Gender and the updated International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18)

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The measurement of work is built upon a range of statistical standards and classifications which form an overlapping conceptual framework, the purpose of which is to measure and describe in meaningful detail the work of women and men.

While the standards in use in recent decades have played a critical role in supporting a major expansion in the availability of statistics on those who perform work and on the activities they undertake, substantial data gaps remain, with some of the most important data gaps related to women's work and employment.

To attempt to fill these gaps and acknowledged limitations in existing frameworks, the ILO and others have been engaged in a long process of review and update of standards and related classification concerning work. A landmark development was the adoption in 2013 of Resolution I of the 19th ICLS concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization. By recognising different forms of work, both paid and unpaid, these standards set the scene for a more comprehensive understanding of all work activities. Data on paid and unpaid work in combination has a huge gender relevance- e.g. it allows us to see that when only employment is considered men have longer average working hours, but when unpaid work performed for the family is included, the picture is reversed. Information of that type is simple and powerful, but fuller understanding of differences between men's and women's work and the impact of those differences require greater detail and granularity, which in turn is built upon a wide range of classifications.

One such classification is the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) which was first adopted in 1993. This classification allows employment to be differentiated based on the relationship between the worker and their job/business. While serving a very important purpose, ICSE-93 has become outdated due to many factors including the increase in non-standard forms of employment. To address this, the international community has agreed to replace it with a more detailed and granular classification at the 20th ICLS in October 2018. This presentation will highlight the main features of the updated ICSE-18 and its gender relevance. Among the key highlights of the new classification are:

- A classification of status in employment that is more clearly built around the two dimensions of type of authority the worker has over the organisation of his/her work and type of economic risk to which the worker is exposed. These two dimensions are highly relevant to understanding of differences between men's and women's employment.
- A far greater level of detail than ICSE-93, including identification of key groups of policy interest such as dependent contractors, previously not defined for measurement.
- Conceptual and operational definitions of the different categories in the classification to support more consistent, coherent and comparable measurement across time, country and source.
- Definition of a range of cross-cutting variables to properly describe working relationships
- A classification which extends beyond employment and covers also the other forms of unpaid work identified in the 19th ICLS standards

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