

Better Data to Better Monitor the Status of Women in Informal employment, unpaid work and work in rural areas and agriculture

A brief background note on a joint ILO-Data2X roundtable discussion to review actions underway and next steps

1. Objective

Data2X and the ILO Department of Statistics share an important area of common interest: to reduce data gaps to better measure and improve the status of women in the world of work. This is an opportune time for taking actions to improve gaps in these data. There is significant political attention being paid to the gender data issues coming from the post 2015 Development Agenda and the call for a data revolution as well as follow up to the Beijing +20. Also, there is global recognition among official producers of the statistics of the need to measure all forms of work, paid and unpaid, as evidenced by the latest statistical standards adopted by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2013. Overall, this is an excellent opportunity for the two teams to partner and to engage the interest, draw from the national experiences of, and support the further development of the work statistics programmes of countries and international organizations, as main producers and users of the statistics, to better address today's gender issues. To do this, the Data2X and ILO Department of Statistics are jointly organizing a Roundtable discussion to be held in Geneva on Oct 1-2, 2014. Because of the link with rural development and agriculture, FAO Statistics Division has also agreed to play an important role in the round table event. The aim is to bring together key stakeholders to review progress and agree on actions that could help to improve practices for producing and disseminating statistics in fundamental policy areas related to gender and the world of work, namely, informal employment, unpaid work, and work in rural areas and agriculture.

2. Background

In October 2013 the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (19th ICLS) adopted a new resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization¹ that revised the previous international statistical standards used by countries to produce their official national statistics on employment and unemployment. The new resolution introduces a comprehensive framework on work statistics as well as a set of measures of labour underutilization to complement the unemployment rate that could have large implications for measuring women's participation in all forms of work, paid and unpaid, and for assessing differences in their access to full and productive employment.

The framework is the first in the body of international standards to recognize all productive activities, paid and unpaid, as work. It further refines the definition of employment as work performed for pay or profit to better support monitoring of labour markets and identifies other forms of work on which to

¹ Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization (19th ICLS, 2013) available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/standards-and-guidelines/resolutions-adopted-by-international-conferences-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS_230304/lang--en/index.htm

produce separate statistics. Particularly relevant for recognizing women's work is the new concept of own-use production work that includes both production of goods and provision of services intended for the household or family. Full and separate measurement of participation in these unpaid productive activities will pave the way for a more complete assessment of work performed mainly by women and of its contribution to the economy, to household livelihoods and wellbeing. It will also help shed light on differences in work patterns across urban and rural areas by providing a basis for the comprehensive measurement of subsistence activities, including in agriculture and fishing, which to date remain poorly accounted for in official statistics.

The new resolution expands the body of international statistical standards particularly relevant for addressing gender issues in the world of work, that include those on measuring informal sector employment and informal employment (1993, 2003) as well as on promoting gender mainstreaming in labour statistics (2003). Together, these standards are meant to contribute to strengthening the knowledge base on the world of work and to provide policy makers with more targeted labour market information that adequately reflects the situation of different population groups, including women, youth and persons living in rural areas, so as to support the formulation of inclusive development policies.

The ultimate goal of having better data to better monitor the status of women, however, will not happen overnight nor without sustained efforts by all stakeholders. A coordinated strategy, bringing together producers, users, regional and international agencies, and development partners will be required in order to promote the implementation of the new standards as part of the national strategies for statistical development and to ensure long-term sustainability. The ILO is now focusing on promoting the implementation of the adopted ICLS standards and guidelines through methodological tests that support the identification of good practices in data collection and technical assistance and training programs aimed at strengthening national statistical capacity. Countries have started to embark on a review of their labour statistics programmes in order to incorporate the new standards, which will require a review of their labour force surveys, and other household surveys, as well as population and agricultural censuses. Also, regional and international partners will play an important role in planning and supporting the implementation of the new standards and guidelines.

New resources, including technical and financial, will be required for building awareness and implementation of the needed changes. A coordinated approach will be required in order to promote their integration as part of the national strategies for statistical development and to ensure their long-term sustainability. Furthermore, in line with calls for a data revolution to make available timely quality data, potential synergies between official and non-official data sources could also be explored. Increased support is also needed to stimulate and encourage data use for policy and decision making processes.

3. Expected results

The roundtable will serve to identify practical solutions to address identified challenges affecting the collection, dissemination and use of quality labour market and work statistics, so as to adequately monitor women's status in the world of work. The main outcomes of the discussions will be used as basis to draft a plan of action, identifying concrete activities as well as partnerships and modalities for collaboration.

4. General format

The roundtable will be structured around panel discussions addressing some of the main challenges and opportunities identified.

Welcoming remarks: The opening session will feature a high official from ILO to welcome participants to Geneva/ILO and stress the importance of the event. A video of HRC addressing the audience could be presented to set the tone.

Keynote address: Ms. Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal University, India

Session 1: Setting the stage. The first panel will include ILO (from Statistics and Gender Equality Branch), Data2X, and FAO lead managers to set the context of the discussions by providing an overview of the main gender data gaps, emerging information needs to support national and global efforts for inclusive development, and latest international statistical standards agreed by countries to meet this challenge.

The subsequent sessions 2-5 will provide spaces for the core substantive discussions and to better identify the main challenges, existing good practice and highlight concrete actions for follow up. The panel sessions will be arranged as follows:

Session 2 and 3: National perspectives – suggested topics to discuss

- Demand for labour statistics that address gender issues in the world of work
- Challenges and good practice to establish sustainable statistical programmes to meet the demand for labour statistics
- Evidence of decisions that have been positively affected by good gender employment data;
- Data gaps and reasons for such gaps (framework issues, weaknesses in data collection instruments, weakness in data access and dissemination tools, coordination issues, etc.)
- Activities underway by various countries and agencies to close the existing data gaps in topics of focus area:
 - Informal Employment
 - Unpaid Work
 - Rural Employment/work in Agriculture Sector
- Latest situation regarding:
 - Impact of the latest ICLS guidelines and implementation plans at country, regional, and global levels in LFS and other household surveys
 - Latest on the Time Use surveys advancements

Sessions 4 and 5: Regional and international support systems (Session 4); Donors and private sector representatives including academics and NGOs (Session 5) – suggested topics to discuss



- Source of the organizational interest in the topic and extent of work and support to countries.
- Opportunities and gaps in the support system.
- Some specific issues to cover in this session should include:
 - o Improving international coordination for funnelling assistance to statistical development activities
 - o Promoting integration of gender issues in policy and statistical planning at national level (e.g. NSDS)
 - o Modalities that support long-term statistical capacity building
 - o Opportunities for more innovative approaches, better coordination, and broader partnership
 - o Support to implementation of 19th ICLS resolution on work statistics
- Possible activities that may be discussed include:
 - o Promoting the new 19th ICLS resolution on work statistics, ILO's international guidelines on mainstreaming gender in labour statistics, ILO data collection on gender statistics and the global level and regional level and ongoing gender-related research with published statistics, especially in Latin America
 - o Checklist of good practices for mainstreaming gender in labour statistics, historic data collection activities (ILOSTAT and previous databases)
 - o ECLAC and UNECE Guidelines for gender statistics
 - o FAO's various activities to fill data gaps and implementing the Global Agriculture Strategy including the new joint work between FAO and Gallup World poll
 - o Plans for the next FINDEX survey (does it cover employment?)
 - o Progress on the LSMS-ISA with potentials for more sex-disaggregated data
 - o Progress on the USAID's Core Agriculture and Rural Survey (CARDS)
 - o Latest advancements in the national strategy/planning for development of statistics to include gender data issues.
 - o Highlights of research programs underway that will impact topics under discussion
 - o Highlights of any special events and opportunities to increase demand and awareness.

Session 6: Action plan. A final planning session will bring together the outcomes from each panel to agree on a possible plan of action identifying concrete follow-up activities, as well as partnerships and modalities for collaboration. The panel members for this session could consist of the chairs of all the previous panels. Each chair will have a chance to summarize the outcome of the session he/she chaired. The Data2X/ILO team could provide support and offer summary talking points to chairs to be prepared for the final session.

Issues that may be raised include:

- o What are the priority activities and any changes to be made going forward?
- o Could the needed changes be made within the current allocated budget of countries and international organizations? What more is needed?
- o Are there any useful links between this work and the call for the Data Revolution and follow up to the post 2015 agenda?
- o Would it be useful to follow up this first round table discussion with another one to review progress in 12 months or so?

Role of Panelists and Chairs: Selected participants will be invited to contribute to the roundtable as panelists or panel chairs. No formal presentations will be requested. However, panelists will be expected to address the issues outlined above for discussion through a short 10-minute intervention aimed at promoting further contributions from the floor. The chair of the session will have responsibility for managing and driving the discussions so as to cover the main issues raised in the panel within the allotted time.

5. Organizers

The roundtable is being organized jointly by Data 2X and the ILO, in collaboration with FAO.

Data2X is a program sponsored by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Government, and the office of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Data2X aims to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and further global economic and social gains through improved data collection and analysis that can guide policy, better leverage investments, and inform global development agendas.

The International Labour Office (ILO) is the lead United Nations agency responsible for promoting methods and standards for labour market and work statistics through their adoption by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) and for supporting their implementation in countries through a variety of sources including labour force surveys, household income and expenditure surveys, establishment surveys, and administrative records. The ILO also compiles and disseminates official national labour statistics at the global level for a broad set of indicators on decent work that include gender as a cross-cutting issue.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the lead United Nations agency responsible for promoting methods and standards for food and agriculture statistics, and for providing technical assistance services and disseminating food and agriculture statistics for global monitoring.

6. Date and venue

The roundtable will be held from 1 to 2 October 2014 at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

7. Participants

The roundtable will bring together high level government officials who are responsible for producing official national labour statistics from 10-15 selected countries around the world with senior representatives from regional and international agencies; multilateral and bilateral agencies, development partners, foundations, some NGOs; and experts from think tanks and research institutions working in the areas of related research, statistical capacity building, gender mainstreaming in statistical production, and analysis and/or in policymaking.