

Advancing Decent Work and Economic Growth in Kenya: Pathways, Challenges, and Opportunities toward Achieving SDG 8

Wafula Luasi Nabutola (Kenya)

Key words: Education; Implementation of plans; Legislation; Risk management; Standards; Urban renewal

SUMMARY

Advancing Decent Work and Economic Growth in Kenya: Pathways, Challenges, and Opportunities toward Achieving SDG 8

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goal 8—promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all—remains both urgent and attainable for Kenya. The country has demonstrated resilience through steady GDP growth, digital innovation, and a youthful, entrepreneurial population.

Keywords: SDG 8, Decent Work, Economic Growth, Youth Employment, Kenya, Sustainable Development, Policy Reform

OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess Kenya's progress and challenges in achieving SDG 8 targets related to decent work and economic growth.
2. To identify structural and policy barriers that limit inclusive and sustainable employment creation.
3. To examine the role of key sectors—particularly manufacturing, tourism, and the digital economy—in advancing productive and decent

Advancing Decent Work and Economic Growth in Kenya: Pathways, Challenges, and Opportunities toward Achieving SDG 8 (13817)

Wafula Luasi Nabutola (Kenya)

FIG Congress 2026

The Future We Want - The SDGs and Beyond

Cape Town, South Africa, 24–29 May 2026

work.

4. To propose actionable policy pathways and institutional frameworks to enhance economic inclusivity and labour productivity.

Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach integrating both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Secondary data are drawn from national statistics, policy documents, and SDG progress reports, complemented by comparative literature from other emerging economies. Sectoral case studies in manufacturing, tourism, and ICT provide contextual insights into employment dynamics, value-

THE RESULTS

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Model

This study is anchored in the Human Development and Inclusive Growth paradigms, which emphasize that economic expansion must translate into equitable opportunities, social inclusion, and dignified livelihoods. The theoretical underpinning integrates three complementary perspectives:

1. Decent Work Theory (ILO, 1999):

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model guiding this study posits that decent work outcomes in Kenya are a function of the interaction among policy coherence, sectoral transformation, and human capital development within an enabling governance and institutional environment.

Findings and Discussion (Anticipated Results and Policy Implications)

The anticipated findings point to several strategic implications:

- Adopt a Human-Centred Policy Lens: Position employment quality, not just quantity, at the heart of economic planning.
- Foster Sectoral Linkages: Strengthen value chains that integrate agriculture, manufacturing, and services for job-rich

Advancing Decent Work and Economic Growth in Kenya: Pathways, Challenges, and Opportunities toward Achieving SDG 8 (13817)

Wafula Luasi Nabutola (Kenya)

FIG Congress 2026

The Future We Want - The SDGs and Beyond

Cape Town, South Africa, 24–29 May 2026

growth.

- Reform Labour and Skills Systems: Align vocational training and innovation ecosystems with emerging economic opportunities.
- Institutionalize Policy Coherence: Create a multi-stakeholder SDG 8 platform to harmonize national and county-level interventions.
- Promote Green and Digital Transformation: Incentivize sustainable enterprises that combine environmental responsibility with economic inclusion.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MY WORK

Conclusion and Recommendations

. Three strategic pillars emerge as foundational:

1. Structural Transformation for Job Creation: .

2. Human Capital and Skills Alignment:

3. Governance and Institutional Coherence: _____

Final Reflection

In summary, Kenya's pathway to achieving SDG 8 lies in harmonizing economic growth with social equity, productivity, and innovation. The evidence suggests that with coherent policies, investment in human capital, and vibrant private–public collaboration, Kenya can translate its growth potential into widespread decent work and shared prosperity

Advancing Decent Work and Economic Growth in Kenya: Pathways, Challenges, and Opportunities toward Achieving SDG 8 (13817)

Wafula Luasi Nabutola (Kenya)

FIG Congress 2026

The Future We Want - The SDGs and Beyond

Cape Town, South Africa, 24–29 May 2026