



International  
Labour  
Organization

## Global Employment Trends for Women 2008 highlights East Asia<sup>1</sup>

- Employment opportunities abundant but working conditions need improvement.
- The gender gap is one of the smallest in the world – for every 100 men in the labour market (in work or looking for work) there are 79 women.
- The proportion of working age women in work (the employment-to-population ratio, which also indicates the extent that economies are utilizing the productive potential of their working-age population) is the highest in the world - 65.2 per cent.
- East Asia is the only region where the employment-to-population ratio for young women is higher than that for young men.
- Finding work not difficult for women. The female unemployment rate remains low at 2.7 per cent (3.8 per cent for men). For young women unemployment is among the lowest in the world at 5.8 per cent (7.9 per cent for young men).
- East Asian women are moving out of agriculture faster than men, many move into the services sector, and to a lesser extent into industry.
- The share of women in waged or salaried employment increased by an impressive 10.5 percentage points between 1997-2007 to 39.2 per cent (compared to 46.4 per cent for men).
- The proportion of women in so-called vulnerable employment (unpaid family or own-account workers) is falling, although more than 60 per cent of women (52.3 per cent of men) are still in this group. While this is a positive development the proportion of women in own-account work is quite high (26.8 per cent); only sub-Saharan Africa has a higher share.
- Economic prospects in the region are good and some benefits of growth are filtering down. But there is room for improvement, particularly in criteria related to decent work, and because family and domestic responsibilities still mainly fall to women, issues which affect their work-life balance can be particularly burdensome for them. Examples include average working hours which are longer than other regions, insufficient progress in safety and health, rights at work, and communications – or social dialogue - between workers, employers and governments.

---

<sup>1</sup> China, Hong Kong SAR, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Macau SAR, Mongolia, Taiwan (China)

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Building, Rajdamnern Nok, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66) 2288 2482; Fax: (66) 2288 1076; E-mail: [bangkok@ilo.org](mailto:bangkok@ilo.org) website: [www.ilo.org/asia](http://www.ilo.org/asia) and [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

*For use of information media. Not an official record; Les communiqués ne constituent pas des documents officiels; Los comunicados de prensa no son documentos oficiales.*