

ZIMBABWE & THE FUTURE OF WORK

A DISCUSSION PRIMER FROM THE SPACE

“Whatever we think of them, the circumstances of the world of work are the outcome of a myriad of decisions taken, in the public and in the private domains, nationally and internationally, and with regard to all aspects of policy. Equally, and notwithstanding already observable dynamics of change and some very harsh realities, the future of work is what we will make it. The challenge is to make it the one we want.”

Guy Rider, 2015

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ABSTRACT

This paper shares and takes forward, by way of report and expansion, perspectives and conversations on the future of work that took place at “theSpace” high level debate of 16 September 2016, between international policy makers, academia, and the private sector, in conversation with Zimbabwean youths. The paper scopes the issues around Zimbabwe and the future of work and encourages an honest conversation that acknowledges global trends in shaping the future of work, but cautions Zimbabweans against dealing with it in a contextual vacuum. Besides being contextual, the paper suggests that the world of work is also characterized by both change and continuity. It highlights Zimbabwe’s context as that of an economy that is informal, with the bulk of workers unskilled, underemployed and part of unorganized labour. In this respect, the paper argues that critical to Zimbabwe’s ability to adapt to the future of work will be a return to basics and dealing with the fundamental deficiencies through: (1.) the transformation of the education system in qualitative ways that enhance recipients’ innovation capacities as well as their global competitiveness, (2.) Dealing with institutional credibility challenges that impede both local and international investment into Zimbabwe’s productive sectors, (3.) putting in place policies and measures that aid

a transition from informality to formality, (4.) preserving space for collective action and organizing like labour unions, and (5.) locating dialogue on the future of work around the decent work agenda, and the sacrosanctity of social justice. The paper sees the future of work in Zimbabwe as a national concern that should be the subject of discussion, planning, and action of a broad range of societal interests. It calls for the convening of a series of national dialogues on the future of work, which locate the roles of the main societal sectors and their ability to suit-up and respond to the demands of the future in ways that are sustainable and reflect the interconnected aspirations for just, social, economic and environmental progress. Given Zimbabwe's current state of play, the article encourages Zimbabwe to respond to present and future threats to social justice, underpinned by the notion of decent work. 'Decent', thus, has to be the operational word where the future of work is concerned, and the cornerstone of future of work conversations in Zimbabwe. This, the paper argues, is of fundamental importance if Zimbabwe is to reduce chances of the fourth technological revolution fostering the advancement of a few, while leaving millions behind - banished to poverty and a highly unequal world.

Key Words: Zimbabwe; Future of Work; Decent Work; Young People; Labour; Fourth Industrial Revolution; innovation capacity;

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1 INTRODUCTION

How does global dialogue around the "fourth industrial revolution" impact developing countries?¹ How does a country with a traditionally low labor absorption capacity, whose jobs are predominantly found in subsistence farming and the informal economy, make sense of the conversation on the future of work? What is work, and what are the driving forces for its future? How is Zimbabwe affected? What are the likely implications of positive and negative externalities of endogenous and exogenous trends driving the future of work in Zimbabwe? Is Zimbabwe ready for the future of work?

The above questions are complex and fuller answers are beyond the scope of this discussion paper, but they assist in locating the global conversation on the future of work in its local context. This article embraces the ILO's call for national conversations on the future of work, and, without claims at prophecies, outlines one possible scenario, while raising questions to provoke a national debate on Zimbabwe and the future of work. It takes forward and reports on perspectives and conversations that took place as part of the "theSpace" dialogue on the future of work, on 16 September 2016, between international and national policy makers in conversation with the youth of Zimbabwe.² In this respect, the paper scopes the issues around Zimbabwe and the future of work. It starts by justifying the urgency of the conversation globally and moves to posit an understanding of work, and the global drivers of the future of work. It then outlines the state of the Zimbabwean political economy and engages what the given context might entail for the future of work. The paper reflects on the challenges and opportunities of the four thematic issues that are part of the conversation on the future of work as led by the ILO as follows: (1.) Work

¹ The term 4th Industrial Revolution is used to refer to the current stage of development in the organization of value chains in the manufacturing industry, where the technology, automation, use of computers and Internet are prominent aspects. It is also referred to depending on setting as 'industry 4.0'-first brought into prominent conversations by the German government as it sought to computerize and automate its manufacturing sector - or The Internet of Things.

² A video of the discussion is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va9RIOkDNPg>

and Society, (2.) The decent work agenda, (3.) the organization of production and work, and (4.) The social justice vision.

2 Overview: The Future Of Work And The Urgency Of Now

The history of world progress is a study in the paradox of change and continuity. On the one hand, we had massive impulsions to push the boundaries of possibility, which changed people's lives in dramatic and previously unimagined ways. This is as true of the discovery of fire and the invention of the steam engine, as it is the way that the Internet (of things) and rapid technological advancements have revolutionized the way we live and work today. Pushing the boundaries of possibility is inspirational to some and scary to others, because where others see profit, opportunities, and freedom, others see loss, Armageddon, and subjugation. On the other hand, world history has also been about resilience, survival, and continuity, with people's ability to master technological advancement, adjust and adapt, as well as continue as the species right at the center of the changes. Celebrated economist Joseph Schumpeter is famed for theorizing this constant change in the economy as constructive destruction – a process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, constantly destroying the old one to create a new one. This process and allied changes to the world of work is ongoing, and cannot be wished away. However, as the ILO Director-General Guy Rider, eloquently put it, notwithstanding these 'observable dynamics of change and some very harsh realities, the future of work is what we will make it'³.

"The world has changed, but the world has not changed."

16 September 2016

Dr. Nginya Mungai Lenneiye (convener Innovation Baraza) speaking at the second edition of theSpace www.thespace.co.zw

³ ILO (2015) *Report Of The Director General: Report 1- The Future Of Work Centenary Initiative*. International Labour Conference, 104th Session, 2015

So if change has always been part of human history and the concomitant of great, revolutionary and often progressive change, why the urgency in conversations and exhortations to engage on the future of work? In part, this is because the levels of change taking place are unprecedented. Google's Chief Engineer, Ray Kurzweil, commented in 2001 that 20,000 years of progress would be crammed into the next 100 years⁴, and the ILO remarked in 2013 that 'processes of change were taking place at such speed, and on such a scale as to constitute a transformation of the world of work.'⁵ The question of the future of work is therefore not just an intellectual futuristic conversation, but is of relevance today, and we feel it's repercussions in our professional, political, social, economic, and personal spaces.

Some of the immediate implications can be heard reverberating in conversations around how automation has hollowed out what is often seen as the engine of growth and mainstay of development, the middle class. In Europe, the repercussions of this hollowing out could be seen in the political 'revolt' by those presumably left behind (former blue collar workers predominantly from small towns) who lost their jobs and associated prestige to automation in industry and the service sector. In Britain, these are the people who voted to leave the EU (BREXIT) against the well thought out arguments of their professional commentariat, scientific community, and tech-savvy, globally connected, big city dwellers who have benefited from technological advancement and globalization. In America this conversation has been taking place through the salience of talk on the top 1% who have materially benefitted from globalization and technological leaps, against the 99% who have benefitted less and whose jobs are in danger as an estimated 45% of jobs currently being done by people can be automated using existing technologies.⁶

⁴ See *The Law of Accelerating Returns*, Ray Kurzweil at <http://www.kurzweilai.net/the-law-of-accelerating-returns>

⁵ ILO, *ibid*

⁶ · See for instance McKinsey and Company <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/automation-jobs-and-the-future-of-work>, also Gratton, L. (2011) " *The Shift: The future of work is here now.*" Harper Collins. London. Or Thomas, R.J.; Fuchs, R.; and Silverstone, Y. (2016) " *A Machine in the C-Suite.*" Accenture Strategy Analysis. □

So the fears around automation are as real as the technological advancements themselves, but it has to borne in mind that technological advancements have also led to enhancement of social services and health care. Tech-driven health and social service solutions have improved our quality of life and increased longevity, adding more years of work for people, beyond the traditional, 60, 65 and 70 years retirement age thresholds. At a global level, private companies, countries, and universities are investing in years of research to understand the future of work.⁷ The United Nations and its specialist body on labour, the International Labor Organization (ILO) are investing in years of global consultations, and mainstreaming conversations around the future of work, with the ILO placing it at the center of its centenary celebrations in 2019 and political program going forward.⁸ However, the conversation in Africa in general, and Zimbabwe, in particular, has been relatively muted, ungrounded, and lacking leadership across society's key sectors and the state.

3 Understanding Work In The Past, Present, And Future

Work is a universal, yet fluid concept, which means different things to different people, but can be understood as whatever physical or mental activities that one carries out, such as a job. Work is often done in pursuit of income to meet ones basic human needs, and fulfill material responsibilities to self and others. In this respect, work is the primary causal pathway to one's sustenance and survival. However, work is also more than just the mechanical process of exchanging physical and mental competencies for the capability to fulfill basic human needs. In addition, work also provides the space where workers: (1.) Can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments. (2.) Make their greatest contribution to the common well being, and (3.) pursue their spiritual development (ILO Declaration of

⁷ For illustrative purposes, see the work done by the London Business School's [Deloitte Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#), since 2008 or their Lynda Gratton's blog [www.lyndagrattontofutureofwork](#). See also Price Waterhouse Coopers which has done extensive scenario building work on the future of work and released a report, *The Future of Work: A Journey to 2022*, developed a disruption profiler for different industries to test their readiness for the future of work, and several blogs on the future of work. For country investments into understanding the future of work, see for instance the UK Commission for Employment and Skills report, "The Future of Work: Jobs and Skills in 2030". □

⁸ See [www.ilo.org/futureofwork](#)

Philadelphia, 1944⁹). Work is, therefore, the place where one can derive satisfaction from achievement, where calibration and aggregation of purpose and worth to self and society through contributing to the greater good, takes place. But beyond this, work and returns from it have to be just. How one pursues the above functions differs remarkably regarding how, where and for what returns. Despite these differences, there is consensus that the world of work as we know it, is not just going to change in an abstract future that is the product of active imaginations but is changing now.

3.1 Global Trends Driving The Future Of Work

Many factors are influencing and driving the future of work, but there is an unusual consensus among governments, international organization's, international finance capital, labour and civil society, on the trends that are foremost in influencing the transformation of work¹⁰ James Manyika, a Zimbabwean and Director at McKinsey Global Institute, and his colleagues, argue that the global economy is being impacted on by: the rise of emerging markets, accelerating impact of technology on traditional market forces, an aging world population, and accelerating flows of trade, people, capital and data (Dobbs, Manyika, and Woetzel, 2010¹¹). In addition to these four forces, Gratton adds the needs of a low carbon economy, and profound societal changes in terms of people's work and professional consciousness (Gratton, 2010¹²). Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), in their prognosis of the future of work, follows similar patterns, listing technological breakthroughs, resource scarcity and climate change, shift in economic powers, demographic changes, and rapid urbanization (PWC, 2015¹³). PWC suggests that the world of work, for corporations at least, may

⁹ ILO Declaration of Philadelphia of 10 May 1944: Declaration concerning the aims and purposes the International Labour Organization at http://blue.lim-ilo.org/cariblex/pdfs/ILO_dec_philadelphia.pdf □ □

¹⁰ Following the UKCES 2014 report, this paper adopts the understanding of trends as, an empirically documented development, which lasts for several years. Trends are relatively stable and less likely to be affected by cyclical changes and fluctuations, nor are they subject to sudden reversals or dramatic increases. In general, trends have a clear direction and a robust course. □

¹¹ Dobbs, R.; Manyika, J.; and Woetzel, J. (2015) *No ordinary Disruption: The four global forces breaking all the trends*. Public Affairs Books. □

¹² See footnote 4.

¹³ PWC (2015) *The Future of Work: A journey to 2022*

take any one of three ways or amalgams of the three pure types, which they outline as follows:

- **THE GREEN WORLD**, where social responsibility dominates the corporate agenda, climate, and demographic changes are central to business models, and sustainability (social, economic and environmental) is mainstreamed into business.
- **THE BLUE WORLD**, where there is the dictatorship of big business and individualism with limited to no concern for social responsibility.
- **THE ORANGE WORLD**, where companies are becoming a thing of the past, and collaboration networks of smaller organizations are in vogue with specialization dominating the global economy.

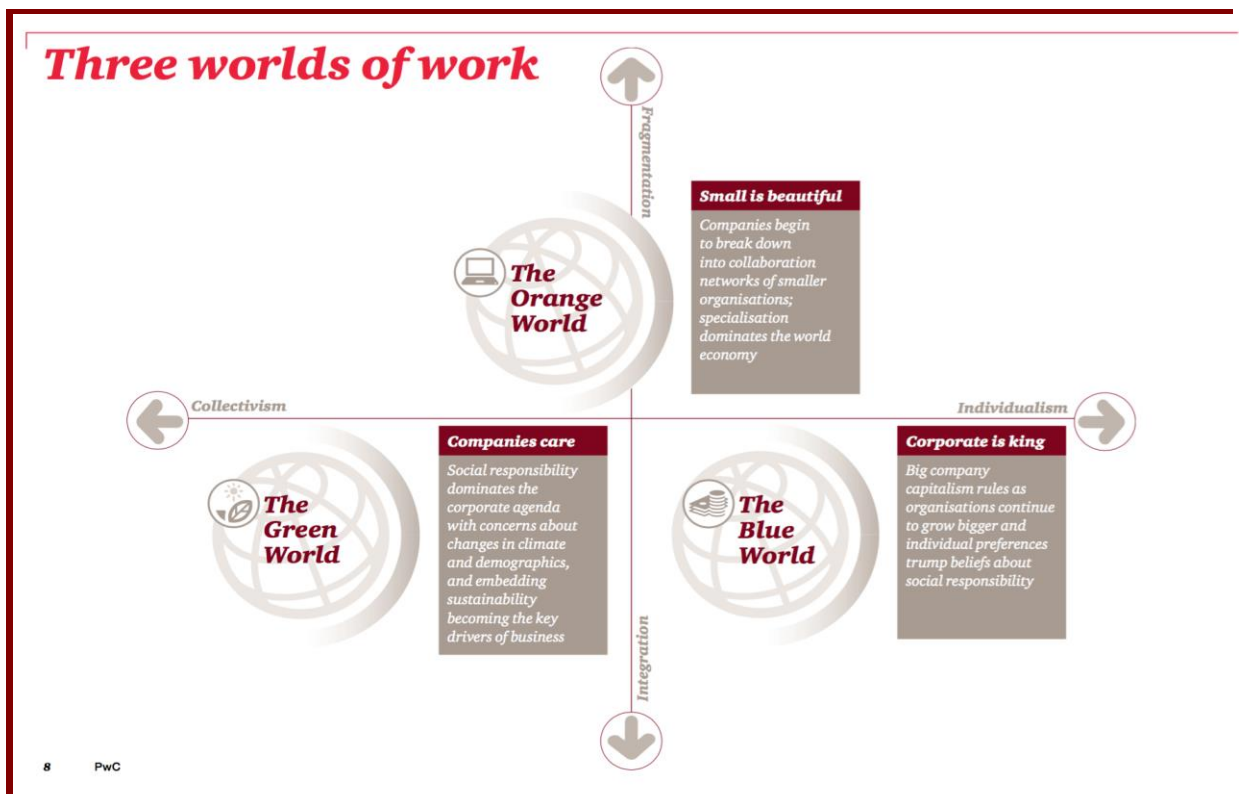


Figure 1: PWC (2015) The Three Worlds of work, sourced from The Future of Work- a journey to 2022

Top 10 skills

in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

in 2015

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity



Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

Figure 2 Skills for the future

3.2 A Cautionary Note on Global Trends

It is evident from the consensus on trends from global corporate finance that there is change and fragmentation, of traditional production processes. However, the agreement of capital and business on the patterns, while correct, they are trends that are noted by business, and predominantly speak to what will impact profitability and operations of the firm. Besides, the following also have to be considered:

- ⇒ While the trends may be global, they are predominantly informed and more poignantly felt in the developed world and to some extent, in emerging economies (of which Africa invariably has anything from 3 to 12 emerging economies depending on who is counting). This is not to say Zimbabwe and Africa are untouched by these trends, but one should consider the rate of diffusion of the patterns, contextual realities, amongst other factors, when analyzing the differentiated impact of these trends.
- ⇒ The articulation of these trends, bar the PWC take, hardly pays attention to other critical components that speak to the politics of the future of work and the patterns ability:
 - ⇒ To be managed and governed by present governing arrangements,

- ⇒ To create winners and losers in ways that impede and have social justice implications based on both the trends, and the changes they are facilitating, or perpetuate current inequalities among persons, sexes, sectors and countries.
- ⇒ To impact on traditional power relations as, on one-hand, states, usually, the regulators are losing power to corporations due to constrained financial and technological muscle. On the other hand, both limited financial capacity, and the reorganization of work through flexi-employment, informalisation, global supply chains, teleworking, the gig economy, the sharing economy, and casualization restrict labour organizations' ability to conduct political action and facilitate collective bargaining and action.
- ⇒ Impact on global aspirations around sustainable development encapsulated in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and their emphasis on sustainable development based on the triple baseline of social, economic and environmental sustainability. As well as Africa's Agenda 2063, which mirrors these goals and aspirations around development with a human face, which does not spawn what the UNDP, called ruthless, jobless, rootless and futureless growth.

Taking these trends at face value, and ascribing them to the globe, despite the variation in contexts is tempting, but will lead to conversations that are lopsided and while conceptually interesting, may be contextually irrelevant. The objective conditions of the developing world and countries like Zimbabwe may differ, and in the short term may be affected by different trends and circumstances, or the same trends but at different intensity.

3.3 Connecting the Dots: Future, Trends & Today's Global Realities On Work

The ILO attempts to remedy the above-intimated disconnects through adopting a different approach to dealing with the future of work. While noting the trends, it begins the conversation by looking at prevailing conditions in the current world of work. While accepting the undeniable impact of the forces outlined by global capital

at 3.1, ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder provides also highlights the following about the current context:

- ⇒ **Jobs, Poverty, and Social Protection-** That a discussion on the future of works needs to acknowledge the current jobs gap globally of 200 million, and gender disparity, in which youth unemployment rates highest and women are adversely affected, respectively. Also, the discussion needs to note that most of those who are in employment are under employed, and the majorities are in informal economy work.
- ⇒ **Internationalization of production – That in the current world of work** social justice challenges are emanating from the pervasive use of global supply chains in world in which governments still administer labour rights and laws at national level.
- ⇒ **The quality of work:** That over 50% of the world is producing within the informal economy, with severe decent work deficits.¹⁴

But what do these trends and the global context mean for Zimbabwe and Africa, below we outline the state of Zimbabwe's economy and other factors contributing to the future of work:

4 Zimbabwe and Future of Work

Zimbabwe does not exist in a vacuum, as such, Industry 4.0, the demographic changes, the rising salience of low carbon or green economies, shifting patterns of work, the age of big data, shifts world economic power, and momentum towards sustainable development will all constitute positive and negative externalities for it.

4.1 The Macroeconomic Picture

The shift in economic power identified, as one of the leading trends should give Africa something to smile about. The IMF in 2015 projected that despite some weaknesses regarding institutions, fiscal space, and infrastructure; GDP in sub-Saharan Africa was expected to continue its 15-year growth run with expectations of

¹⁴ See the Director General's report: *Future of Work Centenary Initiative (2015)* presented to the plenary of the ILO's 104th session

reaching 6% in 2016, before moderating (IMF, 2014¹⁵). But as with most types of global data and cross-national statistics, the outlook for Africa belies some far-reaching variation in terms of economic performance amongst regions and between countries. Africa-wide, the impressive run of continental GDP growth was driven by sound economic performance from East and West Africa, with Southern Africa performing worst after Central Africa (AFDB, 2016¹⁶). Similar variation is present within the regions as well. A closer look at the SADC sub-regional national realities show that despite the upward trend, Zimbabwe's economy has been slow to recover from the hyper inflationary economic crisis that engulfed it between 2000 and 2009. Since rebounding in 2009, the Zimbabwean economy has been on a down turn, experiencing steady declines from a high of 11,9% growth in 2011 to 3,8% in 2014 and 1,5% in 2015.

The Zimbabwean government, through the September 2016 mid-term fiscal policy statement, projected that the economy would grow by 1.2%, down from earlier projections of 2.7% (GoZ, 2016¹⁷). The IMF was of a different opinion, predicting negative growth for Zimbabwe in 2016, at -0.3%, before dipping to between 0 and -2.5% in 2017 (IMF, 2016¹⁸). These macroeconomic indicators suggest that Zimbabwe is set for tough economic times. The causes are many, but include deflation, stagnation, and low productivity in industry, exacerbated by low commodity prices, weak regional currencies, and impending droughts (Chitiyo et al. 2016¹⁹). While the government also points to an unfavorable international environment, blaming measures and restrictions, or sanctions, imposed mainly by the US and European union as acting against meaningful economic recovery. However, Chitiyo and his colleagues argue that the situation is heightened by inconsistent policy

¹⁵ IMF (2014) *World Economic Outlook: Legacies, clouds, and uncertainties*, October. Washington, DC.

¹⁶ AFDB (2016) *African Economic Outlook: Sustainable cities and structural transformation*. www.africaneconomicoutlook.org

¹⁷ GOZ (2016) *the 2016 mid-year fiscal policy review statement: improving investor confidence to enhance productivity*. Harare. September 2016

¹⁸ IMF (2016) *World Economic Outlook: Subdued Demand: Symptoms and Remedies*. Washington, DC, October 2016

¹⁹ Knox Chitiyo, Alex Vines and Christopher Vandome (2016) *The Domestic and External Implications of Zimbabwe's Economic Reform and Re-engagement Agenda*. Chatham House. London. September 2016

implementation and articulation, as well as political uncertainty precipitated by in fighting in the ruling party.

While others also point to inhibitive business costs, commercial revenue underperformance due to deindustrialization, poor infrastructure and poor political and economic institutional quality among other factors.

Suffice to say that the

macroeconomic indicators point to an economy that is unlikely to create employment as a result of factors highlighted above.

“We are already seeing the impact of technology in traditional jobs. Whether you are on a production line and or even on people to people interaction.”

16 September 2016

Her Excellency Ambassador Catriona Laing
(United Kingdom Ambassador to Zimbabwe)
speaking at the second edition of theSpace
www.thespace.co.zw

4.1.1 Productive Sector Deficits, Innovation Challenges and Location of Current Work

The state of Zimbabwe’s economy points to sterner challenges related to the future of work, because economic performance is an indicator of the situation in the main productive sectors of the economy. In this respect, GDP serves to indicate low production levels in the mainstays of the economy - the labour intensive sectors of Manufacturing, Agriculture and Mining, which have all been in decline regarding contributions to GDP and Jobs, save for mining, over the last 5 years. The gains in mining are great but come with the caveat that very few countries, like Botswana in the SADC region, have developed and grown from natural resource alone. For purposes of this discussion, it also worth noting that while natural resources can enhance the state’s fiscus, resource extraction tends to capital intensive, while absorbing little labor and under-developing institutions.

Inevitably the decline in the economy and its key drivers had as its corollary, not just job loses, but also further informalisation of these areas. This trend is especially worrying from a development perspective, as industry has traditionally driven economic growth (with a few exceptions) contributing skilled jobs in the process. On this reasoning Zimbabwe is struck by a double whammy, as the United Nations

Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) argues that without industrialization, development is unlikely to occur, and without technology and innovation, industrialization may also not occur (UNIDO, 2015²⁰). This places Zimbabwe in a difficult situation where it needs industry to develop, but its manufacturing sector has been hit hard by (premature) deindustrialization²¹, and what is left is not producing at optimal levels. Conventional growth theory would suggest that for Zimbabwe's industry to perform (and converge with the developed world), it needs to deal with varied challenges including natural strategic challenges like geography, as well as foster an enabling environment characterized by sound policy fluency and credible political and economic institutions, together with the inducing technology and innovation to spur industry forward. Central government plays critical roles in all the above. However, part of the triple whammy challenge stems from the reality that (1.) little can be done about negative geo-spatial endowments, (2.) inducement of tech-innovation is slowed down by the human development challenges that stem from educational foundations, which besides being weak on science education, were also not calibrated to inculcate innovation, and (3.) the workers already in the labour market, especially in the informal sector, are mostly unskilled and possess limited innovation capacity.

According to the World Economic Forum, Zimbabwe's education system has done well in spreading access (quantity) but fares poorly regarding quality. WEF's Global Competitiveness Index ranks Zimbabwe at 125 out 140 countries. This is allied with poor showings in capacity for innovation (128), business sophistication (130), education and training (117), and labour market efficiency (134) (WEF, 2015²²). This is not to say Zimbabwe is devoid of innovators; it has innovators, and the corporate

²⁰ UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) (2015) *Industrial Development Report: The role of technology and innovation in inclusive and sustainable industrial development*. Vienna: UNIDO

²¹ Premature deindustrialization refers to the situation where developing countries are become service economies without having had a proper experience of industrialization, which were the precursors of most of the service oriented economies of the developed world. See Danny Rodrik's blog on his work on it here <http://voxeu.org/article/premature-deindustrialiation-developing-world>

²² WEF (2015) *Global Competitiveness rankings* at <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/report-highlights/#ranking>

world regards well Zimbabwe's workforce in terms pay versus productivity. The burgeoning class of creative entrepreneurs in different sectors, and the placement of Zimbabweans amongst the most talented in different fields the world over is testament of this. Zimbabwe's challenge concerning innovation capacity and business sophistication is of both inculcation and scale. To meet these challenges, the wealth of indigenous entrepreneurs in the informal economy needs to be turned into a world-beating sophisticated business class that does a little more than petty trade in essential commodities, and innovate beyond services and education apps. It also entails translating the national pride around literacy into more than just reading and writing at grade-3 level²³, into education that produces people capable of economic modeling, computer coding, engineering, manufacturing, and innovating around global services through improving the appropriacy and quality of education to be a better fit for both the present and jobs of the future.

Given the above, while noting the global nature of today's trends and conversation on the future of work, a discussion on the future of work, in Zimbabwe has to be grounded in context and prevailing conditions. Such a conversation needs to take have a different tone from a debate on the future of work in Mauritius or South Africa who both place in the world's top 50 of the Competitiveness index, or Kenya and Nigeria, whose capacity for innovation is highly regarded globally. The discussion will have to be different from that taking place in Singapore (2), The United States (3), or the United Kingdom (10), which all place in the top 10 WEF Index. Zimbabwe's conversation on the future of has to be about the fundamentals, informed by the state of the economy, and how to make lemonade from lemons, so to speak. The conversation needs to be about how the country can rise in ways that create and promote decent work, and ensure that technology accelerators assist with rebooting the economy without killing (and not replacing) too many jobs, banishing the majority of people into poverty, while a select few thrive. Because some of the challenges are natural, and others are legacies of past political and economic disenfranchisement, they will take long to correct, so a conversation on the future of work also needs to

²³ *The basic UNESCO definition of literacy implies the ability to read and write a sentence and understand it, while others using education attendance as a proxy, like number of years spent in school*□

have a real future focus beyond the next 5-10 years, and needs to promote patience and long term planning. Given the nature of the economy, a conversation on the future of work also has to be about facilitating an economic transition, from informality, often regarded as a bane because of the often precarious nature of work there, to formality, where regulation, social safety nets and protections for workers are present.

4.1.2 The Bane Of Informality, and Necessity of a Transition To Formality

A Medium Small And Micro Enterprise (MSME) survey conducted in 2012 estimated that there were over two million individual entrepreneurs, and about 800,000 informal and small-scale enterprises, employing over 2.9 million people in Zimbabwe (FinScope 2012). The vast majority of these entities (82%) are tiny (having less than four employees), very young, (71%, start-ups in operation for less than 4 years), mostly rural (66%), and unlicensed (85%) operating from residential premises, small plots, door to door or on the streets (FinScope, 2012²⁴). Some of these numbers were mirrored in the Central Business Registry inquiry of 2015, which highlighted that most businesses were involved in commodities trading where about 30% had an annual turn over of less than USD 5000, while only 1% of netted over a million dollars annually (ZIMSTAT, 2015²⁵).

²⁴ See *FinScope 2012 Survey on Micro Small to Medium Enterprises*
http://www.finmark.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/FinScope_Zimbabwe_Broch13FNL.pdf

²⁵ *Central Business Registry Inquiry* -
http://www.zimstat.co.zw/sites/default/files/img/publications/Cbr/CBR_2015_Revised.pdf

The Zimbabwe Labour Force Survey for 2014 showed that 94,5 of employment in Zimbabwe is informal, up from around 85% for 2012. Over 86% of those in informal

“When you look at the structure of Zimbabwe's economy, it has undergone far-reaching and wrenching changes over the past three decades. We Actually call it a DUAL and ENCLAVE economy. There has been a PREPONDERANCE of INFORMILISATION with an estimated 94.5% of LABOUR actually informalised”

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Dr. Prosper Chitambara (Economist at LEDRIZ) speaking at the second edition of theSpace www.thespace.co.zw

employment are unskilled young people, mostly female (ZIMSTAT, 2014²⁶). While the statistic is startling, one has to bear in mind that Zimbabwe inherited the dual and enclave economy with a low labor absorption capacity from the colonial state in 1980 although current macroeconomic performance and poor productive sector performance have been accelerants.²⁷ The take away is that the economy and its jobs are largely informal, and both macroeconomic policy, and discussions on the future of work need of necessity to factor this reality in. The table below shows where jobs are currently found as a percentage, disaggregated by gender and industrial sector.

²⁶ http://www.zimstat.co.zw/sites/default/files/img/publications/Labour/Labour_2014.pdf

²⁷ Some scholars have outlined this legacy clearly. For illustration see Kanyenze, G. et al. (2011). *Beyond the Enclave: Towards a pro-poor and inclusive development strategy for Zimbabwe*. African Books Collective. Or Mhone, G.C.Z. (2000), 'Enclavity And Constrained Labour Absorptive Capacity In Southern African Economies,' Discussion Paper No.12. International Labour Organisation, and Mhone, G. & P.Bond (2002), 'Botswana And Zimbabwe', In M. Murshed (Ed.), *Globalization, Marginalization And Development*, London: Routledge, Pp.233- 247 □

Industrial Sector	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3.1	0.1	1.6
Mining and quarrying	8.3	13.8	10.9
Manufacturing	3.1	1.9	1.6
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.6	0.5	0.5
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation	0.7	0.4	0.4
Construction	0.4	0.2	0.3
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and	0.6	0.1	0.4
Transportation and storage	0.6	0.2	0.3
Accommodation and food service activities	1.5	0.3	0.9
Information and communication	2.4	0.8	1.6
Financial and insurance activities	2.5	1.0	2.9
Real estate activities	0.6	1.0	0.8
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.8	1.8	1.6
Administrative and support service activities	1.4	1.8	1.6
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1.1	4.0	2.6
Education	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human health and social work activities	0.0	0.0	0.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other service activities	0.0	0.0	0.0
Activities of households as employers undifferentiated goods	0.0	0.0	0.0
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not Coded	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Percent	100	100	100
Total Number	3 091 318	3 174 551	6 265 869

Figure 3 Zimbabwe Labour Force Survey 2014

Conversations on the future of work will need to bear in mind that, as per the Labour force survey, the 81% of the population involved in work, are underemployed and involved in precarious labour in the informal sector, mostly on their own account (self-employed). The UNDP highlights this challenge through placing the figure of working poor in Zimbabwe at 84,6%, which is above the SADC regional average, and over 50 percentage points above the developing country average²⁸.

The high rate of informality also highlights a disconnect between formal institutional arrangements and the reality of economic activity which require resolution. As the ILO noted in 2002 informality is characterized by economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. People enter the realm of informality out of a need to survive through generating some incoming, not necessarily out of choice.²⁹ Given the survivalist nature of the informal economy transitioning from it (because of the poverty traps, vulnerability and uncertainty that the sector imbues on people) constitutes part of the decent work agenda that this paper argues need to be at the center of conversation on the future of work in Zimbabwe, given it context. While informality, given the above is in large part a governance challenge, governance and

²⁸ Human development Report 2015, briefing note for Zimbabwe 2015, at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/ZWE.pdf

²⁹ ILO (2002) Conclusions Concerning Decent Work And The Informal Economy, International Labour Conference, 90th Session. ILO Geneva

regulation of the informal economy, we argue here, need to be designed and effected in ways that acknowledge that it is an integral element of the country's development, not just a potential tax base for the state. The ILO, in dealing with informality as part of the decent work agenda, suggests a policy and diagnostic framework with 7 key pillars, which Zimbabwe could adapt and pursue, as part of the agenda on the future of work and making it a palatable place for the worker (see figure 3 below).

With globalization, the rise of global value chains, growth of the gig-economy³⁰ and share-economy³¹, as well as the flexi-employment arrangements that are part of the trends influencing the future of work, limited attention to and proactive positive interventions in the informal economy will likely lead to more, not less, decent work deficits. Interventions should however be fit for purpose, allowing employment creation and innovation to thrive, but also protecting the worker in this new terrain which current legislation, the world over has been struggling to regulate.

³⁰ *The gig economy comprises of short-term project or shift work accessed by workers through the sharing economy, and includes what is referred to as "crowdwork" (commissioned and done virtually through internet connections) and "work on-demand through apps" (work that is mediated through technology and apps as connector but done locally/physically not virtually) e.g Uber.*

³¹ *The share-economy is a digital labour market where labor-intensive services are traded by matching requesters (employers and/or consumers) and providers (workers) see Codagnone, C., & Martens, B. (2016). Scoping the Sharing Economy: Origins, Definitions, Impact and Regulatory Issues. Institute for Prospective Technological Studies Digital Economy Working Paper, 1. (5)*

Decent work strategies for the informal economy



Figure 4 from ILC 103rd Session Report V (1) Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. Geneva 2014

4.1.3 The Future work and Collective Action

An additional pressing concern from informality is its effect on the collective action problem in the labour market. Current statistics show that only 14% of those in employment belong to some worker organization. Various reports and scholarship have documented the depletion of numbers and power of the trade union movement as a result of the economic situation and trend towards informality. The rise of technology especially the Internet (of things) and changing working arrangements (flexi-working, gigging and the share-economy) have the potential to further impair labour's ability to organize. These factors and new entrants into the world of work have the potential of changing 'workers' into 'independent contractors' or self-employed people who are not be subject to the protections and rights of workers as currently understood, or who are not easy to organize, or would need to be organized differently. In any case collective bargaining becomes a difficult prospect, unless those introducing technology into through the web based labour market agree to also act as aggregation portals that unions (for organizing) and labor inspectorates (for inspections and compliance tests) can access and use, which may be unlikely given privacy concerns, unless deemed so legally.

Unions may also struggle to keep pace with technology even as they struggle to figure out how best to stem the hemorrhaging of members that the above developments may entail. A mismatch amongst social partners will be the net result, and the differences in the depths of social partner's pockets will perpetuate them. An asymmetry of power between traditional social partners, which used to be mitigated by unions numbers, against the private sector's money, and the states coercive capacities, is likely to be the new reality in the future of work. But imbalance is a bad thing, and part of the future of work challenge will be to see how power relations between government, capital, and labour can be balanced again for the good of society.

This beckoning reality and the issues raised above also point to two important elements for conversations on the future of work. First, discussions on the future of work need to go beyond the traditional social partners of organized labour, government and, employers. They will need to take into cognizance the objective conditions, and ensure that they account for the reality of informality and new working arrangements. Second, any conversation on the future of work needs to come up with ways to deal with challenges posed to collective action, and measures taken, to ensure that issues of societal good and social justice remain front and center in any dispensation of work. It may be appealing to the private sector to have a divided labour pool. However, the benefits and win-wins that have accrued from collective bargaining and tripartite negotiations to all social partners, a disaggregated labor force, in this rights respecting dispensation will not bode well for the employer, and may have political consequences in the long run for the government. In any case, the discerning customer of the future is likely to take an interest in the social aspects of business, with repetitions possibly at scale of boycotts of products and services that result from unfair labor practices, as has occurred in the past.

AGRICULTURE AS AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Technology and the machine will in many respects be 'new' game changers for many Zimbabweans, producing shocks, which unchecked, could lead to what the UNDP

Human Development report for 1995 called jobless, ruthless, rootless and futureless growth (UNDP, 1995³²). While agriculture will continue to be the mainstay of livelihoods and the economy, fundamental shifts will also be the order of the day in the medium to long term. Once characterized by large swathes of labor, as exemplified by massive farming concerns like Kondozi farm, in Manicaland province. Kondozi used to employ over 5,000 people to work its 550 hectares. It specialized in horticulture and exported to retail supermarkets like Tesco, Sainsbury's, Marks and Spencer and Waitrose in England, and had an additional estimated 15,000 people benefiting from employment through selling produce from the farm and other downstream activities.³³ While most large-scale farms like Kondozi have since seen their labour forces decrease in the aftermath of land redistribution, indications are that those that still exist and operate at this scale will also see reductions in workforce needs through automation of Agriculture. The introduction of highly sophisticated machines, already in use for agricultural purposes in other parts of the world, will be a sweet and sour encounter – increasing productivity, on the one hand, decimating jobs on the other. Already, a newly invented tractor with capabilities of plowing, planting, weeding and watering is said to be on the market and comes with the possibility of rendering most agricultural farm workers jobless. □

Environmentalists and conservationists worried about soil erosion, siltation and aiming to reduce soil disturbances, will be up in arms with this machine, as will be the agricultural and plantation workers unions. The reality is that this is the likely future of work, where a machine, which if we are generous will be operated by four people, replaces 550 jobs. The advent of such technologies naturally creates a sense of trepidation for the millions of affected workers; based on real fears around poverty and the growing inequality that unemployment renders one to. The 'perceived' jobs along the value chain that technology might create will either consolidate existing ones or strengthen elite networks – that involve people with skills, access and in some respects capital. This "future," far from being a distant reality, is already penning out. But perhaps in Zimbabwe farm workers may need to worry less about this challenge as farm workers in California for instance. The future of work in Agriculture, in Zimbabwe, will change, but conversations on this changes need to be time framed and anticipated changes discussed within both the physical and the temporal context. The agricultural sector will be impacted on by positive and negative externalities, and knowing what they are likely to be will assist to mitigate adverse impacts. However, timeframes will allow discussions to avoid being abstract and involving machines people are unlikely to see over the next ten years, because while technology and innovation are entering the farms, the rate may be slower, as we exemplify below. □

³² UNDP (1995) Human Development Report 1996. United Nations Development Program. New York. Oxford University Press□

³³ See Edwin Moyo's (2016) " My Kondozi Story: The peoples hopes pillage. Self Published.

At a smaller agricultural scale, local Zimbabwean youths have developed mobile apps that can be used to tag cattle, so that one knows the location and whereabouts of their livestock. This development of course renders vakomana vemombe (cattle herders) endangered, with slow diffusion of ideas, and reluctance to trust technology on the part of rural dwellers, may be the cattle herder's saving grace. Other innovators have developed applications for use in organic agriculture involving piggery, fisheries, and other livestock. Increases in Internet penetration levels in Zimbabwe will eventually assist with the proliferation of app-based technology in the small-scale agricultural sector. Already, for the medium and large-scale commercial farmers, the spread of the Internet has spawned the launch of applications that connect farmers; share weather information, and facilitate trade across the rural and urban divide. □

4.2 Of The Internet (of Things), Technology and the Future of Work in Zimbabwe

The developments mentioned in the illustrative section on agriculture are sponsored, in part, by the lower investment thresholds involved in mobile telephone applications development, compared to other areas of innovation. Resultantly, most innovations, at least those that the press publicly lauds in Zimbabwe and the SADC region, are located in this terrain. But it is also because of the phenomenal and unprecedented growth and penetration of the Internet and mobile telephone services, aided by the advent of cheaper smart phones.

According to The Postal and Tele-communications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), in its first quarter report for 2016, Zimbabwe's Internet penetration rate stood at 49,8%, which is well above the regional average estimated to be between 20 and 30% (POTRAZ, 2016³⁴). The mobile penetration rate (active) was pegged at 96.5%, while 23% of all data usage was reported to be on Whatsapp bundles. Facebook is said to be the most used social media platform with about 97.34%, followed by Twitter with about 1,7% of traffic based on mobile Internet.

³⁴ POTRAZ (2016) Postal And Telecommunications Performance Report First Quarter 2016. POTRAZ, Harare. Available at http://www.potraz.gov.zw/images/documents/Sector_Performance_report_1st_Quarter_2016.pdf

Greater connectivity assists in the sharing of ideas; trading, and easing communication challenges both locally and globally, and will certainly play a huge role in the changing world of

work. However, as a channel, communication serves to aid the transmission of ideas generated and innovations undertaken. Despite the economic hardships and reported challenges with setting up business in Zimbabwe, it still has a lively start-up scene, which the Ministry of Information Communication Technologies has been encouraging through their

innovation showcases, and a promised 25 Million dollar fund. Mobile and Internet service providers have also been sponsoring similar startup showcases. Through such initiatives, some promising start-ups have showcased impressive applications, although some them are related to the continued easing of access to services, communication, doing business, learning on line, and some agricultural solutions.

The app development start-up sector has become almost synonymous with tech startups; however, this sector needs to be supported to innovate beyond communications and service provision. The country also needs innovations in chemistry, biology, physics, engineering and mining, not just computing services. This is perhaps where Zimbabwe legs behind as a consequence of the deficiencies in industry and education, which in other countries act as the spaces for innovation stemming from experienced challenges in the work place and society as well experiments in labs. Part of government's solution has been through encouraging students to take up Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), which bodes well for the grooming and development of innovations beyond computing and telephone-based applications. The initiative is critical to preparing for

"While Jobs are doing, there is a massive skills shortage at the top, technical skills are important but not enough, you have to be on the move every-time, AND YOU have to be creative, be a complex problem solver. With equally strong social skills, persuasion and emotional INTELLIGENCE."

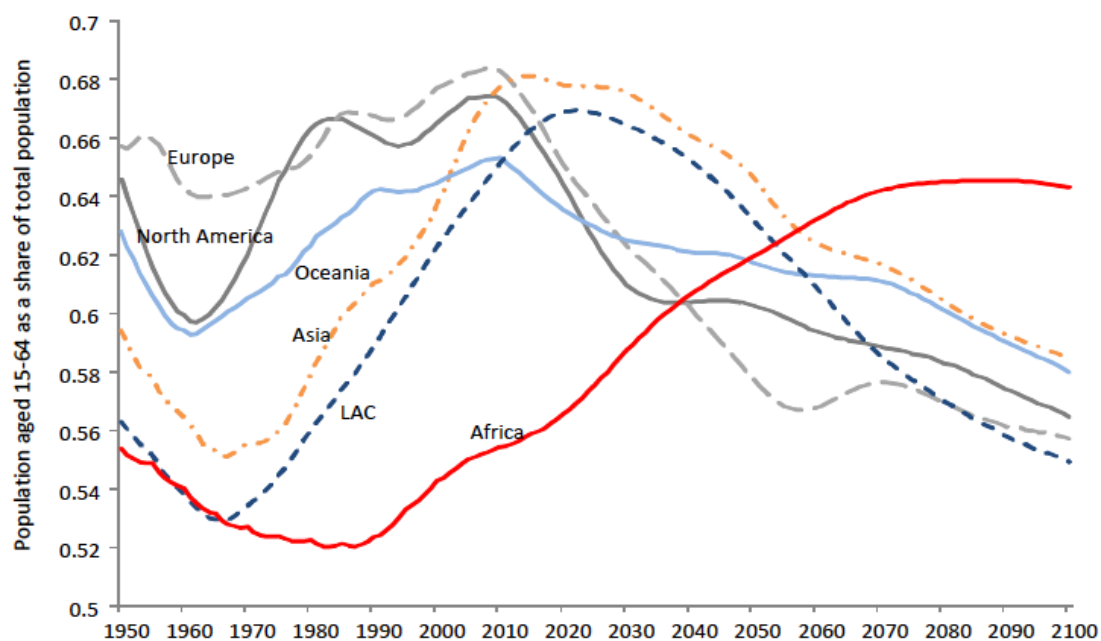
16 September 2016

Her Excellency Ambassador Catriona Laing (United Kingdom Ambassador to Zimbabwe) speaking at the second edition of theSpace
www.thespace.co.zw

the future of work and should be encouraged. The dearth of trained educators in these fields, as well as the dilapidated infrastructure for STEM subjects in schools, colleges, and universities, will, however, be part of the reality that confronts this laudable initiative. Recurrent allegations of looting of the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) by officials responsible for it, will also not aid this otherwise critical initiative.

4.3 Demographic Transition: Averting Disaster striving for Dividend

In most parts of the world, save for Sub-Saharan Africa, are confronted by the prospects of an aging population. This challenge has also been at the center of conversations about the future of work, as people contemplate what this will mean as several generations collide in the work place. This is less of a challenge for Africa, and Zimbabwe. UNFPA suggests that the Sub-Saharan African region is estimated to have a favorable population structure regarding work, as it has the highest share of young people of productive age.



Source: IMF staff estimates based on UN World Population Database

This wealth of youth is representative of a demographic transition, which may yield a demographic dividend if managed well, as the productive capacity of the working-age population surges with the additional labour supply. However, this can only be a dividend if proper investments into human development and social sectors are made

to ensure that this burgeoning workforce is skilled and educated enough to innovate, work, and create jobs for others.

Without the above, this transition towards a dividend can quickly turn into a disaster, as it will be occurring in an already constricted labour market. The options, for those who are part of this population boom, if they fail to be engaged in meaningful work at home, would be to take flight abroad, if they have the requisite skills to compete at a global level. However, although we anticipate that labour will be very mobile in the future, it has to be taken into consideration that the world already has a jobs deficit that stands at more than 200 million people.³⁵ Taking advantage of this dividend will also entail deliberate attempts at narrowing towards eradication of the existing gender gap both regarding work placement, and pay disparities between man and women.

This paper has not touched on them, but the future of work also depends on and will be influenced by the state of our political and economic institutions. Zimbabwe fares poorly on indices of economic and political governance, and these will have to be attended to ensure that they both, are enabling to enterprise domestically and can absorb the labour surplus that the demographic transition will offer. Institutions will also need to be tailored to be facilitatory, not prohibitive, but welcoming to possible foreign direct investment (FDI) that can aid the development of industry, sponsor innovation and create jobs.

5 Closing And Recommendations

The future of work for Zimbabwe remains in the hands of Zimbabweans – the main actors including, the state, private and public sector, young people, in concert with international partners. The pace at which the fourth industrial revolution will unfold in Zimbabwe is a function of uptake and capacity to take up global innovations by locals, but perhaps, more importantly, the State's attitude towards the world of work, its quickness to accept and encourage innovation and its investments in education and innovation. Despite the current realities, Zimbabwe does have a stock of talent and the foundations to make the country's economy grow and for the future of work to take place without leaving a trail of destruction through uprooting jobs and widening the

³⁵ See ILO's *World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015 (WESO)*

chasm between the haves and the have-nots. But when you are down the only way to go is up. This paper suggests that the ladder up lies in having constrictive engagements about the current state of affairs, and then developing both basic and innovative solutions. These solutions have to be grounded in sustainable development, which heeds the inevitability of technological advancements but also takes care of the social, economic and environmental well being of the people who are supposed to benefit from the said advances. Specifically, on Zimbabwe and the future of work, it recommends the following:

5.1 On Discussions on the future of work

Deliberations on the future of work are urgent because of the immediate impact of trends influencing the future of work. We recommend:

- ⇒ That conversations be honest, realistic, and context specific. A lot of the trends shaping the future of work are global, but they have local manifestations and may differ from context to context. **Discussions on the future of work in Zimbabwe need to be tailored to its context and objective reality but be inclusive of environmental and social justice concerns.**
- ⇒ That conversation on the future of work in Zimbabwe needs to be broad based, to include traditional social partners (government, labour, and business) and wider civil society, especially the informal sector, which is where most of the work is being done in Zimbabwe. As this future is of interest to everyone, efforts should be made to ensure that, as many voices as possible are part of the conversation, especially women, and youth, to ensure that no credible voices are left out of the conversation. **This could be by way of a national convention on the future of work, which brings together relevant actors, and or a decentralized conversation that targets either regions or sectors or both.**
- ⇒ Prioritization of conversations: This paper strongly recommends that the nation, through State and sector leaders engage on **“Decent work and Social Justice” as an entry point to future of work conversations.** Decent work and social justice are part of ILO’s suggested four conversational pillars, which different countries can focus, and is possibly the most critical and appropriate conversation for Zimbabwe.

5.2 To Specific Actors and Stakeholders

5.2.1 Government Actors

1. That government, through relevant ministries (ICTs, Education, Labour and social welfare, Health, Finance and Economic Planning as examples) initiates dialogues with labour and other societal voices especially young people, young women and civil society actors on the global discourse around the future of work;
2. That government makes a long term plan aimed at addressing and **adapting Zimbabwe's education system to meet the needs of the current and emerging world of work, through curriculum revision and strengthening, and better resourcing of institutions financially, materially and human resource wise.**
3. That government moves towards corrective measures in policy focus and finance to include **a greater focus on the informal sector, not as a tax base, but as an integral element of the country's future development.**
4. That government fosters an enabling environment for the countries citizens to thrive, express and explore their ingenuity and innovation without undue restrictions and red tape.
5. That government develops sound plans to boost the productive sectors, especially the high labour-absorbing sectors of manufacturing and agriculture, with an accent on agro-based manufacturing, and value adding natural resource light industry as part of structural transformation and job creating economic growth.

5.2.2 The Private Sector

1. That it starts **internal conversations on the skills needed for the type of work their companies do and engage in dialogue with institutions of learning and government on these required skills for possible inclusion in the curriculum.**
2. Should **invest in current employees through staff development** on the new work directions and competencies in preparation for the future.
3. **Invest in Research and Development, not just in their companies but also in institutions of learning, to help ensure that learning centers are well**

equipped and up to speed with the research requirements of the firm of the future.

4. If the companies are international, **facilitate skills transfers and learning exchange programs for local staff with their centers** or between networks to enhance current skill sets.
5. Consider the welfare – financial, spiritual and aspirational- elements of their staff teams as they innovate and move towards the future.
6. Invest in value through showing consideration for sustainable developments that are cognizant of climate change challenges and social justice prerequisites of a just world now and in the future.
7. **Incubate and support smaller projects in the informal economy that are related to their industries, and begin to incorporate them in their supply chains.**

5.2.3 Young People (students/graduates/unemployed)

1. Accept that the future of work will be disruptive (positively and negatively), and tool up through docking into the knowledge economy, developing versatile skills, and sharpening areas of expertise and emotional intelligence.
2. Build networks and unusual synergies to meet the worlds will demand for greater versatility.
3. Accept that courses and degrees are inherently foundational in the broader scheme of work. The future of work in many respects lies in the foundational ethos of hard work, honesty and integrity married to innovation, creativity, and ingenuity.
4. As you innovate, remember that work also has a social function, which remains critical in defining the nature and form of Zimbabwe's future of work. Strengthen on the ethos as much as you strengthen your skills and competency set.

5.3 Organized Labour

1. Explore avenues of representing beyond traditional unions, including the informal sector through further strengthening of platforms like the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy.

2. Sponsor dialogues or labour forums on both the nature of work today and the future of work amongst members of both the formal and informal economy and civil society partners.
3. Strengthen structures in the formal and informal economies, to increase subscriptions beyond the current 14% in the formal sector, and limited representation in the informal sector, as part of ensuring that space and structures for collective discussion and action on the future of work are available.
4. Lead public conversations (press, meetings and broad public engagements) on the future of work, as the moral voice of society and by way of providing leadership on the subject at the very least for current workers and civil society, and at best in the interests of everyone involved in work, as a social justice responsibility.

-Ends-