



Governing Body

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Institutional Section

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FOURTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Director-General

Fifth Supplementary Report: Report of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 2–11 October 2013) and the Tripartite Meeting of Experts in Labour Statistics on the Advancement of Employment and Unemployment Statistics (Geneva, 28 January–1 February 2013)

Purpose of the document

The Governing Body is invited to take note of the Conference report of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians and to request the Director-General to take into account its recommendations in the future work programme of the Office, as well as to authorize its distribution (see the draft decision in paragraph 20).

Relevant strategic objective: Cross-cutting.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Yes.

Author unit: Department of Statistics (STATISTICS).

Related documents: MESEU/2013/1; ICLS/19/2013/1; ICLS/19/2013/2; ICLS/19/2013/3.

1. In preparation for the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), a Tripartite Meeting of Experts examined a preliminary proposal to revise the current international standards on statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment (13th ICLS, 1982), and to develop a set of measures of labour underutilization to supplement the unemployment rate. The conclusions of the Meeting, as reflected in the report accompanying this paper,¹ were taken into account by the Office to further refine the proposals for presentation to the 19th ICLS, with a view to adopting new and revised international statistical standards.
2. The 19th ICLS took place from 2 to 11 October 2013 in Geneva, gathering representatives from government ministries and national statistical offices from over 100 member States; Employer and Worker experts; and a large number of observers. This session was considered to be historic as it marked the 90th anniversary since the first ICLS was held in 1923. The report of its proceedings accompanies this paper.²
3. The Conference elected Mr Thirumalai C.A. Anant (India) as Chairperson; Ms Inesa Senyk (Ukraine) as Vice-Chairperson; and Mr Abrahams Mutedi (South Africa) as Reporter of the Conference.
4. The Conference examined the following agenda items:
 - I. General report on past and planned statistical activities of the ILO and on the functioning of the ICLS (Report I).³
 - II. Revision of the international labour standards on statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, including measures of labour underutilization to supplement the unemployment rate (Report II).⁴
5. The Conference set up one committee to deal with the substantive topics that were the subject of the draft resolution on work, employment and labour underutilization for consideration by the Conference (agenda item II). Ms Marcia Quintslr (Brazil) was elected as Chairperson of the Committee on Work Statistics. The report of this Committee is reproduced in Appendix II to the report of the Conference. The Conference adopted resolution I concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, the most comprehensive revision of core statistical concepts since 1982.
6. In order to implement the resolution, the ILO was called upon to promote the resolution through collaborative mechanisms between countries, international, regional and subregional organizations, and Worker and Employer representatives focusing on:
 - (a) dissemination and wide communication of the new standards, their impact and their interpretation;
 - (b) timely development of technical manuals and model data collection instruments to be made available in the three official languages, as well as in other languages with the support of partner institutions;

¹ MESEU/2013/1.

² ICLS/19/2013/3.

³ ICLS/19/2013/1.

⁴ ICLS/19/2013/2.

- (c) conducting further conceptual and methodological work, including testing;
 - (d) sharing good practice among countries;
 - (e) technical assistance through training and capacity building, especially to national statistical agencies and relevant statistical services in line ministries; and
 - (f) analysis and presentation of work statistics.
- 7.** The ILO was also asked to work in collaboration with constituents and interested international organizations on further methodological work in reference to this resolution, particularly on the measurement of underutilization or inadequate employment related to skills, employment-related income, and excessive working time, in view of future international statistical standards.
- 8.** The adoption of the resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization is very timely given the broad consensus that employment and decent work have taken centre stage in policy debates and that discussions on the post-2015 development agenda are growing in intensity. Its importance for developing countries must also be underlined. The resolution contains the first international statistical definition of work in its various manifestations. It makes important groups like subsistence workers and apprentices more visible and identifies new indicators for international reporting, which will complement the traditional measures, particularly in countries where the unemployment rate is judged insufficient to address labour market issues.
- 9.** A special international effort should be made to support countries in the implementation of the revised statistical measurement standards, as they are essential for improving the understanding of labour markets particularly in developing countries and thereby allowing for refined policy responses. The follow-up activities leading to implementation must entail a special effort by the Office to develop constituents' capacities at the national level through piloting and production of required support materials. The current efforts to strengthen statistical activities in the ILO and the quest for international partnerships should be pursued.
- 10.** In the plenary sessions of the ICLS, many important topics from the general report were widely discussed and debated. Some topics led to recommendations and decisions by the Conference.
- 11.** When discussing the post-2015 development agenda and its implications in terms of statistical activities for the Office, many delegates supported the Decent Work Agenda and statistical indicators used at the country level as an important and solid foundation for developing quantifiable criteria to support a goal on employment and decent work for all.
- 12.** Regarding wage statistics, delegates expressed strong support for the development of a new and updated manual on the measurement of wages and many countries expressed interest in collaborating with the ILO in this regard.
- 13.** Other topics discussed included: informal employment and the informal sector, the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08), child labour, forced labour and human trafficking, cooperatives, statistics on social dialogue, gender mainstreaming in labour statistics, statistics on work-related violence, statistics on labour migration, data collection, dissemination and estimation, statistics on decent work, international classification of status in employment, and green jobs. Further, the development of statistical standards on social protection indicators was particularly welcomed.

14. Important room documents⁵ were discussed during the plenary sessions. One dealt with a proposal for the statistical definition and measurement of green jobs, which allowed for the adoption of international guidelines presented in Appendix I of the Conference report. Another room document on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) highlighted the need to update it to align the standards to the new resolution on work statistics adopted by the Conference.
15. During the plenary sessions, the member States acknowledged the existing gaps in key areas of labour statistics: labour migration, rural employment, dynamics of labour markets and flows, along with statistics on productivity and labour costs, among others. Some of the priority areas identified, where delegates asked the ILO to take a lead, are not provided for in the programme and budget of the ILO for 2014–15, so alternative ways to move forward would have to be considered.
16. The Conference also tackled the issue of the organization, frequency and duration of its sessions. Most delegates strongly supported a five-year frequency for the ICLS, but nonetheless considered that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure continued progress in the interim, including the strengthening of technical working groups. However, there was also consensus on maintaining the ICLS in its full body, given that the process of standard setting in labour statistics dates back to 1923.
17. The Conference adopted a resolution (resolution V) concerning the functioning of the ICLS and the updating of its Standing Orders, in Appendix III of the Conference report. It:

... recommends that the Governing Body of the ILO consider: (i) assessing mechanisms to streamline the work of the ICLS and foster coordination and consultation between meetings; and (ii) amending the ICLS Standing Orders, including to reflect the practice of inviting Employer and Worker experts, and to update its text and bring it in line with the Standing Orders of other ILO meetings, such as on the inclusion of an introductory note outlining the nature, purpose and operation of the ICLS, the use of appropriate language to reflect gender equality and the participation of additional observers.
18. The Conference also adopted resolutions concerning the future work of the ILO in labour statistics as follows:
 - resolution II, on statistics of forced labour;
 - resolution III, on statistics of cooperatives; and
 - resolution IV, on labour migration statistics.
19. More specifically, resolution IV recommends that the Office should set up a working group with the aim of sharing good practices, discussing and developing a workplan for defining international standards on labour migration statistics that can inform labour market and migration policy, and reporting back to the 20th ICLS.

⁵ Room documents available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang--en/index.htm>.

Draft decision

20. The Governing Body:

- (a) takes note of the report of the Conference;*
- (b) requests the Director-General to consider the recommendations of the Conference in carrying out the future programme of work of the Office;*
- (c) requests the Director-General to submit to a future session of the Governing Body a document with proposals to give effect to resolution V of the 19th ICLS; and*
- (d) authorizes the Director-General to distribute the report of the Conference to:*
 - (i) the governments of member States and, through them, to the national employers' and workers' organizations concerned, drawing particular attention to the five resolutions contained in Appendix III to the report;*
 - (ii) the international employers' and workers' organizations concerned;*
 - (iii) the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations;*
 - (iv) non-governmental organizations represented at the Conference.*