

Thursday 17th October 2024 | 12.30 -13.30 | IAS C0.02 Seminar Room



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Women, Jobs and Growth – South Asia Development

South Asia's growth is on track to exceed earlier expectations, in a broad-based upturn. The region is expected to remain the fastest-growing among emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs). Several risks could upend this generally promising outlook, including extreme weather events, social unrest, and policy missteps, such as reform delays. But South Asian countries also have considerable opportunities that could help them further boost growth and employment and adapt to climate change. This edition of the South Asia Development Update examines in detail the issue of female labor force participation. With about two-thirds of the region's working-age women out of the labor force, raising female employment rates to those of men could increase per capita income by as much as one-half. Measures to accelerate job creation, remove obstacles to women working, and equalize gender rights would be more effective if combined with a shift toward social norms that looked more favorably on working women. The second opportunity comes from increase South Asian countries openness to global trade and investment. Greater openness could boost women's employment, spur the growth of firms, and allow the region to take better advantage of the reshaping of global supply chains and trade. Reducing the cost of conducting business could help the region better harness large-scale remittance inflows.

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