



International  
Labour  
Organization

## ▶ Two decades of national employment policies 2000-2020

Part II: Towards a new generation of national  
employment policies (NEP)s: What can we  
learn from the evolution of the scope and  
content of NEPs?

Eléonore D'Achon







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## ▶ Preface

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Trends over recent decades have shown that growth is not sufficient to support the creation of decent and productive employment. The majority of countries around the world continue to face persistent and pervasive employment challenges with both unemployment, underemployment and informality, as well as inequalities, still being very much key features of labour markets. In this context, policies to promote full and productive employment have become central to socioeconomic development strategies, which have been, at the same time, elevated to a much higher position in the international policy discourse and agenda. Indeed, for most national governments, employment has become an even more important objective of policy intervention than before. A principal means of so doing is through the adoption of proactive and explicit national employment policies. Part I of this publication on “Two decades of national employment policies 2000-2020: lessons from the past, policies for the future” showed how such policies have become a public intervention instrument in an increasing number and variety of countries.

Employment deficits and inequalities in the labour market have been exacerbated by the recent and multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges and high level of uncertainty are further intensified by a fast-changing future of work, affected by shifting forms of globalization, as well technological, climate and demographic changes. To design the right policy responses, it is essential to avoid focusing only on short-term and quick fixes to the detriment of sustainable solutions to address longstanding challenges and imbalances in the labour market. These call for specific measures to address their structural nature. Policy sequencing and linking short- and longer-term solutions are the “raison d’être” of national employment policies (NEPs).

To develop more effective employment policies, it is important to learn lessons from the past: how have governments addressed employment challenges? What are the differences (and similarities) in approaches they have been taking through their national employment policies? How did NEPs evolve in the wake of various crises, including the global financial and COVID-19 crises? Are NEPs successful entry points to anticipate changes related to the future of work and foster the development of labour markets that cater to the needs of all workers and promote fairer redistribution of resources?

To answer some of these questions, this paper reviewed 40 national employment policies adopted over the last two decades across regions and income groupings. This review - the first of its kind - highlights that there is no single magic bullet and no one solution that fits all situations. Indeed, policies have evolved in time with the nature of new challenges. The political, economic and social contexts are shaping the content, scope and priorities of employment policies, making each of them unique and tailored to the characteristics of each country.

While it is important to recognise different approaches to NEPs across countries, these policies also have much in common. Amongst other things, all the countries reviewed have embarked on an ambitious and holistic approach to employment policies, looking at employment deficits, in both quantity and quality, in accordance with ILO policy and normative frameworks on employment, notably the Employment Policy Convention (No. 122), 1964, and its Recommendation (No. 169), 1984. Employment policies draw upon a vast array of tools, and various combinations of policy-components are utilized. In a context of increasing requests from ILO constituents for information on the different policy instruments available to address a given challenge and what types of employment policies are formulated in similar contexts, this review can also be used as a catalogue of policy measures structured around different thematic areas and policy goals. We hope that it provides an opportunity for ILO’s constituents to learn from each other.

This report is the second part of a triptych. While each report is meant to stand on its own, they are interrelated and linked. The first part places special emphasis on policy design, this present report focuses on the content of NEP while the third part will focus on implementation - so that it is relevant to countries that are at different stages of their NEP process. As many countries are formulating a new NEP or adapting existing ones to respond to the COVID-19 and other multiple crises, and address future of work challenges, we hope that the recommendations contained in this review will shed light on the way forward and offer practical suggestions for the future.



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## ▶ Executive Summary

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The magnitude and the complexity of employment challenges worldwide requires a comprehensive approach encompassing macro, meso and micro economic and social policies which all bear heavily on employment outcomes. The use of such tools in addressing the threefold challenges of employment creation, work quality and access to jobs constitutes what are called today national employment policies. This paper analyses the diverse spectrum and combinations of measures that governments and social partners around the world have taken to address the varied employment situations - though the review of 40 standalone national employment policies (NEP) adopted over the last two decades. NEPs are defined as a public policy approach that aims at achieving full, productive and freely chosen employment in line with Convention C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122). It relates to the quantity and quality dimensions of employment and addresses the demand and supply sides of the labour market.<sup>1</sup> These policies can take various forms depending on the country situation, including standalone, comprehensive national policy documents.

The review shows that, overall, countries acknowledge that the employment outcome of economic growth is influenced by a mix of policies and the value of a broad and integrated approach to employment where a number of policy areas work in cohesion. Indeed, the policy documents reviewed show that these include a wide range of areas, ranging from policies that steer the creation of jobs, - such as macroeconomic and trade policies, sectoral policies and promotion of sustainable enterprises to policies to connect workers to those jobs while also addressing policies that change the supply of labour in terms of quantity and quality and the conditions under which workers take up employment. NEPs are also an important platform to support the transitions from the informal to the formal economy.

This trend is valid for countries of all economic and regional backgrounds reviewed in this report, even though not all countries are adopting multiple interventions to the same extent, nor do they rely on the same balance and set of policy measures. Indeed, regionally, NEPs from the Americas, the Middle East and North Africa as well as Europe and Central Asia, tend to be more focused than those from Asia and the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa, with a lower number of proposed interventions. Indeed, sub-Saharan Africa and Asian NEPs have a comparatively higher prevalence of policy components although, here again, with different focuses reflecting the different policy priorities of each region. For example, sub-Saharan African NEPs tend to focus more on policies for job creation reflecting the need in the region to reallocate economic activity from low to higher productivity sectors, while policies to guide the labour market are more popular in European NEPs, highlighting the necessity to strengthen labour market relations and functioning.

The review also shows how those policies are changing over time. A first finding is that countries not only adopt more employment policies, as mentioned in the first Report on "Employment policy design: lessons from the past, policies for the future",<sup>2</sup> but seem to commit to them more. Evidence of this exists in the number of countries that establish explicit time-bound and measurable employment targets, reflecting a political commitment to achieving an outcome in the labour market within a defined time period. Over the years, the focus also shifts from unemployment as the headline target to a battery of targets acknowledging the multiplicity of employment deficits.

Looking at time-related trends shows how NEPs are becoming increasingly inclusive, extending the target groups well beyond the "traditional" unemployed and paying specific attention to the needs of the most vulnerable in the labour market, including women, youth, migrants, rural and informal workers, but also less "visible" groups such as young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) or inactive women. The policy areas addressed by the documents have also been evolving in a number of ways, including as a response to the global economic and financial crisis of 2008-9, to focus on issues such as pro-employment

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<sup>1</sup> See [Reports of the Recurrent Discussion Committee: Employment](#) (ilo.org)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS\\_817748/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_817748/lang-en/index.htm)

macroeconomic frameworks, trade, structural transformation, and also policies to address skills and to govern the labour market. Conversely, some issues are losing prominence over time, such as policies for work quality. The review also shows that NEPs are not only addressing existing employment challenges but are increasingly positioning themselves as privileged entry points to address future of work issues, informality and gender concerns. Finally, looking at policies adopted after the period under review shows that, in many countries, NEPs have been formulated or adapted to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic or as a response to the multiple crises they face.

Despite progress made, employment policies still fall short of some promises. The report concludes with some recommendations in that regard to guide the design of forthcoming generations of employment policies. While the review confirms the need to continue investing in NEPs, as they can play an important role in connecting short-term needs to longer-term and structural goals, it will be important to ensure that there is no step backward on important achievements such as pro-employment macroeconomic policies, structural transformation and employment quality. In the same vein, as NEPs become an important avenue to address future of work issues, this should not overshadow old, but persistent, problems, such as informal employment, the rural economy, local development or sluggish structural transformation which remain key policy challenges that will need continued attention in the future. Finally, although the ILO argues for an ambitious and comprehensive approach to employment policies, this should not equate with “all-embracing NEPs”. Having limited resources, countries need to focus on policy priorities that are practical, realistic and based on existing institutions and capacities at the risk of being too ambitious and hence inoperable. Future national employment policies will need to take capacities and budget constraints more seriously so as to identify solutions that fit with economic and institutional capacities, and those that instead are just not practical to address at this stage of the country’s development.

## ▶ 1. Introduction

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Despite some progress in recent decades, employment challenges are manifold in most countries. Globally, countries were already facing a range of persistent employment deficits when the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent crisis hit, such as pervasive informality, gender disparities, stagnant or falling productivity growth rates as well as greater variations in the labour market, with many workers in part-time or temporary employment, in employment arrangements with multiple employers, or in disguised employment. In addition, there are considerations being given to the future of work - many of which relate to globalization as well as demographic, climate and technological change.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, the ILO argues for a comprehensive and explicit approach to employment based on the recognition that economic growth per se is unlikely to yield a satisfactory level and structure of employment. Part I of this publication "Employment policy design: lessons from the past, policies for the future"<sup>4</sup> presents the ILO call for national employment policies (NEP) which combine different policy instruments that address labour supply and labour demand as well as labour market policies and institutions, with a view to addressing the root causes rather than just the symptoms of limited job-rich growth. The NEP equation becomes even more difficult as the focus is broadened to include all dimensions of decent work, which remains the key to achieving inclusive development. These employment policies can take various forms depending on the country situation, including standalone, comprehensive national policy documents which are analysed in this publication.

That said, there is no unique recipe and comprehensive NEPs should not be equated with all-embracing policies. Having limited resources, countries need to focus on policy priorities that are practical and realistic and identify the specific sequencing of those interventions. In addition, at country level, there are trade-offs and sometimes tensions between competing priorities and the subcomponents of such an integrated approach. Part I of this publication "Lessons from the past, policies for the future"<sup>5</sup> shows how these are worked out by national actors and within national institutions to ensure that NEP are tailored to the characteristics of each context and are the result of a specific social and political process. It shows how NEP design processes are not only bringing ministries of labour and employment, but also other ministries, along with social partners and other stakeholders, together, to arrive at consensus-based solutions and how, over the years, social dialogue to support NEP design has undergone changes in its scope, content and depth. The review also explores how the NEP design process has helped to shift mindsets on NEP partners' respective roles in dealing with employment challenges, strengthened national institutions, facilitated collective learning processes, opened up opportunities for new coordination and enhanced policy coherence to arrive at shared ownership of employment solutions. Bringing on board a wide range of stakeholders, employment policies are increasingly becoming an agreed framework that describes the collective employment vision, not only for national stakeholders, but also for development partners.

This second part of the report "Towards a new generation of national employment policy (NEP): What can we learn from the evolution of the scope and content of NEPs" shows the results of such participatory processes and how they shape the content of national employment policies. It analyses the content of national employment policies with a view to assess their scope and evolution over time. This report aims at responding to one of the most frequent questions from ILO constituents and employment practitioners, i.e., what types of employment policies does country x have? or what types of employment policies are formulated in similar contexts? As a contribution to a fuller response to that demand, this report aims at cataloguing employment solutions as set out in national employment policies, to which countries can refer when developing or updating their employment policies.

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<sup>3</sup> For a full overview of the employment context and policy challenges globally see [Part I of this publication](#)

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS\\_817748/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_817748/lang--en/index.htm)

Secondly, this report aims to show how the composition of national employment policies has evolved over the last two decades and to what extent the scope of national employment policies has increased over that period. The report is designed in a way that enables the reader to either read it in its entirety or pick and choose the topics and policy areas for which he or she needs information. It first looks at the overall goals and targets of the selected employment policies (Chapter 3). It then examines their declination into main policy measures to gain insights into their content and capture the diversity of areas covered in employment policy documents across four policy areas: demand side (Chapter 4.1) and skills policies (Chapter 4.2), labour market policies and governance (Chapter 4.3) and quality of employment (Chapter 4.4). In addition, the report will look at some cross-cutting themes (informal economy and gender) which can be taken into consideration as specific objectives as well as by every key priority of the policy (4.5). Chapter 5 concludes with a set of recommendations to highlight potential areas for improvement and how NEP can be adapted to best promote recovery and strengthen the resilience of labour markets in the long run – both in the context of the COVID crisis and the future of work.

Part III will focus on how these employment policies are effectively implemented.



## ▶ 2. Methodology

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Forty national employment policies were reviewed for 30 countries<sup>6</sup> covering the period 2005-2020 and distributed by income level and ILO regional classification.<sup>7</sup> The sample mostly includes countries where the ILO has provided assistance to the formulation and implementation of national employment policies, hence mainly low-income and middle-income countries. To capture evolution over time, the timespan under review was divided into two equivalent periods – 2005-2012 (20 NEPs - eight years) and 2013-2020 (20 NEPs - eight years). To apply the same standard when examining employment policy documents, policy interventions have been analysed based on a template with predefined criteria. The framework retained a total of eighteen policy areas listed under four headings covering factors influencing: (i) the demand side, (ii) skills; (iii) labour market policies and governance, and (iv) the quality of employment. These are then subdivided into sub-policy areas, and even sub-sub policy areas (figure 1).

This implies an inevitable amount of interpretation. In addition, there can be potential bias due to the comparability of NEP. Indeed, employment policy documents vary from country to country and can be extremely diverse in terms of form, length, and scope. While some NEPs outline broad goals, others go into specific outcomes with detailed implementation measures. This means that the different NEPs may not be strictly comparable as they go into different levels of detail. In addition, while the template was established to be as encompassing as possible, some NEP measures are not referenced and may be overlooked. Finally, in general, employment policies are adopted with an action plan, which sets out the outcomes and outputs, addresses budgetary and programming requirements, and allocates roles and responsibilities. Those are in principle regularly updated and have not been analysed in the context of this review.

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<sup>6</sup> The following countries adopted two NEPs over the period under review: Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Nepal, Mozambique, Moldova, North Macedonia, Senegal, Zambia.

<sup>7</sup> See Table 1a and table 1.b.

► **Figure 1. Key policy area and sub (-sub) policy areas**

	<b>Sub-sub policy areas</b>
<b>Key policy 1: Demand side</b>	
<b>Sub-Policy i:</b> Macro-economic policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-employment macro-economic frameworks</li> <li>• Monetary policy and exchange rate</li> <li>• Fiscal policies</li> <li>• Financial policies</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy ii:</b> Sectoral policies and structural change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions and structural change</li> <li>• Rural economy</li> <li>• Industrial policies</li> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy iii:</b> Investment policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• Investments in infrastructure</li> <li>• Investments in labour intensive sectors</li> <li>• Investments to generate green jobs</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy iv:</b> Trade and regional integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• Enhancing competitiveness &amp; productivity</li> <li>• Promoting regional integration and access to global value chains</li> <li>• Promoting promising sectors</li> <li>• Effects of trade agreements on employment</li> <li>• Coherence between employment, skills, and trade policies</li> <li>• Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy v:</b> Sustainable enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidies and tax incentives</li> <li>• Special measures for MSMEs</li> <li>• Supportive regulatory environment conducive to job creation by sustainable enterprises</li> <li>• Special measures for cooperatives</li> <li>• Special measures for multinational</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Key policy 2: Skills and employability</b>	
<b>Sub-Policy vi:</b> Training institutions & systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• Engaging with social partners &amp; the private sector</li> <li>• Qualification frameworks</li> <li>• Funding mechanisms</li> <li>• Matching and forecasting of skills supply and demand</li> <li>• Policies and normative frameworks</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy vii:</b> Lifelong learning and skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• Early childhood and basic education</li> <li>• Curriculum development</li> <li>• TVET</li> <li>• Work-based learning</li> <li>• Career guidance</li> <li>• Skills for entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Skills for trade, green jobs and technological change</li> </ul>

	<b>Sub-sub policy areas</b>
<b>Sub-Policy viii:</b> Skills for social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Migrants</li> <li>• Informal workers</li> <li>• Rural workers</li> <li>• People with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Key policy 3: Labour market policies and governance</b>	
<b>Sub-Policy ix:</b> Employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reform of public employment services</li> <li>• Regulation of private employment agencies</li> <li>• Cooperation between public employment services and private employment agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy x:</b> Active labour market policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job orientation measures</li> <li>• Special employment measures and programmes</li> <li>• Incentives and subsidies to hire</li> <li>• Skills upgrading and re-skilling to improve employability</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship development programmes</li> <li>• Public employment schemes: emergency public works and other direct job creation strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xi:</b> Unemployment benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing existing systems</li> <li>• Establishing unemployment schemes</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xii:</b> Labour market information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Provisions</li> <li>• Data Limitations</li> <li>• Institutional arrangements and capacities</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xiii:</b> Social dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social dialogue and NEPs</li> <li>• Tools for social dialogue</li> <li>• Enabling conditions for social dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xiv:</b> Wages, incomes, benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage setting process</li> <li>• Minimum wage</li> <li>• Equal pay for work of equal value</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xv:</b> Labour law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of labour legislation</li> <li>• Enforcement and compliance</li> </ul>
<b>Key policy 4: Quality of employment</b>	
<b>Sub-Policy xvi:</b> Working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• Work arrangements</li> <li>• Occupational health and safety</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xvii:</b> Equal opportunities & non-discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• People with disabilities</li> <li>• Forced labour</li> <li>• Child labour</li> <li>• Gender</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Policy xviii:</b> Social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General provisions</li> <li>• Social protection for all</li> <li>• Enhancing the scope of social protection</li> <li>• Social assistance</li> <li>• Pension systems</li> </ul>



▶ **Table 1a. Composition of the sample and year of NEP adoption, by economic grouping\***

	NEPs for 2005-2012		NEPs for 2013-2020	
	Country	Year of adoption	Country	Year of adoption
Low-income countries (LIC)	Burkina Faso	2008	Mali	2015
	Liberia	2009	Mozambique	2016
	Mozambique	2006		
	Uganda	2011		
Lower-middle-income countries (LMIC)	Algeria	2008	Benin	2022
	Benin	2011	Cambodia	2015
	Cameroon	2008	Cameroon	2017
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	Nepal	2005	Honduras	2017
	Philippines	2011	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Mongolia	2016
	Senegal	2010	Morocco	2015
	Sri Lanka	2012	Nepal	2015
	Zambia	2005	Rep. of Moldova	2016
			Senegal	2017
		Zambia	2019	
Upper-middle- and high-income-countries (UMIC and HIC)**	Armenia	2012	Albania	2014
	Guatemala	2012	Costa Rica	2014
	Iraq	2011	Guatemala	2017
	Jordan	2011	Namibia	2013
	North Macedonia	2011	North Macedonia	2015
	Peru	2011	Panama	2014

Source: Author's analysis of the sample of national employment policies.

\* For the current 2021 fiscal year, low-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the [World Bank Atlas method](#), of \$1,035 or less in 2019; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,036 and \$4,045; upper-middle income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,046 and \$12,535; high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of \$12,536 or more.

See: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>.

\*\* Figures and text refer to UMIC while also including Panama, the only high-income country in the sample.

► **Table 1b. Composition of the sample and year of NEP adoption, by region**

	NEPs for 2005-2012		NEPs for 2013-2020	
	Country	Year of adoption	Country	Year of adoption
Sub-Saharan Africa	Zambia	2005	Namibia	2013
	Mozambique	2006	Mali	2015
	Burkina Faso	2008	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	Cameroon	2008	Mozambique	2016
	Liberia	2009	Cameroon	2017
	Senegal	2010	Senegal	2017
	Benin	2011	Zambia	2019
	Uganda	2011	Benin	2020
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012		
Americas	Peru	2011	Costa Rica	2014
	Guatemala	2012	Panama	2014
			Guatemala	2017
			Honduras	2017
Middle East and North Africa	Algeria	2008	Morocco	2015
	Iraq	2011		
	Jordan	2011		
Asia and the Pacific	Nepal	2005	Cambodia	2015
	Philippines	2011	Nepal	2015
	Sri Lanka	2012	Mongolia	2016
Europe and Central Asia	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	North Macedonia	2011	Albania	2014
	Armenia	2012	North Macedonia	2015
			Rep. of Moldova	2016

Source: See table 1a.



### ► 3. Goals and employment targets: What are employment policies aiming to achieve?

#### 3.1. Employment policies project decent work as a key goal to be pursued

Public policies are, by definition, goal oriented. Defining a clear goal is usually the first critical step in making decisions on the values or principles that will guide the rest of the process and what is to be achieved by implementing the policy. Table 2 captures what are employment policies ultimate goals. It shows that, globally, employment policies are seeking to promote jobs in terms, not only of quantity, but also quality. Indeed, decent work or quality employment are the most recurrent policy objectives pursued by employment policies (24/40 NEPs). Furthermore, while remaining policies seek to “create jobs”, this objective is most often associated with one or more constitutive elements of decent work, such as productive employment (16/40 NEPs), freely chosen employment (3/40 NEPs) or employability (6/40 NEPs). Equality of opportunities and anti-discrimination are present in seven NEPs’ goals, which are mostly from the latest period under review (except Moldova 2007 and Nepal 2005). In that regard, NEPs sometimes refer to “uncompetitive” or “vulnerable” groups or to more specific groups such as indigenous peoples, rural workers, youth or women (e.g., Guatemala 2017). Several other dimensions of job quality are also considered, such as facilitating the transition to formality (e.g., Peru 2011, Moldova 2007 and 2016), raising income (e.g. Namibia 2013, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007), including for women (gender wage gap), securing employment in condition of equity, security and human dignity (e.g. Honduras 2017, Nepal 2005), and protection of workers’ rights (e.g. Zambia 2005).

► **Table 2. National employment policy goals**

NEP goals	Countries
Inclusive growth and sustainable development	Armenia 2012, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2016, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Senegal 2017
Decent work and job quality	Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Burkina Faso 2008, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d’Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, North Macedonia 2015, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2019
Employability	Algeria 2008, Cambodia 2015, Moldova 2016, Mongolia 2016, Panama 2014, Sri Lanka 2012
Job creation	Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Cameroon 2017, Côte d’Ivoire 2012, Jordan 2011, North Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Senegal 2010, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005
Equal opportunities / prevent discrimination in employment	Armenia 2012, Guatemala 2017, North Macedonia 2015, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011
Freely chosen employment	Cameroon 2008, Namibia 2013, Sri Lanka 2012
Full employment	Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Namibia 2013, Sri Lanka 2012

NEP goals	Countries
Poverty reduction	Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015
Productive employment	Cambodia 2015, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, North Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2019
Reduce unemployment	Algeria 2008, Benin 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Senegal 2017
Reduce underemployment	Benin 2011, Senegal 2017
Social inclusion/ peace	Armenia 2012, North Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Philippines 2011
Other	Albania 2014, Algeria 2008, Armenia 2012, Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2012 and 201, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, North Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Panama 2014, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005

Source: See table 1a.

Fifteen out of 40 countries explicitly link employment with the objective of poverty reduction and/or inclusive growth, acknowledging employment as a key mechanism to translate growth into poverty reduction and achieve sustainable development. In other cases, the policy ambition is to ensure peace or promote social cohesion (e.g., Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009) or to contribute to social justice and inclusion through employment promotion (e.g., Armenia 2012, North Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Philippines 2011).

### 3.2. Countries commit to employment more and move towards addressing a broader range of employment deficits

**Employment policies shift from being a mere statement of intent to more binding commitments.** As reflected in table 3, the review of 40 national employment policies shows that a large number of countries over the last years have adopted various types of targets: explicit employment targets are found in 60 per cent of national employment policy documents.<sup>8</sup> While employment policy goals consist of broad statements of intent providing an overall direction to the employment policy, employment targets provide for more specific and measurable employment objectives to be reached. They represent a public and quantifiable employment commitment to be met by a country by the end of the NEP implementation period. They are also an important part of the answer to the question what needs to be achieved in the field of employment in a specific country: *“there are at least two main advantages of deriving such targets. Firstly, it helps bridge the gap between establishing what needs to be achieved and how it can be achieved. Secondly, it puts employment in the focus of policy-making and a quantification of employment targets is prerequisite for putting such targets at the heart of development planning”*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The following employment policies do not include global employment targets: Algeria 2008, Benin 2011 and 2020, Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2012, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Panama 2014, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2019. For those countries, the absence of targets is not necessarily an indication of an incomplete policy or that employment targeting has been neglected. Most countries develop their action plan which would include targets and deadline, as a separate document.

<sup>9</sup> Per Ronnäs and Miranda Kwong, Deriving Targets for Productive Employment from Poverty Targets, draft discussion note, ILO.

► **Table 3. Countries with global employment targets, by year<sup>10</sup>**

NEPs for 2005 - 2012			NEPs for 2013 - 2020		
Countries	Year of adoption of the NEP	Number of targets	Countries	Year of adoption of the NEP	Number of targets
Nepal	2005	0	Kyrgyzstan	2013	4
Zambia	2005	2	Namibia	2013	9
Mozambique	2006	1	Albania	2014	15
Rep. of Moldova	2007	8	Costa Rica	2014	5
Algeria	2008	0	Panama	2014	0
Burkina Faso	2008	2	Cambodia	2015	0
Cameroon	2008	2	North Macedonia	2015	2
Liberia	2009	2	Mali	2015	1
Senegal	2010	1	Morocco	2015	4
Benin	2011	0	Nepal	2015	0
Iraq	2011	0	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	0
Jordan	2011	5	Rep. of Moldova	2016	7
North Macedonia	2011	1	Mongolia	2016	7
Peru	2011	0	Mozambique	2016	0
Philippines	2011	2	Cameroon	2017	2
Uganda	2011	0	Guatemala	2017	4
Armenia	2012	6	Honduras	2017	0
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	1	Senegal	2017	3
Guatemala	2012	0	Zambia	2019	0
Sri Lanka	2012	0	Benin	2020	0

Source: See table 1a.

Table 3 shows that employment targeting is increasingly featured in national employment policies (33 targets for the 20 early NEPs<sup>11</sup> against 63 targets for the 20 recent NEPs<sup>12</sup>). Some countries, such as Albania 2014 and Namibia 2013, stand out for the number of employment targets in their policies: 15 and 9 respectively addressing the multifaceted challenges of employment in their countries.<sup>13</sup> The global economic and financial crisis of 2008-9, having become a major jobs crisis, is one among other factors that led a growing number of countries to set explicit employment targets. From a “residual” for many years, as employment creation was expected to mechanically stem from economic growth, employment targeting is

<sup>10</sup> For clarity, targets in this table have been aggregated, in the sense that all iterations of, say unemployment – youth unemployment rate, women, people with disabilities, etc. – have been gathered under their generic denomination.

<sup>11</sup> NEPs adopted over the period 2005-2012.

<sup>12</sup> NEPs adopted over the period 2012-2020.

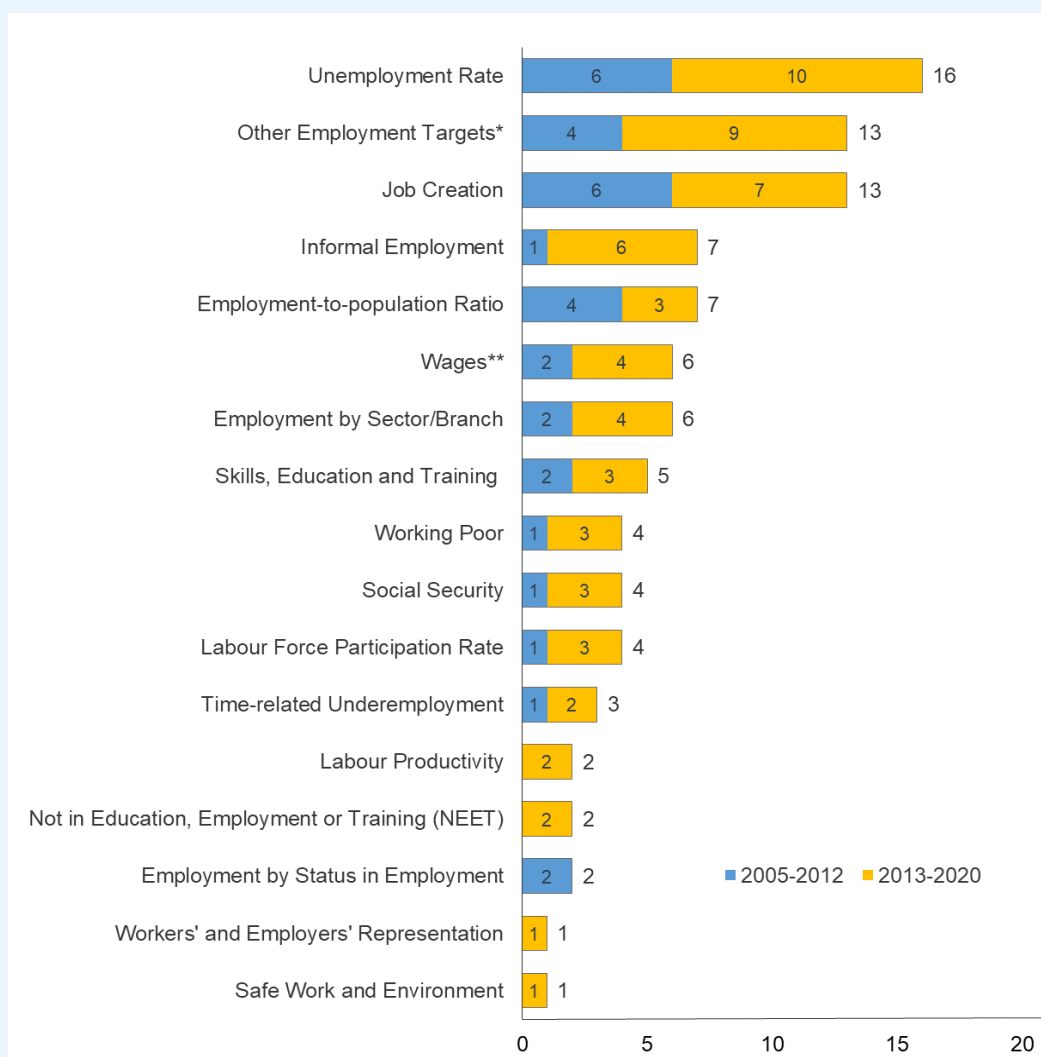
<sup>13</sup> Targets relate among other to youth unemployment rate, working poor, informal employment, employment-to-population ratio, labour force participation rate, the share of GDP invested in ALMPs, NEET, low pay rate, gender wage gap, workers’ and employers’ representation, social security or employment by sector.

receiving increased prominence in recognition that the era of “market supremacy” has been insufficient in generating an adequate number of decent jobs for all those who want to work. The COVID-19 crisis is likely to have further increased this recognition.

**A closer look at employment targets shows a clear move from referring mainly to quantity of employment to being set with respect to the quality dimension as well.** The range of employment targets is varied and laid out in figure 2 along with their variation over time. It shows that employment targets in early NEPs focused primarily on the unemployment rate, job creation and employment-to-population ratio. Although these still predominate in recent NEPs, employment targets now encompass a much larger range of employment deficits. As analysed in part I of this report, unemployment and lack of jobs creation alone are limited indicators of labour market stress. First, employment growth in many emerging and developing countries reflects the growth of the labour force. Secondly, unemployment rate (even in its “relaxed” definition) is of little use in most developing countries with no unemployment insurance systems and where people have no choice but to engage in some form of economic activity. As reflected in figure 2, the inclusion of the qualitative dimension of employment is becoming more common in most recent NEP targets, with more focus on informal employment, working poor or social security, recognizing that not just the quantity, but also the quality of jobs, matters. Some new targets for the first time since 2012 further address the quality dimension of employment - such as safe work and environment (Namibia 2013), workers’ and employers’ representation (Albania 2014), labour productivity (Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015), low pay rate (Albania 2014), minimum wage (Armenia 2012), average wage (Mongolia 2013), but these remain rare. The latest generation of NEPs also focuses for the first time on particularly vulnerable groups including, for example, young people neither in employment or education and training (NEET) in Albania 2014 and Moldova 2016. Despite progress made, important targets on the employment challenges prevailing in many countries are missing, such as the share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, unpaid work or income inequality.



► **Figure 2. Ranking of employment targets and variation over time<sup>14</sup>**



Source: See table 1a.

\* The label “Other employment targets” includes among others: the amount of funds invested in ALMPs; number of green jobs; percentage of work force having their rights fully respected and safeguarded.

\*\*The category “wages” includes gender wage gap, minimum wage and low pay rate

**The targeting of specific groups is still confined to a few countries and targets are mainly defined along with age (mainly youth) and sex.** Some 38 per cent of NEPs with employment targets (9/24) have provided disaggregated employment targets for specific groups, mainly in Europe and Central Asia (6/9),<sup>15</sup> along with Costa Rica 2014, Jordan 2011 and Senegal 2017. Eight out of the 17 targets mentioned in figure 2 are disaggregated: employment by status in employment; labour force participation, employment-to-population ratio, unemployment rate, skills, job creation, informal employment and other employment targets. As reflected in figure 3, specific groups are mainly defined by sex and age (mainly youth), and to a

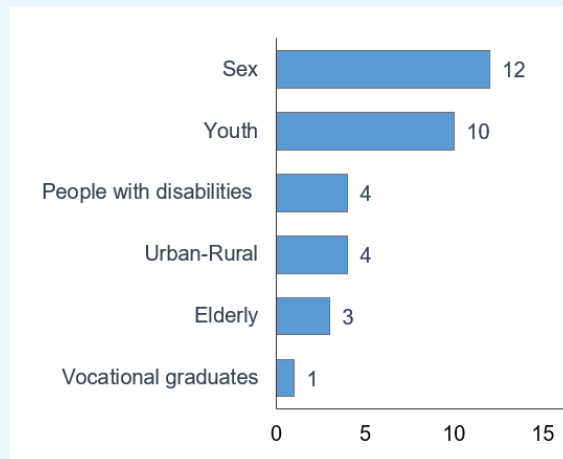
<sup>14</sup> For clarity, targets in this table have been aggregated, in the sense that all iterations of, say unemployment – youth unemployment rate, women, people with disabilities, etc. have been gathered under their generic denomination.

<sup>15</sup> Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Kyrgyzstan 2013, North Macedonia 2011 and Moldova 2007 and 2016.



lesser extent to other characteristics, such as people with disabilities (4), vocational graduates (1) and urban-rural (4).<sup>16</sup>

► **Figure 3. Frequency of targets by specific group**



Source: See table 1a.



## ▶ 4. Employment: A differentiated policy agenda across region and over time

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While employment policy goals and targets provide indications of what is pursued and the aims of the policy, the specific measures address the (more) difficult question of how this is to be achieved. Employment outcomes depend on a vast array of different factors. Hence, the objective of full employment with decent work requires action at multiple levels, ranging from macroeconomic and industrial policies, education and skills to labour market and governance policies. A national employment policy, in principle, spans the entire spectrum of these policies and the relevant institutions and actors. However, the scope, content and balance between the three areas differ from country to country. This section seeks to assess to what extent employment policies address this diversity of policy areas and to analyse the major trends across regions and changes over the last two decades.

### 4.1. Strategies for job creation: Demand-side policies

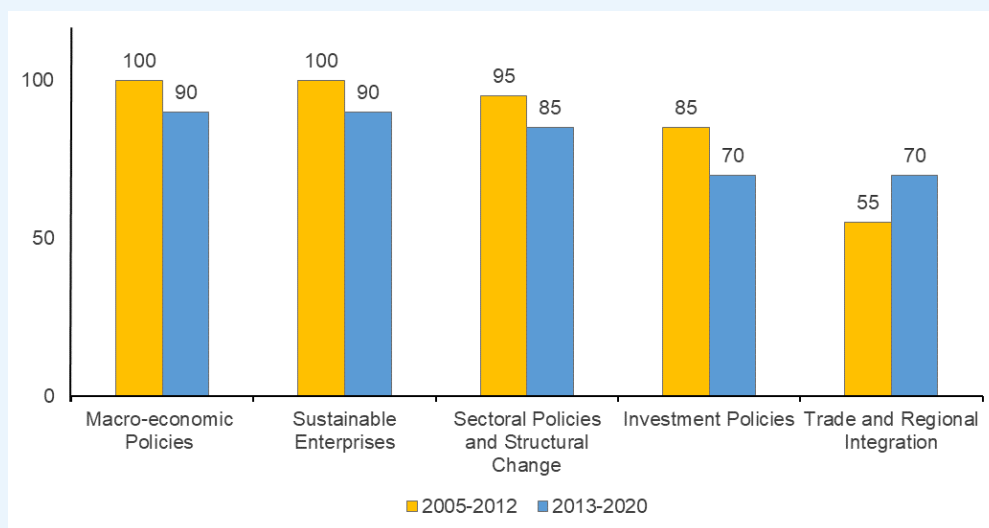
The ILO recognizes that the main policy levers of employment creation are mostly found outside the purview of active labour market policies. This is because the demand for labour is for the most part the result of overall demand for goods and services in the marketplace. This section will start with policies which eventually steer the demand for labour and analyse to what extent and how they are effectively addressed in national employment policies.

Figure 7 shows that all the countries under review but one<sup>17</sup> include at least one demand-side measure. Employment policies can facilitate the demand for labour through a variety of means. Globally, the review indicates that among demand-side policies, macroeconomic policies and policies for sustainable enterprises are most prominent (both included in 95 per cent of NEPs), followed by, sectoral policies (90 per cent of NEPs) and investment policies (78 per cent of NEPs). Trade and regional integration policies (63 per cent of NEPs) are less frequent. The trend emerging from the data is a slight decrease in NEP including demand-side policies over the last 20 years. The number of NEPs including macroeconomic, sustainable enterprises and sectoral policies falls by around 10 per cent, while investments policies fall by 18 per cent. However, figure 4 shows that increased attention has been given to trade policies over time, with an increase of 27 per cent over the last two decades.

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<sup>17</sup> Panama.

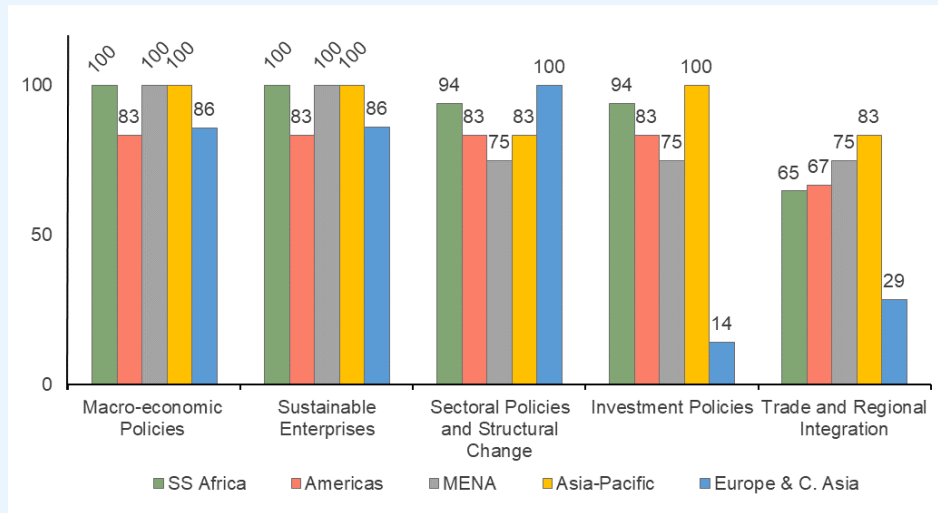
► **Figure 4. Demand-side policies: variation over time (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Regional differences are also observed. Europe and Central Asia show the smallest prevalence of demand-side policies and Asia and the Pacific, the largest.** Figure 5 shows that demand-side policies are least popular in European and Central Asian NEPs proportionately, with the highest coverage being sectoral policies covered by all NEPs. In contrast, 29 per cent of European and Central Asian NEPs include trade policies and only 14 per cent cover investment policies. In the Americas, trade policies are included in 67 per cent of NEPs, while macroeconomic, sustainable enterprises, sectoral and investment policies are found in 83 per cent of NEPs. All NEPs in the Middle East and North Africa region include macroeconomic and sustainable enterprises policies, while sectoral, investment and trade policies appear in three out of four NEPs. Sub-Saharan Africa shows a high prevalence in all areas of demand-side policies, except for trade interventions; macroeconomic policies and sustainable enterprises policies are included in all NEPs, investment and sectoral policies in 94 per cent of NEPs and trade policies in 65 per cent of NEPs. Finally, NEPs in Asia and the Pacific show the highest coverage: macro-economic policies, sustainable enterprises and investment policies are found in all NEPs, while sectoral and trade policies are addressed in eight out of ten.

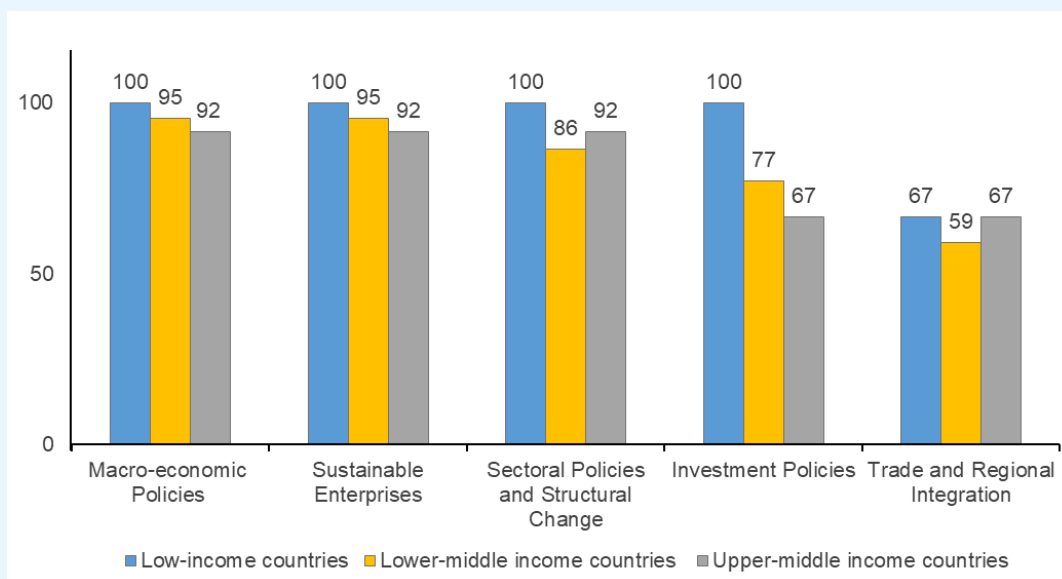
► **Figure 5. Demand-side policies: variation by region (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**In terms of income level, the review indicates that, overall, the lower the income level, the more prevalent is the inclusion of different demand-side policy areas** (see figure 6). This is consistent with the situation in many low-income economies, where the bulge in labour supply is not met by sufficient demand to absorb all who wish to work into employment, or at least productive employment. Employment problems are directly linked to the patterns of economic and sectoral policies, and hence employment policies are mainly about economic transformation and structural change. However, some sub-policy areas vary more than others. For instance, macro-economic policies and policies for sustainable enterprises appear to decrease slightly as the income level increases, while investment policies decrease more sharply as the income level increases (despite the increase of sectoral policies in UMICs). Trade and sectoral policies follow the same pattern: they respectively decrease from 67 and 100 per cent in LICs to 59 and 86 per cent in LMICs and increase again to 67 and 92 per cent in UMICs.

► **Figure 6. Demand-side policies (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Demand-side policies are well represented in NEPs, with 78 per cent of documents addressing at least four policy areas.** Table 4 presents the average number of sub-policy areas by income level, region and period. Figure 7 shows NEPs according to the number of sub-policy areas they cover, from one to five (i.e. (i) macroeconomic policies, (ii) sustainable enterprises, (iii) sectoral policies, (v) trade and regional integration and (v) investment policies). Overall, each NEP covers 4.2 demand-side policy areas on average.

For the period 2005-2012, each NEP includes 4.4 sub-policy areas on average, with 80 per cent addressing at least four policy areas. Macroeconomic and sustainable enterprises policies are included in all NEPs during this period, while trade policies are included in only 55 per cent. LICs include 4.5 out of 5 sub-policy areas on average, while LMICs combine 4.4 sub-policy areas, and UMICs cover 4.2 sub-policy areas. All regions include between four and five sub-policy areas on average, apart from Europe and Central Asia which have the least diversified mix of measures (3.1).

In the most recent period (2013-2020), private sector development and macroeconomic policies are again the most popular sub-policy area (both present in 18 out of 20 NEPs), while the average number of sub-policy areas covered in each decreases slightly to 4.1, with three out of four NEPs covering four policy areas or more. One reason behind this trend may be traced to the different composition of the sample. Indeed, as mentioned above, demand-side policies appear to decrease slightly as the income level increases and the sample of the second period under review includes only two LICs. Another reason may be the difficulty faced by some ministries in charge of employment in influencing demand-side measures implemented by other ministries. A few countries in the sample, such as Côte d’Ivoire, Zambia and Moldova, have moved from very comprehensive NEPs in the period 2005-2012 to a narrower set of policies in the last decade. Looking at the distribution of demand-side policies by economic grouping,<sup>18</sup> the review shows that LICs reach the maximum coverage of possible policy areas (five out of five) while LMICs and UMICs show a less diversified demand-side policy mix (in fact decreasing by 0.5 and 0.2 sub-policy areas on average respectively). By region, the number of sub-policy areas covered shrink in the Asia and the Pacific (-0.7) and the Americas (-0.8) while the average change in the Middle East and North Africa is less pronounced (-0.3) and just residual in sub-Saharan

<sup>18</sup> The sample of the second period under review includes only 2 LICs (Mali and Mozambique) and 1 MENA State (Morocco), thus results should be taken with caution as they depend heavily on the policy mix in these particular countries.

Africa (-0.1). Europe and Central Asia is the only region where demand-side policy components have been gaining ground over time (0.3).

Finally, the analysis of sub-sub policy areas shows a more nuanced picture. Figure 7 shows a slight increase from 199 measures for the first period to 209 over 2013-2020. This reflects an increase of macroeconomic policies, sectoral policies and policies for sustainable enterprises, while policies relating to investment and trade remained stable overall.

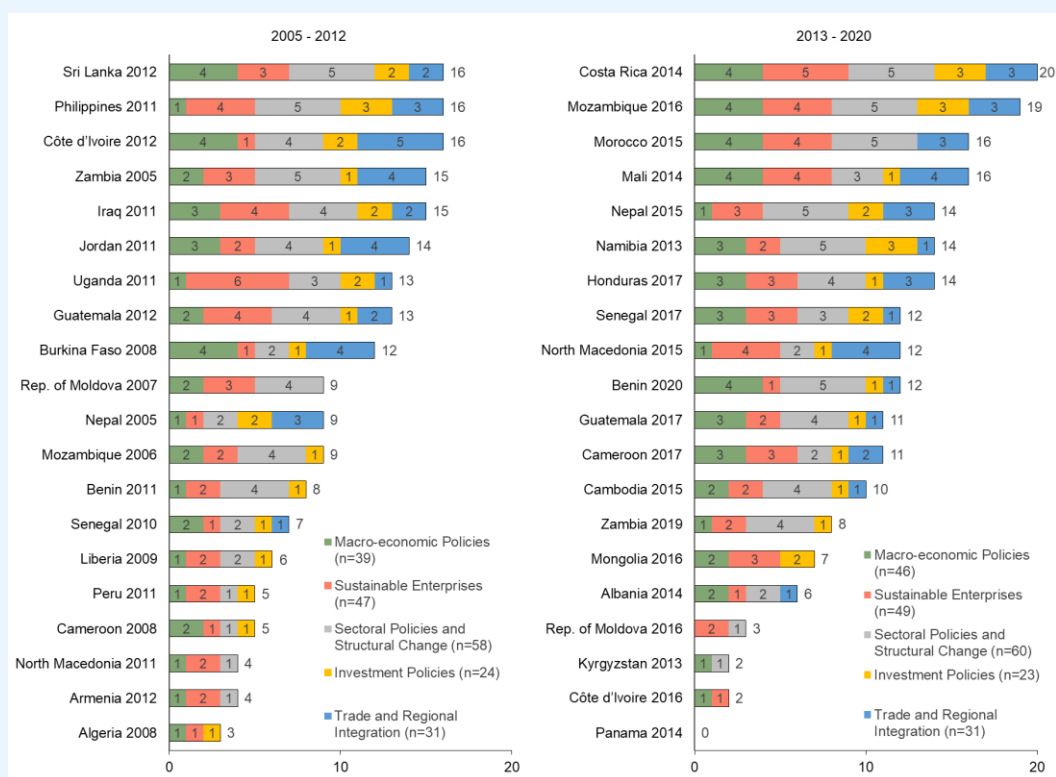
► **Table 4. Average number of demand-side sub-policy areas\* (by period, region, and income)**

	2005-2012	2013-2020	Change	
Total	4.35	4.05	-0.30	↓
Low-income countries (LIC)	4.50	5.00	0.50	↑
Lower-middle-income countries (LMIC)	4.40	3.92	-0.48	↓
Upper-middle-income countries (UMIC)	4.17	4.00	-0.17	↓
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.56	4.50	-0.06	↓
Americas	4.50	3.75	-0.75	↓
Middle East and North Africa	4.33	4.00	-0.33	↓
Asia-Pacific	5.00	4.33	-0.67	↓
Europe and Central Asia	3.00	3.25	0.25	↑

Source: See table 1a.

\*Demand-side sub-policies are the following: (i) macroeconomic policies; (ii) sectoral policies and structural change; (iii) investment policies; (iv) trade and regional integration, and (v) sustainable enterprises.

► **Figure 7. Number of demand-side measures for each sub-policy area (by country and period)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Macroeconomic policies constitute a significant part of employment policies: 95 per cent of NEPs include such measures. While the first NEPs tended to rely primarily on financial policies, the latest policies make a stronger case for pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks and rely on a broader macroeconomic policy mix for employment.**

**A stronger case for pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks**

The majority of NEPs (38/40) include at least one of the main instruments of macroeconomic policy (financial, monetary and fiscal), with a clear focus on financial policies, which is taken up by 88 per cent of NEPs (35/40) but shifting over time towards a more balanced mix of macroeconomic policy tools. The number of NEPs mentioning pro-employment macroeconomic policies slightly decreases over time from 100 per cent of NEPs (2005-2012) to 90 per cent (2013-2020) due to the non-inclusion of such measures in Panama 2014 and Moldova 2016.

A qualitative analysis reveals some more nuanced findings. First, the number of sub-sub-policy areas (i.e. fiscal monetary and financial policies) increases from 39 to 46 over the two periods (figure 7): the share of NEP addressing fiscal policies and monetary policies increased from 45 to 70 per cent and from 25 to 30 percent respectively over the last two decades, while financial measures fell from 100 to 75 per cent during the same period. In addition, 45 per cent of employment policies from the 2005-2012 period simultaneously cover two blocks or more of macroeconomic policies (i.e., fiscal, monetary and financial policies), against 55 per cent of recent employment policies (see table 5). An overall analysis of policy patterns reveals that all NEPs that combine at least two policy areas include financial and fiscal policies. No NEP includes solely monetary policy measures as part of its macroeconomic policy considerations. Thus, the review indicates that NEPs adopted from 2013 start making a stronger case for a pro-employment macroeconomic framework as a whole, going beyond using primarily employment-focused financial policies (see table 5).

▶ **Box 1. Pro-employment macroeconomic policies****National Employment Strategy, Costa Rica, 2014**

“For many years, economic policy has focused on ensuring macroeconomic stability, without major interventions to promote specific activities or sectors - except the exports and the financial sector - due to considering that this introduces distortions in the market and in the allocation of resources. It is necessary to re-establish the creation of quality employment as a central objective of policies, macro, meso and micro.”

**National Employment Policy, Cambodia, 2015**

“Objective 1.1: To promote decent and productive employment opportunities in macroeconomic policy framework:

1. Annually monitor and assess macroeconomic performance with regards to decent and productive employment opportunities.
2. Engage in policy dialogue through an inter-ministerial forum on the progress made to increase decent and productive employment in the country.
3. Set and monitor employment targets, including a separate target for men and women, which reflect quantity and quality of employment.
4. Build capacity and technical expertise of the inter-ministerial committee to set and regularly monitor employment targets.”

Second, 55 per cent of NEPs<sup>19</sup> from 2013 onwards explicitly acknowledge that overall macroeconomic policy tools need to be not only conducive to growth but should also lead to the attainment of decent employment generation (see box 1). They advocate that employment policy should be pursued as a major macroeconomic objective or recognize the need to balance stability considerations with employment objectives, against only 25 per cent of NEPs in the period 2005-2012.<sup>20</sup> In other words, the policy recommendations tend to shift from using the macroeconomic to provide a stable environment as an indirect means of job creation to the need to consider employment within the macroeconomic framework. This trend is consistent with the rethinking of macroeconomics – and how it can be made more conducive to decent employment generation– that took place in the wake of the 2008 GFC.<sup>21</sup> Evidence not only shows that there is increased attention to pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks, but it also tends to go from a general prescription to more detailed or practical measures in the latest employment policies (see box 1). For example, some NEPs from the second period under review envisage assessing the impact of macroeconomic policies on employment outcomes (Cambodia 2015 and Senegal 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2017, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Senegal 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Senegal 2010, Sri Lanka 2012.

<sup>21</sup> See G20 Seoul Summit Declaration, November 11–12, 2010 and Oslo conference Calls for Commitment to Recovery Focused on Jobs, September 13, 2010



► Table 5. Macro-economic measures in NEPs

	Pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks		Monetary & exchange rate		Fiscal policies		Financial policies	
2005 - 2012	Burkina Faso	2008	Burkina Faso	2008	Zambia	2005	Nepal	2005
	Cameroon	2008	Iraq	2011	Mozambique	2006	Zambia	2005
	Senegal	2010	Jordan	2011	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Mozambique	2006
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Burkina Faso	2008	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Sri Lanka	2012	Sri Lanka	2012	Iraq	2011	Algeria	2008
					Jordan	2011	Burkina Faso	2008
					Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Cameroon	2008
					Guatemala	2012	Liberia	2009
					Sri Lanka	2012	Senegal	2010
							Benin	2011
							Iraq	2011
						Jordan	2011	
						North Macedonia	2011	
						Peru	2011	
						Philippines	2011	
						Uganda	2011	
						Armenia	2012	
						Côte d'Ivoire	2012	
						Guatemala	2012	
						Sri Lanka	2012	
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>20</b>
2013 - 2020	Namibia	2013	Costa Rica	2014	Namibia	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Albania	2014	Mali	2014	Albania	2014	Namibia	2013
	Costa Rica	2014	Morocco	2015	Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014
	Mali	2014	Mozambique	2016	Mali	2014	Mali	2014
	Cambodia	2015	Honduras	2017	Cambodia	2015	Morocco	2015
	Morocco	2015	Benin	2020	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015
	Mozambique	2016			Mongolia	2016	North Macedonia	2015
	Cameroon	2017			Mozambique	2016	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	Guatemala	2017			Cameroon	2017	Mongolia	2016
	Senegal	2017			Guatemala	2017	Mozambique	2016
	Benin	2020			Honduras	2017	Cameroon	2017
				Senegal	2017	Guatemala	2017	
				Zambia	2019	Honduras	2017	
				Benin	2020	Senegal	2017	
						Benin	2020	
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>
	Total NEPs	16	Total NEPs	11	Total NEPs	23	Total NEPs	35

Source: See table 1a.

**As part of the objective pursued by NEPs to accommodate employment-oriented growth, more prominence is being given to fiscal policy and a rethinking of its role has been taking place over the last two decades.**

Overall, 58 per cent of employment policies (23/40) acknowledge that fiscal policies can play an important

▶ **Box 2. Examples of employment policies providing that employment shall be taken into account when making public budgeting decisions**

*"The Government shall institutionalize pro-employment budgeting in annual sector programs and budgets."*

National employment and labour market policy "Realizing National Vision 2030 through Inclusive Growth", Zambia, 2019.

*"The Government will continue with budgetary allocations to those sectors which are already contributing to employment growth. Government will strive to maintain an appropriate balance of macroeconomic policies to ensure that there is fiscal space for public investment while maintaining reasonable price stability. However, increased public expenditure is expected to lead to increased private investments and production in the short and medium term and thus is an important macro-economic tool to be used."*

*Namibia 2013 National Employment Policy, 2013.*

*"Enhance public expenditure reviews of productive sector with an employment perspective."*

*National Employment Policy, Cameroon 2017.*

role in fostering job creation, amongst which nine employment policies (45 per cent) for the period 2005-2012 compared with 14 (70 per cent) over the period 2013-2020 (an increase of 55 per cent over the last two decades). This may reflect a reduced focus on monetary policy as the main instrument for economic growth following the 2008 financial crisis, and fiscal policy being put back centre stage.<sup>22</sup> This focus on fiscal policies in NEPs is likely to increase further in the wake of the COVID crisis with the new fiscal consensus giving prominence to fiscal policy.<sup>23</sup>

While most of the NEPs recall the importance of fiscal sustainability – and hence monitoring debts and deficits and setting in place explicit fiscal rules to keep them within a boundary, the majority of employment policies acknowledge that fiscal policy cannot and should not be limited to that (the only exception being North Macedonia NEPs 2011 and 2015 where fiscal policies are narrowed down to fiscal/debt sustainability).

Nine national employment policies mention

the need to build up fiscal space for public interventions focused on enhancing employment generation - all from the period 2013-2020<sup>24</sup> (except Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and Jordan 2011) and all UMICs and LMICs. Although fiscal stimulus measures have been widely credited with halting the 2008 crisis and bringing about a recovery in economic growth and employment, only the Jordan 2011 NEP explicitly links fiscal space with the need for counter-cyclical policies. Albania 2014, Honduras 2017, Morocco 2015 and Sri Lanka 2012 NEPs mention the need to expand the fiscal space by expanding the revenue base, including through improving the efficiency of tax collection (Honduras 2017 and Sri Lanka 2012).

No low-income countries – which face critical constraints including very high levels of unsatisfied basic needs and low revenue to GDP ratios – consider generating fiscal space as part of a strategy to promote employment. In a context of lack of fiscal space, the composition and efficiency of public spending are critical for LICs. Some countries, such as Mali 2014, recommend optimizing the use of available resources to best achieve the employment creation objective, or in other words improve the efficiency of public spending on job creation. The NEP for Cameroon 2017 considers integrating employment concerns in public expenditure reviews carried out for productive sectors.

<sup>22</sup> Blanchard, O., Dell' Ariccia, G., and Mauro, P. (2010), "Rethinking Macroeconomic Policy," IMF Staff Position Note, SPN/10/03, IMF, Washington DC, February 2010.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.piie.com/sites/default/files/documents/pb21-7.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013 and Sri Lanka 2012.

Despite growing support from academics and international organizations<sup>25</sup> (at least temporarily in the wake of the 2008 crisis) for a more proactive fiscal policy to support jobs,<sup>26</sup> the move toward fiscal consolidation was strong in Central and Eastern European countries, such as North Macedonia 2011 and 2015 and Albania 2014 whose NEPs, while recognizing the positive impact of an expansive fiscal policy to mitigate the impact of the 2008 crisis, then prescribe going back to “macroeconomic prudence” and to fiscal consolidation measures. Moldova moved from linking fiscal policy to the transition to the formal economy in the earlier NEP (2007) to no mention of pro-employment macroeconomic policy in 2017 at all.<sup>27</sup> Stimulus interventions raised early alarms on debt sustainability and a fiscal consolidation process started with the EU countries in 2010. Such consolidation programmes have been spreading to developing countries through recommendations of lending agencies.<sup>28</sup> In 2020-22, the COVID-19 pandemic has been recalling and increasing even further the focus on how fiscal policy should contribute to protecting employment and contributing to development. However, special attention should be given to ensure that future NEPs do not reverse their stance in that regard, especially in a period of higher public debt and more constrained fiscal policy.<sup>29</sup>

The employment policies under review not only limit the role of fiscal policies to building up fiscal space or as a counter-cyclical instrument in short-term business cycles but address its longer-term allocative functions toward employment. Indeed, out of 23 NEPs that address fiscal policies, 70 per cent state that spending and/or tax instruments need to be redesigned and directed to maximize their impact on employment while having a minimum impact on the budget deficit. One in five NEPs discuss using tax incentives to spur investment to generate employment (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d’Ivoire 2012, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Senegal 2017 and Zambia 2005 ), while 11/40 employment policy documents mention the need to pursue expenditure policies that support employment generation (Albania 2014, Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Senegal 2017, and Zambia 2019) and green employment in the case of Mongolia 2016.

### There is relatively little reference to monetary policies.

The little reference (and little variation over time) to monetary and exchange rate policies has various explanations. For example, no Eastern and Central European NEPs covered these policy areas, probably as EU accession negotiations commit these countries to compliance with specific macroeconomic criteria, including price and exchange rate stability as well as low inflation. More globally, monetary policymaking requires two features that can often be elusive in developing, and particularly low-income, countries: 1) a well-developed bond market, and 2) policy autonomy of the monetary authorities. According to Weeks (2010)<sup>30</sup> , a study of sub-Saharan Africa countries showed the inability of most states in the region to conduct monetary policy given the fact that most of them belong to a currency union or have no domestic bond market that can serve as a channel for the purpose. Eight countries out of the sample of 40 belong to a currency union

#### ▶ Box 3.

- ▶ “[...] employment should be included as one of the variables to consider in the Central Bank 2015 macroeconomic program”

*National Employment Strategy 2014, Costa Rica*

<sup>25</sup> IMF/ILO Background Paper on the “Challenges of Growth, Employment and Social Cohesion” for High-Level Conference on September 13, 2010, in Oslo. The IMF has subsequently been advocating higher spending, both on capital (infrastructure) and social infrastructures, if a country has the fiscal space. See IMF Report, Jobs and Growth Analytical and operational considerations for the Fund, March 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Among many others, see A. Chowdhury and I. Islam, “The Debate on Expansionary Fiscal Consolidation: How Robust is the Evidence?” *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 13–38.

<sup>27</sup> Ray, N and Schmitz, The IMF and social dimensions of growth: a content analysis of recent Article IV surveillance reports, Employment Working Paper, No 202, ILO (2016).

<sup>28</sup> Ray, N and Schmitz, The IMF and social dimensions of growth: a content analysis of recent Article IV surveillance reports, Employment Working Paper, No 202, ILO (2016).

<sup>29</sup> For more details on the key issues facing Africa, See [Background paper: Towards a transformative macroeconomic policy framework for employment generation in Africa \(ilo.org\)](#)

<sup>30</sup> Weeks, J., (2010), *Why Monetary Policy Is Irrelevant in Africa South of the Sahara*, Centre for Development Policy and Research, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London, June 2010.

(Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal) or have pegged currency regimes (Cambodia and Namibia) and this prevents them from having an autonomous monetary policy.

**Financial policies are covered in 88 per cent (35/40 NEPs)<sup>31</sup> of all employment policies.<sup>32</sup> This is consistent with the fact that, in developing countries, the private sector often cites lack of access to finance as a binding constraint on growth and employment.<sup>33</sup> However, the proportion of NEPs covering financial policies appears to have declined from 100 per cent to 75 per cent over the last two decades.**

Some NEPs mention the need for financial policies that mobilize and allocate resources towards productive investments, employment and development (Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2008, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, the Philippines [2011], Senegal 2010. For example, the NEP for Jordan 2011 advocates measures to assess the real and potential impact of financial policies on the wider economy and job creation by developing a computable general equilibrium model at the Ministry of Planning.

The other NEPs under review consider that the financial sector can play an important role in promoting employment, mainly through the following channels:

- ▶ *Promote better credit access for small businesses.* Half of employment policy documents<sup>34</sup> look at increasing access to finance (including through the private banking system) for the private sector, in particular micro, small and medium enterprises, which face greater constraints and are important drivers of growth and employment. For example, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Namibia 2013 and Senegal 2017 consider encouraging the multiplication and consolidation of funds or banks for SMEs and entrepreneurship.
- ▶ *Help the poor and most disadvantaged groups by providing basic financial and banking services.* Twenty policies<sup>35</sup> include interventions targeting (i) marginalized groups (e.g. Nepal 2015); (ii) workers in the informal economy (e.g. Iraq 2011, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005), (iii) people with disabilities (e.g. Armenia 2012 and Zambia 2005); (iv) women (e.g. Benin 2011, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Peru 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012 and Uganda 2011); (v) youth (e.g. Algeria 2008, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Senegal 2017, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005); (vi) the unemployed (e.g. Kyrgyzstan 2013), (vii) private households (e.g. Morocco 2015), (viii) self-employed (e.g. Algeria 2008); (ix) returning migrants (Philippines 2011).
- ▶ *Increase access in rural areas:* twelve<sup>36</sup> NEPs state that access to financial services should be differentiated: e.g., increasing access (i) in rural areas (e.g. Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005, (ii) or in remote regions (e.g. Jordan 2011, Mongolia 2016).

The following measures are also found in a smaller number of NEPs:

- ▶ *Allocate credit for employment generation and help the poor to build assets,* including housing (e.g., Honduras 2017); in the rural economy and fisheries (e.g. Costa Rica 2014, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006, Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005); handicrafts (e.g. Mali 2014), and in the social and solidarity economy (e.g. Costa Rica 2014).

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<sup>31</sup> See Table 5.

<sup>32</sup> The exceptions being Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, the Moldova 2016, Panama 2014 and Zambia 2019.

<sup>33</sup> See for example the World Bank Enterprise Survey where firms across regions and country income groups recurrently identify lack of access to finance as a major constraint, <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/>

<sup>34</sup> Benin 2020, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2014, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2011, Peru 2011, Senegal 2017, Zambia 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Algeria 2008, Armenia 2012, Benin 2011, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005.

- ▶ *Increase the supply of microcredit by encouraging the development of well-regulated and efficient microcredit institutions* (e.g., Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005).
- ▶ *Create credit for employment generation and poverty reduction* through moderate or preferential interest rates (e.g., Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012).
- ▶ *Increase capacity to raise capital*, including through loan guarantees (e.g., Mongolia 2016), land-based collateral (e.g., Namibia 2013, Zambia 2005) or simplifying procedures for obtaining loans and credit facilities (e.g., Iraq 2011).

**In most countries private enterprises create the most jobs. However, there are still multiple constraints on sustainable enterprise development. This is why, among demand-side policies, measures aimed at private sector development are common across all regions and all countries.**

Almost all employment policies in the sample include measures to support the development of sustainable enterprises (95 per cent). This decreases slightly over time: from 100 to 90 per cent of NEPs include such interventions, while the number of sub-sub-policy areas varies marginally (see figure 7). 73 per cent of NEPs cover two or more measures for sustainable enterprises, while two NEPs (Kyrgyzstan 2013 and Panama 2014) do not include any measures covered in this section but do include other measures for enterprise development (access to finance as analysed above and skills development for entrepreneurship later in Section 2.3).

Special measures for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are by far the most common sub-area covered by NEPs (80 per cent of NEPs), followed by measures for a supportive regulatory environment conducive to employment creation (73 per cent). In contrast, coverage of other measures focusing on cooperatives and corporate social responsibility stand at 28 and 23 per cent respectively, while measures on subsidies and tax incentives are covered in 30 per cent of the NEPs. Policies targeting multinational enterprises are residual, found in only three policy documents.

► **Table 6. Measures for sustainable enterprises for decent employment in NEPs**

	Supportive regulatory environment		Subsides & tax incentives		Micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs)		Corporate social responsibility		Cooperatives		Multi-national enterprises	
<b>2005 - 2012</b>	Zambia	2005	Iraq	2011	Nepal	2005	Iraq	2011	Zambia	2005	Uganda	2011
	Mozambique	2006	North Macedonia	2011	Zambia	2005	Philippines	2011	Rep. of Moldova	2007		
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Uganda	2011	Mozambique	2006	Uganda	2011	Jordan	2011		
	Algeria	2008	Guatemala	2012	Rep. of Moldova	2007			Peru	2011		
	Cameroon	2008	Sri Lanka	2012	Burkina Faso	2008			Philippines	2011		
	Liberia	2009			Liberia	2009			Uganda	2011		
	Senegal	2010			Benin	2011			Guatemala	2102		
	Benin	2011			Iraq	2011						
	Iraq	2011			Jordan	2011						
	North Macedonia	2011			Peru	2011						
	Philippines	2011			Philippines	2011						
	Uganda	2011			Uganda	2011						
	Armenia	2012			Armenia	2012						
	Guatemala	2012			Côte d'Ivoire	2012						
	Sri Lanka	2012			Guatemala	2012						
				Sri Lanka	2012							
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2013 - 2020</b>	Namibia	2013	Costa Rica	2014	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014	North Macedonia	2015
	Costa Rica	2014	Mali	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Mali	2014	Mozambique	2016
	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015		
	Cambodia	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Cambodia	2015	Mongolia	2016	Honduras	2017		
	Morocco	2015	Mongolia	2016	Morocco	2015	Mozambique	2016				
	Nepal	2015	Cameroon	2017	Nepal	2015	Zambia	2019				
	North Macedonia	2015	Senegal	2017	North Macedonia	2015						
	Côte d'Ivoire	2016			Mongolia	2016						
	Mozambique	2016			Mozambique	2016						
	Rep. of Moldova	2016			Rep. of Moldova	2016						
	Cameroon	2017			Cameroon	2017						

	Supportive regulatory environment		Subsides & tax incentives		Micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs)		Corporate social responsibility		Cooperatives		Multi-national enterprises	
	Guatemala	2017			Guatemala	2017						
	Honduras	2017			Honduras	2017						
	Senegal	2017			Senegal	2017						
					Zambia	2019						
					Benin	2020						
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>2</b>
	Total NEPs	29	Total NEPs	12	Total NEPs	32	Total NEPs	9	Total NEPs	11	Total NEPs	3

Source: See table 1a.

\* This table include the measures covered in this section but does not cover other measures for enterprise development (such as access to finance in (table 5) and skills development for entrepreneurship in Section 2.3 below.

**Measures for a supportive regulatory environment conducive to employment creation are covered by 73 per cent of NEPs** (29/40) – some exceptions being Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Jordan 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Mongolia 2016, the Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Panama 2014, Peru 2011, the Philippines 2011 and Zambia 2019. Of the documents addressing an enabling legal and regulatory environment, 55 per cent address measures to remove unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, simplify time-consuming and costly procedures that limit enterprise start-ups and the ongoing operations of existing companies, including through the establishment of one-stop shops facilitating the provision of permits and services for starting and conducting businesses (Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2006, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015 and North Macedonia 2015). Measures aimed at simplifying business registration and licensing procedures and streamlining tax policies and administration mainly come from the period 2012-2020 and primarily targeted at facilitating the transition to formality.

NEPs look at improving the overall quality of regulatory governance through other measures such as: (i) the implementation and enforcement of well-designed regulations (e.g. Honduras 2017, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2016, Senegal 2007, Sri Lanka 2012, and Zambia 2005), including through social dialogue (e.g. Iraq 2011 and Namibia 2013); (ii) the provision of appropriate mechanisms and frameworks for compiling and disseminating relevant information and providing services for employers and workers, thereby reducing barriers to information (e.g. Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011); (iii) better policy coordination within government and effective decentralization (e.g. Armenia 2012, Benin 2011).

**Subsidies and tax incentives.** Thirty per cent of NEPs look at how tax and subsidies can be used to promote production patterns that are compatible with the requirements of sustainable development and the objective of job creation. Various employment policies examine the role that subsidies and tax exemption can play in creating or maintaining existing jobs in times of crisis (e.g. Mongolia 2016, Senegal 2017), while other NEPs provide tax incentives for or subsidize other aspects of businesses activities, such as encouraging innovation and technology transfer (e.g. Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2015), entrepreneurship and business start-ups (e.g. Iraq 2011, Uganda 2011), training and skills upgrading (e.g. Cameroon 2017, North Macedonia 2015, Sri Lanka 2012) as well as efficient energy use and exploring green business opportunities (e.g. Sri Lanka 2012). Costa Rica 2014 looks at subsidies as an important factor in motivating businesses to formalize.

**Special measures for small economic units.** Self-employment and micro and small enterprises both play a key role in providing employment. Indeed, data gathered in 99 countries found that these so-called 'small economic units' together account for 70 per cent of total employment, making them by far the most important drivers of employment, especially in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>37</sup> This is why supporting small economic units is a central part of 80 per cent of NEPs reviewed (32/40). Of these, most aim at facilitating the transition to formality of small economic units, in particular for micro-enterprises, since they play an important role in providing incomes and livelihoods, especially where there is a lack of sufficient wage employment.

In addition to the measures listed above, NEPs provide measures to promote the special economic contributions of small economic units, especially in terms of employment creation. This includes the following:

- ▶ Periodically assessing MSMEs' needs and constraints through surveys, setting up an SME observatory or other tools (e.g., Namibia 2013, Senegal 2017).
- ▶ Developing a policy and legal framework for MSMEs promotion (e.g., Burkina Faso 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2006, the Philippines 2011).
- ▶ Establishing a government board or public fund dedicated to SMEs (e.g., Iraq 2011, North Macedonia 2015, Zambia 2005).
- ▶ Increasing MSMEs' ability to innovate and improve their productive efficiency through enhanced access to technology and ability to invest in research (e.g., Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Peru 2011, the Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011).

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<sup>37</sup> Small matters: Global evidence on the contribution to employment by the self-employed, micro-enterprises and SMEs, ILO, 2019.



- ▶ Preventing unfair competition with MSMEs including enhanced enforcement of tariff and custom laws and rules (e.g., Namibia 2013, the Philippines 2011).
- ▶ Providing support to small economic units and start-ups at the planning phase of setting up a business. This includes physical incubation (office space, facilities and product testing), mentorship and market research (e.g., Benin, Iraq 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2015, the Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011).
- ▶ Providing support to already established entrepreneurs and MSMEs to enable them to upgrade and meet the requirements of new markets and foreign buyers, including financial and non-financial services such as special technical assistance, including accounting, legal services, business advice, access to market information (Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mongolia 2016, North Macedonia 2015, Namibia 2013, Zambia 2005), as well as more specific measures such as intellectual property protection (Sri Lanka 2012), land ownership and tenure rights (Liberia 2009, Namibia 2013) or electricity supply (Mozambique 2016).
- ▶ Promoting forward and backward linkages between MSMEs and larger firms (e.g., Iraq 2011, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011), increased involvement of SMEs in value chains (rep. of Moldova 2016) and ensure SMEs benefit from big investments (e.g., Nepal 2015).
- ▶ Providing incentives to support skills development to increase managers' and employees' work-related skills and MSME productivity (e.g., Cameroon 2017, Mozambique 2016, Peru 2011, the Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2019).

Public procurement spending is estimated to account for 15 per cent of the world's GDP and is particularly prominent in developing countries with active infrastructure and social programmes.<sup>38</sup> This means that governments are major buyers and can significantly impact market demand for employment creation as well as for responsible and sustainable business practices. In this context, various NEPs look at public procurement from local suppliers as a major lever for job creation and/or ensuring adherence to fundamental labour standards (e.g., Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Namibia 2013, Senegal 2017).

**Corporate social responsibility and good practices.** Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one of the important ways in which enterprises can contribute to the objective of decent work. 23 per cent of NEPs look at ensuring the enforcement of labour laws and standards at the enterprise level (e.g., Mongolia 2016, Zambia 2019) or encouraging the social responsibilities of business through CSR. Indeed, Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Iraq 2011, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, the Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011 provide for measures to go beyond the basic conditions and existing laws by establishing programmes and policies to create incentives for enterprises to behave in a responsible way. The diverse ways in which enterprises can give effect to socially responsible practices and provided by NEPs include: (i) developing knowledge about the different aspects of CSR and disseminating information, including examples of best practices (e.g. Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2019); (ii) developing and providing training (e.g. Iraq 2011, Mongolia 2016) or mentoring programmes between large and small firms (e.g. Philippines 2011); (iii) developing a code of conduct or models of good practice on how enterprises are giving effect to CSR activities (e.g. Iraq 2011, Philippines 2011) and conduct social auditing (e.g. Albania 2014 and Morocco 2015); (iv) encouraging adherence to international standards (e.g. Albania 2014); and (v) supporting the creation of CSR networks and social partnerships (e.g. Mongolia 2016, Iraq 2011).

**Cooperatives.** Cooperatives have a proven record of creating and sustaining employment<sup>39</sup> and can play an important role in improving the living and working conditions of women and men, as well as making essential services available, in particular in areas neglected by governments and investor-driven enterprises. However, only one in four employment policies cover cooperatives and this has slightly declined over time (from 7/20 in 2005-2012 to 4/20 in 2013-2020). Specific measures focus on encouraging the formation of cooperatives (e.g. Mali 2014, Nepal 2015, the Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005), including to specifically help young

<sup>38</sup> General Survey concerning the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94) and Recommendation (No. 84), ILO, 2008, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_091400.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_091400.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> CICOPA. 2017. Cooperatives and employment: second global report. <https://www.cicopa.coop/publications/second-global-report-on-cooperatives-and-employment/>

people both to find work and to gain work experience (e.g. Uganda 2011), to promote rural entrepreneurship, business development and employment creation in rural areas (e.g. Mali 2014, Zambia 2015), to develop alternative schemes of social protection initiatives (e.g. the Philippines 2011), to support the wider social and solidarity economy (e.g. Costa Rica 2014) or to provide employment services to help people find and maintain employment (e.g. Nepal 2015).

**Multinational enterprises.** Although multinationals possess the potential for promoting job creation in host countries, and also wider economic development through skills upgrading and technology transfer,<sup>40</sup> only three NEPs cover policies dealing with multinational enterprises (Mozambique 2016, North Macedonia 2015 and Uganda 2011). Such measures seek (i) to assess the impact of multinationals on employment as well as encourage them to give consideration to the conclusion of contracts with national enterprises, (ii) to promote the local processing of raw materials, and (iii) to ensure that relevant training is provided for all levels of workers employed by them as well as know-how transfer.

**Ninety per cent of national employment policy documents address sectoral policies.<sup>41</sup> Sectoral policies are covered in all low-income countries, while the proportion is lower in lower-middle-income countries (86 per cent of NEPs) and upper-middle-income countries (92 per cent). Regionally, sectoral policies are found in 94 per cent of NEPs in sub-Saharan Africa, 83 per cent of NEPs in the Asia and the Pacific and in the Americas, 75 per cent of Middle East and North African NEPs and all European and Central Asian NEPs. The review shows a downward trend in the inclusion of sectoral policies in NEPs (from 95 per cent of NEPs for the period 2005-2012 to 85 per cent for the period 2013-2020), while at the same time the number of NEPs addressing the broader issue of employment-centred structural change increases significantly over the two periods.**

Industrial and sectoral policies have a key role to play in recalibrating developing countries' economic structures and hence impact heavily on employment outcomes. While in the 1990s, industrial policies and sectoral intervention (beyond the infrastructure sector) were roundly criticized by mainstream economists, the turn of the century marked a change of mood towards industrial policy interventions and reopened the debate on reconsidering targeted government interventions to promote economic transformation and create more decent employment. The resurgence of industrial and sectoral policies and the role these can play in generating better employment outcomes is reflected in national employment policies, as only four out of 40 NEPs do not address this issue (Algeria 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Mongolia 2016 and Panama 2014).<sup>42</sup>

Overall, the NEPs reviewed approach increasing the labour intensity of the economy from two perspectives: either by increasing the degree of labour intensity within sectors (in particular, by encouraging labour-intensive methodologies in infrastructure development) or by increasing the share of relatively labour-intensive sectors (or a combination of both). Out of the documents addressing sectoral policies, 75 per cent look at the rural economy (including agriculture), 63 per cent industry, 58 per cent services and 45 per cent cover the tourism sectors. An analysis of subareas combinations reveals that 43 per cent of documents (17/40 NEPs) address the rural economy, industry and services sectors, while another 25 per cent (10/40) combine two of these sectors.

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<sup>40</sup> See Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy, ILO, fifth edition, March 2017.

<sup>41</sup> See Table 7.

<sup>42</sup> Two NEPs in the sample do not look into specific sectors but provide a general provision to promote job-rich value chains (Cameroon 2008), and to stimulate job creation in non-agricultural sectors (Rep. of Moldova 2016).

► Table 7. Sectoral policies and structural change

	General provision & structural change		Rural economy		Industry		Services		Tourism	
2005 - 2012	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Zambia	2005
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Mozambique	2006	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Mozambique	2006
	Cameroon	2008	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Mozambique	2006	Mozambique	2006	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Senegal	2010	Burkina Faso	2008	Burkina Faso	2008	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Benin	2011
	Jordan	2011	Liberia	2009	Liberia	2009	Benin	2011	Iraq	2011
	Philippines	2011	Senegal	2010	Benin	2011	Iraq	2011	Philippines	2011
	Uganda	2011	Benin	2011	Iraq	2011	Jordan	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
	Sri Lanka	2012	Iraq	2011	Jordan	2011	North Macedonia	2011	Guatemala	2012
			Jordan	2011	Philippines	2011	Philippines	2011	Sri Lanka	2012
			Peru	2011	Uganda	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012		
			Philippines	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Guatemala	2012		
			Uganda	2011	Guatemala	2012	Sri Lanka	2012		
			Armenia	2012	Sri Lanka	2012				
			Côte d'Ivoire	2012						
			Guatemala	2012						
		Sri Lanka	2012							
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>
2013 - 2020	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Namibia	2013
	Albania	2014	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Namibia	2013	Costa Rica	2014
	Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Cambodia	2015	Costa Rica	2014	Cambodia	2015
	Cambodia	2015	Cambodia	2015	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015	Morocco	2015
	Mali	2014	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015	Nepal	2015
	Morocco	2015	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Mozambique	2016
	Nepal	2015	Nepal	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Mozambique	2016	Honduras	2017
	Mozambique	2016	Mozambique	2016	Mozambique	2016	Guatemala	2017	Zambia	2019
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Cameroon	2017	Guatemala	2017	Honduras	2017	Benin	2020
	Cameroon	2017	Guatemala	2017	Honduras	2017	Senegal	2017		
	Guatemala	2017	Honduras	2017	Zambia	2019	Benin	2020		
	Senegal	2017	Senegal	2017	Benin	2020				
	Zambia	2019	Zambia	2019						
	Benin	2020	Benin	2020						
		<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>
	Total NEPs	22	Total NEPs	30	Total NEPs	25	Total NEPs	23	Total NEPs	18

Source: See table 1a.

### Structural change matters to the demand for productive labour and as such is increasingly addressed in NEPs.

Structural change results from a series of natural and competitive advantages and constraints, which shape the labour absorptive capacity of different sectors at different levels of productivity. In that context, various NEPs

#### ▶ Box 4.

- ▶ *«The major challenge to address is (...):  
- economic structural transformation to significantly modify the productive structures so that they create more decent jobs for an inclusive growth»*

*National Employment Policy 2019-2015, Benin*

explicitly mention the need for productive structural transformation - from agriculture to industry and services (12/40 NEPs).<sup>43</sup> Recent policies are more likely than older ones to include policies for structural change (from 20 per cent of early NEPs to 40 per cent of the later NEPs). Later NEPs also increasingly address structural change in terms of employment: from low to high productivity (from 30 per cent to 40 per cent of NEPs).<sup>44</sup>

### Agriculture and the rural economy are still the largest source of employment in many countries, as such this is the first sector addressed in NEPs.

The rural economy - and its potential for creating employment - is addressed in around 75 per cent of employment policy documents (30/40 NEPs). There is little variation over time. At regional level, agricultural<sup>45</sup> and rural economy policies occur in 88 per cent of NEPs for the sub-Saharan Africa economies, around 83 per cent of the American NEPs, 75 per cent of Middle East and North Africa, 67 per cent of the Asia and the Pacific and 43 per cent of European and Central Asian NEPs. All LICs address this issue, compared to around three quarters of the LMICs and UMICs under review. This is consistent with the fact that the rural economy continues to play a major role in most of the countries under review - in particular low-income countries- where it accounts for a significant share of employment and output. At the same time, the rural economy continues to be marked by significant labour underutilization, while providing unstable and low earnings, and no or limited access to social protection. Therefore, it remains paramount for poverty reduction in most countries under review, with impacts on the development of both upstream and downstream activities and possible positive spill-over effects on other sectors.

Some NEPs specifically target women in the rural economy (e.g., Iraq 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012), while the Nepal 2015 policy document targets indigenous and minority groups, along with conflict-affected and marginalized communities in rural areas. The policy documents of Mali 2014, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015 and Sri Lanka 2012 specifically identify measures to prepare young people for opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness and enable young entrepreneurs to consider agriculture as a viable profession.

Regarding the contents of measures, the rural economy is in large part associated with primary production (14/40 NEPs), including edible crops,<sup>46</sup> fisheries and livestock farming<sup>47</sup> as well as non-food agricultural products, such as cotton, rubber and forestry<sup>48</sup>. In general, the objective is to raise agricultural productivity and contribute to enhancing farmers' incomes, thereby supporting rural demand leading to the development of new activities and the diversification of the local economy. Secondly, 22/40<sup>49</sup> NEPs consider the promotion of off-farm activities in rural areas, mainly through the consolidation of value chains and clusters targeting specific regions and the expansion of agro-industries as key sources of employment and opportunities for economic diversification in

<sup>43</sup> Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2017, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

<sup>45</sup> In its widest sense to include crops, fisheries, livestock and forestry.

<sup>46</sup> 4 NEPs generically (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Namibia 2013 and Senegal 2010 and 2017) and 5/30 (Benin 2011, Cameroon 2017, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014 and Sri Lanka 2012) identify specific crops (e.g., beans, coca, coconuts, fruits) for targeted interventions.

<sup>47</sup> Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Liberia 2009, Namibia 2013, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012

<sup>49</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2011 and 2020, Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Senegal 2017, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

those areas. The emphasis is placed on food crop production chains, which concern smallholders and family agriculture and have significant growth potential in terms of regional markets and local processing.

Beyond agriculture and agro-processing, rural areas are characterized by a great diversity of off-farm economic activities. A few NEPs look at these issues more generally (e.g., Zambia 2019) or provide more specific measures such as combining agriculture and agri-business with other industrial and services activities to stimulate synergies and diversification (e.g., Jordan 2011, Namibia 2013). The Morocco 2015 employment policy provides measures for supporting the creation of community-based jobs (“emplois de proximité”) to provide local services to enterprises, households and the environment while addressing employment deficits in rural areas. Sectors based on the specific resources of a place can also offer significant employment opportunities in rural areas, as in the case of tourism. Some employment policies provide measures to develop eco- or agri-tourism in rural areas with a view to addressing regional employment inequalities (e.g., Costa Rica 2014, Nepal 2015, Zambia 2005) or developing commerce and SMEs in the rural economy, such as handicrafts production (e.g., Côte d’Ivoire 2012).

Some other priority areas for actions addressed in NEPs are:

- ▶ The proper governance of existing assets, particularly natural resources (e.g., Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2016 and Sri Lanka 2012) with a focus on the consolidation of land rights and its effect on agriculture, its labour absorption capacity and its role for broad-based growth and poverty alleviation.
- ▶ Adequate provision of public goods in infrastructure, including irrigation, sanitation, energy and water management and roads (e.g., Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d’Ivoire 2012, Honduras 2017, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016 and Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005) or more generally increased decentralization of government services in rural areas (e.g. Mali 2014).
- ▶ Adequate access to services in rural areas including, agriculture and entrepreneurial training (e.g., Albania 2014, Côte d’Ivoire 2012, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Senegal 2017), provision of specialized services to small-scale farmers (such as improving market access, mechanization and technology dissemination and ensuring quality control)<sup>50</sup> including through the promotion of rural cooperatives (e.g. Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Nepal 2015, and Zambia 2005).
- ▶ Access to finance in rural areas is addressed in ten NEPs (Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005).

Other elements of an integrated approach to promoting decent work in rural areas<sup>51</sup>, such as farmers’ organizations, the enforcement of an agricultural or rural minimum wage, improving working conditions (which is particularly important in countering youth’s negative perceptions of agriculture), green jobs or the extension of social protection (in particular healthcare which is a major issue in rural areas), are very little addressed,<sup>52</sup> if not totally absent.

### **Sixty-three per cent of policy documents address the industry sector.**

Percentages vary across economic groupings and decrease as income levels increase, with 100 per cent of LIC which address the industry sector to 55 per cent of LMIC and 58 per cent of UMIC. Regional variation is also significant: 83 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 75 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa, 71 per cent of NEPs in sub-Saharan Africa, 67 per cent in the Americas and only 14 per cent in Europe and Central Asia. Some NEPs address industrial policies generically (e.g., Benin 2020, Burkina Faso 2008, Nepal 2005 and Zambia 2019), recommending re-conceiving them to generate better jobs and stressing the importance of taking labour

<sup>50</sup> Costa Rica 2014, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova (2007), Namibia 2013, Nepal, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Portfolio of policy guidance notes on the promotion of decent work in the rural economy : [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/economic-and-social-development/rural-development/WCMS\\_436223/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/economic-and-social-development/rural-development/WCMS_436223/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>52</sup> E.g., the minimum wage for rural area is only addressed in the Mali 2014 NEP, green jobs in Namibia 2013 NEP, health and safety of agricultural workers in Nepal 2015.

▶ **Box 5. Promoting green jobs and industries in the Philippines**

Initiatives to promote green jobs and industries will be pursued particularly in automotive, manufacturing, MSMEs, construction, housing, shipbuilding, mining, solid waste management, community contracting for employment-intensive green infrastructure, natural resource management and renewable energy. Local value added of renewable energy, such as local manufacturing of supply and materials and infrastructure development, will be promoted to ensure local employment generation. Alternative fuel industries will also be promoted, consistent with the

goals of food security, protection of tenurial rights and environmental protection and conservation.

Measures to reduce pollution and waste generation through the promotion of green jobs and green industries will be promoted.

*The Philippines Labour and Employment Plan  
2011-2016*

intensity into account as one of the key factors in determining which sectors to prioritize. Other NEPs look at specific subsectors.

Infrastructure is the most frequent policy sub-area reported in NEPs: 43 per cent of NEPs (17/40) link infrastructure development to employment creation.<sup>53</sup> They seek to close infrastructure gaps to improve access to basic services by ensuring and improving construction such as roads, bridges, public spaces as well as community and public buildings. Four NEPs address sanitation and water supply,<sup>54</sup> while another four NEPs cover electricity and gas utility.<sup>55</sup> Overall, the objective is to improve infrastructure and public assets while increasing labour intensity by promoting labour-based construction activities. Indeed, experience has demonstrated that while labour-based construction activities result in short-term employment, the resulting improved infrastructure contributes to increasing economic performance in other sectors, generating multiplier effects on employment and income throughout the economy.<sup>56</sup>

The second largest sub-area is manufacturing, which is addressed by 14 NEPs (35 per cent).<sup>57</sup> Some of the measures provided by NEPs include:

- ▶ Encouraging and supporting industry clusters to promote employment creation (including in regions which are lagging behind in development) and/or focus on specific labour-intensive subsectors such as cottage industries, metallurgy, light manufacturing, textiles or shipbuilding (e.g., Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, North Macedonia 2015, Nepal 2015, the Philippines 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012).
- ▶ Supporting export industries and international competitiveness (e.g., North Macedonia 2015, Sri Lanka 2012 and Uganda 2011).
- ▶ Strengthening forward and backward linkages to the rest of the domestic economy to create additional demand for the output of upstream and downstream sectors (e.g., Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012).
- ▶ Supporting industries to move ahead in the value chain and facilitate the growth of small-scale manufacturing through incentives, specific programmes and establishing an adequate institutional environment (e.g., Jordan 2011, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2015, Zambia 2005 and 2019).

The third largest subarea is mining which is included in 15 per cent of NEPs. (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Philippines 2011 and Zambia 2005). NEPs make provisions to create interconnected linkages with the broader economy as a channel for job creation, including backward production linkages (i.e., connecting the industry with the suppliers of inputs), forward linkages (i.e. connecting the processing of commodities into added value products) or consumption linkages (i.e. creating demand for locally produced goods as a result of incomes earned from employment in extractive industries).

<sup>53</sup> Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Philippines 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Philippines 2011, Zambia 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2012, Namibia 2013, Philippines 2011

<sup>56</sup> Creating jobs through public investments, ILO, 2018

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_policy/---invest/documents/publication/wcms\\_619821.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/---invest/documents/publication/wcms_619821.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Nepal 2005 and 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

**Amongst the three sectors, services policies are the least represented, with 58 per cent of policies considering them.**

Policies relating to the services sector occur in 58 per cent of NEPs (23/40 NEPs). Among the 23 NEPs addressing the services sector, the majority (19/22) are from 2011 onwards. Services policies are featured in 33 per cent of LICs, 59 per cent of LMICs and 67 per cent of UMICs. It is fairly well represented in the documents from Asia and the Pacific (67 per cent of NEPs) and Middle East and North Africa (75 per cent of NEPs), as well as documents from Latin America (67 per cent). In contrast, policies related to services are found in 57 per cent of European and Central Asian NEPs and 47 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa policies.

The health sector – which is a major sector, with important potential for job creation while essential to achieving the desired future of work, including meeting the demand for universal health coverage<sup>58</sup> – is addressed by five NEPs only.<sup>59</sup> Apart from certain sectors, such as transportation and storage (8/40 NEPs)<sup>60</sup> which is usually characterized by low productivity, a high informality rate and poor working conditions, the review shows a preponderance of sectors with higher added value. Within services, the most visible sub-policy area is information and communication technology (14/40 NEPs),<sup>61</sup> while research and development (R&D), both to create employment for high-skilled workers and help entrepreneurs create innovative products for the market, is addressed in six NEPs.<sup>62</sup> In line with the rising trend towards service offshoring globally, business processing outsourcing (BPO) is mentioned in one in five NEPs<sup>63</sup>.

**Forty-five per cent of national employment policies (18/40) consider tourism as a significant source of employment.**<sup>64</sup>

Of these NEPs, some focus on eco-tourism and cultural tourism (e.g., Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005). The employment policies of Nepal 2015 and Zambia 2005 address tourism as a means of achieving economic and social development in rural areas, to generate local employment and stimulate external investment in the communities. Examples of specific measures to bolster employment in the tourism sector include: (i) creating tax and investment incentives to support the sector (e.g. Sri Lanka 2012); (ii) providing adequate education and vocational training as key requisites for the operational effectiveness of the tourism sector and to address shortages of qualified employees (e.g. Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005); (iii) improve land tenure rights to help develop rural and ecotourism (e.g. Namibia 2013); (iv) provide government support for marketing and advertising (e.g. Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015 and Zambia 2005); (v) support the development of industrial relations in the tourism sector to improve employment outcomes (e.g. Nepal 2015).

**In most developing countries the private sector is small, fragmented, and unlikely to have the capacity to undertake the investments required for growth and employment creation. Hence, public investment remains a key instrument for 78 per cent of employment policies. However, this focus tends to decrease over time.**

Investment policies are addressed in 78 per cent of national employment policies and this has decreased over time (by 18 per cent over the last two decades). This subarea is covered by all LICs, but it is less represented in LMICs (77 per cent) and UMICs (67 per cent). By region, this sub-policy area is well covered in the documents from sub-Saharan Africa countries (94 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (100 per cent), the Americas (83 per cent) and the Middle East and North Africa (75 per cent) in contrast to European and Central Asian NEPs (14 per cent).

<sup>58</sup> See The future of work in the health sector, Working Paper 325, ILO, 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2017, Nepal 2005, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Benin 2011, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005.

<sup>61</sup> Benin 2011 and 2020, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Iraq 2011, Mozambique 2006, Rep. of Moldova 2007, Nepal 2005, North Macedonia 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005.

<sup>62</sup> Benin 2020, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Nepal 2005, North Macedonia 2011, Sri Lanka 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2017 Morocco 2015, Nepal 2015, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005.

<sup>64</sup> As tourism strategies in NEPs include interventions across the three sectors, including services (as per ISIC) but also construction, nature conservation or organic food for eco-tourism, they are presented separately here.

► **Table 8. Investments measures in NEPs**

	General provisions		Investments in infrastructure		Investment in labour intensive sectors		Investment to generate green jobs	
2005 - 2012	Cameroon	2008	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Philippines	2011
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Zambia	2005	Mozambique	2006		
	Guatemala	2012	Burkina Faso	2008	Algeria	2008		
			Liberia	2009	Iraq	2011		
			Senegal	2010	Jordan	2011		
			Benin	2011	Philippines	2011		
			Iraq	2011	Uganda	2011		
			Peru	2011	Sri Lanka	2012		
			Philippines	2011				
			Uganda	2011				
			Côte d'Ivoire	2012				
		Sri Lanka	2012					
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>1</b>
2013 - 2020	Benin	2020	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013
			Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014
			Mali	2014	Cambodia	2015	Mozambique	2016
			Nepal	2015	Nepal	2015		
			North Macedonia	2015	Mongolia	2016		
			Mongolia	2016	Mozambique	2016		
			Mozambique	2016	Honduras	2017		
			Cameroon	2017	Senegal	2017		
			Guatemala	2017	Zambia	2019		
			Senegal	2017				
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>
	Total NEPs	4	Total NEPs	22	Total NEPs	17	Total NEPs	4

Source: See table 1a.

**For 22 employment policies, investment in infrastructure is considered a primary source of employment generation** (see box 6). Of these, six specifically target infrastructure in the rural economy.<sup>65</sup> Three main types of measures are provided for:

- i. Ensuring that the design and assessments of the infrastructure investments takes employment into account as a key criterion (e.g., Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Nepal 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Senegal 2017, and Uganda 2011).
- ii. Promoting the creation of an enabling environment, through: (i) public-private partnerships (e.g. Costa Rica 2014, Peru 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012); (ii) passing an appropriate legal framework (e.g. Nepal 2005, Senegal 2010 and 2017 and Uganda 2011), (iii) institution building to guarantee successful planning and implementation of employment intensive infrastructure approaches (e.g. Liberia 2009 and Mali 2014),

<sup>65</sup> Cote d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015 and Philippines 2011.



(iv) promoting procurement approaches and procedures that favour local SMEs (e.g. Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013 and Zambia 2005).

- iii. Designing and implementing employment-intensive works and public employment programmes (e.g., Benin 2020, Burkina Faso 2008, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2015, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012 and Uganda 2011), including emergency public works in a post crisis context (e.g., Liberia 2009).

**Besides infrastructure, employment policies provide recommendations to expand investments in labour-intensive sectors** (Honduras 2017, Mozambique 2016, Senegal 2017) – including by revising the existing relevant legal frameworks, putting in place incentives and promoting an appropriate investment climate (e.g., Algeria 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mozambique 2006, Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2019) in specific regions (e.g., rural areas in Mongolia 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015), or specific sectors (such as communication and energy in Costa Rica 2014, ICT and BPO in Sri Lanka 2012 or rural industrialization, electricity, tourism and transport in Namibia 2013).

**Finally, four NEPs (Costa Rica 2014, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013 and the Philippines 2011) provide measures for redirecting investment to generate green jobs.**

**International trade and foreign investment have important effects on employment and labour conditions. 63 per cent of employment policies address those issues. Over time, there has been an increase in NEPs dealing with trade and regional integration from 55 per cent in 2005-2012 to 70 per cent in 2013-2020. Income groupings and regional variations can be observed.**

Documents from Asian, Middle East and North African, American and sub-Saharan African countries are more likely to cover trade issues (83 per cent, 75 per cent, 67 per cent and 65 per cent respectively). This proportion is significantly higher than in Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia (29 per cent). Trade policies are also slightly more common in low-income countries and upper-middle income countries (both 67 per cent of NEPs), while are found in only 59 per cent of lower-middle income countries.

▶ **Box 6. Ensuring the contribution of public investment in the creation of job opportunities:**

Setting up standards for procurement and operating of all government projects so that local contractors and Iraqi workers would benefit from public investment and comply with core labour standards. Actions can also be taken to help small businesses and micro enterprises obtain public procurement contracts. In return, these businesses are to ensure applying some of the basic labour standards for their workers. Investment in infrastructure entails huge potential for employment which should be taken advantage of.

Adopting the number of employment opportunities a public investment project can offer, as one of the basic measures in selecting projects.

Adopting the number and types of employment and the level of growth in employment as one of the indicators by which success is measured in economic plans, including the National Development Plan.

*Republic of Iraq, National Employment Policy 2011*

► Table 9. Trade policies and regional integration in NEPs

	General provisions	Enhancing competitiveness and productivity	Promoting regional integration and access to GVC	Encouraging promising sectors	Assessing and addressing the effects of Trade on employment	Coherence between employment, skills and trade policies	Foreign direct investments		
2005 - 2012		Nepal 2005 Zambia 2005 Burkina Faso 2008 Jordan 2011 Philippines 2011 Uganda 2011 Côte d'Ivoire 2012 Guatemala 2012	Cote d'Ivoire 2012 Guatemala 2012	Nepal 2005 Zambia 2005 Burkina Faso 2008 Jordan 2011 Philippines 2011 Côte d'Ivoire 2012 Sri Lanka 2012	Zambia 2005 Burkina Faso 2008 Jordan 2011 Côte d'Ivoire 2012 Sri Lanka 2012	Burkina Faso 2008 Iraq 2011 Côte d'Ivoire 2012	Nepal 2005 Zambia 2005 Senegal 2010 Iraq 2011 Jordan 2011 Philippines 2011		
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>		
	2013 - 2020	Namibia 2013 Benin 2020	Albania 2014 Costa Rica 2014 Mali 2014 Morocco 2015 North Macedonia 2015 Honduras 2015	Costa Rica 2014 Mali 2014 Nepal 2015 North Macedonia 2015 Mozambique 2016 Cameroon 2017	Costa Rica 2014 Mali 2014 Morocco 2015 Nepal 2015 North Macedonia 2015 Cameroon 2017 Honduras 2017	Mali 2014	North Macedonia 2015 Mozambique 2016	Cambodia 2015 Nepal 2015 Mozambique 2016 Guatemala 2017 Honduras 1017 Senegal 2017	
		<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	
		Total NEPs	2	14	8	14	6	5	12

Source: See table 1a.

Six main measures are addressed:

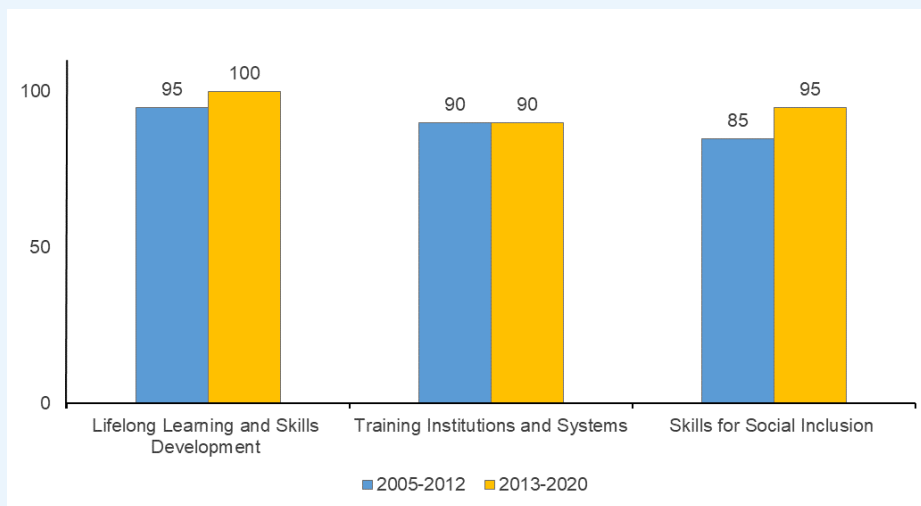
- i. **Enhancing competitiveness and productivity:** fourteen NEPs seek to make companies more competitive and facilitate their market access with a view to maximizing the employment gains from trade (e.g., Burkina Faso 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, North Macedonia 2015 and Zambia 2005), including by setting up export processing zones (e.g. Mali 2014, Nepal 2005, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005). Seven countries look at making it easier for companies to trade and compete internationally by removing constraints on productivity and enhance enterprises' productive capacity (e.g., Albania 2014, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005)
- ii. **Promoting regional integration and access to global value chains:** Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015 and North Macedonia consider regional integration and participation in global value chains as opportunities to enable them to diversify exports, and benefit from spillovers in skills, learning and know-how, as well as improvements in work processes and technology. The number of NEPs discussing access to global supply chains grew from 2/20 (10 per cent) in 2005-2012 to 6/20 (30 per cent) in 2013-2020.
- iii. **Encouraging domestic production in promising sectors to stimulate employment creation:** fourteen employment policy documents seek to support sectors facing global competition and encourage the development of export markets for products in which they have a comparative advantage. Examples of specific sectors for export include: (i) agriculture (e.g., Cameroon 2017, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2015, the Philippines 2011 and Uganda 2011); (ii) manufacturing (e.g. Honduras 2017, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2015 and the Philippines 2011); (iii) tourism (e.g. Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Morocco 2015 and the Philippines 2011); (iv) offshore business processing (Honduras 2017, Morocco 2015 and the Philippines 2011). Some countries are also seeking to increase domestic production to replace foreign import (e.g. Honduras 2017, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2015 and Zambia 2005). Some other recommendations include using export levies to promote domestic upstream raw materials processing, promoting EPZ, structuring the tariff regime to support the development of the country's domestic production as well as promoting local content requirements to stimulate the use of domestically produced goods.
- iv. **Assessing and addressing the effect of trade on employment:** six NEPs look at evaluating and maximizing the potential employment benefits and risks of existing trade agreements and policies (e.g., Mali 2014, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005,), including with the involvement of the social partners (e.g., Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012). The NEP for Jordan 2011 advocates a review of subsidy and trade policies to redesign them and help transition away from declining industries. Four other policies seek to include a labour dimension in trade agreements: Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005 recommend integrating employment or labour standards as part of economic integration processes and trade agreements.
- v. **Ensuring coherence between employment, skills and trade policies:** Some NEPs state that connecting trade and employment requires convergence between these policy areas (e.g., Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011). Surprisingly, no NEPs provide for measures to better match skills supply to trade-related demand, while only two outline measures to facilitate skills and technology transfer (Mozambique 2016 and North Macedonia 2015).
- vi. **Channelling appropriate levels of foreign investment into those sectors of the economy that increase labour absorption and improve productivity.** National employment policies from Cambodia 2015, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, the Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017, and Zambia 2005 all provide for such measures.

## 4.2. Skills and employability

Globally, employment policies recognize that skills-side policies are a key element in achieving employment objectives, both by increasing the productivity and sustainability of enterprises and improving the employability of workers. All employment policy documents include at least one skills intervention (figure 11).

Overall, the review indicates that among them, lifelong learning and skills development policies are more frequent (98 per cent of NEPs), while policies relating to training institutions and systems as well as skills for social inclusion are covered in 90 per cent of NEPs. The trend emerging from the data is a diversification of skills policies over the last 20 years, which have been growing to include an increasing number of policy areas and measures. Skills for social inclusion policies increase by 12 per cent and lifelong learning and skills development policies rise by five per cent over the two periods, while training institutions and systems remain stable (figure 8).

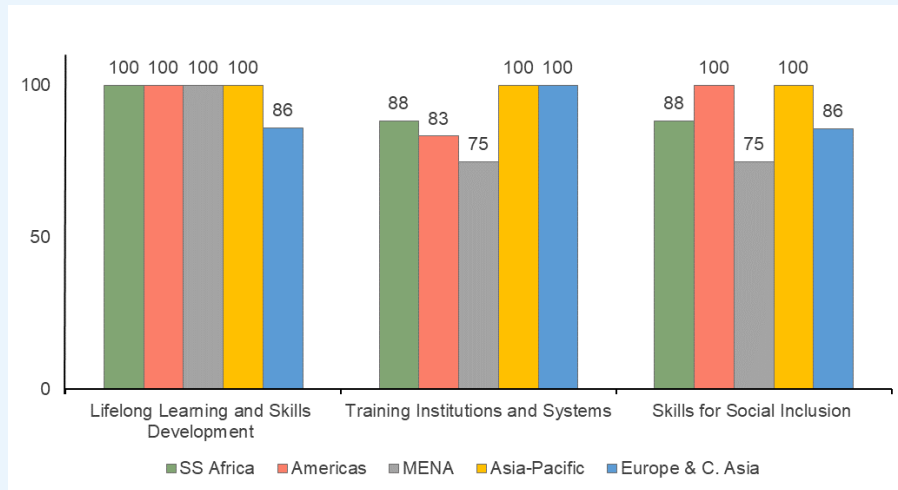
► **Figure 8. Skills policies: variation by period (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Regional differences can be observed. Asia and the Pacific shows the largest prevalence of skills policies, while they are the least present in the Middle East and North Africa countries.** Figure 9 shows that the three subareas of skills policies are systematically found in all NEPs of Asia and the Pacific. followed by the Americas where all NEPs also cover policies relating to skills for social inclusion, as well as lifelong learning and skills development, and 83 per cent of NEPs include training institutions and systems. Sub-Saharan African NEPs come in third position in terms of inclusion of skills policies: they address lifelong learning and skills development in all NEPs, while taking into account the two other subareas in 88 per cent of policies. Then comes European and Central Asia NEPs which give more prominence to training institutions and systems (100 per cent of NEPs), while 86 per cent of policy documents include other types of skills policies. Finally, NEPs from the Middle East and North Africa are the least likely to include those provisions; they include skills for social inclusion and training institutions and systems in three out of four NEPs, while 100 per cent of NEPs include lifelong learning and skills development.

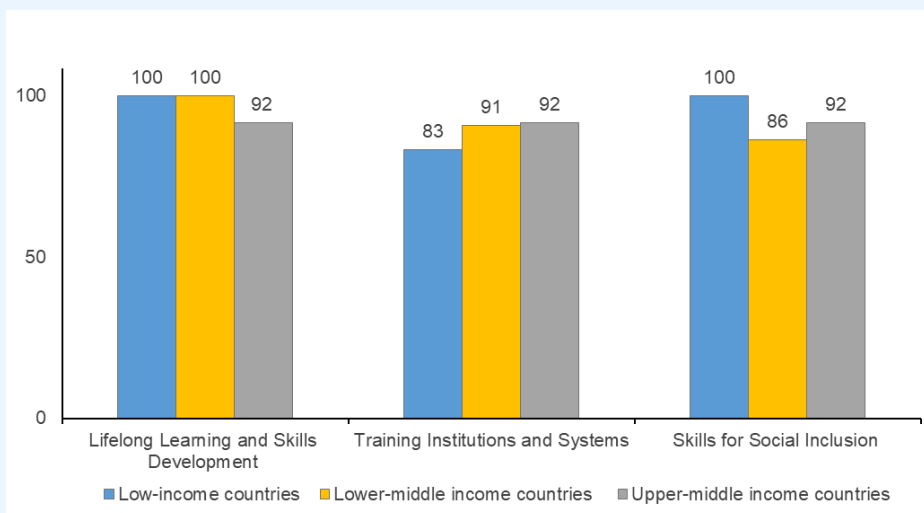
► **Figure 9. Skills policies: variation by region (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Regarding income level (figure 10), the review shows that skills policies are not evenly distributed in employment policies.** Training institutions and systems policies increase as the income level increases, from 83 per cent of NEPs in LICs to 91 and 92 per cent of NEPs in LMICs and UMICs. On the other hand, skills for social inclusion decrease from 100 per cent of NEPs in LICs to 86 per cent of NEPs in LMICs and 92 per cent of NEPs in UMICs. Lifelong learning and skills development policies, are fairly stable, covered in all LICs and LMICs, and in 92 per cent of UMICs.

► **Figure 10. Skills policies: variation by income level (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Skills policies constitute an important part of NEPs and there is an upward trend towards their inclusion in policy documents.** Table 10 presents the average number of sub-policy areas by income level, region and period. Figure 11 shows NEP documents according to the number of sub-policy areas covered, from one to three (i.e., lifelong learning and skills development policies, training institutions and systems and skills for social inclusion) and table 10 shows the average number of sub-policy areas by income level and region. On average, NEPs cover 2.8 skills measures.

For the period 2005-2012, each document covers 2.7 sub-policy areas on average, with 75 per cent of documents addressing all three subareas, and only one country addressing one sub-policy (Algeria 2008). For this period, policies for lifelong learning and skills development are covered in all NEPs except one (North Macedonia 2011), while skills for social inclusion are included in 85 per cent of documents and training institutions and systems are found in 90 per cent of NEPs. LICs address all three policy areas in all cases, while LMICs and UMICs cover 2.6 and 2.7 policy areas on average. Regionally, all NEPs in the Americas and Asia and the Pacific include all three subareas, while sub-Saharan African NEPs include 2.8 sub-policies, and Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa include 2.3 subareas on average.

In the most recent period, the average number of sub-policy areas covered in each document rises to 2.9, with 85 per cent of NEPs covering all three subareas and only Guatemala 2017, Mozambique 2016 and Zambia 2019 covering two policy areas. Remarkably, all NEPs include policies for lifelong learning and skills development during the 2013-2020 period. Looking at the distribution of skills policies by economic grouping,<sup>66</sup> the review shows that low-income countries show a less diversified set of policy components (-0.5) while a contrary trend is observed for the other two groups (LMIC and UMIC). Looking at regions, the Middle East and North Africa as well as Europe and Central Asia see an increase in sub-policy areas on average (both 0.7), while sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia and the Pacific remain fairly stable, and the Americas show a slight decrease.

In figure 12, the analysis is disaggregated by sub-sub-policy area. Interestingly, we find that the trend towards increased complexity is observed at this level as well (from 168 to 176) although only in specific policy areas, such as skills for social inclusion and policies for lifelong learning, while provisions for training institutions and systems decrease slightly.

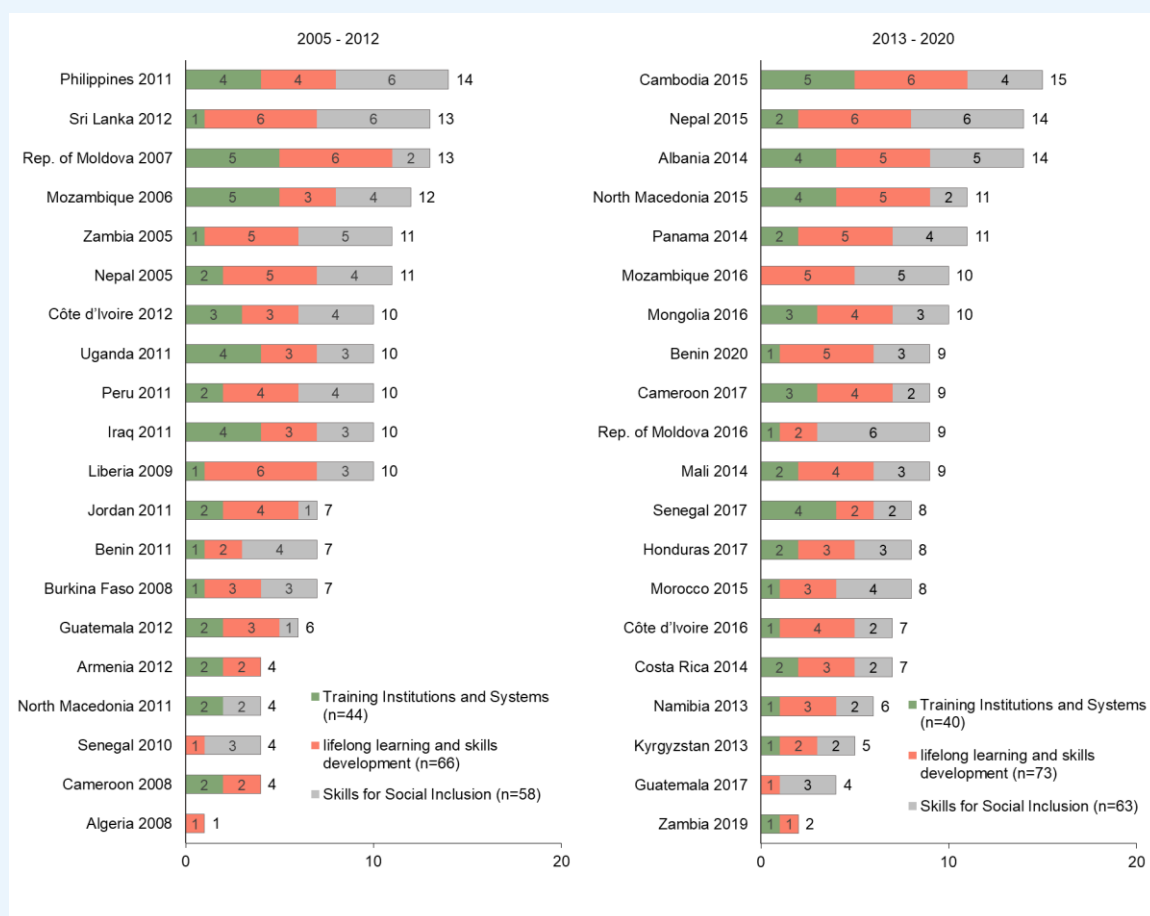
► **Table 10. Average number of skills sub-policy areas (by period, region, and income)**

	2005-2012	2013-2020	Change
Total	2.70	2.85	0.15 ↑
Low-income countries (LIC)	3.00	2.50	-0.50 ↓
Lower middle-income countries (LMIC)	2.60	2.92	0.32 ↑
Upper middle-income countries (UMIC)	2.67	2.83	0.17 ↑
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.78	2.75	-0.03 ↓
Americas	3.00	2.75	-0.25 ↓
Middle East and North Africa	2.33	3.00	0.67 ↑
Asia-Pacific	3.00	3.00	0.00 →
Europe and Central Asia	2.33	3.00	0.67 ↑

Source: See table 1a.

<sup>66</sup> The sample for the second period under review includes only 2 LICs (Mali and Mozambique) and 1 MENA State (Morocco), thus results should be taken with caution as they depend heavily on the policy mix in these particular countries.

► **Figure 11. Number of skills measures for each such policy (By country and period)**



Source: See table 1a.

Recent years have witnessed growing interest in lifelong learning (LLL) as an indispensable element of policy responses to the future of work.<sup>67</sup> The inclusion of such policies increased from 95 per cent of NEPs over the 2005-2012 period to 100 over the 2013-2020 period. The upward trend is also reflected in a rise of LLL sub-sub-measures in NEPs over the last two decades (from 66 to 73).

Employability (for wage work or self-employment) results from a series of factors – a foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities and ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning – and is critical in enabling workers to obtain decent work and manage change and in enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets. Almost all employment policies (except North Macedonia 2011) contain measures to facilitate skills upgrading and re-skilling as well as new skills acquisition through training, education, and lifelong learning activities to remain employable.

<sup>67</sup> See Lifelong learning: Concepts, issues and actions, ILO.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_711842.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_711842.pdf)

**Forty per cent of NEPs include general provisions on skilling and re-skilling and the need to promote continuous learning** including by (i) ensuring that it is accessible to all groups and responds to all employment needs (e.g. Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Mali 2014); (ii) providing bridging programmes to facilitate lifelong training (e.g. Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2008); (iii) developing ongoing training offers, including on-line and distance learning (e.g. Panama 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2016), (iv) facilitating requalification and career changes (Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Nepal 2005), (v) improving the legal framework on lifelong learning (Rep. of Moldova 2007 and 2016), (vi) consolidating cooperation between the public and private sector in promoting on-the-job training as well as stimulating demand and supply for ongoing training, including by providing incentives (Rep. of Moldova 2016). In addition, NEPs address one or more of the following elements of policies for skills development and lifelong learning policies:

**Forty per cent of NEPs provide measures to improve access to quality basic education.** Access to solid basic education is required as a basis for future employment opportunities. In that context, the NEPs in Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Guatemala 2012, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005 address the issue of early childhood and stress the need to ensure access to good quality education for all children. The NEP for Liberia 2009 focuses on the need to build new and safe schools, the one for Jordan 2011 on improving access to public pre-schooling to bolster cognitive development. Sri Lanka 2012 looks at improving access to bilingual education, while Guatemala 2012 stresses the importance of including extracurricular activities such as soft skills in formal education. The Cambodia 2015 NEP looks at increasing access to education for disadvantaged groups, while Benin 2020 seeks to improve access to education for all, including non-formal education and for persons with disabilities.

Whenever young people have not completed education, a “foundation skills” gap is likely to exist. Seven NEPs<sup>68</sup> look at addressing school dropouts through ad hoc programmes to fill that gap. The Cambodia 2015 and Liberia 2009 NEPs look to enhance second chance education schemes for the adult population who did not previously have access to basic education. The NEPs of Benin 2011, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Morocco 2015 and Nepal 2005 and 2015 provide for basic literacy and numeracy skills programmes for adults as the key to building technical skills required in the world of work.

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<sup>68</sup> Benin 2011, Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Moldova.





	General provisions	Early childhood and basic education	Curriculum development	TVET	Work-based learning	Skills for entrepreneurship	Skills for trade, green jobs and technological change
				North Macedonia 2015 Côte d'Ivoire 2016 Mongolia 2016 Mozambique 2016 Rep. of Moldova 2016 Cameroon 2017 Guatemala 2017 Honduras 2017 Senegal 2017 Benin 2020	Côte d'Ivoire 2016 Mongolia 2016 Mozambique 2016 Rep. of Moldova 2016 Senegal 2017 Zambia 2019 Benin 2020	Mongolia 2016 Mozambique 2016 Cameroon 2017 Benin 2020	
	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 9	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 6	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 7	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 18	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 15	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 12	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 6
	Total NEPs 16	Total NEPs 16	Total NEPs 16	Total NEPs 32	Total NEPs 23	Total NEPs 23	Total NEPs 13

Source: See table 1a.

### Curriculum development is addressed in 40 per cent of policies.

Forty per cent of NEPs are looking at curriculum improvement (including in partnership with the private sector) to be consistent with labour market demand and keeping teachers up to date about workplace practices. Employment policy documents in Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006, Namibia 2013 and Zambia 2005 cover it in general terms while also stressing the need to make curriculums more gender-responsive (Nepal 2015) or to incorporate safety and hygiene components in secondary and tertiary education (the Philippines 2011) or in vocational training (Mozambique 2006, North Macedonia 2015). The employment policies of Cambodia 2015, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Panama 2014 and Sri Lanka 2012 look at integrating soft skills in the curriculum in secondary schools and technical and vocational education, while in Albania 2014, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2015, Nepal 2005, and Zambia 2005 policy documents provide for revising curriculums so that they better respond to the needs of specific sectors.

### Policies on technical education and vocational training (TVET) dominate all skills measures and are considered by 80 per cent of NEPs.

TVET is addressed in 32 out of 40 employment policies. In addition to the measures listed below that affect the governance, assessment and certification of TVET systems, eight policy documents provide measures for reorganizing and consolidating the TVET system (Albania 2014, Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Mozambique 2006, Peru 2011 and the Philippines 2011), including at regional level (Albania 2014) and including measures to improve the image of TVET and make it more attractive to young people (Albania 2014, the Moldova 2016, Mozambique 2006, and Panama 2014). Seven NEPs underline the importance of creating bridges between the TVET and the wider education system (Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015, North Macedonia 2015, the Philippines 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012). Other policies recognize that TVET works when strongly linked to labour market demand (Armenia 2012, Mongolia 2016) and hence aims at strengthening and promoting connections between TVET providers and the private sector to reduce skills gaps (e.g., Benin 2020, Cameroon 2008, Iraq 2011, Rep of Moldova 2016, Mozambique 2006, the Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), including in priority sectors (Cambodia 2015). The NEP for Guatemala 2017 further considers linking TVET to economic diversification and competitiveness, while Albania 2014, Liberia 2009, North Macedonia 2015, Namibia 2013 and Zambia 2005 consider regular revision of the TVET curriculum in the light of changing industrial needs.

Other concrete measures relating to the TVET system include: (i) strengthening the link with the national vocational skills classification (e.g. Albania 2014); (ii) broadening the scope of vocational training in terms of geographical coverage, courses offered, training modalities used and target groups (e.g. Mozambique 2006) and ensuring it is accessible to women and persons with disabilities (e.g. Albania 2014, Mali 2014) and girls in industrial and scientific sectors (Mali 2014), (iii) strengthening and establishing TVET systems (Côte d'Ivoire 2016) and centres (Cameroon 2008 and 2017), including centres of excellence, and encouraging those that perform well (Cambodia 2015 and the Philippines 2011); (iv) establishing TVET qualification testing centres (Cambodia 2015); (v) building a database of private TVET systems (Albania 2014) (vi) improving the monitoring and evaluation of TVET performance (e.g. Cambodia 2015, Jordan 2011); (vii) putting in place incentives to support TVET curriculums (Benin 2020), (viii) promoting follow-up activities and permanent evaluation of training beneficiaries (e.g. Mozambique 2006), and (ix) developing a TVET policy.

### Among skills measures, work-based learning is showing the largest increase: from 40 per cent to 75 per cent of NEPs over the last 20 years.

Countries are increasingly putting work-based learning high on their policy agenda, recognizing its potential for reducing the skills mismatch, meeting skills demand in a fast-changing labour market, providing cost-effective training, promoting private sector development and smoothing transitions to the world of work. This trend is reflected in many NEPs, as 58 per cent address this issue, a percentage that has increased significantly over time. Among them, various policies seek to improve employment prospects for young people by expanding dual training / and apprenticeship,<sup>69</sup> including by: (i) promoting close collaboration with employers' and workers'

<sup>69</sup> Algeria 2008, Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2012, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Rep. of Moldova 2007 and 2016, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Panama 2014, Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2019.

organizations (e.g. Albania 2014, Nepal 2015, Panama 2014); (ii) specifically targeting SMEs (Mozambique 2016) or farming skills (Namibia 2013), (iii) developing appropriate legal frameworks and mechanisms (Rep. of Moldova 2007 and 2016, the Philippines 2011, Senegal 2017), and (iv) integrating apprenticeship as an integral part of the TVET system (Albania 2014). Two policies specifically focus on upgrading informal apprenticeship (Sri Lanka 2012) and facilitating the recognition of learning acquired through informal means in the workplace (Senegal 2017). Other interventions look at internship as a key element in facilitating the transition to the world of work:<sup>70</sup> (i) in close cooperation with the private sector (Albania 2014), (ii) for out-of-school students and youth with special needs (Philippines 2011), as well as (iii) part of graduation requirements (Jordan 2011).

### Enhancing skills for entrepreneurship is addressed by 58 per cent of policies.

58 per cent of NEPs discuss the intent to support the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills or skills to help develop small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including through provisions relating to: (i) developing entrepreneurial skills in school, vocational education and / or higher education (Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015, Panama 2014 and Sri Lanka 2012), (ii) providing business management skills development for SME owners/managers (Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007,

#### ▶ Box 7. Promoting skills for green jobs

Skills will be improved and enhanced in the areas of green restructuring, greening of existing jobs and action to overcome negative effects of climate change. Initially, skills training activities will address environment-related priority areas such as climate adaptation, damage mitigation vulnerability assessment, energy efficiency, renewable energy, efficient resource utilization including land and water, pollution control and waste management and so on, with provisions on further opportunities to expand this scope based on efficient monitoring and evaluation systems.

*The National Human Resource and Employment Strategy for Sri Lanka, 2012*

Mozambique 2016, and Zambia 2005); (iii) providing skills for green entrepreneurship (Sri Lanka 2012), and (iv) ensuring that soft skills are mainstreamed in entrepreneurship training (Albania 2014). At institutional level, the NEP for Costa Rica 2014 advocates for a centre to identify skills needs in SMEs, while that for Iraq 2011 seeks to establish a national centre or fund to train entrepreneurs.

In terms of targets, 13 out of 40 NEPs discuss developing entrepreneurial skills for youth,<sup>71</sup> around one in four NEPs target women (11 out of 40)<sup>72</sup> and one specifically considers persons with disabilities, conflict-affected persons and ethnic minorities for entrepreneurship skills development (Nepal 2015). With regard to employment status, 6 out of 40 NEPs target workers in the informal economy (Mali 2014, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda

2011 and Zambia 2005); one in ten considers those in the rural economy (Albania 2014, Moldova (2007), Nepal 2005 and Sri Lanka 2012); and 7 out of 40 the self-employed (Benin 2020, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2005).

### Although skills for trade, green jobs and technological change are becoming increasingly important for the future of work, those issues are still little addressed.

Only five documents look at skills for trade-related industries, such as those related to offshoring and global value chains (Cameroon 2017, Guatemala 2012, Honduras 2017, Liberia 2009 and Mozambique 2016), while three NEPs look at skills for green jobs (North Macedonia 2015, the Philippines 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012). One in five NEPs look at skills for technological change and/or structural transformation (Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005).

<sup>70</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2017, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013, Philippines 2011, Moldova 2007, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011 and Zambia 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2016, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2016, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005.

<sup>72</sup> Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Peru 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012.

► **Table 12. Measures on training institutions and systems in NEPs**

	General Provisions	Matching and Forecasting of Skills Supply and Demand	Qualification Frameworks	Engaging with Social Partners and Private Sector	Funding Mechanisms	Policies and Normative Framework	Monitoring and Evaluation
2005 - 2012		Nepal 2005	Mozambique 2006	Nepal 2005	Jordan 2011	Mozambique 2006	Mozambique 2006
		Zambia 2005	Rep. of Moldova 2007	Mozambique 2006	Philippines 2011	Rep. of Moldova 2007	Rep. of Moldova 2007
		Mozambique 2006	Cameroon 2008	Rep. of Moldova 2007	Uganda 2011	Iraq 2011	Jordan 2011
		Rep. of Moldova 2007	Liberia 2009	Cameroon 2008			Côte d'Ivoire 2012
		Burkina Faso 2008	Iraq 2011	Benin 2011			
		Iraq 2011	North Macedonia 2011	Iraq 2011			
		Peru 2011	Peru 2011	North Macedonia 2011			
		Philippines 2011	Philippines 2011	Philippines 2011			
		Uganda 2011	Uganda 2011	Uganda 2011			
		Armenia 2012	Armenia 2012	Guatemala 2012			
		Côte d'Ivoire 2012	Côte d'Ivoire 2012				
	Guatemala 2012	Sri Lanka 2012					
	<b>N° of NEPs 0</b>	<b>N° of NEPs 12</b>	<b>N° of NEPs 12</b>	<b>N° of NEPs 10</b>	<b>N° of NEPs 3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs 3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs 4</b>
2013 -2020	Zambia 2019	Namibia 2013	Kyrgyzstan 2013	Albania 2014	Panama 2014	Costa Rica 2014	Albania 2014
		Albania 2014	Albania 2014	Panama 2014	North Macedonia 2015	Cambodia 2015	Costa Rica 2014
		Cambodia 2015	Cambodia 2015	Cambodia 2015	Cameroon 2017	Honduras 2017	Cambodia 2015
		Mali 2014	Mali 2014	Nepal 2015	Benin 2020	Senegal 2017	Mongolia 2016
		Morocco 2015	North Macedonia 2015	North Macedonia 2015			
		Nepal 2015	Mongolia 2016	Cameroon 2017			
		North Macedonia 2015	Honduras 2017	Senegal 2017			
		Côte d'Ivoire 2016	Senegal 2017				
	Mongolia 2016						

	General Provisions	Matching and Forecasting of Skills Supply and Demand	Qualification Frameworks	Engaging with Social Partners and Private Sector	Funding Mechanisms	Policies and Normative Framework	Monitoring and Evaluation
		Rep. of Moldova 2016 Cameroon 2017 Senegal 2017					
	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 1	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 12	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 8	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 7	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 4	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 7	<b>N° of NEPs</b> 4
	Total NEPs 1	Total NEPs 24	Total NEPs 20	Total NEPs 17	Total NEPs 7	Total NEPs 7	Total NEPs 8

Source: See table 1a.

**Measures on training institutions and systems are at the heart of 90 per cent of NEPs as a way to ensure access to high quality and relevant programmes that meet the needs of individuals and the labour market. The number of NEPs including such interventions has remained stable over time.**

Ensuring access to high quality and relevant programmes that meet the needs of individuals and the labour market requires an appropriate framework including institutions to better forecasting and matching skills provision to labour market needs, as well as making training services more broadly available. 36 out of 40 NEPs (90 per cent) cover issues related to training institutions and systems, including governance, financing, institutional arrangements and regulations as well as elements to improve the responsiveness, relevance and quality of the skills systems. Overall, the number of measures has decreased slightly over time from 44 (2005-2012) to 40 (2013-2020).

**Many countries are still experiencing a persistent gap between the skills needed in the labour market and those offered by the workforce, hence measures to improve matching of skills is the first issue among interventions on training institutions and systems addressed in NEPs.**

Given the accelerating pace of change, it is not surprising that measures to better forecast and match the provision of skills to labour market needs are included in 60 per cent of NEPs. Such mechanisms and reforms include: (i) generating and using labour market information by establishing or strengthening existing labour market information systems and using the information to set outcomes for training institutions; (ii) conducting regular labour market analysis, skills needs surveys, sector studies and quantitative forecasting; (iii) establishing mechanisms for skills forecasting (North Macedonia 2015), (iv) stimulating coordination between government ministries and agencies at national and sub-national level, as well as closer cooperation between the TVET system, educational institutions and the private sector (e.g. Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011 and the Philippines 2011). This includes the establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism (e.g. Iraq 2011) or incentives for increased private sector participation in the TVET system (Uganda 2011, Iraq 2011), and (v) ensuring that training curriculums are up to date in meeting current and future skills needs both quantitatively and qualitatively.

**Half of NEPs look at qualification frameworks for structuring existing and new qualifications.**

Qualification frameworks and quality assurance systems are an important component of skills systems. One in two NEPs address qualifications certification and recognition systems as platforms for dialogue between education and training practitioners, government, employers and workers to make skills development more responsive to changing needs, link initial, continuing education and lifelong learning, and ensure wide recognition and transferability of qualifications. Specific measures include reforming or establishing systems and mechanisms to:

- ▶ Codify and standardize skills and qualifications (Armenia 2012, Iraq 2011, North Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2006 and Uganda 2011), including for green jobs (Philippines 2011) as well as in line with regional or international standards (Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Senegal 2017 and Sri Lanka 2012).
- ▶ Assess, recognize and certify skills (Cameroon 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Honduras 2017, Liberia 2009), including apprenticeships (Senegal 2017) and skills acquired through informal and on-the-job learning (Albania 2014, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011 and Senegal 2017). Two NEPs envisage setting up independent assessment and certification systems, involving employers or external assessment (Kyrgyzstan 2013 and North Macedonia 2015).

**Forty-three per cent of policy documents seek to engage social partners in good skills governance and delivery.**

Seventeen out of 40 NEPs recognize the important role to be played by social partners in the governance of skills systems to voice employers' and workers' training needs and aspirations, including through the participation in national skills boards and training bodies charged with developing policies and programmes. In Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011, North Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006, Panama 2014, the Philippines 2011, Senegal 2017, and Uganda 2011, NEPs look at the

different forms of involvement possible in view to reduce skills mismatch and better develop skills in line with labour market needs, including adjusting training provision to meet the new demands of a greener economy.<sup>73</sup>

NEPs in Benin 2011, Cameroon 2008, Cambodia 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Panama 2014 and the Philippines 2011 focus on the specific involvement of employers in the governance of skills systems ranging from (i) the use of public-private partnerships to address shortfalls in educational investment (Benin 2011); (ii) promoting private sector participation in soft skills development programmes (Cambodia 2015); (iii) providing fiscal incentives to encourage and enable enterprises to train their workforce as part of business development (Panama 2014); (iv) supporting private sector training facilities (Nepal and the Philippines 2011) and especially for microenterprises (North Macedonia 2015) and (v) to providing incentives for increased private sector participation in the TVET system (Iraq 2011 and Uganda 2011).

**Eighteen per cent of NEPs acknowledge that financing of training remains inadequate and are exploring options for more and better financial support.**

Seven out of 40 NEPs look at the underlying principles and different approaches to identify adequate financing mechanisms for sustainable skills development and TVET systems (Benin 2020, Cameroon 2017, Jordan 2011, North Macedonia 2015, Panama 2014, the Philippines 2011 and Uganda 2011), notably through (i) an industrial levy to fund the TVET system (Cameroon 2017 and Uganda 2011); (ii) encouraging enterprise investment in apprenticeships and TVET (Panama 2014), including through tax concessions (Jordan 2011); (iii) scholarships/bursaries/subsidies for TVET (Panama 2014 and the Philippines 2011); and (iv) a grant scheme for innovative learning measures (North Macedonia 2015).

**Eighteen per cent of NEPs consider the need to develop or strengthen national skills policies and the normative framework to bring the world of education and the world of work closer together.**

Seven policy documents are concerned with developing or reforming policies or laws to shape TVET and skills development. Overall, the rationale is to help address more systematically key longstanding bottlenecks and challenges in skills development, including skills mismatch, poor quality and relevance of training, limited access to training opportunities, as well as weak coordination in the system.

**Monitoring and evaluation systems for skills are addressed in one in five employment policies.**

Eight employment policy documents are concerned with setting up systems to monitor and evaluate skills development policies and ensure evidence-based strategies that shape lifelong learning and skills systems (Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016 and Mozambique 2006).

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<sup>73</sup> Philippines 2011 Labour and Employment Plan 2011-2016.



► Table 13. Skills for social inclusion

	Youth		Women		Informal workers		Rural workers		People with disabilities		Migrants		Vulnerable groups	
2005 - 2012	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Nepal	2005
	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Senegal	2010	Mozambique	2006	Peru	2011	Peru	2011
	Mozambique	2006	Mozambique	2006	Mozambique	2006	Benin	2011	Burkina Faso	2008	Philippines	2011	Philippines	2011
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Burkina Faso	2008	Senegal	2010	Iraq	2011	Liberia	2009	Sri Lanka	2012	Sri Lanka	2012
	Burkina Faso	2008	Liberia	2009	Iraq	2011			Benin	2011				
	Liberia	2009	Benin	2011	Philippines	2011			Peru	2011				
	Senegal	2010	Iraq	2011	Uganda	2011			Philippines	2011				
	Benin	2011	North Macedonia	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012			Côte d'Ivoire	2012				
	Jordan	2011	Peru	2011	Sri Lanka	2012			Sri Lanka	2012				
	North Macedonia	2011	Philippines	2011										
	Philippines	2011	Uganda	2011										
	Uganda	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012										
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Sri Lanka	2012										
	Guatemala	2012												
	Sri Lanka	2012												
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>
2013 -2020	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014	Albania	2014	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Panama	2014	Mali	2014	Mali	2014	Cambodia	2015	Albania	2014
	Costa Rica	2014	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015	Panama	2014	Cambodia	2015	Nepal	2015	Panama	2014
	Panama	2014	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015	Mongolia	2016	Cambodia	2015
	Cambodia	2015	Nepal	2015	Mozambique	2016	Honduras	2017	Mongolia	2016	Mozambique	2016	Nepal	2015
	Morocco	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Rep. of Moldova	2016			Mozambique	2016	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Rep. of Moldova	2016
	Nepal	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Guatemala	2017			Rep. of Moldova	2016	Guatemala	2017		
	North Macedonia	2015	Mozambique	2016	Senegal	2017			Benin	2020				
	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Benin	2020								
	Mongolia	2016	Cameroon	2017										

	Youth		Women		Informal workers		Rural workers		People with disabilities		Migrants		Vulnerable groups	
	Mozambique	2016	Honduras	2017										
	Rep. of Moldova	2016												
	Cameroon	2017												
	Guatemala	2017												
	Honduras	2017												
	Senegal	2017												
	Benin	2020												
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>
	Total NEPs	32	Total NEPs	24	Total NEPs	18	Total NEPs	9	Total NEPs	17	Total NEPs	11	Total NEPs	10

**Ninety per cent of NEPs recognize that targeted initiatives to address the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups are needed, together with efforts to build inclusive training systems which have grown from 85 per cent in 2005-2012 to 95 per cent in 2013-2020. Skills measures for social inclusion in NEPs are primarily targeted at youth (80 per cent), women (60 per cent) and informal workers (45 per cent).**

Improving labour market prospects and quality of work for those disadvantaged in the labour market is a key focus of skills policies in NEPs – 36 NEPs provide specific measures to improve outreach, quality and relevance of education and training, and ease the transition to the world of work for vulnerable groups. Globally, NEP policy interventions to address the heterogeneity of disadvantaged groups, such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, workers in rural areas or the informal economy or migrants, mainly aims at overcoming existing barriers to access and remaining in education and training and responding flexibly to different needs. Only a few measures address questions of status and challenge social perceptions.

**Eighty per cent of NEP include skills development measures targeted at youth**, including NEETs (Benin 2020 and North Macedonia 2015), youth with special needs (Philippines 2011) and conflict-affected/vulnerable youth (Sri Lanka 2012). Examples of initiatives to address challenges faced by youth include (i) encouraging participation in the TVET system and building inclusive TVET systems (Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2017, Liberia 2009, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Panama 2014, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005) – including through scholarships and related incentives (Guatemala 2017), (ii) encouraging NGOs to contribute to youth education (Benin 2011), (iii) supporting entrepreneurship skills acquisition for youth (Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016 and Nepal 2015) (iv) encouraging enrolment in secondary education at all levels, for instance through scholarships (Panama 2014), and (v) changing youth attitudes regarding sector preferences in respect of jobs (Sri Lanka 2012).

Seven NEPs also aim to reduce the drop-out rate from schools or education (Benin 2011, Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2015 and North Macedonia 2015 Moldova). Other measures to help young people acquire skills include providing career and educational guidance (Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011) and interventions to facilitate school-to-work transition directed at specific sectors such as promising value chains (Honduras 2017), farming (Namibia 2013) and the clothing and call centre sector (Guatemala 2012). The Jordan 2011 NEP looks at coordinating with the military service for providing young people with skills.

**Sixty per cent of NEPs look at addressing the specific challenges faced by women in accessing and completing quality education and training.**

As mentioned in Part I of this publication, women are more likely to be in vulnerable employment, such as informal employment and unpaid family work. Skills development offers a means of broadening occupational choices, even if higher proportions of women in training occupations do not automatically translate into higher rates of female employment in those fields. Measures provided in NEPs to encourage women to participate in education and training include (i) facilitating access to education and training for women (Peru 2011), especially in rural areas (Albania 2014, Honduras 2017) and in high productive sectors (Albania 2014); (ii) improving women's literacy (Morocco 2015 and Nepal 2015); (iii) promoting access to secondary education through scholarships (Morocco 2015); (iv) promoting TVET and continuous learning for women (Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, the Philippines 2011 and Zambia 2005); (v) reducing gender bias/stereotypes in training materials and curriculums (Albania 2014 and Nepal 2015); (vi) encouraging women to gain leadership, management and business administration skills (Albania 2014, Cameroon 2017 and Mozambique 2016); and (vii) promoting women's studies in tertiary technical skills (Mali 2014) such as ICT and nursing (Sri Lanka 2012). Broader measures include tools for gender mainstreaming, such as tracker systems and other tools for gender analysis in skills development (Albania 2014 and Uganda 2011).

**Forty-five per cent of documents look at improving access to training and its quality for higher productivity, development of local markets and better working conditions, as well as career prospects and more globally to facilitate the transition to the formal economy.**

Learning and working in the informal economy remain a reality for millions of women and men around the world. Some specific policy interventions include professional training and TVET for informal workers

(Guatemala 2017, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005) and recognition of apprenticeships and work experience in the informal economy (Senegal 2017). The NEPs for Moldova 2016 and Uganda 2011 promote access to new skills development programmes for young people. The 2015 NEP in Morocco aims at setting up mechanisms to ensure that informal economy units can benefit from lifelong training. The 2011 Philippines NEP looks at intensifying implementation of active labour market policies and programmes that enhance the employability of informal workers. Two policies specifically focus on upgrading informal apprenticeships (Sri Lanka 2012), with a focus on facilitating the recognition of learning acquired through informal means in the workplace (Senegal 2017). The Iraq 2011 NEP looks at providing SMEs with appropriate training consistent with modern technologies. Albania's NEP aims at introducing a certification system that includes informal learning over the working life, while the NEP for Benin 2020 envisages reforming the education system, including non-formal education.

#### **Twenty-three per cent of documents target skills development for workers in the rural economy.**

Four NEPs identify TVET for rural workers as the policy objective (Albania 2014, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Senegal 2010), including with a view to developing agro-industry and community-based industries (Zambia 2005). The 2010 Senegal NEP further aims at providing literacy programmes for rural workers. The NEP for Honduras 2017 advocates for skills development for rural women and youth to participate in value chains.

#### **Forty-three per cent of employment policies focus on enabling persons with disabilities and special needs to acquire skills and qualifications required in the labour market and improve their employment prospects.**

A number of NEPs look at (i) how to make skills development systems more inclusive of trainees with disabilities in their programmes and provide accessible infrastructures (Cambodia 2015, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Nepal 2015), (ii) facilitate on-the-job training (Albania 2014) and lifelong learning (Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014), (iii) institutionalize a Government internship programme for people with special needs (Philippines 2011); (iv) promote education and literacy for people with disabilities (Benin 2020), and (v) monitor vocational training facilities available for persons with disabilities and their demand for jobs (Albania 2014, Republic of Moldova 2016).

**Twenty-eight per cent of NEPs include policies to bolster migrant workers' skills** (Cambodia 2015, Guatemala 2017, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, the Philippines 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012). Specific measures include: (i) utilizing returning migrants to conduct training so that they transfer skills learned abroad (Mozambique 2016, Philippines 2011); (ii) engaging local governments to implement skills profiling for migrants (iii) providing training for people aspiring to go abroad for work and ensuring that it matches the demand of the destination countries (Kyrgyzstan 2013, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012); (iii) extending public-private partnerships to deliver training for migrants (Kyrgyzstan 2013); (iv) ensuring that the education and training system is accessible to migrants and returning workers (Kyrgyzstan 2013, Moldova 2007 and Sri Lanka 2012), and (v) skills recognition (Cambodia 2015, Guatemala 2017), including conclusion of skills recognition agreements with recipient countries (Peru 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012).

**Finally, 25 per cent of documents look at other vulnerable groups**, such as orphans (Cambodia 2015), older workers (Moldova 2016, Peru 2011.), ethnic minorities or indigenous people (Albania 2014, Moldova 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Panama 2014), displaced workers (Nepal 2005, the Philippines 2011), conflict-affected groups (Sri Lanka 2012) or populations in disadvantaged regions (Kyrgyzstan 2013)

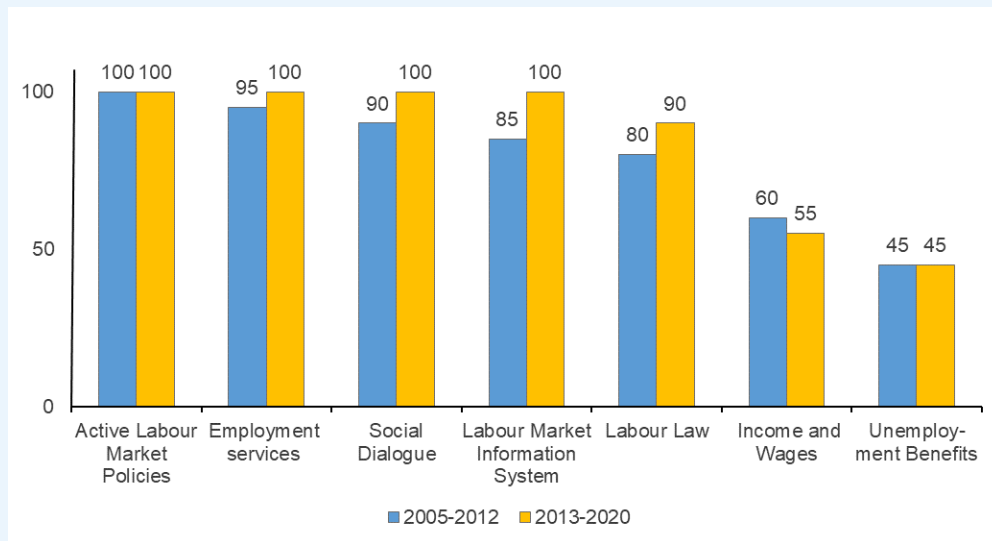
### **4.3. Labour market policies and governance**

Labour market governance refers to the policies, laws, regulations, institutions, and processes that influence the demand and supply of labour and thus a key element of any national employment policies.

Figure 15 shows that all the countries under review include at least two elements of labour market governance interventions. Globally, the review indicates that the most visible policy area is the use of active labour market policies (included in all NEPs), followed by employment services and social dialogue (98 and 95 per cent of NEPs respectively), labour market information systems (93 per cent of NEPs) and labour law (85 per cent of NEPs). Income and wage policies and unemployment benefits are less frequent (58 and 45 per cent of NEPs respectively). Overall, the inclusion of labour market policies and governance increases over time. The more

recent the policy document, the more likely it is to have provisions on employment services, social dialogue, labour law and labour market information system. Indeed, the number of NEPs including employment services and social dialogue increases by five and ten per cent respectively, while the number of NEPs addressing labour law and labour market information system increases by 13 and 18 percent over time. A contrary trend is observed with regard to wage and income policies whose presence in NEPs is declining (8 per cent), while unemployment benefits remain stable but at a relatively low level (45 per cent of NEPs).

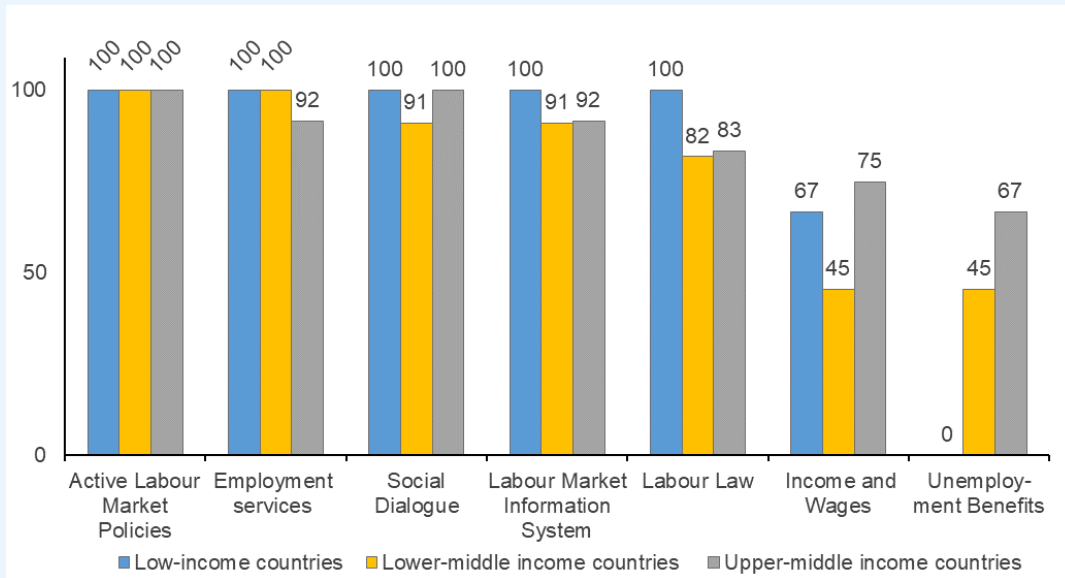
► **Figure 12. Labour market policies and governance: variation by period (% NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Variations between income groupings can be observed: LICs show the largest prevalence of labour market policies and governance in all areas apart from income and unemployment benefits, while UMICs are the highest on average overall (see figure 13).** In LICs, it is observed that provisions for active labour market policies (ALMPs), employment services, social dialogue, labour market information systems (LMIS) along with labour law are found in all NEPs. In contrast, incomes and wages measures are found in 67 per cent of LICs NEPs, while none of the NEPs include unemployment benefits. All LMICs and UMICs cover ALMPs, while their coverage of employment services, social dialogue and labour market information hovers between 90 and 100 per cent. Labour law is slightly less represented in LMICs and UMICs, in both cases in around 80 per cent of documents. Coverage of incomes and wages as well as unemployment benefits drops significantly, particularly in LMICs, while UMICs keep the highest ratio out of the three income groups represented (around 70 per cent).

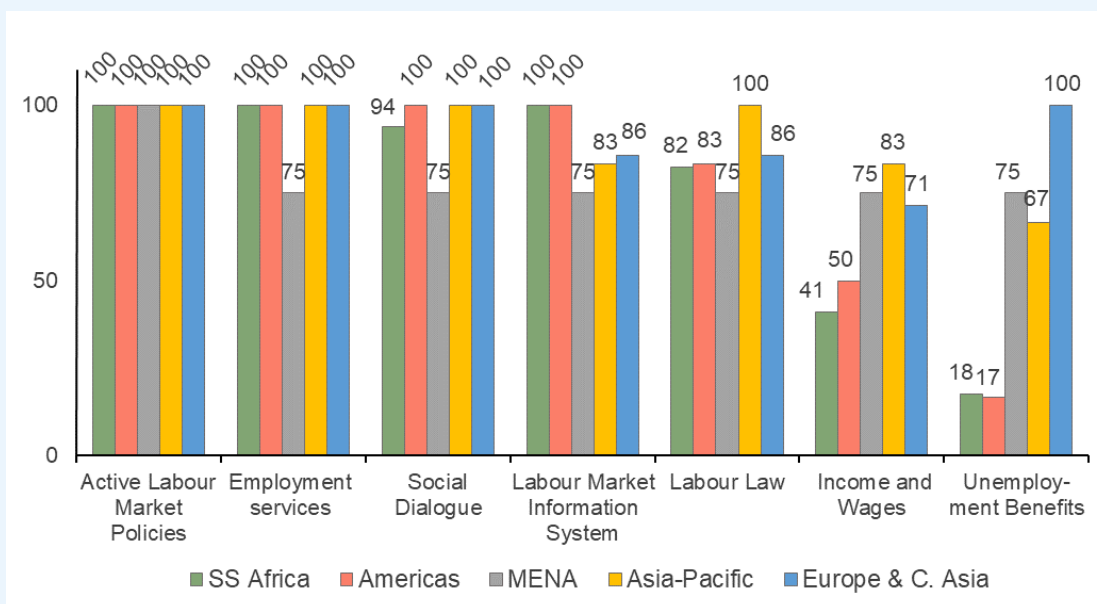
► **Figure 13. Labour market policies and governance: variation by income level (% NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Regional differences can also be observed. Labour market policies and governance are more present in documents from Europe and Central Asia, including Asia and the Pacific, while the lowest prevalence is found in American, Middle East and North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa NEPs.** The sub-areas of employment services, active labour market policies and social dialogue dominate across all regions and are covered by all the documents, with the exception of employment services and social dialogue in the Middle East and North Africa (75 per cent) and social dialogue in sub-Saharan Africa (94 per cent). Labour market information systems are also well represented in the documents from sub-Saharan Africa and American NEPs (100 per cent), in contrast to those from the Middle East and North Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia which drop to 75, 83 and 86 per cent respectively. Around 4 out of 5 NEPs include measures relating to labour law in all regions, ranging from 75 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa to 86 per cent in Europe and Central Asia, the sole exception being Asia and the Pacific NEPs where coverage reaches 100 per cent. Incomes and wages coverage is lower and uneven, reaching its lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (41 per cent) and its highest in Asia and the Pacific (86 per cent). Regarding unemployment benefits, Europe and Central Asia champion the inclusion of such measures (100 per cent), while around three out of four NEPs in Asia and the Pacific and Middle East and North Africa cover such policies, but only around one in five NEPs from sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas.

► **Figure 14. Labour market policies and governance by region (% NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**There is a relatively high frequency of labour market governance policies in NEP documents, and this increases over time.** Table 14 presents the average number of sub-policy areas by income level, region and period. Figure 15 shows policies according to the number of sub-policy areas covered from one to seven (i.e. (i) ALMPs, (ii) employment services, (iii) social dialogue, (iv) LMIS, (v) labour law, (vi) incomes and wages and (vii) unemployment benefits). On average, NEPs cover 5.7 labour market governance policies.

For the period 2005-2012, the average number of sub-policy areas covered by each document is 5.6, with 80 per cent of documents addressing at least five policy areas. Active labour market policies are included in all NEPs during this period, while employment services, social dialogue and labour market information systems are found in 90, 90 and 85 per cent of NEPs, respectively. Income policies and unemployment benefits are by large the less common sub-areas covered (in 60 and 45 per cent respectively). LICs include 5.5 out of 7 sub-policy areas on average, LMICs cover 5.2 and UMICs address 6.2 out of 7 sub-policy areas. In terms of regions, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa countries show the lowest coverage of sub-policy areas (5.1 and 5 per NEP on average respectively) while Europe and Central Asia (6) Asia and the Pacific (6.3) and the Americas (6.5) are all above 6 sub-policy measures on average per document.

In the most recent period (2013-2020), all documents again address ALMPs, while employment services, social dialogue and LMIS also achieve 100 per cent coverage, and policies relating to labour law are found in 90 per cent of NEPs. The share of NEPs including income policies and unemployment benefits remains fairly stable at significantly lower stance (55 and 45 per cent respectively).<sup>74</sup> The average number of sub-policy areas covered in each document increases to 5.9 with all documents but one addressing five policy areas or more. When looking at the averages by income level, the presence of labour market governance policies increases over time for both LICs and LMICs (+ 0.5 and +0.63 sub-policy areas per document on average respectively), while a contrary trend is observed for UMICs. By region, NEPs in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa contain a more diversified set of policy components over time. Remarkably, NEPs from the Middle East and North Africa cover all sub-policy components in the 2013-2020 period. On the other hand, the Americas are moving towards a less complex set of sub-policy areas (-1.5 sub policy per NEP on average), while this remains stable in Asia and the Pacific (table 14).

<sup>74</sup> Panama 2014.

As mentioned above, the review organizes policy documents around policy areas. These are then subdivided into sub-policy areas, and sub-sub policy areas. The analysis of sub-sub policy areas shows a more nuanced picture with a slight decrease from 249 measures for the first period to 240 over 2013-2020. This reflects a decrease in ALMP, labour law and wage sub-measures, while policies relating to LMIS, social dialogue and employment services increased. Unemployment benefits remain stable over time (figure 15).

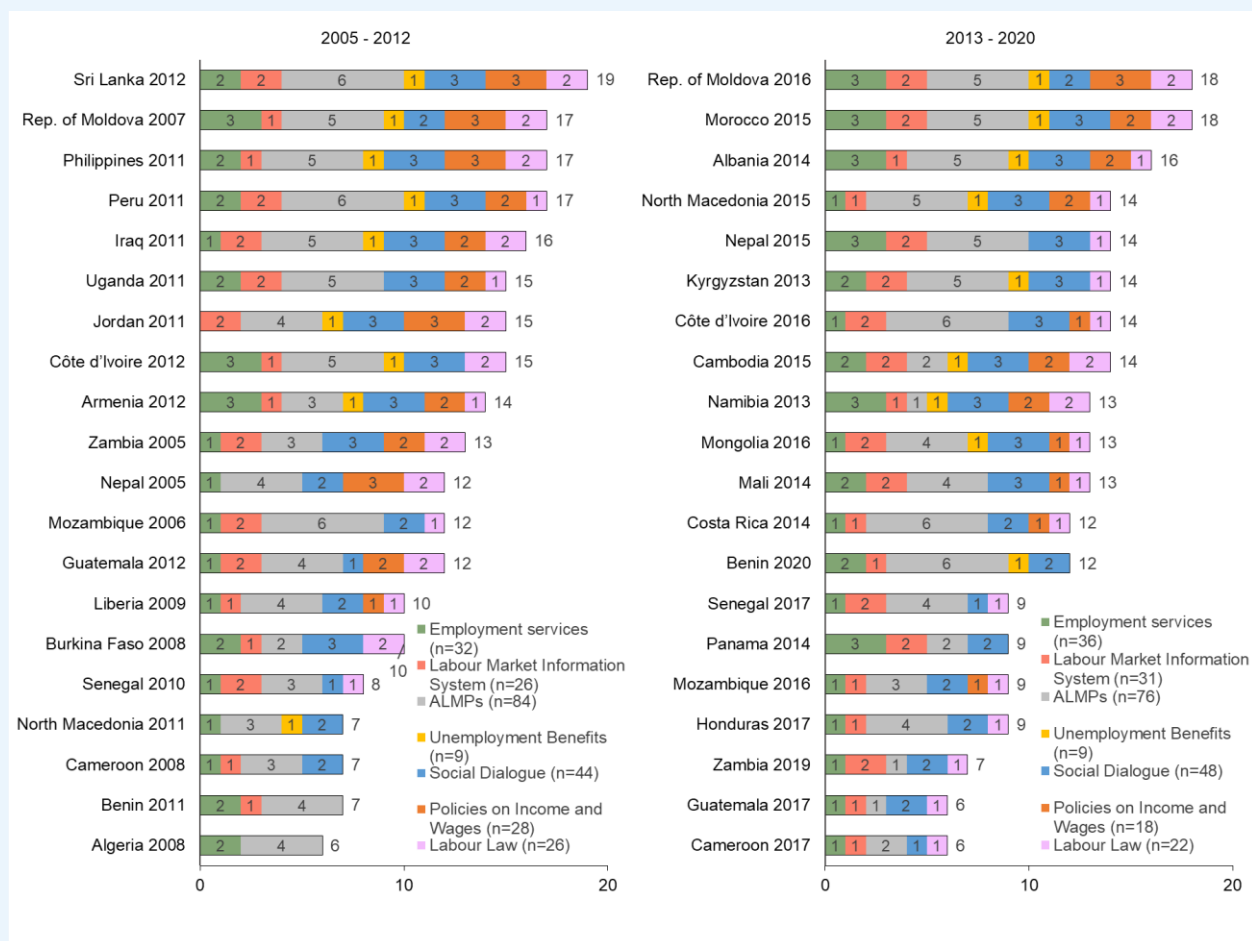
► **Table 14. Average number of labour market governance sub-policy areas (by period, region, and income)**

	2005-2012	2013-2020	Change
Total	5.55	5.90	0.35 ↑
Low-income countries (LIC)	5.50	6.00	0.50 ↑
Lower-middle-income countries (LMIC)	5.20	5.83	0.63 ↑
Upper-middle-income countries (UMIC)	6.17	6.00	-0.17 ↓
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.11	5.63	0.51 ↑
Americas	6.50	5.00	-1.50 ↓
Middle East and North Africa	5.00	7.00	2.00 ↑
Asia-Pacific	6.33	6.33	0.00 →
Europe and Central Asia	6.00	6.75	0.75 ↑

Source: See table 1a.



► **Figure 15. Number of labour market governance measures for each such policy (by country and period)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Active labour market policies (ALMPs) that (re-)connect people to decent employment are another key element of employment policies. They are found in all NEPs. Within ALMPs, the most visible sub-sub-policy area is the use of special measures for specific groups (90 per cent of documents), followed by entrepreneurship programmes (78 per cent)**

Active labour market policies include measures to keep workers employed, bring them into employment, increase their productivity and incomes and improve the functioning of the labour market through effective training, specific measures and programmes to support people with major employment obstacles, including subsidies, job search assistance as well as programmes to support entrepreneurial activities.

**Job orientation measures and career guidance have become more important than ever in the context of an increasingly complex labour market marked by digital transformation, climate change, demographic shifts and external shocks. Indeed, 73 per cent of countries are considering investing in more career counselling and guidance to help individuals upskill, retrain, find and change jobs.**

Seventy-three per cent of NEPs address career and skills development counselling in schools, universities, TVET systems and employment services to better orient students and workers. Various NEPs include general statements on ensuring the provision of counselling and job-search assistance (Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Costa Rica 2014, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, Guatemala 2012, Panama 2014). The majority of other NEPs look at improving the quality of services (Iraq 2011), better monitoring and evaluation of job orientation programmes (Moldova 2007) and/or expanding the range of

services on vocational guidance and counselling (Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007) to specific groups, such as migrants (Albania 2014, Moldova 2016), low qualified youth and inactive women (Morocco 2015), entrepreneurs (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012), the unemployed (Jordan 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Macedonia 2015), vulnerable groups (Liberia 2009), women (Albania 2014, Liberia 2009, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011), youth (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, the Philippines 2011), NEET (Morocco 2015), as well as reductions (Mozambique 2006, Zambia 2005), people living with HIV/AIDS and living abroad (Zambia 2005), people with disabilities (Peru 2011) and those who drop out of school early (Nepal 2015).

Some policy documents look at the institutional requirements for developing and providing adequate and efficient career guidance systems. Sri Lanka 2012 mentions the creation of a national council as a public-private partnership mechanism to direct and guide all career guidance activities. It also considers establishing a network of one-stop careers centres throughout the country to provide information on training, careers guidance and counselling, career planning and other employment-related services. Jordan 2011 looks at developing the capacity of the Ministry of Labour's local offices to carry out career guidance and counselling, while a few NEPs envisage training counsellors (Sri Lanka 2012) including provision of gender-sensitive counselling (Albania 2014). Finally, Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Senegal 2017, look at conducting national and employment forums or clubs to bring together jobseekers and employers.

Some NEPs also aim at introducing and investing in an orientation system, accessible (and mandatory) in schools (Sri Lanka 2012), including from secondary general education (Iraq 2011, Nepal 2015) and in all stages of professional life (Armenia 2012, Mongolia 2016, Uganda 2011).

**Ninety per cent of national employment policies include measures and programmes to support people with specific employment obstacles - particularly youth, women, and persons with disabilities which are covered by 70, 58 and 53 per cent of NEPs, respectively.**

Ninety per cent of policy documents commit to the diversification of services and expansion of customized and targeted interventions for the following groups:

- Seventy per cent of NEPs<sup>75</sup> include targeted interventions for youth, including NEET (Benin 2020, Costa Rica 2014), those who dropped out of school (Benin 2020, Côte d'Ivoire 2016) and rural youth (Nepal 2015). Interventions for youth include, among others : (i) supporting employment for youth in agricultural value chains (Nepal 2015, Senegal 2017), the green and digital economy (Benin 2020) and productive value chains (Peru 2011), (ii) support to self-employment and entrepreneurship (Algeria 2008, Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Macedonia 2011, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Zambia 2005); (iii) improving youth access to finance (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012), (iv) promoting youth participation in voluntary or social work (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2011, Nepal 2015, Uganda 2011); (v) public works and temporary employment programmes for addressing the barriers faced by youth in acquiring meaningful skills and accessing decent work (Algeria 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Nepal 2015) (vi) increasing youth access to land and other factors of production (Zambia 2005) as well as producers' networks (Peru 2011); (vii) measures to improve youth employability (Benin 2020, Costa Rica 2014) and to facilitate the school-to-work transition (Macedonia 2011), such as internships (Mozambique 2016, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Uganda 2011), on-the-job training (Iraq 2011) and apprenticeships (Guatemala 2012, Zambia 2005) as well as other types of programme that promote the first job for young people who lack experience, such as soft skills acquisition (Mozambique 2006) or short-term skills training for NEETs and dropouts.
- In addition, a few policy documents look at more structural and long-term interventions, such as better coordination of services and programmes targeted at youth (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012) or developing an action plan for youth (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Nepal 2015). Peru 2011 envisages promoting the responsibility and active participation of regional and local governments in addressing youth

<sup>75</sup> Albania 2014, Algeria 2008, Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Cameroon 2008, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005 and 2019, Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Uganda 2011, Honduras 2017, Benin 2020, Costa Rica 2014

employment and designing adequate solutions. Jordan 2011 looks at scaling up successful programmes conducted by private sector and NGO providers, while Zambia 2019 consider mainstreaming youth in all employment and labour programmes.

- ▶ Fifty-eight per cent of NEPs<sup>76</sup> look at conducting programmes to support women's employment, in particular through self-employment or income-generating activities (Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Honduras 2017, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), including in job-rich value chains (Benin 2020), in priority sectors such as commerce, rural development, handicrafts and industry (Mali 2014) or agriculture (Senegal 2017). Mozambique 2006 seeks to develop employment programmes for women in the informal economy in rural and urban areas, while Senegal 2010 mentions that all local communities should have a specific employment programme for women. The NEP for Albania 2014 envisages a focused outreach to women and girls in rural and urban areas, while Morocco 2015 considers specific interventions to facilitate women's insertion in the labour market, including through community-based jobs. Macedonia 2015 plans to develop a package of measures combining counselling, training and subsidized employment for women victims of family violence, while Sri Lanka 2012 looks at integrated measures, including subsidized micro-credit and access to social service packages.
- ▶ Fifty-three per cent of employment policies target people with disabilities and special needs.<sup>77</sup> Nepal 2015 looks at developing employment-oriented training for people with disabilities, while Mali 2014 aims to support income-generating activities and establishment of a dedicated guarantee fund. Iraq 2011 seeks to develop a national community-based rehabilitation programme for persons with disabilities to provide them with vocational training, granting loans to establish income-generating businesses. It also plans to develop a special programme within employment centres for registering persons with disabilities looking for job. Sri Lanka 2012 envisages a series of measures combining tax concessions, financial assistance to improve physical facilities for disabled persons, and other incentives to motivate employers to recruit persons with disabilities.
- ▶ Targeted interventions are also considered to a lesser extent for other groups that face specific constraints on entering or remaining in the labour market, including (i) vulnerable groups and those most disadvantaged in the labour market (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Cameroon 2008, Guatemala 2012, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015); (ii) conflict and crisis-afflicted workers (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Peru 2011, Philippines); (iii) people living in rural areas, disadvantaged and remote regions (Albania 2014, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006, Peru 2011, Mongolia 2016, Nepal 2015); (iv) (long-term) unemployed (Cameroon 2008, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Moldova 2007); (v) informal workers (Macedonia 2011, Philippines 2011); (vi) redundant workers (Mozambique 2006, Zambia 2005); (vii) people living with HIV/AIDS (Mozambique 2016, Peru 2011), (viii) minority groups (Albania 2014, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011), (ix) older workers (Peru 2011) including pre-pension aged workers (Moldova 2007), (x) people with low educational and training levels (Albania 2014, Macedonia 2011, Morocco 2015), and (xi) migrants (Cameroon 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017). Zambia's 2019 NEP looks at mainstreaming issues of climate change, disability, HIV and AIDs, youth and gender into all employment and labour programmes.
- ▶ Finally, a few NEPs aim at enhancing the territorialization of employment programmes, through an equal distribution in all regions and taking into account their specificities. For example, Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Benin 2020, Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Morocco 2015, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Peru 2011 and Senegal 2017 stand for promoting the participation of local governments in addressing employment deficits.

<sup>76</sup> Albania 2014, Cameroon 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2017, Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

► Table 15. Active labour market policies

	Job orientation measures		Special employment measures and programmes		Incentives and subsidies to hire		Skills upgrading and re-skilling to improve Employability		Entrepreneurship development programmes		Public employment schemes	
2005 - 2012	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Mozambique	2006	Mozambique	2006	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005
	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Algeria	2008	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Zambia	2005	Mozambique	2006
	Mozambique	2006	Mozambique	2006	Benin	2011	Algeria	2008	Mozambique	2006	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Jordan	2011	Cameroon	2008	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Burkina Faso	2008
	Liberia	2009	Algeria	2008	Peru	2011	Liberia	2009	Algeria	2008	Liberia	2009
	Iraq	2011	Burkina Faso	2008	Uganda	2011	Iraq	2011	Cameroon	2008	Senegal	2010
	Jordan	2011	Cameroon	2008	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Jordan	2011	Liberia	2009	Benin	2011
	North Macedonia	2011	Senegal	2010	Sri Lanka	2012	North Macedonia	2011	Senegal	2010	Iraq	2011
	Peru	2011	Benin	2011			Peru	2011	Benin	2011	Peru	2011
	Philippines	2011	Iraq	2011			Philippines	2011	Iraq	2011	Philippines	2011
	Uganda	2011	Jordan	2011			Uganda	2011	Peru	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
	Armenia	2012	North Macedonia	2011			Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Philippines	2011	Guatemala	2012
	Guatemala	2012	Peru	2011			Guatemala	2012	Uganda	2011	Sri Lanka	2012
	Sri Lanka	2012	Philippines	2011			Sri Lanka	2012	Armenia	2012		
		Uganda	2011					Côte d'Ivoire	2012			
		Armenia	2012					Sri Lanka	2012			
		Côte d'Ivoire	2012									
		Guatemala	2012									
		Sri Lanka	2012									
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>
2013 -2020	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Albania	2014	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Albania	2014	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014
	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Mali	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Mali	2014
	Costa Rica	2014	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015	Cambodia	2015	Panama	2014	Nepal	2015
	Panama	2014	Morocco	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Morocco	2015	Mali	2014	North Macedonia	2015

	Job orientation measures		Special employment measures and programmes		Incentives and subsidies to hire		Skills upgrading and re-skilling to improve Employability		Entrepreneurship development programmes		Public employment schemes	
	Cambodia	2015	Nepal	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Nepal	2015	Morocco	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	Morocco	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Rep. of Moldova	2016	North Macedonia	2015	Nepal	2015	Honduras	2017
	Nepal	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Honduras	2017	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Senegal	2017
	North Macedonia	2015	Mongolia	2016	Benin	2020	Mongolia	2016	Mongolia	2016	Benin	2020
	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Mozambique	2016			Rep. of Moldova	2016	Mozambique	2016		
	Mongolia	2016	Rep. of Moldova	2016			Benin	2020	Rep. of Moldova	2016		
	Mozambique	2016	Cameroon	2017					Cameroon	2017		
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Guatemala	2017					Honduras	2017		
	Senegal	2017	Honduras	2017					Senegal	2017		
	Benin	2020	Senegal	2017					Benin	2020		
			Zambia	2019								
			Benin	2020								
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>
	Total NEPs	29	Total NEPs	36	Total NEPs	17	Total NEPs	25	Total NEPs	31	Total NEPs	22

**Forty-three per cent of NEPs look at incentives as an attractive instrument for supporting employment while improving the employability of specific groups with poor labour outcomes.**

Employment incentives provided in NEPs are typically targeted, temporary and conditional payments or reductions of tax or social security contributions that make labour cheaper for employers, and in turn increase labour demand for certain groups.

A few NEPs look at incentives to encourage institutions to employ people with disabilities (Mozambique 2006), including through wage subsidies (Albania 2014) and tax concessions (Sri Lanka 2012 and Uganda 2011) to positively influence employers' attitudes towards people with disabilities, by bringing the two groups in contact with each other. Moldova 2016 envisages implementing a mandatory quota for hiring people with disabilities.

Other NEPs target unemployed youth who have limited chances for employment or are unlikely to find a job on their own, through wage subsidies including in the form of cuts to employers' social security contributions or tax exemption (Benin 2011 and 2020, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015). Some policies look at targeting young graduates (Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Mali 2014), low-skilled workers (Côte d'Ivoire 2016), laid-off workers (Mali 2014), companies in labour-intensive sectors (Peru 2011), as well as designing different subsidized employment contracts depending on the level of education (Algeria 2008).

Macedonia 2015 focuses on promoting the integration of women into the labour market through integrated employment measures, including counselling, training and subsidized employment, while Costa Rica 2014 and Moldova 2016 envisage incentives for employment of vulnerable groups.

**Sixty-three per cent of NEPs include some type of short-term interventions to provide workers with opportunities to acquire or strengthen their skills portfolios to improve their employment prospects.**

Training or requalification and skills development interventions to facilitate labour market integration, reintegration and transitions (Benin 2020, Cameroon 2008, Guatemala 2012, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Philippines 2011) often target specific groups such as women and working mothers (Liberia 2009, Morocco 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), youth (Algeria 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011), workers affected by crisis (Philippines 2011), migrants (Nepal 2015, Kyrgyzstan 2012, Iraq 2011, Philippines 2011), people living in remote areas (Kyrgyzstan 2013), minority groups (Moldova 2016), poor people (Nepal 2015), persons with disabilities (Albania 2014, Moldova 2016, Mozambique 2006, Peru 2011), older workers (Peru 2011), including pre-pension workers (Moldova 2007), vulnerable groups (Peru 2011) and the long-term unemployed (Macedonia 2011).

Various NEPs look at interventions that contribute to a better matching of skills, particularly after the first entry into the labour market, including re- or up-skilling for laid-off workers (Mozambique 2006) and older workers (Moldova 2016, Peru 2011). A few consider interventions such as (certified) short training programmes (workplace-based or combined with school-based training) as an effective way of facilitating the transition from education to work. This is the case of Algeria 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Peru 2011. In some cases, interventions also take the form of special support for an apprenticeship, such as programmes providing incentives to employers to recruit apprentices from labour market policy groups or training allowances for particular disadvantaged groups, such as low-skilled workers in the case of Morocco 2015 and first-time jobseekers in Guatemala 2012.

In some cases, training programmes are accompanied by other active measures, such as public works (Costa Rica 2014) and may include some type of income support. Indeed, a few NEPs seek to combine employment incentives with an effective training component or coaching for those seeking their first job to ensure that the subsidized period increases their productivity and employability (Albania 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2015). Finally, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Jordan 2011 and Macedonia 2015 look at combining training and job search assistance.

Because of the magnitude of informal employment, work quality can be an important dimension in active labour market policies in developing and emerging countries. Considering job quality, training, including in the form of night school or distance learning, is considered an important type of intervention to facilitate the transition towards the formal sector (Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011) or increase the productivity of existing jobs (Cambodia 2015, Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011).

**Among labour market policies, programmes that promote entrepreneurship by encouraging the unemployed and target groups to start their own business or to become self-employed are considered as a main lever for job promotion. This is, indeed, addressed by 78 per cent of NEPs.**

Almost all countries are turning to interventions that aim to increase an individual's incentives and capacities to start an economic activity, either as self-employed or through the development of new business opportunities (Panama 2014, Senegal 2010, Zambia 2005). These policies are often targeted at and tailor-made for specific groups, such as youth (Algeria 2008, Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Cote d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Liberia 2009, Peru 2011), women (Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011), and including young widows (Sri Lanka 2012), people with disabilities (Armenia 2012, Moldova 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015), migrants (Philippines 2011), seniors (Moldova 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Senegal 2017), populations at local or rural level (Albania 2014, Benin 2011, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012), child workers and their family (Philippines 2011), migrants (Moldova 2007), and minority groups (Nepal 2005 and 2015). Moldova 2016 plans to deliver entrepreneurial training for migrant workers at all stages of migration.

These policies are most often delivered in the form of training (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Uganda 2011) including leadership and management skills programmes (Albania 2012, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007) and mentoring (Morocco 2015); business services and support (Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015, Uganda 2011), financial facilities or access to microcredits (Burkina 2008, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Moldova 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Uganda 2011) or combined with health and education programmes (Philippines 2011). In the case of Armenia 2012, business support is combined with free counselling and professional training courses, while Iraq 2011 and Mali 2014 envisage the creation of a national fund to provide various forms of training, financing, and services.

Finally, various NEPs look at better linking entrepreneurship interventions to promising sectors and niches (Honduras 2017, Mozambique 2006) including the digital economy (Benin 2020), the green economy (Benin 2020 and Sri Lanka 2012), handicrafts (Cameroon 2008) or community-based activities which have the potential to create jobs while contributing to local development (Philippines 2011).

**Fifty-five per cent of policy documents include direct employment creation schemes as a complement to private sector employment creation.**

Public employment programmes seek to compensate for shortcomings in employment creation in the private sector by providing employment opportunities in public works projects. They include a spectrum of options, varying from public works programmes, such as short-term emergency programmes (Philippines 2011) to employment guarantee programmes (Costa Rica 2014, Nepal 2015). Public employment programmes may be a temporary response to provide social and income protection during economic downturns, such as in Guatemala 2012, Peru 2011, but they can also have a longer-term horizon. This is the case, for example, of Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and Nepal 2005, and Senegal 2010 and 2017. Burkina 2005 and Liberia 2009 envisage extending public work programmes on a larger scale, while Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Mali 2014 and others seek to build capacities of local authorities to ensure implementation of such programmes in the long run. Sometimes, they form part of public-private collaborations (Costa Rica 2014, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006) or part of a wider local development strategy (Mali 2014, Sri Lanka 2012)

As well as creating temporary employment, direct employment creation schemes are in most cases also considered as a means of forging work experience and developing skills to improve employability. For example, Costa Rica 2014 considers certifying the skills acquired by the beneficiaries through these programmes, while Liberia 2009 and Mali 2015 look at combining public employment programmes with rapid skills training.

PEPs in NEPs are in general closely related to poverty alleviation and target the most vulnerable groups, such as beneficiaries of social assistance (North Macedonia 2015), disadvantaged and vulnerable workers (Philippines 2011), unemployed people in a situation of poverty (Benin 2020, Costa Rica 2014), school dropouts and single mothers (Côte d'Ivoire 2012) as well as women generally (Côte d'Ivoire 2016).

**As a key resource for jobseekers, for workers wanting a career change and for enterprises looking for workers, measures relating to employment services are envisaged in 98 per cent of NEPs.**

Employment services are core labour market institutions. They play a key role in providing accurate labour market information, arranging for jobseekers to obtain jobs and employers to fill in vacancies. Increasingly, they also administer unemployment benefits and provide for the delivery of labour market programmes. As such, they play a central role in the effective and efficient functioning of the labour market by improving fluidity and transparency in accessing employment-search support and employability resources. PES can also promote equity in access to the labour market and help disadvantaged workers find employment. They are provided both by governments through their ministries of labour and/or by private employment agencies.

**Ninety-eight per cent of policy documents envisage strengthening and reforming their public employment services (PES) to better plan and execute their core functions. This has remained fairly stable over time.**

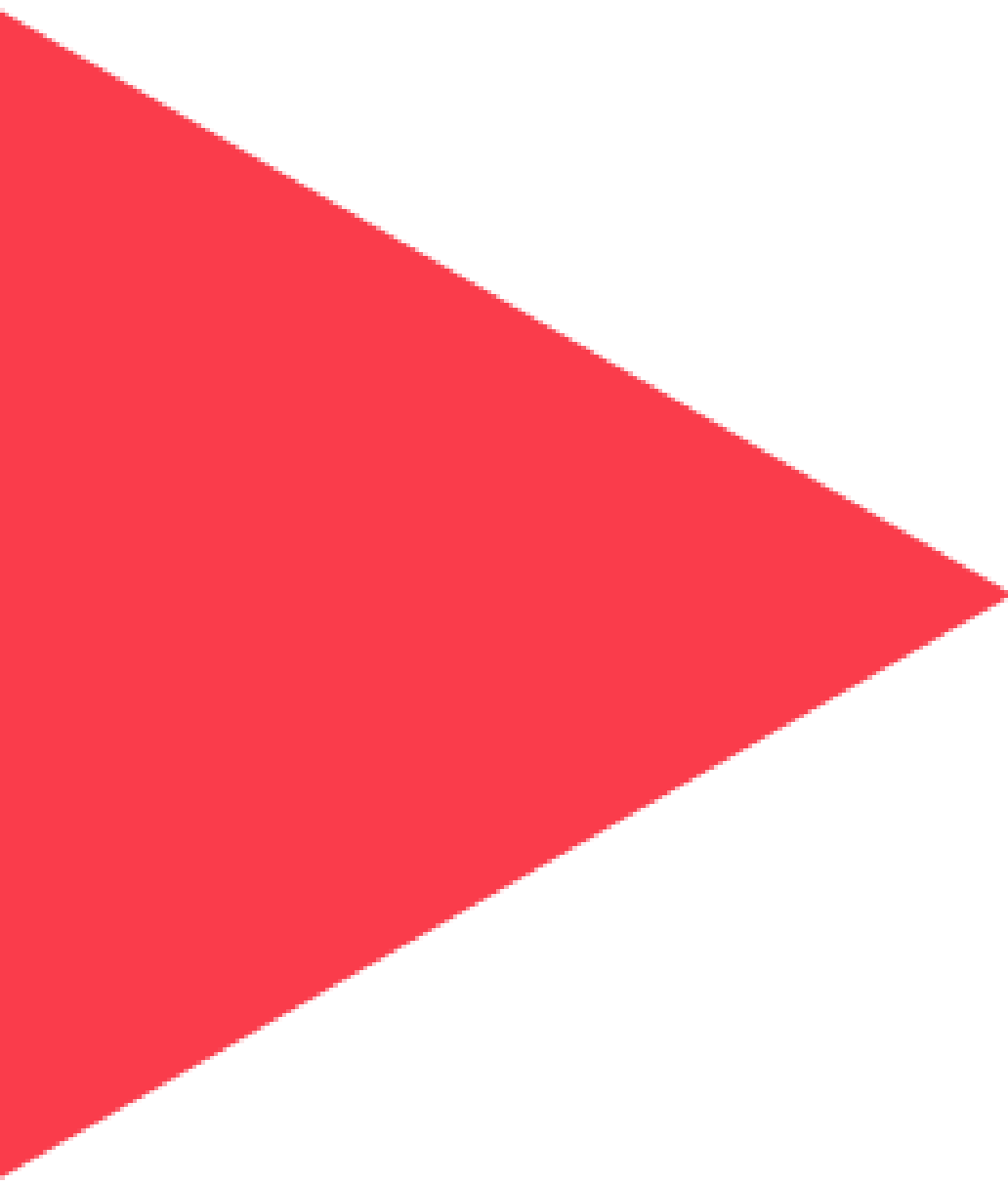
Some NEPs include broad statements on modernizing, strengthening or reforming their public employment service (Algeria 2008, Guatemala 2017, Moldova 2016, Zambia 2005 and 2019), while other policy documents provide more detailed and focussed measures, such as:

- ▶ Creating a public employment service (Guatemala 2012, Liberia 2009, Sri Lanka 2012) or establishing additional job centres (Cambodia 2015), including for youth (Nepal 2015).
- ▶ Improving the quantity, quality and efficiency of services provided to the population, as well as expanding the scope and range of programmes and services (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2011, Panama 2014) including to ensure that the PES better responds and adapts to changes in the labour market (Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016). Some NEPs provide specific measures in that regard including (i) increasing financial, material and/or human resources allocated to PES (Albania 2014, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Mozambique 2006, Namibia 2013, North Macedonia 2015, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Uganda 2011); (ii) revising the PES organizational and territorial structure (Moldova 2016, Senegal 2010 and 2017), including conducting a comprehensive institutional audit (Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016) and implementing its main recommendations (Mali 2014); (iii) digitalizing and modernizing IT infrastructure and systems (Albania 2014, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2016, Peru 2011), (iv) setting-up a one-stop shop gathering multiple services related to guidance, counselling and labour market integration under one roof (Benin 2020, Sri Lanka 2012), and (vi) developing a strategic plan in line with the national employment policy (Côte d'Ivoire 2016). Other NEPs look at improving the quality and efficiency of the work of the employment agencies in the specific field of employment and migration (Albania 2014, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Uganda 2011), including promoting partnerships with public employment services in foreign countries (Peru 2011).
- ▶ Deconcentrating public employment services and/or strengthening capacities to provide services at local level where people generally have less access to such support (Benin 2020, Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010, Uganda 2011), including in rural areas (Albania 2014). Peru 2011 looks at better articulating the different levels of the PES - national and local.
- ▶ Expanding coverage and reaching out to disadvantaged groups with new instruments and initiatives to strengthen their employability and help them to find a job, such as persons with disabilities (Iraq 2011, Moldova 2016), persons with weak attachment to the labour market, particularly unemployed (Kyrgyzstan 2013), rural non-agricultural workers (Armenia 2012), inactive and discouraged workers and the underemployed (Morocco 2015).
- ▶ Increasing efforts to advertise PES support and communicate to the private sector and jobseekers so they have a better knowledge of all services provided (Albania 2014, Benin 2011, Cambodia 2015, Iraq 2011, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015).
- ▶ Strengthening the labour intermediation capacities of PES (Algeria 2008, Benin 2020, Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Macedonia 2015, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011), including better collection and dissemination of information on labour supply and demand



(Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012) through (i) the establishment of an online portal (Armenia 2012, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011,) (ii) conducting national and employment forums or clubs to bring together jobseekers and employers (Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Senegal 2017), (iii) streamlining registration processes (Mongolia 2016), profiling and counselling of jobseekers (Albania 2014), and (iv) better involving of social partners (Albania 2014).

- ▶ Strengthening the articulation of public employment services with priority sectors (Panama 2014), including the social economy (Costa Rica 2014) and green jobs (Macedonia 2015).
- ▶ Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of employment interventions (Armenia 2012, Benin 2020, Cameroon 2017, Moldova 2016, Peru 2011), including implementation of impact evaluation of employment measures (Albania 2014, Moldova 2016) and the development of assessment procedures of client satisfaction with employment services (Costa Rica 2014 and Moldova 2016).



► **Table 16. Employment services**

	Reform of public employment services		Regulation of private employment agencies		Public employment services & private employment agencies	
<b>2005 - 2012</b>	Nepal	2005	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Zambia	2005	Algeria	2008	Benin	2011
	Mozambique	2006	Burkina Faso	2008	Peru	2011
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Uganda	2011	Philippines	2011
	Algeria	2008	Armenia	2012	Armenia	2012
	Burkina Faso	2008	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
	Cameroon	2008	Sri Lanka	2012		
	Liberia	2009				
	Senegal	2010				
	Benin	2011				
	Iraq	2011				
	North Macedonia	2011				
	Peru	2011				
	Philippines	2011				
	Uganda	2011				
	Armenia	2012				
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012				
	Guatemala	2012				
	Sri Lanka	2012				
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2013 - 2020</b>	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Namibia	2013
	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014
	Albania	2014	Albania	2014	Panama	2014
	Costa Rica	2014	Panama	2014	Mali	2014
	Panama	2014	Cambodia	2015	Morocco	2015
	Cambodia	2015	Morocco	2015	Nepal	2015
	Mali	2014	Nepal	2015	Rep. of Moldova	2016
	Morocco	2015	Rep. of Moldova	2016		
	Nepal	2015	Benin	2020		
	North Macedonia	2016				
	Cameroon	2017				
	Guatemala	2017				
	Honduras	2017				
		<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>
	<b>Total NEPs</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Total NEPs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Total NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>

Source: See table 1a.

**A strengthened and functional public employment service, combined with networks involving private and non-governmental providers can support the achievement of decent work for workers. In this**

**context, 40 per cent of NEPs include provisions on regulating private employment agencies and 33 per cent of NEPs look at promoting cooperation between public and private employment agencies.**

Some NEPs include general provisions on developing legal frameworks to regulate private employment agencies and as a means of balancing the interests of private agencies with the need to protect rights of workers (Algeria 2008, Benin 2020, Burkina Faso 2008, Cambodia 2015, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Moldova 2016 and Namibia 2013). Some more detailed measures include:

- ▶ Ensuring alignment with ILO Convention 181 on private employment agencies (Albania 2014, Panama 2014).
- ▶ Providing legal assistance to private employment agencies (Moldova 2007).
- ▶ Promoting measures for ensuring quality and service delivery of private employment agencies (Albania 2014, Burkina Faso 2008, Nepal 2015).
- ▶ Promoting better monitoring and reporting of private employment agencies' activities (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Morocco 2015, Uganda 2011), including those working as intermediaries for migrants (Albania 2014, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011).
- ▶ Building capacities of private providers of labour matching services (Armenia 2012).
- ▶ Developing legislation and guidelines to help shaping the role of private agencies within the context of migration (Albania 2014, Sri Lanka 2012 and Uganda 2011).

Thirteen policy documents look at promoting partnerships as well as complementary collaboration between private and public employment services (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Benin 2011, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Namibia 2013) including with foreign employment services (Peru 2011) and at local level (Philippines 2011). Armenia 2012 specifically mentions that this should be done through appropriate legal provisions, while Côte d'Ivoire 2012 Mali 2014 and Mali 2014 envisage establishing a dedicated platform. In some cases, enhanced partnerships between public and private providers are viewed as a means of supporting clients holistically and extend the scope of coverage, including the most vulnerable (Morocco 2015, Panama 2014) and migrant workers (Peru 2011). Nepal 2015 states that arrangements should be made for monitoring and inspection of all the institutions that provide employment services to ensure that they are registered with the designated government agencies, as well as the adequacy of the services that they provide in terms of quality and number.

**Social dialogue is key to promoting consensus building and holds the potential to promote good governance, encourage industrial and social peace as well as boosting economic and social progress. All employment policies, apart from two,<sup>78</sup> indicate that social dialogue is a key priority and hence should be reinforced.**

As defined by the ILO, social dialogue includes all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

**Eighty per cent of policy documents look at social dialogue as essential for designing, delivering, and monitoring employment policies.**

As analysed in Part I of this report,<sup>79</sup> social dialogue is a core element of NEP design, delivery and monitoring. As such, a number of documents have placed tripartite dialogue as a goal or guiding principle of their employment policy (Armenia 2012, Cameroon 2008, Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Macedonia 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016,

▶ **Box 8. Guatemala, National Decent Work Policy 2017-2032 – Guiding principles:**

(...) **Tripartite social dialogue**- Social dialogue, and in particular tripartite social dialogue, constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the NEP cycle. In the design process, social dialogue has been established to prioritize the policy components and measures. This principle will also be applied in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases.

<sup>78</sup> Benin 2011 and Algeria 2008.

<sup>79</sup> See [Part I of Two Decades of National Employment Policies](#) (ilo.org)

Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005). Various NEPs also stipulate that NEP delivery should be guided by social dialogue. This is the case of Armenia 2012, Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2018, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Macedonia 2015, Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015, Panama 2014, Peru 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019. The majority of these foresee the institutionalization of social dialogue through a tripartite and inter-ministerial committee to oversee NEP implementation.



► Table 17. Social dialogue

	Social dialogue and NEPs		Tools of social dialogue		Enabling conditions for social dialogue	
2005 - 2012	Zambia	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005
	Mozambique	2006	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005
	Burkina Faso	2008	Mozambique	2006	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Cameroon	2008	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Burkina Faso	2008
	Liberia	2009	Burkina Faso	2008	Iraq	2011
	Senegal	2010	Cameroon	2008	Jordan	2011
	Iraq	2011	Liberia	2009	Peru	2011
	Jordan	2011	Iraq	2011	Philippines	2011
	North Macedonia	2011	Jordan	2011	Uganda	2011
	Peru	2011	North Macedonia	2011	Armenia	2012
	Philippines	2011	Peru	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
	Uganda	2011	Philippines	2011	Sri Lanka	2012
	Armenia	2012	Uganda	2011		
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Armenia	2012		
	Sri Lanka	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2012		
			Guatemala	2012		
		Sri Lanka	2012			
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>
2013 - 2020	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013
	Albania	2014	Albania	2014	Albania	2014
	Costa Rica	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Cambodia	2015
	Panama	2014	Panama	2014	Mali	2014
	Cambodia	2015	Cambodia	2015	Morocco	2015
	Mali	2014	Mali	2014	Nepal	2015
	Morocco	2015	Morocco	2015	North Macedonia	2015
	Nepal	2015	Nepal	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	North Macedonia	2015	North Macedonia	2015	Mongolia	2016
	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Mozambique	2016
	Mongolia	2016	Mongolia	2016	Benin	2020
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Mozambique	2016		
	Guatemala	2017	Rep. of Moldova	2016		
	Honduras	2017	Cameroon	2017		
	Senegal	2017	Guatemala	2017		
	Zambia	2019	Honduras	2017		
		Zambia	2019			
		Benin	2020			
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>
	Total NEPs	32	Total NEPs	36	Total NEPs	24

Source: See table 1a.

As listed below, social dialogue is addressed in various ways in NEPs. Overall, interventions range from reinforcing tripartite processes and promoting bipartite relations between labour and management at national level, to measures addressing social dialogue at regional and/or enterprise level, while other policies address

inter-professional or sectoral level - or a combination of all these. These interventions can be divided into two main categories (i) social dialogue instruments, and (ii) enabling conditions for social dialogue.

**Ninety per cent of NEPs contemplate a diverse range of tools for social dialogue.** This includes actions for:

- ▶ Reinforcing and promoting negotiation, consultation and information exchange between governments, employers' and workers' organizations (Benin 2020, Cameroon 2008 and 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011), from specific issues such as wage policies (Albania 2014, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011), migrant workers (Mali 2014, Peru 2011), labour law (Jordan 2011, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), work arrangements (Philippines 2011), skills policies (Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014), training and SMEs (Peru 2011), gender (Morocco 2015, Peru 2011), youth (Cambodia 2015, Peru 2011), OSH (Philippines 2011) to wider socioeconomic and employment issues (Armenia 2012, Côte d'Ivoire , Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Peru 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019), structural reforms (Albania 2014) and crisis responses (Côte d'Ivoire 2016). A few NEPs look at extending social dialogue to informal workers (Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, Philippines), youth (Liberia 2009, Peru 2011), women (Peru 2011), civil society (Moldova 2007), domestic workers (Philippines 2011), and rural workers (Burkina 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and Mali 2014).
- ▶ Encouraging and promoting collective bargaining between employers' organizations and workers' organizations (Cambodia 2015, Iraq 2011, Macedonia 2015, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Namibia 2013, the Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011), including on gender equality (Morocco 2015) and wages (Zambia 2005). Some examples of interventions include encouraging collective bargaining through legal and institutional provisions and by building an environment in which workers and employers in the informal sector can organize (Nepal 2005) or increasing the coverage of employees with collective agreements, especially at industry or employer level, and covering wages within such agreements (Macedonia 2015).
- ▶ Promoting dispute prevention and resolution (Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012). Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and Namibia 2013 look at strengthening the dispute resolution system, while Nepal 2005 envisages resolving labour disputes through bipartite dialogue and building a favourable environment, including in the workplace. Sri Lanka 2012 stipulates that strengthening employer-employee relations is the key to ensuring healthy industrial relations and mentions the need to bring about mechanisms to assist dispute prevention. It also looks at identifying and addressing drawbacks for dispute resolution which are embedded in the Industrial Disputes Act. Morocco 2015 suggests better addressing social conflicts by establishing tripartite sectoral committees at national and regional level, while the Philippines 2011 provides a broad set of measures to ensure an efficient and transparent labour resolution system, including enhancing the Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms; institutionalizing a 30-day mandatory conciliation-mediation of all labour cases; promoting the primacy of pre-judicial systems; simplifying the dispute settlement process; strengthening conciliation-mediation by reviewing existing policies covering adjudication of cases, mandating the establishment of industry tripartite councils to promote industrial peace and developing voluntary codes of good practices, among others. Finally, Guatemala 2012 promotes the creation of alternative mechanisms, consisting of employers, workers and a mediator, to resolve labour disputes and to become a dispute settlement instance prior to the jurisdictional bodies.
- ▶ Promoting cooperation and strengthening labour relations in the workplace (Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012). Mongolia 2016 looks at increasing workers' and employers' responsibilities by improving labour inspection, while Sri Lanka 2012 considers initiating legal provisions in consultation with all the stakeholders to facilitate maintenance of industrial harmony through recognition of workers' and employers' rights and obligations in the workplace in a manner such as to create an environment conducive to the generation of employment and sustained enterprise. Philippines 2011 suggests the creation of works councils in all enterprises with at least ten workers and in EPZ with the right to information, consultation and negotiation, while Moldova 2007 looks at consolidating relations between employees and economic unit and establishing a sound corporate culture.

**In addition, 60 per cent of NEPs address the necessary conditions for sound social dialogue.** These include:

- ▶ Promoting strong, independent and representative employers' and workers' organizations and equipping them with the technical capacities necessary to participate in social dialogue (Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Honduras 2014, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005). For example, Nepal 2005 plans to enhance the efficacy of social dialogue, focussing on equal and balanced representation in all bipartite and tripartite mechanisms, along with capacity-building of social partners. Iraq 2011 (box 9) and Zambia 2005 I contemplate strengthening social partners' capacities to ensure that they are in a better position to defend their members' interests. Namibia 2013 envisages strengthening the capacity of social partners and government in social dialogue, collective bargaining mechanisms and tripartism, while Philippines 2011 envisages reviewing representation in tripartite bodies with a view to mainstreaming emerging labour organizations and employers' organizations. Finally, Sri Lanka 2012 stipulates that trade unions are recognized as democratic institutions that are necessary and useful to maintain cordial relationships between workers and employers. It mentions that workers' organizations are expected to maintain transparency, accountability and responsibility in their activities and that issues behind the declining trend in unionization should be analysed and proposals to resolve them should be developed. Finally, it states that social dialogue for public sector employees will be strengthened in parallel with that for private sector employees and that a critical review identifying the constraints on unionization of the public sector should be conducted and those constraints removed.

▶ **Box 9. Strengthening social dialogue institutions, developing the capabilities of the social partners to enable them to contribute effectively and positively to developing the labour market, and reinforcing opportunities for decent work and the competitiveness of the national economy.**

**Establishing a national social and economic council** - The establishment of an advisory body representing the Government, employers, workers, and civil society organizations, to advise the State regarding economic policies, would guarantee the achievement of economic as well as social development at the same time. It will be possible for influential and independent representatives of employers and workers, as well as other members of civil society, to contribute to good governance, transparency and a fair and productive labour market through the legal and institutional environment of the economic and social policy-making body and among the social partners.

**Establishing effective tripartite commissions at national and provincial level** - The aim is to ensure that the social partners (employers and workers) are influential and committed to contributing actively to the ongoing development of the Iraqi labour market in a parallel and sustainable way. The role of these commissions will be limited to advising the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the various organizations which operate under the Ministry's umbrella.

**Strengthening the capacities of all parties, particularly in participating in collective bargaining and dispute settlement** - In order to enable the social partners to complete their tasks and commitments effectively, it is necessary to build the capabilities of all the social partners at all levels.

**Strengthening the capabilities of trade unions and employers' organizations to represent the interests of their members effectively and allowing them to participate actively in policymaking** - Enabling the social partners to play their roles and handle their responsibilities in the various tripartite commissions through technical support programmes for employers and trade unions.

*National Employment Policy 2011, Republic of Iraq*

- ▶ Political will, trust, commitment to engage in social dialogue by all the parties and respect for the fundamental rights of freedom of association (Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012). Moldova 2007 focusses on promoting a tripartite climate for consultations, bargaining and information exchange within the field of economic and social policies, favouring the consolidation of mutual trust and cooperation between employers, employees and central and public authorities, while Mozambique 2016 seeks to promote responsible workers' and

employers' associations and create a favourable environment for social dialogue at all levels. Nepal 2005 indicates that, apart from adopting tripartite agreements as a basis of law-making, all parties should abide by the decisions taken in those tripartite and bipartite agreements. Sri Lanka 2012 mentions that anti-trade union actions should be discouraged or prohibited, and states that employers in EPZs will be encouraged to provide adequate facilities to trade unions that active in those EPZs to discuss freely and in privacy matters pertaining to trade unions and to represent workers' interests. Finally, it stipulates that the district-level tripartite consultation forum will be strengthened to facilitate freedom of association and to extend labour relations beyond enterprise level. Philippines 2011 stipulates the right to form or join trade unions and promotes the right to organize and to free collective bargaining.

- ▶ Establishing an enabling legal and institutional framework (Burkina Faso 2008, Sri Lanka 2012). Various NEPs look a strengthening or reactivating existing bi/tripartite committees and institutionalizing spaces for social dialogue (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Cambodia 2015, Honduras 2014, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2015, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), including at sectoral (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Morocco 2015), regional (Morocco 2015) and industry and local government level (Philippines 2011). Other policy documents look at reviewing or strengthening the legal environment for social dialogue (Albania 2014, Cambodia 2015, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2015) – including in line with international standards (Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016) or promoting other types of agreement. For example, Benin 2020 envisages the tripartite adoption of a Jobs Pact.

**An increasing number of countries are committed to the development of a solid labour market information system (85 per cent of early NEPs against 100 per cent of the latest policies) to provide a basis for well-informed and monitored employment policies.**

The main purpose of labour market information systems is the production of information and analysis for policymakers and other employment stakeholders, pursuing three main functions: facilitating labour market analysis, providing the basis for monitoring and reporting on employment and providing a mechanism for exchange and coordination between the different actors and institutions that produce and utilize labour market information and analysis.

Beyond general statements on enhancing existing labour market information systems (Benin 2011 and 2020, Cameroon 2008, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013), overall, interventions look at overcoming data limitations to allow sounder preparation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies and programmes as well removing various obstacles, including scarcity of resources, limited analytical capacities as well as more structural and institutional factors.



► **Table 18. Labour market information systems**

	General provisions		Data limitations		Institutional arrangements and capacities	
2005 - 2012	Cameroon	2008	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005
	Benin	2011	Mozambique	2006	Mozambique	2006
			Rep. of Moldova	2007	Burkina Faso	2008
			Liberia	2009	Senegal	2010
			Senegal	2010	Iraq	2011
			Iraq	2011	Jordan	2011
			Jordan	2011	Peru	2011
			Peru	2011	Philippines	2011
			Uganda	2011	Uganda	2011
			Armenia	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
			Guatemala	2012	Guatemala	2012
Sri Lanka	2012	Sri Lanka	2012			
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>12</b>
2013 - 2020	Namibia	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Mongolia	2016	Albania	2014	Panama	2014
	Benin	2020	Costa Rica	2014	Cambodia	2015
			Panama	2014	Mali	2014
			Cambodia	2015	Morocco	2015
			Mali	2014	Nepal	2015
			Morocco	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
			Nepal	2015	Rep. of Moldova	2016
			North Macedonia	2015	Cameroon	2017
			Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Guatemala	2017
			Mongolia	2016	Honduras	2017
			Mozambique	2016	Senegal	2017
			Rep. of Moldova	2016	Zambia	2019
			Senegal	2017		
			Zambia	2019		
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>
	Total NEPs	5	Total NEPs	27	Total NEPs	25

Source: See table 1a.

**Sixty-eight per cent of NEPs address data limitations issues, looking both at improving the quality of available information, as well as producing new data needed to feed into decision-making.**

Provisions include measures aiming at (i) ensuring regular and up-to date labour market information (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Uganda 2011), (ii) broadening and enriching LMI, including through regular (labour force) surveys (Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005 and 2019), and (iii) conducting regular labour market analysis (Cambodia 2015, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Uganda 2011). In addition to enhancing the efficiency of the labour market information system, a few NEPs also plan to better forecast labour force demand and supply (Costa Rica 2014, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007 and 2016 and Morocco 2015).

In some cases, policy documents consider enhancing the production of information at local level (Mali 2014, Morocco, 2015), in different branches, sectors and regions (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Mali 2014, Morocco

2015, Panama 2014), or focusing on young people (North Macedonia 2015) and migration (Albania 2014, Peru 2011, Uganda 2011).

Lastly, various NEPs look at ensuring better dissemination and communication of the information and results of the analyses (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Moldova 2007, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005) to different target audiences (Cambodia 2015), and insist on the need to ensure that data and information produced actually feed into policymaking and budget design (Albania 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Mongolia 2016).

**Institutional arrangements as well as adequate resources and capacities are needed for LMIS to perform their functions effectively. Those key issues are addressed by 63 per cent of NEPs.**

In addition to general statements on reinforcing LMI systems (Cameroon 2017, Cambodia 2015, Iraq 2011, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019), some more targeted actions look at strengthening or creating employment observatories or LMI Departments (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015 Panama 2014, Peru 2011, Senegal 2010), including at local level Morocco 2015), ensuring adequate information and communication technologies at national and local level (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Zambia 2005) or undertaking legal reforms (Guatemala 2012). Senegal 2017 envisages starting with a comprehensive assessment and then develop a strategy to strengthen the labour market information system on this basis.

Another set of interventions looks at ensuring effective coordination of the different actors and institutions that produce and utilize labour market information and analysis (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Panama 2014, Peru 2011), including by (i) developing a network with different actors (Mozambique 2006, Peru 2011), (ii) mapping and coordinating all databases and LMI producers in the country (Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010), establishing a single platform (Cameroon 2017) or a central body with adequate statutory and administrative authority for coordination of LMI data production and dissemination functions (Sri Lanka 2012).

Finally, some NEPs look at the resources and capacities needed for such systems to function effectively, including allocation of resources (Guatemala 2012, Jordan 2011, Sri Lanka 2012) or building specific analytical capacities (Kyrgyzstan 2013, Nepal 2015).

► **Table 19. Labour law**

	Revision of Labour Legislation		Enforcement and Compliance	
2005 - 2012	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005
	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005
	Mozambique	2006	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Burkina Faso	2008
	Burkina Faso	2008	Iraq	2011
	Liberia	2009	Jordan	2011
	Senegal	2010	Peru	2011
	Iraq	2011	Philippines	2011
	Jordan	2011	Uganda	2011
	Philippines	2011	Armenia	2011
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
	Guatemala	2012	Guatemala	2012
	Sri Lanka	2012	Sri Lanka	2012
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>
2013 - 2020	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Namibia	2013
	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014
	Cambodia	2015	Costa Rica	2014
	Morocco	2015	Cambodia	2015
	Nepal	2015	Mali	2014
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Morocco	2015
	Cameroon	2017	North Macedonia	2015
	Honduras	2017	Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	Senegal	2017	Mongolia	2016
			Mozambique	2016
			Rep. of Moldova	2016
			Guatemala	2017
			Zambia	2019
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>Total NEPs</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Total NEPs</b>	<b>26</b>

Source: See table 1a.

**Eighty-five per cent of policies consider labour law as a key instrument to regulate employment relationships and to establish the framework within which workers and employers can determine their own relations.**

**Fifty-five per cent of NEPs envisage a review of existing labour legislation to promote employment including:**

- Better responding to the changing needs of the labour market (Honduras 2017, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2015).
- Covering specific issues such as eliminating the worst forms of labour (Cameroon 2017), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability (Liberia 2009) and HIV/AIDS (Zambia 2005), ensuring harmonious industrial relations (Cambodia 2015, Philippines 2011), ensuring decent working conditions and protection of workers (Cambodia 2015), promoting freedom of association (Philippines 2011, Zambia 2005), institutionalizing a framework for tripartism and social dialogue (Philippines 2011), OSH (Zambia 2005) as well as better covering specific groups such as migrants (Guatemala 2012, Kyrgyzstan 2013), women (Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015), youth (Morocco), domestic workers (Philippines 2011) and informal workers (Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017). Namibia 2013 looks at conducting a labour law gap analysis on OSH.

- ▶ Regulating new forms of work or types of contracts (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012) such as part-time, temporary, subcontracting, internship, teleworking or flexi-time arrangements.
- ▶ Reviewing employment protection legislation, in particular contracting rules (Philippines 2011) so that it is conducive to employment creation while providing protection to workers (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2005, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005).

**While many countries have solid labour legislation, implementation is not optimal in many cases. In that context, 65 per cent of NEPs are concerned with better enforcing labour laws and ensuring effective compliance** (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007, Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2019), including in the informal economy (Sri Lanka 2012), with regard to prohibition of forced labour and employment discrimination (Zambia 2005), OSH (Mozambique 2016) and the obligation to employ workers on written or oral contracts (Zambia 2005). In most cases, labour inspection is considered as an essential element to exercising this function (Armenia 2012, Moldova 2016,). A few NEPs consider targeting inspections on specific issues such as child labour (Iraq 2011, Mozambique 2016), forced labour (Zambia 2015), migrants (Albania 2014), gender discrimination (Morocco 2015) and OSH (Iraq 2011).

Many policies consider strengthening labour inspection capacities (Albania 2014, Burkina Faso 2008 Cambodia 2015, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Macedonia 2015, Mali 2014, Moldova 2012, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011), enhancing the organization and planning processes of labour inspection (Iraq 2011, Mali 2014) or extending its scope and coverage (Albania 2014). In addition, Namibia 2013 seeks to promote collaboration and coordination among enforcement agencies, i.e., labour inspectorate and other public inspection agencies as well as with the social partners, while Morocco 2015 looks at creating commissions at provincial level to ensure compliance with labour law and social conformity, including labour inspectorate, representatives of the Committee for Parity and Fight against Discrimination, social partners as well as the social security institution. Nepal 2005 looks at better involving the private sector in inspection of businesses. Finally, as mentioned in the section above on social dialogue, many countries include provisions aimed at strengthening labour courts, industrial tribunals and dispute resolution mechanisms so that disputes are dealt with efficiently, effectively and equitably.

Overall, NEPs look at labour inspection in its enforcement function and provide measures to ensure better control and more effective sanctions. As an example, Mozambique 2016 envisages promoting the denouncing and reporting of any violation of the law, while Costa Rica 2014 looks at following up better on complaints. A few other NEPs also promote preventive labour inspection with a view to enhancing compliance with labour laws, including through provision of information, dissemination of labour legislation, advice, guidance, training and awareness-raising (Guatemala 2012, Morocco 2015, Peru 2011). Morocco 2015, for example, looks at developing concertation prior to controlling and imposition of sanctions and to promote socially responsible practices within enterprises.

► **Table 20. Policies on wages and incomes**

	Wage-setting		Minimum wage		Equal pay for equal value	
2005 - 2012	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005
	Zambia	2005	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Zambia	2005
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Iraq	2011	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Iraq	2011	Jordan	2011	Liberia	2009
	Jordan	2011	Peru	2011	Jordan	2011
	Peru	2011	Philippines	2011	Philippines	2011
	Philippines	2011	Uganda	2011	Sri Lanka	2012
	Uganda	2011	Armenia	2012		
	Armenia	2012	Guatemala	2012		
	Guatemala	2012	Sri Lanka	2012		
	Sri Lanka	2012				
		<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>
2013 - 2020	Namibia	2013	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014
	Albania	2014	Costa Rica	2014	Morocco	2015
	Cambodia	2015	Mali	2014	Mozambique	2016
	Morocco	2015	Cambodia	2015	Rep. of Moldova	2016
	North Macedonia	2015	North Macedonia	2015		
	Mongolia	2016	Côte d'Ivoire	2016		
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Rep. of Moldova	2016		
		<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>
	Total NEPs	18	Total NEPs	17	Total NEPs	11

Source: See table 1a.

**Fifty-eight per cent of NEPs are committed to promoting policies on wages and incomes that ensure a just share of the benefits of progress to all.**

**Forty-five per cent of NEPs look at the wage-setting process.** Some countries consider strengthening their wage-setting mechanism, including through a more robust and evidence-based wage-setting system (Cambodia 2015) and regular review of wages (Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005), while other policies look at how it should involve full consultations with employers' and workers' representative organizations (Albania 2014, Guatemala 2012 and 2016, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2015, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013 Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005). Jordan 2011, for example, suggests developing dialogue mechanisms between the government, the public sector and labour representatives to discuss the minimum wage, while Albania 2014 states that the National Labour Council will be instrumental in the elaboration of wage policies. Iraq 2011 envisages strengthening the wages committee and that setting wages (including the minimum wage) should come as a result of tripartite negotiation. Other policies are concerned with the need to build up a productivity-linked wage system and to promote a wage-setting process that takes into account both the needs of workers and economic factors (Armenia 2012, Guatemala 2012, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Sri Lanka 2012). Finally, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005 are concerned with enforcement issues, including preventing non-payment or discriminatory practices.

**Forty-three per cent of NEPs look at a minimum wage for all employed in need of such protection** (Armenia 2012, Cambodia 2015, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2016, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, North Macedonia 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011), including in line with international and ILO standards (Armenia 2012, Moldova 2007) and for specific groups of the population, such as migrants (Iraq 2011), informal workers (Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2016, Iraq 2011, Nepal 2005, Sri Lanka 2012), domestic workers (North Macedonia 2015, Philippines 2011), agricultural workers (Mali 2014), and public servants (Armenia 2012, Jordan 2011). Cambodia 2015 envisages an annual review of the minimum wage, while a few countries look at enforcement and compliance issues (Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2012, Philippines 2011). Costa Rica 2014 specifically looks at the enforcement

of minimum wages through effective labour inspection, not only in terms of following-up on complaints received but also to ensure more proactive strategies including awareness-raising to ensure a culture of compliance. Guatemala 2012 also considers compliance issues as well as establishing the various criteria to establish minimum wages to ensure they respond to workers' needs as well as specific regional characteristics.

**The issue of equal pay for equal work is addressed by 28 per cent of NEPs.** Albania 2014, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, and Sri Lanka 2012 are specifically concerned with reducing gender pays gaps and state that women and men are entitled to equal pay for performing work of equal value. For Moldova 2016, this is to be pursued through an effective gender-sensitive collective bargaining process. Morocco 2015 considers establishing a dashboard to monitor the differences between remuneration of men and women while Liberia 2009 and Moldova 2007 look at better monitoring and identifying the main factors that determine gender wage gaps, and the social value attached to the occupations reflected in levels of wage provision, with a view to a general equalization of remuneration. Zambia 2005 promotes the principle of equal pay for work of equal value between nationals and migrants, while Nepal 2005 and Philippines 2011 stipulate equal pay for equal work globally. Sri Lanka 2012 and Jordan 2011 advocate for narrowing the remuneration gaps between the private and public sectors.

► **Table 21. Unemployment benefits**

	Reviewing existing systems		Establishing unemployment schemes	
2005 - 2012	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Iraq	2011
	North Macedonia	2011	Jordan	2011
	Peru	2011	Philippines	2011
	Armenia	2012	Côte d'Ivoire	2012
			Sri Lanka	2012
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>
2013 - 2020	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Namibia	2013
	Albania	2014	Cambodia	2015
	Morocco	2015	Mongolia	2016
	North Macedonia	2015	Benin	2020
	Rep. of Moldova	2016		
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>
	Total NEPs	9	Total NEPs	9

Source: See table 1a.

**Forty-five per cent of employment policies – all LMI and UMI countries – include interventions on unemployment benefits to protect employed individuals against the risk of loss of employment. This remains fairly stable over time.**

Interventions concerning unemployment benefits are divided into two broad categories: countries looking at strengthening, reforming or extending the existing system and the other half considering establishing the first such scheme in the country.

**Overall, the first group aims at reforming the system in place including** (i) reviewing the conditions for accessing unemployment benefits (Kyrgyzstan 2013), and looking at providing income support conditional on tougher job-search requirement or participation in active labour market policies as a way to creating incentives for individuals to look for a job and increase their employability (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Moldova 2007); (ii) better linking and coordination of the social assistance system with the unemployment benefit scheme (Albania 2014, North Macedonia 2015); (iii) increasing unemployment benefits (Moldova 2007); (iv) reforming the funding mechanism (Moldova 2016) and enhancing the sustainability of the system (Macedonia 2011), (v) extending the scope of the existing scheme (Morocco 2015, Peru 2011), and (vi) reviewing the regulations on protection of jobseekers with a gender dimension (Moldova 2016)

**Nine other countries envisage developing an unemployment benefit scheme to provide income support in case of loss of employment** (Benin 2020, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Jordan 2011, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013) for

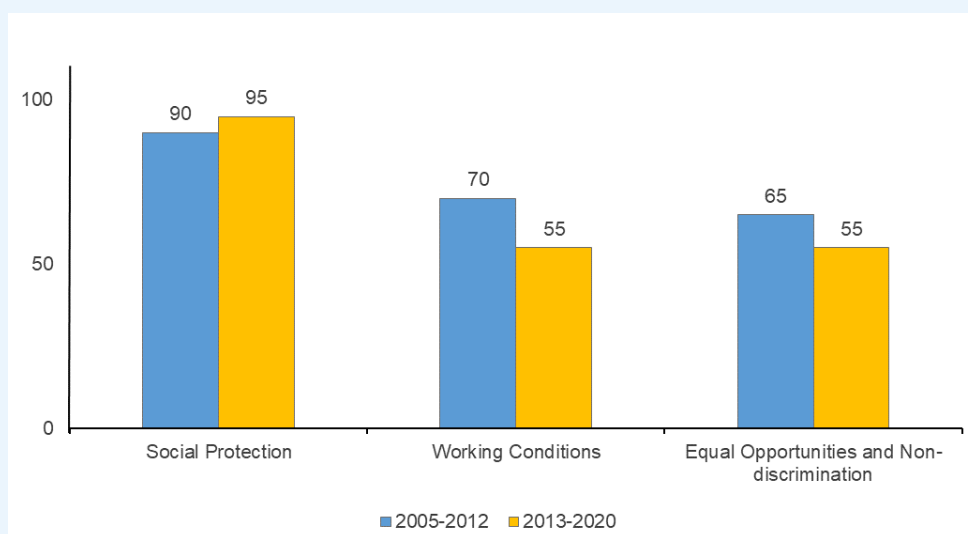
all categories of workers (Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011), along with a package of services including counselling, training and retraining and job placement (Sri Lanka 2012). Iraq 2011 and Philippines 2011 envisage conducting this process through tripartite dialogue, while Cambodia 2015 plans to conduct a feasibility study as a first step in the process, to increase awareness among stakeholders about the cost and benefits of an unemployment scheme as well as starting stakeholder consultations on the question. Jordan 2011 aims to encourage the use of unemployment insurance instead of early retirement for those who have lost their jobs and are eligible for retirement.

### 4.4. Work quality

Employment policies are not only about how many jobs are created but also relate to the quality dimension of employment and inclusion. The strengthening of the labour market institutions analysed above is central to this objective, together with the adoption of other measures to provide inclusion and effective protection analysed in this section.

93 per cent of policy documents include provisions to enhance employment quality (figure 19). with 75 of documents including a combination of at least two sub-policy areas. Social protection is taken into account in 93 per cent of NEPs, increasing from 90 to 95 per cent over the two periods studied, while measures relating to working conditions and non-discrimination are less present (around 60 per cent of NEPs) in the second wave of NEPs and decline by 21 and 15 respectively (figure 16).

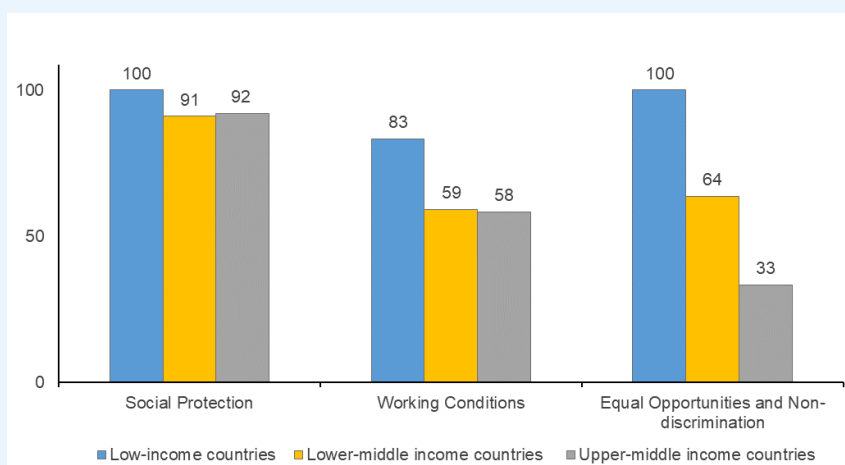
► **Figure 16. Work quality measures: variation over time (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: The Author

**By income groups, the review indicates that overall, the higher the income level, the less prevalent is the inclusion of different areas.** Figure 17 shows that measures on social protection and equal opportunities are systematically found in all LIC NEPs, while provisions on working conditions are covered by 83 per cent of policies. On the other hand, both LMIC and UMIC cover interventions on social protection in around 90 per cent of NEPs and include measures on working conditions in around 60 per cent of documents. Policies on equal opportunities are found in 64 per cent of LMIC and 33 per cent of UMIC.

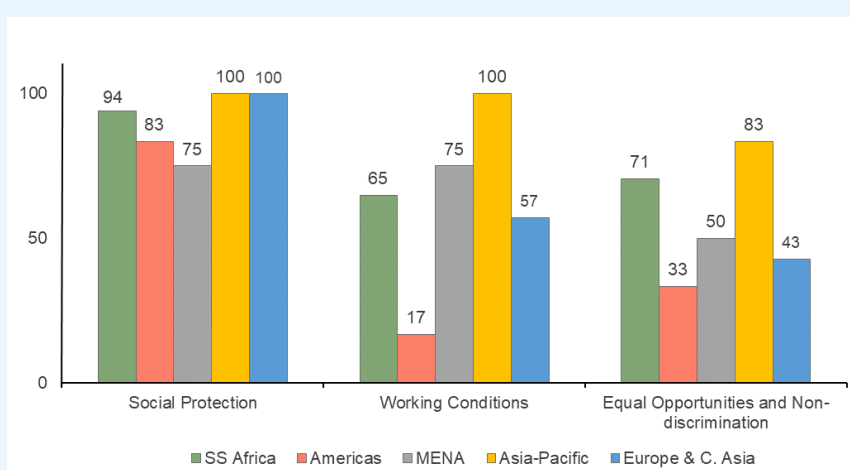
► **Figure 17. Work quality measures: variation by income level (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Not all regions are moving at the same pace in terms of inclusion of provisions on work quality; coverage is lowest in the Americas and the highest in Asia and the Pacific.** Provisions on working conditions are found in all NEPs from Asia and the Pacific, while are less likely to be seen in the Middle East and North Africa Region (75 per cent of NEPs), sub-Saharan Africa (65 per cent of NEPs) and Europe and Central Asia (57 per cent of NEPs). Only 17 per cent of NEPs in the Americas include such provisions. Coverage of equal opportunities and non-discrimination measures show a somewhat similar pattern where Asia-Pacific leads its inclusion (83 per cent of NEPs) followed by sub-Saharan (71 per cent) and MENA (50 per cent), while they are less present in Europe and Central Asia (43 per cent) and in the Americas (33 per cent). On the other hand, social protection measures are systematically found in all NEPs from Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia and are well covered in sub-Saharan Africa (94 per cent). They are less likely to be seen in the Americas (83 per cent) and the Middle East and North Africa (75 per cent).

► **Figure 18. Work quality measures: variation by region (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Documents formulated over the last decade are significantly less likely to include provisions on work quality.** Table 22 presents the average number of sub-policy areas by income level, region and period. Figure 19 shows NEP documents according to the number of sub-policy areas covered, from one to three (i.e., social protection, working conditions and non-discrimination). Overall, each NEP includes 2.2 measures on work quality on average.



For the period 2005-2012, each document covers 2.3 sub-policy areas on average, with 50 per cent of documents addressing all 3 sub-areas, and two NEPs not addressing any policy area at all (see figure 19). In this period, social protection policies are covered in 90 per cent of NEPs, while provisions on working conditions and non-discrimination respectively are included in 70 and 65 per cent of NEPs. LICs have the largest share of work quality measures (2.75 per NEP on average), while LMICs and UMICs cover 2.10 and 2.17 policy areas on average. In terms of regions, all NEPs in Asia and the Pacific include all three sub-areas, followed by Europe and Central Asia NEPs (2.33), sub-Saharan Africa (2.22) and American policies (2), while Middle East and North Africa include 1.67 sub-areas per NEP on average (see table 22).

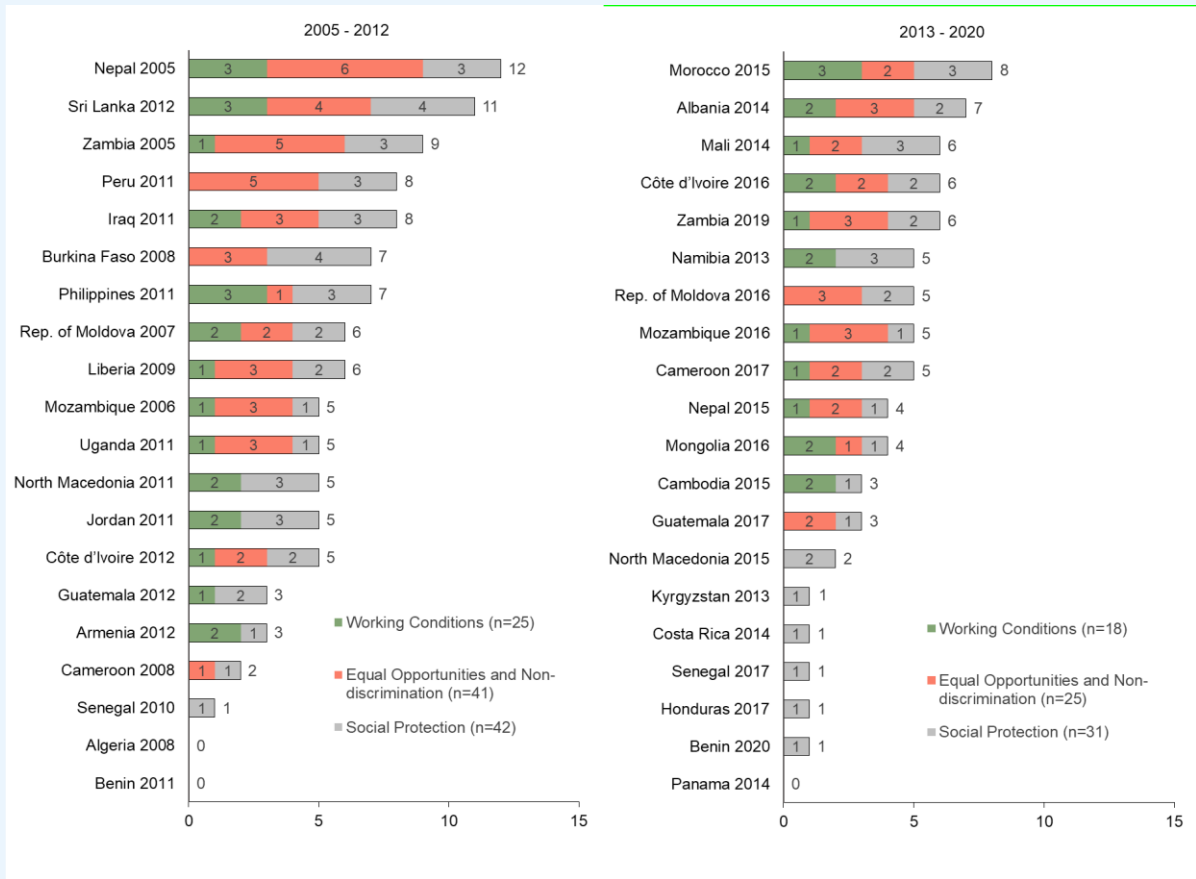
Although, in the most recent period, the number of NEPs addressing work quality increases slightly from 90 to 95 per cent, the policy mix tends to be less complex over time with 45 per cent of NEPs covering all three sub-areas and 30 per cent addressing only one (social protection measures) (see figure 19). Indeed, the average number of sub-policy areas covered in each document decreases to 2.1. Remarkably, 95 per cent of NEPs consider provisions on social protection policies during the 2013-2020 period, while interventions on working conditions and equal opportunities are found in only 55 per cent, i.e., a decline of around 21 and 15 per cent, respectively. Looking at the averages by income level, the inclusion of sub-policy areas increases in LICs (by 0.25), and in LMICs (by 0.07), while decreases dramatically in UMICs (by 0.67). Regions also show uneven trends, ranging from a decline of -1 in the Americas and -0.58 in Europe and Central Asia to -0.33 in Asia and the Pacific, while showing a modest increase in sub-Saharan Africa (0.15) and a substantial rise in the Middle East and North Africa, reaching three out of three possible sub-policy areas in the second period.

In figure 19, the analysis is disaggregated by sub-sub-policy area. The downward trend is observed at this level as well, with sub-sub-measures declining by around from 108 to 74 over time, reflecting a sharp decline in policies for equal opportunities (-39 per cent) and to a lesser extent policy measures on working conditions (-28 per cent) and social protection (-26 per cent).

► **Table 22. Average number of work quality sub-policy areas (by period, region, and income)**

	2005-2012	2013-2020	Change	
Total	2.25	2.05	-0.20	↑
Low-income countries (LIC)	2.75	3.00	0.25	↑
Lower-middle-income countries (LMIC)	2.10	2.17	0.07	↑
Upper-middle-income countries (UMIC)	2.17	1.50	-0.67	↓
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.22	2.38	0.15	↑
Americas	2.00	1.00	-1.00	↓
Middle East and North Africa	1.67	3.00	1.33	↑
Asia-Pacific	3.00	2.67	-0.33	→
Europe and Central Asia	2.33	1.75	-0.58	↑

► **Figure 19. Number of work quality measures for each such policy (by country and period)**



Source: See table 1a.

► **Table 23. Social protection**

	General provisions		Social protection for all		Enhancing the scope of social protection		Social assistance		Pension systems	
2005 - 2012	Zambia	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Cameroon	2008	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Burkina Faso	2008	Burkina Faso	2008
	Senegal	2010	Mozambique	2006	Burkina Faso	2008	Liberia	2009	Iraq	2011
	Guatemala	2012	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Iraq	2011	North Macedonia	2011	Jordan	2011
			Burkina Faso	2007	Jordan	2011	Uganda	2011	Peru	2011
			Liberia	2009	North Macedonia	2011	Sri Lanka	2012	Philippines	2011
			Iraq	2011	Peru	2011			Guatemala	2012
			Jordan	2011	Philippines	2011			Sri Lanka	2012
			North Macedonia	2011	Armenia	2012				
			Peru	2011	Côte d'Ivoire	2012				
		Philippines	2011	Sri Lanka	2012					
		Côte d'Ivoire	2012							
		Sri Lanka	2012							
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>
2013 - 2020	Namibia	2013	Albania	2014	Mali	2014	Namibia	2013	Kyrgyzstan	2013
	Cambodia	2015	Costa Rica	2014	Morocco	2015	Albania	2014	Namibia	2013
	Mongolia	2016	Mali	2014	North Macedonia	2015	Mali	2014	Morocco	2015
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Morocco	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	North Macedonia	2015		
	Honduras	2017	Nepal	2015	Cameroon	2017				
	Senegal	2017	Côte d'Ivoire	2016						
	Zambia	2019	Mozambique	2016						
	Benin	2020	Rep. of Moldova	2016						
			Cameroon	2017						
		Guatemala	2017							
		Zambia	2019							
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>
	Total NEPs	12	Total NEPs	24	Total NEPs	16	Total NEPs	10	Total NEPs	11

Source: See table 1a.

**Ninety-three per cent of NEPs commit to creating, strengthening, or adapting social protection schemes to better protect the population and facilitate access to healthcare, social assistance and maternity benefits and old age pensions, amongst others.**

**Thirty per cent of NEPs include broad commitments to developing, strengthening, reviewing, extending or better implementing their social protection system** (Benin 2020, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2008, Guatemala 2012, Honduras 2017, Moldova 2016, Mongolia 2016, Namibia 2013, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Zambia 2005 and 2019). Moldova 2016, for example, envisages reviewing the law on social protection, while Namibia 2013 envisages different interventions with a view to strengthening and expanding the social protection system, including a social protection expenditure review, reviewing the regulations governing the social protection system as well as improving access to information and services delivery.

Several policies are more specific and commit to a more comprehensive social protection system where:

**Sixty per cent of NEPs look at extending social protection to as many people as possible** (Macedonia 2011, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), including informal workers (Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Zambia 2005), non-

covered groups (Jordan 2011, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, Philippines 2011), the self-employed (Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Peru 2011), small economic units and SMEs (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Costa Rica 2014, Jordan 2011), migrants (Moldova 2007, Philippines 2011) and women, youth and persons with disabilities business owners (Zambia 2019). Albania 2014 considers establishing a system for registering women workers to receive minimum social protection, while Moldova 2016 envisages a review of the law on social protection with a gender perspective.

#### **Box 10. Sri Lanka – the National Human Resources and Employment Policy 2012**

- ▶ Sri Lanka recognises the need to adopt a comprehensive social protection policy providing protection to all on different contingencies as set out by the ILO Convention on Social Security (Minimum Standards), within the overall context of employment. Sri Lanka has a number of social protection schemes as noted and some integration of these different schemes is to be planned.
- ▶ A common vision or perspective is critical if social security benefits are to be extended to all. The integration of existing social security schemes, developed in parallel by several ministries and agencies is considered imperative. Integration of the schemes will contribute to streamlining their administration and to increasing overall cost-efficiency and effectiveness. Such integration also has the potential to guarantee the portability of benefits among different schemes.
- ▶ Actions will be initiated to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Employees Provident Fund and the Employees Trust Fund, the existing social security schemes of formal sector workers, by rationalizing the regulatory procedures, enhancing benefits under the schemes, expanding the scheme to cover all eligible workers, and better fund management.
- ▶ Recognizing the disadvantages of payment of lump-sum benefits in ensuring a continuous flow of income for formal sector workers under the Employees Provident Fund and the Employees Trust Fund Schemes, appropriate studies would be undertaken to ascertain the feasibility of establishing a pension scheme for workers in the formal private sector.
- ▶ Recognizing the significance and the potential of existing social security schemes in the informal sector, such as the Farmers' Pension Scheme, Fishermen's Pension Scheme and the Self-employed Persons' Pension Scheme, a study would be undertaken to ascertain their shortcomings and to take remedial measures.
- ▶ Social assistance programmes and arrangements of the Government have only a few links to the labour market. These links will be improved to enhance employment prospects and formal social security.
- ▶ With a view to removing discrimination in providing maternity benefits to women workers under different legislative provisions and to ensure Sri Lanka's obligations to the relevant ILO Convention, a tripartite process will be initiated to transform the present benefits scheme from an employer liability to a payment from a social insurance scheme.
- ▶ In realizing a vision of universal social protection, action will be initiated for the establishment of a basic social protection floor which would offer a package of benefits that would ensure: access to basic healthcare; income security to all children at the level of appropriate poverty line providing access to nutrition, education and care; targeted income support to the poor and the unemployed in the active age group; and income support to all residents in old age, or those with disabilities.

**Forty per cent of policies aim at enhancing the scope of the social protection system** (Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Nepal 2005, Sri Lanka 2012), including extending to work injuries insurance or compensation (Armenia 2012, Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Philippines 2011), enhancing access to healthcare (Burkina Faso 2008, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Morocco 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011), universal health coverage (Côte d'Ivoire 2016), maternity benefits (Jordan 2011, Philippines 2011), and family allowances (Morocco 2015). A few NEPs envisage developing alternative social security schemes, such as micro-insurance (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Mali 2014, Philippines 2011, Zambia 2005) as well as promoting greater involvement of local governments in providing social protection services (Burkina 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Macedonia 2011 and 2015).

**Twenty-five per cent of NEPs look at introducing or reinforcing social safety nets, cash transfer or other type of social assistance schemes for the poor to meet their immediate needs and to alleviate poverty** (Albania 2014, Burkina Faso 2008, Liberia 2009, Macedonia 2011, Mali 2014, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, Uganda 2011), including better linking of social assistance programmes to the labour market (Macedonia 2015 and Sri Lanka 2012)

**Finally, 28 per cent of NEPs consider setting up or improving existing pension systems.** A few countries are looking at setting up a pension system (Namibia 2013) either through promoting a company-based retirement programme (Philippines 2011), establishing a bond fund (Burkina Faso 2008) or starting on a voluntary basis (Sri Lanka 2012). Other countries are looking at improving their existing pension system by (i) extending it to a greater number of workers (Guatemala 2012, Jordan 2011, Morocco 2015), including by promoting the development of a private market for pension provision for dependent and self-employed workers (Peru 2011), (ii) ensuring the independence of the pension system and promoting the participation of the social partners in the retirement scheme (Iraq 2011). Moldova 2007 looks at increasing transparency of the pension system, revising the pension system in the agriculture sector and, in the long run, ensuring the equalization of women’s and men pension ages. Lastly, Kyrgyzstan 2013 considers developing an agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation on issues related to pensions paid to citizens temporarily working in those countries.

► **Table 24. Working Conditions**

	General provisions		Work arrangements		Occupational safety and health (OSH)	
2005 - 2012	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005
	Liberia	2009	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Zambia	2005
	Philippines	2011	Iraq	2011	Mozambique	2006
	Armenia	2012	Jordan	2011	Rep. of Moldova	2007
	Côte d'Ivoire	2012	North Macedonia	2011	Iraq	2011
	Guatemala	2012	Philippines	2011	Jordan	2011
	Sri Lanka	2012	Sri Lanka	2012	North Macedonia	2011
					Philippines	2011
				Uganda	2011	
				Armenia	2012	
				Sri Lanka	2012	
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>
2013 - 2020	Namibia	2013	Morocco	2015	Namibia	2013
	Albania	2014			Albania	2014
	Cambodia	2015			Cambodia	2015
	Mali	2014			Morocco	2015
	Morocco	2015			Nepal	2015
	Côte d'Ivoire	2016			Côte d'Ivoire	2016
	Mongolia	2016			Mongolia	2016
					Mozambique	2016
				Cameroon	2017	
				Zambia	2019	
	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>10</b>
	Total NEPs	14	Total NEPs	8	Total NEPs	21

Source: See table 1a.

**Sixty-three per cent of NEPs include a set of interventions to address working conditions, including hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules as well as the physical conditions and mental demands that exist in the workplace.**

**Thirty-five per cent of NEPs include statements on improving working conditions in general** (Albania 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011), including in line with international standards (Armenia 2012, Cambodia 2015), for migrant workers (Guatemala 2012), in public works (Liberia 2009) and for informal workers (Mali 2014, Sri Lanka 2012). Cambodia 2015 envisages developing a database of enterprises to allow monitoring conditions of work and strengthening coordination with relevant stakeholders with a view to improving working conditions. Morocco 2015 looks at setting up a dashboard for monitoring gender equality in the workplace, while Albania 2014 plans to develop training material for the labour inspectorate on decent work, equal pay, working conditions and sexual harassment. Finally, the NEP of Philippines 2011 stipulates that not only more jobs, but jobs that are decent and ensure minimum wages, safe working conditions and basic social security, should be created. It considers amending the Labour Code with a view to improving the working conditions of domestic workers as well as ratifying ILO Convention No. 172 or the Convention on Working Conditions in Hotels and Restaurants and Similar Establishments.<sup>80</sup>

**Twenty per cent of NEPs envisage reviewing work arrangements, although this decreases significantly over time from 35 to 5 per cent of NEPs.** Such policies consider (i) promoting flexible work conditions enabling the extension of the length of work for older people (Moldova 2007), and (ii) making them more family-friendly and, more generally, more compatible with life outside work (Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Macedonia 2011, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012). Jordan 2011 looks at reviewing laws and regulations affecting women's employment, in particular working conditions, part-time jobs and work from home, and removing regulatory obstacles associated with them. Morocco 2015 looks at creating a new form of contract to better reconcile work and family life, while ensuring that this does not entail precarious work, insufficient social security coverage and fewer opportunities for career advancement. Nepal 2005 considers enhancing women's employment by making workplaces and the work environment women- and family-friendly including through the provision of affirmative discrimination, maternal safety, security and suitable leave facilities. Iraq 2011 encourages the private sector and the government to adopt flexible work schedules which enable women to work through flexible and partial work assignments, whether at home, or through local associations which produce goods which can be promoted and marketed by a third party. Similarly, Sri Lanka 2012 promotes more flexible work arrangements such as part-time work, and work that can be done online. In that regard, it mentions that telecommunications and other infrastructure facilities necessary to support online working arrangements will be further developed. Finally, Philippines 2011 supports collective bargaining or tripartite initiatives aimed at establishing alternative employment arrangements such as the adoption of the 40 to 48-hour working week to afford flexibility in hiring workers for industries or firms where working hours vary based on demand for products or services.

**Fifty-three per cent of employment policies commit to workers' safety and health needs.** Beyond committing to healthy and safe workplaces (Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Macedonia 2011), various employment policies adopt a focused approach to reduce the incidence of work-related deaths, injuries, and diseases.

Measures touch upon three main areas strategic areas:

- i. Ensuring alignment with or ratification of international standards (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Mongolia 2016), including ILO Convention 187 on Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (Namibia 2013, Philippines 2011).
- ii. Ensuring effective implementation of and compliance with OSH regulations (Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Cambodia 2015, Cameroon 2017, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Zambia 2019), through a conducive national framework and mechanisms, including in the agriculture sector (Nepal 2015) and through a stronger labour inspection system (Albania 2014, Zambia

<sup>80</sup> As indicated in Section 5.2, a number of NEPs also provide for CSR interventions – including as a way to instigate better working conditions at the workplace.

2005). Iraq 2011, for example, promotes the active involvement of the social partners to adopt a long-term approach to OSH and identifies compensation mechanisms in case of injuries and health problems. Namibia 2013 envisages establishing a national coordinating task force on OSH as well as a tripartite OSH programme and a national OSH centre and system. Nepal 2005 looks at revising the institutional and legal framework of occupational safety and health. It also considers setting up safety and health committees for the identification, planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement of activities related to occupational safety and reproductive health in the workplace. Iraq 2011 mentions that companies' occupational safety records should be considered as part of evaluating companies in participation in bids and the renewal of their licences. Other NEPs plan to carry out education and information campaigns on OSH (Philippines 2011, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005), including in the informal sector (Sri Lanka 2012, Nepal 2005). Finally, Nepal 2015 looks more specifically at ensuring safe and decent foreign employment for women.

- iii. Targeting workers, including public servants (Philippines 2011) and groups with higher vulnerability to occupational injuries and diseases such as (i) women, youth and persons with a disability owned businesses (Zambia 2019); (ii) hazardous sectors (Philippines 2011), such as heavy industry, mining and construction (Jordan 2011), (iii) informal economy (Philippines 2011), (iv) and women (Morocco 2015). Philippines 2011 plans to ensure gender-responsive OSH programmes.

► **Table 25. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination**

	General Provisions		HIV / AIDS		People with Disabilities		Forced Labour		Child Labour		Gender	
2005 - 2012	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005	Nepal	2005
	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Mozambique	2006	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005	Zambia	2005
	Rep. of Moldova	2007	Mozambique	2006	Burkina Faso	2008	Peru	2011	Burkina Faso	2008	Mozambique	2006
	Peru	2011	Burkina Faso	2008	Liberia	2009			Iraq	2011	Rep. of Moldova	2007
			Cameroon	2008	Iraq	2011			Peru	2011	Liberia	2009
			Liberia	2009	Sri Lanka	2012			Uganda	2011	Iraq	2011
			Peru	2011					Côte d'Ivoire	2012	Peru	2011
			Philippines	2011					Sri Lanka	2012	Uganda	2011
			Uganda	2011							Sri Lanka	2012
			Côte d'Ivoire	2012								
Sri Lanka			2012									
<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>9</b>	
2013 - 2020	Albania	2014	Mali	2014	Albania	2014	Cameroon	2017	Mali	2014	Albania	2014
	Morocco	2015	Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Mongolia	2016			Côte d'Ivoire	2016	Morocco	2015
	Nepal	2015	Mozambique	2016	Mozambique	2016			Rep. of Moldova	2016	Nepal	2015
	Rep. of Moldova	2016	Cameroon	2017	Rep. of Moldova	2016					Mozambique	2016
	Guatemala	2017	Zambia	2019	Zambia	2019					Guatemala	2017
											Zambia	2019
<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>N° of NEPs</b>	<b>6</b>	
Total NEPs	9	Total NEPs	16	Total NEPs	11	Total NEPs	4	Total NEPs	11	Total NEPs	15	

Source: See table 1a.



**Combating discrimination is an integral part of decent work. Issues linked to equality and discrimination are present in 60 per cent of employment policies.**

**Twenty-three per cent of NEPs include general provisions to combat any form of discrimination and secure equal opportunities and treatment in employment** (see table 25). Albania 2014 commits to zero tolerance of discrimination and plans to develop a sexual harassment policy. Zambia 2005 looks at enforcing all laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, while Guatemala 2017 aims at reducing inequalities and creating equal opportunities for all, including women, youth and indigenous people. Morocco 2015 plans to reinforce the role of labour inspection in the area of non-discrimination and equality and Mozambique 2016 envisages promoting the denouncing and signalling of cases of discrimination. Finally, Nepal 2005 aims at ensuring equal access of women, Dalits, indigenous peoples and displaced persons to employment. It plans to conduct programmes to remove gender, sectoral, ethnic and any other forms of discrimination prevalent in the employment sector, as well as encouraging positive discrimination to ensure their access to productive employment. In the same vein, Nepal 2015 reiterates the will to gradually eliminate gender, geographical and caste-based discrimination in the field of employment.

A number of NEPs look at specific groups more likely to face discrimination in the labour market:

**HIV/AIDS affects the world of work in many ways, and as such is addressed by 40 per cent of NEPs –almost all from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Pacific.** Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Uganda 2011, and Zambia 2019 place it as a guiding principle and a crosscutting issue to be integrated in all employment and labour interventions. In addition, Mozambique 2006 identifies workers living with HIV/AIDS as a priority target for the NEP. As HIV/AIDS affects fundamental rights at work, particularly with respect to discrimination and stigmatization aimed at workers with HIV/AIDS, a number of NEPs seek to eliminate discrimination in employment and ensure inclusion (Burkina 2008, Liberia 2009, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011). For example, Liberia 2009 considers promoting practices of non-discrimination and non-stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS in recruitment and in the workplace as well as ensuring compliance with the law on people with HIV/AIDS. Sri Lanka 2012 commits to safeguarding and respecting worker's rights and ensuring equal employment rights through the creation of an enabling environment free of stigma and discrimination for people with HIV/AIDS, while Zambia 2005 plans to review the law to prohibit discrimination based on HIV/AIDS and to train workers on existing legal provisions in cases of discrimination. Some other NEPs focus on prevention as the basis for addressing the epidemic in the workplace (Burkina Faso 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2016 and Nepal 2005) or more broadly on taking into account HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace (Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Mozambique 2006). A number of policies also envisage information and awareness-raising campaigns as well as educational programmes (Burkina Faso 2008, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011, Zambia 2005). Finally, other measures include providing care to workers (Mozambique 2016), implementing the national policy on HIV/AIDS (Uganda 2011), encouraging employers to provide counselling and support to their employees affected by HIV/AIDS (Zambia 2005) (see also box 11).

#### **Box 11. Mozambique – Employment and Vocational Training Strategy 2006**

*Strategic Objective 4: To include Preventive Measures on HIV/AIDS in Employment Promotion*

Strengthen the Ministry of Labour's capacity in fighting HIV/AIDS in the workplace

Assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on labour and the development of measures to reduce its consequences in both the public and private sectors

Support the establishment and strengthening of partnerships between employers' and workers' organizations

Improve coordination between the social partners in order to create synergies and cooperation in this domain

Implement actions that contribute to the development of a policy on HIV/AIDS in the workplace

Integrate content on HIV/AIDS in vocational training programmes and disseminate experiences with positive results in the country and in the region

Provide support to people with HIV/AIDS, by their integration in income-generating activities and in solidarity actions

Adopt and implement a code of conduct in accordance with the ILO on HIV/AIDS in the workplace

**Twenty-eight per cent of NEPS commit to the right of people with disabilities to decent work and to combat attitudinal, physical and informational barriers to equal opportunities faced by them in the world of work.** Mongolia 2016, Nepal 2005 and Sri Lanka 2012 consider creating a supportive environment for them in the workplace, while Albania 2014, Mozambique 2006 and Sri Lanka 2012 also envisage introducing incentives to motivate employers to recruit persons with disabilities. Iraq 2011 seeks to establish a national council for persons with disabilities to formulate a national policy and monitor the situation of persons with disabilities in the country. Liberia 2009 commits to developing adequate legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. This could include providing for adjustment and accommodation of jobs as well as specific measures such as quotas and other affirmative actions. The Liberia 2009 NEP also envisages developing systems of assistance for persons obtaining, maintaining or returning to employment as well as monitoring employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in all employment services, and labour force surveys. Liberia 2009 and Mozambique 2016 look at ensuring better access to training opportunities, placement services and employment. Finally, Moldova 2016 commits to implementing a mandatory quota of employment of people with disabilities.

**Ten per cent of NEPs commit to combating forced labour and 28 per cent of NEPs stand for the elimination of child labour.** Sri Lanka 2012, for example, mentions that child labour in hazardous activities will be eliminated, while support to families of working children will be provided to support the elimination of child labour. Zambia 2005 considers monitoring child labour trends, reviewing existing regulations, conducting awareness-raising campaigns as well as facilitating the provision of education and training to children. Peru 2011 aims at strengthening institutions fighting against child labour at national and regional level, ensuring the implementation of the national plan on child labour in line with ILO Conventions 182 and 138 as well as producing relevant information with a view to developing sound and evidence-based policies. Iraq 2011 considers better assessing the scale and nature of child labour, adopting a national programme to eliminate child labour as well as setting up a fund, in cooperation with the social partners, to provide children and their families with income resources and help send children back to school. In addition, it envisages strengthening labour inspection mechanisms to follow up on the issue of child labour in the private sector.

Finally, as analysed in the section 2.5 on gender below, 38 per cent of policies include measures for ensuring equal opportunities and/or preventing gender discrimination.<sup>81</sup>

## 4.5. Crosscutting issues

National employment policies include a series of horizontal themes or crosscutting issues, which are special objectives that are taken into consideration by every key priority of the strategy. Two of these are analysed below: gender and the informal economy. Others, such as youth, are not analysed here, but could be the focus of future research.

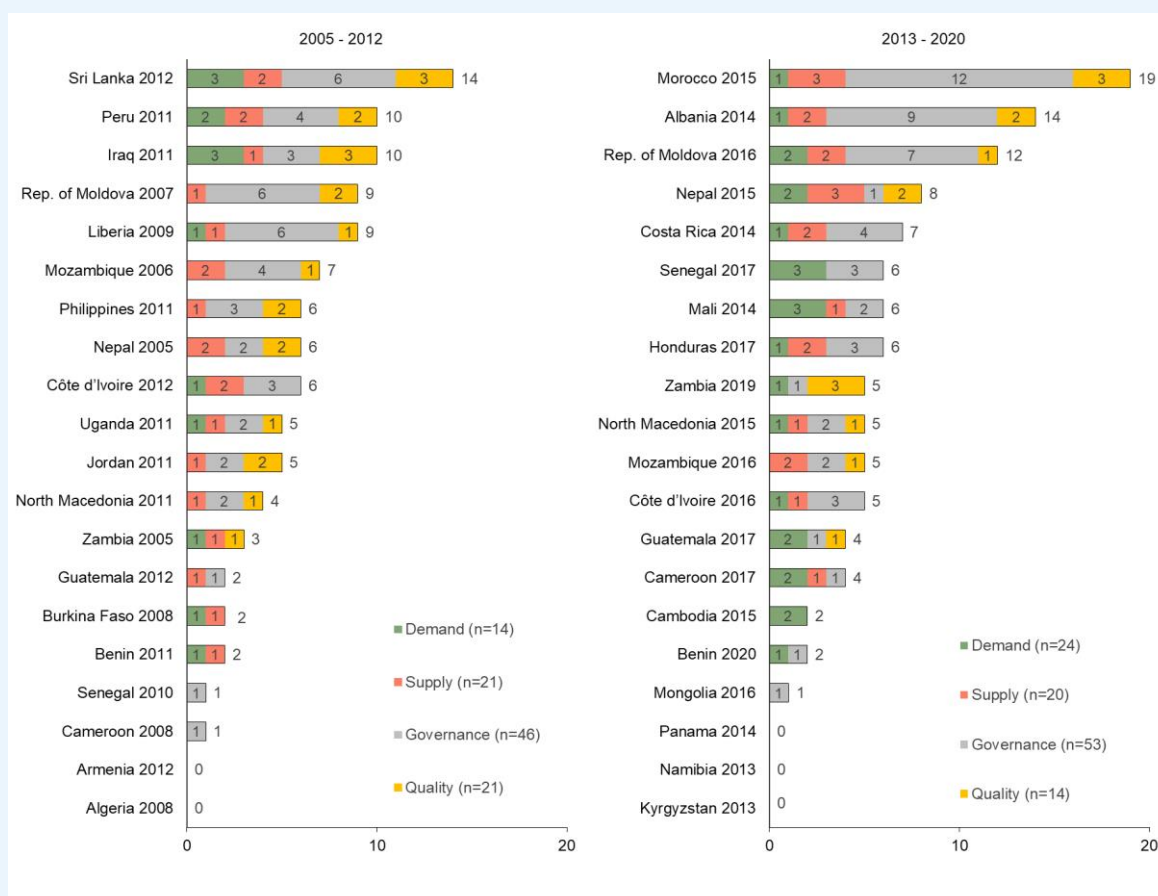
### Gender

As analysed in Part I, Chapter 3, inequalities in the labour market between women and men with respect to opportunities, treatment and outcomes persist globally. To address these challenges, national employment policies need to take fully into consideration the specific gender constraints faced by women and provide for effective gender-responsive measures. The review shows that gender concerns have been increasingly addressed in NEPs over the last 20 years, and gender is now being addressed in 90 per cent of them.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the number of gender-responsive measures have increased over the same period from 102 to 111, in particular with regard to demand-side measures.

<sup>81</sup> Albania 2014, Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

<sup>82</sup> The following NEPs do not include any gender-responsive measures nor address gender in their vision/goal or as cross-cutting issues: Algeria 2008, Armenia 2012, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Panama 2014.

► **Figure 20. Number of measures (sub-sub-policies) for gender equality in NEPs<sup>83</sup>**



Source: See table 1a.

**Gender issues are well integrated into the NEP diagnostics - but the “why” is lacking.**

It is essential to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated right from the beginning of policy development. As described in Part I of this publication,<sup>84</sup> each national employment policy is grounded in a country-level analysis of the extent, nature and dimensions of employment deficits and their determinants. Integrating a gender perspective is important because the diagnostic provides the main rationale for the NEP policy recommendations. All NEPs but two (Armenia 2012, Mongolia 2016)<sup>85</sup> include a gender analysis of employment. The inclusion of the gender dimension varies in scope and depth with some NEPs only briefly considering gender in the diagnostic. Unsurprisingly, most of those NEPs also rank low in terms of integration of gender-responsive measures (Cambodia 2015, Guatemala 2012 – see Annex 2). Conversely, some other NEPs lack a logical sequence between the diagnostic and the policy measures: gender inequality is well addressed as a problem in the NEP analysis, but any solutions are lacking in the subsequent NEP goals and/or in the policy recommendations (Namibia 2013, Panama 2014).

One reason behind this can be found in the nature of the diagnostic itself. The gender dimension of NEP diagnostic tends to focus on the nature of the employment challenges, but less on why such situation has come about for women. The gender gap for the activity rate, for example, can be similar in different countries, but yet have different root causes. The NEPs under review lack an analysis of “why did it happen?” and the likely causes

<sup>83</sup> Namibia 2013 has no specific gender-responsive measure but mentions that gender must be mainstreamed in all policy areas.

<sup>84</sup> Report: Two decades of national employment policies 2000-2020 (ilo.org)

<sup>85</sup> The Algeria 2008 and Nepal 2005 NEPs are not included as they lack a diagnostic section.

that led to the current trends and deficits in decent employment for women. Yet, this is clearly needed in order to inform future choices.

**More than 60 per cent of NEPs include gender either as a part of the main goal/vision or as a crosscutting concern.**

Fifteen NEP documents<sup>86</sup> specifically mention that the policy must benefit both women and men in their vision or goals. They most typically call for decent employment for all women and men, with the exception of Morocco's, which makes a statement for the "increase in labour force participation of youth and women". As mentioned in section 2.1, other NEPs such as Armenia 2012 or North Macedonia 2015 have included the pursuit of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in their overall goal, but without specific mention of gender equality. Another 16 policies<sup>87</sup> specifically mention that gender must be mainstreamed in all policy areas of the NEP, with 6 countries making a stronger case for gender equality by including it both as part of the NEP goal and as a crosscutting issue (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2017, Morocco 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011). No significant variations over time are observed. However, some cross-regional differences emerge. Gender as a guiding principle or in the overall goal is addressed in 83 per cent of Latin American NEPs, 67 per cent of Asia-Pacific NEPs, 70 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa documents, and 50 per cent of NEPs from the Middle East and North Africa. On the other hand, the proportion is significantly lower in Europe and Central Asia, accounting for only a 29 per cent of documents.

The review shows that there is always the danger that by putting an issue into the mainstream, it will disappear from sight: in stating at the beginning that gender should affect and cut across all aspects of the NEP without explicit and quantified targets, it might then "discharge" it from providing any explicit, clear and specific interventions which are needed to guide future actions. This is the case of NEPs such as Benin 2011 and 2020, Guatemala 2012, Mongolia 2016 or Namibia 2013, - for example, which identify gender as a crosscutting issue or in their overall goal without linking it to specific targets, and then fail to state how this concretely applies and translates for each component of the NEP.

**Setting sex-disaggregated targets occurs in a few NEPs and in the majority with regard to the quantity aspects.** Targets are important as they reveal the centrality and priority given to certain issues. As analysed in Chapter 1 above, 96 employment targets are found in 24 employment policy documents. Amongst these, only seven documents have set 12 sex-disaggregated targets. In the majority, targets refer to employment-to-population ratio, lower rate of unemployment or job creation, occasionally in association with a target on labour force participation and skills and once with informal employment. Although job quality in several dimensions is poorer for women than men on average and gender-based inequities in the labour market in general remain a primary challenge, these concerns are not well reflected in NEP targets.

**Ninety per cent of employment policies address gender concern – either by positioning it as a strategic level (i.e., as a goal, guiding principle or target) or by including gender-responsive solutions for employment, although some do more than others (see Annex 2).** Overall, the review shows that gender-responsive policies to guide the labour market is the area most commonly covered by NEPs (about 78 per cent), followed by skills policies (68 per cent) and demand-side interventions (60 per cent). This share is significantly lower for documents covering gender-responsive measures for work quality (50 per cent).

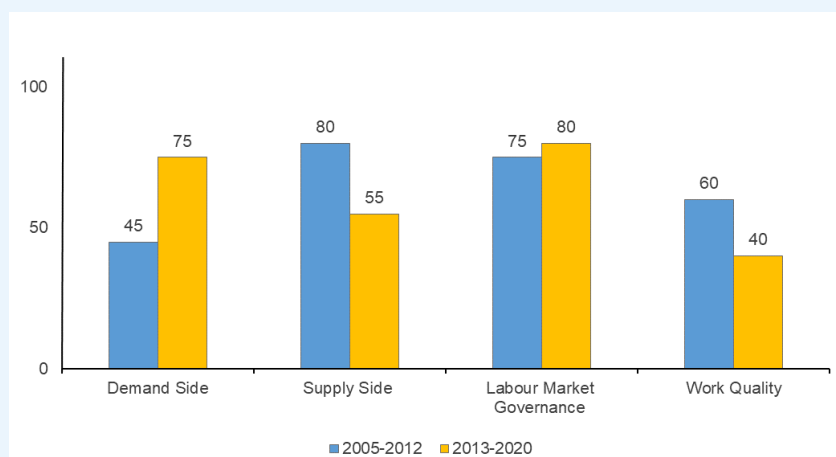
**The review indicates that the focus is shifting over time to include a growing concern for demand-side gender policies.** The policy areas addressed by the documents have been changing over the years. The number of NEPs addressing gender-responsive demand-side interventions has increased by 67 per cent over time, while the number of NEPs integrating policies for governing the labour market has increased only slightly. NEPs including supply-side and work quality provisions both declined by around 33 per cent; however, starting from a lower base for provisions on work quality (figure 21). This does not follow the overall trend for demand and supply-side policies (Section 2.1 and 2.2) which shows a slight decrease in NEPs which include demand-side policies over time and a rise in the share of documents including supply-side interventions. When looking at the

<sup>86</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2011 and 2020, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Morocco 2015, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012 and Uganda 2011.

<sup>87</sup> Cameroon 2008, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

number of sub-policies (figure 20), the review reveals that demand-side interventions show a sustained increase over the last two decades at this level as well (71 per cent). A contrary trend is observed with regard to sub-policies to enhance the quality of employment of women whose presence in NEPs has been declining by 33 per cent (from 21 to 14 interventions), while supply-side interventions and labour market policies to strengthen the governance of the labour market remain fairly stable over time.

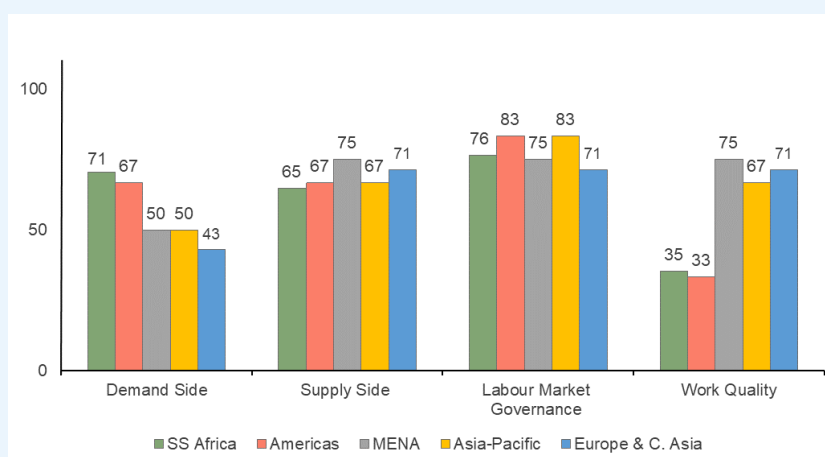
► **Figure 21. Gender-responsive measures: variation over time (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

Once we look at results by region, some cross-regional differences emerge (figure 22). All regions show a similar coverage of gender-responsive policies overall. However, while documents from sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas are more likely to have engendered policies within the demand-side measures (71 per cent and 67 per cent respectively), NEPs from the Middle East and North Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia lead the inclusion of gender measures to enhance work quality. Supply-side and labour market governance interventions show similar rates of coverage in all regions.

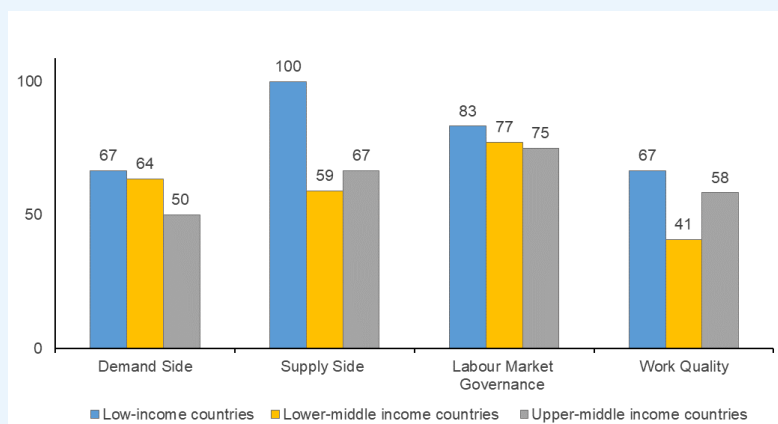
► **Figure 22. Gender responsive measures: variation by region (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

Regarding income levels, the review shows that gender-related measures are not evenly distributed in employment policies. LICs have the highest share of NEPs including gender-responsive measures in all areas. The share is lower and at a similar level for LMICs and UMICs, although following a somewhat different pattern depending on the policy area, and with the exception of work quality measures in which UMICs are significantly higher than LMICs (figure 23).

► **Figure 23. Gender responsive measures: Variation by income group (% of NEPs reviewed)**



Source: See table 1a.

**Sixty per cent of employment policies include at least one gender-responsive demand-side intervention. Their weight in NEPs has also increased significantly over time. Yet gender-responsive measures for job creation are still too little addressed - sectoral and sustainable enterprise development measures that work for women are the most common, but policies with respect to trade, investment, monetary and fiscal policies have remained gender-blind over the last two decades.**

Percentages of NEPs including gender-responsive demand-side policies vary across regions, from 71 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 67 per cent in the Americas, to 50 per cent in documents from the Middle East and North Africa and Asia and the Pacific and down to 43 per cent for Europe and Central Asia. Looking at income groupings, the review reveals that the share of NEPs decreases as the income level rises 67 per cent of documents from LICs and 64 per cent from LMICs include gender-responsive demand-side measures, and to a lesser extent in UMIC (50 per cent). Amongst all measures, gender-responsive strategies for job creation show the largest increase over the last two decades- with 45 per cent of early NEPs including at least one demand-side intervention against 75 per cent of the latest NEPs. In addition, the number of sub-policy measures has increased by around 71 per cent over the two decades. However, this grew from a low base, and still remains too little addressed. Indeed, while each employment policy includes 4.2 demand-side sub-measures on average,<sup>88</sup> gender responsive demand-side measures remain inadequately taken into account (0.95 sub-policy area per NEP on average).

Gender-responsive policies for sustainable enterprises are mentioned in 33 percent of NEPs.<sup>89</sup> It is mentioned almost exclusively with regard to measures for creating or supporting businesses owned and/or managed by women (including MSMEs, cooperatives and social enterprises) and female entrepreneurs who often face significant formal and informal discriminatory practices, such as with regard to access to credit, business networks and markets Overall, those measures include removing those barriers as well as creating the optimal conditions for women’s entrepreneurship to thrive; strengthening the institutional capacity of both financial and non-financial service providers to better serve the needs of women entrepreneurs (Côte d’Ivoire 2012, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011), building capacities for women entrepreneurs who want to start, run and grow their business (Liberia 2009, Sri Lanka 2012), providing specific tools and approaches to reinforce women’s capacities to start and consolidate sustainable businesses (Moldova 2016). The NEP for Albania 2014 looks at supporting social entrepreneurship for women, including though mentoring programmes in rural areas, while Benin 2020 looks at targeting entrepreneurship services for women to promising value chain opportunities, green jobs and the digital economy. Although a range of factors in the business environment have a direct and specific impact on businesses owned and managed by women and women’s employment (such as tax, land titles,

<sup>88</sup> See Section 2.1 which shows NEP documents according to the number of sub-policy areas they cover, from 1 to 5 (i.e., macroeconomic, sectoral, private sector development, trade and investment policies).

<sup>89</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Cameroon 2017, Côte d’Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2015, Moldova 2016, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012.

business registration procedures, legal system etc), only the Guatemala 2017 NEP looks at the regulatory environment from a gender perspective.

As for policies supporting sustainable enterprises, sectoral policies can also affect women and men differently since they are located in different segments and sectors of the economy.<sup>90</sup> Gender provisions on sectoral policies are included in 30 per cent of NEPs.<sup>91</sup> This has increased over the years (from 20 per cent of NEPs including such measures over the period 2005-2012 to 40 per cent over the last decade). These range from broad statements on promoting value chains and sectors that will positively impact employment creation for women (Cameroon 2017), assessing employment needs for both males and females at the sectoral levels (Cambodia 2014) or integrating a gender dimension in sectoral policies (Moldova 2016, Zambia 2019) to measures to promote specific sectors, such as certain segments of the care economy (North Macedonia 2015), agriculture and the rural economy (Burkina Faso 2008, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Senegal 2017, Zambia 2005), community-based jobs and services (Morocco 2015) as well as retail commerce, handicraft and processing units (Mali 2014). While 12 NEPs mention the issue of structural transformation overall (see Section 2.1), only Sri Lanka 2012 addresses the need for structural transformation processes to benefit women and include measures to encourage sectors beyond “traditional female jobs”, with a high capacity to absorb educated women, such as ICT/BPO, tourism and health services.

Economic policies – fiscal, monetary, trade, financial, etc - are often thought to be gender neutral but, like all policies, this is not the case. They impact women and men differently because of their different positions in the economy, both market (paid) and non-market (unpaid).<sup>92</sup> No employment policies take into account the different impact that trade, fiscal, monetary and investment policies can have on women and men, and

only one NEP looks at investment from a gender perspective (Honduras 2017). On the broader macro-economic framework, only two recent NEPs look at the role it can play for men and women’s employment. The Cambodia 2015 NEP looks at assessing macroeconomic performance by setting and monitoring employment targets, including a separate target for men and women (see box 12), while the NEP for Guatemala 2017 more broadly mentions that integrating employment at the core of economic policies will reduce gender inequality. The 2015 NEP for Morocco acknowledges that macroeconomic policies matter for gender equality but does not make any recommendations on that matter.

Women’s empowerment through financial inclusion is considered in 25 per cent of NEPs<sup>93</sup> – however in limited and general terms. Financial inclusion can be addressed through many different channels, including by designing an enabling environment for the financial inclusion of women and supporting equal access to the full range of financial services – savings, credit, insurance, payments – and the accompanying financial education. One in four NEPs address the gender gap in financial inclusion and almost exclusively through general provisions to enhance access to credit for women.

#### **Box 12. Cambodia- National Employment Policy 2015-2025**

Objective 1.1: To promote decent and productive employment opportunities in macroeconomic policy framework

Measure: Set and monitor employment targets, including a separate target for men and women, which reflect quantity and quality of employment.

<sup>90</sup> See gender impact of structural transformation

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_735154.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_735154.pdf).

<sup>91</sup> Burkina Faso 2008, Cambodia 2014, Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2015, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

<sup>92</sup> See Heintz, James (2015) “Why Macroeconomic Policy Matters for Gender Equality”, Policy Brief No. 4, New York: UN Women.

<sup>93</sup> Benin 2011, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d’Ivoire 2016, Iraq 2011, Mali 2014, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Senegal 2017.

**Sixty-eight per cent of NEPs look at addressing the specific challenges women face in accessing and completing quality education and training as well as entering, maintaining or progressing in the labour market. Gender-inclusive supply-side policies show a sharp decline in the share of policies which contain them. Gender and labour migration is addressed for the first time in the most recent employment policies.**

Sixty-eight per cent of NEPs include gender-responsive supply-side policies. Percentages of NEP including such measures vary slightly across regions, from 75 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa and 71 per cent in Europe and Central Asia, to around 65 per cent in documents from the Americas, Asia and the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa. Percentages also vary across economic groupings: documents from LI countries universally include gender-responsive supply-side policies, but less so in UMIC and LMIC (67 and 59 per cent respectively). While Section 2.2 shows an upward trend in the inclusion of supply-side policies in NEPs over time, gender-responsive supply-side policies do not follow the same pattern. Indeed, the number of NEPs addressing such policies decreases from 80 per cent of NEP for the period 2005-2012 to 55 per cent of NEPs for the period 2013-2020. Meanwhile, the number of sub-policies remains fairly stable over the last two decades (21 in early NEPs to 20 in the latest policies). This means that while the share of NEPs including gender-responsive supply-side interventions declines over time, the second wave of NEPs tends to include a broader set of gender-responsive supply-side measures. Finally, while each employment policy includes 2.8 supply-side sub-measures on average (see Section 2.2), gender-responsive supply-side measures are less present (one sub-policy measure per NEP on average).

Skills development plays an important role in the pursuit of equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men in the world of work. While there is evidence of overall progress in women's access to education and training, many still lack skills to participate meaningfully in the workforce and wide discrepancies still exist between men and women.

To address this challenge, 60 per cent of NEPs<sup>94</sup> envisage measures to encourage women to participate in education and training at different stages of the life-cycle, such as (i) facilitating access to basic education and training for women (Peru 2011), especially in rural areas (Albania 2014, Honduras 2017), and in job-rich sectors (Albania 2014) (ii) promoting access to secondary education through scholarships (Morocco 2015); (iii) improving women's literacy (Morocco 2015 and Nepal 2015); (iv) promoting TVET and continuous learning for women (Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Peru 2011, the Philippines 2011 and Zambia 2005), including through identifying and replicating good gender practices in life-long learning; (v) reducing gender bias/stereotypes in training materials and curriculums (Albania 2014 and Nepal 2015); (vi) promoting women's studying of technical tertiary skills (Mali 2014), such as ICT and nursing (Sri Lanka 2012), (vi) encouraging women to acquire leadership, management and business administration-related skills (Albania 2014, Cameroon 2017 and Mozambique 2016). Other measures include developing tools for gender mainstreaming, such as tracer systems and other tools for gender analysis in skills development (Albania 2014 and Uganda 2011).

Skills development offers a means of broadening occupational choices, even if higher proportions of women in training occupations do not automatically translate into higher shares of female employment in those fields. This is why 14 out of 40<sup>95</sup> employment policies include specific measures to counter socio-cultural barriers to women's participation in the labour market. The most typical approach is through policies aimed at reconciling work and family life (Albania 2014, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015), including interventions that reduce women's burden in unpaid care work and household chores, through (i) provision of pre-school and day care centres for young children and the elderly (Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Guatemala 2012, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007), and promoting incentives to enterprises that provide nursery schools (Peru 2011); (ii) promoting a more equitable sharing of care and household chores between men and women (Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012); and (iii) facilitating professional reintegration after maternity leave (Moldova 2007). Some NEPs include measures to promote women's employment in non-traditional sectors (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Jordan 2011, Moldova

<sup>94</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2011, Burkina Faso 2008, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, North Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005.

<sup>95</sup> Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Guatemala 2012, Honduras 2017, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012.



2007, Mozambique 2016, Peru 2011). Sri Lanka 2012 includes measures that address the concern for women's safety when travelling to and from work, such as the provision of safe and efficient transport services through public-private partnerships and strengthening law and order to ensure a secure environment for women to travel.

Three NEPs from the period 2013-2020 look at the gender dimension of labour mobility and migration, albeit taking a different approach. Morocco 2015 looks at validating migrants' skills acquired abroad, while targeting women with a low level of education and those who face greater difficulties in reintegrating into the labour market through specific initiatives. Moldova 2016 recommends the adjustment of labour migration legislation to changes on international labour markets, including female migration. Finally, Nepal 2015 includes policies to manage migrant and immigrant workers appropriately, with emphasis on ensuring safe and decent foreign employment for women.

**Seventy-eight per cent of NEPs include gender-responsive policies to govern the labour market. The review shows a slight increase in the share of NEPs including such policies as well as sub-policy areas, reflecting an increase in some interventions, especially in particular incentives/subsidies to hire and entrepreneurship development programmes. In addition, some measures appear for the first time in the latest NEPs including gender-responsive employment services and unemployment benefits. Conversely, less attention is being given to public employment schemes or the promotion of gender equality through labour laws, with a decrease of more than 70 per cent over the last two decades.**

Gender-responsive measures to guide the labour market are the most common in the NEPs studied. Overall, they seem to be evenly distributed among regions and income groupings (see figure 21). Section 2.3 shows a modest upward trend in the inclusion of labour market governance policies in NEPs over time overall. Gender-responsive policies governing the labour market seem to follow the same pattern, although to a lesser extent. Indeed, the number of NEPs addressing those issues increased marginally (from 75 to 80 per cent). Looking at the sub-policy areas, their number increased by 10 per cent (from 30 in early NEPs to 33 in the latest policies). In addition, while each employment policy includes 5.7 labour market policies on average (see Section 2.3), gender responsive supply-side measures are significantly less present (1.57 per NEP on average).

Employment services, as the primary institution for planning and executing labour market policies as well as matching job seekers with job opportunities, are central to a well-functioning labour market. As such, they can play a key role in promoting gender equality in the labour market, especially if equal opportunity principles are embedded within their rules and organization. Only ten per cent of NEPs consider taking a gender approach to employment services, and only for the period 2013-2020, either by: (i) promoting appropriate regulation of private employment agencies (Moldova 2016) and promoting cooperation between public and private employment agencies (Morocco 2015) or (ii) in the context of modernizing and reforming PES to enhance ways in which they could become an important tool in achieving gender equality. Indeed, Albania 2014 aims at integrating gender equality in all models, mechanisms, processes, and materials of the national employment service (NES). It also considers training all NES staff to address gender equality (see box 13). Morocco 2015 looks at expanding the target groups covered by the PES to inactive and low-qualified women, including though cooperation with NGOs. Costa Rica 2014 explicitly mentions that the PES should target women and envisages the provision of day care centres for young children so that women can attend training and benefit from the services provided. Finally, as part of the modernization process of the PES at national and local level, Moldova 2016 envisages creating a system of ongoing training for the PES staff, including gender-responsive training courses. The way in which PES operate and implement their core functions – sharing labour market information and intermediation; employment counselling and guidance; the administration of active labour market policies – may also become an important tool in achieving equality between men and women. 78 per cent of NEPs include active labour market policies in the context of gender equality:

### **Box 13. Albania- National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020: A gender approach to public employment service and labour market policies**

#### **Reorganization of NES offices**

- ✓ Gender equality and equal opportunities goals are integrated in all models, mechanisms, processes, and materials.
- ✓ Targets for female and male Roma, PWD, women in rural areas and disadvantaged categories of women are defined and monitored.
- ✓ Gender-sensitive labour mobility/migration considerations are an integral part of all relevant models, labour market information systems, mechanisms and processes

#### **Definition and implementation of an NES staff recruitment and development plan**

- ✓ Number of NES staff increased by 30%, including a minimum of 30% qualified women in leading/management positions.
- ✓ Performance management system in place and NES performance to meet female/male clients' needs is assessed twice a year.
- ✓ Equal pay for equal work pursued at NES, using sex disaggregated wage statistics.
- ✓ Staff trained according to NES Development Plan, and enabled to address gender equality, equal opportunities and diversity, and to engage in coaching for special needs groups.
- ✓ Zero tolerance of discrimination; sexual harassment policy is in place and also promoted with third parties.

#### **Assessment and design of adequate, gender-responsive labour market policies**

- ✓ ALMPs adopted and implemented in an effective, and gender-equitable manner.

#### **Registration, profiling and gender-sensitive counselling**

- ✓ NES counsellors trained and competent to deliver gender-sensitive counselling that responds to inclusion goals and diversity needs.
- ✓ NES counsellors do gender-sensitive group or individual counselling
- ✓ Designated NES counsellors are able to refer young female and male potential entrepreneurs
- ✓ Migration counters in employment offices provide tailored guidance to female and male returnee clients in order to facilitate the reintegration process.

#### **Improvement of the gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of employment measures**

- ✓ Gender equality and diversity criteria are an integral part of all monitoring and evaluation procedures and processes, and the relevant indicators of the National Set of Harmonized Gender Indicators are consistently applied.
- ✓ Period reports on the achievements of gender-sensitive targets for employment and training are prepared.

Fifty-five per cent of NEPs<sup>96</sup> (22/40) envisage special measures or programmes to help women face the specific constraints on entering or maintaining labour market attachment. Some policies include general provisions (Cameroon 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2017, Honduras 2017, Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Mongolia 2016, Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011) or envisage mainstreaming gender in all labour market policies (Albania 2014, Peru 2011, Zambia 2019). Some NEPs go into more detail. Mozambique 2006 seeks to develop employment programmes for women in the informal economy in rural and urban areas, while the NEP for Albania 2014 envisages a focus on outreach to women and girls in rural and urban areas and Senegal 2017 looks at conducting a programme to promote employment for women in agri-business value chains. Senegal 2010 considers evaluating all employment programmes from a gender perspective and to ensure that local communities have a specific employment programme for women. Finally, the 2015 Morocco NEP considers specific interventions to facilitate women's insertion in the labour market, including through community-based

<sup>96</sup> Albania 2014, Cameroon 2008, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Guatemala 2012 and 2017, Honduras 2017, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Mongolia 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Nepal 2005, North Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011, Senegal 2010 and 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2019.

jobs. Sri Lanka 2012 looks at integrated measures including subsidized micro-credit and access to social service packages.

Measures to support training for self-employment or entrepreneurship are included in 45 per cent of NEPs.<sup>97</sup> A few NEPs envisage programmes to support women's employment, including through self-employment or income-generating activities (Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Honduras 2017, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012), including in job-rich value chains (Benin 2020), in priority sectors such as commerce, rural development, handicrafts and industry (Mali 2014) or agriculture (Senegal 2017). Beyond general provisions (Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Mali 2014, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2015), this includes ensuring training adapted or specifically designed for women (Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011), in particular rural women (Albania 2014, Morocco 2015, Sri Lanka 2012) as well as ensuring women's representation and promoting their participation in entrepreneurial training (Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007). Peru 2011 and Sri Lanka 2012 seek to enhance women's technological and management skills and encourage them to become business owners/proprietors.

Twenty-three per cent of policy documents<sup>98</sup> consider promoting gender-responsive career guidance and counselling, either by proclaiming it as a general principle (Uganda 2011) or targeting specific groups (low-qualified and inactive women in the 2015 Morocco NEP or women graduates in the case of Sri Lanka 2012). Some NEPs provide more detailed measures. The NEP for Albania 2014, for example, provides for training of NES counsellors and allow them to deliver gender-responsive counselling that responds to inclusion goals and diversity needs, while Moldova 2016 looks at developing new gender-responsive career guidance methodologies. Jordan 2011 looks at utilizing mobile phone-based services to facilitate access by women, while Moldova 2007 seeks to expand community or regional counselling and professional orientation networks for women returning to the labour market after maternity leave. Iraq 2011 looks at strengthening vocational counselling and guidance services, with particular emphasis on entrepreneurship and particularly for young women. The NEP for Morocco 2015 envisages combating gender stereotypes that limit women's career choices.

Fifteen per cent of policies look at providing incentives to employers to recruit women workers. This has increased significantly over the years, from 1 NEP (Sri Lanka 2012) for the period 2002-2012 to five NEPs for the following period (Albania 2014, Costa Rica 2014, Honduras 2017, Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2015). In the case of North Macedonia 2015, the intervention specifically targets care workers with the introduction of a voucher system for hiring nannies and cleaning staff, while in Sri Lanka 2012 incentives are targeted at large corporate firms to recruit female graduates.

Another important role of employment services is to support people facing barriers to work such as lack of skills. 13 per cent of NEPs provide measures to develop skills suited to women to enter the labour market (North Macedonia 2011). Some NEPs consider up/re-skilling interventions to encourage transition for women (i) towards sectors or occupations with high employment potential (Albania 2014, Morocco 2015); (ii) from inactivity/unemployment to employment (Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015), and (iii) from school to work (Liberia 2009).

Only 13 per cent of policy documents (five NEPs) look at social stabilizers (including public employment guarantee schemes, emergency public works, other direct job creation schemes) from a gender perspective - only one for the period 2013-2020. The NEPs of Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2006 and Philippines 2011 mention that special efforts will be made to improve the gender balance in access to emergency employment programmes, while the Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016 NEPs aim more globally at creating employment for women and men through employment intensive works.

Other measures and policies such as social dialogue, labour legislation, unemployment benefits, labour market information systems and wage policies also include a gender perspective but to a lesser extent.

Twenty-three per cent of NEPs<sup>99</sup> look at labour legislation from a gender perspective. This has decreased significantly over the years: from 35 per cent to 10 per cent of NEPs. Jordan 2011 envisages reviewing provisions

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<sup>97</sup> Albania 2014, Benin 2020, Cameroon 2017, Costa Rica 2014, Côte d'Ivoire 2012 and 2016, Honduras 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Mali 2014, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012.

<sup>98</sup> Albania 2014, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Morocco 2015, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011.

<sup>99</sup> Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Peru 2011, Philippines 2011.

in the labour law that affect women's employment, including part-time work and teleworking, while Mozambique 2006 looks at providing legal provisions to combat discriminatory practices in employment for women in the formal sector. Peru 2011 looks more broadly at better disseminating the Labour Code, in particular provisions on equal opportunities for men and women and work of equal value. Morocco 2015 looks at revising the Labour Code to better address gender issues as well as reinforcing, feminizing and sensitizing labour inspection by addressing gender-based discrimination. Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009 and Moldova 2007 look at including gender provisions in labour legislation and/or removing discriminatory practices based on gender. Philippines 2011 considers amending the Labour Code alongside the provision of maternity protection and other maternal and childcare benefits consistent with rights to equal employment opportunities and non-discrimination in employment.

Eighteen per cent of NEPs look at closing the gender pay gaps.<sup>100</sup> Mozambique 2016 provides general statements on addressing gender wage gaps, while other NEPs provide further details. Moldova 2016 specifies that this should be done through a gender-responsive collective bargaining process, while Albania 2014 sets a quantified target (reduction of the gender wage gap by four percentage points). Morocco 2015 considers establishing a dashboard to monitor the differences between the remuneration for men and women and Moldova 2007 and Liberia 2009 look at better monitoring and identifying the main factors that determine gender wage gaps, and the social value attached to the occupations reflected in wage levels with a view to a general equalization of remuneration (Moldova 2007). Sri Lanka 2012 envisages a study to identify any gaps in giving effect to the provisions of the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value ratified by Sri Lanka and to initiate remedial measures.

Fifteen per cent of NEPs commit to having a gender responsive labour market information system.<sup>101</sup> This takes different forms depending on the country, with focused interventions such as Mozambique 2006 which looks at collecting data on women's participation in the formal sector or Uganda 2011 which considers ensuring that all labour statistics are gender disaggregated. Other NEPs take a more comprehensive approach, such as Albania 2014 and Morocco 2015, which both consider integrating gender equality at the core of all monitoring and evaluation procedures and processes. In addition, Moldova 2016 provides for the creation of a Labour Market Observatory with a thematic specialization on different target groups, including women. In addition, Liberia 2009 also considers monitoring to what extent gender is addressed in new policies as well as ensuring gender reporting to the Parliament (see box 14).

Despite the importance of social dialogue for ensuring fair labour markets, only ten per cent of NEPs look at the role that social dialogue can play for in advancing gender equality in the world of work. While early NEPs tend to make general statements, the latest generation of policies contain for more focused provisions. Morocco 2015 considers combating gender discrimination within social dialogue and more specifically integrating topics in collective bargaining that are essential to achieving gender parity at work and in the family, while the NEP for Albania 2014 looks at ensuring a 30 per cent minimum quota of women in leading and decision-making positions on the National Labour Council and Sectoral Committees. Finally, the NEP for Sri Lanka 2012 aims at making social dialogue more relevant and responsive to women's working lives, and the NEP for Peru 2011 looks at integrating gender equality as well as encouraging women's participation in the National Labour Council.

Finally, unemployment benefits, like any other policies, need to be designed in a way that benefits women and men equitably. However, only five per cent of NEPs (two countries) address this concern. The NEP for Morocco 2015 specifically mentions that employment loss compensation should be accompanied by special measures for

► **Box 14. Liberia Employment Policy 2009**

**Liberia Development of Government monitoring and reporting on gender and employment**

*"...ensure all labour statistics are gender disaggregated by age and deepen this information with strategic gender impact assessments. Ensure these impact studies consider how well new policies and plans address the needs of women, including the Decent Work Act. Gender-based analysis of reporting on labour by the Ministry of Labour will be a key part of our yearly report to Parliament."*

<sup>100</sup> Albania 2014, Liberia 2009, Morocco 2015, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Mozambique 2016, Sri Lanka 2012.

<sup>101</sup> Albania 2014, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2016, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006, Uganda 2011.

women, while the NEP for Moldova 2016 considers revising the legislation on employment and social protection of jobseekers by integrating a gender dimension.

**Although women tend to be disproportionately represented in low-quality employment, benefit less from social protection coverage and face specific barriers to entering, remaining and progressing in the labour market, policies to enhance the quality of women's employment address this concern in only half of NEPs, and this has decreased significantly over time.**

Gender-based policies for work quality are the least common in NEPs. However, percentages of NEP including such interventions vary across regions, from 75 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa and 71 per cent in Europe and Central Asia to around 67 per cent of documents from Asia. This share is significantly lower in sub-Saharan Africa (35 per cent) and the Americas (33 per cent). Percentages also vary across economic groupings: gender-responsive policies for work quality are more common in LICs (67 per cent) but appear in only 58 per cent of the documents from UMICs and 41 from LMICs. Section 2.4 shows a downward trend in the inclusion of provisions on work quality in NEPs and gender-responsive measures for work quality seem to follow the same pattern. Indeed, the number of NEPs addressing these issues has decreased by 33 per cent (from 12 to 8). Looking at the sub-policies, they also declined by 33 per cent (from 21 in early NEPs to 14 in the latest policies). In addition, while each employment policy includes 2.2 work quality sub-policy areas on average (see section 2.4), gender-responsive work quality measures are less present (0.88 per NEP on average).

Equitable access to gender-responsive social protection is another key element in achieving and enhancing women's empowerment and opportunities. On the other hand, gender-blind systems can perpetuate unequal gender relations and may even, in some cases, exacerbate them. 28 per cent of NEPs<sup>102</sup> look at social protection systems which address gender-related risks over different stages of the lifecycle. Iraq 2011 looks at providing a support system for women, in particular widowed and divorced women. Jordan 2011 and Philippines 2011 specifically look at ensuring maternity protection and benefits, while Morocco 2015 looks at taking into account the specific constraints faced by women in relation to family responsibilities when calculating pension benefits and combating discrimination based on sex or marital status relating to the surviving spouse's benefit. Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2019 look at promoting social security in businesses owned by women and for self-employed women. Albania 2014 considers establishing a system for registration of women workers to receive the minimum social protection and Macedonia 2011 and 2015 look at providing income security for the groups with the highest risk of social exclusion, including women from the ethnic communities. Moldova 2007 looks at the gradual equalization of the pension age for women and men, while Moldova 2016 takes a more general approach and envisages a review of the law on social protection with a gender perspective.

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<sup>102</sup> Albania 2014, Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Moldova 2007 and 2016, Morocco 2015, North Macedonia 2011 and 2015, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2019.

▶ **Box 15. National Employment Policy Peru 2011: Promoting equal opportunities and treatment between men and women and non-discrimination in the labour market, guaranteeing the full exercise of women's economic rights, particularly those in vulnerable situations**

**Strategies**

Continuously monitor the situation and specific needs of women in the implementation of public policies and strategies to promote decent employment.

Design and implement affirmative action mechanisms in favour of women to reduce gender-based occupational segregation, as well as promote their access to managerial positions and highly specialized jobs, both in the public and private sectors.

Incorporate into active labour market policies the perspective of equal opportunities between men and women, and an equal share between women and men for family responsibilities, enabling women's access to jobs and labour participation.

Develop specific actions aimed at promoting female employment and access to decent jobs under equal conditions and opportunities, emphasizing the particular needs of women with disabilities, indigenous, rural, youth and migrants.

Promote incentives in companies that implement childcare services and/or working conditions aimed at overcoming discrimination and gender-based occupational segregation, due to their family responsibilities.

Design and implement mechanisms to prevent and punish sexual harassment.

Promote support centres for the promotion of breastfeeding and infant cribs that allow the development of female employment.

Promote standards that protect workers and workers with family responsibilities.

Promote business initiatives of women, promoting programmes and projects aimed at improving their enterprises, through training in business management and technological aspects, facilitating their access to microcredit and associations.

Policies on ensuring equal opportunities and/or preventing gender discrimination are found in 38 per cent of NEPs.<sup>103</sup> Some NEPs include general statements on eliminating gender discrimination in the workplace and/or in the course of career development and ensuring equality of opportunity (Albania 2014, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2005 and 2019). Some more specific measures include better understanding and monitoring of gender inequalities and division of labour (Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007, Sri Lanka 2012), including through greater involvement of women's organizations (Sri Lanka 2012), and introducing measures to address them. These include interventions to (i) combat sexism and gender stereotyping in the workplace (Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005, Sri Lanka 2012) (ii) expand the list of professions available to women and promote their access to managerial positions and highly specialized jobs in both public and private sectors (Moldova 2007, Peru 2011) (iii) facilitate women's reintegration after maternity leave (Moldova 2007); (iv) prevent sexual harassment in job search and workplaces (Albania 2014, Mozambique 2016, Nepal 2005, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012); (v) design and implement affirmative action mechanisms in favour of women to reduce occupational segregation by gender (Nepal 2005, Peru 2011); (vi) review all laws so that they are conducive to women's employment (Iraq 2011); and (vii) strengthen the labour inspectorate body in detecting gender discrimination (Morocco 2015) and set up gender audits within companies to combat direct and indirect discrimination (Morocco 2015 and Nepal 2005). Morocco 2015 also looks at reinforcing women's capacities to defend their rights, including by integrating the Council on Equality and Fight against Discrimination in employment councils, both at national and local level. Finally, Finally, Moldova 2007 commits to monitoring the application of national policies on equal opportunities as well as the establishment of the institutional framework ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market.

<sup>103</sup> Albania 2014, Guatemala 2017, Iraq 2011, Liberia 2009, Moldova 2007, Morocco 2015, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Peru 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Uganda 2011, Zambia 2005 and 2019.

► **Box 16. National Employment Strategy 2015-2025- Morocco: Creating a new contract facilitating work-life balance**

It is recommended to engage a discussion to identify a new legal form of contract. This would consist of giving the possibility to employers and workers to establish a new part-time contract. The part-time contract is a category of contract that can be chosen by persons having family responsibilities and who would like to better reconcile private and professional life. It is a new legal contract facilitating the integration in the labour market of inactive women who cannot reconcile private and professional life. Yet, given the risks of precariousness associated with this type of contract and to reduce the development of forced part-time contracts, people with part-time contracts should have the priority within their enterprise to go back to or obtain a full-time contract. People with part-time contracts contribute to social security in proportion to their salary and have full rights, according to parameters to be defined, with respect to social security benefits, other than retirement.

Twenty-three per cent of NEPs<sup>104</sup> look at working conditions (i.e., hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules as well as the physical conditions and mental demands that exist in the workplace) from a gender perspective. Zambia 2019 looks at promoting occupational safety and health and labour standards in businesses owned by women, while Philippines 2011 looks at gender issues in the workplace, including gender-responsive OSH programmes. Morocco 2015 looks at creating a new form of contract to better reconcile work and family life, while ensuring this does not entail increased precarity, insufficient social security coverage and fewer opportunities for career advancement (see box 16). It also considers setting up a dashboard for monitoring gender equality in working conditions. Jordan 2011 looks at reviewing laws and regulations affecting working conditions, part-time jobs and working from home and removing regulatory obstacles associated with them. Nepal 2005 considers enhancing women's employment by making workplaces and the work environment women and family friendly, including through the provision of affirmative discrimination, maternal safety, security and suitable leave facilities, while Nepal 2015 looks more precisely at ensuring safe and decent foreign employment for women. Iraq 2011 encourages the private sector and the government to adopt flexible work schedules which enable women to work through flexible and partial work assignments, whether through assignments to be done at home, or through local associations which produce goods which may be promoted and marketed by a third party. It specifies that challenges faced by women in rural areas are different from those facing women in urban areas and cities, and hence that the programmes should be tailored according to the geographical region. Similarly, Sri Lanka 2012 promotes more flexible work arrangements, such as part-time work and work that can be done online. In that regard, it mentions that telecommunications and other infrastructure facilities necessary to support online working arrangements will be further developed.

## Informal economy<sup>105</sup>

Informality is an important characteristic of labour markets in the world. In 2016, about 61 per cent of all workers in the world were in informal employment or about 2 billion workers worldwide, 1.3 billion of them in Asia, 360 million in Africa and 150 million in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>106</sup> Latest ILO figures on the impact of the COVID crisis show that informality has been further exacerbated in its wake. Indeed, by the last quarter of 2021, the recovery in informal employment had overtaken that of formal employment, increasing the share of informal employment in total employment.<sup>107</sup> The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) provides the rationale and guidance on policies for the transition to formality.<sup>108</sup> This section first examines whether NEPs goals and strategic objectives refer to informal employment and, as a second phase how interventions as set out in R204 are addressed in employment policy documents and to what extent.

<sup>104</sup> Iraq 2011, Jordan 2011, Nepal 2005 and 2015, Morocco 2015, Peru 2001, Philippines 2011, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2019.

<sup>105</sup> Based on V. Leung, Policy Frameworks for Transition to Formality: Formalization Strategy and Plan and National Employment Policy, ILO, 2020. [https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS\\_792080/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_792080/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>106</sup> Global employment policy review 2020. Employment policies for inclusive structural transformation. ILO, 2020.

<sup>107</sup> ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Eighth edition.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_824092.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_824092.pdf)

<sup>108</sup> See Recommendation R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) (ilo.org)

**Informality is acknowledged as a challenge in all the diagnostics with one exception.** However, this is not always then translated into concrete solutions at a later stage in the policy. As for gender, the reason may be found in the nature of the NEP diagnostics. If the reasons of informality are not properly analysed, it is difficult to then formulate concrete recommendations for solving the problems.

**Overall, employment policies seek to facilitate the transition to formality - and this increases significantly over time.**

Sixty per cent of the NEPs in the sample take into account the issue of the transition to formality at a strategic level (45 per cent of NEP against 70 per cent over the last two decades). Among these, 7 NEPs place transition to formality as a goal to be achieved, 18 of them consider transition to formality as a strategic objective and 7 NEPs include formalization targets. The latter two have significantly increased over time (from 6 to 12 NEPs and from 1 to 6 NEPs respectively) (table 26).

► **Table 26. Informality in the NEP goals, strategic objectives and formalization targets**

	2005-2012	2013-2020
Transition to formality as a policy goal/vision	<b>4-</b> Moldova 2007 Mozambique 2006 North Macedonia 2011 Peru 2011	<b>3-</b> Guatemala 2017 Moldova 2016 Namibia 2013
Transition to formality as a strategic objective	<b>6-</b> Cameroon 2008 Liberia 2009 Senegal 2010 Sri Lanka 2012 Uganda 2011	<b>12-</b> Cambodia 2015 Cameroon 2017 Costa Rica 2014 Guatemala 2017 Mali 2014 Moldova 2016 Morocco 2015 Mozambique 2016 Namibia 2013 Nepal 2015 Senegal 2017 Zambia 2019
Formalization targets	<b>1-</b> Moldova 2007	<b>6-</b> Albania 2014 Costa Rica 2014 Guatemala 2017 Moldova 2016 Mongolia 2016 Namibia 2013

Source: See table 1a.

With regard to targets on formalization, some are specific and are set with regard to qualitative and quantitative terms (Moldova 2007 and 2015, Namibia 2013), while others are more general and indirect in nature (Costa Rica 2014). Only the 2016 NEP for Moldova provides targets disaggregated by sex and urban/rural area.



► **Table 27. Targets on formalization**

Country	Target
Albania 2014	Reducing the share of informal employment in non-agriculture sectors from 40% in 2012 to 30% by 2020
Costa Rica 2014	Reducing informality by reducing the unemployment rate from 8.5 per cent to 7% in 2018, by creating at least 217,000 new jobs during the same period
Guatemala 2017	Decrease of informality based on four indicators: (i) decrease in the number of workers who have access to the benefits of labour formalization; (ii) increase in the coverage of the social security scheme for salaried workers, (iii) promotion and facilitation of the incorporation of self-employed workers in the social security scheme and, (iv) strengthening spaces for tripartite social dialogue and mechanisms for fixing and adjusting minimum wages.
Mongolia 2016	Percentage of workers in informal sector (23.0 by 2015; 14.1 by 2020 and 11.7 by 2025)
Moldova 2007	The share of people employed in the informal sector as percentage of the total number of employees (12.1% in 2005; 10% in 2010; 8% in 2015 and 3% in 2020)
Moldova 2016	Increase in the share of formal employment from 65.2% in 2015 to 67.5% in 2020. Targets are disaggregated by sex and urban and rural area
Namibia 2013	By 2017, more than 60% of Namibians are employed in the formal economy and more decent jobs are created in the informal economy

Source: See table 1a.

**NEPs increasingly seek to provide integrated solutions to informality**

The following analysis is based on the list of 20 policy areas that an integrated policy framework should address in order to achieve the threefold objectives<sup>109</sup> in R204 according to national circumstances. Table 8 indicates which policy areas and measures directly and explicitly targeting the transition to formality are included in NEPs.

The review shows that 85 per cent of NEPs mention interventions to support the transition to formality through specific measures and/or by positioning it at a strategic level (i.e., as a goal, objective or target). Coverage varies across regions and economic groupings. Documents from the Americas and LICs universally include specific measures. It is also common in documents from sub-Saharan African countries (88 per cent), and Asia and the Pacific (83 per cent) but less so in the Middle East and North Africa (75 per cent) and Europe and Central Asia (57 per cent). Around 80 per cent of documents from LMIC and UMI provide measures on informality. The number of such interventions increases over time: from 79 for the first period under review to 86 for the latest period. This reflects a higher number of interventions aimed at (i) ensuring a conducive business and investment environment, increasing from 25 to 50 per cent (R204 – 3); (ii) improving access to education and skills development, increasing from 40 to 55 per cent (R204 – 8), and (iii), and supporting entrepreneurship and economic units, increasing from 40 to 60 per cent (R204 – 7). The other measures remain fairly stable overall, with the exception of interventions on income security which decrease from 25 to 10 per cent (R204 – 18).

Among the eight countries in the sample that have two NEPs, the review reveals that in the majority (5 countries), interventions to facilitate the transition to formality gained ground from the first to the next generation of NEPs (Cameroon, Benin, Guatemala, Moldova and Nepal). In the case of Benin and Nepal, informal employment was

<sup>109</sup> (a) facilitate the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while respecting workers' fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship;  
 (b) promote the creation, preservation and sustainability of enterprises and decent jobs in the formal economy and the coherence of macroeconomic, employment, social protection and other social policies; and  
 (c) prevent the informalization of formal economy jobs.

not covered in the first generation of NEP and became apparent in the second wave. Beyond a rise in the number of policy interventions (see table 24), there is also a move from general prescriptions to more concrete measures. For example, while measures in the first NEP for Guatemala were quite general, the second generation recognizes the policy guidance contained in R204 and proposes concrete and specific measures adapted to the national context. For Senegal, the number of policy interventions remained the same over time, while in the cases of Côte d'Ivoire and North Macedonia, informal employment disappeared between the first and second generation of NEPs. In the case of Mozambique, the number of interventions decreased slightly while also taking another approach to address the transition to formality in the two generations of NEPs. The NEP adopted in 2006 focuses more at the micro level on specific target groups, for instance, women and MSMEs, and policy areas, such as vocational training. Policy measures in the NEP adopted in 2016 are less specific but propose a more comprehensive approach through the development of an action plan for the informal economy.

The most common approach in many NEPs is to recognize the informal economy as a challenge. Indeed, all NEPs address informal employment in their diagnostics (except Mongolia 2016)<sup>110</sup> – although to varying degrees. However, concrete policy measures are not always then proposed in the employment policy document (Algeria 2008, Armenia 2012, Benin 2011, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Macedonia 2015 and Mongolia 2016). There are also some cases where formalization is only considered as a measurement indicator of the policy results (Mongolia 2016)<sup>111</sup> but no explicit policy measure is proposed.

As for the types of intervention, the review shows that measures for SMEs and micro enterprises (R204-7), skills (R204-8) and social protection policies (R204-14) receive the most attention. Policies targeting informal economic units (including access to markets, business and financial services) as well as the promotion of a conducive business and investment environment,<sup>112</sup> represent more than 30 per cent of all interventions to facilitate the transition to formality. Skills development (R204-8) and access to social protection (R204-14) represent another 23 per cent of all interventions. Despite the importance of demand-side policies to curb informality, only two NEPs consider sectoral (R204-13) and local strategies (R204-15) and only 7 policies look at the broader relationship between economic growth, poverty reduction and informality (R204-1). Finally, interventions on work quality (i.e., equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination,<sup>113</sup> OSH policies,<sup>114</sup> fundamental principles and rights at work, labour inspection<sup>115</sup> and income security)<sup>116</sup> represent 15 per cent of the total.

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<sup>110</sup> Algeria 2008 and Nepal 2005 NEPs do not include a diagnostic section and are hence not taken into account here.

<sup>111</sup> Percentage of workers in the formal sector: 50.6 (2015), 65.7 (2020), 70.0 (2025) and percentage of workers in the informal sector: 23.0 (2015), 14.1 (2020), 11.7 (2025).

<sup>112</sup> R204 3, 7, 9, 10 and 11.

<sup>113</sup> R204-6.

<sup>114</sup> R204-16.

<sup>115</sup> R204-4.

<sup>116</sup> R204-18.

► **Table 28. Policy areas recommended in R204 addressed in NEPs**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	#
Albania 2024			✓					✓									✓				
Algeria 2008																					
Amenia 2012																					
Benin 2011																					
Benin 2020							✓	✓						✓							✓
Burkina Faso 2008					✓									✓							
Cambodia 2015			✓	✓	✓		✓														
Cameroon 2008																					✓
Cameroon 2017		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓		✓					
Costa Rica 2014		✓	✓				✓							✓		✓	✓	✓			
Côte d'Ivoire 2012					✓		✓		✓												
Côte d'Ivoire 2016																					
Guatemala 2012	✓		✓																		
Guatemala 2017	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓			✓	✓			
Mali 2014		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓							
Honduras 2017						✓															
Iraq 2011			✓					✓	✓				✓	✓					✓		
Jordan 2011		✓																			
Kyrgyzstan 2013																					
Liberia 2009	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓						✓	✓				✓		
Moldova 2007	✓	✓	✓		✓									✓							
Moldova 2016	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓			✓						
Mongolia 2016																					
Morocco 2015							✓	✓		✓											
Mozambique 2006		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓							
Mozambique 2016		✓	✓					✓	✓				✓	✓							
Namibia 2013			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					
Nepal 2005		✓			✓			✓											✓		
Nepal 2015		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				✓							
North Macedonia 2011																					✓
North Macedonia 2015																					
Panama 2014							✓														
Peru 2011				✓	✓		✓				✓			✓			✓	✓			
Philippines 2011		✓			✓		✓	✓						✓		✓					
Sri Lanka 2012		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
Senegal 2010	✓	✓												✓							
Senegal 2017	✓	✓						✓						✓							
Uganda 2011		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓									
Zambia 2005						✓	✓	✓	✓					✓							
Zambia 2019							✓	✓													
Total	7	16	15	4	14	5	20	19	9	5	3	6	2	19	2	5	4	7	0	0	3

Source: See table 1a.

Note: In R204, this integrated policy framework should address:

1. The promotion of strategies for sustainable development, poverty eradication and inclusive growth, and the generation of decent jobs in the formal economy;
2. The establishment of an appropriate legislative and regulatory framework;
3. The promotion of a conducive business and investment environment;

4. Respect for and promotion and realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work;
5. The organization and representation of employers and workers to promote social dialogue;
6. The promotion of equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence, including gender-based violence, at the workplace;
7. the promotion of entrepreneurship, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and other forms of business models and economic units, such as cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy units;
8. access to education, lifelong learning and skills development;
9. access to financial services, including through a regulatory framework promoting an inclusive financial sector;
10. access to business services;
11. access to markets;
12. access to infrastructure and technology;
13. the promotion of sectoral policies;
14. the establishment of social protection floors, where they do not exist, and the extension of social security coverage;
15. the promotion of local development strategies, both rural and urban, including regulated access for use of public space and regulated access to public natural resources for subsistence livelihoods;
16. effective occupational safety and health policies;
17. efficient and effective labour inspections;
18. income security, including appropriately designed minimum wage policies;
19. effective access to justice; and
20. international cooperation mechanisms.

# Some NEPs do not include one of the 20 policy areas as laid out in R204, but still provide general provisions to support the transition to formality and are hence reported here.

### **The most common intervention for the transition to formality consists of the promotion of entrepreneurship, MSMEs and other forms of economic unit (R204 – 7)**

SMEs and micro enterprises receive the most attention and are considered as the driving force for formal job creation to facilitate the transition to formality. Indeed, the policy area on the promotion of entrepreneurship, MSMEs and other forms of business models and economic units is included in 50 per cent of NEPs. This increases over time, from 40 per cent of earlier NEPs to 60 per cent of the most recent.

Some NEPs have general provisions to support informal entrepreneurs and MSME (Côte d'Ivoire 2012, Honduras 2014, Panama 2014), others target specific groups (such as women entrepreneurs in Liberia 2009 or rural areas in Zambia 2019). Most NEPs provide concrete measures. The majority of policy measures aim at increasing the productivity and income of informal economic units by setting up a national pilot programme or special plan to address their needs and support their transition to formality (Cameroon 2017, Liberia 2009). This includes enhancing infrastructure and municipal services for their benefit, securing property and tenure rights in municipal and urban planning, as well as making credit, information and business development services more accessible (Liberia 2009, Mozambique 2006, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Philippines 2011). The NEP for Sri Lanka 2012 envisages the creation of a database of informal enterprises participating in credit and business development programmes so that factors that ensure survival and expansion of firms or precipitate their dissolution can be better identified. In Morocco 2015, the NEP looks at accompanying the implementation of the self-employed entrepreneur law and facilitating the social and economic upgrading of informal units. The NEP in Uganda specifically looks at boosting the productivity of informal economic units and encouraging them to participate in supply chains through upstream and downstream linkages. The Namibian NEP 2013 considers supporting informal economic units to access bigger tenders, while the NEP of Cambodia 2014 envisages providing incentives for those transforming their informal business into a formal one.

Various NEPs also address the labour skill constraints and look at enhancing access to quality training for informal economic units (Honduras 2014, Morocco 2015, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012, Zambia 2019) and/or to promote entrepreneurship as a career option by including courses on entrepreneurship in the curriculum at all levels of the education system and training on basic business skills (Liberia 2009, Sri Lanka 2012).

Concerning other forms of business model and economic unit, the NEP adopted in 2016 in Moldova supports the promotion of the social economy and social entrepreneurship by developing a legal framework and raising awareness about the potential impact of the social economy. The NEP in Costa Rica 2014 proposes designing a special tax regime for the social solidarity economy. Four NEPs look at cooperatives to promote rural entrepreneurship, business development and employment creation in rural areas (Mali 2014, Nepal 2015, Peru 2011, Zambia 2005). Peru 2001 promotes entrepreneurship and formalization to increase the competitiveness of MSEs and cooperatives for greater access to internal and external market. The NEP in Nepal 2015 encourages priority groups to organize their occupations and sectors to become more productive by creating cooperatives.

### **Forty-eight per cent of NEPs look at extending social protection to informal workers (R204 – 14)**

R204 recommends the establishment of social protection floors, where they do not exist, and the extension of social security coverage. 19 NEPs address this issue with no variation over time. Some NEPs make general provisions (Guatemala 2017, Moldova 2007, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Namibia 2013, Nepal 2015), while other NEPs provide more detail on how this should be done – either by (i) extending the existing social security system to the informal economy (Cameroon 2017, Iraq 2011, Sri Lanka 2012) (ii) designing and implementing a special social security regime for informal workers (Liberia 2009, Zambia 2005), or (iii) a combination of the two (Burkina Faso 2008, Mali 2014). The 2017 NEP for Cameroon follows the same guidance as in R204. It prioritizes actions towards the extension of social protection to workers in the informal sector, including consolidation of the national social protection floor and gradual extension of the current social insurance system complemented by voluntary mechanisms through private insurance and mutuals. Liberia 2009 offers social protection to informal workers through a basic cash transfer programme, social assistance associated with public work programmes and cash for work programmes. The NEP for Zambia 2005 considers mobilizing informal workers to form mutual aid societies that would collect contributions from members. Sri Lanka 2012 recognizes the significance and the potential of existing social security schemes in the informal sector, such as the Farmers' Pension Scheme, Fishermen's Pension Scheme and the Self-employed Persons' Pension Scheme.

**Forty-eight per cent of NEPs look at providing access to education, lifelong learning and skills development in order to support the transition to formality. We observe an upward trend towards their inclusion in NEPs from 35 per cent during the 2005-2012 period to 55 per cent over the 2013-2020 period (R204 – 8)**

The issue of skills for the transition to formality is addressed through a variety of measures. Some specific policy interventions include providing professional training and TVET for informal workers (Guatemala 2017, Mozambique 2006 and 2016, Nepal 2015, the Philippines 2011, Senegal 2017, Sri Lanka 2012 and Zambia 2005). The NEPs for Moldova 2016 and Uganda 2011 promote access to new skills development programmes for young people. The NEP adopted in 2006 in Mozambique focuses on increasing the relevance of vocational training to meet economic and labour market demand, extending vocational training to rural areas and applying community-based training methodologies. The NEP for Nepal 2015 looks at providing opportunities for informal workers to receive non-formal education, for instance, evening school and distance learning, or through grant-based professional training. To align skills, training and capacity obtained in the non-formal ways with the formal education system, opportunities will be provided for continuous education, employment-oriented training and retraining. The NEP in Morocco 2015 aims at setting up mechanisms to ensure that informal economic units can benefit from lifelong training. The 2011 Philippines NEP looks at intensifying implementation of active labour market policies and programmes that enhance the employability of informal workers. Two policies specifically focus on upgrading informal apprenticeship (Sri Lanka 2012), and with a focus on facilitating the recognition of learning acquired through informal means in the workplace (Senegal 2017). The Iraq 2011 NEP looks at providing SMEs with appropriate training consistent with modern technologies. The 2014 Albania NEP aims at introducing a certification system that includes informal learning over the working life, while the NEP for Benin 2020 envisages reforming the education system, including non-formal education.

**Forty per cent of NEPs consider establishing an appropriate legislative and appropriate framework (R204 – 2)**

The most common policy measure is to revise the existing legal framework and legislation supporting enterprise development and promote compliance with laws and regulations. Some NEPs provide more specific policy measures. The NEPs in Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011 and Senegal 2007 and 2017 plan to revise labour law and regulations to strengthen the rights of informal workers, while Sri Lanka 2012 looks at enhancing labour law implementation with a view to improving coverage for workers and flexibility for employers. The NEPs in Liberia 2009 and Nepal 2015 suggest developing the Microfinance Law and introduce legal provisions to regulate small financial institutions. The NEP adopted in 2016 in Moldova focuses on developing the legal framework for the social economy and social entrepreneurship, while Uganda 2011 commits to revising local government ordinances and byelaws to support the informal sector and micro- and small-scale enterprises. Finally, to reduce the formal/informal divide, Jordan 2011 considers reviewing laws and regulations that affect the availability of jobs for women, including working conditions, part-time jobs, working from home, and social protection, and removing the regulatory obstacles associated with them.

**Ensuring a conducive business and investment environment is increasingly addressed over time (R204 – 3)**

The promotion of a conducive business and investment environment is addressed in 38 per cent of policy documents. This has increased significantly over time, from 25 to 50 per cent of NEPs. NEPs share similar policy measures in this area. The most common practice is to promote formal business registration by simplifying the registration process, establishing a “one-stop-shop” for administrative procedures and raising awareness about the benefits of registration. For a conducive investment environment, these NEPs suggest providing tax and fiscal incentives for formal sector enterprises, such as recruitment subsidies and business upgrading mechanisms, and reducing administrative costs for tax declarations and payments with transparent and simplified procedures. Namibia 2013 proposes specifically protecting informal economy operators against unfair competition from mass produced goods from industrialized countries.

**Access to business and financial services which are relevant to business formality are also important elements of NEPs (R204 – 9 and 10)**

Thirteen per cent of NEPs include interventions to facilitate access to business services for informal economic units and 23 per cent of NEPs address the issue of access to financial services. The latter mostly includes measures to set up a regulatory framework promoting an inclusive financial sector (Sri Lanka 2012) and to provide low interest rates (Iraq 2011, Namibia 2013, Uganda 2011). Some NEPs target specific groups to improve

their access to financial services. Uganda 2011 stresses the importance of youth employment and their transition to formality and suggests developing and implementing the National Action Plan for Youth Employment by improving young people's, especially women's, access to low interest microfinance. In Nepal 2015, the NEP proposes to provide assistance to small financial institutions to acquire a certain level of deposits to enable them to offer credits to poor and marginalized communities to engage in income-generating activities. Sri Lanka 2012 looks at providing credit and business development services to SMEs on attractive terms while maintaining decent work standards (such as occupational safety and health) as eligibility criteria for such services. Finally, Mozambique 2016 specifically aims at enhancing access to finance in the informal agriculture and fishery sector.

### **Thirty-five per cent of NEPs consider social dialogue as a key element of the solution to facilitate the transition to formality (R204 – 5)**

R204 recalls that the absence of social dialogue is one of the consequences of decent work deficits in the informal economy and acknowledges that public policies can speed up the process of transition to the formal economy in a context of social dialogue. Thirty per cent of the NEPs under review clearly recognize the role of the social partners and social dialogue in the transition to formality. Philippines 2011 considers amending the Labour Code to strengthen the rights of informal workers to self-organization and collective bargaining. Namibia 2013 envisages the establishment of “informal sector bargaining forums” at regional and local level to allow informal economy organizations to negotiate a conducive environment with the relevant authorities. The 2017 NEP in Cameroon looks at reorganizing and restructuring informal workers' umbrella organizations, while the 2006 NEP for Mozambique aims at strengthening social dialogue in MSME's and in the informal unit sector. Finally, Liberia 2009 encourages SMEs to form associations and to affiliate to the major trade unions and employers' associations.

### **Eighteen per cent of NEPs link the transition to formality to sustainable development, poverty eradication and inclusive growth, and the generation of decent jobs in the formal economy (R204 – 1)**

Despite the importance of policies for inclusive and job-rich growth to curb informality, few NEPs look at the relationship between economic growth, poverty reduction and informality. Moldova 2007 takes into account the national development objectives stipulated in the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2004-2006 by supporting sustainable employment and formalization of employment. Senegal 2010 and 2017 both aim at reducing poverty through the transition to formality. The NEP for Guatemala 2012 links formalization with macroeconomic stability and seeks to avoid repeating the macroeconomic crises of the early eighties and the nineties, which reduced the economic income of Guatemalans and reduced formal employment, while the NEP 2017 for the same country has a specific objective of promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth that generates new formal economic units. Liberia 2009 and Moldova 2016 explicitly link the transition to formality to achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

### **Eighteen per cent of NEPs include the issue of income security, including appropriately designed minimum wage policies, although this decreased over time from 25 to 10 per cent (R204 – 18)**

Sri Lanka 2012 and Guatemala 2017 recognize the role of wages policy in striking a balance between employment generation and improved productivity and ensuring decent wages and livelihoods. In order to ensure the inclusion of the informal economy in this aspect, Sri Lanka 2012 considers a national minimum wage for the private sector to be used as a benchmark for wage setting in the informal sector. Guatemala 2017 proposes to develop a national wages policy through tripartite social dialogue, while Iraq 2011 examines the possibility of including informal workers in the minimum wage plan. Finally, Liberia 2009 considers targeted basic cash transfer programmes that provide some degree of income security for informal workers, i.e., social assistance associated with public work programmes and cash for work programmes.

### **The policy area on access to infrastructure and technology is included in 15 per cent of NEPs (R204 – 12)**

Moldova 2016 includes measures to develop infrastructure, especially for electronic communications for institutional coordination to prevent and combat undeclared work, while Mozambique 2006 and Namibia 2013 focus on providing water, electricity, sanitation, roads and other supporting infrastructure. Mali 2014 looks at infrastructure aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of informal economy actors. Finally, the NEP of Sri Lanka looks at enhancing access to technology.

**Other policy areas covered by R204 are little addressed in NEPs**

Apart from the above policy areas, some others are also included in only a very limited number of NEPs. These areas include equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence, and occupational safety and health policies (addressed by five NEPs), fundamental principles and rights at work and labour inspection (covered by four NEPs), access to markets (three NEPs), as well as sectoral policies and local development strategies (both addressed in two NEPs only).

Finally, a number of NEPs consider other interventions to facilitate the transition to formality that are not captured in table 25. For example, some NEPs look at better tracking, measuring and understanding of the dynamics of informality. Cambodia 2015 looks at studying and assessing the employment, incomes and productivity implications of formalizing the informal sector, while Senegal 2010 and 2017 envisages undertaking a national survey of informal employment. In addition, some NEPs (Benin 2020, Cameroon 2008, North Macedonia 2011) take a broad approach and, while facilitating the transition to formality do not provide detailed measures on how this should be addressed.





## ▶ 5. Conclusion

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This paper examines to what extent employment policies are a platform for addressing existing and future challenges in terms of employment creation, work quality, and access to jobs. All of these encompass a series of possible interventions spanning several policy areas. For example, the objective that seeks to boost job creation can be achieved through a mix of policy interventions in areas such as macroeconomic, sectoral, trade and investment policies as well as interventions to support sustainable enterprises. In other words, the objective of full employment with decent work requires actions at multiple levels and each government has a series of tools it can use to achieve this goal. This opens up a series of possible trade-offs and different policy mixes in the NEP adopted in each country. The review shows the results of these and the main trends over time as well as across regions and income groups:

**NEPs are now accepted as important policy tools to which countries commit, and the commitments they are making are more ambitious than in the past.** First, countries seem to be adopting more quantified employment targets over time, reflecting a paradigm shift from employment as a residual of growth towards explicitly targeting and planning for employment. It also reveals a stronger commitment to achieving employment objectives by policymakers as targets which invite ex-post scrutiny and evaluation while also helping in measuring performance at a later stage. Secondly, the review shows that, over the years, employment targets have tended to go beyond the merely quantitative aspects (unemployment rate or the number of jobs created) to focus more on the quality dimensions. In other words, countries are concerned about decent jobs, no longer just any job. However, only 18 per cent of NEPs include formalization targets or targets disaggregated by sex.

**Employment policies are becoming increasingly inclusive, targeting a broader range of different groups which face specific challenges in the labour market. However, inclusiveness is very little addressed in respect of policies for job creation.** Over time, employment policies have increasingly gone well beyond the traditional focus on the unemployed to cover “less visible” groups such as NEET or inactive women. Overall, youth, women, people with disabilities, migrants, informal workers as well as people living in rural, disadvantaged and remote regions are the most targeted in NEPs. Amongst them all, youth stand out as the primary target and the majority of countries seems to use employment policies to also conceptualize a strategy for youth employment. In addition, depending on the priority of each country, target groups include: workers with HIV/AIDS (most NEPs from sub-Saharan Africa), indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities (Albania 2014, Guatemala 2017, Nepal 2015), displaced workers (Nepal 2005, Philippines 2011), conflict-affected populations (Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Nepal 2015, Sri Lanka 2012), domestic workers (North Macedonia 2015, Philippines 2011), child labour (Cameroon 2017) or older workers (Moldova 2016, Nepal 2015, Senegal 2017). In many instances, NEPs target vulnerable or marginalized groups more broadly. However, although policies for job creation affect different population groups differently because of their different positions in the economy, NEPs tend to address inclusiveness almost exclusively with regard to skills, work quality as well as labour market policies and governance. NEPs still pay little attention to how policies for job creation, such as macroeconomic, trade, and sectoral policies, can foster a more equitable and inclusive gender-based, youth, etc. growth process.

**In developing countries, the objective of decent employment is also intertwined with the broader goal of achieving social and economic development. This is reflected in the content of NEPs which include a broad, holistic and integrated approach to employment.** As a result of the social dialogue that has underpinned NEP design over the last two decades (and analysed in part I of this report),<sup>117</sup> countries are now commonly acknowledging and adopting a broad conceptualization of employment policies. Globally, the NEPs under review address the threefold goals of employment creation, work quality and access to jobs. This trend is valid for countries of all economic and regional backgrounds, although each has adopted a difference balance and mix between the subcomponents of this comprehensive approach. All the employment policies reviewed include one or more elements of skills and labour market policies and governance, 98 per cent of NEPs include

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<sup>117</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_817748.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_817748.pdf)

demand-side interventions, while 93 per cent include provisions to enhance employment quality, recognizing that lifting growth and piecemeal interventions are no longer sufficient to make a sustained impact and that coherent policies and integrated strategies that reinforce each other are needed to tackle the multiple fronts of employment deficits.

**NEPs cover the various dimensions of decent work. They include a well-balanced mix of measures to address the structural dimensions of employment problems, although labour market policies and governance remain the most visible area, while policies for work quality are the less prominent.** The average number of sub-policy areas covered by each document is 14.9 out of a possible 18. Each NEP, on average, covers 4.2 demand-side measures, 2.8 skills measures, 5.7 labour market governance policies and 2.2 measures on work quality.<sup>118</sup> Looking at the sub-sub-policies, measures for governing the labour market represent 34 per cent of all interventions. Interestingly, demand-side components (29 per cent) outweigh skills policies (24 per cent). Measures to enhance the quality of employment are the least present (13 per cent). The relatively low frequency of the latter is influenced by the categorization of sub-measures used for this report and should hence be nuanced (for example wage policies or labour law which are key for decent work are included under labour market governance and thus not counted as measures for work quality).

**National employment policies include a mix of different interventions to tackle gender inequalities and boost women's participation in the labour market. Globally, however, gender issues in NEPs continue to be mostly addressed with regard to labour market policies and governance.** The majority of NEPs (90 per cent) include gender-responsive measures, but to varying degrees. Overall, the review shows that gender-sensitive labour market policies and interventions to govern the labour market are the area most commonly covered by NEPs (about 78 per cent), followed by supply-side policies (68 per cent) and demand-side interventions (60 per cent). This share is significantly lower for documents covering gender-responsive measures for work quality (50 per cent). Looking at sub-policies, 36 per cent of interventions targeted at gender equality relate to institutions and policies that guide the labour market and traditionally fall within the purview of Ministries in charge of labour and employment. On the other hand, supply-side policies, demand-side policies and policies for work quality that work for women account for around 23, 21 and 20 per cent of the total. When considering sub-sub-policies, we find that labour market policies and governance are even more over-represented in NEPs (46 per cent of the total). On the other hand, demand-side and supply-side sub-sub-measures that work for women account for around 18 and 19 per cent of the total respectively, while policies to enhance the quality of work are the least represented (16 per cent).

**National employment policies are an important platform to address the transition to formality. Yet informality in NEPs continues to be mostly addressed with regard to support for informal enterprises and supply-side policies.** The transition to formality is addressed in 85 per cent of policy documents. As for the types of intervention, the review shows that measures targeting informal economic units, including access to markets, business and financial services, and skills and social protection policies receive the most attention (more than 50 per cent of the total). Despite the importance of demand-side policies in curbing informality, only a handful of NEPs consider sectoral and local strategies or look at the broader relationship between economic growth, poverty reduction and informality.

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<sup>118</sup> In order to investigate the complexity of employment policies, we classified policies according to the number of sub-policy areas they cover from 1 to 5 for demand-side policies, 1 to 3 to skills interventions, 1 to 7 for labour market policies and governance and 1 to 3 for work quality.

► **Table 30. NEPs sub-policies: variation by period and change (% NEPs reviewed)**

Sub Policy (and policy area)	Overall	2005-2012	2013-2020	Diff
ALMPs governance	100	100	100	0%
Lifelong learning and skills development – Supply	98	95	100	5%
Employment services – Governance	98	95	100	5%
Macro-economic policies - Demand	95	100	90	-10%
Sustainable enterprises – Demand	95	100	90	-10%
Social dialogue – Governance	95	90	100	11%
Social protection – Quality	93	90	95	6%
Labour market information system – Governance	93	85	100	18%
Training institutions and systems – Supply	90	90	90	0%
Skills for social inclusion – Supply	90	85	95	12%
Sectoral policies – Demand	90	95	85	-11%
Labour law – Governance	85	80	90	13%
Investment – Demand	78	85	70	-18%
Trade and regional integration – Demand	63	55	70	27%
Working conditions – Quality	63	70	55	-21%
Equal opportunities and non-discrimination - Quality	60	65	55	-15%
Policies on income and wages – Governance	58	60	55	-8%
Unemployment benefits – Governance	45	45	45	0%

Source: See table 1a.

**Amongst sub-policies, the most visible is ALMP which is present in all NEPs, irrespective of region and income grouping, while strategies for unemployment benefits are the least likely to be found in NEPs.**

The challenges addressed by the largest number of policy documents across almost all regions and income groups are ALMPs, lifelong learning and skills development policies, measures for sustainable enterprises, macroeconomic policies, social dialogue and public employment services. These are the six most common sub-areas found in NEPs, with ALMP being systematically found in all policy documents. Another set of policies, including social protection, LMIS, training institutions and systems, skills for social inclusion and sectoral policies are well addressed in NEPs (in around 90 per cent), while labour law and investment policies are also well represented but at a lower level (85 and 78 per cent). Conversely, working conditions and trade policies are found in only around 63 per cent of NEPs, while measures for equal opportunities and wage policies are less frequent, with unemployment benefits being the least common (table 30).

**Looking at sub-sub-measures, we observe a high concentration of just a few measures in NEPs (mainly related to labour market policies and governance), while the majority of interventions are found in less than 60 per cent of all documents.** The 83 sub-sub-measures can be grouped into three distinct categories. The first includes only 3 interventions that are found in at least 90 per cent of documents and all relating to labour market policies and governance (reform of PES, tools for social dialogue and special employment measures). The most common measure almost systematically found in all NEPs (98 per cent) is the reform and modernization of public employment services. The second group consists of 18 elements that are found in at least 60 per cent of NEPs, again with policies for governing the labour market being over-represented (8/18 sub-sub-policy measures), followed by demand (5/18) and then skills interventions (4/18), and finally work quality (only one measure). A third group includes the bulk of interventions (62/83) that are found in less than 60 per

cent of policy documents (see table 31) and composed of a relatively balanced mix of demand, skills, labour market policies and governance and work quality policies.

**The review shows that NEPs are not growing more complex and even seem to take a slightly more targeted approach over time.** Indeed, the number of sub-policies has remained stable over the last two decades. This means that NEPs continue to acknowledge the need for a multi-pronged approach to employment relying on multiple interventions spanning demand and skills measures as well as labour market policies and governance and interventions to enhance work quality. This makes for an overall balanced composition of NEPs over the last two decades. On the other hand, the number of sub-sub-measures shrinks slightly, showing that, at this level, countries seem to take a more targeted approach or at least that policy documents tend to go into less detail. However, employment policies remain quite complex documents, which can be a major challenge in terms of coordination and implementation at a later stage.

**The focus of national employment policies is shifting.** Skills policies is the only area that increased on all fronts (i.e., in terms of the overall number of sub- and sub-sub-areas). Conversely, policies for work quality decreased for both sub- and sub-sub-measures. As for demand-side sub-policies, while there is a slight decline in the share of policies including them, the number of sub-sub-measures rose. This means that when NEPs consider demand-side policies, they tend to rely on a broader set of measures over time. A contrary trend is observed for policies governing the labour market, where there is a slight increase in the share of NEPs including them, but the number of sub-sub-policies has decreased slightly.

The sub-policy areas addressed by NEPs have been changing over time, with the only exception being active labour market policies, training institutions and systems and unemployment benefits that have remained stable. The second wave of NEPs, that is those adopted from 2013 onwards, is more likely to include trade policies, skills for social inclusion, labour law and social protection, which increased by 27, 12, 13 and 5 per cent respectively over time, while lifelong learning and skills development, public employment services, social dialogue and LMIS also gained ground, reaching 100 per cent of all the latest NEPs. The presence of other policy components in NEPs declined over the last two decades, namely macroeconomic policies (-10 per cent), sustainable enterprises (-10 per cent), sectoral (-11 per cent) and investment policies (-18 per cent), working conditions (-21 per cent), equal opportunities (-15 per cent) and wage policies (-8 per cent). Over the two periods, trade policies show the largest increase of all policy components, while working conditions show the largest decline (see table 30).

Looking at sub-sub-measures also allows better capturing the evolution of the themes and priorities addressed by NEPs. For 35 per cent of all sub-sub-interventions, their presence has improved significantly in the latest NEPs (i.e. more than 10 per cent), with some areas rising more than others, such as fiscal policies (+56 per cent), work-based learning (+88), policies for structural change (+75), general provisions on social protection (+100), corporate social responsibility (+100), multinational enterprises (+100) and pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks (+120). Investment for green jobs as well as regional integration and access to GVC are showing the sharpest rise (+200 per cent) but starting from a low base. On the other hand, 40 per cent of measures have declined significantly in the second wave of NEPs (i.e. more than 10 per cent), with some interventions showing a sharp decline, such as cooperatives (-43), equal pay for equal work (-43), discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS (-55), assessing the effect of trade on employment (-60), child labour (-63), forced labour (-67), general provisions on investment policies (-67). Surprisingly, although a variety of factors in recent years have led to new trends and interest in flexible work arrangements, this area shows the largest decline amongst all (-86), while already starting from a low base. Finally, another 25 per cent of sub-sub-policies remained stable overall (see table 31).

► **Table 31. Ranking of inclusion of sub- sub- policy measures (% of NEPs reviewed)**

Policy area	Policy measure (and sub policy area)	%	2005-2012	2013-2020	Diff
Governance	Reform of public employment services – Employment services	98	95	100	5%
Governance	Special employment measures and programmes - ALMPs	90	95	85	-11%
Governance	Tools for social dialogue – Social dialogue	90	85	95	12%
Demand	Financial policies – Macro-economic policies	88	100	75	-25%
Demand	Micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) – Sustainable enterprises	80	80	80	0%
Governance	Social dialogue and NEPs – Social dialogue	80	75	85	13%
Supply	Youth – Skills for social inclusion	80	75	85	13%
Supply	TVET – Lifelong learning and skills development	80	70	90	29%
Governance	Entrepreneurship development programmes – ALMPs	78	80	75	-6%
Demand	Rural economy – Sectoral policies and structural change	75	80	70	-13%
Demand	Supportive regulatory environment – Sustainable enterprises	73	75	70	-7%
Governance	Job orientation measures – ALMPs	73	70	75	7%
Governance	Data limitations – Labour market information	68	60	75	25%
Governance	Enforcement and compliance – Labour law	65	65	65	0%
Governance	Skills upgrading and re-skilling to improve employability – ALMPs	63	70	55	-21%
Demand	Industry – Sectoral policies and structural change	63	65	60	-8%
Governance	Institutional arrangements and capacities – Labour Market information	63	60	65	8%
Quality	Social protection for all – Social protection	60	65	55	-15%
Supply	Women – Skills for social inclusion	60	65	55	-15%
Governance	Enabling conditions for social dialogue – Social dialogue	60	60	60	0%
Supply	Improved matching/forecasting of skills supply and demand – Training institutions and systems	60	60	60	0%
Demand	Services – Sectoral policies and structural change	58	60	55	-8%
Supply	Skills for entrepreneurship – Lifelong learning and skills development	58	55	60	9%
Demand	Fiscal policies – Macro-economic policies	58	45	70	56%
Supply	Work-based learning – Lifelong learning and skills development	58	40	75	88%
Governance	Public employment schemes – ALMPs	55	65	45	-31%
Governance	Revision of labour legislation – Labour law	55	65	45	-31%
Demand	Investments in infrastructure – Investment policies	55	60	50	-17%
Demand	General provision & structural change – sectoral policies and structural change	55	40	70	75%
Quality	Occupational safety and health (OSH) – Working conditions	53	55	50	-9%
Supply	Qualification frameworks – Training institutions and systems	50	60	40	-33%
Governance	Wage setting processes – Income	45	55	35	-36%
Demand	Tourism – Sectoral policies and structural change	45	45	45	0%
Supply	Informal workers – Skills for Social Inclusion	45	45	45	0%
Governance	Minimum wage – Income	43	50	35	-30%
Supply	Engaging with social partners and the private sector – Training institutions and systems	43	50	35	-30%

Policy area	Policy measure (and sub policy area)	%	2005-2012	2013-2020	Diff
Supply	People with disabilities – Skills for inclusion	43	45	40	-11%
Governance	Incentives and subsidies to hire – ALMPs	43	40	45	13%
Demand	Investment in labour-intensive sectors – Investment policies	43	40	45	13%
Quality	HIV/AIDS – Discrimination	40	55	25	-55%
Quality	Enhancing the scope of social protection – Social protection	40	55	25	-55%
Supply	Early childhood/basic education – Lifelong learning and skills development	40	50	30	-40%
Supply	Curriculum development – Lifelong learning and skills development	40	45	35	-22%
Governance	Regulation of private employment agencies – Employment services	40	35	45	29%
Supply	General provisions – Lifelong learning and skills development	40	35	45	29%
Demand	Pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks – Macro-economies policies	40	25	55	120%
Quality	Gender – Discrimination	38	45	30	-33%
Demand	Enhancing competitiveness and productivity – Trade and regional integration	35	40	30	-25%
Quality	General provisions – Working conditions	35	35	35	0%
Demand	Encouraging promising sectors – Trade and regional integration	35	35	35	0%
Supply	Skills for trade, green jobs and/or technological change – Lifelong learning and skills development	33	35	30	-14%
Governance	Public employment services & private employment agencies cooperation – Employment services	33	30	35	17%
Demand	Foreign direct investments – Trade and regional integration	30	30	30	0%
Demand	Subsidies & tax incentives – Sustainable enterprises	30	25	35	40%
Quality	General provisions – Social protection	30	20	40	100%
Quality	Child labour – Discrimination	28	40	15	-63%
Governance	Equal pay for equal value – Income	28	35	20	-43%
Demand	Cooperatives- Sustainable enterprises	28	35	20	-43%
Quality	People with Disabilities – Discrimination	28	30	25	-17%
Demand	Monetary & exchange rate – macro-economic policies	28	25	30	20%
Supply	Migrants – Skills for Social inclusion	28	20	35	75%
Quality	Pension systems – Social protection	28	40	15	-63%
Quality	Social assistance – Social protection	25	30	20	-33%
Supply	Vulnerable groups – Skills for social inclusion	25	20	30	50%
Governance	Establishing unemployment schemes – Unemployment benefits	23	25	20	-20%
Governance	Reviewing existing systems – Unemployment benefits	23	20	25	25%
Quality	General provisions – Discrimination	23	20	25	25%
Supply	Rural workers – Skills for social inclusion	23	20	25	25%
Demand	Corporate social responsibility – Sustainable enterprises	23	15	30	100%
Quality	Work arrangements – Working conditions	20	35	5	-86%
Supply	Monitoring and evaluation – Training institutions and systems	20	20	20	0%
Demand	Promoting regional integration and access to GVC – Trade and regional integration	20	10	30	200%

Policy area	Policy measure (and sub policy area)	%	2005-2012	2013-2020	Diff
Demand	Assessing and addressing the effects of trade and employment – Trade and regional integration	18	25	10	-60%
Supply	Funding mechanisms – Training institutions and systems	18	15	20	33%
Supply	Policies and normative framework – Training institutions and systems	18	15	20	33%
Demand	Coherence between employment, skills and trade policies – Trade and regional integration	13	15	10	-33%
Governance	General provisions – Labour market information	13	10	15	50%
Quality	Forced labour – Discrimination	10	15	5	-67%
Demand	General provisions – Investment policies	10	15	5	-67%
Demand	Investment to generate green jobs – Investment policies	10	5	15	200%
Demand	Multi-national enterprises – Sustainable enterprises	8	5	10	100%
Demand	General provisions – Trade and regional integration	5	0	10	-
Supply	General provisions – Training institutions and systems	3	0	5	-

Source: See table 1a.

Looking at time-related trends, the following striking elements emerge:

**Measures for gender equality in the world of work tend to creep up slightly in the second wave of NEPs, and the focus is shifting over time towards increased consideration of gender-related demand-side policies and less focus on work quality.** We observe that the number of gender-related sub-policies increases by 5 per cent while the total number of sub-sub-policies for gender equality in the world of work increased by around 9 per cent. However, NEPs still need to catch up in terms of gender equality: indeed, while the average number of sub-policy areas covered by each NEP is 14.9 out of a possible 18, the average number of gender-related sub-areas per NEP is only 4.4. The policy areas addressed by the documents have been changing. The number of NEPs addressing gender-sensitive demand-side interventions has increased by 67 per cent over time, while the number of NEPs integrating policies governing the labour market has remained stable. NEPs including gender measures in the supply-side and work quality provisions declined by around 30 but starting from a lower base in the case of provisions on work quality. When looking at the sub-policies, the review shows that demand-side interventions show a sustained increase over the last two decades (more than 70 per cent). A contrary trend is observed with regard to policies to enhance the quality of women’s employment whose presence in NEPs has been declining by 33 per cent (from 21 to 14 interventions), while supply-side interventions and measures to govern the labour market remain fairly stable over time.

**Overall, while the review shows a shift of focus, the majority of interventions still tend to lie at micro/meso levels (e.g. service provision, programmes, activities etc) and less in addressing the structural roots of women’s employment (e.g. institutional transformation).** For instance, measures for private sector development are almost exclusively mentioned with regard to programmes for women’s entrepreneurship and, although a range of factors in the business environment have a direct impact on women-owned enterprises, only one NEP looks at measures related to the regulatory environment from a gender perspective. Similarly, NEPs provide for targeted active labour market policies for women, but less attention is being paid to how employment services could play a role more globally in promoting gender equality by embedding gender opportunity principles within their rules and organization. However, changes within the structural and institutional dimensions and ensuring that gender equality is embedded in organizational bodies, rules, culture and practices are a precondition for achieving sustainable results that correspond to the objective of gender equality.

**The issue of the transition to formality is addressed in 85 per cent of policy documents and this is gaining ground over time, reflecting a greater recognition and commitment to the transition to formality.** First, the number of NEPs in the sample taking into account the issue of transition to formality at a strategic level (i.e., as a goal, strategic objective or a specific target) increases significantly over time (by 55 per cent). Secondly, the number of interventions on formality has increased by around 9 per cent over the last two decades. The bias towards support to informal enterprises and skills policies seems to increase even further over time. Those areas



are the only one that show a sustained increase over the last two decades, while the others remain fairly stable or in decline.

**A stronger case for pro-employment macroeconomic policies is being made over time.** Overall, the policy recommendations tend to shift from using macroeconomics to provide a stable environment as an indirect means for job creation to the need to consider employment within the macroeconomic framework, hence acknowledging that “business as usual” in macroeconomics has not yielded the expected results in terms of decent work. In addition, while the number of NEPs addressing macroeconomic policies decreases slightly over time, the number of sub-sub-measures (i.e., fiscal, monetary and financial policies) has increased significantly (+18 per cent). This reflects a shift towards a more comprehensive mix of macroeconomic policy tools over the last two decades. Indeed, an issue increasingly looked at, is how the objective of employment creation is calling for changes to and a better balance of fiscal, financial or monetary policy. While mainstream macroeconomic policy had put fiscal policy on the back burner, second to monetary policy, the global financial crisis put fiscal policy back centre stage. This is reflected in NEPs, with fiscal policies increasing by 56 per cent. Finally, financial policies are the most common demand-side sub-sub-measure in NEPs but also show the sharpest decline over time (-25).

**Structural change is increasingly addressed as a key element of solutions for employment.** The number of NEPs considering sectoral policies has decreased slightly over time (-11 per cent). However, recent NEPs are more likely than older ones to include policies for structural change, including in terms of employment, from low to high productivity as well as from informal to formal. Amongst sectoral policies included in NEPs, agriculture and the rural economy continue to be the number one priority (75 per cent of NEPs) reflecting the situation in most countries in the sample where agriculture is a dominant occupation. However, overall, NEPs seek to propose a three-pronged approach aimed at achieving an increase in agricultural productivity, fostering the non-farm informal sector while supporting the growth of labour-intensive industries.

**Amongst demand-side interventions, investment and trade policies are the least represented and undergoing an important evolution over time, though in opposite directions:** investment policies are found in 78 per cent of NEPs and show the second largest decline over time (-18 per cent) for sub-areas while trade provisions are even less present (63 per cent of NEPs) but have gained ground significantly over the last two decades (+27 per cent). Amongst the various trade-related measures, access to global supply chains and promoting regional integration show the sharpest rise (+200 per cent)

**The trend emerging from the data is a diversification of skills policies over the last 20 years,** which are growing to include an increasing number of policy areas and measures. Skills for social inclusion policies tend to be increasingly addressed by NEPs of the second wave, with more measures over time on skills for migrants (+75 per cent), vulnerable groups (+50) rural workers (+25) and youth and persons with disabilities (+11). Lifelong learning and skills development policies rose slightly over the two periods (starting from an already high base), with some sub-sub-areas declining (such as early childhood and basic education) and others gaining in importance (such as work-based learning and TVET). On the other hand, training institutions and systems remain stable.

**The majority of sub-policies among labour market policies and governance increased over time.** Areas such as public employment services, LMIS, social dialogue, and labour law show a sustained increase in the share of policies including them, with LMIS increasing the most (+18 per cent). Wage policies is the only area that has lost prominence over the last two decades, while ALMP and unemployment benefits remained stable. Interestingly, the analysis of sub-sub-policy areas shows a slight decrease from 249 to 240 measures over the last two decades, indicating that if more NEPs address those issues overall, the policy mix is a little bit more limited over time. Striking is the lower frequency of public employment schemes over time, and in particular of wage-setting processes, minimum wage and revision of labour law which were already poorly represented in NEPs (less than 50 per cent in all three cases). On the other hand, some other measures seem to be gaining importance, such as data limitation (+25 per cent) or regulation of private employment agencies (+29 per cent).

**Finally, policies to enhance work quality are the least likely to be found in NEPs and this even declines further over time.** Among measures for enhancing the quality of employment, social protection is the only area that is more likely to be found in the latest NEPs (table 1). A contrary trend is observed with regard to strategies to promote equal opportunities and working conditions whose presence in NEPs is declining (-21 and -15 per cent respectively). Looking at sub-sub-measures, the trend towards a lower frequency of work quality is even more conclusive, with 78 per cent of them losing in importance, such as policies for child labour (-63 per cent),

forced labour (-67 per cent), discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS (-55 per cent) and disabilities (-17 per cent), enhancing the scope of social protection for all (-15 per cent) and work arrangements (-86 per cent).

**Policies have evolved in time with the nature of new challenges: they are becoming important platforms to address future-of-work issues but also entry points to develop responses to external shocks such as the recent COVID crisis.** The review shows that issues related to green jobs and climate change and new forms of work have been considered by NEPs since 2011. For example, investment for green jobs shows the most significant increase (together with regional integration) among all sub-sub-measures over time (+200). Gender and informality also rose in the second period. Other notable areas of progress are issues related to the digital economy, skills for technological change and migration, which are given more prominence over time while, surprisingly, other issues, such as the care economy, are little addressed. The positioning of NEPs as entry points to address future-of-work issues seems to be confirmed in NEPs adopted after the period under review or being currently developed, such as green jobs (Ethiopia 2021, Peru 2021, Serbia 2021, Suriname 2022), digitalization (Ethiopia 2020, Macedonia 2015, Peru 2021, Serbia 2021 ) or new forms of work, such as platform workers, teleworking or part-time work (China 2021, Morocco (forthcoming NEP), Peru 2021). In addition, in many countries, NEPs have been formulated or adapted to focus on COVID responses (North Macedonia 2021, Philippines 2021, Tunisia). Conversely, other issues, such as workers with HIV/AIDS or forced labour, are significantly losing ground.

**The territorialization of employment solutions crept up in the second wave of employment policies.** The review of demand and skills policies as well as interventions to govern the labour market and enhance work quality shows that, over time, an increasing number of countries are moving towards greater territorialization of these interventions, through a more equal distribution in all regions and taking into account their specificities. This is the case of Albania 2014, Armenia 2012, Benin 2020, Cameroon 2017, Côte d'Ivoire 2016, Kyrgyzstan 2013, Morocco 2015 and Senegal 2017, for example, which stand for promoting the participation of local governments in addressing employment deficits. This is consistent with Part I of this Report which found a greater involvement of regional and local levels in NEP design.

► **Table 32. Average number of sub-policy measures by category**

	Total		2005-2012	2013-2020
Low-income countries (LIC)	16.0	↑	15.8	16.5
Lower-middle income countries (LMIC)	14.6	↑	14.3	14.8
Upper-middle income countries (UMIC)	14.8	↓	15.2	14.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	14.9	↑	14.7	15.3
Americas	13.7	↓	16.0	12.5
Middle east and North America	14.3	↑	13.3	17.0
Asia and the Pacific	16.8	↑	17.3	19.7
Europe and Central Asia	14.3	↑	13.7	14.8

Source: See table 1a.

**Cross-regional variation are significant, reflecting the specific priorities of the different labour markets. NEPs for Asian countries contain the highest number of policy components, while at the other end of the spectrum, American NEPs contain the least number.** It must be underlined that there is no optimal number of policy components against which NEPs should be evaluated. However, these numbers and their evolution can inform about the level of complexity and comprehensiveness of the NEPs reviewed. It is also important that NEPs are kept realistic and adapted to institutional capacities and budgetary constraints. In this instance, Asian NEPs accumulate the highest number of sub-policies on average, followed by sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia as well as the Middle East and North Africa. American NEPs contain the least number of sub-policy areas. Looking at time-related trends, American countries have gone down from an average of 16 to 12.5 sub-policy areas respectively (see table 32). Conversely, over the same period, and starting from a lower base, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and the MENA countries seem to move towards broader NEPs,

increasing by 0.6, 1.1 and 3.7 sub-policy areas on average. Remarkably, countries in the Asia-Pacific region, increased by 2.4 sub-policy areas on average, starting from an already high base (17.3).

**Analysis of the policy documents from sub-Saharan Africa indicates that policies for job creation (i.e., demand-side policies) are a top priority in the region.** Overall, sub-Saharan African NEPs tend to be a somewhat more comprehensive over time, reflecting a rise in labour market policies and governance and work quality policies. The strong commitment to demand-side policies- with macroeconomic and sustainable enterprise policies being present in all NEPs and sectoral and investment policies in 94 per cent of them- is consistent with the fact that employment issues in the region are intrinsically linked to a lack of structural transformation, hence the need for job creation and employment to be a central objective of macroeconomic, sectoral, investment, private sector and trade policies. On another note, the lowest prevalence of policies for governing the labour market is due to the small number of NEPs including wage and unemployment benefits measures. However, this is also the only policy component that gained substantial importance in the second period, while all the others remained fairly stable. Economic transformation and structural change imply a need for people to be mobile and hence the need to go along with measures to facilitate transition and connect people to jobs. This may explain why labour market policies have crept up over time as well as why the region ranks the second highest in the inclusion of measures to facilitate the transition to formality. It can also reflect the fact that Ministries of employment are going back to their traditional areas of expertise and activities directly under their purview, and hence more implementable. Finally, consistent with the fact that women in Africa are disproportionately employed in the informal economy and in unpaid or poorly remunerated jobs, all sub-Saharan Africa NEPs include some type of gender-responsive measure (in the form of interventions and/or as a goal or target), with a focus on gender-sensitive demand-side policies.

- **Policies in Europe and Central Asia tend to be more focused on labour market policies and governance, although they tend to include more demand and skills policies over time.** Amongst all regions, Europe and Central Asia champion the inclusion of labour market policies and governance, in particular unemployment benefits. Here again, this is consistent with the labour market situation in the region as well as the requirements for countries to be eligible for entry to the European Union which must conform to the European Employment Strategy (EES). It includes, among other things, a commitment to social inclusion, improving the quality and performance of education and training systems, better functioning labour markets, enhanced social dialogue and social protection. Along those lines, measures such as active labour market policies, improving (public) employment services, social dialogue and measures for strengthening social protection of the unemployed are systematically found in all Europe and Central Asia NEPs. Conversely, the region has the smallest prevalence of demand-side policies, in particular with trade and investment policies covered in just a small number of NEPs. Over time, European and Central Asian policies tend increasingly to include a growing number of demand, skills and labour market governance interventions –while work quality provisions decrease over time. Finally, Europe and Central Asia NEPs are less likely than others to include measures to facilitate the transition towards formality (57 per cent) as well as gender-sensitive policies (71 per cent).
- **Asia and the Pacific shows the largest prevalence of sub-policies.** Although Asian NEPs include the highest rate of sub-policy areas per NEP on average, the analysis indicates that such complexity tends to decrease over time. NEPs from this region show the largest prevalence of policies for work quality, job creation and skills policies with three sub-areas (lifelong learning and skills development, training institutions and systems and skills for social inclusion) being systematically found in all NEPs. On the other hand, the policy mix of NEPs is shifting over time: while demand-side and work quality interventions decrease, skills and labour market governance policies remain stable over time. Finally, all NEPs from the region include solutions for gender equality and the transition to formality.
- **NEPs from the Middle East and North Africa are growing more complex over time in all policy areas except the demand side.** As there is only one MENA country in the sample for the period 2013-2020 (Morocco 2015), conclusions on time-related trends should be treated with a degree of caution. However, it seems that observations on progressive diversification of policies, which are growing to include an increasing number of policy areas is confirmed. Indeed, following the Arab Spring of 2011, a number of MENA countries, such as Oman and Tunisia started the process of developing comprehensive national employment policies, acknowledging that long-term policies were needed in the region to tackle the structural roots of employment deficits. These countries seem to have moved from active labour market policies towards a more holistic and integrated approach that addresses the

many employment challenges faced by the region. Finally, all but one of the NEPs reviewed include gender-related policies, with relatively good coverage of interventions that look at influencing skills, labour market governance and work quality policies, reflecting a common concern in the region which is characterized by the world's lowest female labour force participation rate.

- ▶ **The lowest proportion of per policy area in the American NEPs reflects a tendency to target fewer specific policies to promote employment.** Amongst all the regions, the Americas has the lowest number of policy components per NEP on average. It has the smallest prevalence of sub-policy components in macroeconomic interventions, policies for sustainable enterprises, as well as provisions on working conditions, equal opportunities and unemployment benefits. On the other hand, employment services, lifelong learning and skills development, skills for social inclusion, ALMPs, LMIS, public employment services and social dialogue are high priorities and are systematically found in all NEPs. The tendency to focus on a more limited policy mix seems to increase over time, with the average number of policy components declining by -75, -0.25, -1.5 and -1 in demand-side, skills policies, labour market governance and work quality respectively, consistently showing the largest decline over time and among all regions. Countries in the region seem to have a well-developed approach to informal economies, with documents from the Americas universally including specific measures to facilitate the transition to formality.

**Once we look at results by income groupings, some differences emerge as well, revealing a context-specific priority ranking.** The highest proportion of LICs per policy area reflects a tendency to focus on a broader range of policies, which may not be realistic given institutional capacities and budgetary constraints, but reflect, their greater needs across all policy areas. On the other hand, UMICs and LMICs tend to target fewer policy areas (see table 32). In particular, LICs lead the inclusion of demand-side and work quality policies whereas UMICs have a comparatively higher focus on labour market policies and governance, reflecting the need to strengthen labour markets relations and functioning. Regarding skills policies, they are evenly applied across all income groupings.

The comparison of the first half of the period to the second half yields contrasting results depending on the economic background of the countries. First, LIC and LMIC are growing more comprehensive, while UMIC tend to focus on fewer sub-policies over time. With regard to LMI countries, the second period (2013-2020) witnesses NEPs integrating a broader range of skills policies (+0.32), measures for governing the labour market (+0.63) and policies to enhance work quality (+0.07), but a steady decline in demand-side policies (-0.48). On the other hand, LIC countries tend to shift towards NEPs more focused on the demand-side and labour market policies and governance (both +0.5), as well as work quality (0+25), and less on skills (-0.5). While LICs and LMICs tend to shift their focus over time, UMI countries tend to have a more uniform coverage of policy items with objectives related to factors influencing the demand side, skills policies and the governance labour market only varying marginally. On the other hand, policies for work quality are declining (-0,67) in this region.

## 5.1. Recommendations for a new generation of employment policies

In this report we have analysed the main characteristics and trends in national employment policies across the world and over time. The review clearly shows that policies are embedding multipronged approaches to address the varied employment situations. This does not mean that all countries are adopting multiple interventions to the same extent nor that they rely on the same balance and set of policy measures. However, it highlights that multi-treatment approaches to employment remain highly relevant today, in particular in contexts characterized by multiple crises requiring more than ever to address the structural roots of employment deficits and reinforce the resilience of the labour market and economies to repeated external shocks. The review highlights that a new generation of employment policies will need to pursue some existing challenges while also addressing new ones. Here we focus on ten of them:

### **Continuing to invest in NEPs to keep a balance between short-term and long-term employment needs....**

At a time where repeated and multiple crises are facing countries around the world, the risk is to focus all efforts and resources on emergencies while neglecting and losing sight of more structural employment interventions. Indeed, despite the importance of quickly and efficiently addressing short-term needs, addressing concerns that takes longer to fix, including productive structural transformation as well as structural imbalances (such as those characterized by gender, age, urban informality, traditional agriculture or isolated areas) is paramount. Those

challenges are complex and cannot be addressed by single-bullet, short-term and spread interventions. In that regard, employment policies which link crisis responses with longer-term and more structural goals while strengthening the resilience of the labour market to future adverse shocks continue to be more needed than ever.

**... and to leave no one behind.** The review shows that NEPs are inclusive and increasingly cover a wide range of disadvantaged groups in the labour market. They go well beyond unemployed young graduates to also target informal and vulnerable workers or less visible groups such as inactive women or NEETs. All of these have been exacerbated by the COVID crisis and may involve large social costs in the longer term, perhaps even more so than increased unemployment. Hence, from a policy perspective, an important challenge, in the years to come, will be to continue designing and implementing inclusive NEPs targeting all population groups, while avoiding a single approach that only addresses selected groups and would risk exacerbating existing inequalities and reinforcing the segmentation of labour markets.

**Comprehensive does not mean all-encompassing, and NEPs need to be tailored to the institutional capacities of each country, and more globally to implementation requirements.** Comprehensive NEPs should not be equated with “all-embracing” policies. Having limited resources, countries need to focus on policy priorities that are practical. These also need to be realistic, based on existing institutions and capacities at the risk of being too ambitious and hence inoperable. As some countries under review (Côte d’Ivoire, Moldova and Zambia) have moved from very comprehensive NEPs in the period 2005-2012 to a narrower set of policies in the last decade, this may be an indication of the difficulty for the Ministries in charge of employment to coordinate such policies that go well beyond their traditional area of expertise, hence then going back to more limited but more manageable policies. More generally, as NEPs tend to become slightly less complex over time, this may be a sign of “complexity fatigue” and the need to go towards more realistic and implementable policies. While the merits of a broad spectrum of employment policies remain valid, future national employment policies will need to take capacities and budgetary constraints more seriously so as to identify solutions that fit with the country’s economic and institutional capacities, rather than those that are just not practical to address at this stage of the country’s development. A first step in that direction is to include an analysis of institutional capacities and other implementation arrangements more systematically in the NEP diagnostic, to see what the existing context is and how it can then be adjusted in the light of the priorities of the new employment policies. It would also ensure that policy interventions that are set are realistic and based on a sound review of the capacities and institutional landscape. Finally, NEPs need to be based on more iterative processes, growing more complex as institutions build up their expertise and institutions get stronger.

**Pursuing efforts to set measurable and time-bound employment targets, in both quantity and quality of employment, as those are more binding promises than NEP goals or objectives.** Targets are an even clearer expression of policy priorities and Government commitment than policy goals and objectives, as they set out what the Government wants to achieve and by when. Targets let those responsible for delivery know what needs to happen, so that they can plan, track and deliver the policy. They also have the merit of holding them accountable for meeting the targets. It is important that these are set with respect to employment quantity and quality and disaggregated by sex. Formalization targets also need to be better reflected in future NEPs, given the scale of informality in many countries. Of course, targets alone are not enough. Actually, delivering on them requires incentives (or penalties) to ensure the commitment of the people responsible for making it happen. They also need to be linked to the national budget. Part III of this report on NEP implementation will address the extent to which this is actually being done.

**Ensuring there is no step backward on important achievements such as pro-employment macroeconomic policies, and more generally policies for employment creation.** As the latest generation of employment policies tend to acknowledge the limitations of mainstream macroeconomic approaches and give way to a broader vision of macroeconomic policies as serving employment objectives, attention will be needed to ensure that countries do not reverse their stance in that regard. Indeed, inflationary pressures as well as the high levels of expenditures needed to cope with COVID-19 which left governments with growing fiscal deficits and debts may suggest the premature adoption of policies for fiscal consolidation and the adoption of short-term stabilization priorities to the detriment of longer-term imperatives of employment and structural transformation. As macroeconomic stability in the past has proven insufficient for achieving employment objectives, it will be key that NEPs continue to advocate for well-articulated, balanced and tailored macroeconomic policies that support equity, income distribution and employment for all. More generally, as the review shows a slight decrease in demand-side policies over time, it will be important to keep sight of strategies

for job creation, including sectoral policies, as this lies at the heart of employment challenges in most developing countries. Future NEPs will also need to ensure that policies for job creation take into account the different impact they have on different groups, such as women, youth, informal workers, MSMEs and more generally on vulnerable groups. Finally, beyond the standalone national employment policies analysed in this report, integrating employment goals in national development frameworks, may be a privileged entry point to better articulate the relationship between employment, growth and, more globally, development, and better connect with the Ministries of Finance and Economy as well as productive Ministries which are in the driving seat of demand-side policies.

**Ensuring that structural change translates fairly into a sustainable increase in productivity and expansion of quality employment.** While it is important that NEPs look at increasing countries' resource and economic bases, it will be also key to focus on distributional aspects and issues of access and inclusion to ensure that they translate into expansion of quality employment for all. Indeed, new employment opportunities are unlikely to be found in the same sectors, occupations and areas where most people living in poverty are found. Hence, the importance of taking into account the diverse barriers that impair mobility and access to opportunities and create inequalities. Some elements of this, such as access to information on employment opportunities, ensuring further gains in skills development, measures to facilitate the transition to formality, strengthened social dialogue and social protection or the presence of solid of active labour market policies and employment services creating a more level playing field, seem to be a central part of NEPs. On the other hand, other parts of the response (such as policies for equal opportunities, combating pay discrimination and, more globally, removing social and cultural obstacles that create inequalities) tend to be less addressed in the latest NEPs. Others, such as combating gender inequalities and facilitating the transition to formality, still call for further attention. A new generation of employment policies will need to focus on those important issues.

**NEPs aim at ensuring that a large set of employment interventions in a given country work in coherence and harmony. However, significant progress needs to be achieved in new policy frameworks.** Employment policies pursue the explicit purpose of preventing and remedying decades of disconnects between the different components of employment solutions, yet this quest is not always fully achieved. Indeed, while the review shows that employment policies tend to be structured around the main strategic objectives (typically job creation, employability and labour market policies and governance), synergies between them are not systematically leveraged. For example, while rural employment comes as a priority sector in NEPs, agricultural skills or other elements to enhance work quality in the rural sector, which are key for agricultural transformation, remain elusive. Similarly, while trade or investment for green jobs are becoming important priorities in the latest NEPs, skills for trade and green jobs remain poorly addressed. In many instances, too, priority sectors are not explicitly articulated with labour market policies and employment services needed to connect people to the new jobs created. Sometimes inconsistencies are found at strategic level as well. One example is that while targets are increasingly set with regard to the quality dimension of employment, measures to enhance work quality are declining over time. In the same vein, the review highlights that gender and informality are well addressed in the diagnostic, but that this is not always followed by subsequent policy measures. A new generation of employment policies will need to enhance coherence, ensure that the diagnostic is better linked to the policy actions and fully exploits the synergies between the different NEP pillars, as this is crucial for achieving the desired employment objectives.

**There has been progress on addressing future of work issues in NEPs: this need to be pursued, but without overshadowing old, but persistent, problems.** The world of work is changing at a rapid pace and in its scope and this change is accompanied by high levels of uncertainty. Employment policies need to prepare for these changes, such as technological and climate change which will be adding new jobs and eliminating ones that exist today. They must strive to ensure that those jobs and all new forms of work are decent, help identify where the new employment opportunities are, including in the care, digital, circular and green economies, as well as facilitate the different labour market transitions and provide the income support to do so, as these will become the challenges of the future for many countries. These concerns are paramount but some of them (such as technological change) are more likely to affect wealthier countries in the immediate term. In other regions, the future of work for most will resemble the present of work. In other words, longstanding issues, such as informality, rural economy, local development, community-based jobs or sluggish structural transformation will remain key policy challenges that will need continued focus and attention in the future. Other issues, such as forced labour, child labour or workers with HIV/AIDS which tend to fade away in the latest NEPs, but remain a reality in many countries, also call for continued attention.

**Measures for gender equality in the world of work tend to increase slightly in the second waves of NEPs.**

**Yet, there is much more work to be done.** For economies to achieve the goal of gender equality, it is not enough to address supply-side constraints and the governance of the labour market and focus on the reduction and redistribution of unpaid care, as increasing women's participation in the labour market will not necessarily guarantee that there is enough employment to absorb those who want to work. In that regard, policies focused on demand that create employment and address segregation will be key to women's access to the labour market.<sup>119</sup> More attention will need to be paid in the future to gender-smart NEPs, in particular by: (i) promoting gender data for measuring progress towards agreed targets and long-standing gender inequalities in the labour market. Gender-responsive employment targets are useful only if they are underpinned by a solid and gender-smart labour market information system to monitor them. As only 15 per cent of NEPs (or 6 policy documents) commit to a gender-sensitive labour market information system, supporting the production, compilation and dissemination of coherent, reliable, accessible and timely gender data need should be a priority of future NEPs; (ii) Creating an appropriate legal, institutional and organizational environment for promoting equal opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work, (i.e. ensuring that they take into account formal as well as social and cultural obstacles that impair mobility and access to opportunities and more generally create gender inequalities); (iii) promoting an economic environment that provides new employment opportunities, in particular sectoral and economic policies that explicitly contribute to gender equality, and (iv) opening pathways to quality jobs as women need not only more, but also better employment. This requires dialogue for advancing gender equality in the world of work, equal treatment laws, policies for ensuring equal opportunities and closing gender pay gaps, unemployment insurance and social protection that benefit women and men equitably as well as policies for gender-friendly workplaces.

**For countries to achieve the goal of transition to formality, more attention will need to be paid in the future to considering demand-side policies and measures for work quality as key instruments of formalization processes.**

Experience around the world shows that the policy mix supporting economic growth is a key determinant of the way growth impacts on informality. In this regard, reorienting macroeconomic, sectoral and local policies has a vital role to play in supporting the transition from the informal to the formal economy and should be given more attention in future generations of employment policies. Similarly, as the informal economy is often characterized by low quality employment (such as small or undefined workplaces, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, low or irregular incomes and long working hours), this should also be a focus of future NEPs. Finally, as the informal economy encompasses a huge diversity of situations and manifests itself in a variety of forms at country level, measures aiming to facilitate the transition to formality will need to be tailored to the specific circumstances faced by countries but also categories of economic units and workers. Among different priority groups in NEPs, informal economic units are the most common priority group. Groups considered vulnerable to the most serious decent work deficits in the informal economy should be further taken into consideration and addressed through specific and targeted measures<sup>120</sup>.

Exactly as the 2008 crisis created a momentum for NEPs, the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises that countries are experiencing today are marking a turning point in the making of national employment policies. The next step is to ensure that they do not just remain a distant reality but are actually implemented and deliver on their promises. This implies political commitment, backed by legislative measures, budgets and effective institutions. This will be analysed in Part III of this Report (forthcoming).

<sup>119</sup> Esquivel, V. (2017). "Efficiency and Gender Equality in Growth Theory: Simply Add-Ons?" *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue Canadienne d'études Du Développement* 38 (4): 547-52; Esquivel, V. (2019). Gender impacts of structural transformation. ILO/Sida Partnership on Employment Technical brief No. 2. Link: [https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/projects/sida/18-19/WCMS\\_735154/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/projects/sida/18-19/WCMS_735154/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>120</sup> R204 highlights the need to pay special attention to those who are especially vulnerable to the most serious decent work deficits in the informal economy, including but not limited to women, young people, migrants, older people, indigenous and tribal peoples, persons living with HIV or affected by HIV or AIDS, persons with disabilities, domestic workers and subsistence farmers.

## ► Annexes

### ► Annex 1. Employment targets by countries, categories and specific groups

Employment target	No. of employment targets	Countries
<b>Employment opportunities</b>	<b>74</b>	
<b>Employment opportunities (generic) (total)</b>	<b>2</b>	Albania 2014 Moldova 2016
<b>Employment by status in employment (total)</b>	<b>2</b>	
Emp. by status older person	1	Moldova 2007
Emp. by status people with disabilities	1	Armenia 2012
<b>Employment to population ratio (total)</b>	<b>16</b>	
EPR generic	7	Albania 2014 Armenia 2012 Jordan 2011 North Macedonia 2011 Moldova 2016 Morocco 2015
EPR youth	2	North Macedonia 2011 Moldova 2016
EPR women	4	Jordan 2011 North Macedonia 2011 Moldova 2007 Moldova 2016
EPR men	1	Moldova 2016
EPR older persons	2	North Macedonia 2011 Moldova 2016
<b>Informal employment</b>	<b>6</b>	Albania 2014 Costa Rica 2014 Guatemala 2017 Moldova 2007 Mongolia 2016 Namibia 2013
<b>Job creation (total)</b>	<b>13</b>	
Job creation generic	13	Albania 2014 Armenia 2012 Burkina Faso 2008 Costa Rica 2014 Côte d'Ivoire 2012 Kyrgyzstan 2013 Liberia 2009 North Macedonia 2015 Mali 2014 Namibia 2013 Philippines 2011 Senegal 2010 Senegal 2017



Employment target		No. of employment targets	Countries
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>		<b>4</b>	
	Labour force participation rate generic	3	Albania 2014 Mongolia 2016 Morocco 2015
	Labour force participation rate men	1	Jordan 2011
<b>Unemployment rate (total)</b>		<b>25</b>	
	Unemployment rate generic	15	Albania 2014 Cameroon 2008 Cameroon 2017 Costa Rica 2014 Guatemala 2017 Jordan 2011 Kyrgyzstan 2013 Moldova 2007 Moldova 2016 Mongolia 2016 Morocco 2015 Namibia 2013 Philippines 2011 Senegal 2017 Zambia 2005
	Unemployment rate youth	3	Albania 2014 Moldova 2007 Moldova 2016
	Unemployment rate women	2	Albania 2014 Moldova 2007
	Unemployment rate men	2	Albania 2014 Moldova 2007
	Unemployment rate other	3	Armenia 2012 Share of unemployed benefitting from unemployment benefits Kyrgyzstan 2013 Moldova 2007
<b>NEETs</b>		<b>2</b>	Albania 2014 Moldova 2016
<b>Other (total)</b>		<b>4</b>	
	Other youth	1	Kyrgyzstan 2013
	Other people with disabilities	1	Kyrgyzstan 2013
	Other	2	Kyrgyzstan 2013 Moldova 2016
<b>Employment in sector and sub-sector</b>		<b>9</b>	
	<b>Employment in sector and sub-sector (generic)</b>	<b>1</b>	Moldova 2007
<b>Employment by branch of economic activity/ Sectoral employment (total)</b>		<b>7</b>	
	Employment by branch of economic activity/ Sectoral employment generic	1	Moldova 2007
	Sectoral employment – Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2	Albania 2014 Namibia 2013
	Sectoral employment – Manufacturing	1	Albania 2014
	Sectoral employment – construction	1	Namibia 2013
	Sectoral employment – ICT	1	Albania 2014
	Sectoral employment – other	1	Namibia 2013
<b>Employment by sector (generic)</b>		<b>1</b>	Albania 2014
<b>Adequate earnings and productive work</b>		<b>6</b>	

Employment target		No. of employment targets	Countries
<b>Low pay rate (total)</b>		<b>2</b>	
	Low pay rate generic	1	Albania 2014
	Low pay rate other	1	Armenia 2012
<b>Working poor</b>		<b>4</b>	Albania 2014 Guatemala 2017 Liberia 2009 Namibia 2013
<b>Decent hours</b>		<b>3</b>	
	<b>Time-related underemployment rate (generic)</b>	<b>3</b>	Cameroon 2008 Cameroon 2017 Guatemala 2017
<b>Equal opportunity and treatment in employment</b>		<b>3</b>	
	<b>Gender wage gap</b>	<b>3</b>	Albania 2014 Moldova 2007 Moldova 2016
<b>Safe work and environment</b>		<b>1</b>	Namibia 2013
<b>Social security</b>		<b>4</b>	
	<b>Generic</b>	<b>1</b>	Namibia 2013
	<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b>	Albania 2014 Jordan 2011 Mongolia 2016
<b>Social dialogue</b>		<b>1</b>	
	<b>Workers' and employer's representation</b>	<b>1</b>	Albania 2014
<b>Economic and social context for decent work</b>		<b>12</b>	
	<b>Labour productivity</b>	<b>2</b>	Moldova 2016 Morocco 2015
<b>Skills, education &amp; training (SET) (total)</b>		<b>10</b>	
	SET generic	4	Albania 2014 Burkina Faso 2008 Costa Rica 2014 Namibia 2013
	SET youth	1	Jordan 2011
	SET women	2	Albania 2014 Costa Rica 2014
	SET men	1	Albania 2014
	SET people with disabilities	1	Albania 2014
	SET other	1	Jordan 2011
<b>Other employment targets</b>		<b>17</b>	
	Other employment targets generic	11	Albania 2014 (3) Armenia 2012 (1) Costa Rica 2014 (1) Kyrgyzstan 2013 (1) North Macedonia 2015 (1) Moldova 2007 (3) Moldova 2016 (1) Mongolia 2016 (6) Mozambique 2006 (1) Namibia 2013 (1) Zambia 2005 (1)
	Other employment targets youth	2	Costa Rica 2014 Kyrgyzstan 2013
	Other employment targets women	1	Albania 2014
	Other employment targets men	1	Albania 2014
	Other employment targets people with disabilities	1	Moldova 2016
	Other employment targets other	1	Albania 2014



	Algeria	Armenia	Benin 2011	Burkina Faso	Cameroon 2007	Côte d Ivoire 2012	Guatemala 2012	Iraq	Jordan	Liberia	Macedonia 2011	Moldova 2007	Mozambique 2006	Nepal 2005	Peru	Philippines	Senegal 2010	Sri Lanka	Uganda	Zambia	TOTAL	
<b>III. Labour market policies and governance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	
<b>1. Employment services</b>																					<b>0</b>	
Support the reform and modernization of public employment services																						
Regulation of private employment agencies																						0
Cooperation between public employment services and private employment agencies																						0
<b>2. Active labour market policies</b>																						<b>31</b>
Job orientation measures								x	x			x						x	x			5
Special employment measures or programmes for women					x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				11
Incentives/subsidies to hire																		x				1
Skills upgrading and re-skilling to improve employability										x	x	x										3
Entrepreneurship development programmes						x		x		x		x		x	x				x			7
Public employment schemes						x				x		x				x						4
<b>3. Unemployment benefits</b>																						<b>0</b>
<b>4. Social dialogue</b>															x				x			<b>2</b>
<b>5. Wage policies – policies that address gender pay gap</b>										x		x							x			<b>3</b>
<b>6. Labour law and regulations</b>								x	x	x		x	x		x	x						<b>7</b>

	Algeria	Armenia	Benin 2011	Burkina Faso	Cameroon 2007	Côte d Ivoire 2012	Guatemala 2012	Iraq	Jordan	Liberia	Macedonia 2011	Moldova 2007	Mozambique 2006	Nepal 2005	Peru	Philippines	Senegal 2010	Sri Lanka	Uganda	Zambia	TOTAL	
<b>7. Labour Market Information System</b>										x			x						x			<b>3</b>
<b>IV. Policies to enhance the quality of employment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>1. Working conditions</b>								x	x					x	x	x		x				<b>6</b>
<b>2. Social protection</b>								x	x		x	x				x		x				<b>6</b>
<b>3. Ensure equal opportunities/ Prevent gender discrimination in employment</b>								x		x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x		<b>9</b>



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**Advancing social justice,  
Promoting decent work**

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

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