



GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR WOMEN MARCH 2008

LINDA WIRTH

**Director, International Labour Organization
Chair, UN Gender Mainstreaming Committee**





Key findings of the report

- More women are working than ever before
- Number of employed women grew by almost 200 million over the last decade
- Women more likely than men to get low-paid, low-productivity and vulnerable jobs
- Improvements in the status of women in labour markets throughout the world have not narrowed gender gaps.
- Burden of vulnerability is still greater for women than men, especially in the world's poorest regions



Other key findings of the report

- At the global level, the female employment-to-population ratio – indicates how much economies are able to take advantage of the productive potential of their working-age population – was 49.1 per cent in 2007 compared to a male 74.3 per cent.
- Over the past decade, the service sector has overtaken agriculture as the prime employer of women.
- More women are gaining access to education, but equality in education is still far from reality in some regions.



Other key findings of the report

- Worldwide, the female unemployment rate stood at 6.4 per cent compared to the male rate of 5.7 per cent.
- Less than 70 women are economically active for every 100 men globally. Remaining outside of the labour force is often not a choice but an imposition. It is likely that women would opt for remunerated work outside the home if it became acceptable to do so.



Regional situation of women

- **Sub-saharan Africa:** Women continue to bear a heavier burden in the lack of decent jobs.
- **North Africa:** Tremendous gap in labour market participation between women and men; unemployment rates for women are the highest in the world.
- **Middle East:** The few women participating in labour markets face unemployment and vulnerable employment.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Women dominate the services sector, which becomes an increasing source of vulnerable employment.



Regional situation of women

- **Developed Economies and European Union:** Female employment gains prominent but inequality in workplace responsibilities and decision-making continue
- **Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU):** Aspects of gender equality declining
- **East Asia:** Employment opportunities for men and women abundant, but working conditions, social protection and social dialogue need improvement.
- **South-Asia:** Untapped female potential and sizeable decent work deficit.
- **South-East Asia and the Pacific:** Women moving into wage and salaried jobs – but slowly



South-East Asia and the Pacific

- Women moving into wage 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 looking for work or working (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.



South-East Asia and the Pacific

- While the adult employment-to-population ratio has increased, for young women it 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).



South-East Asia and the Pacific

- 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.



South-East Asia and the Pacific

- The proportion of women in vulnerable employment (unpaid family or own-account work), has fallen 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.



Women in the Philippines

PHILIPPINES – low paid, low productivity

STATISTICS	MALE	FEMALE
Unemployment to working age population	6.48%	3.68%
Visible underemployment rate	15.23%	11.89%
Proportion of low-paid employees to total employees	10.94%	26.25%
Productivity	66.27%	52.21%

SOURCE: Department of Labor and Employment, October 2007



Investing in Decent Work for Women

- From vulnerable employment into wage and salaried work toward economic freedom and self-determination
- Access to labour markets and to decent and productive employment is crucial
- Full economic integration of women and realizing their untapped potential for economic development
- Broadening access for women to employment in an enlarged scope of industries and occupations
- Society's ability to accept new economic roles for women and the economy's ability to create decent jobs