

**ESTIMATED RATES OF ACTIVITY: ASIAN COUNTRIES
AND TERRITORIES (1950-90)**

In the course of preparing the fourth edition of *Estimates and projections of the economically active population*, the ILO Bureau of Statistics is now making estimates of activity rates by sex and age group and of distribution by sex for each sector of economic activity, for each country or territory in the world which had 200,000 inhabitants or more in 1990.

The present article contains the estimates in question for 1950-90, for Asian countries and territories excluding the republics of the former USSR. The latter are the subject of a separate estimate published by the ILO, namely "Estimates of the economically active population for the 15 countries of the former USSR for the years 1950, 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989", in *Bulletin of Labour Statistics 1994-2* (Geneva, ILO, 1994). The corresponding estimates for the other major geographical subdivisions, namely Africa, North America, Latin America and Oceania, will appear in forthcoming issues of the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*.

These estimates cancel and replace those published in previous editions of *Estimates and projections of the economically active population*, namely: *Labour force projections, 1965-85* (Geneva, ILO, first edition, 1971), *Labour force estimates and projections, 1950-2000* (Geneva, ILO, second edition, 1977) and *Economically active population, 1950-2025* (Geneva, ILO, third edition, 1985). It should be noted, however, that for a very limited number of countries these data may have to be changed if the Bureau of Statistics receives more complete and detailed information before the issue of the fourth edition, which is foreseen for the end of 1995 for the figures and the middle of 1996 for the methodology.

The definition retained for the economically active population is in conformity with that adopted by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1982 and similar to that retained in the three preceding editions.

Population censuses and sample surveys of the economically active population have provided the main basis for the estimates, which have been adjusted where necessary in order to make the data drawn from these sources compatible with the definition of the economically active population adopted.

These adjustments have concerned primarily military personnel, the unemployed and those seeking their first job, but other categories, particularly women working in agriculture as unpaid family workers, have also been included.

Where national statistics permit, the adjustments have been made simply by shifting the category or categories concerned from the non-active or institutionalized population to the category of economically active population. In all other cases recourse has been had to models mostly taken from neighbouring countries with similar demographic, social, political and cultural characteristics. It should be noted that in certain countries, particularly those with a Moslem culture, where national statistics continue to ignore women's contribution to agricultural work, it has been decided to make ad hoc estimates of this important component, which has been added to the national data. The adjustment has, however, been made only for data in the last two decades, namely 1980 and 1990. In the cases indicated by a separating line the figures for these two decades are not comparable with those for the three preceding decades, namely 1950, 1960 and 1970.

Where, owing to one or more factors, major discrepancies have appeared between the figures published in the third edition for 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980 and that calculated for 1990, owing to the different definition retained for the economically active population or certain categories of it, the date when the census or sample survey was carried out (high or low agricultural season) or the coverage of certain categories of persons, adjustments have nearly always been made to the earlier series.

Where differences may have arisen between different sources, particularly sample surveys of the economically active population and population censuses, preference has usually been given to the former.

Although the adjustment methodology has remained the same as that used in the three previous editions, in terms of quality, quantity, reliability and comparability at the international and interregional level, affecting Asia in the present case, the data collected by the national authorities continue nonetheless show notable improvements since the appearance of the third edition, which is a great advantage to this publication and its users.

For the vast majority of the countries and territories of the continent, the figures presented are based on statistics drawn from a number of censuses and sample surveys of the economically active population that were made between 1945 and 1994. For three countries, however, in the complete absence of information on the active population, it has been necessary to resort exclusively to empirical models.

Since the third edition the territorial coverage of Asia has been increased by the addition of the Asian republics of the former USSR. Moreover, three new countries or territories which had 200,000 inhabitants by 1990, namely, the Maldives, Macau and Brunei, have been the subject of separate estimates. Finally, one country, Kampuchea, has resumed its former name of Cambodia.