

ILO Gender News

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ILO Bureau for Gender Equality

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The electronic version of *ILO Gender News 2012*, available on ILO Bureau for Gender Equality website (www.ilo.org/gender), provides access to multiple online resources and documents.

That the ILO has contributed significantly to advancing the goal of gender equality in the world of work during the past year is undeniable. Some of the Organization's main achievements across the regions are reflected in this issue of *ILO Gender News*. They are testimony to ILO efforts to further implementation of the 2009 International Labour Conference (ILC) resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work.

Following the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the ILO has intensified actions to improve the working conditions of an estimated 100 million domestic workers – women and men – worldwide. It has responded energetically to requests for technical assistance on the gender pay gap, reconciling work and family responsibilities, combating gender-based violence at the workplace, enhancing women's economic opportunities, and reviewing legislative texts in order to improve the application of international labour standards. This newsletter illustrates some of the ILO's responses – including though technical cooperation – to the labour market situation of women across the regions, along with the role played by workers' and employers' organizations in bringing about gender equality at the workplace and strengthening women's engagement in social dialogue. It also contains articles on ILO joint work with the UN System sister entities such as on decent work for women

in rural areas during the Commission on the Status of Women.

This issue of *ILO Gender News* also reports on the 2012 International Labour Conference outcomes that had important implications for gender equality, such as the adoption of a resolution on the youth employment crisis, which gives consideration to the needs of women at work and girls in education. A growing number of new publications are featured, including the new edition of *A manual for gender audit facilitators* and a forthcoming comparative study on ten countries, presenting good practices and challenges regarding the Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156).

Taking account of the progress made over the last decade to achieve the goal of gender equality in the world of work, it is fitting to look to the future with anticipation and confidence under the leadership of the new Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder. In his vision statement, Mr Ryder stressed the importance of ILO's full regard to the gender dimension of its work, building on our record of achievements.

It has been a wonderful year and I heartily wish to thank all ILO Gender Network colleagues, especially those who contributed to this newsletter. I hope you enjoy the read!

JANE HODGES
Director, ILO Bureau for Gender Equality

ECOSOC discusses decent work and economic empowerment for women

Convened by ILO and UN Women during the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) session from 2 to 9 July 2012 in New York, a Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast brought together over 80 ministers, heads of delegations and representatives of agencies to hear of good policies and practices on “Decent work and women’s economic empowerment”. The event enriched gender analysis in the ECOSOC debate which led to the [Ministerial Declaration](#) on “Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the MDGs”.

The national experiences that were shared at the Roundtable highlighted a number of key elements for success:

- political leadership by women for women and men (at all levels);
- policies that create a legal and practical framework that is conducive to economic start-ups for women, especially young women;
- international labour standards that breathe new life into national law and practice on non-discrimination as well as into well-crafted constitutional and statutory rights;
- programmes that maintain purchasing power through social protection floors;

- innovative financial services and credit facilities specifically targeting women;
- state-provided facilities to help balance the division of labour in households;
- giving a voice to women, whose injustices are often unheard or unheeded, inter alia through representative organizations for labour and business; and
- gender-responsive budgets and resource allocations that recognize the overall importance to development of women’s economic empowerment.

→ [Download the Ministerial Declaration](#)



UN’s Commission on the Status of Women spotlights rural women workers

Across UN collaboration was again demonstrated by the joint ILO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) panel discussion organized during the 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 27 February – 9 March 2012). Some 85 women and men participants engaged in an active dialogue on “Rural employment and agriculture”.

The panel was chaired by the Minister for Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines, Ms Corazon Juliano Soliman, herself an activist committed to giving rural women a strong voice. Three powerful speakers – Ms Ronnie Goldberg (Vice-President of the US Council for International Business), Ms Rehana Riyalwala (Secretary of the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) of India) and Ms Shireen Lateef (Senior Adviser on Gender of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)) – presented some innovative examples and success stories of cooperatives unleashing rural women’s potential and giving them stronger voice.

The participants spoke of challenges and opportunities: role of government; policy coordination across ministries at the national level; introduction of job diversity and new industries to rural areas without undermining traditional

occupations (e.g. encouraging rural women to engage in construction and maintenance of rural infrastructure); recognition of women as farmers with associated rights; extension of the rule of law to remote rural areas to end violence against women and girls; and engagement of rural men together with rural women in seeking decent work so that their voice and empowerment can benefit the whole community.

A second side event during the Commission discussed “The importance of decent work for indigenous women in rural areas”. In cooperation with the Government of Norway, ILO invited indigenous women speakers with careers in politics, law, private business and indigenous women’s organizations: Ms Kayleen Rawlings Hunter (member of the Indigenous Human Rights Network and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Alliance, Australia), Ms Lee Anne Cameron (Director, First Nations and Metis Relations at Hydro One Networks, Canada), Ms Vibeke Larsen (member of the Board of the Sami Parliament, Norway) and Ms Rose Cunningham Kain (Director, Wangki Tangni, Nicaragua). Panellists described how they were addressing the gender and social pressures on their communities as they strived to ensure jobs and economic opportunities on native lands.

The debate brought together over 70 delegates from governments, the United Nations, employers and workers organizations and NGOs. It highlighted the need for indigenous women’s groups to link up with the trade union movement to advocate for their rights within a stronger legal framework and also for unions to reach out to these groups for knowledge of and education in their rights and decent work. A common concern was to involve more women in decision making in rural organizations. One way to get young people back to rural areas, especially young women, was to ensure that there was work available to match their education and skills. In urban areas communities needed to provide cultural support and language skills to indigenous workers who had migrated to the cities. The usefulness of [ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples \(No. 169\)](#) was highlighted as a framework for indigenous women’s rights. The ILO working paper *Indigenous women workers – With case studies from Bangladesh, Nepal and the Americas* was widely distributed.

One of the outcomes of the roundtable discussion was the adoption of a resolution, *Indigenous women: Key actors in poverty and hunger eradication (available in the [report of the 56th session](#))*.



ILO Network at the annual Inter-regional Gender Learning Forum


The Bureau for Gender Equality (GENDER) and the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (DWT/CO-Budapest) hosted the 2012 Learning Forum on 16–19 April in Budapest. The Forum was attended by 41 members (30 women and 11 men) of the Gender Network, including GENDER staff, gender coordinators and focal points from headquarters, senior gender specialists from the regions and technical experts and national coordinators from countries across Europe.

Given the support that the Office has provided to Central and Eastern European member States in their economic and labour market transformation (and in their accession to the EU), Budapest was a fitting venue to bring the Gender Network together. It provided an excellent opportunity to boost the ILO's flagship gender equality programmes and initiatives in the region and through them to help member States stimulate their economic recovery, create jobs and protect working women and men and their families in times of crisis.

Through theme-based sessions and dedicated discussion groups, the Forum strengthened the Gender Network's capacity to support the implementation of the 2009 ILC conclusions on gender equality, the Action Plan for Gender Equality (Phase II, 2012–13) and priorities highlighted in the Programme and Budget 2012–13. The programme covered a wide range of topics and reflected the quality and volume of work carried out in the regions and at headquarters. Participants learned about new tools, including the guide on equality and non-discrimination at work in East and South-East Asia and the guide to mainstreaming gender in workplace responses to HIV and AIDS. The Gender Network highlighted a number of areas where a stronger effort needs to be made to support constituents such

Key facts


Over the past decade the Gender Network has met annually for a strategic *Inter-regional Learning Forum* to take stock of achievements, exchange knowledge, strengthen capacities and agree on approaches and mechanisms to implement the ILO's gender equality mandate. The Forums are part of the institutional mechanism called for in the ILO's 1999 gender equality policy. The last four forums took place in the field – Bangkok (2009), Addis Ababa (2010), Beirut (2011) and Budapest (2012) – with the support of the respective Regional Directors/Decent Work Team Director and the Human Resources Development Department (HRD) under centralized staff development funds.

as recognizing domestic work as work and replicating “what works” from one country to other countries; strengthening labour inspection services; responding to challenges posed by violence and sexual harassment at the workplace; improving understanding of equal pay for work of equal value; and ensuring that the Decent Work Agenda and gender equality maintain their relevance in international and national agendas during times of crisis and continue to influence the high-level policy forums of inter-governmental organizations and the United Nations. 

International Women's Day 2012: Empower rural women — End hunger and poverty

On 8 March 2012 the ILO celebrated International Women's Day at its Geneva headquarters by highlighting the need to unleash the full potential of rural women in building a fair and equitable global economy.

A high-level discussion took place with distinguished panellists – Ms Sue Longley (Coordinator for Agriculture, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF)), Ms Zodwa F. Mabuza (Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce) and Dr Esther Byer Suckoo (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Barbados). The panellists shared their experiences and examples of what worked best to empower rural women and examined the challenges that remained. They also highlighted the

need to focus on access to employment, education and organization as key tools in the empowerment of rural women. A strong message was that change is not only possible but is already taking place in many countries where rural women are organizing and demanding equal treatment. 

→ [Access ILO web page on International Women's Day 2012](#)



Ms Sue Longley, Ms Zodwa F. Mabuza and Dr Esther Byer Suckoo, panellists at International Women's Day high level discussion, ILO, Geneva, 8 March 2012.



ILO enhancing knowledge of judges on gender equality

From 1 to 5 October 2012, GENDER in partnership with the International Training Centre (ITC-Turin) ran a workshop for professional upgrading of 26 judges on the application of the ILO's gender equality Conventions. The women and men judges, from courts in Botswana, Malawi, Nigeria, South African and Zambia, engaged actively in debates, comparative studies of recent decisions, and role plays covering Conventions Nos [111](#), [100](#), [156](#) and [183](#) as well as 158 on dismissals, 189 on domestic workers and Recommendation No. 200 on HIV and AIDS, and the [UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#). Building

upon previous initiatives for judges, and based upon ILO constituent demands reflected in Country Programme Outcomes, the workshop was very positively evaluated by participants. It responded to the ILC 2009 resolution instruction to the ILO "...to support the strengthening of labour inspection systems and courts so that they are able to monitor more effectively the application of key equality Conventions and issues of sex discrimination at work" and the ILC call on governments to enforce "non-discrimination legislation and gender-sensitive labour law... through well-resourced labour inspectorates and courts that do not discriminate on the basis of sex".

Inter-regional technical cooperation projects on gender equality: Presentation and progress

Gender Equality in the World of Work in Brazil, Angola, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) – Phase III

BASIC, which is supported by the Government of Norway, has since January 2010 been actively seeking to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment at the workplace. The project develops constituents' knowledge base on gender equality at the workplace, promotes the representation, advocacy and voice of women workers and builds constituents' capacity to advance the cause of gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Four of the five original target countries are the political and economic fulcrum of their respective region, and all have made progress in promoting gender

equality at the workplace. In a spirit of south-south and triangular cooperation, their successes are currently being shared with neighbouring countries that have requested ILO assistance in combating gender-based discrimination. The project is now beginning the process of replicating South African good practice in Zimbabwe, Indian good practice in Nepal, Chinese good practice in Mongolia and Brazilian and Angolan good practice in Mozambique.

One specific example concerns the sharing of Brazilian good practice in promoting the rights of workers with family responsibilities in Angola and Mozambique. Under the BASIC project ILO-Brasilia has worked with the Government to promote the ratification of the [Workers with Family](#)

[Responsibilities Convention, 1981 \(No. 156\)](#), and with employers' and workers' organizations to develop methodologies for promoting work/family balance in practice. The basic premise is that gender equality and a healthy work/life balance are good for workers and can complement a company's business goals, i.e. that acting in a socially responsible, gender-sensitive manner is good for workers and good for business.

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→ [Read more about this project](#)

Promoting Rights, Diversity and Equality in the World of Work (PRIDE)

With funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GENDER is undertaking research into the extent and type of discrimination facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers in Thailand, South Africa, Argentina and Hungary. The areas of research include assessing national laws, identifying good practice workplaces and elucidating the types of discrimination facing LGBT workers. This research is the first of its kind for the ILO and reflects the increasing emphasis and visibility that sexual orientation and gender identity is being given in international development.

Research under the project began in the summer of 2012 in the form of focus group discussions with self-identified LGBT workers and interviews with key actions in the labour market. The results of the research will be available in 2013.

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'Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality – South Africa' Project

The final independent evaluation of the *Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality – South Africa* project was completed in June 2012. The project, which began in January 2009, will finish in December 2012 in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa. The evaluation concludes that the project will substantially achieve its ultimate outcomes of improving the enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship, increasing the capacity of business service providers to deliver services to women entrepreneurs and establishing a framework for the comprehensive use of ILO tools for developing entrepreneurship among women. The total number of beneficiaries reached was a remarkable 5,518 women and men.


→ Access the [Evaluation Summary](#)
→ Read about the [ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development programme \(ILO-WED\)](#)

Gender mainstreaming in ILO partnership agreements: Norway and Sweden

In line with ILO policy and the Governing Body's instructions, all ILO technical co-operation projects must be gender mainstreamed. All must include "a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation". Regardless of the subject matter, projects must strive to promote equality between women and men, and not perpetuate inequality. With funding from the Governments of Norway and Sweden, GENDER is working in close collaboration with six ILO departments in ten different countries to help them add a gender dimension to their work.

Under the Norwegian partnership GENDER is collaborating with the Programme on Promoting the Declaration (DECL) to promote freedom of association in South Africa, Indonesia and Jordan; with the Labour Administration and Inspection Programme (LAB/ADMIN) to build the capacity of labour inspectorates in South Africa, Indonesia, Oman, Jordan and Lebanon; with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) to build the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations in Cambodia and Nepal; and with the Policy Integration Department (INTEGRATION) to develop decent work indicators in Indonesia.

Under the Swedish partnership GENDER is collaborating with DECL to promote freedom of association in El Salvador and the Philippines; with the Conditions of Work and Employment Branch (TRAVAIL) to promote rights for domestic workers and enhanced maternity protection in the Philippines and Zambia; with ACTRAV to build the capacity of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines; with ACT/EMP to build the capacity of the Zambian Federation of Employers; and with the Youth Employment Programme in El Salvador and Zambia.

Clearly the chief and immediate objective is to ensure that the ILO's outputs under both partnerships are gender responsive this biennium. However, there is also a longer-term, strategic logic at work. Through the collaboration between GENDER and the partner units, gender issues will become more structurally embedded in the work of these departments, and will occur without the need for further inputs. 

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ILO intensifying networks on gender equality with Multilateral Development Banks




Ms Jane Hodges, GENDER's Director at the MDB Gender and Employment Workshop (Istanbul, 24–25 April 2012).

Some 100 people (about 10 per cent men) attended the 4th Gender and Employment Workshop (Istanbul, 24-25 April 2012) organized by the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) to discuss key economic issues and explore good practices and key actions to accelerate progress towards MDG 3 to "promote gender equality and empower women".

Invited as a speaker, Ms Jane Hodges, GENDER's Director, shared the ILO message on decent work and gender equality and strengthened partnerships with participants – comprising heads of gender units at the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and World Bank (WB) – in areas of mutual interest.

At the opening debate on key trends relating to gender and employment, Ms Hodges highlighted the major labour market challenges faced by women in terms of unemployment, the pay gap and the growing informal economy as well as successful gender-sensitive policy measures being implemented in some countries. She recalled the principles of the Global Jobs Pact and the much-needed role that the ILO's social partners can play in responding to the economic crisis.

At a technical session focusing on sharing knowledge and good practices, Ms Hodges presented the participatory gender audit methodology, explaining how it can help multilateral development banks promote gender equality in their own institutions and assist their partners and clients in identifying and responding to inequalities. 



News from Africa


A plea for maternity protection in French-speaking Africa

The genuine progress that has been made in gender equality and empowerment of women in Africa should not conceal the reality fact that an alarming form of discrimination persists in employment, namely, the bias against maternity. Although maternity protection is looked upon as being one of the fundamental values of African societies, the fact remains that maternity and economic security are still under threat from most working women of childbearing age. In the formal economy many women encounter discrimination at work or dismissal simply because they are or may become pregnant. The conditions in which they work often present risks for pregnancy, and little is done to encourage breastfeeding and day-care centres. And in the informal and rural economies, where most women are engaged in atypical forms of employment, they have no legislation coverage and no negotiated maternity protection.

Because it is important that working women no longer have to face the impossible choice between finding a job, being promoted, having a child and meeting their family obligations, the ILO and its constituents have been looking at ways to examine, explain and promote the [ILO Maternity Protection](#)

[Convention \(No. 183\)](#), among the population of West Africa. The following are some of the public awareness and promotional activities with constituents and partners in the course of ILO's 2012 technical support:

- A training workshop for constituents, partners and United Nations agencies (Cape Verde, 6–7 August 2012) provided an occasion for 30 participants to learn more about maternity protection in the world of work. During the workshop's tripartite social dialogue and consultation between partners, a plan of action was devised for a public awareness campaign to promote the ratification and application of Convention No. 183. The plan of action is to be part of the Joint Programme on maternity protection in Cape Verde, as a response by United Nations agencies to the attainment of some of the MDGs.
- A detailed session was introduced at the workshop for directors of human resources departments in telecommunications enterprises, on the theme: "Maternity protection and the information and communication technology sector – Guidelines for the management of human resources" (Dakar, 11 July 2012).

- Two studies were prepared on the implementation of Convention No. 183 in Benin and Morocco, in order to help women and men understand the challenges facing these countries in their efforts to introduce adequate maternity protection. The studies will be published later 2012 by GENDER as a contribution to knowledge sharing through a comparative analysis of good practices.
- Awareness activities among key actors in the region were conducted to underline the importance of protecting maternity at work in order to protect the women's health and that of their infants and to make women of childbearing age less vulnerable to risks linked to pregnancy and childbirth. There have been a number of positive results, including the development of a campaign on maternity protection in Senegal to be led by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the inclusion of the issue of maternity protection for consideration by Cape Verde's National Committee on Social Dialogue. 

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Zambia: Better access to finance for women entrepreneurs


The Bank of Zambia is engaged in a reform of the banking sector aimed at increasing financial literacy and competitiveness and promoting financial inclusion, especially of women. The ILO is providing technical assistance through the FAMOS (Female and Male Operated Small Enterprises) service quality check in order to facilitate access to finance for women entrepreneurs in particular. The objective is to create an enabling environment for gender equality under the Government's financial inclusion strategy.

FAMOS is part of the Zambia's Financial Sector Development Plan (Phase II) which encompasses two key reforms that the ILO is keen on promoting: financial inclusion of women and financial literacy. These two areas

have become central to promoting women's participation in economic activities through entrepreneurship development.

The FAMOS Task Force, chaired by the Bank of Zambia, has adopted a work plan which led to a number of achievements:

- Preparation of FAMOS checks for three Zambian commercial banks;
- Showcasing of good practices in implementing FAMOS checks at international forums, including the round table meeting on Women and Access to Finance in Africa (Arusha, April 2012) and the Second African Women's Economic Summit (Lagos, July 2012), hosted by the African Development Bank and New Faces, New Voices;

- Holding of a financial exhibition during the Month of the Woman Entrepreneur (MOWE) in 2012, under the theme "Accelerating Women's Economic Empowerment – Key to Job and Wealth Creation" and sub-theme "Women's Financial Inclusion"; and
- Participatory gender audit training for the Bank of Zambia in October 2012, supported by the ILO's Gender Bureau and Regional Office for Africa. 

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→ **Download the keynote address by the Bank of Zambia's Deputy Governor-Administration at the MOWE Conference (Lusaka, 26-27 September)**

Launching of a campaign to promote ratification of ILO Convention No. 156 in the Dominican Republic

In order to help people understand the difficulty of providing proper care for children and ageing or handicapped family members, the Ministry of Labour, Ministry for Women and the Women's Action Research Centre (CIPAF) have joined forces in a campaign to ratify the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156).

An initial stage of the campaign was the ILO's production of a national report on work-family balance (*Ambos a dos: Proveer y cuidar – El desafío pendiente en una sociedad en evolución*). The study revealed that the public care infrastructure for most of the Dominican Republic's workforce was not sufficiently developed for workers to reconcile their professional and family responsibilities.

The campaign to ratify Convention No. 156 was designed to bring home to the population, members of Parliament, public administration and the workers and employers' sector the importance of giving proper consideration to the specific needs of workers with a family member requiring special care and attention. The campaign coincided with Fathers' Day in the Dominican Republic, on the last Sunday in July, so as to highlight the co-responsibility of men and women in providing that care and attention and thus a more harmonious life. Mr Francisco Domínguez Brito (Minister of Labour), Ms Alejandrina Germán (Minister for Women), Ms María José Chamorro (ILO Senior Gender Specialist) and Ms Magaly Pineda (Director of CIPAF) were

present at the launch of the campaign (Santo Domingo, 1 August 2012).

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Mr Francisco Domínguez Brito, Minister of Labour, at the launch of the campaign (Santo Domingo, 1 August 2012).

The ILO plays the leading role in a study on gender equality and decent work in Latin America and the Caribbean

An inter-agency regional report on decent work and gender equality is being prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the ILO for publication in early 2013. It is part of a cooperative venture involving tripartite consultation workshops to present the report's initial findings and elicit recommendations from the competencies of the five partner agencies.

As Ms Elizabeth Tinoco, ILO Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, observed, although there are more women in the labour force, they are still fewer in number than men, they are more prone to unemployment, they earn lower wages and they are more exposed to bad labour conditions in the informal sector. Though there have been major advances, there are still issues that need to be resolved.

In recent years there has been a sharp drop in the urban unemployment rate, which currently stands at 6.7 per cent. Yet unemployment among women is still 1.4 times higher than that of men, a difference that has remained unchanged over the years. The latest *Labour Overview* published by the Regional Office noted that, although women's labour force participation rate and rate of employment have steadily increased in recent years to reach 49.5 and 45.5 per cent respectively, the figures are still lower than those for men, for whom the corresponding rates are 71.3 and 67.3 per cent. The *Labour Overview* also revealed that the proportion of women in the informal sector (53.7 per cent) continues to be greater than that of men (47.8 per cent).

The inter-agency report will be the first effort of this magnitude to provide a detailed picture both of the status of women in the labour market and of the policies being applied in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote gender equality. Information and sex disaggregated data provided in the report will make it possible to identify the structural factors that determine the level of employment of women and to design policies to close the remaining gaps, covering the following areas: occupational segregation; wage gaps; the status of rural and indigenous women and women of African descent; migrant women; the effect of

long working days and double workloads; the persistence of potentially discriminatory policies; and the contribution of women to the poverty reduction.

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El Salvador Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare gender audit

The ILO and Organization of the American States (OAS) conducted a Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) of El Salvador's Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MTPS) between 27 February and 10 March 2012. The recommendations were discussed and approved by the Minister, Mr Humberto Centeno.

As a follow-up, the ILO and the OAS have supported the MTPS in the design of an Action Plan to implement the PGA recommendations. Ministry officials actively participated in the definition of the Plan's strategic objectives and activities to be undertaken. The Plan is designed as a tool to facilitate the implementation of measures aimed at institutionalizing gender equality in the MTPS across all structures and levels and bears witness to Ministry's clear political determination in this area.

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Uruguay makes strides towards decent work for domestic workers

The first country to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), which aims to improve the working conditions of tens of millions of domestic workers throughout the world, was Uruguay, and this just one year after the instrument's adoption at the 2011 Session of the International Labour Conference.

When depositing the ratification document, Uruguay's Minister of Labour and Social Security, Mr Eduardo Brenta, explained that his country had entered into a political commitment to promote the Convention and had submitted a Bill to that effect, which had been adopted unanimously by both houses of Parliament.

In the course of 2012, the ILO engaged in a number of activities to strengthen organizations of domestic workers and of their employers. Uruguay

is one of the few countries in the world where collective bargaining extends to domestic work. Training workshops have been held (Paysandú, 29 April, 2012 and Maldonado, 6 May 2012) to train union leaders of the Sindicato Único de Trabajadoras Doméstica (SUTD) to defend their fundamental labour rights. The ILO also helped the Liga de Amas de Casa Consumidores y Usuarios del Uruguay (LACCU) to set up a website to inform domestic workers and their employers of their rights and duties and to promote decent work.

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- **Access the LACCU website**
- **Play the video “Uruguay: Líder en protección de las y los trabajadores domésticos”**



SUTD leaders attending training workshop (Paysandú, 29 April, 2012)

Advances in the ratification of Convention No. 189 in Latin America

During the first half of 2012 the ILO supported ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) in several countries in the Americas, a number of which have made significant progress. The parliaments of Bolivia, Costa Rica and Paraguay have all approved the Convention's eventual ratification and are currently engaged in the last stage of the parliamentary debate. Discussions in Parliament have already begun in Colombia, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, and other Latin American countries are actively mobilizing the workers and their organizations to promote the Convention's ratification.

The ILO has lent its support to the process by providing public awareness

material, holding workshops to popularize the concepts behind Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 and preparing studies on the subject. It has also encouraged domestic workers to hold meetings where they can discuss the present situation of paid household work and its role in society, gain the support of the authorities and civil society, develop a commitment to the Convention's ratification and promote the rights of paid domestic employees.

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- **Access latest ILO information on Decent work for domestic workers in Americas (in Spanish only)**

Cash-for-work programme for market vendors and agricultural producers in Fiji

A cash-for-work programme was launched by the Government of Fiji with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the ILO after severe flooding in February and April 2012. The main purpose of this short, small-scale protection programme targeting women market vendors and agricultural producers was to stimulate economic and livelihood recovery through their participation in disaster clean-ups and restoration activities. For many of the women it was the first time they had paid work and could contribute to their family's income. The programme ran in four flood-affected villages and towns in Rakiraki and the Nadi area. In Rakiraki the programme reached 352 participants (85 per cent of whom were women) between 26 April and 5 June 2012, including the country's two main ethnic groups (iTaukei and Indo-Fijian). Some 850 individuals benefited from the programme in Nadi, the majority of them being women victims of the floods. All the workers were provided with safety gear and remunerated for the tasks performed. The programme, which was greatly appreciated, enabled beneficiaries to participate in short focused training to improve market vendors' agricultural productivity, market production planning, food handling and financial skills.

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Market vendors in Rakiraki, Fiji.

Making decent work a reality for domestic workers in India

With ILO support, India continues to make headway in making decent work a reality for domestic workers. A draft *National Policy for Domestic Workers* is awaiting Cabinet approval. Social welfare schemes at the central level and in some States are reaching out to domestic workers, and the ILO's trade union partners are forging ahead with organizing domestic workers, linking them to welfare schemes and educating them about their rights. Furthermore,

central trade union women's committees have collaborated to plan the way forward in supporting domestic workers. The Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill was passed by the *Lok Sabha* on 3 September 2012. The forthcoming law will cover women workers in informal sector enterprises employing fewer than 10 people and will extend to domestic workers employed in private homes.

Capacity-building tools are being developed to support the effective functioning of internal complaints committees in companies and labour commissions, as established in the 1997 Supreme Court Directives regarding sexual harassment (*Vishaka*). UN Women and the ILO have agreed to formulate a Letter of Intent for enhancing their collaboration in India and in the subregion.

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Bangladesh: Prevention and redress of sexual harassment at the workplace

Sensitization training programmes carried out under a Violence Against Women initiative in Bangladesh have resulted in some large private organizations (e.g. Apex Group, Pran Group, Beximco Pharmaceutical, ACI Limited) taking institutional measures to prevent and redress sexual harassment at the workplace. The measures include: introducing complaint/suggestion boxes and setting up committees headed by women to address sexual harassment. Following the issuance of a High Court directive in May 2009 to prevent sexual harassment at educational institutes

and workplaces and the adaptation of the ILO code of practice on workplace violence, they have also revised their human resources policies to promote gender equality. The trade unions have also, for the first time, included gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence in their agendas and leadership development programmes. All these initiatives have contributed to breaking the silence about gender-based violence at the workplace. In addition, a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) project in collaboration with the National Skills Development

Council (NSDC) has led to the development of a *National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET*, which was endorsed on 26 September by the Executive Committee of the NSDC. The strategy provides a clear set of priorities and targets and performance accountability mechanisms aimed at increasing women's participation through a combination of socio-cultural, economic, institutional and systemic measures to improve the employment of women.

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Pakistan: Empowerment of women in Punjab

The ILO's gender equality programmes in partnership with constituents and stakeholders contributed to the Government of Punjab's *Women Empowerment Package, 2012*. The package includes: a policy for home-based workers; the promotion of child-care facilities at the workplace; the promotion of women's entrepreneurship; protection against sexual harassment; support for residential facilities for women workers; equal pay for work of equal value, requiring a revision of laws to comply with [ILO Convention No. 100](#); career counselling services for women; a commitment to increasing skills training opportunities

for women; and simplifying the rules and procedures for maternity and paternity leave. An innovative initiative to improve public awareness of sexual harassment to support a safe and conducive commute for working women, in collaboration with the National Highways and Motorway Police, was adopted and improved upon by the Government. Furthermore, following gender assessments carried out in collaboration with the ILO, all provincial departments of labour are working towards the introduction of institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality. In addition, the ILO and UN Women executed a

Letter of Intent in March 2012 based on a global memorandum of understanding signed between the two agencies in June 2011 to ensure a collaborative approach to gender equality and the empowerment of women by: enhancing women's participation and voice representation, building the capacity of government departments to ensure a gender dimension in their work, carrying out joint research and providing assistance to the national data collection agency to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex.

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PROWD! – Action Programme for Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon

Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the European Commission (EU), PROWD aims at improving the working conditions of women migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. It builds on a three-pronged approach to effect the desired change: revising laws that apply to domestic workers in order to bring them further in line with international labour standards; building the capacity of stakeholders so that they are in a better position to monitor the working terms and conditions of the workers; and raising awareness of the rights and obligations of domestic workers and Lebanese citizens.

Work in progress

- A unified standard contract, discussed with the Ministry of Labour, to ensure better working terms and conditions for domestic workers.
- Revisions of the conditions and procedures for acquiring work and residence permits, changing employers and inspecting households.
- A code of conduct for private employment agencies developed by the Syndicate of the Owners of Workers Recruitment Agencies in Lebanon (SORAL).

- Workshops for media and communications specialists to encourage better understanding and reporting of issues related to women migrant domestic workers.
- “Adam around the Globe”, a series of short stories to introduce Lebanese children to the culture of migrant domestic workers, and a teachers’ orientation kit on domestic workers for kindergarten and secondary school teachers and their students.



Cover of ‘Adam Round the Globe’ series

- “Information Guide for Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon”, soon available in Amharic, Tagalog, Madagascar, Sinhala, Tamil, Bengla and Nepalese, currently exists in French, English and Arabic.
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Gender-based violence in the occupied Palestinian territory

In partnership with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Birzeit University’s Institute of Women’s Studies the ILO has conducted a national survey on the gender dimension of violence at the workplace to provide data for policy formulation. The study is the first ever to be conducted on gender-based violence at the workplace in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Out of 853 working women respondents 78.2 per cent reported that they had not been exposed to any form of gender-based violence and 21.8 per cent that they had experienced at least one form. Around 4.2 per cent reported experiencing forms of violence more than five times, while 7.6 per cent said that they had been exposed to harassment at least once. The findings emphasize the lack of measures to deter perpetrators, but they may also reflect the reluctance of the victims to report harassment. In addition, the data show that clients and co-workers are the main sources of harassment and unwanted sexual attention. The study concludes that more attention should be paid by the Government and employment agencies to the harassment of women and the promotion of punitive policies.

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ILO responses to challenges faced by women in the labour markets of Central and Eastern Europe

Policy’s effectiveness

In order to promote and facilitate women’s access to employment, the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (DWT/CO-Budapest) is focusing on improving the effectiveness of existing policy instruments to prevent discrimination in recruitment and treatment of women workers. The work entails mapping good practices that show how labour inspectorates, public employment services and gender equality commissions monitor, supervise and sanction the publishing of discriminatory job advertisements, with a view to developing capacity-building tools later in the biennium.

Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising campaigns, which are an important means of educating a wider public on issues of gender equality and the role of labour institutions, have been launched to reduce undeclared work and occupational hazards and to improve gender equality at work. For example, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM) and Moldova assistance is provided in setting up and implementing public awareness campaigns for the agricultural and construction sectors. In Ukraine, too, a campaign has been launched to promote gender equality at the workplace, and a new campaign is being prepared to explain how labour inspectors can help achieve decent work goals.

Work and family balance

The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), is an important entry point to address equal opportunities for women workers, particularly as

women's disadvantage in the labour market stems from employers' perception that women will be less devoted to their work because of existing or future family responsibilities. Although Convention No. 156 has been ratified by 13 countries in the Europe and Central Asia region, implementation remains a major challenge, as the legislation and practice of many member States tend to extend family benefits primarily to women workers, while access to family-related benefits for men may exist only as a last resort. In addition, long child-care leave of three to six years (taken primarily by women) is not uncommon among the countries in the region, often with very low income replacement levels or even unpaid, and this affects their re-entry into the labour market significantly. Irrespective of a member States' ratification status, the ILO has responded increasingly to requests for technical assistance on policy measures and financing mechanisms for reconciling work with family responsibilities (in the FYRM, Moldova, Ukraine). Capacity development modules are currently being designed to enable the social partners to promote workplace instruments and solutions to balance workers' needs and preferences regarding working hours with business requirements.

Gender pay gap

The declining share of wages in this region's gross domestic product has slowed the pace at which member States can reduce the gender gap in earnings, and this is emerging as an important area of work in many member States (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the FYRM) as they strive to improve the labour participation of women and ensure the effectiveness of gender equality legislation and policies. Analytical work is under way in Albania, Ukraine and the FYRM to provide constituents with data-based knowledge to engage in policy dialogue on reducing the wage gap. In addition, a capacity-building workshop in Skopje, FYRM, on 6 June 2012 trained representatives from workers' organizations in gender neutral job evaluation methods.

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New ILO Recommendation on social protection floors

On 14 June 2012 the International Labour Conference adopted the Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202). Social protection floors are nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. These benefits are of particular support to women in the informal economy, in precarious and irregular employment and with family responsibilities. The Recommendation's application is based on principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs as well as social inclusion, including that of people in the informal economy.

→ **Download the [Social Protection Floors Recommendation \(No. 202\)](#)**

Youth employment crisis: A call for action

At the Conference Session in June 2012 the ILO adopted a resolution calling for immediate, targeted and renewed action to tackle the youth employment crisis. The resolution provides a portfolio of tried and tested measures and underscores the need for balance, coherence and complementarity across the policy measures. It calls on governments to promote youth entrepreneurship, especially among young women, and to give particular consideration to the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills by young women and girls. It highlights the need for the ILO to continue assisting countries with "systematic collection of age and gender-disaggregated labour market information" and for programmes and policies to respect the rights of young workers and to be gender-sensitive.

→ **Download the resolution: [The youth employment crisis: A call for action](#)**

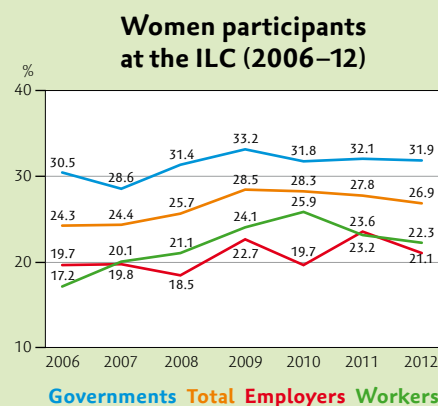
Participation of women in the ILC

The 2009 ILC resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work instructs the ILO to "...improve the representation of women at all levels, in all ILO meetings – including sessions of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference». Despite ILO's efforts, the 2012 Conference Credentials Committee noted that the participation of women in the Conference has again not achieved the target the UN set in 1990 of increasing the proportion of women in decision- and policy-making bodies to at least 30 per cent. The Committee requested the Governing Body, through the Conference, to consider concrete measures to improve the situation in this respect. The Governing Body will examine a selection of concrete measures (see [GB.316/LILS/1](#)) at its November 2012 Session.

ILO's report *Gender balance in the ILC on the representation of men and women* contains tables and graphs showing the following official percentages figures for 2012: 806 women and 2,195 men attended. The Government group had the strongest overall participation of women with 31.9 per cent, followed by the Workers' group with 22.3 per cent and the Employers' group with 21.1 per cent. The European region had the best representation, with 35.8 per cent women participants, followed closely by the Americas with 32.2 per cent; the lowest participation of women was in the Arab States, with 11.7 per cent.

ILO's report also looks at the number of Ministers who addressed the plenary of the Conference: only 24.8 per cent of such key speakers were women, compared to 29.3 per cent the year before.

→ **Download [Gender balance in the ILC](#)**



New ILO Resources



[A manual for gender audit facilitators: The ILO participatory gender audit methodology \(2nd Edition\), ILO, 2012](#)

This revised manual provides gender audit facilitators with guidelines and practical instructions on how to plan and implement participatory gender audits (PGAs) in an organizational context. It is based on the ILO's practical experience of piloting PGAs of many ILO technical units and country offices, constituents and UN partners from 2001 to 2012.

[Gender equality and social dialogue: An annotated bibliography, ILO Social Dialogue Sector, 2012 \(forthcoming\)](#)

This comprehensive research compiles over 100 annotated bibliographies. A detailed summary for each entry offers an insight into the role of social dialogue and collective bargaining, and draws attention to such issues as the gender pay gap, gender-based violence and work-family balance.

[Good practices and challenges on the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 \(No. 183\), and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 \(No. 156\): A comparative study, ILO GENDER, Working Paper 2/2012](#)

The working paper presents ten national case studies on Conventions No. 183 and 156. It identifies opportunities for stepping up ratification and implementation of these Conventions, as requested in the 2009 ILC resolution on gender equality. An annex contains an annotated bibliography of 150 relevant publications, making this a complete reference tool for policy-makers and practitioners.

[Equal Pay: An introductory guide, ILO NORMES & TRAVAIL, 2012 \(forthcoming\)](#)

This Guide both clarifies the concepts underlying the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, as set out in the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), and provides guidance on its practical application. It can also be used to help apply the principle in national law and practice, negotiate equal pay provisions in collective agreements and develop workplace policies, including job evaluation methods.

[Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects \(Guidance Note 4\), ILO Evaluation Unit, 2012](#)

This revised version of the ILO's gender in-evaluation-of-projects guidance note contains updated explanations on how to integrate gender into monitoring and evaluation. It cites all relevant gender publications and documents and reflects new developments such as the latest United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidance on the subject.

[Decent work for domestic workers in Asia and the Pacific: Manual for trainers. ILO and International Domestic Workers Network \(IDWN\), 2012](#)

This manual presents the voices, experiences and visions of women and men domestic workers. It aims to stimulate reflection and discussion on domestic work and on how domestic workers and their allies can work together towards achieving their objectives.

[Indigenous women workers – With case studies from Bangladesh, Nepal and the Americas, ILO GENDER & NORMES, Working Paper 1/2012](#)

The paper summarizes the findings of a number of case studies undertaken in South America, Nepal and Bangladesh and makes some recommendations on how decent work can be advanced for indigenous women.

The electronic version of *ILO Gender News 2012*, available on ILO Bureau for Gender Equality website (www.ilo.org/gender), provides access to multiple online resources and documents.

[Training package: Equality and non-discrimination at work in East and South-East Asia: Guide and Exercise and tool book for trainers ILO, 2011.](#)

This training package on equality and non-discrimination at work in East and South-East Asia is designed to support the application of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), in the region. It contains a *Guide* introducing concepts and approaches for eliminating discrimination and promoting equality at work, as well as an *Exercise and tool book for trainers* with different types of learning activities and electronic training tools to facilitate the delivery of interactive training on equality and non-discrimination in employment and occupation.

[Combatiendo la desigualdad desde lo básico: Piso de protección social e igualdad de género \[Fighting inequality from the basics: the social protection floor and gender equality\], ILO, UN Women and UNDP, 2012\)](#)

[Executive Summary available in English](#)

This report is a contribution to recent thinking on social security models in Central America and the Dominican Republic, as well as to further research into the framework, methodology and practical implementation of those models from the perspective of gender equality. The objective is that the models should respond to the individual economic, social and cultural rights to which every citizen is entitled.

[ABC of women workers' rights, 2nd Edition, ILO, 2007](#) [Now available in Arabic!](#)

Arranged alphabetically by topic, this publication is an essential tool for raising people's awareness of the legal ramifications of gender equality issues. It focuses on governments' and employers' obligations and workers' rights as regards equality between men and women, as embodied in the ILO's international labour Conventions and Recommendations, and explains a number of current political, legal and socio-economic concepts, especially as they relate to women workers and gender equality.