Artificial intelligence and the future of jobs

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Technology has had an undeniable impact improving living standards and increasing productivity. But with the rapid technological advancement of recent years, computers are increasingly encroaching on domains that were previously considered exclusively human.

There are concerns that technological innovation will lead to increased unemployment, suppressed wages and greater inequality. There are fears that machines enabled by artificial intelligence will replace many human jobs, resulting in mass unemployment and impoverishment.

This and other questions are discussed in the **new Frontier Issues report** prepared by DESA's researchers, in collaboration with UNDP, ILO and UN Women. The report entitle: "The impact of the technological revolution on labour markets and income distribution" finds that new technologies will have a profound impact on labour markets around the world. No country will be spared. Inequalities will rise further, and some jobs will disappear forcing a painful adjustment. However, fears of mass unemployment caused by automation are overblown. The impact of these new technologies on labour markets and income distribution is not predetermined. New technologies will also provide new jobs in the marketspace. The right policy mix and institutional arrangements can ensure that benefits of innovation are shared broadly, an essential step to achieving the SDGs for all.

"Just because a job can be automated does not mean it will. Humans may well be more productive and cheaper than machines. Our political and legal choices will prevent some jobs being taken over by robots" said Matthias Bruckner from the development policy and analysis division, UN DESA.

It is critical that government, industry, academia, civil society, as well as the United Nations, work together to create regulatory and legal frameworks that facilitate the adoption and diffusion of new technologies, while helping to address their negative consequences. The United Nations serves as an ideal platform to discuss and legislate on the issue.

Additional links:

  - For a more in-depth look at the role of technonlogu on labor markets and income distribution, the newly released report is   **available here** .
  - **UN News story** on this week's day-long event, ' The future of everything – sustainable development in the age of rapid technological change'.

  - How can the power of AI be harnessed to accelerate the SDGs? Learn more on SDGs and AI in this ITU blog post,   "Accelerating the UN's Sustainable Development Goals through AI"   .
  - ITU AI for Good Global Summit (website)
  - ITU has created a **new LinkedIn group ** for debate on cutting-edge AI technologies and related ICT applications and services.