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Incorporating gender issues in labour statistics

**by Adriana Mata-Greenwood
Bureau of Statistics**



**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, Bureau of Statistics
BUREAU INTERNATIONAL DU TRAVAIL, Bureau de statistique
OFICINA INTERNACIONAL DEL TRABAJO, Oficina de Estadística**

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1. Introduction

The main objective of labour statistics is to provide accurate descriptions of the size, structure and characteristics of the various participants in the labour market, as well as changes taking place. Labour statistics are useful as information for a general audience but also as basis for analysing the labour market and for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating employment and social programmes and policies. To best serve their various purposes, labour statistics need to reflect reality as closely as possible. This means that they should cover relevant aspects of all actors in the labour market and describe their different types of work situations with sufficient detail.

To do so perfectly, however, is impossible. The production of statistics requires that reality be "simplified" or codified into synthetic categories which highlight certain aspects of this reality while suppressing others. The aspects which are highlighted or suppressed will depend on the *priorities and objectives* of the descriptions to be undertaken and on the *methods of data collection* which can be used. As data collection methods are faced with limitations of many types, and the measurement priorities depend to a large extent on the intrinsic perception of a society about how the labour market functions, labour statistics have generally been successful in identifying and characterising "core" employment and unemployment situations, which reflect a common view of what "work" and "joblessness" are all about: workers in full-time regular employment in formal sector enterprises and persons who are looking for such jobs. National labour statistics have been less successful to describe other work situations.

In order to extend the coverage of labour statistics and improve the description of all labour market situations, labour statistics need to identify and describe work situations which do not constitute this core situation and which therefore often are unnoticed or inadequately described. Women are often found in such "atypical" work situations and will constitute a very important population group therein. The production of valid and reliable labour statistics therefore requires a good understanding of what women do and how they behave in the labour market, as well as recognition that it is indeed important to adequately identify and describe all work situations.

Generally, the work women do differs from the work men do in many respects: the hours they work, the type of tasks they carry out, the income they earn, etc. When labour statistics make these distinctions "visible" they enable users to understand and analyse the particular position and constraints of women workers relative to men workers, and to provide a solid basis for promoting equality between women and men in the labour market. Endeavouring to reflect as fully as possible the differences and similarities between men and women in the labour market will also improve the quality of labour statistics themselves. Not only will the information available to users, to market analysts and policy decision makers be more complete, but the evaluation, from a gender perspective, of the data's strengths and shortcomings by producers and users of the data, will therefore provide indications of how and where improvements to the data are needed and possible.

It is a fact, however, that the contribution of women to the national economy is still subject to more under reporting and misrepresentation than the contribution of men. The statistics available are partial and contribute to maintaining a distorted perception of the nature of a country's economy and its human resources, and to perpetrating a vicious circle of inequality between men and women caused by

inappropriate perceptions, policies and programmes. This may have an important consequence on the validity of the statements usually made on the basis of conventional labour statistics, e.g., those in Box 1 below. It is evident from such statements that women are at a disadvantaged position with respect to men in the labour market. But, are there other aspects, currently not covered in labour statistics, which would help describe the situation of men and women more comprehensively? Furthermore, can the existing data be trusted? For example, do increases in labour force participation rates reflect real increases or only changes in the way the

Box 1. What conventional labour statistics generally say about men and women in the labour market

- The labour force participation of women is lower than that of men in basically all countries in the world. Still, it has increased over the last decades while that of men has slightly decreased.
- The age of women affects their participation in the labour market dramatically, reflecting the link of age with their reproductive cycle and its associated constraints on women. This effect, however, has decreased over time. For men, the effect of age is more uniform across age, indicating their lower attachment to family responsibilities.
- In countries where agriculture is not very important, women tend to be concentrated in service occupations while men are more evenly distributed in industry and services. In countries where agriculture is widespread, women tend to be unpaid family workers.
- The share of women in the informal sector is higher than their share in the labour force, suggesting that women turn to the informal sector more often than men because they lack opportunities or they face other obstacles to employment in the formal sector.
- Women work shorter hours than men, and are more frequently in atypical forms of employment, different than core full-time regular employment.
- Unemployment rates of women are higher than men's in most countries.
- Women are often found in occupations which are losing status. They are underrepresented in managerial, production and transport occupations while they make up a large part of clerical and service occupations.
- Women earn less income than men, even at the same level of explained educational attainment, occupation and hours of work.
- Most poor people are women.

(UN 1995)

phenomenon is being measured? In other words, are existing statistics reflecting reality only partially, so that women are in fact in a far worse (or better) situation than it may seem? What aspects of reality are labour statistics reflecting, and what are they hiding?

This working paper examines some issues to be considered when using or producing labour statistics, in order to evaluate whether the real differences and similarities between men and women are adequately reflected in these statistics. To be

useful for the general reader, two introductory chapters are included. Chapter 2 briefly reviews the topics covered by conventional labour statistics and the main measurement methodologies used. Chapter 3 introduces the notion of gender and identifies some of the main gender issues in labour statistics. Chapter 4 identifies a number of topics which may be useful to address gender concerns in the world of work. Chapters 5 to 7 then go on to discuss gender issues for a selected set of topics, in the areas of definitions and classifications (Chapter 5), measurement methodologies (Chapter 6) and dissemination practices (Chapter 7).

2. A brief introduction to labour statistics

Labour statistics cover a number of topics dealing with the size, structure and characteristics of the labour market and associated changes. Producing labour statistics entails designing definitions and survey instruments as well as collecting and disseminating the resulting data. In order to provide an accurate and complete description of labour market situations, the different types of work situations need to be taken into account at each of the data production stages.

2.1. Scope of labour statistics

Labour statistics relate to data which describe the size, structure, characteristics and contributions of the participants in the labour market and how these change over time. They are generally part of a national statistical programme and are interrelated with statistics in other fields, for example, with statistics in education, health and production. They are also part of the national labour market information system which is used to analyse the labour market functioning and which includes, in addition to statistics, laws and regulations, research reports, case studies, etc. (ILO, 1997b).

Conventionally, labour statistics cover a wide range of topics related to the world of work. They include statistics on the *size and structure of the labour force*, including information on the number of persons who work, ie., who produce the goods and services accounted for in national production statistics (the employed population) and those who do not work but are willing and able to do so (the unemployed population). These two population groups comprise the economically active population, which together with the economically inactive population, make up the three mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups of the total population in a country.

Among the employed population, various subgroups are of analytical importance. There are those persons who although working are in jobs with insufficient hours of work (the population in time-related underemployment), those whose jobs are ill suited for them for particular reasons (the population in inadequate employment situations), those who work in small economic units (the employed in the informal sector), children who work (child labour), older workers, migrant workers, workers with disabilities, etc.

Among the economically inactive population, there are two population groups which are gaining importance. One consists of persons who produce goods and services which at present are not accounted for in national production statistics, and who therefore are not considered as employed. Their contribution to the wellbeing of the population is increasingly recognised. The other group consists of persons who would like to work and are available to do so, but who do not look actively for work for various reasons. Generally, they are not considered as unemployed in national statistics, even though it is acknowledged that they exert an important pressure on the labour market for jobs.

Labour statistics also include information about the characteristics of workers, their jobs and their employers. For workers, topics include the income linked to employment during a particular period (income from employment), the regular payments to persons in paid employment (earnings), and the hours they work, whether normally (normal hours of work), usually (hours usually worked) or during a specific period (hours actually worked). Topics also include deaths, injuries and diseases

resulting from occupational accidents (occupational injuries) and diseases resulting from exposure to risk factors at work (occupational diseases), on industrial disputes experienced by the working population (strikes and lockouts), union participation, the set of tasks carried out by a person in a specific job (occupations) and type of contract they have in a particular job (status in employment). For employers, characteristics include the kinds of goods produced or services supplied by the establishment, enterprise or other economic unit (branch of economic activity), the institutional sector (public, private sector), the demand for labour (vacancies) and the cost of employing labour (labour cost).

Linked very closely to labour statistics because of its importance to determine minimum wages and real wages and incomes is the consumer price index, which measures the changes over time in the general level of prices of the goods and services that the population acquires, uses or pays for as consumption.

Some of these characteristics are quantitative, such as income and hours of work. Most are qualitative or categorical. Among the latter, some require many distinctions (or categories): occupations, branch of economic activity and status in employment. In order to facilitate data collection, dissemination and analysis, these categories are organised in "classifications". These are instruments which group together units of a "similar" kind - "similarity" being determined in relation to specific criteria related to the characteristics - often in hierarchies which allow for different degrees of detail to describe the characteristic in a systematic and simplified way.

2.2. The ILO and labour statistics

The ILO has a normative role in relation to labour statistics. Convention 160, to be covered in official national labour statistics programmes, was adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1985, and establishes a minimum set of topics and, for each of them, the type of classifications (i.e. by sex, industry, occupation, etc.), coverage and frequency of data collection. The topics specified comprise most of those mentioned above: the economically active population and its component groups, average earnings and hours of work, time rates of wages and normal hours of work, labour cost, consumer price indices, household expenditure and income, occupational injuries and diseases and industrial disputes. Ratifying countries - 42 by April 1999 - commit themselves to fulfilling the obligations specified in it. The Convention also mentions the need to take into account the international guidelines on definitions and measurement methodologies for these topics. These guidelines are *resolutions* adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), organised by the ILO. The ICLS has met sixteen times since 1923¹. These guidelines serve two purposes. First, as a model for countries trying to develop national statistics on the topic concerned, and second, as a benchmark to be used by countries wishing to enhance international comparability (ILO. 1999).

2.3. Producing labour statistics

Labour statistics are generally collected in censuses or sample surveys of households or establishments, or processed on the basis of data resulting from administrative procedures of public or private agencies. Whatever the source involved, the production of labour statistics can be divided into three phases: (a) setting up

¹ Current guidelines can be consulted at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/res/index.htm>.

definitions and classifications, **(b) collecting and processing the relevant information** and **(c) disseminating the resulting statistics**.

When setting *definitions and classifications*, the objectives of the survey or administrative procedure need to be established. These determine the topics (or variables) for which information is collected. For each variable, a definition and the degree of detail in its measurement (or resolution) need to be decided. These determine the content, with how many categories and the accuracy with which the data are to be collected.

The *data collection and processing* phase implies designing the data collection instrument, usually a questionnaire or a form, including the type of questions to ask or items to be collected and how they should be worded or obtained to reflect the definitions. It also requires designing a set of instructions to ensure that the questionnaire or form will be correctly applied, as well as procedures for the actual collection and checking of data, to eliminate inconsistencies and other errors.

When information is collected using sample surveys, this phase also requires designing and selecting a sample of households, establishments or individuals, to guarantee adequate representation of the target population. When information is collected as a by-product of an administrative procedure, the processing requires adjusting the information to correspond to the statistical definitions as closely as possible. This stage also involves construction of new variables by combining two or more of the observed characteristics.

Finally, *disseminating* the statistics means designing and producing tables and diagrammes which show the results. It also consists of distributing the tables or raw data to users on paper form, in machine readable form, etc..

For labour statistics to be useful they need to provide an accurate and complete description of the labour market. This requires that the production of good quality labour statistics considers, at each stage of the production process, how well it is addressing the differences and similarities between the various actors in the labour force. This implies that **(a) valid labour statistics need to be based on *definitions and classifications* which taken together can reflect well the different work situations of all participants in the labour market; (b) measurement needs to use sound *methodologies* that will ensure that these particular work situations are clearly and consistently identified; (c) and *dissemination practices* need to present data in such a way that differences and similarities, and the causes that cause them, are clearly highlighted.**

3. Gender issues in labour statistics

Gender issues relate to the differences and similarities that exist between men and women in relation to their contributions, their conditions of work and life, and their needs, constraints and opportunities. In labour statistics, these aspects need to be reflected in definitions, measurement methods and presentation of results in order to improve the description of the labour market and provide a solid basis for promoting equality between men and women in the world of work.

3.1. An introduction to gender analysis

It is generally accepted that inequality between men and women stems from attitudes, prejudices and assumptions about the different roles assigned to men and women in a society. These are better known as *gender roles*. Gender roles are learned expectations and behaviours in a given society, community or social group and determine the type of activities which are perceived as “male” or “female”. They may vary according to a person’s age, social class, race, ethnicity and religion, and according to the geographical, economic, political environment, etc. Some gender roles are widespread and cut across cultures, religions, and social classes. One such role relates to women’s assigned role as housekeepers and economically dependent members of the household and men’s assigned role as breadwinners and decision-makers. The fact that society does not assign these roles the same value helps explain women’s different position in relation to men.

Gender roles can be said to explain the bulk of the social differences between men and women. Conventional gender analysis identifies a number of areas in the interrelation between men and women which contribute to the inequality between them (Overholt, C. et. al. 1984). They include the particular *contributions* of men and women, their *conditions of work and life*, as observed through the access to and control of resources and benefits, the different *needs* of men and women, and their specific *constraints and opportunities*. Evaluating the impact of each of these aspects on a particular programme, activity or subject is useful to examine whether and how thoroughly it is incorporating gender issues.

In labour statistics it is useful to take into account these aspects in each step of the production process, in order to improve the description of the labour market² and provide a solid basis for promoting equality between women and men. There is evidence that not taking gender issues explicitly into account when producing labour statistics tends to result in women being undercounted and misrepresented (Dixon, R, Anker, R. 1990), which in turn may put them at a disadvantaged and even adverse position in the development process. Only when their specific contributions to the production process are well understood and valued will they be explicitly considered as distinct and equally valuable actors in the development process. The following paragraphs describe some of these aspects as they relate to labour statistics.

² To provide an even better description of the labour market, it is also important to evaluate the incorporation of other important population groups, such as child workers, disabled workers, and migrant workers. This working paper is limited to gender issues, but the same principles and tools can be applied to incorporate the contributions and concerns of these and other population groups in labour statistics.

3.1.1. Contributions

The contributions of men and women to society tend to be different and the impact of gender roles in this area is striking. For example, given their role of main housekeepers, women workers tend, more than men, to combine economic activities with household (non-economic) activities, leading to work intermittently over the year closer to home, either for pay in the house or for profit of a family enterprise. Distinguishing “work” from other activities may be therefore very difficult for them. While they dedicate less hours to paid work than men they tend to work longer hours than men when domestic activities are considered. Because housekeeping activities consist of a range of repetitive activities requiring general skills, women who work in paid productive activities tend to do routine work with a multitude of tasks, such as secretarial and sales activities, and to engage in occupations which require similar tasks as those required for housekeeping, such as domestic services, teaching and care giving occupations. Because of their traditional role as dependent members of the household, women tend, as compared to men, to be more active in non-market activities and the informal sector; to be considered by others and even by themselves as economically inactive; to be less educated, thus engaging in occupations which require lower skills and are less rewarded; to be considered as unpaid family workers even when they have equal responsibility in a family enterprise; to find it hard to break through the “glass ceiling”, i.e. move to managerial or decision-making positions (ILO, 1997a), and, in times of economic downturns or structural adjustments, to be dismissed from their paid employment jobs first (UN, 1991). Given women’s structural constraints related to their family responsibilities, women who want to work and are available to do so tend to seek work much less frequently than men in the same situation, and employers tend to be reluctant to employ women outside typically female occupations. Finally, women’s work tends to be less remunerated and to have less status than men’s.

It is clear therefore that to understand differences between men and women in the labour market, complete labour statistics should identify, among others, (a) whether work is carried out in combination with domestic chores; (b) multiple activities; (c) the context and location of work activities, e.g., work done at home; (d) whether work is carried out intermittently over the year; (e) subsistence and informal sector activities; (f) total hours worked, including those dedicated to domestic activities; (g) the type of work men and women do, e.g., in management and decision making positions and elsewhere; (h) labour turnover; (i) seeking work behaviour for those not employed; and (j) total income earned.

3.1.2. Resources and benefits

It is also recognised that the allocation of resources and benefits among the members of a household is far from egalitarian. By resources it is meant anything which people use in order to carry out their various productive or reproductive activities (e.g., human, financial and financial capital, time, equipment, credit, transportation and means to markets, etc.), and by benefits are meant the income accrued from the productive and reproductive outputs; the food and other goods produced by the households themselves; and the status, power or recognition received in a society as a result of the productive or reproductive outputs and activities. The interest here is to analyse (a) what resources are available to men and women; (b) who is able to use, or has access to, these resources; (c) who has control over these resources, i.e., who

decides what, how much and in what manner to use them; and (d) what benefits are derived from using these resources.

It has been observed that women who are in self-employment tend to have more limited access to production resources than men, and this lowers their income. Furthermore, even when they have access to some resources they do not necessarily have the power to control how they will use them nor do they reap the benefits accruing from their efforts. For example, when engaged in a family business, women's (and children's) resources, such as time, may be allocated by the operator of the family business (typically a man) for production in the family business. Equally, they may not have access to the monetary benefits. Labour statistics should therefore allow the analysis not only of the resources and benefits of an economic activity but also of the allocation of these resources and benefits among the members of the household.

3.1.3. Needs and constraints

Needs relate to practical items or facilities, such as food, shelter, income, water provision, health care, employment, child care, but also equal access to job opportunities and training; ensuring equal pay for work of equal value and equal rights to land and capital assets; preventing sexual harassment at work and domestic violence; and guaranteeing freedom of choice over childbearing. Constraints relate to the extent of direct and indirect discrimination against women and men within their socioeconomic environment, while opportunities relate to the mechanisms which exist and may be used to combat such discrimination. These constraints and opportunities exist in legislation, the economic situation of the locality and country, the norms and values of the society, etc.

In labour statistics, women and men should be treated equally, which means that they should have the same certainty as men of being classified in a statistical category if they satisfy the criteria for inclusion. And that their activities should be described with equal detail and knowledge. A major constraint on women's participation in the labour force, affecting their identification for statistical purposes, relates to their family responsibilities. The extent and form of their participation and contribution to the production process is highly connected to their marital status and on whether they have small children or other persons requiring care in their households. While men's participation and contribution to the production process also relate to such factors, the effect tends to be opposite to that for women. Labour statistics should therefore identify and reveal the presence and nature of these constraints on men's and women's labour market behaviour. In this context it is also relevant that women, regardless of their family responsibilities, tend to be seen by others and even by themselves as housekeepers and dependent workers, even if they work, while men are seen as breadwinners predominantly, even if they do not work. This hinders the identification of women as active participants in the labour market. Furthermore, when statistics identify them as workers, women more than men tend to be considered a homogenous group of workers and the differences in their characteristics tend not to be studied with as much care as they deserve. Definitions, measurement methods and presentations therefore should need to minimize this tendency.

3.2. Integrating gender issues in labour statistics

Summing up, labour statistics which address or "integrate" gender issues, will (a) cover topics that help explain the differences and similarities that exist between men

and women in the labour market; (b) ensure that the topics' definitions and measurement methodologies take account of the different contributions, conditions, benefits and constraints of men and women; and (c) present the results to reveal the differences and similarities and the factors that may cause them.

The *topics* to be described need to be relevant to increasing the understanding of men's and women's position and interrelation in the labour market. To understand men's and women's different contributions, labour statistics should cover and separately identify e.g., work which is carried out in combination with domestic chores, multiple activities, work done at home; intermittent work, subsistence and informal sector activities, domestic activities, workers' occupations, labour turnover, resources and benefits (i.e., total income) of an economic activity as well as the allocation of these resources and benefits among the members of the household.

Definitions and classifications to be used should recognise and accommodate the fact that women and men do not necessarily perform the same activities, nor do they always behave in the same way, nor are they subject to the same constraints, nor have the same opportunities and needs. Definitions on the size and structure of the labour force should cover all women and men who work, including those who work in the informal sector, who are unpaid, who are in self-employment, in home-based activities, and who perform seasonal activities. For workers carrying out several activities, they should cover all. Definitions and classifications on the characteristics of the labour force should describe men and women's work characteristics equally well. This means that occupations and status in employment situations where women dominate, their types of remuneration and occupational safety and health hazards, etc. should be described with the same level of detail and knowledge as those dominated by men.

Measurement methodologies should specifically take into account the differences in women's and men's behaviour and perception regarding their work situation. In particular, they should be sensitive to the constraints that women face, among them their traditional role as houseworkers, which are such that they tend not to be perceived as active participants in the labour market, even if they are. They should also be sensitive to men's perceived role as breadwinners, which may identify them as active participants in the labour market, even when they are not. The fact that women's economic activities tend to be on the borderline between economic and non-economic activities to a larger extent than men's, makes their identification and description more complex and requires special measurement strategies.

Finally, the way data are *presented* and *disseminated* should portray differences in men's and women's contributions, conditions and constraints. This implies relevant desaggregation by variables which explain the demographic, economic, social and family context of workers, including, in addition to the workers' sex, at least their level of education, their marital status and the presence in the household of small children and other members requiring care.

4. Topics

Basically all topics currently identified in Convention 160 are relevant to reflect gender distinctions. But they are not enough. Additional topics are of interest to women or men specifically. Other topics are useful to understand differences and similarities between men and women at work.

In order to understand the situation of women relative to men in the labour market, statistics are needed on, for example, the employed population and its subgroups, including the underemployed, those working in the informal sector and child workers; and the unemployed population. These population groups need to be further subdivided into more homogeneous categories, according to other work-related characteristics, which may include, for example: the workers' *occupations*, given that men and women generally do very different jobs; their *status in employment*, in view of the steady decline of regular wage employment and the increase in other forms of employment situations, such as casual and temporary/seasonal employment and self-employment, where men and women are present in different degrees; their *income from employment*, given the pervasive difference between men's and women's level of income in every country even after correcting for their hours worked and level of education; their *working time*, in order to provide a more accurate measure of their participation in the labour market; their participation in *industrial disputes*, as women are said to be more passive and less unionised than men, to be indirectly rather than directly implicated in industrial action and to be in industries which are less prone to industrial disputes; and their *occupational injuries*, given the tendency of men to be in occupations where accidents are more visible and obvious and of women to be in jobs which are more stressful, less autonomous and with more repetitive tasks than men. The above topics are conventionally covered in national labour statistical programmes, as established by ILO Convention 160, and international guidelines on their measurement exist³.

However, it is clear that topics which are relevant to increasing the understanding of men's and women's position and interrelation in the labour market need to go beyond those covered by conventional labour statistics. For example, information is needed on the number of *persons who "work" in an enlarged sense*, which include workers who produce goods and services for own consumption, because of women's significant participation in these types of activities; on workers' *working time arrangements*, to indicate the degree to which men and women work in what is known as "regular full-time" working schedules or in more irregular schedules, such as part-year, part-time employment, annualised working hours and other schedules providing flexibility for employers, customers or the workers themselves; on workers' *overtime work*, to evaluate whether establishments' responses to market's demands affect men and women differently, and on their *absence from work*, to indicate any differences in the types of absences experienced by men and women, in particular in view of the family context; on *occupational diseases*, given men's tendency to be more exposed to injuries and women's tendency to be more exposed to diseases; and on

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Current guidelines can be consulted at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/res/index.htm>.

home-based work, on contingent (or non-permanent) employment, on poverty, on union participation, on the duration of employment, unemployment and underemployment, on access to productive resources and on the allocation of benefits among household members, etc.. It may also be useful to calculate composite indexes or measures, to reflect, e.g., the occupational segregation, wage differentials, annual hours of work, etc., of men and women.

5. Definitions and Classifications

In labour statistics, definitions and classifications which address gender issues will cover all qualifying work situations, regardless of whether it is a man or a woman who performs them, and will describe the different work situations with an equal level of detail and knowledge. If the criteria on which the definitions are based do not consider all possible work situations, particular groups of workers will tend to be excluded, affecting the validity for gender differentiation since the sex composition of these groups is rarely uniform. For definitions to be useful for gender concerns they also need to make sure that men's and women's characteristics are described at sufficiently detailed levels to allow significant distinctions to emerge.

The crucial role of definitions and classifications in the production of data is often underestimated. They determine what is to be covered or not and with how much detail a variable will be described. The whole data production process is based on definitions and classifications, and therefore the quality of the resulting figures depends on how well these definitions and classifications, taken together, reflect the actual situation of the different participants in the labour market. A change in a definition used will bring forth a change in the resulting figures. Therefore, when analysing time series it is important to assess foremost whether observed changes are due to changes in definitions rather than changes in the underlying reality/or a reflection of real changes.

To be useful for gender distinctions, definitions should recognise that women and men do not necessarily perform the same activities, nor do they always behave in the same way, nor are they subject to the same constraints. Two characteristics are essential: *coverage* and *detail*. Definitions need to cover all qualifying work situations, regardless of whether they are performed by a man or a woman, and need to describe the different work situations in sufficient detail to bring out gender distinctions.

Many of the shortcomings found in national statistics regarding coverage and detail are due to measurement limitations: as will be seen in Chapter 6, measurement methodologies often limit the type and range of information that can be produced. However, in other cases, the responsibility partly lies with the international guidelines which serve as models for national definitions. Seldom have international guidelines explicitly addressed the implications for gender of using a certain set of criteria as opposed to another. While revising these guidelines may not always be possible or practical, it is necessary for the ILO to recommend to identify and describe separately those groups of workers that will tend to be excluded from the different labour topics when the international standards are used.

5.1. The scope of "work"

The range of activities which constitute what is understood as "work" affects the scope of all topics in labour statistics. Employment statistics, for example, will include only those persons performing activities which are within the boundary of "work" activities. Unemployment statistics will only include persons seeking to carry out such activities. Statistics on employment-related income will include only those receipts

accrued to persons carrying out such activities. Occupational injuries statistics will include persons experiencing an injury only if performing such activities. And so on.

If it is to reflect reality fully, "work" needs to encompass all activities performed by persons to produce goods and services in a country, regardless of whether these activities are remunerated or not, declared to the tax authorities or not, done intermittently, casually, simultaneously or seasonally, etc.; and regardless of whether the good or service produced is intended for sale or barter or for own household consumption. Only then will all persons engaged in activities geared towards the production of goods and services be covered in labour statistics.

Presently, however, the scope of "work" in labour statistics is limited to activities which are geared towards the production of goods and services as defined by the System of National Accounts (SNA). These are known as "economic" activities. "Work" defined this way includes those activities which produce goods or render services for sale or barter in the market, and may include those activities that produce goods for own consumption, if they represent a significant proportion of the production of that good in the country, see Box 2 below. But it excludes domestic or personal services provided by unpaid household members. Box 3 above provides a list of activities destined to be consumed by the household. A review of national practices reveals that only a few countries include the production of goods for own consumption within the scope of "work" and none includes services for own consumption (ILO 1990). The present SNA justifies the present scope on grounds of conceptual and measurement constraints, but it has been suggested that the distinction between economic and non-economic activities is based on the sex of the person who usually performs the activities (ILO 1995). Indeed, most of the activities excluded from the scope of "work" are carried out by women (UNDP 1995). Thus, while "work" defined this way has the advantage of being consistent with "production" statistics as currently defined, it has the same drawbacks in that it also disregards the important contribution of non-market production to the well-being of the population. Considering that the bulk of persons carrying out such activities are women, it is clear that this constitutes an important source of underestimation of women's participation in the productive sphere and of their contributions to the welfare of their society. Thus, from the onset, labour statistics are at best only reflecting a partial reality, and this has a negative impact on the recognition of the full contribution to the economy of workers, particularly of women workers. It may also distort the description and understanding of changes, if they to a large extent consist of a transfer of activities from being done outside the market to being done within the market, e.g., the care of children and of the elderly.

Box 2. Production boundary for measuring national production and employment

Economic activities (activities included in the SNA production boundary)				Non-economic activities	
Production of <u>goods or services</u> (intended to be) supplied to other units ^a		Production of <u>goods</u> for own final use ^b	Production of <u>services</u> for own final consumption		
Goods or services sold at economically significant prices, bartered or used for payments in kind	Goods or services provided free, or at prices that are not economically significant, by government units or NPIS		Housing services produced by owner-occupiers of dwellings ^c	Domestic or personal services produced by employing <u>paid</u> domestic staff	Domestic or personal services provided by <u>unpaid</u> household members

 Market production

 Non-market production

Notes: ^a Including the production of goods or services used up in the process of producing such goods or services (intermediate inputs).

^b Own final consumption or gross fixed capital formation. To be recorded only if the amount of a good produced for own final use is quantitatively important in relation to the total supply of that good in a country.

^c No labour inputs involved

5.2. Definitions on the size and structure of the labour force

The labour force is composed of the employed and unemployed populations. National measures of employment and unemployment tend to converge towards the international definitions on the subject which were adopted by the 13th ICLS in 1982. These definitions have a number of characteristics. First, they require persons to do something or have the intention of doing something (e.g., work, look for work) to be classified in employment or unemployment. This is known as the “activity” principle. In this context, the issue to evaluate is whether the actions required for inclusion in a category reflect the labour market behaviour of women and men equally well. Second, they are based on “priority” rules, which clearly assign, in either employment, unemployment or inactivity, persons who could be in more than one category during the same reference period. For example, persons who both work and seek work will be classified as employed; and persons who seek work and study or do housework will be classified as unemployed, no matter how much time was devoted to the latter activities. These definitions are statistical constructions and, in these multiple activity

situations, may differ from the common understanding of “employment” and “unemployment”. A third characteristic of these definitions is that, while in theory they are meant to be applicable to any measurement instrument, they have been primarily established to be applied very precisely in household-based surveys.

Box 3. Examples of non-market activities covered by the present SNA concept of production of goods and services (if the amount of a good produced for own final use is quantitatively important in relation to the total supply of that good in a country)

Included		Excluded
Growing or gathering field crops, fruits and vegetables	Threshing and milling grain	Constructing dwellings
Producing eggs, milk and food	Making butter, ghee and cheese	
Hunting animals and birds	Slaughtering livestock	Constructing farm buildings
Catching fish, crabs and shellfish	Curing hides and skins	Building boats and canoes
Cutting firewood and building poles	Preserving meat and fish	Clearing land for cultivation
Collecting thatching and weaving materials	Making beer, wine and spirits	Caring for, training and instructing children
Burning charcoal	Crushing oil seeds	
Mining slate	Weaving baskets and mats	Caring for the sick, invalid or old people
Cutting peat	Making clay pots and plates	
Carrying water	Weaving textiles	Transporting household members or their goods
	Making furniture	
	Dressmaking and tailoring	
	Handicrafts made from non-primary products	

Source: Based on System of National Accounts, 1993.

5.2.1. Employment

Statistics of employment are useful as indicators of the population which produces the goods and services in a country (i.e., labour input) and its relationship with the income accrued and other characteristics of this population. This information is essential to design, implement and evaluate employment, income and human resource development policies and programmes. It is therefore vital to identify all men and women who contribute to the production process in a country and describe their characteristics with great care. Employment statistics usually refer to persons identified as in employment during a short reference period of one week. Two groups of persons are generally included: persons who “worked” during the reference week (in its restricted economic scope) and persons who for temporary reasons were “not at

work” during this week but who would have worked if a different reference week had been chosen.

The first group of workers should be exhaustive of all “work” activities: it should include all persons who “worked” (in the restricted economic sense) even if only for one hour, and even if they usually do not work. Only then will all types of employment situations and all types of workers be covered, including casual labour, short-time work, unpaid non-market work, all forms of irregular employment and employment of persons whose main activity is other than to work. As applied in many countries, however, it only covers persons who carry out market activities, and exclude persons who work for no pay to produce goods that will be consumed by their households. Furthermore, some countries explicitly exclude contributing (unpaid) family workers who worked less than a certain number of hours (ILO, 1990). The effect of such exclusions will probably be greater on the number of women identified as employed, as women are relatively more numerous in these types of work situations.

The second group of workers should include all workers who were absent from their usual (paid or self-employment) job during the reference week because they were on vacation, off sick, on maternity leave, etc. To be regarded as “employed”, such workers should maintain some attachment to their employment. The number of workers identified in this group may depend to a large extent on establishments’ practices, on the existing legislation or collective agreements governing leave entitlement as well as on the proportion of workers covered by them. Paid workers who have the right to vacations, sick leave, etc. are typically workers covered by laws and regulations. They are usually in regular paid employment and working in the formal sector. Where the proportion of such workers is large in a country and national laws allow them to take relatively extended leave without losing their jobs, e.g. in Scandinavian countries, national estimates of employment will show a higher share of people absent from work than other countries. Most of these workers tend to be women, e.g., on extended maternity leave, see Table 1 below. High employment levels in such countries may therefore be partly the reflection of generous leave entitlements, as an important share of these workers are not working and would not be considered as “employed” in other countries where legislation or collective agreements are less favourable. On the other side, where the number of paid workers who are not covered by labour laws is important, many women are excluded. They are, for example, unpaid family workers or seasonal workers absent from work, workers in informal sector units or engaged in non-market production. When absent, such workers will tend to be excluded from employment because they do not maintain an attachment to their employment. It is clear from the above arguments that to understand the resulting figures, the existing legislation in a country, the proportion of workers covered by such legislation, and any variations over time, need to be considered.

Table 1. Employed persons “not at work” during the reference week as a percentage of the employed population, by sex

Country	women	men
Finland (1991)	15.2	11.4
Sweden (1994)	11.3	6.4
Canada (May 1994)	6.4	4.5
Spain (IV trimester 1993)	4.5	4.5
Venezuela (I semester 1993)	3.6	1.9
Thailand (August 1991)	1.4	2.5

Sources: *Finland*: Statistics Finland, Labour Force Statistics 1991, Helsinki 1992; *Sweden*: Statistiska Centralbyran, Arbetskraftsundersökninge i maj 1994, 1994; *Canada*: Statistics Canada, The labour force, May 1994; *Spain*: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Encuesta de Población Activa, Resultados detallados, Cuarto Trimestre de 1993, Madrid, 1994, *Thailand*: National Statistical Office, Report of the Labour Force Survey, August 1991; *Venezuela*: Oficina Central de Estadística e Informática, Indicadores de la Fuerza de Trabajo, Primer Semestre 1993, Diciembre 1993.

The ability to reflect the particular working patterns of men and women is a major constraint of national definitions of employment, which are generally based on a reference week. These definitions provide an instant image of the labour force situation at a given time. Statistics derived from these definitions are useful to monitor current changes over time when the dominant form of employment is regular, full-time, non-agricultural, paid employment. They are less useful to cover seasonal and occasional work. Since women tend, more than men, to work in such activities often on an intermittent basis throughout the year, alternating household non-market activities with economic activities, employment and unemployment measured for a short reference period will only capture their reality partially.

One way of identifying all activities and thus all workers is to repeat the measurement at sufficiently frequent intervals. Only a few countries are able to do so, however: of 84 countries which reported to the ILO having carried out a household-based survey to measure employment and unemployment, only 12 carry out monthly surveys, and only an additional 24 countries carry out quarterly or three-times-a-year surveys (ILO, 1990) and (Chernyshev, 1997).

Another way is to define employment and unemployment over a long period such as one year, ideally the same as the production accounting year. This definition might include all persons who experienced some employment or unemployment anytime during the year, identifying all spells of employment and unemployment and their duration over the year. National statistics on the experience of employment or unemployment over a year exist for a number of countries, but tend to identify the *predominant* activity over that period, as this is the recommendation made in international guidelines. This measure conceals seasonal patterns of work and excludes persons who, while working part of the year, are inactive most of the year.

Such workers, many of whom, unfortunately, are women, will then be classified as usually inactive.

5.2.2. Unemployment

Unemployment statistics have conventionally been used to assess the performance of the labour market. They are instrumental to design, implement and evaluate full employment policies and programmes and are therefore very important in public debate. It is vital to identify all men and women who exert a pressure on the labour market for jobs, and to describe their characteristics with great care. The importance for gender concerns is that women tend to do different types of jobs than men and to work in different industries. As a consequence, they are affected differently by labour market changes. The criteria on which the unemployment definition is based are designed to reflect the behaviour of persons who want to work and are ready to do so. Because women and men behave differently when they are out of work, this also has an effect on how they relate to these criteria and on the number of men and women actually identified as unemployed.

Generally, national definitions of unemployment are designed to reflect a situation of total lack of work. It is limited to persons who during a short reference period of one week were not in employment, were currently available for work and were actively seeking work. Actively seeking work is central in most national definitions of unemployment, and is also an indication of search for information on the labour market. This criterion is easy to apply for persons who are looking for paid employment in situations where the channels for the exchange of information on the labour market exist and are widely used. It is less easy to apply to persons who are looking for self-employment or for paid-employment where labour exchanges are limited to the cities and local work opportunities are so limited that workers already know that none exist. It will be particularly difficult to apply where workers use informal channels rather than contacting public or private exchanges and newspaper employment advertisements. Such workers may not necessarily consider that their activities represent "seeking work" and may therefore not report having sought work when asked about this in a household survey interview (UN, 1995). Furthermore, the seeking work criterion will not be useful for those who want to work but do not "seek" work at all, either because they believe that there is not work available which corresponds to their skills, because they have restricted labour mobility, face discrimination or face structural, social and cultural barriers to look for work. These workers, however, are generally available to start working and many would tend to react positively to a concrete opportunity to work. Many of these workers are women (UN, 1995).

Unemployment-related statistics would incorporate gender issues more fully if they reflected these type of constraints that women in particular tend to have. One way of doing this is to identify all persons not in employment who want to work and are available to work, even if they do not seek work. The Labour Force Survey of the European Community identifies this population group, see Table 2 below. In 1997, for example, for the 15 countries covered in their statistics, 8.9 million persons were identified as being economically inactive but willing to work. 66% of them were women. If they had been included among the unemployed, the female unemployment rate would have increased by over 6 percentage points, from 12% to 19% while for men the increase would have been less than 3 percentage points, from 10% to 12%.

Table 2. Population 15 years and above by activity status in the 15 EC countries (in millions), 1997

	Total	Women (%)
Employed	150.1	41.9
Unemployed	18.1	48.8
Inactive, of which:	135.7	63.2
want to work but do not seek	8.9	65.8
seek work but are not available	1.7	57.4

Source: Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 1998 - 5

Another area where national definitions could better address gender issues relates to the choice of the period during which workers should be available to start work. When they are required to be available for work *during the reference period*, as recommended by international guidelines, persons who need to reorganize other commitments before starting work, such as for child care, housing, etc. and who therefore are not available for work during the short reference period but soon afterwards, are excluded from unemployment. Predictably, women would be important in this group. Apart from not being able to work immediately, these persons are very similar to the "core" unemployed population, however. Various countries have acknowledged this coverage problem and have expanded the "availability" period to the two weeks *following and including* the reference period. Even when such an extended period is used, women tend to be, more than men, excluded from unemployment by this criterion, probably because this period is still not long enough to consider their particular constraints. Table 2 above shows for the 15 EC countries, which use an extended two-week availability period, that more than half of those who seek work but are not available within two weeks are women.

5.2.3. Underemployment

Underemployment statistics complement statistics on unemployment to understand the shortcomings of the labour market more fully. *Time-related underemployment* (or visible underemployment, as it has conventionally been termed) reflects situations in which full employment, in terms of hours of work, is not achieved. In analogy with unemployment, it reflects the case of persons in employment who exert a pressure on the labour market to work additional hours. While national definitions of time-related underemployment vary considerably, they tend to include persons in employment who during a short reference period were willing and available to work additional hours and worked less hours than a certain threshold.

The threshold used to exclude persons from time-related underemployment usually represents a level of full-time employment as established in legislation or usual practices in establishments. Workers who already work hours corresponding to the full-time threshold or above are considered to be fully employed and are therefore not in time-related underemployment, even if they are willing and available to work additional hours. Unfortunately, in many countries the chosen threshold does not

reflect full employment. Many workers are in fact compelled to work beyond those hours in order to earn a livelihood (CEPAL, 1996). The full employment level for such workers is higher than the threshold usually chosen by policy makers. Most of these workers are men, as Table 3 below shows. In order to identify these workers and evaluate the impact of their exclusion on the measure of time-related underemployment, international guidelines recommend that, as far as possible, countries should provide information on the manner in which the threshold relating to hours of work was determined, and on the number and characteristics of workers who worked beyond this threshold but who nevertheless were willing and available to work additional hours (ILO, 1998c).

Table 3. Employed persons who were willing and available to work additional hours, by hours actually worked and sex, Japan and Iceland

Another issue which needs to be evaluated in national definitions of time-related underemployment relates to whether workers are required to *actively seek* to work additional hours or only to *be willing* to work additional hours. As in unemployment, many workers do not take steps to seek to work additional hours even though they want them and are ready to work additional hours if the opportunity to do so arose. Those who want to work more hours in their current jobs, will know whether the possibility to do so exists and will or will not seek additional work accordingly. And those who have recently started to work short hours may have not had time to organise themselves to seek more hours of work even though they want them and are available to work additional hours. Workers in unorganised markets and persons subject to discrimination may not consider it possible to find more hours. Some persons may have family constraints which hinder them from seeking work or be secondary earners who are not able to move to regions where such additional work is available. As with unemployment statistics, women who want to work additional hours seek additional work less frequently than men, as Table 4 below illustrates, most probably because of their assigned family constraints. National definitions which are based on the criterion of "actively seeking" to work additional hours will tend therefore to exclude more women than men.

Table 4. Employed persons who sought additional work as compared to those who want additional work, by sex. Australia and Japan

	labour force ('000)	<i>persons who sought additional work (%)</i>	<i>persons who wanted additional work (%)</i>
AUSTRALIA	8766.1	3.1	5.7
men	5012.0	2.3	4.2
women	3754.1	3.8	8.3
JAPAN	65020	0.6	1.5
men	38840	0.4	0.8
women	26180	1.1	2.4

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, September 1995 Underemployed Workers Australia, April 1996, and Japan Statistics Bureau, Report on the Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey, February 1995. **Definitions:** Australia includes persons who usually work 35 hours or more per week; Japan includes persons who worked less than 35 hours the reference week and wanted to work more hours in an additional job or in another job.

As with the definition of unemployment, another issue that needs to be considered in relation to gender distinctions relates to the period during which workers are required to be available to start working additional hours. A period of transition which is too short will not take into consideration workers who need to leave one job in order to start another job with increased hours of work, nor the period needed to make arrangements for child or adult care, an aspect which affects women more than men.

5.2.4. Employment in the informal sector

Statistics on employment in the informal sector contribute significantly to recognising the contribution of all workers, and of women workers in particular, to the economy. Conventional statistics of employment tend to omit or underestimate the number of persons engaged in this sector, because informal activities are of a nature that evades measurement, which depends on the effective operation of administrative registrations and formal organisational structures, and because priority has conventionally been given to measuring large-scale industrial enterprises which are assumed to make the greatest contribution to economic development. Still, very few countries produce separate statistics on the informal sector.

National definitions of the informal sector vary widely, using different criteria to identify informal sector units. Some define them as units with less than a certain number of paid workers, others as units which are not registered as a corporation or with tax authorities, others as units which do not register their employees (i.e., do not pay the relevant taxes and social security contributions on behalf of the employees, employees are not covered by standard labour legislation), and others as different combinations of the above criteria. It is important to inquire whether national definitions include only persons whose main job is in the informal sector, or whether those whose secondary job is in the informal sector are also included. Only in the

latter case will persons whose main job is outside of the informal sector, perhaps in the government or in agriculture, be taken into account. Such situations may be more common among men than among women.

It is also important to evaluate whether particular activities are excluded, as recommended by international guidelines, even if units otherwise satisfy the criteria for inclusion in the informal sector. Women can be important in many of these situations, and thus the exclusion of these activities would result in a significant underestimation of women workers. For example, national statistics on the informal sector may exclude *agricultural activities*, even when they satisfy the criteria for inclusion, because they require special measurement instruments adapted to the particular characteristics of agricultural enterprises, and extended coverage of the survey to rural areas, which would increase the cost of the exercise significantly, particularly in countries where agriculture employs a significant proportion of the labour force. The informal sector definition may also exclude units *exclusively engaged in the production for own final use*. Most workers involved in these units are women. The reason provided for this exclusion is that the objective of these activities is not to generate employment or cash income but to provide for the needs of the household. They are employed but not in the informal sector. If they were treated like other workers, however, they would certainly satisfy the criteria for inclusion in the informal sector (of registration and size of establishment). A similar reasoning may be applied when excluding *paid domestic workers*. These workers, such as maids, watchmen, drivers and gardeners, are engaged by households. But the objective of households is not to generate employment or income but to provide for their own needs. Therefore, the employing households are not considered to belong to the informal sector and neither are the employees engaged by them. A slightly different situation is that of *homeworkers with paid employment jobs*, who may also be excluded from the scope of the informal sector on the grounds that their employer belongs to the formal sector.

5.2.5. Child labour

Statistics on child labour are essential to implement, monitor and evaluate programmes to combat harmful forms of child labour. They include information on the number of child workers and their characteristics, like for example on the age when they first worked, their living conditions (e.g. whether with or without parents), their reasons for working, what they do and where they work (i.e., occupation and industry), whether they have experienced abuse and exploitation and of what type, issues of safety and health, whether they attend school and problems associated with this, how their parents and employers perceive the work of these children, and how the children themselves perceive their work, and finally the hours they work, their schedules and their earnings (Ashagrie 1998).

Statistics on child labour involve the measurement of basically all labour topics. As a consequence, they will also suffer from the difficulties inherent in each topic. Most notably, they suffer from the omission of children engaged in unpaid domestic activities. To be useful, statistics on child labour should identify all persons below a set age, engaged in activities which handicap their future and enforce the vicious cycle of poverty. This includes child workers who are hindered from going to school, who work in activities which are hazardous or strenuous for their health, which hinder their normal growth and development, which are humiliating or which limit their rights. Data on child labour generally show that child labour is more common among boys

than among girls. This fact, however, is largely due to the restricted scope of labour statistics, where the activities included for the measurement of child labour are limited to "economic" activities, i.e., those which are being accounted for in national production statistics. While many children who are engaged in domestic work are hindered from going to school, the number and reality of these children is not being described. Current international guidelines on the measurement of child labour have recognised this fact and recommend including (all or a subset of) children engaged in unpaid household activities, including the production of goods and services to be consumed by their households. This inclusion, once again, has a greater impact on girls than on boys: when these activities are included in the scope of child labour, then the number of girl workers exceeds that of boys (Ashagrie 1998). This is clearly a gender issue.

5.3. Definitions on characteristics of workers

Under this heading are described the main characteristics of workers covered by labour statistics and for which international definitions exist, including information on the workers' occupation, status in employment, their income from employment, working time, labour disputes and occupational injuries.

In contrast with definitions on the size and structure of the labour force, definitions on workers' characteristics are not based on what workers do or intend to do. They describe a trait or aspect of workers, often in alignment with the common understanding of the term. In practice, they depend to a large extent on the measurement instrument used.

5.3.1. Occupation

The description of workers' occupations is vital to understanding gender differences, because men and women generally have very different jobs. In order to facilitate the study of the vast number of occupations which exist in an economy, occupational information is organised through a "classification". Most national classifications of occupations used for statistical purposes are either designed along the lines of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), or allow comparisons with it. The current version of ISCO (ISCO-88) was adopted by the 14th ICLS in 1987. It is a hierarchical classification which organises occupations at four levels according to the skills required to carry out the jobs classified to them. The first level of the classification contains 10 major groups, the second 28 sub-major groups, the third 116 minor groups and the fourth 390 occupational groups (ILO 1990b).

To detect the extent of gender differences in occupations a national classification of occupations needs to be used at very detailed levels. Very broad occupational groups will hide occupational segregation between men and women. For example, major group 3 in ISCO-88 includes all technicians and associate professionals, and seems to be very feminized in many countries. However, most occupational groups within this major group are in fact dominated by men. Women are concentrated in a few large occupational groups, e.g., in teaching and nursing (Anker 1998). Similarly, analysing the managerial group as a whole will not reveal the fact that women tend to be concentrated in managing small enterprises, while most of those managing larger companies are men. Unfortunately, even very detailed occupational groups may hide segregation between men and women, as the tasks and duties of the same occupation

may vary between men and women. This is notably the case of cleaning occupations (Messing, 1998) and sales occupations (Dixon-Muller, Anker 1990).

Another aspect which a classification of occupations needs to consider if it wishes to capture gender distinctions is whether the occupations included at each level of the classification are similar to the same extent according to the criteria specified. For example, the occupational group "drivers" includes a more heterogeneous set of specialisations within it (covering car drivers, bus drivers, train drivers, etc.) than the group "cooks". It should therefore be at a higher level of aggregation in the occupational classification. Generally, it is. Similarly, the group "secretaries" encompasses a more heterogeneous set of specialisations than "data entry clerks". The former should therefore be at a more aggregate level in the classification. Generally, it is not, however. It is important to evaluate whether appropriate distinctions are made in occupational groups where women tend to be numerous, e.g., in clerical, agricultural and elementary occupations, to the same extent as in occupations where men are numerous, e.g., in manufacturing. Generally, female occupations tend to be considered too "general", because they have a multitude of tasks which are very much linked to general skills (literacy, numeracy and interpersonal contacts and traditional housekeeping activities), or to be considered too "new", "variable" or not sufficiently uniform to be well documented to allow further subdivisions. This may contrast with distinctions made among male occupations, where specialisation is common and tasks are generally well documented, e.g., in collective agreements negotiated between workers and employers.

In this respect, ISCO-88 has improved the description of the type of work done by workers, and by women workers in particular, by subdividing many occupational groups which used to cluster large and heterogeneous occupations into more detailed and homogeneous groups and thus harmonizing the level of resolution, or detail, at each level in the classification. Box 4 below provides examples of such occupational groups where women are numerous.

Box 4. Examples of large and heterogenous occupational groups which have been subdivided by ISCO-88

ISCO-68 (3 digit group)	ISCO-88 (4 digit group)
Stenographers, typists and teletypists (3-21)	Stenographers and typists (4111)
	word-processor operators (4112)
	secretaries (4115)
Receptionists and travel agency clerks (3-94)	travel agency clerks (4221)
	receptionists and information clerks (4222)
Nursing aid (5.99-40)	institution-based care workers (5132)
	home-based personal care workers (5133)
Salesmen, shop assistants and demonstrators (4-51)	fashion and other models (5210)
	shop salespersons and demonstrators (5220)
	stall and market salespersons (5230)
Street vendors, canvassers and newsvendors (4-52)	street food vendors (9111)
	street vendors of non-food products (9112)
	door-to-door and telephone salespersons (9113)
General farmers (6-11.10)	mixed crop growers (6114)
	subsistence agricultural occupations (6210)

5.3.2. Status in employment

A detailed description of the type of contracts workers have (i.e., their status in employment) has become very important in view of the steady decline of regular wage employment and the (re-)emergence of other forms of contracts, such as casual and temporary/seasonal employment and self-employment. This is true also in countries where regular paid employment continues to be the dominant form of employment contract. From a gender perspective, it is important to describe men's and women's status in employment adequately in order to understand the interaction between them.

National classifications tend to converge towards the International Standard Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), which was last revised in 1993 (ILO, 1998). ICSE-93 classifies jobs according to the type of explicit or implicit contract of employment of the person with other persons or organizations. It can also classify persons in relation to their past, present or futures jobs. Two criteria are used to reflect the contract of employment. The first is the *economic risk*, an element of which is the strength of the attachment between the person and the job. The second is the *type of*

authority over establishments and other workers which the job incumbents have or will have.

At a first stage, ICSE-93 distinguishes between two main types of jobs: jobs in *paid employment* and in *self-employment*. In *paid employment* jobs, remuneration is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the unit, while in *self-employment* jobs, the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits, and persons make the operational decisions or have responsibility over the enterprise. At a second stage, ICSE-93 identifies six categories of jobs: (a) employees, i.e., persons who hold paid employment jobs, (b) employers, (c) own-account workers, (d) members of producers' cooperatives, (e) contributing family workers and (f) workers not classifiable by status. Jobs of types (b) to (e) are self-employment jobs.

Data show that non-salaried women tend to be classified as "contributing family workers" while non-salaried men tend to be classified as "own account workers" or "employers" (ILO, 1999). This may be reflecting reality, but it may also be due to biased reporting and misclassification. In particular, when women work in association with, and on an equal footing as, their husbands in a family enterprise, it is important to evaluate how they are classified. According to the International Classification of Status in Employment, adopted by the 15th ICLS in 1993, ICSE-93, they are *partners* of their husbands, and should therefore be classified in the same status in employment category, i.e. as "own account workers" or "employers". In national statistics, however, there is a tendency for women in these situations to be classified as contributing (or unpaid) family workers (Dixon-Muller, Anker 1990).

Another issue relates to the number and type of status in employment categories which are distinguished at the national level. Most countries only distinguish between "employees", "employers" and "own account workers" (ILO, 1998d). Fewer countries identify separately "contributing family workers". The first three are very heterogeneous categories, comprising a diverse set of employment situations. For example, in addition to regular employees, the category "employees" includes outworkers (also known as home-based workers), casual employees, work-gang members, etc. Women tend to be very important in the latter forms of employment. Similarly, own account workers include subsistence workers, share croppers, members of producers cooperatives, etc., where women in particular can be numerous. Only a few countries identify separately one or more of these subcategories.

5.3.3. Income

The need to guarantee adequate returns to labour is a fundamental right of workers and is a central issue in collective agreements and labour laws. Statistics on employment-related income can also be used to analyse the capacity of different economic activities to generate income. There is a pervasive difference between men's and women's level of income in all countries (ILO 1998a) even after correcting for their hours worked and level of education (Dixon-Muller, Anker 1990). It is essential therefore to measure the returns to labour of men and women as completely and accurately as possible.

Worker coverage is an important concern with respect to income statistics, due mainly to the use of establishment surveys: in many cases, not only is income data limited to workers in paid employment only but also only to those in the modern sector and even then excluding managerial staff, outworkers, subcontracted workers, commission agents and sometimes even apprentices. As women and men are not

evenly distributed among the groups excluded, all these exclusions will have a very important effect for gender comparisons, as well as for the understanding of the distribution of income among women.

Coverage of income components is another issue which has consequences for gender distinctions. Generally, national definitions follow the international definition of earnings adopted by the 12th ICLS, which includes the remuneration received by employees directly from their employers at regular intervals for time worked, for time not worked granted with pay and for bonuses, gratuities, etc. While this definition of earnings has been widely used in many countries of the world, it is an incomplete indicator of income. It excludes certain wage and non-wage benefits such as social security benefits, profit-related pay and irregular payments, which may tend to be significant for many workers and where differences between men and women may be important. Most importantly, it excludes the remuneration of the self-employed, where, again, differences between men and women may exist and be considerable.

A complete account of all receipts resulting from employment is provided by the definition of employment-related income, adopted by the 16th ICLS in 1998. This definition encompasses all earnings, and includes the direct returns to paid employment and those to self-employment, whether at regular or irregular intervals. It also includes those social security benefits received by virtue of workers' employment status from the employer, from social security and insurance schemes or from the state (ILO, 1998a). Employment-related income can take the form of cash, kind, services, benefits or entitlements to deferred benefits. As the measurement of income as defined above is very complex, countries will generally only identify a subset of income components. It is important therefore to inquire about the types of income from paid and self employment which are covered by the national statistics and whether they can be separately identified, as women and men may not receive them to the same extent.

In particular, when income statistics include social security benefits (e.g. family allowances and compensation for medical expenditures) received by virtue of workers' employment status, as recommended in international guidelines, a worker's income will include all such benefits relating to his or her dependents. Similarly, when income statistics include the income of self-employed workers, the workers' income will include the income generated by the economic activities of his or her contributing (unpaid) family members. The importance for gender is that men tend to be the primary earners of their households, so it can be expected that these income components will be more important for men than for women. Therefore, income statistics that include such components will probably show a greater disparity between men and women in employment than statistics which do not.

It is also important for gender distinctions to know whether income statistics includes estimates for payments in kind; whether they include the income from secondary jobs; and whether they include separate estimates of the value of the work of contributing (unpaid) family workers as is recommended in international guidelines, and of the value of the work of other unpaid workers, including those in subsistence and non-market activities. Such estimates recognise that unpaid work, most of which is carried out by women, has an economic value. They not only assign a value to the unpaid work of many workers in the world but they also allow to adjust the income of self-employed workers, which otherwise includes this income when they work with the help of contributing family workers, and will as a consequence tend to reduce the

differences in the measured contributions of men and women to the economy or their households.

5.3.4. Working time

Statistics of working time are important to monitor working time regulations and as tools for economic analysis, to estimate labour volume and to calculate economic indicators such as the average hourly earnings, the average labour cost per unit of time and labour productivity. The comparison of the hours worked by men and women is useful to provide a more accurate measure of their participation in the labour market. Statistics on the number of persons employed has often been criticized for being too broad and for giving equal weight to persons who work full time and those who work only a few hours during the week. Women work on average less hours than men (on economic activities) and as a consequence a measure of volume of employment based on the hours they work will decrease their relative participation in the labour market as compared to a measure based on head counts, thus providing a more valid reflection of reality⁴.

Generally, two types of working time statistics are collected by countries: the "hours actually worked", relating to time worked during a specific reference period, and the "usual hours of work", relating to usual working schedules. As with income statistics, coverage of workers is a critical issue. Available statistics of working time, as those of income, may only cover a subgroup of paid workers, and often exclude the self-employed and paid workers in small establishments, or those who work in large firms but who are peripheral to it: outworkers, casual employees, or who work in management.

As to the type of working time components included, it is important to know whether the definition covers all time spent actually working or only time which is paid; time spent waiting or standing-by, time spent on short breaks, on long breaks such as for lunch; and whether it includes time spent outside the workplace on particular activities, such as professional training, work at home, attending meetings and travelling to, from or in relation to work. Many such periods of time may be more commonly experienced by self-employed workers and in general by workers who work near or at their home, whose personal activities are carried out intermittently or simultaneously with working activities. As these work situations may be experienced to a different degree by women and by men, it can be expected that their inclusion or exclusion will have a significant effect on the type of gender differences which are observed.

To make possible valid gender comparisons in working time statistics, it is important to separately identify the various working time components (e.g., overtime, absence from work, work at home, travelling time, etc.), as they may be experienced by women and men to different degrees.

5.3.5. Industrial disputes

⁴ It should be remembered, however, that much of women's work remains unrecognized and unvalued, given the restricted definition of "work" which excludes from its scope many unpaid activities carried out for the consumption of their household. If these activities were included in the scope of economic activity, and the hours spent in them included in the measure of hours of work, then women's share of working hours would be greater than men's (UNDP, 1995).

Statistics of industrial disputes are useful to monitor the climate of industrial relations and to develop policies and programmes to promote industrial and social peace. Industrial disputes relate to actions in which workers participate, as opposed to actions in which other population groups, such as consumers, students, etc., are involved. Three broad forms of industrial disputes can be identified (ILO, 1993): *strikes*, which imply a loss of working time and is initiated by workers; *lockouts*, which also imply a loss of working time and is initiated by employers; and *other actions*, which will reduce production without a loss of working time through actions such as go-slow, working to rule, overtime bans, boycotts, or withdrawals of other forms of cooperation. Such statistics are useful to analyse men's and women's behaviour in relation to industrial action. Women are said to be more passive and less unionised than men, to be indirectly rather than directly implicated in industrial action and to be in industries which are less prone to industrial disputes. Again, the coverage of workers and of labour disputes in the statistics are the issues to be evaluated.

Statistics of strikes and lockouts may or may not cover legal or official actions as well as those which are not. They may or may not require a minimum duration or a minimum number of workers involved for inclusion in the statistics. In the latter case, they will include disputes that happen in small establishments and allow adequate comparison of total time lost due to industrial disputes, e.g., between industries or countries which experience few long strikes and those which experience many short ones. The statistics may also include only workers "directly" involved, i.e. those stopping work; or include (and separately identify) also those "indirectly involved", i.e. who do not take part in the action but who work in the establishments concerned -- and, in the case of lockouts, also those self-employed in the groups involved -- and who are prevented from working because of the dispute. This last group of workers would include, for example, outworkers (or home-based workers) in paid employment and casual and seasonal employees, who would normally not take part in a strike but whose work would be affected by such action happening in the establishment where they work. It can be expected that the more restricted the coverage of the statistics on strikes and lockouts, the less it will be valid for portraying gender differences in industrial action. Women may tend to be more represented in small establishments, and to be, more than men, indirectly affected by industrial action.

5.3.6. Occupational injuries

Statistics on occupational injuries and diseases are very important when analysing gender differences in the labour market. Men and women tend to do very different jobs, and therefore face very different hazards: men tend to be in occupations where accidents are more visible and obvious while women tend to be in occupations which are more stressful, less autonomous and which contain more repetitive tasks. This has helped create the image that women's jobs are safe, clean and easy. However, while women tend to be less exposed to injuries than men, they tend to be more exposed to diseases (Messing 1998). As a consequence, it is important to analyse statistics not only of occupational injuries but of occupational diseases as well. Also, the characteristics of injuries and diseases and the circumstances which give rise to them are useful to differentiate patterns between men and women.

To evaluate the coverage of statistics on occupational injuries it is important to identify whether there is a minimum duration of work days lost for an injury to be included. Even when all injuries which last at least one workday in addition to the day

in which the accident happened are included, as the international guidelines recommend (ILO, 1998c), the situation of workers, typically women, who work in pain due to small accidents but who do not lose any single day of work, is disregarded (Messing 1998).

6. Measurement methodologies

Labour statistics are obtained from three types of sources: household-based surveys, establishment-based surveys and administrative records. The figures they generate have distinct features, regarding coverage of workers and work situations, as well as the flexibility they allow to obtain the type of information that will be useful to portray gender distinctions. All these aspects affect the ability of the resulting statistics to reveal gender distinctions. It is important therefore to be aware of these differences in order to understand the strengths and limitations of each source and to interpret the data correctly.

6.1. Establishment-based surveys

Establishment-based surveys generally obtain the statistical information from individual establishments' records about individual workers or groups of workers. When establishments do not keep records (e.g. in the case of operators of small informal sector units), these surveys may need to obtain the information by interviewing the business operators directly. Establishment's records provide information which is accurate and consistent over time on employment, earnings and hours of work over a specified period of time, which can be one year as required for the operation of the establishment and for reporting of its activities to owners and authorities. However, these records may not correspond to the requirements of the definitions of the statistics, e.g., by having coverage limitations that restrict their usefulness for fully incorporating gender concerns.

Rarely do records kept by establishments or administrative agencies cover the whole population, and the groups excluded are generally those where women, more than men, are numerous, thus reducing the usefulness of these sources to reflect gender distinctions. Often, the statistics from establishment surveys tend to cover only regular employees who work in medium size and large establishments. They may leave out managerial staff and may keep less detailed records for peripheral workers, such as outworkers, part-time worker, casual employees and workers contracted by temporary agencies. This is a serious handicap in countries where a proportionately large share of the labour force is working in micro-enterprises, or on casual, subcontracted and other non-regular forms of paid employment.

Furthermore, statistics obtained from records kept by establishments and by other agencies are limited by the type and range of information that can be obtained. Establishment records are designed to be useful for payment and attendance purposes and not for statistics. The definitions used by these records will therefore not be equivalent to the statistical definitions aimed at, as Box 5 below illustrates and there is little that can be done to adjust the resulting data. Also, these records may not keep information about those characteristics which are useful to understand gender issues adequately. For example, they may not register information on the age of the workers, their level of education or other descriptive variables. They may not even differentiate between men and women workers!

Box 5. Examples of the type of information recorded by establishments about their workers

- regarding employment, they will record occupied posts, not the number of employees in the establishment: a person holding two jobs may therefore be counted twice in establishment surveys, with the corresponding impact on gender differences if multiple job holders are mostly of one sex;
 - regarding working time, they will record the hours worked by employees as established by their internal attendance or payment practices: if commuting time is paid for some of its employees, it will probably be recorded as working time even if the statistical definition excludes it; inversely, if time spent preparing the workplace is not paid for, it will probably not be recorded, even if the statistical definition includes it. As each establishment may have different regulations and payment practices, working time data will not necessarily be comparable between establishments or groups of workers and will not be consistent with the statistical definition aimed at. In practice, establishments provide information on the hours of work stipulated in workers' contracts of employment corrected for overtime (as registered) and leave entitlement, and perhaps for "authorised" or registered absences from work. The impact for gender distinctions depends on the whether recorded overtime and absence is experienced mostly by men or by women;
 - regarding income, depending on e.g., accounting conventions and reporting procedures to tax and social security authorities, they will record regular payments to employees, but may exclude one-time payments, such as profit-related bonuses, 13th month payments, etc.. The impact for describing gender differences will be important if excluded components are accrued predominantly by men or by women.
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6.2. Informal sector surveys

Informal sector surveys are specially designed to obtain information on small establishments. Because these are difficult to identify and have a high turnover rate which renders very difficult the creation and maintenance of directories normally used as a sampling frame, these special surveys are generally carried out in two stages. The first stage establishes a sampling frame and generally uses a household-based approach, to identify informal sector operators and units. The second stage uses an establishment-based approach and obtains information from the establishment operators identified through the first stage.

Depending on the legal framework in a country, informal sector units will tend to be on the margin of illegality, so it is expected that a certain amount of under-reporting is inevitable. This may have a greater impact on the identification of men operators than on women operators, who seem to be more open in declaring the existence of their informal sector activities. On the other side, it is important to evaluate whether the listing operation which identifies informal sector operators redresses the fact that women's economic units tend to be more "invisible" and smaller in scale, and that women tend to be seen by others, and by themselves, as other than

breadwinners. Otherwise, there may be a tendency to underenumerate women's economic units and activities.

6.3. Administrative records

Administrative records contain information recorded as part of the administrative functions of an agency, such as employment exchange offices, insurance companies, social security institutions, tax authorities or labour inspectorates. The information recorded can relate to events (such as registrations, occupational injuries, strikes, etc.) or to physical units and their characteristics (such as insured persons and their income, occupation and hours of work, or registered business and their size and industry).

The use of administrative records as basis for statistics has the great advantage of not requiring additional data collection procedures. They are also able to provide information about all units in the population covered by the agency's operations. Statistics can therefore be compiled for the smallest geographical areas and population groups identified in the information registered. Furthermore, they may be able to provide longitudinal information for long reference periods, if units are given unique identifications in the registers.

As with data stemming from establishments' records, however, data from administrative records have coverage limitations, and this may limit their usefulness for gender distinctions. The data kept by administrative bodies are not collected for statistical purposes but for an administrative procedure. Therefore, there are important differences between the statistical definitions targeted and the actual definition used in the registers, and the type of information recorded may not be useful or sufficient to identify gender differences. Some records do not even compile information on the sex of workers.

Additionally, administrative statistics will only cover persons covered by the work of the agencies. In many countries, this coverage may be very low, thus reducing the usefulness of this source. As a general rule, administrative records will tend to cover regular full-time employees in the formal sector. Other workers, such as self-employed workers, casual and seasonal employees, outworkers and sometimes even part-time workers, are frequently not covered to the same extent, see Box 6. Given that women are very important in all of these groups of workers, administrative records are poor sources to fully reflect their contribution and characteristics in the economy.

Box 6. Examples of worker coverage of labour statistics stemming from administrative records

- statistics on employment from insurance records will include only those workers who are insured;
- statistics on unemployment and underemployment stemming from records kept by employment offices will only cover persons (whether employed or not) who register when they seek work. Similarly, records about the beneficiaries of unemployment insurance will provide information for persons who have the right to claim benefits when not working or for employed persons who have the right to claim benefits when working less hours than their contractual hours;
- statistics on occupational injuries are limited to injuries which are reported or compensated, depending on whether the agencies providing the information deal with occupational accident reporting as reported by labour inspectorates or with compensation schemes. It may be, furthermore, that the administrative procedure of compensation schemes discriminates against women, thus under reporting their actual numbers: the fact that women tend to be in precarious employment situations more than men makes them more vulnerable to claim them (Messing 1998);
- statistics on industrial disputes provided by services concerned with labour relations, workers' and employers' organisations or strikes notices, are generally restricted to legal strikes which involve a large number of workers and which last many days, and tend to cover only workers directly involved, i.e, those actively taking part in an industrial dispute. Workers indirectly involved would be excluded, leaving out important groups of workers where women are important. Reports may not distinguish separately the different types of workers involved or affected, etc., e.g., by sex or age group.

6.4. Household-based surveys

Household-based surveys obtain information directly from workers or from other household members answering on their behalf, through replies to a standard questionnaire. They can enumerate the whole population (population censuses) or a sample of it (household sample surveys). Unlike statistics from establishment-based surveys and from administrative records, statistics from household-based surveys can cover all workers, including the self-employed, casual workers, unpaid family workers, outworkers and paid workers in small production units. Given that these are groups where women are prominent, it is the ideal source to reflect gender concerns in labour statistics⁵. Household-based surveys can also provide compatible information for a greater number of subjects than other sources, including employment, unemployment

⁵ While household-based surveys are able to cover the whole population, sometimes, for practical reasons, they exclude from their scope the armed forces and other persons living in collective houses and institutions. The impact of excluding the armed forces on size of the labour force and its characteristics is greater for men than for women, since men are more numerous than women in the armed forces. The impact of excluding other collective households may be particularly important in countries where members of religious orders or seasonal migrant labourers are common, as they tend to live in collective houses

and underemployment, hours of work, income from paid and self-employment, occupational injuries, union participation, etc., thus allowing their combined analysis.

A significant advantage of household-based surveys over other sources is that, in contrast with information stemming from registers, they allow much more control over the type and range of data collected, the underlying concepts, data item definitions and classifications. The subjects that can be covered are limited only by the capacity and willingness of household members to provide the information (e.g., information about difficult or sensitive subjects, and about far removed events may be particularly difficult). Furthermore, the measurement can be made as independent as possible from the respondents' own perception in that the classification of persons to a particular category (e.g., a particular occupation or a particular activity status) can be determined on the basis of combined replies to a sequence of questions related to the criteria that make up the category, rather than on a direct question which requires respondents to classify themselves on the basis of their own understanding of the notions involved. For example, persons can be classified as unemployed on the basis of whether they did something to find work and were available to work (the defining criteria) rather than on whether they thought they were unemployed. Similarly, quantitative information, e.g., on hours of work or income, can be determined on the basis of replies to the elements that compose the measure, instead of on direct questions of the type: "How many hours did you work last week?" or "How much did you earn last month?". The challenge therefore, is to formulate those questions that will allow accurate application of the definition criteria from the answers given.

It can be expected that the more detached the measurement is from workers' perceptions of their situation, the higher the chance that women will receive equal statistical treatment, i.e., that they will have the same chance as men of being classified in a particular category when they satisfy the criteria for inclusion. This implies posing more than one question to measure each variable. Box 7 below presents some issues that may be useful to consider when evaluating the questionnaire from a gender perspective. Unfortunately, in many national household-based surveys this flexibility is not sufficiently exploited, given the need to limit overall costs and response burden by restricting the size of the questionnaire and the length of the interview.

In addition, the lack of reference to written records and the subjective nature of the replies provided by household members can lead to response errors of different kinds. Respondents may not understand or misinterpret the questions being raised, they may forget certain activities or purposely provide incorrect information, especially on sensitive subjects such as income. When household members give information about other members of their households, they may not be fully aware of their activities, in particular if these activities happen on an irregular basis.

Box 7. Gender issues in household-based survey questionnaires

Topic	issues to be considered ...	purpose ...
employment	whether words such as "work" or "economic" are avoided; whether specific questions are used to identify "borderline" activities	identify employed persons who tend to be under reported because their activities do not fit in with the conventional notion of what "work" is, and because the roles assigned to them are not those of the breadwinner, e.g., persons who worked a few hours during the short reference period because they were mainly students, houseworkers or job seekers, persons whose activities are unpaid, are carried out intermittently with other non-economic activities, are casual or seasonal or who carry out a multitude of activities simultaneously)
unemployment	whether questions inquire about specific activities carried out by workers to find work; whether questions that rely on terms such as "seeking work" "looking for work", etc. are avoided	identify persons who actively sought work and were available for work but whose main activity was to be a student, houseworker, etc. (these persons may not consider that they are unemployed); identify persons who looked for work using "informal" channels, such as asking relatives or friends, instead of the more "formal" channels of sending application forms to potential employers or answering newspaper ads
usually active population	whether a month-by-month recall approach is used to obtain information on each of the twelve months of the year	minimize response errors to retrospective questions concerning a long reference period. Response burden will be greater for workers with highly irregular working patterns throughout the year, where women are particularly numerous
occupations	whether questions inquire on the <i>type of work</i> done and the <i>activities carried out in the job</i> , rather than on the person's occupation or job title	identify what workers do in each of their jobs and not what they think their occupation is, i.e., what they have been trained to do or what their job titles indicate. The way men and women describe their activities in the job tends to vary, although there is no evidence that this introduces a gender bias
status in employment	whether response categories include particular groups of workers where women are numerous, such as outworkers, subsistence workers, etc.; whether more than one question is used to identify it	describe employment contracts in more detail; evidence suggests that more than one question is needed to adequately identify the various status in employment categories (ILO, 1998b)
working time	whether questions inquire on the components of working time (hours spent on particular activities, including overtime or on different types of absence or rest periods), instead of using a single question of the type: "How many hours did you work during the week of ...?"	avoid measuring the legal or administrative concept of working time; improve the quality of responses of workers who do not hold full-time regular jobs but perform highly irregular and what is known as atypical types of jobs, including the self-employed, for whom it is more difficult to know clearly when they are working or not because the distinctions between working activities and other activities is blurred
income from employment	whether information is collected for each component of income separately or whether a single question is used	to improve coverage and quality of data. The measurement of income from self-employment is more problematic than the measurement of income from paid employment, given that unincorporated enterprises usually do not keep accounts and the difficult information needed to compute income from self-employment (e.g., on gross output, operating expenses, fixed capital consumption and total labour inputs) needs to be provided by the self-employed persons themselves. Income from employment needs to be measured for long reference periods, thus increasing recall errors, even when a month-by-month recall approach is used to obtain information on each of the twelve months over the year

occupational injuries	whether questions avoid using terms such as "injury" or "accident" which could convey the notion of injuries which have been recognised as such by the establishment or compensation system, or, in its default, whether clear definitions are provided of what is meant by these terms	ensure that workers report all injuries and not only those which have been reported to authorities or compensated by insurance schemes.
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Therefore, the instructions given in interviewers' manuals are also very important to guarantee that borderline and hidden work situations will be properly reflected in the statistics. The training of interviewers should be evaluated on (a) whether it has stressed the need to raise questions and transcribe the replies of household members into the questionnaire without introducing personal perceptions of reality, e.g., in order not to associate housewives with economic inactivity; (b) for those items in the questionnaire which require that the interviewers introduce their interpretation of the replies given, whether they have been provided with adequate explanations, e.g., on how they should interpret the reply of women who work on an equal footing as their husbands in a family enterprise; and (c) whether they have been sensitized to gender issues in particular.

The process of assigning a code to occupational information may introduce gender biases if the same reply is coded differently depending on whether the job incumbent is a man or a woman. For example, a male farmer may tend to be coded in a different occupational group than a female farmer. The same may happen when coding male cleaners as compared to female cleaners. It is therefore important to evaluate whether coders have been given adequate coding tools (indexes and instructions) which illustrate particular situations that could affect the adequate recording of replies and to provide them with a list of common examples.

6.5. Time use surveys

Time use surveys are a specialised type of household-based survey useful to account for the time spent by the population in all types of activities, whether economic or non-economic, during the reference period. There is evidence that time use surveys are able to improve the precision and reduce biases in the measurement of the hours actually worked as compared to general household-based surveys, in particular for workers for whom the distinction between periods of work and other periods is unclear or when such periods are frequently interchanged, such as agriculture workers, other rural workers, homeworkers and the self-employed in general (Niemi 1983). They are also useful to identify multiple and marginal activities in the measurement of employment, and seeking work activities in the measurement of unemployment. They are particularly suitable to identify the number of workers, understood in a large sense, including

not only those in employment but also those who render unpaid services to their households. They are also able to measure total time worked, i.e., time spent on economic and non-economic activities. Additionally, time use surveys are able to throw light on the scheduling of work activities and on the way time is used at work, which may help in understanding segregation between men and women within similar occupations and why women have less chances of being promoted to supervisory positions (Hoffmann, E., Mata, A. 1998).

Indeed, in time use surveys, respondents are not expected to report on their activity status or working time directly, but on the type of activities performed during a short reference period, the context of these activities and the time spent on each of them. Therefore, the classification of activities as "work" or "non-work" is even more detached from respondents' and interviewers' assessments of what "work" and "non-work" is than in conventional household-based surveys. In these surveys, persons are classified as employed or unemployed on the basis of the activities carried out during the reference period, and their working time is calculated as the sum of the time spent on all "work" activities.

The emphasis of most time-use surveys, however, has conventionally been mainly on unpaid domestic activities and other non-market activities. These activities are measured with great detail: respondents are requested to provide information separately for each type of activity and to be extensive in its description; activities are then coded using a wide range of categories. A corresponding level of detail is generally not considered to be so important for those activities which the respondent have considered as "work". For these activities respondents have generally been requested to state only whether they were at work or not. Thus the potentials of time use surveys for providing statistics on gender issues related to many areas of work have not yet been realized.

7. Gender issues in data presentation

The presentation of labour statistics is central to reflect gender concerns. This implies relevant disaggregation by variables which describe the demographic, economic, social and family context of workers. As a basis, all statistics on the number of persons employed, unemployed and economically inactive and their characteristics (e.g., income, hours of work, occupations, etc.) should make it possible to compare men with women. As a minimum, therefore, data collection instruments should be designed so that this distinction is readily available. This means that establishment registers and other administrative records should compile information as a minimum on the sex of persons and that the statistical system should allow for the publication of data disaggregated by sex.

But classification by sex is not enough. Tables and figures on the structure and characteristics of the labour force should also highlight gender differences related to men's and women's different access and control over resources and benefits, their particular needs and constraints, etc. This will help describe differences and similarities in the labour force participation and behaviour of women and men in a more holistic way.

Variables related to men's and women's constraints and needs include the persons' personal and family circumstances such as their age, whether there are children in the household who need care, whether there are adults requiring assistance in the household (e.g., handicapped persons, older members of the family), etc.. All these factors constrain in different ways the time and energy women and men can dedicate to work. In many societies, a person's marital status will also determine their participation in the labour force, and in societies practising polygamy a variable which deserves attention is the rank within the marriage. The type of household (e.g. single parent, female headed, etc.) to which the person belongs should also be used as an explanatory variable.

Variables describing workers' access and control over resources are also useful: their access to credit, equipment and other non-labour inputs; and the workers' level of education and time available to work, etc.

It is also important to analyse the various components that make up a statistical category. Among the employed population, for example, it is informative to distinguish those who "worked" during the reference period from those who were "not at work", and to study their respective characteristics. In relation to the unemployed population it is useful to identify those who only sought work but were not available for work and those who, while being available for work, did not seek work. The analysis of the various components of hours of work and income from employment will certainly throw light on the difference that exist between men and women.

Statistics on the characteristics of workers should be disaggregated by those variables, which in addition to sex, help explain the source of differences between men and women. For example, statistics on income should be distributed at least by workers' hours of work and education level. When income statistics includes social security benefits, comprising family allowances and compensation for medical expenditures of the worker's dependants, it is vital that the statistics be analysed in the context of workers' family situation. Similarly, in order to show a more complete picture of men's and women's occupational injuries, statistics should be provided by hours of work and seniority, and be shown by occupational groups.

While these variables are essential when describing gender differences and similarities in the labour market, few countries present their statistics in this way. One reason may be that only household-based surveys provide sufficient flexibility to produce such statistics. But international guidelines have a role to play. They have never addressed the importance of linking labour market topics with workers' family context. Surely, this is an issue that needs to be addressed soon, if gender is to be a central area of work in the ILO.

8. Concluding remarks: what can the ILO do?

This working paper presents a number of issues to be considered when evaluating the degree to which labour statistics are reflecting differences and similarities between men and women in the labour market, whether inherent or circumstantial. It is meant to assist both users and producers of labour statistics. For users it provides tools to examine, from a gender perspective, the limitations and strengths of the data being analysed and thus analyse the data with greater awareness. For producers of statistics, it identifies steps to take to ensure that gender issues can be well reflected in statistics. Indeed, integrating gender concerns in labour statistics is needed not only to understand the interaction between men and women in the labour market and thus providing a basis for policy makers in promoting equality between them, but also as a means to improve labour statistics in general.

Awareness of gender issues affects each stage of the data collection and production process. This means that when setting up definitions, designing measurement methodologies and deciding on dissemination procedures, the inherent differences between men and women in the labour market are being taken into account and reflected. These differences relate to women's and men's types of contributions, their access and control over resources and benefits and their needs, constraints and opportunities. Labour statistics which incorporate gender issues are, therefore, more than data disaggregated by sex.

Such statistics will cover topics which are relevant to reflect gender distinctions in the world of work. Labour statistics conventionally cover a number of core topics, e.g., those established by ILO Convention 160. However, there are a number of additional topics which are of interest to women or men specifically, or which could help understand their differences more fully. These include topics such as poverty, access to resources, allocation of benefits among family members, part-time work, contingent employment, etc. If gender is to be a key area in the work of the ILO, international guidelines on the measurement of labour statistics may therefore need to be extended beyond the topics covered by this Convention.

The way these topics are defined and measured will have at least three attributes. First, they will ensure the coverage of all workers engaged in the production of goods and services in a society, irrespective of their social status or their sex. They will also integrate the different ways in which men and women view, behave and perform their economic activities. Second, they will adequately cover multiple, seasonal and occasional activities. The use of long reference periods is important here. Indeed, unless employment, unemployment, income, etc., are measured throughout the year, the working patterns of many workers, women in particular, who carry out a multitude of activities and who work

intermittently over the year, will not be well accounted for. Third, they will describe women and men workers' characteristics equally well and at sufficiently detailed levels to make distinctions apparent. For example, they will take care not to cluster women in large, general occupational groups, and will also classify women who are equally committed to the operation of an establishment as their husband to the same status in employment category as them.

Definitions and measurement methodologies can incorporate gender issues by, for example, applying a strategy to deal with work situations which tend to be overlooked or badly reflected, given their nature or the social roles assigned to persons who usually perform them. Presently, however, coverage of workers, even when such a strategy is implemented, remains incomplete. Indeed, the scope of labour statistics excludes unpaid services for own household consumption and by so doing, the contribution of a vast amount of workers to the economy, most of whom are women, is disregarded. Additionally, by virtue of the criteria used in the definition, or the coverage limitations of the data collection method used, certain groups of workers tend to be excluded from the scope of the various topics. Because the sex composition of these groups is generally not uniform, the usefulness of the resulting statistics for reflecting gender differences will be reduced. To improve this situation, international guidelines may be useful on how to better identify and describe those groups of workers that tend to be excluded from statistics.

Finally, the presentation of data which incorporates gender issues will need to adequately portray the factors that cause differences between men and women at work. Pertinent disaggregation is critical. As a minimum, data need to be disaggregated by sex. But this is not enough. Data which relate to women's different contributions, constraints and conditions of work as compared to men's need to be explicitly put forward, in particular data reflecting their family situation (e.g., presence of young children and other members requiring care in the household). At present, few countries do so. Also in this area, international guidelines may need to be developed.

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