market.

LABOR MARKET LEADERS

Bringing together the world's foremost leaders and changemakers to shape the future of work. Meet, discuss, and engage with:

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|  | Ministers of Labor |  | Regulators and Policymakers |
|  | CEOs of Leading International and Regional Companies |  | Employee Group Representatives |
|  | Global Multilateral Organizations |  | Researchers, Academics and Chief Economists |



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For more information on how to be part of the Global Labor Market Conference 2026, contact us on MinisterOffice@GlobalLaborMarketConference.com