

Evolution of the economically active population from 1950 to 1995 and forecasts for the year 2010

Summary

The ILO Bureau of Statistics has just completed the estimates and projections, by sex and age group, of the economically active population, 1950-2010. Individual projections are presented for all countries and/or territories of the world which in 1990 had attained or exceeded the threshold of 200,000 inhabitants. These estimates and projections will appear in *Economically active population, 1950-2010*, ILO, 4th edition.

The first five volumes of this publication will be on Asia (Vol. I), Africa (Vol. II), Latin America (Vol. III), North America, Europe and Oceania (Vol. IV) and the World - Summary (Vol. V). They should be issued in the first half of 1996. Volume VI contains a detailed description of the methodology used in obtaining the actual and forecast data presented in the first five volumes; it should be published later in 1996.

This publication is part of the programme launched by the ILO in 1971 with the aim of providing member States and the international community with a tool that is as comprehensive, detailed and comparable nationally and internationally as possible. These estimates and projections of the economically active population are also part of the joint programme of the United Nations and its specialized agencies aimed at disseminating data that are coordinated and compatible in demographic terms.

This fourth edition, which replaces the first three, contains innovations and improvements in terms of both presentation and methodology. These include an increase in the number of countries and/or territories for which separate estimates are produced, a larger number of tables to enable results to be understood more quickly and clearly, and a new projection methodology using a country and/or territory by country and/or territory approach rather than the uniform method applied in the three previous editions.

On the basis of specialized surveys that are both detailed and precise, the ILO has decided to adjust systematically the rates of activity of women in the countries and/or territories where the results of national censuses and/or surveys have not registered and still do not reflect a large proportion of women working in agriculture as "unpaid family workers". For technical reasons, this adjustment could only be made for the last two decades of the period under review, that is 1980 and 1990. It was also reflected in the projections.

As for the data obtained, the following conclusions may be drawn from this initial global analysis:

- An increase in the economically active population, which is expected to triple from 1.2 billion in 1950 to 3.5 billion in 2010;
- A decrease in the annual growth rate of the economically active population as from 1980. For the first time, the number of

economically active men in Europe could decrease from 1990 to 2

- The least developed regions should account for nine-tenths of the growth of the economically active population worldwide. Thus, in 2010, four-fifths of the world's economically active population should be concentrated in the least developed regions. This percentage was 69 per cent in 1950;
- The number of women will continue to increase in both absolute and relative terms in the vast majority of countries and/or territories of the world. The increase will be higher in the developed regions. This situation is reflected in the gross rate of activity of women worldwide, which was 32.4 per cent in 1950 and is expected to reach 41.2 per cent in 2010;
- As regards the distribution by sector of economic activity of the economically active population, ILO estimates for the period 1950-90 show that in relative terms, the share of agriculture is declining, while services show a considerable increase; industry has decreased between 1980 and 1990, although this decline has occurred only in the developed regions for the time being.