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Gender Statistics in the International Labour Office *

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PART A: BACKGROUND

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PART B: GENDER STATISTICS MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

- **International guidelines** on mainstreaming gender in labour statistics were adopted at the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2003. A copy of these guidelines is attached to this paper. This is to us the most effective tool for developing national statistics as these guidelines have been adopted by countries themselves and therefore they have a sense of ownership. As well, they provide everybody with an instrument against which to evaluate national statistics.
- **Training activities** involve giving courses on gender mainstreaming in labour statistics to users and producers of labour statistics – usually as part of larger courses. We are planning to produce a training kit on gender statistics.
- **Data collection** activities involve requesting national statistics on a number of labour issues. They are always requested by sex, except for consumer price indices and labour cost statistics. We generally receive data by sex when the source is a household-based survey, but not so when statistics come from establishment-based surveys or administrative sources.
- ILO continues to be responsible for producing world and regional estimates of *the Millennium Development Goal indicator 11* on share of women in non-agricultural paid employment, which is the only gender-specific indicator pertaining to labour issues. There are currently discussions regarding the set of new work-related indicators that will be part of new Target 1B on Decent work for all. It is expected that they will all be gender-sensitive.
- An activity which we are planning to carry out in 2007 will be a **Gender indicator database** which will contain a number of novel labour-related indicators for as many countries as possible and for the last 10 years.

PART C: ONGOING REGIONAL OR COUNTRY PROJECTS

- We do not have regional or country projects which target gender in particular. We aim rather at mainstreaming all our activities. Most of our **technical assistance** activities relate to helping National Statistical Institutes produce national statistics on employment, unemployment, wages, etc. We also provide technical assistance to non-statisticians within the UN systems.
- It is evidently not easy to assess the gender sensitivity of our technical assistance activities. Sometimes, the job may be well done from our side but the country may not be receptive. In other cases, the opposite may be true. The only output indicator to evaluate the success of our activities is the type of **tables** and **indicators** produced by countries.

PART D: GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A lot still needs to be done at the Agency level as well as at the country level. At the Agency level, unfortunately, work on gender mainstreaming is still seen as a residual activity, to be carried out almost on our spare time, with no clear outputs nor mandate, and it is usually left to the discretion of the staff involved.
- At the country level, the awareness and willingness to engage in gender mainstreaming is very country-specific and related to efforts done by individual persons within the National Statistical Institutes or as a mandate from higher bodies. I found for example that the excellent reception of the statistical guidelines on gender mainstreaming mentioned above was due more to the fact that countries themselves were ready to engage in this work than to any lobbying our Agency may have done.

Checklist of good practices for mainstreaming gender in labour statistics

To usefully address gender concerns, and to understand more fully the labour market functioning, labour statistics should satisfy the following four requirements:

- (a) They will be based on a political will at all levels, in the various data collection and analysis agencies and in all agencies which can provide administrative information;
- (b) The data collection procedures for labour statistics will ensure that, as far as possible, all relevant topics for describing gender concerns are regularly included. Such topics may include employment in the informal economy, non-SNA work, employment by detailed occupations and status in employment categories, income from paid and self-employment, statistics on the life course, on lifelong learning and on working time;
- (c) The data collection and processing procedures for labour statistics programmes will be designed to ensure that definitions and measurement methods cover and adequately describe all workers and work situations in sufficient detail to allow relevant gender comparisons to be made. Household and establishment-based surveys as well as administrative sources are valuable and, in particular, periodical time-use surveys are crucial;
- (d) The resulting statistics will always be presented as part of regular publications in a way that will clearly reveal differences and similarities between men and women in the labour market and the factors that may influence their situations. This can be done by (i) presenting relevant topics in sufficient and relevant detail, and by (ii) providing statistics according to relevant descriptive variables, of e.g. personal and family circumstances, work environment and institutional setting.