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**Items for information: employment statistics**

### **Report of the International Labour Organization on recent developments in labour statistics and preparations for the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians**

#### **Note by the Secretary-General**

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session (see E/2012/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is presented to the Commission for information. The present report highlights the steep increase in the demand for and interest in labour and decent work statistics worldwide and describes how ILO has reacted to it within the context of a new Director General and a new administration, which took over in October 2012. It describes all the preparatory work done towards the forthcoming International Conference of Labour Statisticians to be hosted by ILO in October 2013. The report identifies the major regional consultations and expert group meetings dealing with the draft resolution on the labour force, employment, unemployment and underutilization and briefly describes the scope of the suggested revisions. It lists the major activities carried out in the past two years on labour and decent work statistics, including classifications of occupation and status in employment, informal employment, volunteer work, child labour, social dialogue statistics, wages and hours, green jobs, changes in labour data compilation and dissemination, training and capacity-building activities and technical assistance to countries and regions. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

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\* E/CN.3/2013/1.



## **Report of the International Labour Organization on recent developments in labour statistics and preparations for the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians**

### **I. Labour statistics at the centre stage of the new administration of the International Labour Organization**

1. As reported to the Statistical Commission in 2010 (see E/CN.3/2010/18), the creation by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in May 2009 of a new Department of Statistics that reports to the Director General was a clear sign of the increased importance that ILO constituents have decided to give to the enhancement of the labour statistics system in the world. Within the limited resources available, ILO has started a process of reorganization in its four main areas of statistical activities: technical assistance to countries, setting of international statistical standards, data compilation, and training and capacity-building in labour statistics.

2. In October 2012 a new Director General took over and, with him, a new administration. From the very start, there was a clear intention to strengthen the ILO knowledge base and enhance labour statistics worldwide, as shown in the actions by the ILO Governing Body and externally. Both during the campaign for his election and in his early statements, the new Director General placed special emphasis on the need to build the capacities of member States, especially those less developed, in order to have more and better information systems in the area of labour and decent work statistics. In his first programme guidance letter, on the subject of his first programme and budget proposal for the biennium 2014-2015, the Director General established statistics, research and analytical capacities as his top priorities, giving central importance to statistics as a means to help ILO in better assuming its advisory and technical responsibilities to its constituents. To achieve that, an intense reform process has been launched throughout the Office, both at its headquarters and in the field. It is expected to be completed by the end of 2013. With regard to statistical activities, the restructuring will be finalized by the end of March 2013, for subsequent implementation. It is being carried out through careful scrutiny of all the different areas, with a view towards avoiding duplication and overlaps and establishing a consolidated ILO database.

3. The need for more and better labour statistics in the world has been clearly relaunched as a priority after the economic recession started in 2007. The serious problems in labour markets, jobs and livelihoods, derived from the steep downturn and its consequence both in the developed and developing economies, have been the focus of attention of all Governments and major international organizations, as well as the Group of 20 and other groups. Such acute problems need to have timely and complete information in order to be addressed promptly and efficiently. Different stimulus packages have been put in place, but there is an urgent need to better measure their impact on the actual well-being of affected groups. Labour policies have been chosen and targets identified, a difficult task without proper labour information. In its *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*, the World Bank makes a special plea to enhance labour statistics and fill the major gaps in the world, stressing the fact that while jobs are in the centre stage, the information on them is scarce and insufficient, and paving the way for the coordination of efforts with countries and other partners to enlarge and improve labour statistics in the world.

4. ILO has started this process by strengthening its regional presence in various regions through regional labour statisticians based in the field, who are in the process of providing technical support to national statistical offices and ministries of labour in defining, compiling and assessing their labour statistics systems. After redefining the compilation activities, ILO is identifying the various gaps in the methods and instruments in place in all regions. Through this process, it has already set up a system to contact the different countries and work together in order to enlarge their statistical capacities. The need to be closer to the countries has been set as a priority, and many regions have already begun working more closely with ILO constituents. The number of regional consultations has increased and ILO presence in partnering with regional organizations has been renewed as a means of identifying needs. However, several areas have yet to be strengthened in the ILO statistical structures in order to catch up with the increment in the ILO constituents' needs. In particular, such areas as labour migration, rural employment, jobs dynamics and flows and establishment surveys should be tackled, and ILO should strengthen its capacities in this regard. The need to partner with major statistical offices to promote South-South cooperation and technical cooperation in general is considered vital in this process. In addition, the need to coordinate better with donors and other international organizations to ensure that countries apply the international statistical standards correctly should be addressed at the highest level.

5. ILO is seeking to reinforce its statistical network in Africa to strengthen the capacity of member States to produce and use labour statistics. It currently has two labour statisticians in place for anglophone and francophone Africa, based in Pretoria and Dakar, respectively. A new position for a regional senior labour statistician based in Addis Ababa was created and a candidate recruited to support and coordinate the activities in the region and to work with regional partners.

6. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the active partnership of ILO with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has proved to be very fruitful. Different joint activities, such as technical assistance and training, were carried out; a working group on labour market indicators was established within the Statistical Conference of the Americas, with a large membership coordinated by Chile and Colombia. A regional labour statistician based in Santiago was recruited to work on the ILO Labour Information and Analysis System for Latin America and the Caribbean, an important project based in Panama and supported by its Government.

7. In Asia and the Pacific, ILO has also recruited a regional labour statistician based in Bangkok to work more closely with countries by participating actively in training and advisory activities, as well as connecting the regional activities with those carried out by key partners, such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and others in the region.

8. In other regions, ILO has been strengthening its collaboration with member countries of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) not only through the provision of technical assistance but also through the planning of future joint activities in the area of labour statistics. It has also been undertaking training activities in the Middle East and North Africa areas, advancing with other international organizations in strengthening data compilation and availability.

## **II. Nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians**

9. In October 2013 ILO will convene the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva. During the Conference, a revised draft resolution on statistics of work and of the labour force will be reviewed and discussed for possible adoption. If adopted, the revised statistical standards will update the current international standards contained in the resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, adopted by the thirteenth Conference in 1982, and related guidelines. Apart from the draft resolution, the Conference will discuss and be informed on topics related to the International Classification of Status in Employment, green jobs, decent work indicators and child labour and forced labour statistics.

10. As reported to the Commission at its forty-first session, despite the conclusions of the eighteenth Conference recommending the organization of the Conference every three years, ILO will not be able to convene such a major event with such high frequency. Owing to budget constraints, ILO will still convene the Conference every five years until the situation enables it to reduce the span between conferences. Technical committees or meetings of experts may be called to attend to specific subject matters between conferences.

### **A. Economically active population, employment, unemployment and underutilization**

11. Work to update the international standards on statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment was initiated by the ILO Department of Statistics following the recommendations of the eighteenth Conference and of the labour statistics programme review considered by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session, both held in 2008, and will be the core of the draft resolution to be considered during the forthcoming Conference.

12. The programme review considered by the Commission highlighted among the priority areas for future work in labour statistics: (a) the changing structure of the labour force; (b) an update of the labour statistics framework to address the dynamic aspects of labour markets; (c) the interaction between paid and unpaid work; and (d) the interaction between labour statistics and other domains of statistics. The eighteenth Conference further identified as priority areas for future work of ILO a revision of the resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment and of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93). It also adopted a resolution concerning the development of measures of labour underutilization.

13. Since 2008, following these recommendations, ILO has conducted a number of activities and consultations with labour statisticians from countries and regional statistical organizations in order to facilitate the review process. These included a seminar on employment and unemployment statistics held in parallel with the eighteenth Conference in 2008; a technical workshop on measures of labour underutilization in 2009; the establishment, also in 2009, of a working group for the advancement of employment and unemployment statistics; the conduct of regional preparatory meetings of labour statisticians in all major regions of the world in 2012; and reviews of national practices, including the implementation of the current

labour force statistical standards in national household surveys and in population and housing censuses.

## **B. Working Group for the Advancement of Employment and Unemployment Statistics**

14. The Working Group for the Advancement of Employment and Unemployment Statistics was established in 2009 to serve as the main mechanism for carrying out the review and update of the standards. It is composed of experts in labour force statistics from national statistical offices of 40 countries from all major regions of the world, as well as from Afristat, Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Its mandate is to advise ILO on the review process. Consultations with the Working Group have been carried out through online discussions and meetings held in 2009, 2011 and 2012.<sup>1</sup>

## **C. Regional preparatory meetings of labour statisticians**

15. To widen the technical consultations in preparation for the nineteenth Conference, the ILO Department of Statistics embarked, for the first time in the history of the Conference, in a wide consultative process in order to involve all regions in the world in the discussions and incorporate the regional specificities, investing substantial resources. It organized and conducted five regional preparatory meetings of labour statisticians for countries in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa and Europe and Central Asia. The meetings were organized in collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions and other regional partners, including the African Development Bank, the African Union, Afristat, OECD and the World Bank.

16. In total, representatives from 100 countries (16 in the Americas, 21 in Asia-Pacific, 19 in sub-Saharan Africa, 10 in the Middle East and North Africa and 34 in Europe and Central Asia), as well as from the African Development Bank, the African Union, Afristat, CIS-STAT, Eurostat, OECD, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), ESCAP, ECLAC, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the World Bank, attended the regional preparatory meetings.

17. The main objectives of the meetings were to: (a) inform participants about the process of preparation for the nineteenth Conference; (b) present the current proposals for the review and update of the international labour force statistical standards; and (c) gather feedback and promote discussion among countries in order to further refine the proposals. The meetings were also instrumental in identifying the main labour market issues and policy concerns of each region, with a view to ensuring that the revised standards address them adequately.

18. A main outcome of the regional meetings was broad support for the general approach proposed to develop a comprehensive framework for work statistics, within which employment is defined for the production of labour force statistics.

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<sup>1</sup> The ILO Department of Statistics intends to maintain the Working Group as the main advisory mechanism to promote methodological developments in labour force statistics in the future. To this end, an online communication platform, accessible only to registered members of the Working Group, has been set up at <https://papyrus.ilo.org/empstats/EMPSTATS/>.

The regional meetings also highlighted the need to carry out pilot tests in order to assess the operational implementation of some of the proposals and of data evaluations in order to estimate the potential impact of the proposed revisions on employment and unemployment time series.

#### **D. Pilot tests and case studies**

19. Following the recommendations from the regional preparatory meetings, in 2013 the Department will carry out pilot tests in a few selected countries from each major region of the world with the main objective of assessing the practical implementation of some of the proposals through labour force surveys. In addition, case studies using existing survey microdata from selected countries are being carried out in order to assess the potential impact of the proposals on key labour market indicators, such as labour force participation rates, unemployment rates and time-related underemployment rates.

#### **E. Scope of proposed revisions**

20. With a view to addressing the priority areas highlighted in the Commission's programme review and at the eighteenth Conference, the main revisions proposed are:

(a) A more refined concept and definition of employment that focuses on work to generate income to serve as a basis for the production of labour force statistics;

(b) A comprehensive, yet flexible, general framework for work statistics that distinguishes between employment and other forms of work, including production of goods for own final use, provision of services for own final use, and volunteer work;

(c) General definitions and operational guidelines to measure participation and time spent in forms of work other than employment;

(d) Operational guidelines for the measurement of employment and unemployment that provide greater detail, build on the experience accumulated by countries in the past 30 years and promote the international comparability of the statistics;

(e) General guidance for developing classifications of persons outside the labour force for different purposes, including the assessment of their labour market attachment;

(f) Measures of labour underutilization that focus on problems related to the insufficient absorption of available labour, to be disseminated at par with the unemployment rate;

(g) General guidance for developing a rational programme of work and labour force statistics to provide for short- and long-term needs, taking account of national context and resources.

21. An important concern throughout the review has been to ensure, to the extent possible, the historical continuity of labour force statistics. To this end, the

proposals incorporate identified good practices that enhance the international comparability of the statistics and address specific gaps and concerns regarding the implementation of the standards. Those elements of the current standards that have proved to be sound and essential to guarantee the internal consistency of labour force statistics and their coherence with other statistical domains remain unchanged. Notable among them is the labour force measurement framework based on the activity principle, priority rule, one-hour criterion and short reference period of measurement.

22. The proposals are aimed at: (a) better meeting the demand for labour force statistics to monitor labour markets, including labour absorption, as well as to inform employment promotion, income and other related social policies; (b) enabling the comprehensive measurement of labour input into all productive activities and the contribution of different forms of work to economic development, household livelihoods and well-being; (c) improving the integration of labour force statistics with other work statistics and statistics in other domains, particularly production statistics; and (d) promoting the development of dynamic measures of labour markets in the future.

## **F. Procedure of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians**

23. In accordance with the Conference mechanism, ILO will convene a tripartite meeting of experts in labour statistics in January 2013. At the meeting, the experts will discuss the updated draft proposal and make recommendations in preparation for the nineteenth Conference, to be held in October 2013. The Conference will be asked to evaluate the revised draft standards and make appropriate recommendations concerning its adoption by the ILO Governing Body.

## **III. Recent activities<sup>2</sup>**

### **A. International Classification of Status in Employment**

24. The International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93) was adopted in a resolution of the fifteenth Conference in January 1993. There is concern that the adopted categories no longer provide sufficient information to adequately monitor changes in employment arrangements that, in many countries, are blurring the boundaries between self-employment and salaried employment. It is also felt that the classification does not provide sufficient detail for the provision of statistics that adequately satisfy user needs. The eighteenth Conference identified the changing structure of the labour force, including a revision of ICSE-93, as a priority for future methodological work in labour statistics. It is likely that the revision of the standards for statistics on the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment described in paragraph 20 above will also have a significant impact on the scope and nature of statistics on status in employment and will lead to a change in the boundary, for statistical measurement purposes, between employment and other forms of work. It is difficult, however, to develop a complete proposal for the revision of classification of ICSE-93 for

<sup>2</sup> Most publications referred to in section III are available from [www.ilo.org/statistics](http://www.ilo.org/statistics).

consideration by the nineteenth Conference, since any resolution on status in employment would have to anticipate the outcome of deliberations on labour force at the same Conference.

25. ILO will present a discussion paper to the Conference in 2013 summarizing the known problems with ICSE-93 and the range of existing national practices with respect to statistics on status in employment and other aspects of the employment relationship. ILO will also identify ways in which ICSE-93 could be modified and/or other standard classifications and variables could be developed as a complement to it, in order to better reflect contemporary realities and economic and social concerns. ILO will present various options for the revision of ICSE-93 that reflect possible outcomes from the Conference deliberations on standards for labour force statistics. The paper is intended to form the basis for discussion at a working group on revising ICSE-93 during the nineteenth Conference, with a view to seeking guidance on the proposed options and on how best to progress work to revise ICSE-93.

## **B. International Standard Classification of Occupations**

26. Recent ILO activity related to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) has been concerned primarily with the provision of support for its implementation at the national and regional levels. Support was provided through a variety of means, including participation in a web discussion forum open to all countries in the world hosted by Eurostat, the provision of regional and national training workshops and direct technical assistance, and the development and release of relevant documentation.

27. Volume 1 of ISCO-08, on the structure, group definitions and correspondence tables, was published in English in May 2012 and is available on the ILO website. The detailed definitions of groups included in this publication are based on material released on the ILO website in July 2009. The definitions were updated and clarified in a number of areas in the light of comments received from agencies that used the earlier material to assist in the development or updating of national occupation classifications. Volume 1 also includes methodological notes that provide advice on the application of ISCO at the national level. The French, Russian and Spanish versions of volume 1 are being prepared. Volume 2, which provides an index of occupational titles, will be available in English and French early in 2013 and in Spanish and Russian as soon as possible thereafter.

28. Many countries have now adapted their national occupation classifications to improve comparability with ISCO-08, have developed national classifications based on ISCO-08 or have developed correspondence tables that will allow them to report data according to ISCO-08. ISCO-08 has been adopted in all relevant European Union collections from 2011 onward. Feedback on the usefulness of the classification has generally been positive.

29. In line with the recommendations of the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications concerning the main international reference classifications, ILO is preparing a report for consideration of the nineteenth Conference that will outline the case for starting work on a revision or update of ISCO-08 or for making no change for the time being. To this end, the ILO Department of Statistics is consulting with national experts on occupation



classification to ensure that all problems and concerns encountered in implementing ISCO-08 are identified and taken into consideration in preparing the report.

### C. Informal employment

30. *Measuring Informality: A Statistical Manual on the Informal Sector and Informal Employment* was finalized in 2012, after a long process of consultations following the technical meeting of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics held in 2010. A technical guide being prepared by the Department of Statistics in cooperation with the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics and with financial support from the Government of India, it is expected to boost national measurement of informality according to international standards and recommendations and will increase opportunities for technical assistance to countries whose surveys do not currently enable them to apply the recommendations of the fifteenth and seventeenth Conferences.

31. The *Manual* is a technical and operational guide for national statistical offices and other institutions interested in producing statistics on the informal sector and informal employment. It presents the current international standards, namely the resolution regarding the measurement of the informal sector, adopted by the fifteenth Conference in 1993, and the guidelines regarding the measurement of informal employment, endorsed by the seventeenth Conference in 2003.

32. The *Manual* also presents best practices regarding the measurement of the informal sector and informal employment using three types of measurement methodologies, namely, household-based surveys, mixed household and enterprise surveys, and establishment-based surveys. It describes each of the methodologies on the basis of experiences gained at the national level and compares their qualities and limitations. While none of these methodologies is better than the other, they complement each other. The choice of using one or another methodology will depend on data requirements, financial possibilities and the statistical infrastructure in the country. The *Manual* provides a selected set of survey questionnaires illustrating each of the methodologies targeted to countries wishing to start or improve a programme of statistics on the informal sector and informal employment. It provides guidance on dissemination strategies, the calculation of indicators, the tabulation of statistics and the integration of statistics on the informal sector in national accounts.

33. The *Manual* was prepared with contributions from national and international experts, members of the Delhi Group, the global network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, ILO and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat. It benefited from the contributions of national experts from countries as diverse as China, India, Mauritius, Mexico and South Africa.

34. Since the adoption of the statistical standards on informality, ILO has been active in providing assistance to countries on the measurement of employment in the informal sector and on informal employment, using labour force surveys as the measurement methodology. Assistance has been provided in the form of regional training workshops or directly in the countries. Countries in all regions have been covered and in the past three years have included Albania, Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, China, Ecuador, Mauritius, Namibia, Paraguay, Peru, South

Africa, Timor-Leste, Uruguay, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and the State of Palestine.

#### **D. Estimates and projections of the economically active population**

35. ILO completed the sixth edition of the estimates and projections of the economically active population in the world and its main geographical regions in October 2011. Its first edition was published by ILO in 1971. It covers 191 countries and territories; the reference period for the estimates is 1990-2010 and 2011-2020 for the projections.

36. For the sixth edition, enhanced methodologies have been developed in order to improve the labour force estimates and projections. There are several important changes in this edition as compared to the previous one: the proportion of imputed values has been reduced since the statistical base was increased, and the historical estimates (1990-2010) are now accompanied by detailed metadata for each data point. The metadata include several fields regarding the source of collected data, the type of adjustments made to harmonize them, when needed, and the type of imputation method used to fill missing data.

37. Concerning the projection exercise, the projections are now based on a wider range of models than in the previous edition. Notably, they allow the impact of the latest economic (and still ongoing) crisis on the labour force participation to be captured for concerned countries. In the sixth edition ILO uses projections made by national statistical offices, provided that these have been published recently; this concerns around 12 countries.

38. The ILO Department of Statistics has also published a literature review of all of the methodologies developed by national statistical offices and international organizations in order to derive projections of economically active population. The literature review was the starting point of the revision of the ILO methodology.

#### **E. Child labour statistics**

39. Child labour data collection activities within ILO are implemented by the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour, a unit of the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. In 2011 and 2012, the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme's technical assistance, often with accompanying financial support, supported 25 ongoing national child labour surveys at various stages of implementation in Albania and Tajikistan in Central Europe; Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia in Africa; Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Philippines and Viet Nam in Asia; Egypt and Yemen in the Arab countries; and Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay in Latin America. Moreover, subsequent to preparatory work in that period, national child labour surveys in Belize, Ghana, Lebanon, Morocco, Mozambique and Ukraine will commence in 2013.

40. In several of those countries, in order to promote data collection sustainability ILO is implementing combined labour force and child labour surveys, with the ILO Department of Statistics supporting the labour force component. Technical

assistance was also provided by the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme in 2012 for sector- and area-specific child labour surveys in Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, South Sudan, Thailand and Uganda.

41. Countries conducting national child labour surveys benefited from a national training course conducted by the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on child labour data collection. At the regional level, training courses on child labour data collection were organized for eight countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in June 2011, eight anglophone African countries in Nairobi in November 2011 and six countries in the Middle East and North Africa in Amman in March 2012. With regard to methodology advancement, ILO published *Hard to See, Harder to Count: Survey Guidelines to Estimate Forced Labour of Adults and Children*. In addition, pilot surveys to improve estimation methods for commercial sexual exploitation of children are being implemented in Indonesia and Togo. The Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour manual for surveys of child labour in special situations will be published around mid-2013.

## **F. Gender**

42. Since the adoption of the guidelines for mainstreaming gender in labour statistics by the seventeenth Conference in 2003, ILO has been active in providing technical assistance to countries wishing to start a national programme of gender statistics. The technical assistance has been carried out directly to countries, such as the Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Viet Nam and the State of Palestine, or as part of regional workshops organized by ILO or by other United Nations agencies, covering Arab States, Eastern European countries, Africa and Latin America.

## **G. Volunteer work**

43. In 2011, ILO released the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* in English, French and Spanish. It provides a definition of volunteer work, a measurement methodology to identify volunteer workers and their characteristics and an estimation methodology to value their work. At the eighteenth Conference, in 2008, the *Manual* was discussed and approved, and it was then prepared by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies (Johns Hopkins University) under the auspices of ILO and in cooperation with an international technical expert group and with support from the United Nations Volunteers programme. It is expected that the forthcoming revision of the international standards on the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underutilization will boost the measurement of volunteer work.

## **H. Decent work indicators**

44. The first version of the ILO manual entitled *Decent Work Indicators: Concepts and Definitions* was launched in May 2012. It is intended as a pragmatic tool to provide a basic understanding of how to define and interpret statistical and legal framework indicators on decent work. In particular, it is seen as a guidance tool to support ILO member States (i.e. producers of statistical, legal framework and decent

work information) that wish to develop national decent work indicators for analysis and policy purposes. It is also intended to support users of information on decent work indicators, including ILO constituents, other stakeholders and the general public, to understand the concepts and definitions used to construct decent work indicators and their interpretation. The manual was produced in English and will be available in French, Russian and Spanish in 2013.

45. A major effort was started in 2011 to produce an African report on decent work indicators covering some 20 countries. A first assessment based on national sources was published in 2012; the report is available in English and French. Over the past three years, ILO has supported quite a large number of household survey processes, in particular labour force surveys, as well as establishment surveys and administrative records (labour inspections data) in 28 countries (Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Technical assistance is primarily provided in the design and pilot phase but is also provided in data processing and survey reports. For example, the Liberia labour force survey was supported throughout the process, and the report was published in 2011. This was made possible by pooling the support and resources from several partners working for development in the country.

46. Furthermore, ILO has been actively supporting the regional and subregional initiatives for harmonized labour market information systems, in particular with the African Union Commission, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community and the West African Economic and Monetary Union. To achieve higher impact, it is important to continue coordinating the initiatives, as well as the support of development partners.

## **I. Trade unions and collective bargaining agreements**

47. An updated and expanded database on trade union membership has been disseminated by the ILO Department of Statistics, along with a methodological note on the sources of the statistics. This is the first stage in the process of establishing a database on social dialogue indicators focused on collecting and updating key industrial relations data relating to trade union membership, trade union density and collective bargaining coverage. An appropriate methodology is also being developed in order to apply a standard approach to the collection and analysis of such data. The inclusion of social dialogue indicators in the ILO annual questionnaire aims to provide a comprehensive account of available statistical information on trade union density and collective bargaining coverage and to provide inputs to ILO for developing international guidelines for their measurement to enhance their comparability.

## **J. Wage and hour statistics by industry and occupation**

48. Pursuant to the recommendations of the eighteenth Conference, ILO has completed its evaluation of the *ILO October Inquiry* data collection and publication

in order to carry out its global data collection on employment, wages and working time (and disaggregation by occupation and/or economic activity group) in a more uniform manner. Declining response rates among national statistics producers to the survey and responses that reflected outdated categories of occupations and industries and a cumbersome survey, together with the view expressed by data users that the data were not useful for cross-country comparisons owing to a lack of standardization of the variables, led to the launch in June 2010 of an ILO expert consultation survey on wages/earnings, hours of work and employment, which aimed to reach consensus among key data users, producers and ILO constituents on a set of standardized variables on these topic areas and on key occupation and economic activity groups. In April 2011, ILO sent a follow-up survey to the experts with the objective of validating the first-round results and helping to further refine key variables used in the annual data collection. ILO has taken into consideration the consensus reached from the two expert surveys and the need to streamline ILO data collections, which reflect annual averages, and has incorporated the survey results into its yearly indicators questionnaire. Hence, the *ILO October Inquiry* will no longer be published. Instead, a more standardized set of data on employment, wages and working time by occupation and/or economic activity group will be published in the new ILO database of labour statistics (ILOSTAT).

## **K. Green jobs**

49. Over the past few years, the international community has emphasized the implications of climate change for economic and social development, production and consumption patterns and, therefore, employment, incomes and poverty. Many have stressed the importance of shifting towards a green and sustainable economy.

50. The concept of the green economy has thus become a focus of policy debate and has been mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, the green economy was considered an important pathway to sustainable development. This was reflected in the outcome document of the Conference, entitled “The future we want” (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex).

51. This has led to an increasing need for reliable statistics on green jobs in order to: (a) gain a better understanding of the impact of “greening the economy” on the labour market; and (b) ensure that effective policy measures and tools are formulated to respond to the desired shift to a greener economy.

52. In order to respond to this growing demand for both statistical data and conceptual guidelines on the measurement of green jobs, the ILO Department of Statistics engaged in drafting proposals towards agreement on a statistical definition of green jobs and associated methodological guidelines that could be used to produce internationally harmonized statistical indicators, which are relevant in monitoring progress towards achieving a green economy and the associated employment impacts.

53. In order to promote discussion, ILO organized an informal technical meeting in November 2012 that brought together national and international experts and ILO officials to share experiences and discuss the draft definition(s). To facilitate discussion, ILO, in a concept paper, reviewed current practice in selected countries

and suggested a standardized definition that could be applied by countries in all regions and at various stages of economic and social development. The paper draws on other international statistical work in related fields, such as environmental accounts and energy statistics, and presents methodological issues, potential data sources and types of indicators that could be produced.

54. A draft proposal for a statistical definition of green jobs and associated methodological guidelines will be presented and discussed at the nineteenth Conference.

## **L. Other activities in a standard setting**

55. ILO, as the focal point for consumer price indices (CPIs) within the United Nations system, continues to: (a) collect and disseminate annual and monthly CPIs for some 200 countries; (b) promote the implementation of the international standards on CPI; and (c) provide technical assistance to member States. In addition to the regular update of its annual and monthly series, ILO is updating the methodological descriptions of national CPI series in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as from 2012. The dissemination of methodological descriptions is planned for 2013. In collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe, ILO organized a meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices from 30 May to 1 June 2012 in Geneva. It also continues to actively participate in the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. As the agency responsible for the coordination of future revisions of the CPI Manual, ILO will continue to maintain the electronic version of the CPI Manual online. A number of chapters have already been updated. The web page contains the original version, errata and the latest corrected version.

56. Within the Millennium Development Goals monitoring framework, ILO is responsible for monitoring progress by using five indicators<sup>3</sup> and has continued to prepare global, regional and country estimates, monitored progress and analyzed the trends of these indicators. In order to: (a) inform national and international stakeholders on the definitions, concepts, calculations and data sources for each of the five employment indicators; (b) assist countries in monitoring and reporting effectively on their employment situation; and (c) highlight the linkages between the Millennium Development Goals employment indicators and the broader set of decent work indicators, ILO has updated the *Guide to the New Millennium Development Goals Employment Indicators*, published in 2009.

## **M. Training and capacity-building in labour statistics**

57. ILO continues to support national statistical offices and ministries of labour to better measure, collect and disseminate statistics through numerous training activities. Its Department of Statistics has organized, along with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, a regular annual training programme in

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<sup>3</sup> Under Goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), the four indicators are: growth rate of labour productivity, employment-to-population ratio, proportion of employed people living below the poverty line and proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment; and under Goal 3 (promote gender equality and empower women), share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.

labour force surveys and other sources, and labour data analysis has been in place since 2010. In addition, it participated in the Master in Applied Labour Economics for Development statistics course at the ILO International Training Centre, collaborated in several training workshops on decent work indicators co-organized with European Commission-funded ILO projects (RECAP and MAP), some of which were carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Europe, Asia and Africa. Training on decent work and labour statistics, informality, child labour, wages and hours, establishment surveys and Millennium Development Goals indicators, CPI and ISCO, among other topics, was carried out in the past two years, sometimes in partnership with other international organizations, including the World Bank, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ECA, ECLAC, ESCWA, the African Development Bank and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).

58. A training on conducting and analysing labour force surveys for monitoring the labour market was held in Jordan in November 2012 in close collaboration with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), ESCWA, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and the Department of Statistics of Jordan and with the participation of 22 Arab States. A technical training course on labour statistics and labour market information and analysis was jointly organized in New Caledonia in November 2011 with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, targeted to the island States of the South Pacific region following the recommendations of an ILO assessment mission. A course on sampling techniques applied to household surveys was held in El Salvador, hosted by the Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (DIGESTYC) and ECLAC in November 2010. In Africa, a technical workshop on challenges and strategies in improving labour statistics in Africa was held in Bamako in November 2010, and a workshop on measuring decent work for francophone and lusophone ECOWAS countries was organized in Ouagadougou in January 2011.

## **N. Labour data compilation and dissemination**

59. When the new ILO Department of Statistics was created in 2009, an external review observed the existence of rather outdated systems for the compilation and dissemination of labour statistics, high maintenance costs, low coverage and problems of international comparability between data. In response, the Department gave priority to streamlining processes and introducing new tools for data compilation and dissemination. Meanwhile, ILO has been facing an increase in the demand for more and timelier data, especially after the economic crisis of 2007. The results of consultations with constituents and researchers indicated that ILO should collect additional indicators with more streamlined concepts. However, this would put a further strain on limited resources and outdated tools while increasing the burden placed on countries. The project of redesigning the new approach included the development not only of new applications using updated and appropriate tools to achieve the required functionality but also of procedures that could be automatic. One aspect that was emphasized from the beginning of the project was the adoption of every possible standard, so as to increase the opportunities to interact with ILO partners. Thus, the process follows the recommendations of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and uses development tools from the Oracle suite (a de facto standard), and the means of collection of data and metadata are based on

Excel, extensible markup language (XML), Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) and Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX).

60. The adoption of standards is fostering the collaboration with other institutions regarding data collection and software development, attempting to reduce respondent burden to countries and avoid duplication in the collection of official statistics. An agreement with Eurostat has been signed for the provision of more than 60 per cent of the indicators of the annual compilation, thus relieving European countries of the task, and joint work is being initiated with the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) of Mexico on the implementation of SDMX for the interchange of labour statistics and with the World Bank to define a mapping for labour force survey reference metadata and the adoption of the Data Documentation Initiative standard. Software interfaces (application programming interfaces, or APIs) are also being developed to be able to reuse software application developed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for mapping and mobile dissemination.

61. The new process of data compilation and dissemination is built on three main ideas: (a) broadening of the ways of interacting with countries for data collection; (b) systematization of the consistency and correction procedure, irrespective of the way the data were received; and (c) ability to know when and why (or why not) data from the countries are arriving, thus knowing how much information is to be included in a publication.

62. Two new ways of collecting data are being implemented: the e-questionnaire, which allows countries to enter data online through the Internet, and the use of electronic data interchange based on the SDMX standard, in order to allow the countries to send the information in XML files automatically downloaded from their own databases or to interact with the system through web services for data uploading. Excel questionnaires remain a valid option, but countries are expected to progressively stop using them and to move to the use of SDMX or the online e-questionnaire, which is expected to be available by March 2013.

63. The ways in which ILO relates to countries are changing. Multilingual teams have been defined to relate to each region or group of countries, and each member has been assigned a set of countries on the basis of language skills, cultural affinity and previous knowledge of the region. This country-centric approach (as opposed to the previous theme-centric approach) allows them to develop relationships with their counterparts in each assigned country and makes them accountable for increasing country response rates. The new approach has already demonstrated its value, increasing the response rate in the 2011 collection compared to the previous five years, despite the request for about twice the number of indicators requested in the past. Technical support is also offered to countries to ease their reporting and understanding of concepts.

64. As for metadata, the former “source and methods” system will be revamped and integrated into the ILOSTAT database, making it compatible with the DDI 2.x standard to allow the incorporation of existing metadata. The new ILOSTAT unified database and website are composed of dynamic pages built on the basis of the content of the metadata database. The site provides different ways of retrieving the information (by subject, by country, by classification, bulk download, etc.), as well as contextual links to different types of documents, such as publications, resolutions and guidelines, based on the country and/or subject being viewed.



65. A new ILO yearly indicators questionnaire, including a broad set of labour and decent work statistics, was launched in December 2011. The new questionnaire includes indicators clustered around topic areas ranging from such traditional areas as the economically active population, working time, earnings, occupational injuries and strikes and lockouts to new areas, including discouraged workers, employment-related income, working poverty, labour inspection, trade union membership and collective bargaining. The definitions of the indicators continue to reflect concept definitions and classifications while meeting the needs of data users for more harmonized and comparable labour statistics.

66. A short-term indicators database has been greatly improved in terms of quality and quantity of information, serving to support the needs of data users who require short-term data to monitor labour market trends in a timely manner in these times of economic crisis. More than 50 indicators on the labour market and consumer prices for about 100 countries have been incorporated into the database. The database has been important for reporting to the meetings of the Group of 20, in which ILO sits with other agencies.

67. The ILO Department of Statistics has started to publish seasonally adjusted time series as of September 2010. The covered topics are the economically active population (total and by sex), total employment (total and by sex), unemployment (total and by sex) and unemployment rates (total and by sex). Only quarterly time series are published. With regard to OECD countries, the seasonally adjusted time series are extracted from OECD; regarding the other countries for which infra-annual data are published consistently, ILO undertakes the seasonal adjustment. This covers 369 time series and 45 countries. The European Statistical System guidelines on seasonal adjustment guidelines are being followed very closely, and detailed metadata are published for each time series. ILO uses the Demetra 2.2 software, and the migration to Demetra+ is in progress.

68. Both annual and short-term indicators, along with the rest of the ILO databases, are being merged into the ILOSTAT database. This project has begun and will facilitate the use and understanding by users of labour statistics, who so far have been given different figures by different databases, all reported by ILO. This has already been approved by the ILO Governing Body and will be the cornerstone of the ongoing reorganization of ILO.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

69. ILO recommends:

(a) Noting the different activities undertaken by ILO through partnerships with member States and various international organizations in preparation for the forthcoming nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, to be held in Geneva in October 2013, and encouraging labour statisticians within the different national statistical offices to participate actively in the discussions on the draft resolution now being discussed worldwide;

(b) Encouraging the wide participation at the Conference in October 2013 of labour statisticians, active and lively discussions and interchanges in order to have all regional positions well represented and incorporated in its outcomes and conclusions;

(c) Noting the different activities undertaken by ILO in support of regional and national efforts in various areas of labour and decent work statistics, especially the new data compilation methods that are being modernized in order to lower the burden of reporting on countries;

(d) Encouraging donor agencies and international financial institutions to increase their engagement in supporting household and establishment surveys, as well as administrative records, in order to enlarge the knowledge base on labour issues, now the centre of attention of policymakers;

(e) Encouraging the active participation of ILO member States in regional working groups on labour statistics promoted and created in most of the regions, in order to keep a continuous update of its standards and operations at the international level;

(f) Promoting labour statistics within the national statistical system by coordinating actively with the ministries of labour and other national agencies in charge of them, in order to better implement the international statistical standards agreed by the Conference. By doing so, the ILO Governing Body, composed of ministries of labour, employers and workers' organizations, would also echo the need for more and better labour statistics at the national level and put more attention on such activities.

70. The Statistical Commission is invited to take note of the views and recommendations presented by ILO in the present report.

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