



**Federation of
Uganda Employers**
The Voice of Employers



THE FUTURE OF WORK

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 All Protocols Observed and Pleasantries shared.

1.2 **First of all, I would like to thank Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) for this privileged honor and opportunity for choosing me to talk about “the Future of Work” on this colorful occasion.** Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate all the Employers who participated in this years’ Employer of the year Award 2021/2022.

1.3 **From the National Planning Authority, we would like to thank you all employers for your resilience even with the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to keep jobs for Ugandans.** Our workplaces have seen major changes amidst the pandemic. In these unprecedented times, we had to adapt and be flexible. Working from home, which was not so common pre-COVID, became the default mode of work for many in the last two years. We thank you for your contribution towards Uganda’s development and transformation agenda.

2. THE WORLD OF WORK

2.1 **Work is anything that a person undertakes with a goal of being productive in a way that meets human needs.** Work helps people earn a living. But more importantly, work gives people a sense of worth to be able to do something and lend meaning to their well-being. Work is a way of contributing to the national income of the country.

2.2 **The factors of production are the building blocks of the world of work.** Factors of production are the resources (inputs) used to produce goods and services They consist of any resource that is used in the creation of a commodity or service and they are the starting point of the production process. Factors of production are the parameters which affect the output of production.

2.3 **Traditionally, the factors of production were land, labor, and capital.** Land is both an input (raw material) in the production process and space on, above, or below the earth’s surface, on which all production takes place. Capital is both physical and financial resources invested to facilitate the production of goods and services. Labour is the effort that individuals exert in the production of goods and services. However, in the first half of the 20th century, entrepreneurship was added as the fourth factor of production. Together, the factors of production make up the total productivity potential of a given economy.

2.4 **Labor is the convener of all factors of production.** Without labor, other factors of production, namely land, capital and entrepreneurship cannot operate. Therefore, labor is known as an ‘active factor of production’. Labour is the only factor that can work and start the production of goods and services itself. However, neither land or nor capital can begin the production of goods and services on their own. Therefore, labour works as an active factor of production used in producing the final output.

WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK OF THE WORLD OF WORK TODAY?

2.5 **The world of work is changing faster than ever before.** This is mainly attributed to technology development, digital advances and the new expectations of the younger generations of workers. The way we produce and collaborate today has remodeled workplaces, and with that of human lives.

2.6 **At least two developments characterize the new world of work.** First, the confluence of new and rapidly evolving technological breakthroughs is increasing the potential for automation. Second, the way people are working is also rapidly evolving as technology is connecting people to jobs and income opportunities in new ways. So how has the work world actually changed?

2.7 More employees are demanding workplace flexibility. The mass transition to remote work in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic upended long-held norms surrounding where work can be done. The digitalization made it possible for people to work from wherever they want. The majority of employees now want to share their working hours between being at home and the office. Work flexibility can be described in many ways: part-time working, days working from home, or working different hours, such as 7am to 3pm instead of 9am to 5pm.

2.8 Just a few decades ago, nearly all workforces across the globe consisted of permanent employees. Today, more than 40 per cent of employees are now considered non-permanent workers, with the figure expected to rise as people start to fully embrace more remote, distributed and gig work. Almost every job will have some degree of flexibility built in.

2.9 Non-standard forms of employment (NSE) are a feature of the contemporary world of work. Non-standard jobs can provide access to the labour market, including disadvantaged groups such as youth or migrants, and in some instances, can provide opportunities for moving to better jobs. In the latest phase of this trend, more people are finding work in the 'digital economy', via online Web- and app-based platforms. For example; click workers who work over the internet for anybody who hires them for their particular specialty, or platform workers who provide specific services using an online platform directly to individuals or organizations as Uber drivers.

2.10 The growth of NSE is a concern because these employment arrangements are associated with greater insecurity for workers when compared with standard employment. Workers in NSE often have inadequate social security coverage, either because statutory provisions exclude them from entitlements to social security payments or because short tenure or low earnings or hours provide limited or no access to such entitlements. It is therefore imperative to ensure that all jobs, regardless of their contractual arrangement, provide workers with adequate and stable earnings and social protection.

2.11 Wellness at work is an increasingly dominant theme in any discussion at workplaces. Employee welfare raises the company's expenses, but if it is done correctly, it has huge benefits for both the employer and employee. Employers now have the responsibility to encourage a work-life balance for employees. Not only does this show that the employer truly respects and cares for employees, but it also increases productivity in the long run. Employers are now more open to the idea of wellness rooms in the workplace. Examples of common wellness rooms include; exercise/gym rooms, mother's/lactation rooms for breast-feeding mothers, office pantries as well as dining areas among others. These wellness spaces are directly correlated with high employee satisfaction.

2.12 A key characteristic of the current world of work is diversity – gender-wise, culturally and generationally. With different generations mixing in the workplace, the new reality is one where teams of diverse ages work together on a project, where older leaders give guidance across several generations and where young graduates engage with and sometimes lead older workers. In response to a more diverse workforce, workers should possess emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence and generational intelligence. A critical role of leadership is to motivate and inspire people towards a common goal or outcome, thus interpersonal and human skills are needed. The uniquely human skills of empathy, ingenuity, co-operation, resilience, ethics and integrity are all contained within emotional intelligence.

2.13 The age of automation and digital transformation has raised a renewed demand for humans to learn specialized new skills, whereas current workforce trends require new ways of working. The need for manual and physical skills, as well as basic cognitive ones, is declining, but demand for technological, social and emotional, and higher cognitive skills such as originality, fluency of

ideas and active learning is growing. While sought-after technical expertise continue to evolve, certain soft skills remain a constant prerequisite for most jobs in the future. Skills such as analytical thinking, innovation, creativity, leadership and social influence, collaboration, empathy and agility play a huge complementary role to the new specialized skills.

2.14 **New technology is changing the world of work with unprecedented speed and intensity.**

Advances in robots, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning are pushing the frontier of what machines can do. However, human beings and machines working together always beat or make a better decision than a man or a machine independently. Digital systems, for example, excel at processing vast volumes of data and identifying patterns. Humans can then analyze those patterns, spotting anomalies and drawing new conclusions. When engaged as partners, digital systems and human workers accomplish more work, with fewer errors. Done well, a human-machine partnership can produce better solutions than either the digital or human behaviors could have produced alone.

3. **PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK**

The key question is how do we position ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the changing nature of work? Policymakers must be quick in drawing up strategies to address the issues surrounding the future of work from a broad perspective. Generally, as we position ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the changing nature of work, there is need to pay attention to the following strategies:

- i. Continuous education and re-skilling will be essential for sustained success in our evolving global economy.** As the economy changes, new skills and jobs will be created and others eliminated. The Ugandan education system needs to be equally dynamic, creating innovative and individualized opportunities for workers to develop new skills throughout their career.
- ii. Data-driven policy is crucial to forecasting the future needs of the economy.** Preparing the Ugandan workforce for jobs and skill sets that may not exist yet is one of the greatest challenges facing policymakers. Leveraging data is key to creating meaningful strategies to respond to economic change and bolster societal resilience. There is need for real-time insights about skill evolutions as well as projections to identify and prepare to meet future skills needs to avoid potential gaps between skills demand and supply.
- iii. Broaden social security schemes and implement safety nets for new forms of work and/or make them consistent with the ones already in place for traditional forms of work.** New safety nets should be amended to protect individuals rather than jobs. Aspects of employment should include the protection for both the formal and informal employees. The NSSF (Amendment) Act, 2021 provides for voluntary savings targeting those in the 'gig' economy. This is a step in the right direction.
- iv. Provide appropriate regulation for remote working as well as on online platforms (such as Safe boda, Jumia, Uber).** Work is no longer a place to go, and this necessitates clear labour regulations. Since work is now disconnected from a fixed place, work is increasingly linked to networks, and based on relations between remotely connected workers. Also, due to the diversity and flexibility of businesses with rapid emergency of online platforms, there is need to promote fair competition, clarify the rights and obligations of both providers and consumers.
- v. Employers need to empower workers to be decision-makers and risk-takers, starting with fostering a culture of curiosity and continuous learning.** Companies and organizations often focus on the technology requirements for the digital economy than on their people. Therefore, employers should

create learning workplaces and allow workers to self-direct their learning based on their motivational purpose.

- vi. **The onus is on various stakeholders to maximize equality of opportunity in terms of access to education and labor markets, as well as promote continuous mid-career learning opportunities to those seeking them.** Solutions may involve greater use of publicly backed education and training, with employers playing a leading role in the curriculum design of training and retraining programs.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 **In conclusion, the future of work is still ultimately human.** Technological advancements are changing the landscape of work; however, human jobs are not threatened by these technologies in nearly any way therefore will not replace the need for humans to work. Workplaces of the future are going to need individuals and systems that provide not only technological innovation, but also human connection. The future of work is about more than work – it’s about work-life fit, and making space for human-centered values in both work and home life.

4.2 **As digitalization grows, we can expect a significant impact on employment and skills at all levels and in all sectors.** Workers need to be positioned to harness the benefits from technological innovations and the overall changing labour market dynamics in the world of work. Individuals must acquire special skills to stay competitive. Workers will need to constantly gain new skills throughout their work life.

4.3 **The rise of new forms of work and the diversification of working conditions provide for new dimensions to the labour market.** But due to the diversity of the workforce, the *one-size-fits-all approach* is not relevant when it comes to the world of work. Government, policy makers and businesses need to make bold choices and investments today that will pave the way for the next generation of workers, inventors and entrepreneurs.

4.4 I therefore, implore all the employers in attendance to rethink their business models and strategies to best position themselves to leverage emerging opportunities.

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**I THANK YOU ALL
FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**

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