



Report II

# Statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization

## 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians

Geneva, 2–11 October 2013



**ICLS/19/2013/2**

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

**Department of Statistics**

Report II

**Statistics of work, employment and  
labour underutilization**

**Report for discussion at the 19th International Conference  
of Labour Statisticians**  
(Geneva, 2–11 October 2013)

Geneva, 2013

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, GENEVA

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2013  
First edition 2013

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with reproduction rights organizations may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit [www.ifro.org](http://www.ifro.org) to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

---

*Report II. Statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization:* Report for discussion at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 2–11 October 2013).

ISSN 1010-500X

Also available in French: *Rapport II, Statistiques du travail, de l'emploi et de la sous-utilisation de la main-d'œuvre*: 19<sup>e</sup> Conférence internationale des statisticiens du travail (Genève, 2-11 octobre 2013), ISSN 0259-3432; and in Spanish: *Informe II, Estadísticas del trabajo, el empleo y la subutilización de la fuerza de trabajo*: Informe para la discusión en la 19.<sup>a</sup> Conferencia Internacional de Estadísticos del Trabajo (Ginebra, 2 a 11 de octubre de 2013), ISSN 1010-5018

labour statistics / work statistics / employment / unemployment / underemployment / labour underutilization / data collecting / international labour standards

*ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

---

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications and electronic products can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address, or by email: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org).

Visit our website: [www.ilo.org/publns](http://www.ilo.org/publns).

---

Printed by the International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland

---

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Part I.....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
Review and update process.....	2
Structure of the report.....	3
2. Current international standards.....	3
Employment.....	5
Unemployment.....	6
Persons not in the labour force.....	7
Time-related underemployment.....	7
3. The rationale for revised standards.....	8
Evolving policy needs.....	8
Changing labour markets and patterns of work.....	9
Limitations of the current standards.....	9
Broad activity scope of employment.....	10
Non-distinguishable forms of work.....	10
Partial activity coverage.....	10
Optional treatment of specific worker groups.....	11
Inconsistencies with related standards.....	11
Insufficient measures of labour underutilization.....	11
Lack of dynamic measures.....	12
Further clarifications required.....	12
4. Scope of revisions and proposed approach.....	13
Scope of revisions.....	13
Proposed approach.....	14
Classification of the population by labour force status.....	16
Expected impact of revisions on labour force statistics.....	17
Measures of labour underutilization.....	18
Components.....	19
Terminology.....	20
Part II.....	21
5. Objectives, reference work concept, units and classifications.....	21
Objectives.....	21
Work.....	22
Statistical units.....	22
Jobs.....	23

Multiple job-holding .....	23
Activity clusters .....	23
Classifications of the population .....	24
Labour force status .....	24
Main work status .....	25
Usual activity status .....	25
6. Forms of work: Definitions and guidelines .....	26
One-hour criterion and reference periods of measurement .....	26
Own-use production work .....	27
Employment .....	30
Volunteer work .....	33
7. Measures of labour underutilization .....	34
Time-related underemployment .....	35
Unemployment .....	36
Defining criteria .....	36
Search for employment .....	36
Availability for employment .....	37
Reference periods of measurement .....	37
Treatment of specific groups .....	38
Duration of unemployment and long-term unemployment .....	38
Potential labour force .....	39
8. Programmes of data collection .....	40
Strategies for data collection frequency and reporting .....	40
Assessment over short and long observation periods .....	41
Population coverage .....	43
Age coverage .....	44
Sources of data .....	44
9. Indicators, tabulations and analysis .....	46
Indicators .....	46
Tabulations and analysis .....	48
10. Data evaluation and dissemination .....	49
Evaluation, and national dissemination .....	50
International reporting .....	50
References .....	51
Appendix .....	55

---

## Part I

### 1. Introduction

1. International statistical standards covering employment, unemployment and related topics are meant to serve two purposes: to provide up-to-date guidelines for the development of national official statistics on the subject; and to promote international comparability of the resulting statistics. Regular revision and update of these standards are needed to ensure that they adequately reflect new developments in labour markets in countries at different stages of development, and that they incorporate identified best practices and advances in statistical methodology so as best to meet emerging policy concerns.
2. The *resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment* (13th ICLS, 1982) is recognized worldwide. Official national statistics for these topics are largely based on these standards. Not only do the standards define who is to be counted as employed and as unemployed, they also set the scope of measurement linked to working conditions, quality of employment, access to employment, etc. In turn, the resulting statistics play a central role in informing the design, implementation and monitoring of a broad range of macroeconomic, labour market, income and related economic and social policies at the national level. They also facilitate cross-country comparisons of economic growth, productivity and competitiveness, the structure of labour markets and decent work. At the regional and international level, these labour force statistics have increasingly been looked to in setting targets and assessing progress towards the achievement of agreed social and economic development goals, as their inclusion in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) testifies.
3. However, the employment and unemployment statistics produced according to these standards have increasingly been found to fall short of fully describing the world of work. Classic economic indicators such as the gross domestic product (GDP), the employment-to-population ratio and the unemployment rate on their own are now widely being questioned as to their sufficiency as headline measures of social progress, of living standards, and even of economic performance and of job creation (Stiglitz, 2009; ILO 2013b). These statistics also shed little light on how households allocate their labour resources and on the subsequent impact on livelihoods and on well-being. Furthermore, the adequacy of labour force statistics to describe the variety of work patterns across countries is seen to differ according to the level of development and the institutional context, as well as between rural and urban environments and among different population groups, particularly regarding the work patterns of women as compared to men.
4. Reliance on an approach developed to serve specific macroeconomic purposes with few indicators cannot address the growing demand for statistics to inform a broader range of economic and social policies. The recent international financial crisis and its consequences on employment have sharpened the focus of policy-makers and commentators throughout the world on monitoring labour markets and job-led growth (UN, 2013). At the same time, increasing public and policy concern about the impact of climate change and global warming on production and consumption patterns and the consequences for employment, income and food security has led to the realization that, in order for development to be more sustainable and equitable for all, stronger emphasis must be placed on socio-economic approaches that encompass all work.
5. These developments have highlighted the need to review and update the current standards in order to broaden their scope so as to provide a more flexible body of statistics covering all forms of work and more comprehensive measures of labour underutilization for monitoring labour markets than are currently provided for.

---

## Review and update process

6. The review responds to calls made in 2008 in the context of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). The 39th Session of the UNSC discussed a programme review report on labour statistics that identified as priority areas for future work: (a) the changing structure of the labour force; (b) an update of the labour statistics framework to address the dynamic aspects of labour markets; (c) the interaction between paid and unpaid work; and (d) the interaction between labour statistics and other domains of statistics. To facilitate the work, the review recommended the establishment of dedicated working groups under the overall coordination of the ILO and the holding of expert group meetings (UN, 2008a).
7. The 18th ICLS held extensive discussions on possible future work by the ILO in labour statistics, including the areas highlighted in the UNSC review report, and identified as a priority the revision of the *resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment* (1982). It also adopted a *resolution concerning the development of measures of labour underutilization* that recommended that the ILO, in cooperation with interested countries and organizations, develop a set of measures of labour underutilization to supplement the unemployment rate, for discussion and possible adoption by the 19th ICLS in 2013 (ILO, 2008a).
8. The draft resolution put forward in this report is the result of extensive discussions and desk reviews of national practices carried out by the ILO between 2009 and 2013. Throughout the review, proposals for update were developed and refined in consultation with the Working Group for the Advancement of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, established in 2009 to serve as the main updating mechanism. To ensure their wide relevance and applicability, the proposals were also discussed in regional technical meetings held in 2012 for countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and Middle East and North Africa. A tripartite meeting of experts, convened in January 2013, further considered the proposals and made a number of recommendations (ILO, 2013a). The draft resolution draws heavily on these recommendations.
9. An important concern throughout the review has been to ensure, to the extent possible, the historical continuity of statistics of the economically active population. Essential elements of the standards currently in force that have proved to be sound and essential to the internal consistency of labour force statistics and their coherence with other statistical domains remain unchanged. Analysis of micro-data from selected countries and survey pilot tests were also carried out by the ILO, in collaboration with partner countries and institutions, to assess the potential impact of some of the proposals on key indicators of the labour market, their purported usefulness and ease of operational implementation. Care has also been taken to ensure that the new proposals enable the reconstruction of existing series.
10. Furthermore, the proposals incorporate identified good practices that enhance the international comparability of the statistics. The review of national practices documenting the extent to which the concepts, definitions and guidelines contained in the standards are applied in household surveys was based on the 2011 update of the ILO series *Sources and methods: Labour statistics*, Volume 3 (ILO, 2012). Additional desk reviews were carried out to document national practices in population and housing censuses and in agricultural censuses. The results of the case studies and review of national practices are summarized in accompanying room documents and referred to in this report, as relevant.

---

## Structure of the report

11. This report summarizes the rationale underlying the full review and describes the main proposals to revise and update the international standards of statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment. It is structured in two parts:
  - (a) Part I covers the background to, and scope of, the review, including the role of international statistical standards and the revision process (Chapter 1); the current international standards (Chapter 2); the rationale for the review, including emerging policy concerns, developments in work patterns and labour markets, and the limitations of the current standards (Chapter 3); and the approach taken and scope of the proposed revisions (Chapter 4).
  - (b) Part II explains the revisions introduced in the draft resolution in respect of: objectives and scope of the national system of work statistics, the reference concept *work*, relevant statistical units and classifications of the population (Chapter 5); operational definitions and guidelines to measure different forms of work, including employment (Chapter 6); definitions and guidelines to measure persons in situations of labour underutilization, including time-related underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force (Chapter 7); programmes of data collection and methods (Chapter 8); indicators, tabulations and analysis (Chapter 9); and data evaluation, dissemination and reporting (Chapter 10).

## 2. Current international standards

12. The first international efforts to develop common standards on employment, unemployment and underemployment statistics date back to the second ICLS held in 1925. Since then, under the auspices of the ILO, the ICLS has reviewed and adopted international resolutions or guidelines on labour force and related statistics on ten separate occasions.
13. The body of international standards in force is contained in the following resolutions and guidelines:
  - (a) resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment (13th ICLS, 1982);
  - (b) resolution concerning the measurement of underemployment and inadequate employment situations (16th ICLS, 1998);
  - (c) guidelines on the implications of employment promotion schemes on the measurement of employment and unemployment (14th ICLS, 1987);
  - (d) guidelines concerning the treatment in employment and unemployment statistics of persons on extended absences from work (16th ICLS, 1998); and
  - (e) resolution on the amendment of paragraph 5 of the resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment adopted by the 13th ICLS (18th ICLS, 2008).
14. The resolution adopted by the 13th ICLS in 1982 sets out the conceptual framework for statistics of the economically active population and specifies the main objectives and uses of the statistics, as follows:

- 
- (a) to measure labour input into production for purposes of macroeconomic monitoring and human resource development and planning; and
- (b) to measure the relationship between employment, income and other social and demographic characteristics for purposes of formulating and monitoring employment policies and programmes, income-generation and maintenance schemes, vocational training and other similar programmes.
- 15.** To meet these objectives, the resolution defines the economically active population in terms of the production of goods and services as set forth by the System of National Accounts (SNA). The 2008 SNA defines two separate boundaries for economic production:
- (a) It defines the *SNA general production boundary*, based on the concept of *production* consisting of “an activity carried out under the control and responsibility of an institutional unit that uses inputs of labour, capital and goods and services to produce outputs of goods and services”. This excludes “purely natural processes without any human involvement or direction” and activities that cannot be performed on one’s behalf by another person.
- (b) For the purpose of compiling national accounts, it also defines a more restricted scope of production, commonly referred to as the *SNA production boundary*. Unlike the *SNA general production boundary*, this excludes activities undertaken by households that produce services for their own final use (i.e. unpaid household service work performed by household members or by volunteers). While contributing to production, these activities have been excluded in order to place emphasis on monetary flows for analysis of market behaviour, on the grounds that the decision to consume unpaid services within households is made even before the service is provided (UN, 2008b).
- 16.** Persons are considered to be economically active if they contribute or seek to contribute to the production of goods and services within the narrower *SNA production boundary*. This definition of the economically active population was introduced for the first time in the 1982 resolution to establish a direct link between employment activity and production statistics, which did not exist previously. Previous international standards instead placed emphasis on the measurement of the “gainfully occupied population” defined as “any occupation for which the person engaged therein is remunerated directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind”, which placed emphasis on the connection between occupational skills and remuneration (Husmanns, 1990).
- 17.** For measurement purposes, the resolution establishes alternative concepts to determine the status of the population vis-à-vis their participation in economic activities, namely, the *currently active population* and the *usually active population*, which result in different classifications of the population according to their engagement in economic activities. These have subsequently been implemented using alternative frameworks:
- (a) the current activity framework (also referred to as the labour force framework), for producing the statistics in a short reference period using an activity principle, priority rule and one-hour criterion to classify the population into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups: employed persons, unemployed persons and persons not in the labour force. The employed and unemployed together are referred to as the labour force or the currently active population. Persons not in the labour force are also referred to as the population not economically active. The current activity framework is intended to provide a snapshot picture of economic activity for frequent measurement so as to enable monitoring of trends and seasonal variations, and to provide a picture of the average situation over longer periods. As a minimum, the

---

resolution recommends collection of statistics of the currently active population at least twice a year;

- (b) the usual activity framework, for producing statistics of the usually active population based on a *main activity status* (active/not active) over a long reference period (e.g. the preceding 12 months or preceding calendar year). Emphasis is placed on determining whether the person was *usually active* or *not usually active*, based on the number of weeks or months the person was employed, or unemployed, or otherwise inactive in the long reference period. This concept and the associated framework were introduced for use in settings, particularly in less developed countries, where it is not possible to measure the labour force at frequent intervals, and where the main interest is to classify the population according to their *predominant* situation over the long reference period.

- 18.** For measuring the currently active population, the resolution further provides operational definitions for employment, unemployment and persons not in the labour force, along with guidelines for the treatment of specific groups. Operational guidelines to measure the usually active population are not included in the resolution, but were later developed in a technical manual (Husmanns, 1990).

## Employment

- 19.** *Persons in employment* are defined in terms of two main status in employment categories, i.e. paid employment and self-employment, distinguishing between two main groups: persons at work, and persons with a job or an enterprise but not at work. According to the resolution adopted by the 13th ICLS, the employed thus comprise:

... all persons above a specified age who during a specified brief period, either one week or one day, were in the following categories:

- (a) “paid employment”:
  - (a1) “at work”: persons who during the reference period performed some work for wage or salary, in cash or in kind;
  - (a2) “with a job but not at work”: persons who, having already worked in their present job, were temporarily not at work during the reference period and had a formal attachment to their job.
- ...
- (b) “self-employment”:
  - (b1) “at work”: persons who during the reference period performed some work for profit or family gain, in cash or in kind;
  - (b2) “with an enterprise but not at work”: persons with an enterprise, which may be a business enterprise, a farm or a service undertaking, who were temporarily not at work during the reference period for any specific reason.

- 20.** For employed persons at work, the 13th ICLS resolution stipulates that the notion of “some work” should be interpreted as work for at least one hour during the reference period. The application of the one-hour criterion to identify persons in employment was reiterated by the 14th ICLS, which further specified that the resulting statistics should be routinely classified by appropriate working-time bands.

- 21.** For employed persons not at work, separate guidelines are provided for the treatment of temporary absences from work among persons in paid employment and in self-employment.

- 
- 22.** In the case of paid employment, the assessment is based on the notion of “formal job attachment”, which is to be determined in the light of national circumstances according to one or more of the following criteria:
- (a) the continued receipt of a wage or salary;
  - (b) an assurance of a return to work (with the same employer) following the end of the contingency, or an agreement as to the date of return; and
  - (c) the elapsed duration of absence from the job, which may be the duration for which workers can receive compensation benefits without the obligation to accept other jobs.
- 23.** Several combinations of similar criteria to the above are recommended by the 16th ICLS resolution in the case of employees on maternity leave, on unpaid leave initiated by the employer and on other types of extended leave. Regarding seasonal employees not engaged in any kind of work during the off season, the 16th ICLS recommended that they be classified as employed if they have an assurance of a return to work with the same employer at the beginning of the following season and if the employer continues to pay all or a significant part of their wage or salary during the off season.
- 24.** In the case of self-employment, no further guidance is provided on how to determine the existence of an enterprise during the absence. The 16th ICLS resolution, however, recommends that seasonal employers, own-account workers and members of producers’ cooperatives who are not engaged in any kind of work during the off season should be considered as unemployed or not economically active, depending upon their current availability for work, recent job search activity and, possibly, their reason for not seeking work.

## Unemployment

- 25.** The *unemployed* are defined in the standards as comprising all persons above a specified age who during the reference period were:
- (a) “without work”, i.e. were not in paid employment or self-employment;
  - (b) “currently available for work”, i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and
  - (c) “seeking work”, i.e. had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment.
- 26.** The examples listed of active steps to seek work include: registration at a public or private employment exchange; application to employers; checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, markets or other assembly places; placing or answering newspaper advertisements; seeking assistance of friends or relatives; looking for land, building, machinery or equipment to establish one’s own enterprise; arranging for financial resources; applying for permits and licences, etc.
- 27.** Concerning “registration at a public or private employment exchange”, the 14th ICLS guidelines specify that this should be considered an active step to seek work only when it is for the purpose of obtaining a job offer, as opposed to registration merely as an administrative requirement for the receipt of certain social benefits. The guidelines also provide recommendations on how to distinguish between seeking self-employment and the self-employment activity itself. They recommend basing this distinction on the point when

---

the enterprise starts to exist formally, e.g. when the enterprise is registered, or at the point when the enterprise is ready to receive the first order, when financial resources have become available, or when the necessary infrastructure is in place.

28. Since it was recognized that the standard definition of unemployment, with its emphasis on the “seeking work” criterion, might be somewhat restrictive and might not fully capture the prevailing employment situation in many countries, the 13th ICLS introduced a provision which allows for relaxing that criterion in certain instances. The provision is confined to situations where “the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance, where the labour market is largely unorganized or of limited scope, where labour absorption is at the time inadequate, or where the labour force is largely self-employed”.
29. In line with the principles to identify the labour force, the standards further state that students, homemakers, pensioners and other persons mainly engaged in non-economic activities during the reference period, who satisfy the criteria of the definition of unemployment, should be regarded as unemployed. They should, however, be identified separately, where possible.

### **Persons not in the labour force (the inactive)**

30. *Persons not in the labour force* is defined as comprising all persons, irrespective of age, including those below the age specified for measuring the economically active population, who were not employed or unemployed during the reference period because of: (a) attendance at educational institutions; (b) engagement in household duties; (c) retirement or old age; or (d) other reasons such as infirmity or disablement, which may be specified.
31. The resolution also recommends that persons not classified as unemployed under the standard definition, who were available for work but not seeking work during the reference period, be classified separately as part of the population not currently active. Although the standards do not provide a full classification of persons not in the labour force, they recommend the development of classifications reflecting the relative strength of their attachment to the labour market.

### **Time-related underemployment**

32. As defined by the 16th ICLS resolution, *time-related underemployment* exists when the hours of work of a person are insufficient in relation to an alternative employment situation in which the person is willing and available to engage. Accordingly, persons in time-related underemployment comprise all those in employment who satisfy the following three criteria:
- (a) were willing to work additional hours (i.e. wanted another job (or jobs) in addition to their current job (or jobs) to increase their total hours of work; to replace any of their current jobs with another job (or jobs) with increased hours of work; to increase the hours of work in any of their current jobs; or a combination of the above);
  - (b) were available to work additional hours (i.e. were ready, within a specified period of time, to work additional hours, given opportunities for additional work); and who
  - (c) worked less than a threshold relating to working time (i.e. persons whose hours actually worked in all jobs during the reference period were below a threshold to be specified according to national circumstances).

- 
33. The 16th ICLS resolution further suggests that countries may want to identify, among persons in time-related underemployment, those who usually work part-time schedules and want to work additional hours. This subgroup reflects longer term or structural situations of insufficient employment. The resolution also provides general guidance for producing estimates of the volume of time-related underemployment and for identifying specific groups of workers in a variety of inadequate employment situations, including due to low income, inadequate use of skills and excessive hours.

### 3. The rationale for revised standards

#### Evolving policy needs

34. For several decades, States have recognized the central role of employment as a pivotal means of reducing poverty, improving livelihoods and promoting overall social and economic development (UN, 1995). There has at the same time been growing recognition of the need to integrate all forms of work (e.g. care work, volunteer work) more fully into assessments of the economy, of labour markets and of well-being for the purpose of formulating economic and social policies (UN, 2005). Today, promoting poverty eradication, full and productive employment for all and social cohesion have become central goals for achieving sustainable progress (ILO, 2008e). These goals are becoming crystallized in the post-2015 development agenda as a vision for the future that places emphasis on inclusive, job-led growth (UN, 2013).
35. New thinking and experience as to how to measure economic performance and social progress have also underlined the need to shift focus from purely economic production to measuring also livelihoods, social cohesion and well-being. To do so, emphasis is placed on individual and household income and consumption and on the comprehensive measurement of participation in all work activities, including paid and unpaid work, among other dimensions of well-being (OECD, 2010).
36. In parallel with these developments, the last 30 years have seen the rise and consolidation of evidence-based policy-making as a central approach to development planning. A number of indicator frameworks have emerged as a means of assessing performance and monitoring progress at the national, regional and international levels. Existing indicator frameworks such as the United Nations MDGs, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Better Life Index are emphasizing the need to measure not just the economic impact of employment but also its social implications for the well-being of all workers and their households. While it is still early, countries are emphasizing, as part of the post-2015 development agenda, the need for adequate statistical frameworks that enable monitoring of job creation, livelihoods, social inclusion and their links to poverty eradication and sustainable, inclusive growth.
37. The rise in requirements for evidence-based policy-making has meant that producers of official statistics face a growing demand for more frequent statistics, from multiple users and for multiple objectives. In seeking to meet this demand, countries are moving towards greater integration of their official statistical systems. Integration entails coherence between frameworks underlying the different statistical domains; hence the body of labour force statistics must be conceived in relation to other socio-economic statistics, beyond production and income statistics. It is particularly important that labour force statistics be coherent with statistics on all forms of work, working time, population, migration, education and health.

---

## Changing labour markets and patterns of work

38. In market economies, the general public's understanding of employment is closely associated with jobs and with remuneration. The vast majority of households depend for their livelihood on income secured through employment, which is essential to purchase goods and services needed. Since adoption of the current standards in 1982, employment has undergone major changes in the context of urbanization and globalization. While in the more developed countries employment now largely takes the form of wage employment or of self-employment in small and medium-sized market enterprises, in less developed countries traditional modes of production based on subsistence agriculture, fishing and hunting and gathering continue to coexist with expanding markets for labour, goods and services (World Bank, 2012).
39. At the same time, recent decades have witnessed a rise in “non-standard” types of employment in both more developed and less developed countries. Such changes are attributable in part to the emergence of more flexible labour contracts, working time and working-time arrangements, as well as to the continuing existence of informal employment, both within and outside the informal sector (EC, 2010; ILO, 2010). These changes, together with rapid urbanization, internationalized production, advances in information and communication technologies and recent demographic trends (ageing in some countries, youth bulges in others) have resulted in greater mobility of workers across jobs, regions and economies (Van der Hoeven, 2010). In turn, this has created an increased need for persons to acquire, adapt and upgrade their skills and become more specialized so as to enter or remain active in complex and evolving labour markets.
40. While standards of living have improved globally, they have been accompanied by growing wage inequality, declining wage shares and a widening poverty gap. This gap is particularly high between persons living in areas that are integrated into growing regional or national markets and those relying primarily on local subsistence work for their own consumption (Dollar, 2004). In addition, technology and rising labour costs in industrialized settings are tending to reduce the reliance on markets to secure domestic and personal services (such as cleaning, repair and maintenance, etc.); voluntary forms of work are serving to promote social cohesion and to support communities and enterprises, especially non-profit institutions.
41. The recent financial crisis and consequential job crises have accentuated the trend towards greater flexibility of labour markets and labour relations at the expense of workers, with job recovery taking place disproportionately through the growth of part-time, informal and other types of casual employment (ILO, 2010). Evidence also points to a return to, or rise in, subsistence production as a livelihood strategy to mitigate the impact of the job crisis, a common strategy in rural and remote areas with limited access to wider markets (Tieguhong et al., 2009; UNDP, 2010). Limited job growth vis-à-vis population growth is having a major impact on the extent of the unmet need for employment. This is evidenced in rising levels of time-related underemployment (due to insufficient working time), of unemployment and of long-term unemployment. Policy attention to relevant groups of persons “outside” the labour market – who nonetheless remain interested in employment, such as persons on layoff and discouraged jobseekers but also others facing social and economic barriers to employment – has therefore heightened.

## Limitations of the current standards

42. Given the broader policy concerns and transformations in labour markets and work patterns today, there are a number of aspects of the current international standards for labour force statistics that are out of date and hence need to be reviewed, updated or extended. Areas of particular consequence include: (a) enabling complete coverage of all

---

productive activities; (b) differentiating between existing forms of work; (c) new measures to monitor labour market participation, underutilization and integration more broadly; and (d) dynamic measures of labour flows. In this light it becomes necessary to: (e) extend the scope of the guidelines; (f) remove existing ambiguities or unnecessary complexity in the guidelines and provide clarification where necessary; and (g) update some of the terminology accordingly.

### ***Broad activity scope of employment***

43. The direct link between employment and production statistics embodied in the current standards was designed primarily to furnish information on labour input into SNA production for economic analysis. It has, however, limited the usefulness of labour force statistics as a means of monitoring the performance of labour markets and comprehensively informing labour market policies. This is because a definition of employment that is based on the *production boundary* in the 2008 SNA means in principle the inclusion in a single category of activities undertaken by a fairly heterogeneous group of persons: those working for pay or profit, but also persons in own-use production work (such as subsistence farmers and fishers, persons collecting firewood and fetching water, persons manufacturing durable goods or constructing their own dwelling), paid and unpaid apprentices and most volunteer workers. In practice, however, few countries have systematically included all these groups of workers in their measures of employment, thus reducing the comparability of the resulting statistics.
44. Apart from restricted coverage in practice, treating these different productive activities or forms of work as a single category results in a concept and measure of employment that is too broad to adequately inform policies and programmes aimed at promoting employment as a main source of income and job-growth, and as an engine of economic development or to assess the links between employment, poverty reduction and development.

### ***Non-distinguishable forms of work***

45. A corollary is that, at present, it is not possible to develop separate measures and indicators of participation in each different form of work (employment for pay or profit, own-use production work or volunteer work). Consequently, it is not possible to examine the impact of economic and business cycles on participation in each of these forms of work (e.g. movements from subsistence agriculture to wage employment or market self-employment) or to assess the impact that participation in one form of work may have on other forms (e.g. engagement in subsistence production of foodstuff and in market self-employment selling cash crops as a supplementary activity to obtain cash income). Likewise, it is not possible to prepare comprehensive estimates of labour input into SNA production.

### ***Partial activity coverage***

46. The standards on the measurement of the economically active population currently in force do not address all work forms. They exclude all the activities that involve inputs of labour to provide services inside the *SNA general production boundary* but that are *beyond* the more restricted *SNA production boundary* (see paragraph 15). This partial and incomplete activity coverage neither makes it possible to examine important links between, for example, unpaid household service work and participation, in particular of women, in the labour force, nor to compile estimates of labour input into productive activities *beyond the SNA production boundary* and to evaluate their monetary value and contribution to the economy as a whole and to the well-being of households. Thus, no guidance is provided to

---

produce the information needed for a number of analytical purposes, one being the achievement of gender justice and inclusive development.

### ***Optional treatment of specific worker groups***

47. One way in which the current standards sought to mitigate problems that were inherent in the breadth of the employment concept was to allow for the optional exclusion of specific groups of workers, based on various thresholds to be determined by national circumstances. Hence, a threshold of number of hours worked could serve to exclude contributing family workers from employment. Persons engaged in own-use production of goods could be excluded if their production did not constitute an important contribution to the total consumption of their household.
48. In particular, the operationalization of the threshold so as to exclude some groups of persons engaged in own-use production, on the basis of the notion of important contribution to total household consumption, has led to the use of working-time thresholds or to the exclusion of specific activities from employment. These practices have notably resulted in the frequent exclusion of activities generally performed by women, including fetching water, collecting firewood, manufacturing of durable goods and maintenance of kitchen gardens and of smaller plots to produce foodstuff, all activities that form part of the livelihood strategies of households and are essential to their survival. This uneven treatment also leads to incomplete accounting of participation in different forms of work and associated working time, thus affecting the evaluation of working conditions for all workers and the computation of labour productivity estimates.

### ***Inconsistencies with related standards***

49. Although the current standards strive to establish a direct link between the concept of employment and the SNA production boundary, in practice the optional treatment referred to above has introduced inconsistencies with the SNA itself. The 2008 SNA recommends that countries include all production of goods for own final use as labour input into production. For practical reasons, however, it recommends recording such production only when the amount of a good produced within households is believed to be quantitatively important in relation to the total supply of that good in the country. This differs from the guidelines provided in the standards adopted by the 13th ICLS and described above. Another inconsistency concerns the treatment of volunteer workers, whose contribution to production is included in the SNA but who are cited in the 13th ICLS standards only as a subcategory of the population not usually active, thus not included in employment.

### ***Insufficient measures of labour underutilization***

50. Given the priority principle embodied in the labour force framework that evolved to operationalize the current standards, the broad concept of employment has resulted in a concept of unemployment that is very narrow. In many developing countries, because unemployment benefits and other state-organized social safety nets are limited or non-existent, large segments of the population must perform subsistence activities to survive, and volunteer work is an important support mechanism for households, enterprises and communities. Under the current framework, subsistence workers as well as most volunteer workers do not qualify for inclusion in unemployment, even if they are seeking and available for employment, because they are already classified as employed. Consequently, the measure of unemployment according to the current standards does not fully capture its intended target group, namely, all those persons without income-generating activities who are seeking and available to work for pay or profit.

- 
- 51.** In a similar way, while the unemployment rate aims to capture a very specific target group for policy purposes, it cannot comprehensively reflect the measure of the potential supply of labour as it does not cover all persons with an unmet need for income-generating work. Another outcome of the lack of unemployment benefits or other safety nets is that persons may be willing to take any available jobs or create their own. The measures of time-related underemployment and inadequate employment situations introduced by the 16th ICLS resolution sought to address the need for additional measures of labour underutilization. Those guidelines were found to be somewhat ambiguous however, and this has led to significant differences in their implementation at the national level, thus limiting their usefulness as measures of labour market performance and introducing an additional source of non-comparability between countries applying the current standards.
- 52.** At present, specific guidelines are lacking for identifying groups among persons outside the labour force who may also form part of the potential supply of labour. The current standards envisage a relaxation of the “seeking work” criterion when measuring unemployment in specific situations (see paragraph 28). When implemented, this relaxation has the effect of including in the measure of unemployment groups of persons who would otherwise have been classified as outside the labour force. Although the practice serves to cover a broader group of persons with an attachment to the labour market, it has tended to confuse users and has also diminished the international comparability of unemployment statistics.

### ***Lack of dynamic measures***

- 53.** Guidelines that enable countries to examine labour market dynamics and highlight their relevance for policy were not provided by the 13th ICLS standards. In view of their usefulness, nevertheless, some countries have started to produce statistics on flows in order to better understand transitions from one labour force category to another. Some have also been studying employment stability and developing typologies of workers by degree of their labour market attachment. Although such practices are still in their early years, the demand for this type of information is strong. There is a need to begin integrating the foundations within revised standards for enabling further methodological developments in this important area of statistics.

### ***Further clarifications required***

- 54.** The current standards do not provide guidance with respect to recommended reference population(s) or concerning the setting of age limits for the production (collection and reporting) of labour force statistics. Within the labour force measurement framework no specific treatment of volunteer workers and of unpaid or paying apprentices, trainees and interns is recommended, nor are there guidelines on how to determine formal job attachment among self-employed persons who are absent from employment.
- 55.** At the same time, existing guidelines on the treatment of temporary and long-term absence from employment have been found too complex to be implemented in labour force surveys. Ambiguities have been identified with respect to the purpose and operationalization of the “availability” criterion to measure unemployment. Likewise, the list of active search methods for its measurement is felt to need updating in order to reflect new developments arising from technological developments, increased geographic mobility, etc. Finally, some of the terminology used in the standards is either considered outdated, such as the use of “inactivity” to refer to persons who actually perform work activities but not within employment, or in the case of newly defined forms of work. Agreement will be needed on new terms to be used for these various concepts and measures.

---

## 4. Scope of revisions and proposed approach

### Scope of revisions

- 56.** In light of broader policy needs, evolving labour markets and work patterns and the identified limitations of the current standards described in Chapter 3, the proposals embedded in the draft resolution seek to:
- (a) refine the concept and measure of employment to refer to work for pay or profit, so as to support more targeted monitoring of labour market policies, including job creation;
  - (b) situate employment activities within a broader framework of all productive activities, as different forms of work, so as to enable the separate and yet comprehensive measurement of labour inputs and participation in all productive activities;
  - (c) make possible assessments of the contribution of the different forms of work to economic and social development and to the livelihoods and well-being of households;
  - (d) provide wide-ranging measures for labour market monitoring to complement the unemployment rate, focusing on problems of labour underutilization related to mismatches between the supply of, and demand for, labour resulting from insufficient quantity of employment;
  - (e) encourage the future development of dynamic measures of labour markets and of other issues affecting labour markets, particularly utilization and integration of labour;
  - (f) improve the integration of labour force statistics and statistics on other forms of work, as well as with statistics in other domains;
  - (g) promote the international comparability of labour force statistics, including employment statistics and measures of labour underutilization, and of work statistics including the other defined forms of work.
- 57.** The proposals incorporate those elements in the current standards that have widespread acceptance and use, in particular the labour force measurement framework based on the activity principle, priority rule and one-hour criterion to establish the labour force status of the population (in employment, in unemployment and outside the labour force) during a short reference period of measurement.
- 58.** To meet these objectives, the proposals introduce several new elements to update and broaden the international standards so as to cover work statistics as a whole, including:
- (a) a reference concept of “work” for the development of a coherent system of statistics of work, aligned with the general production boundary of the SNA and thus enabling its full integration with national production accounts and other economic statistics;
  - (b) definitions and operational guidelines to measure separately three specific forms of work:
    - (i) own-use production work carried out to produce goods or services for own final use, an essential element in the livelihood and well-being of households that

---

contributes to household income and to production within and beyond the SNA production boundary;

- (ii) employment as work for pay or profit, which will continue to serve as the basis for the production of labour force statistics and as a major component of labour input into SNA production;
  - (iii) volunteer work as non-compulsory work without pay for the production of goods and services for use by others, which contributes to the livelihoods of households and communities, to the functioning of non-profit institutions, to social inclusion and integration, and to the measurement of labour input into production, including satellite accounts.
- (c) main classifications of the population by labour force status in order to continue assessing the participation of different population groups in the labour market, and by main work status for social analysis of the main productive activities of different groups in the population;
  - (d) updated definitions and operational guidelines on measures of time-related underemployment, unemployment and the newly defined potential labour force, for use as measures of labour underutilization;
  - (e) guidance for developing a programme of work and labour force statistics in order to provide for short- and long-term needs, taking account of national context, aspirations and resources;
  - (f) guidance in specifying the population and age coverage of statistics of work and of the labour force, and in utilizing the different data sources so as to produce comprehensive sets of statistics;
  - (g) guidance in assessing participation in different forms of work over a long observation period, for the analysis of the situation of individuals and of the economy including short-term trends, structural analysis, labour market flows and stability, as well as summary statistics on the long-term situation of individuals and of the economy;
  - (h) guidance on a minimum national set of indicators that includes several measures of labour underutilization for dissemination at par with the unemployment rate, as well as other indicators of labour market performance and working conditions relevant to the national context; and indicators to monitor participation in forms of work other than employment, including an indicator of subsistence foodstuff producers in order to bring to light and monitor issues of labour market integration in particular contexts.

## Proposed approach

- 59.** The reference concept of *work* is based on activities that are carried out for the production of goods or services for one's own final use or for the final use of others (see Chapter 5). Defining the concept of work in terms of activities that contribute to production places emphasis on the economic dimensions of work and ensures continued coherence, in particular, with national accounts and, more generally, with economic statistics, as well as with working-time and time-use statistics. It also permits continuity with the existing labour force measurement framework that classifies persons as employed, on the basis of activities performed in a specified reference period.

60. Among these work activities, the proposals single out three distinct sets of productive activities, referred to as *forms of work*:

- (a) those that are for one's own final use;
- (b) those that are for the final use of others, performed in exchange for some monetary or non-monetary remuneration (i.e. monetary and non-monetary transactions);
- (c) those that are for the final use of others and performed without an expectation of remuneration, whether monetary or non-monetary (i.e. transfers).

These are referred to, respectively, as *own-use production work*, *employment work* and *volunteer work*. It is also acknowledged that other forms of work exist, such as unpaid compulsory work for others, but the proposals in the draft resolution deal only with the three forms of work identified here (see diagram 1).

Diagram 1. Classification of work activities by form of work

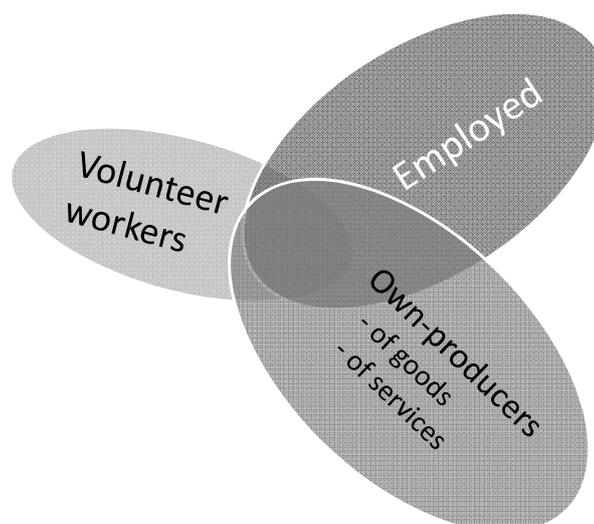
Intended destination of production	For own final use		For use by others				
	Forms of work	Own-use production work		Employment (Work for pay or profit)	Other work*	Volunteer work	
of services		of goods	in market and non-market units			in households producing	
						goods	services
Relation to 2008 SNA			Within SNA production boundary				
			Inside SNA general production boundary				

\* Includes compulsory work performed without pay for others, not covered in the draft resolution.

61. No priority is assigned between the three forms of work. Rather, they are introduced to enable the production of separate sets of statistics on each, providing flexibility in measurement, so as better to meet different policy needs. Underlying this feature of the proposals is the recognition that persons may engage in different forms of work during a given reference period. Persons may hold one or several income-generating jobs (e.g. as wage employees or as owners of a market enterprise) and may also engage in own-use production of goods (e.g. growing vegetables or fetching firewood) and/or work as volunteers for an organization or for the community. At the same time, they may provide services for own use by the household (e.g. managing bills, cleaning, cooking, making repairs, caring for children or elderly members). The benefit from this is that the labour input into each form of work is measured exhaustively within the specified period. It is also possible to examine how persons allocate their time to different productive activities, and how participation in one form of work may impact participation in others (see diagram 2).

---

Diagram 2. Participation in different forms of work

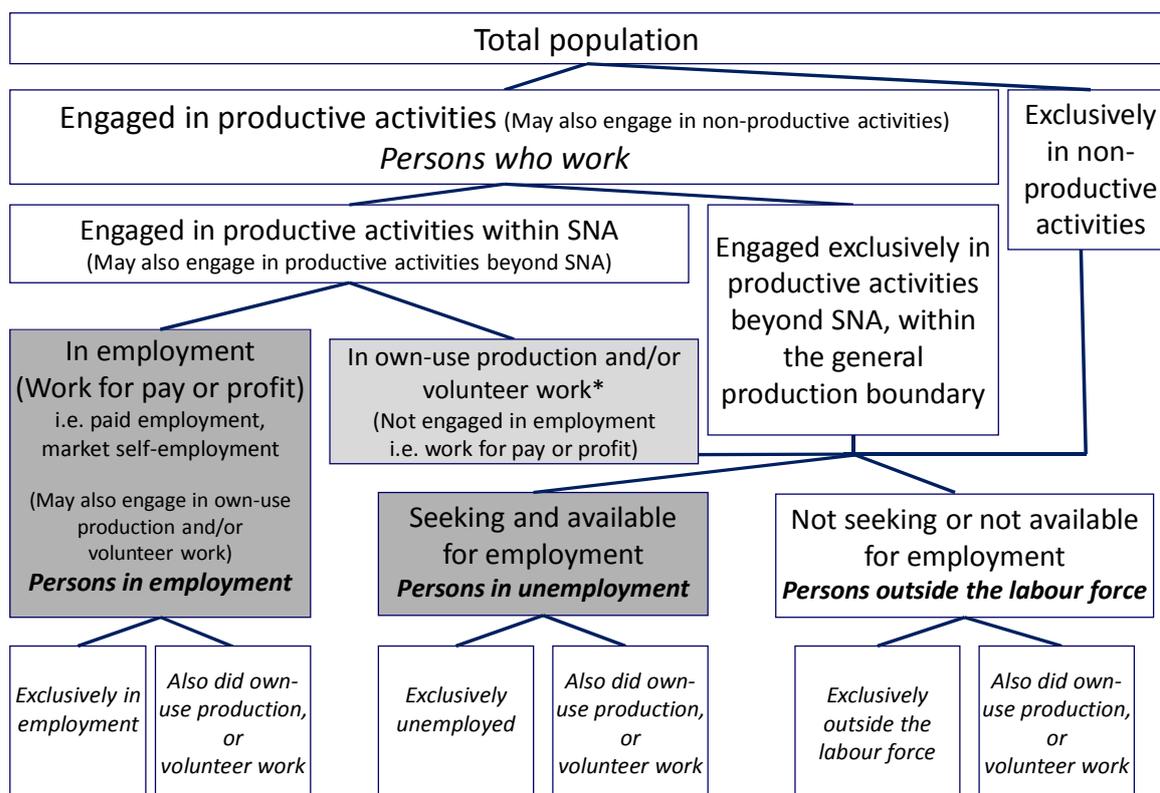


62. In addition, this approach avoids making a distinction between the social and economic dimensions of work, by recognizing that all forms of work have both economic and social implications and by enabling their joint analysis. Thus, it is possible to assess and compare the contributions of each form of work to the organization of society, to the livelihoods and well-being of households and to economic outcomes such as production and income. Inter-country analysis of the different forms of work could also reveal which are prevalent in each country and how this relates to the level of development and to economic and social conditions in these countries.

### ***Classification of the population by labour force status***

63. Operational definitions are proposed for the measurement of the three forms of work (see Chapter 6). Common to all is the proposal to use the one-hour criterion to define work in a short reference period of measurement, thus enabling the use of alternative classifications of the population to serve different purposes (see Chapter 5).
64. For employment, the proposed classification of the population is the same as the labour force framework from the current standards. However, while the classification has the same structure, the changes in the definition of employment as work for pay or profit could have consequences in its measurement. This is a narrower concept than that used in the current standards. It excludes production mainly for own final use, volunteer work in market and non-market units and in households that produce goods for own consumption, which will be captured in full through the separate concepts of own-use production work and volunteer work and made visible through corresponding indicators.
65. Consequently, the measurement of unemployment could be wider as these persons, not in employment as newly defined, are now eligible to be included as unemployed if they meet the search and availability criteria for it. Thus, persons exclusively working as volunteers or producing goods for own final use, such as subsistence farmers and fishers, those engaged in fetching water, collecting firewood, manufacturing household goods or in the construction or major repair of their household premises would no longer be counted as employed. Instead, it would be possible to assess their degree of integration into labour markets or of labour underutilization (see diagram 3).

Diagram 3. Revised classification of persons in the labour force framework



\* New treatment based on proposed revised scope of employment.

### Expected impact of revisions on labour force statistics

66. The proposed narrower scope of employment captures a more homogeneous group of workers and is more in line with common perceptions of employment as work done in exchange for pay or profit. It also leads to the measurement of unemployment as a total absence of work for pay or profit. Thus, the measurement of unemployment reflects more closely the perception of unemployed persons as those who are looking for work opportunities to generate income. Employment and unemployment, now so defined, are the main targets of labour market policies aimed at integrating persons into labour markets and at promoting employment as a means of securing a livelihood and of promoting social inclusion. It is expected that the proposed narrower scope of employment will improve the relevance of labour force statistics to labour market policies, especially job creation. It also enables indicators, such as the unemployment rate and other measures of labour underutilization such as the rate of time-related underemployment and the rate of potential labour force, to capture the unmet need for work for pay or profit more accurately.
67. The ILO review of country practices shows significant differences in the treatment in the labour force of persons engaged in own-use production of goods and volunteer work. Nonetheless, at present most countries collecting labour force statistics partially or fully exclude these forms of work from the scope of employment. Countries that already exclude these groups of workers from the scope of employment would not see changes in their labour force statistics as a result of this proposed revision. Changes would, on the other hand, be seen in countries where large segments of the population are engaged in own-use production of goods (including for subsistence) or in volunteer work, and these

---

groups have been included in the scope of employment. However, it is precisely in many of these countries that the current measures of unemployment or time-related underemployment provide only limited information for monitoring labour market performance.

### ***Measures of labour underutilization***

- 68.** In addition to introducing an improved measure of unemployment by refining the concept of employment, the proposed approach to revising the current standards promotes the regular production of additional measures for use (together with the unemployment rate) as headline indicators of overall labour market performance for general use by policy-makers and the public.
- 69.** The concept of unemployment has its roots in macroeconomic analysis and policies. Its main objective has been to signal deficiencies in the use of available labour resources by capturing situations of total lack of employment among persons who are seeking and available for employment. As such, it has been used as a headline indicator of overall labour market performance. Responses to labour market downturns, however, are more varied than unemployment alone can reflect, as is recognized in the current standards. They depend on factors such as availability of unemployment insurance or other social protection schemes, as well as opportunities for, and infrastructure to, seek employment.
- 70.** In more developed countries, economic downturns generally lead to increases in unemployment and reduced working hours or pay. In less developed countries, where social protection and other safety nets may be limited, people more commonly take any job that is available, supplement their income or hours with second jobs, create their own work through self-employment, engage in subsistence work or emigrate. In addition, where conditions are such that the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance, where expectations regarding employment are not matched by the available vacancies or where there is simply no labour market, people may become discouraged or remain outside of the labour market.
- 71.** Given the range of possible responses to labour market downturns, a single indicator cannot be expected to capture all forms of unmet need for work for pay or profit, or be used alone as an overall indicator of labour market performance. There is therefore a need to complement the unemployment rate with measures signalling situations of insufficient labour absorption among persons in employment and among persons not in the labour force.
- 72.** Various attempts have been made at the national and international level to develop such measures, including measures of visible and invisible underemployment, of time-related underemployment and inadequate employment, of relaxed unemployment, of labour shortage, of labour reserve, and so on. Regular use of such indicators in conjunction with the unemployment rate has only recently become more widespread in countries and at the regional level (Eurostat, 2011). These indicators generally try to capture similar groups of persons that share some characteristics with the unemployed but who are included in the statistics among the employed and those outside the labour force. However, differences in their measurement and construction limit their cross-country comparability.
- 73.** The development of measures of labour underutilization was discussed by a technical working group during the 18th ICLS, resulting in a resolution that requested that the ILO continue work to develop a methodology for the measurement, in particular, of labour slack, low earnings and skills mismatches (ILO, 2008a). Preliminary work on the three dimensions proposed was therefore carried out by the ILO in collaboration with a number of interested countries. Tests of the proposed methodology using available national data were discussed at an ILO technical workshop (ILO, 2009). The measures were further considered by the Working Group for the Advancement of Employment and

---

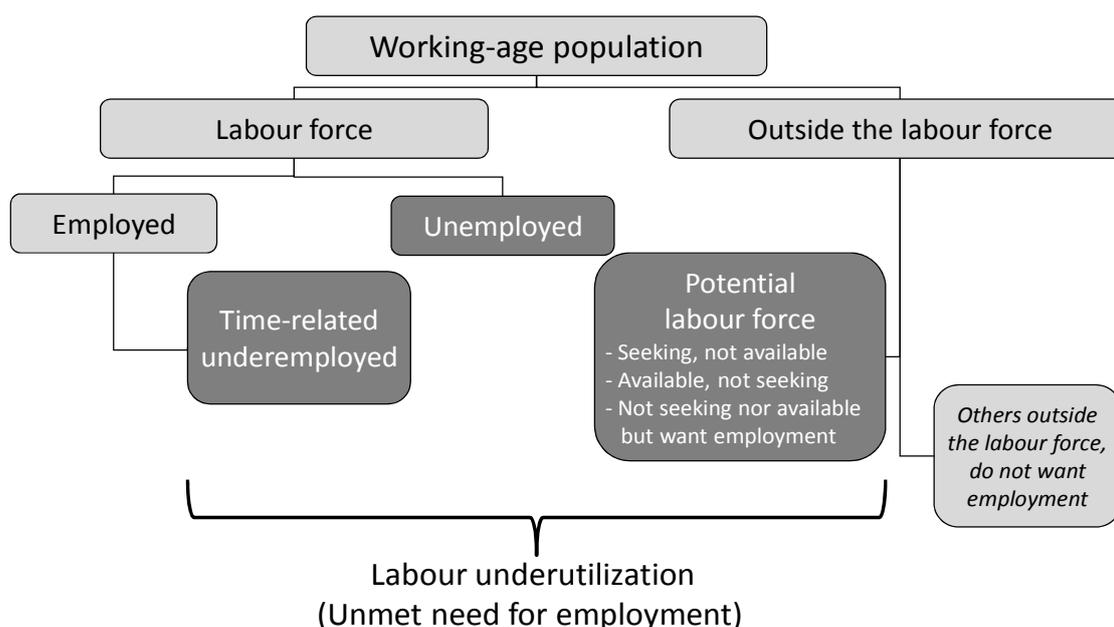
Unemployment Statistics and presented for discussion at all of the five regional consultation meetings held during 2012.

74. Building on this work, the draft resolution incorporates guidelines pertaining to one dimension of labour underutilization previously referred to as *labour slack*. Measurement guidelines relating to skills mismatches and low earnings have, however, not been introduced for a number of reasons, explained below, and which will also be presented to the Conference.
75. Approaches to the measurement of labour underutilization in the past considered measures relating to low income as a proxy for low productivity at the individual level, on the basis that low pay would signal low levels of organization of work and/or low output. More recent work and approaches based on relative measures of earnings per hour have shifted the focus away from issues of productivity to issues of wage inequality. These latter measures are being seen more and more as the most appropriate for monitoring the links between employment, poverty and inequality (Grimshaw, 2011; ILO, 2012b; ILO, 2009; Lee and Sobeck, 2012). In the case of skills mismatches, past approaches have generally seen this phenomenon as a main dimension of labour underutilization. More recent work, however, has tended to conceptualize skills mismatches within the framework of quality of employment and to broaden its scope to encompass issues of lifelong learning in the workplace and the reskilling of workers in the face of rapid technological change and more dynamic and globalized labour markets (Wilkins and Wooden, 2011; UNECE, 2010).
76. If these two dimensions were to be included within a framework of labour underutilization, it would require refocusing the measures to emphasize their relation to the mismatches between supply and demand for labour. Such a shift in focus would also entail moving away from a normative measurement approach to one that takes into account the situation of individuals vis-à-vis a preferred alternative situation. This approach underlies the measurement of time-related underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force measures included in the draft resolution. It is also the approach used in the existing international standards on the measurement of inadequate employment situations due to income and skills (16th ICLS). Moreover, maintaining this common measurement approach facilitates the joint use of these measures for a more judicious interpretation.
77. The draft resolution recognizes the centrality of these two dimensions for monitoring labour markets and assessing their impact on poverty, whether they are conceived of within a framework of underutilization of labour or of working conditions and quality of employment. To this end, the draft resolution recommends that (see paragraph 62 of the draft resolution), as part of their national labour market indicator set, countries include measures relating to inadequate employment situations due to income and skills as defined in the international standards on the topic (16th ICLS, 1998), as well as measures of low pay defined in the context of the measurement of decent work, among other measures of income poverty (see paragraph 63 of the draft resolution). Guidelines to prepare tabulations of persons in employment by income bands, and of households by relevant measures of household income, are likewise included (see Chapter 9). On the basis of the above criteria, the Conference may wish to consider whether or not the Office should continue to work on expanding the range of measures of labour underutilization to be included in the international statistical standards, as well as the possible dimensions to be covered.

## **Components**

78. Beyond unemployment, measures that reflect problems of insufficient labour absorption include, among the employed, underemployment related to insufficient hours or intensity of work and, among persons not in the labour force, situations of discouragement and other contextual barriers to employment (see diagram 4).

Diagram 4. Components of labour underutilization relating to insufficient labour absorption



79. The components proposed above as key measures of labour underutilization are time-related underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force. These three measures, when used separately, would enable more detailed monitoring of labour market cycles, since each component is likely to respond differently at different stages of the business cycle and in different settings. In addition, they may be combined to produce overlapping measures of different aspects of labour underutilization, as well as an overarching indicator of labour underutilization. Definitions and operational guidelines for the identification of persons in situations of underutilization with respect to their labour are provided in Chapter 7. General guidance for the construction of relevant indicators is included in Chapter 9.

### Terminology

80. The current standards introduced the terms “economically active population” and “population not economically active” as general concepts that were independent of the measurement framework used. In addition, they introduced the terms “currently active population” and “population not currently active” for measures based on the current activity framework, and “usually active population” and “population not usually active” for measures based on the usual activity framework (see paragraph 17).
81. It is proposed that only the terms “labour force” and “persons outside the labour force” be retained in the draft international standards. Use of these terms is consistent with the current proposals, which recognize that persons may engage in different forms of work and that all forms of work involve inputs of labour into productive activities.
82. The terms “employment” and “unemployment” have been retained notwithstanding the proposed refinement of the activity scope of employment. Retaining these terms is preferred because they are in common use by the general population and because the proposed refinements actually bring both measures closer to people’s understanding of the concepts. Furthermore, as a large number of countries already use the proposed narrower activity scope to measure employment, the revisions are not expected to cause significant changes in time series in those countries.

---

## Part II

**83.** Part II of this report explains in detail the revisions included in the draft resolution on statistics of work (see appendix).

### **5. Objectives, reference work concept, units and classifications**

#### **Objectives**

**84.** Emerging policy priorities require that national statistical systems be able to provide information on a broader range of measurement objectives. While the measurement objectives highlighted in the 13th ICLS resolution remain the central aim of the system, these have been expanded and further specified in the draft resolution in order to emphasize the need for information to:

- (a) monitor labour markets and labour underutilization, so as to inform the design of employment, income and related social and economic policies;
- (b) quantify the contribution of different forms of work to production, economic growth, the livelihoods of households and well-being; and
- (c) assess participation in the different forms of work of specific population groups so as to inform policies aimed at reducing inequalities.

**85.** New elements in the draft resolution include the explicit reference to monitoring labour underutilization as part of the regular assessment of labour market performance and to quantifying the contributions of the different forms of work to economic and social outcomes, at the level of the economy, the household and the individual.

**86.** While the measurement objectives and scope shaping national systems of work statistics are becoming wider than in the past, this does not imply that statistics on all measures included in the draft resolution would be needed with the same frequency or with the same level of detail. Rather, each country should design its national system to provide different sets of statistics at different frequencies, taking account of the nature of national labour markets and work patterns, and of available resources and statistical sources, in a way that supports the progress and sustainability of the system.

**87.** The specific set of measures to be covered and their different frequencies of collection and of reporting need to be identified in consultation with the various users of the statistics. In general, the programme should provide statistics in the short term to enable monitoring of seasonal and other temporal variations in labour markets, at longer intervals for macroeconomic estimation and structural analysis, for benchmarking and for supporting analysis in greater depth. More detailed recommendations to guide countries in defining the national schedule of data collection and reporting are described in Chapter 8.

**88.** Recognizing the widespread use of labour force statistics for international comparisons and the need for comparable statistics on the different forms of work, recommendations have also been introduced in the objectives that advocate the use of the revised standards as a basis for the development of national statistics on the topic.

---

## Work

- 89.** To meet the stated objectives, the draft resolution introduces the first international definition of *work* for use as reference in developing statistics on the topic. *Work* is defined in terms of activities performed by persons in order to produce goods or services for use by others or for own final use.
- 90.** This definition is consistent with the scope of productive activities included in the *general production boundary* and with the definition of economic unit as currently specified in the 2008 SNA. Accordingly:
- (a) The reference concept *work* excludes activities that cannot be performed on one's behalf by another person, including all self-care activities, learning and activities for one's own recreation, as well as all other activities that do not involve producing goods or services for one's own or for other units' consumption, such as begging and stealing.
  - (b) *Work* can be performed in all kinds of economic units that comprise:
    - (i) market units producing goods and services mostly for sale at prices that are economically significant;
    - (ii) non-market units producing goods and services mostly for supply to other units without charge or at prices that are not economically significant; and
    - (iii) households producing goods and services for own final use or fixed capital formation by the producers.
- 91.** The introduction of the reference concept *work* in the draft resolution serves two related purposes:
- (a) First, it recognizes that all productive activities contribute to economic output and to the livelihood of households and to well-being, regardless of whether the intended destination of the production is for the market or for own final use by the producer or by members of his or her household. As such, it will support the comprehensive measurement of all inputs of labour into production within and beyond the SNA production boundary, and the valuation of their contribution to the economy and to households.
  - (b) Second, it promotes use of a common measurement approach to produce separate sets of statistics on each *form of work* in order to meet different policy needs. A common measurement approach is essential to facilitate the integration of employment statistics with statistics on other forms of work, and of work statistics as a whole with national production accounts and, more generally, with other economic statistics, as well as with statistics on working time, on child labour and on time-use. Indeed, this approach is in line with the existing international standards on the measurement of working time and on statistics of child labour (ILO, 2008b; ILO, 2008c), which cover all activities within the general production boundary of the SNA.

## Statistical units

- 92.** Different units are relevant to produce and analyse statistics on each form of work. The draft resolution identifies the following statistical units: persons, jobs and activity clusters.

---

## Jobs

93. The concept of *job* was first defined in an international standard for labour statistics as part of the resolution adopting the 1988 version of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88); it was updated in the 2007 resolution adopting the current (ISCO-08) version. That resolution defined a job as “a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment”. This definition was also included in the international standards for the measurement of working time adopted in 2008 by the 18th ICLS, which further specified that a job may be “formal or informal” and may “refer to unpaid household service and volunteer work performed by one person for a household outside the *SNA production boundary* but within the *general production boundary*”.
94. The draft resolution introduces a number of revisions to the existing definition of *job*. It is now defined as “a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person for a single economic unit”. The reference to specific status in employment categories has been removed from the definition of *job* in order to accommodate any changes stemming from the forthcoming revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE). The notion of “single economic unit” in the case of self-employed persons has been clarified. Namely, persons in self-employment are considered to have as many jobs as economic units they own or co-own, irrespective of the number of clients served.
95. Following the recommendations of the meeting of experts, the activity scope of the statistical unit *job* has also been reduced. It is now recommended for use only with respect to employment. In recommending this narrower application of the unit *job*, the meeting of experts emphasized its use for monitoring job creation so as to inform labour market policy, the general use of the term in common language and problems with its translation into languages other than English. The experts nevertheless acknowledged its applicability to volunteer work and own-use production work as a statistical unit for measurement and analysis. The Conference may wish to express its views on the need for a statistical unit equivalent to the unit *job* for use in the case of volunteer work and own-use production work and, in which case, propose acceptable terminology for inclusion in the revised standards.

## Multiple job-holding

96. Recognizing that persons may hold multiple jobs during the short reference period, the draft standards introduce a common definition of *main job* as that with the longest hours usually worked. The choice of usual hours worked (as opposed to income or self-perception) as the principal criterion for identifying the main job is consistent with the emphasis of the framework on measuring participation in employment and working time. It enables persons in employment to be classified according to the characteristics of the job in which they generally spend most of their time.

## Activity clusters

97. A new unit termed *activity clusters* has been introduced for use in respect of own-use production work and volunteer work. *Activity clusters* refer to sets of tasks and duties performed by one person in order to produce specific kinds of goods or services for an economic unit.
98. This unit is introduced for two main reasons: first, to serve as a data collection tool to facilitate memory recall and to improve the reporting of the working time associated with each *activity cluster* that is necessary to achieve comprehensive accounting of the activities

---

carried out during the reference period (e.g. farming, fishing, collecting firewood, fetching water, household management, caring for dependent household members, etc.); second, to support industry-level analysis of productivity and of the contribution of own-use production work and of volunteer work, particularly of direct volunteering, and of the range of tasks and duties most commonly associated with engagement in these activities.

- 99.** This approach is similar to that recommended in the international standards on statistics of the informal sector, which recommends coding each activity carried out by an informal sector unit separately (15th ICLS, 1993). It is also recommended for use in the measurement of volunteer work and for time-use statistics (ILO, 2011). A problem with the current international classifications for occupations and industries (ISCO-08 and the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev. 4) is that they do not provide detailed classifications for a coherent analysis of the diverse activities carried out by households for own final use, whether the work is performed by household members or by volunteers. This is especially the case for the provision of services, but it is also true for the production of goods.
- 100.** To address these limitations, the most recent version of ISCO-08 introduced separate sub-major groups to distinguish market-oriented skilled agricultural workers and forestry, fishing and hunting workers (sub-major groups 61 and 62) from subsistence farmers, fishers, hunters and gatherers (sub-major group 63), and provided separate detailed groups for water and firewood collectors (unit group 9624). However, comparable detailed groups were not included for capturing the more common activity clusters or range of tasks and duties performed by own-use providers of services, nor for those who engage in both the production of goods and of services for own final use.
- 101.** In the case of ISIC Rev. 4, because emphasis is placed on the primary activity of economic units engaged in market production, it is not possible to classify persons according to their contribution to the production of different kinds of goods and of services. In addition, activities for own final use are classified in ISIC Rev. 4 class 9810 – “Undifferentiated goods-producing activities of private households for own use”, or class 9820 – “Undifferentiated service-producing activities of private households for own use”, but only if it is not possible to identify a primary activity for the subsistence activities of the household. Such an approach limits the usefulness of the statistics for valuation of these forms of work and for assessing the overall scale of goods and services produced in the economy.

## **Classifications of the population**

### ***Labour force status***

- 102.** The draft resolution retains the current activity framework, which has become the norm for producing statistics of the labour force. It serves to classify the population according to their labour force status in a short reference period. The same principles (activity criterion, priority rule and one-hour criterion) to classify persons into the three mutually exclusive categories – in employment, in unemployment and outside the labour force – are retained. Likewise, the labour force continues to comprise the sum of persons in employment and persons in unemployment.
- 103.** Participation in other forms of work in the same reference period (i.e. volunteer work and own-use production work) is not taken into account in classifying persons by their labour force status. Thus, a person who worked one hour in employment and 12 hours in own-use provision of services is still counted as in employment. A person who did not have a job,

---

worked 20 hours as a volunteer, applied for jobs and was available to take up employment will be classified as in unemployment.

- 104.** However, given the narrower activity scope of employment proposed and its implications for the measurement of unemployment, the labour force conceptually no longer refers to the supply of labour contributing to SNA production. It now refers to the current supply of labour for the production of goods and services in exchange for pay or profit. This revised definition of the labour force has been included in the draft resolution as a reference concept.
- 105.** Furthermore, in contrast with the existing definition of persons not in the labour force, it is proposed to restrict the new concept of persons outside the labour force to those above the age specified for measuring the labour force, i.e. the working-age population. This change is suggested in recognition of the fact that children may be engaged in a variety of work activities and that separate international statistical standards exist for the production of statistics on children in productive activities. It also takes account of the development of the new measure of potential labour force to be used for labour market monitoring.

### ***Main work status***

- 106.** In addition to the classification of the population by labour force status, an alternative classification is introduced for use in social analysis that classifies the population according to main work status. This classification, as opposed to the classification by labour force status, is suggested for use in reference to short or long reference periods, as relevant for different analytical purposes. In the proposed classification, priority is given to any work activity over non-work activity and, among the different forms of work, to the one considered as the main form based on self-perception, as reported.

### ***Usual activity status***

- 107.** The usual activity approach and related classification of the population, meant to reflect the predominant situation of persons over a long observation period as usually active or not usually active, are no longer recommended in the revised standards. That approach, which was introduced in the 13th ICLS resolution and later developed for implementation in an ILO manual (Hussmanns, 1990), has not been widely implemented by countries (see also Chapter 8). Where it has been implemented, a variety of measurement approaches have been used, including not only the recommended detailed period-by-period or job-by-job recall but also spontaneous self-perception in reference to the long reference period, whole year recall, as well as recall of participation in economic activity at some time in the year.
- 108.** Particularly common in population censuses has been the use of an alternative concept, the “principal activity framework”, generally measured through spontaneous self-perception in relation, notably, to the present situation with the reference period left unspecified, or to a specified short reference period – and in some cases to a long reference period. Such diversity of measurement approaches has resulted in wide variability in the statistics obtained, thus limiting their international comparability.
- 109.** Likewise, the reporting of statistics using these various approaches as measures of the economically active population has led to confusion with statistics of the labour force derived using the labour force framework. Despite these problems in the application of the usually activity framework, from the conceptual standpoint the retention of a classification of the population according to their predominant situation vis-à-vis the labour market in a long reference period may be of particular use for social as well as labour market analysis. The Conference may wish to express its views on the need for such a classification.

---

## 6. Forms of work: Definitions and guidelines

110. The draft resolution identifies three distinct *forms of work*, namely *own-use production work*, *employment* and *volunteer work*, and provides definitions and operational guidelines for their separate measurement.

### One-hour criterion and reference periods of measurement

111. Participation of persons in each *form of work* is measured in relation to a one-hour criterion in a short reference period. This is the established approach for identifying persons in employment. It is proposed to use the same time threshold to capture participation in own-use production work and in volunteer work. Thus, a person is considered to be engaged in own-use production work if he or she produced goods or provided services for own final use for at least one hour in the specified short reference period. Likewise, a person is considered to be engaged in volunteer work if he or she performed at least one hour of unpaid work voluntarily for others in the specified reference period.
112. Use of the one-hour criterion serves to include within the measurement work activities carried out on a part-time, sporadic or casual basis. Such information is essential for producing accurate estimates of labour input, productivity and related measures and of the aggregate contribution of each *form of work* to the economy. It is also necessary in formulating policies related to work–life balance, working-time arrangements and income and time poverty, as well as other decent work and quality of employment issues. In addition, it can serve to examine differences in levels of participation in each form of work among different population groups, for example, differences between men and women in employment or in own-use provision of services.
113. Short reference periods of measurement are recommended in order to prepare current estimates of the situation at a given point in time and to minimize problems of recall and/or respondent burden that can affect the quality of the data. The length of the short reference periods of measurement must also take into consideration the intensity with which persons tend to engage in each form of work and the way in which they organize their time in order to carry out the work. Taking these various elements into consideration, the draft resolution recommends the use of different short reference periods to measure each form of work. In particular it recommends:
- (a) For employment, a reference period of one week or seven days. This is in line with the existing international standards and with national practice. It also serves as the reference period for establishing the “without employment” criterion in the measurement of unemployment and thus, for determining the labour force status of persons. The inclusion of alternative reference periods of the same length (“one week or seven days”) provides some flexibility, while at the same time promoting cross-country comparability of the statistics. It is based on the recognition that there are valid reasons for different practices in national data collection methodologies in which a fixed calendar week, a moving week or the previous seven days may be used. These differences exist in order to achieve a number of objectives; notably in terms of providing statistics for a specific period in the month or producing an average for the full month, as well as of improving or facilitating retrospective recall given common working-time arrangements in the country.
  - (b) For own-use production of goods and volunteer work, a reference period of four weeks or a calendar month. Patterns of participation in own-use production of goods can vary widely, from work carried out intensively over a number of days followed

---

by waiting periods as in the case of farming activities, to work carried out infrequently as in the case of major repairs or activities performed for recreational purposes. Similarly, the prevalence of participation in volunteer work tends to be low in the population and is generally carried out sporadically or infrequently. A reference period of four weeks or a calendar month would enable to capture these activities more adequately by providing some flexibility to accommodate periods of rest or inactivity and at the same time limiting potential problems of memory recall.

- (c) For own-use production of services, a reference period of one or several 24-hour days within a seven-day or one-week period. Activities to provide unpaid services for own final use tend to be performed throughout the day, often intermittently and combined with other activities. In addition, different types of activities also tend to be carried out on different days and at different levels of intensity, with important variations, for example, between market days, rest days, holidays, etc. Use of such a reference period serves to facilitate reporting or recording of the information and to cover the different working-time arrangements observed in own-use production work.

**114.** Use of different short reference periods combined with a one-hour criterion will effectively result in the application of a different “yard stick” for the level of intensity used to determine participation in each different form of work. This approach is suggested in the draft resolution as a compromise between the need for precision and ease of implementation. The draft resolution nonetheless recommends that countries collect information on the working time associated with each activity cluster performed in the reference period, including for periods of less than one hour. While this is recommended to facilitate memory recall, the collected information will also enable analysis of the extent to which persons engage in own-use production work and/or volunteer work for periods shorter than one hour in the specified reference periods.

**115.** The 13th ICLS standards, in addition to a one-week reference period, also recommend use of a reference period of one day to measure employment (see paragraph 19). This approach has its origins in early efforts to produce stock estimates that referred to a particular point in time, developed primarily for use in population censuses. This period is now deemed to be too short to provide meaningful information to describe labour force and work patterns in the population. The one-day reference period was also intended for statistics derived from establishment surveys and administrative sources, which are often compiled with reference to a specific day (for example, as of the payroll day or the last Friday in the month). The draft standards no longer recommend the one-day reference period. Instead, reference periods associated with administrative sources are mentioned in the section on sources (see Chapter 8).

## **Own-use production work**

**116.** Production of goods and services for own final use is one of the oldest forms of work. Prior to the spread of markets for goods and services, households mainly produced their own food, shelter and other necessities, caring for the household members, premises and durables. As these products have become increasingly available through markets, the prevalence of production for own final use has steadily declined. Nonetheless, it remains widespread in countries at different levels of development. Such production, as in subsistence agriculture, continues to be central to survival in impoverished and remote areas throughout the world and is also a common strategy for supplementing household income, as in the case of kitchen gardens in many urban and rural areas alike. In more developed settings and among higher income groups, it predominantly covers unpaid household services, do-it-yourself work, crafts, backyard gardening and suchlike.

- 
- 117.** In the draft proposal, the concept of *own-use production work* is introduced to capture all inputs of labour involved in the production of goods and of services for own final use. Own final use covers production that is intended for final consumption by the producer, by members of his or her household or by family members living in other households. This last group is included to capture the range of productive activities carried out without pay on a regular or occasional basis by persons to assist family members. This includes farming activities organized on a family basis where members living in different households pool their labour and resources to produce foodstuffs and other goods which are distributed among family members for their own final use, as well as work carried out without pay to assist family members, such as fetching water for elderly relatives, maintenance and repair of their household premises or goods, shopping, preparing meals or providing care for relatives. This kind of work for one's family is common in all parts of the world, although no definition of the notion of family is specified to accommodate different national circumstances.
- 118.** Own-use production work combines in a single concept the production of goods for own final use (own-use production of goods) that are included within the *SNA production boundary* and the provision of services for own final use (own-use provision of services) which are beyond the more restricted *SNA production boundary* but are included within the *general production boundary*. These activities are covered under the same concept in recognition of their common contribution to household and family production for own final use. Such an approach allows for examination of the contribution of own-use production work to household material welfare, household income and well-being. These assessments, in turn, can support the identification of subsistence households and of subsistence workers. This approach will also serve to address long-standing gaps in the measurement of activities primarily performed by women, thereby enabling a more complete assessment of their contribution to the economy and of the dynamics of women's participation in own-use production work and in employment as work for pay or profit.
- 119.** It has been argued that an advantage of treating own-use production of goods and of services as a single form of work is that it will be less likely for household production to be omitted during data collection than is the case at present (Goldschmidt-Clermont, 2000). Collection of the information by *activity clusters*, as recommended, will also reduce the problem of having to establish a boundary between goods and services. For example, fetching firewood, the processing of food for preservation, making butter or cheese, husking rice, slaughtering animals and grinding grain are all considered as production of goods, while cooking a meal is a service on the grounds that the meal is consumed immediately. In practice, the dividing line between cooking and these other activities is often difficult to draw, especially where fresh food is prepared daily. Similarly, construction and improvement of one's dwelling is considered as fixed capital formation and thus included within the *SNA production boundary*, whereas smaller repairs are viewed as services and hence excluded. Yet it is difficult to distinguish between repair, improvement and construction, particularly where dwellings are built of materials such as mud, palm, wood and other perishables (Anker, 1983).
- 120.** *Activity clusters* are not predefined in the draft resolution in order to support data collection at different levels of detail, depending on the intended uses of the statistics for analysis and to inform policy, the data source used and the range of own-use production work activities prevalent in the country. Thus, for example, more detailed categories of *activity clusters* may be used in a time-use survey as compared to a labour force survey. Likewise, where policy priorities require information on time spent in unpaid care of children and/or dependent adults, these may be included in a survey as separate *activity clusters* for reporting purposes.
- 121.** To facilitate continued correspondence with the SNA, the draft resolution makes reference to two categories of own-use production work: own-use production of goods, and own-use

---

provision of services. It also sets their respective scope of activity in line with the 2008 SNA. In addition, distinguishing between these two categories during tabulation and analysis will make it possible to classify persons engaged in own-use production work by the types of activities performed, namely: (a) own-use production of goods only; (b) own-use provision of goods and services; or (c) own-use provision of services only. Such a classification will support gender analysis of intra-household allocation of labour.

- 122.** To identify persons engaged in own-use production work during data collection, the draft resolution proposes using the main intended destination of the output, as reported (i.e. intended mainly for own final use versus intended mainly for sale/barter). In the case of services, this will in practice comprise all services provided unpaid by household or family members exclusively for their own use, as services are consumed in the process of being provided and it is thus not possible to separate the intended from the actual destination of the production. In the case of goods, however, particularly agricultural, hunting and fishing products, the intended destination of the output will need to be established so as to distinguish persons engaged in own-use production work from those engaged in market-oriented activities – i.e. producing goods intended mainly for sale or barter that constitutes self-employment. The proposed approach based on the intended destination of the output is the same as that adopted in the ISCO-08 to distinguish “subsistence farmers, fishers, hunters and gatherers” (sub-major group 63) from “market-oriented skilled agricultural workers and forestry, fishery and hunting workers” (sub-major groups 61 and 62).
- 123.** Alternative approaches are not suggested that attempt to quantify the proportion of the production destined to, or actually sold in the market in a set reference period, given their sensitivity to economic and environmental fluctuations. Their impact could lead to inconsistent treatment or, during periods when the enterprise is not able to make sufficient sales or profits, to misclassification of market-oriented activities as being for own final use. Rather, use of the self-reported intended destination of the output serves to capture aspects related to the mode of organization of production. Accordingly, persons will be classified as in own-use production work if the main intended destination of the output they were involved in producing is for own final use, even if a surplus is sold or bartered.
- 124.** This specific approach is proposed also to enable analysis of the extent of integration, or lack thereof, of persons engaged in own-use production of goods in wider markets for labour and for goods and services. This is particularly critical for foodstuff producers, who will continue to produce mainly for own final use by the household so long as the opportunity costs of switching to market production remain high, but who may nonetheless barter or sell a part of the surplus to obtain other products or some cash income.
- 125.** Given also the seasonality often associated with production of foodstuff, particularly in agriculture, the draft standards recommend identifying subsistence foodstuff producers separately as a subgroup of persons in own-use production work. An indicator for subsistence foodstuff producers is also recommended for dissemination, together with measures of labour market performance, to bring to light possible issues of insufficient market integration (see also Chapter 9), of differences in traditional lifestyles and cultures, etc.
- 126.** The proposed definition for subsistence foodstuff producers focuses on production of foodstuff from agriculture, fishing, hunting or gathering that contributes to the livelihood of the household or family. It is proposed to exclude from this subgroup those persons who engage in production of foodstuffs as a recreational or leisure activity so as to focus on the subgroup of foodstuff producers that is of particular importance for the formulation of labour market integration, poverty reduction and food security policies. Any distinction based on assessments of the contribution of this work to the household budget or consumption is not recommended, in order to limit the exclusion of work activities

---

considered “supplementary” and that are often performed by women and younger household members. However, tests will need to be conducted to determine practical approaches to establish when these activities are considered as recreational or leisure. The Conference may wish to express its views on further work in this area to develop more detailed operational guidance or to include in the revised standards a call for such work.

- 127.** In addition, to support the use of the statistics for quantifying the contribution of own-use production work to household income and to national income, the draft resolution also recommends the collection, where appropriate, of information regarding the estimated amount and/or estimated value of the output consumed by the household and by family members living in other households, and of any surplus sold or bartered during the reference period. Such information is increasingly being collected in surveys of agriculture and of household budget, income and expenditure, and it may notably be used to support analysis of agricultural holdings, according to their access to markets (FAO, 2005).

## Employment

- 128.** A number of refinements have been introduced to the concept of *employment*, its operational definition and the associated measurement guidelines necessary for its implementation. The scope of employment has been revised to refer to work performed in the context of transactions for remuneration. Such remuneration may be in the form of pay for work done or for hours worked, or in the form of profits derived from goods or services that are sold or bartered. It may be paid in cash or in kind and may or may not be received in the same reference period as when the work was performed. It also includes situations of labour transactions where the remuneration is paid indirectly to a household member for work performed by another, as in the case of contributing family workers, as well as of family members assisting with the tasks and duties of a paid employment job held by another household member. This is more common among outworkers and piece-rate workers or in certain occupational groups (for example concierges also known as building caretakers).
- 129.** Also proposed for inclusion within the concept of employment, in line with the existence of a labour transaction is the work done in exchange for workplace training or experience to learn a particular trade, profession or occupation, whether or not there is any cash or in-kind remuneration. This kind of work is considered as contributing to the production of goods and services for others in the context of a labour transaction where, instead of remuneration, the apprentice receives training. Its inclusion within the concept of employment is proposed to enable consistent treatment of similar productive activities across different contexts, given their importance as a mechanism for labour market entry, whether formally or informally.
- 130.** Programmes that train persons in particular trades or professions through workplace learning are organized very differently around the world. Apprenticeship systems organized in partnerships between enterprises and the national vocational and training system, are widespread in more developed countries and are being established increasingly in less developed countries too. Under such programmes the apprentice usually receives some remuneration or an allowance during the practical workplace component, which increases with the level of skill but is always lower than the wages of employees in that occupation.
- 131.** More common in the rural areas in particular of many less developed countries, however, are traditional arrangements whereby experienced workers train apprentices in their trade or craft at workshops, garages, shops, etc. The apprentices may not receive any remuneration, or only an allowance or in-kind support; in many cases, too, they are expected to pay a fee for the workplace learning received or to provide their own tools

---

(ILO, 2008d; Nübler, 2009). Comprehensive information on this group of apprentice workers and its different subset groups is needed to support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of specific policies and programmes for vocational education and training, skills development and reskilling of workers in countries having the various types of setups. For this purpose the draft resolution includes guidelines for classifying apprentices, interns and trainees by type of labour transaction, distinguishing between monetary (paid fully or partly in cash), non-monetary (paid exclusively in kind), and non-remunerated (receiving training only) transactions. Regarding the criterion of a transaction for remuneration that underpins the employment concept, the Conference may wish to consider whether or not this is applicable to both contributing family workers and assisting family members, as well as to categories of unpaid or paying trainees, and to express its views on their respective treatment in the revised standards for adoption.

132. The operational guidelines to measure employment have been updated correspondingly to reflect the proposed narrower activity scope. Additionally, employment is now defined independently from the status in employment categories, as was the case. A self-standing definition of employment has the advantage of remaining relevant over time, despite the emergence or disappearance of specific status-in-employment categories and despite changes in the nature of the underlying employment relationships or that may arise from the ICSE-93 currently under review.
133. To identify the employed in the reference period of measurement, continued reference is made to two main groups: employed persons at work and employed persons not at work. In the case of employed persons at work, explicit reference is made to the one-hour criterion, as reiterated in the 14th ICLS guidelines (1987) and during the consultations held as part of the review process.
134. In the case of employed persons not at work, guidelines for assessing temporary absence from employment have been retained but simplified, taking into account their main purpose, existing national practices and the international standards on the measurement of working time (18th ICLS, 2008b). Specifically, the proposals for revision focus on providing guidance for the identification of employed persons on temporary absence from their jobs in the reference period, as needed to produce current estimates of employment.
135. In addition, a common approach is proposed to determine temporary absence from employment among persons in paid employment and in self-employment. This is based on the recognition that the same forms of absence from employment generally apply to persons in paid jobs and in self-employment jobs, irrespective of the associated modalities of pay, entitlements or benefits. This is clear, for example, in the case of annual leave, holidays, sick leave, personal leave and maternity or paternity leave, but also in the case of temporary interruptions due to bad weather, mechanical or electrical breakdown, shortage of raw materials or fuels and slack work.
136. As in the current standards, temporary absence is established on the basis of the existence of a *continued attachment to the job* and an expected absence of a short duration. In the light of accumulated national practice around the world, it is proposed that the existence of the *continued job attachment* be based on the self-declaration of an expected return to the same job or to the same business or activity and on the *type of reason for absence* and, for certain reasons, the *total (expected) duration of the absence*. These criteria are part of the current standards (see paragraphs 22–24) and tend to be the criteria most commonly used by countries.
137. The first criterion, *continued job attachment*, implies that for a person to be considered on temporary absence from a job he or she must have already worked in that job prior to the absence and have the expectation of returning to it after the period of absence. The requirement to have already worked in the job implies that persons who have made

---

arrangements to start a new job or business in the future, commonly referred to as *future starters*, should not be considered as employed persons not at work on the basis of that job. The expectation of a return to work with the same employer or in the same business or activity is the basis upon which temporary absence from employment is generally assessed. In surveys of households, this expectation of return is usually included in the main question that starts the sequence on temporary absence (for example: “Even though you did not work last week, did you have a job or business to which you will definitely return? ...”).

- 138.** The second and third criteria (*reason* and *duration of the absence*) are suggested as the means of assessing further the short nature of the absence. In general, certain reasons for absence do not necessarily call into question the continued existence of an employment relationship. These include absences due to own illness or injury, holiday, vacation or annual leave, and the statutory periods of maternity or paternity leave. In addition, the length of absences for such reasons is generally short and determined by national legislation or common practice. In these cases, the self-reported expectation of a return to employment and the reason for the absence will generally be sufficient for such absence from employment to be treated as temporary.
- 139.** In the case of other reasons for absence, however, it may not be possible to assume that an employment relationship continues to exist or that the absence is temporary in nature. This is so, for example, in the case of parental leave, education leave, care for others and other personal leave, occupational injury, strike or lockout, reduction in economic activity (including temporary lay-offs and slack work), disorganization or suspension of work because of bad weather, mechanical or electrical breakdown, and shortage of raw materials or fuels. In these cases it may be necessary also to use the expected total duration of the absence in order to determine its treatment as a temporary absence from employment.
- 140.** The limit on the duration in order for an absence to be treated as temporary is left to national circumstances, taking account of general periods of statutory leave entitlements in national legislation or in common practice. The draft resolution notes that such a limit is generally not longer than three months. Use of the *total expected duration* is recommended to reduce differences due to the time when the data collection or records compilation takes place.
- 141.** Unlike the 13th ICLS standards, the proposed revisions do not recommend using the continued receipt of payment as evidence of temporary absence. Though indicative of a continued employment relationship in many contexts, such a criterion is not a sufficient test, particularly in the case of informal jobs and of unpaid leave initiated by the worker. Rather, the continued receipt of payment during a temporary absence from employment forms part of the conditions of employment associated with the specific job.
- 142.** Specific guidelines are also retained and refined to identify the inclusion within employment of persons in different categories that may be problematic, provided that they are engaged in the production of goods or services for pay or profit, as follows: employed persons who in the reference period were on training and skills-enhancement programmes required by the job or for another job in the same economic unit; members of the armed forces, including regular members and conscripts; self-employed persons in market enterprises (i.e. producing goods intended mainly for sale or barter) even if part of the output is consumed by the household; persons with seasonal work during the off season if they continue to perform some of the tasks and duties of that seasonal job (for example, keeping the accounts, maintaining the premises, preparing the land); contributing family workers and household members assisting with the tasks and duties of a paid employment job held by another household member, irrespective of the number of hours worked in the reference period; and apprentices, interns and trainees whether receiving cash, in-kind remuneration or training exclusively, as explained above.

- 
- 143.** In the case of persons engaged in employment promotion programmes, the draft standards recommend that they be classified as employed if, in the context of the programme, the participants contribute to the production of goods and services of an economic unit for which they receive payment in cash or in kind, which may include a government social benefit. It thus excludes participants who do not contribute inputs of labour into production e.g. recipients of subsidies to start up a self-employment job (unless of course during the reference period of measurement the participant engaged in that employment activity).
- 144.** In the case of extended absence, the revised standards recommend excluding from employment: all persons on indefinite lay-off (i.e. with no assurance of a return to work with the same employer); persons with seasonal employment jobs during the off-season if they cease to perform activities related to that income-generating job; and other persons on extended absence from employment (i.e. absence with a total accrued duration beyond the limit set for defining temporary absence from employment). In the first two cases, the continued existence of the job cannot be assured. In the case of prolonged absences, referred to as extended absences in the present standards, the length of the absence indicates that the absence is not temporary in nature, even though the persons concerned may retain a right to return to the same job or to another job in the same economic unit. It is further recommended that countries where extended absences are commonplace may, for analytical purposes, wish to collect information on payments received during these absences and on total durations.
- 145.** Finally, basic guidance has been introduced for the collection of information in order to monitor the prevalence of multiple job-holding, and so as to produce statistics about secondary jobs. This is done because such information is essential for establishing comprehensive estimates of income from employment and of working time and for supporting analysis of trends in different industries and occupational groups.

## Volunteer work

- 146.** Volunteer work is another form of work which contributes to the production of goods and services and to community well-being. Among the oldest forms of volunteering is helping other households or the community through mutual aid or self-help, where the group as a whole benefits from the work performed. Such volunteer work is widespread in many cultures around the world, where it serves as a mechanism for maintaining social relations and promoting community development. More recent forms occur for, or through, organizations, particularly non-profit institutions, as an important mechanism for promoting social cohesion, civic engagement and community well-being.
- 147.** The draft resolution introduces the concept of *volunteer work* to capture work activities performed for others without pay and on a voluntary basis. Its proposed definition, as well as related measurement guidelines, builds on the work carried out by the ILO Department of Statistics in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society (Baltimore, Maryland) as well as on the recommendations of the 18th ICLS Working Group on the Measurement of Volunteer Work (ILO, 2008a) and the ILO's recently published manual on the topic (ILO, 2011).
- 148.** The proposed definition emphasizes as main criteria of volunteer work its unpaid and non-compulsory nature, and the intended destination of the goods and services produced for others outside the volunteer's household or family.
- 149.** The term *unpaid* indicates that the volunteer work is carried out without an expectation of payment, whether in cash or in kind. In this sense, the nature of the exchange can be considered as a transfer, i.e. volunteer workers do not receive an income in return for the work performed. They may, however, receive some form of monetary or in-kind

---

compensation, such as the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, services such as meals or transportation, stipends to cover living expenses and symbolic gifts, in recognition of their voluntary work (ILO, 2011). Volunteers may also benefit in a number of ways from participating in volunteer work, including the establishment or maintenance of social connections, social standing or a feeling of self-worth and the development of skills, etc. (ILO, 2011).

- 150.** The term *non-compulsory* signifies that volunteer work is performed without any legal or other obligation or coercion. This is an important element in distinguishing volunteer work from other work activities that are unpaid but are performed on a compulsory basis (e.g. court-mandated community service, work mandated as part of a prison sentence, mandatory national service related to a military draft). At the same time, various kinds of voluntary community work are a common feature of many cultures and societies. Participation in volunteer work may be partly driven by shared social expectations or by peer pressure, but such expectations or pressure should not be interpreted as indicating that the work is compulsory (ILO, 2011).
- 151.** The phrase *for others* emphasizes that the work done by volunteers is intended for final use by other economic units outside the volunteer household and family. Two kinds of volunteer work are identified:
- (a) organization-based volunteering which is performed for, or through, organizations; and
  - (b) direct volunteering which is performed for other households, excluding the household of the volunteer or of family members living in other households.
- 152.** The distinction between organization-based and direct volunteering permits the analysis of the contribution of this form of work, in particular, to the non-profit sector and to households. It is also important for analysing patterns of volunteer work in different contexts, as more institutionalized forms of volunteer work tend to be prevalent in more developed countries whereas direct volunteering is more widespread in settings with less structured labour markets. Moreover, it provides added flexibility for countries wishing to measure different components of volunteer work with different frequencies.
- 153.** Volunteer work can be conducted to benefit any organization or cause, including people, the environment, animals, the wider community, etc. In addition, volunteer work may benefit the volunteer when he or she is a member of the group, community or organization for which the work is performed. Volunteer work carried out within self-help or mutual-aid groups is thus included.

## **7. Measures of labour underutilization**

- 154.** To facilitate monitoring of labour markets, operational definitions and guidelines are included in the draft resolution for the compilation of selected measures of labour underutilization. These include measures of time-related underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force that capture, in particular, mismatches between labour supply and labour demand due to insufficient labour absorption. From an individual perspective these signal situations of unmet need for employment within the population. The range of headline indicators of labour market performance that may be computed using these definitions are described in Chapter 9.

---

## Time-related underemployment

- 155.** The draft resolution incorporates guidelines for the measurement of time-related underemployment based on the recommendations of the 16th ICLS resolution on this topic. The operational definition of time-related underemployment has not been changed. However, several revisions to the text are proposed in order to clarify ambiguities identified by countries in applying the international standards. These relate particularly to the defining criteria of time-related underemployment, the relevant working-time concepts used, and the different subgroups that may be identified to shed light on structural and cyclical situations of time-related underemployment.
- 156.** As set forth in the 16th ICLS resolution, the definition of time-related underemployment comprised three criteria. It referred to persons in employment who, in the short reference period, wanted to work additional hours, had worked less than an hours threshold set at national level, and who were available to work additional hours in a subsequent reference period. A main source of ambiguity relates to the requirement to establish an hour's threshold as part of the definition. This criterion was introduced in order to focus the measure on situations related to insufficient quantity of employment, as evidenced by the number of hours actually worked at all jobs in the reference week. Exclusion of the threshold from the definition would result in the inclusion of persons who wanted to work additional hours because of issues not related to insufficient quantity of work, particularly due to low income, thus no longer being a measure of time-related underemployment.
- 157.** To establish the hours threshold, countries may use a variety of approaches, including a distinction based on notions of part-time/full-time employment, or on median or modal values of hours usually worked. At the time when the standards were adopted by the 16th ICLS, an international definition of hours usually worked did not exist. As a result, the resolution used the notion of normal hours. Even then, however, the intention was to recommend the concept of hours usually worked in order to have a measure in reference to the typical working time associated with specific groups of persons in employment. As different industries may have different typical working-time patterns, for example in agriculture, the draft resolution allows the setting of different hours thresholds for different worker groups, depending on national circumstances.
- 158.** A second source of ambiguity concerns the reference period against which to assess the availability criterion. The 16th ICLS resolution provides detailed guidelines for establishing the reference period for availability as comprising the "period generally required for workers to leave one job in order to start another". In practice, however, most countries have used a similar period as that used for establishing availability as part of the definition of unemployment. Such practice is likely to result in an underestimation of time-related underemployment by referring to a situation in the past when the person would not have made arrangements to become available for additional work. This would be, in particular, the case for persons with responsibilities outside of employment, including those providing care for dependent members of the household, and those engaged also in other forms of work.
- 159.** A final source of ambiguity is the distinction between the two categories of persons in time-related underemployment, namely, those who work *usually less* than the hours threshold and those who *usually work* more than the hours but who, during the short reference period, were not at work or actually worked reduced hours for economic reasons. These two groups are mutually exclusive:
- (a) The first group is in a prolonged situation of time-related underemployment (with both hours actually worked and hours usually worked below the threshold for time-related underemployment). As such, when separately identified, this group may be

---

useful for examining structural situations of insufficient quantity of employment among the employed.

- (b) The second group is in a temporary situation of time-related underemployment. As such it reflects situations of insufficient quantity of employment due to cyclical or seasonal factors.

## Unemployment

**160.** A number of refinements have been introduced to the operational definition of *unemployment* and related measurement guidelines based on accumulated national practice. First, the definition has been refined in the light of the proposed changes to the concept of *employment*. Thus, unemployment is now defined with respect to work for pay or profit, more closely reflecting people's perception of unemployment. This implies that unemployment should reflect the search for any type of employment as newly defined, including paid employment and self-employment as well as informal, casual, part-time, seasonal or other temporary employment such as work done in the context of a paid apprenticeship, internship and traineeship. In addition, where work done in exchange for training in a trade or a profession, without remuneration in cash or in kind, is included within employment, a search for this type of employment should also be considered. Similarly, to capture the available supply of labour in a country adequately, unemployment should cover all persons who fulfil the criteria for its measurement, whether they seek employment within the national territory or abroad.

## Defining criteria

**161.** Reflecting accumulated good practice, the criteria to measure unemployment have been reordered in the text. In accordance with the priority rule for establishing the labour force status of persons, the criterion "without employment" is determined first. This criterion serves to ensure that persons who are employed, even if only for a few hours, are not counted among the unemployed. Once this criterion has been ascertained, it is followed by the "active search for employment" criterion and, finally, the "availability" criterion. The 13th ICLS resolution listed these last two criteria in reverse order, leading to their operational implementation in the household surveys of certain countries in that order. Partly as a result of this, countries have reported problems with the interpretation of the questions on availability for employment, and this has led to problems regarding the quality of the measurement of unemployment.

## Search for employment

**162.** In the implementation of the "seeking employment" criterion, the current standards include a list of methods to be used as evidence of job search (see paragraph 26). In the last 30 years, a variety of new activities to seek employment have become more commonplace. In particular, the spread of the Internet as a main channel of communication and of networking has led to the emergence of a range of new methods, which include placing or answering online job announcements and placing or updating résumés on online professional or social networking sites. The use of private employment services and intermediaries has likewise become common practice, particularly for specialized occupations but also as a way of seeking employment in a wider geographic area, including outside the national territory. The revised list of active search methods incorporates these new methods. It also describes more clearly activities that indicate a search for self-employment, including in agriculture, such as looking for land, building, machinery, equipment or raw materials, arranging for financial resources, applying for permits, licences, etc.

- 
- 163.** Recognizing that a precondition for actively searching for employment is the existence of a diverse labour market, with available opportunities for employment and established channels for job search, the current standards allow countries to relax (in other words, to exclude) this criterion where such conditions are not present. In such cases, the standards recommend using additional tests beyond availability for employment, such as the “desire” or “willingness” to take employment, in order to determine the existence of an interest in the labour market. These recommendations have created some confusion as to which are required criteria for the measurement of unemployment and have limited the international comparability of unemployment statistics. In line with the inclusion of a new, separate concept and measure to capture the potential labour force, and in order to reduce the confusion surrounding the measurement of unemployment, the option of relaxing the “seeking work” criterion has been removed from the proposed draft standards.

### ***Availability for employment***

- 164.** According to the international standards, persons without employment who are seeking employment should also be available for employment if they are to be considered as unemployed. In this context, availability is a test of readiness to start employment (Husmanns, 1990), and its inclusion is necessary for unemployment to serve as a current measure of labour market performance. It excludes from unemployment any persons who may be actively seeking employment but are not available to start within a short period of time. Such is the case of students who start seeking employment while still studying but will only become available to start after they have completed their studies. In this sense, the criterion of availability for employment refers to “time availability” to take employment after finding an opportunity (i.e. how soon a person can become available to start working). This is now made clear in the revised standards, which address concerns as to the utility and purpose of this criterion.

### ***Reference periods of measurement***

- 165.** To ensure that unemployment serves as a measure of current labour market performance that can capture short-term changes in labour market absorption, the standards generally recommend short reference periods of measurement for each of its defining criteria: the “reference day or week” criterion for establishing that a person is not in employment and is available for employment, and a “specified recent period” to capture activities to seek employment. The latter is intended to be interpreted as a longer period than the reference day or week, in order to account for the time-lags that often follow initial steps to seek employment, during which jobseekers may choose not to take any other steps to find employment (Husmanns, 1990).
- 166.** The review of national practices suggests, however, that the current guidelines are not sufficiently clear. In particular, a number of countries use the reference week to determine active job search. Such a short measurement period is not sufficient to capture employment search behaviour adequately. To improve the clarity of the standards and to promote international comparability of the statistics, a reference period of four weeks or a month, including the reference week or seven days, is recommended for measuring active search for employment.
- 167.** Concerns have also been raised about the adequacy of measuring current availability to take up employment with respect to a reference period in the past. As indicated, the main purpose of the availability criterion is to identify those persons without employment who would be ready to start working upon finding a job or business opportunity. In reality, jobseekers may need a few days to become available to take up employment upon finding a job or business opportunity. This is particularly the case of those who need assistance with their children or with household responsibilities prior to starting work. Similarly,

---

persons living in areas to which access is difficult may need to secure transportation, while new entrants to the labour market may need to purchase the requisite clothing or equipment.

- 168.** Tests indicate that in certain contexts small differences in the reference period used to measure availability do have an effect on the measurement of unemployment, particularly in the case of women and young persons (Hussmanns, 1990). This suggests that, in those settings, a slightly longer reference period of measurement than the reference week would be better suited to capturing situations of unemployment among different population subgroups. The draft resolution, while retaining the reference period established in the 13th ICLS resolution, allows for the optional extension of this reference period to encompass at most the subsequent two weeks, so as to enable consistent identification of situations of unemployment among different population groups. Such a recommendation is consistent with the range of practices observed at the national level.

### ***Treatment of specific groups***

- 169.** To clarify the treatment of specific groups, guidelines are retained that recommend that persons on indefinite lay-off be treated as being in unemployment if they satisfy the three criteria for inclusion. As in the current standards, no special treatment is given to persons in such a situation. The option to relax the “seeking work” criterion for indefinite lay-offs has been removed, as such persons, if available for employment, will be included among the potential labour force.
- 170.** The recommended treatment of future starters and participants in training schemes has also been retained. In the case of future starters, now more clearly defined, it is proposed that they continue to be treated as unemployed if available, irrespective of whether they sought employment or not. Similar treatment is also proposed for participants in skills training schemes who have an assurance that they will be employed at the end of the training period. Given that future starters have already found a job, it can be assumed that, if they indicate that they are currently available to take up employment, they would have started working earlier if possible. They therefore constitute underutilized labour resources. For participants in training schemes, participation in the programme also indicates that they would have been available to start the employment if they had had the opportunity to do so.
- 171.** In line with the proposed revisions for determining temporary absence from employment, persons with seasonal jobs, who stop performing the tasks and duties associated with that job during the off season and persons on extended absence from a job (i.e. beyond the duration threshold set to establish temporary absences), are now eligible for inclusion among the unemployed if they seek and are available for employment.

### ***Duration of unemployment and long-term unemployment***

- 172.** Beyond monitoring cyclical fluctuations in unemployment, it is important that labour market analysis assess structural situations of unemployment over longer reference periods. To this end, general guidance has been added for measuring the duration of search for employment and for identifying persons in long-term unemployment.
- 173.** Duration of search for employment is important as both an economic and a social indicator. In periods of high and increasing unemployment, changes in duration of job search and in the proportion of persons unemployed for longer periods are key indicators of changes in labour market conditions. Long-term unemployment is of particular concern

---

because of such consequences as financial hardship, loss of relevant skills, loss of self-esteem and alienation from employment.

- 174.** While many countries collect statistics on duration of job search and the long-term unemployed, conceptual and measurement differences between countries and regions impose serious limitations on the international comparability of these statistics. A main conceptual difference is whether the focus is on measurement of duration of unemployment or of duration of job search. In many cases, countries reporting duration of unemployment do not actually test for availability throughout the duration of job search, and thus the measure becomes in effect one of duration of job search. In other cases, availability is ascertained for the duration of the job search. Questions arise, however, regarding respondents' actual interpretation of availability in a long reference period. A second common difference relates to whether or not the duration of job search allows for short periods of employment. There are also variations in the period used to determine long-term unemployment; in many countries, a period of 12 months is used, whereas in others a shorter period (typically of six months) is applied.
- 175.** Taking into account existing practices and the policy objectives of the measures, the draft resolution proposes defining the duration of search for employment from when a currently unemployed person began looking for employment or, if that job search was interrupted by a period of employment, the period of time since a person was last employed, whichever is the shorter. Long-term unemployment is further defined in reference to a search for employment comprising the last 12 months.

## Potential labour force

- 176.** To identify situations of inadequate absorption of labour, beyond those captured by unemployment, the draft resolution introduces a definition of *potential labour force*. It is proposed that the definition cover persons who have indicated some interest in employment, distinguishing three mutually exclusive groups:
- (a) *unavailable jobseekers*, referring to persons without employment who are seeking employment but are not available;
  - (b) *available potential jobseekers*, referring to persons without employment who are not seeking employment but are available; and
  - (c) *willing potential jobseekers*, comprising persons without employment who are neither seeking nor available for employment but who want employment.
- 177.** Existing data suggest that group (a) generally accounts for only a small proportion of persons outside the labour force. In certain cases, this group most likely reflects the sensitivity of the “available for employment” criterion to the reference period used for its measurement. That is to say that it captures persons who put pressure on the labour market (by actively seeking employment) but who, because they are not immediately available, are excluded from unemployment. In other cases, it may also reflect a more structured labour market where waiting periods to enter the labour market or to switch jobs are generally long, thus requiring early planning by prospective workers.
- 178.** Group (b) is generally larger and includes some subgroups that have received considerable attention from policy-makers, i.e. persons on indefinite lay-off and discouraged jobseekers. It also comprises persons facing a variety of impediments to seeking employment, including personal and family-related factors in addition to the socio-economic context. Some of these subgroups are at present included among the unemployed in countries that have chosen to relax the “seeking work” criterion. Capturing this group has become

---

particularly relevant in both more developed and less developed regions, owing, on the one hand, to the increasing flexibility of labour markets across the world and, on the other, to the limited existence of diversified labour markets and channels for seeking employment in many rural areas in less developed countries.

- 179.** Group (c) is particularly relevant in impoverished areas where persons not only have no opportunity to seek employment but are also occupied with subsistence activities as their main source of livelihood. It is also an important indicator of the need for employment, particularly in the case of women, in settings where family responsibilities and expectations imply that the expression of interest in the labour market is generally in the form of an expressed desire for employment.
- 180.** This definition, based on three mutually exclusive groups, should serve two main purposes. First, it should provide flexibility in its implementation by allowing countries to identify the subgroups that are relevant in the national context. Second, it should support more detailed analysis of labour markets by identifying additional groups in situations of underutilization. The proposed definition, in addition, is readily implementable as part of the identification of unemployed persons through household surveys. Indeed, the various groups comprising the *potential labour force* share certain characteristics with the unemployed but fail to meet all the criteria needed to be counted among them. Their separate identification will enable the design of more targeted policies aimed at improving access to employment for specific groups of the population, such as women, youth and persons living in rural or remote areas.
- 181.** The inclusion of a definition of *potential labour force* implies that data collection instruments need to collect information about employment search and availability for all persons not classified as employed in the reference period of measurement. As this practice is not yet widespread, appropriate guidance is provided in the draft resolution.
- 182.** Finally, a definition of *discouraged jobseekers* has also been included to meet the demand for more comparable information on this particular subgroup of the *potential labour force*. As proposed, the group of discouraged jobseekers comprises persons without employment who, though available, did not seek employment on account of such labour market reasons as past failure to find a suitable job, lack of experience or qualifications, lack of jobs matching the person's skills, absence of any jobs in the area, recent job loss, or the fact of being considered too young or too old by prospective employers.
- 183.** Some approaches argue that, for a jobseeker to be classified as discouraged, some evidence of past search for employment is needed. For this, an additional criterion of employment search in a recent reference period (i.e. the past six or 12 months) would need to be included. Such a restriction would, however, affect the relevance of the measure in settings where employment opportunities are limited and where people have general knowledge of available employment options. The latter is one of the reasons why the relaxation of the "seeking work" criterion was introduced in the 13th ICLS resolution as an option in the measurement of unemployment.

## **8. Programmes of data collection**

### **Strategies for data collection frequency and reporting**

- 184.** Flexibility is needed in national data collection plans in order to meet the demands of users for statistics of work and of the labour force within existing budgets and resources. Not all work statistics will be needed with the same frequency. In determining the periodicity with which different statistics are needed, their policy relevance and their suitability for

---

describing work patterns and labour markets in an economy are decisive factors. The draft resolution includes general guidance, based on good practice, to assist countries in establishing a collection and reporting schedule for different sets of work statistics. The recommendations constitute a minimum requirement and countries may produce (and many already do) broader sets of work statistics on a more frequent basis. In any case, establishing such a schedule is important to ensure the overall sustainability and progressive development of the national system of work statistics.

- 185.** For labour market monitoring, main aggregates for employment and labour underutilization, including unemployment, are needed on a sub-annual basis in order to assess seasonal and other temporal variations in the supply of labour, including variations resulting from the business cycle. This recommendation is in line with the guidelines already set out in the 13th ICLS resolution of 1982. As discussed in the next section, such information is also essential for producing accurate annual averages that take account of variations in the level of participation at different times of the year.
- 186.** Sub-annual estimates of subsistence foodstuff producers would also be needed in countries where this group of workers is sizeable and where seasonal variations result in changes in their participation levels and working time – for example, during peak and slack seasons in agriculture. The information would, in addition, be essential for monitoring movements between subsistence production and seasonal wage employment or market self-employment, and for monitoring changes in measures of labour underutilization, particularly rates of unemployment and of potential labour force, pointing to a need for seasonal employment as a source of cash income at different times of the year.
- 187.** For a more structural evaluation of labour markets, more detailed statistics on the characteristics of the employed, the unemployed and persons outside the labour force, such as those highlighted in Chapter 9, would be needed on an annual basis. In addition, for national production accounts, statistics are needed to produce annualized estimates of labour input into SNA production. This would involve the preparation of estimates of working time over the long observation period (i.e. the year) associated with the total number of jobs in the economy, with organization-based volunteering and with direct volunteering in households that produce goods for own final use, as well as with activities to produce goods for own final use.
- 188.** For more in-depth analysis of specific work topics or population subgroups, as well as for benchmarking and for assessing macroeconomic models and estimations, statistics are required on a less-than-annual basis, for example, every three, five or ten years, as determined by user demand. Detailed statistics on own-use production of goods and provision of services and on volunteer work are particularly important for a deeper understanding of work patterns in the population, in order to assess their contribution to household livelihoods and well-being and to specific industries and the economy as a whole. In addition, to inform policies targeting specific groups, statistics are needed on such topics as: labour migration, youth, child labour, gender issues, transitions in and out of employment, work in rural areas, household-level analysis of work patterns, and income and other socio-economic factors. Because of their importance, these topics have been highlighted as examples in the draft resolution. The specific topics covered, however, should be determined by countries in consultation with the various user groups.

## **Measurement over short and long observation periods**

- 189.** Statistics of work referring to a short reference period as recommended in the draft resolution (see Chapter 6) cannot be taken to reflect the general situation in a country over a long observation period, such as a year. To reflect labour markets and work patterns in an economy more adequately, repeated measurements must be made at different times during

---

the year. In practice, such frequent measurement is usually provided by administrative sources, in so far as they are updated on a continuous or monthly basis. For household surveys it entails implementing data collection throughout the year, especially on a continuous or monthly basis. When this kind of approach is used, even work activities carried out sporadically will be adequately covered by a short reference period of measurement. Seasonal and other temporal variations in employment and work patterns will likewise be adequately captured. In addition, annual estimates will refer to the average situation in the year. Two possible approaches are recommended in the draft resolution:

- (a) Registers and continuous or periodic surveys designed to produce estimates on a monthly, quarterly or other sub-annual basis are particularly useful for producing labour force statistics reflecting the current and long-term situation in the economy. When these registers or surveys are designed to follow-up individuals within their coverage, for example, through the use of panels, it may also be possible to produce estimates of the current and long-term situation of individuals and to carry out an analysis of labour market dynamics, including the computation of gross labour market flows.
- (b) One-time surveys may be designed to produce annual estimates for the economy that take into account seasonal or other temporal variations in activity levels. This is accomplished by spreading the sample over the year, which thus calls for continuous data collection operations.

**190.** Continuous or monthly data collection, however, may not be feasible in countries with limited infrastructure or resources. In these cases the draft standards recommend that the countries strive to implement a sub-annual data collection strategy progressively – for example starting with data collection twice a year coinciding with the high and low season in employment, in order to produce sub-annual periodic estimates that would still permit the assessment of changes in levels of participation at different times of the year.

**191.** When this is not possible, a one-time household survey that collects information using retrospective recall over a long reference period of measurement may be used. However, this approach will not yield statistics of work and of the labour force with the same level of accuracy as those obtained using short reference periods of measurement and frequent data collection. In this case, the chosen methodology should seek to minimize respondent burden and memory recall problems. To this end, the options suggested include:

- (a) job/activity-based recall, where persons are asked to describe the characteristics of their current job/activity followed by questions about prior jobs/activities held over the observation period;
- (b) period-based recall, where the work activities of persons are recorded by asking persons to recall their work situation during specified time periods, such as month by month;
- (c) single recall over the entire period, in order to establish the main work status of persons in the long observation period, as self-perceived.

**192.** When using retrospective recall over a long observation period, it is not possible to implement the one-hour criterion to establish the labour force status of persons or to account for all inputs of labour. In these cases, the main objective will instead be to approximate levels of participation and working time in each form of work. For this purpose and to facilitate memory recall, use of broader categories of working time, such as part-time/full-time, are suggested. Such an approach is generally used in agricultural censuses and surveys for preparing estimates of employment and working time in agricultural holdings (FAO, 2005).

- 
- 193.** Given the problems of memory recall and respondent burden generally associated with retrospective measurement over a long reference period, the usual activity approach and related measures (usually active population, not usually active population) are no longer recommended. Rather, the proposed revisions limit the use of retrospective methods over a long observation period as an alternative when resource limitations impede sub-annual data collection, in order to produce broad estimates of participation in each form of work and associated working time or to prepare a classification of the population by main form of work as self-perceived.

## Population coverage

- 194.** General guidelines for defining the reference population(s) for work and for labour force statistics need to be included in the draft standards in order to promote comprehensive coverage of all population subgroups, particularly those likely to be excluded (such as foreigners), the population in collective living quarters, the armed forces and various groups of temporary migrant workers such as border workers and seasonal workers. Guidelines are also needed for identifying the appropriate reference populations so as to serve the needs of labour market policies and of national accounts.
- 195.** Two main reference populations are specified: the *resident population*, and the population working in *resident producer units*.
- 196.** For the analysis of labour markets, statistics about the participation of the population in employment, their labour force status and the degree of labour underutilization should refer to the *usually resident population*. This is also the reference population for statistics of participation in each form of work. The *usually resident population* is recommended in international standards for the collection of population statistics, in order to promote coherence with population statistics and other social statistics and to enhance the usefulness of the statistics in informing a broad range of social and economic policies. Accordingly, nationals and non-nationals who are usual residents of the country, irrespective of whether they work in the national territory or abroad, are in principle included as part of the reference population for statistics of work and of the labour force. This includes the civilian population and the armed forces living in private households and in collective living quarters, as well as those without fixed premises.
- 197.** For preparing estimates of labour input for national production accounts a different reference population is needed. According to the most recent version of the 2008 SNA, the relevant reference population is made up of persons *working in resident producer units*, which may be market units, non-market units or households producing goods for own final use. This is recommended so as to ensure coherence between work and production statistics. It covers all jobs and activities in *resident producer units* that contribute to the production of goods and services within the SNA production boundary, i.e. all jobs in employment, all activities to produce goods for own final use, all organization-based volunteering activities and all direct volunteering activities producing goods for own final use by other households. In addition to usual residents working for resident producer units, this reference population includes non-resident border, seasonal and other short-term migrant workers who enter the territory to work for resident producer units, for which statistics may be obtainable from establishment surveys or specific inquiries.
- 198.** Indeed, the proposed draft standards recognize that certain groups of workers, particularly migrant workers, persons without fixed premises such as nomads, and other specific groups may not be adequately captured through regular data collection mechanisms such as labour force surveys. To this end, it recommends that countries use all available sources in order to prepare sets of statistics that are as comprehensive as possible. In addition, given the growing policy relevance and importance of migrant workers in analysing labour

---

markets, the draft resolution recommends that statistics on these groups of workers be collected on a regular, albeit less frequent, basis, using special data collection mechanisms. Furthermore, to facilitate the proper interpretation and use of work and labour force statistics, the draft standards recommend that they be disseminated along with methodological information, including population coverage (see Chapter 10).

## Age limits

- 199.** In general, the national system of work statistics should provide information about the work activities of the population regardless of age. Separate sets of statistics, however, are required to inform labour and related social policies that address children and the population of working age. The draft resolution introduces general guidelines for selecting an appropriate minimum age in defining the working-age population as the main target population for labour force statistics. It also recommends using the same age limits for the preparation of statistics on the different forms of work.
- 200.** The inclusion of guidelines on the minimum age limit was deemed important in the light of the recent adoption of separate international recommendations for the production of statistics on working children that cover all work activities within, and beyond, the SNA production boundary (18th ICLS, 2008c), the different purposes for which statistics on child labour and on the working-age population are collected (namely, to inform national programmes for the eradication of child labour and policies aimed at promoting employment), and the generally lower prevalence of participation in different forms of work among younger age groups. For these reasons, it is recommended that, in setting a minimum age limit for establishing the working-age population, countries take into consideration the minimum age for employment including any exceptions as specified in national laws or regulations, and the age of completion of compulsory schooling.
- 201.** In setting national minimum age thresholds for statistics of the working-age population, ensuring that the work activities of children are adequately captured, where prevalent, is a major concern. Countries that use a common data collection instrument to produce statistics on working children and on the working population will need to set a lower age limit in the survey instrument than that used to compute and report estimates of employment, unemployment, labour force participation rate and other labour market indicators. Thus, minimum age limits may differ for the collection and reporting of labour force and work statistics. In addition, in order to enable cross-country comparisons the guidelines recommend reporting labour force and work statistics for the population aged 15+ years (see Chapter 10). This in turn implies that the minimum age for the collection of labour force and work statistics may not be higher than 15+ years of age.
- 202.** The draft resolution discourages the introduction of upper age limits for the production of statistics of work and of the labour force. In many countries, some groups of the population continue to work well past the legal or customary retirement age. In others, retirement systems are not in place or apply only to a subset of workers. In addition, with a rising life expectancy and limited pension systems, many governments are contemplating encouraging continued participation in the labour force at a more advanced age. The introduction of an upper age limit could result in incomplete coverage, loss of valuable information and unavailability of data for evaluating the success of government policies aimed at encouraging prolonged labour force participation.

## Sources of data

- 203.** Statistics of work may be derived from a variety of sources. In general, the best sources are household-based surveys. Other sources such as establishment surveys and administrative

---

records also play an important role in providing statistics for certain groups of workers, as noted in the draft resolution. Register-based sources can likewise be an important source in countries with well-developed and comprehensive registration systems. The draft resolution recognizes the complementary role of the various sources and recommends their joint use in developing a comprehensive set of statistics on each form of work. To this end, the proposals stress the need for sources to be harmonized in terms of concepts, definitions, classifications, reference periods of measurement and other methodological aspects.

- 204.** Given the central role played by household surveys, special attention is paid to their use as the main source of data. Household surveys, particularly labour force surveys, are best equipped for collecting statistics on most forms of work and on measures of labour underutilization. Because measurement is done through the household, these surveys can cover all forms of work, notably those taking place only within households, such as own-use production work and some forms of volunteer work. In addition, they can produce statistics for the population as a whole and for all jobs and other work activities. These last two are essential as household-based surveys are often the only source of information about informal jobs in employment and in some forms of volunteer work which do not appear in administrative sources or establishment surveys (an exception being specialized establishment surveys of the informal sector). They are flexible tools that can be used in a modular format to introduce supplementary question sequences for collecting information on specific topics or forms of work with different frequencies of collection.
- 205.** To enable the joint assessment of participation in the labour force and in forms of work other than employment, the introduction of short add-on modules or supplements in labour force surveys is recommended. This approach is already used on a regular basis in a number of countries in both more developed and less developed regions. Add-on modules to establish the labour force status of respondents as well as their participation in own-use production work and in volunteer work may also be used in the context of household surveys covering related topics, such as surveys of living standards, of household budget or of household income and expenditure. These surveys are particularly valuable for analysing the links between participation in the different forms of work and household-level outcomes, including poverty. Given their multi-topic nature, the introduction of such modules in this case would primarily serve for the production of statistics on general levels of participation and working time in each form of work, as well as on other selected characteristics as described in Chapter 9. To limit the response burden and to assure the overall quality of the data collection, however, care should be taken not to introduce too many modules in a single data collection exercise and to include only a limited number of questions at a time.
- 206.** For these reasons, specialized household surveys may be appropriate for a more detailed analysis of each form of work. The draft resolution recognizes the potential of specialized household surveys for providing in-depth information on specific topics or population groups. In particular, it highlights surveys of time use, volunteer work, employment in agriculture and labour migration. Traditionally, time-use surveys have been used to capture information about all activities performed by the population within a short period. While employment activities are not generally covered in detail, time-use surveys have been a major source of statistics on participation in own-use provision of services and in volunteer work. They are also increasingly being used as a tool for assessing the quality of data derived from labour force surveys and for improving data collection instruments, given their detailed recording of working time associated with different work activities.
- 207.** However, household surveys are generally not an adequate source of statistics for small geographic areas, small groups or populations not living in private households, unless explicitly designed for such purposes (for example, by implementing special procedures to enumerate worker camps, military barracks, etc.). This could be the case of statistics on

---

migrant workers living in group quarters or outside the national territory. For these groups of workers establishment surveys are a potential source of information, to the extent that the workers are formal paid employees.

208. Population censuses can be used to provide statistics on small populations or areas, as well as on the population living in group quarters. Their low frequency and the number of questions that can be included on any given topic can, however, pose limitations. They are thus best used as a source for benchmarking purposes, and in preparing master samples for use in the design of household surveys.

## 9. Indicators, tabulations and analysis

209. The draft resolution stresses the importance, for national purposes, of countries specifying a comprehensive set of indicators and tabulations, in consultation with the users of the statistics: (a) to monitor labour market performance in a broad sense; (b) to measure and monitor participation in own-use production and in volunteer work; and (c) to assess total labour input, or volume of work in reference to all jobs and other work activities in the national economy.
210. In general, and to reflect differences in working patterns among population subgroups adequately, the resolution urges that, where applicable, all routinely produced statistical outputs cover the total population separately, by sex, geographic region (including urban and rural areas), specified age groups and other selected characteristics, according to an appropriate reporting schedule as described in Chapter 8.

### Indicators

211. For labour market monitoring, a number of key indicators will need to be produced on the basis of the concepts and definitions set out in the draft resolution. These include existing indicators, particularly totals and rates of the labour force, persons outside the labour force and persons in employment, in time-related underemployment and in unemployment, as well as new indicators for the potential labour force and for subsistence foodstuff producers.
212. Two well-established indicators that are highlighted in the resolution are the employment-to-population ratio (referred to as the employment rate in certain countries and regions) and the labour force participation rate in relation to the working-age population. In addition, a new rate of subsistence foodstuff producers, computed in relation to the working-age population, is proposed in order to shed light on, and monitor trends in, this important group of workers where they are insufficiently integrated in the labour market, and to support the formulation of policies for the eradication of extreme poverty.
213. In line with the recognized need for policy outreach to identify and promote the integration of persons in the labour market, the resolution further provides recommended computations for a parsimonious range of labour underutilization indicators. The new set of four indicators LU1 to LU4 (including the unemployment rate) are intended to be used and analysed in conjunction with each other. The draft standards recommend that countries select at least two or three from among them in the combination that best reflects national circumstances, for presentation to the general public as **headline** indicators for monitoring insufficient labour absorption reflecting the extent of unmet need for employment among different groups of the population. The choice of headline indicators includes:

---

**LU1:** Unemployment rate:

$$[\text{unemployment} \div \text{labour force}] \times 100$$

**LU2:** Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment:

$$[(\text{time-related underemployment} + \text{unemployment}) \div \text{labour force}] \times 100$$

**LU3:** Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force:

$$[(\text{unemployment} + \text{potential labour force}) \div (\text{labour force} + \text{potential labour force})] \times 100$$

**LU4:** Composite measure of labour underutilization:

$$[(\text{time-related underemployment} + \text{unemployment} + \text{potential labour force}) \div (\text{labour force} + \text{potential labour force})] \times 100$$

- 214.** All of the above indicators provide relative measures of the prevalence of persons putting pressure on the labour market, with different degrees of intensity and attachment. Measures LU2–LU4 include the unemployed within their scope. Both the unemployment rate (LU1) and the combined rate of persons in time-related underemployment together with the unemployed (LU2) are calculated in relation to the labour force, whereas the combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (LU3) and the composite indicator (LU4) are both computed in relation to an extended denominator, i.e. the labour force plus the potential labour force. Thus, the levels provided by these rates will not be interpretable in direct comparison to the unemployment rate. Rather, they will provide increasingly broad measures for monitoring changes in overall levels of labour underutilization. More detailed analysis of different responses to labour market downturns will require the use of separate indicators for each of the components – and subcomponents in the case of the potential labour force and of labour underutilization.
- 215.** Other useful indicators of labour underutilization that are defined include a long-term unemployment rate referring to persons in long-term unemployment expressed as a percentage of the labour force and volume of time-related underemployment. For the preparation of the latter estimates, the draft resolution cites the international standards on the topic.
- 216.** The long-term unemployment rate usefully complements the unemployment rate and other measures of labour underutilization, providing a different perspective by tracking the prevalence of persons who have been in a situation of unemployment for a prolonged period of time, where applicable.
- 217.** Volume measures of time-related underemployment provide information, at the level of the economy, about the amount of working time not being harnessed for the production of goods and services and, at the level of the individual, about the severity of the underemployment situation being experienced by the workers.
- 218.** The basic recommended indicators of the prevalence of participation in forms of work other than employment are a “volunteer rate” and rates of “own-use production of goods” and of “own-use provision of services”, each expressed as a percentage of the working-age population, computed by relevant activity clusters and, in the case of volunteer work, by type of economic unit. Such indicators, when used together with the refined employment-to-population ratio, provide a general picture of the relative levels of the population’s participation in the different forms of work. On the one hand, using the working-age population as the denominator provides a common basis for comparison. On the other hand, indicators based on the working-age population are influenced by the age structure of the population, thus limiting their usefulness for cross-country comparisons and for

---

monitoring long-term changes over time. For these purposes it may be important also to produce age-specific participation rates for each form of work.

- 219.** Prevalence indicators are useful measures of the extent to which a country's population or a specific population group engages in each form of work. However, they do not provide information about the amount of time spent in each form of work, i.e. the volume of work carried out by persons. Volume measures are essential for macroeconomic estimation, including the assessment of production and productivity. They are also informative for the analysis of working-time patterns and arrangements and for the assessments of time poverty. For the purposes of national production accounts, the draft resolution recommends producing estimates of the volume of work or labour input, in accordance with the international standards for measurement of working time (18th ICLS, 2008b).
- 220.** Labour input prepared for activities *within the SNA production boundary* will include employment, own-use production of goods, organization-based volunteering and direct volunteering producing goods for consumption by other households. For activities *beyond the SNA production boundary* it will refer to own-use provision of services and to direct volunteering providing services for consumption by other households.

## Tabulations and analysis

- 221.** General guidance is provided to support the preparation of comprehensive national tabulation plans of statistics of work and of the labour force, taking into account the main uses of the statistics. Tabulations may be prepared for persons, jobs, activity clusters and households.
- 222.** Person-level tabulations of the resident population are mainly needed to inform social and economic policies and programmes targeting the population of the country. This is the approach that is recommended for preparing tabulations for the labour force and for persons in own-use production work and in volunteer work. For a descriptive analysis of the labour force, general tabulations of the working-age population by labour force status and category of labour underutilization (i.e. time-related underemployment, unemployment and potential labour force) should be prepared. In addition, statistics of the employed, the unemployed and persons outside the labour force should be classified by relevant characteristics of their main or last (main) job in employment, in particular: industry, occupation, status in employment, sector of employment, institutional sector, geographic place of work (to distinguish non-migrants and short-term labour migrants, where relevant), specified working-time bands (as per the international standards on the topic) so as to enable identification of persons working short or excessive hours, type of remuneration (e.g. in cash only, in kind only, in cash and in kind) and specified bands of income from employment.
- 223.** For apprentices, interns and trainees classified as being in employment, in particular, special tabulation by type of labour transaction is recommended to identify those working in the context of a labour transaction in exchange for pay – distinguishing between remuneration fully or partly in cash (monetary) and remuneration exclusively in kind (non-monetary) – separately from those working in exchange for training without remuneration.
- 224.** For persons in unemployment, tabulation by duration intervals of job search is recommended in order to support the separate identification of persons in long-term unemployment.
- 225.** For persons outside the labour force, new guidelines are included, in addition to the above, to promote the development of alternative classifications by degree of labour market attachment, by reasons for not seeking, not being available for, or not wanting,

---

employment, and by self-perceived main activity status. The proposed classifications respond to the demand for policy-relevant breakdowns of this component of the working-age population, which was previously treated as a residual category.

- 226.** Classification by degree of labour market attachment is the basis for the identification of the different groups comprising the potential labour force (see Chapter 7). Classification by reasons given provides information to support the analysis of barriers to employment, including personal factors (illness, disability, studies), family-related factors (pregnancy, presence of small children, refusal by family), labour market factors (past failure to find a suitable job, lack of experience or qualifications, jobs that do not match the person's skills, lack of jobs in the area, recent job loss, being considered too young or too old by prospective employers), lack of infrastructure (lack of assets, roads, transportation, employment services), other sources of income (pension, rent) or disenfranchisement. These two classifications need to be combined to identify specific target groups, particularly discouraged jobseekers. Finally, classification by main activity status aims to provide a basic breakdown of persons outside the labour force according to their self-perceived main activity. The breakdowns included are activity-based so social status categories such as retired or disabled are therefore not included; instead, they are included as part of the classification based on reasons.
- 227.** With regard to own-use production work and volunteer work, the draft resolution proposes basic tabulations by selected characteristics, notably by activity clusters and specified bands of hours actually worked. Furthermore, a general classification of persons in own-use production work by type of production (goods only, goods and services, services only) is suggested to support social analysis of this form of work. In the case of volunteer workers, additional tabulations by economic unit (market or non-market enterprises and households) and, for households, by type of production (goods or services) are essential. In addition, to shed light on the labour market integration of persons in these forms of work, tabulations by their labour force status, by category of labour underutilization and by other such characteristics (particularly among the employed by industry) are also recommended.
- 228.** Job-level tabulations with reference to resident producer units are highlighted for macroeconomic purposes, including national production accounts, for describing the characteristics of all jobs (whether main or secondary) in specific industries, of jobs in the informal sector and of informal jobs in the economy, and for informing social policies relating more and more to the quality of employment and to gender justice.
- 229.** Household-level tabulations are needed to understand better the dynamics of participation in different forms of work, particularly how households allocate labour as part of their livelihood strategies, and to assess the distribution of tasks between the sexes – especially for own provision of goods and of services. They also serve to assess more accurately the socio-economic outcomes associated with participation in each form of work, including poverty and material well-being at the level of the household. In particular, guidance is included on the preparation of tabulations that support: (a) gender analysis of work patterns taking into account basic features of the composition and structure of households, including the presence of dependent members; and (b) identification of households at risk of poverty.

## **10. Data evaluation and dissemination**

- 230.** To promote good practices in the production, dissemination and reporting of statistics at the national and international levels, general recommendations are included that emphasize data quality and documentation, timely and wide dissemination of statistics and accompanying methodological information to all users, and reporting of the information so as to permit international comparisons.

---

## Data evaluation and national dissemination

- 231.** Current standards call for the prompt and wide release of statistics of the labour force and for the dissemination of appropriate methodological information in order to evaluate data quality. The draft resolution builds on these general recommendations and advocates adherence to the United National Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the guidelines concerning dissemination practices for labour statistics (16th ICLS, 1998), highlighting the importance that countries' statistical agencies communicate the resulting labour force and work statistics to all users on an impartial basis, including other branches of government, civil society, the social partners, the news media, etc.
- 232.** Emphasis is also placed on dissemination of the information in a variety of formats, including electronic formats, in order to meet all user needs, as well as on its timely release in phases so as to meet the demand for early preliminary reports of main aggregates, followed by full reports. Dissemination of public-use files that guarantee the confidentiality of the information is also advocated for promoting more in-depth analysis and use of the information.
- 233.** In adopting the revised standards for the production and dissemination of national labour force statistics, statistical agencies will need to consider the most appropriate strategy for communicating the nature of the changes in the statistics and the reasons for them. This is particularly relevant if introduction of the standards leads to a break in high-profile statistical series, such as labour force, employment, unemployment and time-related underemployment rates, in which case the reporting of parallel series is recommended for a specified period following the implementation of the revisions. Moreover, the introduction of new measures of labour underutilization and their relationship to existing measures such as the unemployment rate will need to be explained. More generally, States are urged to disseminate statistics of work and of the labour force routinely along with relevant metadata, including information about the concepts, definitions and methods of data collection and about its quality.

## International reporting

- 234.** For purposes of international comparison, the draft resolution includes guidelines recommending the routine reporting of statistics of work, of the labour force and of key measures of labour underutilization, particularly LU1 and LU4 as defined in the draft resolution (see Chapter 9), for the total population, by sex, by specified age group, by broad level of education and by urban and rural areas.
- 235.** Use of common five-year age bands for reporting the main aggregates is highlighted, starting from the 15–19 age group and ending with an open bracket for persons aged 75 years and above, in order to accommodate future changes in participation levels in the light of rising life expectancies around the world. Where concerns for data quality may preclude the use of five-year age bands, the resolution recommends broader bands for specific target groups, including 15–24 years, 25–34 years, 35–54 years, 55–64 years, 65–74 years and 75+ years. The use of common classifications that are convertible to the most recent standard international classifications is likewise recommended.
- 236.** Finally, to facilitate the use of statistics for international comparison, the revised resolution exhorts States to document and report any differences between their national concepts, definitions, classifications and methods, and those contained in the relevant international statistical standards.

---

## References

- Anker, R. 1983. "Female labour force participation in developing countries: A critique of current definitions and data collection methods", *International Labour Review*, Vol. 122, No. 6, (Geneva, ILO), pp. 709–723.
- Dollar, D. 2004. *Globalization, poverty and inequality since 1980*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3333 (New York, World Bank).
- European Commission (EC). 2010. *Employment in Europe 2010* (Brussels), Oct.
- Eurostat. 2011. "New measures of labour market attachment", in Arturo de la Fuente, *Statistics in Focus*, 57/2011.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). 2005. *A system of integrated agricultural censuses and surveys. Volume 1: World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010*. FAO Statistical Development Series No. 11 (Rome).
- Goldschmidt-Clermont, L. 2000. "Household production and income: Some preliminary issues", *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 2000–02 (Geneva, ILO).
- Grimshaw, D. 2011. "What do we know about low-wage work and low-wage workers? Analysing the definitions, patterns, causes and consequences in international perspective", *ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Series No. 28* (Geneva, ILO).
- Hussmanns, R.; Mehran, F.; Verma, V. 1990. *Surveys of economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment: An ILO manual on concepts and methods* (Geneva, ILO).
- International Labour Office (ILO). 1982a. Resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, adopted by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 18–29 October 1982.
- . 1982b. *Labour force, employment, unemployment and underemployment, Report II*, 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 18–29 October 1982.
- . 1987. Guidelines on the implications of employment promotion schemes on the measurement of employment and unemployment, endorsed by the 14th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, October 1987.
- . 1998a. Resolution concerning the measurement of underemployment and inadequate employment situations, adopted by the 16th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, October 1998.
- . 1998b. Guidelines concerning the treatment in employment and unemployment statistics of persons on extended absences from work, endorsed by the 16th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, October 1998.
- . 2008a. *Report of the Conference*, 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 24 November–5 December 2008.
- . 2008b. Resolution concerning the measurement of working time, adopted by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 24 November–5 December 2008.

- 
- 2008c. Resolution concerning statistics of child labour, adopted by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, 24 November–5 December 2008.
  - 2008d. *Workshop: Apprenticeship in the informal economy of Africa*, Employment Sector workshop report, Geneva, May 2007.
  - 2008e. ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted by the International Labour Conference, 97th Session, Geneva, 2008.
  - 2009. *Report of the Technical Workshop on Measures of Labour Underutilization*, Geneva, 7–9 December 2009.
  - 2010. *World of Work Report 2010: From one crisis to the next?*, International Institute for Labour Studies (Geneva).
  - 2011. *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*, Geneva, 2011.
  - 2012. SSM3: *Labour Force Surveys – Source of statistics of the labour force and its components* (2011 edition). Available at: [http://laborsta.ilo.org/applv8/data/SSM3\\_NEW/E/SSM3.html](http://laborsta.ilo.org/applv8/data/SSM3_NEW/E/SSM3.html) [accessed July 2013].
  - 2012b. *Global Wage Report 2012/13: Wages and equitable growth* (Geneva).
  - 2013a. *Final report*, Meeting of Experts in Labour Statistics on the Advancement of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Geneva, 28 January–1 February 2013.
  - 2013b. *Jobs and livelihoods in the post-2015 development agenda: Meaningful ways to set targets and monitor progress*, ILO Concept Note No. 2, Geneva, 20 May 2013.
- Lee, S. and Sobek, K. 2012. “Low-wage work: A global perspective”, in *International Labour Review*, Vol. 131, No. 3 (Geneva, ILO), pp. 141–155.
- Nübler, I.; Hofmann, C.; Greiner, C. 2009. “Understanding informal apprenticeship – Findings from empirical research in Tanzania”, ILO Employment Working Paper No. 32, Geneva.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2010. “A Framework to Measure the Progress of Societies”. Statistics Directorate Working Paper No. 34, (Paris), 12 Jul. 2010.
- Stiglitz, J.E.; Sen, A.; Fitoussi, J.-P. 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* (Paris), Sep. 2009.
- Tieguhong, J.C. et al. 2009. “Coping with crisis in Central Africa: Enhanced role for non-wood forest products”, in *Unasylva*, No. 233, Vol. 60 (Rome, FAO), pp. 49–53.
- United Nations. 1995. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995, Sales No. E. 96.IV.8.
- 2005. *2005 World Summit Outcome*, resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its 60th Session, New York.
  - 2008a. Report of the Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on labour statistics, 39th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, New York, 26–29 February 2008.

- 
- . 2008b. *System of National Accounts 2008*, New York, 2008.
- . 2013a. “A new global partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development”, *Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda* (New York, NY).
- . 2013b. *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. Good Practices on National Official Statistics, United Nations Statistics Division. Available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx> [accessed July 2013].
- United Nations Development Programme. 2010. *Economic crisis and unpaid care work in the Pacific*, Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis, Port Vila, 10–12 February 2010.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2010. *Measuring Quality of Employment: Country Pilot Reports* (Geneva, United Nations).
- Van der Hoeven, R. 2010. “Labour markets trends, financial globalization and the current crisis in developing countries”, DESA Working Paper No. 99 (New York, United Nations), 2010.
- Wilkins, R. and Wooden, M. 2011. “Economic Approaches to Studying Underemployment”, in D.C. Maynard et al. (eds): *Underemployment: Psychological, Economic and Social Challenges* (Melbourne, Springer), pp. 13–34.
- World Bank. 2012. *World Development Report 2013: Jobs* (Washington, DC, World Bank).



---

## Appendix

### Draft resolution concerning work statistics

#### Preamble

The 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians,

Having reviewed the relevant texts of the resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment adopted by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1982) and the amendment of its paragraph 5 adopted by the 18th Conference (2008); the resolution concerning the measurement of underemployment and inadequate employment situations adopted by the 16th Conference (1998), as well as the guidelines endorsed therein concerning treatment in employment and unemployment statistics of persons on extended absences from work; and the guidelines on the implications of employment promotion schemes on the measurement of employment and unemployment, endorsed by the 14th Conference (1987),

Recalling the requirements of the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160), and the accompanying Labour Statistics Recommendation, 1985 (No. 170), and the need for coherence with other international statistical standards, particularly with regard to the system of national accounts, working time, employment-related income, child labour, status in employment and informal employment,

Recognizing the need to revise and broaden the existing standards in order to enable better statistical measurement of participation of all persons in all forms of work and in all sectors of the economy; of labour underutilization; and of interactions between different forms of work; as well as to provide guidelines on a wider set of measures than previously defined internationally, thereby enhancing the relevance and usefulness of the standards for countries at all stages of development,

Calling attention to the usefulness of these standards to enhance the international comparability of the statistics and to their contribution to the measurement of decent work and of well-being of households and society in general, as well as to the achievement of gender justice,

Acknowledging that the relevance of measures of work in a given State will depend on the nature of its society, labour markets and all user needs, and that their implementation will therefore, to a certain extent, be determined by national circumstances,

Adopts this xx day of October 2013 the following resolution in substitution for the resolutions of 1982 and of 2008, and for paragraph 8(1) of the resolution of 1998, as well as for the guidelines from 1987 and 1998 cited above.

#### Objectives and scope

1. This resolution aims to set standards for work statistics to guide countries in updating and integrating their existing statistical programmes in this field. It defines the statistical concept of *work* for reference purposes and provides operational concepts, definitions and guidelines for:
  - (a) three distinct subsets of work activities, referred to as *forms of work*;
  - (b) related classifications of the population according to their *labour force status* and *main work status*;
  - (c) measures of labour underutilization.
2. These standards should serve to facilitate the production of different subsets of work statistics for different purposes as part of an integrated national system that is based on common concepts and definitions.
3. Each State should aim to develop its system of statistics of work, including of the labour force, to provide an adequate information base for the various users of the statistics, taking account of

---

specific national needs and circumstances. Such a system should be designed to achieve a number of objectives, in particular to:

- (a) monitor labour markets and labour underutilization including unemployment for the design, implementation and evaluation of economic and social policies and programmes related to employment creation, income generation, skills development including vocational education and training, and related decent work policies;
  - (b) provide comprehensive measurement of participation in all forms of work in order to estimate labour input for national production accounts, including existing “satellite” accounts, and the contribution of all forms of work to economic development, to household livelihoods and to the well-being of individuals and society;
  - (c) assess participation in different forms of work among population groups such as women and men, young people, children, migrants and other groups of particular policy concern; and study the relationships between different forms of work and their social and economic outcomes.
4. To serve these objectives, the system should be developed in consultation with the various users of the statistics and in harmony with other economic and social statistics and be designed so as to provide current statistics for short-term needs and statistics collected at longer intervals for structural and in-depth analysis and as benchmark data:
- (a) choices regarding the concepts and topics covered and their different frequencies of measurement and/or reporting will depend on their national relevance and the resources available;
  - (b) each State should establish an appropriate strategy for data collection and reporting, as recommended in paragraph 42, that ensures the progress and sustainability of the system.
5. In developing their work statistics, States should endeavour to incorporate these international standards in order to promote international comparability and to permit the evaluation of trends and differences for the purpose of labour market and social and economic analysis, in particular with respect to the measurement of the labour force, of labour underutilization and of the different forms of work.

## Reference concepts

6. *Work* comprises any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others, or for own use.
- (a) *Work* is defined irrespective of its formal or informal character or the legality of the activity.
  - (b) *Work* excludes activities that do not involve producing goods or services (e.g. begging and stealing), self-care (e.g. personal grooming and hygiene) and activities that cannot be performed by another person on one’s own behalf (e.g. sleeping, learning and activities for own recreation).
  - (c) The concept of *work* is aligned with the general production boundary of the System of National Accounts (SNA).
  - (d) *Work* can be performed in any kind of economic unit comprising market units, non-market units, and households that produce goods or services for own final use.
7. To meet different objectives, three distinct *forms of work* are identified for separate measurement. These forms of work are distinguished on the basis of the intended destination of the production (i.e. for own final use, or for use by other units) and the nature of the transaction underlying the exchange (i.e. monetary or non-monetary transactions, and transfers), as follows:
- (a) *own-use production work* comprising production of goods and services for own final use;
  - (b) *employment work* comprising work performed for pay or profit;
  - (c) *volunteer work* comprising non-compulsory work performed without pay for others.
8. These forms of work are mutually exclusive. During a given reference period, persons may engage in one or more forms of work in parallel or consecutively, i.e. persons may be employed, be volunteering and/or be producing for own use, in any combination.

- 
9. Other work activities that exist, such as unpaid legally sanctioned community service, unpaid prison work and alternative civilian service, may be treated as a distinct form of work for measurement (i.e. compulsory work performed without pay for others). These are, however, *not* covered by this resolution.
  10. The form of work identified as *employment* sets the reference scope of activities for labour force statistics. *Labour force* refers to the current supply of labour for the production of goods and services in exchange for pay or profit.

## Statistical units

11. Different statistical units are relevant for the compilation and analysis of work statistics. In particular:
  - (a) *Persons* are the basic unit for producing statistics on the population engaged in each form of work, for establishing their labour force status and main work status and for monitoring and assessing their integration into employment and the extent of their labour underutilization.
  - (b) *Jobs* are the relevant unit in the compilation of employment statistics, to support monitoring of employment creation and job loss, quality of employment and income generation and for human resource development planning:
    - (i) *Job* is defined as “the set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person for a single economic unit”.
    - (ii) Persons may have one or several jobs. In cases of multiple job-holding, the *main job* is that with the longest hours usually worked, as defined in the international standards on working time.
    - (iii) Persons in self-employment will have as many jobs as the economic units they own or co-own, irrespective of the number of clients served.
  - (c) *Activity clusters* are used with respect to own-use production work and volunteer work to permit analysis of their contribution to different industries, to economic growth and to household livelihoods and well-being. Activity clusters refer to sets of tasks and duties performed by one person to produce specific kinds of goods or services for an economic unit. A person may engage in one or several activity clusters.

## Classifications of the population

12. Useful classifications of the population may be prepared according to their participation in the labour market and in different forms of work.
13. Persons may be classified in a short reference period according to their *labour force status* as being:
  - (a) in employment, as defined in paragraph 21;
  - (b) in unemployment, as defined in paragraph 35; or
  - (c) outside the labour force.
14. Priority is given to *employment* over the other two categories and to *unemployment* over *outside the labour force*. The three categories of labour force status are, thus, mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Employment and unemployment together comprise the labour force. *Persons outside the labour force* are those above a specified age who were neither in employment nor in unemployment in the short reference period.
15. Persons may also be classified according to their *main work status* over a short or long reference period, such as a year, as being:
  - (a) mainly own-use producers;
  - (b) mainly employed;
  - (c) mainly volunteers;
  - (d) mainly engaged in another form, or in other forms, of work;

- 
- (e) engaged in non-work activities only.

16. These categories of main work status are mutually exclusive. Priority is given to any work activity over non-work activity and, among the different forms of work, to the one considered as the main form as self-perceived.

## Operational definitions and guidelines

### Forms of work

17. The various *forms of work* are measured with respect to a short reference period:

- (a) The relevant short reference periods recommended are:
  - (i) seven days or one week, for *employment*;
  - (ii) four weeks or one calendar month, for *own-use production of goods* and *volunteer work*;
  - (iii) one or several 24-hour days within a seven-day or one-week period, for *own-use provision of services*;
- (b) A person is considered to have engaged in a given *form of work* when performing such form of work for at least one hour during the short reference period. Use of this one-hour criterion ensures the coverage of all the activities engaged in, including part-time, temporary, casual or sporadic activities, as well as the comprehensive measurement of all inputs of labour into production.

### Own-use production work

18. *Persons in own-use production work* are defined as all those above a specified age who, during a short reference period, performed any activity to produce goods or provide services for own final use, where:

- (a) “any activity” refers to work for at least one hour;
- (b) production of “goods” includes:
  - (i) producing and/or processing for storage agricultural, fishing, hunting and gathering products;
  - (ii) collecting and/or processing for storage mining and forestry products, including firewood and other fuels;
  - (iii) fetching water from natural and other sources;
  - (iv) manufacturing household goods (such as furniture, textiles, clothing, footwear, pottery or other durables, including boats and canoes);
  - (v) building, or effecting major repairs to, one’s own dwelling, farm buildings, etc.;
- (c) provision of “services” includes:
  - (i) household management, accounting, purchasing and/or transporting goods;
  - (ii) preparing and/or serving meals, household waste disposal and recycling;
  - (iii) cleaning, decorating, gardening and maintaining one’s own dwelling or premises, durables and other goods;
  - (iv) childcare and instruction, transporting and caring for elderly or dependent household members and pets;
- (d) “for own final use” is interpreted as production where the intended destination of the output is mainly for consumption or use by the producer, by household members, or by family members living in other households:
  - (i) the intended destination of the output is established in reference to the specific goods produced or services provided, as self-reported (i.e. mainly for own use);

- 
- (ii) in the case of agricultural, fishing, hunting or gathering goods intended mainly for own consumption, a surplus may nevertheless be bartered or sold.
19. Essential items that should be collected for national accounts and for household and industry-level analyses of own-use production work are:
- (a) the working time of own-use producers associated with each relevant activity cluster collected using short time units, such as minutes or hours, as appropriate;
  - (b) the estimated amount and/or value of the output consumed by the household and by family members in other households in the short reference period;
  - (c) the estimated amount and/or value of any surplus sold or bartered in the short reference period, where applicable.
20. *Subsistence foodstuff producers* constitute an important subgroup of persons in own-use production work. They are defined as:
- (a) including all those who performed any of the activities specified in paragraph 18(b)(i) in order to produce foodstuff from agriculture, fishing, hunting or gathering that contribute to the livelihood of the household or family;
  - (b) excluding persons who engaged in such production as recreational or leisure activities.

For purposes of monitoring conditions of labour market performance as related to insufficient access to, or integration in, markets or other factors of production, statistics of this group should be identified and reported separately to serve policy needs, as recommended in paragraph 42(a).

## Employment

21. *Persons in employment* are defined as all those above a specified age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. They comprise:
- (a) employed persons “at work”, i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour;
  - (b) employed persons “not at work” due to temporary absence from a job or to working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flexitime and compensatory leave for overtime).
22. “For pay or profit” refers to work done as part of a transaction in exchange for remuneration paid in cash or in kind, whether actually received or not, in the form of wages or salaries for time worked or work done, or in the form of profits derived from the goods and services produced:
- (a) It includes remuneration to be paid directly to the person performing the work or indirectly to a household or family member.
  - (b) It may also include additional components of cash or in-kind income, as defined in the international standards on employment-related income.
23. “Persons on temporary absence” during the short reference period refers to those who, having already worked in their present job, were not at work for a short duration but continued to have an attachment to the job during their absence. In such cases:
- (a) “continued job attachment” is established on the basis of an expected return to work after the short absence, the type of reason for the absence and, in the case of certain reasons, the total duration of the absence as self-declared or reported, depending on the statistical source;
  - (b) “expected return to work”, as self-declared or reported, refers to the same job;
  - (c) reasons for absences that are typically of short duration, and where job attachment is generally maintained, include: sick leave due to own illness or injury; public holidays, vacation or annual leave; and statutory periods of maternity or paternity leave;
  - (d) reasons for absences of longer duration, where the job attachment may require further testing, include: parental leave, educational leave, care for others, other personal absences, occupational injury, strikes or lockouts, reduction in economic activity (e.g. temporary lay-off, slack work), disorganization or suspension of work (e.g. due to bad weather, mechanical, electrical or communication breakdown, shortage of raw materials or fuels):

- 
- (i) For these reasons, a duration threshold should be set to establish the short nature of the absence. The threshold should take into account periods of statutory leave entitlement in national legislation or commonly practiced, and/or the length of the employment season so as to permit the monitoring of seasonal patterns. The recommended threshold should generally not be greater than three months.

24. **Included** in employment are:

- (a) persons with a job while on training or skills-enhancement activities required by the job or for another job in the same economic unit, such persons are considered as “employed at work” in accordance with the international standards on working time;
- (b) apprentices, interns or trainees who work for pay in cash or in kind (where appropriate, those who work in exchange for training or workplace experience in a trade or profession, without remuneration in cash or in kind, should also be included and separately identified);
- (c) participants in employment promotion programmes who work for pay in cash or in kind, including government social benefits;
- (d) persons who work in their own economic units to produce goods intended mainly for sale or barter, even if part of the output is consumed by the household or family;
- (e) persons with seasonal work during the off season, if they continue to perform part of the tasks and duties of the job;
- (f) persons who:
  - (i) work in market units operated by a family member living in the same or in another household, or
  - (ii) perform some tasks or duties of an employee job held by a family member living in the same or in another household,  
for pay or profit that is received by that household or family member;
- (g) both regular members of the armed forces and conscripts, who work for pay in cash or in kind.

25. **Excluded** from employment are:

- (a) persons with seasonal jobs during the off season, if they cease to perform the tasks and duties of the job;
- (b) persons who retain a right to return to the job or economic unit but who were absent for reasons specified in paragraph 23(d), when the total expected duration exceeds the recommended short threshold for temporary absence. For analytical purposes, it may be useful to collect information on total duration of absence, reason for absence, benefits received, etc.;
- (c) persons on indefinite lay-off who do not have an assurance of return to work with the same employer.

26. To support job-level analyses, information should be collected on the number of jobs held by persons in employment in the short reference period. Where the number of secondary jobs is significant, it may be useful to collect information about their characteristics, including industry, occupation, status in employment, sector (formal/informal/household), working time and employment-related income.

## Volunteer work

27. *Persons in volunteer work* are defined as all those above a specified age who, during a short reference period, performed any unpaid, non-compulsory activity to produce goods or provide services for others, where:

- (a) “any activity” refers to work for at least one hour;
- (b) “unpaid” is interpreted as the absence of remuneration in cash or in kind, for work done or hours worked; nevertheless, volunteer workers may receive some form of cash reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, a stipend to cover living expenses or in-kind compensation (such as meals, transportation and symbolic gifts);

- 
- (c) “non-compulsory” is interpreted as work carried out without legal or administrative obligations; that is different from the fulfilment of social responsibility, including cultural, religious or to the community;
  - (d) production “for others” refers to work performed:
    - (i) through, or for, organizations comprising market units and non-market units (i.e. organization-based volunteering);
    - (ii) for households other than the household of the volunteer worker or of related family members (i.e. direct volunteering);it includes work done through, or for, self-help, mutual aid or community-based groups of which the volunteer is a member.
28. **Excluded** from volunteer work are persons engaged in:
- (a) court- or state-mandated community service or prison work, or compulsory civil or military service;
  - (b) unpaid work required as part of education or training programmes;
  - (c) work for others performed during the working time associated with employment, or during paid time off from an employee job granted by the employer.
29. Essential items that should be collected for national accounts and industry-level analyses of volunteer work include the working time of volunteer workers associated with each relevant activity cluster, the type of work performed, type of economic unit and industry.

### **Measures of labour underutilization**

30. *Labour underutilization* refers to mismatches between labour supply and demand owing to insufficient labour absorption, which translate into an unmet need for employment among the population. Measures of labour underutilization include, but may not be restricted to:
- (a) *time-related underemployment*, when the working time of persons in employment is insufficient in relation to alternative employment situations in which they are willing and able to engage;
  - (b) *unemployment*, reflecting the active search for existing employment opportunities by jobless persons who are available for work;
  - (c) *potential labour force*, i.e. jobless persons who express an interest in employment but for whom existing conditions limit their active job search and/or their availability.
31. Other issues affecting utilization of labour at the individual and economy-wide levels that are not defined in this resolution include skills mismatches and low productive labour, which States may consider for measurement where possible.

### **Time-related underemployment**

32. *Persons in time-related underemployment* are defined as all persons in employment who, during a short reference period, wanted to work additional hours, whose hours actually worked in all jobs were less than a specified hours threshold and who were available to work additional hours given an opportunity for additional work, where:
- (a) “additional hours” may be hours in the same job, in an additional job(s) or in a replacement job(s);
  - (b) the “hours threshold” is based on the boundary between full-time and part-time employment, or on the median or modal values of the hours usually worked that are set for specific worker groups, as appropriate to the national context;
  - (c) “availability” for additional work should be established in reference to a set short reference period that reflects the typical length of time required in the national context between leaving one job and starting another.
33. Time-related underemployment may occur owing to fluctuations in the demand for labour associated with short-term business cycles or as a result of longer term, structural problems of

---

labour absorption. It may be useful to identify two separate categories in time-related underemployment:

- (a) Persons who usually work less than the hours threshold and who wanted and were available to work additional hours, so as to shed light on structural situations of insufficient volume of employment.
  - (b) Persons who usually work more than the hours threshold but who, for specific reasons (e.g. a reduction in economic activity including temporary lay-off and slack work or the effect of the low or off season), were “not at work” or had reduced working time during the short reference period, so as to be able to monitor conditions related to business cycles.
34. To assess further the pressure on the labour market exerted by persons in time-related underemployment, it may be useful to identify separately persons who actively sought to work additional hours in a recent period that may comprise the last four weeks or calendar month.

## Unemployment

35. *Persons in unemployment* are defined as all those above a specified age who were not in employment, carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period and were currently available to take up employment given a job opportunity, where:

- (a) “not in employment” is assessed with respect to the short reference period for the measurement of employment;
- (b) “activities to seek employment” refers to any one of the following activities when carried out during a specified recent period that is interpreted as comprising four weeks or one month including the period for the measurement of employment:
  - (i) arranging for financial resources, applying for permits, licences;
  - (ii) looking for land, premises, machinery, supplies, farming inputs;
  - (iii) seeking the assistance of friends, relatives or other intermediaries;
  - (iv) registering with a public or private employment service;
  - (v) applying to employers directly, checking at worksites, farms, factory gates, markets or other assembly places;
  - (vi) placing or answering newspaper or online job advertisements;
  - (vii) placing or updating résumés on professional or social networking sites online.

These activities are considered as evidence of job search when carried out for the purpose of setting up a business or agricultural undertaking alone or with partners, or of working as an employee, apprentice, intern or trainee, or in any other activity in employment as defined in this resolution, including part-time, informal, temporary, seasonal or casual employment, whether within the national territory or abroad;

- (c) the point when the enterprise starts to exist should be used to distinguish between activities aimed at setting up a business and the work activity itself, as evidenced by the enterprise’s registration to operate or by when financial resources become available, the necessary infrastructure or materials are in place or the first client or order is received, depending on the context;
  - (d) “currently available to take up employment” serves as a test of readiness to start a job in the present, assessed with respect to a short reference period comprising that used to measure employment:
    - (i) depending on national circumstances, the reference period may be extended to include a subsequent short period not exceeding two weeks in total, so as to ensure adequate coverage of unemployment situations among different population groups.
36. **Included** in unemployment are:
- (a) *future starters*, defined as persons “not in employment” and “currently available to take up employment” who did not carry out “activities to seek employment” as specified in paragraph 35 because they had already made arrangements to start a job within a short

- 
- subsequent period, set according to the general length of waiting time for starting a new job in the national context but generally not greater than three months;
- (b) participants in skills training or retraining schemes within employment promotion programmes, who were “not in employment” and did not carry out “activities to seek employment” because they had an offer to start a job at the end of the training period, irrespective of whether or not they were “currently available to take up employment”.
37. For a structural analysis of unemployment it may be useful to collect information on the duration of the search for employment, measured from when unemployed persons:
- (a) began seeking employment, or
- (b) last stopped working, if the job search was interrupted by a period of employment, whichever is the shorter.
38. Among persons in unemployment, it may be useful to identify separately those in *long-term unemployment* defined as those with a duration of search for employment, as specified in paragraph 37, lasting 12 months or more, including the reference period.

## Potential labour force

39. *Potential labour force* is defined as all persons above a specified age who, during the short reference period, were neither in employment nor in unemployment but who were considered as either *unavailable jobseekers*, *available potential jobseekers* or *willing potential jobseekers*, where:
- (a) *unavailable jobseekers* are those who carried out activities to “seek employment”, were not “currently available” but would become available within a subsequent period established in the light of national circumstances;
- (b) *available potential jobseekers* are those who were “currently available”, but did not carry out activities to “seek employment”;
- (c) *willing potential jobseekers* are those who “want employment” but who did not carry out activities to “seek employment” and were not “currently available”.
40. Among the available potential jobseekers it may be useful to identify separately *discouraged jobseekers*, comprising those who did not seek employment for labour market-related reasons listed in paragraph 66(b).
41. In order to identify the different groups of potential jobseekers, questions on search for employment and current availability to take up employment should be asked of all persons not classified as being in employment in the short reference period. Where relevant, additional questions to establish a current desire for employment (i.e. want work for pay or profit) would need to be asked in order to identify *willing potential jobseekers*.

## Programmes of data collection

### ***Strategies for data collection frequency and reporting***

42. To meet the need for information to monitor labour markets and work patterns, a national data collection strategy should be established that allows for different sets of statistics to be reported, as relevant, on:
- (a) *a sub-annual basis*, main aggregates of employment, the labour force, labour underutilization, including unemployment, and subsistence foodstuff producers, in order to monitor short-term trends and seasonal variations (e.g. high and low season, quarterly);
- (b) *an annual basis*, detailed statistics of the labour force and of labour underutilization, including unemployment, that permit the structural analysis of labour markets and statistics of working time in relation to the total number of jobs/activities contributing to production within the SNA production boundary for the purpose of compiling national accounts;
- (c) *a less frequent basis*, depending on national circumstances, for the purpose of in-depth analysis, benchmarking and comprehensive macroeconomic estimations:

- 
- (i) participation and working time in own-use production work and volunteer work;
  - (ii) statistics on particular topics, such as labour migration, child labour, transition in and out of employment, youth, gender issues in work, households, work in rural areas, the relationship between employment, income and other social and economic characteristics, etc.

### **Measurement over short and long observation periods**

43. Statistics that support the analysis of short-term trends and of the situation of individuals and the economy over a long observation period such as a year, may be produced by means of different data collection approaches:
- (a) Measurement of the current situation during the short reference periods specified in paragraph 17(a), repeated over a long observation period, is recommended to achieve optimal coverage of seasonal and other temporal variations in work activity patterns for purposes of producing sub-annual and annual estimates for short-term trend and structural analyses. In particular:
    - (i) repeated measurement by means either of population registers with individual-level data or household surveys with panel samples or subsamples permits the assessment of the current and long-term situation of both individuals and the economy;
    - (ii) measurement by means of a one-time survey with nationally representative subsamples spread over the duration of the long observation period permits assessments at the level of the economy.
  - (b) Where frequent data collection is not possible, States should aim to progressively increase data collection in the year so as to provide estimates for at least the high/low seasons, rather than expanding the reference periods of measurement.
  - (c) Alternatively, a one-time cross-sectional survey with retrospective recall in reference to a long observation period can approximate levels of participation and related working time in employment, own-use production of goods and volunteer work. In this event, the long observation period and recall method used should be chosen so as to reduce respondent burden and memory recall errors to the extent possible. In this case:
    - (i) the long observation period may refer to the last 12 months, calendar year, agricultural or tourist season or any other season relevant to national circumstances;
    - (ii) retrospective recall may relate to short, individual time periods (e.g. month-by-month) or to jobs/activities so as to establish participation in the different forms of work based on broad categories of part-time/full-time (instead of a one-hour criterion), or to a single recall over the entire period so as to establish the main work status of persons as recommended in paragraphs 15 and 16.
44. Measurement over a long reference period, particularly the last 12 months or calendar year, is especially important for national accounts estimates and for analysis in relation to other economic and social statistics that use a long-term reference period, such as statistics on household income, poverty, social exclusion, education or training.
45. States using repeated measurement or retrospective recall on a period-by-period basis should aim to:
- (a) measure gross labour market flows (on a monthly, quarterly and/or yearly basis) reflecting national policy priorities, in order to shed light on labour market dynamics, job stability and transitions between the different labour force statuses, status in employment, forms of work, etc.;
  - (b) prepare summary statistics by means of aggregation or averaging across the different periods, as appropriate, in order to describe the situation of individuals and of the economy over a long observation period, for example, long-term employment situation of persons, and annual employment estimates.

### **Population coverage**

46. In general, statistics of work should cover the resident population comprising all persons who are *usual residents* of the country, regardless of sex, national origin, citizenship or geographic location

---

of their place of work. This includes usual residents who work outside the country (e.g. cross-border workers, seasonal workers, other short-term migrant workers, volunteer workers, nomads).

47. In countries with a significant in-flow of short-term migrants, employment statistics should be supplemented to the extent possible with information about the employment characteristics of non-usual residents working in the national territory, so as to permit analysis of their situation and impact on the labour market.
48. For complete national production accounts, labour input should cover all work performed by persons working in *resident producer units*, regardless of sex, national origin, citizenship or place of usual residence. This comprises all jobs/activities, whether main or secondary, including those performed by non-usual residents working in resident producer units.
49. In specifying the concepts of *usual residence* and *resident producer units*, States should aim to maintain consistency with international standards for population statistics and national accounts. In principle, therefore, the scope of the statistics includes the civilian population and members of the armed forces living in private households and in collective living quarters. States should endeavour to use all available sources to produce statistics with the widest population coverage.

## Age limits

50. In principle, the national system of work statistics will cover the work activities of all age groups in the population. To serve different policy concerns, separate statistics are needed for the working-age population and, where relevant, for children in productive activities.
51. To determine the working-age population:
  - (a) the lower age limit should be set taking into consideration the minimum age for employment and exceptions specified in national laws or regulations, or the age of completion of compulsory schooling;
  - (b) no upper age limit should be set, so as to permit comprehensive coverage of work activities of the adult population and to examine transitions between employment and retirement.
52. The lower age limit for the collection of statistics, however, may differ according to whether or not a separate programme exists for child labour statistics.

## Sources

53. Statistics of work may be compiled using a single or a variety of data sources. In general, household-based surveys are best suited for collecting statistics of work and of the labour force covering the usually resident population; their participation in all jobs and in all forms of work – in particular, informal employment, own-use production work and volunteer work.
  - (a) Labour force surveys are the main source of statistics for monitoring labour markets, labour underutilization including unemployment, and the quality of jobs and working conditions of persons in employment. They are also a useful source when the objective is to capture general patterns of participation of the population in different forms of work. For these purposes, short add-on modules or supplements on own-use production work and volunteer work may be attached to labour force surveys for completion by all or a subsample of respondents on a periodic or continuous basis, as appropriate, with due regard to respondent burden and overall survey quality, including sampling and non-sampling errors.
  - (b) Specialized household surveys on topics such as time-use, volunteering, agriculture, child labour and labour migration may be more appropriate for comprehensive measurement and in-depth analysis of participation in specific forms of work, or for focusing on particular subgroups of the population. Time-use surveys, in particular, are a main source of statistics on participation and time spent in own-use production work and volunteer work for purposes of individual, household and macroeconomic level analyses. Their methodology, based on the use of detailed time diaries to record how respondents allocate their time over different activities performed during one or several 24-hour days for a given reference period, makes them particularly well-suited to capture work and non-work activities performed simultaneously or intermittently, and they are thus a potentially useful source in developing estimates of total working time that cover the different forms of work. They may also be used

---

for assessing the quality of estimates on employment and labour input derived from other surveys, and for refining other household-based survey questionnaires.

- (c) General household surveys covering related topics such as living standards, household income and expenditure, and household budget can be used to meet the need for statistics of work and of the labour force by means of the inclusion of dedicated modules, in so far as the sample permits computation of estimates with an adequate level of precision. They are a cost-effective alternative when a dedicated labour force survey is not feasible and are an important source to support analysis of the relationship between different forms of work and household livelihoods, poverty and other social and economic outcomes. Other household surveys that focus mainly on a topic not directly concerned with work, such as education, health and housing, may serve to produce, in particular, summary measures of employment, of labour force status or of main work status in a short or long reference period as explanatory variables.
  - (d) The population census is a main source of statistics for benchmarking purposes, for preparing master samples for household surveys and for producing estimates for small geographic areas and small groups. This is particularly pertinent in respect of non-nationals living in the country, persons living in collective living quarters and persons without fixed premises, as well as detailed occupational groups. Space and operational considerations, however, place a limit on the work-related topics included, so measurement may be confined to core questions establishing the labour force status and main work status of the population and capturing essential characteristics of persons in employment and in own-use production work, in accordance with the latest international recommendations for this source.
54. Administrative records, when developed also for use as a statistical source, may be useful for producing frequent and detailed statistics on specific target groups of registered workers, jobs and/or jobseekers covered by the system, for reference periods of one month, quarter or year. Job-based registers, pension schemes and social security and tax system registers provide statistics of employment for persons covered by the scheme or register concerned. Depending on national circumstances, the statistics may cover participants in employment promotion and paid apprenticeship schemes and in organized traineeship programmes, as well as recipients of unemployment benefits. Statistics on usual residents, cross-border workers, short-term workers, contract migrant workers abroad and work permit holders may be obtained from overseas employment administrations and labour offices.
  55. Establishment surveys are a relevant source of statistics, particularly on paid employment, including on non-usual residents working in resident producer units for reference periods of a week, month, year or other pay period. Along with administrative records, they are essential for producing estimates of total jobs by industry in the country and of employee earnings and of labour costs. In addition, establishment surveys constitute a potential source of information on organization-based volunteering.
  56. These different statistical sources should be treated as complementary, to be used in combination in order to derive comprehensive sets of statistics, where feasible. The national programme of statistics should seek to ensure the use of common concepts, definitions and classifications and of overlapping reference periods and should assess the coherence and comparability of the results.

## Indicators

57. A set of indicators that serves the principal objectives of the statistics should be selected by States for dissemination according to the relevant reporting periodicities, as recommended in paragraph 42. Indicators should be computed for the population as a whole and disaggregated by sex, specified age groups, level of education, geographic region, urban and rural areas, and other characteristics as appropriate.
58. To reflect national circumstances, the set should comprise selected indicators from among the three groups identified in paragraph 59 for monitoring labour market performance, participation in own-use production and volunteer work, and for assessing labour inputs.
59. The three groups of indicators for monitoring labour market performance are:
  - (a) headcounts of the labour force, of persons outside the labour force, of persons in employment, of persons in time-related underemployment, of persons in unemployment, of the potential labour force and of subsistence foodstuff producers;

- 
- (b) rates computed in relation to the working-age population (e.g. employment-to-population ratio, labour force participation rate, rate of subsistence foodstuff producers);
  - (c) measures of labour underutilization, of which at least two or three of the following should be selected as headline indicators:
    - LU1:** Unemployment rate:  

$$[\text{unemployment} / \text{labour force}] \times 100$$
    - LU2:** Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment:  

$$[(\text{time-related underemployment} + \text{unemployment}) / \text{labour force}] \times 100$$
    - LU3:** Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force:  

$$[(\text{unemployment} + \text{potential labour force}) / (\text{labour force} + \text{potential labour force})] \times 100$$
    - LU4:** Composite measure of labour underutilization:  

$$[(\text{time-related underemployment} + \text{unemployment} + \text{potential labour force}) / (\text{labour force} + \text{potential labour force})] \times 100$$
  - (d) Other labour underutilization measures include:
    - (i) long-term unemployment rate computed in relation to the labour force;
    - (ii) volume of time-related underemployment, according to the international standards on the topic.
60. Indicators of participation in own-use production work and volunteer work include:
- (a) headcounts and rate by activity cluster of own-use producers of goods;
  - (b) headcounts and rate by activity cluster of own-use providers of services;
  - (c) headcounts and rate by type of economic unit of volunteer workers.
61. Indicators of labour input should be prepared in accordance with the international standards on working time, for activities:
- (a) *within the SNA production boundary* (i.e. employment, own-use production of goods, organization-based volunteering and direct volunteering producing goods for consumption by other households);
  - (b) *beyond the SNA production boundary* (i.e. own-use provision of services and direct volunteering providing services for consumption by other households).
62. In settings where significant segments of the labour market are not regulated or where access to unemployment benefits and other safety nets is limited or non-existent, States should include, as part of the national indicator set, other measures for monitoring labour market performance. Particularly relevant are measures relating to informality, especially informal sector employment; to job search among persons in employment; to inadequate employment situations due to income, skills or excessive working time, according to the relevant international standards; and to insufficient volume of work among the self-employed, etc.
63. To monitor working conditions and the relationship between employment, poverty and livelihoods, States should endeavour to compute on a regular basis indicators relating to quality of employment and decent work, in line with emerging policy needs, in particular measures of income poverty such as rates of low pay and working poor.

## Tabulation and analysis

64. Statistics of work should be systematically tabulated by significant characteristics, particularly sex, specified age groups, level of educational attainment and region, including urban and rural areas.
65. For a descriptive analysis of the labour force, tabulations should be prepared of:
- (a) working-age population by labour force status and category of labour underutilization;

- 
- (b) persons in employment, in unemployment and outside the labour force by characteristics of their main or last job, such as industry, occupation, status in employment, sector of employment (formal/informal/household), institutional sector, geographic place of work, type of remuneration, specified bands of income from employment and specified working-time hour bands, according to the relevant international standards;
  - (c) apprentices, interns and trainees in employment, by type of labour transaction: monetary (paid fully or partly in cash); non-monetary (paid exclusively in kind); and non-remunerated (exclusively receiving training);
  - (d) persons in unemployment by duration intervals of job search that permit separate identification of persons in long-term unemployment.
66. For analysis of persons outside the labour force, alternative classifications used separately or in combination can shed light on specific subgroups affected by discouragement or by gender-based, economic or social barriers to employment. These alternative classifications include:
- (a) degree of labour market attachment, in order to identify the different groups comprising the potential labour force as specified in paragraph 39:
    - (i) persons seeking employment but not available;
    - (ii) persons not seeking employment but available;
    - (iii) persons neither seeking nor available for employment but who want employment;
    - (iv) persons neither seeking nor available for employment who do not want employment;
  - (b) main reason for not seeking, not being available or not wanting employment: own illness; disability; studies; family-related reasons (pregnancy, presence of small children, refusal by family); labour market reasons (past failure to find a suitable job, lack of experience, qualifications or jobs matching the person's skills, lack of jobs in the area, recent job loss, considered too young or too old by prospective employers); lack of infrastructure (assets, roads, transportation, employment services); other sources of income (pensions, rents); disenfranchisement;
  - (c) main activity status, as self-perceived, in the following categories: studies; own-use production of goods; own-use provision of services; volunteer work; self-care (due to illness or disability); leisure activities (social, cultural, recreational).
67. Tabulations for analysis of participation in own-use production work and in volunteer work and for assessments of their contribution to the economy should be presented for activity clusters and by specified working-time hour bands; in the case of volunteer work, they should also be presented by type of economic unit.
68. Persons in own-use production work may usefully be classified as:
- (a) own-use producers of goods only;
  - (b) own-use producers of goods and services;
  - (c) own-use providers of services only.
69. To shed light on their integration into the labour market, tabulations of persons in own-use production work, of subsistence foods producers and of persons in volunteer work are needed by their labour force status, labour underutilization category and related characteristics.
70. For macroeconomic purposes and to inform labour and other social policies related to quality of employment, job-level tabulations with reference to resident producer units are needed by selected characteristics, in particular by industry, specified bands of working time as specified in the international standards on the topic, and by sector (formal/informal/households).
71. Since participation in employment and in other forms of work often depends on family or household-level characteristics, particularly in rural areas of developing countries where work is largely organized on a household or extended family basis, it is essential to prepare tabulations to permit analysis of the relationship between employment, other forms of work, poverty and livelihoods for:
- (a) persons in employment, by marital status and by presence of dependents or persons (young children, the elderly, others) requiring care;

- 
- (b) households, by number of working-age members according to their labour force status and main work status, by main sources of income (including income from self-employment, from wage employment, from own-use production work, and other sources), by bands of household income;
  - (c) households without members in employment and households with members who are subsistence foodstuff producers, by size, composition, main sources of income and other relevant social and economic characteristics.

## Data evaluation, communication and dissemination

- 72. In producing statistics of work, States should adhere to statistical standards and other requirements as set out in the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the guidelines concerning dissemination practices for labour statistics endorsed by the 16th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1998).
- 73. To facilitate and promote a careful interpretation of the statistical results produced as part of the national programme of statistics, procedures should be put in place to monitor the quality of the statistical production process from planning and design to data collection, processing, estimation and dissemination.
- 74. The implementation of a sound, publicized communication strategy to disseminate official statistics involving government, social partners and the public is as important as the data collection programmes themselves. This strategy must ensure that statistics of work are made available by the official statistical agency on an impartial basis to all users of the statistics, including other government units.
- 75. Official statistics on different forms of work, on the labour force and on labour underutilization should be disseminated in a variety of formats, including electronic to the extent possible and permissible; they may be released in stages, with rapid, preliminary reports for main aggregates, followed by full reports of the detailed, final statistics in recommended tabulations. Existing public-use files that guarantee the confidentiality of persons and establishments (i.e. anonymized, confidentialized micro-datasets) should also be made available to analysts and other interested users.
- 76. To enhance the transparency of the statistics, whether produced on a sub-annual, annual or less frequent basis, States are urged to report them accompanied by the appropriate methodological information, with particular regard to: scope and coverage; concepts and definitions; data collection methods used; sample size and design, where relevant; any estimation or adjustment methods, including seasonal adjustments or imputation procedures; and, where possible, measures of data quality and precision, including response rates, relative standard errors that account for complex survey designs, where relevant, and non-sampling errors.
- 77. The impact of revisions, new time series or indicators deriving from this resolution and changes in historical series should be clearly indicated and documented, including through publication of dual series, if applicable, for a specified period following their implementation.

## International reporting

- 78. For international reporting, States should endeavour routinely to report statistics of work and the labour force, in particular headline indicators that include measures of labour underutilization (particularly LU1 and LU4) for the whole population, by sex, by urban/rural areas and, to the extent possible, by broad levels of education and by standard age ranges. Five-year age bands should be used for the main aggregates, where the lowest age bracket refers to persons aged 15–19 years and the highest age bracket to persons aged 75 years and above. Where concerns regarding the precision of the estimates impede disaggregation by five-year age bands, broader bands may be used; in all cases these should include 15–24 years, 25–34 years, 35–54 years, 55–64 years, 65–74 years and 75+ years.
- 79. The classifications applied to the statistics of work and of the labour force should adhere to, or be convertible to, the most recent version of international standard classifications, such as the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), the International Standard Industrial Classification of All

---

Economic Activities (ISIC), the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS), the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO), and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), as appropriate.

80. To enhance and promote the transparency and comparability of statistics reported internationally, States are urged to compile and disseminate adequate information on the source, coverage and methodologies used, including national concepts, definitions and reference periods, noting any departures from the relevant international standards. States should, therefore, design or adjust their data collection and processing procedures so as to permit them to document fully any differences between relevant national statistical or administrative concepts and definitions and this resolution and, where possible, to compute and report main aggregates on the basis of both the national and the international definitions.

## **Future work**

81. To promote the implementation of this resolution by States, the ILO should prepare a technical manual and materials detailing such aspects as methodology of data collection, estimation, dissemination and interpretation of statistics of work based on best practices, and should expand its technical assistance programme.
82. Regarding statistics for areas of critical importance to the world of work currently not within the scope of the present resolution, the ILO, in collaboration with interested countries and national and international partner organizations, should continue conducting developmental and methodological work and testing, in order to provide further guidance on ..., ..., ... for future inclusion in the body of international statistical standards.