

**Commission:** International Labour Organisation (ILO)  
**Subject:** Does technology help or hinder working conditions?  
**Author:** Saudi Arabia's Government

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been part of the ILO since 1976 and has signed six out of eight of its fundamental conventions. The royalty is willing to break the image that it used to have in the past century of ultra-conservative country. In fact, technologies have permitted South-West Asian countries to modernize themselves and increase work employment.

Saudi Arabia declared war on Germany in 1945, which enabled the Kingdom to join the United Nations as a founding member. It also joined the Arab league but as the other members didn't have the same opinions on the major importance of Islam in a State, the Kingdom decided to take a step back.

Since its entry into the ILO in 1976, Saudi Arabia has continued to contribute in order to improve its working conditions and social past issues. Signing six of the fundamental conventions, the kingdom has showed to the other members its agreement with the principles of the ILO: "freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, elimination of all forms of forced or obligatory labor, effective abolition of child labor and elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation".

Saudi Arabia is now-a-days the second most important oil producer of the world and owns the second biggest world reserves of oil. Saudi Arabia was one the founding members of the OPEP (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) and of the OAPEP (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries).

The Kingdom is now-a-days facing the future of our planet: oil is not a lasting investment anymore. Consequently, the Kingdom's economic plans currently focus on diversification away from oil. Being the biggest Middle East's economy, the 48 year-old PIF (Public Investment of Fund of Saudi Arabia) is able to change direction: the government is willing to transform one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds into a major tech and entrepreneurship investor. For a few years now, it has been investing into many start-ups and companies related to clean energy, ride-sharing and going local.

One year ago, in September, the creation of the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and the National Data Management Office was ordered. Effectively, the continued development of the country's digital economy is the main thrust behind the kingdom's National Transformation Programme strategy. The Government has communicated about their desire to become the Silicone Valley of the Middle East.

Vision 2030 is a blueprint established by the Government in order to create a new society in which all citizens could find their place. This project is based on three pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation. They include 13 vision realization programs, one of them being the Quality of Life program, which plans on enhancing the quality of life of the citizens and creating new jobs. Another one of those programs is the Human Capital Development Program, based on the Islamic, educational, social and professional foundations.

Saudi Arabia has a population of 33 million, of which 70% are below the age of 30 years old. Since the early 2000's, the Kingdom has invested in education and its modernization, so that the youth has solid skills related to new technologies. The Sarabian's project of diversification away from oil is introducing a large transformation of the labor market and that is why the ILO's mission is crucial: it consists of making sure that all of those changes are not hindering working conditions.

In 2011, the ILO and the Saudi Arabian's Ministry of Labor and Social Development, agreed on the Programme of Assistance to improve technical support, social security, un-employment insurance fund, gender equality, social dialogue, skills development and many other aspects.... In 2016, the ILO proposed a Decent Work Country Strategy Framework based on development challenges, priorities by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, as well as past ILO interventions in Saudi Arabia.

The collaboration of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development with the ILO is a way for Saudi Arabia to implement new common goals in order to create a new society with an alternative economy (independent of oil business) and constantly improving the working conditions through these partnerships.