

## Call for Abstracts

The Fourth Conference of the *Regulating for Decent Work* Network

Organized by *International Labour Office* (ILO)

In collaboration with

The University of Amsterdam *Institute for Advanced Labour Studies* (AIAS),  
The University of Melbourne *Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law* (CELRL),  
The University of Manchester's *Fairness at Work* Research Centre (FairWRC),  
The University of Duisburg-Essen *Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation* (IAQ),  
and other RDW network members

### ***Developing and Implementing Policies for a Better Future at Work***

**International Labour Office**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**8-10 July 2015**

**[www.rdw2015.org](http://www.rdw2015.org)**

The pre-crisis socio-economic model has failed. Unemployment - particularly youth unemployment - is destructively high, precarious work is expanding, growing numbers of workers are found among the working poor, and an evolving awareness of inequality has galvanised policy debates across the globe. Yet the reforms in policies and institutions that would counteract these trends have yet to materialise. This policy failure has triggered a broader unease about the future of work. To design policies that could transform this future, however, demands further investigation of complex and intersecting issues that include the role of labour regulation in development strategies; the disproportionate presence of vulnerable workers (e.g. youth, women, minorities, migrant workers) in unacceptable forms of work (UFW); the most effective strategies for protecting workers in fragmented labour markets, curbing income inequality and reducing informality; and the long-run impact of austerity policies.

The 4th RDW Conference will investigate key dimensions of the future of work. Papers are invited that focus on four thematic issues: (I) Worker protection: wages, hours, and the employment relationship; (II) Income security in the era of widening inequality – labour income, social protection, and well-being; (III) Labour market regulation and development – political economy of policy reforms and their outcomes; and (IV) Reaching out to vulnerable workers: voice, actions, and the role of collective labour relations (see further below).

The Conference will be held in the International Labour Office, Geneva, from 8-10 July 2015. It is co-hosted by the University of Amsterdam *Institute for Advanced Labour Studies* (AIAS), the University of Melbourne *Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law* (CELRL), the University of Manchester *Fairness at Work* Research Centre (FairWRC), and the University of Duisburg-Essen *Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation* (IAQ). Researchers from all regions are welcome. Continuing in the multidisciplinary tradition of *RDW*, it is hoped that participants will examine the Conference themes from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives (e.g. economics, industrial relations, labour law, political economy, sociology etc.)

## DEADLINES

Abstract submission (RDW Fellowship applicants)	31 December 2014
Abstract submission (general)	31 January 2015
Communicating acceptance (fellowship applicants)	28 February 2015
Communicating acceptance (general)	31 March 2015
Full paper submission	31 May 2015

## CONFERENCE TRACKS

### **Track I. Worker protection: wages, hours, and the employment relationship**

Coordinators: Janine Berg, Gerhard Bosch, Jill Rubery

New forms of work organization, technological developments, and deregulatory pressures, are transforming today's world of work. Employers are shifting the risk of the new models of production onto their workers, engaging in new forms of labour contracting -- temporary work, temporary agency work, subcontracting, marginal part-time work -- that have led to increased insecurity among workers. A growing cohort of workers, especially among the young, the lower-skilled, women and migrants, is shouldering the flexibility that employers demand, leading to growing job insecurity and a greater inability of workers to manage their working hours and ensure a decent income. In most countries, the State, rather than stepping in to fill the void, has stepped back on the protection and public services it provides, while lowering employment standards in the public sector, all under the veil of austerity and activation. Insecurity increasingly affects traditionally well protected workers with strong impacts on the middle class. Employers are weakening the standard employment relationship and drawing new boundaries between protected and unprotected workers- within professional and managerial groups, skilled trades as well as among lower skilled service and manual workers. Employers are also increasing their discretion in the setting of pay and in the organisation of work and working time. Under the twin pressures of the 24/7 globalised economy and the spread of new technologies, workers at all levels are being expected to be available for work as and when required, without necessarily being compensated for their time spent on call. Furthermore, activation measures coupled with pension reforms are placing increased pressures on citizens to work for longer, without employers being required to adjust their policies and their systems of work organisation and working time to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse labour force.

Although insecurities have long existed in the developing world, here too they have been exacerbated as 'modern sector' enterprises have adopted many of the same practices found in the industrialized world. There is thus a need to develop new policies and regulatory systems to address the erosion of all forms of worker protection in both the developed and developing world. While papers are welcome that address any of these issues we particularly welcome papers that address the following issues: (a) How should societies react to these trends? Are 'new systems' of worker protection needed? Have the labour markets of industrialized countries returned to the labour markets of the early 20th century? If so, are there lessons from the past that can be helpful in constructing solutions to the growing insecurities in the world of work?; (b) How is fair pay to be established and maintained within fragmented and segmented labour markets?; (c) How is work being reorganised and with what implications for working conditions, work intensity and employee well-being for specific occupational groups ( including professions, managerial work, skilled trades, service work and manufacturing)?; (d) What is the impact of austerity and longer term trends on pay and conditions in the public sector and how can fair conditions be established in the public sector and protected in contexts of pressures for cuts in public expenditure?; (e) How can workers' rights to regular working time and work-life balance be protected under the impact of

globalisation, new technologies, the 24/7 and new managerial prerogatives?; (f) How far are workplaces becoming better or less well adapted to meeting the needs of a diverse workforce, including older or disabled workers and those with caring responsibilities? How far are legal protections against discrimination for vulnerable groups being effectively implemented?

## **Track II. Income security in the era of widening inequality: labour income, social protection, and well-being**

Coordinators: Uma Amara, Christina Behrendt, Sukti Dasgupta

There is a growing body of evidence which suggests that widening income inequality is one of the major contributing factors to the current global crisis. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening, as the total income of high-income households expanded faster than that of low-income households in about two-thirds of the countries, leading not only to higher income inequality but also – in many cases – to higher poverty and social exclusion. A critical challenge today is how to ensure that economic gains are shared in a more equitable manner and how to ensure income security for all over the life course, particularly during key transitions into and out of the labour market, in fast changing economic contexts, and for poor and vulnerable segments of the population. In many of the developing economies, the share of low paid workers, who also have little access to social protection, has been on a rise. Similarly, in countries with high and increasing levels of unemployment, many households have to rely on transfers and are under pressure to make ends meet. In such situations, it becomes obvious that while the main source of income is from work, other sources (e.g., from public and private transfers) assume great importance, and is critical for the livelihood of the households. The importance of income security is self-evident: the ultimate goal of inclusive economic growth is to ensure decent living conditions for all people in any given society.

The issues that become pertinent to understand are what the underlying factors for the changes in income inequality over the past decade, and what are the variations across regions and countries? What are the mechanisms to provide income security, particularly by combining labour market policies (in a narrow sense) and social protection policies? What kind of policies and institutions are needed to prevent the trend of downward spiral in incomes or stagnating incomes? What would be the implications of such policies for well-being and, if possible, economic stability/growth in the long-run?

Papers in this track should address the above questions. More specifically, they could focus on: (1) Changing dynamics of economic growth and income distribution in developed and developing countries, with a focus on changing forms of work and employment (including informality and formalization) and the distribution of earnings and other incomes; (2) Relevant employment policies, wage policies, social protection policies, etc. that have been successful in reversing the trend of increasing poverty and inequality in developed and/or developing countries; (3) The link between labour market and social institutions, income security and income inequality based on developments in countries and regions; (4) The link between growth and inequality and what are the economic impacts of the increase in inequality.

## **Track III. Labour market regulation and development: political economy of policy reforms and their outcomes**

Coordinators: Sean Cooney, Colin Fenwick, John Howe

This track focuses on the process of making and implementing law and policy regulating the labour market. It has two aspects.

The first aspect of the theme concerns the politics of labour regulation. What are the institutions, the economic and social policies, and the social forces – national, regional and international – that have shaped government intervention in labour markets in recent years, whether through legal or administrative means? How do they constrain or promote particular initiatives? How do they vary from country to country, and how have they changed over time? What are the challenges and opportunities for labour law and policy flowing from participation in the international economy or global value chains? What are the connections between industrial policy and areas such as labour market regulation, skills development and respect for labour rights? When has it been possible to build consensus around, or at least coalitions in favour of, innovative reforms?

The second aspect of the theme considers the outcomes of innovations in law and policy. What kinds of initiatives have proved to be successful, in the sense that they are of demonstrable socio-economic benefit and/or because they have gained widespread social consensus? Which were contested at the time of introduction, and how were these constraints overcome?

Papers in this track can focus on a particular issue of labour market regulation, including health and safety, wages, hours, employment relations and other working conditions, compliance strategies and enforcement mechanisms, dispute-resolution institutions, and national and international approaches to the regulation of labour in global value chains.

#### **Track IV.        Reaching out to vulnerable workers: voice, actions and the role of collective labour relations**

Coordinators: Chang-Hee Lee, Susan Hayter, Kea Tijdens

The world of work is undergoing profound changes. In industrialized countries the financial and economic crisis of the late 2000s further weakened one of the basic tenets of industrial relations systems, stable permanent, formal employment. What were once considered atypical forms of employment such as temporary agency, fixed-term and informal work are now a typical feature of many sectors. This has not only compounded the fall in union membership, it has also eroded coverage and protection by collective bargaining agreements. In developing countries, many workers continue to work in informal arrangements that fall outside the boundaries of union organization and collective bargaining as well as labour law. How to make the voice of these vulnerable workers heard and reflected in policies remains a challenge. Industrial relations institutions struggle to find innovative ways to reach out them, while vulnerable workers themselves strive to make their voices heard through organizing and collective actions.

The papers in this track will examine (1) Collective actions, new forms of organizations, strategies and source of power emerging amongst vulnerable workers, and their effects on innovative labour regulations and labour market conditions; (2) Inclusive industrial relations institutions and practices for reaching out and covering vulnerable workers, and for innovative labour regulations; (3) Multi-faceted approaches of various stakeholders to improving wages and working conditions of vulnerable workers at the low end of global supply chains; (4) Methodological challenges to researching voice mechanisms and to studying the interests of vulnerable groups

## **SPECIAL SESSIONS**

### **I. Regulating employment relationship and working conditions in domestic work: new evidence, approaches and methodologies**

Domestic work is a fast expanding sector globally, and has among the highest incidence of informal employment. Informality of employment, along with the nature of the workplace and social structures make domestic workers vulnerable to poor working conditions, labour exploitation and abuse. Increasingly, countries are adopting regulations to extend protection to domestic workers. Such initiatives have stirred debate about the effects of such regulations: while some argue that regulations are necessary to formalize the sector and improve working conditions, others see regulations as a sure fire way to push more domestic workers into the informal economy or reduce their employment opportunities. Little evidence has been collected on the outcomes of such regulations, the factors and conditions that influence outcomes, and whether or not formalisation and improved quality of employment are not incompatible and could be achieved. Specific elements of the regulatory framework may matter, including the level of the MW, transaction costs of registering to social security, burden placed on employers with respect to social protection, and scope of application sometimes excluding large segments of the domestic work force.

Papers for this special session will address one or more of the following questions: What are some of the observed effects of specific regulations for domestic workers in a given country or countries and what have influenced these changes? What methods could be used to evaluate and learn more about the effects of regulations? What institutions and measures have governments used to ensure a positive outcome of their regulations? What other labour market institutions have proved useful in ensuring regulations effectively protect domestic workers? Papers that offer new insights and empirical findings on the impact of specific regulations, policies and labour market institutions on the domestic work sector are particularly welcome.

### **II. The governance of work and labour standards in global value chains**

Relations of production in the global economy are increasingly embedded in global value chains (GVCs), characterized by cross-border outsourcing of fragments of the production process and coordination by national, regional and global buyers. Participation in GVCs creates both new challenges and opportunities concerning the type of jobs created, whether non-standard employment relations are involved (including casual, contract, informal and migrant labour), the conditions in which work takes place, if labour standards are respected (and when lacking, how to monitor and enforce compliance).

Important implications arise for the formulation of policies and legislation (as well as their implementation and enforcement) by governments, associations of employers and workers, non-governmental organizations, and for potential interaction between these various agents of governance. Forms of labour governance in GVCs may involve international trade rules, corporate social responsibility, private monitoring initiatives, trade union campaigns, strategies to organize informal workers, pressure from civil society organizations and multi-stakeholder initiatives. This Special Session invites the submission of abstracts for papers that would address governance challenges and initiatives to promote decent work in GVCs from a theoretical perspective, or empirical studies involving comparative and individual case studies, or from practitioners representing the perspective of different governance actors and their initiatives.

## SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS

The organizing committee invites you to submit abstracts for the 2015 RDW Conference:

- Abstracts should be in English.
- Abstracts must have a maximum of 400 words including references and appendices.
- Abstracts can be submitted on the conference website: [www.rdw2015.org](http://www.rdw2015.org) (from 15 October 2014).
- The author(s) should indicate their preferred Conference track.
- Deadline for abstract submission (general): 31 January 2015.
  - Deadline for abstract submission (RDW fellowship applicants): 31 Dec 2014

The abstracts will be subject to a competitive review process. Guidelines for final papers will be communicated to the authors of selected abstracts. It is expected that an edited volume will be produced, drawn from selected conference papers.

## PROPOSALS FOR SPECIAL SESSIONS

- Special Sessions devoted to existing research projects or specific themes are encouraged. The Special Sessions should be international in content. They will be 90 minutes in length and involve at least three presenters, a chair, and a discussant if preferred. Session abstracts should be in English.
- Session abstracts must have a maximum of 400 words including references and appendices.
- Session abstracts can be submitted on the conference website: [www.rdw2015.org](http://www.rdw2015.org) (from 15 October 2014).
- Session abstracts should describe the session as a whole, including the names and affiliations of the three presenters, the chair and the discussant, if applicable. It is not necessary to identify a Conference track.
- Session abstract submission deadline: 31 January 2015.

## FEES AND EXPENSES

There will be no fee for conference participants. Travel costs must be met from participants' own resources, although limited funds will be available for authors of selected papers who are based in developing countries (see "RDW Fellowships" below). Interest in these funds should be indicated in the abstract proposal.

## RDW FELLOWSHIPS

A unique aspect of the RDW Conference is the commitment to creating an environment for global research dialogue, especially between industrialized and developing countries. In this respect, a Fellowship fund has been established to support researchers from developing countries who may otherwise be prevented from attending. Interested researchers are strongly encouraged to submit their abstracts no later than 31 December 2014 (please note that this deadline for submission is one month earlier than the general deadline). Successful applicants will receive Fellowship grants of an amount determined by the estimated cost of travel and other expenses.

## COMMITTEES

### *RDW Conference Organizing Committee*

Janine Berg, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([berg@ilo.org](mailto:berg@ilo.org))

Sangheon Lee, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([lees@ilo.org](mailto:lees@ilo.org))

Deirdre McCann, University of Durham, UK ([deirdre.mccann@durham.ac.uk](mailto:deirdre.mccann@durham.ac.uk))

Kea Tjidsen, AIAS, University of Amsterdam ([K.G.Tjidsen@uva.nl](mailto:K.G.Tjidsen@uva.nl))

### ***RDW Committee***

Uma Amara, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([amara@ilo.org](mailto:amara@ilo.org))  
Janine Berg, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([berg@ilo.org](mailto:berg@ilo.org))  
Gerhard Bosch, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany ([gerhard.bosch@uni-due.de](mailto:gerhard.bosch@uni-due.de))  
Sean Cooney, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([cooney@ilo.org](mailto:cooney@ilo.org))  
Colin Fenwick, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([fenwick@ilo.org](mailto:fenwick@ilo.org))  
Susan Hayter, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([hayter@ilo.org](mailto:hayter@ilo.org))  
John Howe, University of Melbourne, Australia ([j.howe@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:j.howe@unimelb.edu.au))  
Chang-Hee Lee, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([chlee@ilo.org](mailto:chlee@ilo.org))  
Sangheon Lee, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([lees@ilo.org](mailto:lees@ilo.org))  
Deirdre McCann, University of Durham, UK ([deirdre.mccann@durham.ac.uk](mailto:deirdre.mccann@durham.ac.uk))  
Adriana Marshall, Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social, Buenos Aires, Argentina ([marshall@retina.ar](mailto:marshall@retina.ar))  
Jillian Murray, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia ([Jill.Murray@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:Jill.Murray@latrobe.edu.au))  
Anne Posthuma, ILO, Brasilia Office ([posthuma@ilo.org](mailto:posthuma@ilo.org))  
Arianna Rossi, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland ([rossi@ilo.org](mailto:rossi@ilo.org))  
Jill Rubery, University of Manchester ([jill.rubery@mbs.ac.uk](mailto:jill.rubery@mbs.ac.uk))  
Kea Tijdens, AIAS, University of Amsterdam ([K.G.Tijdens@uva.nl](mailto:K.G.Tijdens@uva.nl))

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further details are available on the RDW website:  
[www.rdw2015.org](http://www.rdw2015.org)

For any queries, please contact the Conference Organizing Committee at [rdw@ilo.org](mailto:rdw@ilo.org)