

**Committee:** International Labour Organization (ILO)

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South Africa is very impacted by automation because new technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence have improved efficiency and replaced traditional jobs especially in the sectors of mining and agriculture. Indeed, the rise of automation and AI poses profound implications for the labor market. According to a 2019 report by the International Labor Organization (ILO), it has been estimated that up to 38% of jobs in South Africa could be at risk due to automation in the coming decades. This reality calls for urgent action in terms of upskilling and reskilling the workforce. To mitigate the negative effects of these changes, South Africa is promoting education reforms that emphasize digital literacy, critical thinking and adaptability, aligning with the objectives set out in Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education. Historically, South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to these ideals by endorsing various international frameworks. For example, in 2015, South Africa was a signatory to the United Nations's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which commits member states to implement policies that ensure sustainable economic growth, decent work and better educational outcomes. This agenda highlights the need for a workforce equipped to thrive in an increasingly automated and AI-driven economy.

Moreover, South Africa requires the implementation of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) because many South Africans live below the poverty line and cannot meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and healthcare. Indeed, UBI could serve as a mechanism to provide a safety net for people displaced by technological advancements. In 2019, South Africa's Economic Recovery Plan called for innovative social protection measures, including UBI, in response to high unemployment rates that often disproportionately affect marginalized communities. At international level, South Africa has participated in dialogues on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 23, which emphasizes the right to work and the right to an adequate standard of living. UBI solutions would aim to guarantee a basic standard of living for all citizens, thereby tackling systemic inequalities.

South Africa is highly concerned by the wage gap because of historical injustice like apartheid which developed deep-rooted economic and social inequalities between white minorities and the black majority of people. Indeed, the issue of wage disparity remains a pressing concern in South Africa, exacerbated by automation and the shift to an AI-centric economy. Various studies have shown that the introduction of new technologies often benefits those with the relevant skills, while low-skilled workers face reduced job prospects and stagnant wages. The ILO's World Employment Social Outlook 2020 highlights that the gender pay gap is particularly pronounced in South Africa, a reality that calls for targeted policies to ensure fair pay for all employees, regardless of gender or skill level. To address these disparities, South Africa has approved the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work 2019, which emphasizes the importance of social justice and decent work. This declaration emphasizes policies that guarantee fairness and decent pay, even in a context of changing work dynamics due to automation and AI.

As we approach 2030, the interplay between automation, UBI and wage disparities calls for a multi-faceted approach. The country needs to build a forward-looking labor market capable of responding to technological change while ensuring social equity and economic inclusion.