

2009 MDG Report

The Report states that accelerated progress for “efforts to provide productive and decent employment for all, including women and young people” is required (2009 MDG Report, 5). The ILO estimates that global unemployment in 2009 could reach between 6.1 - 7.0% for men and 6.5-7.4 % for women, where many women remain trapped in insecure or unpaid jobs.

Millennium Development Goal 1 focuses on decent work and employment. The goal, to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” is supported by Target 1B, to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all including women and young people.” Within this target are three areas of concern: the working poor, vulnerable employment and labour productivity.

Prospects darken for the working poor. The working poor are those who do not earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the \$1.25/day poverty line. The positive pre-crisis gains are being reversed: between 1997 and 2007 working poor numbers in developing countries declined from 41% to 24%, but then rose to 28% from 2008 to 2009. The worst-faring group is in sub-Saharan Africa where the ILO foresees no improvement. This region has the second-highest adult employment-to-population ratio among all regions (about 74%), but the lowest level of labour productivity. More than half the workers are considered extreme working poor and three quarters are engaged in vulnerable employment.

Economic turmoil means increased vulnerable employment: Vulnerable employment is either unpaid labour from those contributing to a family business or own-account workers who likely do not benefit from safety nets. There was a probable increase of 77 million engaged in vulnerable employment between 2007 and 2008. It is expected that 80% of the female labour force in Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia were engaged in vulnerable employment.

Labour productivity: A country’s ability to create and sustain decent employment opportunities is measured through labour productivity. In developing regions between 1998 and 2008, the per-person output remained consistently small, growing from 8%-11%. While productivity has remained alarmingly low in sub-Saharan Africa even declining in Oceania, it has increased in Eastern Asia, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and transition countries of South-Eastern Europe. In this region, the share of working poor declined nearly 9% since 1997, productivity nearly doubled and proportion of vulnerable employment dropped.

Looking to 2015

It is still possible to achieve the 2015 goals. To fulfill MDG1 measures should include:

- § Promoting access to economic resources and decent work opportunities for all, but especially for women and youth
- § Ensuring social safety nets and building basic universal social protection
- § Developing infrastructure and services in both urban and rural areas which will enhance productive capacity and help economies transition into a global economy

The MDGs are defined, measurable and monitored – and achievable. Stand Up and Take Action can help show the world what has been done and what there is left to do.



The ILO is pleased to welcome participants of the Geneva Red Cross programme “Le Semester de Motivation (SEMO)” to the Stand Up Event. SEMO is a professional training programme for youth aged 16 to 25, offering employment workshops, skills refresher courses, and professional advice and helping participants find internships. The Red Cross also offers an internship programme: participants work in the Red Cross Café Solférino and in a garden, selling its products at a weekly market.