

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ATLAS of **Future Jobs**

A Decade of Transformation in
Latin America and the Caribbean

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Executive summary

Technological, climate, and demographic shifts are rapidly reshaping labour markets across Latin America and the Caribbean. This edition of the Atlas of Future Jobs is guided by a clear premise: building resilience in labor markets in the face of these forces requires proactive strategies that act on three fronts: expanding, upgrading, and widening access to occupations that are reinforced by these transformations, reducing exposure to jobs vulnerable to disruption, and strengthening core skills across all occupations.

Which jobs are reinforced by ongoing transformations—and therefore hold greater potential for job creation? Labour markets offer particularly strong opportunities where workers operate in synergy with new technologies, the environment, or other people. We define these segments as future-oriented jobs, characterised by high People-to-Technology (P-T), People-to-Environment (P-E), and People-to-People (P-P) complementarities. These jobs are not only expected to expand as megatrends unfold; they are also essential to economic, social and environmental progress. Yet only 17% of workers in Latin America and the Caribbean hold such jobs –about 30% fewer than in high-income countries. This gap reflects structural differences in diversification and innovation.

Care-related jobs account for the largest share of future-oriented employment in the region: nearly three out of four such occupations falling within the care sector. These jobs rely predominantly on People-to-People (P-P) complementarities, are held mainly by women, and are expanding as populations age and social norms evolve. Realizing its potential will require recognizing the value of care, professionalizing these occupations and improving working conditions.

Occupations linked to science and technology (STEM) are central to harnessing People-to-Technology (P-T) complementarities, yet they account for just 4% of total employment in Latin America and the Caribbean—less than half the share observed in high-income countries. Green occupations, which concentrate People-to-Environment (P-E) complementarities, represent around 7% of total employment. However, once occupations vulnerable to automation are excluded, their share also converges towards 4%. Scaling up these strategic activities, alongside gender-responsive approaches to address women’s low participation, is key to advancing productive development, innovation, and the creation of high-quality jobs.

The region not only lags behind in shifting towards future-oriented jobs; a large share of its labor market is exposed to risk. 70% of regional employment is concentrated in activities vulnerable to technological or climate disruption. Automation alone threaten 55% of workers—a share one-third higher than in high-income countries—disproportionately affecting occupations that have historically sustained the middle class. This landscape highlights the need to support adaptation and enable transitions towards roles with better prospects for growth and quality.

A quarter of the region’s jobs are exposed to the adverse effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and extreme temperatures. This is considerably higher than in high-income countries, where it affects 15% of employment. Climate-related risks are concentrated in lower-skilled activities that predominantly employ men, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, construction, and transport. Addressing these vulnerabilities will require integrated strategies for climate adaptation and a just transition, ensuring protection and support for those most exposed.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) introduces a new dimension of change to labour markets. In Latin America and the Caribbean, around 21% of jobs—primarily in medium- and high-skilled occupations—could experience

productivity gains as tasks that can be replicated by these tools are combined with tasks that remain uniquely human. By contrast, about 5% of jobs face a higher risk of displacement, particularly in administrative support functions. Women are over-represented in both groups, positioning generative AI as a critical force in reshaping women's work and reinforcing the importance of closely monitoring its labour-market impacts.

Skilled trades—a longstanding segment of the labour market—are regaining prominence amid productive transformations and the green transition. These occupations combine technical expertise with human capabilities that are difficult to automate, and their relevance and productivity tend to increase as economies and green activities develop. In Latin America and the Caribbean, they account for around 8% of total employment and offer entry-points into medium-skilled careers, which is particularly important to developing economies. Yet they are often embedded in low-productivity environments and marked by pronounced gender segregation, with men representing 91% of the workforce. Realising their potential will depend on modernising technical training systems and reducing barriers to women's participation.

Opportunities and risks are unevenly distributed across the region. In the Southern Cone—Chile, Argentina, and Brazil—more than one-fifth of jobs are future-oriented, a share broadly comparable to that of high-income countries. In contrast, in many Central American and Caribbean economies fewer than one in ten jobs falls into this category, while exposure to automation and climate-related risks is markedly higher. These disparities reflect differences in productive structures: Caribbean economies rely heavily on tourism, which is highly exposed to climate risks, whereas Central American countries depend more on maquila manufacturing, a segment particularly vulnerable to automation.

A dynamic analysis points to limited progress over the past decade. The share of future-oriented jobs in the region increased only marginally—from

15.5% to 17%—while in advanced economies it rose from 21% to 25%. Even the most dynamic segments showed little expansion, and gender gaps persisted. Overall, the region remains anchored in less sophisticated and more vulnerable activities than its more developed counterparts, with limited scope for convergence.

Gender segregation in the labour market exposes women and men to distinct challenges. Women are more represented in future-oriented jobs, but these are largely concentrated in care-related occupations, which on average require lower skill levels and offer lower job quality. Men, by contrast, dominate STEM and green occupations, which, although relatively limited in scale, are associated with higher levels of innovation, productivity, and working conditions. This configuration risks reinforcing existing gender gaps, as women continue to face barriers to entering the most dynamic segments of the labour market.

The findings point to the need for comprehensive strategies to shape the future of work around five key pillars: (i) broadening access to core competencies, including digital, green, and socio-emotional skills; (ii) stimulating strategic sectors through productive policies and enabling conditions; (iii) improving working conditions in strategic yet precarious occupations, such as care work and skilled trades; (iv) ensuring that emerging opportunities are inclusive of women and other excluded groups; (v) supporting excluded and at-risk workers; and (vi) strengthening information systems to better anticipate change and inform decision-making.