



International
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ADWA'
Advancing the Decent Work
Agenda in North Africa

ECONOMIC
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WEBINAR SERIES ON

JOBS AND GROWTH IN NORTH AFRICA

KEY MACROECONOMIC INDICATORS AND LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND THE COVID-19 IMPACT

5-8 JULY 2021

The webinar series organized by the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), will bring together policy makers, academics, international organizations and other key stakeholders to discuss the ERF/ILO regional report on Jobs and Growth in North Africa, and the key findings from the COVID-19 labour market monitor.

The report consists of a regional overview and of four Country chapters covering Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Sudan. The report presents growth and labour market patterns over the last two decades (2000-2019). The combination of a macroeconomic and of a labour market perspective sheds light on a range of policy dimensions, including countercyclical management, the public investment mix, boosting private investment, structural transformation, human capital and education, and social protection.

This event happens as the world is facing its most challenging economic and social crisis since the Second World War. The COVID-19 pandemic is deeply affecting North African economies and labour markets. To monitor such an impact, a series of rapid labour force surveys is being implemented by ERF and ILO (ADWA' project) in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Sudan¹. Using a random digital dialling approach, phone surveys have been conducted to produce nationally representative data on the ways the pandemic is affecting labour markets in the region.

The webinar series will be held over four days, starting by presenting each of the country case studies, followed by presenting key findings from the first and second waves of the COVID-19 monitor surveys for these countries, covering the period February to November 2020 and January to February 2021 respectively, and concluding the webinar series by a presentation of the regional comparative perspective.

CONTEXT

The relationship between economic growth and job creation has long been a key focus of economic research. The experience in North African countries over the last generation confirms evidence from elsewhere: growth does linearly deliver jobs. A decade of high growth in the 2000s had not allowed to absorb imbalances in labour markets and at the turn of the decade the region witnessed the outbreak of the Arab spring. After a deep slump in the first part of the 2010s, growth bounced back in the second part of the decade, and before COVID-19 hit. In many circles, the economic policy discourse appeared to have seamlessly returned to the narratives of the 2000s. Price stability and low fiscal spending, not

¹ Data collection in Sudan is implemented by ERF and ILO (CO- Addis Ababa)

to “crowd-out” private investment, together with improvements to the business environment, are the headline concerns.

In a region with a persistently strong demography, the challenge of “job-rich growth” is central. While countries in the region have compared fairly well with other Middle Income Countries (MICs) in terms of gross GDP growth over the past two decades, they continue to feature at the top of the lists in terms of unemployment and youth unemployment rates. With significant improvements in educational attainment, including in tertiary attainment, higher-skilled jobs are in demand. Yet, in North African countries more often than not the share of high-skilled jobs is dwindling. Jobs are not only concerned about incomes but also about economic security; households with stable jobs consume and invest more, and at given wages contribute more therefore to aggregate demand and to the investment rate. When decent working conditions are the norm, women are more able to participate, and overall economic activity rates rise. Instead, the North African region still struggles with amongst the lowest activity rates in the world, and work is by many accounts becoming more precarious and informal.

Policies for job-rich growth need to be driven by an understanding of labour market dynamics that goes beyond cursory looks at just the unemployment rate. In lower and middle-income countries with segmented labour markets and limited social protection, unemployment rates are poor indicators of labour market dynamics. Yet, unemployment is still widely used as the single leading indicator of the labour market both for economic and for social policy purposes.

OBJECTIVES

Under this project, ERF and ILO (ADWA' project) through a regional expert group of economists and statisticians led by Dr Ragui Assad and Dr Mohamed Ali Marouani have assembled data from national statistical offices across the region to produce broad historical series (2000 – 2019) for a wide range of key labour market indicators. These common regional indicators, and the way they may be computed from labour force surveys, have been defined in line with international standards (ICLS). The project also sought to break silos between macro and micro data sources, and between macroeconomics, labour and other economic disciplines. The project's research team included both macroeconomists and labour economists and statisticians².

The regional report presented and discussed in this seminar series is the first of a series of similar reports, to be produced by ERF and ILO (ADWA' project) over the coming years, to continue to track jobs and growth dynamics from a broad perspective, and to advance research and policy understandings on causalities and remedies. A firm grasp of the growth and job market patterns that have preceded these unforeseen times is essential to effective short-term responses and medium and longer-term recovery plans.

² Assad, R. (2019). *Moving beyond the unemployment rate: alternative measures of labor market outcomes to advance the decent work agenda in North Africa* (Approach paper: expert group meeting, December 2019). Cairo: ERF and ADWA'.

The webinars and reports are supported by the project “Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa (ADWA)”, implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The project aims to promote job-rich growth, International Labour Standards (ILS) and their application at the enterprise level. It works at the policymaking level in order to support evidence-based decisions on key dimensions of the Decent Work Agenda.



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AGENDA

THE REGIONAL REPORT ON JOBS AND GROWTH IN NORTH AFRICA KEY MACROECONOMIC INDICATORS AND LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND THE COVID-19 IMPACT WEBINAR SERIES

DAY 1: LABOUR MARKET VULNERABILITY AND PATTERNS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH: THE CASE OF EGYPT

5 JULY 2021 AT 15:00-16:00 CAIRO TIME (GMT +2) – (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Moderator: Dr. Ragui Assaad; *Professor of Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and ERF Research Fellow.*

15:00 – 15:15 Introduction and Welcome Remarks

- Dr. Ibrahim Elbadawi; *Managing Director, ERF.*
- Mr. Eric Oechslin; *Director of the ILO Decent Work Team for North Africa and Country Director for Egypt and Eritrea.*
- H.E. Mr. Mohamed Safaan; *Minister of Manpower – Arab Republic Egypt.*

15:15 – 15:35 Labour Market Vulnerability and Patterns of Economic Growth: The Case of Egypt

- Ms. Mona Amer; *Labour Economist and Consultant.*
- Dr. Irene Selwaness; *Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, and ERF Research Fellow.*
- Dr. Chahir Zaki; *Associate Professor and Director of the French Section, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, and Lead Economist at ERF.*

15:35 – 15:50 Lead Commentators

- H.E. Dr. Ahmed Kamaly; *Deputy Minister of Planning and Economic Development.*
- Dr. Omneia Helmy; *Vice Dean for Post Graduate Studies and Research and Professor of Economics at Cairo University, Member of Editorial Board of the Journal of African Trade and ERF Affiliate.*

15:50 – 16:00 Q&A and Way Forward

**The webinar will be held in Arabic; English and French simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the event.*



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DAY 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE IN TUNISIA

6 JULY 2021 AT 10:00-11:00 CAIRO TIME (GMT +2) – (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Moderator: Mr. Mohamed Selim El Oueslati; *National Coordinator of the ADWA' Project, ILO.*

10:00 – 10:20 **Introduction and Welcome Remarks**

- Ms. Rania Bikhazi; *Director, ILO Country Office for Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.*
- Mr. Fethi Ben Ameer; *Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs.*
- Mr. Fakher Zaibi; *General Manager of the National Observatory of Employment and Skills.*

10:20 – 10:35 **Growth and the Pattern of Employment in Tunisia**

- Dr. AbdelRahmen El Lahga; *Associate Professor at the University of Tunis, ERF Research Fellow, and Researcher at the Partnership for Economic Policy in Canada.*
- Dr. Sofiane Ghali; *Professor, Higher School of Economic and Commercial Sciences of Tunis, University of Tunis, and ERF Policy Affiliate.*

10:35 – 11:00 **Lead Commentators**

- Dr. Mongi Boughzala; *Professor of Economics at University of Tunis El Manar, and ERF Research Fellow.*
- Ms. Asma Ben Hassen; *Tunisia Inclusive Labour Institute.*
- Ms. Naïma Hammami; *Deputy Secretary General and Head of Arab and International Relations and Migration and Member of the Executive Board of the Tunisian General Labour Union.*
- Mr. Sami Sellini; *Central Director of Social Affairs of the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts.*

11:00 – 11:10 **Q&A and Way Forward**

**The webinar will be held in French; English and Arabic simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the event.*



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DAY 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE IN ALGERIA

6 JULY 2021 AT 12:00-13:00 CAIRO TIME (GMT +2) – (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Moderator: Dr. El Mouhoub Mouhoud; *President of Paris Dauphine University and ERF Affiliate.*

12:00 – 12:10

Introduction and Welcome Remarks

- Ms. Rania Bikhazi; *Director, ILO Country Office for Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.*
- Dr. Chahir Zaki; *Associate Professor and Director of the French Section, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, and Lead Economist at ERF.*
- Mr. Charef-Eddine Boudiaf; *General Director of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.*

12:10 – 12:30

Economic Growth and Labour Market Performance in Algeria

- Dr. Moundir Lassassi; *Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement, and ERF Research Associate.*
- Dr. Ali Souag; *University Mustapha Stambouli of Mascara and Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement.*

12:30 – 12:45

Lead Commentators

- Dr. Samir Maliki; *Professor, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, University of Tlemcen and ERF Research Fellow.*
- Dr. Ahmed Zakane; *General Director of National Higher School of Statistics and Applied Economics in Algeria.*

12:45 – 13:00

Q&A and Way Forward

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AGENDA

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KEY MACROECONOMIC INDICATORS AND LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND THE COVID-19 IMPACT WEBINAR SERIES

DAY 3: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE IN SUDAN

7 JULY 2021 AT 15:00-16:00 CAIRO TIME (GMT +2) – (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Moderator: Dr. Khalid Nour Eltigani.

15:00 – 15:15

Introduction and Welcome Remarks

- Dr. Ibrahim Elbadawi; *Managing Director, ERF.*
- Mr. Alexio Musindo; *Director, ILO Country Office for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.*
- Ms. Thoraya Hamad Farah; *Director of the General Directorate for Policies, Planning, and Research, Ministry of Labour and Administrative Reform, Sudan.*

15:15 – 15:35

Economic Growth and Labour Market Performance in Sudan

- Dr. Ebaidalla Mahjoub; *Associate Professor, Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Khartoum, and ERF Research Associate.*
- Dr. Samia Satti; *Professor of Economics, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, Khartoum University and ERF Research Fellow.*

15:35 – 15:50

Lead Commentators

- Dr. Saif El Din Abd El Rhman; *Resilience Advisor, UNDP Resilience Hub, Nairobi.*
- Mr. Kamaleldin Ahmed Ismail, *Census Consultant, Administrative Director, Central Bureau of Statistics, Sudan.*

15:50 – 16:00

Q&A and Way Forward

**The webinar will be held in Arabic; English and French simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the event.*

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**THE REGIONAL REPORT ON
JOBS AND GROWTH IN NORTH AFRICA**

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WEBINAR SERIES

**DAY 4: JOBS AND GROWTH IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE COVID-19 IMPACT – A
REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

8 JULY 2021 AT 15:00-16:00 CAIRO TIME (GMT +2) – (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Moderator: Dr. Ibrahim Elbadawi; *Managing Director, ERF.*

15:00 – 15:15 **Introduction and Welcome Remarks**

- Dr. Ibrahim Elbadawi; *Managing Director, ERF.*
- Ms. Sukti Dasgupta; *Director, Employment, Labour Market and Youth Branch, ILO Geneva.*
- H. E. Mrs. Alexandra Rydmark, *Ambassador Designate of Sweden to Jordan.*

15:15 – 15:40 **Jobs and Growth in North Africa and the COVID-19 Impact – A Regional Overview**

- Dr. Ragui Assaad; *Professor of Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and ERF Research Fellow.*
- Dr. Mohamed Ali Marouani; *Associate Professor at Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne University, IRD and ERF Research Fellow.*

15:40 – 15:50 **Lead Commentators**

- Dr. Salim Araji; *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, ERF Research Fellow.*
- Mr. Sher Verick; *Head, Employment Strategies for Inclusive Transform Unit, Employment, Labour Market and Youth Branch.*

15:50 – 16:00 **Q&A and Way Forward**

**The webinar will be held in Arabic; English and French simultaneous interpretation will be provided during the event.*