

BALI DECLARATION POLICY BRIEF NO. 12 | 2018 UPDATE

IMPROVING LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

BALI DECLARATION PRIORITY:

Better data collection and reporting on the status of the world of work, with particular emphasis on labour relations and employers' and workers' organizations

Reliable, timely, high-quality, disaggregated data are of critical importance to effectively monitor progress toward decent work and inclusive development and improve the basis for evidence-based decision-making and accountability

Defining effective labour market strategies at the country level requires first and foremost the collection, dissemination and assessment of up-to-date and reliable labour market information, and in line with agreed international measurement standards. Once policies and strategy are decided, continued gathering and analysis of information are essential to monitor progress towards goals and to adjust policies where needed. Labour market information and analysis is an essential foundation for the development of integrated strategies to promote fundamental principles and rights at work, productive employment, social protection and dialogue between the social partners, as well as to address the cross-cutting themes of gender and development.

The Bali Declaration was adopted at the 16th Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting of the ILO on 9 December 2016. The Declaration serves as a call to action for governments, workers' and employers' organizations in the region to do more to promote inclusive growth, social justice and decent work. This series of Policy Briefs aim to focus attention on the priorities for policies and actions at national level and by the ILO as defined in the Declaration.



Without reliable statistics policy-makers are working in the dark. Similarly, employer and worker organizations and other stakeholders need good statistics to back their efforts to influence policy directions.

– Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General

DEFINING THE CHALLENGE

For policy-makers to design and evaluate policies and programmes to help boost competitiveness, productivity and job creation, they require sound labour market information and analysis, including data on employment, unemployment and other measures of labour underutilization, jobseekers and vacancies, and skills and working conditions, as well as wages and salaries. Such information is used in the formulation of a wide range of social and economic policies targeting the population as a whole, as well as particular groups that may be left behind, such as children, youth, women and men, and geographic regions. It also forms the basis to evaluate the contribution of different forms of work to macroeconomic output (e.g. GDP and satellite accounts), to household livelihoods, to community well-being and social cohesion.

One of the principal tools for generating statistics on the world of work is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is a standard household-based survey of work-related statistics. Other sources of labour market information come from topic-specific household surveys (like child labour surveys or informal employment surveys), employment-related establishment surveys (with details on recruitment and labour demand), and administrative records. Many countries in Asia and the Pacific regularly produce an LFS and other sources of labour market information. There are, however, clear capacity gaps remaining, with certain developing countries, including many Pacific Island countries, still running surveys only periodically or not at all. The unfortunate data gaps result in the continued exclusion of these countries from regional and sub-regional analyses. More importantly, the lack of regular labour statistics inhibits the extent to which national policymakers can monitor the impact of national policies and programmes and make adjustments for more effective delivery of services to the targeted population.

The lack of data will also make it difficult for these countries to monitor progress towards the SDGs, affecting the principle of “leave no one behind”. The adoption by the UN General Assembly, of the Global Indicator Framework to monitor SDGs in 2017 should, however, serve to boost data collection at the country level. The ILO was successful in embedding the decent work agenda into the SDG framework and has the custodianship of 14 SDG indicators. A number of countries in Asia and the Pacific have started to establish country-specific indicator frameworks, inspired by the global SDGs indicator framework, which will be used as basis for national statistical programming. The ILO is currently providing support to developing these frameworks in a number of countries in the region.

The world of work is not static; where and how people work today has evolved over the last 100 years and will continue to evolve over the next hundred. In 2013, the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted new standards to enable better statistical measurement of participation of all persons in all forms of work and in all sectors of the economy; of labour underutilization; and of interactions between different forms of work (ILO, 2013a).

The 20th ICLS of October 2018 resulted in the adoption of another important statistical standard for statistics on work relationships which will be instrumental to improving the knowledge base on emerging issues such as new forms of work – including platform work. The adaptation of these new standards, along with standards from the 19th ICLS, in future LFSs will result in improved and more relevant labour statistics. Yet building the capacity of national statistics offices in the region to implement the latest resolutions of the ICLS, and educating policy-makers on the revised concepts and definitions, will pose additional challenges to national statistical programmes.

AREAS OF ACTION AND LESSONS LEARNED

The ILO Department of Statistics, as focal point within the United Nations system, works together with national statistics offices to provide timely and reliable labour statistics. It has the mandate to develop international standards for better measurement of labour issues with enhanced international comparability and to support member States to develop and improve their labour statistics.

ILO statistical activities in support of member States in Asia and the Pacific focus on three main areas: (1) capacity building in labour statistics and decent work indicators, especially in support of the recent standards of the 19th and 20th ICLS (ILO, 2013a; ILO, 2018f); (2) technical cooperation with, and technical assistance to national statistics offices for implementation of LFSs or other data collection exercises, including building statistical systems for annual or sub-annual LFSs; and (3) support to the measurement of the ILO custodial SDGs indicators, in line with the most recent international standards.

The ILO will continue to support the production of labour market information among member States in order to establish a core of comparable labour market indicators. To meet the growing demand for production of regular high-quality, relevant information on decent work, including related SDG indicators, an additional call for action from relevant policy portfolios is needed. One of the main issues for the regular production of data is funding from national resources. It is important that the urgent call for support to national statistics programmes comes from all relevant policy departments and not just the national statistics offices. The ILO will aim to reinforce the call to action by ensuring that every Decent Work Country Programme is supported by a high-quality data assessment and a strong data-driven monitoring and evaluation framework, supported by national funding.

STATUS OF LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

	LFS	Latest year*	Frequency of survey	Alternative source
East Asia				
China	No			Official estimates
Japan	Yes	2017	Monthly	
Korea, Republic of	Yes	2017	Monthly	
Mongolia	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
South-Eastern Asia				
Brunei Darussalam	Yes	2017	Occasional	
Cambodia	Yes	2012	Occasional	
Indonesia	Yes	2017	Twice yearly	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Yes	2017	Occasional	
Malaysia	Yes	2017	Monthly	
Myanmar	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
Philippines	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
Singapore	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
Thailand	Yes	2017	Monthly	
Timor-Leste	Yes	2013	Occasional	
Viet Nam	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
South Asia				
Afghanistan	No			Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS)
Bangladesh	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
India	No			National Sample Survey (NSS)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
Maldives	No			Census/ Household income and expenditure survey (HIES)
Nepal	Yes	2017	Occasional	
Pakistan	Yes	2015	Quarterly	
Sri Lanka	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
Pacific Islands				
Australia	Yes	2017	Monthly	
Cook Islands	No	2019 (planned)	Occasional	
Fiji	Yes	2017	Occasional	
Kiribati	No			Census
Marshall Islands	No			Census
New Zealand	Yes	2017	Quarterly	
Palau	No			Census
Papua New Guinea	No			Census
Samoa	Yes	2017	Occasional	
Solomon Islands	No			Census
Tonga	No	2019 (planned)		
Tuvalu	No			Census
Vanuatu	No			Census

*Latest year in ILOStat (www.ilo.org/ilostat).

GLOBAL SDG INDICATORS UNDER ILO CUSTODIANSHIP OR WITH ILO INVOLVEMENT

SDG Indicator		Custodian agency/ies	Partner agency/ies	Tier
1.3.1	Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems	ILO	World Bank	II
5.5.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions	ILO		I
8.2.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	ILO	World Bank, UNSD	I
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	ILO		II
8.5.1	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities	ILO		II
8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	ILO		I
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	ILO		I
8.7.1	Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	ILO and UNICEF		II
8.8.1	Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	ILO		II
8.8.2	Level of national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status	ILO		II
8.b.1	Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy	ILO	World Bank, OECD	III
10.4.1	Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers	ILO	IMF	II
10.7.1	Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of yearly income earned in country of destination	ILO and World Bank		II
14.c.1	Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law ...	UN-DOALOS, FAO, UNEP, ILO, other UN Oceans agencies		III

Notes: Tier I: SDG indicator that is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards, and for which data are widely available and produced regularly by countries. Tier II: SDG indicator that is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards, but for which data are not easily available and are not regularly produced by countries. Tier III: SDG indicator that has no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The labour statistics of Asia and the Pacific will continue to be consolidated in the ILO database of labour statistics (ILOSTAT), the leading global data repository on decent work statistics. In the next biennium, priority will be given to supporting member States to (1) measure, produce and analyze the SDGs indicators associated with the decent work; and (2) implement the resolution of the 19th ICLS, including in design of transition road maps to measuring different forms of work and labour underutilization, as well as new forms of work relationships (20th ICLS). With regards the first priority, the ILO works within the broader UN regional framework for capacity building in Asia-Pacific countries on production and analysis of the SDGs.

Some recent regional trainings on labour statistics

- Workshop on populating labour market indicators and standardizing microdata, Nouméa, 3 – 7 December 2018 (Pacific island countries), organized in collaboration with the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), Statistics for Development Division (SDD);
- SDG Indicators: Measuring decent work in the context of the SDGs, Chiba, 19-22 November 2018 (15 countries), organized in collaboration with UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP);
- 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), Geneva, 10–19 October 2018;
- Foundation of Economics and Statistics, training for trade unions, Siem Reap, May 2018. The course was designed to provide hands-on exposure to basic data management and analysis.

Useful references:

International Labour Organization (ILO). 2013a. *Report of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians* (Geneva).

—. 2013b. *Resolution I: Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization*. 19th ICLS (Geneva).

—. 2017. *Asia-Pacific Labour Market Update, September 2017* (Bangkok).

—. 2018a. *Time-use surveys and statistics in Asia and the Pacific: A review of challenges and future directions* (Bangkok).

—. 2018b. *Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Advancing decent work for sustainable development* (Bangkok).

—. 2018c. *Accelerating the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals through decent work: SDG monitoring and country profile for Mongolia* (Bangkok).

—. 2018d. *Myanmar: Decent work and Sustainable Development Goals baseline indicators* (e-pub).

—. 2018e. *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture. Third edition* (Geneva).

—. 2018f. *Resolution I: Resolution concerning statistics on work relationships*. 20th ICLS (Geneva), Oct.