



International  
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► ILO Flagship Report

# World Employment and Social Outlook

## Trends 2024



▶ **World Employment  
and Social Outlook**

**Trends 2024**

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# Preface

This year's *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends* provides a comprehensive assessment of the latest labour market trends, including unemployment, job creation, labour force participation and hours worked. Importantly, it also links these trends with their social outcomes, and it is these findings that are the most revealing when we assess the full significance of these developments – for both policy formation and the lives of individuals.

The report finds that although some of the data are encouraging – notably on growth and unemployment – a deeper analysis reveals that labour market imbalances are growing and that, in the context of multiple and interacting global crises, this is eroding progress towards greater social justice.

So, although in 2023 global unemployment dropped to the lowest level since the start of the pandemic, and working poverty and informality approached pre-pandemic rates, the ILO's projections suggest that little positive change in these indicators can be expected in 2024.

Productivity growth and living standards have also not improved, in spite of technological progress that was widely projected to give these a boost. Indeed, there are indications that the nature of the technology roll-out under way could widen rather than weaken disparities, nationally and globally.

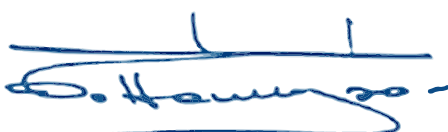
Measures to address insufficient pay, poor job quality, and major inequalities – of gender, pay, skills – are not just significant for our economic good; they are also essential components in building social justice. And without greater social justice we have little chance of tackling the major problems of our age. People will not support the hard choices that need to be made, on climate change, healthcare, technology and employment, if the costs and opportunities are not seen to be shared equitably and if decent work is not available to give them the chance to build a better future.

In this difficult context, policymakers are confronted with tough decisions. Boosting economic growth will be essential to escape from our current crisis vortex, but it must be quality economic growth that not only creates more jobs but also makes working conditions better, our societies more resilient and our future sustainable.

What is clear from this report is that the problems we face are too large and complex for any one group, country or region to solve alone. The policies and actions chosen need to be coordinated and mutually reinforcing, at both country and multilateral levels. What's more, this coordination needs to extend to the allocation of financial and technological resources.

A more effectively coordinated response will also help to put us on track to achieve both the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments made at COP28 – which, encouragingly and for the first time, included reference to the importance of labour rights, social dialogue, social protection and decent work in achieving the just transition we all need.

The recent decision by the ILO's Governing Body to endorse a Global Coalition for Social Justice will facilitate this coordination. The Coalition will bring together the knowledge and skills of a unique and diverse group of international bodies and stakeholders to promote coordinated responses, at national, regional and global level. This will help to ensure a human-focused approach, and so ensure that social justice is recognized as the keystone of a sustainable global recovery.



Gilbert F. Hounoubo  
ILO Director-General



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# Executive summary

## Job resilience amidst rising fragility

### The economic recovery has slowed ...

**The macroeconomic environment deteriorated significantly over 2023.** Ongoing geopolitical tensions as well as persistent and broadening inflation triggered frequent and aggressive moves by central banks. Monetary authorities in advanced and emerging economies implemented the fastest increase in interest rates since the 1980s, with significant global repercussions. Large emerging economies such as China, Türkiye and Brazil slowed down considerably, causing adverse impact on global industrial activity, investment and trade. Growth in advanced economies was nearly halved. Given the significant and highly persistent deviation of inflation from targets, central banks are expected to maintain a tight stance on monetary conditions, at least until the end of 2024. Consequently, the post-pandemic economic and social recovery remains incomplete and new vulnerabilities are eroding progress in social justice.

### ... while job growth proved to be resilient and the unemployment rate continued to fall ...

**Despite the economic slowdown, global growth in 2023 was modestly higher than anticipated, and labour markets showed surprising resilience.** On the back of strong jobs growth, both the unemployment rate and the jobs gap have declined below pre-pandemic values. The global unemployment rate in 2023 was 5.1 per cent, a modest improvement on 2022. The global jobs gap also saw improvements in 2023, but, at close to 435 million, remained elevated. Moreover, in 2023, labour market participation rates had largely recovered from their pandemic lows, especially among lower-middle-income and high-income countries, although with large differences across labour market groups, which have contributed to labour market imbalances, notably in advanced economies. Average hours remain below their 2019 pre-pandemic levels, weighing on the overall available labour input and causing labour market imbalances, especially in key sectors in advanced and some emerging economies. Although the imbalances eased somewhat in 2023, concerns are rising that these labour market imbalances are structural, rather than cyclical, in nature.

## ... although real wages declined and working poverty has bottomed out

**Despite lower unemployment and positive employment growth, real wages declined in the majority of G20 countries as wage increases failed to keep pace with inflation.** Moreover, in 2023, the numbers of workers living in extreme poverty – earning less than US\$2.15 per day per person in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms – grew by about 1 million globally. A stronger pattern emerges when one looks at moderate working poverty, that is, earning less than US\$3.65 per day

per person in PPP terms. The number of workers living in moderate poverty increased by about 8.4 million in 2023; a decline in moderate poverty was observed only in upper-middle-income countries. On the positive side, informality rates have returned close to pre-pandemic levels, even though the number of informal workers reached 2 billion people in 2023 because of the growing global labour force.

## Financial conditions started to deteriorate, building up fragility

**Underneath benign trends in headline job numbers, fragility has started to emerge that is likely to first hit countries that were already struggling before the pandemic.** Highly indebted developing countries are particularly at risk of quickly running into financial distress as global financial conditions tighten, with significant

repercussions for jobs, working conditions and wage growth. So far, these problems have remained localized and have had few regional or global repercussions. However, should financial stress affect more systemically significant countries, another global financial crisis cannot be excluded.

## Investment remained resilient ...

**Global investment rates have recovered significantly since the historic low during the global financial crisis and continued to do so throughout the pandemic.** Rising financing costs and a rise in the level of uncertainty have not prevented a return to higher investment activity, especially among European countries. Thanks to strong commodity developments, countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced significant

acceleration in investment and are expected to sustain investment rates at one of the highest levels in that subregion in more than three decades. On the other hand, countries in East and South-East Asia have experienced moderate investment slowdown, albeit from very high levels. Overall, a temporary decline in investment is to be expected, but global investment rates are expected to remain significantly above the levels seen during the 2010s.

## ... but productivity growth continued to decelerate amidst rising price pressures

**After a short growth spurt as countries recovered from the pandemic, aggregate labour productivity growth quickly returned to the low pace observed over the previous decade.** This slowdown happened despite the apparent acceleration of technological progress, especially that of digital technologies. In this regard, the rise in investment in many advanced and some developing countries does not seem to have lifted productivity growth, presumably because

of strong investment growth in low-productivity services and construction.

**During periods of slow productivity growth, real disposable income and real wages are often vulnerable to sudden price shocks.** As only a few firms have seen their profits accelerate, most workers have been unable to ask for stronger increases in their earnings, and so they and their households are facing an accelerating erosion of their real disposable income. Moreover, given the

large sectoral heterogeneity of earnings, a further widening of within-country income inequality has ensued. Macro-policymakers might welcome the absence of a wage-price spiral, but, in an environment of already lacklustre growth and where earnings were lost during the pandemic, such an

erosion of real disposable income bodes ill for aggregate demand and a more sustained economic recovery. More importantly, when demand falters, productivity growth suffers as firms fail to generate enough revenue to invest in and adjust to the latest technological developments.

## Labour imbalances were compounded by weak productivity growth and lower average hours worked ...

**Concerns about labour and skills shortages have remained high on the agenda of policymakers, at least in advanced economies and some emerging economies.** Despite a quick recovery in aggregate labour force participation rates, sectors with essential workers have expressed difficulties in attracting people to take up the rising demand for care, transportation and retail work. There have also been persistent shortages in other sectors such as manufacturing, construction and ICT. Part of the challenge with respect to shortages of essential workers has to do with the poor working conditions in these sectors. Slowing productivity makes it difficult for employers in these sectors to offer higher wages. In addition, restructured demand across sectors and supportive fiscal policy have created a significant overhang in vacancies, in specific sectors, that are difficult to fill. Such sectoral mismatch has been often compounded by low geographical mobility because workers have suffered from a lack of affordable housing. Although these shortages seem to have eased with tighter macroeconomic policies, labour market imbalances have persisted.

**The recovery in labour force participation rates to pre-pandemic levels has been uneven and has not benefited all labour market groups the same way.** Female participation rates have recovered faster than expected but the gender participation gap remains large, especially in emerging and developing countries. Most concerning is the situation for young people. Although youth labour force participation has recovered above trend, a disproportionately large proportion of youth who dropped out of the labour market are not pursuing any form of training and continue to face significant obstacles to returning to work. The rate of those not in training, education or employment (NEET) remains high across income levels and

particularly among young women, causing significant challenges for individuals' long-term labour market attachment.

**Although people have returned to the labour market, they tend not to be working the same numbers of hours as before the pandemic.** Across countries of all income levels, average hours worked have expanded less than total hours worked; there are acute labour shortages in some – contact-intensive – sectors. These are partly related to ongoing longer-term health-related problems that have built up over the past three years. The numbers of sick days have increased significantly from pre-pandemic levels, indicating ongoing COVID-19-related effects on people's health. Policy measures to keep workers in jobs regardless of the number of hours worked are fading only slowly and have prevented a faster recovery of average hours worked. Finally, the increase in the incidence of part-time employment is contributing to longer-term reductions in average hours worked, since part-time employees often find it difficult to return to a full-time job.

**As the economy continues to slow down, part of these labour shortages will be absorbed by firms issuing fewer vacancies.** Nevertheless, as productivity growth remains weak, labour shortages are likely to persist. In countries where the population is ageing, employers will face increasing difficulties in filling their vacancies despite the slowing growth. Older workers tend to switch jobs less frequently; hence an older population means there will be fewer of the job hoppers who constitute many of the candidates for open vacancies. Improvements in working conditions and rising productivity could help address some of these labour market imbalances, as could more equitable distribution of job opportunities across countries that have severe excess labour.

## ... an indication of structural problems that affect labour market adjustment

**As the cyclical factors impacting on labour markets have slowly been absorbed, structural issues in labour market adjustment have become more pressing.** Job retention schemes – such as those put in place in many advanced economies – proved essential to prevent firms and workers losing valuable experience and skills. However, these schemes made workers less likely to switch rapidly to new opportunities with the onset of the recovery. Moreover, long-term trends in productivity and population ageing among advanced and some emerging economies have slowed down the adjustment necessary to

absorb the pandemic-induced labour market imbalances. A workforce that is on average older and less mobile – in part because of problems on the housing market as described above – will have fewer opportunities to switch to alternative job opportunities. Such opportunities may simply not exist, owing to the generalized slowdown in productivity growth, and this will reduce pathways for transitions to better-paying jobs. Finally, despite the modest improvements in 2023, labour market participation rates for both men and women are set to decline in 2024 and 2025 across most income groups, following their long-term trend.

## Accelerating technological progress is testing labour market resilience

**Labour market adjustment will be further tested by accelerating technological progress.** The year 2023 saw the arrival of yet another wave of digital innovations involving generative artificial intelligence (AI). Despite this apparent technological progress, living standards and productivity growth have not improved, a further indication of slow labour market adjustment. Lack of skills and the entry barriers for newcomers created by large digital monopolies have been significant obstacles to faster technological adoption, in particular in low-productive sectors and developing countries. Geographical inequalities are likely to worsen because a small number of conglomerates continue to attract most of the investment in the digital sector. Many countries, including developing

ones, have adopted policies to encourage the adoption of AI. However, in the current climate of geopolitical tensions, technological transfer seems to be facing intensifying barriers, which will hamper leapfrogging strategies in developing countries to harness the benefits of these digital technologies. Broad-based skills initiatives require significant domestic fiscal resources, but these have been eroded by the pandemic, including in advanced economies. Countries longing for a faster digital transformation that will benefit society at large will need new policy approaches, including a more proactive approach to technological development, for instance through mission-oriented innovation policy and the mobilization of resources through sovereign wealth funds.



## Outlook remains cloudy as a poly-crisis worsens social justice

### **In the near future, the labour market outlook is set to deteriorate, albeit only moderately.**

Global unemployment rates will notch up slightly over the forecast horizon, primarily because of increased joblessness in advanced economies. Unemployment is expected to rise modestly in 2024: as labour force participation rates decline and employment growth slows, global unemployment will rise by 2 million, pushing the global unemployment rate from 5.1 per cent in 2023 to 5.2 per cent in 2024. The global jobs gap, though improving, remained elevated in 2023, at close to 435 million. The erosion of real wages and living standards by high and persistent inflation rates and rising costs of housing is unlikely to be compensated quickly. Youth unemployment continues to present a challenge to faster structural and labour market adjustment, especially in countries with high NEET rates. The gap here opened by the pandemic needs to be closed quickly through targeted skills initiatives to prevent further erosion of job resilience. Informality rates are not expected to improve any further; around 58 per cent of the global employment will

remain informally employed in 2024. Similarly, working poverty is likely to persist.

### **Major challenges need to be addressed swiftly to accelerate movement towards achieving the UN sustainability goals.**

The current environment of geopolitical tensions bodes ill for rapid and effective international coordination to address major economic, ecological and social challenges. Governments need to strengthen their domestic economy through initiatives to raise productivity growth and living standards. To this end, governments and social partners could make use of existing international cooperation instruments to foster regional productivity initiatives, for instance by strengthening global skills partnerships. Although governments have returned to the commanding heights of the economy, their resources have been depleted, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Current work by the G20 to foster international cooperation to make better use of multilateral development funds should be encouraged and sped up to support the most fragile economies.



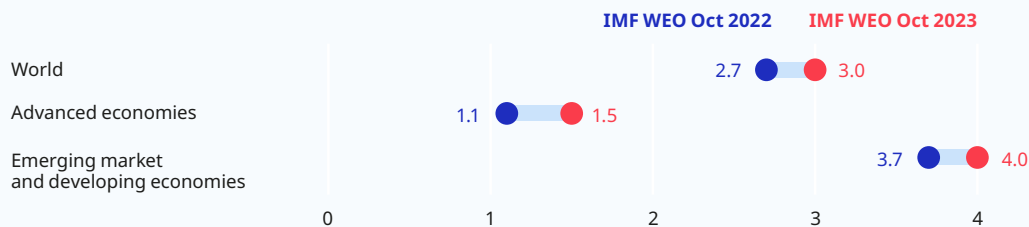
# 1 Labour market resilience will be tested in the near term

## ► Growth has proved to be resilient amidst rising fragility

### **GDP in 2023 proved to be more resilient than was anticipated.**

In October 2022, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) outlook for GDP (gross domestic product) growth in 2023 was constrained by persistent increases in interest rates intended to bring inflation under control (IMF 2022). The frequent and rapid increasing of interest rates was expected to dampen global growth considerably. However, in October 2023, the global GDP growth projection for 2023 was revised upwards by 0.3 percentage points from the previous year's forecast, primarily because of stronger demand for services (IMF 2023). GDP growth was revised upwards by 0.4 percentage points for advanced economies and 0.3 percentage points for emerging market and developing economies (figure 1.1). Some of the better than anticipated growth in 2023 was also the result of investment levels that remained high despite rising costs of borrowing (box 1.1).

► **Figure 1.1. Projected GDP growth in 2023, comparing October 2022 and October 2023 outlooks (percentages)**



Source: IMF (2022 and 2023).

► **Box 1.1. Investment levels fell modestly in the face of higher borrowing costs**

At the global level, investment as a share of GDP in 2023 is estimated to have been 26.4 per cent, only 1 percentage point lower than in 2022 (IMF 2023). The fall in advanced economies was even less pronounced (from 23.2 per cent in 2022 to 22.4 per cent in 2023). This pales in comparison, for instance, with the 3 percentage point drop in advanced economies in 2009 at the height of the global financial crisis. Some of the recent underlying persistence in investment may have been linked to anchored expectations that inflation (and interest rates) would return to target levels (see box 1.3).

This resilience in investment can also be attributed to swift policy action at the onset of the pandemic to bolster the uncertainty shock that the health crisis brought about. However, the current macroeconomic environment, conditioned partly by rising geopolitical tensions, has altered the composition of investment away from highly innovative investments to low-yielding ones. This has likely helped to bolster economic activity and employment in the short term, but an over-reliance on lower-productivity investments, such as retail trade, could dampen productivity and overall improvements in living standards over the medium term.

**Inflation pressures eased in 2023 but remained elevated.** Rising prices in 2021 and 2022 came on the heels of strong fiscal stimulus by governments during the COVID-19 pandemic, and supply chain pressures exacerbated by geopolitical developments including the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. Although all regions and economies have seen inflation rise since 2020, advanced economies have experienced lower levels of inflation than have emerging market and developing economies. Although inflation was down from its 2022 peak, it remained considerably above central bank target levels throughout 2023, averaging 4.6 per cent in advanced economies and 8.5 per cent in developing economies. This has had important negative consequences on real wage growth (see figure 1.8).

**The GDP outlook for 2024 is characterized by considerable heterogeneity across country groupings.** The resilience in GDP growth in 2023 was most evident among lower-middle- and upper-middle-income countries (figure 1.2). High-income countries experienced a significant slowing of GDP growth in 2023 compared with 2022, and low-income countries also saw a marked slowdown. GDP is expected to remain stable in 2024, globally, relative to 2023, with low-income and lower-middle-income countries expected to see an improvement over this period (IMF 2023). However, owing to the presence and persistence of global spillovers, there are risks that growth will deteriorate in the near future (box 1.2)

► **Figure 1.2. GDP growth outlook (percentage change)**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
World	-3.0	6.2	3.4	2.9	2.9	3.2
Low-income countries	-0.5	2.2	2.9	0.6	3.7	5.1
Lower-middle-income countries	-3.1	6.2	5.1	4.6	5.1	5.4
Upper-middle-income countries	-1.3	7.3	3.1	4.0	3.5	3.5
High-income countries	-4.3	5.6	3.0	1.5	1.6	2.0

**Note:** GDP estimates are based on constant 2017 international USD.

**Source:** Authors' calculations based on IMF (2023).

► **Box 1.2. Global spillovers: Risks of deteriorating GDP that could exacerbate employment challenges**

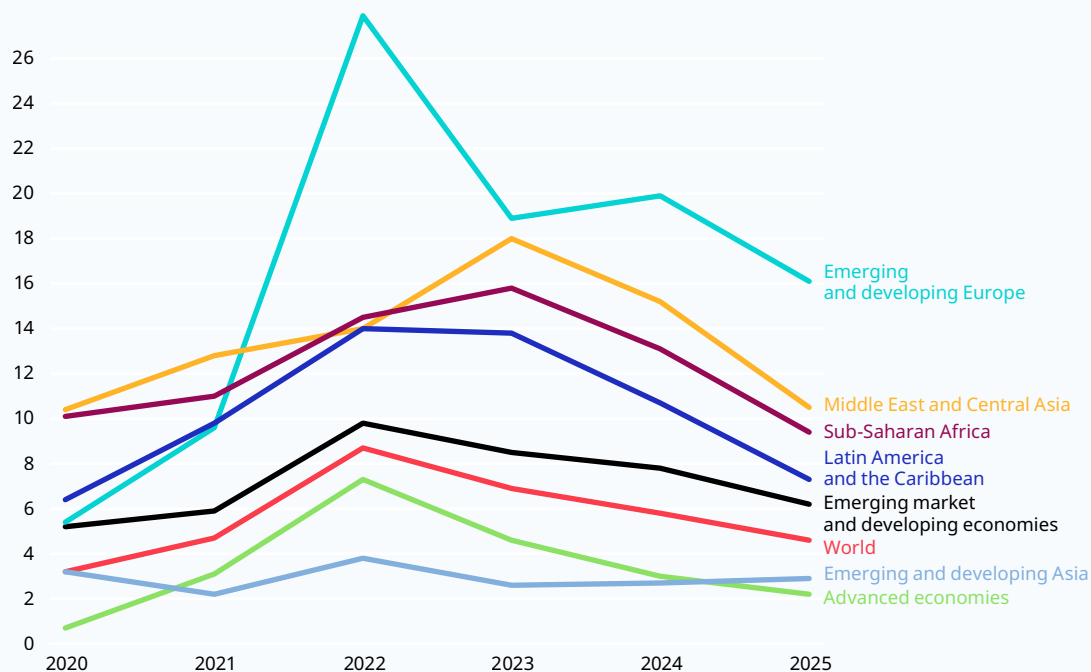
The outlook for GDP and employment is subject to several global risks. Foremost are the economic, employment and social risks and related spillovers arising from the Israel– Hamas conflict that erupted in October 2023, heightening tensions in the Middle East. Geopolitical factors and a prolonged or widened conflict in the Middle East could also have implications for, among other things, the scale of refugee crises, impacting on neighbouring countries and other countries in Europe and beyond.

Another risk of deterioration comes from potential disruptions in global value chains. A recent Bank of International Settlements (BIS) bulletin points to evidence that, although direct cross-country links fell significantly between December 2021 and September 2023, there was an increase in indirect cross-country links (Qiu, Shin and Zhang 2023). Thus, the global economy remains highly interconnected and – contrary to “near-shoring” post-pandemic trade patterns – is far from immune to regional developments.

Finally, if interest rates remain higher, and for longer, in the United States of America and other advanced economies, they could have ripple effects on global growth through higher levels of sovereign debt and other transmission channels in emerging market and developing economies. In sum, there are considerable downside risks to growth and employment in the near future.

**Inflation – though easing – could become more widespread over 2024 and 2025.** The better than anticipated economic growth outlook is partly a reflection of the fact that inflationary pressures are easing as cost shocks from energy and food price hikes dissipate (figure 1.3). However, as more

and more sectors are affected by inflation, higher inflation could persist albeit at levels lower than the peaks reached in 2022 (IMF 2023). Because inflation remains sticky, interest rates are expected to remain elevated over the forecast horizon. This could continue to dampen real wage prospects.

► **Figure 1.3. Recent and projected changes in inflation (percentages)**

Source: Calculations based on IMF (2023).

## ► Economic resilience held labour market conditions steady in 2023

**On account of stronger than anticipated economic growth in 2023, total labour force participation rates moved above their long-term linear trend.**<sup>1</sup> Possibly buoyed by a stronger than anticipated job market, participation rates increased in several regions in 2023, notably in high-income countries (by 0.3 percentage points) and lower-middle-income countries (by 1.5 percentage points) (table 1.2). In low-income and upper-middle-income countries labour force participation rates fell (by 0.1 and 0.3 percentage points, respectively). When 2023 participation rates are compared with the 1991–2019 linear trend, a number of observations can be made (figure 1.4). First, except in low-income countries, 2023

participation rates were higher than the 1991–2019 linear trend, signalling that participation rates have largely recovered from their pandemic lows. Second, however, participation rates were lower in 2023 than their linear trends in North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and to a lesser extent in South-East Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, there are notable differences across ILO subregions (see Chapter 2). More fundamentally, although labour market participation is above trend, a number of important deviations have occurred that are masked when aggregate figures are examined. For instance, women, youth and migrants – particularly hard hit by the pandemic – continue to have comparably low participation rates (see Chapter 3).

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the broad estimation method of the linear trend, only discrepancies beyond  $\pm 0.5$  percentage points are considered off trend.

► **Figure 1.4. Total labour force participation rates (percentage points)**



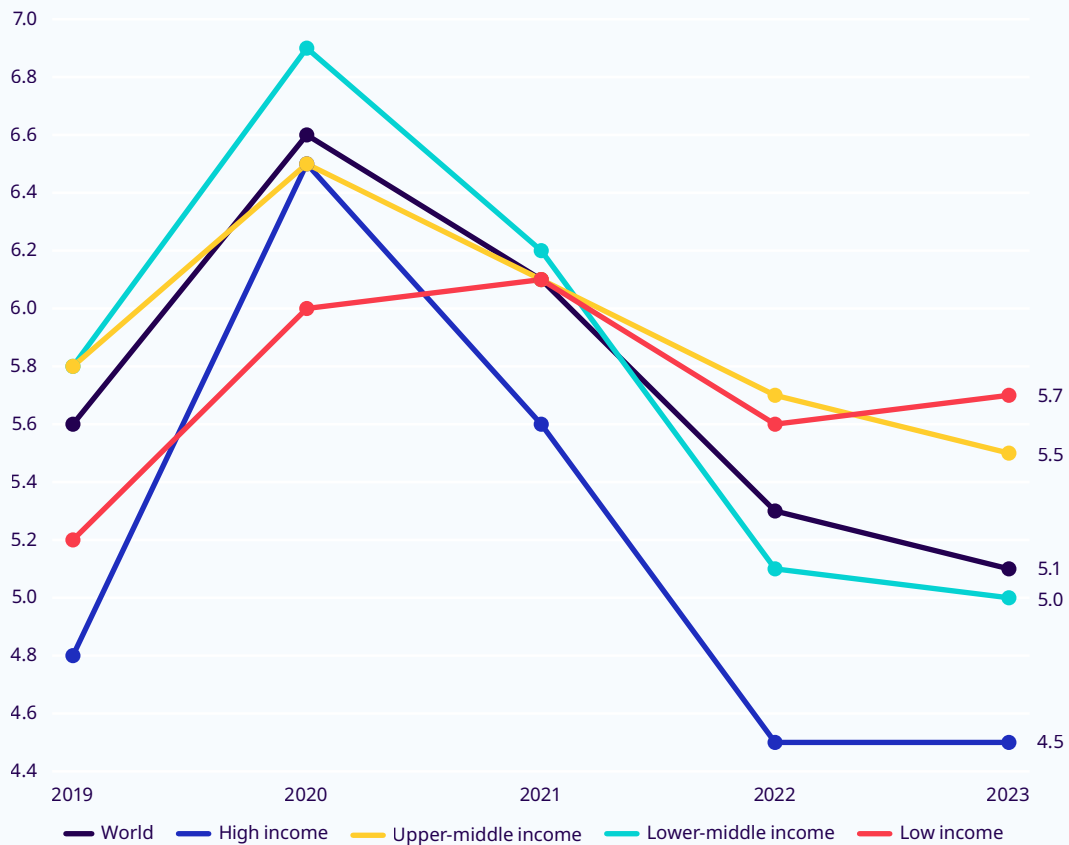
**Note:** The linear trend is based on labour force participation rates in 1991–2019.

**Source:** Author's calculations based on ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

**The downward trajectory in unemployment rates was maintained in 2023.** Unemployment rates fell globally by 0.2 percentage points in 2023 to 5.1 per cent, with declines across most country groups except low-income countries, where rates ticked up, and high-income countries, where unemployment remained stable (figure 1.5). Moreover, except in low-income countries, the unemployment rates in 2023 were consistently below the pre-pandemic levels of 2019.

**The jobs gap has improved in recent years, but in 2023 stood at nearly 435 million.<sup>2</sup>** Since the height of the pandemic in 2020, the jobs gap has continued to trend downwards and is now below its 2019 pre-pandemic level (table 1.1). Globally, the jobs gap is expected to have numbered 434.8 million persons in 2023, equating to a jobs gap rate of 11.1 per cent. This marks a 5.6 million decrease in the size of the jobs gap from 2022. Among women the jobs gap is expected to have

<sup>2</sup> The “jobs gap” includes every person who wants employment, regardless of whether they are currently available or searching for a job. See ILO (2023).

► **Figure 1.5. Unemployment rates (percentages)**

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

been 220.7 million in 2023, and among men 214.1 million. The jobs gap rate for women in 2023 was 13.7 per cent, versus 9.3 per cent for men. Across all country income groups the jobs gap of women is higher than that of men, but the gender differences are most pronounced in low-income and lower-middle-income countries, where the jobs gap of women surpasses that of men by nearly 7 percentage points. In upper-middle-income and high-income countries in 2023, the jobs gap rate for women was higher than that of men by 3.0 and 2.3 percentage points, respectively. In all country income groups the jobs gap rate has declined since 2020, the most pronounced decline (3.0 percentage points) having occurred in high-income countries.

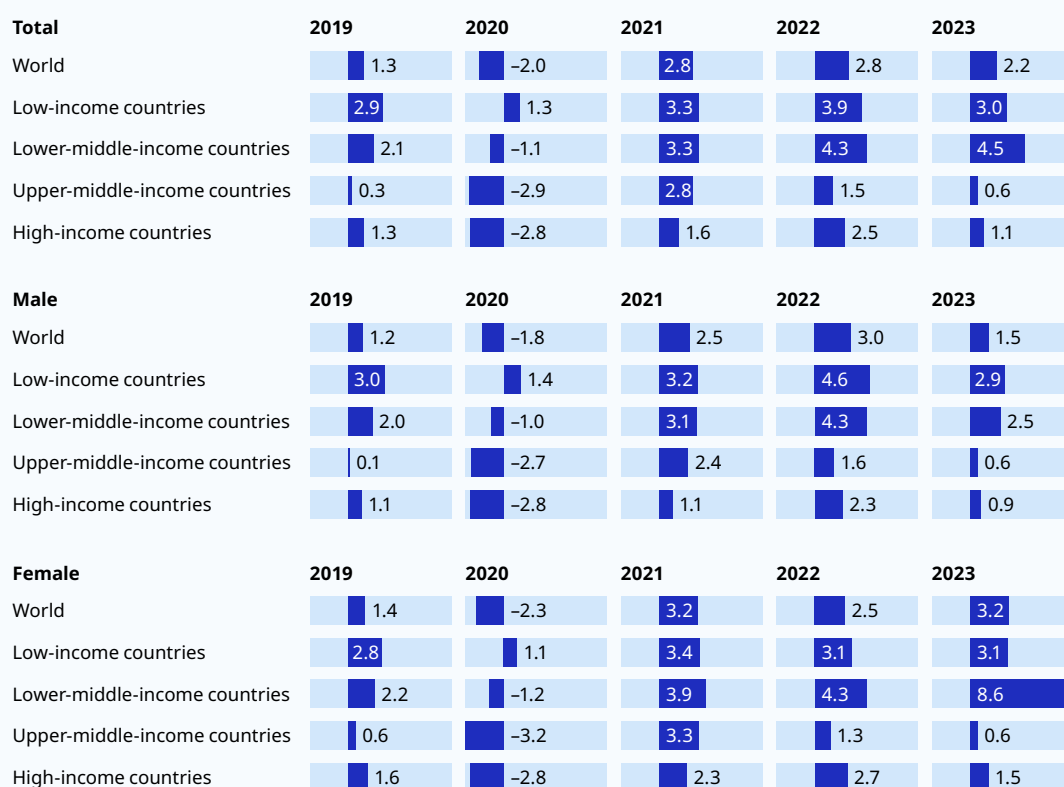
**Employment growth remained positive across all income groups in the face of economic headwinds.** In 2023, the drop in unemployment rates was a consequence of employment growing faster than labour market participation. Nevertheless, since 2021, global employment growth has by and large decelerated (figure 1.6). In 2023, employment growth, while remaining positive, fell across most income groups (the exception being lower-middle-income countries). At the global level, employment grew 2.2 per cent in 2023, compared with 2.8 per cent the previous year. The deceleration of employment growth was particularly pronounced in upper-middle-income and high-income countries. Although total employment growth decelerated in 2023,



► **Table 1.1. Jobs gap and jobs gap rate, 2019–23, by sex, world and income group**

Country group	Sex	Jobs gap rate (percentages)					Jobs gap (millions)				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
World	Women	14.4	16.1	15.3	14.2	13.7	219.7	244.7	238.0	223.0	220.7
	Men	10.0	11.6	10.7	9.6	9.3	219.3	254.8	238.3	217.5	214.1
	Total	11.8	13.4	12.6	11.5	11.1	439.0	499.5	476.4	440.4	434.8
Low-income countries	Women	24.1	25.5	25.1	24.4	24.3	31.7	34.7	35.2	34.9	35.7
	Men	16.6	17.8	17.8	17.5	17.4	25.8	28.5	29.4	30.1	30.9
	Total	20.0	21.4	21.1	20.6	20.5	57.6	63.3	64.5	65.0	66.6
Lower-middle-income countries	Women	16.2	17.4	16.8	16.0	15.4	67.3	72.2	72.2	71.1	73.7
	Men	10.1	11.6	10.5	9.1	8.9	84.0	97.3	90.1	79.6	79.5
	Total	12.1	13.5	12.6	11.4	11.1	151.3	169.4	162.3	150.6	153.2
Upper-middle-income countries	Women	13.2	14.8	14.0	12.6	12.0	89.8	99.8	96.4	86.7	82.4
	Men	9.6	11.1	10.2	9.4	9.0	81.2	93.2	86.6	80.2	77.3
	Total	11.2	12.8	11.9	10.8	10.4	171.0	193.0	183.0	166.9	159.7
High income countries	Women	10.4	12.8	11.4	10.0	9.5	30.9	38.0	34.2	30.3	28.9
	Men	7.8	9.9	8.9	7.6	7.2	28.2	35.9	32.3	27.6	26.4
	Total	8.9	11.2	10.1	8.7	8.2	59.1	73.9	66.6	57.9	55.3

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

► **Figure 1.6. Employment growth, 2020–23, by sex and country income groups (percentages)**

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

► **Figure 1.7. Mean weekly hours actually worked per employed person, 2019 and 2023, by country income group and sex**



**Note:** This indicator is based on the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) definition. More information can be found in the ILO Modelled Estimates (ILOEST) database description (<https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/ilo-modelled-estimates/>).

**Source:** ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

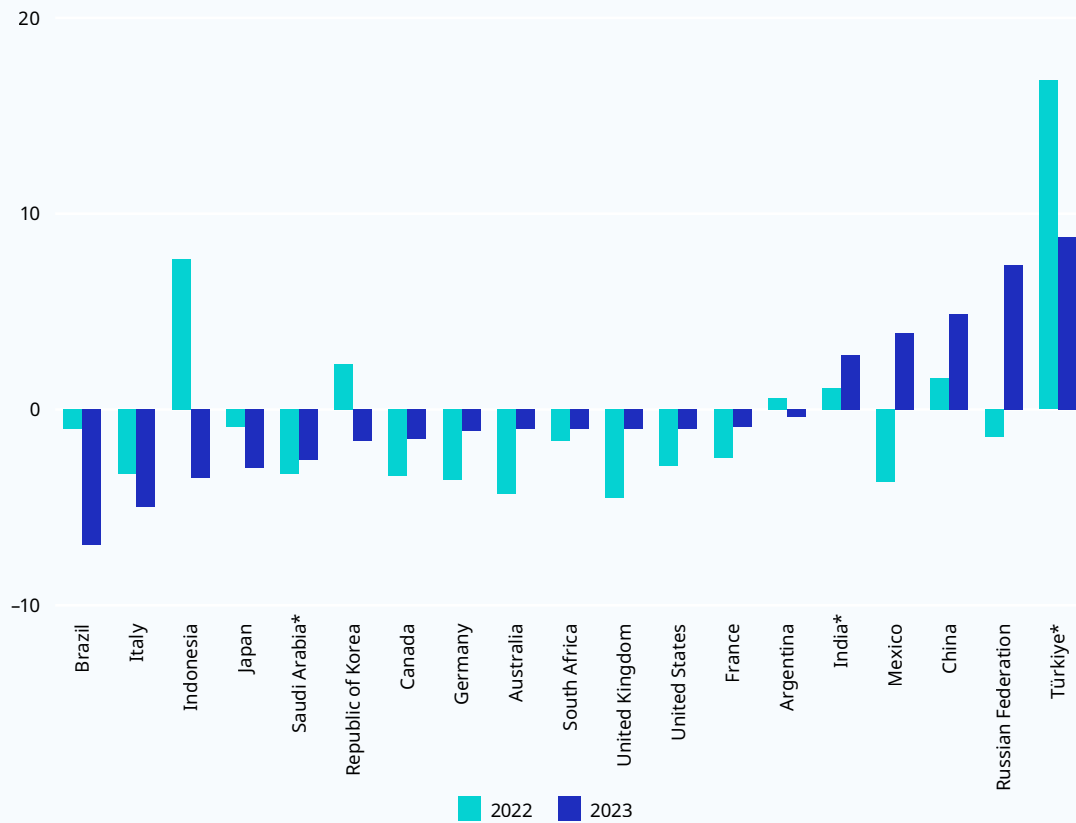
female employment growth topped or equalled that of males across income groups. Despite a deceleration in job growth, notably in high-income countries, labour market and skills imbalances have persisted across several countries and sectors (see Chapter 3).

**However, mean hours worked have yet to recover fully from the pandemic.** Against the backdrop of positive employment growth, at the global level mean hours worked per week per person employed reached approximately 42 (figure 1.7). Although in some instances – low-income and upper-middle-income countries – they

are approaching 2019 levels, mean hours worked remain consistently below their pre-pandemic levels, a circumstance that may adversely affect overall labour supply (see Chapter 3). They are especially so among lower-middle-income countries. The recent trends in average hours worked are broadly consistent across genders.

**Despite low unemployment and positive employment growth, in countries with available data, real wages have been declining.** The vast majority of G20 countries with available wage data saw real wages fall in 2023, meaning that wage increases were unable to keep pace with inflation

► **Figure 1.8. Annual real wage growth in 2023 (percentages)**



**Note:** For 2023, data refer to the real wage growth in the first or second quarter compared with the same quarter in 2022. Data for 2022 refer to full-year real wage growth compared with 2021.

\* Data for India, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye refer to changes between 2022 and 2021 (rather than 2023 and 2022) and between 2021 and 2020 (rather than 2022 and 2021).

**Source:** ILO Global Wage Database.

(figure 1.8). Only China, the Russian Federation and Mexico enjoyed positive real wage growth in 2023. The strongest wages gains were in China and the Russian Federation, where labour productivity growth was among the highest in G20 countries in 2023. Real wage growth in India and Türkiye

was also positive, but the available data refer to 2022 relative to 2021. The other G20 countries saw real wages fall; the declines were particularly pronounced in Brazil (6.9 per cent), Italy (5 per cent) and Indonesia (3.5 per cent).

## ► Looking ahead, there are risks that job creation will deteriorate further

**The economic slowdown is expected to finally catch up with job creation in 2024.** Some of 2023's labour market resilience may have resulted from the fact that employment is typically a lagging indicator, so weaknesses in job creation are more likely to unfold some time after economic growth slows. Thus, globally, employment growth is expected to remain positive in 2024, but at rates of only 0.8 per cent in 2024 and 1.1 per cent in 2025 (less than half the employment growth of 2023) (figure 1.9). The situation is particularly concerning in high-income countries, where employment growth is expected to turn negative in 2024 and only modest improvements are anticipated in 2025.

Similarly, little gain in employment is anticipated among upper-middle-income countries over the next two years. In contrast, jobs gains in low-income and lower-middle-income countries will remain robust. Unlike in 2023, when female employment growth outpaced that of men, in 2024 employment growth among women is expected to be lower than among men.

**Despite modest increases in 2023, participation rates are set to decline in the coming years.** Recent increases in labour market participation rates are likely to have been buoyed by a stronger than anticipated job market. However, in 2024 and

► **Figure 1.9. Employment growth, 2023–25, by sex and country income groups (percentages)**

	2023	2024	2025
<b>Total</b>			
World	2.2	0.8	1.1
Low-income countries	3.0	3.2	3.3
Lower-middle-income countries	4.5	1.2	2.0
Upper-middle-income countries	0.6	0.3	0.4
High-income countries	1.1	-0.2	0.1
<b>Male</b>			
World	1.5	1.1	1.3
Low-income countries	2.9	3.2	3.3
Lower-middle-income countries	2.5	1.8	2.1
Upper-middle-income countries	0.6	0.4	0.4
High-income countries	0.9	0.0	0.2
<b>Female</b>			
World	3.2	0.3	0.9
Low-income countries	3.1	3.1	3.2
Lower-middle-income countries	8.6	0.1	1.7
Upper-middle-income countries	0.6	0.2	0.3
High-income countries	1.5	-0.4	-0.0

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

► **Table 1.2. Labour force participation rates by income group, 2019–25**

Country group	Sex	Years						
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
World	Women	48.0	46.8	47.6	47.9	48.7	48.2	48.0
	Men	73.0	71.7	72.2	72.9	73.0	72.9	72.9
	Total	60.5	59.2	59.8	60.3	60.8	60.5	60.4
Low income	Women	56.2	55.4	55.6	55.2	55.2	55.1	55.0
	Men	74.4	73.6	73.7	74.4	74.3	74.2	74.2
	Total	65.2	64.4	64.6	64.7	64.6	64.6	64.5
Lower-middle income	Women	34.9	34.1	34.8	35.4	37.7	37.0	37.0
	Men	73.9	72.8	73.2	74.2	74.9	74.8	75.0
	Total	54.6	53.6	54.1	54.9	56.4	56.1	56.2
Upper-middle income	Women	56.4	54.6	55.8	55.9	55.7	55.4	55.1
	Men	74.2	72.3	73.1	73.5	73.3	73.0	72.7
	Total	65.2	63.3	64.4	64.7	64.4	64.1	63.8
High income	Women	53.7	53.0	53.4	54.0	54.3	54.0	53.9
	Men	68.5	67.5	67.6	68.0	68.1	68.0	67.9
	Total	61.0	60.2	60.4	60.9	61.2	60.9	60.8

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

2025, participation rates are expected to decline across all income groups (except low-income countries, where they are set to remain stable in 2024 but then decline the following year) and for both men and women (table 1.2). The anticipated fall in participation rates is more pronounced among women, for whom between 2023 and 2025 it is expected to fall 0.7 percentage points globally, compared with 0.1 percentage points among men.

#### **Unemployment is expected to rise modestly.**

Projections show that unemployment rates are set to remain broadly stable over the next two years (table 1.3). As labour force participation rates decline and employment growth slows, the global unemployment rate is expected to remain near current levels, edging up from 5.1 per cent in 2023 to 5.2 per cent in 2024 and remaining unchanged in 2025. This upward tick is primarily a result of the rising unemployment rates expected among high-income countries (an increase

of 0.2 percentage points from 2023 levels to reach 4.7 per cent in 2024).

**A modest uptick in unemployment is expected to disproportionately affect men.** The unemployment rate of women is set to remain stable at 5.3 per cent through the forecast period, whereas that of men is expected to rise modestly in 2024 (by 0.1 percentage points) and then decline by the same magnitude in 2025.

**Global unemployment is projected to increase in 2024 by around 2 million.** The modest increase in the unemployment rate will translate into an increase in global unemployment of 2 million in 2024, rising to 190.8 million from the 188.6 million in 2023. The outlook for unemployment in 2024 is broadly consistent across income groups, each country group being expected to see an increase in unemployment. The increase is expected to be highest (1 million in total) in high-income countries.

► **Table 1.3. Unemployment and unemployment rate, 2019–25, by sex, world and income group**

Country group	Sex	Unemployment rate (percentages)							Unemployment (millions)						
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
World	Women	5.7	6.6	6.2	5.5	5.3	5.3	5.3	78.5	90.0	87.0	79.2	77.9	78.5	79.4
	Men	5.5	6.6	6.0	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.0	115.9	137.3	126.4	110.6	110.7	112.3	113.3
	Total	5.6	6.6	6.1	5.3	5.1	5.2	5.2	194.3	227.3	213.4	189.7	188.6	190.8	192.7
Low income	Women	5.4	6.1	6.3	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	6.6	7.0	6.5	6.7	6.9	7.0
	Men	5.1	6.0	6.0	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.6	7.0	8.3	8.7	8.4	8.9	9.2	9.3
	Total	5.2	6.0	6.1	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.6	12.7	15.0	15.7	14.9	15.6	16.1	16.3
Lower-middle income	Women	6.1	6.8	6.6	5.8	5.4	5.4	5.4	22.5	25.2	25.2	22.7	23	22.9	23.5
	Men	5.7	6.9	6.1	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	45.6	54.8	49.5	39.8	40.7	41.4	42.1
	Total	5.8	6.9	6.2	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.9	68.2	80.0	74.7	62.5	63.7	64.4	65.5
Upper-middle income	Women	5.7	6.4	6.1	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.4	36.1	39.0	38.4	36.1	34.5	34.5	34.5
	Men	5.8	6.6	6.1	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.5	47.2	52.6	49.3	47.2	45.7	45.8	45.8
	Total	5.8	6.5	6.1	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.5	83.3	91.6	87.7	83.3	80.2	80.3	80.4
High income	Women	5.0	6.9	5.9	4.8	4.7	4.9	5.0	14.2	19.2	16.5	13.8	13.7	14.1	14.4
	Men	4.5	6.2	5.4	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5	16.0	21.6	18.9	15.2	15.4	15.9	16.1
	Total	4.8	6.5	5.6	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.7	30.1	40.8	35.4	29.0	29.0	30.0	30.5

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

## ► Persistent decent work deficits are undermining long-run progress

**Decent work deficits persist, with considerable heterogeneity across regions and groups.** The decline in unemployment rates obscures a significant lack of decent employment opportunities. As highlighted in table 1.1, globally, the jobs gap stood at nearly 435 million in 2023, representing a jobs gap rate of 11.1 per cent. Moreover, many individuals in employment are confronted with several barriers to decent work, including declining real wages, elevated levels of informal employment and deteriorating working conditions. In other instances, barriers to labour market participation persist, notably for women, and for youth, who also continue to be confronted with higher levels of unemployment. Together, these factors are undermining long-run progress to improving decent work and social justice.

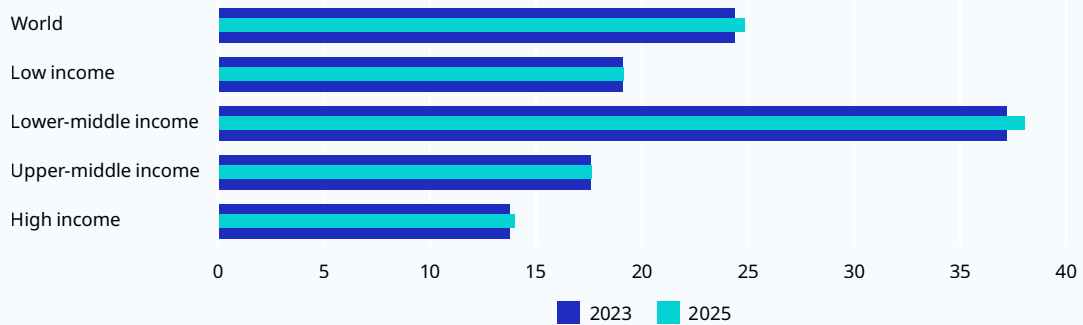
### **Gender gaps in participation rates will persist.**

Over the forecast period, both male and female participation rates are expected to decline. Since the decline among women is anticipated to be more pronounced than that among men, the gender gap in participation rates will rise modestly. In 2025, the global participation rates of men will exceed those of women by 25 percentage points (the gap will be noticeably elevated, at 38 percentage points, in lower-middle income countries) (figure 1.10). There are also some important regional differences, as elaborated in Chapter 2.

### **Youth unemployment rates are nearly 3.5 times higher than those of adults.**

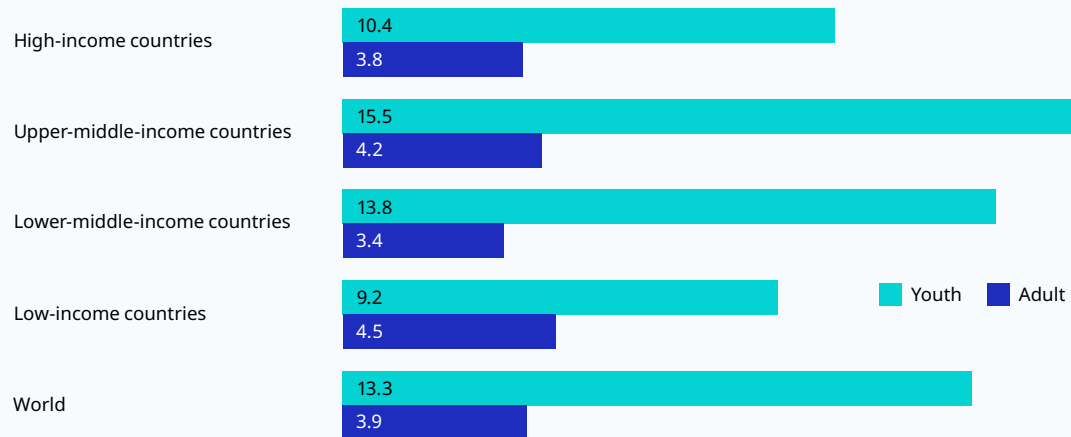
Globally, in 2023, the youth unemployment rate, 13.3 per cent, far exceeded that of adults, 3.9 per cent (figure 1.11).

► **Figure 1.10. Gender gap in participation rates, 2023 and 2025 (percentage points)**



Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

► **Figure 1.11. Youth and adult unemployment rates (percentages)**



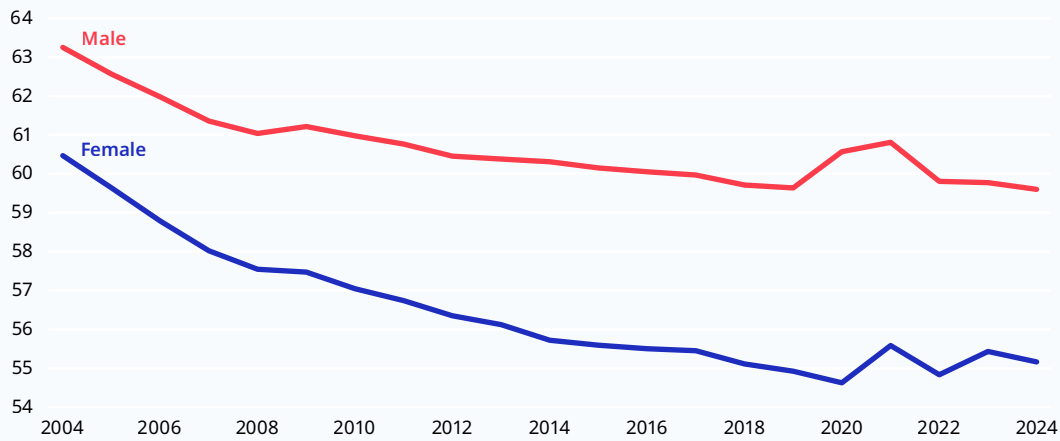
Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

The general pattern of higher youth unemployment holds across all country income groups. Upper-middle-income countries had the highest youth unemployment rate, 15.5 per cent, in 2023.

**Informal employment is beginning to decline again but remains elevated.** Since the global financial crisis, informality had been trending downwards for both men and women (figure 1.12). After the onset of the pandemic, informal employment experienced a modest uptick, but in 2024 it is expected to resume declining. However, as the

working population grows, the number of informal workers continues to rise. Since 2019, the number of informal workers has risen by more than 120 million, bringing the total to over 2 billion in 2023 – its highest level in two decades. This scale of informal work raises concerns about overall job quality, since many of these workers lack adequate social and legal protection.

**Close to 241 million workers were living in extreme poverty in 2023.** Between 2020 and 2021, the share and volume of workers living in extreme

► **Figure 1.12. Informal employment as share of total employment, 2004–24 (percentages)**

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

poverty – earning less than US\$2.15 per day per person in PPP terms – diminished (table 1.4). This was driven largely by significant reductions in working poverty among lower-middle-income countries. However, in 2023, although the overall incidence of working in extreme poverty remained relatively stable, even declining as employment grew, the numbers of workers in the world who

were living in extreme poverty grew by around 1 million. A similar pattern emerges when one looks at moderate working poverty, that is, earning less than US\$3.65 per day per person in PPP terms. The number of workers living in moderate poverty increased by nearly 8.4 million in 2023. Only in upper-middle-income countries did the number of workers in moderate poverty decline.

► **Table 1.4. Working poverty, 2020–23, world and by country income group**

Country group	Working poverty	Rates (percentages)				Numbers (millions)			
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
World	Extreme	7.7	7.3	7.1	6.9	248.0	241.6	240.1	241.1
	Moderate	12.5	12.1	12.2	12.2	402.7	401.4	414.9	423.4
Low-income countries	Extreme	38.9	38.5	38.7	39.0	90.5	92.7	96.7	100.6
	Moderate	26.6	26.4	26.5	26.7	61.9	63.5	66.3	68.9
Lower-middle-income countries	Extreme	12.8	11.8	10.9	10.2	139.3	132.0	127.3	124.7
	Moderate	26.1	25.6	25.2	24.7	283.7	287.6	294.8	302.1
Upper-middle-income countries	Extreme	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.1	17.9	16.7	15.9	15.6
	Moderate	4.3	3.7	3.9	3.8	56.9	50.0	53.6	52.0

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.



**Addressing labour market and skills imbalances could help tackle short-term labour market challenges and underlying structural issues.**

Despite some easing of labour market pressures as job vacancies have fallen from record highs, notably in high-income countries, labour market and skills imbalances are persisting in many regions and sectors. This suggests that the issue of labour market and skills imbalances is increasingly structural in nature as growth in the global labour force slows and the participation rates of under-represented groups remain suppressed.

**The persistence of labour market imbalances is also a reflection of how the labour market is substantially different today.** As inflation rose over the course of 2021 and 2022 to levels not seen in 40 years, parallels were drawn with the 1970s: in both cases, geopolitical developments impacted on commodity prices, especially the price of oil, and hence affected the economies of both advanced and developing countries. However, there are some striking differences (Allen and Ainsworth-Grace 2023). In 2023, the world managed to keep a recession at bay – even in the context of high inflation – in stark contrast to the recessionary conditions that accompanied inflation during the 1970s. The contrast reflects the relative speed with which central banks responded to inflation and also the structural differences between today’s labour market and that of the 1970s (box 1.3).

**Policy action is likely to be constrained by the macroeconomic environment.** The long expansionary period in the 2010s with ultra-low interest rates allowed both advanced and emerging economies to stretch their borrowing capacity. Sovereign debt has increased to heights not seen since the post-1945 period. Several countries, including some advanced economies, have seen

their debt ratings decline as a consequence; this has increased borrowing costs for both public and private debtors. At the same time, few countries seem to have taken precautionary steps to lock in low interest rates and so they are now facing rapidly rising interest costs in their public budgets, whose capacity to provide targeted support is thereby limited. Highly indebted developing countries are particularly at risk of quickly running into financial distress as conditions tighten, with significant repercussions for their labour market conditions, wage growth and jobs.

**As financial conditions deteriorate, this may spell double trouble for both labour markets and public purses.** First, rising unemployment will only further dampen revenues and compromise already fragile fiscal positions. Second, as unemployment increases, there will be limited fiscal space to provide much needed measures to keep workers attached to the labour market and provide upskilling and reskilling support – both of which are central to encouraging a faster economic recovery. Yet, expenditure of this nature should be viewed as an investment and will help to bolster a more inclusive recovery and to address structural issues that are impeding long-run productivity growth and improvements in living standards. In fact, investments in well-targeted skills and training programmes and other related measures have lower opportunity costs during slowdowns.

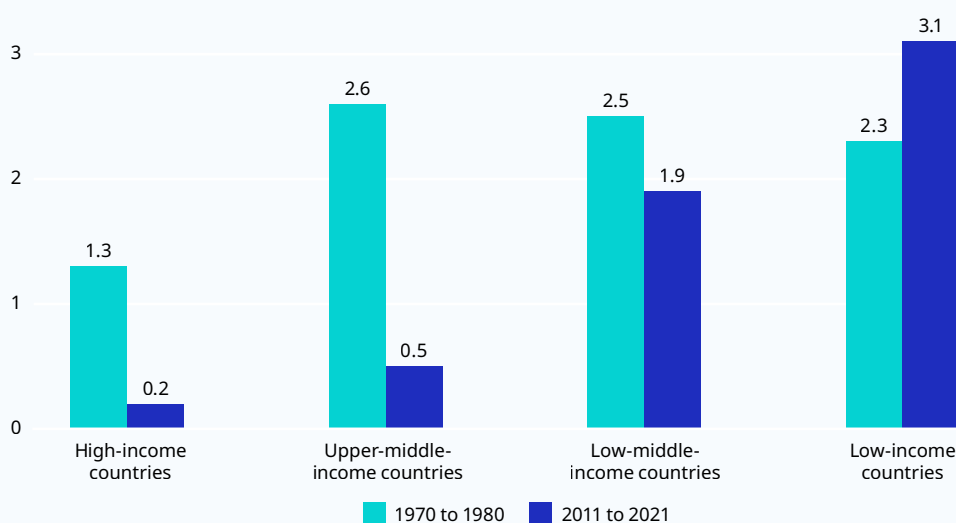
**The remainder of this report will examine these decent work deficits in greater detail.** Chapter 2 will analyse employment and social developments during 2023 and the future outlook. ILO-region-specific decent work deficits will be explored and key areas highlighted in each region that merit attention. Chapter 3 will examine labour market imbalances in more detail.

► **Box 1.3. Baby boom versus baby bust: The labour market impacts of inflation in the 2020s compared with the 1970s**

One reason why the labour market impacts of inflation are moderate today in comparison with the 1970s is the fact the economy is less energy intensive than it was five decades ago. Rising oil prices have not challenged industrial output and related employment to the same extent. Recent supply shocks have been less substantial and more temporary than in the 1970s, and the recent inflationary period has been more affected by the positive demand shock following on the heels of the pandemic (De Grauwe and Ji 2023). Another key difference is the speed and scale of monetary policy response. During the 1970s, monetary policy was not viewed by central banks as the most appropriate tool to confront the structural shock brought on by the oil embargo that began in 1973. Policymakers' reactions during the 1970s have been deemed "too little too late" (Allen and Ainsworth-Grace 2023). In contrast, between the spring/summer of 2022 and autumn 2023, central banks launched a cycle of aggressive interest rate hikes – the Federal Reserve and European Central Bank hiking rates by 525 and 450 basis points, respectively. The recent inflationary period was preceded by a prolonged period of low inflation, which helped anchor inflationary expectations at relatively low levels. Thus the disinflationary monetary policies rolled out by central banks were able to bring down inflation more swiftly than during the 1970s and without a corresponding surge in unemployment (De Grauwe and Ji 2023).

There is also a marked difference in the structures of the working-age population. In 1970, 36 per cent of the population of high-income countries were under the age of 19 and, over the course of the decade, the largest cohorts of the baby boom generation came of working age and entered the workforce in large numbers. Between 1970 and 1980, the population aged 20 to 64 grew by 1.3 per cent per year in high-income countries (figure 1.13). This provided an ample supply of labour and likely exacerbated the impact of inflation on unemployment during the 1970s. In contrast, by 2021 the population was considerably older on average and many members of the baby boom generation (aged 57 to 75 in 2021) had begun to exit the labour market. In the decade preceding the recent inflationary period (the decade 2011–21), the population aged 20 to 64 grew just 0.2 per cent per year in high-income countries. As a consequence, in the face of inflationary pressures and rising interest rates, employment growth only slowed in 2023 and labour shortages persisted across a number of countries and sectors (see Chapter 3).

► **Figure 1.13. Growth of population aged 20 to 64, by time period and country income group (compound annual percentages)**



**Note:** Country income groups are as per World Bank categorization.

**Source:** Calculations based on UN Population Division estimates, World Population Prospects 2022 (<https://population.un.org/dataportal/>).

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# 2

## Employment and social trends by region

### ► Overview

**Headline indicators show an improvement in most regions, with a slight deterioration for 2024 and considerable downside risk.**

Employment is growing in all regions, although often driven by growth in the working-age population. Employment-to-population ratios are also approaching pre-pandemic (2019) levels in most regions, except in some subregions, such as the non-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Arab States, North America, East Asia and Eastern Europe, where employment-to-population ratios in 2023 were still below 2019 levels. Unemployment rates are also recovering to pre-pandemic levels, with similar subregional exceptions, including non-GCC Arab States and East Asia, for which ratios remain above 2019 levels. Considerable heterogeneity remains across subregions and different labour market dimensions. Weaker job growth is expected in 2024 owing to various geopolitical tensions and tighter global monetary conditions.

**With a return to pre-COVID-19-pandemic levels evident in headline indicators in many regions, the focus is on strengthening long-standing decent work deficits.**

Despite progress in reducing informal employment, more than eight in ten employed people in Africa were in informal employment in 2023, nearly two thirds in Asia and the Pacific, and more than half in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2023, around a third of the employed population in sub-Saharan Africa were living in extreme poverty (in households subsisting on less than US\$2.15 per day per person in PPP terms), and about 37 per cent of the employed population in South Asia and around 8 per cent of the employed population in Latin America and the Caribbean were living below the moderate poverty threshold (US\$3.65 per day per person in PPP terms). In many regions women continue to be distinctly disadvantaged across labour market variables, particularly in the Arab States and North Africa. With improvements in headline labour market indicators such as employment and unemployment, countries are taking stock of pre-existing challenges and developing strategies to confront new forms of work and their implications for these decent work deficits.

## ► Africa

**Africa's GDP growth remains buoyant although impacted upon by oil and non-oil commodity prices, which slowed growth in 2023.** Africa's GDP growth is estimated to have been 3.8 per cent in 2022, following the turmoil of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. In 2023, growth is expected to have slowed to 3.1 per cent, reflecting a combination of factors, including the impact of global geopolitical tensions, such as the conflict in Ukraine and its impact on commodity markets. The outlook for Africa is mixed. In 2024, GDP growth is expected to pick up again to 3.8 per cent, bolstered in part by higher commodity prices supporting the region's commodity exporters. Downside risks, however, include inflationary pressure, ongoing commodity price fluctuations, and tensions in the Middle East.

**Long-term structural challenges continue to weigh on the region's economic potential; they include endemic working poverty, major population displacement and the impact of climate change.** Limited fiscal space affects African countries' abilities to respond to exogenous shocks (IMF 2023a). Of continuing concern is the ability of these countries to be resilient to and rebuild from events resulting from climate change, such as prolonged drought, crop failures, and storms, which can disrupt key economic drivers such as mining activity and agricultural production. An additional concern is that much existing growth in GDP is not accompanied by increases in per capita incomes, which are rising too slowly to reduce extreme poverty and working poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, in 2023, 145 million people were in extreme working poverty (at the US\$2.15 per day threshold, in PPP terms), equating to a third of the employed population. Per capita incomes are expected to grow less than 1 per cent in 2023–24, and 40 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's population live in countries (including the three largest economies) where per capita incomes will be lower in 2024 than at the start of the pandemic (World Bank 2023a). Several African countries also face continuing security risks that have the potential to depress growth and produce adverse spillovers into neighbouring countries. For example, all five Sahel countries (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania) are experiencing active conflict or

confronted with security challenges. Such conflict impacts on livelihoods as well as diverting public funds away from growth-enhancing investment (World Bank 2022; AfDB 2023a).

### Labour market trends in North Africa

This subregion's growth has been undermined by a series of exogenous shocks, including drought, flooding and earthquakes. North Africa's GDP grew at 2.7 per cent in 2023, down from 3.7 per cent in 2022. GDP growth is forecast to rebound to 3.5 per cent in 2024 and 4.4 per cent in 2025. However, growth varies across the subregion. Ongoing conflicts continue to disrupt Libya's growth, as have recent flooding disasters, and drought and earthquakes have impacted on Morocco's growth (AfDB 2023b; Henson and Masters 2023). Meanwhile, tourism and trade resumption have benefited other countries in the region, including Egypt and Tunisia (AfDB 2023b).

**North Africa continues to exhibit a low labour force participation rate driven by low levels of female participation.** The labour force participation rate in North Africa, around 45 per cent in 2023, is the second lowest of all the world's subregions, higher only than in non-GCC Arab States (table 2.1). The female labour force participation rate, 20 per cent, was 49 percentage points lower than for men (69 per cent) in 2023. This carries through to the employment-to-population ratio, also low at 40 per cent in 2023, again driven by exceptionally low female rates (16 per cent compared with 63 per cent for males). This gender dimension is also visible in the share of the youth (aged 15–24) population not in employment, education or training (NEET): the NEET share of female youth is 38.4 per cent compared with 17 per cent for males.

**Job creation has continued to recover since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.** Mean weekly hours worked per person employed are still relatively high by global standards: 44 hours in 2023. Despite this, mean weekly hours per person employed have only just returned to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 and the long-term pre-pandemic average over 2010–19. Recent job

► **Table 2.1. Estimates and projections of working hours, employment, unemployment and labour force, regional and subregional, Africa, 2010–25**

Region/ subregion	Mean weekly hours worked per person employed						Total weekly hours in full-time equivalent jobs (FTE = 48 hours/week) (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024		2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	
Africa	38.8	39.0	39.1	39.0	39.0		296	372	406	418	430	
North Africa	44.7	44.0	44.0	44.0	44.0		56	60	64	65	66	
Sub-Saharan Africa	37.6	38.2	38.3	38.2	38.2		241	312	342	353	363	
	Employment-to-population ratio (percentages)						Employment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Africa	59.5	58.2	58.4	58.6	58.7	58.8	367	458	498	514	529	545
North Africa	42.8	39.1	39.7	39.6	39.6	39.8	60	65	70	71	72	74
Sub-Saharan Africa	64.5	63.3	63.2	63.5	63.5	63.5	307	393	429	443	457	471
	Unemployment rate (percentages)						Unemployment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Africa	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.5	26.2	33.2	35.8	36.4	37.1	37.7
North Africa	10.5	11.4	10.9	11.3	11.3	10.9	7.0	8.3	8.5	9.0	9.2	9.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.9	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.8	5.7	19.1	24.8	27.2	27.4	27.9	28.6
	Labour force participation rate (percentages)						Labour force (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Africa	63.8	62.4	62.6	62.8	62.8	62.8	393	491	534	550	566	583
North Africa	47.8	44.1	44.6	44.6	44.6	44.7	67	73	78	80	81	83
Sub-Saharan Africa	68.5	67.3	67.2	67.4	67.4	67.4	326	417	456	471	485	500

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

growth is likely to have been driven by service sector recovery, including jobs in tourism and trade, which have potential to increase further (ILO 2022a).

## Labour market trends in sub-Saharan Africa

**GDP growth is expected to have slowed for a second year in a row in 2023, but a rebound in growth is expected in 2024.** Several factors have contributed to slower economic expansion in the subregion, including persistent inflation, the global fallout from geopolitical issues (including supply

chain disruption), global declines in consumer confidence, and poor economic performances of a number of major economies in the subregion (IMF 2023a). Nevertheless, oil exporters saw strong growth against the backdrop of strong oil price increases (IMF 2023a). This oil price boom will likely continue to drive the subregion's growth in 2024, contributing to and combined with the strong growth of more than 5 per cent in the majority of sub-Saharan African countries, offsetting the higher costs for oil importers in the subregion (AfDB 2023a).

**Sub-Saharan Africa's labour force continues to be driven by population growth.** The size of the



labour force increased by 3.3 per cent in 2023. This translates into an additional 53 million people of working age in the labour force in 2023 compared with 2019. The labour force participation rate remained around 67 per cent, approximately the same as the pre-pandemic level in 2019 although marginally lower than the average of 68 per cent between 2010 and 2019. The labour force in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to increase by a further 14 million people in 2024.

**Unemployment has remained slightly elevated since the onset of the pandemic, youth being particularly at risk.** The average unemployment rate was estimated to be 5.8 per cent in 2023, compared with 5.9 per cent in 2019. This equates to a total of 27 million people. For youth, the rate is higher, 8.9 per cent, accounting for 9.4 million people. In a context of growing working-age population, young people are particularly at risk of disillusionment and labour market detachment as a result of being unable to secure decent and productive work on entry into the labour market. In 2023, around 62 million young people were estimated to be NEET, equating to 25.9 per cent of the youth population, up from 22.2 per cent in 2013.

**Job creation is keeping pace with the rising labour force, but not necessarily involving improvements in the quality of jobs.** Total hours worked increased by 3.4 per cent in 2023, compared with 2.8 per cent growth in 2019. Job growth is keeping pace with the growing labour force. Mean hours worked per person employed are also in line with pre-pandemic levels: 38.2 hours per week in both 2023 and 2019. The low average hours in the subregion, given that most countries in the subregion are low or middle income, point to likely underemployment. This illustrates the need for new jobs to be decent and productive.

**Not all those in employment are in decent and productive jobs, decent work deficits being rife in the subregion.** Informal employment accounted

for 86.5 per cent of total employment in 2023, almost the same as a decade earlier (87.2 per cent in 2013). In 2023, almost 60 per cent were employed but living in households below the “moderately poor” international poverty threshold of US\$3.65 per person per day in PPP terms (down from 63.8 per cent in 2013). These challenges remain pervasive, particularly in rural areas. Meanwhile, in 2022, around 75.5 per cent of the employed population were own-account workers or contributing family workers – employment statuses that typically are more precarious, have less job security and bring less regular income than does more stable employee status. The combined share of own-account work and contributing family work has remained relatively unchanged over the past decade, from 76.1 per cent in 2012.

## Data challenges for evidence-based labour migration governance in Africa

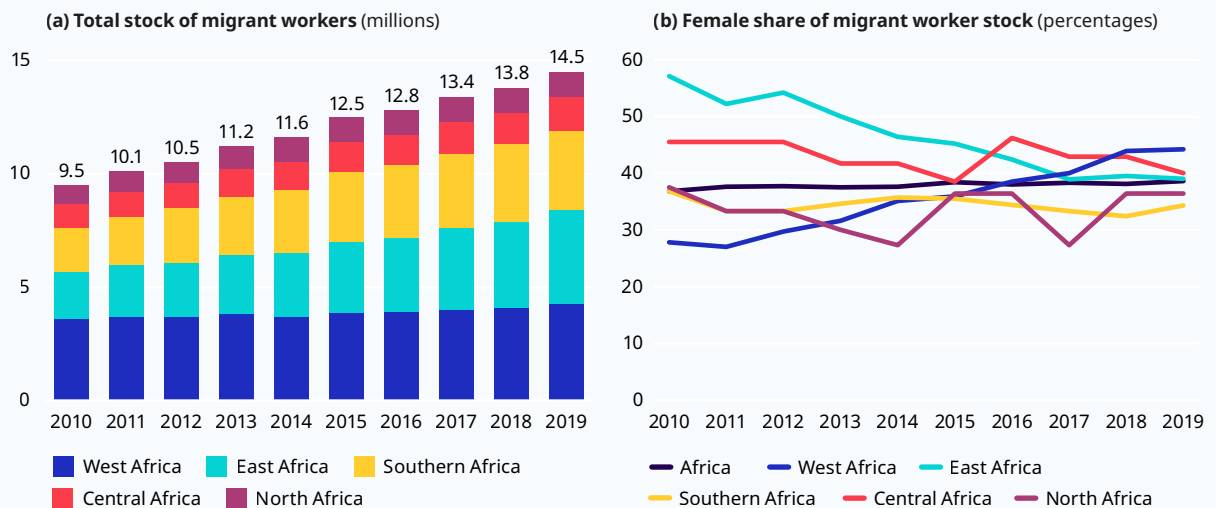
**Africa is subject to many migration channels and contains countries of destination, transit and origin.** There are multiple drivers and motives of migration, including conflict and security, climate-change-related factors, family reunification, and seeking better opportunities and employment. Often there is no single driving factor and thus there are mixed migration flows. “Mixed migration” refers to all cross-border movements that encompass a range of driving factors and motivations (*Migration Data Portal* 2022). At the same time, the region has various regional economic communities (RECs).<sup>1</sup> These RECs present different degrees of commitment and implementation with regard to the free movement of persons.<sup>2</sup> Together with irregular migration, porous borders and high degrees of informality in the labour market, all these factors complicate the measurement and therefore understanding of regional migration, including labour migration.

1 Including, among others, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CED-SAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and part of the East Africa Community (EAC).

2 For instance, the COMESA Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, the Right of Establishment and Residence was adopted in 2001 by the COMESA Authority of Heads of States and is in the process of being signed and ratified. COMESA Member States are still working towards the gradual relaxation and removal of visa requirements (COMESA 2023). A draft Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons within the SADC was introduced in 1996 and replaced by a Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons in 1997, which was revised in 2005 to allow visa-free entry for a maximum of 90 days. This has not been fully implemented – only some Member States have signed it – although most Member States exempt one another from visa requirements (UNECA n.d.).



► **Figure 2.1. International stock of migrant workers, Africa and subregions, total and female share, 2010–19**



Source: African Union Commission et al. (2021).

**Estimates of migrant workers vary significantly in the region.** The ILO, African Union, and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have all produced recent estimates of the total stock of international migrant workers within the region (and subregions). The ILO estimates the total stock of international migrant workers in the region to have been 13.7 million in 2019 (ILO 2021a); the African Union, 14.5 million in 2019 (African Union Commission et al. 2021); and COMESA, 5.2 million for its Member States only (COMESA 2022).<sup>3</sup> These figures all refer to migrant workers of working age (aged 15+). They are all likely to be underestimates given the extent of irregular migration in the region and the challenges of capturing such migration in official data.

**Of the 14.5 million migrant workers in Africa in 2019, 4.3 million were estimated to be in West Africa, 4.1 million in East Africa and 3.5 million in Southern Africa** (African Union Commission et al. 2021) (figure 2.1(a)). Estimates of immigration are more common than estimates of emigration, since the underlying data sources include

labour force surveys and population censuses, both of which are used in most countries and provide estimates of international migrant stock in a country. Estimates of emigration are more difficult to obtain, as are estimates of inflows and outflows of migrant workers, all of which rely more on administrative data sources – such as work permit issuances, visas and border-crossing information – and undercount total numbers because of the challenges of capturing irregular migration.

**The share of women in the total stock of migrant workers varies substantially by subregion and over time.** In East Africa, for instance, the female share of total migrant stock decreased from 57.1 per cent in 2010 to 39 per cent in 2019 (figure 2.1(b)). In West Africa, over the same period, the female share increased from 27.8 per cent to 44.2 per cent. Such sex-disaggregated data are fundamental to effective gender-responsive labour migration policymaking in the region, yet such data are often missing or lacking. A significant challenge is that even when there are data on migrant workers in official statistics, there is a lack of granularity on occupation, skill levels, economic

<sup>3</sup> The ILO is also involved in the African Union estimates. In future the numbers published by the African Union and ILO are likely to be aligned.

activity and other characteristics. Furthermore, women migrant workers are predominantly engaged in the informal sector and therefore harder to measure (ILO 2020a).

**Despite shortfalls in available data on migrant workers, several labour migration policies are being formulated in the region in line with international commitments – including the African Union Revised Migration Policy Framework.**

A challenge for evidence-based effective labour migration policies arises when there is a lack of international labour migration statistics upon which to base them. In the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for instance, almost all Member States have developed or are planning to develop a national migration policy or something similar (ILO 2020a). In the Southern

Africa subregion, too, a number of migration and labour migration policies and initiatives are under way or have recently been developed, including the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Labour Migration Action Plan (SAMB 2021a). Recognition of women's increasing role in labour migration, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment in these policies and initiatives are fundamental and require improved data on women migrant workers as well as measures to facilitate greater granularity of data for men and women (SAMB 2021b; ILO 2020a). Wider research into the working roles and economic contributions of migrants can facilitate evidence-based policymaking as well as more informed public opinion, as has happened in South Africa and Ghana (OECD and ILO 2018a and 2018b).

## ► Americas

**Economic growth continued to slow in 2023 in both North America and Latin America and the Caribbean.** The average GDP growth rate in the Americas fell to 2.1 per cent in 2023 from 2.7 per cent in 2022 (IMF 2023b). Weakness in the external environment as well as tighter monetary policy to fight inflation contributed to the slowing of the economy across the region. The GDP growth rate is expected to fall below 2 per cent in 2024.

**Economies in Latin America and the Caribbean are still struggling to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.** Latin America and the Caribbean's GDP growth rate fell by nearly 2 percentage points to 2.2 per cent in 2023. Despite the recent reductions in countries' public debt, their overall debt-to-GDP ratio is still high, limiting their capacity for fiscal support (ECLAC 2023). Many countries in the subregion (aside from Brazil) have struggled with decreasing rates of private consumption. Household consumption levels have also been dampened by monetary policies that have tightened credit restrictions. The GDP growth rate is expected to remain at the same level as in 2023 in both 2024 and 2025 (IMF 2023b). Given the growing populations in the subregion, this implies that per capita incomes will continue to decline.

**North America's GDP growth remained resilient in 2023 but is expected to fall in 2024.** North

America's GDP growth rate decreased by only 0.2 percentage points to 2 per cent in 2023 (IMF 2023b). However, projections show that this subregion's growth rate will fall to 1.5 per cent in 2024. The United States' GDP growth rate is expected to decline in 2024 given the headwinds upon consumer spending (Lundh 2023). The slowdown in the GDP growth rate has come from persistently high inflation and interest rates throughout 2023, which caused household debt to increase. The United States' slowing economy has resulted in a decrease in Canadian exports thither, decelerating Canada's GDP growth.

## Labour market trends in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Labour force participation rates in Latin America and the Caribbean have not quite returned to pre-pandemic rates, but there has been a reduction in the gender gap.** The labour force participation rate is estimated to have been 62.6 per cent in 2023, marginally lower than the 63.5 per cent in 2019 (table 2.2). The reduction in the gender gap is largely driven by a slightly stronger recovery for women than men in labour force participation, women being almost back to pre-pandemic labour force participation rates, but

► **Table 2.2. Estimates and projections of working hours, employment, unemployment and labour force, regional and subregional, Americas, 2010–25**

Region/ subregion	Mean weekly hours worked per person employed						Total weekly working hours in full-time equivalent jobs (FTE = 48 hours/week) (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024		2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	
Americas	38.3	38.1	38.1	38.1	38.1		329	372	380	387	389	
Latin America and the Caribbean	40.0	39.2	39.5	39.4	39.4		209	233	242	246	249	
North America	35.7	36.4	35.9	36.0	36.0		119	139	138	140	140	
	Employment-to-population ratio (percentages)						Employment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Americas	58.5	59.2	58.7	59.1	58.8	58.6	411	469	479	487	490	493
Latin America and the Caribbean	58.9	58.4	58.2	58.7	58.7	58.6	251	285	294	300	304	307
North America	57.8	60.5	59.5	59.8	59.0	58.7	160	183	184	187	186	187
	Unemployment rate (percentages)						Unemployment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Americas	8.1	6.4	5.7	5.3	5.4	5.4	36.3	32.3	29.2	27.3	27.8	28.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	7.2	8.0	6.9	6.2	6.1	6.0	19.5	24.8	21.8	19.8	19.8	19.6
North America	9.5	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.2	4.3	16.8	7.4	7.3	7.5	8.1	8.4
	Labour force participation rate (percentages)						Labour force (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Americas	63.6	63.3	62.3	62.4	62.2	62.0	448	501	508	514	518	521
Latin America and the Caribbean	63.5	63.5	62.5	62.6	62.5	62.4	270	310	316	320	323	326
North America	63.8	62.9	61.9	62.2	61.6	61.3	177	191	192	195	194	195

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

men lagging behind. The gendered impact of the crisis has been well documented: women were more likely to leave the labour force (ILO 2021b and 2023a). Nevertheless, the gender gap still looms large, 24 percentage points, between women with a labour force participation rate of 51.1 per cent in 2023 and men 74.6 per cent.

**Strong job growth has contributed to reductions in unemployment, but the outlook is weaker.**

A reduction in the subregion's unemployment rate

to 6.2 per cent in 2023, compared with 8 per cent in 2019, before the pandemic, has been driven by employment growth and job creation (ILO 2023a). However, slowdowns in the subregion's economy are likely to prevent further gains in the coming years; the unemployment rate is expected to remain around 6 per cent in 2024 and 2025. Youth unemployment remains a concern, being 13.6 per cent in 2023 (aligned with the global average of 13.3 per cent) and expected to marginally increase into 2025.

## Stagnating labour productivity growth in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Latin America and the Caribbean have stagnated over the last few decades.** Figure 2.2 illustrates average annual productivity growth rates for subregions and selected economies in the Americas. For Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, there was a drop in labour productivity between 2015 and 2023. In Argentina, over the same period, labour productivity is estimated to have decreased by 1.7 per cent per annum, and in Mexico by 0.4 per cent per annum. Not all countries in the region experienced a decline; Brazil exhibited very slight productivity growth over this period, far less than its neighbours in North America. In Canada and the United States, labour productivity grew 0.4 per cent per annum and 1 per cent per annum, respectively.

**Poor productivity growth has been a long-standing and complex issue in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Several factors underlie the persistent low productivity growth in this sub-region, including regulatory regimes, infrastructure investment and tax systems. Of particular concern, as highlighted in the previous *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends* report, is the persistence of the informal sector, notably in services and in rural areas, which drives down overall productivity growth (ILO 2023b and 2021c). This is compounded by the dominance of micro and small enterprises, which typically have lower productivity growth (high-productivity economies typically have higher shares of large and middle-sized enterprises). Partly because of the enterprise composition, investment in research

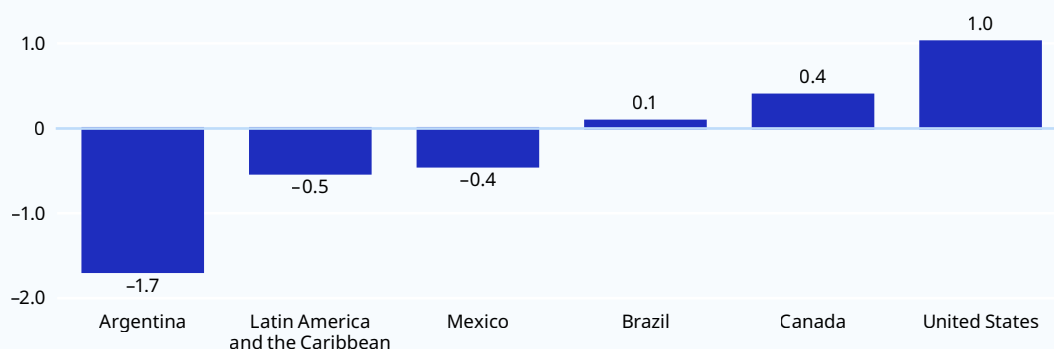
and development in Latin American countries lags behind that in North America; this, combined with lower-quality education and training systems, further suppresses productivity growth.

## Labour market trends in North America

**Unemployment rates remain low in the United States despite anticipated rises in the number of job seekers, owing to tighter monetary policy conditions.** In North America, total unemployment in 2023 was less than half its 2020 peak. In 2023, the unemployment rate is estimated to have been 3.8 per cent (accounting for 7.5 million people), compared with 8.2 per cent (accounting for 15.5 million people) in 2020. The rate in 2023 was close to the pre-pandemic rate of 3.9 per cent in 2019. However, the unemployment rate is forecast to increase to 4.2 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively, in 2024 and 2025, on the back of tighter monetary conditions in the United States impacting on job growth and hiring. In Canada the unemployment rate remains stable on the back of employment growth (Moosapeta 2023).

**Employment growth, having increased in 2023 by 1.4 per cent, is expected to decline in 2024 as the economy slows down.** Total hours worked are also expected to decrease marginally in 2024, potentially representing a slowdown in job growth. Mean weekly hours, at 36 hours, have returned to the long-term pre-pandemic average (2010–19) and are only marginally below the 2019 level of 36.4 hours. As mentioned above, monetary policy conditions are expected to impact on job growth, but this has yet to show in headline indicators.

► **Figure 2.2. Average annual productivity growth rate, 2015–23 (percentages)**



Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

## ► Arab States

**GDP growth in the Arab States has declined considerably amidst multiple oil production cuts.** The 2023 GDP growth rate in the Arab States fell short of previous predictions (IMF 2023b). After a substantial 7.2 per cent in 2022, GDP growth decelerated to a meagre 0.9 per cent in 2023. However, GDP growth is expected to bounce back in 2024, to more than 3.5 per cent.

**Oil-exporting countries are seeing a shift to non-oil-sector activities as drivers of GDP growth, owing to multiple oil production cutbacks.** Near the end of 2022, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+) agreed to reduce 2023 oil production by 2 million barrels per day (bpd) from August 2022 production levels (Lawler and Edwards 2023). Further voluntary cuts were made on various occasions throughout 2023 (Lawler 2023). Saudi Arabia expects its oil

production to have fallen by 9 per cent in 2023, the highest reduction per annum in the past 15 years (Saba and Uppal 2023). Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been able to offset oil production cutbacks with their growing retail and service sectors (IMF 2023c). However, studies have suggested that, to prevent GDP contracting, non-oil-sector growth needs to have averaged around 5 per cent in 2023 (Saba and Uppal 2023).

**The outlook is clouded by economic headwinds in a context of rising geopolitical tensions.** The Hamas attack on Israel and the latter's retaliation, in October 2023, have sparked uncertainty around, among other things, oil production in the Arab States. Within 48 hours of the initial attack, global oil prices experienced a short-term spike. This conflict is not expected to cause the same disruption in the oil industry as the Russia–Ukraine conflict initially did, because it is not occurring in an oil-producing nation (Hale 2023). However, the possibility that the conflict could spread to other countries in the region has increased the uncertainty of the outlook in the Arab States (see box 2.1).

### ► Box 2.1. Impact of the Israel– Hamas conflict on total employment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

The ILO's first bulletin on the impact of the current Israel–Hamas conflict on the labour market and livelihoods estimates that at least 61 per cent of employment, accounting for 182,000 people, has been lost in the Gaza Strip since the start of the conflict (ILO 2023c). The conflict is also likely to have a spillover effect in neighbouring countries and the larger region. In the West Bank (the other area included in the Occupied Palestinian Territory), an estimated 24 per cent of employment has been lost, accounting for 208,000 people, since the start of the conflict. Gaza's labour market was already characterized by working poverty, unemployment and other decent work deficits. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and elsewhere in the region if other countries are drawn into the conflict, employment and economic losses are projected to increase if military operations in Gaza intensify and the humanitarian crisis in the enclave continues to unfold.

## Labour market trends in the Arab States

**Limited growth of formal and productive job opportunities continues to be a major challenge for the region.** In 2023, total hours worked in the Arab States are expected to have increased by 2.3 per cent; this is forecast to increase by another 2 per cent in 2024 (table 2.3). These growth rates are below employment growth – expected to be 3 per cent and 2.5 per cent in 2023 and 2024, respectively – as has been the case for the past decade. Mean hours per person employed are estimated to have been 38.4 hours per week in 2023, still below pre-pandemic levels (39.2 hours in 2019). Insufficient structural transformation and economic diversification – owing to weak macro-economic, sectoral, industrial and investment policies – have caused years of deficient demand for labour, in which less than half of the total working-age population in the region have been employed (the employment-to-population ratio

► **Table 2.3. Estimates and projections of working hours, employment, unemployment and labour force, regional and subregional, Arab States, 2010–25**

Region/ subregion	Mean weekly hours worked per person employed						Total weekly working hours in full-time equivalent jobs (FTE = 48 hours/week) (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024		2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	
Arab States	43.0	39.2	38.6	38.4	38.2		37	43	44	45	46	
Non-GCC	40.6	33.5	31.7	31.4	31.1		18	16	17	17	18	
GCC	45.6	43.9	44.5	44.5	44.4		20	26	27	28	28	
	Employment-to-population ratio (percentages)						Employment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Arab States	45.5	45.0	44.4	44.5	44.4	44.4	42	52	55	56	58	59
Non-GCC	37.0	33.0	32.3	32.5	32.6	32.7	21	23	25	26	27	28
GCC	59.2	64.0	65.4	65.7	65.6	65.6	21	29	30	30	31	31
	Unemployment rate (percentages)						Unemployment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Arab States	7.2	9.3	10.0	9.9	9.8	9.7	3.2	5.4	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4
Non-GCC	10.1	15.3	16.1	16.1	16.0	15.8	2.4	4.2	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.3
GCC	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.4	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Labour force participation rate (percentages)						Labour force (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Arab States	49.0	49.6	49.4	49.4	49.3	49.1	45	58	61	63	64	66
Non-GCC	41.2	38.9	38.5	38.8	38.8	38.9	23	28	30	31	32	34
GCC	61.7	66.6	68.1	68.2	68.0	67.8	22	30	31	31	32	32

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

is estimated to have been 44.5 per cent in 2023). The jobs created are often informal, especially in the non-oil-exporting countries in the region, and fail to provide decent working conditions, including social protection coverage and decent wages. Informal employment remains elevated: 51 per cent in 2023.

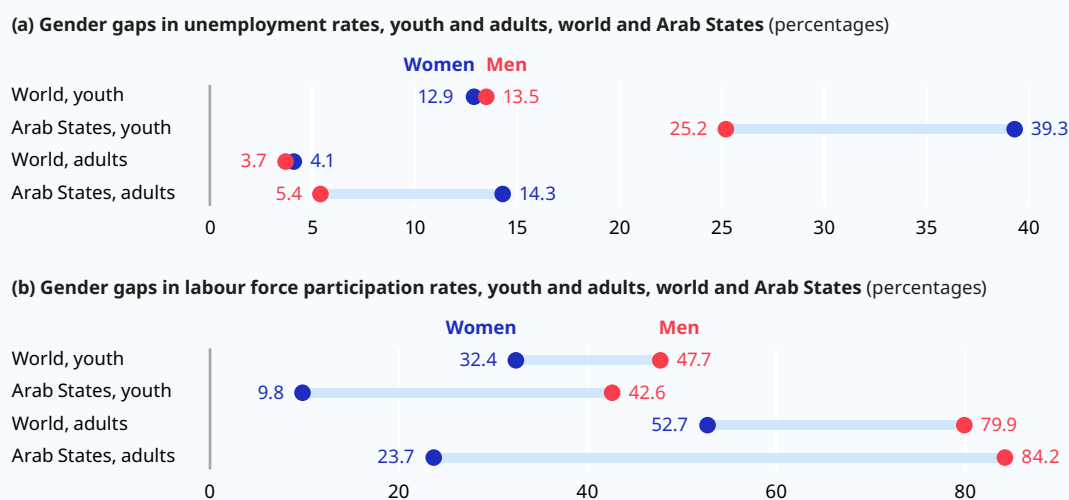
**Skills mismatch and weak education, training and skills development systems also contribute to the high levels of unemployment in the region.** The skills supplied by the education and training institutions are failing to respond to the current and future needs of the private sector, including with regard to soft and digital and green skills, among others. As a result, unemployment

was elevated in 2023 to 9.9 per cent in the Arab States as a whole and a particularly high 16.1 per cent in non-GCC countries. Persistent high levels of unemployment, among youth in particular, are driven by growth of the working-age population, combined with limited job opportunities and a disconnect between supply of and demand for skills (see Chapter 3 for more on the population impacts).

**Gender gaps in unemployment and labour market participation remain significant.** Although the gender gaps in labour market outcomes in the Arab States have improved modestly in recent years, they remain elevated among both youth and adults. In 2023, the unemployment rate



► **Figure 2.3. Gender disparities in labour market outcomes in the Arab States, 2023**



Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

in the Arab States was nearly 9 percentage points higher among adult women than among men (figure 2.3(a)). This is much larger than the average global gap, of approximately 0.4 percentage points. The gender gap of unemployment in the Arab States was 14.2 percentage points for the youth population (compared with the global average gap of 0.6 percentage points). Gender gaps are similarly present in labour force participation (figure 2.3(b)). The Arab States have labour force participation gender gaps of 33 and 61 percentage points for the youth and adult populations, respectively. The global gender gap is less than half of that of the Arab States for both age groups.

**A range of factors are driving gender disparities in the region.** Gender gaps and inequalities in the region persist in both the GCC and non-GCC states, driven by cultural norms, unbalanced household responsibilities, an underdeveloped care economy, lack of safe public transportation, discrimination in the workplace and an absence of family-friendly policies, among other things (ILO 2023d; UNDP 2023). Efforts to address these challenges and promote the growth of jobs in high-productivity and high-value-added sectors are ongoing and, with the right labour market and social policies as a complement, will help to promote higher female employment and labour force participation in the region.

## Labour market implications of forced displacements

**A major challenge faced by several non-GCC states is forced displacement, encompassing both refugees and asylum seekers as well as internally displaced persons.** Over the past decade, the region has experienced a significant influx of displaced individuals, owing to conflicts, persecution and instability in several countries. An increase in displacement followed the Arab Spring uprisings, in which major political shifts led to civil wars that contributed to the 2.9 million new internal displacements a year in the Middle East and North Africa region (IDMC 2020). Natural disasters, meanwhile, contributed 1.5 million displacements in the Middle East and North Africa region between 2010 and 2020 (IDMC 2020). These displacements are likely to be exacerbated by climate-change-induced events. Finally, the recent escalation of conflict in Israel is likely to contribute to further displacements in the region.

**Migrants face challenges in accessing the labour market, which exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.** Many refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons living in camps or camplike settings were disproportionately impacted upon by the COVID-19 pandemic,

including through exclusion from government policies focused primarily on the national population; this further exacerbated their already vulnerable situations (ILO 2020b). Refugees and asylum seekers may also face limitations on their movements, which impact on their ability even to work in self-employment (ILO 2020b). Refugees and internally displaced persons who manage to enter the labour market often experience poor working conditions as a result of legal barriers (lack of legal rights and difficulty in obtaining work permits), lack of skills (and recognition of skills) or language barriers.

**The displacements of recent years have contributed to complex dynamics in labour markets.** The presence of displaced populations can

have various impacts on job opportunities and resources, particularly in low-skilled and informal employment in host communities (ILO 2013). Research has shown that refugees and internally displaced persons often work in the informal economy, for longer hours of work and lower wages and with limited or no social protection coverage. A recent study found that Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were found to have an informal employment rate of, respectively, 95 per cent and 94 per cent (ILO 2021d). Many refugees and internally displaced persons may lack the necessary skills and qualifications to access higher-paying jobs. Limited access to education and skills training programmes can perpetuate their vulnerability in the labour market.

## ► Asia and the Pacific

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**In Asia and the Pacific, GDP is estimated to have grown by 4.3 per cent in 2023** (IMF 2023b). Reopenings of the economy from COVID-19 restrictions, including the removal of lockdown measures in China, contributed to stronger growth in 2023 (compared with 3.9 per cent in 2022). In China the removal of these constraints resulted in increased domestic spending as households spent accumulated savings (World Bank 2023a). Meanwhile, tourism to the region from high income economies has rebounded, surpassing pre-pandemic levels in 2022 (ADB 2023). However, some countries in the Pacific, such as the Solomon Islands, are unable to tap into the tourism recovery, owing to an exodus of skilled labour that took place following the closure of tourism-related businesses during the pandemic (ADB 2023). Although inflation has affected the region, price controls, subsidies and interest rate hikes have been lower than in other emerging and developing regions, with certain exceptions such as some countries in South Asia (World Bank 2023a). Improved economic circumstances have facilitated the phasing out of pandemic- and cost-of-living-related support measures, allowing the stabilizing of fiscal positions (ADB 2023). As many of these dynamics settle, growth is expected to continue at around 4.1 per cent in 2024.

**South Asia is expected to have had the highest growth rate in the region in 2023, 5 per cent, compared with 4.2 per cent in East Asia and 3.8 per cent in South-East Asia and the Pacific** (IMF 2023b). Although many countries in Asia and the Pacific were able to avoid the accelerating inflation seen in other regions, a number of South Asian countries – including Bangladesh, India and Pakistan – have implemented import suppression measures and face energy shortages, both of which have been affecting industrial output. These countries also have limited fiscal room to provide stimulus or respond to exogenous shocks in the future, should that be required (World Bank 2023b; ILO 2023e and 2022b). Moreover, some countries, such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan, have been struck by financial crises (World Bank 2023b). Nevertheless, India has buoyed growth for the South Asia subregion, thanks in part to high investment growth (World Bank 2023a). In South-East Asia, Indonesia, too, is expected to have exhibited relatively strong growth through 2023, which is projected to continue into 2024, as a result of high commodity prices bolstering export earnings (UNCTAD 2023).



## Labour market trends in Asia and the Pacific

**In 2023, labour force participation trends returned to a pre-pandemic downward trend for Asia and the Pacific.** The labour force

participation rate, which had been decreasing over the past two decades (from 66.4 per cent in 2000 to 60.2 per cent in 2019), is decreasing again following a turbulent period between 2019 and 2023 owing to the impact of the pandemic (table 2.4). The labour force participation rate in

► **Table 2.4. Estimates and projections of working hours, employment, unemployment and labour force, regional and subregional, Asia and the Pacific, 2010–25**

Region/subregion	Mean weekly hours worked per person employed						Total weekly working hours in full-time equivalent jobs (FTE = 48 hours/week) (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024		2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	
Asia and the Pacific	46.7	45.3	44.1	43.9	43.8		1,700	1,784	1,793	1,828	1,832	
East Asia	46.3	44.6	44.1	44.0	43.9		831	813	806	803	802	
South-East Asia	42.6	40.6	39.9	39.9	39.9		253	275	274	279	282	
South Asia	49.5	48.7	46.3	45.8	45.8		605	682	698	730	733	
The Pacific	35.0	34.5	34.4	34.4	34.4		12	14	15	15	15	
	Employment-to-population ratio (percentages)						Employment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Asia and the Pacific	59.5	57.4	57.4	58.2	57.8	57.7	1,749	1,892	1,952	1,999	2,007	2,025
East Asia	66.3	63.9	63.3	62.9	62.6	62.4	861	875	878	877	877	878
South-East Asia	65.4	65.6	64.2	64.5	64.5	64.3	284	325	330	336	340	343
South Asia	49.7	48.0	49.3	51.4	50.9	51.0	586	672	723	765	769	783
The Pacific	59.7	60.0	60.8	60.9	60.6	60.4	17	20	21	21	21	22
	Unemployment rate (percentages)						Unemployment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Asia and the Pacific	5.3	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	97.5	94.3	92.2	93.3	93.7	94.9
East Asia	4.5	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	40.8	39.5	43.1	42.9	43.0	43.1
South-East Asia	3.3	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	9.6	8.0	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.6
South Asia	7.3	6.4	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	46.2	45.8	39.6	41.0	41.4	42.3
The Pacific	5.0	4.7	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9
	Labour force participation rate (percentages)						Labour force (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Asia and the Pacific	62.8	60.2	60.1	60.9	60.5	60.4	1,846	1,986	2,044	2,092	2,100	2,120
East Asia	69.5	66.8	66.4	66.0	65.7	65.5	902	914	921	920	920	921
South-East Asia	67.7	67.2	65.9	66.2	66.1	65.9	294	333	339	344	348	351
South Asia	53.6	51.3	52.0	54.2	53.6	53.8	632	718	762	806	810	826
The Pacific	62.8	62.9	63.0	63.2	62.9	62.8	17	21	22	22	22	23

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

2023 is estimated to have been 60.9 per cent; it is expected to decrease in 2024 and 2025 (to 60.5 per cent and 60.4 per cent, respectively). This modest long-term decline has largely been driven by socio-economic developments in the low- and middle-income economies of the region as poverty rates have decreased and youth educational enrolment has improved. At the same time, women's labour force participation rates have been increasing because of women's improved access to the labour market, particularly in South Asia, where the women's labour force participation rate (30.8 per cent) was 45.9 percentage points lower than the men's (76.7 per cent) in 2023, compared with a gap of 51.2 percentage points in 2010.

**Employment growth in the region has picked up, driven by job growth in South Asia.** The employment growth of 2.4 per cent between 2022 and 2023 is significantly greater than the pre-pandemic long-term average of 0.9 per cent per annum (2010–19). This corresponds to an employment-to-population ratio of 58.2 per cent in 2023, almost the same as the long-term pre-pandemic average (2010–19), suggesting that employment growth is keeping pace with population growth. Mean weekly hours per person employed, 44 hours per week in 2023, have remained lower than the long-term pre-pandemic average of around 46 hours per week (2010–19). This may have been driven by developments in East Asia, where total hours worked in the economy have been decreasing since the onset of the pandemic – owing to weak economic growth in China – as well as over the long term (by 0.2 per cent per annum between 2010 and 2019).

**At around 4.5 per cent, the regional unemployment rate fell below pre-pandemic levels in 2023, but this figure conceals heterogeneity across countries and age groups.** The unemployment rate is expected to remain constant over the next two years and significantly lower than the spike in 2020 of 5.5 per cent. It is also lower than the pre-pandemic level – 4.7 per cent in 2019 – and the long-term average between 2010 and 2019 of 5.1 per cent. East Asia's unemployment rate in 2023 was higher than in 2019, 4.7 per cent compared with 4.3 per cent, respectively; the rates in the other subregions were all lower or only marginally higher in 2023 than in 2019. Youth unemployment continues to be a significant challenge for the region. The youth unemployment rate in 2023 is estimated to have

been around 14.4 per cent, on average, in Asia and the Pacific, marking a steady increase from 12 per cent in 2010 and less than 10 per cent in 2000. Particularly high youth unemployment rates in China – reported to have been 20.4 per cent in April 2023 in urban areas – have driven the overall rate for East Asia (ILO 2023f).

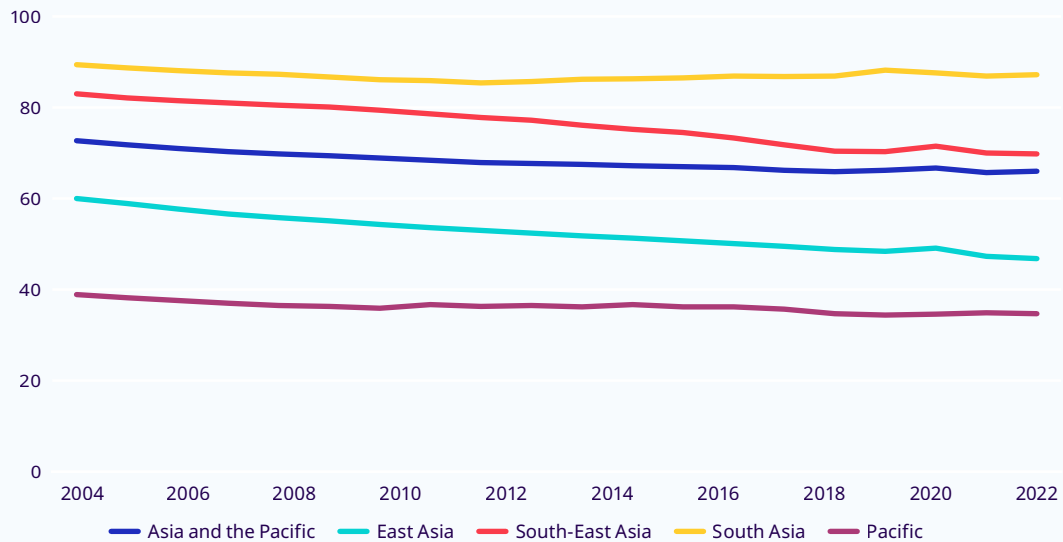
**Youth continue to encounter decent work deficits, which exacerbate this age group's pre-existing vulnerabilities.** Alongside the elevated and increasing unemployment rate in the region, informal employment affects more than eight out of ten young workers in the region, and one in four young workers live in households subsisting below the moderate poverty threshold of US\$3.65 per day in PPP terms (ILO and ADB 2020). At the same time, more than 144 million youth in the region are NEET, the majority of whom are women; the NEET rates of young women are especially high in South Asia. There was a lack of youth-targeted approaches in Asia and the Pacific during the pandemic; the one-size-fits-all approaches that were generally used failed to give specific attention to vulnerable groups such as youth (ILO 2023g).

## Informality and new forms of work in Asia and the Pacific

**In Asia and the Pacific, nearly two thirds of total employment was informal employment in 2023.** This rate has decreased from 72.7 per cent two decades earlier, in 2004, but in 2023, at 66 per cent, it still accounted for 1.3 billion people in the region. The informal employment rate varies considerably within the region, being highest in South Asia (87 per cent in 2023), followed by South-East Asia (70 per cent) and then East Asia (47 per cent) and the Pacific (35 per cent) (figure 2.4).

**Informality affects countries in this region at varying degrees of economic development, and new forms of work continue to bring challenges on this front even in countries that have made substantial progress.** Low- and middle-income countries continue to have elevated levels of informal employment. For instance, Nepal's informal employment rate was around 82 per cent in 2017 and Pakistan's around 84 per cent in 2021 (ILO 2023h). Although many high-income economies (Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand) have fared relatively better, seeing sustained

► **Figure 2.4. Informal employment rates, Asia and the Pacific and subregions, 2004–23 (percentages)**



Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

reductions in informal employment, new forms of work, including jobs in the platform economy, present new and different challenges to tackling informality (ILO, forthcoming).

**New forms of work arrangements offer a number of opportunities, but they also expose legal and policy gaps, thereby presenting new challenges to reducing informality.** The growth of non-standard forms of work, including the gig and platform economy, has been driven by new technologies.<sup>4</sup> Although these new forms of work present a range of opportunities, including flexible work arrangements, and benefits to

both businesses and workers, several downsides prevail, including lack of job security, irregular and low incomes, and limited access to social protection schemes. Moreover, many of these new forms of work are outside the scope and coverage of employment laws and regulations (ASEAN Secretariat 2023). The Republic of Korea is one country that has been introducing policy changes to address the informality emerging from new forms of work – for example with a National Employment Insurance Roadmap to cover all workers, including non-regular and gig workers, as well as legislation to help specify accountability for labour platform operators (ILO, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> “Non-standard employment”, as defined by the ILO, comprises four different types of wage employment that deviate from the standard employment relationship. These include temporary employment (casual work and fixed-term contracts), part-time work and on-call work arrangements, triangular employment relationships (temporary agency work and other forms of labour brokering or labour dispatch) and disguised employment or dependent self-employment relationships (where workers are legally classified as self-employed but someone else directs their work) (ILO 2016).

## ► Europe and Central Asia

**Europe and Central Asia's GDP growth is expected to increase in the next two years, following a slowdown in growth in 2022 and 2023.** Economic growth in Europe and Central Asia continued to decline in 2023, falling to 1.4 per cent from 6.4 per cent and 2.6 per cent in 2021 and 2022, respectively (IMF 2023b). However, projections show that economic growth is expected to turn around in 2024, in part because of anticipated improvements in Poland, the Russian Federation and Türkiye (World Bank 2023c). The European Union is expected to experience subdued growth in the medium term as a result of inflationary pressure, and high interest rates in the eurozone, impacting on household consumption and investment (EIU 2023).

**Eastern Europe's economic growth has struggled the most within the region, largely in consequence of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine.** Eastern Europe's GDP contracted by 1.5 per cent in 2022, but quickly recovered to a growth rate of 1.7 per cent in 2023 (IMF 2023b). The Russian Federation's increased military expenditure and strong consumer demand from Türkiye have both contributed to Eastern Europe's expanding economy (World Bank 2023c). Meanwhile, Northern, Southern and Western Europe has experienced strong economic growth for two consecutive years. After growth of 0.7 per cent in 2023, projections show that GDP growth is expected to increase to around 1.2 per cent in 2024.

**Economic growth has remained strong in Central Asia despite political tensions.** Central Asian countries have improved their trading relationship with the Russian Federation, filling a demand caused by international firms withdrawing from the Russian Federation market (Usov 2023). Many Russian firms and individuals have been forced to relocate by the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine; this has resulted in increased demand for retail, real estate, and hospitality services in Central Asia. Russia's increased demand for migrant labour has also supported Central Asia's GDP through labour remittances.

## Labour market trends in Europe and Central Asia

**The settling of headline indicators suggests that the labour market in Europe and Central Asia has stabilized.** In the region as a whole, employment is continuing to expand in line with growth in the working-age population (corresponding to a stable employment-to-population ratio of around 55 per cent) (table 2.5). The unemployment rate decreased to 5.7 per cent in 2023, from a recent high of 7 per cent in 2020. The labour force participation rate is also at around the same level as in pre-pandemic and long-term trends, around 58.5 per cent (compared with 58.3 per cent on average between 2010 and 2019). These trends are consistent with findings from other monitors, particularly of the European labour market, such as the European Labour Market Barometer, whose recent measures suggest stability in key indicators (IAB 2023).

**Heterogeneity prevails in the region; the different trends in Eastern Europe reflect the regional impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.** Employment is growing in all subregions except Eastern Europe, whose total employment has followed a downward trend since 2022. This trend is expected to continue well into 2025. There have been a range of labour market disruptions in Ukraine, resulting from economic disruption, business closures, population exodus and internal displacement, which have all contributed to decreases in total employment, job quality and job creation and an increase in informality (ILO 2022c and 2022d). Total hours worked have also been decreasing in Eastern Europe since 2021. Finally, the unemployment rate has been falling in Eastern Europe, partly because of the shrinking size of the labour force – the denominator of the unemployment rate. This shrinking of the labour force has been driven by population ageing and outward migration flows, and points to a starker picture than is otherwise conveyed by falling unemployment rates.

► **Table 2.5. Estimates and projections of working hours, employment, unemployment and labour force, regional and subregional, Europe and Central Asia, 2010–25**

Region/ subregion	Mean weekly hours worked per person employed						Total weekly working hours in full-time equivalent jobs (FTE = 48 hours/week) (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024		2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	
Europe and Central Asia	25.8	23.8	25.1	25.4	25.4		327	301	317	320	320	
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	26.1	23.9	25.3	26.2	26.0		158	145	153	158	156	
Eastern Europe	26.9	25.5	26.3	25.1	25.5		110	103	106	100	101	
Central and Western Asia	23.5	20.8	22.6	24.0	23.9		59	53	58	62	63	
	Employment-to-population ratio (percentages)						Employment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Europe and Central Asia	52.7	54.7	55.0	55.1	54.9	54.6	389	417	421	423	422	422
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	52.0	54.4	54.8	55.1	54.9	54.8	193	208	211	213	212	212
Eastern Europe	54.7	56.9	56.9	56.6	56.1	55.7	137	139	137	136	135	134
Central and Western Asia	50.5	51.7	52.5	52.9	52.7	52.5	59	70	73	74	75	76
	Unemployment rate (percentages)						Unemployment (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Europe and Central Asia	9.0	6.6	5.9	5.7	5.8	5.7	38.4	29.3	26.5	25.4	25.8	25.7
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	9.9	6.9	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.3	21.2	15.5	14.2	14.0	14.3	14.3
Eastern Europe	7.9	4.7	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.0	11.8	6.8	6.4	5.7	5.7	5.5
Central and Western Asia	8.3	9.0	7.5	7.1	7.2	7.3	5.4	6.9	5.9	5.7	5.8	5.9
	Labour force participation rate (percentages)						Labour force (millions)					
	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2010	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Europe and Central Asia	57.8	58.6	58.5	58.5	58.2	58.0	428	446	448	448	448	448
Northern, Southern and Western Europe	57.7	58.5	58.5	58.7	58.6	58.5	214	224	225	227	227	227
Eastern Europe	59.4	59.7	59.5	58.9	58.4	58.0	149	146	144	142	140	139
Central and Western Asia	55.1	56.8	56.8	56.9	56.8	56.6	65	77	79	80	81	82

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2022.

**Improving headline indicators in Central and Western Asia may be slowed in the long term by economic uncertainty.** Central and Western Asia's employment-to-population ratio, 52.9 per cent, is higher than the long-term pre-pandemic average of around 51.7 per cent. The unemployment rate continues to decline; it reached 7.1 per cent in 2023, considerably lower than the 9 per cent in 2019 and the long-term pre-pandemic (2010–19) average of 7.9 per cent. Despite this, there are ongoing challenges in the subregion, particularly with regard to the quality of work. Informality remained elevated at 36.4 per cent in Central and Western Asia in 2023, compared with 9 per cent in Northern, Southern and Western Europe and 19.5 per cent in Eastern Europe. This figure is a marked improvement from the 46.5 per cent in Central and Western Asia in 2010, but still accounts for 27 million people. There are risks to the subregion's outlook, including from the war in Ukraine and from climate change, which may impact on long-term growth and have knock-on effects on the labour market (Gigineishvili et al. 2023).

## Mixed pictures of youth unemployment in Europe

**Roughly half of European countries witnessed declines in youth unemployment in the 12 months up to June 2023.** Throughout 2023, the labour market situation of youth in Europe steadily improved. In June 2023, the youth unemployment rate in the European Union stood at just over 14 per cent, a fall of 0.3 percentage points from the same time the year before. Improvements between June 2022 and June 2023 were mixed: approximately half of the Member States saw declines whereas the others saw increases (Eurostat 2023a). Part of the reduction also owed to labour shortages observed in a number of countries from 2020 to 2023, which resulted in increased employment among young people (ILO 2023f). The different economic cycles and recoveries observed among countries in the European Union corresponded to different changes in the labour market.

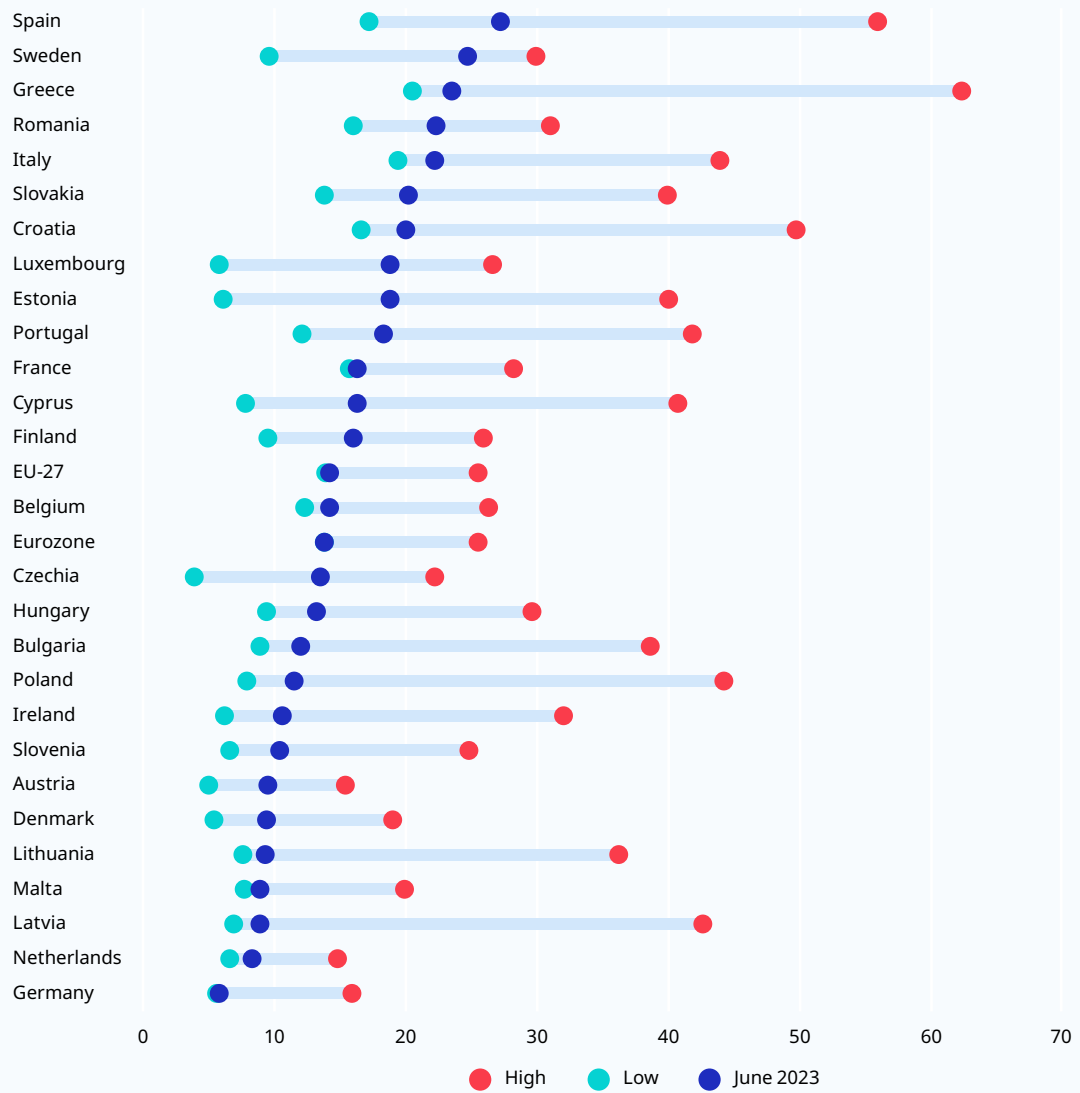
**Among the changes that took place in the European Union, some of the largest declines in the youth unemployment rate over the past few years have been in Southern Europe** (Eurostat 2023b). Between June 2022 and June 2023, youth unemployment fell most markedly in Greece,

where the rate of unemployed youth declined by more than 8 percentage points. There were strong reductions in other Southern European countries too: in Cyprus by 2.1 percentage points, in Italy by 1.2 percentage points, in Portugal by 0.8 percentage points and in Spain by 1.8 percentage points. Despite these gains, youth unemployment remains elevated in many of these countries, at rates of more than 20 per cent in Italy, Greece and Spain. In European Union countries, part of the improvement in youth unemployment has owed to the reinforced European Youth Guarantee, which acted as an automatic stabilizer supporting youth employment during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rinne et al. 2022). In Spain the introduction of *fijos discontinuos* ("fixed-discontinuous") contracts, whereby a worker can work sparingly and be counted as employed but also receive unemployment benefits, may have contributed to the reductions in youth unemployment (*elEconomista.es* 2023). The extent of the decreases may also reflect a renormalization after the exceptionally high unemployment rates reached during the eurozone crisis of 2009–10, particularly in Southern European countries.

**Trends in the rest of the European Union point to an increase in youth unemployment.** In contrast, the recent trends in youth unemployment in the rest of Europe point largely to increases over the same period. The largest increases have taken place in Czechia (6.3 percentage points) and Sweden (5.1 percentage points). Sweden now has the second-highest youth unemployment rate in Europe (nearly 25 per cent in June 2023). There were also increases, albeit modest in comparison, in Bulgaria, Croatia, Luxembourg, Germany, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Poland and Finland.

**Youth unemployment rates are well below their peak levels.** Despite the mixed evidence regarding recent trends in youth unemployment, all European Union countries have seen considerable progress in this measure since their peak levels in the period since 2000 (figure 2.5). Although most of the countries still have some progress to make to attain previous lows, in nearly all of them the figures for youth unemployment are closer to the low than to the high. The exceptions are Sweden, Czechia and Luxembourg. The situation in these countries may reflect the lasting and ongoing impact of the pandemic on young people, who were disproportionately affected by its consequences.

► **Figure 2.5. Prevailing youth unemployment rates, compared with highs and lows between 2003 and 2023, European Union (percentages)**



Source: Eurostat (2023b).



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# 3

## Labour shortages amidst unmet demand for decent work

### ► Overview

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**Growing imbalances between the demand for and supply of labour have been a puzzle for economic observers and policymakers in recent years. Despite large job market disruptions from the pandemic, labour demand outstripped available supply early in the recovery in advanced economies and key sectors.** Although 2023 brought some relief, many vacancies remain unfilled as employers struggle to find personnel. Labour imbalances have been slow to resolve and now threaten to impede a fast, equitable and sustainable economic recovery. They have also created spillover effects in emerging and developing countries that have abundant labour supply but are affected by the “higher for longer” interest rate posture adopted by many advanced countries in response to their labour market imbalances. Over the longer term, imbalances between labour-rich countries and those with shrinking labour forces are likely to contribute to increased international migration flows. If not addressed by comprehensive skills partnerships that benefit both source and destination countries, this situation could worsen skills shortages in sending countries.

**At the same time, fears of a sustained reduction in labour force participation following the pandemic have proved to be unfounded, since workers have generally returned to work in most regions and country income groups.** In 2023, unemployment rates fell below pre-pandemic levels in all country groups except low-income countries as global employment growth continued to be positive (see Chapter 1). On the other hand, total hours worked have not increased at the same rate as employment, since mean weekly hours have declined and part-time rates have risen. Possible drivers include health reasons, workers’ preferences in response to working conditions, and also employment retention where firms have maintained staff despite lower workloads in order to avoid the need to rehire employees later. Labour markets have failed to adjust to changes in demand, partly because of lower worker mobility and stagnating wage growth. Secular trends, especially population ageing and technological change, are posing further challenges by intensifying skills shortages.

## ► A growing demand for labour

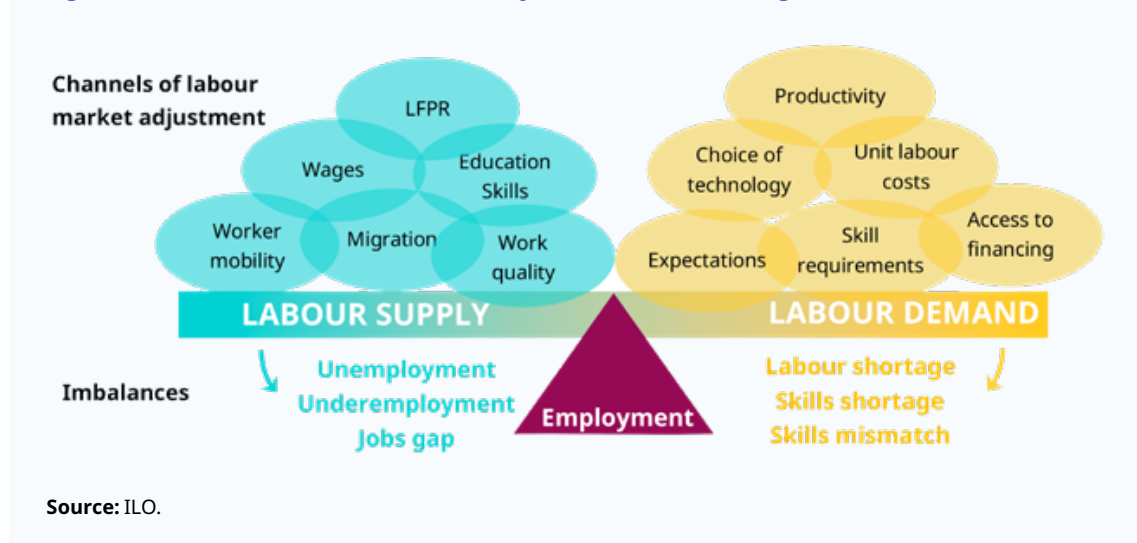
**Labour shortages arise when employers fail to fill job openings because of a lack of suitable candidates.** This can occur because of an overall shortage of workers, a mismatch between required skills and candidate profiles, a disconnect between workers’ expectations and the characteristics of available jobs, or a combination of these factors. Labour shortages are a sign that the labour market is imbalanced. Long-term imbalances are driven by structural factors, such as a lack of sufficiently educated workers or population ageing. Short-run imbalances, driven by cyclical factors, may owe to an abrupt surge in demand for workers or to short-term restrictions on labour supply, such as those imposed by health-related measures during the pandemic. Imbalances and shortages can also be limited to a subset of sectors and occupations. The way that labour markets adjust to these imbalances determines whether and how fast they can be resolved (see figure 3.1). Sluggish wage adjustment, for example, may exacerbate shortages because wages tend to adjust over the medium run but may fail to do so quickly enough in periods of high volatility. Across regions, both cyclical and structural factors have been observed over the last few years, to various degrees depending on sector, occupation or skill level.

## Labour demand: Unfilled vacancies in advanced economies

**The numbers of vacancies – a measure of (unfilled) demand for labour – remain elevated after having peaked in 2022 across numerous advanced economies.** After the pandemic, many advanced economies experienced soaring rates of unfilled vacancies even as labour markets recovered and unemployment started to fall (Causa et al. 2022; Duval et al. 2022). Subsequently, vacancies dropped as the economy cooled off but nevertheless the numbers of them remain higher than at any point during the previous decade (figure 3.2). Over 2022 and 2023, most countries started to see the numbers of vacancies slowly fall. However, employers in many high-income – and some upper-middle-income – economies still face difficulties in meeting their demand for workers (Feist, forthcoming).

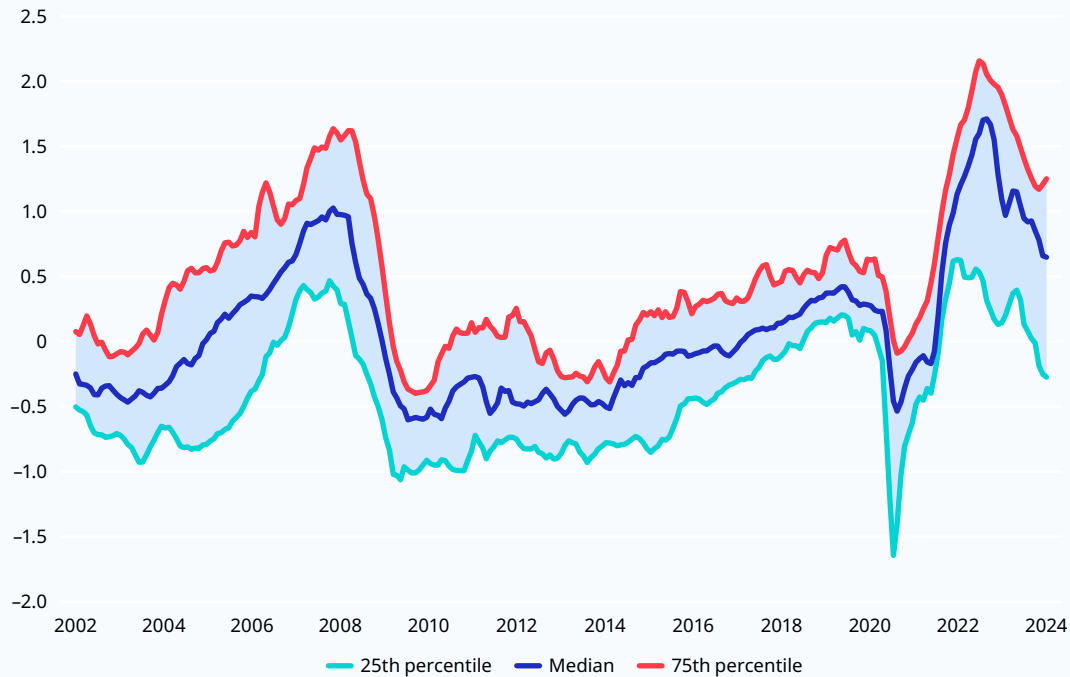
**The degree and nature of labour shortages differ across sectors and occupations.** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries saw vacancies increase in 2021 across all sectors, but most

► **Figure 3.1. Channels of labour market adjustment and resulting imbalances**





► **Figure 3.2. Job vacancies in selected (advanced) economies, January 2002 to September 2023** (standard deviations from mean)



**Note:** The figure shows the median and the 25th and 75th percentiles of the three-month moving average of standardized job vacancy postings across 18 (mostly advanced) economies. Economies included: Austria, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States.

**Source:** *Trading Economics*, calculations by the ILO.

notably in manufacturing, information and communications, and contact-intensive sectors such as accommodation and food services, and healthcare (Causa et al., 2022). The US Chamber of Commerce noted that the most prominent shortages in the United States were in transportation, healthcare and social assistance, and accommodation and food services (Ferguson and Hoover 2022). There are also persistent shortages throughout the European Union in construction, information and communications technology, manufacturing and healthcare (European Commission 2023a). This non-exhaustive list shows that shortages affect both highly productive, high-pay sectors and also low-pay sectors typically characterized by high informality rates, large shares of self-employment and often difficult working conditions.

**Skills and labour shortages are not limited to these high-income economies.** Many economies of different development levels in Asia have been facing a shortage of skilled labour for some time (Sakamoto and Sung 2018). Outward migration to countries with higher wage levels is also contributing to severe shortages in parts of Eastern Europe, considerably clouding the prospects of economic growth and productivity. Survey data show that, globally, 77 per cent of employers report difficulties in hiring candidates with the right skill set, whereas the proportion was only 35 per cent a decade earlier (Manpower Group 2023). At the same time, the pandemic has initiated a shift in work norms – towards remote and hybrid forms – and led many workers to question the acceptability of non-decent employment.

## Local and global consequences of labour and skills shortages

### **Labour shortages can have severe economy-wide consequences in affected countries.**

They not only harm businesses, by hindering growth and the exploitation of a nation's full economic potential and thus decreasing overall income. By raising hiring and labour costs for businesses, shortages can also contribute to higher consumer prices and thus raise the cost of living, which usually disproportionately affects poorer households. High-income countries have experienced low economic growth and a manifest slowdown in productivity growth for some time (ILO 2023a). Labour shortages can further reduce growth prospects and put a brake on the recovery process.

### **Shortages of essential workers in key sectors are set to create supply bottlenecks in affected economies.**

A continuing shortage of health personnel and also workers in transportation and accommodation and food services may worsen access to and the quality of services rendered and products delivered. The pandemic has demonstrated how much economies depend on these types of essential workers (ILO 2023a). Consequences range from long waiting hours to more serious concerns, for example when health needs cannot be met because of a lack of

personnel. Labour shortages in essential services such as healthcare can also worsen working conditions for overstretched staff (Buchan, Catton and Shaffer 2022). Shortages of workers in agricultural firms threaten food security and contribute to rising food prices. A lack of workers in construction can hinder access to affordable housing and hamper necessary infrastructure projects. Export firms may struggle to remain competitive with respect to product quality, innovative capacity and productivity when value chains are disrupted by labour shortages.

### **What's more, a shortage of labour in some economies can create spillover effects in the rest of the world.**

The pandemic has shown the impact of disruptions in labour supply – mainly caused by high infection rates – on global supply chains, producing ripple effects in the global economy (Ivanov and Dolgui 2022). Trade between advanced and developing economies experienced significant turbulence partly because of demand shifts and labour shortages in importing countries, and this led to port congestion (Komaromi, Cerdeiro and Liu 2022). Production bottlenecks have triggered an acceleration of inflation, forcing major central banks to tighten monetary policy rates and so causing adverse effects on global financial conditions. Meanwhile, migration out of countries with lower wages and poor working conditions towards those with shortages of skilled workers has adversely affected the supply of skilled labour to fulfil key roles in source countries.

## ► Labour supply

**The available supply of labour is determined by the number of people in the labour force as well as the number of hours they are willing and available to work.** Adjustments can occur through both factors: either more swiftly through a change in the number of hours worked, or via a somewhat slower adjustment of the number of people at work. During the pandemic these measures decreased at varying rates depending

on policy choices made regarding job retention schemes and the expansion of unemployment benefits. As economies reopened and labour markets recovered, a full and swift recovery in participation rates was considered uncertain. However, data on labour force participation demonstrate that pandemic-induced labour supply reductions have been fully reversed in most ILO subregions (see Chapter 1).



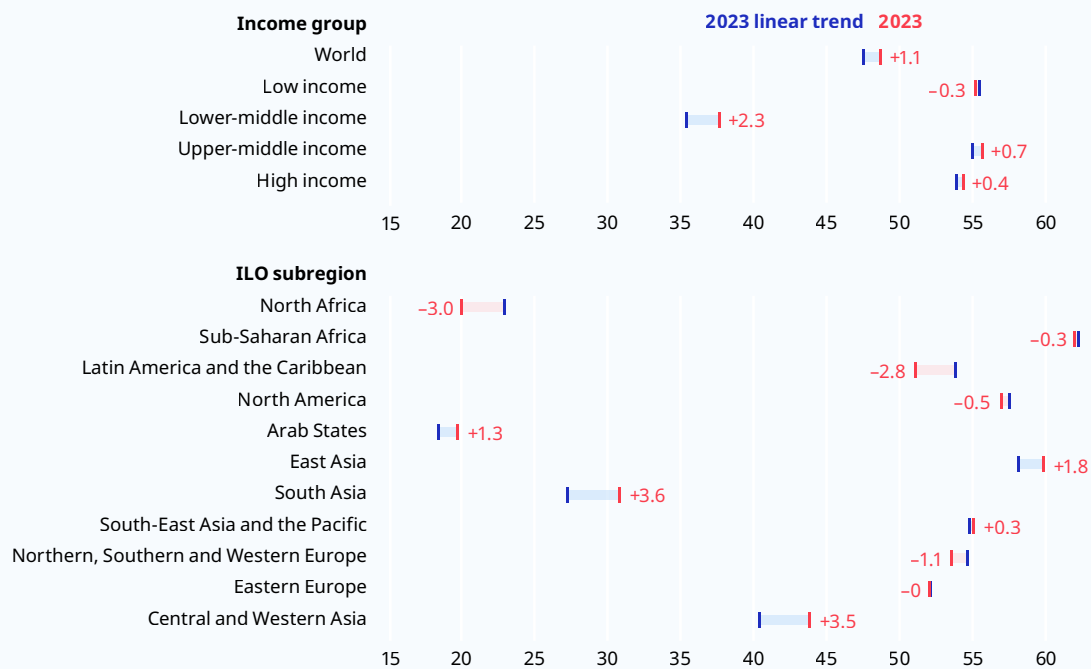
## Labour force participation: Are fewer people working or looking for jobs?

Although overall participation has now surpassed pre-crisis levels in some cases, the impact of the crisis on the global workforce was highly asymmetrical. Women, youth and migrants were especially affected by workplace closures, since they are more likely to work in low-pay and contact-intensive sectors and the informal economy (ILO 2021). Rising unpaid care work added to the obstacles to women's participation (Azcona et al. 2022). Older workers, having significant overlaps with the group of immunocompromised and long-term sick workers, had a strong incentive to opt for teleworking or to leave the workforce altogether. In sum, the pandemic has changed the employment

trajectories of millions of vulnerable workers, reduced incomes and pushed many into poverty (Yonzan et al. 2022). If participation rates had remained lower than had been projected before the pandemic, then shortages and worsened labour market outcomes could have been expected to ensue in the long run. But comparison of actual participation rates of women and youth relative to their pre-crisis long-term trends suggests that only a few pockets of "missing workers" persist (see figures 3.3. and 3.4).

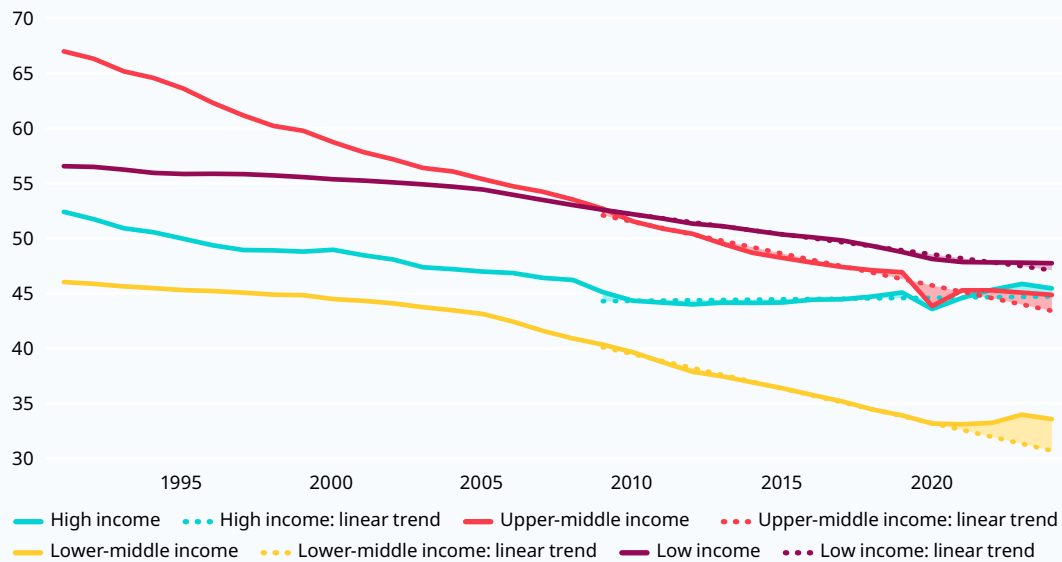
**Women's labour force participation in 2023 was on or slightly above its long-term linear trend across all country income groups.** Female participation was notably below the pre-pandemic linear trend in Africa – especially North Africa – and Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> In Northern, Southern and Western Europe and North America,

► **Figure 3.3. Female labour force participation rates compared with the pre-pandemic historical trend (deviation from trend in percentage points)**



Source: ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

1 In Latin America and the Caribbean, female labour force participation has recovered to its pre-pandemic level while that of men remains slightly below this benchmark (see Chapter 2). Female participation has been stagnating for almost two decades after experiencing steady increments throughout the 1990s, hence the slightly positive linear long-term trend.

► **Figure 3.4. Youth labour force participation (percentages)**

Source: ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

too, the participation rate was lower than expected and could have contributed to the observed labour shortages. In contrast, women's participation was *higher* than predicted by the long-term linear trend in the Arab States and most parts of Asia.<sup>2</sup> Despite these partial improvements, the gap between male and female participation rates remains high across the globe, and the pandemic has reversed some of the convergence achieved before 2020.

**Youth participation rates across income groups have not returned to their decade-long pre-pandemic downward trend. They have stabilized after the initial negative impact of the pandemic.** Youth labour force participation is usually more cyclical than that of other age groups, since young workers tend to leave or get pushed out of the labour market – for inactivity or education – when economic conditions worsen.<sup>3</sup>

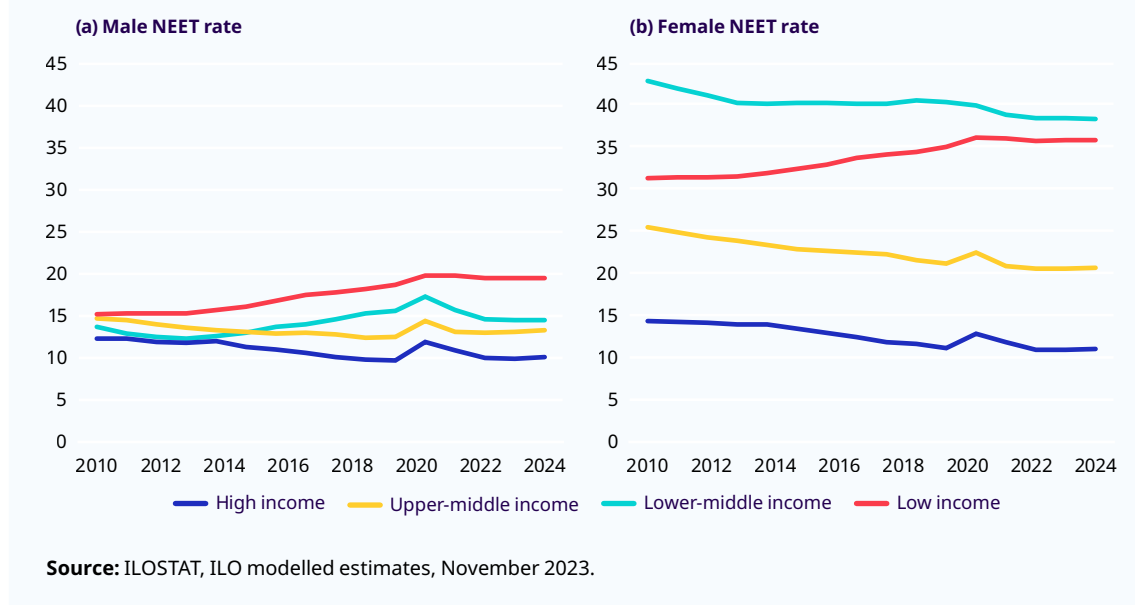
This happened during the pandemic especially in high-income and upper-middle-income countries (figure 3.4). In the subsequent recovery, young people have joined the labour force at higher-than-expected rates. The broad recovery of participation rates suggests that additional factors must play a role in driving current shortages.

**At the same time, the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) remains elevated globally.** In 2020, the number of NEET had risen by 15 million since 2019, to more than 285 million worldwide. In 2022, it was higher than before the health crisis in both absolute and relative terms (ILO 2023b). Figure 3.5 shows that in 2023 the male NEET rate remained particularly high in low-income countries. Young women are frequently NEET in low-income and lower-middle-income countries, a circumstance

2 In Asia, where participation rates are following a long-term downward trend, the positive sign of the depicted deviation from trend implies that female participation fell more slowly than predicted. This does not necessarily imply good quality of employment, since women's employment is often lower paid and less secure than that of men (Dasgupta and Verick 2016). In the Arab States, women's participation increased mainly because Saudi women now participate at a higher rate owing to legislative changes in recent years (Alaref and Koettl 2021).

3 Given this higher variability of youth labour force participation, the deviation from the linear trend may be better attributed to cyclical movements than to structural conditions.

► **Figure 3.5. Youth NEET, by sex and income group** (percentages of the population aged 15 to 24)



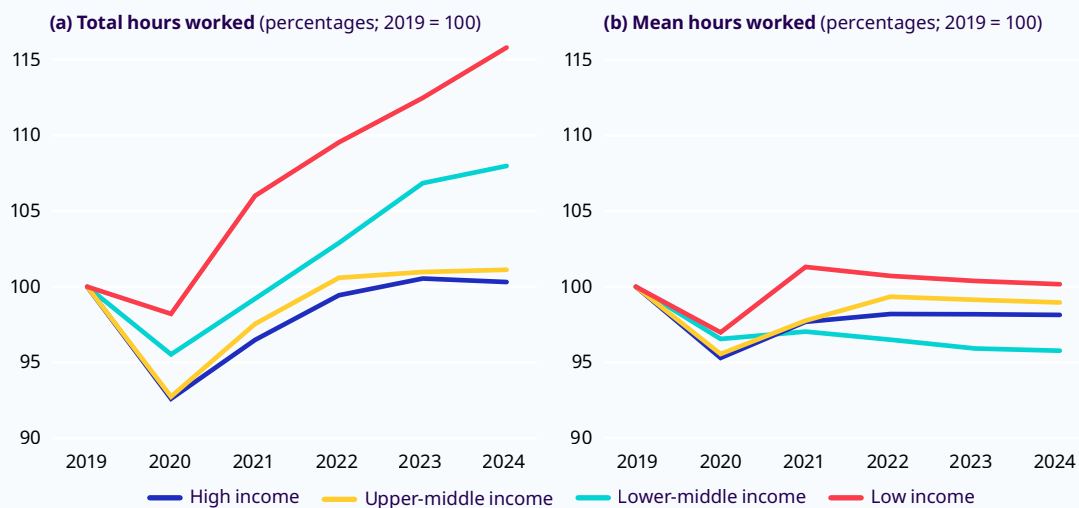
that reduces their chances of subsequent gainful and decent employment. The prevalence of NEET among rural youth is also a cause of concern (ILO 2022a). In high-income and upper-middle-income economies, NEET rates were on a downward path until 2019, but this gradual improvement did not continue after the pandemic. Through the lens of labour and skills shortages across the world, this trend reversal could lead to further divergence between the competencies of individuals in need of decent work and those sought after by employers to contribute to sustainable growth.

## Hours worked: Mean and total hours have diverged

**Total hours worked increased across all country income groups, driven by strong employment growth throughout the recovery.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, there was an increasing divergence between total and mean hours worked.** Mean

weekly hours per worker were lower in 2023 than in 2019 across all income groups except low-income countries, where they were slightly higher. The size of the relative decrease in mean hours ranges from under 1 per cent in upper-middle-income countries to more than 2 per cent in high-income and lower-middle-income countries. Across all income groups the development of total and mean hours has diverged to different degrees (see figure 3.6). This means that the labour force is being utilized less intensely. These reductions may accord with workers' desired working time and may even enhance well-being, but they do mean that less of their time is available to employers who need more labour. Possible reasons for these reductions in hours per worker include increases in part-time employment because of care duties or health reasons, and employers' decisions to retain their workforce during an economic downturn because of optimistic expectations about the future and/or potential barriers to and costs of rehiring staff in the future (Arce et al. 2023, Colijn 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Hours worked typically increase again during expansions, as they did after the pandemic. Hours had started to recover at the beginning of 2022 but experienced headwinds owing to health restrictions in China and ensuing supply chain disruptions, and further suffered from the global consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The recovery in total hours worked was very uneven across country income groups: high-income and upper-middle-income countries, in the main, met the pre-pandemic 2019 benchmark in 2022 whereas the labour market recoveries of lower-middle-income and low-income countries experienced more difficulties (ILO 2022d).

► **Figure 3.6. Total hours versus mean hours actually worked per employed person**

**Note:** These indicators are based on the 13th ICLS definition. They refer to mean weekly hours actually worked per employed person and total weekly hours actually worked by employed persons in their main job. More information can be found in the ILO Modelled Estimates (ILOEST) database description (<https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/ilo-modelled-estimates/>).

**Source:** ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

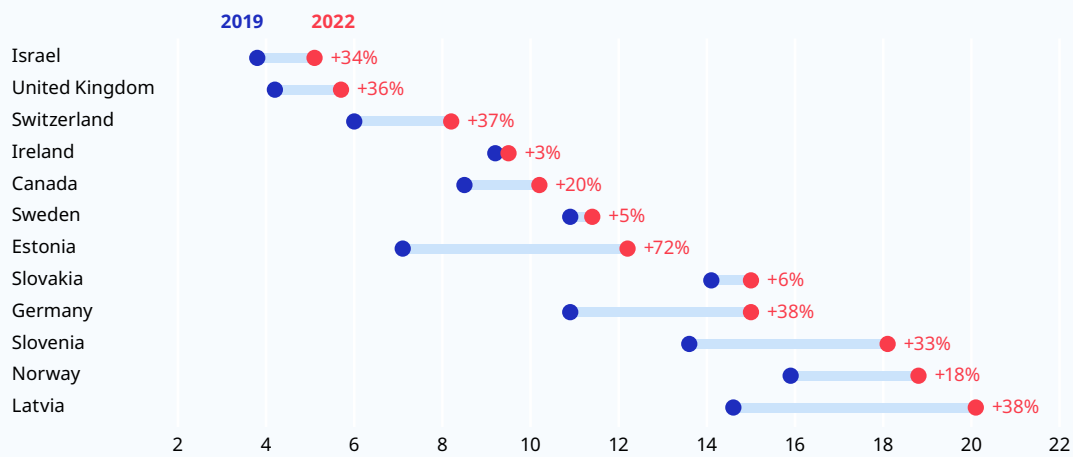
**Working hours have evolved differently across sectors and occupations.** In high-income countries with available data, sectors with particularly strong relative decreases in mean hours include accommodation and food services, and transportation and storage, closely followed by information and communications, real estate, and professional, scientific and technical activities. The fact that mean hours decreased more in some sectors than in others may stem from several causes. First, workforce composition differs between sectors with respect to age, gender, and part-time work. Accommodation and food services, for example, typically employ disproportionately more women and part-timers. Second, firms differ with respect to hiring dynamics and their propensities to hold on to labour, depending on firm characteristics such as size and profitability; and labour retention typically reduces employees' working hours (Bäurle, Lein and Steiner 2021; Génin and Scott 2022).

**The sectoral differences between the growth rates of total and mean hours can give a hint of the types of shortages prevailing in each sector.** In shortage sectors where both total hours and

mean hours have dropped, shortages are probably more driven by limitations of labour supply. In sectors where total hours have increased but mean hours have dropped, shortages tend to be more demand driven. The latter is the case, for example, in sectors with significant expansion demand such as information and communications technology and healthcare (European Commission 2023a). The former is mainly observed in essential and low-pay sectors, suggesting that poor working conditions may trigger shortages in these sectors.

**The share of part-time workers has increased in many high-income economies.** Part of the decrease in mean hours worked may owe to compositional effects as the share of part-timers has increased. Some of them are in involuntary part-time work and, given the right circumstances, would be willing to work more. The precise circumstances heavily depend on the national context and the particular factors that limit a return to full-time employment. Part-time employment is distinctly more prevalent among women than men; and, since it is especially frequent among women with children, it is intricately linked to national education

► **Figure 3.7. Number of sick days per worker and year and percentage increase, 2019–22**



**Note:** The definition of sick leave depends on the source. Data for Israel, Estonia and Canada refer to self-reported absence because of illness. Swiss data refer to absence owing to sickness or accident and are based on an 8-hour working day. UK data are based on a 7.5-hour working day.

**Sources:** OECD, Institute for Employment Research (IAB) (Germany), Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Office for National Statistics (United Kingdom).

systems and childcare provision.<sup>5</sup> Other groups in part-time employment include older workers in partial retirement and people with disabilities that prevent them working full-time.

**Another possible reason for decreases in mean working hours is deteriorated health.** This may be attributable to an ageing population but could also be driven by higher numbers of sick days owing to COVID-19 infection and/or by an increasing number of people suffering long-term sickness. Long COVID, affecting around 20 per cent of those infected by the virus, according to the World Health Organization, may be having a significant impact on activity measures of labour markets.<sup>6</sup> Estimates for the United States indicate that, in addition to individuals affected by long COVID who left the labour force – between 280,000 and 680,000 persons – those similarly affected who continued to work reduced their working hours by 2–3 per cent, corresponding to 20,000–39,000 full-time equivalents (Sheiner

and Salwati 2022). Psychosocial factors after the pandemic, such as burnout and stress, have also played a role, particularly for workers in the health and hospitality sectors (Liu-Lastres, Wen and Huang 2023; WHO 2022). The number of sick days remains significantly higher than in 2019 (see figure 3.7); some observers see this as one of the drivers of labour shortages in Europe (Colijn 2023).

## Do labour markets fail to adjust?

**Wages and labour mobility are important channels in the adjustment of labour markets (see figure 3.1). Both these channels may have lost efficiency in recent years. Wages are adjusting slowly and rising living costs are swallowing small gains.** Aggregate wages tend to be sticky in the short run. They typically adjust slowly to changing economic conditions; the surge in vacancies after the pandemic did not produce any

5 See data on childcare gaps in Germany or the United States: <https://www.laendermonitor.de/de/vergleich-bundeslaender-daten/kinder-und-eltern/fokus-u3/betreuungsquote-und-betreuungswunsch-2> and <https://childcaregap.org/>. See ILO and Asian Development Bank (2023) on similar needs in Asia and the Pacific.

6 <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/post-covid-19-condition>.

meaningful wage growth in affected countries. Data on wage growth in the United States show that by 2021 wages had started to rise in sectors more strongly affected by labour shortages, especially the hospitality sector (Duval et al. 2022). In the eurozone, wage growth picked up in 2022 in accommodation and food services, transport and trade (Bodnár et al. 2022). Beyond this limited number of sectors, wage growth has been subdued. Although these wage increases may have had some potential to counter labour shortages by increasing the numbers of candidates for jobs, the growing cost of living has swallowed much of the nominal wage gains. Following strong fiscal and monetary support to contain the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and following commodity price surges arising from geopolitical tensions, global inflation in 2022 rose to levels not seen in decades (IMF 2023). Price hikes, which first affected more energy-intensive sectors, have subsequently worked their way through the rest of the economy. Real incomes have suffered in consequence, the lower echelons of the income distribution being disproportionately affected (ILO 2022b). Real wages across OECD countries decreased in 2023 (OECD 2023a).

**After the pandemic, workers in advanced economies stayed away from occupations with subpar working conditions.** Quit rates rose strongly in 2021 compared with 2019 and, at least in the United States, they rose faster in low-pay sectors (Causa et al. 2022; Ferguson and Hoover 2022). Low-pay occupations across the globe were heavily affected by employment losses, and employers struggled to hire back workers during the recovery. This contributed to persistent labour shortages: in the United States and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland the highest proportional rises in vacancies were observed for jobs with lower pay, low skills or precarious working conditions (for example, truck drivers, cleaners, accommodation and food industry workers, warehouse workers) (Pizzinelli and Shibata 2023). In the European Union, too, labour shortages have increased more in sectors with lower pay and poorer job quality.<sup>7</sup> These same sectors also have higher shares of young, poorer-educated and migrant workers (Zwysen 2023). Shortages tend to be worse in sectors with

higher gender segregation, highlighting the need to improve inclusivity and to diversify sectoral workforces (European Commission 2023a). Work quality factors that worsen labour shortages also include gender-based discrimination and disparities in remuneration between men and women for work of equal value, for example in the tourism sector (ILO 2022c).

**Some of the imbalances could probably be dissolved by addressing low take-home pay and strenuous working conditions.** The ability to pay higher wages and improve working conditions is also tied to firm performance. More profitable firms tend to perform better with respect to employee well-being (De Neve, Kaats and Ward 2023). This implies, vice versa, that firms with worse working conditions tend to be the less profitable ones. To the extent that there is a correlation between the share of small and very small firms, informality, low profitability and low pay in certain sectors, worsening working conditions have contributed to increases in shortages owing to the unwillingness of workers to accept available jobs.

**Labour mobility may have also suffered because firms are reluctant to let go of workers.** Besides lowering the mean hours worked, this practice – dubbed “labour hoarding” – prevents employees from climbing the job ladder through job switching. Across the eurozone, for instance, around 10 per cent of firms in the industry and services sectors retained labour throughout 2022. In the retail sector the share of labour-retaining firms was about 20 per cent, slightly more than in the construction sector (15 per cent of firms by the end of 2022). After peaking in 2020, owing to job retention schemes, this indicator remains higher than before the pandemic, especially in retail and the industry sector (European Commission 2023b). Such job retention help firms maintain firm-specific human capital in the short run but, when continued for too long, can have lasting effects on labour supply and productivity growth, by discouraging workers from switching from low-productivity to potentially better-matching jobs.

**Job mobility is decreasing partly because of an increasing proportion of older workers, especially in high-income and upper-middle-income economies.** Between 2000 and 2022, the

<sup>7</sup> Measures of job quality comprise the incidence of: involuntary part-time and temporary contracts; working on evenings, nights, weekends and shifts; having no control over the order of work; working under high pressure; and the requirement of flexibility.



share of workers aged 55 or more in the labour force increased from 13 to 22.5 per cent in high-income countries and almost doubled from 9.8 to 17.8 per cent in upper-middle-income countries. In contrast, the share of older workers slightly decreased from 11.5 to 11 per cent in low-income countries and saw only a minor increase from 11.4 to 14.4 per cent in lower-middle-income countries. Participation rates among older workers tend today to be higher than in previous generations, a testament to improved health and longevity (Harasty and Ostermeier 2020). They are also partly driven by higher female participation among today's older workers than in former cohorts. However, older workers' job mobility differs from younger workers': the likelihood of moving from one job to another (the job-to-job transition rate) decreases with age whereas the average job tenure increases (Bosler and Petrosky-Nadeau 2016).<sup>8</sup> Although frequent job switching can be associated with job instability among younger workers, it also correlates with wage increases and more efficient allocation of workers to more productive jobs that match their skill set (Haltiwanger, Hyatt and McEntarfer 2018; Moscarini and Postel-Vinay 2018). Consequently, a larger share of workers aged 55 or more is likely to be associated with lower wage growth, lower productivity growth and generally lower mobility of workers. A lower number of workers willing to switch jobs also translates into a smaller number of potential candidates for firms that are hiring.

**Economic segments with low productivity seem to maintain a high demand for labour.**

This suggests a link between low productivity and labour shortages which arises from resource misallocation. Several of the sectors experiencing shortages typically have low productivity levels, including construction, accommodation and food services, and logistics. In theory, the opportunity costs of investment should lead to selective allocation of financial resources to highly productive and growing firms. However, in practice, there may have been inefficiently high and unsustainable allocation of funds to low-productivity firms in recent years, owing to high levels of uncertainty, untargeted fiscal support measures during the pandemic, and accommodative monetary

policies. Untargeted support measures, which were necessary to absorb the initial shock of the pandemic, have also enabled unviable firms to stay in business, increasing the number of so-called "zombie firms" (Albuquerque and Iyer 2023). This has distorted sectoral reallocation of capital and labour. The misallocation of resources may reduce the responsiveness of employment growth to firm productivity and help to "trap" labour in low-productivity firms (Andrews and Hansell 2021; Hambur and Andrews, 2023). Targeted investments in growing, high-productivity areas could result in higher economic output and increase employment opportunities. This, in turn, would incentivize workers to acquire the necessary skills to move into expanding, better-paying sectors. Conversely, the availability of the skilled workforce required for a specific sectoral activity will spur investment in that sector. Inefficient allocation of resources thus not only fuels low productivity growth; unsustainable investment also hinders the future-oriented development of the workforce and can worsen labour shortages at the higher end of the productivity distribution.

**Productivity growth has been low in advanced economies and has been concentrated among a limited number of firms** (ILO 2023a).

Overall low productivity growth can lead to slowing wage growth. An environment of low or stagnating wage growth in turn reduces workers' incentive to seek new job opportunities to improve their salary. A small number of highly productive firms tend to pay higher wages than the larger group of lower-productivity firms, a situation that exacerbates wage dispersion and inequality. Low job mobility among workers further deepens these disparities (Criscuolo et al. 2021).

**Housing barriers are another factor suppressing job mobility.**

When and where housing becomes increasingly expensive, or is subject to uncertainty or bureaucratic restrictions, job mobility is reduced (Cannari, Nucci and Sestito 2000; Liu, Huang and Albitar 2023). Owing to monetary policy measures since 2022 to mitigate inflation, the borrowing cost of money has increased, further restricting access to ownership and increasing economic uncertainty. House prices have started to fall in many advanced economies, adding to uncertainty for

<sup>8</sup> This observation is also visible in data, published by Eurostat, on job-to-job transition probabilities by age group: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour\\_market\\_flow\\_statistics\\_in\\_the\\_EU#Labour\\_market\\_flows:\\_transition\\_probabilities](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Labour_market_flow_statistics_in_the_EU#Labour_market_flows:_transition_probabilities).

homeowners (OECD 2023b). The ensuing increase in demand for rentals is causing rising prices for new rentals, which is exacerbating labour shortages because workers are less likely to switch jobs if the new job will require a relocation.

**Some of the new work methods expatiated during the pandemic – including remote work and flexible working hours – have the potential to leverage unused resources and increase labour supply in certain occupations.**

By allowing regular teleworking, employers can extend their candidate pool, save office space and reduce turnover (Silver 2023). Survey data from the United Kingdom show that almost a third of business leaders have resorted to hiring purely remote workers because of labour shortages (Ruparel and Fox 2023). For workers, remote employment has demonstrated the advantages of reducing commuting time, increasing flexibility and enabling non-mobile workers to participate in paid employment. At the same time, remote work can negatively affect work–life balance by creating conflicts between home and work tasks, increase isolation and shift the burden of providing a workspace on to the worker (Shirmohammadi, Au and Beigi 2022).

## Labour shortages might become entrenched

**Population ageing will continue to decrease labour supply in high-income countries.**

Employers will face an increasingly smaller pool of talent and will have to adjust their work processes to an older workforce with different demands and capabilities from younger cohorts (for an overview, see ILO 2023a, 105). Demographic change is also having adverse effects on enrolment in higher education, employment, and the economy at large. This may hamper human capital accumulation in the long run and thus economic growth prospects (Hetrick et al. 2021).

**In contrast, many low- and middle-income countries will experience a demographic transition only after 2030.**

Faced with continuous population growth that will bring millions of new entrants on to the labour market over the next few years, countries in Africa and parts of Asia and the Pacific are continuing to experience a shortage of jobs

rather than a shortage of labour. These global imbalances will challenge policymakers to design sensible migration policies and skilling initiatives to support and develop local labour markets with growing populations while addressing the most pressing labour and skills shortages and maintaining social cohesion in labour markets with a shrinking workforce. To do so will require, among other things, a more accurate forecast of labour demand by occupations and sectors in destination countries, and a strengthened education and training system in countries with excess labour resources.

**Population ageing is changing the consumption patterns in advanced economies.**

First, saving and spending behaviour changes as societies grow older: lower birth rates and a larger proportion of people in old age tend to have the effect of increasing savings and decreasing consumption (Bloom, Canning and Graham 2003). Second, the need for healthcare and other personal services increases. Especially in the health sector, the current labour shortages will thus likely worsen in advanced economies if not swiftly addressed by policymakers – a policy need that may be especially challenging in countries with limited fiscal space (Dewan, Ernst and Gravel 2021).

**The climate crisis and green transition are set to challenge attitudes to skills development.**

As the climate crisis becomes more urgent, governments around the world are being forced to ensure a transition away from combustible and towards renewable energy sources. The related technological shifts will lead to changing skills needs and the risk of further skills shortages. A just transition will therefore require integrated policies and significant adaptive capacity and flexibility from workers, employers and governments (ILO 2022d). New and evolving skills requirements to serve new technologies may require workers to undergo significant career changes and frequent training measures. For employers, on the other hand, fast-paced change in an environment of labour and skills shortages also means that, across sectors, skills requirements could become more important than degree requirements (Fuller, Langer and Sigelman 2022). The reduction of such barriers could make labour markets more inclusive for individuals with non-standard education and for older workers (Butrica and Mudrazija 2022).



## ► Concluding remarks: Priorities for action

**In fast-ageing countries, policymakers need to support the participation of groups with weak labour market attachment, notably youth, women and older workers.** Policies regarding public childcare, second-earner tax provisions, and early retirement are known to affect labour supply. A favourable environment for parents' participation in the labour market could enhance financial independence, improve lifetime earnings and help alleviate labour shortages. For those older workers who are willing and physically and mentally able to continue working, the removal of barriers – financial and otherwise – could strengthen their labour market attachment. Youth employment policies should aim to offer relevant training and improve young people's labour market attachment. Finally, housing policies to increase people's geographical mobility could reduce spatial and skills mismatch.

**Investment and skills policies need to raise productivity and potential growth and facilitate more productive use of technological progress.** The currently observed increases in investment in many advanced and some developing countries seem to favour low-productive services and construction. Instead, integrated strategies are needed to improve productivity through comprehensive skills policies; and supporting the transitions of workers to new job opportunities in high-productive sectors would help to alleviate shortages. Many services require physical presence, including in transportation, construction and healthcare. If shortages remain pressing, some of the work can be automated, which will require public investment in infrastructure and skills. For example, new technologies such as 3D printing, robotics, drones and the internet of things – collectively known as “Construction 4.0” – are already revolutionizing the construction sector (El Jazzer et al. 2021). Research shows that productivity growth correlates negatively with unemployment in the long run and that there is little evidence of negative net employment resulting from technological change – refuting the notion of technological unemployment (Chen and Semmler 2018; Hötte, Somers and Theodorakopoulos 2023).

In the health sector as well, the deployment of new technologies – for example, telemedicine, wearable sensors and AI-based pattern recognition – can be of great value to support healthcare personnel, whether in diagnostics or care activities.

**Improvements in sectors and occupations with low pay and difficult working conditions may motivate workers who left to come back.** Data show that labour shortages are more dire and more difficult to relieve in sectors with challenging working conditions; quit rates are particularly high in these sectors. Better pay, better recognition and better working conditions could turn around this trend.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, sectors with labour shortages tend to be more segregated with respect to gender: at the lower end of the pay scale, sectors tend to be more female dominated (European Commission 2023a). Addressing such imbalances could improve the possibilities for employers to fill their open positions, while broadening the opportunities for individual workers and improving their labour market outcomes.

**Ensuring that internationally mobile workers get matched to adequate jobs could alleviate some of the shortages.** Some jobs in high-income countries might be filled through international migration, which would need to be carefully evaluated against local skills needs and the skills initiatives in countries of origin (World Bank 2023). Policies should be built upon a comprehensive data basis of projected labour and skills demand – over the short, medium and long run – in countries experiencing shortages. Regularized migration channels based on bilateral skills partnerships could improve the working and living conditions of migrants in receiving countries (see box 3.1). Current legal frameworks and barriers in diploma recognition systems in receiving countries do not allow migrants to fully participate in the formal labour market, and this obstructs their access to decent work.

**None of the structural headwinds facing labour market adjustment is likely to disappear over the short term, which makes it important that**

<sup>9</sup> Certain sectors that struggle with working conditions, such as healthcare and education, are tied to the available fiscal space in the specific national context because they are to a large extent publicly funded.

► **Box 3.1. Dual-track global skills partnerships**

To tackle sectoral labour shortages, some advanced economies have piloted dual-track global skill partnerships (GSPs). Dual-track GSPs are bilateral agreements in which a destination country invests in skills training in an origin country. The training occurs in two tracks: a “home” track for those who stay in their country of origin and an “away” track for those aspiring to migrate. The goal is to fill specific labour gaps in advanced economies while offering a structured pathway for migration. In addition, these programmes promote skills development in the origin countries’ workforce, creating a win-win-win scenario for destination countries, origin countries, and trainees (Clemens, Dempster and Gough 2019).

One example of dual-track GSPs is the establishment of the Heimerer Institute in Pristina, Kosovo (Clemens, Dempster and Gough 2019; Clemens 2015). In 2018, 60 per cent of the institute’s 960 nursing students were on the “away” track, which entailed German-language training and subsequent access to the German labour market. As proposed by Clemens (2015) and in accordance with the ILO guidelines for fair recruitment (ILO 2019), in the Heimerer programme the employers in destination countries pay the language course fee and ensure immediate labour market integration and skills matching; the trainees pay the training fee, so the total cost to the trainees is comparable to the cost of alternative, undocumented ways of migrating (Clemens, Dempster and Gough 2019). Efforts to align training programmes with labour demand in origin countries are managed by governmental actors such as public employment services or by private recruitment agencies and international cooperation agencies (ICAs), like the German Development Corporation (GIZ), that seek to ensure that the training is both relevant and sustainable (Clemens, Dempster and Gough 2019). Such separation of tasks allows employers to focus on skill requirements while governmental actors and ICAs ensure the sustainability of migration and the quality and recognition of training.

The implementation of dual-track GSPs, and GSPs in general, brings its own set of challenges. Previous projects have demonstrated frictions in the allocation of stakeholder responsibilities, lack of satisfying training results, and problems of scalability (Schneider 2023). One project, led by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Asklepios Medical Group, was halted when the trainees opted out in reaction to the financial conditions imposed (Angenendt 2014). The charging of recruitment costs to workers is forbidden in most countries; only Cambodia, as of 2020, included such pre-departure training in the legal definition of recruitment costs (ILO 2020). Further insights emerge from a Jamaican–Canadian project in which Jamaican students were unable to fulfil later practical requirements, which led to the termination of the agreement by the Canadian accreditation institution (Reid 2011). Moreover, there is a lack of comparative, project-overarching evaluations (Schneider 2023). One successful GSP, the German “Triple Win” project, launched in 2013, shows the retention of 84.4 per cent and satisfaction of 95.4 per cent of migrants (GIZ 2021).

**governments and social partners engage in supplemental efforts to address these challenges.**

To address structural labour market and skills shortages will require efforts to improve labour market attachment and upskilling, especially for vulnerable groups. More fundamentally, policies to improve productivity growth and working conditions need to be prioritized. Although

private expenditure on innovation has reached a historic high, public-sector austerity has led to underinvestment in infrastructure and educational systems. New challenges around rising market concentration and ecological sustainability also need to be addressed, for instance through tighter competition policies and more active mission-oriented public science and innovation systems.

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# Appendices

## ► Appendix A. Groupings of countries and areas by region and income level

Africa	Americas	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and Central Asia
<b>North Africa</b> Algeria Egypt Libya Morocco Sudan Tunisia Western Sahara  <b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b> Angola Benin Botswana Burkina Faso Burundi Cabo Verde Cameroon Central African Republic Chad Comoros Congo Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Equatorial Guinea Eritrea Eswatini Ethiopia Gabon Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Kenya Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi Mali Mauritania Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Niger Nigeria Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Sierra Leone Somalia South Africa South Sudan Togo Uganda United Republic of Tanzania Zambia Zimbabwe	<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b> Argentina Bahamas Barbados Belize Bolivia (Plurinational State of) Brazil Chile Colombia Costa Rica Cuba Dominican Republic Ecuador El Salvador Guatemala Guyana Haiti Honduras Jamaica Mexico Nicaragua Panama Paraguay Peru Puerto Rico Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Suriname Trinidad and Tobago United States Virgin Islands Uruguay Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)  <b>North America</b> Canada United States  <b>Arab States</b> Bahrain Iraq Jordan Kuwait Lebanon Occupied Palestinian Territory Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia Syrian Arab Republic United Arab Emirates Yemen	<b>East Asia</b> China Democratic People's Republic of Korea Hong Kong, China Japan Macau, China Mongolia Republic of Korea Taiwan, China  <b>South-East Asia</b> Brunei Darussalam Cambodia Indonesia Lao People's Democratic Republic Malaysia Myanmar Philippines Singapore Thailand Timor-Leste Viet Nam  <b>The Pacific</b> Australia Fiji French Polynesia Guam New Caledonia New Zealand Papua New Guinea Samoa Solomon Islands Tonga Vanuatu  <b>South Asia</b> Afghanistan Bangladesh Bhutan India Iran (Islamic Republic of) Maldives Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka	<b>Northern, Southern and Western Europe</b> Albania Austria Belgium Bosnia and Herzegovina Channel Islands Croatia Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Iceland Ireland Italy Latvia Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Montenegro Netherlands North Macedonia Norway Portugal Serbia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland United Kingdom  <b>Eastern Europe</b> Belarus Bulgaria Czechia Hungary Poland Republic of Moldova Romania Russian Federation Slovakia Ukraine  <b>Central and Western Asia</b> Armenia Azerbaijan Cyprus Georgia Israel Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Türkiye Turkmenistan Uzbekistan

High-income	Upper-middle-income	Lower-middle-income	Low-income
High-income	Upper-middle-income	Lower-middle-income	Low-income
Australia	Albania	Algeria	Afghanistan
Austria	Argentina	Angola	Burkina Faso
Bahamas	Armenia	Bangladesh	Burundi
Bahrain	Azerbaijan	Benin	Central African Republic
Barbados	Belarus	Bhutan	Chad
Belgium	Belize	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Brunei Darussalam	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cabo Verde	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Canada	Botswana	Cambodia	Eritrea
Channel Islands	Brazil	Cameroon	Ethiopia
Chile	Bulgaria	Comoros	Gambia
Croatia	China	Congo	Guinea-Bissau
Cyprus	Colombia	Côte d'Ivoire	Liberia
Czechia	Costa Rica	Djibouti	Madagascar
Denmark	Cuba	Egypt	Malawi
Estonia	Dominican Republic	Eswatini	Mali
Finland	Ecuador	Ghana	Mozambique
France	El Salvador	Guinea	Niger
French Polynesia	Equatorial Guinea	Haiti	Rwanda
Germany	Fiji	Honduras	Sierra Leone
Greece	Gabon	India	Somalia
Guam	Georgia	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	South Sudan
Guyana	Guatemala	Jordan	Sudan
Hong Kong, China	Indonesia	Kenya	Syrian Arab Republic
Hungary	Iraq	Kyrgyzstan	Togo
Iceland	Jamaica	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Uganda
Ireland	Kazakhstan	Lebanon	Yemen
Israel	Libya	Lesotho	
Italy	Malaysia	Mauritania	
Japan	Maldives	Mongolia	
Kuwait	Mauritius	Morocco	
Latvia	Mexico	Myanmar	
Lithuania	Montenegro	Nepal	
Luxembourg	Namibia	Nicaragua	
Macau, China	North Macedonia	Nigeria	
Malta	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Pakistan	
Netherlands	Paraguay	Papua New Guinea	
New Caledonia	Peru	Philippines	
New Zealand	Republic of Moldova	Samoa	
Norway	Russian Federation	Sao Tome and Principe	
Oman	Saint Lucia	Senegal	
Panama	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Solomon Islands	
Poland	Serbia	Sri Lanka	
Portugal	South Africa	Tajikistan	
Puerto Rico	Suriname	Timor-Leste	
Qatar	Thailand	Tunisia	
Republic of Korea	Tonga	Ukraine	
Romania	Türkiye	United Republic of Tanzania	
Saudi Arabia	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	
Singapore	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Vanuatu	
Slovakia		Viet Nam	
Slovenia		Western Sahara	
Spain		Zambia	
Sweden		Zimbabwe	
Switzerland			
Taiwan, China			
Trinidad and Tobago			
United Arab Emirates			
United Kingdom			
United States			
United States Virgin Islands			
Uruguay			



## ► Appendix B. ILO modelled estimates

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The approach used to derive the labour market indicators featuring in this report consists of three phases: (a) data evaluation and collection, (b) estimation of historical values of indicators and (c) forecasting the last year's and future values.

The first phase entails the work of labour market information specialists from the ILO Department of Statistics, who, in cooperation with the Research Department, evaluate existing country-reported data and select only those observations deemed sufficiently comparable across countries. It is important to note that this process may entail large revisions from one year to the next, owing to, among other things, frequent revisions of historical micro labour market data. The estimates are derived for 189 countries and territories, disaggregated by sex and age as appropriate.

In the second phase, the wealth of information obtained in the first phase is used as a basis to estimate a series of models that establish statistical relationships between observed labour market indicators and explanatory variables. These relationships are used to impute missing observations

and thus to estimate a complete historical series of labour market indicators. The rigour of the estimates is ensured by employing advanced statistical techniques such as cross-validation and model averaging.

These historical series are finally used in the forecasting phase, where we project the values of selected indicators for the 2023–25 period. The models used for projection are similar in nature to the ones used in the estimation of historical values. They, too, rely on advanced cross-validation and model selection techniques to guarantee robustness. They differ mainly in that they include standard time series elements, such as error correction terms to model the impact of trends.

A general description of the ILO modelled estimates, including FAQs, is available at <https://ilostat.ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/ilo-modelled-estimates/>. Specific technical explanations of the methodology behind the estimates and projections contained in this report may be found at <https://www.ilo.org/ilostat-files/Documents/TEM.pdf>.

## ► Appendix C. Tables of labour market indicators by regional groups

### Table C1. World

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Labour force</b>	Total	Millions	2751.5	3159.3	3481.6	3449.2	3525.7	3594.5	3668.1	3696.7	3737.4
	Women	Millions	1091.4	1248.8	1384.5	1366.6	1405.1	1430.7	1472.4	1477.1	1490.1
	Men	Millions	1660.1	1910.5	2097.1	2082.5	2120.5	2163.8	2195.7	2219.6	2247.3
	Youth	Millions	558.8	557.6	495.4	478.7	487.3	492.5	501.2	502.0	506.4
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	Total	Per cent	64.2	62.0	60.5	59.2	59.8	60.3	60.8	60.5	60.4
	Women	Per cent	50.6	48.9	48.0	46.8	47.6	47.9	48.7	48.2	48.0
	Men	Per cent	77.9	75.3	73.1	71.7	72.2	72.9	73.0	72.9	72.9
	Youth	Per cent	51.3	45.6	40.9	39.3	39.8	40.0	40.3	40.0	40.0
<b>Employment</b>	Total	Millions	2582.9	2957.8	3287.3	3221.8	3312.3	3404.7	3479.5	3505.9	3544.8
	Women	Millions	1023.0	1168.5	1306.1	1276.6	1318.1	1351.6	1394.5	1398.6	1410.7
	Men	Millions	1559.9	1789.3	1981.2	1945.2	1994.2	2053.2	2085.0	2107.3	2134.0
	Youth	Millions	491.3	483.5	426.8	403.7	416.7	427.0	434.6	434.3	437.5
<b>Employment-to-population ratio</b>	Total	Per cent	60.2	58.1	57.1	55.3	56.2	57.1	57.7	57.4	57.3
	Women	Per cent	47.4	45.7	45.3	43.7	44.6	45.2	46.1	45.6	45.5
	Men	Per cent	73.2	70.6	69.1	67.0	67.9	69.1	69.4	69.2	69.2
	Youth	Per cent	45.1	39.6	35.2	33.2	34.1	34.7	35.0	34.6	34.6
<b>Unemployment</b>	Total	Millions	168.6	201.5	194.3	227.3	213.4	189.7	188.6	190.8	192.7
	Women	Millions	68.4	80.4	78.5	90.0	87.0	79.2	77.9	78.5	79.4
	Men	Millions	100.2	121.2	115.9	137.3	126.4	110.6	110.7	112.3	113.3
	Youth	Millions	67.5	74.1	68.6	75.0	70.6	65.5	66.6	67.7	68.8
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	Total	Per cent	6.1	6.4	5.6	6.6	6.1	5.3	5.1	5.2	5.2
	Women	Per cent	6.3	6.4	5.7	6.6	6.2	5.5	5.3	5.3	5.3
	Men	Per cent	6.0	6.3	5.5	6.6	6.0	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.0
	Youth	Per cent	12.1	13.3	13.8	15.7	14.5	13.3	13.3	13.5	13.6
<b>Jobs gap</b>	Total	Millions		441.5	439.0	499.5	476.4	440.4	434.8		
	Women	Millions		217.7	219.7	244.7	238.0	223.0	220.7		
	Men	Millions		223.8	219.3	254.8	238.3	217.5	214.1		
<b>Jobs gap rate</b>	Total	Per cent		13.0	11.8	13.4	12.6	11.5	11.1		
	Women	Per cent		15.7	14.4	16.1	15.3	14.2	13.7		
	Men	Per cent		11.1	10.0	11.6	10.7	9.6	9.3		

Table C1. World (cont'd)

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		273.1	271.0	289.2	274.3	267.6	269.1	273.2	276.4
	Women	Millions		188.8	181.3	186.7	180.4	178.5	178.9	181.2	183.2
	Men	Millions		84.3	89.7	102.5	93.9	89.2	90.2	92.0	93.2
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		22.3	22.4	23.8	22.4	21.7	21.7	21.8	21.8
	Women	Per cent		31.8	30.9	31.7	30.5	29.9	29.7	29.8	29.9
	Men	Per cent		13.4	14.3	16.3	14.9	14.0	14.1	14.2	14.3
Informal employment	Total	Millions		1757.7	1898.9	1875.6	1945.4	1969.1	2019.3	2027.6	
	Women	Millions		666.6	717.4	697.4	732.7	741.2	773.1	771.6	
	Men	Millions		1091.1	1181.6	1178.2	1212.7	1227.9	1246.3	1256.0	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		59.4	57.8	58.2	58.7	57.8	58.0	57.8	
	Women	Per cent		57.0	54.9	54.6	55.6	54.8	55.4	55.2	
	Men	Per cent		61.0	59.6	60.6	60.8	59.8	59.8	59.6	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	1187.0	1459.2	1743.3	1678.9	1729.2	1779.3			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	1395.9	1498.6	1544.0	1542.9	1583.1	1625.5			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	46.0	49.3	53.0	52.1	52.2	52.3			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	54.0	50.7	47.0	47.9	47.8	47.7			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	713.0	426.9	227.7	248.0	241.6	240.1	241.1		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	27.6	14.4	6.9	7.7	7.3	7.1	6.9		

Note: "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C2. Africa**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Labour force</b>	Total	Millions	301.1	393.1	490.7	498.2	515.5	533.9	550.4	566.5	582.9
	Women	Millions	129.6	169.6	210.9	213.9	222.0	229.4	237.0	244.2	251.4
	Men	Millions	171.5	223.5	279.9	284.3	293.5	304.6	313.4	322.3	331.4
	Youth	Millions	78.9	95.2	105.6	107.1	110.1	113.0	116.7	120.1	123.5
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	Total	Per cent	64.5	63.8	62.4	61.7	62.1	62.6	62.8	62.8	62.8
	Women	Per cent	54.5	54.3	53.1	52.4	52.9	53.2	53.5	53.6	53.7
	Men	Per cent	74.9	73.5	72.0	71.1	71.4	72.2	72.2	72.2	72.2
	Youth	Per cent	47.8	45.5	41.7	41.2	41.2	41.2	41.4	41.4	41.4
<b>Employment</b>	Total	Millions	277.9	366.9	457.6	461.9	477.4	498.2	514.0	529.4	545.2
	Women	Millions	119.6	156.7	195.1	196.8	203.5	211.6	218.8	225.6	232.5
	Men	Millions	158.4	210.2	262.5	265.1	273.9	286.6	295.2	303.7	312.7
	Youth	Millions	68.1	83.8	93.8	94.5	97.5	101.1	104.5	107.6	110.7
<b>Employment-to-population ratio</b>	Total	Per cent	59.5	59.5	58.2	57.2	57.5	58.4	58.6	58.7	58.8
	Women	Per cent	50.3	50.2	49.1	48.2	48.5	49.1	49.4	49.5	49.6
	Men	Per cent	69.1	69.1	67.5	66.3	66.7	67.9	68.0	68.0	68.1
	Youth	Per cent	41.3	40.0	37.1	36.4	36.5	36.9	37.0	37.1	37.1
<b>Unemployment</b>	Total	Millions	23.2	26.2	33.2	36.2	38.1	35.8	36.4	37.1	37.7
	Women	Millions	10.0	12.9	15.8	17.0	18.5	17.8	18.2	18.6	19.0
	Men	Millions	13.2	13.3	17.4	19.2	19.6	18.0	18.3	18.5	18.8
	Youth	Millions	10.8	11.4	11.7	12.6	12.5	11.8	12.2	12.5	12.8
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	Total	Per cent	7.7	6.7	6.8	7.3	7.4	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.5
	Women	Per cent	7.7	7.6	7.5	8.0	8.3	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.5
	Men	Per cent	7.7	5.9	6.2	6.8	6.7	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7
	Youth	Per cent	13.7	11.9	11.1	11.8	11.4	10.5	10.5	10.4	10.3
<b>Jobs gap</b>	Total	Millions		87.2	114.4	122.1	125.5	124.1	124.3		
	Women	Millions		49.3	64.7	68.6	71.1	70.7	71.1		
	Men	Millions		37.9	49.7	53.5	54.4	53.3	53.2		
<b>Jobs gap rate</b>	Total	Per cent		19.2	20.0	20.9	20.8	19.9	19.5		
	Women	Per cent		23.9	24.9	25.8	25.9	25.1	24.5		
	Men	Per cent		15.3	15.9	16.8	16.6	15.7	15.3		



Table C2. Africa (cont'd)

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		50.2	65.9	70.3	70.4	71.8	73.7	75.8	77.9
	Women	Millions		32.4	40.9	43.5	43.6	44.6	45.8	47.1	48.4
	Men	Millions		17.8	25.0	26.8	26.7	27.2	27.9	28.6	29.4
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		24.0	26.0	27.1	26.4	26.2	26.1	26.1	26.1
	Women	Per cent		31.1	32.5	33.8	33.0	32.8	32.7	32.7	32.8
	Men	Per cent		16.9	19.6	20.5	19.9	19.7	19.6	19.6	19.5
Informal employment	Total	Millions		305.1	381.5	391.6	405.3	416.3	428.2	439.9	
	Women	Millions		138.8	170.9	173.3	180.6	185.8	191.5	196.9	
	Men	Millions		166.3	210.6	218.3	224.6	230.5	236.7	243.0	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		83.2	83.4	84.8	84.9	83.6	83.3	83.1	
	Women	Per cent		88.6	87.6	88.1	88.8	87.8	87.5	87.3	
	Men	Per cent		79.1	80.2	82.3	82.0	80.4	80.2	80.0	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	71.7	98.9	127.0	125.7	130.7	137.9			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	206.2	268.0	330.6	336.2	346.8	360.3			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	25.8	27.0	27.8	27.2	27.4	27.7			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	74.2	73.0	72.2	72.8	72.6	72.3			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	130.5	126.1	131.7	138.2	141.3	145.4	148.9		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	47.0	34.4	28.8	29.9	29.6	29.2	29.0		

Note: "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C3. North Africa**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	51.7	66.9	73.3	72.8	75.6	78.2	79.8	81.5	83.3
	Women	Millions	11.7	16.1	16.6	16.0	16.9	17.4	17.8	18.3	18.8
	Men	Millions	40.0	50.8	56.7	56.7	58.7	60.8	62.0	63.2	64.5
	Youth	Millions	12.6	13.4	10.2	10.0	10.4	10.6	10.8	11.1	11.3
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	47.3	47.8	44.1	43.0	43.9	44.6	44.6	44.6	44.7
	Women	Per cent	21.5	23.1	20.1	19.0	19.6	19.8	20.0	20.1	20.2
	Men	Per cent	73.1	72.3	68.1	66.9	68.0	69.2	69.1	69.1	69.1
	Youth	Per cent	34.7	32.4	24.7	24.0	24.7	24.7	24.7	24.8	24.8
Employment	Total	Millions	43.9	59.8	64.9	63.7	66.4	69.7	70.8	72.3	74.1
	Women	Millions	9.3	12.9	13.0	12.5	13.2	14.0	14.2	14.5	15.0
	Men	Millions	34.7	47.0	52.0	51.2	53.2	55.7	56.6	57.8	59.2
	Youth	Millions	8.8	10.2	7.5	7.2	7.6	7.9	8.0	8.2	8.5
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	40.3	42.8	39.1	37.7	38.6	39.7	39.6	39.6	39.8
	Women	Per cent	17.0	18.5	15.7	14.8	15.4	15.9	15.9	16.0	16.1
	Men	Per cent	63.3	66.9	62.4	60.4	61.6	63.3	63.1	63.2	63.4
	Youth	Per cent	24.2	24.6	18.0	17.2	18.0	18.5	18.3	18.4	18.5
Unemployment	Total	Millions	7.7	7.0	8.3	9.1	9.1	8.5	9.0	9.2	9.1
	Women	Millions	2.4	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.8
	Men	Millions	5.3	3.8	4.7	5.5	5.5	5.1	5.4	5.4	5.3
	Youth	Millions	3.8	3.2	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	15.0	10.5	11.4	12.5	12.1	10.9	11.3	11.3	10.9
	Women	Per cent	20.6	20.1	21.9	22.2	21.5	19.6	20.4	20.6	20.2
	Men	Per cent	13.3	7.5	8.3	9.7	9.4	8.4	8.7	8.6	8.2
	Youth	Per cent	30.2	24.1	26.9	28.2	27.2	25.0	25.9	25.9	25.3
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		15.3	19.1	20.6	20.5	19.8	19.2		
	Women	Millions		7.6	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.2	8.9		
	Men	Millions		7.6	9.8	11.2	11.1	10.6	10.3		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		20.3	22.8	24.4	23.6	22.1	21.3		
	Women	Per cent		37.2	41.9	42.9	41.7	39.6	38.4		
	Men	Per cent		14.0	15.8	17.9	17.2	16.0	15.4		

**Table C3. North Africa (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		12.5	11.3	12.1	11.8	11.7	12.0	12.3	12.5
	Women	Millions		9.1	7.7	8.2	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.4	8.6
	Men	Millions		3.4	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		30.3	27.3	29.0	27.9	27.4	27.5	27.5	27.4
	Women	Per cent		45.0	38.0	40.1	38.7	38.2	38.4	38.4	38.4
	Men	Per cent		16.2	17.0	18.3	17.5	16.9	17.0	17.0	16.8
Informal employment	Total	Millions		35.9	41.3	41.5	42.1	44.1	44.6	45.4	
	Women	Millions		7.6	7.2	6.9	7.5	7.7	7.7	7.9	
	Men	Millions		28.2	34.1	34.6	34.5	36.4	36.9	37.5	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		59.9	63.6	65.2	63.3	63.3	63.0	62.8	
	Women	Per cent		59.4	55.7	55.4	56.9	55.0	54.5	54.4	
	Men	Per cent		60.1	65.6	67.6	64.9	65.4	65.1	65.0	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	24.1	34.7	41.0	40.5	42.3	44.6			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	19.8	25.1	23.9	23.2	24.1	25.1			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	55.0	58.0	63.1	63.5	63.7	64.0			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	45.0	42.0	36.9	36.5	36.3	36.0			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	2.1	1.6	2.1	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.5		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	4.8	2.6	3.3	3.8	4.0	4.2	5.0		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C4. Sub-Saharan Africa**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	249.5	326.2	417.5	425.4	439.9	455.7	470.6	485.0	499.6
	Women	Millions	117.9	153.5	194.3	197.8	205.1	212.0	219.2	225.9	232.7
	Men	Millions	131.6	172.7	223.2	227.6	234.8	243.7	251.4	259.1	267.0
	Youth	Millions	66.2	81.8	95.4	97.1	99.7	102.4	105.9	109.1	112.1
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	69.7	68.5	67.3	66.6	66.8	67.2	67.4	67.4	67.4
	Women	Per cent	64.3	63.3	61.8	61.1	61.5	61.7	62.0	62.0	62.0
	Men	Per cent	75.4	73.9	73.1	72.3	72.4	72.9	73.0	73.0	73.0
	Youth	Per cent	51.5	48.7	45.0	44.5	44.4	44.2	44.4	44.4	44.4
Employment	Total	Millions	234.0	307.1	392.7	398.2	411.0	428.5	443.2	457.1	471.0
	Women	Millions	110.3	143.9	182.1	184.4	190.3	197.6	204.7	211.1	217.5
	Men	Millions	123.7	163.2	210.5	213.9	220.7	230.9	238.5	246.0	253.5
	Youth	Millions	59.2	73.6	86.4	87.3	90.0	93.2	96.4	99.4	102.2
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	65.4	64.5	63.3	62.3	62.4	63.2	63.5	63.5	63.5
	Women	Per cent	60.2	59.3	57.9	56.9	57.0	57.5	57.9	57.9	57.9
	Men	Per cent	70.9	69.8	68.9	67.9	68.0	69.1	69.3	69.3	69.3
	Youth	Per cent	46.1	43.8	40.8	40.0	40.0	40.3	40.4	40.5	40.4
Unemployment	Total	Millions	15.5	19.1	24.8	27.2	29.0	27.2	27.4	27.9	28.6
	Women	Millions	7.6	9.6	12.2	13.5	14.9	14.4	14.5	14.8	15.2
	Men	Millions	7.8	9.5	12.7	13.7	14.1	12.9	12.9	13.1	13.5
	Youth	Millions	7.0	8.1	9.0	9.8	9.7	9.2	9.4	9.7	9.9
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	6.2	5.9	5.9	6.4	6.6	6.0	5.8	5.8	5.7
	Women	Per cent	6.5	6.3	6.3	6.8	7.3	6.8	6.6	6.6	6.5
	Men	Per cent	6.0	5.5	5.7	6.0	6.0	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.0
	Youth	Per cent	10.5	10.0	9.4	10.1	9.7	9.0	8.9	8.9	8.8
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		71.9	95.3	101.5	105.0	104.3	105.1		
	Women	Millions		41.7	55.4	59.2	61.6	61.6	62.3		
	Men	Millions		30.2	40.0	42.3	43.3	42.7	42.9		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		19.0	19.5	20.3	20.3	19.6	19.2		
	Women	Per cent		22.5	23.3	24.3	24.5	23.8	23.3		
	Men	Per cent		15.6	16.0	16.5	16.4	15.6	15.2		

**Table C4. Sub-Saharan Africa (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		37.7	54.6	58.2	58.6	60.1	61.6	63.5	65.4
	Women	Millions		23.3	33.2	35.3	35.6	36.5	37.6	38.7	39.8
	Men	Millions		14.3	21.4	22.9	23.0	23.6	24.1	24.8	25.5
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		22.4	25.8	26.7	26.1	26.0	25.9	25.8	25.9
	Women	Per cent		27.8	31.5	32.6	31.9	31.8	31.7	31.7	31.7
	Men	Per cent		17.1	20.1	20.9	20.3	20.2	20.1	20.0	20.0
Informal employment	Total	Millions		269.3	340.2	350.1	363.2	372.2	383.6	394.5	
	Women	Millions		131.2	163.7	166.4	173.1	178.1	183.7	189.0	
	Men	Millions		138.1	176.5	183.6	190.1	194.1	199.8	205.4	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		87.7	86.6	87.9	88.4	86.9	86.5	86.3	
	Women	Per cent		91.2	89.9	90.3	91.0	90.1	89.8	89.5	
	Men	Per cent		84.6	83.8	85.9	86.1	84.1	83.8	83.5	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	47.6	64.3	86.0	85.2	88.3	93.3			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	186.4	242.8	306.6	313.0	322.7	335.2			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	20.3	20.9	21.9	21.4	21.5	21.8			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	79.7	79.1	78.1	78.6	78.5	78.2			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	128.4	124.5	129.6	135.8	138.6	142.5	145.3		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	54.9	40.6	33.0	34.1	33.7	33.3	32.8		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C5. Latin America and the Caribbean**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	221.5	270.5	310.3	294.1	308.5	315.9	319.8	323.3	326.3
	Women	Millions	85.1	110.1	129.5	121.0	128.1	131.8	133.9	135.4	136.6
	Men	Millions	136.4	160.4	180.7	173.1	180.4	184.1	185.9	187.9	189.7
	Youth	Millions	54.1	55.2	52.3	47.7	50.5	50.4	49.6	49.2	48.7
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	62.7	63.5	63.5	59.5	61.7	62.5	62.6	62.5	62.4
	Women	Per cent	47.1	50.5	51.7	47.7	50.0	50.9	51.1	51.0	50.9
	Men	Per cent	79.0	77.1	75.8	71.8	74.0	74.8	74.7	74.6	74.4
	Youth	Per cent	53.9	51.3	48.6	44.4	47.2	47.4	46.8	46.6	46.4
Employment	Total	Millions	200.5	251.0	285.4	264.1	280.2	294.1	300.0	303.6	306.7
	Women	Millions	75.0	100.2	117.0	106.4	113.6	120.6	123.9	125.4	126.7
	Men	Millions	125.6	150.8	168.4	157.7	166.6	173.5	176.1	178.2	180.0
	Youth	Millions	44.7	47.0	42.9	37.6	40.8	42.8	42.8	42.4	42.0
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	56.8	58.9	58.4	53.4	56.0	58.2	58.7	58.7	58.6
	Women	Per cent	41.5	46.0	46.7	42.0	44.3	46.6	47.3	47.3	47.2
	Men	Per cent	72.7	72.5	70.6	65.4	68.4	70.5	70.7	70.7	70.6
	Youth	Per cent	44.6	43.7	39.9	35.0	38.2	40.2	40.4	40.2	40.0
Unemployment	Total	Millions	21.0	19.5	24.8	30.0	28.4	21.8	19.8	19.8	19.6
	Women	Millions	10.1	9.9	12.5	14.6	14.5	11.2	10.0	10.0	9.9
	Men	Millions	10.9	9.6	12.3	15.4	13.8	10.6	9.8	9.8	9.7
	Youth	Millions	9.4	8.2	9.4	10.1	9.6	7.6	6.8	6.8	6.7
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	9.5	7.2	8.0	10.2	9.2	6.9	6.2	6.1	6.0
	Women	Per cent	11.9	9.0	9.7	12.1	11.3	8.5	7.5	7.4	7.3
	Men	Per cent	8.0	6.0	6.8	8.9	7.7	5.8	5.3	5.2	5.1
	Youth	Per cent	17.4	14.9	18.0	21.2	19.1	15.1	13.6	13.8	13.8
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		50.4	58.7	72.9	65.8	54.0	50.1		
	Women	Millions		31.1	34.9	41.3	39.3	32.6	30.1		
	Men	Millions		19.3	23.8	31.6	26.4	21.5	19.9		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		16.7	17.1	21.6	19.0	15.5	14.3		
	Women	Per cent		23.7	23.0	28.0	25.7	21.3	19.6		
	Men	Per cent		11.3	12.4	16.7	13.7	11.0	10.2		

**Table C5. Latin America and the Caribbean (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		21.9	23.0	26.1	23.2	21.7	21.1	21.0	20.9
	Women	Millions		15.1	15.1	16.4	14.9	14.0	13.6	13.6	13.5
	Men	Millions		6.8	7.8	9.6	8.3	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.4
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		20.3	21.4	24.3	21.7	20.4	19.9	19.9	19.9
	Women	Per cent		28.2	28.5	31.1	28.2	26.7	26.1	26.1	26.1
	Men	Per cent		12.6	14.4	17.7	15.4	14.3	13.9	13.9	13.9
Informal employment	Total	Millions		134.6	150.5	136.4	148.3	153.9	155.4	156.9	
	Women	Millions		52.8	60.4	52.9	58.4	61.8	62.9	63.5	
	Men	Millions		81.8	90.1	83.4	89.9	92.2	92.6	93.4	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		53.6	52.7	51.6	52.9	52.3	51.8	51.7	
	Women	Per cent		52.8	51.7	49.8	51.4	51.2	50.8	50.6	
	Men	Per cent		54.2	53.5	52.9	54.0	53.1	52.6	52.5	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	121.0	157.8	179.7	165.1	173.7	185.5			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	79.6	93.2	105.7	99.0	106.5	108.5			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	60.3	62.9	63.0	62.5	62.0	63.1			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	39.7	37.1	37.0	37.5	38.0	36.9			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	18.7	9.4	9.2	10.7	10.0	9.8	9.9		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	9.3	3.7	3.2	4.1	3.6	3.3	3.3		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.



**Table C6. North America**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	162.6	177.3	190.9	188.3	189.6	191.8	194.5	194.3	194.9
	Women	Millions	74.5	82.5	88.3	87.1	87.7	89.0	90.6	90.3	90.6
	Men	Millions	88.1	94.7	102.5	101.2	101.9	102.8	103.9	104.0	104.3
	Youth	Millions	26.4	25.0	25.2	24.3	25.1	25.3	25.7	25.3	25.1
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	65.9	63.8	62.9	61.6	61.6	61.9	62.2	61.6	61.3
	Women	Per cent	58.9	58.1	57.4	56.1	56.1	56.5	57.0	56.3	56.1
	Men	Per cent	73.3	69.8	68.7	67.3	67.3	67.4	67.6	67.0	66.7
	Youth	Per cent	60.3	51.5	52.1	50.2	51.7	51.8	52.2	51.2	50.9
Employment	Total	Millions	155.6	160.5	183.4	172.8	179.0	184.5	187.0	186.2	186.5
	Women	Millions	71.3	75.5	85.0	79.7	82.9	85.6	87.3	86.7	86.8
	Men	Millions	84.4	84.9	98.5	93.1	96.1	98.8	99.8	99.5	99.7
	Youth	Millions	23.8	20.5	23.0	20.6	22.6	23.2	23.6	23.0	22.7
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	63.1	57.8	60.5	56.5	58.2	59.5	59.8	59.0	58.7
	Women	Per cent	56.3	53.2	55.2	51.3	53.1	54.4	54.9	54.1	53.7
	Men	Per cent	70.2	62.6	66.0	61.9	63.5	64.8	64.9	64.1	63.8
	Youth	Per cent	54.5	42.3	47.6	42.4	46.5	47.5	47.9	46.5	46.1
Unemployment	Total	Millions	7.0	16.8	7.4	15.5	10.6	7.3	7.5	8.1	8.4
	Women	Millions	3.2	7.0	3.4	7.4	4.8	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.8
	Men	Millions	3.7	9.8	4.1	8.1	5.8	4.0	4.1	4.5	4.6
	Youth	Millions	2.5	4.5	2.2	3.8	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.4
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	4.3	9.5	3.9	8.2	5.6	3.8	3.8	4.2	4.3
	Women	Per cent	4.4	8.5	3.8	8.5	5.4	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.2
	Men	Per cent	4.2	10.3	4.0	8.0	5.7	3.9	4.0	4.3	4.4
	Youth	Per cent	9.6	17.9	8.7	15.5	10.1	8.3	8.3	9.1	9.4
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		20.2	9.9	18.8	13.6	10.1	9.6		
	Women	Millions		8.7	4.6	9.0	6.3	4.8	4.5		
	Men	Millions		11.5	5.3	9.8	7.3	5.4	5.1		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		11.2	5.1	9.8	7.1	5.2	4.9		
	Women	Per cent		10.3	5.1	10.1	7.0	5.3	4.9		
	Men	Per cent		12.0	5.1	9.5	7.1	5.2	4.9		

**Table C6. North America (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		7.3	5.1	6.9	6.0	5.5	5.3	5.4	5.5
	Women	Millions		3.6	2.6	3.4	3.0	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.7
	Men	Millions		3.7	2.5	3.5	3.0	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		15.1	10.6	14.3	12.3	11.3	10.7	11.0	11.2
	Women	Per cent		15.3	11.0	14.4	12.5	11.6	10.7	11.0	11.2
	Men	Per cent		14.9	10.2	14.1	12.0	11.0	10.6	11.0	11.2
Informal employment	Total	Millions		19.9	18.0	16.1	18.7	16.5	16.6	16.3	
	Women	Millions		9.0	8.0	7.1	8.3	7.3	7.3	7.2	
	Men	Millions		11.0	10.0	9.0	10.3	9.3	9.2	9.1	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		12.4	9.8	9.3	10.4	9.0	8.8	8.7	
	Women	Per cent		11.9	9.4	8.9	10.0	8.5	8.4	8.3	
	Men	Per cent		12.9	10.2	9.7	10.7	9.4	9.3	9.1	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	142.6	147.6	170.5	160.2	165.8	171.4			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	13.1	12.8	13.0	12.6	13.2	13.0			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	91.6	92.0	92.9	92.7	92.6	92.9			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	8.4	8.0	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.1			

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C7. Arab States (non-GCC)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	18.2	23.5	27.7	27.5	28.4	30.1	31.3	32.5	33.5
	Women	Millions	3.2	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.1
	Men	Millions	14.9	19.8	23.5	23.3	24.1	25.6	26.6	27.5	28.4
	Youth	Millions	5.3	5.8	6.0	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	44.8	41.2	38.9	37.4	37.5	38.5	38.8	38.8	38.9
	Women	Per cent	15.8	12.7	11.8	11.3	11.3	11.5	11.7	11.7	11.7
	Men	Per cent	74.2	70.0	66.2	63.8	63.9	65.8	66.1	66.2	66.2
	Youth	Per cent	35.6	29.7	26.0	24.6	24.9	25.1	25.2	25.2	25.2
Employment	Total	Millions	16.4	21.1	23.5	22.9	23.5	25.2	26.3	27.3	28.2
	Women	Millions	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7
	Men	Millions	13.6	18.0	20.4	19.8	20.4	22.0	22.8	23.7	24.5
	Youth	Millions	4.3	4.6	4.1	3.7	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	40.4	37.0	33.0	31.1	31.1	32.3	32.5	32.6	32.7
	Women	Per cent	13.8	10.6	8.7	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.5
	Men	Per cent	67.3	63.8	57.4	54.2	54.1	56.5	56.8	56.9	57.1
	Youth	Per cent	29.1	23.6	17.8	15.8	16.0	16.8	16.8	16.9	16.9
Unemployment	Total	Millions	1.8	2.4	4.2	4.7	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.3
	Women	Millions	0.4	0.6	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4
	Men	Millions	1.4	1.8	3.1	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.9
	Youth	Millions	1.0	1.2	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	9.8	10.1	15.3	16.9	17.2	16.1	16.1	16.0	15.8
	Women	Per cent	12.7	16.7	26.0	27.2	27.2	27.1	27.4	27.5	27.5
	Men	Per cent	9.2	8.9	13.3	15.1	15.4	14.2	14.1	14.0	13.7
	Youth	Per cent	18.3	20.7	31.6	35.6	35.7	33.2	33.2	33.2	33.0
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		5.5	10.3	11.3	12.0	12.4	13.0		
	Women	Millions		2.0	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.2	4.4		
	Men	Millions		3.5	6.8	7.5	8.1	8.2	8.6		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		20.6	30.5	33.1	33.8	32.9	33.1		
	Women	Per cent		39.7	53.2	55.3	55.4	56.0	56.3		
	Men	Per cent		16.1	24.9	27.5	28.5	27.2	27.3		

**Table C7. Arab States (non-GCC) (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		7.5	8.9	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.9	10.1	10.4
	Women	Millions		5.5	6.1	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.8	7.0
	Men	Millions		2.0	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		38.2	38.8	39.7	38.8	38.4	38.5	38.6	38.6
	Women	Per cent		57.2	54.3	54.0	52.8	52.8	53.0	53.1	53.2
	Men	Per cent		19.8	23.9	25.8	25.3	24.5	24.6	24.7	24.6
Informal employment	Total	Millions		13.5	15.7	15.5	16.1	17.1	17.9	18.6	
	Women	Millions		1.7	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	
	Men	Millions		11.8	14.1	13.9	14.5	15.5	16.1	16.7	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		63.9	66.9	67.7	68.5	67.9	68.1	68.2	
	Women	Per cent		54.4	50.8	50.7	51.3	51.3	51.4	51.3	
	Men	Per cent		65.5	69.4	70.3	71.1	70.4	70.7	70.7	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	9.5	13.5	15.2	14.7	15.2	16.4			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	6.8	7.5	8.3	8.1	8.3	8.8			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	58.3	64.2	64.6	64.4	64.6	65.0			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	41.7	35.8	35.4	35.6	35.4	35.0			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	0.2	0.3	5.1	5.4	5.7	6.3	7.0		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	1.5	1.5	21.7	23.8	24.3	25.1	26.5		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C8. Arab States (GCC)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	11.4	21.5	29.9	30.0	30.2	30.7	31.3	31.7	32.2
	Women	Millions	1.6	3.3	5.2	5.9	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.7	6.9
	Men	Millions	9.8	18.2	24.7	24.2	23.9	24.3	24.7	24.9	25.3
	Youth	Millions	1.7	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	56.6	61.7	66.6	66.9	67.7	68.1	68.2	68.0	67.8
	Women	Per cent	21.3	26.5	32.9	36.4	38.7	39.0	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Men	Per cent	77.5	81.3	85.0	83.9	84.1	84.8	84.8	84.7	84.6
	Youth	Per cent	27.8	30.4	28.7	28.6	29.7	31.1	31.4	31.4	31.6
Employment	Total	Millions	11.0	20.7	28.8	28.4	28.8	29.5	30.1	30.6	31.1
	Women	Millions	1.5	2.9	4.6	5.0	5.5	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.2
	Men	Millions	9.5	17.7	24.2	23.4	23.3	23.8	24.2	24.6	24.9
	Youth	Millions	1.5	2.4	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	54.5	59.2	64.0	63.2	64.5	65.4	65.7	65.6	65.6
	Women	Per cent	19.8	23.5	28.5	31.3	33.8	34.6	35.0	35.0	35.2
	Men	Per cent	75.1	79.1	83.5	81.1	81.9	83.0	83.4	83.4	83.4
	Youth	Per cent	23.6	26.0	24.3	22.8	25.1	27.0	27.4	27.5	27.7
Unemployment	Total	Millions	0.4	0.9	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Women	Millions	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
	Men	Millions	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
	Youth	Millions	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	3.6	4.0	3.8	5.5	4.7	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.4
	Women	Per cent	6.8	11.2	13.3	14.2	12.6	11.2	10.9	10.8	10.5
	Men	Per cent	3.1	2.7	1.8	3.3	2.6	2.1	1.7	1.6	1.4
	Youth	Per cent	15.0	14.3	15.3	20.5	15.5	13.1	12.8	12.7	12.2
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		3.7	4.9	5.9	5.2	4.6	4.5		
	Women	Millions		1.9	3.1	3.6	3.3	2.9	3.0		
	Men	Millions		1.8	1.8	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.4		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		15.3	14.6	17.1	15.2	13.5	12.9		
	Women	Per cent		39.2	40.5	41.5	37.4	34.0	34.1		
	Men	Per cent		9.4	6.9	9.0	7.6	6.6	5.6		

Table C8. Arab States (GCC) (cont'd)

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		1.8	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3
	Women	Millions		1.1	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
	Men	Millions		0.7	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		20.1	14.3	18.5	17.1	16.4	15.6	15.7	15.7
	Women	Per cent		29.0	23.0	25.5	23.1	22.7	21.7	21.9	22.0
	Men	Per cent		13.7	7.7	12.8	12.1	11.0	10.2	10.0	9.8
Informal employment	Total	Millions		7.6	10.3	10.0	10.3	10.5	10.7	10.7	
	Women	Millions		0.9	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	
	Men	Millions		6.7	8.9	8.4	8.5	8.7	8.8	8.8	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		37.0	35.8	35.4	35.8	35.6	35.4	35.1	
	Women	Per cent		32.1	32.1	32.6	32.2	31.9	31.8	31.6	
	Men	Per cent		37.8	36.5	35.9	36.6	36.5	36.3	36.0	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	10.4	19.9	27.5	27.1	27.3	28.0			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	0.6	0.7	10.3	10.3	10.5	10.5			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	94.7	96.6	95.6	95.5	95.0	95.0			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	5.3	3.4	4.4	4.5	5.0	5.0			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5		

Note: "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C9. East Asia**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	851.0	902.2	914.1	901.4	918.4	921.2	919.7	919.7	920.8
	Women	Millions	381.7	398.2	411.5	405.3	415.8	415.8	415.0	414.7	414.9
	Men	Millions	469.3	504.0	502.6	496.1	502.6	505.4	504.7	505.1	505.9
	Youth	Millions	152.3	139.4	93.3	86.9	89.3	88.6	88.6	88.8	89.0
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	74.5	69.5	66.8	65.6	66.5	66.4	66.0	65.7	65.5
	Women	Per cent	67.2	61.7	60.4	59.3	60.5	60.3	59.9	59.5	59.3
	Men	Per cent	81.7	77.2	73.0	71.8	72.4	72.5	72.1	71.8	71.6
	Youth	Per cent	64.6	55.4	49.2	46.4	48.2	48.0	47.9	47.7	47.6
Employment	Total	Millions	822.0	861.5	874.6	858.5	878.3	878.0	876.9	876.8	877.6
	Women	Millions	370.3	382.5	395.9	388.4	399.8	398.7	398.1	397.7	397.9
	Men	Millions	451.7	478.9	478.7	470.1	478.5	479.3	478.8	479.1	479.8
	Youth	Millions	141.6	125.8	83.8	76.4	78.8	76.4	75.6	75.8	75.9
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	72.0	66.3	63.9	62.4	63.6	63.3	62.9	62.6	62.4
	Women	Per cent	65.2	59.2	58.1	56.8	58.2	57.8	57.4	57.1	56.9
	Men	Per cent	78.7	73.3	69.6	68.0	69.0	68.8	68.4	68.1	67.9
	Youth	Per cent	60.0	50.0	44.2	40.9	42.5	41.3	40.9	40.7	40.6
Unemployment	Total	Millions	29.0	40.8	39.5	42.9	40.1	43.1	42.9	43.0	43.1
	Women	Millions	11.4	15.7	15.6	16.9	16.0	17.1	17.0	17.0	17.0
	Men	Millions	17.6	25.1	23.9	26.0	24.2	26.0	25.9	26.0	26.1
	Youth	Millions	10.7	13.6	9.5	10.4	10.5	12.2	13.0	13.0	13.1
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	3.4	4.5	4.3	4.8	4.4	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Women	Per cent	3.0	3.9	3.8	4.2	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
	Men	Per cent	3.8	5.0	4.8	5.2	4.8	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.2
	Youth	Per cent	7.0	9.8	10.2	12.0	11.7	13.8	14.7	14.7	14.7
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		87.5	76.8	83.0	77.4	79.7	78.8		
	Women	Millions		41.8	36.4	40.3	36.6	37.6	36.9		
	Men	Millions		45.8	40.4	42.8	40.8	42.2	41.9		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		9.2	8.1	8.8	8.1	8.3	8.2		
	Women	Per cent		9.8	8.4	9.4	8.4	8.6	8.5		
	Men	Per cent		8.7	7.8	8.3	7.9	8.1	8.1		

Table C9. East Asia (cont'd)

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		40.1	21.2	23.7	21.0	21.8	22.4	22.6	22.8
	Women	Millions		23.0	11.7	12.6	11.2	11.5	11.6	11.7	11.8
	Men	Millions		17.2	9.6	11.1	9.8	10.3	10.7	10.9	11.0
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		15.9	11.2	12.7	11.3	11.8	12.1	12.2	12.2
	Women	Per cent		19.2	13.2	14.4	13.0	13.4	13.6	13.6	13.7
	Men	Per cent		13.0	9.5	11.1	9.9	10.4	10.8	10.9	11.0
Informal employment	Total	Millions		467.8	426.9	415.9	431.6	415.6	410.2	405.5	
	Women	Millions		203.3	189.6	180.8	190.2	183.9	181.3	179.1	
	Men	Millions		264.5	237.2	235.1	241.4	231.7	228.8	226.4	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		54.3	48.8	48.4	49.1	47.3	46.8	46.2	
	Women	Per cent		53.1	47.9	46.6	47.6	46.1	45.6	45.0	
	Men	Per cent		55.2	49.6	50.0	50.4	48.3	47.8	47.3	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	352.3	443.6	498.1	488.5	502.2	505.7			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	469.8	417.9	376.4	370.0	376.1	372.4			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	42.9	51.5	57.0	56.9	57.2	57.6			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	57.1	48.5	43.0	43.1	42.8	42.4			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	296.8	120.5	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.1	3.1		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	36.1	14.0	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4		

Note: "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.



**Table C10. South-East Asia**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Labour force</b>	Total	Millions	246.4	294.0	333.5	330.2	330.1	338.9	344.4	348.2	351.1
	Women	Millions	103.1	121.8	139.3	137.5	138.1	141.2	143.8	145.2	146.3
	Men	Millions	143.3	172.2	194.1	192.8	192.1	197.7	200.6	202.9	204.8
	Youth	Millions	54.9	53.1	49.6	47.2	45.2	45.8	46.7	47.0	47.1
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	Total	Per cent	68.5	67.7	67.2	65.7	64.9	65.9	66.2	66.1	65.9
	Women	Per cent	56.6	55.6	55.7	54.3	53.9	54.5	54.8	54.7	54.5
	Men	Per cent	80.6	79.9	78.9	77.3	76.2	77.6	77.8	77.7	77.5
	Youth	Per cent	53.9	49.4	46.0	43.8	42.0	42.5	43.2	43.3	43.3
<b>Employment</b>	Total	Millions	236.8	284.4	325.4	320.4	319.6	330.2	335.8	339.6	342.5
	Women	Millions	99.0	117.7	136.1	133.5	134.0	137.8	140.3	141.8	142.9
	Men	Millions	137.8	166.7	189.3	186.8	185.6	192.5	195.5	197.8	199.6
	Youth	Millions	48.8	47.9	45.2	42.4	40.4	41.2	42.2	42.5	42.6
<b>Employment-to-population ratio</b>	Total	Per cent	65.8	65.4	65.6	63.8	62.9	64.2	64.5	64.5	64.3
	Women	Per cent	54.3	53.7	54.4	52.7	52.3	53.2	53.5	53.4	53.2
	Men	Per cent	77.6	77.4	76.9	75.0	73.6	75.5	75.8	75.7	75.5
	Youth	Per cent	47.9	44.6	42.0	39.4	37.5	38.2	39.0	39.2	39.2
<b>Unemployment</b>	Total	Millions	9.6	9.6	8.0	9.9	10.5	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.6
	Women	Millions	4.1	4.1	3.2	3.9	4.0	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Men	Millions	5.5	5.4	4.8	5.9	6.4	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.2
	Youth	Millions	6.1	5.2	4.4	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	Total	Per cent	3.9	3.3	2.4	3.0	3.2	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4
	Women	Per cent	4.0	3.4	2.3	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3
	Men	Per cent	3.8	3.2	2.5	3.1	3.4	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.5
	Youth	Per cent	11.0	9.8	8.8	10.1	10.6	10.1	9.7	9.6	9.5
<b>Jobs gap</b>	Total	Millions		26.5	22.4	26.7	32.1	24.0	22.6		
	Women	Millions		15.3	12.3	13.4	16.5	12.0	11.3		
	Men	Millions		11.2	10.2	13.3	15.5	12.0	11.3		
<b>Jobs gap rate</b>	Total	Per cent		8.5	6.5	7.7	9.1	6.8	6.3		
	Women	Per cent		11.5	8.3	9.1	11.0	8.0	7.4		
	Men	Per cent		6.3	5.1	6.6	7.7	5.9	5.5		

**Table C10. South-East Asia (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		21.9	18.8	20.3	20.0	19.2	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Women	Millions		14.0	11.6	12.0	11.5	11.3	11.2	11.3	11.3
	Men	Millions		7.9	7.2	8.3	8.6	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.7
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		20.3	17.5	18.8	18.6	17.8	17.6	17.5	17.5
	Women	Per cent		26.5	22.1	22.8	21.8	21.5	21.3	21.3	21.4
	Men	Per cent		14.4	13.0	15.0	15.5	14.3	14.0	13.9	13.9
Informal employment	Total	Millions		225.7	229.1	225.1	228.5	231.2	234.3	235.5	
	Women	Millions		93.5	95.8	92.4	95.2	96.3	97.5	97.9	
	Men	Millions		132.2	133.3	132.7	133.3	134.9	136.8	137.5	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		79.4	70.4	70.3	71.5	70.0	69.8	69.3	
	Women	Per cent		79.5	70.4	69.2	71.0	69.9	69.5	69.1	
	Men	Per cent		79.3	70.4	71.0	71.8	70.1	70.0	69.5	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	79.6	119.0	163.9	158.9	159.3	165.4			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	157.2	165.4	161.5	161.5	160.4	164.8			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	33.6	41.8	50.4	49.6	49.8	50.1			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	66.4	58.2	49.6	50.4	50.2	49.9			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	75.9	30.1	10.4	9.5	9.3	8.0	7.4		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	32.0	10.6	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.4	2.2		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C11. South Asia**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Labour force</b>	Total	Millions	523.2	632.3	717.6	718.6	739.4	762.4	806.0	810.3	825.6
	Women	Millions	127.8	158.3	183.0	182.1	190.2	197.7	225.5	220.9	223.9
	Men	Millions	395.4	474.0	534.6	536.5	549.2	564.6	580.5	589.4	601.7
	Youth	Millions	125.2	126.6	114.5	113.4	114.3	115.6	119.3	116.7	117.8
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	Total	Per cent	55.7	53.6	51.3	50.5	51.2	52.0	54.2	53.6	53.8
	Women	Per cent	28.0	27.4	26.6	26.1	26.8	27.5	30.8	29.7	29.6
	Men	Per cent	81.9	78.6	75.1	74.1	74.7	75.8	76.7	76.7	77.1
	Youth	Per cent	43.4	37.4	31.8	31.3	31.4	31.6	32.6	31.8	32.1
<b>Employment</b>	Total	Millions	486.6	586.0	671.8	664.1	691.4	722.8	765.0	768.9	783.2
	Women	Millions	118.2	145.9	170.7	168.6	177.7	186.6	214.1	209.8	212.4
	Men	Millions	368.4	440.2	501.1	495.5	513.7	536.2	550.9	559.1	570.9
	Youth	Millions	109.5	107.0	92.3	89.8	93.3	97.1	99.9	96.9	97.2
<b>Employment-to-population ratio</b>	Total	Per cent	51.8	49.7	48.0	46.7	47.8	49.3	51.4	50.9	51.0
	Women	Per cent	25.8	25.3	24.9	24.1	25.0	25.9	29.3	28.2	28.1
	Men	Per cent	76.3	73.0	70.4	68.4	69.9	71.9	72.8	72.7	73.1
	Youth	Per cent	38.0	31.6	25.6	24.8	25.6	26.6	27.3	26.4	26.5
<b>Unemployment</b>	Total	Millions	36.6	46.2	45.8	54.5	48.1	39.6	41.0	41.4	42.3
	Women	Millions	9.6	12.4	12.3	13.5	12.5	11.2	11.4	11.1	11.5
	Men	Millions	26.9	33.8	33.5	41.0	35.6	28.4	29.6	30.3	30.9
	Youth	Millions	15.7	19.7	22.2	23.5	21.0	18.5	19.4	19.7	20.6
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	Total	Per cent	7.0	7.3	6.4	7.6	6.5	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1
	Women	Per cent	7.5	7.9	6.7	7.4	6.6	5.6	5.1	5.0	5.1
	Men	Per cent	6.8	7.1	6.3	7.6	6.5	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.1
	Youth	Per cent	12.5	15.5	19.4	20.8	18.3	16.0	16.2	16.9	17.5
<b>Jobs gap</b>	Total	Millions		89.2	82.6	93.9	83.7	75.3	78.6		
	Women	Millions		31.8	29.7	31.4	29.3	28.5	31.3		
	Men	Millions		57.5	52.9	62.5	54.4	46.7	47.3		
<b>Jobs gap rate</b>	Total	Per cent		13.2	11.0	12.4	10.8	9.4	9.3		
	Women	Per cent		17.9	14.8	15.7	14.2	13.3	12.8		
	Men	Per cent		11.5	9.6	11.2	9.6	8.0	7.9		

Table C11. South Asia (cont'd)

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		100.5	111.1	114.1	107.1	101.8	101.8	102.8	103.2
	Women	Millions		81.5	83.6	82.3	80.4	78.7	78.3	78.7	78.9
	Men	Millions		19.0	27.5	31.8	26.7	23.1	23.5	24.1	24.3
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		29.7	30.8	31.5	29.4	27.9	27.8	28.0	28.1
	Women	Per cent		49.8	48.3	47.3	46.0	44.9	44.5	44.7	44.7
	Men	Per cent		10.9	14.7	16.9	14.1	12.2	12.3	12.6	12.7
Informal employment	Total	Millions		504.9	584.0	586.0	605.7	628.3	667.2	666.2	
	Women	Millions		131.8	153.2	153.3	161.1	167.7	194.2	188.9	
	Men	Millions		373.0	430.8	432.7	444.6	460.7	473.0	477.2	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		86.1	86.9	88.2	87.6	86.9	87.2	86.6	
	Women	Per cent		90.4	89.7	90.9	90.7	89.9	90.7	90.1	
	Men	Per cent		84.7	86.0	87.3	86.5	85.9	85.9	85.4	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	100.6	131.8	203.0	186.5	198.2	206.0			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	385.9	454.3	468.9	477.6	493.1	516.8			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	20.7	22.5	30.2	28.1	28.7	28.5			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	79.3	77.5	69.8	71.9	71.3	71.5			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	178.7	133.3	63.9	76.9	68.5	63.4	60.9		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	36.7	22.8	9.5	11.6	9.9	8.8	8.0		

Note: "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C12. The Pacific**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Labour force</b>	Total	Millions	14.8	17.5	20.6	20.7	21.2	21.7	22.1	22.3	22.6
	Women	Millions	6.6	8.0	9.7	9.7	10.0	10.2	10.4	10.4	10.5
	Men	Millions	8.3	9.5	11.0	11.0	11.2	11.5	11.7	11.9	12.0
	Youth	Millions	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	Total	Per cent	64.9	62.8	62.9	62.1	62.6	63.0	63.2	62.9	62.8
	Women	Per cent	57.0	57.0	58.5	57.8	58.5	58.8	59.0	58.6	58.4
	Men	Per cent	72.8	68.7	67.3	66.5	66.7	67.3	67.5	67.4	67.2
	Youth	Per cent	64.7	57.3	56.1	54.8	55.8	55.9	55.7	55.0	54.6
<b>Employment</b>	Total	Millions	14.0	16.6	19.7	19.6	20.2	20.9	21.3	21.5	21.7
	Women	Millions	6.2	7.6	9.2	9.2	9.5	9.8	10.0	10.1	10.2
	Men	Millions	7.8	9.0	10.5	10.4	10.7	11.1	11.3	11.4	11.5
	Youth	Millions	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2
<b>Employment-to-population ratio</b>	Total	Per cent	61.1	59.7	60.0	58.6	59.7	60.8	60.9	60.6	60.4
	Women	Per cent	53.9	54.1	55.9	54.6	55.9	56.8	56.9	56.5	56.3
	Men	Per cent	68.4	65.3	64.1	62.6	63.4	64.8	65.0	64.7	64.6
	Youth	Per cent	57.6	51.1	50.2	48.0	50.2	51.4	51.1	50.3	49.8
<b>Unemployment</b>	Total	Millions	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9
	Women	Millions	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
	Men	Millions	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
	Youth	Millions	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	Total	Per cent	5.8	5.0	4.7	5.7	4.7	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8
	Women	Per cent	5.5	5.1	4.5	5.5	4.4	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.7
	Men	Per cent	6.1	4.9	4.8	5.8	4.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0
	Youth	Per cent	11.0	10.9	10.4	12.3	10.2	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.8
<b>Jobs gap</b>	Total	Millions		1.6	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.5		
	Women	Millions		0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8		
	Men	Millions		0.8	0.9	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8		
<b>Jobs gap rate</b>	Total	Per cent		8.8	8.3	9.5	8.0	6.9	6.7		
	Women	Per cent		9.5	8.4	9.3	8.3	7.3	7.0		
	Men	Per cent		8.3	8.2	9.7	7.7	6.5	6.3		

**Table C12. The Pacific (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Women	Millions		0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
	Men	Millions		0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		18.9	18.0	19.4	18.8	18.3	18.5	18.7	18.9
	Women	Per cent		20.8	19.5	20.8	20.2	19.8	20.0	20.2	20.4
	Men	Per cent		17.1	16.6	18.1	17.5	17.0	17.1	17.3	17.4
Informal employment	Total	Millions		5.9	6.8	6.7	7.0	7.3	7.4	7.4	
	Women	Millions		2.8	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	
	Men	Millions		3.2	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		35.9	34.7	34.4	34.6	34.9	34.7	34.7	
	Women	Per cent		36.9	35.4	35.1	34.9	34.9	34.8	34.8	
	Men	Per cent		35.0	34.2	33.7	34.4	34.8	34.7	34.6	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	9.8	12.2	14.6	14.4	15.0	15.1			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.8			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	70.0	73.8	74.2	73.8	74.0	72.4			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	30.0	26.2	25.8	26.2	26.0	27.6			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.9		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	5.3	4.4	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.3		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C13. Northern, Southern and Western Europe**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Labour force</b>	Total	Millions	197.6	214.2	223.6	220.9	222.9	225.1	226.6	226.6	226.6
	Women	Millions	85.9	97.4	104.0	102.8	104.2	105.3	106.0	105.8	105.7
	Men	Millions	111.7	116.8	119.6	118.1	118.7	119.8	120.5	120.8	120.9
	Youth	Millions	25.3	23.4	21.6	20.8	21.1	21.9	22.3	22.1	21.8
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	Total	Per cent	56.4	57.7	58.5	57.6	58.0	58.5	58.7	58.6	58.5
	Women	Per cent	47.4	50.9	52.9	52.2	52.8	53.3	53.5	53.3	53.2
	Men	Per cent	66.2	65.0	64.4	63.3	63.5	64.0	64.2	64.1	64.0
	Youth	Per cent	47.5	45.0	43.6	42.1	42.9	44.5	45.5	45.1	44.6
<b>Employment</b>	Total	Millions	180.2	193.0	208.1	204.7	206.6	210.9	212.6	212.3	212.3
	Women	Millions	77.2	87.8	96.5	95.1	96.3	98.3	99.2	98.9	98.8
	Men	Millions	103.1	105.2	111.6	109.6	110.3	112.6	113.3	113.4	113.5
	Youth	Millions	21.0	18.5	18.4	17.3	17.7	18.8	19.2	18.9	18.7
<b>Employment-to-population ratio</b>	Total	Per cent	51.5	52.0	54.4	53.4	53.8	54.8	55.1	54.9	54.8
	Women	Per cent	42.5	45.8	49.1	48.3	48.8	49.7	50.1	49.8	49.7
	Men	Per cent	61.1	58.6	60.0	58.8	59.0	60.1	60.4	60.2	60.1
	Youth	Per cent	39.5	35.5	37.1	35.1	35.8	38.2	39.2	38.6	38.1
<b>Unemployment</b>	Total	Millions	17.4	21.2	15.5	16.2	16.3	14.2	14.0	14.3	14.3
	Women	Millions	8.8	9.6	7.5	7.7	7.9	7.0	6.8	6.9	6.9
	Men	Millions	8.6	11.5	8.0	8.4	8.4	7.2	7.2	7.4	7.4
	Youth	Millions	4.3	4.9	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	Total	Per cent	8.8	9.9	6.9	7.3	7.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.3
	Women	Per cent	10.2	9.9	7.2	7.5	7.6	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.5
	Men	Per cent	7.7	9.9	6.7	7.2	7.1	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1
	Youth	Per cent	16.9	21.1	14.9	16.6	16.4	14.1	13.9	14.4	14.5
<b>Jobs gap</b>	Total	Millions		35.8	30.1	34.1	32.9	29.6	28.3		
	Women	Millions		18.5	16.0	17.9	17.4	15.8	15.0		
	Men	Millions		17.3	14.1	16.1	15.5	13.8	13.3		
<b>Jobs gap rate</b>	Total	Per cent		15.6	12.6	14.3	13.7	12.3	11.8		
	Women	Per cent		17.4	14.2	15.9	15.3	13.9	13.1		
	Men	Per cent		14.1	11.2	12.8	12.3	10.9	10.5		

**Table C13. Northern, Southern and Western Europe (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		6.9	5.3	5.8	5.4	4.9	4.9	5.0	5.0
	Women	Millions		3.4	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Men	Millions		3.4	2.8	3.1	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		13.2	10.8	11.8	11.0	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.1
	Women	Per cent		13.5	10.6	11.4	10.6	9.7	9.6	9.7	9.7
	Men	Per cent		12.9	10.9	12.1	11.3	10.3	10.3	10.5	10.5
Informal employment	Total	Millions		16.1	19.6	18.6	19.0	19.0	18.7	18.2	
	Women	Millions		7.5	9.1	8.5	8.8	8.7	8.6	8.4	
	Men	Millions		8.6	10.5	10.0	10.3	10.3	10.1	9.8	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		8.4	9.4	9.1	9.2	9.0	8.8	8.6	
	Women	Per cent		8.6	9.5	9.0	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.5	
	Men	Per cent		8.2	9.4	9.1	9.3	9.1	8.9	8.6	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	149.9	162.0	177.0	174.3	176.0	179.5			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	30.3	31.0	31.1	30.5	30.5	31.3			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	83.2	84.0	85.1	85.1	85.2	85.1			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	16.8	16.0	14.9	14.9	14.8	14.9			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.



**Table C14. Eastern Europe**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	147.8	148.7	146.2	144.8	144.7	143.8	141.9	140.5	139.4
	Women	Millions	71.1	71.3	69.2	68.5	68.6	68.4	67.5	66.7	66.1
	Men	Millions	76.7	77.4	77.0	76.3	76.0	75.3	74.4	73.8	73.2
	Youth	Millions	19.6	15.7	9.7	9.1	8.9	8.5	8.5	8.8	9.0
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	59.4	59.4	59.7	59.3	59.5	59.5	58.9	58.4	58.0
	Women	Per cent	53.2	52.9	52.5	52.1	52.5	52.6	52.1	51.5	51.1
	Men	Per cent	66.5	66.9	68.1	67.6	67.7	67.6	67.0	66.4	65.9
	Youth	Per cent	40.9	37.8	33.6	31.9	31.0	29.5	29.1	29.4	29.6
Employment	Total	Millions	131.1	136.9	139.3	136.8	137.1	137.4	136.2	134.8	133.9
	Women	Millions	63.1	66.1	66.0	64.8	65.0	65.2	64.6	63.9	63.4
	Men	Millions	68.0	70.8	73.3	72.0	72.1	72.2	71.5	71.0	70.5
	Youth	Millions	15.2	12.8	8.4	7.7	7.5	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.8
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	52.7	54.7	56.9	56.0	56.4	56.9	56.6	56.1	55.7
	Women	Per cent	47.2	49.0	50.1	49.3	49.7	50.1	49.9	49.3	49.0
	Men	Per cent	59.0	61.3	64.8	63.8	64.3	64.7	64.4	63.9	63.4
	Youth	Per cent	31.7	30.9	29.0	26.9	26.1	25.4	25.3	25.5	25.8
Unemployment	Total	Millions	16.7	11.8	6.8	8.0	7.5	6.4	5.7	5.7	5.5
	Women	Millions	7.9	5.3	3.1	3.7	3.6	3.2	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Men	Millions	8.7	6.5	3.7	4.3	3.9	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.8
	Youth	Millions	4.4	2.9	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	11.3	7.9	4.7	5.5	5.2	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Women	Per cent	11.2	7.4	4.5	5.5	5.2	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Men	Per cent	11.4	8.4	4.8	5.6	5.1	4.2	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Youth	Per cent	22.5	18.4	13.7	15.7	15.6	14.0	13.2	13.2	12.8
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		21.7	14.3	15.7	14.1	13.4	12.0		
	Women	Millions		10.9	7.4	8.2	7.3	7.1	6.3		
	Men	Millions		10.8	6.9	7.5	6.7	6.3	5.7		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		13.7	9.3	10.3	9.3	8.9	8.1		
	Women	Per cent		14.2	10.1	11.2	10.1	9.8	8.9		
	Men	Per cent		13.2	8.6	9.5	8.5	8.0	7.3		

**Table C14. Eastern Europe (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		6.1	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.5
	Women	Millions		3.6	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0
	Men	Millions		2.5	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		14.7	11.7	12.6	12.8	12.1	11.4	11.6	11.7
	Women	Per cent		17.5	13.9	14.7	14.9	14.2	13.2	13.5	13.7
	Men	Per cent		12.0	9.6	10.6	10.7	10.2	9.7	9.8	9.8
Informal employment	Total	Millions		28.8	28.8	27.9	28.5	26.7	26.1	25.6	
	Women	Millions		13.3	12.9	12.5	12.8	12.0	11.7	11.5	
	Men	Millions		15.5	15.9	15.4	15.7	14.7	14.4	14.1	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		21.0	20.6	20.4	20.8	19.5	19.2	19.0	
	Women	Per cent		20.1	19.6	19.3	19.6	18.4	18.2	18.0	
	Men	Per cent		21.9	21.6	21.3	21.8	20.4	20.1	19.9	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	114.3	118.1	122.1	119.7	120.4	120.6			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	16.8	18.8	17.2	17.1	16.8	16.8			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	87.2	86.3	87.6	87.5	87.8	87.8			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	12.8	13.7	12.4	12.5	12.2	12.2			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.

**Table C15. Central and Western Asia**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Labour force	Total	Millions	55.9	64.7	76.5	74.4	76.7	79.0	80.1	80.9	81.6
	Women	Millions	21.2	24.7	29.8	28.8	29.9	31.0	31.5	31.8	32.0
	Men	Millions	34.7	40.1	46.7	45.6	46.8	47.9	48.6	49.1	49.6
	Youth	Millions	12.1	12.0	11.7	10.8	11.1	11.4	11.4	11.5	11.6
Labour force participation rate	Total	Per cent	57.7	55.1	56.8	54.7	55.8	56.8	56.9	56.8	56.6
	Women	Per cent	42.7	41.1	43.4	41.5	42.6	43.7	43.9	43.8	43.6
	Men	Per cent	73.5	69.7	70.8	68.5	69.5	70.4	70.5	70.4	70.2
	Youth	Per cent	44.5	39.1	41.1	38.2	39.5	40.5	40.6	40.5	40.3
Employment	Total	Millions	50.7	59.3	69.6	67.7	70.1	73.0	74.4	75.1	75.7
	Women	Millions	18.8	22.6	26.9	26.1	27.1	28.4	28.9	29.2	29.4
	Men	Millions	31.8	36.7	42.7	41.6	43.1	44.7	45.5	45.9	46.4
	Youth	Millions	10.0	10.2	9.7	8.9	9.2	9.7	9.8	9.9	9.9
Employment-to-population ratio	Total	Per cent	52.3	50.5	51.7	49.8	51.0	52.5	52.9	52.7	52.5
	Women	Per cent	37.9	37.6	39.2	37.6	38.6	40.0	40.3	40.2	39.9
	Men	Per cent	67.3	63.9	64.7	62.5	63.9	65.6	66.0	65.8	65.6
	Youth	Per cent	36.7	33.2	33.8	31.4	32.8	34.5	34.9	34.8	34.6
Unemployment	Total	Millions	5.2	5.4	6.9	6.7	6.6	5.9	5.7	5.8	5.9
	Women	Millions	2.3	2.1	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.7
	Men	Millions	2.9	3.3	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	Youth	Millions	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6
Unemployment rate	Total	Per cent	9.4	8.3	9.0	9.0	8.6	7.5	7.1	7.2	7.3
	Women	Per cent	11.0	8.4	9.6	9.4	9.4	8.6	8.2	8.3	8.3
	Men	Per cent	8.4	8.3	8.6	8.7	8.0	6.8	6.4	6.5	6.6
	Youth	Per cent	17.5	15.0	17.6	17.8	16.9	14.8	13.9	14.1	14.1
Jobs gap	Total	Millions		12.1	12.7	13.1	12.4	11.7	11.5		
	Women	Millions		5.7	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.0	6.0		
	Men	Millions		6.5	6.4	6.8	6.3	5.7	5.5		
Jobs gap rate	Total	Per cent		17.0	15.4	16.2	15.0	13.8	13.4		
	Women	Per cent		20.0	18.8	19.5	18.5	17.5	17.1		
	Men	Per cent		15.0	13.1	14.0	12.7	11.3	10.8		

**Table C15. Central and Western Asia (cont'd)**

Indicator	Group	Unit	2000	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Weekly hours worked per employed person	Total	Hours		43.1	42.0	40.3	41.1	41.3	41.2	41.1	
	Women	Hours		39.1	38.1	36.5	37.3	37.6	37.3	37.2	
	Men	Hours		45.6	44.6	42.8	43.6	43.7	43.8	43.7	
Youth NEET	Total	Millions		7.8	6.0	6.3	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.6
	Women	Millions		5.1	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6
	Men	Millions		2.8	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Youth NEET rate	Total	Per cent		25.5	21.0	22.4	20.3	19.7	19.5	19.6	19.6
	Women	Per cent		33.5	27.1	28.2	26.1	25.7	25.5	25.7	25.7
	Men	Per cent		17.7	15.2	16.8	14.9	14.0	13.7	13.8	13.9
Informal employment	Total	Millions		27.6	27.7	25.9	26.5	26.6	26.8	26.9	
	Women	Millions		11.2	11.0	10.2	10.6	10.9	11.0	11.0	
	Men	Millions		16.4	16.7	15.7	15.9	15.8	15.9	15.9	
Informality rate	Total	Per cent		46.5	39.8	38.3	37.8	36.4	36.1	35.8	
	Women	Per cent		49.4	41.0	39.1	39.1	38.3	37.9	37.6	
	Men	Per cent		44.7	39.1	37.8	36.9	35.3	34.9	34.6	
Wage and salaried workers	Total	Millions	25.3	34.6	44.7	43.8	45.5	47.7			
Self-employed workers	Total	Millions	25.3	24.7	24.9	23.9	24.6	25.4			
Share of wage and salaried workers	Total	Per cent	50.0	58.4	64.2	64.7	64.9	65.3			
Share of self-employed workers	Total	Per cent	50.0	41.6	35.8	35.3	35.1	34.7			
Extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Millions	9.3	6.2	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.6		
Share of extreme working poverty (<US\$2.15 PPP per day)	Total	Per cent	18.3	10.5	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.8	3.6		

**Note:** "Youth" = ages 15–24. The terms "women" and "men" refer to ages 15 upwards.











## Advancing social justice, promoting decent work

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

Amidst slowing economic growth, global labour markets have shown resilience in 2023. Global unemployment has dropped to the lowest level since the outbreak of the pandemic and labour force participation has recovered in most regions. Despite these positive headline indicators, fragility has emerged in working conditions, and a cost-of-living crisis has arisen from fast-rising energy and food prices. Employment growth in 2024 is projected to falter even though global unemployment will remain broadly unchanged. Major decent work deficits, which to a large degree predate the pandemic, are set to persist under these conditions – especially gender participation gaps, working poverty, and informality.

This year's *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends* provides a comprehensive assessment of labour imbalances that arose with the recovery from the pandemic and exist alongside persistent decent work deficits. It analyses global patterns, regional differences, and outcomes across groups of workers. The report also offers labour market projections for 2024 and 2025. Finally, it presents trends in labour force participation, hours worked and employment growth and analyses their contributions to labour market imbalances.

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