

LAU Economics Networking Event – Spring 2025

Panel discussion – Concept note

16 April 2025

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

AKSOB903

Panel Title: **Next-Gen Economies: Insights on Work, Technology and Institutional Reform in Lebanon and the Arab Region**

Background

As part of LAU's Economics Networking Event, this panel discussion will explore the future of work and evolving labor market trends in Lebanon and the broader Arab region. It brings together high-level experts from international and regional organizations to share insights on workforce readiness, public sector reform, technology integration, sustainable economic development, and progress toward the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Lebanon's labor market continues to face significant pressures—including economic contraction, high youth unemployment, talent emigration, and persistent mismatches between education and employment. These challenges are unfolding against broader transformations across the Arab region, driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digitalization and the emergence of green and care economies. At the same time, fiscal instability and institutional fragility have reinforced the need for targeted reforms and regional cooperation. The panel will unpack these multidimensional shifts, drawing on lessons from Lebanon and regional and global experiences. Speakers will discuss how inclusive policymaking, strategic investment and innovation can help the region adapt to these trends while promoting shared prosperity, institutional resilience and long-term economic competitiveness. With a focus on Lebanon, the session will also explore public financial management and the state's role in creating enabling environments for recovery and reform. Finally, the session offers students and participants a unique opportunity to engage directly with thought leaders on the future of work and economic development.

Agenda

Welcome and opening remarks – [2 mins – Dr. Hussein Zeaiter, Department of Economics, AKSOB, LAU]

Panel presentations – [30 mins, 5 mins per speaker]:

– **Dr. Jad Jaber**, Advisor to the Minister of Finance, Republic of Lebanon

- The Ministry of Finance has shown a strong commitment to building an inclusive and forward-looking public sector. Could you tell us more about any upcoming opportunities the Ministry is creating for university students—particularly in terms of internships and early career development?

- **Ms. Dima Chehabeddine**, Manager of the Director General’s Office, Ministry of Economy and Trade (MOET), Republic of Lebanon
 - The Ministry of Economy and Trade is currently undergoing a significant digital transformation aimed at modernizing its operations and services. How do you see this digital shift impacting the economy in general, and job opportunities in particular?

- **Dr. Jan Gaska**, Economic Affairs Officer, Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster, ESCWA
 - Given the rapid pace of change and increasing technology integration in economics, how can economics students better prepare themselves for the evolving job market?

- **Ms. Maya Bsaibes**, Economist and Programme Manager, Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan (IoF)
 - How is the Institute supporting public sector reform and capacity development in Lebanon and the wider region? And what innovative tools or approaches are you using to enhance transparency and accountability in public finance?

- **Dr. Alissar Nasser**, Team Leader, Central Administration of Statistics (CAS)
 - In the context of increasing demand for timely, accessible, and policy-relevant economic data, how does your office ensure transparency in methodologies and ease of access for various users? What are some of the main challenges you face in meeting these expectations? Additionally, is your office currently engaged in or planning partnerships with academic institutions to support the development and use of official statistics in public policy and innovation?

- **Dr. Marwan Barakat**, Group Chief Economist and Head of Research, Bank Audi
 - What role can the private sector play in driving inclusive recovery and creating meaningful opportunities for youth in Lebanon’s evolving labor market?

- Moderator – Ms. Stephanie Karam, Department of Economics, AKSOB, LAU

Moderated Q&A – [30 min]

Closing remarks [2 mins – Dr. Hussein Zeaiter, Department of Economics, AKSOB, LAU]