



International  
Labour  
Organization

## Global Employment Trends for Women 2008 highlights South East Asia & the Pacific <sup>1</sup>

- Women are moving into waged and salaried jobs, but slowly
- The gender gap is narrower than the global average – for every 100 men in the labour market (in work or looking for work) there are 73 women.
- The proportion of working age women in work or looking for work (the employment-to-population ratio, which also indicates the extent that economies are utilizing the productive potential of their working-age population) is around 55 per cent - the third highest level in the world, behind only sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia.
- While the adult employment-to-population ratio has increased, that for young women has fallen considerably (to 40.3 per cent) but this is mainly the result of more young women entering and staying in education.
- The increasing unemployment rate for women is a worrying trend that also goes against the decline seen in most other regions. In 1997 the female rate was 4.2 per cent (3.9 per cent for men) but in 2007 it was 6.9 per cent (5.6 for men).
- The largest recorded increase is in Indonesia, where young women's unemployment rose from 17 to 33.9 per cent between 1996 and 2006. (For young men it rose by 13 percentage points to 27.1 per cent).
- There has also been a large rise – greater than for men - in the number of women in waged and salaried work. But the region still has the second largest share of women working as unpaid family workers, behind only South Asia.
- The move from agricultural employment is slower than in other Asian regions (although still sizeable). The overall increase in employment in services is being driven by women who now account for 40.3 per cent of the services sector workforce.
- The proportion of women in vulnerable employment (unpaid family or own-account work), has decreased by 6 percentage points but the overall level remains concerningly high.
- Gender inequality in the region is less of a challenge than in other developing regions, but some trends need to be carefully watched, particularly women's unemployment rates which are increasing faster than men's.

---

<sup>1</sup> South-East Asia: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam. Pacific Islands: American Samoa, Cook islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, North Mariana Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna Islands.

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.*