



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-Maghrab

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 (GMT+1)

Registration

9:00 am – 9:30 am (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

Coffee break

10:45 am – 12:05pm (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

Lunch Break

1:35 pm – 2:35 pm (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

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-authors: **Said Hanchane** (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University), **Khalid Souidi** (High Commission for Planning)

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

3:55 pm – 4:10 pm (GMT+1)

Coffee break

4:10 pm – 5:30 pm (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

Coffee break

11:35 am - 12:55 pm (GMT+1)

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 (GMT+1)

Lunch

2:30 pm - 3:30 pm (GMT+1)

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 Macroprudential Surveillance at Bank Al-Maghrib

3:30 pm - 3:45 pm (GMT+1)

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