



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF BELGIUM TO THE UNITED
NATIONS IN GENEVA



GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Permanent Mission to the
United Nations Office and other
international organizations in Geneva



Human Rights Council, 53rd Session

Side event: The job guarantee as a tool in the fight against poverty

Jointly organized by [ATD Fourth World](#) and the [UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights](#).

Co-sponsored by the [Permanent Mission of Belgium](#), the [Permanent Mission of Luxembourg](#) and the [Permanent Mission of South Africa](#) to the United Nations in Geneva.

Date/time: Friday 30 June 2023, 13:00 – 14:00 CET

Joining details:

In person: Room XXV, Building E, Palais des Nations, Geneva ([register to attend in person here](#))

Online: Webex ([register to follow online here](#))

Moderated by:

- **Olivier De Schutter**, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights [@srpoverty](#)

Panellists:

- **Aye Aye Win**, President of the International Committee for October 17th [@ayeayewinlemmer](#)
- **Kate Philip**, Programme Lead on the Presidential Employment Stimulus, South Africa
- **Mito Tsukamoto**, Chief of the Development and Investment Branch (DEVINVEST) of ILO's Employment Policy Department [@mitotsukamoto](#)
- **Pavlina Tcherneva**, Associate Professor of Economics, Bard College; Director, OSUN Economic Democracy Initiative; Research Scholar, Levy Economics Institute – [@ptcherneva](#)



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Background:

The “right to work” is an accepted human right. Yet unemployment and underemployment remain widespread, with huge costs to individuals, communities and society. A common approach many governments take to realizing the right to work is to foster job creation and skills development. But these approaches are insufficient to fulfil this right for all and to ensure that work is also decent and meaningful.

In his [upcoming report to the Human Rights Council](#), the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights proposes a more ambitious understanding of the right to work; one that imposes on governments an obligation of result – to provide decent work to all individuals able and willing to work. This is the idea of a job guarantee.

The idea is not new. In the United States, the Works Progress Administration was part of the New Deal response to the depression of the 1930s. More recently, the Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée scheme was launched in 2016 to provide a new way to challenge long-term unemployment in France, while the Expanded Public Works Programme in South Africa created a million job opportunities in 2021/22. And the COVID-19 pandemic saw a revived interest in job guarantee programmes as a means to buffer the employment impact of the crisis.

In his report, the Special Rapporteur takes the case for job guarantee programmes one step further. Beyond their ability to reduce poverty and retain jobs in times of crisis, he argues, they also have the potential to create jobs in areas of unmet, yet urgent, social need that are currently undersupplied by the market, such as the greening of the economy or the care economy. They should therefore be firmly on the radar of policy-makers as they navigate the climate and societal challenges of our time.

Bringing together experts on poverty and employment policy, as well as leading advocates and practitioners working on job guarantee programmes, this side event will unpack the potential of the job guarantee in the fight against poverty, with real-world examples and practical next steps for human rights professionals and policy-makers alike.