



**GLOBAL LABOUR
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XIII

GLOBAL LABOUR UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

on

The Future of Work:

Democracy, Development and the Role of Labour

**Labour Economics and Trade Union Studies Center - CESIT
Institute of Economics – University of Campinas (UNICAMP)**

Campinas, Brazil

7 - 9 August, 2018

The Global Labour University (GLU) is pleased to announce a call for the 2018 Conference on “Future of Work: Democracy, Development, and the Role of Labour”. The current global conditions of rising conservative forces, the spectre of unemployment and precarization of work, due to technological change and global restructuring processes, pose enormous challenges to academics, unionists and social organizations concerned with the future of work, democracy and less asymmetrical development.

The Conference will take place from **August 7th to 9th 2018 in Brazil**. The first day of the Conference will take place in São Paulo city where the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT, Unified Workers' Central) will organize the opening session, and the following days at the Economics Institute of University of Campinas (Unicamp), São Paulo State, Campinas, Brazil.

The last four decades have been marked by neoliberal hegemony and intensification in the process of globalization and financialization, which are presented as the main components of world economic order. Unregulated global capitalism has led to instability and deep financial and productive crises, resulting in high unemployment and an increase of inequality, informalization and precariousness of labor.

The implementation of successive structural reforms have contributed to the reduction of social protection and labor regulation, weakening the role of trade unions and hampering their struggles and strategies of organization - nationally and internationally - widening social inequality within nations and asymmetries between nations in economic development, insertion in the global value chains and in the international division of labour. Furthermore, the international agenda of our times is marked by the growth of right-wing and extreme right-wing forces in several nations. Also the profound

ongoing technological changes create concerns about the future of labor, the organization and role of trade unions, public labour regulation, on the possibilities for reducing global asymmetries in global value chains and in the international division of labour. Under the general theme “**Future of Work: Democracy, Development, and the Role of Labour**” the XIII GLU Conference will debate these challenges with a focus on four sub-themes:

1. *Structural Changes and Impacts on Labour*: There is a pressing need to discuss how those huge structural changes, in their various expressions - ideological, political, economic, technological and internationally - will affect the daily working life of millions of people, in particular those living in the less developed areas of the world. Defending and extending workers’ rights calls for a set of strategies that need to advance across geographic borders to form inclusive working people alliances. One pressing question concerns the likely impact of the new technologies on varieties and forms of work, working hours and remuneration. How will structural changes and new technologies affect employment, unemployment and precariousness in different nations? How will new technologies and new kinds of jobs impact the organization of trade unions?

2. *Trade Union Organization and Strategies*. The reconfiguration of work in contemporary capitalism – loss of regular manufacturing jobs, drive towards job precarization - seriously impacted trade unions’ bargaining power and ability to voice workers’ interests. Nevertheless many trade unions have adopted new strategies – national and transnational - in their *modus operandi* in order to act in very adverse circumstances. What kinds of strategies have they developed and what are the impacts on trade union organizing? What will be the main impact on labour relations, and conflicts between capital and labor? How can organized labour help to organize those workers left out of the traditional forms of workers’ organizations and solidarity networks? How are trade unions responding to the new morphology of the working class? What new and innovative forms of organization and transnational cooperation are being devised to strengthen trade unions? What strategies are they developing in order to effectively use and expand their power resources? What forms of articulation are being built between trade unions, social movements and political power? What kind of successful experiences of trade union renewal and revitalization are underway, both with regard to the formal and the informal economy? What are trade union strategies for effectively shaping economic, social and labour policies?

3. *Labour Regulation*. Despite this context of profound transformations and precariousness of labor, labor reforms implemented in several countries end up reducing public regulation or sanctioning the various precarious forms of labor. It is becoming increasingly important to think of the most successful experiences of public labor regulation at the national and international levels, as well as those established in the same transnational enterprise and the normative role of the ILO. In this context, not only new forms of labor regulation, but also new types of social protection policies will be needed. How have labor reforms affected employment relations (working hours, pay, flexible forms of hiring) and the Social Protection System (social security, unemployment insurance, health care, etc.) and their effectiveness in different countries? How can universal social protection be ensured in countries where social protection is traditionally closely linked to a formal employment relationship? What are the trends in the areas where the rules of employment relationships are defined? What are successful experiences or strategies to overcome divisions between different groups within the wider working class? What are the relationships between these new technologies and their impacts with the need to modify (or not) the different forms of labour regulation? Considering international experiences, what would be the main aspects of the labour regulatory public system, including institutions charged with monitoring and enforcing social rights at work? What changes are under way and how will they affect the relationship between wage and

access to social policies? Which policies, including labour market regulations and social policies could face that structural transformation?

4. *Development*. No discussion on the future of work can be held without a general discussion of the kind of development we want. Different forms of deindustrialization in some parts of the Global South need to be examined and discussed, as the impact of this process sets crucial challenges on workers, among them stand out a shift towards deindustrialization. Will the international asymmetry in the economies and labour markets in the future be reinforced? How are relations between the core and periphery countries and between poor and developing countries being rebuilt? How do these trends affect the possibilities for development and improvement of working conditions? What will be the impacts of structural changes and new technologies on the international division of labor? Will developing countries continue to participate mainly in lesser quality stages of global value chains? How to diminish current income and social inequalities stands out as a major question to be raised and discussed considering the manifold faces in which those inequalities express themselves. What are strategies for development that create formal employment and benefits to all in society? What kind of changes in national economic policies and on the international order can reduce the inequality and asymmetry between and within nations? How can economic growth be made more inclusive to address the growing inequalities in many emerging countries? What will be the effect of climate change for regional inequalities, labour migration and even forced displacements both within and among countries? What could be the new development strategies in that context of huge importance of global value chain and industry 4.0 impacts? What lessons can be drawn from China and other Asian experiences in creating new development policies? How could national and international trade union movement/s help in creating new development initiatives?

Contributions that address gender and race aspects of the above four themes are encouraged.

As the conference will be held in Brazil, we will organize a special session about some themes of the conference *Work, Democracy and Development*, discussing the current political, social and economic context of Brazil.

We welcome submissions for papers on any of these themes. Articles may be written and presented in English, Spanish or Portuguese. While we encourage submission of papers that broadly fit into the themes, we will also consider papers that do not fit directly into one of the themes as long as they address the broad focus of the conference. Please indicate which theme your paper addresses with your abstract submission. The GLU encourages policy orientated research and therefore welcomes submissions that not only analyse problems, but also offer some policy initiatives and solutions for debate.

Please send a one-page abstract (which includes your methodological approach) by April 2, 2018 to Jacqueline Aslan Souen at glu.brazil.2010@gmail.com.