Job creation remains center stage in developing and developed countries. According to the World Development Report 2013, the latter need to create 600 million new jobs over the next 15 years just to keep pace with working-age population growth. Even more will be needed to meet the goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity by 2030.

Yet policymakers around the world are quickly recognizing that conventional macro-fiscal and investment climate reforms may not be sufficient to meet these challenges. Rapid and sustained job creation requires more proactive industry level efforts to strengthen competitiveness and innovation.

It is said, though, that all failed industrial policies are alike; but all successful ones are successful in their own way. Those that failed used the wrong institutions at the wrong time, resulting in little action, much capture and no learning; those that succeeded found unique institutional forms tailored to their political context, solving problems of politics as much as of economics.

So the central challenge is as much how to implement as what policies to pursue, or the intersection of economics and institutions in creating effective change. Fortunately, while much remains unanswered, the body of knowledge on such questions is growing quickly, motivating a new effort to consolidate the state of the art, connect researchers and practitioners, and define new directions.

Encouraged by the evolving state of knowledge and in response to demand from its country partners, the World Bank has embarked on an ambitious agenda in this domain. The Competitive Industries and Innovation Program (CIIP) – a global effort to scale up World Bank Group technical assistance to developing countries that seek to boost industry competitiveness – was recently established between the World Bank Group, the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Secretariat, along with the Governments of Austria and Switzerland.

Now, to bring together leading researchers and practitioners, the Competitive Industries Global Practice at the World Bank, with financial support from CIIP, is organizing a high-level conference on "Making Growth Happen: Implementing Policies for Competitive Industries."
The goals of the event are to:

- Consolidate the state of the art in knowledge from research and from practical experience;
- Disseminate this knowledge among officials and practitioners, particularly those working on relevant World Bank projects; and
- Catalyze new directions for future research and knowledge creation in the field

The Conference will follow the occasion of the IMF-World Bank 2013 Annual Meetings (October 11-13, 2013). A number of senior World Bank Group clients and recognized international thought leaders will attend the conference sharing their experiences and views.

The conference will be keynoted by Joseph Stiglitz, University Professor, Columbia University, and Don Graves, Executive Director of the White House Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Among senior officials, will be Shri Arun Maira, Member of the Planning Commission of India; Patrick J. Achi, Minister of Economic Infrastructure from Cote d’Ivoire; Mugo Kibati, Head of Kenya’s Vision 2030; and Laura Alfaro, former Minister of Planning and Policy from Costa Rica.

Eminent academics, such as Nicholas Bloom, Ha-Joon Chang, JP Faguet, Mushtaq Khan, Mariana Mazzucato, Rohini Pande, John van Reenen, Charles Sabel, and Liu Xielin will share their latest thinking.

Also sharing their perspectives will be distinguished representatives of the private sector, among them Fadi Ghandour, Founder and Vice Chairman of Aramex; R. J. Lino, Director of the Indonesia Port Corporation (Pelindo II); Jose Augusto Coelho Fernandes, Executive Director, Policies and Strategies, National Confederation of Industry from Brazil; and Guillermo Luz, Private Sector Co-Chair, National Council for Competitiveness in the Philippines.

Subsequent plenary sessions will focus on the risks and rewards of industrial policies, experimental policy reform, public initiatives to spur private innovation, and regional approaches to execution, with a focus on Africa. The second day will hold seminars on topics ranging from the Bank’s forthcoming flagship study on South Asia, the knowledge economy, provincial competition, and more.

The Conference is organized with generous support from the

Competitive Industries and Innovation Program (CIIP)

[Image: Financial & Private Sector Development]