

OFFICE OF THE
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MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA
THE WORLD BANK



ANNUAL MEETINGS
2023 | Marrakech
WORLD BANK GROUP
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

3rd

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE REGIONAL
RESEARCH NETWORK OF CENTRAL BANKS OF MENA

LABOR MARKETS AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Rabat, September 14 and 15, 2023



Centre de Formation Professionnelle Bank Al-Maghrib



DAY 1: September 14th, 09:00 am – 07:00 pm (GMT+1), 04:00 am – 02:00 pm (Washington, D.C.)

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Registration

9:00 am - 9:30 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Abdellatif Jouahri, Governor, Bank Al-Maghrib

Ferid Belhaj, Regional Vice President, World Bank

Younes Sekkouri, Minister of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills

9:30 am - 10:30 am

Keynote lecture I: Scale vs. Scope: The Rise and Fall (?) of Conglomerates

Chang-Tai Hsieh, Phyllis and Irwin Winkelried Professor of Economics, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Session Moderator: **Ferid Belhaj**, Regional Vice President, World Bank

10:30 am - 10:45 am

Coffee break

10:45 am - 12:05pm

Session 1. Structural Change: Drivers, Consequences, and Policies

Session Moderator: **Chucri Mouannes**, Executive Director, Head of Statistics & Economic Research Department, Central Bank of Lebanon

Paper 1. Jobless Industrialization

Speaker: **Luis Felipe Sáenz** (University of South Carolina)

Co-authors: **Laura Alfaro** (Harvard Business School), **Marcela Eslava** (Universidad de Los Andes), **Martí Mestieri** (UPF-CREi-BSE, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago)

Discussant: **Hoda Assem** (World Bank)

Paper 2. Policy Determinants of Structural Change in Developing Countries

Speaker: **Jala Youssef** (University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne)

Co-authors: **Mohamed Ali Marouani** (University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne and ResRep of IRD in Tunisia) and **Chahir Zaki** (Cairo University and ERF)

Discussant: **Luis Felipe Sáenz** (University of South Carolina)

Paper 3. Stages of Diversification Redux

Speaker: **Hoda Assem** (World Bank)

Co-authors: **Roberta Gatti** and **Daniel Lederman** (World Bank)

Discussant: **Jala Youssef** (University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne)

12:05 pm - 1:35 pm

Lunch Break

1:35 pm - 2:35 pm

Keynote Lecture II: Evidence Based Policy Making and Development

Esther Duflo, Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences

Session Moderator: **Roberta Gatti**, Chair, RRN Steering Committee and Chief Economist, MENA-World Bank

2:35 pm – 3:55 pm

Session 2: Gender Inequality, Poverty, and Labor-Market Reforms

Session Moderator: **Nacef Abdennadher**, Director of Research and Studies at the Central Bank of Tunisia

Paper 1. Good from Far, Far from Good: The Impacts of the 2016 Female Labor Reform in Iran

Speaker: **Ebad Ebadi** (World Bank)

Co-author: **Maggie X. Chen** (George Washington University)

Discussant: **Fatima Mounir** (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)

Paper 2. Poverty Feminization in the Arab Region: Analysis of Trends and Dynamics Based on a New Typology

Speaker: **Shireen AlAzzawi** (Santa Clara University)

Co-authors: **Vladimir Hlasny** (UN ESCWA), **Hai-Anh Dang** and **Kseniya Abanokova** (World Bank)

Discussant: **Ebad Ebadi** (World Bank)

Paper 3. Understanding Gender Pay Gaps in the Moroccan Labor Market

Speaker: **Fatima Mounir** (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)

Co-author: **Said Hanchane** (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)

Discussants: **Shireen AlAzzawi** (Santa Clara University)

3:55 pm – 4:10 pm

Coffee break

4:10 pm – 5:30 pm

Session 3. Labor Markets, Human Capital and Structural Change in MENA

Session Moderator: **Salah Alsayaary**, Director of Economic Studies at the Central Bank of Saudi Arabia

Paper 1. Why is Tunisia's Unemployment so High? Evidence From Policy Factors

Speaker: **Aymen Belgacem** (IMF)

Co-author: **Jerome Vacher** (IMF)

Discussant: **Mohammed Ahmed Al Yousif** (Saudi Central Bank)

Paper 2. Structural Change and the National Initiative for Human Development in Morocco: Subnational Insights

Speaker: **Al-Mouksit Akim** (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)

Co-author: **Wissal Sahel** (Mohammed V University of Rabat)

Discussant: **Aymen Belgacem** (IMF)

Paper 3. Alternative View of Unemployment Issue among Saudi Citizens: Automatization of Local Gas Stations as a Case Study

Speaker: **Mohammed Ahmed Al Yousif** (Saudi Central Bank)

Discussant: **Al-Mouksit Akim** (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University)

DAY 2: September 15th, 09:00 am – 06:00 pm (GMT+1), 04:00 am – 01:00 pm (Washington, D.C.)

9:00 am - 10:00 am

Keynote Lecture III: Women at Work in the course of Structural Transformation

Speaker: **Rachel Ngai**, Professor of Economics, Imperial College London
Session Moderator: **Leila Rhiwi**, Representative of Morocco-Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

10:00 am - 11:20 am

Session 4. Migration, Growth, and Structural Transformation

Session Moderator: **Mohamed Al-Jahwari**, General Manager, Financial Stability & Research, Central Bank of Oman

Paper 1. Are Migrants Second-Class citizen in Urban labor Markets? Evidence From Two Secondary Cities in Tunisia

Speaker: **Mohamed Amara** (University of Tunis)
Co-authors: **Luc Christiaensen** and **Nancy Lozano Gracia** (World Bank)
Discussant: **Helmi Hamdi** (Central Bank of Bahrain)

Paper 2. Economic Performance and the Demand for Foreign Labor in the Oil-Exporting and Labor Importing States of the Arab Gulf: Case of Oman

Speaker: **Ibtisam Al Abri** (Sultan Qaboos University)
Co-authors: **Omar Al Hinai**, **Sara Al Raisi**, **Abdullah Al Harassi**, **Zeyana Al Jabri** (Central Bank of Oman)
Discussant: **Mohamed Amara** (University of Tunis)

Paper 3. The Short-and Long-Run Effects of International Migrant Workers on Remittances Outflow and Financial Sector Development: Evidence from a Regional Financial Centre

Speaker: **Helmi Hamdi** (Central Bank of Bahrain)
Discussant: **Ibtisam Al Abri** (Sultan Qaboos University)

11:20 am – 11:35 am

Coffee break

11:35 am – 12:55 pm

Session 5. Shocks, Labor Markets and Enterprises

Session Moderator: **Shireen Fahmy**, Chief Economist, Central Bank of Egypt

Paper 1. Egypt's Labor Market Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Speaker: **Daniel Halim** (World Bank)
Co-authors: **Camila Cortes Rodriguez** and **Maria Eugenia Genoni** (World Bank)
Discussant: **Charles Udomsaph** (Georgetown University)

Paper 2. The Impact of Economic Growth on Young Women's Participation in the Moroccan Labor Market

Speaker: **Zaynab Benabdallah** (Mohammed V University)

Co-author: **Taha Namri** (Applied Economics Laboratory)

Discussant: **Daniel Halim** (World Bank)

Paper 3. The Paradox of Innovation in Conflict Zones

Speaker: **Charles Udomsaph** (Georgetown University)

Discussant: **Zaynab Benabdallah** (Mohammed V University)

12:55 pm - 2:30 pm

Lunch

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Keynote Lecture IV: Economic Development and Environmental Protection: Tradeoff or Synergy?

Seema Jayachandran, Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University

Session Moderator: **Jadi Halim**, Director of Macroeconomic Surveillance at Bank Al-Maghrib

3:30 pm - 3:45 pm

Closing Remarks

Abdessamad Saidi, RRN Steering Committee Member, Head of the Research Division, Bank Al-Maghrib

Roberta Gatti, Chair, RRN Steering Committee and Chief Economist, MENA-World Bank