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Report IV

## **General report**

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# 1. The work of the Bureau of Statistics

## 1.1. The Bureau of Statistics

### (a) Structure

The Bureau of Statistics (STAT) is the main unit in the ILO in charge of the statistical activities of the Office. It covers the following three chief areas of work: (a) the development of international statistical standards on the basis of the experience and requirements of the different member States; (b) the provision of advice to member States in the form of expert consultancies, training and manuals to assist them in the application of these standards; and (c) the dissemination of key labour statistics and methodological information through publications and electronic means.

At its headquarters in Geneva there are 27 officials (including secretarial and one part-time support staff), 13 of whom are in the Professional category. In addition, three statistical positions (two of which are currently vacant) are located in three of the 17 ILO multidisciplinary advisory teams (Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Abidjan). The level of staffing resources is virtually unchanged since the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1993 (27 versus 25 persons), but as compared with its peak in 1973 (40 persons) it has fallen by more than 30 per cent.

### (b) The Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No.160)

The Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160) and Recommendation (No. 170), provide the basic framework within which the Bureau of Statistics operates. They enable member States progressively to develop their programmes of labour statistics in accordance with their economic and social circumstances and resources and, together with the resolutions adopted by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians, they provide the basis for the promotion of the international comparability of labour statistics.

Convention No.160 was adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1985, and by the end of 1997 had been ratified by 41 member States (Annex 1). It supersedes the earlier Convention concerning Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work, 1938 (No. 63); Convention No. 160 covers the following subjects: the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment; average earnings and hours of work; time rates of wages and normal hours of work; wage structure and distribution; labour cost; consumer price indices; household expenditures and household income; occupational injuries and diseases; and industrial disputes. The Convention sets guidelines for the scope and coverage of the statistics and requires that the latest standards and guidelines established under the auspices of the ILO be taken into consideration and that representative organizations of employers and workers be consulted when statistical concepts, definitions and methodology are designed or revised.

### (c) Activities since the 15th ICLS

The main activities, carried out by the Bureau of Statistics since the 15th ICLS was held in 1993, are presented in the following three sections of this chapter under the broad headings of Development of labour statistics, Technical cooperation in labour statistics and Collection and dissemination of labour statistics. Certain items of work are presented in more detail in Chapters 2 (child labour), 3 (status in employment), 4 (extended absences in employment and unemployment statistics) and 5 (dissemination

practices for labour statistics). Proposals for future work are presented in Chapter 6.

## **1.2. Development of labour statistics**

### **(a) Statistical standards for the 16th ICLS**

Preparation for the 16th ICLS was one of the main activities of the ILO Bureau of Statistics during the last two biennia. Two Meetings of Experts on Labour Statistics were organized: the first, held from 14 to 23 October 1997, dealt with two topics — the measurement of underemployment and the measurement of income from employment; the second, held from 30 March to 3 April 1998, dealt with statistics of occupational injuries. For each topic, a report was prepared by the Bureau of Statistics which was discussed at the respective meetings. On the basis of the discussion, the reports were revised and draft resolutions prepared for submission to the 16th ICLS. These are Reports I, II and III respectively.

### **(b) Informal sector**

In early 1993, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the 15th ICLS resolution concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector and decided to include the 15th ICLS definition of the informal sector in the Revised System of National Accounts (SNA, 1993). Since 1993, the Bureau has continued its work on the development and promotion of informal sector statistics. Various papers on the concepts and methods of informal sector measurement were presented to international and regional technical meetings (Hussmanns, 1994a, b; 1996a, b, c; 1997). The Bureau made substantial technical and financial contributions to a series of seminars and workshops on informal sector statistics for African and Asian and Pacific countries, which were held in Addis Ababa, Bamako, Bangkok and Lisbon in 1996 and 1997. It also played an active role in the meetings of the United Nations Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics, which was constituted in 1997, and was requested to organize an invited papers meeting on "Surveying and estimating for the informal sector" for the 52nd Session of the International Statistical Institute (Helsinki, 1999). A module on informal sector statistics was developed as part of the Bureau's training programme. Through technical advisory missions and cooperation projects, the Bureau provided assistance in the development of informal sector statistics to the following countries: Armenia, Barbados, Brazil, Ethiopia, Georgia, Pakistan, Turkey and the Ukraine. Another major activity was the Bureau's participation in the Interdepartmental Project on the Urban Informal Sector, which the ILO launched in 1994; as part of the project, the Bureau conducted, in cooperation with the national statistical agencies, large-scale statistical surveys of the informal sector in the capital cities of Colombia, United Republic of Tanzania and the Philippines. On the whole, about 40 countries have already started to collect and publish data on employment and other characteristics of the informal sector, and some of them (e.g. Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Mexico, Peru) do so regularly. With the assistance of the national statistical offices, the Bureau has started to collect data from existing informal sector surveys and related methodological information, which are stored in a special database. It should be noted in this connection that employment in the informal sector has been chosen as one of the ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) and included among the United Nations Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS). Finally, the Bureau is preparing a manual on informal sector surveys; based on available experience, the manual aims at providing technical guidelines on the contents of the 15th ICLS resolution.

### **(c) International labour migration**

The economic and social issues related to international migration were the subject for an interdepartmental project in 1994-95. Included in the project was a review of the current availability and quality of statistics on migrant workers in general and specifically for the 22 countries included in the project. The results are documented in Hoffmann and Lawrence (1996), and in Bilsborrow et al. (1997). Experiences gained in the project were used for the ILO contributions to the revision of the *United Nations Recommendations on Migration Statistics (1997)*. Work has started to create an International Migration Database in connection with the Migration Programme of the ILO Employment and Training Department.

(d) Labour accounting systems (LAS)

Since the discussion on this subject at the 15th ICLS the ILO has received information about national work on labour accounting from eight OECD member countries. In addition, the ILO has been informed that similar but more limited work has been carried out by at least 23 countries under the heading "reconciliation of data from different sources". The information available to the ILO on this work was reviewed and presented in Hoffmann (1997), with the conclusion that it has now advanced from conceptual discussion to partial numerical estimation. The focus of the estimation activities reviewed is on: (i) making optimal use of statistics from different sources, giving priority to paid employment and using the results of labour force surveys as an overall reference for coverage; (ii) extending the scope, in some countries, to also include statistics on earnings, wages and salaries; and (iii) ensuring coordination with corresponding national accounts estimates for production and income.

(e) Vocational and work-related training

Due to financial constraints, the Bureau of Statistics has been unable to devote resources to the collection of vocational training statistics; however, some cooperation with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) has been initiated. The Bureau of Statistics is providing data for the statistical annex of the forthcoming issue of the ILO report *World Employment 1998-99: Training for employment* (ILO, 1998) which focuses on labour force education and training.

(f) Household income and expenditure

The fourth edition of the ILO publication *Household income and expenditure statistics* was produced in 1995, and contains results of surveys carried out in 82 countries between 1979 and 1991. As many countries have increased the frequency with which these surveys are carried out, even to the extent of having annual surveys in some cases, the periodicity of this publication will be increased from the present average of about ten years to, in the first instance, about five years. It is therefore proposed to start work in 1998-99 on a new edition covering surveys carried out between 1992 and 1996. The resolution adopted by the 12th ICLS in 1973 concerning this subject will be revised in the light of the many developments that have taken place in the concept and definition of income and expenditure, in methodology and in data requirements over the past 25 years.

(g) Productivity

Labour productivity statistics have sporadically figured in the work of the Bureau of Statistics. One major book on this subject was published in 1969 (see ILO, 1969). Indices of labour productivity were also published with the 1977 *Year Book of Labour*

*Statistics.* Following the Labour Statistics Recommendation, 1985 (No. 170) in which it is stated that "Statistics of productivity should be progressively developed and compiled covering important branches of economic activity", the Bureau of Statistics has re-examined the availability, sources and methods of productivity statistics in a small sample of countries and has investigated the methodological problems involved.

#### (h) Gender statistics

A manual on methodology to measure occupational concentration and segregation between men and women was published in 1995 (Siltanen et al., 1995) and is available to the Conference. This manual was produced by the ILO interdepartmental project on equality for women in employment, carried out in 1992-93. The project also produced an analysis of the data on the occupational distribution of men and women compiled in 1993. In addition, a training module was prepared on gender issues in labour statistics and tested in the context of general courses organized by the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (Italy).

#### (i) Labour demand

While many years of discussions on the conceptual and practical problems of measuring employment, unemployment and underemployment have resulted in international agreements and recommendations on how they should be measured, corresponding discussions on the measurement of vacancies, labour hoarding and over-manning — the demand side manifestations of imbalances in the labour markets — have been limited, both at the national level and internationally. The statistical neglect of this topic would lead one to suspect that many of the existing empirical studies of aggregate labour market dynamics may be based on unsatisfactory and fragile data. This applies in particular to studies which investigate the relationship between measured unemployment on the one side and measured vacancies on the other, which have to rely on vacancies registered in public employment services with the associated problems of coverage, validity and reliability. Drawing on the limited national experiences readily available, the ILO explored some of the conceptual and operational issues, with the results being presented in Hoffmann (1995a). This work has been followed by a more in-depth study for the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) documented in Verhage et al. (1997).

#### (j) Use of administrative records

The report from the discussion of the Bureau of Statistics' programme of work at the 15th ICLS included calls for "... the development of administrative records for use as sources of labour statistics ...", and the observation that "Use of administrative records could be very helpful in developing countries where resource constraints restrict the undertaking of large surveys" (ILO, 1993, paragraph 44). A possible framework for the work was presented in Hoffmann (1995b), and was used as the basis for a review of sources and issues related to statistics on the international migration of workers (see Hoffmann and Lawrence (1996)). In a parallel development the ILO's East Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (ILO/EASMAT) received funds from the Japanese Government in support of the project to assist ministries of labour in improving labour statistics derived from administrative records, which resulted in ILO (1997a). This publication was used as the basis for a training workshop for labour ministry officials from 11 countries in Asia in February 1997, and is being translated into several languages used in that region.

#### (k) Population and housing censuses



Two sets of recommendations for the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses have been revised (see UN (1998) and UNECE/Eurostat (1998)). The ILO participated in both processes in order to ensure that the recommendations concerning economic characteristics would be consistent with the latest standards for labour statistics. To help national statistical offices implement these recommendations the ILO and the United Nations Statistical Division are preparing a publication with advice on question formulations and coding procedures for the characteristics included in UN (1998), as well as detailed discussions on the measurement problems associated with censuses.

### **1.3. Technical cooperation in labour statistics**

#### **(a) Technical assistance in labour statistics**

Technical assistance continues to be one of the three major areas of the Bureau's activities. The principal means of providing technical assistance has been through: (a) field missions; (b) national and international seminars and workshops; (c) training courses in labour statistics; (d) organization of individual short-term training; (e) backstopping of labour statistics projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank; and (f) translation of ILO recommendations and manuals into languages other than the official three (English, French and Spanish). The technical advisory expertise of the Bureau's regular staff is strengthened by its three labour statistics experts stationed respectively in Abidjan, Bangkok and Addis Ababa (two posts are currently vacant). All technical assistance projects have been geared towards enhancing and reinforcing the statistical infrastructure in central statistical offices, labour ministries and employers' and workers' organizations. Technical assistance efforts were mainly concentrated on the following priority areas identified by the recipient member countries: preparation for and refinement of labour force surveys; collection of wages and labour cost statistics; development of national classifications of occupations based on *ISCO-88* (International Standard Classification of Occupations, 1988); measurement of employment in the informal sector; and collection of child labour statistics. To meet the numerous requests for technical assistance received by the Bureau since the last ICLS, its regular staff carried out over 110 technical advisory missions. In addition, the regional labour statistics experts carried out over 55 missions and contributed to a number of regional seminars and workshops. Continuous technical backstopping was provided to labour statistics projects in nine countries. The following conferences were held: The ILO Minsk Conference on the Restructuring of Labour Statistics in Transition Countries, Minsk, 31 August-2 September 1994; Joint ILO/Czech Statistical Office Meeting on the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of leave in respect to the international definitions of employment and unemployment, Prague, 15-17 November 1995; and Joint ILO/CIS Interstate Statistical Committee Workshop on Occupational Classifications, Moscow, November 1995.

#### **(b) International Standard Classification of Occupations (*ISCO-88*)**

Following its approval by the 14th ICLS in 1987 and by the ILO Governing Body in 1988, *ISCO-88* was made available to users in English, French and Spanish, and has, since 1990-91, been available as both printed volumes and on diskette (a Catalan version was published in 1996, and a Russian version in early 1998). Also available on diskette is a set of descriptions of more detailed occupational groups than those included in *ISCO-88*, taken from the previous version, *ISCO-68*, with minor adaptations and only limited updating. Useful ILO material on work with occupational classifications

can be found in Embury et al. (1997) and Hoffmann et al. (1995), as well as in Chapter 10 of Hussmanns et al. (1990) and in Chapters 22, 23 and 24 of Chernyshev et al. (1994). Information about the classifications in the *ILO Year Book of Labour Statistics* can be found on STAT's web pages where hyper links are provided to the corresponding websites of the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick and the United Nations Statistical Division. In the future we also hope to establish such links to the corresponding national sites, as part of the plan to establish the ILO site as the main gateway to the world of occupational classifications, as well as to the occupational classifications of the world.

Advice has been provided for three efforts to develop common regional classifications based on *ISCO-88*: (i) *ISCO-88(COM)* developed for Eurostat; (ii) *ISCO-88(CIS)* developed for CIS STATCOM; and (iii) *ISCO-88(OCWM)* developed for the ILO/UNDP Asian Regional Programme on International Labour Migration. (Preparations were made for a project to develop a regional classification for the island countries in the South Pacific, but the necessary funds could not be found.) At the end of March 1998 direct contacts had been made with 53 countries and territories which have developed, or are in the process of developing, national occupational classifications based either on the model of *ISCO-88* or on its underlying principles. Nine countries have decided to use another model when revising their national classification, usually that of their previous national classification. Sixty five countries with a population census in the 1989-94 period established links to *ISCO-88* for their latest census results while 33 countries linked the results to *ISCO-68*.

Systematic work to update and extend *ISCO-88* has been modest, but the World Health Organization has provided new descriptions for the following groups defined for nursing occupations: 223, 2230, 323, 3231, 3232 and 5133. These updated descriptions can be found on the STAT website, and other updated descriptions will be included as they are developed. Proposals for updating and extending the *ISCO-88* classification structure may take several forms. (a) A number of more detailed occupational classes may be presented as subdivisions of appropriate *ISCO-88* unit groups, with a two-digit extension to the unit group code: "xy". Such extensions will be proposed where it has been made clear that the international exchange of occupational information, including statistics, on these groups will warrant their separate identification within the *ISCO-88* structure. This may happen: (i) at the initiative of e.g. international federations of organizations of people working in particular professions who can make a case for the separate identification of these professions in *ISCO-88* as being important for the international recognition of such occupations (one example is 2111-11 Medical Physicist); (ii) because new occupations have emerged as a consequence of technological developments common to a number of countries; or (iii) due to the fact that the exchange of information between several countries for such purposes as recruitment, job placement and the international migration of workers will be facilitated by references to detailed standard occupational classes.

(b) Regional adaptations of *ISCO-88* may introduce a new unit and/or minor groups to the *ISCO-88* structure to bring together and highlight some important occupations which in *ISCO-88* are "hidden" in one or more unit groups, or which it is difficult to place within the *ISCO-88* structure. One example is the group 247, Public Service Administrative Professionals, created for *ISCO-88(COM)* which is being used by Eurostat.

### (c) Labour statistics training programme

The 15th ICLS supported training as an important means of enhancing the link and impact of the Bureau of Statistics' international statistical standard-setting work with its technical cooperation activities. While it was recognized that broad training courses

covering all core labour statistics topics were necessary, the Conference had recommended that regional programmes were also an efficient means of delivering training. In the last five years, the Bureau of Statistics has carried out the following training programmes mainly using its own staff as trainers: in 1993 a six-week overall programme for 17 countries worldwide at the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin (Italy); two regional training courses — one for Central Asian and Caucasian countries, in Turkey (September 1994) with the collaboration of the State Institute of Statistics, and one for Central and Eastern European countries in transition, in Slovakia (September/October 1996) — on labour force surveys, prepared at the request of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; a Subregional Workshop on the Development of a Wages Statistics Programme for the Caribbean, in collaboration with UNDP, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Government of Barbados, in Barbados (November 1996); two parallel training programmes under the theme "designing a national programme of labour statistics to monitor the labour market, using establishment surveys and labour force surveys", funded by the Chinese Government, in Turin (November/December 1997).

In addition, the Bureau of Statistics continued to support the other Turin Centre training activities and to provide resource persons for several training seminars in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, sponsored by other organizations or as training components of technical cooperation projects. Examples include statistics for social policy, Germany, 1994 and 1995 (Munich Centre for Advanced Training in Applied Statistics for Developing Countries); Training Course in Practical Statistics, Japan, 1997 (United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)).

Regular training materials were updated to reflect the latest international recommendations and new training modules were prepared (and tested in various classrooms) on child labour statistics and on engendered labour statistics. All of these materials now exist in English, French and Spanish. A training manual announced in the general report to the last ICLS will take the form of an electronic and paper training package or briefcase of training tools. Individual folders cover the main subjects through basic texts, overhead materials, exercises with solutions, further reading references, etc. which are combined according to the specific training requirements. This package will be produced in collaboration with the Turin Centre's specialized pedagogical materials units.

#### **1.4. Collection and dissemination of labour statistics**

##### **(a) LABORSTA**

Since its inception over 75 years ago, the ILO has compiled, analysed and presented official labour statistics worldwide. The main database, LABORSTA, contains statistics covering nearly 190 countries starting in 1969 (with some census data starting as early as 1945). This database is used to publish the *Year Book* and *Bulletin of Labour Statistics* and to generate custom-made computer-readable extracts which are regularly requested both inside and outside the ILO (see Annex 2 for the list of databases, including special databases).

Since the 15th ICLS, all consumer price index (CPI) time series have been revised in order to present the same 1990 base-year, in line with most recent international practices. This CPI database is now set up and automated for all future changes of base-year. In 1995, a major enhancement to LABORSTA consisted of the definition of a new data structure to accommodate several new, revised international classifications (ISIC Rev. 3 [International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, third revision], *ISCO-88* and *ICSE-93* [International Classification of Status in

Employment, 1993]), as well as to continue providing storage for the previous versions and national classifications. All of the data in the old structures were reconstructed to fit into the new structure, with the exception of a few cross-classified tables relating to the economically active population. Today virtually all data in LABORSTA are in the form of time series, irrespective of the type of variables defining them (classifications according to age, industry, occupation, status in employment, etc.) or the version of the classification itself.

During the 1998-99 biennium, the Bureau of Statistics will undertake an examination of its entire data collection and dissemination programme as regards the way data are collected, their scope and coverage, and the type and format of data being disseminated, although considerable advances have already been made in the techniques and means of data dissemination used. Initially, the use of Internet to promote our dissemination programme will be explored and implemented. Subsequently, it will be used to receive data directly from countries through their national statistical agencies. Closely linked to this reorientation is a concern with the need to shift the focus of attention somewhat towards primary users of international labour statistics, including major data users within the ILO, instead of focusing only on the traditional client groups of national statistical organizations and the United Nations statistical system.

#### (b) *Year Book of Labour Statistics*

The major improvements made to LABORSTA in 1995 resulted in several new inclusions in that year's *Year Book* and important innovations being introduced as from the 1996 issue. The restructuring into time series made it possible to extend the presentation of the data to new tables and new series, which include, wherever possible, statistics in accordance with the latest versions of the international standard industrial and occupational classifications (i.e. ISIC Rev. 3, *ISCO-88* and *ICSE-93*) and data on the economically active population and on unemployment by level of education (according to the International Standard Classification of Education). The new standard presentation for time series as well as data for economic activities not previously covered, will be features of the next century's *Year Book*. Attention may also be drawn to two articles of interest: one commemorating the 75th anniversary of the ILO, which outlined developments in international labour statistics over the past 75 years, and another on statistics of household income and expenditure, presented in the 1994 issue.

#### (c) *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*

The quarterly *Bulletin of Labour Statistics* and its regular *Supplements* present monthly and quarterly series on employment, unemployment, hours of work, wages and consumer prices for over 160 countries and territories, drawn mainly from information supplied by national statistical offices or from national publications. Each issue of the *Bulletin* includes at least one article on statistical methods and practices or presents the results of special surveys or projects.

#### (d) *October Inquiry*

Each year a special supplement to the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics* is published which presents detailed results of the annual *October Inquiry* into wages and hours of work relating to 159 different occupations and into the retail prices of 93 selected food

items. The number of countries responding varies slightly from year to year — on average data on wages are published for 100 countries and on prices for 120 countries. The results from 1985 onwards are available on diskette, on request. There are plans to produce a volume of descriptions of the national methods used to compile the data.

(e) Sources and methods: Labour statistics

Since 1992, the *Year Book of Labour Statistics* has been accompanied by a volume of the "Sources and methods: Labour statistics" series, providing methodological information on the sources and methods used in each country to compile labour statistics. The descriptions are presented under standard headings which allow for easy comparison of the various characteristics. Eight volumes have so far been issued, of which four have already been revised. Since the 15th ICLS in 1993, new volumes on strikes and lockouts (1993), household income and expenditure surveys (1994) and occupational injuries (1997) have been issued. The volumes on establishment surveys (1995) and population censuses (1996) are revised editions. A third edition of the volume on the economically active population, employment, unemployment, wages and hours of work (household surveys) will be published shortly. The trilingual presentation (English, French, Spanish) of this series is now carried out using computer-assisted translation software.

(f) Press releases, newsletter, website

Press releases have been issued relating to inflation in Africa and Latin America (1993), the decline in strikes around the world (1994), high inflation rates in Eastern Europe and Brazil (1994), unemployment (March and November 1996) and statistics of child labour (1995 and 1996).

The Bureau of Statistics' newsletter continues to be published once a year. Each issue contains two pages of articles and two pages of information on publications, seminars, press releases, databases, technical cooperation, and the Bureau's staff.

The Bureau of Statistics' website has been operational in English, French and Spanish since the end of 1997 (address: <http://www.ilo.org/stat>). It contains textual information on the work of the Bureau, contacts within the Bureau, information on the Bureau's publications and databases, international classifications in use, the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160) and Recommendation No. 170, other ICLS resolutions and meetings. Depending on ILO policy decisions regarding the ILO website in general, the Bureau of Statistics hopes to expand the website to include extracts from its publications and statistical information.

(g) Economically active population 1950-2010

The ILO completed the fourth edition of its programme on estimates and projections of the economically active population in December 1996; previous editions were published in 1971, 1977 and 1986. The new results are available on a set of diskettes and in a publication comprising five regional volumes.

The data include estimates and projections of activity rates by sex and age group for the period 1950-2010 at ten-year intervals, and estimates of the distribution of the labour force by sex and major sectors of economic activity for the period 1950-90. The data cover 178 countries and territories, plus their aggregations into regions, major areas and the world, for a total of 207 geographical units.

(h) ILO-comparable employment and unemployment estimates

New countries were added and several Eastern European countries which were temporarily withdrawn following transition have since re-entered the programme following the introduction of new labour force surveys. Thus statistical series were published for some 30 countries (1994 annual averages) in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1996-2. Results of the analysis of the data and verification procedures were summarized in the methodologies accompanying the published tables. The ILO-comparable project is intended to be integrated into a broad project on global and regional estimates of employment and unemployment as outlined in section 6.2(b) below.

## 2. Child labour statistics: Methodological considerations

### 2.1. Introduction

Although child labour has always existed and is believed to be not only increasingly widespread but also becoming increasingly harmful in its forms, the actual level, nature, causes and consequences of the practice have not been fully determined in the past. The main reason for the dearth of data on child labour has been the absence of an appropriate survey methodology to probe into the work of children which, for the most part, is a "hidden" phenomenon. In view of the absence of adequate data, little is known about many important aspects of this phenomenon at both the national and global levels. There is, however, a wide variety of guesstimates as to the number of working children under 15 years of age, these range from 200 to 400 million working children worldwide. Even if such estimates were to be regarded as realistic, mere global totals do not provide insight into any of the various forms of the practice and the problems inherent therein.

Given the recent growing concern of individual countries and the international community on the issue of child labour, in 1992-93 the ILO launched an Interdepartmental Project on the Elimination of Child Labour and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) to investigate the extent of the phenomenon and the issues associated with it. The ILO Bureau of Statistics designed special sample survey methodologies and experimented with them in four countries. They were then further refined and adopted to investigate the child labour situation at the national level in a number of countries.

### 2.2. Data requirements

In view of the multidimensional aspect of the child labour problem, the information sought through the specialized survey approaches involved answers to the following questions, among others:

- Who are the working children and how many are there in the various countries?
- How old are the children when they start to work for the first time and how do they live?
- Why do they work and in which sectors are they engaged?
- What are their specific occupations and the conditions of their work?
- What types of exploitation and abuse do they face at work?
- How safe are they physically and mentally at their workplace or in their occupations?
- Do they also go to school? If so, what are the consequences of their work on their schooling? And if they do not go to school, why not?
- Who are their employers? Why do they employ them? And how do they treat them in comparison with their adult workers?
- How many children are engaged on a full-time basis in housekeeping activities of a purely domestic nature in their own parents' or guardians' households, thereby sacrificing their education?
- Do any children live away from their parents' or guardians' home, and if so, where do they live and what do they do?

- What are the perceptions of parents about their working children? What are the perceptions of the children themselves and their employers?

### 2.3. Survey methodologies

It is evident that answering all the above questions would require the collection of comprehensive information on working children. Consequently, the Bureau of Statistics designed four survey approaches and tested them in a number of countries together with a supplementary inquiry. Three of the approaches were implemented, respectively, at the level of households, employers/establishments/enterprises, and street children. The fourth method tested was a "time use" approach. The main purpose was to determine which survey methodology would yield the best results.

The questionnaire that was applied at the household level consisted of two parts. The first part was addressed to the head of the household (or a proxy) to obtain information on the demographic and socio-economic composition of the household, including such aspects as housing facilities, household migration status and living standards, and the education level and economic activity status of the household members. The second part was used to collect the required information from the individual children themselves. The employer's (establishment or enterprise) questionnaire was addressed to the owner of the business or a designated respondent, seeking information on the particulars of the ownership, the goods produced and services rendered, the number of children and adults engaged, their working conditions, the reasons for using child workers, the facilities and health care at the workplace, etc.

As a supplement, a simple questionnaire was used to interview elected and appointed leaders, administrators, etc., in the communities or towns and villages of the selected areas to identify the major local characteristics, assess development levels and determine the differential in the incidence of child labour. This investigation was also used to list the households which served as a sampling frame.

During the household listing stage, basic information on a limited number of variables relating to each household and its members was also obtained to facilitate the stratification of the households in each segment and the sample selection of households.

Due to the special problems of collecting data on children working and living on the streets (i.e. children not residing in a household), an individual questionnaire was formulated which was used to assemble information on variables relating to the schooling and non-schooling activities of such children, their living and working conditions, parents, migration status, etc. The fact that they do not live in a household means that such children are not represented in the sample.

The surveys were formulated to measure as many variables as possible, particularly in relation to the various non-schooling activities of children in the 5-14 age group, their characteristics and those of their parents or guardians, etc. The principal variables considered for the investigation related to the following subjects, expressed in broad terms as:

- the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the children, including their schooling and training status, occupations, skill levels, hours of work, earnings and other working and living conditions, as well as the hardships and risks they face at their workplace which are detrimental to their health, education, and physical and mental development;
- the socio-economic composition of their parents or guardians, or other relatives with whom the children live, as well as the particulars of their employers;
- the migration status of the children (in particular those on the streets); where the children have been working and for how long, the reasons why they work, their



- own immediate and future plans and those of employers using child workers;
- the perceptions of the parents or guardians about their working youngsters and those of the children themselves and their employers.

The concepts, definitions, classifications, etc. used for the purposes of the experimental surveys in all the countries were generally in keeping with internationally recommended standards concerning such elements as the economically active population, the labour force, classifications of industry, occupation, status in employment, age grouping, households, enterprises and establishments, etc., with some variations to reflect the unique circumstance of child work and the peculiarities of individual countries.

Depending on the availability of basic information or demarcations regarding the general characteristics of the areas and the availability of appropriate sampling frames, the various elements considered for the stratifications included development levels of the selected rural and urban areas (e.g. poorly developed/well developed, slum/non-slum blocks), income classes (low, middle, high), overall rates of literacy/illiteracy of the general population, school attendance levels, etc. This was because it is known that factors such as these and the incidence of child labour are either positively correlated or they vary inversely, depending on the factor being considered.

For the purposes of the experiments, a "child" was defined as a person between five and 14 years of age. In the absence of a universally endorsed definition of "child labour", all activities of children were enumerated and quantified so that the data could be tabulated according to the different characteristics of the variables included in the questionnaires. Depending on the level and nature of the quantified activities or variables, those which were judged or expected to have negative effects or consequences to the health, education and normal development of the working child were considered as falling within the boundaries of "child labour".

The main focus of the surveys in all four countries was on the economic activity of the child, whether paid in cash or in kind, or on unpaid family work, thus respecting the international definition of "economic activity". In this respect, some types of work or production for own household consumption, such as carrying water, fetching firewood, pounding and husking food products for own consumption, were also considered as falling within the boundaries of economic activity. While the dividing line between economic and non-economic activities for cases such as the above is rather thin and not always obvious, these and many others (e.g. preservation of fruit by drying or bottling, weaving cloth, dressmaking and tailoring, etc.), were considered to fall within the margin of economic activity or the "production boundary" as defined by the System of National Accounts (SNA, 1993).

While schooling activities were measured in the majority of cases, in some instances non-schooling activities of a non-economic nature were also estimated. In all the surveys, both the "current" and the "usual" economic activity approaches were applied, the first in reference to activities during the week (or seven days) prior to the date of the interview, and the second in reference to the 12-month period (or 365 days) preceding the inquiry date. The latter reference period takes seasonality into account which is an important factor since a considerable proportion of children's activities is seasonal, including activities undertaken when schools are closed.

In all the selected areas the household-based surveys were carried out strictly on a relatively rigorous sample basis using a multi-stage (two- or three-stage) stratified sampling design. Using the household listing as a sampling frame as well as the basic information that was collected during the listing, all the listed households in each unit of the segment were then grouped into three strata as follows:

- (i) households with at least one paid child worker (in the specific age group);

- (ii) households without a paid child worker but with at least one child working as an unpaid family worker (in the same specific age group); and
- (iii) other households (in the same age group).

As a final step in the sample selection procedure, a specified number of households in each of the above three strata were selected by means of systematic sampling which formed the final stage sampling units. Through these sampling procedures or slight variations, between 4,000 and 5,000 households were selected to represent the sample size for the surveys in each of the four countries.

As regards the employers (enterprises/establishments), probability sampling became prohibitive due to the absence of basic information which could serve as a master frame, such as an exhaustive list or directory of employers in respect of the areas selected for the surveys. In view of this problem, only those employers identified by the children themselves or their parents during the interview at the household level or those enterprises known or suspected to be using child workers were located and interviewed on a random basis. In this way, up to a total of 200 entities were identified and enumerated in urban and rural areas.

For the children on the streets, a purposive approach was applied. These children were visited in their localities in the evenings, and in some cases at night if that proved to be more convenient. In the urban core many children usually tend to form groups to eat and sleep together.

The methodological experiments had also included a "time use" module for interviewing individual children at both the household and street children levels. A long list of economic and non-economic activities was constructed and used to identify which activities children had been engaged in during the 24 hours preceding the date of the survey and to determine how much time had been devoted to each activity.

Where suitable statistical software packages were not available in the statistical offices of the countries concerned, a self-weighting systematic sampling design with probability proportional to size (PPS) was adopted. This approach helped by providing a uniform weight for estimating totals. It also facilitated the computation of percentages, means and ratios of the population parameters directly from the sample data.

## 2.4. Basic results

Variations exist in the results of the surveys conducted in the four countries owing to their differences in terms of social, cultural, political and economic development levels, average family size, household income and expenditure, literacy or illiteracy levels of the adult population, and especially the school enrolment and attendance ratios of young children, etc. The findings are also influenced by the differences in the reference period of the surveys, e.g. whether it covers a schooling period, agricultural season, etc. For the same reasons, the findings also vary between any two areas covered by the survey within each country.

The household-based experiment has been found to be the most effective means of investigating the child labour phenomenon in all its facets. It does, however, exclude homeless children who live and work on the streets with no fixed place of usual residence. As a result the data obtained through household surveys do not give a complete picture of the phenomenon or practice of child labour at the national level. Homeless such children face daily risks and hazards that are detrimental to their mental and physical development. These children are found mainly in the urban core working either independently on the streets or for operators of various activities in the informal sector. Most of them have no fixed place of work and may sleep outside buildings with no permanent or even usual place of residence. During the daytime these children may continuously be on the move from one place to another. This makes it impossible to

construct a sample frame to carry out a well-designed survey.

One country successfully conducted a micro-level inquiry taking as a starting-point the fact that most homeless children are usually found in large urban centres. A purposive approach was applied using well-trained interviewers who were well acquainted with the inner city where such children usually work or congregate. The interviewers were sent out in the early evening and often at night with a detailed questionnaire to interview at random the children they found. In many cases, the informal sector operators for whom the children work were also interviewed. The exercise resulted in useful statistical data, enabling the survey team to analyse in some detail the various characteristics of street children, such as age, sex, educational background, migration status and reasons for being on the streets, types of economic activity and occupation, earnings, living conditions (food, sleeping place, etc.), difficulties encountered, skills, future plans, activity patterns or background characteristics of their parents, etc.

In some cases the establishment-based investigation was not particularly successful, notably where there was no exhaustive frame for the selection of a sample. While it was hoped that the information obtained from the household heads and the children themselves would allow a list to be compiled of establishments where the children work, this proved difficult, mainly because many children were not available during the household inquiry and many adults (usually mothers or proxies) were unable to provide the precise address of the children's place of work. Nevertheless, in a few of the countries it was possible to compile lists consisting of a reasonable number of establishments for the purposes of testing the instruments designed for employers using child labourers.

Where a list or directory of establishments does not exist or cannot be compiled on the basis of the information obtained from the household-level survey, a micro-approach can be taken in which the type of formal sector activities (industries, services) where children may be working are identified and the enterprises engaged in these activities are investigated. In view of the fact that a large majority (90 per cent) of economically active children are unpaid family workers and some others are self-employed or casual labourers, this approach may often suffice. It is to be noted that in a few of the countries where a proper sample survey of establishments proved difficult, small purposive or convenience inquiries were carried out which produced some interesting statistical results, though for the most part these were qualitative and not representative of the universe of enterprises.

Another problem regarding the establishment-based inquiry was the lack of full, or even any, cooperation on the part of the employers, especially where the employment of youngsters under a specified age is illegal. For this reason, the use of the term "child activity" or "child work" instead of "child labour" may minimize the employers' as well as some of the parents' suspicion as to the objective of the surveys. The absence of any reference to "child labour" in the survey instruments and by field personnel during interviews, may lead to a better response rate at all levels. In addition, conducting a well-formulated campaign, prior to the launching of the survey, in the various localities and at the national level to publicize the importance of the data to be collected for improving children's welfare (schooling, health, etc., including working conditions if children have to work) could make respondents much more cooperative.

In view of the difficulty of contacting the children themselves in the households during the daytime and the non-reliability of proxy informants especially with respect to certain questions or variables, where possible, the best time to visit the sample households is the late afternoon or early evening.

The statistical results from the surveys have proven the existence of a positive

correlation — in some instances a strong one — between child labour and such factors as poverty, illiteracy, the level of rural community underdevelopment, urban slum conditions, school truancy or drop-outs, abandoned or runaway children, large family size, female-headed households, the parents' — especially the father's — occupations, permanent absence or death of the father, among others.

It is also recommended that work of a domestic nature (household chores) performed by children in their own parents' or other relatives' home where they actually reside should be included in the investigation of children's schooling and non-schooling activities. This is to measure the time spent on this type of work in order to identify those children who are working more than the number of hours a day that may be considered as normal to learn common household chores and related activities. The final data compiled on these children should then be tabulated separately from the data relating to children who are economically active (as defined in accordance with international standards). Non-economic work of a domestic nature in the parents' or guardians' household would then be classified and tabulated into various ranges according to the number of hours that such work was performed so that a threshold could be established beyond which the activity could be deemed as constituting child labour.

The above is based on the argument that many non-school-going children perform housekeeping activities in their parents' or guardians' households for various reasons, one such reason being to make adult household members available for economic activity elsewhere. For many of these children this is a full-time occupation involving preparing and serving meals, washing garments, cleaning floors, etc., taking care of younger siblings, serving as messengers in and around the household, and so on, all this at the sacrifice of the education and playing time to which each child is entitled under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Even those who attend school are found to be spending several hours a day performing such activities which are detrimental to their schooling, health and normal development to adulthood. Such children suffer fatigue which affects their school performance and many are exposed to hazardous situations, for example cooking food over an open fire. Children who are put under the guardianship of relatives or other persons are especially susceptible to much abuse in these areas of work. Behind the guardianship status there are often other arrangements which amount to child labour, including bondage which is among the worst forms of the practice.

The survey experiment based on a "time use" module was not successful for the purposes of investigating children's activities and the intensity of their work. Even when presented with a long list of economic and non-economic activities, many children could not recall the activities in which they had been engaged during the 24 hours preceding the date of the survey. And even when they were able to identify the activities, they had little recollection of the amount of time spent on each. Most children seem to remember only those activities which they most like, especially those in which they made "good" earnings. In many instances, it was difficult to consult the children themselves, and approaching proxies for this purpose was found to be futile since they could not account for the children's daily activities or their time allocation on each. Consequently, the results obtained from the "time use" exercise were found to be unsatisfactory.

However, better quality data may be obtained if the investigators or interviewers spend time in the area where the children can be found and interact with them and/or observe them throughout the day. Unfortunately, this approach is neither practical nor feasible where the geographical coverage is wide and the sample size is large in order to make estimates at the national level. It is therefore recommended that, with the exception of a micro-level time allocation exercise, the application of a "time use" approach to individual children to identify all their activities over a specific period of time (such as 24 hours) and quantify the time devoted to each should be discouraged.

## 2.5. Recommendations in brief

In view of all the above, **the overall recommendation** is to conduct a household-based sample survey which should be supplemented by surveys of employers (establishments and enterprises) and street children. Below are some details on each of these three survey approaches which could serve as technical guidelines:

### (a) Household-based surveys

#### (i) *Justification*

The justification for these surveys and their suitability lies in the fact that by definition a household is a unit consisting of either an individual living alone or a group of two or more persons living together with a common provision for food and other essentials necessary for living. Whether they are one-person or multi-person households of related and/or unrelated individuals, such households serve as the ultimate sampling units which best represent any specific population under consideration or study. The only persons who are not represented through household-based sample inquiries are the homeless, nomads, and household members who are absent from the household permanently or for a long period at the time of enumeration. If such persons do not live in another household within the country, they will not be represented in a household-based national sample survey. However, such groups normally only constitute a very small proportion of the total population within any specific age-cohort. Even then, much information could be collected on those who are away from the households (such as street children) by addressing various relevant questions to the household head or a proxy. This information could, in turn, be used to design a more appropriate investigation of such persons in order to find out more details on all aspects of their activities, occupations, living conditions, etc.

The use of households as units of enumeration could permit the gathering of a wealth of statistical information on all or any segment of a country's population, subject to the availability of resources. The ILO/IPEC methodological experiments carried out in 1992-93 and national surveys undertaken since then concerning child labour in several countries have proven the household approach to be the most effective means for a profound assessment of the level, nature and determinants of the practice at the national level. During such surveys, information could also be collected on the activity patterns of adults not only because the additional cost involved would be marginal, but because such data are important for studying the interrelationship between the activities of children and the activities of other members of the same household and, in particular, those of their parents or guardians.

Besides providing a national picture, another advantage of a comprehensive household-based survey is that, if implemented through well-designed sampling and stratification procedures, it would permit segregation of the statistical information not only into rural/urban areas and informal/formal sectors, but also and more importantly into small geographical areas within any large geographical region or province. The information on small localities would be crucial for the formulation and implementation of policies and action programmes appropriate for combating child labour in specific geographical areas or communities where the problem may be quite serious.

It should be noted that the household-based survey of child labour could be carried out either as a "free-standing" or "stand-alone" inquiry, or as a module attached to other ongoing household-based surveys. The latter approach is much more efficient in many ways particularly if the module is implemented as a supplement to an established programme of a labour force survey (LFS) conducted on a sample basis at the national

level. This undertaking will not only accrue in substantial cost savings, but the operation could be achieved in less time. Operationally, it means that the module would be piggybacked to one of the rounds of the LFS and that the interviews for both the LFS and the module would be carried out at the same time. Since the LFS questionnaire always seeks to enumerate the demographic and socio-economic composition of the household members, there would be no need to repeat this part in the module for the children. Through empirical studies it has been demonstrated that the incidence of child labour and the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the "adult" household members are correlated positively or negatively depending on the different variables considered. Therefore, information on the other household members has to be collected as well.

The attractiveness of the modular option stems from the fact that there would be no need to list all the households selected in the initial stage of sampling, representing the primary stage sampling units (PSUs), or to collect the basic information required for the stratification and selections of the second stage sampling units (SSUs). Also since there would be no repeats of questions on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the children, the entire module would be considerably shorter. (It is to be noted that where ILO/IPEC and national statistics offices collaborated closely in attaching a comprehensive child labour module to on-going household-based surveys, significant savings were realized.) For example, in Turkey, where the module was attached to one of the two rounds of the national LFSS, the cost of the operation amounted to only one-fifth (20 per cent) of the total resources that would have been needed if a stand-alone child labour survey had been conducted. A similar approach was carried out in Cambodia where the cost of the child labour survey component was about one-tenth (10 per cent) of the estimated total resources.

*(ii) Coverage and classification of child labour*

To avoid limiting the coverage of the incidence of various forms of child work, all types of activities (schooling and non-schooling, economic and non-economic activities) of children under 15 years would be represented through sampling and enumerated, and the volume or workload of their activities quantified, so that the assembled statistical information could be cross-tabulated by the different characteristics of the variables included in the questionnaire. Depending on the level and nature of the quantified activities or variables, those which are judged or expected to have negative effects or consequences on the health, education and normal development of the working children could be considered as falling within the boundary of "child labour". The data should then be further dissected into various categories of affected children based on the degree of harm caused by the quantified activities.

Since the comprehensive household survey would investigate all the activities of children under 15 years old, the data collected would make it possible to identify the specific occupations of the working children, their working conditions, accidents/injuries/illnesses suffered — including their frequency and gravity, problems related to workplace environment, particulars of employers using children, the specific industries in which children work, the effect of their work on their normal life including their schooling, and other related matters which would assist in assessing more fully the extent, nature and causes of child labour. Such detailed information would also become instrumental for focused study of a particular category of working children, or occupation, industry, etc. and for formulating and implementing policies and programmes for the immediate elimination of the most harmful of children's activities as well as for the complete eradication of the use of child labour in the long term.

**(b) Surveys of employers (establishments)**

or enterprises)

(i) *Scope*

A survey of establishments or enterprises to study child labour can cover only a small part of all child workers, i.e. only those children who are employed for wages. According to the ILO/IPEC experimental surveys carried out in the four countries, the proportion of employed children among total child workers was found to be around 10 per cent. Thus, a survey of employers or establishments can give statistical information about only a small segment of child workers to supplement the results obtained through the household approach. However, these child workers might form the most vulnerable section of all working children; some of them may be exposed to danger, maltreatment by employers, underpayment and environmentally bad working conditions, etc. Such facts may not, however, be revealed through the survey of establishments as most employers will not divulge such information. (This information can be more readily obtained from the child employees themselves who are covered by the survey of households.) Nevertheless, a survey of establishments employing child labour may be undertaken as a supplementary effort to find out more about the employers who use child labour.

(ii) *Practical difficulties and operational procedures*

The experimental studies revealed many practical difficulties in conducting the survey of establishments. The most important of them was the difficulty in identifying the establishments that employ child labour. Most developing countries do not have an updated or exhaustive national list or directory of employers. The task of preparing such a list and identifying those employing children in the ultimate areal unit is time-consuming and requires considerable resources, both human and financial. Also, due to legal restrictions on the employment of child labour, many establishment owners try to hide the fact that they actually engage children, and even if they admit to it, they may provide only partial information. The alternative is to survey the establishments which employ the children belonging to the sample households.

In spite of the possible problems that may arise a survey of employers should be attempted. The following alternative operational procedures, which can be modified according to national requirements and circumstances, may be considered:

- constructing a list/directory of employers using child workforce based on the responses provided by the children and their parents during a household-based child labour survey (this approach is strongly recommended);
- preparing, through local inquiries, a frame of enterprises employing child labour in the areas known to have a concentration of such units. For each unit, some broad information relating to the type of productive activity and the scale of operation (in terms of employment) may be ascertained;
- selecting a sample of enterprises engaged in different activities in which children are known or suspected to be working (if the total number of enterprises in the frame is small, all of them may be surveyed);
- collecting the required information by interviewing all owners or operators of the enterprises (this amounts to a census which could be prohibited in terms of resources and time required to complete the survey operations).

The main difficulty in applying the above operational procedures will be the preparation of a proper frame. An alternative could be to list all the enterprises along with the listing of households in the selected areal units, and elicit information as to whether or not they employ child labour. All the enterprises/establishments (employing any child labour) in each areal unit in the sample for the household survey can be taken up. Such a scheme might also permit estimates of total child workers employed in

enterprises. But it may call for a large number of ultimate areal units in the sample to obtain an adequate number of sample enterprises for the survey. Therefore, the strategy may be formulated according to the national circumstances of a country.

The three possible strategies are:

- as undertaken in the experimental surveys, a verification of the establishments in which the child workers identified during the household survey are reported to be employed;
- a survey of all the establishments (employing child labour) located in the ultimate areal units in the sample for the household survey;
- a survey of establishments selected purposely from a list (prepared through local inquiries) of enterprises employing child workers.

### (c) Surveys of street children

#### (i) Coverage

Children who may live and work on the streets with no fixed place of usual residence could not be covered through a household-based child labour survey since such children are not represented by the sample of households as it excludes homeless persons. These children are found mainly in the urban core of big cities, working either independently in the streets or for operators of various activities in the informal sector. Most of these children are continuously on the move from one place to another during the daytime; during the night they usually form groups, gather at fixed places and sleep outside buildings, etc. It is also to be noted that certain children's activities can prove to be difficult to quantify through sample surveys. (For example, child prostitution, trafficking and other illegal activities of children are not so easy to investigate through sample surveys given that, for the most part, such activities are hidden. A purposive or convenience survey approach may have to be used to collect qualitative information. It may be possible to contact a few of the children involved in these activities who are willing to be interviewed. However, much information could be gathered through the "key informants" system — contacting and interviewing knowledgeable persons in the community where the activities are known to exist. The investigators would have to be sociologists, psychologists, social workers, etc.).

The questions addressed to the youths in the streets should relate to most of the variables directed at the children aged 15 years mentioned under the household-based survey above. Additionally, the street children should be asked to provide information on their migration status and reasons for being homeless or for coming to the present place, on living conditions (food, sleeping places and facilities, health and safety, etc.), on the background characteristics of their parents/guardians and siblings, on whether or not they are in regular contact with their parents/guardians and/or siblings on their present difficulties or problems, and their prospects or plans for the future.

#### (ii) *Operational difficulties in the collection of data on street children*

The actual fieldwork for collecting data from street children may be operationally difficult in the general framework of a survey. The investigators may have to visit the spots or places where the groups gather, perhaps late at night. There may even be some resistance from the group and in some cases it may even be dangerous to visit such spots for survey purposes. If so, help should be sought from local influential persons, social workers, etc., and sometimes even from police personnel.

The first operational step in the survey of street children is to identify the different places in the city (included in the geographical coverage of the survey) where the groups of street children usually gather to sleep. This has to be done through local



enquiries of social workers, law enforcement officers, etc. After identifying these spots, either a sampling of them can be undertaken if they are numerous, but otherwise they should all be surveyed.

If a city has a large number of such places where street children gather, an alternative procedure could be to survey those which fall in the areal units selected for the household survey in the city. But since such places are not generally uniformly spread throughout the city, this scheme may not cover enough sample spots for the survey unless a special stratification is adopted. Therefore, as suggested earlier, an initial identification of such spots and a sampling of them (if necessary) may be more fruitful, particularly when such a survey cannot aim at statistical estimates for a larger geographical area.

In the selected spots, a complete enumeration of all the children can be attempted if the number of children is small. The children congregating at a particular place may often be homogeneous with respect to their activities and therefore, if there is a large number of children in a given spot, a sample can be selected. To draw the sample, a list of all the children has first to be drawn up. Each child in the sample can then be interviewed to fill out the questionnaire. However, a survey of street children would have a number of limitations:

- the survey may not provide a reliable estimate of total street children by various categories as the sample selected may not be representative;
- children living individually on streets may not be covered since many of them move from place to place continuously;
- it may not be possible to get reliable information on some of the activities (illegal or disreputable) pursued by street children, which they may not want to report to the investigators;
- if there is resistance in some places (or even threats of violence), the investigators may try to avoid collecting data in such places unless security is provided.

To the extent possible, interviewers of street children should be those who are reasonably acquainted with the areas and streets where the children are usually found, who may even know some of the children themselves, and who are well trained in making the children at ease, even by sometimes providing them with soft drinks, etc.

### **3. Status in employment (ICSE-93)**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) is one of the main international statistical standards and classifications for which the International Labour Office (ILO), represented by its Bureau of Statistics, is responsible. The current version, ICSE-93, was approved by the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1993, but with a degree of qualification reflected in the preamble to the resolution concerning the International Classification of Status in Employment as follows:

Recognizing that, on the basis of experience gained in applying the present classification, further thought should be given to the conceptual basis of the ICSE and the relevance of the groups and subgroups proposed hereafter be verified in operational terms ...

In response to this request, the ILO carried out a comprehensive inquiry into national practices with respect to the use of classifications similar to ICSE, in the last population census as well as in labour force and household surveys. The Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, was engaged to assist with data

collection, to analyse the information provided by about 120 countries and territories and to use this information, together with its knowledge of the analytical and descriptive uses made of such classifications, to make recommendations concerning the further work, if any, necessary with respect to ICSE-93. This chapter summarizes the findings in Elias (1998). Detailed results from this inquiry are given in Elias (1997).

### 3.2. The conceptual basis of ICSE-93

The ICSE-93 classifies jobs held by persons at a point in time. The classifying concept applies to the nature of the implicit or explicit contract of employment between the jobholder and other persons or legal organizations. Such explicit or implicit contracts relate to the provision of labour input, in contrast to the supply of goods or services. Contracts are classified in the ICSE-93 according to the types of economic risk shared between the contracting parties, "an element of which is the strength of the attachment between the person and the job and the type of authority over establishments and other workers which job incumbents have or will have" (ILO, 1993, page 65).

Fundamental to the classification of status in employment is the distinction made between paid employment jobs and self-employment jobs. Paid employment jobs are those for which the associated contract of employment remunerates the incumbent in a manner which is not directly dependent upon the profits derived from the sale of the goods and/or services produced. Self-employment jobs are those jobs where the remuneration depends directly upon the profits (or expectation of future profitability) derived from the sales or own consumption of the goods and/or services produced.

The phrase "economic risk" as used in the definition of the ICSE-93 is intended then as a measure of the strength of attachment between the contracting parties in a labour relationship and the extent to which the contract provides the jobholder with a degree of control over their labour market situation. The term "employment relations" is more widely defined. Like economic risk it encompasses the degree of autonomy that a job facilitates, but it extends further to measure the nature of the authority relationship governing the parties to the labour contract.

The preparatory work undertaken for the discussion of ICSE-93 at the 15th ICLS reviewed the background to the development of this classification and described in some detail the complexity of these conceptual issues and their implications for national statistical data collection methods (ILO, 1991a). In Report II on the Meeting of Experts on Labour Statistics, convened in 1992 to consider issues relating to the proposed revision of the ICSE, it was remarked that (ILO, 1991b, page 5):

It is disquieting that we have so little explicit agreement concerning *what* the SE (status in employment) variable is measuring, despite its widespread use in official statistics.

The underlying concepts pervade ICSE-93 at all levels. In its aggregate form, five groups are distinguished: employees and four types of self-employment (employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers). The ICSE-93 resolution states that employees may be further distinguished into those with stable contracts and regular employees (those with stable contracts, within a tax regime and subject to labour legislation). However, the ICSE-93 is not overly prescriptive about the extent to which detailed subgroups are identified. Many recommendations are phrased in the conditional tense, reflecting possible difficulties in the associated requirements for national data collection. A section of the resolution details approximately 20 specific groups of workers which may be differentiated according to the degree of economic risk to which they are exposed and the type of authority relationships they involve. The intention here was to provide examples of such groups, thereby assisting statistical offices in developing appropriate national variants of

ICSE-93 within a coherent framework.

### 3.3. An inquiry into national practices

The desire for more information about practices in the national statistical offices, or rather the national realities underlying those practices, was evident at the 15th ICLS. This section reviews some of the key findings from the ILO inquiry which have a bearing upon these issues.

#### (a) The nature of the inquiry

In April 1997 a short questionnaire was sent to the national statistical office or other responsible authority in 211 countries and territories throughout the world. The questionnaire requested information on current practices regarding the collection and interpretation of information concerning status in employment in the last population census as well as in labour force and household income and expenditure surveys carried out after 1989. Questions were asked concerning:

- the methods used to collect information about the status in employment associated with particular jobs;
- the nature of instructions and guidance available to interviewers and respondents to help them determine the appropriate response to questions about status in employment;
- the statistical treatment of a number of groups of workers which are difficult to classify by status in employment;
- the nature of changes in the national classification of status in employment and the extent to which ICSE-93 is associated with any such changes.

By 1 December 1997 a total of 121 statistical offices (57 per cent) had responded to the inquiry, regional response rates varying from 92 per cent for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe to 33 per cent for African countries.

#### (b) General findings

As expected classifications similar to ICSE-93 are used in almost all the responding countries and territories. However, it is clear that within many national statistical offices there are differences in the classifications used by the various data collection programmes existing in these countries. This is demonstrated using information drawn from the inquiry into the methods used to collect information on status in employment, as well as in the categories specified.

Unlike classifications of occupations and sectors of economic activity, which typically have large and complex coding structures, the smaller number of categories used by most countries in their status in employment classification makes it seem that it lends itself to self-classification — the process whereby respondents to census and survey questions, or the interviewers, choose from among a limited set of pre-defined categories that which best describes their current work status. Classification via selection from pre-defined categories is therefore the predominant method in censuses of population, with this method used in the population censuses of 72 per cent of responding countries. Where a pre-defined set of categories was not used, national statistical offices indicated that jobs were classified by the use of replies to one or more questions about the employment contract or situation (11 countries) or by some combination of the use of predetermined categories and other information about the

employment situation (17 countries). Self-classification methods appear slightly lower in survey data collection methods, presumably because of the presence of an interviewer and the scope that this affords to assist the respondent. Nonetheless, in 60-65 per cent of countries, selection of status in employment is from pre-defined categories in such surveys.

National statistical offices were requested to state the number of categories used in each data collection source. The responses indicated that the set of classifications used usually had wider coverage than status in employment — often expanded by identifying a set of non-employment categories. Procedures often varied between data sources within a country and agency, indicating that often a statistical standard for data collection had not been achieved at the national level.

Relatively few of the offices (about 23) reported that the classification they use has been re-examined or revised since the approval of ICSE-93, which was said to have been adopted as a national classification in five countries and to have served as a model or provided ideas in only six others. Almost all the classifications used recognize in some way the basic distinction between paid-employment and self-employment jobs. The differences between them relate to the type of further distinctions made and the methods used to make those distinctions. Many do not go beyond the groups traditionally defined for ICSE-93, but a significant number make use of other classifications to make the further distinctions.

In cases where status in employment categories is pre-defined, statistical offices were requested to state who chooses among the pre-defined categories to classify the job described by the respondent. Replies indicated that, in general, the interviewer selects the appropriate category. This is an interesting finding, because it is usually the case that pre-defined categories are used when a classification is thought to be fairly evident to the respondent and the pre-defined categories present a mutually exclusive and exhaustive set of categories. In such instances, the respondent chooses from among the categories that which best describes his/her current situation after the alternatives have been read to him/her or been shown on a card. The fact that pre-defined categories are the predominant data collection method and yet interviewer selection of these categories often takes place, suggests that the categories themselves are perhaps not particularly well understood by respondents and that interviewers may have to guide respondents in their selection of a particular category. (However, it may also just reflect that it is the interviewer who writes on the form.) Most statistical offices indicated that both verbal and written advice and guidance was available to respondents and/or interviewers to help them select the appropriate category. Only a very small number of responding offices reported that no instructions or guidance notes were available.

There is a considerable degree of variety between national statistical offices in terms of the specific status in employment categories which they identify separately. Employees are quite frequently subdivided according to whether or not they are in the public or private sector (also distinguished as government and non-government or profit and non-profit employees). This distinction probably reflects the fact that it is quite difficult to distinguish between such employees using ISIC. Some classifications also distinguish the nature of employee contracts further, by differentiating between permanent and temporary employees, casual work, contracts of fixed duration, etc. For own-account workers, some classifications distinguish between those who have incorporated their business (yet have no employees) from those who remain unincorporated. A number of classifications separate farmers from the latter group of workers. The group designated as employers is often distinguished according to the size of the enterprise, measured in terms of the number of employees. Definitions vary markedly in this area, for example small enterprises being identified as those with less than five employees, or with ten, 20 or 25.

### (c) Treatment of particular groups of workers

Some groups of workers have jobs which are difficult to classify, usually because they lie at the boundary between paid employment and self-employment, or between paid and non-paid work (in other words, close to the "production boundary" of the System of National Accounts and thus frequently excluded from consideration). The ILO inquiry investigated five such categories:

- (i) Owner-managers of incorporated enterprises. This group should be regarded as employees from a legal perspective and for taxation purposes and this is how they should be treated according to the rules of the System of National Accounts, yet the jobs classified in this group may share the characteristics of self-employment jobs in terms of their total remuneration and control over resources. In ICSE-93 it is stated that "Countries should ... endeavour to identify this group separately" (ILO, 1993, page 68).
- (ii) Outworkers/homeworkers. This group may be regarded as employees or as self-employed depending on the specific terms of their contract and the nature of their remuneration.
- (iii) Contractors. This group is usually defined with reference to the employment taxation system as workers who are responsible for their own taxation (as self-employed persons) yet who operate under contract as if in paid employment.
- (iv) Franchisees. This group consists of workers whose operating contracts determine how they will work and require that a share of their income or operating fee is remitted to a licence holder (the franchiser). Such workers may be regarded as self-employed although their operational working conditions in many respects are essentially similar to those in paid employment.
- (v) Subsistence workers. This group consists of workers who hold a self-employment job and produce goods/services predominantly consumed by their own household.

National offices were asked to state whether they identified such groups. Approximately 30 per cent of countries/territories did not respond to these questions. Where responses were obtained, these usually indicated that only a minority of countries/territories separately identified the categories in question. The rate of identification is highest for owner-managers of incorporated businesses, but even for this group only 25 per cent of the statistical offices indicated that this group of workers was separately identified. For outworkers/homeworkers, about 20 per cent stated that this group is identified from the information on status in employment generated from each data source. Subsistence workers were identified by 15 per cent of responding countries/territories. Contractors were identified by approximately 10 per cent and franchisees by only 5 per cent.

Those responding to the ILO inquiry were asked to indicate how they would classify owner-managers of incorporated enterprises within the categories of the ICSE-93, regardless of whether or not they are separately identified. By far the most common response indicated that such jobs would be classified as employees, but some offices indicated that it might depend on the particular type of work contract or response given in the survey.

For the category outworkers/homeworkers, the most common response was that such jobs would be classified as employees, and only a minority of offices thought that such workers should be classified as own-account workers.

For the category contractors, the responses did not identify any of the possible categories as the dominant choice, indicating that whether such jobs would be classified as employees, own-account workers or employers depends on national

circumstances or on the precise understanding in the statistical offices of the contractual and work situation of those designated as contractors.

For franchisees, the most common response indicated that such jobs would be classified as employers, and only a minority of offices thought that such workers should be classified as own-account workers or employees.

The majority of respondents to the ILO inquiry indicated that subsistence workers would be classified as own-account workers, but with a significant minority (approximately 10 per cent) indicating that this group might be classified as contributing family workers.

### **3.4. Conclusions and recommendations**

The national data collection programmes from which the above results derive include those where a status in employment classification is most likely to represent a significant descriptive variable without being the main focus for the type of descriptions and analysis to be carried out on the basis of the resulting statistics. However, based on their replies concerning the treatment of some of the problematic status in employment groups it seems that for a significant number of national statistical offices the inclusion of this variable in these important data collection programmes does not reflect a clear and uniform idea of where the dividing lines between the main groups are located. More than one-third of the offices did not reply to these questions. Among the offices that did reply there is enough disagreement to indicate that comparisons between countries of statistics by status in employment groups should be made with great care and that only substantial differences should be considered to be significant. The fact that only a few offices are using classifications which make it possible to separately identify one or more of these groups supports an impression that this classification suffers from benign neglect in most national statistical offices, and that those interested in the corresponding statistics have not had the will, the analytical capacity or the influence to put enough pressure on the offices for them to take a more active interest in the definition of these groups and the corresponding issues in data collection.

One can only speculate on the reason for this state of affairs. It is well known that the "best practices" that the international statistical standards try to reflect have to rely almost exclusively on the experiences of national statistical offices and on the research they can carry out into methodological problems. It is also clear that such work is done mainly in the statistically advanced countries, which are dominated by the rich, industrialized and traditionally market-oriented countries. As pointed out in Korns et al. (1994), in most of these countries, traditionally: (i) there are legally and administratively well-established tax and social security regulations which define the difference between paid employment and self-employment; (ii) the terminology for one or both of these situations is well established in everyday language; (iii) the labour market is dominated by those in paid employment; and (iv) few people find themselves in mixed situations where either their one job has features of both paid employment and self-employment or they have to supplement a paid employment job with one where they are self-employed. Thus there are few incentives for the statistics producers and users to use a more complex typology for status in employment, or for investigating situations on the border between paid and self-employment, even though there have been clear indications that the situation has also become more complex lately in these countries (see OECD, 1992). The situation in developing and transition countries is different in all these respects, as well as in the capacity of their national statistical offices to investigate the various contractual situations and formulate more adequate typologies than the one traditionally used, e.g. by making use of relevant sub-categories among those included in ICSE-93.

It was noted from the responses to the ILO inquiry, together with the accompanying documentation supplied by national statistical offices to support their national practices, that most classifications make a basic distinction between employees and self-employed persons. However, the rules used to make the distinctions vary considerably between countries and even between surveys within the same country. This appears to occur for a number of reasons. First, self-definition as employee or self-employed is the principal method whereby respondents are categorized into these two main groups. Variations arise in this process according to the number of categories a respondent has to choose between, the nature and extent of the help and guidance available to the respondent in making this choice and the legal situation of the respondent for tax purposes. Key problems which appear to give rise to significant differences between groups countries in measuring and recording these two broad employment status groups relate to the following.

(a) Employers in unincorporated versus incorporated businesses

The ICSE-93 recognized that employers in incorporated businesses may share many of the characteristics of employers in unincorporated businesses. Separate identification of these groups is necessary for coordination with data on incomes presented in the national accounts whereas for other socio-economic analyses this may not be appropriate. The recommendation in ICSE-93 that countries should endeavour to identify employers in incorporated businesses separately is largely ignored. Statistical procedures in many countries allow employers to identify themselves by self-definition, regardless of whether they have engaged workers on a regular basis or only ad hoc.

(b) Contract labour

New and varying forms of work organization have led to the growth in many countries of a variety of contractual arrangements which move the traditional employer-employee labour contract towards a contract for services. The scale of these trends and the forces driving them have been documented for certain sectors in nine countries (ILO, 1997b). In terms of the ICSE-93 distinctions, this would tend to reclassify workers from employee to self-employed status. However, judging from the wide variation observed between national statistical offices in their treatment of groups on the boundary between employee status and self-employment, it is clear this development will probably not be taken up and that meaningful international comparisons of official labour statistics cannot be readily achieved. Particularly problematic in this respect is the phenomenon of labour-only subcontracting prevalent in home work and the use of gang labour in agricultural production.

(c) Workers at the production boundary

The System of National Accounts defines the production boundary to exclude personal and domestic services produced for own consumption or by own household. However, for certain activities, at the time production takes place the final destination of domestically produced goods may not be known or may not be realizable. In particular, the production of agricultural products and their storage, the domestic processing of agricultural products and other kinds of household production which may be marketable are included within the production boundary. Family workers working on a subsistence basis are therefore included as self-employed workers in the ICSE-93. This group may be quite significant in developing countries, yet there is evidence that some countries do not collect such information. Self-classification methods and the nature of the

categories used indicate that much of this activity remains hidden from a statistical perspective.

In addressing these problems, the ICLS must reflect upon the fact that five years have elapsed since the ICSE-93 was recommended, yet only a handful of countries appear to have acted upon these recommendations by introducing statistical definitions and data collection methodologies which provide internationally comparable labour statistics. For most countries the classification by status in employment will reflect in varying degrees the confusion that exists between incorporated versus unincorporated businesses, between contract labour as employee versus self-employed status, and concerning the classification of those workers who are at the production boundary for national accounting purposes. The slow penetration of a new international standard classification is not unusual — some countries still use classifications of occupations linked to *ISCO-68* rather than *ISCO-88* for example — but there is little evidence that a significant number of countries have either examined or evaluated their status in employment classification. There are probably a number of reasons for this. First, some national statistical offices may feel that the problems are relatively insignificant, that status in employment categories are well established and understood by respondents. Second, it may be the case that the problems are recognized but deemed intractable. The feeling may be that by delving into the complexity of contractual status, data collection methodologies would become cumbersome to operate and may adversely affect response rates. Third, it may simply reflect a lack of knowledge about the scale and extent of recent changes on the labour market.

To conclude, it is apparent that there is a significant gap between the aims of the ICSE-93 — to provide an international standard for the definition and measurement of employment status — and the variety of practice in this area both within and between countries. The conceptual basis of the ICSE-93 withstands close inspection, yet only a few countries have supplied evidence to indicate that they were aware of the statistical issues underlying their classification of status in employment. The development of the ICSE-93 has progressed ideas in this area and probably represents the best available model from which to work, yet in the national statistical offices little concerted effort has been undertaken, is under way or is planned to address practical classification issues in this area.

It is recommended, therefore, that the ILO should seek to explore in depth the nature and strength of the factors that appear to constrain national statistical offices from accepting ICSE-93 and developing national variants of it. The aim would be to examine further, using a wide variety of different sources, the nature of the growth in different contractual forms of employment, to explore in detail the way information on such trends may or may not be collected via census and survey data collection methodologies and to examine the obstacles (both in terms of resources, perceived disadvantages, statistical continuity or general lack of interest) which contribute to lack of definition and/or data collection. This could take the form of a structured survey, focusing on groups of respondents who have been identified in, for example, a labour force survey and for whom status in employment has already been determined, and seeking to identify their contractual situation, the degree of economic risk to which they are exposed and the nature of the power and authority relations in their work situation.



## 4. Extended absences from work: Treatment in employment and unemployment statistics

### 4.1. Introduction

The international recommendations on employment and unemployment statistics currently in force are specified in resolution I concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, adopted by the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in October 1982. They are reproduced in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1983-3 (pages XI-XV) and further details on them are provided in Hussmanns et al. (1990).

Since their adoption, the current international recommendations on employment and unemployment statistics have been followed by most countries all over the world, industrialized as well as developing ones. Since the beginning of the 1990s, this has also been the case for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union which, during the process of transition to a market economy, have increasingly used these recommendations in their efforts to develop a system of statistics on employment and unemployment which can be compared internationally.

At the ECE/ILO/OECD Work Session on Labour Statistics and Issues of Concern for Transition Countries (Paris, 17-18 December 1992), the ILO Bureau of Statistics agreed to examine certain issues which were of common concern to the transition countries and for which no explicit provision could be found in the 1982 recommendations, in particular regarding the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of leave such as: (a) maternity and parental leave; (b) leave initiated by the employer or administration or by the employee; and (c) educational or training leave. From a statistical point of view, persons on various types of extended leave have at least one feature in common: they are on the borderline between two or all three of the labour force categories "employed", "unemployed" or "not economically active".

In order to examine these issues, the ILO convened jointly with the Czech Statistical Office a meeting which was held in Prague from 15 to 17 November 1995. The meeting was attended by 29 specialists from the following 18 transition countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. Experts from the United Kingdom, the OECD and the ILO Bureau of Statistics also participated in the meeting. The ILO Bureau of Statistics prepared three papers on the statistical treatment of persons on various types of extended leave which were discussed at the meeting and provided the basis for the recommendations adopted. The recommendations adopted by the Prague meeting were published in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1996-1 (pages XXV-XXVII); they are presented in section 4 of this chapter. Participants at the meeting requested that the recommendations should be submitted for consideration by the 16th ICLS.

The issues addressed during the Prague meeting seem to be relevant not only to the transition countries but also to a number of other countries. For example, in a number of Western European countries parents have the possibility of taking long-term parental leave. There are also countries other than the transition countries where workers are given the opportunity to take extended educational or training leave in order to upgrade their skills, or where labour legislation permits employers to lay off workers temporarily or to arrange short-time work with zero hours of work during periods of adverse economic conditions. The latter situations are to some extent similar to the

phenomenon of unpaid leave initiated by employers or administrations in the transition countries. Thus, regarding the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of leave, a number of countries are facing problems similar to those of the transition countries. Moreover, the comparability of the labour force statistics of different countries is likely to be affected unless international guidelines are formulated to harmonize the statistical treatment of persons in such situations. Another problem is that the number of employed persons may be overestimated as compared with the number of available jobs, if employers hire substitutes to replace persons on long-term leave, and the persons on leave and their substitutes are both classified as employed. For these reasons, the recommendations adopted by the Prague meeting were submitted for discussion to the OECD Working Party on Employment and Unemployment Statistics (Paris, 17-18 October 1996). During that discussion, most members of the Working Party indicated their agreement with the gist of the recommendations, although some reservations were expressed concerning specific details.

So far, the recommendations adopted by the Prague meeting represent guidelines which were formulated by representatives of the transition countries for use in their own countries. The delegates of this Conference are invited to comment on these recommendations and on their appropriateness and feasibility for use in their respective countries. They are also invited to express their views on the usefulness of adopting international recommendations on these issues, and to propose any changes to the proposed recommendations that might be necessary to this end. Furthermore, delegates may wish to identify those types of extended leave not covered by the proposed recommendations for which the development of international guidelines would be useful, and to make proposals for the formulation of such guidelines.

In a large number of countries a substantial proportion of the labour force is engaged as seasonal workers in activities relating to agriculture, construction, tourism, sales, etc. in both the formal and informal sectors. The international recommendations adopted by the 13th ICLS make no specific reference to seasonal workers. The statistical treatment of seasonal workers at work or not at work does not raise any major difficulty, if the measurement is made during the busy season. However, there is some ambiguity regarding the classification into labour force categories of seasonal workers, if the measurement is made during the off-season when many of the persons concerned are not at work and thus on the borderline between employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. For this reason, the Bureau has developed a set of draft recommendations for the classification into labour force categories of seasonal workers not at work during the off-season, which are presented in section 5 of this chapter. It should be noted that the number of seasonal workers is especially high in many developing countries. The delegates of the Conference are invited to discuss the draft recommendations, and to propose any modifications deemed necessary for their adoption by the Conference.

Any recommendations adopted by the Conference on the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of leave or of seasonal workers not at work during the off-season would become a type of supplement to the 13th ICLS resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, in order to provide guidelines for the application of the resolution to the specific issues addressed in this chapter. In 1987, the 14th ICLS already adopted a supplement of this kind in respect of the statistical treatment of participants in job-training schemes.

## **4.2. Basic considerations**

According to the international recommendations adopted by the 13th ICLS, employed persons include persons with a job but not at work, defined as "persons who, having already worked in their present job, were temporarily not at work during the reference period and had a formal attachment to their job". The formal job attachment should be determined according to one or more of the following criteria:

- (i) the continued receipt of wage or salary during the absence from work;
- (ii) an assurance of return to work following the end of the absence from work, or an agreement as to the date of return;
- (iii) the elapsed duration of absence from the job (which, wherever relevant, may be the duration for which workers can receive compensation benefits without obligations to accept other jobs).

The concept of formal job attachment thus defined is rather vague, not only with respect to the combination of the criteria, but also with respect to the exact content of each criterion.

Recognizing the need for more precision, the 14th ICLS, in its Report of the Working Group on Implications of Employment Promotion Schemes on the Measurement of Employment and Unemployment, specified that "assurance of return to work" should be interpreted as assurance to return to work with the same employer (i.e. not necessarily to the same job), and that it was to be considered the most essential criterion of formal job attachment. As absence from work generally refers to a time interval between two periods of employment with the same employer, it is imperative that there is an assurance of a return to work (or at least a reasonable expectation of a return to work) for the absence from work to be considered as part of employment. If a person had no assurance of a return to work and, in fact, would not be given employment upon his/her return, the period during which the person was not at work would not actually be an absence, but the start of a period of unemployment or economic inactivity.

The 14th ICLS also specified that the criterion of "continued receipt of wage or salary" should be considered as satisfied if the employer paid directly all or a significant part of the wage or salary. The use of the criterion of "elapsed duration of absence" was considered especially useful in particular situations such as long-term absences from work. An absence from work can only be considered temporary if its duration is fairly short.

The above-mentioned provisions regarding persons with a job but not at work, which are part of the current international definition of employment, were intended to refer to temporary absences from work of fairly short duration rather than extended types of leave. The most striking example of the latter is parental leave, the duration of which may extend to several years in a number of transition and other countries. Thus, the question arises of how persons on such extended types of leave should be classified into labour force categories.

As far as the classification as employment is concerned, the statistical treatment of each type of extended leave covered by the recommendations adopted by the Prague meeting is based on a specific combination of the above-mentioned criteria of formal job attachment, which were further specified by the meeting. The application of these criteria to the various types of extended leave covered by the recommendations was based on the following two principles: (i) assurance of a return to work was considered the most important criterion; and (ii) depending upon the type of leave, this criterion was supplemented by either one or both of the others. For the classification as unemployment, the criteria of seeking work, reason for not seeking work, and availability for work were used, as specified by the 13th ICLS.

It is perhaps the most important feature of these recommendations that persons on

extended leave who usually still have employment contracts, are not automatically classified as employed. This is because the recommendations were developed to measure the current supply of labour and its utilization in terms of employment and unemployment for the purpose of monitoring the actual labour market situation, rather than to measure the labour market attachment of the persons concerned in terms of their legal status. The recommendations thus adhere to the spirit of resolution I adopted by the 13th ICLS, which defines the economically active population as comprising all persons who furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services (as defined by the United Nations System of National Accounts) during a specified time-reference period, and which defines unemployment in terms of the persons' active job search and current availability for work during the reference period rather than their official registration as jobseekers or recipients of unemployment benefits. Also, it should be repeated in this connection that persons on leave should be considered absent from work and, hence, employed only if they return to work with the same employer at the end of the leave. However, it is likely that a significant proportion of the persons on parental leave, educational leave, unpaid leave initiated by the employer or other types of extended leave will actually not be willing or not be able to return to work with the same employer. It would be possible to obtain quantitative estimates of the size of that proportion in various countries if appropriate longitudinal data were available for analysis.

Another important related feature of the recommendations is that persons on extended types of leave (including persons on unpaid leave initiated by the employer or persons laid off) are classified into more than one labour force category, depending upon their job attachment, job-search activities and current availability for work. According to the national practices currently prevailing in most countries, such persons, depending on the type of the leave, tend to be all classified as either employed, unemployed or not economically active; the manner in which persons on specific types of leave are classified in this way varies among countries. For example, persons temporarily laid off are classified as unemployed in the United States, Canada and Australia, while they tend to be classified as employed in the European Union labour force surveys. It is hoped that the proposed recommendations will help to enhance the international comparability of labour force statistics.

Two points need to be mentioned in respect of the proposed classification into labour force categories of seasonal workers not at work during the off-season:

- (i) The international definition of employment adopted by the 13th ICLS mentions the criterion of "formal job attachment" only with respect to temporary absence from paid employment; it does not mention any corresponding criteria for temporary absence from self-employment. For this reason, in the draft recommendations presented in section 5 below, the criteria of "continued existence of the enterprise" and "duration of absence from work" were introduced in respect of self-employment activities.
- (ii) The wording of the 13th ICLS resolution implies that contributing family workers (then called "unpaid family workers") not at work should not be included among the employed as they cannot be "with an enterprise but not at work". This is because such workers, though participating in the activities of an enterprise operated by a related person (living in the same household), do not have an enterprise of their own and cannot be regarded as a partner sharing the responsibility of operating the enterprise. Thus, the draft recommendations presented in section 5 below provide only two possibilities (unemployed, not economically active) for the classification into labour force categories of contributing family workers not at work during the off-season.

Regarding the feasibility of data collection, it should be noted that the

recommendations presented below can be implemented quite easily in labour force surveys (and, in fact, have already been implemented in the labour force surveys of some countries) as they basically only require some amendments to be made to the answer categories of already existing survey questions, some changes to be made to the skip patterns and very few additional minor questions. Sometimes, it may even suffice to include relevant instructions in the interviewer manual and in interviewer training. With respect to other data sources such as establishment surveys or administrative records, it is however likely that the use of these recommendations will be more difficult.

### 4.3. Definitions

In order to develop a common ground for the discussions, the various types of absence from work dealt with in sections 4 and 5 below may be tentatively defined as follows:

*Maternity leave* is the period of time off from work before and/or after childbirth, usually determined as a minimum period considered necessary for the rest and recuperation of the mother. In most countries, the absence from work during all or part of the period of maternity leave is compulsory.

*Parental leave* is a period of leave available to mothers and/or fathers in order to take care of their child, usually on an unpaid basis, which is additional to the regular maternity leave and can be taken either consecutively after the maternity leave or at any other time, possibly split into different periods, until the child reaches a certain age.

*Unpaid leave initiated by the employee* refers to leave requested by an employee for personal or family reasons (other than educational/training leave or maternity/parental leave). Such leave may be an extension of a statutory leave such as annual leave, sick leave or other types of paid leave.

*Leave initiated by the employer or administration* (other than educational/training leave) refers to a situation where the employer/administration has decided to suspend, for a specified or indefinite period, an employee from work for reasons of labour redundancy, economic difficulties, shortage of clients, orders or materials, or due to other factors over which the employee has no control. The leave may be authorized formally by law, or be initiated informally by the employer/administration if there is no legal basis. Leave initiated by the employer or administration can be paid or unpaid.

*Educational or training leave* may be defined as leave taken by an employed person, either on his/her own initiative or that of the employer, to improve the educational level or vocational qualification of the person. Educational or training leave can be paid or unpaid.

*Seasonal workers* are persons employed only during specific periods of the year in activities characterized by seasonal variations (e.g. agriculture, construction, tourism, holiday sales). Seasonal workers may be in any of the substantive groups of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93), i.e. employees, employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers.

### 4.4. Recommendations of the Prague meeting

Persons on maternity and parental leave

*Maternity leave*

1(1) Women on maternity leave who have an assurance of a return to work following the end of the leave, and who, during the reference period, were in receipt of all or part of their wage or salary from the employer or an equivalent payment from other sources received by virtue of being an employee, should be considered as in employment for the compulsory period of the leave stipulated by national legislation to ensure that mothers before and after childbirth have sufficient rest, or for a period to be specified according to national circumstances (e.g. one to six months).

(2) In countries where women on maternity leave are not classified as employed according to subparagraph 1(1), they should be classified as unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons, if they were available for work during the reference period and actively seeking work during a recent period. Women on maternity leave who do not satisfy the criteria of the definition of unemployment should be classified as not economically active.

#### *Parental leave*

2(1) Women or men on parental leave should be considered as having a formal job attachment and, therefore, be classified as employed, if the duration of the leave is fairly short (e.g. one to three months) and immediately preceded by a period of employment, and if the person has an assurance of a return to work following the end of the leave. A period of maternity leave according to subparagraph 1(1) above is to be considered as a period of employment.

(2) Similar to the case of maternity leave, persons on parental leave who are not classified as employed, and who were available for work during the reference period and actively seeking work during a recent period, should be classified as unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons. Persons on parental leave who do not satisfy the criteria of the definition of unemployment should be classified as not economically active.

#### *Persons on unpaid leave initiated by the employee*

3. Employees on unpaid leave initiated by themselves should be classified as employed, if they have an assurance of a return to work with the same employer, and if the elapsed duration of the leave does not exceed a short time-limit (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances. Otherwise, they should be classified as unemployed or not economically active, depending upon their current availability for work and recent job search activity.

#### *Persons on leave initiated by the employer or administration*

##### *Paid leave initiated by the employer or administration*

4. Persons on paid leave initiated by the employer or administration should be classified as employed, if they have an assurance of a return to work with the same employer, and if the employer or administration pays all or a significant part of the wage or salary of the person on leave. Otherwise, such persons should be classified as unemployed or not economically active, depending upon their current availability for work and recent job search activity.

##### *Unpaid leave initiated by the employer or administration*

5(1) Persons on unpaid leave initiated by the employer or administration (including

leave paid out of the government budget or social security funds) should be classified into labour force categories as follows:

- (a) Persons having an agreed date for return to work should be considered employed if the elapsed duration of their leave falls within a short time-limit (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances. Such persons may be classified as a separate category among employed persons; they should be included among the underemployed if they satisfy the criteria of the definition of underemployment.
- (b) Persons who have an agreed date for return to work but whose elapsed duration of leave is longer than the specified short time-limit, as well as persons who have no agreed date for return to work but who are expecting to return to their work in the near future, should be considered unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons, if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work. Such persons should also be considered unemployed if they are currently available for work but have not recently sought work for either of the following two reasons: (i) they expect to be recalled to work with their former employer; and (ii) they have already found a new job. They should be considered not economically active if they have not recently sought work for other reasons or if they are not currently available for work.
- (c) Persons who neither have an agreed date for return to work nor expect to be recalled to their work in the near future should be considered unemployed like other categories of non-employed persons if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work. They should be considered not economically active if they are not currently available for work or if they have not recently sought work.

(2) The notion of expectation of returning to work "in the near future" should be specified in the light of the national circumstances and economic situation of each country, such as one to three months.

#### Persons on educational or training leave

6(1) Persons temporarily not at work on paid educational or training leave should be classified as employed provided they have an assurance of a return to work, and if the employer or administration pays all or a significant part of the wage or salary of the person on leave.

(2) Persons temporarily not at work on unpaid educational or training leave of a short duration (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances should be classified as employed provided they have an assurance of a return to work.

(3) Other persons not at work on educational or training leave should be classified as unemployed or not economically active depending upon their current availability for work and recent job search activity.

### **4.5. Seasonal workers not at work during the off-season: Proposed classification into labour force categories**

#### Employees

7(1) Seasonal employees not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season

should be classified as employed if:

- they have an assurance of a return to work with the same employer at the beginning of the next season; and
- the employer continues to pay all or a significant part of their wage or salary during the off-season, or their absence from work is of a short duration (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances.

(2) Seasonal employees not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season, who are not classified as employed according to subparagraph 7(1), should be considered as unemployed if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work.

(3) Seasonal employees not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season, who are not classified as employed or unemployed according to subparagraphs 7(1) and (2), should be considered as unemployed if they are currently available for work, but have not recently sought work because they: (i) have already made firm arrangements to take up employment at the beginning of the next season; or (ii) are awaiting the start of the next season because currently there is no work opportunity for them. Appropriate tests should be developed in respect of such persons in order to probe their current availability for work; such tests may be based on their present desire for work, their willingness to move away from home if work in another area were offered, the minimum wage acceptable, their readiness to engage in suitable self-employment activities, etc.

(4) Seasonal employees not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season, who are not classified as employed or unemployed according to subparagraphs 7(1)-(3), should be considered as being not economically active.

#### Employers, own-account workers and members of producers' cooperatives

8(1) Seasonal employers, own-account workers and members of producers' cooperatives not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season should be classified as employed if their enterprise continues to exist during the off-season, and their absence from work is of a short duration (e.g. one to three months) to be specified according to national circumstances.

(2) The continued existence of the enterprise should be determined on the basis of criteria such as: the continued production of goods or services by the enterprise; the continued employment of hired labour; the continued availability of land, building, machinery, equipment, tools, raw materials, supplies, or stocks of finished products; the continued registration of the enterprise; etc.

(3) Seasonal employers, own-account workers and members of producers' cooperatives not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season, who are not classified as employed according to subparagraph 8(1), should be considered as unemployed if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work.

(4) Seasonal employers, own-account workers and members of producers' cooperatives not engaged in any kind work of during the off-season, who are not classified as employed or unemployed according to subparagraphs 8(1) and (3), should be considered as unemployed if they are currently available for work, but have not recently sought work because they: (i) have already made firm arrangements to take up employment at the beginning of the next season; or (ii) are awaiting the start of the next season because currently there is no work opportunity for them. Appropriate tests should be developed in respect of such persons in order to probe their current availability for work; such tests may be based on their present desire for work, their willingness to move away from home if work in another area were offered, the minimum wage acceptable, their readiness to engage in suitable paid or self-employment



activities, etc.

(5) Seasonal employers, own-account workers and members of producers' cooperatives not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season, who are not classified as employed or unemployed according to subparagraphs 8(1), (3) and (4), should be considered as being not economically active.

#### Contributing family workers

9(1) Seasonal contributing family workers not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season should be considered as unemployed if they are currently available for work and have recently sought work.

(2) Seasonal contributing family workers not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season should also be considered as unemployed if they are currently available for work, but have not recently sought work because they: (i) have already made firm arrangements to take up employment at the beginning of the next season; or (ii) are awaiting the start of the next season because currently there is no work opportunity for them. Appropriate tests should be developed in respect of such persons in order to probe their current availability for work; such tests may be based on their present desire for work, their willingness to move away from home if work in another area were offered, the minimum wage acceptable, their readiness to engage in suitable paid or self-employment activities, etc.

(3) Seasonal contributing family workers not engaged in any kind of work during the off-season, who are not classified as unemployed according to subparagraphs 9(1) and (2), should be considered as being not economically active.

## 5. Dissemination practices for labour statistics

### 5.1. Introduction

While virtually all international recommendations and manuals have been aimed at data collection and data processing procedures, until recently there has been little contribution at the international level to what could be considered as a good set of practices with respect to the dissemination of statistical information to the public. One exception is the work carried out by Thomas J. Plewes on national practices with respect to release of labour statistics into the public domain, published in the *ILO Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1993-1.

Another major development in this area has been the introduction of the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), which became operational in April 1996. The SDDS establishes dissemination standards for the main economic and financial statistics issued by subscribing countries.

For understandable reasons, the SDDS has both the most demanding and developed standards for data on the fiscal, financial and external sectors. To strengthen its labour market component, the ILO decided to complement the above standard with guidelines on dissemination practices for labour statistics. With this in mind, at the end of the 1996-97 biennium the ILO Bureau of Statistics undertook a study of country dissemination practices for employment and unemployment statistics and drafted a checklist of guidelines on good practices to be submitted to this Conference for discussion and possible approval as a supplement to the existing ILO international recommendations.

The draft guidelines are presented below in section B. Further background and discussion of the guidelines is presented in the report entitled *Dissemination practices for labour statistics* written by Peter J. Stibbard, ILO consultant, available as a room document in English. The report also contains information collected through a questionnaire sent out to 174 countries and territories on current dissemination practices in the field of labour statistics.

### 5.2. Draft guidelines

In October 1982, the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted a resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment. This resolution aims at providing technical guidelines to all countries, particularly those with less developed statistics, and at enhancing international comparability of the statistics on these topics. It sets forth the objectives and scope of the statistics, the basic concepts and definitions, key analyses and the principal classifications, data requirements on special topics of concern, and broad guidelines on the evaluation and dissemination of the results.

Over the years, data on the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment have been expanded and improved significantly in many countries. They have taken on economic and political functions that sometimes extend beyond their most immediate purpose, which is to portray the workforce situation of the nation. At present, employment and unemployment data are seen as much as indicators of social health as they are of economic or labour performance. The data influence voters, stock markets, and movements of capital and investments. In

many cases they also influence the geographical allocation of massive amounts of government funding.

Because of the importance of these statistics in decision-making and individual welfare, the procedures for their generation and release are closely examined by specialists and non-specialists alike. It is, therefore, in the interest of governments to establish sound measures for the release of labour statistics into the public domain.

The set of dissemination practices presented below is intended to provide guidelines to member countries on the dissemination to the public of comprehensive, timely, accessible and reliable employment and unemployment statistics.

The proposed guidelines have been developed within the framework of the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard for economic and financial statistics and are congruent with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in New York.

### Access

1. Ready access should be provided to data and metadata and they should be actively marketed and publicized.
2. A variety of statistical products should be derived from each data set, using appropriate dissemination media in each case.
3. The professionalism of labour statisticians should encompass the skills and techniques needed to design tables and charts to communicate information effectively to non-statisticians; it should also encompass presentational and media skills.
4. The main labour aggregates should be first released into the public domain free of charge; an explanation of the rationale of charging policies should be made publicly available.
5. The statistician responsible for labour data should ensure his or her name and/or telephone number is published with all statistical outputs; other forms of direct contact with users such as user groups and help lines should be developed by the statistical agency.
6. Statistical agencies should regard the provision of data and metadata to international organizations as equivalent in importance to the supply of data to home customers; international organizations should adopt dissemination guidelines themselves.
7. The terms and conditions under which statistics are produced and released, including labour statistics, should be a matter of public record.
8. Those agencies that have technical responsibility and prepare analytical commentary on the data should be responsible for releasing data.
9. There should be prior announcement of the date and time of release of labour statistics. The greater the advance notice the better, even if dates are issued initially on a provisional basis. When release deadlines are not met, the reason should be made publicly available.
10. Data should be released the same day and at precisely the same time to all parties. If special privileges are given to journalists, this should be under "lock-up" conditions.
11. If demands for prior access to the data within governments cannot be resisted, the number of persons with advance access should be kept to an absolute minimum; the period of notice they are given should be kept as short as possible; their names and/or positions and the period of notice should be made public.
12. Ministerial commentaries and statements made at the time the statistics are

released must be clearly distinguished from those of the statisticians.

#### Data

13. Where there are significant shortfalls in the coverage of national employment and unemployment totals, users should be made aware of this and reminded every time the data are released. Providing sufficiently reliable subtotals can be produced for the purpose to be served, their availability should be well publicized.
14. Similarly, users should be made well aware of the reference period of the data.
15. If countries have the resources and there is evidence of user demand, the main aggregates should be released at least on a quarterly basis. Publication of information necessary for detailed structural analysis of the labour market should occur at least once a year.
16. Labour statistics should be released as soon as possible after the data have been assembled and analysed. When the source is a household or establishment survey conducted monthly or quarterly, data for the main aggregates should normally be available within a quarter of the end of the reference period to which they refer; annual survey data should be released within a half year of the reference period.

#### Quality

17. Regularly updated documentation on the definitions, methodology and sources used in preparing the labour statistics should be made publicly available, including the degree of alignment with international recommendations.
18. Where there are two or more sources of labour data, reconciliation or comparisons between them should be published regularly. Statistical framework and accounting schemes that support statistical cross-checks should also be developed.
19. Users should be given adequate advance warning of revisions and their implementation should be guided by a code of practice.
20. The statistical agency should make estimates for missing periods whenever collection or collation of data is interrupted. Similarly, the effects of discontinuities should be estimated.

## 6. Future work of the Bureau of Statistics

Under various headings in sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 proposals for future work have been made regarding in particular, informal sector statistics, labour accounting systems, household income and expenditure statistics, productivity measurement, use of administrative records, and the training programme on labour statistics. In addition, major proposals are made below regarding the development of working time statistics, the integration of the various elements of guidelines on employment, unemployment and underemployment statistics into a single set of international standards, the development of global and regional estimates of employment and unemployment, a review of national practices on occupational employment and wages statistics and the development of new international standards in this area, the updating and revision of the ILO manual on consumer price indices, and the development of standard typologies for statistics on labour market dynamics.

### 6.1. Working time

Working time is one of the key aspects of working conditions and is generally at the centre of labour-management negotiations. The way people spend their time and the circumstances leading to observed patterns are of increasing interest in the fields of economic and social analysis. The Preamble to the ILO Constitution urges the regulation of daily and weekly working time as a first step to improving workers' conditions and the first ILO Convention adopted by the International Labour Conference refers to working time. Subsequently, over 30 Conventions have dealt with such working time issues as the regulation and reduction of maximum daily and weekly working time, the regulation of night work, weekly rest, annual leave and maternity leave, and the measurement of working time.

The hours people spend working or not working, and the period of the day when the activities are carried out, affect and are affected by a number of factors: the type and amount of goods and services produced, the time that is devoted to family and personal activities, legislation and types of issues for negotiation between trade unions and employers' groups, and level of productivity, income from employment and labour costs, etc. These factors differ considerably in nature and call for different concepts of working time. For example, to ascertain productivity of work a measure of working time work needs to relate to time spent producing the goods and services being accounted for and also needs to relate to the same period and have the same worker coverage as the corresponding production statistics. Measures required to monitor the application of working time legislation need to relate to time spent on activities considered as "work" in the legal documents, to represent those workers covered by them and to refer to the period mentioned by them. A measure of working time to be studied as part of the overall allocation of time requires a fine resolution: data are needed in minutes. But measures of working time to calculate earnings per hour may allow a broader resolution: for example, in hours. It follows that the topic for which working time data are needed will determine the content, the period to which it refers, the worker coverage and the resolution required. In all cases, the need to consider time worked in connection with time not worked is essential to formulate and evaluate social and economic policies.

The need for different working time measures tends to be overlooked. As a result,

working time statistics are often limited to one or two measures which are expected to answer the needs of many data applications. Current statistical standards on working time are embodied in the resolution concerning statistics of hours of work adopted by the Tenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, in 1962, which defines only two measures, "normal hours of work" and "hours actually worked". Both relate to workers in paid employment, a serious limitation in countries where the bulk of the working population is in self-employment. Accordingly, the resolution concerning self-employment promotion adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1990, calls on the ILO to extend the coverage of labour statistics to all workers.

Additionally, current international standards on the measurement of working time are based on reference periods of one week and time units of one hour, and cannot be easily implemented for other reference periods or time units, which may also be required. In many countries, to an increasing extent, workers either choose or are required by their employers to work less or more than normal hours of full-time work, to work only part of the year, only part of the week, at night, on weekends, to enter or exit at different times and/or to have variable daily or weekly schedules as part of "annualized" working schemes, which fix working time over a period of one year, allowing weekly schedules to vary.

Finally, there are considerable gaps between what needs to be measured, what can be measured and what is actually being measured. Little can be done to reduce the first type of gap, which mainly results from the difficulty of identifying periods spent on working activities and of distinguishing them from periods spent on other activities. But the second type of gap can and should be reduced. It arises mainly from the measurement method used, which may be based on information from registers, from workers themselves, from members of their households or from their employers. Each method is subject to different types of constraints and response errors, which affect the resulting data. Time use surveys stand out as one of the most comprehensive of these sources. Such surveys are based on the inventory of persons' activities and classify activities as "work" *ex-post*, independently of respondents' and interviewers' assessments of what constitutes "work". Time use surveys can therefore be used to identify workers who would otherwise be omitted from the conventional count of employment; they form a suitable instrument to measure the time worked of workers who perform highly irregular or what is known as atypical types of jobs, for whom the distinction between periods of work and other periods is unclear and frequently interchanged; and they are the best source for studying the incidence, patterns and interrelation of the various working activities in the different types of jobs.

The Conference may wish to discuss whether the ILO should promote the production and use of enhanced working time statistics, comprising a variety of working time measures for different data applications, and the study of the effects that various measurement methods, including time use surveys, have on the resulting figures. In particular, it may wish to discuss whether the ILO should focus on working time arrangements, including annual hours of work (also known as volume of employment), and the working time measures needed for the calculation of labour productivity.

## **6.2. Employment and unemployment**

Two areas of work are proposed on this topic: (a) integration of international standards; and (b) development of global and regional estimates.

### **(a) Integration of existing international standards**

The existing international standards on employment and unemployment statistics were adopted in 1982 by the 13th ICLS in its resolution concerning statistics of the

economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment. These standards, and their earlier version adopted in 1954 by the 8th ICLS, have been widely used as reference points for the development of corresponding national statistics as well as for making international comparisons. Certain national statistical offices such as INSEE in France and ONS in the United Kingdom explicitly refer to them in the title of every release of their official unemployment data. Many others cite them in their methodological notes as the definitional basis of the national employment and unemployment data derived from labour force surveys.

These standards have served the statistical community and the public for the last 50 years or so. Their underlying conceptual basis is to be maintained and enlarged upon in light of new developments in national labour market situations. In 1987, at the 14th ICLS, conclusions were reached on the principles to be followed in classifying participants in a wide variety of job-training and employment promotion schemes put in place by many governments. At the present Conference, it is envisaged to clarify the statistical treatment of persons on extended types of absences common in certain countries. Also, principles are expected to be established on dissemination practices for employment and unemployment data. The measurement of underemployment is also undergoing revision and amplification.

For the next five years, the proposal is to undertake work on new elements of the international standards, namely, the job-search criterion in the definition of unemployment, the operational boundary of production of economic goods and services for own and household consumption in the definition of employment, the measurement of usual activity within the current activity framework, and supplementary indicators of the unemployment rate. The results obtained together with work carried out by the 14th and 16th ICLS, could be integrated into an expanded set of international standards on statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment for submission to the 17th ICLS, possibly to be held in 2003.

#### (b) Development of global and regional estimates

Almost every year on different occasions, the Bureau of Statistics is asked to provide at short notice current estimates of employment and unemployment in the world and in main geographical regions. These estimates are generally constructed by extrapolating available data using various weighting schemes. The results are widely quoted, and subsequently used for updating and desegregation. Given the continued and frequent interest in such data, it is proposed to develop a sounder methodological basis for making the estimates, and to use the project for integrating certain related statistical activities of the ILO which are currently carried out on an independent basis. These activities are: estimates and projections of the economically active population, 1950-2010 (4th edition), the ILO-comparable annual estimates of employment and unemployment (28 selected countries), and the Key Indicators of the Labour Market.

Under this plan, the global and regional estimates will be published annually with a set of indicators for a selected number of countries, including, in particular, employment-population ratio and unemployment rate, both by sex. These two indicators are among the 15 indicators in the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS) promulgated by the United Nations Statistical Commission and developed as a follow-up to the recent major world conferences.

### 6.3. Occupational employment and wages

In recent years, the number of requests for statistics on occupational employment and wages as well as for technical assistance in this domain has been on the increase. Government officials and policy planners require both occupational employment and

wage statistics to: develop educational and vocational training programmes; regulate economic development; establish income and fiscal policies, monitor labour market development; and create or evaluate minimum wage regulations. The information is equally beneficial to both management and worker's associations for negotiating establishment and industry compensation packages. Analysts rely on such information for the study of employment, unemployment, social differences in lifestyles, and labour mobility. Article 9 of the Labour Statistics Convention (No. 160), 1985 identifies the need for current statistics of average earnings and hours of work to be compiled for important categories of employees and branches of economic activity. Paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Labour Statistics Recommendation (No. 170), 1985, affirms that current statistics of employment and wages, where relevant, should be classified according to such factors as sex, age and occupational group.

With the increased demand for occupational employment and wage statistics being placed on national statistical agencies, a number of member countries have sought clarification and guidance in designing or reshaping statistics programmes. In order to assist the member countries, the Bureau of Statistics has begun the process of examining methodological descriptions of occupational employment and wage inquiries. The long-term objective of the project is to develop guidelines for the collection and dissemination of occupational employment and wage statistics based on the requirements of the member countries.

#### **6.4. Consumer price indices**

Over the past few years many countries have made significant changes in their CPI methodology and there have been some well-publicized controversies about the measurement of CPI. Also, there are many newly independent countries that have started to compute their own CPI. In order to facilitate comparative analyses of consumer prices and to ensure good quality data it is necessary to maintain up-to-date methodological descriptions of CPI carried out in various countries, and to revise and develop international standards to take account of these new developments. The Bureau of Statistics will therefore produce a new edition of *Sources and methods: Labour statistics*, Volume 1, in 1999, a revision of the 1989 ILO manual on consumer price indices by the year 2000 and, possibly, a revision of the 1987 14th ICLS resolution concerning consumer price indices. The revised international standards and methods will provide a useful basis for the compilation of price statistics on a consistent international basis as well as a useful framework for countries which are developing their price statistics.

#### **6.5. Labour market dynamics**

It has long been recognized that official labour statistics mostly provide "snapshots" of the labour market situation and structure. However, very few statistics are available on the dynamics of the labour market, for example on the number of persons who have experienced changes in status or jobs, or the duration of completed spells in these situations; or on changes in the characteristics of jobs (e.g. occupation, status in employment, wage rates, hours worked, earnings) and of establishments (e.g. size, industry, sector). This means that statistics are missing which are needed to formulate, implement and evaluate policies for structural adjustments in the labour market and for the labour force, and for monitoring the structural adjustments which take place, for example, in response to increased globalization of national economies, transitions to market economies and economic and social changes in general.

The need for and experience with statistics on labour market dynamics was



discussed at the 1996 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, and in the informal January and November 1997 meetings of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation Statistics (see e.g. Stibbard (1996) and Hoffmann (1996)). These discussions showed wide support for the need to develop measures which could: (i) summarize significant aspects of a labour market's dynamic development; and (ii) be given an easily understood interpretation with respect to these developments. It was observed that there is a certain amount of academic and empirical research related to issues of labour market dynamics and gross flows which should be consulted, but that this tended to take the form of fairly complex models for analysis of labour market structures and might therefore not provide much basis for identifying the type of monitoring measures which would be demanded from statistical agencies by policy-makers and the public. The work to develop statistics on labour market dynamics would need to consider data on such events as hirings, separations, births and deaths of enterprises; job and activity status changes; as well as on the duration and patterns of spells of different types of activities and jobs during a longer reference period. The methodological issues as well as the advantages and disadvantages of retrospective versus panel strategies for data collection, and the possibilities which surveys and the use of administrative registrations, also in combination, generate will need to be explored further on the basis of experiments and experiences in countries.

During the discussions the participants referred to recent experiences and plans in their own countries, and it was suggested that the ILO should request information from statistical agencies and ministries of labour in its member countries on their current practices and plans concerning statistics on labour market dynamics. A questionnaire was sent to 60 countries and territories in early 1998 and a report on the results will be available before the end of the year. It was also recommended that the ILO should seriously consider whether it could serve as a focal point for information about national experiences in this area, e.g. by establishing and managing an electronic bulletin board for information about methods, approaches and data. The ICLS may want to discuss whether the ILO should follow up the work in this area, and to what issues priority should be given.

One strategy for a dynamic extension of the standard concepts of the ILO Labour Force Framework may be to define a variable "pattern of activities" which will summarize the labour market experience of persons over this longer period, not in terms of "main" or "usual" activity, but in terms of sequences and duration of activity states. This variable would obviously need to have a larger value set than "current activity", in order to reflect the patterns which would be of central interest to users. Using the activity at the start of the period as the main organizing feature, a possible typology for a variable describing sequence patterns for a reference period of e.g. one year, is presented in Box 6.1 as a possible point of departure for future discussions.

Box 6.1

**Possible typology for "pattern of activities during year  $t$ "**

1. Stable employment
  - (a) Employed whole period: Same job.
2. Mobile employment
  - (a) Employed whole period: Changed industry at least once, same occupation.
  - (b) Employed whole period: Changed occupation at least once, same industry.
  - (c) Employed whole period: Changed both industry and occupation at least once.
3. Unstable employment
  - (a) Employment followed/interrupted by at least one unemployment spell lasting not more than  $t$  weeks in total, no spells, not in the labour force.
  - (b) Employment followed/interrupted by at least one spell not in the labour force lasting not more than  $t$  weeks in total, no unemployment spells.
  - (c) Employment followed by a spell of unemployment lasting more than  $t$  weeks.
  - (d) Employment followed by a spell not in the labour force of at least  $t$  weeks.
  - (e) Unemployment followed by a spell of employment lasting more than  $t$  weeks.
  - (f) Not in the labour force and in training followed by one spell of employment lasting more than  $t$  weeks.
4. Stable unemployment
  - (a) Unemployed whole period.
5. Long-term unemployment
  - (a) Unemployment followed/interrupted by one or more employment spells lasting not more than  $t$  weeks in total.
  - (b) Unemployment followed/interrupted by one or more spells not in the labour force of not more than  $t$  weeks in total.
  - (c) Unemployment followed by a spell not in the labour force lasting more than  $t$  weeks.
6. Turbulent labour force status
  - (a) Not in the labour force and in training followed/interrupted by at least one spell of employment and/or unemployment.
  - (b) Not in the labour force and not in training followed/interrupted by at least one spell of employment and/or unemployment.
  - (c) Combinations of periods of employment, unemployment and not in the labour force not classified elsewhere.
7. Stable not in the labour force: in training
  - (a) not in the labour force and in training the whole period
  - (b) Not in the labour force and in training part of the period.
8. Stable not in the labour force: Not in training
  - (a) Not in the labour force whole period: Not in training during any part of the period.

This prospective typology has eight categories at its summary level and 20 at the detailed level, and is complicated in comparison with the basic distinction between employed, unemployed and not in the labour force, and also in comparison with a typology parsimonious enough to serve as a basis for newspaper headlines and cabinet briefs. However, relative to the total number of situations and careers of analytical and descriptive interest over a reference period of one year the typology represented by these 20 categories is quite simplistic, in particular as the concept of "underemployment" has not been used when delineating the above categories.

A parallel "retrospective" typology can be constructed by starting from the situation at the end of the reference period when defining the categories. The main groups above will then be the same, as will the subgroups in the second main group, but the distinctions to be made among those who during the reference period experienced some moves between the labour force categories will have to be different.

Experiments and the reactions of users will be needed before it is possible to establish standard typologies. It is not certain that a single typology of this type will be sufficient to be both analytically meaningful for a wide range of users' needs and sufficiently parsimonious to be implemented with the limited precision allowed by sample surveys. The typologies to be



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## Annex 1

### Ratification of the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160)

List of member States which had ratified the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160) at the end of 1997, and the date on which the ratification was registered.

Australia	15.05.87
Austria	03.06.87
Azerbaijan	19.05.92
Belarus	12.10.90
Bolivia	14.11.90
Brazil	02.07.90
Canada	22.11.95
Colombia	23.03.90
Cyprus	01.12.87
Czech Republic	01.01.93
Denmark	22.01.88
El Salvador	24.04.87
Finland	27.04.87
Germany	25.04.91
Greece	17.03.93
Guatemala	07.04.93
India	01.04.92
Ireland	27.10.95
Italy	08.11.89
Korea, Republic of	08.12.97
Kyrgyzstan	31.03.92
Latvia	10.06.94
Mauritius	14.06.94
Mexico	18.04.88
Netherlands	05.10.90
Norway	06.08.87
Panama	03.04.96
Poland	24.04.91
Portugal	08.12.93
Russian Federation	27.08.90
San Marino	01.07.88
Slovakia	01.01.93
Spain	03.10.89
Sri Lanka	01.04.93
Swaziland	22.09.92
Sweden	22.09.86
Switzerland	07.05.87
Tajikistan	26.11.93
Ukraine	15.08.91
United Kingdom	27.05.87
United States	11.06.90





## Annex 2

### List of databases

1. **LABORSTA:** ILO database on labour statistics covering economically active population (data since 1945), employment, underemployment, hours of work, wages, labour cost, consumer prices, occupational injuries and strikes and lockouts (data since 1969).
2. **LABSSM:** Textual database from the publication "Sources and methods: Labour statistics" (formerly Statistical sources and methods) in English, French and Spanish, containing methodological descriptions and sources of data collected by the ILO, comprising eight volumes.
3. **LABPROJ:** ILO database on estimates and projections of the economically active population (fourth round) for all countries and territories with a population of over 200,000 in 1990. Includes estimates and projections of activity rates by sex and age group, and estimates of the distribution of the economically active population by sex and major sectors of economic activity. Database covers time span 1905-2010, with annual estimates for the years 1995-2005 and every ten years for the period 1950-2010.
4. **LABOCT:** Database on ILO October Inquiry on wages and hours of work relating to 159 occupations, 49 industry groups and retail prices of 93 food items (wages and hours of work data since 1983, retail prices since 1985).
5. **LABCOMP:** Database on ILO-comparable annual average estimates for some 30 countries since 1981 on total and civilian labour force, total employment by age group, by industry (ISIC-1968 major divisions), civilian employment, total unemployment by age groups and unemployment rates. All estimates available by sex, except for the industry data.
6. **LABISCO:** Database for occupational distributions and for titles coded to *ISCO-88* and *ISCO-68*, corresponding to the index as published in the *ISCO-88* publication. Available in English, French and Spanish.
7. **SEGREGAT:** Database on employment (or labour force) by detailed occupational group and sex, obtained from population censuses or labour force surveys for years near 1970, 1980 and 1990. Over 40 countries covered.
8. **HIES:** This database on household income and expenditure statistics provides the main results of the most recent household income and expenditure surveys or similar household surveys conducted in various countries, areas and territories. It contains five basic tables: (i) household income by source; (ii) characteristics of household by income or expenditure class; (iii) distribution of consumption expenditure by income or expenditure class; (iv) distribution of household by expenditure class and household size; and (v) distribution of household by income class and household size.
9. **UNION:** A special database on trade union membership. Based on official figures mainly from national publications, it contains data for 36 countries from 1990 onwards.
10. **LABMINW:** Numeric database on legal minimum wages by region, industry or occupational group, covering some 40 countries, from 1980 to date.
11. **ABS:** Numeric database on absence from work, contains information on number of persons absent and duration of absence, classified by reason for absence, and where available, by sex. Data are obtained from national labour force or household surveys for the 1980s.