

Chapter 4

Work

“Women contribute to development not only through remunerated work but also through a great deal of unremunerated work.”

Beijing Platform for Action

All over the world, women and men spend the major portion of their lives working. Some of the work may be paid and some may be unpaid. The conditions under which women work, and women's access to employment and productive resources, can differ considerably from those of men. As observed in the Beijing Platform for Action, almost everywhere, women are now working more outside the home, but there has not been a parallel lightening of their responsibility for unremunerated work in the household and community. For women in paid work, obstacles remain that hinder them from achieving their potential, and women are poorly represented in economic decision-making, as well as in certain occupations and sectors. Unemployment and underemployment¹ are serious problems in many countries, especially for women. Where formal employment opportunities are not accessible, women often seek livelihoods for themselves and their dependants in the informal sector, some becoming self-employed or owners of small-scale enterprises.²

According to the Millennium Development Goals, strategies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women include advocating women's empowerment in employment. Countries are also called on to develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth and to ensure that girls are given the same opportunities as boys.³

To address those concerns, Governments require information on the economically active population, employment, unemployment, occupations, status in employment, wages and related statistics. For effective gender-sensitive planning and evaluation, the data should be generated and disseminated by sex, age and other socio-economic variables as needed. Statistics on the economically active, employed and unemployed populations, and on the distribution of those populations by occupation and by status in employment (i.e. whether employers, own-account workers, employees or contributing family workers), are already collected regularly in many countries, mainly through labour force surveys. These data are also collected in population censuses.

Data on the earnings of women and men are routinely collected in many countries from payroll figures through establishment censuses or surveys,⁴ and in some cases from labour force surveys or administrative records.

Official statistics on the labour force and its characteristics are typically collected in a country by the ministry of labour or the national statistical office. At the international level, the International Labour Office is generally responsible for collecting those statistics from national authorities. The United Nations Statistics Division is responsible for collecting from national authorities those statistics on economic characteristics that are derived from population censuses.

On the basis of what has been reported to the international organizations, it is apparent that the worldwide availability of statistics on economic activity, employment and unemployment is far from satisfactory, with slightly more than half of all countries providing data by sex and only roughly a third of all countries doing so with fair regularity. The lack of data has received particular attention in recent years as a result of the monitoring and reporting requirements of the Millennium Development Goals. One positive aspect is that when economically active population, employment and unemployment data are provided, they are almost always disaggregated by sex.

In general, labour force surveys and establishment surveys capture the more formal types of economic activity better than the non-formal types of economic activity. As a result, the economic activities of women are often under-reported. The production of goods and services for household consumption is done by women more than by men. Although included in the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA),⁵ work of this nature is often under-recorded. It is believed that women also perform most of the unremunerated domestic and community work that are not part of the SNA and a significant part of the activities in the informal sector of the economy, which tend to be underreported in official statistics. In that light, the Beijing Platform for

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Action called on countries to improve data collection on the full contribution of women and men to the economy, including their participation in the informal sector, and to conduct regular time-use surveys to measure unremunerated work in quantitative terms.⁶

Current state of statistics 1995-2003

The labour force, the unemployed and the employed

The labour force

Most Governments attach a high priority to up-to-date information on the labour force (see box 4.1 for

concepts related to the labour force) and the employment and unemployment situation, given the importance of the information in economic planning and monitoring. For many countries, that emphasis is reflected in the breadth and regularity of available statistics on the labour force. For other countries, however, it is a challenge to produce even the most basic of these important statistics. The result is that for the world, for the period 1995 to 2003, a total of 127 out of 204 countries or areas, comprising about 50 per cent of the world population, reported the numbers of the economically active population⁷ at least once to the international statistical system. The count includes only countries or areas that provided data on the economically active population from either a survey or a population census.⁸ All but two

Box 4.1

Concepts related to the labour force

The **economically active population** comprises all persons of either sex who furnish or are available to furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services, during a specified reference period; that is, it comprises all persons above a specified minimum age who were either employed or unemployed during that time. If the reference period used to define this population is short, for example one week or one day, the term **labour force or currently active population** is used to denote the group. If the reference period is long, for example a year, the term **usually active population** is used.

As defined by the System of National Accounts, the concept of economic activity covers (i) all production oriented to the market; (ii) some types of non-market production, including production and processing of primary products for own consumption; (iii) own-account construction; and (iv) other production of fixed assets for own use. It excludes some unpaid activities, such as unpaid domestic activities and certain types of volunteer community services.^a

The **employed** population comprises all persons above a specified age who during a specified brief period, either one week or one day, worked for pay or profit, or contributed to a family business (or farm) without receiving any remuneration (i.e. were unpaid).

The **unemployed** population comprises all persons above a specified age who during the reference period were:

- “without work”, that is, were not employed;
- “currently available for work”, that is, were available for paid employment or self-employment; and

- “seeking work”, that is, had taken specific steps in a specified reference period to seek paid employment or self-employment (this condition is relaxed in situations where the conventional means of seeking employment are of limited relevance, where the labour market is largely unorganized or of limited scope, where labour absorption is, at the time, inadequate, or where the labour force is largely self-employed).

Persons **not in the labour force** (or population **not currently active**) comprise all persons who were not classified as employed or unemployed during the brief reference period and hence not currently active, because of any of the following reasons:

- attendance at educational institutions
- engagement in household duties
- retirement or old age
- other reasons such as infirmity, disability or being below a specified age

Source:

Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 2004 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2004); and Commission of the European Communities and others, *System of National Accounts, 1993* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4).

- a Under the Resolution of the thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, it was recommended that all volunteers be classified as not economically active. However, as a result of changes to the SNA in 1993, the treatment of unpaid volunteer community services is no longer as simple; some volunteer activities are included in the concept of economic activity while others are not.

of the 127 countries provided data by sex, and all but four provided them by sex and age (chart 4.1).

In addition to the sex and age composition of the labour force, information on their level of education is important for planners whose task is to provide work opportunities for particular segments

Chart 4.1

Number of countries or areas that reported economically active population at least once, from either surveys or censuses, 1995 – 2003

All countries or areas	204
Economically active population	
Total	127
By sex	125
By sex and age	123
By sex, age and education level	69

Source:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

of the population, such as young people or women re-entering the labour force after child-rearing. A breakdown by educational level of the economically active population by sex and age is, however, not yet widely available across the world. Only 69 out of 204

countries or areas reported such data to the international statistical system during the period 1995-2003 (chart 4.1).

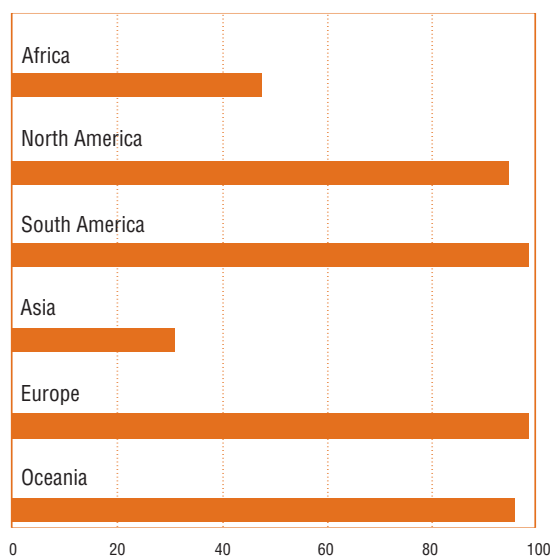
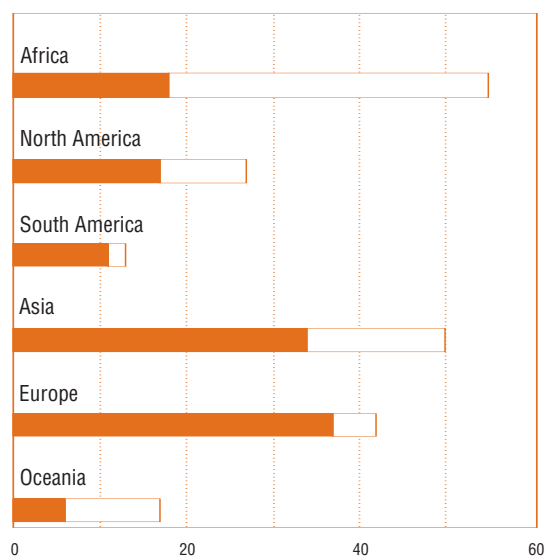
Reporting of the economically active population varies considerably across geographic regions. Nearly all of the countries or areas in Europe and South America reported the data by sex and age at least once in the period 1995-2003. In Europe, 37 countries (out of 42), comprising 98 per cent of the region's population, reported the numbers economically active by sex and age; in South America, 11 countries (out of 13), also comprising 98 per cent of the region's population, reported those statistics (chart 4.2). In North America, 17 countries, comprising 94 per cent of the region's population, reported the data.

More than half of the countries or areas in Asia also reported the economically active population by sex and age (34 out of 50). However, they comprise a mere 31 per cent of the region's population because the two biggest countries in the region, China and India, did not report those data (China constitutes 35 per cent of Asia's population and India 28 per cent). For Oceania, only six of the 17 countries reported the economically active population by age and sex at least once in the period, although they comprise 95 per cent of the region's population (they include Australia and New Zealand, which together constitute 74 per cent of Oceania's population).

Reporting of the economically active population varies considerably across geographic regions

Chart 4.2

Number of countries or areas that reported economically active population by sex and age at least once for the period 1995 – 2003, and their corresponding proportion of the regional population



■ Reported at least once
□ Did not report

Sources:
Tables 4.A and 4.B

Number of countries or areas

Population of reporting countries (%)

For statistics on the labour force to be useful for policy and planning, they have to be current and regularly available

Africa has the lowest level of reporting: only 18 of the 55 countries, representing 47 per cent of the region's population, reported the data.

For statistics on the labour force to be useful for policy and planning, they have to be current and regularly available. At present, relatively few countries have been able to report such statistics frequently (for at least five of the nine years in the period 1995-2003). Only half of the reporting countries or areas (59 out of 123) managed to report the data by sex and age frequently.

A factor contributing to the small number of countries reporting frequently is the inability of many countries to conduct labour force surveys, or to conduct them regularly. At least 10 countries conduct their labour force surveys irregularly, occasionally or at long intervals (every 5 or 10 years). In addition, a large number of countries (25) relied solely on population censuses for labour force statistics, particularly in Asia (11 countries), Africa (5 countries) and Oceania (4 countries) (see annex table A4). Since censuses are conducted only once every 10 years or 5 at best, they can not provide statistics on the labour force at frequent intervals. However, for some countries, census data is all that is available.⁹

The capacity to frequently report labour force by sex and age varies across geographic regions. In Africa, for the period 1995-2003, only one country reported such data frequently (Morocco); in Oceania, only two (Australia and New Zealand) did so. In Asia, only 12 of the 50 countries reported data on the labour force by sex and age frequently, while in North and South America, close to half of the countries did so. Only in Europe did more than half report, with 28 out of 42 countries regularly reporting labour force statistics by sex and age (table 4.A).

The discrepancies in reporting are most pronounced when one compares the more developed regions with the least developed countries. While 33 of the 47 countries in the more developed regions report on the labour force by sex and age frequently, not a single least developed country does so (table 4.A).

The unemployed population

Compared to the number of countries or areas reporting on the economically active population, the number reporting statistics on total unemployment is slightly lower: 115 out of 204. Those 115 countries comprise 66 per cent of the world population, a higher proportion than for the 127 countries that reported on the economically active population. This

is mainly a result of the reporting by India, which constitutes 17 per cent of the world population, of unemployment but not of the total economically active population. Of the 115 countries or areas that reported total unemployment, all but one provided data by sex, but a much smaller number—96—provided statistics by sex and age (chart 4.3). Again, the count of countries is limited to those that provided data from surveys or censuses.¹⁰

Chart 4.3

Number of countries or areas that reported unemployed population at least once, from either surveys or censuses, 1995 – 2003

All countries or areas	204
Unemployed population	
Total	115
By sex	114
By sex and age	96
By sex and education level	87

Source:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005).

A total of 87 countries reported unemployment data by sex and educational level at least once during the nine-year period 1995-2003. Further breakdown of these statistics by age is necessary if countries are to monitor efforts to develop and implement strategies aimed at providing decent and productive work for their young women and men, as called for in the Millennium Development Goals.

Reporting of data on the unemployed population varies considerably across geographic regions. The pattern of reporting among regions is roughly the same as that of the reporting of the economically active population.

To inform policy, it is crucial that unemployment data be current and regularly available. However, only 72 countries out of 204 are able to provide unemployment data by sex and age frequently, i.e. for at least five out of nine years (table 4.A). This number is slightly higher than that reporting the economically active population (59 countries), which would seem to indicate the importance given by Governments to producing and disseminating unemployment statistics on a regular basis.

The capacity to frequently report data on the unemployed population by sex and age varies across geographic regions. In Africa, only two countries

While 33 of the 47 countries in the more developed regions report on the labour force by sex and age frequently, not a single least developed country does so

Only 72 countries out of 204 provide unemployment data by sex and age frequently

reported such data frequently (Egypt and Morocco). In Oceania, no country besides Australia and New Zealand was able to report unemployment data frequently. In Asia, 14 out of 50 countries reported unemployment by sex and age frequently, but the most populous countries (China, India and Indonesia) are not among those. However, in each of the three remaining regions—Europe and North and South America—more than half of the countries reported the data frequently, with the reporting countries covering more than 90 per cent of each region's population (tables 4.A and 4.B).

Underemployment is another area of particular relevance to women's employment situation, and the Beijing Platform for Action recognized that its measurement needed to be improved.¹¹ Although more than 50 countries worldwide include time-related underemployment questions in their labour force surveys, data on underemployment are not as yet systematically collected and disseminated at the international level.

The employed population

Occupational distribution

The Beijing Platform for Action calls for the elimination of occupational segregation.¹² Although women have slowly been entering occupations that were traditionally male-dominated, many occupations remain sharply divided across gender lines. Information on the distribution of the employed population by sex and occupational group is often utilized to study occupational segregation between the sexes. This information is usually obtained through labour force surveys and population censuses.

Compared to statistics on the numbers economically active, data on occupational distribution is less widely available worldwide. Of the 204 countries or areas analyzed in the present report, 108 provided statistics on the employed population by major occupational group (see box 4.2) at least once for the period 1995-2003. Of that number, 105 were able to provide data by sex, and of those, 68 reported data frequently (table 4.A).

The regional patterns of reporting occupational data are very similar to those observed for the labour force, with more than half the countries of the Americas, Asia and Europe reporting the employed population by occupational group and sex at least once but with fewer countries reporting such data in Africa and Oceania

Box 4.2

Major occupational groups

The 1988 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) classifies occupations into 10 major occupational groups:

1. Legislators, senior officials and managers
2. Professionals
3. Technicians and associate professionals
4. Clerks
5. Service workers and shop and market sales workers
6. Skilled agricultural and fishery workers
7. Craft and related trade workers
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers
9. Elementary occupations
0. Armed forces

An earlier classification, the International Standard Classification of Occupations issued in 1968 (ISCO-1968), is still used by many countries and recognizes the following major occupational groups:

- 0/1. Professional, technical and related workers
2. Administrative and managerial workers
3. Clerical and related workers
4. Sales workers
5. Service workers
6. Agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers, fishermen and hunters
- 7/8/9. Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers
- Members of the armed forces

Source:

Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 2004
(Geneva, International Labour Office, 2004).

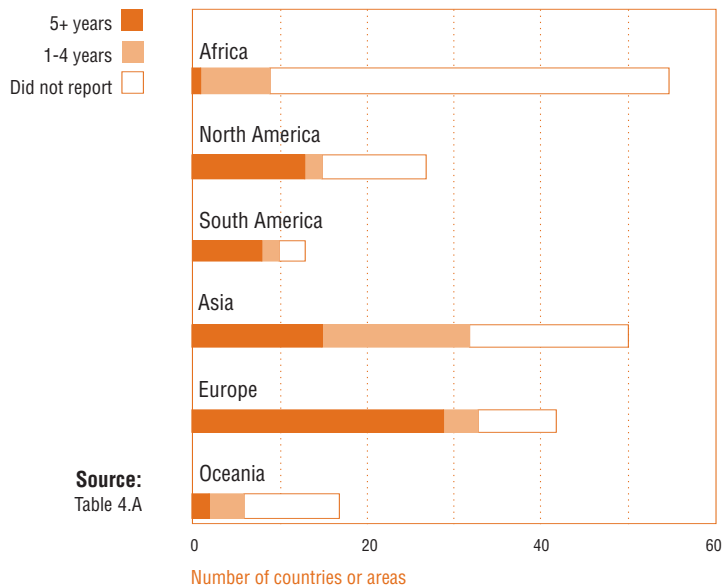
(chart 4.4). The proportion of the population covered by the reporting countries of Asia, however, is only 25 per cent, owing to non-reporting by the three biggest countries in the region. For Africa, only nine countries, representing 23 per cent of the population of the region, reported statistics on the employed population by sex and occupational group. Of those, only one country (Egypt) was able to report the data frequently. In Oceania, only Australia and New Zealand reported occupation data by sex frequently. The only regions where a majority of countries are able to report this data frequently are Europe and South America.

In Asia, 14 out of 50 countries reported unemployment by sex and age frequently, but the most populous countries (China, India and Indonesia) are not among those

More than half the countries of the Americas, Asia and Europe report occupational data but few countries in Africa and Oceania do so

Chart 4.4

Number of countries or areas that reported employed population by sex and major occupational group, by number of years data were reported during the period 1995 – 2003



Just over half of the countries reported data by sex and status in employment

The preceding data on employed persons by occupational group refer to either the 10 major occupational groups of the 1988 International Standard Classification of Occupations or the 8 major groups of the earlier classification, the ISCO-1968 (see box 4.2). The data provide an indication of the extent of women's presence in each major occupational group. Using the data, the extent to which women are employed in occupations with authority, influence and decision-making may be analysed by examining their numbers within the major occupational group of legislators, senior officials and managers.¹³ However, since the group is very broad, it hides detailed occupational differences between women and men. Women, for example, may be employed at lower levels than men within the same major occupational group. An in-depth examination of occupational segregation between the sexes requires a higher level of detail than that provided by the major groups.

Such detailed data by sex and occupation has been produced by a number of countries from census or survey data and reported to the International Labour Office. The data have been incorporated into the Office's SEGREGAT database.¹⁴ For the period 1995-2003, detailed data are available for 54 coun-

tries or areas, with eight providing multi-year data for a total of 62 occupational data sets. The countries or areas are predominantly European (30), but all regions have some data (Asia 10, Africa 5, North America 4, South America 3, Oceania 2). As many as 43 of the 62 available data sets contain between 100 and 499 occupations, and 3 sets contain more than 500 occupations (provided by Canada and Mauritius from their 1996 and 2000 population censuses, respectively, and by the United States from their 2000 labour force survey). Those data sets provide a rich source of information for studying gender segregation in occupations.

Distribution by status in employment

In countries or areas with a large agricultural population, many women, especially rural women, work as contributing family workers and are mostly unpaid. Own-account workers also constitute a large portion of the employment of women in countries or areas where the informal sector is an important part of the economy. This type of information is revealed when statistics on the numbers of employed persons, collected through labour force surveys or population censuses, are broken down by sex and status in employment (see box 4.3). However, during the period 1995-2003, just over half of the countries or areas of the world (104 out of 204) have reported data on sex and status in employment for any year to the international statistical system, and a much lower number—64—reported the data for at least five years in the nine-year period.

The patterns of reporting by geographic region roughly resemble those of the occupational data shown in chart 4.4. For Africa the reporting is particularly low—only 13 out of 55 countries reported data by sex at least once in the period and just one (Egypt) was able to report the data for at least five years (table 4.A).

A category in the status in employment classification that is often examined for evidence of gender inequality is employers. The information is sometimes used to show that women are less likely to be employers. In fact, it can be seen from annex table A10 that in no country is the proportion of employers among employed women higher than their corresponding proportion among employed men.

Although 104 countries or areas report statistics on the employed population by sex and status in employment, some combine two or more categories. For example, 11 countries report employers and

Box 4.3

Status in employment

Employment, as defined by the thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1982), is comprised of two broad categories: **paid employment** and **self-employment**.

Paid employment includes persons who during the reference period were either (a) "at work": that is, performed some work for wage or salary, in cash or in kind, or (b) "with a job but not at work": that is, having already worked in their present job, were temporarily not at work and had a formal attachment to their job.

Self-employment includes persons who during the reference period were either (a) "at work": that is, performed some work for profit or family gain, in cash or in kind, or (b) "with an enterprise but not at work": that is, with an enterprise that may be a business enterprise, a farm or a service undertaking, but were temporarily not at work for any specific reason.

The International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), adopted in 1993, classifies jobs with respect to the type of explicit or implicit contract of employment the person has with other persons or organizations. The groups are defined based on the type of economic risk and the type of authority over establishments and other workers that the job incumbent has or will have. There are five major groups: employees, employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers.

Employees are all those who hold jobs with explicit or implicit employment contracts that give them basic remuneration that is not directly dependent on the revenue of the unit for which they work. Employees are

typically remunerated by wages and salaries, but may also be paid by commission from sales, by piece-rates, bonuses or in-kind payments, such as food, housing or training.

Employers are those who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, are self-employed and have engaged on a continuous basis one or more persons to work for them in their business as employees.

Own-account workers are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, are self-employed and have not engaged any employees on a continuous basis.

Members of producers' cooperatives are workers who are self-employed in a cooperative producing goods and services, in which each member takes part on an equal footing with other members in all decisions relating to production, sales, investments and the distribution of proceeds.

Contributing family workers (referred to in the previous classification as unpaid family workers) are workers who are self-employed in a market-oriented establishment operated by a relative living in the same household, who cannot be regarded as partners because their degree of commitment to the operation of the establishment is not at a level comparable to that of the head of the establishment.

Source:

Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 2004 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2004).

own-account workers as one group, thereby precluding separate analysis of these categories of workers in those countries. Still other combinations of categories are used, and some countries do not report all categories. The result is that the number of countries or areas with data by sex (for at least one year) is reduced to 82 for own-account workers, 92 for employers, 97 for contributing family workers and 102 for employees.

Employees (i.e. those in paid employment jobs), whether women or men, constitute the majority of workers in most countries of the world (see annex table A10). For both women and men, being in paid employment is generally a more desirable sit-

uation than being engaged in unpaid work or in own-account work, provided that working conditions are decent.¹⁵ One of the indicators specified for Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (promote gender equality and empower women) is the "share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector".¹⁶ Women's share of wage employment measures the degree to which women are integrated into the monetary economy. Their share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector measures the degree to which labour markets in the industry and service sectors are open to women, and whether there are the same employment opportunities for women as for men in those sectors.

Women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector measures the degree to which labour markets in the industry and service sectors are open to women

The production of the indicator requires data on the number of female and male employees in the non-agricultural sector.¹⁷ The current sources of such data are labour force surveys or labour-related establishment surveys—where they are in place—owing to their generally more frequent execution and more timely release of results compared to censuses. However, based on data available in the International Labour Office database, it is apparent that not many countries or areas are able to produce from those

sources the data needed for calculating the indicator. For the period 1995–2003, only 84 of 204 countries or areas worldwide reported data on wage employment by major industry group for at least one year, and only 74 of them reported data by sex (chart 4.5). Still fewer (61) reported data by sex for at least five of the nine years covered.

The 61 countries or areas that frequently report the number of employees by sex and major industry group are unevenly distributed across geographic regions. Three quarters of all countries in Europe (32 out of 42) are able to provide such data frequently, compared to less than a third of countries in Asia and South America and close to a quarter in North America (chart 4.6). Only three countries in Africa and two in Oceania report those data frequently.

Chart 4.5

Number of countries or areas that reported wage employment from labour-related establishment surveys or labour force surveys, 1995 – 2003

	Reported at least once	Reported for at least 5 years
All countries or areas	204	204
Wage employment		
By major industry group	84	69
By major industry group and sex	74	61

Source:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (July 2005).

Wage statistics

As employees, women are still seeking equal pay with men. Closing the gap between women's and men's pay continues to be a major challenge in most parts of the world. To monitor whether and how the gap is closing, it is necessary to have statistics on women's and men's pay.

Most statistics on wages (average earnings or wage rates) are obtained from payroll data collected mainly from establishment censuses or surveys. In the period 1995–2003, a total of 51 countries or areas reported data on wages by major industry group from labour-related establishment surveys and 23 from labour-related establishment censuses. A smaller number of countries derived wage data from labour force surveys, insurance records or administrative reports. With the exception of the labour force surveys, reporting of wages by sex is not prevalent, with at best only half of the reporting countries doing so (chart 4.7).

Comparability of earnings data from different sources is affected by the type of workers covered, the inclusion or exclusion of overtime pay, incentive pay, bonuses, payment in kind and other allowances, as well as the unit of time used (per hour, per day, per week or per month). Furthermore, some sources use average earnings while others use wage rates. International comparability is additionally hampered by differences across countries in the size criterion adopted in their survey or census of establishments. Average earnings of women as a group relative to those of men are, in addition, affected by the relative shares of skilled and unskilled labour and of full-time and part-time workers in each group.

Chart 4.6

Number of countries or areas that reported wage employment by sex and major industry group, from labour-related establishment surveys or labour force surveys, for at least five years during the period 1995 – 2003

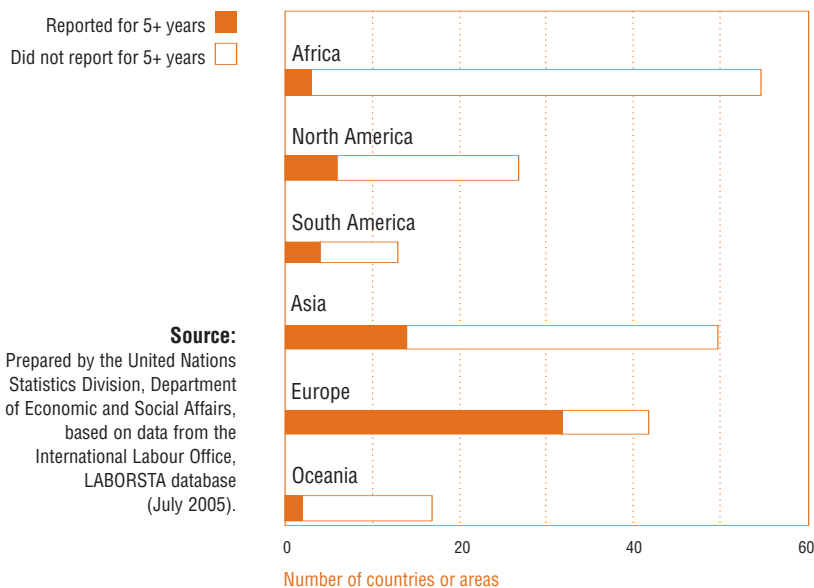


Chart 4.7

Number of countries or areas that reported data on wages by major industry group and number and percentage that reported data by sex, by source of data, for the period 1995 – 2003

Source	Number of countries or areas that reported	Number that reported by sex	Percentage that reported by sex
Labour-related establishment survey	51	27	53
Labour-related establishment census	23	8	35
Labour force survey	14	13	93
Insurance records	8	3	38
Administrative reports	7	3	43
Other	11	3	28

Source:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005).

Note:

There is multiple counting; i.e. some countries or areas report data from more than one source.

In all, 108 countries or areas reported data on wages by major industry group from any source for the period 1995-2003. However, only 52 of those countries reported them by sex. Countries from Europe and Asia together account for almost three quarters of the available data (chart 4.8).

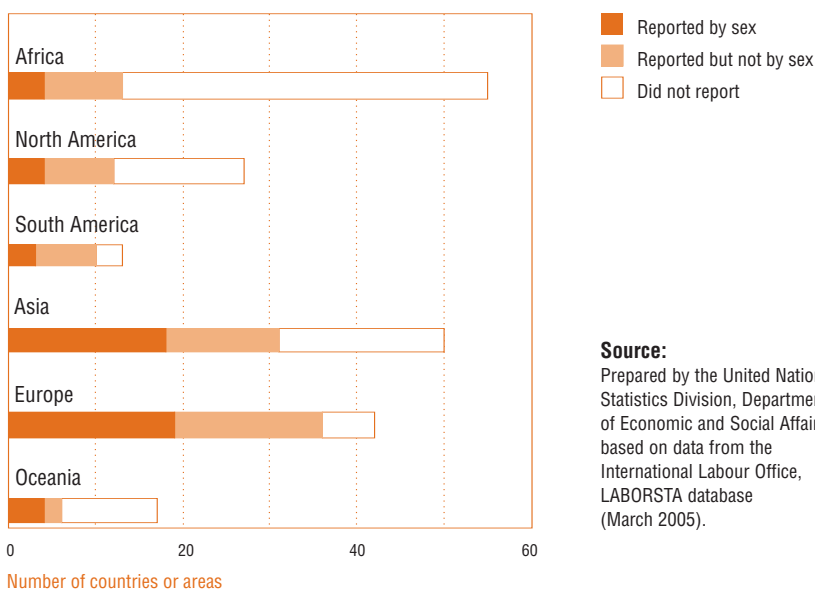
Informal employment¹⁸

The informal sector represents an important part of the economy and the labour market in many countries, especially developing and transition countries. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is a more important source of employment for women than formal employment. Women's collaborative, self-help and traditional practices and initiatives in the informal sector are a vital economic resource.¹⁹

Following the adoption in 1993 of an international definition of the informal sector covering informal sector enterprises (see box 4.4), many developing and transition countries have produced statistics on employment in this sector (some countries produced the data before the definition was established).²⁰ However, it is a relatively new concept in official statistics and is still not part of regular data collection in most countries. Collecting accurate and comprehensive information on the informal sector is difficult owing to the wide-ranging activities, non-formal organizational structures and diverse modes of operation involved. Various national sources are usually combined to derive statistics on the sector. The most common data sources are labour force surveys, special informal sector surveys based on a mixed

Chart 4.8

Number of countries or areas that reported data on wages by major industry group at least once during the period 1995 – 2003

**Source:**

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005).

household and enterprise survey approach and establishment censuses and surveys.

About 60 countries or areas have produced statistics on employment in the informal sector since 1995, although many of them still did not use the criterion of legal organization of the enterprise. Thus, a total of 28 countries provided data on **employment in the informal sector** using national definitions, and 8 countries²¹ (including 6 of the aforementioned 28) were able to provide such data following a harmo-

About 60 countries or areas have produced statistics on employment in the informal sector since 1995

nized definition.²² Another 18 countries provided data that refer to **employment in small or microenterprises** using national definitions, and 14 countries²³ (including some of the 18 using national definitions) were able to provide data adopting a harmonized definition.²⁴ Ten other countries provided data on employment in the informal sector using other closely-related concepts, such as household economic activities and unregistered employment, among others.²⁵

Following the definition of employment in the informal sector adopted in 1993, most countries exclude producers of goods exclusively for own final

use by the household from their informal sector statistics. Many countries also exclude paid domestic workers employed by households. Both are activities in which women predominate.

Since an enterprise-based definition would not be able to capture all forms of informal employment, a second component was developed based on employment relationships. That led to the adoption in 2003 of a statistical definition of informal employment (see box 4.4). As it is a very new statistical concept, the collection of data on informal employment is still in its infancy at the national and international levels.

Box 4.4

Informal employment

In 1993, the fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians adopted an international statistical definition of the informal sector, which was linked to the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA). Employment in the informal sector was defined as comprising all persons who, during a given reference period, were employed in at least one informal sector enterprise, irrespective of their status in employment and whether it was their main or secondary job.^a Informal sector enterprises were defined by the fifteenth Conference as a subsector of the SNA institutional sector “households” on the basis of the following criteria:

- They are enterprises owned by individuals or households, either alone or in partnership with others, that are not constituted as separate legal entities independently of their owners, and for which no complete accounts are available that would permit a financial separation of the production activities of the enterprise from other activities of its owner(s)
- At least some of the goods or services produced are meant for sale or barter
- Their size in terms of employment is below a certain threshold to be determined according to national circumstances,^b and/or they are not registered under specific forms of national legislation and/or their employees, if any, are not registered
- They are engaged in non-agricultural activities, including secondary non-agricultural activities of enterprises in the agricultural sector

The preceding enterprise-based definition of the informal sector is not able or meant to capture all forms of informal employment. The Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics and others therefore recommended that it be complemented with a broader, job-based definition and measurement of informal employment. In response to this, the seventeenth International Conference of

Labour Statisticians (2003) adopted a statistical definition of informal employment, which complements the earlier resolution by including informal employment outside the informal sector, as follows:

- Employees holding informal jobs^c in formal sector enterprises or as paid domestic workers employed by households
- Contributing family workers working in formal sector enterprises
- Own-account workers engaged in the production of goods exclusively for own final use by their household (e.g. subsistence farming, do-it-yourself construction of own dwelling), if considered employed according to the definition of employment adopted by the thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians

Source:

Based on material provided by the International Labour Office.

a “Resolution concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector”, adopted by the fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, January 1993, in *Current International Recommendations of Labour Statistics*, 2000 edition (ILO, Geneva, 2000).

b During its third meeting, the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics recommended that for international reporting, the size criterion should be defined as less than five employees (Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics, “Report of the Third Meeting”, New Delhi, 17-19 May 1999 [Central Statistics Office, New Delhi, 1999]). The Delhi Group was set up in 1997 as an international forum to exchange experience in the measurement of the informal sector, document data collection practices and recommend measures for improving the quality and comparability of informal sector statistics.

c Employees are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, in law or in practice, not subject to national labour regulations, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits, such as advance notice of dismissal, severance pay or paid annual or sick leave (“Report of the seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians”, Geneva, 24 November-3 December 2003 [Geneva, International Labour Office, 2003]).

Unpaid work and time-use statistics

The Beijing Platform for Action called on national and international statistical organizations to devise suitable statistical means to recognize and make visible the full extent of the work of women and all their contributions to the national economy, including their contribution in the unremunerated sectors.²⁶

The value of time-use studies in examining both paid and unpaid work has been documented in previous issues of *The World's Women*.²⁷ Time-use studies measure how people spend their time throughout the course of a day, capturing productive activities within and outside of the household. They therefore provide a starting point for better capturing women's and men's paid and unpaid work.

Time-use studies were initially implemented in developed countries. In developing countries, the few time-use studies before 1995 were mainly case studies of either one locality or a few localities and did not cover a 24-hour day. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, however, a number of developing countries have conducted time-use surveys with national coverage to improve the measurement of women's and men's unpaid work.

Since 1995, a total of 7 countries in Africa and 18 in Asia have conducted at least one time-use survey, as have 8 in North America, 3 in South America and 2 in Oceania (chart 4.9). In Europe, at least 29 countries have done so, some of them conducting multiple surveys. For the world overall, at least 67 countries or areas carried out a time-use survey in the period 1995-2004.

Following the recommendation of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United Nations

Statistics Division has developed a trial International Classification of Activities for Time-use Statistics.²⁸

To help countries planning to implement a time-use survey to measure paid and unpaid work, the United Nations has also published a guide to producing statistics on time-use.²⁹

Progress in statistics

1975-2003

The labour force

In the international statistical system, national labour force statistics were generally already being reported by sex during the period 1975-1984. During that period, 172 out of 204 countries or areas reported the economically active population from censuses or surveys at least once, and all of them also provided the data by sex. The reporting in the next decade, 1985-1994, was slightly lower, with 165 countries having reported and 3 not reporting by sex. For the most recent period, a much lower number of countries (127) reported data, with 2 of them not having reported it by sex.

Of the countries that reported the data by sex, a number did not further break it down by age: 7 in the first period, 8 in the second and 2 in the third (chart 4.10). The much smaller number of reporting countries for the most recent period (1995-2003) is partly due to the fact that this period covers only 9 rather than 10 years. Furthermore, some of the data for recent years were not yet available at the time of preparation of the report, since the processing and disseminating of results, especially of population censuses, requires time.

At least 67 countries or areas carried out a time-use survey in the period 1995-2004

Chart 4.9

Countries or areas that have conducted at least one time-use survey since 1995

Africa	7	Benin, Chad, Gambia, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa
North America	8	Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, United States
South America	3	Brazil, Chile, Ecuador
Asia	18	Armenia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Dem. Rep., Mongolia, Nepal, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Oman, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Viet Nam
Europe	29	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, TFYR Macedonia, United Kingdom
Oceania	2	Australia, New Zealand

Sources:

The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.XVII.14); and information provided by the statistical services of the United Nations regional commissions.

Labour force statistics have to be current to be useful for planning. Unemployment statistics, in particular, are very sensitive to changes in the economic situation and need to be regularly monitored by Governments. Of particular relevance therefore is

whether there is improvement in terms of frequent reporting of labour force statistics (i.e. for at least five years in the period).

For the three time periods considered, there was substantial improvement in terms of the number of countries or areas frequently reporting the economically active population by sex and age. From only 22 countries able to report frequently in the period 1975-1984, the number increased to 40 in 1984-1995 and further to 59 in the current period (chart 4.10). In spite of the improvement, however, the number remains low, representing less than a third of all countries in the world.

Much of the improvement in frequent reporting is a result of the increasing number of countries or areas that produced the statistics from labour force surveys in the latter two periods. Concurrent with that, the reporting of labour force statistics from censuses has declined. The use of official estimates³⁰ has also decreased significantly. Those changes are shown in chart 4.11.

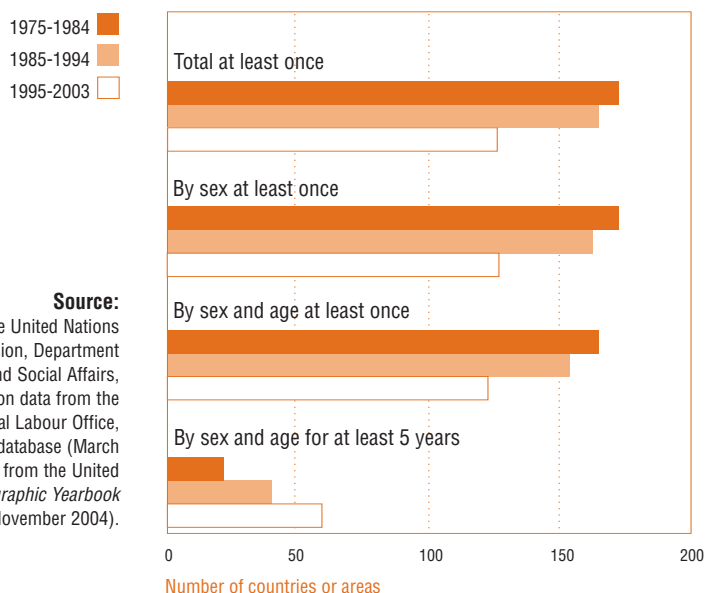
A total of 52 countries or areas reported the economically active population at least once from surveys in the period 1975-1984. By the period 1995-2003, that number had almost doubled (to 98), with the survey replacing the census as the most frequently reported source of data. At the same time, the number of countries or areas reporting data on the economically active population from the census dropped from 162 in the period 1975-1984 to only 69 in the most recent period (1995-2003). The number of countries reporting official estimates also decreased dramatically, from 37 to 13 (note that countries may report data from more than one source).

The labour force survey is a very important source of regular statistics on the economically active population. Disappointingly, even after the improvements of recent years, still only 59 countries have been able to report data on the economically active population by sex and age from this source for at least five out of nine years in the most recent period.

There is considerable variation across geographic regions in the patterns of increase in the use of labour force surveys in the last 30 years (chart 4.12). For three consecutive decades, Europe saw a steady increase in the number of countries reporting labour force data by sex and age at least once from surveys (from 12 countries in the first period to 23 in the second, to 35 in the most recent). More than half of the increase is attributable to transition countries initiating labour force surveys in the 1990s after

Chart 4.10

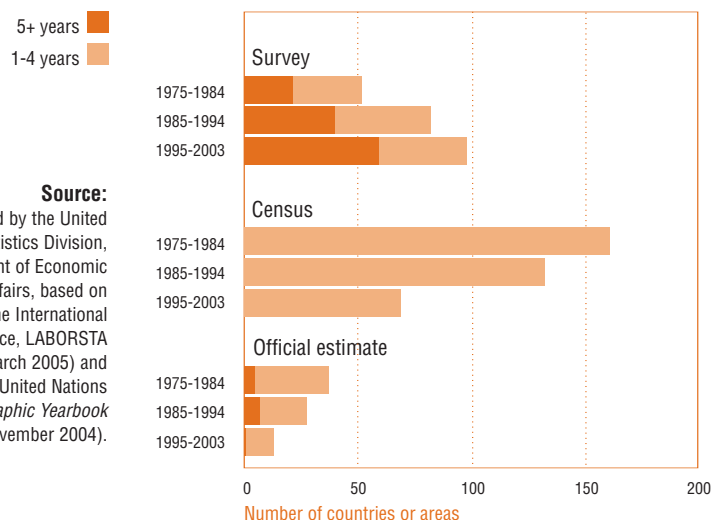
Number of countries or areas that reported statistics on the economically active population from censuses or surveys, for three periods



Source:
Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

Chart 4.11

Number of countries or areas that reported economically active population by sex and age, by source, for three periods



Source:
Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

moving towards a market economy. A steady increase was also observed in Africa but with considerably fewer countries involved (5 in the first period, 10 in the second and 13 in the third). In both North and South America, an increase in the number of countries reporting data at least once from surveys occurred in the second period but not in the third, while in Asia the improvement came about later, in the third period.

The improvements, however, did not always translate to frequent reporting, for which improvement was very modest. Only in Europe was there a substantial increase, occurring in the period 1995-2003, when as many as 28 out of 42 countries or areas (up from 11 in 1985-1994) frequently reported the numbers economically active by sex and age from surveys. In Africa, no new country has reported frequently from surveys during the last two periods; to date, Egypt remains the only country in the region that has reported frequently from surveys. Moderate improvements were seen in Asia, North America and South America, where the number of countries or areas able to frequently report this data increased in each period, except for the most recent period in South America.³¹ In Oceania, only two countries (Australia and New Zealand) frequently reported from surveys; both began to do so during the second period.

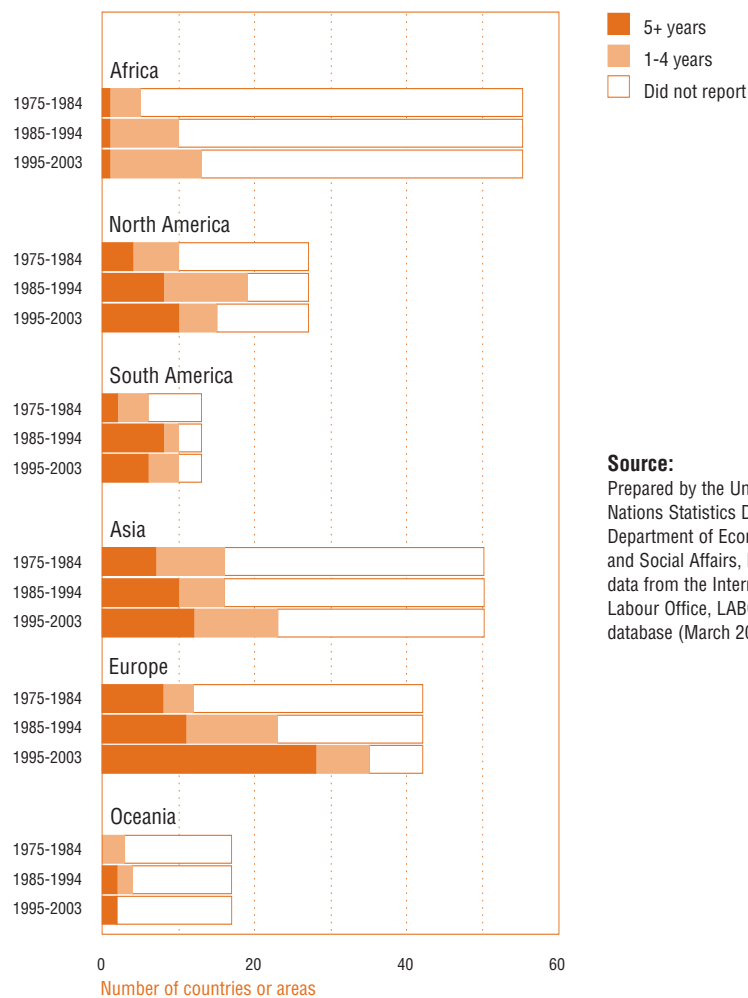
The unemployed and employed populations

For the unemployed population and the distribution of the employed population by occupation and by status in employment, the trends in reporting of sex-disaggregated data are shown with those for the economically active population in chart 4.13. As already seen earlier, there is a sharp decrease in the number of countries reporting data on the economically active population at least once in the most recent period. Nonetheless, it is still reported by more countries than either the unemployed population or the employed population by occupation or by status in employment.

The biggest improvement by far in reporting among countries is in unemployment. While only 45 countries or areas reported data on unemployed persons by sex at least once in the 1975-1984 period, there are now 114 that do so. The number of countries reporting data on occupation and status in employment of employed persons both decreased slightly from the first to the second period, but increased slightly for status in employ-

Chart 4.12

Number of countries or areas that reported economically active population by sex and age from surveys, for three periods



Source:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005).

ment in the most recent period. For occupation, there was little change.

The end result is that for the most recent period, between 100 and 125 countries or areas worldwide are able to report sex-disaggregated data at least once on economically active population, unemployed population, employed population by occupation and employed population by status in employment.

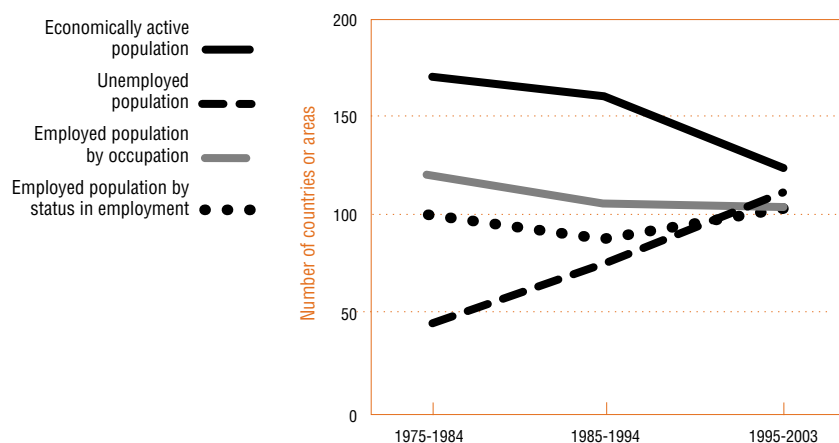
As in the case of economically active population, reporting of survey-based data on both employed and unemployed populations increased significantly with each period, while that from censuses declined dramatically. The much smaller number of countries reporting data from censuses in the

There was substantial improvement in the number of countries or areas frequently reporting the labour force data by sex and age

Europe saw a steady increase in the number of countries reporting labour force data by sex and age from surveys

Chart 4.13

Number of countries or areas that reported selected characteristics of the labour force by sex at least once from surveys or censuses, for three periods

**Source:**

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

most recent period can be attributed in part to delays in reporting already mentioned earlier. For unemployed population from censuses, there appears to be an increase in reporting, but that should be considered inconclusive because of the extremely small number of countries involved (chart 4.14).

Wage statistics

Between the first two periods (1975-1984 and 1985-1994), there was a notable increase in the number of countries or areas reporting wage statistics by major industry group as well as the number reporting them by sex. From 57 in the first period, the number of countries or areas reporting wages (average earnings or wage rates) of employees by major industry group increased to 79 in the second period (chart 4.15). At the same time, the number of countries reporting these data by sex increased from 14 in the first period to 23 in the second period. In the most recent period (1995-2003), there was continued improvement in the number of reporting countries (from 79 to 108), and the number reporting the data by sex rose sharply, to 52. However, 52 out of 204 countries is still very low.

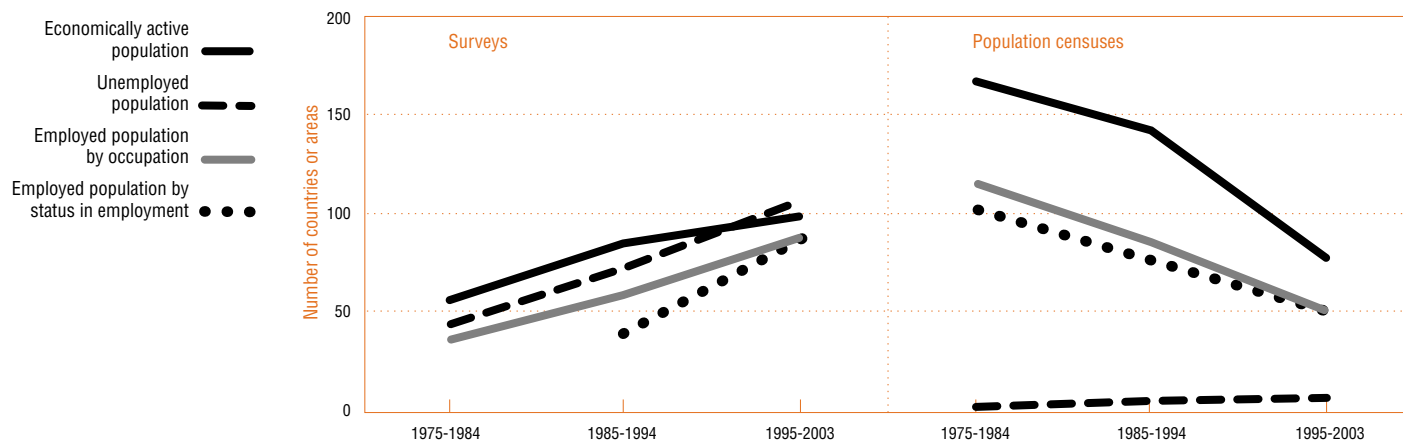
Statistics related to the Millennium Development Goals

The present section looks specifically at progress made by countries in the reporting of those statistics required to produce two of the indicators specified in the Millennium Development Goals:

- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, by sex

Chart 4.14

Number of countries or areas that reported selected characteristics of the labour force by sex at least once, by source, for three periods

**Source:**

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector

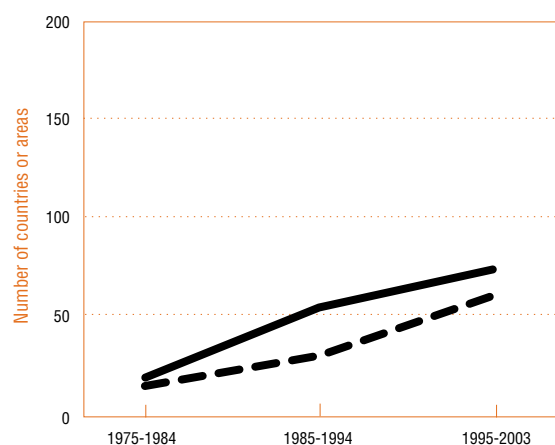
For the indicator on the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, the required statistics are the number of employees among employed persons, broken down by sex and major industry group. The number of countries or areas reporting that data at least once increased substantially from the first period to the third: from 20 in 1975-84 to 74 in 1995-2003 (chart 4.16). The number able to report the data frequently also increased considerably, from 16 in the first period (1975-84) to 61 in the most recent period. In spite of the improvement, however, that number represents less than a third of all countries.

Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, by sex

For the youth unemployment indicator, the data required are the total numbers unemployed by sex and age. The number of countries reporting that data has increased substantially during the last three periods but remains low. From 22 countries reporting the data at least once in the period 1975-1984, there are now 96 able to do so; however, of those, only 72 report data frequently (chart 4.17).

Chart 4.16

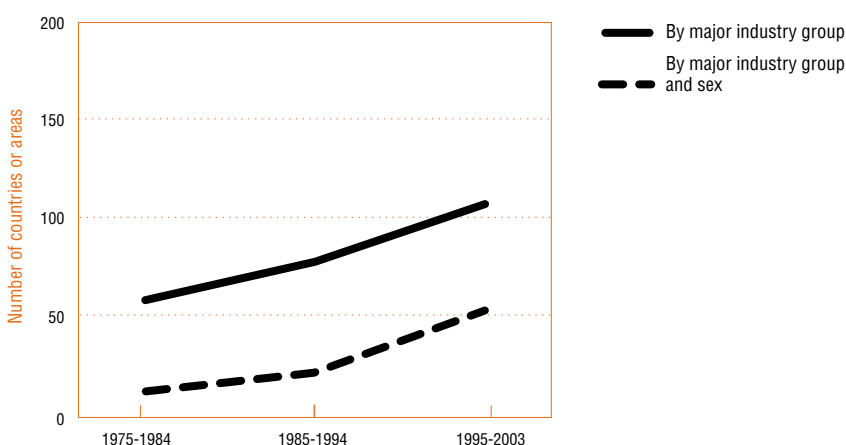
Number of countries or areas that reported wage employment by sex and major industry group, for three periods



Source: Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (July 2005).

Chart 4.15

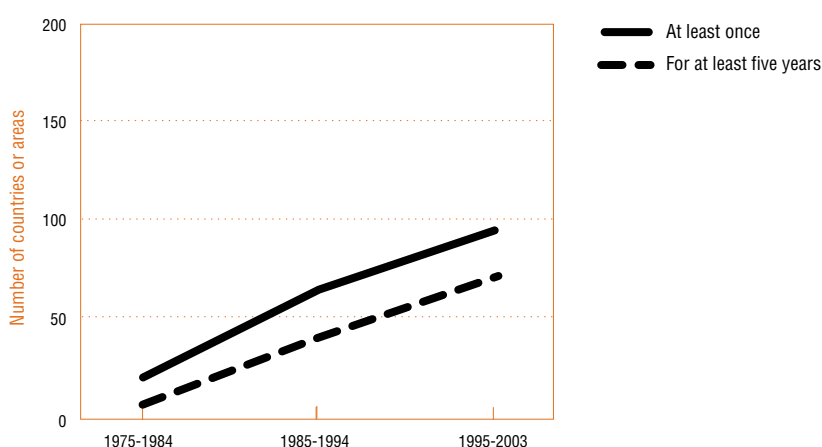
Number of countries or areas that reported data on wages at least once, for three periods



Source: Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005).

Chart 4.17

Number of countries or areas that reported unemployment by sex and age, for three periods



Source: Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005).

Challenges

Strengthening statistical capacity

The findings reported in the present chapter point to the need for a concerted effort and commitment by Governments to collecting basic labour statistics in countries or areas where the statistics are deficient. In most countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania, no survey programme is in place to furnish data regularly on the labour force and its characteristics (such as employment status, occupations, unemployment and wages) to guide policy. Some countries in Africa and Asia that do conduct labour force or other sample surveys to collect the data still do so irregularly, occasionally or at long intervals, in some cases as far apart as every 10 years.

Thus, in a number of countries, the census is the only source of statistics on the characteristics of the labour force. In those statistically less developed and resource-poor countries, it takes a long time to process the large amount of data that censuses produce. Consequently, the results are often disseminated partially or late, thereby reducing their usefulness for policy and decision-making. For the concerned countries, efforts should be made to improve the availability and timeliness of census results.

At the same time, however, the rapidity of changes in the labour force, employment and unemployment situations point to the need for regular sources of timely data on those topics. More importantly, the complex task of measuring women's work and its associated problems is better addressed by labour force or related household surveys. The existence of a regular and integrated survey programme is imperative for informing policy and addressing gender issues in employment.

The main challenge for the less developed countries is to strengthen their capacity to produce statistics within the limits of their resources. In many cases, international, regional or bilateral donors have stepped in to help countries implement a population census or labour force survey, but their efforts rarely produced long-term results. The focus should be on making a sustainable improvement in the recipient countries' statistical capacity, keeping in mind that capacity building can be a lengthy process and that national resources are limited and Government commitment may fluctuate.

Mainstreaming gender in labour statistics

A separate but related issue in strengthening statistics is mainstreaming gender in the collection, analysis

and dissemination of statistics on work. Whether obtained through administrative records, household or establishment-based surveys or censuses, most data on the labour force and its characteristics are collected on individuals. Each individual's sex, age and other personal and contextual factors are usually recorded. However, in the processing, analysis or presentation of data, sex and age—not to mention the more detailed characteristics—are often dropped. In order to better reflect gender concerns, countries should ensure that this information is collected and compiled and that the resulting statistics are disaggregated by sex and age as a minimum and, if possible, by the worker's personal and family characteristics (such as marital status, number of children or other family members requiring care) and work environment (such as the existence of childcare facilities) as well. Detailed cross-tabulations, however, will require a large sample size, which many countries may find difficult to implement owing to the significant resources needed.

Of the statistics reviewed in the present chapter, those on wages stand out as being most deficient in terms of availability of sex-disaggregated data. Many countries that produce those statistics from establishment censuses and surveys have not been able to report the data by sex. This is in part due to payrolls of establishments not having recorded the sex of the employee. To improve the situation, all data collection entities, including those that do not produce statistics but have administrative information that can be used by statistical agencies, should be encouraged to record their data in a way that will allow the reporting of wage statistics by sex.

There is a need to ensure that definitions and measurement methods cover and adequately describe all workers and work situations in sufficient detail to allow gender comparisons to be made. In most countries, women are the majority of workers in non-standard work, such as temporary, casual, part-time, contract and home-based work. The methods of measuring those varied types of employment need to be improved and effectively mainstreamed into the regular data collection system.

A critical area that needs improved mainstreaming in the regular data collection system is women's and men's work activities in agriculture. Population censuses and labour force surveys largely overlook and thus under-report women's work in agriculture since it is usually unpaid and often includes activities such as food processing and providing water and fuel that are easily considered part of housework. Improved methods for measuring the

In most countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania, no survey programme is in place to furnish data regularly on the labour force and its characteristics

In a number of countries, the census is the only source of statistics on the characteristics of the labour force

Of the statistics reviewed, those on wages stand out as being most deficient in terms of availability of sex-disaggregated data

There is a need to ensure that definitions and measurement methods cover and adequately describe all workers and work situations

wide range of agricultural activities are needed to better reflect both women's and men's roles in agricultural production and participation in the economy.

Unemployment as currently measured in official statistics often underestimates the actual level of unemployment of women, especially rural women. Unemployment is particularly difficult to define and measure in populations largely dependent on subsistence agriculture, such as in the poorer countries of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Attention is drawn to the need to improve the measurement of women's unemployment, especially in rural areas.

Improving knowledge and measurement of women's work

Many aspects of women's work are not measured well by mainstream employment statistics as they currently stand. Developing a more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of work and employment through the improvement of data collection on the unremunerated work that is already included in the System of National Accounts (SNA) was stipulated in the Beijing Platform for Action,³² and should continue to be a priority for national, regional and international statistical services. In addition, more knowledge is needed on non-SNA work, employment in the informal economy and income from paid and self-employment, among other topics.

Since the adoption of the Platform for Action, significant methodological work has been undertaken to improve the measurement of employment in the informal sector. However, more needs to be done. Many countries do not collect the data necessary for producing statistics on employment in the informal sector. In others, statistics on the informal sector are collected on an ad hoc basis and survey methodologies change over time so that statistics often cannot be fully compared even within the same country. Countries that do not currently have statistics on informal employment will need technical assistance and training to develop those statistics, while countries that already have statistics on informal employment will need assistance to improve the quality of those statistics, including their international comparability.

A data source that is essential in understanding the various forms of women's and men's work is time-use surveys, which capture both paid and unpaid work. However, such surveys are still not widely conducted in the less developed regions. In addition, methods for conducting time-use surveys need to be further developed and elaborated to suit different situations and contexts. As stated above, the United

Nations Statistics Division has developed the trial International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics, but it needs refinement and has yet to be adopted.

A recent initiative to better cover the various types of economic work that women engage in, especially in the less developed regions, is evidenced in the work of the United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. The Task Force recommended the production of indicators that would reflect women's status in employment, while at the same time distinguishing agricultural from non-agricultural employment, and formal and informal employment in the case of employment in the non-agricultural sector.³³

To derive the recommended indicators requires the total number of employed women and men to be broken down along three dimensions: status in employment, sector (agricultural, non-agricultural) and formal/informal employment in the case of the non-agricultural sector. The task poses a great challenge for developing countries, the majority of which do not currently have the capacity to produce data regularly on informal employment or even on status in employment. At present, less than 40 countries are able to provide such detailed data. Detailed guidelines on how to collect the required data and produce the indicators are needed.

Developing a more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of work and employment should continue to be a priority for national, regional and international statistical services

Methods for conducting time-use surveys need to be further developed and elaborated to suit different situations and contexts

Table 4.A
Number of countries or areas that reported data^a on selected economic characteristics, 1995 – 2003

	Geographic region						Development group			
	World	Africa	North America	South America	Asia	Europe	Oceania	More developed regions	Less developed regions ^b	Least developed countries
All countries or areas	204	55	27	13	50	42	17	47	107	50
Economically active population										
Total, at least once	127	19	17	11	34	38	8	43	70	14
By sex, at least once	125	18	17	11	34	37	8	42	70	13
By sex and age, at least once	123	18	17	11	34	37	6	42	69	12
By sex and age, for at least five years	59	1	10	6	12	28	2	33	26	0
Unemployed population										
Total, at least once	115	13	19	12	31	35	5	40	66	9
By sex, at least once	114	12	19	12	31	35	5	40	65	9
By sex and age, at least once	96	8	15	9	27	34	3	39	51	6
By sex and age, for at least five years	72	2	14	9	14	31	2	36	36	0
Employed population by occupation										
Total, at least once	108	10	16	10	32	33	7	38	60	10
By sex, at least once	105	9	15	10	32	33	6	38	58	9
By sex, for at least five years	68	1	13	8	15	29	2	34	34	0
Employed population by status in employment										
Total, at least once	106	15	16	9	28	33	5	38	59	9
By sex, at least once	104	13	16	9	28	33	5	38	57	9
By sex, for at least five years	64	1	12	6	14	29	2	34	30	0

Sources:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

a From labour force surveys, household surveys, population censuses or labour-related establishment surveys.

b Excluding the least developed countries.

Table 4.B

Percentage of the world and regional populations in countries or areas that reported data^a on selected economic characteristics, 1995 – 2003

	World	Geographic region						Development group		
		Africa	North America	South America	Asia	Europe	Oceania	More developed regions	Less developed regions ^b	Least developed countries
All countries or areas	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Economically active population										
Total, at least once	50	47	94	98	31	99	96	100	36	50
By sex, at least once	50	47	94	98	31	98	96	99	36	50
By sex and age, at least once	50	47	94	98	31	98	95	99	36	50
By sex and age, for at least five years	32	4	90	78	15	85	74	91	20	0
Unemployed population										
Total, at least once	66	33	93	100	60	98	92	99	61	36
By sex, at least once	66	32	93	100	60	98	92	99	61	36
By sex and age, at least once	45	22	91	91	30	97	75	98	33	27
By sex and age, for at least five years	36	12	91	91	16	96	74	97	24	0
Employed population by occupation										
Total, at least once	42	24	91	98	25	88	92	93	29	36
By sex, at least once	42	23	90	98	25	88	75	93	29	35
By sex, for at least five years	34	8	89	95	16	87	74	92	23	0
Employed population by status in employment										
Total, at least once	46	32	93	91	29	88	76	93	34	38
By sex, at least once	45	27	93	91	29	88	76	93	34	33
By sex, for at least five years	30	8	89	40	16	85	74	91	18	0

Sources:

Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, based on data from the International Labour Office, LABORSTA database (March 2005) and from the United Nations *Demographic Yearbook* system (November 2004).

a From labour force surveys, household surveys, population censuses or labour-related establishment surveys.

b Excluding the least developed countries.

Notes

- 1 Individuals are considered underemployed in any of the following situations, which may coexist: (a) they are working fewer hours than they are able or want to (referred to as “time-related unemployment”); (b) they are earning less than they are willing or able to; (c) their work does not match or make full use of their occupational skills; and/or (d) their working hours are excessive (situations [c] and [d] are described as “inadequate employment”). Source: see International Labour Organization, *Report of the Conference, Sixteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians*, held at Geneva from 6-15 October 1998 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1998), appendix I, resolution 1.
- 2 *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, paras. 150, 153, 156, 158 and 161.
- 3 See “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration”, Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/326), paras. 125 and 128.
- 4 Establishment censuses and surveys provide data on the number of workers on establishment payrolls for a specified payroll period or working day in the period; on average earnings from establishment payrolls; on hours of work; and on employment. Statistics derived from establishment surveys do not always distinguish between women and men because such distinction may not be made in the payrolls of the establishments surveyed.
- 5 Commission of the European Communities, *System of National Accounts*, 1993 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4).
- 6 *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, paras. 206 (e), (g)(i) and (g)(ii).
- 7 In the present report, the terms “economically active population” and “labour force” are used interchangeably. For a fuller explanation of the concepts, see box 4.1.
- 8 Two countries provided only “official estimates” of the economically active population. They are excluded from the count of 127 countries or areas presented here. Official estimates provided by national authorities are based on combined information drawn from one or more sources.
- 9 Labour force surveys in general provide more accurate and detailed data than population censuses owing to the limitations on the number of questions and extent of probing possible in a population census. The census, as a result of its universal coverage, has the advantage of being able to provide statistics for small administrative areas or population subgroups not normally possible in surveys but, as stated, the disadvantage of being conducted in general only once every 10 years.
- 10 For unemployment statistics, employment office records provide an alternative data source. The extent to which statistics from that source represent the general level of unemployment is, however, difficult to ascertain. The statistics typically include persons who register at an employment office, and the reasons for and extent of registration vary within and across countries; in some cases, they are limited to work applicants. Still other countries report “official estimates”, which are usually based on combined information drawn from one or more of the other sources already mentioned. For the period 1995-2003, 16 countries provided unemployment statistics from employment office statistics (eight that covered registered unemployment and eight that covered work applicants) and another nine provided “official estimates”. The 115 countries or areas reported to have unemployment data do not include those 25 countries.
- 11 *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 206 (f).
- 12 *Ibid.*, para. 178 (g).
- 13 See, for example, Richard Anker, “Women’s access to occupations with authority, influence and decision-making power: women as legislators, senior officials and managers”, working paper (Geneva, International Labour Office, forthcoming).
- 14 SEGREGAT database can be accessed through www.ilo.laborsta.
- 15 The term “decent work” refers to opportunities for “work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men”. See <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/decent.htm> (Geneva, International Labour Office) (4 August 2005).
- 16 “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration”, Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/326).
- 17 Information on the number of female and male employees in the non-agricultural sector is obtained mainly from labour force surveys or labour-related establishment surveys. Population censuses or establishment censuses may also provide the information. The indicator is calculated from labour force surveys or population censuses using data on the employed population of each sex, cross-classified by status in employment and type of industry. The status in employment category of interest would be “employees”, and the relevant industry groups are all groups other than agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing. If the indicator is calculated from labour force establishment surveys or censuses, the data required are the total number of female and male employees, cross-classified by type of industry. At a minimum, the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors must be separable.

- 18 Based on material provided by the International Labour Office.
- 19 *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 162.
- 20 Some results have been reported in *The World's Women 1995: Trends in Statistics* and *The World's Women 2000: Trends in Statistics* (United Nations publications, Sales Nos. E.95.XVII.2 and E.00.XVII.14).
- 21 Barbados (1998), Ethiopia (1999), Georgia (1999), India (2000), Latvia (1999), Peru (1999), Russian Federation (1999) and Turkey (2000).
- 22 The informal sector defined as private unincorporated enterprises (excluding quasi-corporations) that produce at least some of their goods and services for sale or barter, have less than five paid employees, are not registered and are engaged in non-agricultural activities (including professional or technical activities).
- 23 Argentina (1998), Bolivia (1997), Brazil (1999), Chile (2000), Colombia (2000), Costa Rica (2000), Ecuador (2000), Honduras (1999), Mexico (2000), Panama (2000), Paraguay (1996), Peru (2000), Uruguay (1999) and Venezuela (2000).
- 24 Defined as all own-account workers (excluding professionals and technicians) and unpaid family workers, and employers and employees working in establishments with less than 5 or 10 persons engaged, depending on the available information. Paid domestic workers are excluded. Agriculture is excluded.
- 25 For more information, see Ralf Hussmanns and B. du Jeu, "The ILO Compendium of official statistics on employment in the informal sector", STAT working paper No. 1-2002 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2002).
- 26 See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 68 (b).
- 27 *The World's Women 1990: Trends in Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XVII.3); *The World's Women 1995: Trends in Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.2); and *The World's Women 2000: Trends in Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.XVII.14).
- 28 The trial International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS), which is published as an annex in the *Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use: Measuring Paid and Unpaid Work* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XVII.7) and available from the United Nations Statistics Division website "Allocation of time and time use", <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/tuse/tu3.aspx>.
- 29 *Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use: Measuring Paid and Unpaid Work* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XVII.7).
- 30 National authorities sometimes provide "official estimates" to the international statistical system. These estimates are usually based on combined information drawn from one or more sources.
- 31 Suriname and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) reported data at least five times in 1985-1994 but provided data for only two and four years respectively in the most recent period.
- 32 *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 206 (f).
- 33 Millennium Project, *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*, Task Force on Education and Gender Equality (London, Earthscan, 2005).

