



## Labor Markets and Structural Transformation

- Submission deadline:** May 21, 2023
- Submission email:** [menarrn@worldbank.org](mailto:menarrn@worldbank.org)
- Notification of acceptance:** June 22, 2023
- Conference dates:** September 14-15, 2023
- Conference location:** Rabat, Morocco
- Keynote speakers:** **Esther Duflo** (Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), **Chang-Tai Hsieh** (Phyllis and Irwin Winkelried Professor of Economics, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business), **Seema Jayachandran** (Professor of Economics and Public Affairs, Princeton University), and **Rachel Ngai** (Associate Professor of Economics, The London School of Economics and Political Science)
- Organizers:** Hosted by Bank Al-Maghrib (Central Bank of Morocco) and co-sponsored by the World Bank's Office of the Chief Economist of the Middle East and North Africa, on behalf of the Regional Research Network of Central Banks of the Middle East and North Africa

### Overview

The [Regional Research Network](#) (RRN) of Central Banks of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was launched in 2021 with the support of the World Bank's Office of the Chief Economist of MENA. The RRN seeks to facilitate the diffusion in MENA of ideas and scholarly research in economics and to promote evidence-based policy dialogue on the development challenges and opportunities faced by the region. The RRN Annual Conference is organized by the Heads of research departments and/or Chief Economists of MENA Central Banks, together with the Chief Economist Office of MENA of the World Bank.

The third edition of the conference will explore recent research on labor markets and structural transformation. The process of long-term growth tends to involve changes in the structure of economies. As GDP per capita increases, workers usually transition from low-productivity, low-earnings activities into higher-productivity, higher-earnings activities: from agriculture into manufacturing or services; from rural into urban areas; and from self-employment and informal wage-work into large, formal firms. This transformation also features changes in the allocation of time between home production and market production, with effects on the economic role of women and their participation in the labor force. Despite some pre-pandemic gains, labor markets in MENA still face significant challenges: a preponderance of informal work, a high share of inactive youth (not engaged in employment, education, or training), large gaps in economic opportunities for women, fragmented social protection systems, and an underdeveloped private sector. The organizing

committee of the 3<sup>rd</sup> RRN conference invites submissions of high-quality papers (with the potential for publication in peer-reviewed journals) that seek to understand how labor market challenges shape the long-run process of structural transformation. Relevant questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do distortions, barriers, and other constraints to the reallocation of labor across sectors or across occupations affect the process of structural transformation?
- What is the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises, and the structure of the private sector in general, in shaping labor market dynamics and the development transformation process?
- How does international trade and regional cooperation and integration shape labor market structural transitions?
- What are the effects of digitalization and the automation of production on the speed of labor market transitions and the process of structural transformation?
- What are the short- and long-run effects of migration, both domestic and international, on economic transformation?
- How do shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or climate-related disasters, affect labor market structural transitions?
- As economies grow, their structure as well as their level of diversification across products and industries change. What are the implications of this diversification on economic development, including macroeconomic volatility?

Empirical and theoretical contributions analyzing these and related topics are welcome. A focus on countries in MENA is welcome but not required, provided that the paper is relevant to the economic and policy debate in the MENA region.

### Speakers

**Esther Duflo** (Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), **Chang-Tai Hsieh** (Phyllis and Irwin Winkelried Professor of Economics, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business), **Seema Jayachandran** (Professor of Economics and Public Affairs, Princeton University), and **Rachel Ngai** (Associate Professor of Economics, The London School of Economics and Political Science) will offer keynote addresses at the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the RRN conference.

### Submissions

The deadline for submissions is May 21, 2023 (before midnight Washington, DC time). Interested authors should send their papers to [menarrn@worldbank.org](mailto:menarrn@worldbank.org). The e-mail should contain i) the name, title, and affiliated organization/institution of the main author and potential presenter, ii) the names of the co-authors, iii) an abstract of the paper and iv) the full paper as an attachment. Please use [Paper submission to the 3<sup>rd</sup> RRN Conference] in the subject line. Authors of accepted papers will be notified by email on June 22, 2023.

The conference will be held in hybrid format in Rabat, Morocco on September 14-15, 2023. Please note that in-person presentation of the accepted papers is strongly preferred. Travel and accommodation costs for the presenter of each accepted contribution will be covered. Details on travel logistics and accommodation will be circulated after the notification of acceptance.

### Questions?

Questions or comments about the submission of papers should be addressed to [menarrn@worldbank.org](mailto:menarrn@worldbank.org). For more information on the RRN, including the agenda of the 1st and the 2nd conferences, please visit the RRN [website](#).