



13th WAPES World Congress

2025

Active employment policies and demographic issues: What challenges for labour market players?

Abidjan,

7 and 8 May 2025

This event will be partially broadcast live. By registering or submitting your contributions, you agree to be filmed and to have your image and voice recorded, published and/or broadcast on www.wapes.org.



Preamble

For several years now, our societies - whatever the nature of our economies, our systems of governance or our resources - have been faced with phenomena that have emerged mainly from the activities and developments of human kind. Faced with the need to anticipate changes in these phenomena, researchers and experts in various fields have identified a number of major trends with global impacts, known as megatrends. Generally speaking, demographic change, climate change and the development of the digital economy are at the heart of these concerns.

We have chosen to focus here on the major issues that will impact employment, work and our economies, with a particular emphasis on demographic change. As public employment services, we need to focus our thinking and our discussions on putting people back at the heart of these changes and the transformation they imply for our services and our organisations. Together, we need to build a forward-looking vision so that we can better support our citizens, the users of our services in the future, whether they are students, employees or jobseekers, the self-employed, company directors, and all the socio-economic players or political decision-makers.

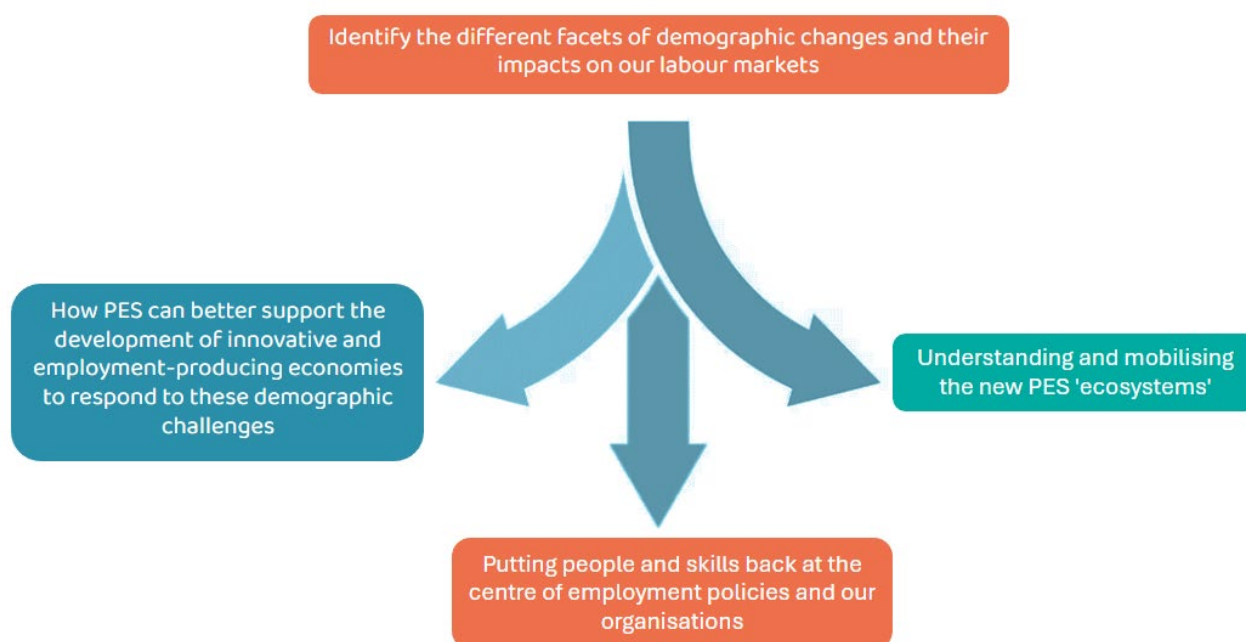
Our central theme will therefore be: **Active employment policies and demographic issues: what challenges for labour market players.**

We propose to divide our collective thinking and discussions into 4 sub-themes:

- Sub-theme 1: Identifying the different facets of demographic change and their impact on our labour markets
 - Objective: Understand and anticipate the issues facing PES in the years ahead
- Sub-theme 2: How can the PES better support the development of innovative, job-producing economies to meet these demographic challenges?
 - Objective: Identify the different economic paths to which PES could contribute to development with a view to green and digital transformation, giving priority to social integration and community enterprises.
- Sub-theme 3: Understanding and mobilising new PES 'ecosystems'
 - Objective: To identify the levers for mobilising and coordinating the various economic and social development players so that they can act together more effectively.
- Sub-theme 4: Putting people and skills back at the heart of employment policies and our organisations
 - Objective: To put the development and adaptation of skills back at the centre of our concerns, both for working people faced with changes in their environment and for those involved in supporting them (PES, partner NGOs, private operators, etc.).



Active employment policies and demographic issues: What are the challenges for labour market actors



Introductory remarks: Our human challenges for tomorrow

(Introductory plenary lecture, working title)

According to the different sources or approaches of the experts, the aim is to present and illustrate the major trends which, for us as PES, must be taken into account as a matter of priority and urgency:

Demographic change: Changes in the size, composition and distribution of the world's population, including ageing population, increasing urbanisation and international migration, are having a profound impact on labour markets, resources and social systems. The growing urban population brings with it challenges and opportunities in terms of infrastructure development, service provision, resource management and the creation of sustainable communities.

Climate change and preserving diversity: The effects of climate change, including rising temperatures, rising sea levels, extreme weather events and biodiversity loss, require global action to mitigate risks and promote environmental sustainability.

Changes in societal values: Changes in societal attitudes, beliefs and values are influencing consumer behaviour, governance expectations and the dynamics of intercultural relations, leading to increased demands for transparency, accountability and inclusion.

Sustainable development and the circular economy: The transition to a circular and sustainable economy means rethinking the way we design, produce, use and recycle



resources to reduce waste, minimise our environmental footprint and promote inclusive economic growth.

The exponential evolution of technology: The rapid evolution of technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, biotechnology and quantum computing is fundamentally transforming the way we work, communicate, care for our health and interact with the world.

Accelerating digital transformation: The increasing digitisation of business, government and society as a whole creates new opportunities for innovation, but also poses challenges in terms of data security, privacy and digital equity.

Growing inequalities: Growing economic, social and geographical disparities between individuals, communities and nations fuel social, political and economic tensions, and are a major source of endogenous or exogenous conflicts (protest movements, armed conflicts, etc.). In the face of these risks, measures to promote equity, inclusion and social justice are imperative.

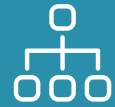
Evolving global governance and geopolitical polarities: Changes in the global balance of power, including the emergence of new superpowers, growing geopolitical tensions and transnational challenges such as migration, terrorism and pandemics, require enhanced international cooperation and reform of government institutions to address global challenges effectively and equitably.

These trends, or issues, cannot be considered in isolation, as they interact with each other to form an emerging, complex system, with as many questions at its heart as answers, as many risks as opportunities...

And it is at the heart of this complex system, at the heart of its movements, that today's and tomorrow's workers will have to find their place, imagine and realise their professional projects, constantly develop and adapt their skills, anticipate and manage their professional transitions. **The human dimension therefore appears to be one of the vectors of change, both the source of problems and challenges and the primary resource for providing sustainable solutions.**

It is against this backdrop that the public employment services, which are the levers of policies to support these transformations, are and will be heavily mobilised in the years to come.

To keep pace with these changes, they will have to transform themselves: adapting their methods and patterns of intervention, in contexts where public resources will be increasingly conditional on tangible results, implying a constant search for the best performance. The internal organisation and management of the PES will also have to adapt to the changes, aspirations and new concerns of society and of future generations at work.



Increasingly, there is a need to work in networks, with multiple forms of cooperation to broaden the responses to these challenges of tomorrow...

"The future is being built now, and the best way to predict it is to create it."

Alan Kay¹

¹ American computer scientist (1940 -), a pioneer of object-oriented programming, he was behind one of the first prototypes of the portable computer, and was involved in the development of modern graphical user interfaces, for which he introduced the metaphor of the "desktop".



First sub-theme: Identifying the different facets of demographic change and their impact on our labour markets

Objective: Understand and anticipate the issues facing PES in the years ahead.

The ageing of the global workforce: Many countries, particularly in advanced economies such as Europe and North America, are experiencing exponential population ageing. Falling birth rates and rising life expectancy are creating new economic and social tensions linked to a shrinking potential workforce and skills shortages. The need for labour is increasing in all sectors, which thus find themselves in a situation of heightened competition. To correct this imbalance, most of these countries are turning to immigration policies, more or less controlled, more or less concerted with the countries of origin.

Continued demographic growth in emerging countries: On the other hand, many developing countries in Africa and Asia are experiencing rapid population growth. This poses challenges in terms of housing, employment, health services and education. Asia is home to the world's largest youth population, and Africa has the highest proportion of young people in its population, with 40% under the age of 15. These figures will continue to rise over the coming decades, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, which are experiencing exponential demographic growth.

The global youth unemployment rate is now 13.6% (compared with 5.1% for the total population), and 55 million young workers around the world are living in extreme poverty.

These young people still have tremendous potential for development, but the challenges they face remain enormous: 628 million young people aged between 15 and 24, the majority of whom are girls, are unemployed, untrained and uneducated (NEETS). This situation alters their prospects and hopes for the future and makes them more vulnerable to the rise of extremism.

Furthermore, the migration of skills from the South to the North, while it may offer individual opportunities, poses a serious risk for the emerging economies of the South, which find themselves facing a crucial deficit in key sectors, compromising their sustainable development.

Increasing migration: Migratory movements will continue to influence the populations of the different continents. Factors such as the search for economic opportunities, conflict, environmental change and natural disasters are likely to increase large-scale population movements. Globally, it is estimated that the number of international migrants has increased over the last fifty years. It is estimated that 281 million people will be living in a country other than their country of birth in 2020 (3.6% of the world's population), 128 million more than in 1990 and more than three times as many as in 1970.

Urbanisation and the proliferation of megacities: Urbanisation is continuing apace in many parts of the world. Rural populations are migrating to cities in search of economic



opportunities, posing challenges in terms of housing, transport, infrastructure and resource management.

Integrating ethnic and cultural diversity: As a collateral effect of migration and urban concentration, populations are becoming increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse, particularly in megacities. This can enrich society, but it can also pose challenges in terms of integration, social cohesion and the management of cultural differences.

In summary, future demographic changes will require adaptations in many areas, including social policy, urban planning, education, employment and health. Governments, businesses and organisations need to anticipate these trends and develop strategies to deal with them effectively and equitably. So how, now and in the future, can public employment services adapt their collective skills and services to enable our citizens to find information, advice and support at every stage of their working lives, so that they can manage their careers and their transitions?

We propose that this rather wide-ranging theme be dealt with in two stages:

- a round-table discussion with speakers or witnesses able to illustrate, share their experience or reflect on these themes,
- followed by a time for discussion with the participants.

Second sub-theme: How can PES better support the development of innovative, job-producing economies to meet these demographic challenges?

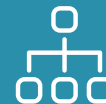
Objective: Identify the different economic paths to which PES could contribute to development with a view to green and digital transformation, giving priority to social integration and community enterprises.

The global economy is undergoing radical change, with the emergence of new forms of economy and innovation, such as the green economy, the blue economy and digital industries. These transformations offer employment opportunities in new sectors, but also raise questions about training, professional retraining and the skills required. The innovation economy, characterised by rapid technological advances, is profoundly changing the dynamics of labour markets and forms of production and work.

The PES must anticipate and accompany these transformations by promoting proactive policies that support the development of a sustainable and inclusive economy, while ensuring that workers, particularly the most vulnerable, can adapt to these new forms of employment or activity.

We propose that each of the following areas be explored in the form of a series of workshops/parallel sessions.

The workshops will last 1h30min and are divided into three parts:



1. An introduction to the subject of the workshop by a facilitator and (up to) 5 minutes of interactive/creative session;
2. 3-4 presentations (each 10 to 15 minutes long) by representatives or experts from the PES ;
3. A discussion with and between workshop participants led by the facilitator (who will also act as rapporteur for the proceedings) and questions/answers.

The first conclusion of the first hour will be presented at the January session on the second day.

Workshop 1: Green Economy, Circular Economy, Blue Economy...: Supporting the transformation of our economies by making them inclusive

- Supporting the development and transformation of jobs, particularly in sectors linked to renewable energies, energy efficiency, waste management, recycling and the conservation and management of natural resources (agroforestry, fisheries, etc.).
- To set up training and retraining programmes, in consultation with economic players and professional sectors, to enable workers to acquire the skills they need to enter emerging and sustainable sectors.
- Encouraging and supporting start-ups and businesses to innovate in green technologies, sustainable resource management solutions and environmentally friendly products.
- Promote financing mechanisms that support green entrepreneurship projects, such as green funds and tax incentives
- Examples of experience: The AASEP Action Plan, Conclusion of WAPES G7 Working Group

Workshop 2: The development of the digital and platform economy: preventing risks and taking advantage of opportunities for the future of employment?

- How can you take advantage of these opportunities?
 - The creation of new jobs and new sectors:
 - Improved productivity for organisations (including SMEs)
 - New ways of developing skills
 - Job transformation and cross-sector mobility
- How can you prevent risks?
 - Combating job insecurity (Gig economy)
 - Preventing the growth of territorial inequalities (regional disparities) and professional inequalities (skills discrimination)
 - Facing up to the dematerialisation and dehumanisation of work?



Workshop 3: Increasing inclusion through the development of the social economy

- Supporting local development: Encouraging local initiatives that meet the specific needs of communities, creating local jobs and supporting the local economy.
- Strengthening skills and social entrepreneurship: Training and supporting social entrepreneurs, particularly in marginalised communities, so that they can create businesses that have a positive impact while generating income.
- Access to solidarity financing: Discuss ways of facilitating access to alternative financing, such as microcredit or ethical investment funds, to support social economy projects.
- Social innovation and technology: Exploring how new technologies can be used in the social economy to improve inclusion, whether through digital platforms, solidarity applications or self-help networks.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships: highlighting the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors and associations to support the social economy, whether through public policies, tax incentives or mentoring programmes.

Third Sub-theme: Understanding and mobilising new PES 'ecosystems

Objective: To identify the levers for mobilising and coordinating the various economic and social development players so that they can act together more effectively.

The main challenge of the new ecosystems of public employment services lies in the ability to bring together different players within an effective governance framework, to create innovative partnerships and to foster collective synergy of action. The growing complexity of labour market issues requires PES to be responsive, flexible and open to innovation, whether institutional, economic or social. With this in mind, the development of an integrated and collaborative ecosystem is a priority to ensure a better match between job supply and demand.

This sub-theme will cover:

The governance of public employment services (PES), which refers to the way in which these institutions are directed, coordinated and controlled. The aim is to understand the decision-making mechanisms and institutional structure that guarantee the effectiveness and efficiency of the PES in a rapidly changing environment.

- How has the governance of PES evolved to adapt to new economic, technological and social contexts? Implementation of shared governance systems, multi-stakeholder committees, digital platforms for transparency and traceability of decisions.



- Decentralisation and autonomy: How much autonomy do local players have in implementing employment policies? Does the move towards more decentralised governance make the PES more effective and responsive?
- Evaluation and accountability: What tools should be used to evaluate the performance of public employment services? The importance of empowering players within the PES in the context of the new demands of the labour markets.

Partnerships, players in economic and social development, and public employment services can no longer operate in a vacuum. They must collaborate with a range of players if they are to respond to the contemporary challenges of the labour market.

- Broadening partnerships: PES must work with traditional players (companies, trade unions) as well as new partners from the private sector (start-ups, social enterprises, incubators), training bodies, NGOs, etc. This also includes international collaboration in a context of globalisation of employment markets. This also includes international collaboration in a context of globalisation of labour markets.
- The role of the social partners: The integration of the social partners in the design and implementation of employment policies is crucial. How do the PES work with local associations, community organisations and social development bodies?
- Co-construction of public policies: How can partnerships with economic and social players lead to more inclusive public policies that are adapted to local realities? The PES is becoming an intermediary at the heart of the challenges of sustainable economic and social development.

Synergy of action and cooperation between labour market players, The ability of public employment services to generate value depends largely on their ability to federate and coordinate the actions of different labour market players.

- Coordination between private and public players: How do the PES work in synergy with private employment agencies, digital employment platforms, independent recruiters, etc.? The importance of regulation and information sharing in an increasingly competitive ecosystem.
- Interconnection of information systems: Digital transformation offers opportunities for cooperation, particularly through shared data systems. Should the PES set up integrated digital platforms to enable a fluid flow of labour market information?
- Collective responses to labour market challenges: Against a backdrop of economic change (automation, ecological transition), how can the PES promote



collaborative initiatives that anticipate skills needs and encourage lifelong learning?

Introductory keynote: 9am-9.45am

- The new challenges facing public employment services in changing ecosystems: the need for more agile governance, strategic partnerships and cooperation between different players to meet the new challenges of the labour market.
- Global perspectives: comparison with international trends (e.g. European, American or African models) and how these dynamics can inspire the reconfiguration of local PES.

Round table: "Governance and partnerships at the heart of new PES ecosystems"

- **Objective:**
 - Exploring the governance of SPEs: How is it adapting to a constantly changing world? What innovations are being introduced in terms of leadership and decision-making?
 - Identifying new forms of strategic partnership: How do PES work with actors from the private sector, civil society and economic development to create effective employment policies?
 - Identifying the conditions for success: What are the main difficulties encountered in setting up effective partnerships and how can they be overcome? What role can international institutions and local bodies play in coordinating policies?
 - Identify the mechanisms for inter-institutional cooperation: What are the mechanisms for smooth collaboration between the PES, companies and training bodies to anticipate skills needs?
 - Sharing technological solutions and innovations for cooperation: The role of digital transformation in cooperation and the implementation of new synergy strategies (employment platforms, artificial intelligence for skills matching, etc.)...

Fourth Sub-theme: Putting people and skills at the heart of employment policies and our organisations

Round Table (1 h)

In a context of profound economic and social change, employment policies and organisational strategies need more than ever to place people at the heart of their concerns. Our approach aims to reconcile performance and well-being, by adopting



indicators that are no longer limited to economic dimensions, but also integrate social development, quality of life at work and the inclusion of vulnerable populations.

The development of performance indicators, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), reflects this need to measure an organisation's success in a different way. It is no longer just a question of aiming for economic growth, but also of responding to the needs and aspirations of employees and users, by personalising services and paying greater attention to their well-being.

At the same time, taking account of vulnerable populations - whether people with disabilities, young people in difficulty or migrants - is becoming a central issue in guaranteeing inclusive and equitable policies. Combating discrimination and promoting decent work are priorities for building working environments that are more respectful of rights and diversity.

We propose to deal with this subject through a round-table discussion that will enable us to explore these different dimensions through a variety of testimonials, exchanges and reflections, in order to identify innovative solutions for putting people back at the heart of our organisations and our employment policies.

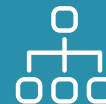
Congress objectives

The main objectives of the 13th WAPES World Congress are to:

- To encourage delegates from member countries to contribute, by sharing ideas and experiences, to the necessary adaptations and transformations of public employment services at the heart of a changing world of work and labour market.
- Proposing actions geared towards our users, enabling the public employment services to prepare and support them in the face of the challenges of the future labour market, through presentations of practical experience and testimonials by PES representatives and professionals, and external speakers.
- To promote new modes of collaboration, sharing and mutual learning, in a network, between existing WAPES members, potential members and key partners in the field of work, employment and inclusion.

For each of these workshops, we are looking for motivated speakers who are able to give presentations covering best practices, methods or innovative projects. We would be delighted if you could contribute to the dissemination of best practice and the sharing of opinions. Contributions should focus on concrete and innovative practices.

Members, non-members, stakeholders and academics will be welcome to share their experiences and take part in the workshops.



Presentations should be made in the official languages of WAPES, i.e. English, Spanish and French. In order to achieve the best possible interaction, we encourage our speakers to be innovative in their presentations and to diversify their communication methods and media.

The workshops will end with recommendations drawn up by the participants, which will then be presented to the plenary session.

All the work will be summarised in a final report.

Target audience

- WAPES members (DGs and contacts of the PES),
- Decision-makers in labour market institutions,
- Stakeholders in international organisations,
- Academics,
- Experts from government agencies, particularly public employment services,
- Representatives of international organisations dealing with labour, employment and social inclusion issues,
- Stakeholders from the private sector, local authorities and not-for-profit organisations.
- Participants will come from all over the world, members and non-members of WAPES (non-members by invitation).

Organisation

The World Congress is an opportunity for all our members to get together once every three years.

The events will take place over three days (see Agenda), with the first day devoted to the WAPES General Assembly (open only to members of the association). The following two days will be devoted to the conferences and workshops of the World Congress, which are open to all, subject to prior registration (please note that, depending on the contingencies of the sites selected for the organisation and the organisers' own decisions, participation may be limited).

Access to the event is free for participants from member utilities. Non-member participants, unless invited, will be asked to make a contribution.

Terms and conditions

If you would like to contribute as a speaker, please send us a proposal (abstract, draft presentation, etc.) by February 14th, 2025 at the latest, together with a brief biography of the speaker/author.



Innovative ways of presenting information will be welcome, so please do not hesitate to contact the Congress project team to find out about the technical and technological possibilities available to us for this event.

Please note that this document is currently only a general concept note and that topics will be described in more detail according to presentation proposals from WAPES members and stakeholders.



Provisional agenda

Day 1

5 May 2025 - WAPES Managing Board

- Organisation of the Board of Directors in preparation for the Annual General Meeting

Day 2

6 May 2025 - Annual General Meeting

- Holding the Annual General Meeting - Organising elections
First Board meeting of the new term of office

Day 3

7 May 2025 - 1st day of Congress

08.00 - 09.00	Participant registration
09.00 - 09.15	Welcome by the Master of Ceremonies (plenary room)
09.15 - 10.15	Opening speech (order to be revised according to protocol): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome from the Mayor of Abidjan• Speech by the AEJ Administrator• Words from Ms Imane Belmaati, President of WAPES 2018-2022, DG of ANAPEC, PES of Morocco• The new President of WAPES• Words from the Honorary President of WAPES, Mr Camille Mouté à Bidias, CEO of the FNE, PES of Cameroon• Words from the Minister for Youth Promotion, Professional Integration and Civic Service of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
10.15 - 10.45	Plenary conference : World demographic trends: Presentation of the 2024 world population projections See UN/ILO speaker or academic or public figure
10.45 - 11.15	Break - Coffee & Tea
11.15 - 12.30	Round Table: The different facets of labour market demography.
12.30 - 14:00	Lunch



14:00-15:00	Opening of the "Marketplace" exhibition and tour <i>Reminder: the Marketplace remains accessible after all the breaks and, depending on the organisation, it may be possible to access it before dinner (if organised on the Sofitel Hôtel Ivoire de Cocody site).</i>
15:00 - 16:30	Supporting innovative, job-creating economies to meet demographic challenges First series of parallel sessions (Workshops): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops A: Green economy, circular economy, blue economy, etc.: Supporting the transformation of our economies• Workshop B: The development of the digital and platform economy: Preventing risks and taking advantage of opportunities for the future of employment• Workshop C: Increasing inclusion through the development of the social economy
16:30 - 17.00	Conclusion of the day (master of ceremonies) and group photo
19.30	Gala dinner





Day 4

8 May 2025 - 2nd day of Congress

08.30	Meeting at the hotels if transport is organised
09.00 - 09.15	Opening of the second day (plenary room) - "Wake-up" activity/animation
9:15 - 10:45	Second series of parallel sessions (Workshops): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops A: Green economy, Circular economy, Blue economy,....: Supporting the transformation of our economies Moderated by :• Workshop B: The development of the digital and platform economy: Preventing risks and taking advantage of opportunities for the future of employment Moderated by• Workshop C: Increasing inclusion through the development of the social economy Moderated by
10.30 - 10.45	Break - Coffee & Tea
10:45 - 11:00	Keynote address: The new Eco-system of Public Employment Services
11:00- 12:00	Round table : "Governance and partnerships at the heart of the new PES ecosystems
12:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00 -14:45	Feedback from the 3 Workshops (plenary room) Supporting the development of innovative and productive economies
14:45- 15:45	Round-table discussion : "Putting people at the heart of employment policies and our organisations
15:45 -16:00	Break - Coffee & Tea
16:00 - 16:30	Feedback - general report
16 :30 - 17:00	Speeches and closing ceremony



Day 5

9 May 2025 - Study visit or cultural activities

10:00

Morning dedicated to a choice :

Study visits or sightseeing tours (details to follow)