



Caribbean Future of Work Forum

Kingston, Jamaica February 2017

REPORT



International Labour Organization
Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean

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● ● ● Background

On 22 February 2017, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in collaboration with the Government of Jamaica, hosted the Caribbean Future of Work (FoW) Forum. The Forum was held at the Pegasus Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica and was attended by the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean under the leadership of the ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder; the Ministers of Labour from twelve (12) Caribbean countries, the CARICOM Secretariat, representatives of the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC) and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) and employers' and workers' organizations from Jamaica, Non-governmental Organizations, academia and the media. Participants at the Forum represented seventeen (17) Caribbean countries.¹

The Future of Work is one of the seven (7) initiatives that would mark the ILO's centenary in 2019. The FoW is structured around four themes namely: (1) work and society; (2) decent jobs for all; (3) organization of work and production; and (4) the governance of work. For the Caribbean FoW Forum, these themes were combined into three (3) sessions:

1. decent jobs for all;
2. governance of work; and
3. organization of work and production.

The objective of the Forum was to discuss the changes in the world of work; challenges presented by these changes and agree on the Caribbean perspective, which would contribute to the global debate to take place 7-8 April 2017, in Geneva.

● ● ● Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony, officiated by **Ms Norma Brown-Bell**, included contributions from the following speakers:

1. Welcome and opening remarks by Mrs Colette Roberts Riden, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), Jamaica;
2. Greetings from Mr Wayne Chen, President, CEC and Ms Jennifer Issacs-Dotson, President, CCL;
3. Remarks by Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General, ILO;
4. Remarks by Hon. Shahine Robinson, Minister, MLSS, Jamaica; and
5. Closing remarks by Mr Damian Cox, Chief Technical Director, MLSS, Jamaica.

1. Welcome and opening remarks - Mrs Colette Roberts Riden

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica, Mrs Roberts Riden welcomed all participants to the Caribbean FoW Forum and acknowledged the participation of the ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder and the ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, the Ministers of Labour from across the region, government officials

¹ The list of participants is attached as Annex A.

and the representatives of the CEC and CCL. In her remarks, Mrs Roberts Riden noted some of the changes in industrial relations, laws and civil society and challenges they presented which the Forum sought to address with a view to looking for solutions in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

2. Greetings - Mr Wayne Chen, President, CEC

The main message from the CEC was centred on the dangers and opportunities, which characterized the Future of Work. He indicated that the Confederation is commitment to (i) social dialogue as an efficient means to meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities to come; and (ii) the goal of creating decent work for Caribbean people because it is believed that new levels of cooperation will enhance collective efforts.

Mr Chen further noted that while the impact of globalization, the advancement of technology and demographic changes offered mounting challenges to planners and policymakers, with adequate efficiency and competitiveness, these equally presented an opportunity to make a quantum leap forward. Some of the challenges facing the Caribbean region were highlighted which included unemployment, particularly youth unemployment; narrowly based economies that are vulnerable to exogenous shocks; adverse impact of climate change; and the aging population. In order to actively mitigate some of these challenges, he indicated that changes in how social partners interrelate were required. He further stated that while tripartism must be embedded in all government activities this needed not to be in isolation and required a joint government approach which recognizes that labour in its broadest sense cannot be consigned to a ministerial silo and required interaction with education, health, culture, youth as well as agriculture, commerce, tourism and industry. With this approach, the Caribbean region could show how government, workers and employers can work together effectively. While the region is small it has demonstrated that size is never an impediment to development.

3. Greetings - Ms Jennifer Issacs-Dotson, President, CCL

The main message from the CCL was about action required to take stock and determine the future we want for the Caribbean and the need to create productive jobs and secure employment. In this regard, workers needed to know whether governments and employers are ready to work with their organizations to put the policies and measures-in place to create a just and prosperous Caribbean Community for all, where each citizen and every resident can freely choose decent productive employment which offers the worker a living wage, protects their safety and provides their family with adequate security.

Some of the challenges confronting the region were highlighted, including slow economic growth, unemployment and disappearance of quality jobs from the formal economy and the public sector, and fiscal restraint. These challenges continue to have a direct impact on the quality of life of the Caribbean people and their survival and decent work could secure stable and quality employment for all persons. Social partners were urged to be proactive in devising a roadmap for a new economy that must place human development as the central objective in dealing with economic and environmental sustainability. It was further noted that the promotion of rights, creation of jobs, the expansion of social protection, the development of occupational safety and health systems and the implementation

of effective tripartite social dialogue mechanisms at all levels of governance must be front and centre of the Caribbean roadmap.

Furthermore, the need to create a labour market information system to assist policymakers and vocational institutions to meet the demand of the market was also highlighted.

4. Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General, ILO

The Director-General congratulated the Government of Jamaica for hosting the FoW Forum to develop a Caribbean vision for the future world of work. The participation of the Ministers of Labour from the region and of the social partners through the CEC and CCL was acknowledged as a demonstration of how to make partnership a cornerstone for the region's blueprint for prosperity.

Mr Ryder shared some of the initiatives that the ILO will be implementing as part of the Organization's centenary celebrations, which includes global conversations on the future of work. These conversations address the transformational changes in our societies, which have a big impact on the world of work. This transformation is accompanied by high levels of uncertainty, and in some cases, fear of change. He noted the importance of including the Caribbean perspective in these conversations which would feed into the work of the High Level Commission on FoW which will present a report at the International Labour Conference in 2019 with the aim of adopting a Centenary Declaration to guide ILO future activities. It was further reported that to date the ILO had convened 150 such conversations around the world.

The Director-General highlighted some of the changes taking place globally and in the Caribbean region which are shaping the future world of work. It was reported that global unemployment stood at approximately 200 million people in 2017, and that young people in particular were finding it difficult to find decent work. In addition, increasing inequality was threatening economic growth and job creation. Some of the specific challenges confronting the region include: sluggish growth, spiralling debt, high youth unemployment, rising crime rates, piecemeal investment and low productivity. In responding to these challenges, the Mr Ryder reiterated the importance of working together with constituencies as part of the FoW initiative to work out the future of work we want. To guide these discussions, the ILO has divided the key policy issues into four conversations which are (1) work on society; (2) jobs; (3) organization of work and production; and (4) governance of work.

In addition, the Mr Ryder shared some of the mega-drivers of change steering the transformation at work. This body of knowledge has been collected as part of the ILO's work to inform the future of work dialogues, namely:

1. Demography

- Rapid aging population and the impact on future social protection and health system. This was also noted as having a particular impact for the Caribbean region;
- Issue of migration and mobility.

2. Technological

- Concerns about automation and the destruction of jobs;
- Improved labour productivity supported by automation;

- High wages due to improved labour productivity;
- Technological advances and the acceleration of cross-border flow of goods and services, which are increasingly knowledge intensive; and
- The need to develop skills and competencies required for meaningful participation in the knowledge economy

3. Climate Change

- The impact of climate change, especially in the Caribbean region, as a result of high and inherent vulnerability to external shocks including natural disasters;
- National plans for greening the economy;
- The need for alternative energies and for reducing the temperature increase;
- COP 21 Agreement to decarbonise of economies, linked to economic recovery and jobs creation.

4. Globalization

- The impact of globalization on developing states and increasing uncertainties;
- Policies to help reposition the Caribbean economies for effective participation in the changing global economic environment;
- The lack of job security and the absence of social interaction afforded by the traditional work arrangements which can have major implications for social cohesion and inequality; and
- The rise of digitization and communication technologies.

In conclusion, the Mr Ryder reported that 600 million new jobs were needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. At the same time, the traditional employment relationships are breaking down and non-standard forms of employment are becoming a norm; and global supply chains are growing and require an enhanced understanding of what this means for decent work. The role of government is critical in this regard, including the participation of social partners, in developing policies that will shape the future of work we want. It is against this backdrop that the ILO strives to realize social justice.

5. Ms Shahine Robinson, Minister, MLSS, Jamaica

The Minister called for a proactive approach in designing strategies that would respond to the changing world of work. While the specific future cannot be predicted, it was critical to commence assessing future challenges and their implications for job creation and skills development for workers. In doing so, a tripartite approach must be employed in a creative and constructive manner.

The Minister further referred to the ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2016 Report, which describes some key challenges the worlds' workforce faces. They include low productivity, low wages, high incidents of informal economy, and forgone taxes. The Minister reiterated the need to ensure a strong Caribbean voice in the Future of Work dialogues. She highlighted the three (3) themes that would guide the Caribbean discussion, (i) decent jobs for all; (ii) governance of work; and (iii) organization of work and production as previously noted by the other speakers.

The future of work lies in an increased flexibility of the labour market, competitiveness of industries must be increased and growing inequality must be addressed. In addition, technological innovation drives social innovation and therefore adaptation was necessary to improve productivity and competitiveness. These challenges must be met in collaboration among the government, workers and employers. Work in the future must achieve equity, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability. The Minister stressed that economic growth means nothing if it leaves people out.

Further, the Minister shared some of the initiatives implemented by the Government of Jamaica through the Economic Growth Council, which includes the development of a growth policy with eight (8) growth initiatives to achieve a five per cent growth in four years, pursued by the Labour Market Reform Commission. Some of the specific initiatives include the launch of the National Qualification Framework and the establishment of the high level committee to drive human capital by the Minister of Tourism. Skills development and education are important for the future of economic growth. Skills of workers must be recognized nationally, regionally and internationally. Social, creative thinking, entrepreneurial, logistic skills are needed. In addition, the Minister highlighted some of the work being carried out by the Ministry of Labour which included the development of the national social protection strategy, review of the OSH Act, improving the school-feeding programme and pursuing an integrated labour and social protection programme.

In conclusion, the Minister affirmed that the Future of Work Initiative has decent work at its core and that it is imperative to start shaping future workplaces through dialogue, partnership and cooperation.

● ● ● Closing remarks

Mr Damian Cox, Chief Technical Director, Labour Division, MLSS, Jamaica

Mr Cox closed the opening ceremony and expressed his appreciation to the organizers, the participants and the ILO.

● ● ● Session 1: Decent jobs for all

The session was moderated by **Mr Danny Roberts**, Head of Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute, and included the following panellists:

1. Senator Dr the Honourable Esther Byer-Suckoo – Minister, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, Barbados;
2. Dr Wayne Wesley, Executive Director, HEART Trust/NTA, Jamaica;
3. Mr Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The session discussed innovation and technological changes which are transforming economies and societies while generating new paths for achieving prosperity and development. It was noted that these changes may affect the existing forms of work and the current mix of occupation while also

creating new forms of work for new occupations, and was transforming the nature and organization of work. In facilitating the discussion, the Moderator posed the following questions to the panellists:

- a. Where will the jobs in the Caribbean come from? How can we ensure quality jobs?
- b. What are the policies and institutions needed to ensure that innovation and technological change create new and better forms of work?
- c. How do we match the skills and training with the needs?

Senator Dr the Honourable Esther Byer-Suckoo – Minister, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, Barbados

In her response, the Minister aligned her intervention with the remarks by the ILO Director-General and the President of the CCL. She reaffirmed that the world of work in the Caribbean shared some commonalities with other parts of the world, but was also unique. The Minister indicated that the jobs in the Caribbean should come from economic growth. To realize economic growth, the policies of job creation, diversification and productivity improvement must be brought into reality beyond discussions.

Technological innovation does not seem to be a major driver of economic growth in the Caribbean. In the region, tourism is still the top industry and it will most likely remain so even when economic diversification is discussed. We therefore have to address the issues arising from climate change, and mitigate their impact. The Minister indicated that in Barbados, one of the economic drivers is green economy, and this should be a main driver for the other parts of the Caribbean as well. She further stated that while climate change is both an opportunity and a threat, adaptation and mitigation measures are necessary. These will change the way businesses operate. Measures for green economy will affect the way people lead their daily lives as well.

The Minister recognized that youth unemployment continues to be a major problem. The Caribbean youth do not see their future in the region and look to migrate. While the general unemployment rate in Barbados is 10 per cent, it is 27 per cent for youth. In this respect, an aging society is an issue, but also an opportunity. Traditionally unpaid work can be a paid job, for instance, caring for the elderly.

In addition, the Minister noted that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) were a concern for Barbados and the region as these can reduce productivity and affect the workforce. Multinational enterprises investing in Caribbean countries will change the world of work by bringing different cultures. In addition, access to work for vulnerable categories of persons, such as disabled persons, women, persons living with HIV, must be fully integrated in the society.

The Minister expressed that not only the Ministry of Labour, but all Ministries must be involved and cooperate with each other in addressing the challenges confronting the world of work in the Caribbean.

As the Sustainable Development Goals are cross-cutting, civil society organizations have an important role to play as well. Trade unions, employers' organizations, the academia and vocational training institutions must also be involved. Regional and international organizations from which the Caribbean countries draw on for financial and technical assistance must also be involved. Together necessary

policies, programmes and mechanisms must be developed, such as labour legislation, social security portability, government procurement, and tax incentives to attract green and decent jobs.

Dr Wayne Wesley, Executive Director, HEART Trust/NTA, Jamaica

In his response, Dr Wesley emphasised the need to include education and training in the discussions concerning economic growth. In this regard, he stressed upon the change in focus from inputs to competencies, which workers should pursue through lifelong-learning, especially in this world of work impacted by technological innovations, which are constantly changing. Such focus should be on work achieved and less on how work is performed.

While foreign direct investment (FDI) can bring economic growth, Dr Wesley noted the need to ensure that workers of the country receiving FDI benefited from the investment. Dr Wesley raised pertinent issues concerning the lack of transfer of knowledge and pointed to the role of Ministers of Labour in ensuring that local people benefited from FDI and possible restrictions on the number of permits to be issued to the investors. Furthermore, to address issues arising from FDI, in addition to tripartism consisting of representatives of the government, the workers' and the employers' organizations, the community impacted by the investment must also be represented and consulted in order to assess social impact. Economic benefits must not be for just a few.

A pointed question was addressed to the CARICOM Single Market Economy (CSME) role in advancing the course of free movement of the Caribbean's 14 million people. Dr Wesley further cautioned against thinking overly based on national sovereignty but rather encourage regional cooperation and collaboration on key economic activities. In this regard an example of the recent discovery of oil in Guyana was highlighted and the need to collaborate with countries such as Trinidad and Tobago for the transfer of technical skills.

In conclusion, Dr Wesley acknowledged that creation of jobs is not magic and must be done collectively. Noting the difficulty in funding the activities of the National Training Authorities, he called for the establishment of an ecosystem that would ensure stable funding for vocational education and training.

Mr Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean

Mr Salazar-Xirinachs presented a report on the future of work, employment and skills in Latin America and the Caribbean. The presentation highlighted some of the key factors that are considered the main drivers and determinants of the future of work in the region. Some of the factors included those identified in the ILO Director-General's opening remarks. These included:

- (i) Demographic and population factors which include issues relating to longevity, youth explosion, greater human diversity, migration and gender parity;
- (ii) Technological factors including cloud technology, automation, robotics, genetics and bioprocesses which are shaping the qualifications and skills which are key for the future of work;

- (iii) Productive development (or under-development) of countries which looks at the impact of low productive in Latin America and the Caribbean region and what can be done to speed up productivity through quality education and relevant training;
- (iv) New enterprise models and forms of contracting dealing with new models of doing business and consumer awareness;
- (v) The political views of social actors and social dialogue processes.

Based on the findings of the report, Mr Salazar-Xirinachs, in this response to where will the jobs come from in the Caribbean, indicated from new engines of growth based on concrete economic activities in tourism, financial services, creative industries, agriculture and agri-business, green growth, strong entrepreneurial ecosystem and formalization. In order to drive this he concluded that productive development policies and social dialogue institutions were critical to ensure that innovation and technological changes create new and better forms of work.

Following the presentations by the panellists, participants posed questions and provided additional contributions. The following salient points were noted:

- The Hon. Keith Scott, Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection, Guyana, noted and agreed with the comments by Dr Wesley encouraging regional collaboration and reported that the Government of Guyana had already contacted and is engaging Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Latin American countries with a view to drawing on their experience and skills in Guyana's oil-industry development.
- The Hon. Steadroy Benjamin, Attorney General and Minister, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Public Safety and Labour, Antigua and Barbuda, posed a question to Dr Wesley with respect to FDI and the policies needed to ensure that all Caribbean people would benefit from it. Dr Wesley responded that there should be a policy concerning a period during which skills will be transferred to the Caribbean citizens. In addition, labour market information systems are critical to analyse trends and identify upcoming opportunities so that the workforce would be prepared and ready for the opportunity.
- In responding to the question regarding the number of jobs required in the Caribbean region from the 600 million new jobs globally to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Mr Salazar-Xirinachs stated that the estimate from the region was not available due to data unavailability.
- In responding to the question regarding the need to identify areas in which opportunities lie in order to tailor vocational training accordingly, Senator Dr the Hon. Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, Barbados, agreed that preparation must be carried out with the cooperation of all Ministries. This will ensure that the policy developed will be aligned with the existing policies of the individual Ministry concerned and implementation can be easily monitored by these ministries. Mr Salazar-Xirinachs added that the ILO has been advocating a job-rich economic growth, not just any growth, and that has to be a policy target and also a measure against which the growth would be evaluated.
- In responding to the question about the Caribbean 40 million population and whether the ILO had conducted a study as to how much freedom of movement of skills would impact economic growth of the region, Mr Salazar Xirinachs indicated that such a study has not been done.

Considering that free movement of skills is an opportunity and that there could be huge potential, the ILO could embark on this type of research if a request was to be received. In addition, Minister Byer-Suckoo added that skills was one area for free movement and that a consideration must also be placed on other issues such as wages and portability of social security so that workers would want to move.

In summing up their inputs, the panellists noted the need for a regional growth policy and the political will to drive the changes needed. In addition, they stressed the importance of developing national policy of work that cover all citizens engaged in social and economic development, which should guide programme-funding and activities. That vocational training must be outcome driven (i.e. focus on competencies that students would leave with after exiting a training institution), and based on a policy of continuous learning throughout a professional life. In addition, tourism, energy and other sectors must be addressed in a combined manner in order to create an enabling environment for economic growth.

● ● ● **Session 2: Governance of work**

The session was moderated by **Dr Leith Dunn**, Senior Lecturer/Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, Mona, University of the West Indies, and included the following panellists:

1. Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago
2. Mr Ruben McSween, Director, Caribbean Employers' Confederation
3. Mr Andrew Lewis, Vice President, Caribbean Congress of Labour

The session discussed how the development of frameworks of social dialogue, norms and institutions for regulating work, including international labour standards, labour inspection system, workplace representation, specialist labour court and tribunals were changing the future world of work. While these norms and institutions are well suited to formal, stable and straightforward employment relationship, it was noted that they have had limited coverage in many emerging and developing economies and are now increasingly under pressure in the developed world.

To facilitate the discussion, the Moderator posed the following questions to the panellists:

- a. How can the Caribbean respond to the erosion of the well-established regulatory framework?
- b. Do we need new or different governance structures to regulate work effectively?
- c. What is needed to make the existing structures effective in this emerging context?

Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister, Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago

In her response, the Minister reported that Trinidad and Tobago held a Future of Work Forum in 2016 in collaboration with the ILO. She noted the following salient points:

- Governance of work is to be intended and understood within the framework of human rights protection and, as such, we ought to adopt a societal perspective.
- Governance of the employment relationship is a key challenge especially as new forms of work will appear, e.g. the gig economy and the multi contract nature of it. At the same time, she noted that contract employment is competing in parallel with non-contract employment, therefore there is a need to redefine what contract and non-contract work means, what are the benefits and drawbacks of each.
- Contract work impact on workers morale and this is detrimental to productivity and economic development.
- In Trinidad and Tobago they recognized intrinsic disadvantages related with contract work in the public administration, for instance, the challenge of accessing finance for workers on a temporary contract. As such, they opted not to utilize such contract modality any longer and progressively shift to permanent employment.
- It is key and paramount to apply collective bargaining to contract workers so as to protect the most vulnerable. Specifically, there is a need for tripartite and multipartite discussion to understand and agree on what contract work should and should not be.
- In Trinidad and Tobago collective bargaining is strongly endorsed by the Government and tripartite consultations seek to engage stakeholders broadly, recognizing the need to reform some of the existing institutions.

The Minister concluded that legislative changes are needed and that while ILO Conventions are universal, they also allow for flexibility to respond to country needs.

Mr Ruben McSween, Director, CEC

In his response, Mr McSween acknowledged that governance of work should be guided by informed policy-making. Furthermore, there is a strong need for labour market information to guide decisions. While a single approach across the Caribbean might not work, he acknowledged the importance of ensuring that all forms of work are protected, especially to ensure that part-time workers do not have less rights than full-time workers. Mr McSween indicated that this translated in the need to review ILO Conventions to make recommendations on ratification or review of legislation and introduce new standards to regulate the definition of work – contract or non-contract.

He concluded that the key to achieve protection is enforcement of existing legislation and reliance on tripartism. Moreover, there is need to introduce solid decentralized functioning within the public administration, together with performance-based contracts and accountability measures. He proposed that Permanent Secretaries should be empowered to fire non-performing employees.

Mr Andrew Lewis, Vice President, CCL

Mr Lewis response noted that while tripartism is agreed upon, most governments had abandoned collaboration with social partners and as a result, responses to the crisis are often miss-designed or miss-calculated with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. He

further indicated that the increase in international movement of capital has highlighted the importance of capital in response to labour.

● ● ● **Session 3: Organization of work and production**

The session was moderated by **Ms Brenda Cuthbert**, Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Employers' Federation, and included the following panellists:

1. The Honourable Stephenson King, Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour, Saint Lucia;
2. Mr Silburn Clarke, Vice Chair, Labour Market Reform Commission, Jamaica; and
3. Professor Neville Ying, Executive Director, Jamaica Diaspora Institute, Mona School of Business and Management, The University of the West Indies

The session explored factors that are rapidly changing organization of work including globalization, technological advancements and competitiveness. These further included how the digital economy was bringing about new forms of production and employment such as gig economy and crowd-sourcing, casual work and ICT-based mobile work.

To better understand the emerging organization of work and production in the context of the Caribbean region, the Moderator posed the following questions to the panellists:

- a. How will the changes in the organization of work and production define the future of work in the Caribbean?
- b. What are the changes in the way that businesses work and what are the implications of what it means to be an employer or an employee?
- c. Is there a new role for labour ministries?

The Honourable Stephenson King, Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour, Saint Lucia

The Minister noted that the issue under discussion presented a disturbing reality and was very relevant as we attempt to address current challenges faced by the labour market and the productive sector. He thought that the presentation by Dr Wesley was provocative. In addressing the questions posed by the Moderator, the Minister confined his response to developments in Saint Lucia. He indicated that the Government had committed to review the Labour Legislation, a process that would commence in March 2017, and that the ILO had demonstrated its commitment to the process. In addition, the Minister noted the little expansion in investment in the tourism sector by the private sector, particularly in the OECS where a number of conglomerates were taking over and indigenous companies, were fading away. He questioned if this could be attributed to the failure by Government to treat with issues that affect the production process.

He further questioned whether the education system was failing young people and whether they were being trained on the right skills that are required by the labour market. Deficiencies in the curriculum

covering the tourism and agricultural sectors were noted. The Minister further called for a coordinated policy in education through labour market information system, which required greater collaboration between the TVET institutions, ministries of labour and education. The Minister further noted the issue of work permits and stressed upon the need to train locals alongside expats and use work permits to support capacity-building and development. In his conclusion, he indicated that there was a need for the development of strong policies to ensure greater coordination in education, training and lifelong learning.

Mr Silburn Clarke, Vice Chair, Labour Market Reform Commission, Jamaica

In his response, Mr Clarke shared some insights on how Caribbean firms can be reinvented for the future. He referred to a number of issues which affects the organization of work and production. These include:

- Innovation, productivity, competitiveness and prosperity challenges which are caused by low skills and low productivity.
- The emergence of a knowledge-based economy, which is replacing land and capital was becoming the main resource driving the fourth industrial revolution. The revolutions are driven by continuous advances in machines, automation, global communications and IT. This, he noted, meant that certain jobs would be lost while high technical skills would be required. He noted that the Caribbean region had three stages of economic development, namely resource-based, efficiency-based, or innovation-based. In this regard, Trinidad and Tobago was at stage three, Jamaica at stage two, Barbados between stages two and three and Haiti as stage one. He further noted that firms that innovated the most would expand the economy.

Mr Clarke further challenged the thought “from where would these firms’ sustainable and competitive advantage arise?” In his response he indicated through exploring knowledge, innovation and creativity factors. In this regard, firms must have valuable, non-imitative resources to become competitive. In addition, the Caribbean firms must be able to rearrange and reinvent to enter the uncontested space based on value contribution – culture and continuous improvement and innovation. He further noted the need for building tripartite consensus -- which he referred as the ‘Triple Helix Model -- rested on four pillars, vision; leadership; innovation and collaboration. He then concluded by asking the following pertinent questions for consideration of the tripartite partners:

- a. Are the institutions comprising the training and education ecosystem presently optimized for delivering the workforce of today and the future?
- b. Are the levels of investment (public and private) supporting the creation of knowledge and intellectual capital adequate to energize and drive the necessary economic growth, which, the region seeks?
- c. How do we ensure that our Helix partners continually improve the training and educational ecosystem for most effective delivery?
- d. How do we mitigate the loss/leakage/outward migration of talent to the metropolises?

Professor Neville Ying, Executive Director, Jamaica Diaspora Institute, Mona School of Business and Management, The University of the West Indies

Professor Ying's presentation was titled "Planning for Organization of Work and Production for Future of Work" and noted that the future of work was uncertain and unknown both internationally and in particular in the Caribbean. Therefore in guiding the planning and preparation for the future of work, he outlined the following three processes:

1. Strategic thinking incorporating trends that are likely to have significant impact on the future of work. Trends and drivers of transformation, which included technology and ICT, mergers of formal and informal economies and strategic geopolitical partnerships and investments.
2. Focussing on key sustainable imperatives influenced by productivity and the dominance of technology in the workplaces. Requirements for creativity, innovation, ethical practice, flexibility and agility, discipline and leadership styles based on self-awareness and capacity to build relationships.
3. Reshaping and repositioning the roles of the tripartite constituents built on conversational competencies conveying context and meaning and energizing and exciting people to be part of the conversation.

In implementing the framework for shaping tripartism, Professor Ying identified the following roles for each constituency:

- a. Role of Government
 - Develop policies to promote inclusive growth, create jobs and employment in key areas, raising social protection floors;
 - Harmonization of laws across regional borders;
 - Incorporating ILO Conventions;
 - Promoting economic diplomacy for bilateral relationship.
- b. Role of employers
 - Create jobs especially for youth;
 - Promote safety and health at the workplace;
 - Fair wages, personal development;
 - Mobility.
- c. Role of Trade Unions
 - Promote personal development, empowerment and productivity to enable members to work anywhere;
 - Social and rights protection for local and migrant workers.

In conclusion, Professor Ying reiterated that planning for the future of work must begin now and should be informed by transformational leadership. This calls for the use of trends that are likely to affect, impact, build collaboration among key stakeholders and the development of clear, manageable implementation plans.

At the end of the panel discussion, participants reinforced the need to increase investment in social enterprises and build a clear vision which excited and inspired people to take action and showed empathy for concerns and feelings of others.