



**ECOSOC
Partnership
Forum**

2025

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2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum Side Event

AI and Its Impact on SDGs 5, 8 & 17

5 February 2025, 13:15 – 14:30 ET / 19:15 – 20:30 CET, CR-5 – UNHQ

Organized by: The President of ECOSOC, the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
in collaboration with the Business and Industry Major Group





Background on the event

The side event explored how AI can drive gender equality, decent work & economic growth, and global partnerships while ensuring ethical deployment, fair access to opportunities, and skills development. The discussion emphasized AI's impact on SMEs and its potential to enhance workplace diversity, job creation, and productivity highlighting the challenges of the digital divide and the need for inclusive policies.

The President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ambassador Bob Rae and Ambassador Omar Hilale made introductory remarks on the importance of technology, AI and emphasized the imperative of engaging and partnering with the private sector. The President of ECOSOC spoke about the Council's ongoing work to examine the impacts of AI, including the convening of multiple meetings with broad participation. Ambassador Hilale gave concrete examples of how Morocco is leading at the country-level in this work.

Expert panellists from international organizations, the private sector and employers organizations highlighted the following:

- The trends of how AI is affecting the current job market, particularly in relation to SDG 5 and 8 implementation. While it was noted that the augmentation effect of generative AI, i.e. complementing work by automating tasks, was significantly higher than the automation effect, certain occupations were more exposed to automation than others. (ILO)
- Best practices on how the technology is advancing the job creation and productivity in Asia and the Middle East. (Employers Bahrain)
- The trend of a widening gender balance in job losses and the lack of women in STEM-related training and job categories. On the flip side, however, there is evidence of a large increase in AI jobs and jobs which require AI proficiency. (LinkedIn)

The panel discussion included the following regional examples:

- In Africa, the seriousness of the digital divide was highlighted. The divide risks increasing if basic infrastructure needs are not addressed. A best practice was shared on financial and digital skills education between employers and Microsoft. (Ecobank Côte d'Ivoire)
- In Latin America, the needs are many and focus was on strengthening vocational training tools. (Sur Futuro)

Key Issues

- AI has the potential to enhance workplace diversity, productivity, and job creation.
- The digital divide is an urgent challenge in developing regions such as Africa.
- Women tend to be more exposed to the potential of automation than men.
- Once there is access to internet and tools, it is imperative to have upskilling and reskilling programs, including lifelong learning initiatives.
- AI can be a game changer for SMEs (the backbone of all economies).
- Regulatory frameworks – SMART regulation is needed.

Key Recommendations for Action

- Leadership at country level is required in partnership with the private sector.
- Need to look at the quality of jobs and the protection of workers' rights.
- Invest in upskilling and reskilling programs including on-the-job training.
- Strengthen policies to promote inclusive AI adoption.
- Strengthen the empirical evidence on the impact of AI on the world of work.
- Develop ethical guidelines.
- Encourage partnerships between governments, businesses, and international organizations for responsible AI deployment.

Speakers

- H.E. Bob Rae, President of ECOSOC
- H.E. Omar Hilale, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations
- Ms. Shea Gopaul, Permanent Representative of the IOE to the United Nations
- Mr. Sangheon Lee, Director of the ILO Employment Policy, Job Creation and Livelihoods Department
- Ms. Sarah Steinberg, Head of Global Public Policy Partnerships, LinkedIn
- Ms. Sonya Janahi, CEO and IOE VP of Employers in Middle East and Asia
- Mr. Ramiro Albrieu, Lead, Sur Futuro
- Ms. Fatima Coulibaly, Group Product Head for Receivables, Ecobank Côte d'Ivoire
- Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the UN and Director of the ILO Office for the United Nations