



## **From Employment and Unemployment to Work and Labour underutilization: The new international standards on statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization**

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In October 2013, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted a new Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization. This Resolution updates the previous international standards dating from 1982 and used by countries as basis to produce their official statistics on the labour force, employment and unemployment.

Major changes introduced in the new standards include a conceptual framework that recognizes all paid and unpaid work as productive activity and promotes their comprehensive but separate measurement; a more refined measure of employment as “work for pay or profit” and wider measures of labour underutilization that complement the unemployment rate to support better monitoring of labour markets; as well as separate concepts, definitions and indicators of participation in different forms of unpaid work, particularly in own-use production work (including in subsistence farming and fishing and in the provision of unpaid household services), unpaid trainee work and volunteer work to render visible their contribution to households, communities and national economies.

These refinements to the international statistical standards respond to demands for more targeted measures to inform the formulation and monitoring of a wide range of economic, labour market and social policies and programmes. Their impact on official labour market statistics is expected to vary depending on the socioeconomic context and the existing data collection practices of countries. However, it is expected to be especially relevant in countries and areas where subsistence activities are widespread, where labour markets are of limited scope, and for groups predominantly engaged in forms of work that are unpaid, especially women.

Activities to revise and update national data collection practices to be in line with the new standards are already underway in a number of countries and regions around the world. To support these efforts, the 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS called on the ILO to conduct further “conceptual and methodological work, including testing” and to promote the “sharing of good practice among countries” through a “collaborative mechanism between countries, international, regional and sub-regional organizations, and workers’ and employers representatives.”

This presentation will provide an overview of the main changes introduced in the new international standards on statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization. The potential impact of these changes on headline labour market indicators will be illustrated with selected case studies. The presentation will end with an update on the latest activities of the ILO to support the implementation of the new standards in countries.

**Keywords:** work statistics framework; employment; unemployment; labour underutilization, ICLS, international standards, ILO.