

Forum : Citizen's forum of Labour

2026

Theme : Empowering the youth to drive/ thrive/ embrace and match the requirements of the future labour market**Name of the citizen :** Olatunji Obdeijn

Family situation ☐ Married / dating ☒ Single ☐ With kids, if so how many _____	Education level ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☒ University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

As a 25-year-old Saudi citizen working as a logistics manager for Bahri, I am concerned by the theme of empowering young people to thrive in the future labour market. As a member of a young generation entering the workforce during a period of rapid technological and economic change, I believe that the decisions we make today will have a major impact on our professional lives. However, I also believe that the future of work should not be based on one single model of employment. Different workers and economies have different needs, and informal labour should be recognised as an important part of this discussion.

One of my main concerns is the way informal labour is often viewed only as a problem that needs to be eliminated. I believe this approach is too irrational. According to the IMF, around 2 billion workers, or approximately 60% of the world's adult labour force, participate in the informal economy. The informal sector also represents around 35% of GDP in low- and middle-income countries, compared with approximately 15% in advanced economies. These figures demonstrate that informal labour is not a small or insignificant part of the global economy; it is essential to the lives of billions of people.

From my perspective, informal employment can provide valuable opportunities, particularly for young people, migrants and individuals who may not have the qualifications required to enter formal employment. It can provide immediate income and greater flexibility, while allowing people to work in several occupations at the same time. The committee report itself recognises that informal employment can fill gaps left by formal labour markets and provide opportunities for people who cannot easily obtain recognised qualifications. I therefore do not believe that informal labour should simply be abolished. Instead, I believe governments should find ways to improve conditions for informal workers without destroying the flexibility and accessibility that make this sector valuable.

At the same time, I recognise the serious disadvantages that informal workers can face. Without formal contracts, stable incomes or social protection, workers can become vulnerable to economic shocks. The challenge is therefore finding a balance between protection and accessibility. Formalisation should be gradual and should not place excessive financial or administrative burdens

on small businesses and workers. If the costs of becoming formal are too high, businesses may simply choose to remain informal. The committee report highlights precisely this risk, explaining that poorly designed formalisation can encourage small businesses to leave the formal sector because they cannot afford the associated costs.

I am also concerned about the effect of artificial intelligence and automation on young workers. Working in logistics has made me particularly aware of how technology can transform an industry. According to the World Economic Forum figures included in the committee's research, 92 million jobs could be displaced by 2030, while 170 million new jobs could be created, resulting in an increase of 78 million jobs. This shows me that the problem is not necessarily that technology will destroy employment altogether, but that the jobs available in the future may require completely different skills.

For this reason, I believe governments and businesses have a responsibility to invest in education and retraining. Young people should be equipped with digital, technological and practical skills that allow them to benefit from technological progress. Rather than restricting AI simply because it threatens certain jobs, we should ensure that workers are prepared to work alongside new technologies.

As a young Saudi professional, I see the future of work as both a challenge and an opportunity. I support stronger worker protections, but I also recognise the economic and social importance of informal labour. With billions of people depending on it, informal employment cannot simply be ignored or eliminated.

2. What do you suggest on your scale ?

Ultimately, I believe that empowering young people means giving them choice. Some people will prefer stable formal employment, while others may value the flexibility offered by informal or freelance work. We should not force every worker into exactly the same system. Instead, governments should ensure that people can access opportunities while gradually improving their protection and security.

As a logistics manager, I propose implementing AI to increase productivity across the country. AI could optimize shipping routes by analyzing weather, maritime traffic, fuel consumption, and port congestion. This would reduce fuel costs, voyage times, and unnecessary delays. AI could also predict port congestion, allowing vessels to adjust their arrival times and avoid bottlenecks. Administrative tasks such as processing documents, tracking shipments, and generating reports could be automated, allowing employees to focus on more complex responsibilities. Predictive maintenance systems could monitor vessels and identify mechanical problems before they cause breakdowns. AI could also forecast shipping demand, helping us allocate vessels, containers, and staff more efficiently. Implementation should begin with small pilot projects before expanding successful systems throughout the company. Progress should be measured