



# Annual ParlAmericas Delegation to the OAS

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March 16 to 20, 2026

Washington, D.C., United States of America



# Mental Health in the Americas: Opportunities for Inter-American Cooperation

*ParlAmericas*  
*March 19, 2026*

Renato Oliveira e Souza  
Chief of the Mental Health and Substance Use Unit  
Pan American Health Organization

# Mental Health and Suicide in the Americas: A Public Health Crisis

**18.7%**

*Prevalence of mental disorders in the Region in 2023*

**82%**

*Treatment gap for the treatment of severe mental disorders in 2020*

**> 100,000**

*Annual suicide deaths in 2021*

**▲ 17.4%**

*Increase in the suicide rate in the region between 2000 and 2021*

## BURDEN AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

- Depression and anxiety disorders are among the leading causes of morbidity
- More than 118,000 deaths were associated with drug use disorders in 2021
- Social factors include poverty, violence, displacement, among others

# Broader Impacts of Poor Mental Health

## SOCIAL

- Lower labour productivity
- Unemployment
- Poor academic performance and educational attainment
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Incarceration

## ECONOMIC

- Globally, productivity losses due to anxiety and depression amount to **one trillion dollars per year**.
- The economies of Latin America and the Caribbean lose **nearly 31 million dollars each year** due to mental disorders affecting young people.

## SECURITY

- Untreated trauma and distress erode trust
- Weakened community cohesion
- Social fragmentation



**THANK YOU**



*The Premier Economic Development,  
Innovation, and Entrepreneurial  
Network of the Americas.*

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OAS | SEDI



EDA  
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

# THE ACE

The Premier Economic  
Development, Innovation  
and Entrepreneurial  
Network of the Americas



The ACE is the Premier Economic Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurial Network of the Americas that aims to boost international and regional partnerships, increase trade and investment, strengthen innovation and competitiveness, and foster economic development in the region.

The ACE successfully connects decision-makers from the Americas and beyond and is a catalyst for enhanced economic development and commercial ties in the Americas.

#ACXchange



# ACE Editions



# ACE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Promoting long-term multilateral commercial, trade, and investment partnerships among decision-makers of the Americas and beyond;
- Identifying and sharing best practices in economic development, including public private partnerships, building local assets that grow businesses, cluster development, promoting entrepreneurship, and coordinating regional economic development strategies;
- Stimulating capital investment and job creation in the region;
- Fostering an environment for innovative companies to startup and expand.



# ACE IMPACT

Up to

**\$30 USD**

ROI for every **\$1**  
**spent**, based on an  
independent evaluation

**\$660,000 USD**

Savings to host of recent  
ACE

**+1000**

**New  
Partnerships**

Over

**30 countries**

participating in ACE

Over

**1000**

participats in ACE

Over

**30**

**Prioritized**

industries

[Video](#)

# PRIORITIZED CLUSTERS

## Logistics, Trade, and Global Commerce

Memphis is a global logistics powerhouse, anchored by FedEx's world headquarters and global air hub, one of the most sophisticated multimodal freight networks in the world, and direct access to river, rail, road, and air infrastructure. The region is also emerging as a leader in supply chain resilience, automation, and trade-enabled innovation, offering valuable insights into how logistics ecosystems can adapt to evolving global commerce dynamics.

## Advanced Mobility and Electrification

The region's leadership in advanced mobility is being reshaped by advanced battery innovation at Amplify Cell Technologies and SK Innovation as well as the Industry University Cooperative Research Center at the University of Memphis. The region is seeing high-end manufacturing and supply chain innovations within the electrification spectrum. The city of Memphis has also coordinated industry and academic research and development investments across the full value chain of mobility solutions. Memphis is prime for this activity with its global leading supply chain, logistics, and geographic attributes.

## Artificial Intelligence and Frontier Technologies

Memphis is rapidly positioning itself as a hub for frontier technologies and applied innovation, underscored by xAI's major supercomputing investment in the region. AI applications are expanding across key sectors—including logistics optimization, healthcare delivery, public services, and advanced analytics—demonstrating how emerging technologies can be deployed at scale to improve efficiency, competitiveness, and decision-making.

## Healthcare and Life Sciences

With world-class institutions such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Regional One Health, Memphis has a globally recognized healthcare and life sciences ecosystem. The region's strengths span clinical research, medical devices, biotechnology, and health equity, providing ACE delegates with insights into innovation models that integrate research excellence, commercialization, and community impact.

## Ag-Innovation and Food Systems

Memphis' agricultural innovation ecosystem is supported by Agricenter International, AgLaunch, and close proximity to the Mississippi Delta, one of the most productive agricultural regions in the Americas. Combined with the strategic advantages of the Port of Memphis, the region offers a powerful platform for advancing agtech, sustainable food systems, and global agricultural trade.

# THE AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS EXCHANGE

**1 Week** (May 10 - 15, 2026)

**50+ Participants**

**25+ Sites and  
Projects**

# SELECTION CRITERIA

- ✓ Senior leadership from the public, private, and academic sectors
- ✓ Top entrepreneurs and innovators
- ✓ Ability to create long-term economic connections
- ✓ Capacity to cover the cost of participation

# **The Future of Work in the Americas: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Role of the OAS**

**ParlAmericas – March 10, 2026**

# Trends Shaping the Future of Work

**Environmental  
changes**

**Demographic  
changes**

**Technological  
changes**

## Concerns About the Future of Work

- **Are the robots taking over?** Or how are new technologies redefining jobs and skills?
- **How many jobs will AI replace?**
- **Who is my boss?** Or how are labour relations and the nature of work changing?
- **How and in what do we work?**
- **How and in what will we work?**

# How many jobs will disappear, and how many will be created?

## Is this the question we should be asking?

In Latin America and the Caribbean, only between 2% and 5% of occupations can be fully automated, but between 26% and 38% of jobs may be affected by generative AI. (ILO and World Bank, 2024)

Machine learning would affect 35% of jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean, while generative AI would reach 44% of jobs. (ECLAC, 2025)

In the United States, 2 out of every 3 jobs can be partially automated through the use of AI. (Goldman Sachs, 2023)

30% of the public sector workforce in Latin America works in occupations at high risk of technological replacement. (CAF, 2021)

27% of employment in OECD member countries is at very high risk of automation.

(OECD, 2025)

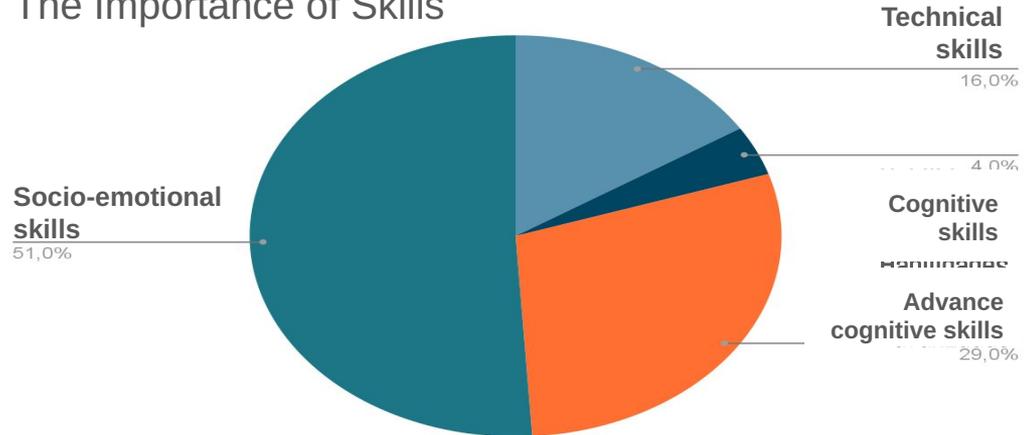
## The evidence shows:

- The disappearance of **routine and codifiable** jobs — slower in Latin America and the Caribbean, but accelerating
- The emergence **of new occupations** that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago
- AI's impact: there is no evidence of massive job displacement, but there is evidence of a major **transformation of occupations**
- **Today, AI is acting more as a complement to employment** than as a substitute
- **Gender gaps are** at risk of widening
- **Skills gaps and brain drain (!!)** present major paradoxes

- Massive transformation of jobs — all now require **digital skills**
- We must focus on skills development and lifelong learning, along with socio-emotional skills.

What skills do employers value most?

The Importance of Skills



Rethinking the conversation:  
It is not people **or** technology, but people **WITH** technology

## *Platform work, or the “platform economy”*

- An increase in the share of the workforce that is “independent” or freelance
- **12% of the global workforce works fully or partially through platforms (World Bank, 2023)**
- Opportunities and challenges — it must not be allowed to become a race to the bottom in terms of **precarious work**
- Countries are moving forward with regulation — Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay

## *Platform work*

### **Advantages**

Flexibility / autonomy / and income — better work-life balance

Inclusion of groups traditionally excluded (such as migrants) —  
reduced barriers to entry

### **Challenges**

Lack of transparency in platform-based decision-making

Low levels of social protection coverage, inadequate protection in  
the event of accidents, and unpredictable income

# *Work, Climate Change, and a Just Transition*

- Climate change undermines productivity, employment, and workers' health, including through heat stress
- At the same time, it holds significant potential for the creation of green jobs: **15 million jobs by 2030**, including 13.5 million in medium-skilled occupations — **(\*education and training\*)**
- **There is a risk of widening gender disparities**, as new jobs generated through decarbonization are concentrated in traditionally male-dominated sectors
- **Public policy: ensuring a just transition**

# The Role of the OAS

To work with governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations to strengthen and improve the design and implementation of:

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

LABOUR POLICIES

LABOUR MARKET  
POLICIES

in order to better address major labour and employment challenges and protect rights at work.

## GOALS:



### STRATEGIC LINE 4

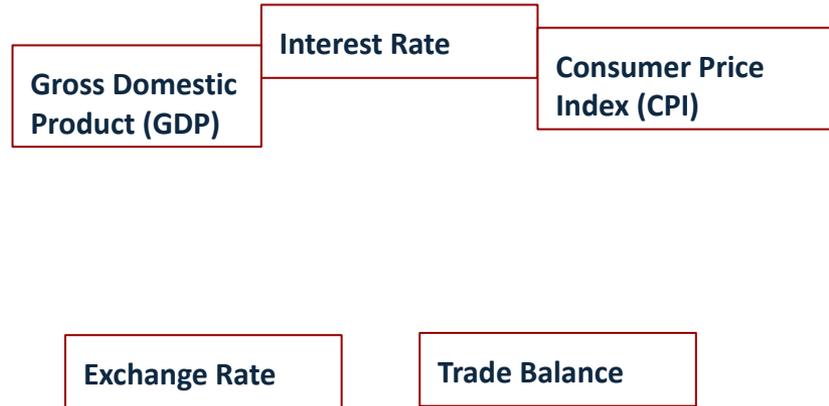
Promote decent, dignified, and productive work for all

## EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

LABOR POLICIES

LABOUR MARKET POLICE

- Far beyond the “labour” sphere: embedded in the broader direction of economic and social policy
- They shape the demand for labour generated by the economy (fiscal, monetary, and industrial policy)
- They shape the supply of labour (education, health, and social protection)



EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

LABOR POLICIES

LABOUR MARKET POLICE

A set of policies that operate in the employment relationship between worker and employer and that influence working conditions

They include provisions on the **guarantee of rights**:

Minimum wage

Mandatory  
benefits

Right to strike

Occupational  
health

Non-  
discrimination

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

LABOR POLICIES

LABOUR MARKET POLICE

A set of instruments and programs that the public sector uses to intervene in the labor market to prevent or combat unemployment, and to support the economically active population.

#### ACTIVE POLICIES

- Vocational training
- Job placement
- (Public employment services)
- Career guidance

#### PASSIVE POLICIES

- Relieve loss of income due to unemployment
- Unemployment insurance

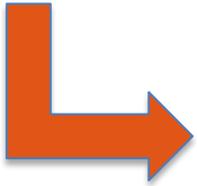
# The role of the OAS CIMT Process Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor



## Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (CIMT)



Forum for political dialogue and consensus building at the regional level



OEA | RIAL



Cooperation mechanism led by the Ministries  
Funded by the Ministries through the Voluntary Contributions Fund

**STRENGTHENING Ministries of Labor  
through COOPERATION**

# CIMT Work Plan 2022-2024

## LINES OF ACTION OF THE CIMT WORK PLAN

Future of work & new forms of employment

*Futuro del trabajo y nuevas formas de empleo*

Strengthening and modernization of Ministries of Labor

*Fortalecimiento y modernización de los Ministerios de Trabajo*

Articulation between labor and employment

*Articulación entre educación y empleo*

Institutionalized social dialogue

*Diálogo social institucionalizado*

Gender equality and mainstreaming

*Igualdad y transversalización de género*

Occupational Safety and Health

*Salud y Seguridad Ocupacional*

Transición de la economía informal a la formal

*Transition from informal to formal economy*

Compliance with labor law & fundamental rights at work

*Cumplimiento de la legislación y derechos y fundamentales del trabajo*

# Priority public policy actions (Building the Future of Work We Want)

**\*\*Policy coordination and social dialogue** - Designing intersectoral policies to address multidimensional phenomena.

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- Improve the quality, inclusion, and relevance of education
- Coordinate education and labor market policies
- Facilitate/guarantee lifelong learning
- Revalue technical and vocational education and training
- Develop socio-emotional skills
- Facilitate retraining and reskilling (reskilling, upskilling)

# Priority public policy actions (Building the Future of Work We Want)

## IN THE FACE OF NEW FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Develop regulatory frameworks and policies on platform work (the "race to the bottom" in working conditions and rights)
- Increase social protection coverage
- Invest in connectivity – digital infrastructure – equitable access to technology
- Ensure the **ethical and responsible use of AI** in the workplace
  - ✓ Transparency in data handling
  - ✓ Right to information about algorithms
  - ✓ Mitigation of algorithmic discrimination bias
  - ✓ Regulation of human oversight

# María Claudia Camacho

Head of the Labor and Employment Section, Department of Human  
Development, Education and Employment, SEDI/OAS

[mcamacho@oas.org](mailto:mcamacho@oas.org)