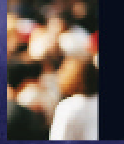




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## ILO Socio-Economic Security Programme

# “Economic Insecurity drags on in Ukraine” Survey shows millions in distress

## Conference in Kiev reviews results

Ukraine's population remains mired in poverty and insecurity, twelve years after becoming independent, with a monthly income of less than \$100 per capita, and with no less than 40% of wage earners being owed a backlog of wages.

These results are shown from the latest People's Security Survey, conducted by the ILO and the State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine. The national survey of over 9,000 adults found that average income is less than what most estimated is required for a subsistence standard of living. As for the non-payment of wages, the percentage of workers not receiving their contractual wages was higher in 2003 than found in the second survey, conducted in 2002. As then, the worst affected sector was agriculture.

The full results will be presented at an international conference in Kiev on December 16-17, organised by the Government, the ILO and the UNDP. Among the main results to be announced are the following:

About 85% of adults felt that their household income was insufficient to cover for their healthcare needs;

One in three adults reported that they were suffering from some long-term illness or disability;

Over four in every five adults expected their financial situation in old age to be bad or very bad;

More people felt “badly off” than was the case in 2002;

Only one in every 20 people thought their family income would improve in the coming year;

Most people had little or no trust in government agencies to do much about their plight;

Although many of the employed are still formally entitled to a wide range of enterprise benefits, in practice only a minority actually receive

them; this was particularly the case with subsidised meals at work and transport allowances;

While income inequality has increased, the situation between workers is actually worse than it appears because the higher the income, the more likely the worker is to receive enterprise perks and benefits; One in every five workers report that they are in arrears in paying for their domestic rent, gas or electricity;

Less than half of the unemployed receive regular unemployment benefits, and of those the average replacement rate is less than 50% of their previous wage;

Only about 9% of households have any savings, and the incidence of household indebtedness has grown;

Scarcely surprisingly, over two-thirds of the employed were dissatisfied with their wage levels, and over half were dissatisfied with their enterprise benefits;

Workers were staying in their jobs largely because they saw no chance of obtaining another;

More people thought opening up the economy and 'globalisation' was threatening their employment than thought the reverse, although youth tended to think the reverse;

Only one in five workers were confident about retaining their employment over the next 12 months;

One in every four workers thought their workplace was unsafe, with a larger proportion of men feeling that was so; the most common hazards mentioned were excessive noise and unguarded or dangerous machinery; Although many workers had received some sort of training for employment, more than one in every seven reported that they did not use their skills in their current main job;

Only a small minority can use, or have access to, a computer;

Unionisation has fallen, but still remains high by western European standards, although unions appear to have done little to arrest the decline in living and working standards in the country;

Widespread apathy or anomic reactions characterise the attitude of most workers, most saying that they would take no action in response to unpaid wages or other adverse developments in their jobs.

In spite of all these adverse developments, Ukrainians appear to have retained a sense of social solidarity, according to an analysis conducted by the ILO's Socio-Economic Security Programme. Asked about their attitude to various social issues, a very large majority said that human rights were very important, along with personal independence and adherence to the law.

There was support for a reduction in the extent of inequality, and nearly two-thirds expressed support for a minimum income for every citizen of Ukraine. Nearly nine out of ten workers supported equal wages for men and women, and over three-quarters expressed support for equal wages for citizens and legal immigrants. A majority supported providing income support for those providing care for the elderly and children and for those doing voluntary community work. In short, civilised values are persisting in economically insecure circumstances.

For further information, please contact:  
The Secretariat,  
Socio-Economic Security Programme,  
International Labour Organisation, Geneva.  
Tel: 004122-7996648 or 6645  
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