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Towards developing a conceptual and measurement framework for statistics on violence and harassment in the world of work

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▶ Contents

1. Background[1]

1. The ILO Violence and harassment Convention[2] (No. 190) (hereinafter Convention C190) and its accompanying Recommendation[3] (No. 206) (hereinafter Recommendation R206) were adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2019 and constitute the first-ever global standards aimed at ending violence and harassment in the world of work. The Convention C190 recognizes that violence and harassment in the world of work constitute a human rights violation or abuse, are an unacceptable threat to equal opportunities and are incompatible with decent work. The Convention C190 also recognizes the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, and sets out the obligation to respect, promote and realize this right. The Recommendation R206 calls ILO Member States to "*make efforts to collect and publish statistics on violence and harassment in the world of work disaggregated by sex, form of violence and harassment, and sector of economic activity (...)*".

2. The consequences of work-related violence and harassment are immense. Violence and harassment affect people's dignity, wellbeing and health. Violence is a threat not only to the persons who suffer such acts, but also to their families and the communities they belong to. In addition to unmeasurable costs such as its impact on the well-being, mental and physical health of the victims and their families, violence also has social and economic costs. In particular, it can lead to productivity losses because of underperformance related to a lack of motivation, chronic stress and illness among those affected, and an avoidable burden to the health system and social services where care and support services offered to victims exist. Work-related violence and harassment also directly impact the victims' livelihood, putting their social and economic situation at a greater risk.

3. The development of appropriate policies and programmes to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, and monitoring of progress over time requires sound statistical evidence. Increasing the knowledge on the phenomenon through the collection of timely, comprehensive and reliable data is key to develop relevant and effective regulations and policies. Furthermore, accurate and comprehensive data serve to increase societal awareness about the phenomenon and call attention to the accountability of States and all national stakeholders to act against it.

4. To date, measurement of violence and harassment in the world of work has been largely limited to small-scale or isolated studies across specific work sectors or occupations, or to minimal information included in larger studies focusing on a different topic. Administrative sources, such as such as police, justice, hospitals and labour inspection records can produce information on the topic, but they present many limitations, especially under-reporting and limited details available. A review of nationally representative household or individual surveys conducted by the ILO (ILO, 2023) revealed that at present countries lack a dedicated survey to measure the phenomenon and that only some countries collect limited relevant information through surveys covering different topics such as general working conditions or overall level of crime and victimization. As a result, the available data

is not sufficient to understand the nature, the extent or the impact of the phenomenon. While such studies provide insights into experiences of violence and harassment at work, they are not comparable across settings or over time because the methodologies used differ with respect to definitions of the forms of violence and harassment covered, and the target population groups (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006), (ILO, 2023). Additionally, there are important differences in the measurement approach across the identified surveys and in the type and level of detailed information collected. Moreover, there are important gaps in geographic coverage as the large majority of surveys identified have been conducted in Europe and in North America, although this can be partly related to the languages used to carry out the review, which were limited to English, French and Spanish.

5. Towards supporting countries to develop sound statistics on violence and harassment in the world of work, as called for by Recommendation R206, this document outlines the key concepts and considerations for statistical measurement of work-related violence and harassment, drawing on a review of surveys conducted and existing frameworks for measuring prevalence of violence in other domains, namely gender-based violence and domestic violence.

6. This document is structured as follows: after this background section, the second section outlines the key conceptual issues to consider for measurement of work-related violence and harassment. Section three discusses the data needs and the main information that can serve to characterize the phenomenon. Section four presents additional important considerations in violence measurement. Section five presents a preliminary set of questions on work-related violence and harassment developed by the ILO for testing before the final section on concluding remarks.

2. Concepts and definitions

2.1. Conceptual definitions from the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention

7. The ILO Convention C190, in its article 1, defines the term **violence and harassment** in the world of work as *"a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm (...)".* The unacceptable behaviours and practices are not specifically defined in the Convention nor its accompanying Recommendation. The definition emphasizes that violence and harassment are defined not as resulting necessarily in actual harm or injury, but as being present where unacceptable behaviours and practices or threats thereof, have the potential to cause harm, at physical, psychological, sexual or economic level.

8. The Convention C190 uses the term *violence and harassment* to refer to the overall range of unacceptable behaviours that can result in physical, psychological, sexual and economic harm[4]. As discussed in section 2.2, in the existing conceptual and statistical frameworks on violence and in the research literature in general, *violence* is a broad concept that encompasses different forms of unacceptable or unwanted behaviours that can cause harm, including harassment. In this document, for ease of reading and unless specified otherwise, *violence* and *violence and harassment* are used interchangeably as the broad term encompassing the overall range of unacceptable behaviours that can result in physical, psychological, sexual and economic harm.

9. The definition set by Convention C190 does not mention *intent*, focusing on an approach centered on the victim and the harm that can result from the unacceptable conducts that constitute violence and harassment.

10. The Convention further defines the term **gender-based violence and harassment** as *"violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment"* , emphasizing the importance of the gender perspective in the understanding of the phenomenon in the world of work.

11. In its article 2, paragraph 1, the Convention C190 underlines that it *"protects workers and other persons in the world of work, including employees as defined by national law and practice, as well as persons working irrespective of their contractual status, persons in training, including interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, jobseekers and job applicants, and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer."* This article defines the population scope of the Convention, which, unlike most studies and statistics on occupational violence, goes beyond persons in employment. C190 recognizes that people involved in the world of work in other capacities, such as persons in unemployment, unpaid interns and volunteers also need to be protected from violence and harassment in relation to work.

12. Paragraph 2 of article 2 further confirms the wide scope of C190, as it underlines that the Convention *"applies to all sectors, whether private or public, both in the formal and informal economy, and whether in urban or rural areas".* Persons involved in the world of work as cited

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[4] While Convention C190 proposes a single concept covering violence and harassment, it takes into account the diversity of national legal systems and regulatory approaches and allows States to opt for a single concept or separate concepts in their definitions in national laws and regulations (Article 1(2)).

above are within the scope of the Convention, regardless of the institutional sector, the informality, or the geographical location of the work they are involved in.

13. Article 3 states that: " *This Convention applies to violence and harassment in the world of work occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work: (a) in the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work; (b) in places where the worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities; (c) during work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities; (d) through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies; (e) in employer-provided accommodation; and (f) when commuting to and from work.*" The Convention C190 defines the scope of the world of work as wider than the place where work is carried out and recognizes that work-related interactions can happen in locations other that the usual place of work or work premises. It also recognizes that violence linked with or arising out of work can occur outside working time, such as during breaks from work or commuting to and from work.

1.   Key issues to consider

Developing a statistical framework to support measurement requires clarity on the different components highlighted in the Convention C190, particularly on:

▶ the definition of the unacceptable behaviours and practices that can result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm

▶ the definition of the instances where violence and harassment is considered *as "occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work"*, or to use a shorter wording, considered as "*work-related*"

▶ the population scope or the population for which statistics on violence and harassment in the world of work should be produced

▶ the information or statistics to be produced to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of the phenomenon.

2.2. Towards an operational definition of violence and harassment in the world of work

2.2.1. Challenges in establishing a statistical definition of violence for measurement

14. Violence is an extremely diffuse and multifaceted phenomenon that is difficult to precisely and completely define (Fraga, 2016). Although particularly extreme behaviours such as using a weapon against someone or threatening to kill someone are easily recognized as violence, there can be substantial variability in what people consider as violence for more insidious conducts, which could be more frequent in the world of work. There is no global consensus around how to precisely define violence as the boundary between what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behaviours, or what constitutes harm or not can be subject to a degree of subjectivity and interpretation which largely vary across contexts, cultures and individual perceptions, which are constantly evolving with values and social norms (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006) (Walby, et al., 2017) (WHO, 2002). Even when focusing on a narrower domain, such as violence against women, the precise definition of the

phenomenon is still subject to debate, ranging from broad conceptions that include female genital cutting, sex trafficking and child marriage, to narrow definitions of forced sex and intimate partner violence (Merry, 2016). Beyond conducts that constitute criminal offences as defined by national and international legal instruments, there is a grey area around the other behaviours that can potentially be considered as violence.

15. The way in which violence is defined will have tremendous impacts on its statistical measurement. Therefore, a common understanding on which behaviours constitute violence in the world or work and how they can be measured is important, both for consistent application at national level and to support cross-country comparability of statistics.

2.2.2. Types of violence

16. Different typologies or classifications of violence have been developed in an attempt to better describe and unpack the concept. In 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) set a conceptual framework to characterize the different types of violence. This framework has since been widely recognized (Graph 1) and can be used as a starting point to reflect on a specific framework for work-related violence.

▶ **Graph 1. The WHO typology of violence**

World Report on Violence and Health, World Health Organization, 2002
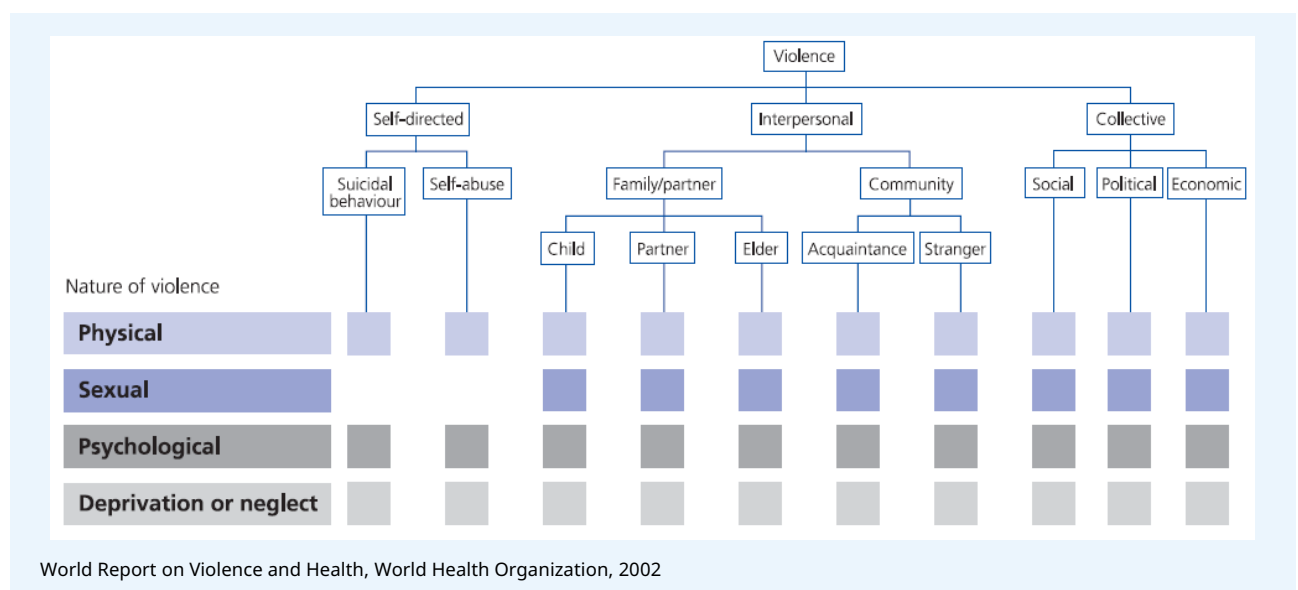
17. Three broad categories are distinguished according to who has committed the violence and the setting where violence occurs.

- **Self-directed violence** involves an individual inflicting physical or psychological harm onto himself or herself. Self-harm, attempted suicide and suicide constitute self-directed violence.

- **Interpersonal violence** captures a situation where violence is inflicted by another person. It includes acts of violence occurring between family members, between intimate partners or between individuals, whether or not they are known to one another, and where the violence is not specifically intended to further the aims of any group or cause.

- **Collective violence** describes instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives. Collective violence includes war, terrorism and violent political conflict between or within states, violence perpetrated by states (genocide, torture, systematic abuses of human rights) and organised violent crime such as gang warfare.

18. In general, work-related violence will fall under the category of interpersonal violence as it is exerted by individuals on other individuals, with whom, in most cases, they interact with in the work environment. But can there be self-direct violence or collective violence in relation to work? If so, is measurement possible and of interest?

19. Violence can also be classified based on the nature of the acts or behaviours involved or the ways through which violence is manifested. Beyond physical acts that cause harm, violence also encompasses the notions of non-physical coercion, threats and intimidation that can also be detrimental to mental wellbeing or health and therefore potentially cause harm, which is an essential component of violence. Several classifications of the types of violence based on how violence is manifested exist. The WHO framework refers to *physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence* and *deprivation and neglect* (WHO, 2002). From a violence against women perspective, the UNFPA refers to the three common types of violence, *physical, psychological* and *sexual*, and also considers *economic* violence (UNFPA, 2016). The ILO Convention C190 does not emphasize the nature of the acts or behaviours of violence but rather underlines the type of harm that can result from violence in the world of work: actual or potential harm can be *physical, psychological, sexual* or *economic* (ILO, 2019a).

20. However, many forms of violence often overlap and occur simultaneously (Di Martino & Musri, Guidance for the prevention of stress and violence at the workplace, 2001), so the categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, physical violence may involve elements of psychological aggression, and sexual violence may involve physical violence. This is an important challenge in attempting to categorize the different forms of violence.

21. Several different definitions of the main types of violence exist in the literature and the next paragraphs attempt to compile and review the definitions commonly used by various organizations or researchers.

2.2.2.1. Physical violence

22. In a survey on occupational violence in the health sector conducted by the ILO, the WHO and other partners in 2003, physical violence was defined as *"the use of physical force against another person or group that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm"* (ILO/ICN/WHO/PSI, 2003).

23. Other definitions refer to any act which causes physical harm as a result of unlawful physical force. Physical violence can take the form of, among others, serious and minor assault, deprivation of liberty and manslaughter (EIGE, 2023); any attempt at physical injury or attack on a person including actual physical harm (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006); or the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, injury or harm (UNFPA, 2016).

24. The different definitions of physical violence appear to have some degree of consistency as they all highlight the use of physical force, actual or attempted, and consequences associated with it such as harm and death.

25. The term physical assault is sometimes used interchangeably with physical violence. The term assault, however, have been more narrowly defined in some instances, as *"injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means"* (UNODC, 2015), emphasizing the intent to harm and the actual physical harm or injury that resulted from the act.

26. Physical violence encompasses various behaviours that can be listed, non-exhaustively, as follows: pushing; slapping; kicking; beating; strangling; throwing objects at someone; burning someone; stabbing and shooting. It is important to determine whether there are other forms of physical violence that occur in the world of work and that are not reflected in the list above.

2.2.2.2. Psychological violence

27. Psychological violence can also be referred to as psychological *aggression* or *abuse,* and for clarity, those terms can be preferred to *violence* to specifically refer to non-physical acts. This type of violence is more challenging to define as it includes a wide range of behaviours and practices, some of which can be subtle and difficult to identify. The ILO and WHO define psychological violence as the *"intentional use of power, including threat of physical force, against another person or group, that can result in harm to physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development"* (ILO/ICN/HWO/PSI, 2003). The definition focuses on intention and underlines the use of power or threats of physical force. It also emphasizes that the resulting harm is not exclusively psychological.

28. Other definitions provide more details on the acts that can constitute psychological aggression. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)'s definition refers to *"any intentional conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats"* (EIGE, 2023). It specifies that "*psychological violence can take the form of, for example, coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment".* The UNFPA definition refers to *"any act or omission that damages the self-esteem, identity or development of the individual"* and specifies that psychological aggression *" includes, but is not limited to, humiliation, threatening loss of custody of children, forced isolation from family or friends, threatening to harm the individual or someone they care about, repeated yelling or degradation, inducing fear through intimidating words or gestures, controlling behaviour, and the destruction of possessions*" (UNFPA, 2016).

29. Psychological aggression encompasses a very large range of non-physical behaviours impacting the self-esteem, emotional well-being, development and psychological integrity of an individual. The behaviours can vary across contexts and so can their definitions, but a non-exhaustive list of the main psychologically abusive behaviours identified in research literature and existing frameworks would include:

- **Verbal abuse** which is a form of verbal communication that is hostile and harmful for others. It can include abusive language and threatening tone of voice (Partridge & Affleck, 2017) that humiliates, degrades and indicates lack of respect for the dignity and worth of an individual (Manderino & Berkey, 1997). It includes but is not limited to insults or name-calling, yelling or angry outburst; devaluating rights and opinions; accusation and blaming, etc (Lybecker & Sofield, 2000).

- **Threats by words or gestures**. Threats encompass the announcement of an intention to harm a person or to damage their property. It can also be defined as the promised use of physical force or power resulting in fear of physical, sexual, psychological harm or other negative consequences to the targeted individuals or groups (ILO/ICN/WHO/PSI, 2003).

-    **Other non-physical acts or behaviours** that are humiliating, intimidating or fear-inducing, such as destruction of possession, gossiping, slandering and spreading rumors, refusal to share information, etc .

30. Specific terms such as **mobbing** or **bullying** are used to refer to behaviours specifically related to psychological violence in relation to work. Several definitions of those terms also exist. Bullying at work means harassing, offending, or socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks (Einarsen, Hoel, Cooper, & Zapf, 2011). It is also defined as mistreatment of a person by one or more workers that takes the form of verbal abuse; conduct or behaviours that are threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; sabotage that prevents work from getting done; or some combination of the three (Namie & Namie, 2009). Mobbing is defined as malicious attempt to force a person out of the workplace through unjustified accusations, humiliation, general harassment, emotional abuse, and/or terror. It generally involves uniting as a group against the victim into systematic and frequent "mob-like" behaviour. Mobbing has also been defined as offending, socially excluding someone or assigning offending work tasks to someone; and as a process in the course of which the victim ends up in an inferior position (Zapf, 1999). Although the terms mobbing and bullying are sometimes used interchangeably, several authors prefer to use mobbing to specifically refer to violence exerted by a group of persons on one or several individuals (Zapf, 1999). **Cyberbullying**, which is the umbrella term used to refer to a range of aggressive behaviours perpetrated regularly through information and communication technologies in the context of work, is another form of psychological violence that is gaining importance in the world of work (ILO, 2020a)

31. In addition to the conducts listed above, work-related bullying or mobbing can include behaviours such as setting impossible goals and deadlines; repeated threats of dismissal; sabotage that prevents work from getting done; refusal to share information important for work to get done; persistently negative attacks on personal and professional performance.

32. Identifying behaviours that constitute psychological aggression is challenging as some conducts can appear as relatively minor alone and be difficult to detect if they are spaced out in time. In some contexts, certain abusive behaviours can also be normalized and considered as "part of the job". However, cumulatively the acts of psychological aggression can become a very serious form of violence (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006).

33. The term **harassment** is sometimes used interchangeably with psychological violence, or bullying, or emotional abuse, and sometimes defined as another specific form of violence (EU-OSHA, 2010). A broad definition of the term refers to "*any behaviour that demeans, humiliates, embarrasses, disturbs, insults or discomforts an individual, in whatever manner, by words, gestures, swearing or insults*" (Khalef, 2003). Other authors refer to an unwanted conduct which could be "*verbal, non-verbal, visual, psychological or physical*" (Di Martino & Musri, 2001), using a broader conception beyond non-physical acts leading to psychological harm. Heinz Leyman, cited by EU-OSHA (EU-OSHA, 2010), refers to *"hostile and unethical communication, which is directed in a systematic way by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual who, due to mobbing, is pushed into a helpless and defenseless position, being held there by means of continuing mobbing activities. These actions occur on a very frequent basis over a long period of time".* The European Union framework agreement on harassment and violence at work (EU-OSHA, 2007) also focuses on the repetition of the behaviours and specifies that *"harassment occurs when one or more worker or manager are repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances relating to work".* Harassment in the workplace is recognized as a specific category of harassment in the International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes, (UNODC, 2015).

2.2.2.3. Sexual violence

34. Various definitions also exist for violence of sexual nature which represents the third broad form of violence. For the United Nations , sexual violence refers to *"Sexual violence is any sort of harmful or unwanted sexual behaviour that is imposed on someone. It includes acts of abusive sexual contact, forced engagement in sexual acts, attempted or completed sexual acts with a woman without her consent, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, threats, exposure, unwanted touching, incest, etc"* (United Nations, 2014). This definition focuses on sexual conducts that are nor welcome of wanted by the victim and considers sexual harassment as a specific form of sexual violence.

35. The ILO definition of gender-based violence and harassment explicitly includes **sexual harassment.** As reported in the guide document on Convention C190, this term contains two key elements: *quid pro quo* and *hostile work environment*. Quid pro quo is *"any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature and other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men, which is unwelcome, unreasonable, and offensive to the recipient; and a person's rejection of, or submission to, such conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a basis for a decision which affects that person's job".* Hostile work environment refers to "*conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment for the recipient"* (ILO, 2021).

36. The definitions above refer to the unwelcome or unwanted character of the behaviours of sexual nature, emphasizing how the person subjected to the conducts consider or perceive them. The intention of the person perpetrating the behaviours is not relevant.

37. Different sexual violence behaviours are described in statistical measurement frameworks on violence against women (United Nations, 2014), (UNFPA, 2016) and mainly include: unwanted sexual advances; use of sexual text and images; exhibitionism; unwanted touching; attempted or actual unwanted sexual acts; etc. The notion of "quid pro quo" or unwelcome conducts of sexual nature whose rejection of, or submission to, can affect a person's job, is not reflected in those frameworks.

2.2.2.4. Economic violence

38. To date, economic violence has been mainly defined from a domestic violence perspective and has not been included in existing surveys or studies on occupational violence. The EIGE definition refers to *"any act or behaviour which causes economic harm to an individual. Economic violence can take the form of, for example, property damage, restricting access to financial resources, education or the labour market, or not complying with economic responsibilities, such as* alimony" (EIGE, 2023).

39. Economic violence can take many forms, but mainly involves denying access to financial resources; denying access to property and durable good; not complying with economic responsibilities; denying access to paid work; denying access to education; exclusion from certain jobs, etc. It entails denying or controlling access to money or income, education, and other means necessary for participation in social life (Pink, 2009) as a form of control and mean of isolation.

2.2.2.5. Main behaviours related to each type of violence

40. From the definitions and examples presented in this section, there is a wide range of behaviours or conducts that can fall under the definition of each type of violence. Table 1 attempts to compile the list of behaviours commonly included in each type of violence as described above and whose relevance could be considered for inclusion in future statistical

definitions. The list serves as illustration only and is not intended to be exhaustive, as further consultation is required to determine the relevant behaviours to consider.

▶ **Table 1. Possible behaviours associated to each type of violence**

Type of violence	Possible behaviours
Physical	• Slapping • Pushing • Biting • Throwing objects • Kicking • Beating • Strangling • Burning on purpose • Threatening to use a weapon (gun, knife or another object) • Using a weapon (gun, knife or another object)
Psychological	• Belittling • Humiliating • Verbal insults and name-calling • Threatening by words or gestures • Repeated threats of dismissal • Socially excluding or isolating a person • Withholding information important for work to get done • Slandering and ridiculing • Devaluating rights and opinions • Manipulating a person's reputation • Setting impossible goals and deadlines • Assigning offending tasks • Damaging work materials and/or property
Sexual	• Innuendos of sexual nature • Comments of sexual nature • Unwanted sexual advances • Display of sexually suggestive or explicit material • Exhibitionism • Unwanted touching, excluding intercourse • Forced or coerced intercourse
Economic	• Denying access to work • Withholding pay

2. Key issues to consider

▶ An internationally agreed definition of violence and harassment in the world of work for statistical purposes is lacking. Towards that definition, it's important to determine the components of the broad concept or the types of violence that are relevant and their respective definitions.

▶ Which behaviours should be included in the definition of each type of violence to comprehensively reflect the extent of the phenomenon and the experience of persons involved in the world of work? This question is particularly important for work-related psychological violence given the wide diversity of acts or conducts that can fall under this category.

▶ Which behaviours could be relevant across contexts for international comparability, given that perceptions and understanding of violence, especially psychological, sexual and economic, can vary significantly according to cultural context and country circumstances?

▶ Are there behaviours specific to the world of work that are not included in the existing definitions or frameworks but should be considered?

▶ Are there instances where violence and harassment in the world of work is self-directed or collective as per the WHO typology, and is it relevant to extend the future conceptual and measurement framework to those specific types of violence?

2.2.3. When is violence related to work?

41. There are different spheres in which violence can occur and thus different perspectives on the issue of violence, such as that of domestic violence, involving violent behaviours towards an intimate partner or family relationship; violence against women, which is a specific domain of gender-based violence targeting women; school violence, which is primarily experienced by children and adolescents in relation to their learning environment, etc. Violence and harassment in the world of work pertains to violence *"occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work"* as per the ILO Convention C190 (ILO, 2019a).

42. Although workplace violence or occupational violence have been the commonly used term to refer to violence occurring at work in the existing research literature, the ILO Convention C190 uses the term *violence and harassment* **in the world of work**, emphasizing a wider perspective and a broader scope of application. Violence *"occurring in the course of, linked with or arising out of work"* (ILO, 2019a) largely goes beyond violent acts occurring within the usual place of work. For statistical purposes, to convey that larger scope intended by the Convention C190 through a shorter but wide-encompassing term, it is suggested to use "**work-related** violence and harassment", or "*violence and harassment **in relation to work***" to refer to violence occurring in the course of, linked with, or arising out of work.

43. Unpacking the concept of world of work is challenging given the diversity and complexity of the situations and relationships that it can encompass. A key issue is to establish the criteria that can help determine whether an incident of violence occurs in relation to work or not. To identify the relation to work, the Convention C190 refers to the different places where violence happens (ILO, 2019a), regardless of the perpetrators. For violence occurring in locations that might not be usual places of work or locations where the victim is present for reasons linked to or arising out of work, an early ILO document highlighted the

relationship with the perpetrator or the person who exerts the violence on the victim as a criteria for determining the work-related nature of violence (ILO, 2013a).

2.2.3.1. The place where violence occurs

44. In the literature, the criteria commonly used to determine whether violence is work-related is to consider all violent acts that occurred within the workplace. The term workplace is itself is elusive, as increasing numbers of people work on mobile sites, in home-based offices, and by teleworking (EU-OSHA, 2010). The use of the term "violence in the world of work" over terms such as "workplace violence" aims at including the variety of places where work can be carried out and suggests that incidents that happen outside the premises of work should also be included if they are related to work. The ILO Convention C190 lists a number of locations where violence in the world of work can occur, such as "*(a) in the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work; (b) in places where the worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities; (c) during work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities; (d) through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies; (e) in employer-provided accommodation; and (f) when commuting to and from work.*"

45. For paid employees, a workplace is defined by the ILO as *"all places where workers need to be or to go by reason of their work and which are under the direct or indirect control of the employer"* (ILO, 2003). To include self-employed persons and specific places that are not under the control of employers, a wider definition was proposed as follows : *"all locations where workers need to be or to go by reason of their work"* (ILO, 2013a). The places where workers need to be or to go by reason of their work are extremely diverse. Places where people carry out their work could be premises or part of a premises which are made available to them as a place of work such as factories, shops, offices, hospitals or schools. They include the transportation vehicles for transport workers such as bus, train, subway workers, taxi drivers and flight attendants. They also include the workers' home if they perform work in their own home. Home workers may be considered at less risk of physical violence but remain vulnerable to aggression through telephone or online communication means. Additionally, home workers may also experience domestic violence, occurring in their home which is also their place of work. Places where people carry out their work also include the premises or home of clients or patients for fieldworkers such as repair persons, visiting nurses or visiting social workers for example, or public spaces for people working as street vendors for example. In many situations, the boundaries between place of work, home and public places can be blurred.

46. Beyond places where work is usually carried out, violence occurring in other locations where the worker is present for work-related reasons are also considered as violence in the world of work based on the ILO Convention. This includes places such as a hotel or an airplane during a work-related trip, a training centre during a work-related training, or an entertainment place during a work-related social event or activity. The places where workers take a rest break during their work, where they live when accommodation is provided by employers, or where they are present when commuting to and from work are also included in the locations they need to be by reason of work.

2.2.3.2. The perpetrator

47. The relationship between the perpetrator or the person who commits the act of violence and the victim is another component that can serve to determine whether the violence was work-related, especially if the violence occur in locations that are not related to work. In

previous studies and attempts to measure the phenomenon, if the perpetrator was related to the work of the victim or was known by the victim through work, the violence was classified as work-related (ILO, 2013a).

48. Several perpetrator-based classifications of violence exist. The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration, reproduced in EU-OSHA (EU-OSHA, 2010), classified perpetrators into four categories: co-workers; supervisors; customers and strangers. This classification allows to distinguish four types of violence (Figure 1), that can occur in relation to work:

 - *Violence perpetrated by strangers* where the perpetrator is not known by the victim; and has no legitimacy to be at the premises of the victim's work or is not necessarily directly involved with the business or activities carried out in the workplace. The perpetrator usually commits a crime (robbery, trespassing, etc) in conjunction with the violence.

- *Violence perpetrated by customers:* customers are recipients of goods or services which are under the care of the victim. Examples of customers include clients, students, passengers, patients, or their relatives. A customer may be unknown to the victim, but the perpetrator (the customer) knows the victim through an activity related to the victim's work.

- *Violence perpetrated by co-workers:* co-workers are persons who currently or formerly, directly or indirectly works with the victim including in situations when both are in in different departments and at different hierarchical levels of an organization. Although co-workers can be higher in the organizational hierarchy, they do not directly supervise or manage the victim.

- *Violence perpetrated by supervisors:* this category includes acts of violence carried out by a direct supervisor or a person in direct superior hierarchical position.

49. Another classification (Injury Prevention Research Center , 2001) also distinguishes four types of work-related violence based on the identity of the perpetrator: (i) the *criminal intent* type, which correspond to the violence perpetrated by strangers; (ii) the *customer/client* type; (iii) the *worker-on-worker* violence, where the perpetrator is a current or past colleague, regardless of the hierarchal level compared to that of the victim; and (iii) the *personal relationship* type, where the perpetrator usually does not have a relationship with the business but has a personal relationship with the intended victim.

50. The ILO proposed a typology that distinguishes between *horizontal violence,* perpetrated between co-workers, *vertical violence*, perpetrated between supervisors and subordinates, and *third party violence* which takes place between workers and clients, customers, patients, service providers or members of the public (ILO, 2019b) (ILO, 2020b)

51. Statistics based on a detailed classification of perpetrators are important for a precise understanding of the issue of violence and to inform the development of targeted responses. Violence occurring in the context of power or hierarchical relations at work, violence perpetrated by individuals during a robbery or another type of crime occurring at the work-related location, or violence perpetrated by aggressive or angry customers during the course of the work call for different remedial mechanisms and policies.

52. Violence perpetrated by a worker towards a customer, a client or a patient, such as a care worker in an institution abusing a person under his or her care can also occur (Härkänen, et al., 2023) and have implications for the place of work and for the employer. However, measuring violence inflicted by workers is a substantially different endeavour from measuring violence experienced by workers, especially when victims are non-workers. Additionally, violence perpetrated by workers is not always "work-related" from the point of view of victims. Victims can be elderly people or children if the violence occurs in a

retirement home or a school for example, and from their perspective, the incident constitute violence occurring when receiving care or education rather than occurring in the course of or arising from their work. Statistics on this different perspective may involve different data sources and entail different requirements and challenges.

3. Key issues to consider

▶ For statistical measurement, it is important to clarify the criteria for determining that an incident of violence is related to work. Is the nature of the location where the incident occurs a sufficient criterion for the violence to be considered as work-related in all situations and contexts? Is the identity of the perpetrator a relevant criterion to consider? If so, should any of the two criteria take precedence over the other to qualify the work-related nature of the incident?

▶ Clarity is required on which criteria to consider for establishing the relationship between the incident of violence and the work of the victim in situations where the lines are blurred between workplaces, private places such as workers' home, and public spaces, including situations where violence is exercised through information and communication technologies.

▶ Are there other elements or criteria that should be considered in order to establish the relationship between the violent incident and the work of the victim?

▶ Further reflection is required on measurement of violence inflicted by workers on non-workers and on the specific requirements and challenges involved.

2.2.4. The population scope

53. The ILO Convention C190 underline in its article 2 that it aims at protecting *"workers and other persons in the world of work, including employees as defined by national law and practice, as well as persons working irrespective of their contractual status, persons in training, including interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, jobseekers and job applicants, and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer".* The scope of the population of interest is wide and comprises not only the persons who work, but also others who are involved in the world of work in different capacity but are also potentially exposed to work-related violence. That population universe would include:

- Persons in employment, defined as persons of working age who, during a short reference period, were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit (ILO, 2013b). This category includes employed persons at work and employed persons on temporary absence from work. All categories of status in employment are covered in this group: dependent workers (employees, dependent contractors and contributing family workers) and independent workers (employers and independent workers without employees) (ILO, 2018a). Apprentices, interns or trainees who work for pay in cash or in kind are considered as employees and included in persons in employment.

- Persons in unemployment, defined as persons of working age who were not in employment, but carried out activities to seek employment during a specified recent period and were currently available to take up employment given a job opportunity. Job seekers and job applicants, as referred to by C190, belong to this category.

- Persons in unpaid trainee work, defined as persons of working age who performed any unpaid activity to produce goods or provide services for others, in order to acquire workplace experience or skills in a trade or profession. Apprentices, interns or trainees who do not work for pay in cash or in kin are included in this category.

- Persons in volunteer work, defined as persons of working age who, during a short reference period, performed any unpaid, non-compulsory activity to produce goods or provide services for others.

- Convention C190 also refers to "workers whose employment has been terminated", who are persons with previous employment experience. They can be included in persons in unemployment, if they seek work and fulfil the other conditions, or considered a separate category if they do not belong to any other categories described above.

54. Within this wide population universe, a narrower population scope can be determined according to the purpose of measurement. Each of the categories listed above can constitute a specific population of interest in itself, to understand the nature and extent of violence faced by persons in those different groups. Many other criteria can be used to determine the population of interest, such as a specific branch of economic activity, a specific occupation or a specific institutional sector, a specific age group etc. Examples of measurement objectives could be to assess the level of work-related violence and harassment experienced by:

- all persons in employment at the time of measurement: this is useful to inform on current levels of violence among the employed, to identify the main sectors and main forms of employment where violence is particularly prevalent;

- all persons with employment experience regardless of labour force status at the time of measurement: this is useful to capture the experience of people who may have dropped out of the labour market due to past violence experience;

- persons employed in a particular branch of economic activity: this can serve to specifically focus on violence in high risks sectors, such as health, education or transportation sectors for example;

- persons employed in a specific occupation: to understand the nature and extent of the issue in occupations recognized at high risk of violence, such as nurses or domestic workers;

- persons employed in a specific institutional sector: to illustrate the forms and magnitude of violence experienced by workers in the public sector, or in the household sector, such as domestic workers employed by private households for example;

- persons within a specific age group: for example to assess the nature and extent of violence experienced by youth.

55. In the determination of the target population, in addition to the purpose, the data collection method or source of data, the related technical requirements (such as the existence of a sampling frame for a survey), the specific legal and ethical requirements (such as parental consent to interview or record information on underage persons) and the resources available also require careful reflection and consideration.

4. Key issues to consider

▶ It is important to clarify whether persons involved in forms of work that are not explicitly mentioned by Article 2 of Convention C190 should be within the scope of the conceptual and measurement framework. Should persons in own-use production work be included? Should persons involved in unpaid work other that unpaid trainee work and volunteer work also be included?

▶ Existing statistical definitions of the various categories above refer to persons of working age, usually set according to national laws and regulations. In violence measurement, given the ethical requirement of confidentiality a higher age limit may be required to avoid the need for parental consent to collect data for persons below the majority age. The issue of the recommended age limit for the population of interest requires further consideration.

3. The data needs or what to measure

56. As part of future work on the topic, it is important to clarify the policy data needs or the main information required to understand the issue of work-related violence in order to inform programme and policy planning towards the elimination of the issue. The elements presented below are based on commonly addressed questions, as identified through the review of surveys on work-related violence conducted by the ILO and on the existing statistical frameworks for measuring violence in other domains, and will need to be adjusted, completed or updated as relevant.

3.1. The prevalence of violence

57. In existing statistical frameworks for measurement of interpersonal violence, such as domestic violence or violence against women, the main statistical information produced to measure the extent of violence is prevalence. *Prevalence* reflects the number of people within a given population who have experienced a phenomenon. This count of persons who have experienced the phenomenon is expressed as a ratio or percentage of the total number in the population.

58. The prevalence of work-related violence provides information on the proportion of the population who have experienced violence and harassment in relation to work. Prevalence rate can be produced for the main forms of violence, but also for the detailed acts of behaviours asked about if the data collection uses the act-specific measurement approach. Prevalence can be obtained using the following expression:

$$\frac{\text{Number of persons subjected to WRV}}{\text{Total population (of interest)}} = \text{Percent of population (of interest) who has experienced WRV}$$

59. Different reference periods can be used for measurement of violence. To inform programme and policy planning to remedy and prevent work-related violence and harassment, it is essential to gather evidence of the recent or current levels of violence. *Current violence* concerns events that happened in a relatively recent time frame, usually the past 12 months. Measures covering the past 12 months provide an indication of the extent and nature of current levels of violence. This information is important for planning the appropriate response services because it provides an estimate of how many people are experiencing violence at the time of survey and who may need assistance and support; and as a monitoring tool because this information is sensitive to measuring change over time. The current violence prevalence is also important to show the effectiveness of a policy of a programme, as it is sensitive to change if measured again a few years afterwards (UNFPA, 2016).

60. It is also important to gather information on *violence that occurred in the past* to understand the changes in the magnitude and characteristics of violence and harassment over time. It is possible to consider a time frame such as the past 5 years. It is also possible to use a longer time frame, such as the start of the working life of the respondent, i.e, the moment the respondent started to be in employment for the very first time. *Working lifetime prevalence* provides an indication of the total number of workers ever affected by work-related violence and harassment since they started to work. This information is important for advocacy purposes, as it shows the proportion of persons who have experienced work-related violence ever in their life (UNFPA, 2016). For this specific time frame, the starting

point of the reference period requires further consideration for persons involved in the world of work but who never actually worked such as new job applicants.

61. In addition to the separate interpretation of the two reference periods by themselves, the *ratio of the current versus working-lifetime violence* is an estimate of the proportion of persons who are still experiencing work-related violence and harassment, among those who ever experienced it. This estimate provides an important information about the easiness of difficulty of stopping or "escaping" the violent behaviours experienced in relation to work.

62. Several issues require consideration as they can make the estimation of the prevalence of work-related violence challenging. They include:

-   Under-reporting, as some incidents of violence may not be reported because either they are not perceived or recognized as such by the victims (incident not interpreted as constituting violence or not perceived as linked to work, for acts experienced outside the workplace or outside working hours for example) or the victims do not wish to disclose their experience for different reasons.

-   Recall problem, which can arise for incidents that occurred in the distant past which may cause quality issues with working lifetime prevalence.

-   Reporting burden, which, depending on the structure and length of the data collection tool, can arise when detailed information is collected for different reference periods.

63. Decision on the time frame to consider will depend on the specific measurement objectives. However, data on current and past violence are both important to show how many people have ever experienced violence and harassment in relation to work overall, and how the phenomenon has evolved over time. Using at least two reference periods, the current and the working lifetime one, will support better characterization of the phenomenon of violence and will have great value for monitoring of progress over time.

3.2. The frequency of violence

64. A person may experience more than one violent act during the reference period. The incidence of violence refers to the number of occurrences of violent acts or events experienced by a worker during the reference period, such as in the past 12 months or during his or her working lifetime. However, in it can be difficult to identify the specific number of incidents of violence if the behaviour or conduct happened continuously over a period of time. Frequency is an approximate measure of the incidence rate and can be captured using categories such as "once", "a few times", or "many times", allowing to distinguish between a single event from repeated and continuous experiences. Additionally, information on frequency is important for more insidious forms of psychological violence, where repetition contributes to make the acts a very serious form of violence.

3.3. The severity of violence

65. Severity is a distinct characteristic that also aims at assessing the extent of the violence experienced. While there is no consensus in the literature on how severity of violence should be measured, a possible approach is the classification based on the degree of harm that can be potentially caused by the violence ((Rodríguez Carballeira, et al., 2015)), the mild to moderate violence being likely to cause less harm than the severe one. For example, classification of physically violent behaviours can be done based on the potentially resulting injuries, behaviours such as "slapping" being usually classified as moderate compared to

"stabbing with a knife". It is important to underscore that this classification does not take into consideration the subjective impact and suffering caused by the acts to the victim. However, this type of classification is more complex to establish for psychological aggression. Additionally, there are differences in perceptions of the harm caused by violence. A literature review suggests that men perceive psychological violence as less harmful than women experiencing the same form of abuse, and that psychological violence is perceived as more harmful than physical violence by the victims, whereas physical violence is considered more harmful by outside observer (Sikström, et al., 2021). Establishing a severity scale of the type of violence experience is a challenge that requires more reflection and research.

3.4. Characteristics of the victim and the job

66. Social and demographic information on the victim of violence provides more information on the personal characteristics of the workers who might be more vulnerable to victimization. Age and sex of the victims are essential characteristics to capture. In addition, evidence suggests for example that workers with a disability are at particular risk of becoming victims of violence, including sexual abuse. However, they are much less likely to report such crimes to the authorities (ILO, 2013a). International migrant workers are another group of vulnerable workers who are also often reluctant to report incidents to employers or authorities due to informal employment arrangements, language barriers, fear of arrest or deportation – especially in the case of undocumented- and they have often little possibilities to access legal redress for labour rights violations (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). Moreover, data from many countries have shown that other vulnerable groups to violence and harassment at work are people living with HIV and sexual minorities (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006); nevertheless, this information is rarely collected in work-related surveys as it can be very sensitive depending on the context.

67. Work-related characteristics of the victim, related to the specific job associated with the experience of violence, provide information on the labour context within which the violence occurred. Common employment characteristics, such as branch of economic activity, occupation, status in employment, and informality status of the job are relevant. The type of industry or branch of economic activity where the victim works allow to assess the sectors that present an increased risk for workers. Their occupation, status in employment and informality status can also help shed light on specific vulnerabilities as certain occupations and economic activities show higher prevalence of work-related violence, such the health sector (ILO, 2013a). People working in precarious employment such as short-term and casual employees, which may often be informal jobs, are also more likely to experience violence (Mayhew & Quinlan, 1999).

68. There are also specific work settings or situations that place workers at increased risk of violence and harassment. This is the case of persons working alone (in solitary work, without coworkers, in a small shop of a petrol station as a taxi-driver for example), working outside of usual hours, at night or very early in the morning (such as cleaners or repair workers working at night on the premises of a company), working with valuables (such as cash transport workers or tellers in financial institutions) or working in contact with the public (such as bus or taxi drivers, tellers in financial institutions, etc). Working with people in distress (in emergency care units, old-age care units or drug abuse rehabilitation centres for example) or in conflict zones are also recognized as a high-risk situation (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). The risks of violence and harassment faced by persons working in the gig or platform economy, where work is mainly obtained via online applications and basic employment rights are often lacking, are also being increasingly recognized (ILO, 2018b).

69. In some cases, organization of work and practices within the work environment can also constitute risk factors of violence for workers. Studies report that a stressful work environment due to chronic under-staffing, poorly defined tasks or disorganized work, long working time, important overtime requirements, or low autonomy at work can increase the risk of physical and psychological violence (Bouville & Campoy, 2012) (EU-OSHA, 2010). The type of inter-personal relationships at work, the managerial style and the general culture of the workplace have also been underlined as risk factors (Di Martino, 2005). Further work is needed to determine which specific work environment and work organization characteristics are relevant for policy and how to measure them.

70. In the case of first-time job seekers, who are involved in the world of work but were never workers, further discussion is also needed to determine the specific work-related characteristics for which it would be relevant to collect information on.

71. An important challenge is that the timing of reporting does not necessarily coincide with the timing of violence. In case of violence that occurred in the past, in a different job than the one held by the victim at the time of data collection, collecting the characteristics of that past job can be challenging. The challenge is even greater if multiple cases of violence occurred in the past in multiple different jobs. A reflection is required on which work characteristics to collect, past or current; on whether collecting information from jobs in the past is feasible, and if so, how to ensure correct attribution of the violence experienced to the corresponding past job.

3.5. Characteristics of the perpetrator

72. Identifying the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator or the person who commits the act of violence is important to confirm that violence as work-related or not if the incident does not occur in work-related locations, and to inform sound policy responses. This information also allows more understanding of the context of the experience or incident of violence. Understanding the relationship between the victim to the perpetrator as well as the characteristics of the perpetrator are also important to inform targeted prevention and remediation programme development, as the violence exerted by the different people interacting with the respondent in the work context may have different causes and risk factors and may require specific policy responses.

73. As mentioned in sub-section 2.2.4, the main types of perpetrators can be listed as follows:

   - The professional relationships, which include the supervisors, managers or any person who is in a higher hierarchical position that the victim at work; the colleagues or co-workers who are at the same hierarchical level than the victim; and the subordinate or a person that the victim supervises or who is employed by the victim.

   - The customers which include all persons that directly benefit from the work of the victim, such as a client, a patient or a pupil. This group can also include family members of the clients, patients or pupils.

   - The personal relationships, which refer to the intimate partner, the other family members, the friends and the acquaintances.

   - Complete strangers, which are people who are not known by the victim.

74. Identifying the characteristics of the perpetrators pose several challenges. In the case of workers, positions and roles may change over time and perpetrators that belonged to a category at the moment violence occurred may have changed role at the time of data collection. A perpetrator that was a colleague at the same hierarchical category when

inflicting violence may have become a supervisor at the time of data collection. The same issue can arise in the case of a job or position change for the victim. It is thus important to clarify how such cases should be reported to ensure correct reporting of the time frame of the violence, correct attribution of the violence to the specific work or job in relation to which it occurred, and correct attribution of the category of perpetrator.

75. A perpetrator can also have several types of relationship with the victim, in the case of a family business for example, where a supervisor can also be a family member, or in the case of a personal acquaintance that was hired in the same company and becomes a colleague. It is important to clarify how to prioritize the type of perpetrator to record when multiple relationships with a single perpetrator can be established. Similar issue can arise with multiple perpetrators of different incidents of violence.

76. In the case of first-time job seekers, who are involved in the world of work but were never workers, further discussion is needed to determine the type of perpetrators that would be relevant to collect information on.

77. While it can be difficult for the victim to know the detailed socio-demographic characteristics of the perpetrator who are not family of personal acquaintances, the sex of the perpetrator is an important information. Capturing whether perpetrators are men or women can shed lights on specific gender dynamics and issues.

3.6. Consequences of violence

78. The impact of work-related violence may be observed at the individual, organizational and the society level. Information on consequences of the work-related violence experienced is relevant to develop the appropriate systems and programmes to support the victims. Studies have shown that violence at work is a major risk factor for mental and physical health issues. Work-related violence can cause stress, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder than can lead to physical injuries, illnesses and even death, as well as higher rate of unemployment, particularly for groups more at risk of violence and harassment. It is also associated with absence from work, lower motivation and decreased commitment to the job, underperformance at work, intention to quit, and premature retirement (Hoel, Sparks, & Cooper, 2001), (Asamani, 2016). Studies also showed that women victims of sexual harassment are more likely to leave their positions, resulting in financial stress and impeding their career attainment (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2017).

79. For organizations, violence experienced by their employees can cause increased absenteeism of staff, reduced productivity, deterioration of work climate and corporate image, increased staff turnover and recruitment difficulties, replacement and litigation costs (Hoel, Sparks, & Cooper, 2001), (EU-OSHA, 2010). The consequences on the society can include increased unemployment and loss of productive workers, higher medical costs due to higher demand for health care services to support the victims, increased welfare costs (EU-OSHA, 2010). It is important to underline the extended range of negative effects of work-related violence for organizations and policymakers to better understand its direct and indirect adverse impact and make the issue a greater priority.

80. While further discussion is required to determine the consequences of work-related violence that are relevant for measurement, an initial list can include the direct consequences on the victims, such as the mental and physical impacts of the violence experience, the effects on their motivation and ability to work, the effects on their productivity and performance, on absenteeism, or on participation to the labour market.

Those elements can support better understanding of the direct consequences of work-related violence on the workers.

3.7. Violence reporting

81. The actions taken by the victims to address the violence experienced is another policy relevant set of information that is important to produce statistics on, as it concerns the avenues that workers take to obtain assistance or gain protection when they encounter violence. This could include disclosing what happened (telling someone in the family or the community) and actively seeking help to stop the violence (including reporting violence to the employer, the human resources department or any relevant resource person at work; labour inspectors; legal authorities and the criminal justice; or seeking assistance from health agencies). The reason for not disclosing the incident or for not seeking help, and the knowledge of reporting mechanisms are also important information for policy purposes. For those who sought help, information on their satisfaction with the support received and effects of help seeking is relevant to help improve the existing support systems and reporting mechanisms. Administrative sources, such as hospital, police, justice, insurance or labour inspection records could be a potential source of complementary information on this specific aspect, as they inform on the use of the support services by the victims.

5. Key issues to consider

▶ The policy data needs or the main information that should be collected to understand the issue of work-related violence and support policymaking are a key element to clarify in future work.

▶ The recommended reference period(s) or time frame for measurement in view of producing comprehensive statistics that allow to monitor progress over time requires further discussion. The recommended periodicity of data collection is also an important element to consider.

▶ The criteria for measuring severity of violence, especially of psychological and economic violence where the degree of resulting harm is difficult to assess, should also be discussed.

▶ It is important to reflect on specific characteristics of the victim's work that should be measured in addition to the common employment characteristics to allow the identification of the jobs with significantly higher risk of violence.

▶ The timing of reporting does not necessarily correspond to the timing of the incident of violence. This involves many issues to consider, including correct reporting of the time frame of violence; which characteristics of the victim's work to collect in case of violence experienced in one or several past jobs; correct classification of the relationship to the perpetrator in case of a change of position for the victim or for the perpetrator, etc.

▶ Further reflexion is also needed on prioritization of the type of perpetrator in case multiple relationships can be established.

▶ In the case of first-time job seekers, who are involved in the world of work but were never workers, further discussion is needed to determine the specific work characteristics and the type of perpetrators that would be relevant to collect information on.

▶ There is a need to elaborate on the complementary use of different data sources to improve the availability of information, including the potential role of administrative data to inform on the use of the different support services by the victims of work-related violence.

4. Other important considerations

4.1. Addressing the subjective interpretation issues

82. As discussed in section 2, the perception and interpretation of what constitute violence can largely vary across individuals, contexts and culture. Practical measurement thus requires a clear operational definition of the different types or forms of violence that allow to minimize those issues and provide to the extent possible an objective understanding of the behaviours or practices that constitute violence. The research literature on violence describes two different measurement approaches used to capture information on experience of violence in surveys (Jansen, 2007), (Nielsen, Notelaers, & V., 2020). These approaches are also identified in the review of existing practices to measure work-related violence (ILO, 2023).

83. The first approach entails asking questions about experience of violence in generic terms (e.g., have you been exposed to physical violence? Have you been sexually attacked?). In general, no definition of what is meant by the generic terms is provided. In some cases, a short theoretical definition is provided. This *"self-labelling"* approach leaves the respondents to subjectively determine what constitute physical, psychological or sexual violence – depending on the generic terms asked about. An affirmative answer provides information on whether the respondents perceived themselves as, and admit being, victims of the type of violence in question (ILO, 2022). Box 1 provides examples of self-labelling questions from surveys identified in the review of existing practices to measure work-related violence conducted by the ILO (ILO, 2023) .

84. The self-labelling approach has been commonly favoured until the early 2000s as it allows for shorter questions in survey questionnaires, or less information to record in other data sources. However, relying on the respondent's own definition of violence could introduce important interpretation and subjectivity bias, impairing reliability and comparability of measures. Additionally, people may have different threshold in recognizing themselves as victims of a given type of violence. Misperceptions, social desirability bias, feelings of shame and other related factors can deter respondents from admitting that they were victims of violence (Nielsen, Notelaers, & V., 2020). Moreover, this approach does not provide any insight in the nature of the behaviours or the conducts involved.

85. Despite being easily applicable, the self-labelling approach has important limitations and is not in line with existing recommendations for violence surveys aiming at reducing the subjective interpretation of what constitute violence and enhancing disclosure by using questions on specific behaviours (United Nations, 2014).

▶ **Box 1. Examples of respondent self-labelling questions to capture the experience of violence**

● **Central American Working Conditions and Health Survey, 2018**

Over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to...?

    A. physical violence committed by people working with you
    B. physical violence committed by people related to your workplace (patients, students, inmates, clients, etc.)
    C. physical violence committed by offenders
    D. unwanted sexual advances (sexual harassment and/or abuse)

● **European Working Conditions Surveys, 2015**

Over the last month, during the course of your work have you been subjected to any of the following?

    A. Verbal abuse
    B. Unwanted sexual attention
    C. Threats
    D. Humiliating behaviour

86. The second approach entails the use of a series of questions asking about detailed acts experienced by the respondent, attempting to specifically define violence through a list of objective behaviours. This approach relies on an external definition of violence that is set by the researcher or the survey designer through the detailed questions. This *act-specific* or *behaviour-specific* approach, also referred to as *behavioural experience method* (Nielsen, Notelaers, & V., 2020) is recognized to reduce the subjectivity or the possible individual interpretation bias that people may have of what constitutes abuse or violence in different contexts and settings. It is also recognized to yield significantly higher levels of disclosure (United Nations, 2014), (Jansen, 2007). To measure bullying the workplace for example, the behavioural experience method can involve an inventory of unacceptable conducts coupled with frequency items as response categories, as the behaviours are only labelled as bullying if repeated over time (Nielsen, Notelaers, & V., 2020).

87. Box 2 provides examples of questions addressing detailed behaviours of violence related to work from surveys identified in the ILO review of existing practices (ILO, 2023). The review showed that the behaviours considered in the different surveys under the act-specific approach vary largely. As mentioned in section 2, an important challenge lies in establishing a list of acts that will capture the extent of the phenomenon of work-related violence, that can be relevant across contexts for international comparability, and that can be agreed internationally.

► **Box 2. Examples of act-specific questions to capture the experience of violence**

● **Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire III, 2019**

Have you been exposed to gossip and slander at your workplace during the last 12 months?
Have you been involved in quarrels or conflicts at your workplace during the last 12 months?
Have you been exposed to unpleasant teasing at your workplace during the last 12 months?
Have you been exposed to work-related harassment on the social media (e.g. Facebook), by e-mail or text messages during the last 12 months?
Have you been exposed to undesired sexual attention at your workplace during the last 12 months?
Have you been exposed to threats of violence at your workplace during the last 12 months?
Have you been exposed to physical violence at your workplace during the last 12 months?

● **Survey of the European Observatory on Sexism and Sexual Harassment at Work, 2019**

(…) at your workplace in the past 12 months, have you …?

1. Been exposed to whistling, rude gestures or comments, or suggestive looks (e.g. winks, leers, etc.)
2. Been exposed to embarrassing comments on your clothes or body
3. Been exposed to obscene proposals or messages with a sexual connotation
4. Been forced to see or receive texts, photos or videos of a sexual nature despite showing your disinterest in such content
5. Been exposed to light physical content like brushing against your hands, hair, face or legs
6. Been exposed to touching of genital or erogenous zones like a hand on your bottom, a forced hug or a stolen kiss
7. Been exposed to invitations to places or at times that could potentially put you in a compromising situation (e.g. work appointment in a hotel, dinner in a restaurant, etc.)
8. Been offered embarrassing gifts (perfume, flowers, jewellery, lingerie, etc.) despite your lack of consent
9. Been exposed to pressure to obtain a sexual favour from you (e.g. sex in exchange for getting a job or a promotion)

4.2. Ethics and safety in measurement of violence

88. Violence data collection is a specific and sensitive endeavour, especially when done through individual surveys where people are asked about their experience of violence. It deals with issues that potentially could embarrass, cause emotional distress, or even harm respondents if appropriate precautions are not taken. Respondents may be afraid to disclose their real experience of violence for fear of stigma, retaliation or more violence from the perpetrators. In some contexts, admitting having experienced abusive behaviours, such as severe sexual violence may result in death. Respondents may also experience distress or trauma during data collection, while revealing their experience of violence. For people collecting the information, safety concerns also exist as they are made aware of the sensitive information about the difficult experience of the victims. Additionally, listening to the difficult stories of the victims of violence may also constitute emotionally draining work. Therefore, recommendations on how to collect data on violence and harassment would need to include guidance on the need to integrate protocols to ensure the emotional and physical safety and wellbeing of both the respondent and the person collecting the information. The benefits of a particular data collection on violence must be

weighed against its risks, both to respondents and to communities, and potential harm arising from the data collection should be minimized (Fraga, 2016).

89. Previous research and statistical work on violence in other domains highlighted that the sensitive nature of the topic requires special ethical and safety considerations. Currently, there is no ethical or safety recommendations specific to researching or measuring violence and harassment in the world of work. However, existing guidelines such as the recommendations of the World Health Organization for researching domestic violence against women, of the UNDESA for producing statistics on violence against women, of the the UNODC for conducting Victimizations Surveys, and of the ILO for measuring forced labour, provide useful reference from which the overall principles can be drawn.

90. The ethical and safety considerations include – but are not limited to – confirming informed verbal consent of the participant to the data collection, protecting the safety of respondents and the person collecting the data throughout the process, and ensuring complete confidentiality (WHO, 2016), (UN Women, 2018).

91. Confidentiality is always a priority and is recognized among the fundamental principles of official statistics. Individual data collected by statistical agencies are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes. In surveys about violence where there is potential for harm to the respondent during or following the interview if someone else learns that the respondent participated in the survey or finds out about the responses provided to the questionnaire, hypervigilance on confidentiality is required throughout the process. Confidentiality affects not only the safety of the respondents and the people involved in the data collection, but also the quality of the data. If respondents do not fully trust the confidentiality of the endeavour, disclosure rates could be low and the quality of the data compromised. Assurance of confidentiality and anonymity is therefore important for safety and to encourage respondents to disclose their real experience.

92. Methodological soundness of the data collection is also an ethical requirement, as a poorly designed data collection may result in important under-reporting of violence (WHO 2001). This aspect is particularly important as low-quality data could potentially result in questioning the importance of the topic as an issue worth addressing in a particular context. There is also an ethical obligation to help ensure the proper interpretation and use of the data collection results.

93. If the data is collected through a household survey, in instances where more than one eligible respondent resides in the household, only one person should be randomly selected for interview about their experiences of violence, to ensure confidentiality and safety within the household. Additionally, interviews are only conducted when privacy can be guaranteed. Interviews should be conducted in a quiet, private and safe place where no other family member or other person present in the household can overhear the discussion and where the interview is unlikely to be interrupted. For the safety of both respondents and the survey team, the survey should be introduced to the community and the selected households under a neutral and safe title that does not mention violence, harassment or any sensitive term. Only when privacy with the individual respondent is ensured should the interviewer provide further information on the questionnaire and the objective of the survey to the respondent. This is to ensure confidentiality at the household and community level.

94. Careful selection and specialized training of the survey staff members are also necessary. Interviewers need to have the appropriate interviewing and communication skills, empathy without judgement, and an understanding of the range of consequences of violence (WHO 2001). Violence data collection requires an important investment in interviewer training,

first to raise their consciousness about the topic, the diversity and cultural sensitivity, safety planning and distress handling, and second to give them opportunities for successive series of practice exercises, including roleplay and watching model interview. These elements will enable interviewers have the skills to create a safe space where respondents feel comfortable enough to disclose their experience and to handle respondents' distress. This recommendation will also allow to improve disclosure and the quality of the final results.

95. Actions and procedure to reduce distress of the respondents must be built into the survey. The questionnaire design should ensure that questions are asked in a non-judgmental way and that checks on the emotional status of the respondents are incorporated. Interviewers should receive specific training on the protocol for handling interruptions and respondent's distress. At the end of the survey interview, provision of confidential referrals to available local services and sources of support by interviewers when required is also an important ethical requirement (WHO 2002).

96. The principles above are commonly recognized as essential in existing frameworks for sensitive data collection. It may be important to conduct a reflection and testing on which are the principles relevant for work-related violence measurement and how they can be applied in practice.

6. Key issues to consider

▶ Should the act-specific or behaviour-specific approach be recommended as priority for measurement of work-related violence? Is so, what are the specific behaviours that should be included?

▶ If the self-labelling approach is used, what are the means to minimize the limitations of the approach?

▶ Which are the ethics and safety principles relevant for application in the domain of work-related violence data collection? Are there specific principles, not currently included in existing frameworks, that are relevant to measurement of violence in the world of work and should be considered?

5. Testing a set of questions to measure work-related violence and harassment

97. The review of surveys and the conceptual and measurement issues helped to inform the development of a preliminary survey questionnaire and accompanying ethical and safety guidelines to produce a core set of indicators on violence and harassment in the world of work. The preliminary questionnaire was developed in response to countries' interest and in the context of funding opportunities for research. In 2022-23, the ILO supported qualitative validation tests of the survey questionnaire in Jordan, in collaboration with Ipsos, a private research company. In 2023, a similar activity is ongoing in Côte d'Ivoire, in collaboration with the National School of Statistics and Applied Economics (ENSEA) and the National Statistical Office, in view of conducting quantitative tests in the last quarter of 2023.

98. This section outlines the questions on violence and harassment in the world of work that were proposed for initial testing. The questions proposed for testing at the current stage are preliminary and based on a simple adaptation of existing questions largely used in other domains of violence. Important components such as questions on economic violence, which are not frequently used in those other domains and require further development, are missing. In developing the set of questions or module, consideration was given to the following:

- how to measure the experience of the three most common types of work-related violence and harassment (physical, psychological and sexual) and understand the nature of the violence experienced;

- which factors providing context to the measures of violence and harassment to include;

- how to measure the impacts of the violence and the reporting behaviours or coping strategies adopted by the victims.

5.1. Understanding the nature of violence

99. Table 2 list the set of questions to measure the experience of specific unwanted behaviours in relation to work. The questions are act-specific, and are limited to physical, psychological and sexual violence. No questions on economic violence are included yet, as their development require more in-depth reflection and discussion. They are ordered from less sensitive behaviours of psychological aggression to very sensitive conducts of sexual violence. The questions are preliminary and currently undergoing validation.

▶ **Table 2. Preliminary questions on the experience of unwanted behaviours in the world of work**

Type of violence	Act or behaviour-specific questions
Psychological violence	**In relation to your work, current or past, has anyone ever …**
	insulted, belittled, or humiliated you through comments or gestures, either privately or in front of other people, be it in person, on the phone or online?
	done things to scare or intimidate you, for example by yelling or hitting or smashing objects?
	made you feel isolated by preventing you from communicating with your colleagues or withholding information from you?
	repeatedly assigned you lower-level tasks completely unrelated to your work that made you feel humiliated or useless?
	repeatedly threatened to have you fired or constantly reminded you of past errors you made at work?
	intentionally damaged or destroyed any material, equipment, or property you use for work purposes regardless of who owns it?
Physical violence	**In relation to your work, current or past, has anyone ever…**
	threatened to hurt you physically, without a weapon but in a way that worried you?
	pushed, shook or grabbed you, or slapped or kicked you, or threw something at you that could hurt?
	beat you up, strangled you or burnt you on purpose?
	threatened to hurt you physically with a weapon (like a stick, a knife or a gun)?
	shot, cut or stabbed you or used any other weapon against you?
Sexual violence	**In relation to your work, current or past, has anyone ever…**
	made unwanted sexually suggestive looks, sounds or gestures to you?
	asked you questions or made comments of a sexual nature that made you feel uncomfortable or offended?
	showed or sent you sexually explicit images, messages or videos you did not want, either in person or via text messages, emails or online?
	showed you their intimate body parts when you did not want them to?
	touched or stroked any part of your body against your will, or hugged or kissed you when you did not want them to?
	pressured you to perform sexual acts against your will either by using intimidation, threat or physical coercion?

5.2. Identifying the context of violence

100. In the set of questions developed by the ILO for testing purposes, follow-up questions (Table 3) are asked after each affirmative response to the different act-specific questions on experience of violence to determine the reference period within which the act of violence occurred, and the frequency of the behaviours experienced. The reference period question allows to distinguish between current violence and harassment, which were experienced in the 12 months before the interview, and experience over the working lifetime. Frequency reflects how often the violence and harassment occurred within a specified time period. As recalling the exact number of times an event happened could be challenging, the alternative approach adopted is to combine non-numeric categories, with

numeric examples if needed: "*Once*", "*A few times (2-5 times)*" and "*Many times (6 times and more)*".

▶ **Table 3. Follow-up questions on the timeframe and frequency of the violence experienced**

Questions	Response options
If YES to the act-specific question: Has this happened in the past 12 months?	01. Yes 02. No
If the behaviour happened in the past 12 months: In the past 12 months, how many times would you say that this has happened?	01. Once 02. A few times (2 to 5 times) 03. Many times (6 times and more)

101. After the questions of a specific type of violence, additional follow-up questions (Table 4) allow to determine whether the violence was experienced in current job or not, and to identify the perpetrator (*relationship with the victim and sex*) and the place or location where the act of violence occurred *(in the usual place of work; in the client/customer/patient premises; in public transportation during commute to or from work; in a place where a work-related activity/event/stay was taking place; in your own home; on the phone/online/ on a mobile device; elsewhere)* are also included.

102. To provide additional information on the work context or any organizational factor that may have influenced the violence, another question relating to any specific situation that was happening at the place of work at the time of the violence will also be tested. The possible situations may involve *heavy workload, tight deadlines or time pressure; restructuring, downsizing or layoffs; poor work organization and unclear role distribution; low activity, lack of clients or patients, or work with difficult clients.*

▶ **Table 4. Follow-up questions related to each type of violence**

Questions	Response options
Did the acts that you just mentioned happen:	01. In your current/most recent job 02. In a previous job 03. Both in current and previous job
Who did the acts you just mentioned? Was it…:	A. Supervisor or manager B. Colleague C. Someone you supervise or employ (who works for you) D. Client/customer/patient/pupils or their family member(s) E. Intimate partner F. Other family member G. Friend or acquaintance H. Complete stranger I. Other, please specify: _____
Indicate the sex of the person(s) who did those acts to you:	01. Men only, or mainly men 02. Women only, or mainly women 03. Both men and women equally

5.3. Assessing the reporting behaviour and impact of violence

103. Several additional data items were included for testing to capture the reporting or help-seeking behaviours of the victim and the impact of the work-related violence.

- **Reporting or help seeking behaviour:** An important set of information to include concerns the actions taken by the victims to address the violence, such as help-seeking and reporting. The questions included for testing relate to disclosure of the experience of violence; the source of help or support sought; the satisfaction with the help received; the effect of the reporting or help-seeking of the violence (whether it stopped, decreased, increased, or stayed the same); and the reasons for not reporting for those who did not disclose the violence situation (Table 5).

▶ **Table 5. Follow-up questions related to each type of violence**

Type of information	Questions	Response options
Disclosure of expériences	Did you talk to someone about these behaviours that you experienced?	01. Yes, all of them 02. Yes, some of them 03. No
Source of help	Who did you talk to about these behaviours that you experienced?	A. Family or friends B. Colleague/co-worker C. Manager/supervisor D. Human resources department E. Trade union representative F. Police G. Lawyer/legal representative H. Local or religious leader I. Medical services (Doctor, nurse, psychologist, etc) J. Social services K. Labour inspection authority L. Other
Satisfaction with help	Were you satisfied with the help that you received from the following persons when you talked to them about the behaviours that you experienced?	01. Yes 02. No
Effect of help	Was there a change in the situation after you told the persons you just mentioned about the unwanted behaviours at the time?	01. No change, the same unwanted behaviours continued 02. Situation improved, no more or less unwanted behaviours 03. Situation got worse, more unwanted behaviours 98. Don't know/don't remember 99. Refused / No answer

Reasons for not reporting/not seeking help	What were the reasons that made you not talk about some of the unwanted behaviours you experienced/never tell anyone about these behaviours?	A. Did not feel the issue was serious B. Embarrassed or ashamed C. Afraid would not be believed or would be blamed D. Fear of losing my job E. Fear or threats/ consequences of more violence or harassment F. Fear of getting a bad reputation G. Did not know where to go H. Other, specify: _____ 98. Don't know

- **Impacts of violence on health:** Health impacts include mental health impacts such as psychological distress, anxiety, anger and depression, and post traumatic distress disorder (PTSD). Adverse physical health impacts include injuries resulting directly from physical violence, and impacts such as weight loss and fatigue which could persist or occur after the violence. Different methods exist to measure the emotional states of individuals, their well-being and physical health, and the extent and detail of questions to assess health impacts depend on the objectives of the survey. The tested questions ask two questions to illicit the respondent's self-report on how the violence experienced affected their health (Table 6). A challenge will reside in cases where different acts of violence were experienced, to ensure that the response provided capture complete and accurate information.

▶ **Table 6. Questions aiming at assessing the impact of violence on health**

Questions	Response options
Would you say these behaviours negatively affected your mental health?	01. No, no effect 02. Yes, a little 03. Yes, a lot 04. Not sure
Would you say these behaviours negatively affected your physical health?	05. No, no effect 06. Yes, a little 07. Yes, a lot Not sure

- **Impacts of violence on work :** To try to capture some of the economic costs of violence, the pilot instrument included a set of questions on whether the violence experienced affected the motivation, productivity, concentration or confidence of the respondents at work and whether it resulted in days of absence from work (Table 7).

▶ **Table 7. Questions aiming at assessing the impact of violence on work**

Type of information	Questions	Response options
Lost productivity	What effect have these behaviours had on your work or your ability to work?	A. No effect B. Lost confidence in ability to work C. Lost motivation to work D. Scared to go to work E. Reduced performance or productivity at work F. Unable to work (sick leave) G. Started looking for a new job H. Changed job I. Stopped working and did not resume work J. Other
Days of absence from work	In the past 12 months, how many days were away from work because of these behaviours?	Number of days: ____ 99 Don't know

5.4. Current status of the testing

104. A cognitive testing of an earlier version of the questionnaire was conducted between November 2022 to February 2023 in Jordan, in collaboration with Ipsos. Local non-governmental organizations providing support services to victims of violence were also informed about the activity and referral information about their services was provided to the testing participants, in line with the general ethical recommendations. The results of the cognitive testing pointed to the need to simplify the questionnaire and the terminology. A revised version of the preliminary questionnaire will undergo cognitive testing in Côte d'Ivoire during the third trimester of 2023, in the framework of a research project[5] in West Africa, led by the National School of Statistics and Applied Economics (ENSEA) in collaboration with the National Statistical Office. The research project will also involve pilot surveys in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Senegal at the end of 2023. They will target persons aged 18 years old and above who ever worked, regardless of their labour force status at the time of survey. The majority age was chosen as lower threshold to avoid the need to acquire parental consent for underage persons, which may jeopardize confidentiality and therefore, the safety of the young person. Those pilot surveys will generate initial evidence on the conceptual issues identified and the measurement approach developed and will inform the further methodological work.

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[5] For details on the France-OIT project, see: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/violence-harassment/projects/WCMS_792213/lang--fr/index.htm

6. Concluding remarks

105. This document aimed at outlining the main challenges and important considerations for measurement of work-related violence and harassment. The first challenge relates to the concept of work-related violence. Violence is a multifaceted phenomenon, whose conception is highly variable across individuals, contexts and cultures, and this wide-ranging nature is also pertinent to violence and harassment in the world of work. The ILO Convention C190 introduced a legal definition of violence and harassment in the world of work, but a standard and internationally agreed statistical definition of the phenomenon is lacking.

106. Many conceptual issues requiring further work and discussion have been identified in this document. A reflection is required on how to statistically define work-related violence and each type of violence it involves, and which corresponding main behaviours can best capture the phenomenon in a manner that is comprehensive and relevant across contexts. A reflection is also required on the elements to consider for establishing that the violence experienced is related to work in order to confirm whether the identity of the perpetrator, the place or location where the violence occurs, or any other criteria should be taken into account. It is also important to define the population scope of measurement, the priority indicators and characteristics recommended for measurement and the reference period for which the information should be measured.

107. For practical measurement, issues of subjectivity and interpretation, correct attribution of the violence experienced to relevant time frame, work characteristics and perpetrators characteristics need to be addressed.

108. In measurement of work-related violence, ethical and safety requirements are essential given the sensitivity of the issue addressed. They should be properly implemented to ensure the safety of the respondents and the measurement team, the confidentiality of the survey, and to improve disclosure and the quality of the resulting data. Future global recommendations should include guidance on the ethical and safety guidelines applicable to measuring violence and harassment in the world of work.

109. The ILO is currently supporting interested partners in testing preliminary survey tools through a set of qualitative and quantitative assessments. The aim is to generate initial results on the conceptual issues identified and the measurement approach proposed, in order to inform future methodological work on the topic.

110. The possible way forward could involve establishing a technical working group to discuss the identified issues, expanding the collaboration with interested countries to test and refine the preliminary measurement tools, and assessing the possible contribution of administrative sources to statistical measurement.

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