

COMMISSION: International Labour Organisation (ILO)

SUBJECT: Does technology help or hinder working conditions?

COUNTRY: Mexico (Government)



The boom in technological innovations in the last 50 years, with the arrival of the internet and the creation of a common database of shared knowledge accessible to all accelerating the process, has led a multitude of improvements to our quality of life. Technology has enabled us to do everything from carrying a computer in our pockets, helping the disabled walk, revolutionising the retail business with ecommerce and online shopping, traveling from anywhere on earth to anywhere else within 24 hours and maintaining the education of millions of children through a pandemic via online classes.

In the past, Mexico has ratified all 8 Fundamental Conventions of the ILO and hopes today to reaffirm once more the strong commitment of the Government of Mexico to multilateralism, as well as the common endeavor to protect and improve working conditions and standards of living.

Mexico recognises the numerous advantages of technology aiding the workforce: with machines and AI, companies are able to produce much more and at a much faster pace, allowing businesses to innovate and provide entire populations with their needs and wants. Mexico also understands the importance of technology in medical research and humanitarian fields, for example the development of vaccines like VSV-EBOV, saving the world from a lethal pandemic during the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016.

However, Mexico raises concerns at the replacement of its workforce by automation and AI, already threatening more than 800 million jobs worldwide and 63% of the working Mexican population. This constant threat has engendered a lack of job security, giving corporations too much power to lower wages and working conditions for their employees.

Mexico is also concerned about the effect that job insecurity and working alongside machines rather than co-workers may have on mental health. Currently Mexico has one of the highest levels of workplace stress worldwide, with 75% of the working population experiencing stress related to fear of losing their jobs, being overworked and underpaid, and loneliness in the workplace. These are all partly due to technology replacing the workforce. Worldwide, 46% of stress related mental health issues are related to workload and job insecurity.

Without a proper plan for the integration of automated technology into the workplace, millions could be left out of work and job opportunities could decline significantly. Mexico embraces the opportunity for technological advancement and innovation. Our workers are ready to welcome the future and are famously adaptable. We believe in the collaboration between employers and workers, and while automation will have its place and will not be resisted by workers, we must value the irreplaceable contribution of workers' input. Employers must take this opportunity to retrain their employees with new skills to take full advantage of the growth potential of automation and AI. Employers, workers and technology can come together to make the industry even more successful than before.

Furthermore, Mexico would like to deal with the surplus of workers in the industrial sector by developing Mexico's services sector. We hope to use technology to reach that goal. For example with appropriate funding we can complete the rollout of fiber optic cables and achieve our goal of universal access to the internet, build new infrastructure to adapt to the needs of the service sector and update our equipment, amongst other things. Mexico would like to propose the creation of a common fund to invest in the development of the services sector in LEDCs.