



Webinar

Active Labor Market Policies: Good Practices and Recommendations for North Africa

07th April 2021

Concept Note

I- Context

Employment is central to the development policy agenda of North African countries. Indeed, the sub-region has a structurally high unemployment rate, 12.1% in 2019 (International Labor Organization, ILO), an employment rate among the lowest on the African continent (40.1% against a continental average of 58.8% in 2019), low participation in the labor market (45.7% against 60.7% on the world average), and particularly of women (22.1%) and one of the highest youth unemployment in the world. According to the ILO, the youth unemployment rate in North Africa in 2019 was 30.2%, compared to a global average of 13.6%. In addition, the unemployment gender gap remains high for the entire sub-region, both for adults and for young people, with an unemployment rate for young women of around 39.6%.

The economic growth recorded by the countries of the sub-region during the decade of 2010 was not sufficient to absorb the arrivals on the labor market. The private sector remains underdeveloped and the capacity to absorb the demand for labor by the public sector is limited due to budget constraints.

In addition, as in other sub-regions of the continent, a high proportion of workers find themselves in precarious jobs, characterized mainly by the predominance of informal establishments, low incomes and a low level of social protection. In addition, North Africa is the part of the continent that will experience the fastest rate of ageing of its population. The share of people over 60 is expected to double in just over 20 years in the sub-region, posing significant challenges for pension systems, largely funded by employee contributions from a limited formal labor market.

North African countries are depriving themselves of a good part of their human resources because of the low participation of women in economic life. The ratio of women to men in the participation rate in the labor force (22.1% for women against 69.5% for men) testifies to the low participation of women in the economy and consequently of their low financial autonomy. This ratio (31.8% for the sub-region against 63.6% on the world average) is the lowest in the world.

Furthermore, the primary sector, made up mainly of agriculture, employs a large segment of the working population of the countries of the sub-region with a regional average of 25.1%. The sector suffers from high underemployment and low productivity. The implementation of policies aimed at transferring the stock of "surplus" jobs from the agricultural sector to sectors with higher productivity, such as the agro-food industry for example, would make it possible to make the primary sector more competitive and would increase industrial added value and labor

productivity. Indeed, the underemployment and low productivity of the agricultural sector must be interpreted as a reservoir of labor which must be drawn on to increase added value through inter-sector mobility.

The sustainable development of the sub-region requires improving the skills of its labor force and its optimal use. The States of the sub-region will have to review their employment policies and formulate new strategies, more integrated and more inclusive, based on the active participation of the its population and a stronger political will, capable of reforming the modes of governance, and mobilize more resources to meet the expectations, especially of young people and the most vulnerable populations. The initiatives recently launched in some of the countries of the sub-region head to this direction and will certainly help to improve the impact of the programs in place.

The main objective of active labor market policies (ALMPs) is to increase employment opportunities for job seekers, to better match the profiles of the unemployed to those of vacant positions and to stimulate the creation of new ones. Active policies can help increase employment, reduce unemployment and dependency to social allowances. They allow the unemployed to find a job that matches their profiles as quickly as possible, providing them with the support they need to successfully re-enter the labor market. ALMPs require beneficiaries to fulfill specific obligations constituting a relationship that is more akin to an exchange since the effort of the unemployed is rewarded in the form of performance.

In this context, the ECA sub-regional office for North Africa is organizing a webinar under the theme "Active labor market policies: good practices and recommendations for North Africa"

II- Objective

To support the countries of the sub-region in the design and implementation of effective ALMPs, based on successful sub-regional experiences.

North African countries, faced with the major challenge of unemployment and the need for massive creation of decent jobs for their young women and men, have put in place a significant number of national and territorial initiatives. Some of them constitute good practices that can be transposed to others and shared at the sub-regional level.

III- Panelists

The webinar will be moderated by representatives of ministries responsible for employment in North African countries, eminent experts and representatives of the private sector and civil society.

IV- Moderation

The Sub-Regional Office for North Africa will moderate the webinar.

V- Participation

Representatives of the private sector from Member States, universities and international organizations.

VI- Date

April 7, 2021 (2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Rabat time).

VII- Working languages

There will be simultaneous interpretation into Arabic, English and French.

VIII- Contacts

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