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**Reporting regularly on decent work in the world:  
Options for the ILO**

**Working Paper No. 94**

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International Labour Office  
Geneva**

Working papers are preliminary documents circulated  
to stimulate discussion and obtain comments

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*Abstract:* This paper is concerned with the measurement and reporting of decent work. The first part of the paper discusses the decent work concept and draws out implications of this for measuring and monitoring decent work. This includes its comprehensive nature, concern for all workers and especially the most vulnerable and worst off, and the actual situation of workers. It also includes discussion of the need for information both on the legal framework for work as well as statistical indicators of working conditions. This discussion is followed by a suggested core set of statistical indicators and legal information for measuring decent work. The second part of the paper is concerned with what an annual ILO World Decent Work Report might look like if ILO decided to publish such a report. Suggestions are made based on reviews of the annual world reports produced by most other international organizations. This paper concludes by discussing practical ways of improving measurement of decent work by ILO and why this would require increased investment and commitment. This paper was the main source for a discussion paper presented to an ILO tripartite meeting and this has led to field testing of a revised set of decent work indicators in four countries.

*JEL classification:* C10; J08; J38; J81; J83; J88.

*Resumé:* Ce document traite de la manière de mesurer et de rendre compte du travail décent. La première partie du document examine le concept de travail décent, puis en expose les implications en termes de mesure et de suivi. Cela inclut la nature polyvalente du concept, le souci de couvrir l'ensemble des travailleurs, en particulier les plus vulnérables et les plus défavorisés, ainsi que la situation réelle des travailleurs. Le document expose également le besoin d'informations concernant le cadre juridique du travail et les indicateurs statistiques des conditions de travail. Cette discussion est suivie par la proposition d'un ensemble fondamental d'indicateurs statistiques et d'informations juridiques destiné à la mesure du travail décent. La seconde partie du document aborde la forme d'un éventuel Rapport annuel de l'OIT sur le travail décent, si l'Organisation devait décider de publier un tel rapport. Des suggestions sont avancées qui s'appuient sur l'examen des rapports mondiaux annuels produits par la plupart des organisations internationales. Ce document se termine sur un exposé des moyens pratiques visant à améliorer la mesure du travail décent par l'OIT et des raisons pour lesquelles une telle amélioration nécessiterait davantage d'investissement et d'engagement. Ce document a constitué la principale source d'un document d'information présenté à l'occasion d'une réunion tripartite de l'OIT, suite à laquelle des essais d'un ensemble révisé d'indicateurs du travail décent ont été menés sur le terrain dans quatre pays.

*Classification JEL:* C10; J08; J38; J81; J83; J88.

*Resumen:* El presente documento versa sobre la medición del trabajo decente y la presentación de informes al respecto. En la primera parte del documento, se examina el concepto de trabajo decente, y más específicamente su exhaustiva naturaleza, la preocupación por todos los trabajadores, en particular los más vulnerables y los que están en la peor situación, así como la situación real de los trabajadores, y a partir de este examen se establecen algunas pautas para la medición y supervisión del trabajo decente. El documento contiene igualmente una reflexión sobre la necesidad de información tanto sobre el marco jurídico del trabajo como sobre los indicadores estadísticos de las condiciones laborales. Para acompañar esta reflexión se propone además un conjunto básico de indicadores estadísticos e información jurídica para la medición del trabajo decente. La segunda parte del documento se dedica a definir la forma y el contenido de lo que podría ser un informe mundial de la OIT sobre trabajo decente si la OIT decidiera publicar anualmente tal informe. Las propuestas se formulan en base al examen efectuado de los informes mundiales anuales que elabora la mayoría de las otras organizaciones internacionales. Como conclusión, se exponen modalidades prácticas que la OIT podría adoptar para mejorar la medición del trabajo decente y las razones por las cuales sería necesario reforzar la inversión y el compromiso. Este documento fue la principal fuente de un documento de debate presentado a una reunión tripartita de la OIT, lo cual contribuyó a poner a prueba un conjunto revisado de indicadores de trabajo decente en cuatro países.

*Clasificación JEL:* C10; J08; J38; J81; J83; J88.

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## The Policy Integration and Statistics Department

The Policy Integration and Statistics Department pursues the ILO's decent work and fair globalization agenda from an integrated perspective. It consists of the Bureau of Statistics and the Policy Coherence Group.

The central objective of the latter is to further greater policy coherence and the integration of social and economic policies at the international and national level. To this end, it works closely with other multilateral agencies and national actors such as Governments, trade unions, employers' federations, NGO's and universities. Through its policy-oriented research agenda, it explores complementarities and interdependencies between employment, working conditions, social protection, social dialogue and labour standards. Current work is organized around four thematic areas that call for greater policy coherence: Fair globalization, the global poor and informality, macro-economic policies for decent work, and emerging issues.

Labour statistics play an essential role in the efforts of member States to achieve decent work for all and for the ILO's support of these efforts. These statistics are needed for the development and evaluation of policies towards this goal, for assessing progress towards decent work, and for information and analysis of relevant labour issues. The ILO Bureau of Statistics works with integrity, independence and high professional standards to provide users within and outside the ILO with relevant, timely and reliable labour statistics, to develop international standards for better measurement of labour issues and enhanced international comparability, and to help member States develop and improve their labour statistics. It maintains strong professional relationship with national statistical systems and with statistics offices of other international agencies.

*Stephen Pursey*

Director of the Policy Integration Department

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

ILO has discussed for many years whether it should regularly publish a report on decent work around the world based on evidence that it systematically draws together. Indeed, the ILO Governing Body discussed in March 2008 measurement of decent work, and there are on-going discussions in the International Labour Conference (ILC) about strengthening ILO reporting on decent work. The ILC in June 2008 discussed whether ILO should produce a Conference report each year on a different aspect of decent work with a overall decent work report every fourth year. This paper also suggests a core set of indicators for measuring decent work so that future ILO reports on decent work can be more evidence-based. Based in large part of these suggestions, the ILO's Policy Integration Department is presently testing a core set of decent work indicators in several countries.

The present paper discusses one possible option for regularly reporting on decent work around the world in the form of an annual ILO report that would deal each year with all aspects of decent work, that would be intended for the general public, and that would be evidence-based so as to be authoritative in nature. Thus, this paper, which is based in part on the experiences of other international organizations in producing annual global reports, is intended to add to the thinking process on how ILO should proceed regarding regularly reporting on decent work.

There are many advantages for ILO of a regular annual report on decent work around the world. Regular reports increase an organization's visibility and exposure with the public, the media, governments, social partners, and scholars. Regular reports improve the image and reputation of an organization. Regular reports influence public and private policies and policy debates by highlighting and framing important issues. Regular reports play a valuable role for an organization itself by helping to focus an organization's own work, goals and message. Indeed, an annual report on decent work around the world would help fill an important gap in ILO. In the words of Albert Thomas, ILO's first Director General:<sup>1</sup>

“Even if the International Labour Organization should only be a scientific information service at the disposal of all employers, workers, and students who are seeking the social justice which is the guarantee of international peace, even if the Office only registers the progress made in various countries, even then the International Labour Organization would be an invaluable clog in the machinery of social justice. Even then it would still be worthy to hold the attention and to utilize the activity of men who still keep in their hearts a more daring ideal, but who, in the present confusion, see no other effective means to ameliorating poverty immediately or of hastening the advent of a juster world.”

ILO, of course, has had major periodic reports, such as the World Employment Report and the World Labour Report.<sup>2</sup> These reports, however, do not qualify as a flagship ILO report. First and most importantly, they only deal with employment which is one (albeit very important) aspect of decent work. Second, these reports have

<sup>1</sup> Thomas (1921, p. 276).

<sup>2</sup> ILO (*various years*).

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not generally included a world overview each year. And third, support for these world reports has not always been maintained, as evidenced by the fact that they have not come out every year.

There are, of course, reasons why ILO does not have an annual flagship Decent Work Report. None of these should stand in the way of a flagship report. First and foremost, decent work is a relatively recent framework for ILO, having been introduced by Director-General Juan Somavia in 1999.<sup>3</sup> Despite several years having passed since then, decent work indicators and information remain unavailable for many aspects of decent work for many countries. This lacuna is due in part to reluctance of the Office to devote sufficient resources and attention to decent work information and indicators. A flagship report would help stimulate efforts to measure decent work and focus attention on progress in decent work. Second, the wide ranging and comprehensive nature of decent work (that includes for example rights, legal framework for work, labour market institutions, and labour market conditions) makes it difficult to measure for a large number of countries. Accentuating this difficulty is that labour statisticians and government statistical offices have mainly focused on employment and unemployment. They have paid much less attention to other aspect of decent work such as social protection, social dialogue and quality of work. And they have paid almost no attention to issues related to workers' rights or the legal framework for work. A commitment from the ILO would go a long way to changing this situation.

It seems that the ILO faces a chicken or egg situation as regards publication of an annual World Decent Work Report and the availability of decent work indicators and information. Each requires the other. On the one hand, an annual flagship decent work report requires information and indicators for all aspects of decent work for many countries. On the other hand, ILO is not likely to expend the effort and resources required to put together available data and information for all aspects of decent work until there is compelling need, such as an annual flagship World Decent Work Report. A third possible problem with an evidenced-based flagship report mentioned by ILO staff is a supposed concern of the employers group in ILO that evidence on decent work might call into question trends and policies in countries. This is a needless concern in our opinion. Not only would an annual flagship report be consistent with ILO's mandate and promise, but it need not be negative in tone. For example, it would *make sense for a flagship report to highlight best practices and positive developments* in addition to pointing out violations of rights and describing labour market trends.

A greater investment in measuring decent work could also yield other dividends for the ILO. For example, the fact that the Millennium Development Goals include very few indicators for decent work is partly due in our opinion to the lack of data series for relevant decent work indicators. This is in contrast to sister agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and The World Health Organization (WHO), which have both invested heavily in indicator development and measurement, and perhaps as a result a disproportionate number of Millennium Development Goal indicators are related to their mandates.

The present paper discusses possibilities and options for an annual ILO flagship World Decent Work Report and makes recommendations in this regard. Discussion focuses on what a Part I World Overview chapter on decent work might look like using a similar structure and set of indicators every year. Recommendations are based

<sup>3</sup> ILO (1999)



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on the following assumptions. An annual flagship report would need to cover all aspects of decent work (i.e. all four pillars: social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue in addition to employment) for it to qualify as a decent work report. Such a report would need to be published every year to ensure that it builds up credibility and recognition and receives attention from the media, the public and the social partners. Such a report would need to include a world overview that succinctly describes decent work around the world and how it has been changing. A reasonable format would include also a Part II that is concerned with a special theme that changes every year. One year for example, the Part II special theme could be “gender”, the next year “corporate social responsibility”, and the following year “worker voice representation”.

## **1.2. Organization of the paper**

The remainder of this paper is briefly described in this section. Section 2 is concerned with the decent work concept. For example, section 2.2 indicates how ILO describes decent work. Section 3 identifies and discusses key aspects of the decent work concept that affect how best to measure and monitor it. This discussion draws out implications for measuring and monitoring decent work indicators. Section 2.3 points out that measuring and monitoring decent work requires two quite different types of information: (i) statistical indicators of labour market conditions/outcomes and (ii) systematic information on the legal framework within which work is embedded. Discussion in this section deals mostly with the need for information on the legal framework for work because systematic information on this for many countries is at a much earlier stage of development as compared to statistical indicators of working conditions. Section 2.10 discusses what typical small and/or counter-cyclical changes in decent work over a one year mean for decent work indicators and an annual Decent Work Report. Section 2.11 discusses implications for statistical decent work indicators of the fact that the age distribution of workers and the distribution of production by sector can affect observed national values. Section 2.12 discusses the pros and cons of developing and including a decent work index in an annual World Decent Work Report.

Section 3 is concerned with recommendations of specific decent work indicators and information. Section 3.1 discusses possible approaches to classifying key aspects of decent work. Sections 3.2-3.4 discuss and suggest core sets of decent work indicators and information. Section 3.2 is concerned with statistical decent work indicators of labour market conditions, while Section 3.3 is concerned with the legal framework for work. Section 3.4 is concerned with gender issues and measuring male-female differences.

Section 4 is concerned with how an annual ILO World Decent Work Report might be structured, especially a Part I World Overview of decent work. Section 4.1 reviews annual world reports of other international organizations, and draws out implications for a possible ILO report. Section 4.7 reviews annual ILO global type reports. Based on these reviews, suggestions are made regarding the structure and content of a possible ILO World Decent Work Report particularly regarding a Part I World Overview chapter.

Section 5 is concerned with the need to improve measurement of decent work and consequently the need to invest in this. Section 5.1 discusses the need for the ILO to make a commitment to improving the information base for decent work. Sections 5.2-5.4 discuss world and regional estimates and draw out implications regarding the value of setting up a network of national collaborating scholars to obtain available

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national data and information for at least largest developing countries. Section 6 provides a short summary and conclusions section.

## 2. Decent work concept and implications for measuring and monitoring decent work in the world

This part of the paper is concerned with the decent work concept and what it implies for the measurement of decent work. The assumption is that a Part I World Overview in an annual World Decent Work Report would be based in large part on decent work indicators and information.

### 2.1 Decent work according to ILO

The ILO has a description of decent work that appears to have developed into a definition. In 1999 when Director-General Juan Somavia introduced the decent work concept in his first report to the International Labour Conference, he described decent work as “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. This description has been taken as a definition by the United Nations’ Chief Executives Board for Coordination which says that: “Decent work has been defined by the ILO and endorsed by the international community as being productive work for men and women in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”.<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that the 2005 World Summit of the United Nations General Assembly, with more than 150 countries, committed to the policy goal of decent work for all as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

**Comment [A1]:** Was there another world summit in 2006? Do we mean the 2005 MDG-follow up?

Since the above description/definition of decent work is general, other ILO sources were looked at to see if there was a more detailed description of decent work. A request was made to ILO CABINET but nothing new or additional was received. ILO’s Department of Communication (D-COMM) provides some details on its website: “The decent work agenda covers the four strategic objectives of the ILO with gender a cross-cutting objective – creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting dialogue and conflict resolution.”<sup>5</sup> Each of these four objectives was further elaborated. Job creation was said to consist of: “opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation and sustainable development”; rights at work to consist of: “representation, participation, and good laws that are enforced”; social protection to consist of: “working conditions that are safe, allow adequate free time and rest, take into account family and social values, provide for adequate compensation in case of lost or reduced income and permit for adequate health care”; and dialogue and conflict resolution to consist of: “strong and independent workers’ and employers’ organizations”. A more detailed

<sup>4</sup> United Nations’ Chief Executives Board for Coordination (2007).

<sup>5</sup> ILO (2006) <[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_082654.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_082654.pdf)>

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description of decent work was not found in ILO Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) documents or in the ILO Asian regional office publication on decent work.<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion, the description of decent work included in the ILO Director-General's report to the 1999 ILC noted in the first paragraph in this section remains ILO's operative description and its definition according to the United Nations.

## **2.2. Key aspects of decent work and implications for its measurement and monitoring**

This section discusses some important implications of the ILO description/definition of decent work quoted in Section 2.

## **2.3 Comprehensive nature of decent work**

Decent work is a comprehensive concept covering all aspects of work represented by ILO's four pillars (rights at work, employment, social protection, and dialogue and voice). All four pillars of decent work are required for work to be decent.

*Implication 1* for decent work indicators: The *comprehensive nature of decent work* implies that an annual ILO World Decent Work Report would *need to cover all aspects of decent work*. Reports that cover only one or two pillars of decent work (for example ILO's World Employment Report) would not be sufficient to be a decent work report.

## **2.4 Concern for all workers**

Decent work is relevant for, and a concern of, all workers. This includes women as well as men; workers in the informal sector as well as in the formal sector; and self-employed and unpaid family workers as well as employees. This also includes workers in high income countries as well as workers in low income countries.

*Implication 2* for decent work indicators: Whenever possible, *decent work indicators should be based on data that cover all workers* and not just employees or just workers in formal sector or registered establishments whenever possible. Since the reality is that some labour market data are collected from only modern sector workers or establishments, it is not always practical to have indicators that measure the situation for all workers. It is important to be aware when this is the case. For example, fatal injuries data are typically collected on employees in modern establishments. Although these data can provide a useful indicator of the level of safe work for all workers, analysts need to always keep in mind that these data actually measure the extent to which modern sector work is safe. Similarly, decent work indicators should be *measured separately for women and men whenever possible* in order to shed light on gender aspects of decent work.

*Implication 3* for decent work indicators: Decent work indicators are *relevant for and so should cover countries at all levels of development* whenever possible. One

<sup>6</sup> ILO (2005).

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example in ILO reports (such as its World Employment Report) where this is not done are data on the number of working poor, as there are no estimates of working poor in upper middle-income and high-income countries. This would obviously be disputed by tens of millions of workers and citizens in these countries.

Implication 4 for decent work indicators: National data and information on decent work should be available for countries at all development levels and in every region for an ILO World Decent Work Report. Since decent work is relevant for all countries, it is important that sufficient information and data on decent work be available for all regions. This need for data and information availability is taken into consideration in Section 3 where core sets of decent work statistical indicators and legal framework information are suggested. This need is also discussed in Section 5.2 which is concerned with regional and world estimates.

## **2.5 Concern especially for the situation of the most vulnerable, the worst off, and the poor**

Concern for the most vulnerable and especially for the poor is implied by the word “decent” as this has a normative and minimum acceptable connotation to it. This concern is also consistent with the importance of standard setting in the ILO and the achievement of at least minimum standards.

*Implication 5* for decent work indicators: Concern for the worst off and poor and achievement of at least minimum acceptable working conditions implies that *whenever relevant and practical, decent work statistical indicators should measure the situation of more marginal workers. This will often mean that it is preferable to measure the tail of a distribution than the mean or mode.* For example, it is preferable to measure the percent of workers who work unacceptably long excessive hours (e.g. 49 or more hours a week, as 48 hours is maximum allowed in ILO Convention No. 1) than the average number of hours worked. And, it is important to measure the percentage of workers who do not earn at least a living wage, and not just to report average wage rates.

*Implication 6* for decent work indicators: Concern for minimum acceptable standards implies the *need for information on the legal framework of work.* See Sections 3.3 for further discussion on this.

## **2.6 Concerned with actual situation of workers**

Decent work is concerned with the situation actually faced by workers, and not with only the theoretical reach of laws that may not be effectively applied or may only apply to certain groups of workers.

*Implication 7* for decent work indicators: Interest in the actual situation faced by workers means that whenever possible *statistical indicators should be based on data for all workers* and not only for select groups of workers such as employees in the modern sector.

*Implication 8* for decent work indicators: Whenever possible *information on the legal framework for work should include information on effectiveness of implementation, jurisprudence, and coverage.*

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## 2.7 Concerned with workers' lives and not just with work and workplace

The ILO and therefore decent work are concerned with workers' lives and not just with work and the workplace. As the Philadelphia Declaration of the ILO notes, "Poverty anywhere is a threat everywhere."

*Implication 9* for decent work indicators: Concern for workers' lives means that *statistical decent work indicators should go beyond work and the workplace* and include statistics on poverty, living wage, health care, balance of work and family life, old age support, and children's education.

## 2.8 Concern for sustainability of decent work

ILO's description/definition of decent work specifically mentions "productive work". In addition, ILO standards and technical assistance activities are concerned with realism and the need for progressive implementation.

*Implication 10* for decent work indicators: Decent work obviously *needs to be sustainable over the long run to be meaningful*. This implies the need for decent work indicators that measure for example: labour productivity (to ensure that increases in wages are sustainable), inflation (high inflation rates restrict macro economic policies), education (human capital is an important determinant of productivity), and income inequality (social capital is required for stability and economic growth).

## 2.9 Need for systematic information on legal framework for work in addition to statistical indicators of working conditions

Two types of information are required to describe and measure decent work and the extent to which there is decent work in a country. There needs to be information on both: (i) working conditions (such as employment and unemployment, earnings, safety, and social dialogue) as well as on (ii) the legal framework for work (such as right to organize and bargain collectively, anti-discrimination laws, existence of unemployment insurance, and existence of a statutory minimum wage).<sup>7</sup> One of these two types of information alone is not sufficient to describe and measure decent work.

There are two major lacunae at the international level as regards decent work variables. Both of these lacunae need to be addressed and solved to an acceptable degree for a World Decent Work Report to be viable. First among statistical indicators of working conditions, there needs to be adequate data on the decency and quality of work to move beyond the current emphasis on employment and unemployment. Second, up-to-date national information on the legal framework for work needs to be put together and made available to the public. As noted near the end of the ILO Policy Integration Department working paper No. 2 "one important area

<sup>7</sup> Researchers have used different terminology for what we are calling the "legal framework for work". Kucera uses "qualitative indicators"; Block uses "laws and legislation"; National Research Council uses "legal framework and governance performance"; ILO IFP-SES uses "input and process variables", VERITE uses "laws and legal system". See Kucera, 2007.

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which is not well addressed in this paper is legal and regulatory frameworks at the national and international levels... A complementary and integrated set of indicators on laws and regulations for each of the major aspects of decent work would be worth developing through systematic coding of this information. Such an effort would need to include information that also measures effective coverage and scope so that they reflect the actual situation for workers.”<sup>8</sup> This opinion remains as true today as in 2002.

The remainder of this section is devoted to discussion of information on the legal framework for work, because of its importance for an ILO World Decent Work Report together with the general absence of appropriate national information on this at the present time. For discussion on the need for statistical indicators of work to go beyond their current emphasis on employment and unemployment to the decency and quality of work, readers are referred to Section 3 where a core list of specific statistical indicators of working conditions is suggested.

The legal framework for work in a country is complex. This means that it cannot easily be condensed into simple quantitative variables/indicators (such as a yes or no binary variable with a 0 or 1 value, or even an ordinal variable with values that go from 0 to 5 or 1 to 10). For example, workers’ right to organize and bargain collectively in a country is not as simple as knowing if a country has ratified appropriate ILO Conventions. One would want to know for example: restrictions on the right to organize; how many complaints the ILO has received; whether there is a national complaints body; how many complaints such a body received last year; how complaints were treated and investigated; and what enforcement mechanisms were used such as fines.<sup>9</sup> In another example, knowing that a country has ratified an ILO Convention on maternity leave or even that there is a national paid maternity leave law does not indicate whether the situation in a country is advantageous for women workers as regards maternity leave. To meaningfully represent the situation in a country, one would want to know: how generous the law is in terms of weeks and replacement pay; which types of workers the law covers (e.g. does the law cover farmers and domestics?); and how many workers receive maternity leave in practice (e.g., does only a select group of women workers in the modern and public sectors actually get paid maternity leave).

Given the complexity of legal issues, it is not surprising that legal experts are reticent about the use of quantitative indicators to represent the legal framework. Jurisprudence at the national level allows for complexity with each case judged on its own merits and circumstances. For example whether or not an individual worker is considered to be an employee in the United States is determined by ten factors: “hiring party’s right to control manner and means by which product is accomplished, skill required, source of instrumentalities and tools, location of work, duration of relationship, right to assign additional projects, extent of hiring party’s discretion over when and how long to work, method of payment, hiring party’s role in hiring and paying assistants, regular business of hiring party, employee benefits, and tax treatment of hired party”.<sup>10</sup> And none of these ten factors is considered determinant,

<sup>8</sup> Anker et al (2002), page 68.

<sup>9</sup> This example is based on discussions with Lee Sweptston of the ILO.

<sup>10</sup> United States Supreme Court (1992).

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as “all of the incidents of the employment relationship must be assessed and weighed with no one factor being decisive”.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to lawyers, researchers and scholars (often economists) interested in studying whether labour standards and rights affect national economic performance and/or international trade have used quantitative variables to measure the legal framework for work. The most common approach for international comparisons has been to rely on ratification by countries of ILO conventions to measure labour laws and regulations. Practical considerations of data availability have trumped other considerations such as meaningfulness, since “ratification of international conventions can be a poor indicator of the influence of the standards they contain”.<sup>12</sup>

Significant improvements to measuring the legal framework for work with quantitative variables (usually ordinal variables that are often referred to as qualitative variables) has been spearheaded in recent years by ILO. Kucera’s work on qualitative indicators of labour standards has involved looking at complaints received by ILO and at the content of national laws. IFP-SES (ILO’s Socio-Economic Security program) has developed and measured a series of qualitative decent work indicators.<sup>13</sup> The ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) has developed databases on national maternity leave legislation, working time, and statutory minimum wage.<sup>14</sup>

But this ILO research, as good and useful as it is, represents only a beginning regarding possible use in an annual World Decent Work Report. The reason is that researchers do not need to be nearly as stringent about the accuracy of national values for legal indicators as would an annual ILO Decent Work Report. For researchers, errors in national values are tolerable as long as errors are random and unbiased across countries. For an ILO flagship report in contrast, legal indicators for every country would need to be accurate, because errors could likely lead to complaints to the ILO directorate. On the other hand, the ILO has an advantage compared to researchers, because the ILO would be able to vet legal information with governments and social partners before publication and this would improve the accuracy of this information.

*Implication 11 for decent work indicators: Two types of information are required for a World Decent Work Report: (i) information on the legal framework for work, and (ii) statistical indicators of working conditions.*

*Implication 12 for decent work indicators: Information on the legal framework for work should represent its complex nature and include information on laws, jurisprudence, enforcement, and coverage. Given the difficulty of doing this, it might be advisable to start modestly and improve the completeness of information over time.*

<sup>11</sup> How important the determination of whether or not workers are employees is demonstrated by a recent case in the United States where Microsoft settled for just under one billion dollars in a case where persons hired as subcontractors claimed that they were employees of Microsoft.

<sup>12</sup> Lee and McCann (2008).

<sup>13</sup> ILO (2004).

<sup>14</sup> ILO (2007) <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/condtrav/database/index.htm>

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*Implication 13* for decent work indicators: Information on the *legal framework for work should be presented in tables and not converted or aggregated into quantitative cardinal or ordinal variables/indicators.*

*Implication 14* for decent work indicators: Information on the legal framework for work *should be vetted with countries before dissemination to avoid errors and embarrassment.*

## **2.10 Change over time in decent work indicators, especially from one year to the next year**

Since an annual ILO World Decent Work Report would be published every year, it is critical to think about how decent work indicators tend to change from one year to the next year and what this means for an annual report. This is not usually considered in international analyses, because users are usually concerned with differences across countries and with longer run changes. Three aspects associated with annual change in decent work can be important and should be thought through when considering statistical decent work indicators: (i) size of change over one year and what this means for producing an interesting and fresh report each year (e.g. what to do when change over one year decent work indicators is small and gradual); (ii) size of annual change relative to measurement error, and what this means for indicating direction of change over a one year period (e.g. what to do when annual change in a decent work indicator is generally small relative to measurement error); and (iii) possibility that the direction of change in decent work indicators over one year is counter-cyclical (e.g. what to do when an indicator increases when the economy deteriorates and decreases when the economy improves).

To be effective, annual reports need to be fresh and topical each year. This presents a problem for topics where change is gradual, which includes many, and perhaps most, aspects of decent work. For example, labour force participation rates, percentage of children in school, percentage of workers with a pension, and union density rates (using one obvious indicator from each of ILO's four pillars of decent work) change only gradually from year to year. It would clearly be easy to write an interesting first World Decent Report based on the four indicators mentioned in the previous sentence. But what about the following year's report, what would one do to make it fresh and interesting? It would not be interesting to repeat the same analysis based on the same indicators, since values for these indicators would be basically the same as last year's values. In light of the gradual change over time in many decent work indicators, it is clear that values and information should be provided for more than just the latest one or two years and include values and information for say ten years earlier so that secular change over time can be discerned.

There are a number of approaches and techniques that can be used to ensure that an annual world overview is interesting and topical every year. Some are discussed in Section 4.1 below where annual global reports of other international organizations and the ILO are reviewed. Before moving on, however, it is worth noting that an annual ILO World Decent Work Report has major advantages compared to annual reports of most other international organizations in being able to make each year's report topical and interesting. First of all, the importance of the legal framework for work will make it easier to write a fresh and topical annual World Decent Work Report. Every year, countries pass laws and jurisprudence changes; in addition, complaints are made at both the international and national levels. All of these would be topical and noteworthy for an annual Decent Work Report. Secondly, the broad



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range of issues covered by the decent work concept means that it is possible to highlight different aspects of decent work each year in a world overview without being repetitive.

*Implication 15* for decent work indicators: *A Part I World Overview can be topical and interesting by: reporting and discussing important recent examples of developments in the legal framework of work, as well as by highlighting each year different aspects of decent work.*

*Implication 16* for decent work indicators: *Most statistical decent work indicators should include a value for an earlier year (such as ten years ago) in addition to the value for recent years, so that it is possible to observe change over time as most decent work phenomena change only gradually from year to year.*

Measurement error is large relative to observed annual change for some decent work indicators, and this needs to be taken into consideration when cleaning, presenting, analyzing and discussing decent work indicators. This is a likely problem for indicators where change is small from year to year.

A related problem for some decent work indicators is that change from one year to the next year is sometimes erratic. Examples of this occur for occupational fatalities and strikes and lockouts. Annual fatality rate can be greatly affected in a particular year by a disaster such as a major mining accident which could cause the fatality rate for a country to be unusually high in a particular year. The fatal injuries rate per 100,000 workers in Austria, for example, went from 130 in 2002, to 103 in 2003, and to 532 in 2004. Strikes and lockouts data are often greatly affected by periodic strikes by a major union. This would mean that the number of days per 100,000 workers lost due to strikes and lockouts is often saw-toothed in nature. In Finland for example, the number of days lost per 1,000 employees over the ten year period from 1996-2005 was: 11, 48, 60, 9, 110, 256, 31, 28, 18, and 280. Decisions on smoothing for variables such as fatality rate and strikes and lockouts need to be considered on a case by case basis, because an unusual annual value can be as meaningful as smoothed longer run trend values.

*Implication 17* for decent work indicators: *Since measurement error and erratic change from one year to the next can be large, annual values for some indicators should be smoothed out by using a running average calculated over several years such as the last 3 or 5 years. At the same time, annual values for some variables are also worth reporting even when they are erratic from year to year as these annual erratic values can also have meaning.*

The possibility of counter-cyclical decent work indicators is real. For example, the percentage of workers with more than one year tenure in their present work is a counter-cyclical indicator. This percent decreases when an economy improves, because new hires have short job durations; this percent increases when an economy slows down, because workers with shorter tenure are typically let go first. It is appropriate to include counter-cyclical indicators in a core set of ILO decent work indicators if they are important. But at the same time, it is necessary to make sure that discussion and analysis in a World Decent Work Report takes into account when a decent work indicator is counter-cyclical. For example, while it would be appropriate to look at secular change over say 10 to 30 year in the extent to which work security based on job tenure data has changed across countries, regions and the world, it would not be appropriate to discuss how work security based on job tenure data has changed in the last year.

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*Implication 18* for decent work indicators: Discussion in a World Decent Work Report should *take into consideration whether decent work indicators are counter-cyclical*. When an indicator is counter-cyclical, longer run secular changes could be discussed rather than annual change.

## **2.11 National values of some decent work indicators are affected by age distribution of labour force and distribution of employment by sector**

National values of some decent work indicators are sensitive to the age distribution of the labour force and/or to the distribution of production by sector. This occurs when rates for an indicator differ greatly by age or sector. For example, the average number of years of job tenure is sensitive to the age distribution of the labour force, because young workers have much shorter tenure than other workers; and the occupational fatality rate in a country is sensitive to the distribution of production by sector, because some sectors such as mining, agriculture, fishing and construction have much higher fatality rates than other sectors.

*Implication 19* for decent work indicators: Since decent work indicators should measure the extent to which countries differ in the decency of work for similar situations, the *effect on national values of age distribution of workers and distribution of production by sector should be ameliorated to the extent possible*. This can be done *by restricting some indicators to certain age groups* (e.g. age 25+ for average tenure) *and/or to certain sectors* (e.g. manufacturing sector for occupational fatality rate).

## **2.12 Possibility of including a decent work index**

This paper does not make recommendations with regard to how to develop an ILO Decent Work Index (DWI) that would rank countries based on the extent to which there is decent work in each country. Given the difficulties and controversy surrounding a DWI, it is felt that publication of an ILO World Decent Work Report and development of a DWI should not be linked. We also feel that at least the first few issues of an annual ILO flagship World Decent Work Report should not include a DWI, even if the ILO decides to develop one. Our reasoning is that the controversy that would surround inclusion of a DWI in an annual ILO World Decent Work Report would reduce the likelihood of a World Decent Report ever getting launched. In any case, development of a DWI is important enough and the problems involved serious enough that this should be taken up separately by a task force.

There are pros and cons related to development of a DWI. On the one hand, a DWI has considerable appeal. It would help draw attention to the importance of decent work and to progress toward achieving decent work. It would also increase ILO's exposure and visibility. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, has gained considerable exposure and benefit from its Human Development Index (HDI). HDI has helped draw attention to the need for development and development policies to go beyond their current emphasis on income and income per capita to emphasize human development. HDI provides a good analogy for a DWI, as a DWI would help draw attention to the need to go beyond the current emphasis on employment and unemployment to emphasize the importance of the decency of work. On the other hand, a DWI would necessarily come with major problems. There would be technical problems in construction and measurement of a DWI, as well as

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philosophical issues about ranking countries. On the technical measurement side for example, subjective judgment would be required to decide on: which aspects of decent work to include, how to weigh each aspects included, and how to impute national values when national data are missing. At the end of the day, developers of a DWI would face a trade-off between wishing to be comprehensive by including as many aspects of decent work as possible in a DWI and the technical difficulties of including many aspects of decent work because of data availability and measurement and aggregation problems. Developers would also face a trade-off between the desire for a DWI to be comprehensive and the value of being simple, transparent and understandable to the public. On the philosophical side, some think that the concreteness of country rankings would be at odds with the need to draw countries into progressive improvements of working conditions and standards (although others think the opposite!).

*Implication 20 for decent work indicators: An ILO World Decent Work Report and an ILO Decent Work Index (DWI) should not be linked. An ILO World Decent Work Report should proceed without a DWI.*

### **3. Suggested core sets of decent work indicators and information**

Section III is concerned with identifying specific indicators and information to measure and describe the multi-faceted decent work concept. It assumes that an annual *ILO World Decent Work Report would require a core set of decent work indicators and information, and that this would provide much of the basis for discussion in the Part I World Overview* appearing in every issue. It is assumed that values for some or all of these indicators would be reported in an appendix. Finally it is assumed that collection of decent work indicators and information by *ILO requires a core set of decent work indicators and information to help focus work on this*. Discussion keeps in mind the criteria required for core statistical decent work indicators noted in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2: “For practical reasons, such as limited financial and human resources in countries and ILO, a final list of decent work indicators will need to be parsimonious. ... To this end, we required that indicator candidates meet four criteria: (i) conceptual relevance, (ii) easily communicated interpretation, (iii) availability of data for a range of countries (industrialized, developing, and transition), and (iv) a reasonable level of international comparability.”

Section 3.1 discusses different approaches that could be used to describe and measure decent work and concludes that it is best to look at decent work from the point of view of workers and citizens so as to increase the meaningfulness and relevance of decent work to the public, media, scholars, governments and social partners. Sections 3.2 - 3.4 get specific as regards decent work indicators and information. Section 3.2 discusses and suggests a core set of statistical decent work indicators of working conditions, while Section 3.3 discusses and suggests a core set of decent work information on the legal framework for work. Section 3.4 discusses taking into consideration gender issues and measuring male-female differences.

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### 3.1 Approaches to organizing and identifying decent work indicators and information

Two quite different approaches have been used in ILO papers to organize and identify statistical decent work indicators. The ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 uses ten key characteristics of decent work by “looking through the eyes of people to identify general characteristics of decent work”.<sup>15</sup> Other ILO documents use the internal structure of the ILO to organize and identify decent work indicators on the four pillars of decent work: Rights, Employment, Social Protection, and Social Dialogue.<sup>16</sup>

The approach used in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 (looking at decent work through eyes of people) is a useful approach for an annual ILO World Decent Work report. We feel that it is more meaningful and understandable to readers than ILO’s internal structure which can be confusing. For example, rights at work are not isolated and separate but are spread throughout the work environment even for the rights associated with the ILO core conventions (anti-discrimination, child labour, forced labour, and right to organize and bargain collectively), as these are concerned with employment, social dialogue and social protection. Labour standards are concerned with all aspects of work.

For use in an annual ILO World Decent Work Report, however, the Policy integration Department list of 10 key characteristics of decent work would benefit from simplification for presentational purposes. It would help to group Policy integration Department’s key characteristics of decent work into fewer groupings. The following suggestion is one possibility:

- Employment opportunities
  - Employment
  - Unacceptable work
- Earnings
  - Adequate earnings
  - Benefits
- Fair treatment
  - Non-discrimination
  - Decent hours
  - Balancing work and family life
- Safe work

<sup>15</sup> Anker et al *Op.cit.* See also below Table 1, second column.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see D-COMM’s Facts on Decent Work, UN’s Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work prepared by ILO, and ILO’s Labour and Social Trends in Asia and the Pacific 2005 and 2006.

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Security

Social dialogue and workers' voice

Workers' voice

Social dialogue

### **3.2 Suggested core set of statistical decent work indicators of working conditions**

This section and the next section suggest core sets of decent work indicators and information. The present section is concerned with statistical indicators of working conditions, whereas the next section is concerned with information on the legal framework for work. See Section 3.4 for a discussion on taking gender into account.

The following process was used to identify a suggested core list of statistical decent work indicators. First, we began with the core list of statistical indicators in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 (see also below Table 1, column 2), because we felt that this represented the best available list. It was based on considerable thought, consultation and discussion. Readers are referred to this working paper for detailed discussion on all of these indicators. Second, these indicators were reconsidered in the light of possible limited national data (especially for developing countries) because an annual World Decent Work Report would require indicators that can be measured now for a reasonably wide range of countries; as well as in light of the possible problems with decent work indicators. It is worth noting that this working paper stressed that its decent work indicators were not intended to be a final list. They were meant as a first step in a process toward identification of a final core set of statistical decent work indicators. Indeed, this working paper pointed out that some of its suggested indicators required further investigation before inclusion in a final core list. Third, the core list of indicators in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 was compared to the core list of indicators suggested in Labour and Social Trends in Asia and Pacific reports in 2005 and 2006. Fourth, ILO work on decent work indicators since the 2002 working paper was scrutinized. This included more recent publications and databases as well as discussions with ILO staff. New databases and indicators were of special interest. Based on the above process, a new core set of statistical decent work indicators of working conditions was derived (see below Table 2). Lastly, data availability was investigated in detail for some indicators included in this new core set of decent work indicators.

Table 1 below compares the core list of decent work indicators in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 with the core list of decent work indicators suggested by the ILO Regional office for Asia and the Pacific. There is a considerable agreement in the two lists. A majority of indicators (24) are the same or similar; 3 appear only in the ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific list; and 14 appear only in the list in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2. This provides strong support for indicators that are common to these two lists in our opinion. Confidence in the common indicators in both lists is strengthened further by the fact that many of the indicators not in common in the two lists are good candidates for exclusion from a new core list. 6 of the indicators that appear only in the list in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 have limited data availability (recent job training, time-related underemployment, employment rate for women with children under school age, labour inspection, job tenure less than one year, public

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expenditure on needs based cash income support for the poor). All 3 of the indicators included only in the ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific list are good candidates for exclusion; two have questionable value or meaning (youth inactivity rate, enterprises belonging to employers' organizations)<sup>17</sup> and data quality is poor for the other (non-fatal occupational injuries).<sup>18</sup> After excluding these 9 indicators, the two lists differ significantly in only two ways. The list in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 includes several indicators that are intended to measure gender differences whereas the ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific list does not include any indicators to specifically measure gender differences; also, the list in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 includes additional socio-economic context variables. In both of these instances, the list in the ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 is more complete since a core lists of decent work indicators needs to measure gender differences and to have a reasonably large set of socio-economic context variables.

In the next step, we looked at ILO work in the past few years on statistical indicators of working conditions. The ILO Social Security Department (SEC/SOC) has identified three indicators on social protection benefits that it feels are practical in the sense that data are available or can be put together for a reasonable number and range of countries. For two of these indicators (public social security benefit expenditure, and old age pension coverage), SEC/SOC recently collected data in a new Social Security Inquiry for 30 developing countries, in addition to obtaining available data for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) countries. A third indicator, which proxies for health care coverage (health care expenditure not financed by private household's out-of-pocket payments), utilizes available WHO data. All three of these SEC/SOC indicators were included in the suggested new core list of statistical indicators. Indicators for social benefits are required, and these three have demonstrated measurability.

ILO's Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Programme has improved measurement of decent work in several ways in recent years.<sup>19</sup> It has taken responsibility for and improved labour force and labour force participation rate estimates for most countries. It has increased the number of occupations drawn from the ILO October Inquiry database for which it reports average wage rates.<sup>20</sup> It estimates the number of working poor on an on-going basis. It will estimate the percent of workers who work more than 48 hours per week rather than more than 39

<sup>17</sup> Youth inactivity rate is composed of two quite different phenomena as regards decent work. Youth unemployment is negative as regards decent work, whereas school attendance (which increases the youth inactivity rate) is almost always positive as regards decent work. Data on the number of enterprises belonging to employers' organizations are of questionable value. They do not indicate the number of workers covered by such organizations or the influence of these organizations.

<sup>18</sup> Non-fatal occupational injury rate data reported in LABORSTA are of poor quality. For example, rates are often higher in countries where work is safer, the reason being a higher probability of reporting non-fatal occupational injuries in countries with safer working conditions. For example, the non-fatal injury rate is reported to be about 2 per 100,000 workers in Pakistan and Turkey compared to about 800 in Denmark and the UK.

<sup>19</sup> See <<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/kilm>>

<sup>20</sup> See <<http://laborsta.ilo.org>>

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hours per week as presently. All four of these indicators are included in the new suggested core list.

ILO's IFP-SES put together a very large and very impressive database on seven forms of security in work, which represent key aspects of decent work.<sup>21</sup> This included legal framework indicators as well as indicators of labour market outcomes. A number of IFP-SES indicators are included in the suggested core list. Unfortunately, the IFP-SES database is no longer updated and so is not a viable basis for a future ILO core set of decent work indicators. The IFP-SES approach of using national collaborators to collect national data, however, is worth using at least in a limited number of countries (see Section 5.2).

ILO's Policy Integration Department developed a methodology for measuring living wages that are comparable across countries.<sup>22</sup> This opens up the possibility of measuring the number of workers in a country with unacceptably low pay in a consistent way. It is important to note that the living wage and working poor concepts are different. Living wage is a worker-level concept associated with earnings that is included in the ILO constitution, while working poor is a household level concept that is affected as much by household size and structure as it is by earnings. This means that many of the working poor can be reasonably well paid and many of those who are not among the working poor can be poorly paid depending on the number of dependants needing to be supported. It is our feeling that both the living wage concept and the working poor concept are important and relevant for decent work, and for this reason both are included in the suggested core list of statistical indicators of working conditions.<sup>23</sup>

New world and regional estimates have been made by ILO for both forced labour and child labour.<sup>24 25</sup> Although these estimates would be very useful for an ILO World Decent Work Report, they are not good candidates for inclusion in a core set of statistical decent work indicators primarily because they are not based on a reasonably complete set of annually updated national data. In addition, world and regional forced labour estimates do not measure the actual number of forced labourers but rather the

<sup>21</sup> See <<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/sesame/ifpses.home>>

<sup>22</sup> The ILO Policy Integration Department Working Paper No. 2 suggested using ½ of median hourly earnings to estimate the living wage rate, since this is roughly what the statutory minimum wage is in high-income countries when new minimum wage legislation is passed. This rough and ready definition of living wage does not correspond, however, to what is observed for 12 countries in the Anker's (2005) working paper where this ratio is found to increase along with national income per capita.

<sup>23</sup> The way that the ILO estimates the number of working poor in a country causes the percentage of workers who are working poor to be almost perfectly correlated with the World Bank poverty rate. This also means that working poor cannot be estimated in upper middle-income and high-income countries, because the World Bank does not estimate poverty in these countries using its \$1 a day and \$2 a day poverty lines. Despite adding little new knowledge about national differences, the working poor as measured by ILO is quite useful for focusing public attention on the importance of low earnings in low-income and lower middle-income countries.

<sup>24</sup> Belser and al. (2005).

<sup>25</sup> ILO (2002).

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number of cases observed and confirmed, which is much less than the actual number. This means that this number is likely to rise over time relative to the actual situation as more cases are observed because of increased publicity and consciousness of forced labour.

*Table 2 provides the new suggested core list of statistical indicators of working conditions.* This core list is practical in our opinion, in the sense of being measurable with available data for a reasonable range and number of countries. Column 1 lists four main aspects of decent work and their eleven components. Column 2 lists the suggested core statistical indicators. Column 3 lists indicators not included in the core, usually because of limited data availability (generally in developing countries). Column 4 contains comments. Indicators excluded because of limited data availability include: part-time employment; long-term unemployment; underemployment; involuntary part-time employment; learning in school; hazardous and worst forms of child labour; forced labour; recent job training; social security expenditure separately for health, pensions and other; irregular and asocial hours that conflict with family responsibilities; provision of child care. Five indicators noted in column 3 were excluded from the core list because of either questionable meaning for decent work or unacceptably poor quality data (and in addition, limited data availability could also be a problem). This applied to strikes and lockouts, since few or no strikes can indicate little or no dialogue (e.g. because of weak unions, or unions that are not free) just as it can indicate dialogue; number of enterprises in employers' organizations because this indicates nothing about social dialogue, influence of employers' organizations, or coverage of workers; tenure of more than one year because this is a countercyclical indicator which rises during economic downturns and falls during economic upturns; number of women working as professional and technical workers because this can be misleading as regards occupational segregation as professional and technical women workers are often concentrated in only two occupational groups of nursing and teaching; non-fatal occupational injury rate because of poor quality data.

Because this paper is concerned with the possibility of an annual ILO World Decent Work Report in the near future (i.e. within a few years), it is important to look into the extent to which national data are available by region for suggested core statistical decent work indicators. Data availability was investigated for four suggested core indicators drawn from the four different major aspects of decent work (which is all that was possible to investigate here given time constraints). No effort was made to ascertain data quality. Results of this investigation are reported in Table 3 for the world as well as for six regions. Indicated are number of countries with data, percent of countries with data, percent of labour force with data, and percent of past eight years with data. To simplify this exercise, generally only one or two data sources were consulted, and data sets with estimates for all countries were excluded; the main data sources are noted at the bottom of each column in Table 3.

As expected, data are available for all four indicators for almost all countries in the Developed Economies and EU region. Interestingly, data are also widely available for countries in the Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, especially for larger countries in this region. Thus, data were available for 84-94 percent of the labour force and 50-83 percent of the countries in this region. In terms of availability of annual data, it was found that data tended to be available most years except for union density which was available on average about every other year for Developed Economies and EU countries and every fifth year for Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS countries.

Data availability was more of a problem for the four developing country regions, especially for Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East and North Africa. Depending on



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the indicator, data were available for developing countries for between approximately 25 to 60 percent of countries, 20 to 90 percent of the labour force, and 20 to 70 percent of the years.

Although as expected data availability is a problem in developing countries for the four indicators investigated, it is important to realize that data were available in each developing country region for a sizable number of countries. The number of countries with data outside of the Developed Economies and EU and Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS ranged from approximately 30 for fatality rate, to approximately 40 for union density, to 50 for social security expenditures, and to 75 for labour force participation rate. It seems from this quick exercise (that looked at only a few data sources and did not look into data quality) that data are available for a sufficient number and range of countries to be acceptable for at least the four suggested indicators investigated.

In summary, it is worth noting some characteristics of the suggested core list of statistical decent work in Table 2. There are 22 *core statistical decent work indicators*. In addition, there are 4 socio-economic context indicators that would need to be measured by ILO as they are related to employment (informal economy employment, employment by sector, employment by employment status) and earnings (working poor). Data for the other 10 suggested socio-economic context indicators would not require any effort to obtain as they are available from other international organizations. *This core list of statistical decent work indicators is, we feel, a manageable list.* Suggested indicators are *spread across the four main aspects of decent work*: 7 are concerned with employment (10 if socio-economic context indicators are counted), 5 are concerned with earnings (6 if socio-economic context indicators are counted), 8 are concerned with fair treatment, and 2 are concerned with social dialogue and workers' voice. *Some aspects of decent work, however, are not well measured, especially fair treatment and social dialogue and workers' voice.* Notice that there are no suggested core statistical indicator for balancing work and family life because of limited data; the one indicator suggested for work security has serious data comparability problems and is counter-cyclical, and is suggested in large part because we felt that there should be at least one indicator for this important phenomenon of decent work; workers' voice is only partially represented by trade union membership and there is the added problem of the need to take into consideration when unions are not free; social dialogue is only partially measured at best by collective bargaining coverage rate. Thus while the *suggested core list of statistical indicators in Table 2 goes a long way toward measuring the comprehensive nature of decent work, there is still a ways to go.* Part of this need can be taken into account by measuring the legal framework for decent work as discussed in the next section of this paper.

### **3.3 Suggested core set of information on legal framework for decent work**

A good legal framework for work is essential for decent work. It helps protect workers, working conditions, and workers' rights. Decent work is not possible without a good legal framework for work. This paper, therefore, assumes that *an annual ILO World Decent Work Report would require systematic information on the legal framework for work.* In any case, international and national labour standards have been a central part of ILO's mandate and activities since its inception. An added advantage of including information on the legal framework for work in an annual World Decent Work Report is that national law and jurisprudence is always changing,

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and discussing this would help an annual World Decent Work Report to always be fresh and interesting.

This section of the paper presents some thoughts and suggestions regarding the legal framework for decent work. Before beginning it is worth recalling, as discussed above, that systematic and reasonably complete information on the national legal framework for work is not widely available at present (although, ILO has made progress in the development of databases on national laws in recent years.)

*The suggested approach (see Table 4) does not suggest condensing legal framework information into quantitative variables/indicators. This is not suggested, because we feel that most aspects of the legal framework for work are too complex to be represented as quantitative variables/indicators, for example as dichotomous binary variables (with 0 and 1 values for no and yes answers) or as ordinal variables (with for example 0, 0.5 and 1 values to represent no, partially true, and yes). Rather, an approach is suggested where important aspects of the legal framework for work are identified, relevant information for these is systematically collected, and this information is reported in a tabular format without coding this information into a statistical indicator in numeric form.*

The suggested format in Table 4 has eight columns. Column 1 lists the main characteristics of decent work noted in a previous section which are divided into four main groups and eleven subgroups. Column 2 lists aspects of the legal framework for work that are important and relevant and practical in the sense of measurement. Columns 3-7 are concerned with national level information for each key aspect listed in Column 2. For each aspect in column 2, it is suggested to report information on: whether a relevant national law exists (column 3), benefit level of the law (column 4), evidence on the effectiveness of implementation of the law (column 5), and coverage of workers in terms of the types of workers covered along with a rough approximation of the percentage of workers covered by the law in theory (Column 6) and in practice (Column 7). Column 8 is concerned with ratification of relevant ILO Conventions.

Columns 6 and 7 require some explanation, because estimation of worker coverage in percentage terms is not straight-forward and is impossible for most countries to do with a reasonably high degree of accuracy. The suggestion to estimate approximate percent coverage is made with full cognizance that the information needed does not exist for most countries at present, especially developing countries. This suggestion is based on two considerations. First, it is felt that differences in benefits of national laws in different countries is meaningless (and often misleading) without some idea about how many workers are covered. For example, to learn that Zimbabwe has longer paid maternity leave (96 days) than United States (0 days) according to national law is obviously misleading as regards practice for a typical worker. Second, we feel it should be possible to make very rough estimates of coverage if broad percentage ranges are used, such as: few (<10%), some (10-32%), about half (33-66%), most (67-89%), virtually all or all (90+%). To do this, one would need very rough estimates of the percentage distribution of employment by for example: sector, employment status, size of establishment, and size of the informal economy. Since such percentages on the distribution of employment are not available for most countries, subjective judgments would be required. But in our opinion, the very rough estimates of coverage that could be made would be defensible and rough ballpark estimates of coverage would be preferable to no estimates of coverage. For coverage, one would need to (i) list the types of workers covered or excluded in the law and then to (ii) make a very rough estimate of the percentage of workers and employees covered in theory and in practice. For example, if a minimum wage law applied to employees outside of the agricultural sector, this fact would be indicated under

**Comment [A2]:** According to the ILO- TRAVIAL database, Zimbabwe has 90 days and Sweden 480 calendar days.

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theoretical coverage information. The percentage of workers theoretically covered by such a minimum wage law would then be estimated using information or judgment on the size of the non-agricultural labour force and employment by employment status in the non-agricultural sector. The resulting rough estimate of percentage of workers theoretically covered would help one to decide on which of the categories on percent covered (see above) to use.

A basic idea underlying Table 4 is that information on the legal framework for work is worth reporting without having to go the extra step of converting this information into numeric indicators (either an ordinal qualitative type indicator or a quantitative cardinal type indicator). The complexity of legal and rights issues do not easily lend themselves to conversion into quantitative variables. Not requiring construction of quantitative legal framework variables has the added advantage that this information would not negatively affect ILO technical assistance efforts to progressively implement improved national labour standards. Having at one's disposal a more complete set of information provides a better opportunity to understand the legal framework in a country. For example, few or no reported problems in a country might be due to a lack of freedom to report problems, and not to a lack of problems.

It is worth noting that variables in Table 4 on the legal framework for work tend to be complementary with variables in Table 2 on statistical indicators of working conditions. Where statistical indicators of working conditions are less complete (more complete), legal framework variables tend to be more complete (less complete). For example, whereas statistical indicators of Social dialogue and workers' voice in Table 2 leave much to be desired, there is essential information on this in Table 4. Whereas there are no suggested statistical indicators in Table 2 for Balancing work and family life, there are two variables on this in Table 4.

The specific variables suggested in Table 4 are based to a substantial degree on discussions with ILO staff and availability of new ILO databases on the legal framework for work. *This means that suggestions in Table 4 are generally practical in the sense that information should be possible to obtain for a substantial number of countries* if the ILO decided this was important.

TRAVAIL has databases on paid maternity leave and statutory minimum wages. IFP-SES has databases on existence of a government policy commitment to full employment and on existence of national laws for unemployment insurance, paid maternity leave, paid parental leave, compulsory education, statutory minimum wage, anti-discrimination, occupational safety and health (OSH) insurance, right to bargain collectively, and limitations on right to organize. It is worth noting that the complete IFP-SES database indicates which laws and/or documents were used to make a determination about the legal situation. This practice is important, as it increases the ability of countries and others that might wish to challenge the accuracy of information in the database. Note that considerable national information on social security is available from the International Social Security Association (ISSA) website; information on compulsory education is available from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and there are several sources that provide information on democracy.<sup>26</sup> Also note that ILO receives and archives national legislative digests for most countries in the world, and these could be used to regularly update legal framework information.

<sup>26</sup> See <[www.issa.int](http://www.issa.int)> and <[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)>

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To be useful, legal databases would have to be regularly maintained so that information is kept up-to-date. This is not an idle comment, since the new ILO databases on legal framework variables are not updated on a regular basis. For example, the TRAVAIL databases on minimum wages and maternity leave have not always been kept up-to-date; the large IFP-SES database has been discontinued; and Kucera's databases on rights were one-off efforts for research papers. *The most effective way of updating legal framework databases would be for ILO country and regional offices to take some responsibility, at the very least by vetting information with countries before this information would be finalized and included in an annual ILO World Decent Work Report.*

In conclusion, Table 4 provides suggestions on how to present and measure information on the legal framework for work. It suggests that *several pieces of information be reported without creating quantitative indicators*. While the lay out, contents and specific variables in Table 4 are only suggestions (and it is clear that more thought would be required before finalization of a core set of legal framework variables and information), *it is critical that a minimal amount of information on the legal framework for work is measured and included in an annual World Decent Work Report*. The intention of Table 4 is to stimulate discussion and help lead to the collection and reporting of information by ILO for a core set of information on the national legal framework for work.

### **3.4 Gender and decent work indicators and information**

Differences between men and women workers would obviously be of great concern for an annual ILO World Decent Work Report. Indeed, the ILO description/definition of decent work specifically mentions women and men: "opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity". This means that decent work indicators and information are needed to measure and analyze gender differences. The present section suggests how to measure gender differences in decent work and what this means for the suggested core list of decent work indicators and information in Tables 2 and 4.

The ILO Policy integration Department working paper No. 2 took the position that "all aspects of decent work are relevant for both men and women. This implies that male-female differences provide the appropriate gender indicators in almost all instances." This makes sense, since men and women have similar needs in terms of decent employment, earnings, fair treatment, social dialogue and workers' voice.

With this as background, "S" was added in column 2 in Table 2 when it was felt that male-female differences are relevant. *Virtually all statistical indicators of working conditions in Table 2 received a "S"*.<sup>27</sup> Of course, four suggested core indicators in

<sup>27</sup> It is important to point out that it is often useful to report female-male shares in different ways. For example for women managers or women professionals, it is useful to report both women's share of these workers as well as women's share relative to women's average labour force activity. The former indicates the extent to which an occupational group (such as professionals) is female, while the latter indicates the extent to which women workers are over-represented or under-represented (among professionals). These two ways of looking at gender sometimes tell quite different stories. In the Middle East and North Africa for example, very few professionals are women, whereas women professionals are over-represented among

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Table 2 under fair treatment were included precisely because they measured gender aspects of fundamental rights of work. Occupational sex segregation, female share of managers, and female share of non-agricultural wage employment were already included to measure equal opportunity in occupation (ILO Convention No.111); and female/male pay ratios was already included to measure equal pay for work of equal value (ILO Convention No.100). There were only two core statistical indicators of working conditions where “S” was not added to indicate the usefulness of measuring female-male differences (social security expenditures, and health care expenditures of households). Unfortunately however, *reality is that data availability will limit the extent to which male-female differences can be measured in practice* for many countries (especially developing countries) for many of the core statistical indicators in Table 2.<sup>28</sup> Finally, it is also worth noting that despite its importance for women workers, there are no suggested core indicators in Table 2 to measure the ability of women workers to balance work and family life because of limited data, especially for developing countries. It is for this reason that total fertility rate was included as a contextual indicator.

Three variables included in Table 4 on the legal framework for work are specifically intended to measure important gender aspects of decent work: existence of anti-discrimination law based on sex of worker, paid maternity leave, and paid paternity or parental leave. It is interesting that even though the legal framework for work is very important for women workers, mainly because of their responsibility for a disproportionate share of child rearing in all countries (and of course all of childbearing), only three of the suggested core legal information in Table 4 are specifically concerned with gender issues. This probably implies that more thought is required. For example, missing in Table 4 are national laws that affect women’s opportunity for entrepreneurship, such as laws that restrict women’s access to credit and restrictions on women’s rights to own land, businesses and bank accounts. Whenever possible, rough estimates of coverage should be made separately for women and men, although this will prove to be impractical in many instances.

#### **4. Possible formats and structure for an annual ILO World Decent Work Report**

This part of the paper looks into what a Part I World Overview section in an annual ILO World Decent Work Report could look like, presents alternative possible approaches and makes suggestions. Discussion is based to a large extent on reviews

female non-agricultural workers. The reason for a difference in these two statistics in the Middle East and North African region is traceable to the low female labour force participation rate in this region. This means that discrimination for women in this region comes more in being excluded from the labour force and less due to a lack of opportunity for professional occupations per se. (A separate issue is the considerable degree of occupational segregation among women professionals in this region, as women professionals are mainly either teachers or nurses.)

<sup>28</sup> The fatal injury indicator provides an example of limited data on female-male differences. Only 4 developing countries outside of the Central Europe, CIS and non-EU region have data on female and male fatality rates in LABORSTA. Even in the Developed Economies and EU region, reporting of separate female and male fatality rates is far from universal; only 54 percent of countries in this region reporting a fatality rate also report separate rates for females and males.

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of what other international organizations and the ILO itself have done when producing annual global type reports. Section 4.1 reviews annual world reports of other international organizations, while Section 4.7 reviews ILO annual global reports.

#### **4.1 Review of annual world reports of other international organizations**

To get insights into what an annual ILO World Decent Work report might look like, annual world reports of other international organizations were reviewed. Table 5 summarizes results for the 16 annual reports that were reviewed.<sup>29</sup>

#### **4.2 Inclusion of a CD-rom with data with publication.**

It is not common to include a CD with data in the publication. Only 3 of the 16 annuals included a CD, and one of these is was to stop this practice. Only UNDP's Human Development Report and the annual report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) called The State of Food and Agriculture are expected to continue to include a CD with the publication.<sup>30</sup> As indicated in the next subsection, data are mainly disseminated online as well as in statistical appendices of the printed publication.

*Implication 1* for a World Decent Work Report: Inclusion of a CD with data in the publication is not necessary.

#### **4.3 Online availability of data**

All 16 publications reviewed provide data online to the public. Other organizations clearly prefer to use the internet to disseminate data to the public.

*Implication 2* for a World Decent Work Report: Data on decent work *should be made available online* in an easy to use form.

#### **4.4 Inclusion of data tables in statistical appendix or appendices.**

Virtually all annual international publications included a statistical appendix. The only exception among the 16 publications reviewed was ISSA's publication, and this makes sense since its contents do not lend themselves toward presentation in statistical tables.

<sup>29</sup> Three of the 16 publications are technically speaking not annual publications. IMF's World Economic Outlook and UNAIDS's Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic are published bi-annually, and ISSA's Social Security Programs throughout the World is published every two years. They are included in this review, because they have similar characteristics to an annual publication.

<sup>30</sup> FAO (various years).

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There was a clear tendency to include basically the same tables each year in statistical appendixes. Eleven of 15 publications used the same tables each year, and the 4 publications that did not use the same tables each year used a mixture of the same tables along with tables on that year's special topic.

Size of the statistical appendix varied considerably across publications. Given the availability of data online, it is not obvious how much data should be made available in a printed publication. Different organizations have made different decisions in this regard.

*Implication 3 for World Decent Work Report: An appendix with data tables and information should be included.*

*Implication 4 for World Decent Work Report: A subset of the data and information provided online should be provided in an appendix. While all aspects of decent work should be covered, this should not be complete, partly because of the need to save printed pages and production costs and partly because of the fact that the complete set of data and information would be available online.*

*Implication 5 for World Decent Work Report: There should be two appendixes. There should be a main appendix which is the same every year that covers all aspects of decent work (see suggestion immediately above). This would increase continuity in the data series and the annual publications. There should also be a second appendix that includes data/information on the special topic of that year's publication discussed in the Part II of a World Decent Work Report.*

#### **4.5 World overview chapter that describes the situation around the world**

Practices are mixed regarding whether international publications include a Part I World Overview chapter that discusses how the world situation has been changing. Eleven of 16 publications do not include such a similar Part I World Overview chapter every year. Almost all of these 11 publications include an overview chapter, but it is concerned with the special theme of that year's report.

We looked more closely at 3 of the 6 reports which include a Part I World Overview chapter that describes the world situation and how it has been changing, since these reports are potentially informative about what a Part I world overview chapter in an annual ILO World Decent Work Report could look like.<sup>31</sup> The size of the world overview chapter in the three annual world reports reviewed ranged from 39 pages in the IMF report to 98 pages in the annual report of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) called the World Investment Report and 120 pages in the annual report of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social

<sup>31</sup> The FAO report is excluded here because it is not a good model for an annual ILO Decent Work Report. The FAO report has very little analysis. The FAO World Overview chapter consists of bullet points and graphs only; almost the same words are used every year in the bullet points; and graphs take up approximately two-thirds of the Overview. The UNAIDS report is excluded here, because it is on a relatively focused subject and so less relevant for a subject such as decent work.

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Affairs (DESA) report.<sup>32</sup> Our feeling is that a Part I World Overview chapter in an ILO World Decent Work Report would need to be relatively long in light of the comprehensive nature of decent work and the large differences in decent work across regions and development levels. The approximately 100 or so pages in the UNCTAD and DESA world reports would seem to be in the ballpark.<sup>33</sup>

All three world reports reviewed included separate sections or chapters for different regions. This was necessary because of major differences across regions. For a World Decent Work Report, we think that there would also need to be separate headings or chapters for regions in light of the great differences across regions in terms of decent work.

Before moving on, it is worth pointing out that the structure, size, and content of the annual world reports of other international organizations are not set in stone. The DESA report for example went from 38 pages in 2002 to 120 pages in 2007 in a smooth progress with 52, 60, 104, and 124 pages in 2003-2006; also, this report did not have an executive summary until 2004. The UNCTAD report went from 68 pages in 2000 to 98 pages in 2006. This idea that it is acceptable for an annual world report to change and mature over time contains a valuable lesson for ILO if it launches an annual World Decent Work Report.

*Implication 6 for World Decent Work Report: The text of a Part I World Overview in an ILO World Decent Work Report should be 100 or so pages in our opinion. This size would allow for reasonable discussion and analysis of decent work without being unacceptably long.*

*Implication 7 for World Decent Work Report: A Part I World Overview should have separate sections or chapters for regions. The large differences in decent work across regions make this necessary.*

*Implication 8 for World Decent Work Report: The structure and length of an annual ILO World Decent Work Report should not be set in stone in its first issue. It should be allowed to evolve and improve over time.*

## 4.6 Executive summary

Executive summaries are provided in all three of the reports reviewed in detail. These executive summaries were found to be an effective vehicle for delivering messages and highlighting recent developments and trends. The three executive summaries differed in length, ranging from 4 pages in the IMF report, to 9 pages in the DESA report, and to 16 pages in the UNCTAD report.<sup>34</sup> It seems that it is a judgment call regarding the appropriate length of an executive summary. Whereas a short executive summary is generally more effective than a long executive summary because it is more focused, the comprehensive and wide ranging nature of decent work lends itself to a longish executive summary. A compromise would seem in order, an executive

<sup>32</sup> UNCTAD (various years).

<sup>33</sup> DESA (various years).

<sup>34</sup> IMF (various years).



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summary that covers all aspects of decent work but is as parsimonious as possible in highlighting important recent developments around the world in decent work.

Only 1 of the 3 annual world reports reviewed (UNCTAD) used graphs in the executive summary. The use of graphs in an executive summary is effective but questionable because it increases the size of the executive summary.

Two of the 3 annual world reports reviewed here (UNCTAD and DESA) used non-neutral statements headings to highlight conclusions. This was affective in getting across messages the organizations wanted to convey to the reader, as it helped catch the reader's attention and helped make the executive summary more interesting and easy to read.

*Implication 9 for World Decent Work Report: An executive summary should be included in an annual ILO World Decent Work Report. It should be as parsimonious as possible to focus messages and conclusions.*

*Implication 10 for World Decent Work Report: Use of graphs in an executive summary is a judgment call. While graphs are affective, they increase length.*

*Implication 11 for World Decent Work Report: Use of non-neutral statements in the margin and/or as headings in the executive summary should be encouraged in our opinion. It is an effective way of drawing readers' attention to major findings and messages.*

#### **4.7 Review of ILO annual multi-country reports**

Five annual ILO multi-country reports that were available when this report was prepared and where felt to be potentially relevant for a possible annual ILO flagship World Decent Work Report, especially a Part I World Overview, were reviewed. This included three publications produced in headquarters and two publications produced in a region. Table 6 provides a summary of the result of this review.

The three headquarters reports were not found to be especially helpful for a Part I World Overview. Overview chapters in these reports do not provide world overviews of the type of interest for the present paper; rather, they discuss the special theme of that year's report. There is, however, a negative lesson that can be drawn from a review of these reports. The World Employment Report and World Labour Report have not come out every year, and the World Labour Report has now been stopped. This lack of commitment to these reports has negatively affected their effectiveness. It is important for a future annual ILO flagship World Decent Work Report *to come out regularly every year in order to keep up interest and impact.*

The two ILO regional reports reviewed were found to be useful and worth learning from. Both are well presented and easy to read. The Latin American report has a short executive summary (3 pages in 2005) and overview chapter (27 pages in 2005). The labour and social trends in Asia and the Pacific 2005 report has an Overview chapter which is more like an executive summary (6 pages in 2006 and 9 pages in 2007) with most of the remainder of the report consisting of chapters that are similar to overviews of different topics. The second half of the Latin American report is comprised of "featured articles".

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These regional publications are similar in many ways. *Characteristics they have in common are consistent with the suggestion/recommendations for an ILO World Decent Work Report noted above based on a review of annual world reports of other international organizations.* The two regional reports are similar in length with a text of 74 pages in the Labour and social trends in Asia and the Pacific 2007 report and 79 pages in the 2005 Latin American report (latest reports we had when preparing this paper). This is somewhat smaller than the 100 or so pages suggested in the previous section for a World Decent Work Report (*see implication 6 above*). However these are regional reports, and a world report would obviously need to be longer. Both regional reports have grown in size over time, again demonstrating that it is acceptable and natural for annual reports to grow in size over time (*see implication 8 above*). The ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific report went from 35 pages in 2005 to 74 pages in 2007; the Latin American report went from 49 pages in 2000 to 79 pages in 2005. Both regional reports include a statistical appendix with tables just as world reports of other international organizations. Tables are the same every year in the Latin American report and mostly the same in the ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific report. This is useful, as it keeps up continuity over time (*see implication 3 above*). Both regional reports provide data online (*see implication 4 above*). Both reports effectively use non-neutral statements to highlight findings and messages in their overviews; the Latin American report does this in headings and the ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific report does this in the margin (*see implication 11 above*). Both regional reports make extensive and attractive use of graphs and tables in their overviews (*see implication 10 above*). Both regional reports include an executive summary (*see implication 9 above*). It is also worth noting that the Latin American report is based in part on an active and on-going relationship between the ILO regional office and national government statistical agencies in the region as regards data access and sharing.

Even though the Latin American and Asia and Pacific reports are not world reports, nor sufficiently comprehensive in their coverage of decent work in any given year to be called a decent work report, this does not negate their usefulness for design of a World Decent Work Report. It is important to recognize, for example, that these regional reports have covered many aspects of decent work over the years including the legal framework for work. For example, the ILO regional office for Asia and the Pacific report looked at OSH policies and programs in 2007 and at labour market governance in 2006; the Latin American report discussed unemployment insurance in 2001 and child labour in 2004.

*Implication 12 for World Decent Work Report: In light of the considerable experience that has been gained in the development and production of ILO regional labour reports, it is essential that ILO draw on experience and knowledge in the regions to help design and produce a future ILO World Decent Work Report.*

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## 5. Improving measurement of decent work and the need for investments in this

This section discusses the need for ILO to invest in improving the measurement of decent work.<sup>35</sup> As noted earlier in this report, the comprehensive nature of decent work is not well measured at the international level at present time, or even at the national level outside of some developed countries. For statistical indicators, this is especially a problem for certain aspects of decent work such as for social dialogue and social protection. This is also a serious problem for all aspects of the legal framework for work. At the same time as already noted, it would be possible to rectify this situation if ILO decided this was important and devoted sufficient time and resources. As a first step to help focus work on this, a parsimonious core list of variables would need to be identified that have conceptual relevance and are measurable using currently available information at the national level. Suggestions in this vein were provided in Section 3.

Section 5.1 discusses usefulness for ILO of a major investment in decent work measurement, pointing out that this is not a new idea for ILO. It is also pointed out that other United Nations' family organizations have taken measurement more seriously and to their advantage. Sections 5.2 to 5.4 discuss world and regional estimates and the value of additional effort to gather available data and information for the largest countries in the world.

### 5.1 Need to invest in measurement of decent work

The Director-General in his 2001 report to the ILC wrote:

“In order to effectively promote the goal of decent work for all, the Office must be able to measure and monitor progress and deficits..... At present our information systems provide only a partial, and sometimes only a rudimentary picture of decent work deficits... If there is one place in the world where people can turn for quality information on decent work, it should be the ILO. We need to make a major investment in the design and implementation of our data and statistical base.”

The need to invest in measurement of decent work elucidated by the Director-General in 2001 is just as necessary today. While some progress on measurement of decent work has been made since 2001, this progress has been patchy and efforts have not always been maintained. Major areas of decent work remain poorly measured, especially in the areas of the legal framework for work, social protection and social dialogue.

<sup>35</sup> Discussion in the present section is concerned with improving the measurement of decent work using currently available information and data, because if an ILO World Decent Work Report is to be published in the near future it would need to be based on currently available information and data. Just as important (and even more important) in the longer run would be to improve national capacity to collect decent work data and information. It is worth noting in this regard that identification and measurement by ILO of a core set of decent work indicators right now based on currently available information and data could play a valuable role in helping to stimulate and improve national capacity to collect and utilize information and data on decent work in the future.

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UNICEF and WHO provide good examples of how major investments in measurement can pay off. WHO has developed extensive health statistics including DALYs (disability adjusted life years) for many diseases. UNICEF has developed all purpose household surveys to monitor a wide range of social issues. Originally developed in 1998 to monitor child development goals agreed upon in the World Summit for Children, UNICEF spent 20 million dollars in its third Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) round in around 65 countries. Given the fact that a disproportionate number of the UN Millennium Development Goals are on topics of concern to WHO and UNICEF and conversely that there are only a few Millennium Development Goals related to decent work, it seems reasonable to conclude that this is due at least in part to data availability. It is a fact of life today that numbers and data help frame the debate.

The need for decent work indicators and information would take on greater urgency if the ILO decides to publish an annual World Decent Work Report with a Part I World Overview that describes and analyses decent work around the world and how it has been changing. Such a world overview would not be possible without a database that measures the comprehensive nature of decent work. This would require a major and sustained investment by ILO.

## **5.2 World and regional estimates and investing in obtaining national data for largest countries**

An annual ILO World Decent Work Report will need to rely on world and regional estimates to a considerable extent for a Part I World Overview chapter. World and regional estimates help simplify discussion and make it more understandable. This is not to say that a world overview chapter would not use national information and examples, it should to ensure that discussion is interesting, but rather that world and regional estimates would be necessary.

## **5.3 Importance of large countries for making world and regional estimates**

ILO has used two approaches to making world and regional estimates. The imputed value approach, a commonly used technique in the world, has been used by several ILO departments, such as KILM, Safe Work, and STAT among others. National values for countries which do not have data are imputed based on various assumptions. A less common approach developed by Mehran has been used by IPEC to estimate child labour in the world where available country values are treated as data points and sampled using stratified random sampling with countries stratified into large, medium and small size countries based on size of their labour force (although it is worth noting that probability of selection is one for large countries).<sup>36</sup> Each approach to making world and regional estimates has advantages, although the more complete are national data the more compelling is the imputation approach. This implies that the imputation approach would almost always be more useful for core decent work statistical indicators, because one of the criteria for selection of core indicators should be data availability for a reasonable number of countries in each region.

<sup>36</sup> Mehran (2002).

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In both approaches, the precision of world and regional estimates is sensitive to inclusion of data for especially large countries. For example, world estimates would be problematic without China, India and the United States (which together have 46 percent of the world's labour force). Similarly, regional estimates for Latin America without values for Brazil and for the Middle East without values for Egypt would be problematic.

To get an idea of which countries are especially important for making regional and world estimates, information was put together on the percentage distribution of the labour force by country for six regions as well as for the world with countries ordered by size of labour force. It is striking the extent to which workers are concentrated in relatively few countries (Table 7). One-half of the labour force in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS is found in 2 countries. One-half of the labour force is found in 3 countries in Developed Economies and EU; in 4 countries in the Middle East and North Africa; and in 6 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The concentration of workers in relatively few countries also occurs for the world as a whole. Over one-half of the world's labour force is found in 5 countries, and over two-thirds of the world's labour force is found in 13 countries.

Although findings in Table 7 indicate that data and values for a relatively few large countries are very important for making world and regional estimates, this does not mean that data and information for only the largest countries would be sufficient for making world and regional estimates or to form the basis of an ILO World Decent Work Report, far from it. World and regional estimates require data from a wide range of countries. Even though large countries include a majority of workers in the world, they are not likely to be representative of smaller countries. For example, India is not necessarily representative of the situation in other South Asian countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, let alone of other Asian countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. Nor is Germany necessarily representative of other EU countries such as Sweden, Italy and the United Kingdom. In any case, a World Decent Work report would need data and information for a range of countries to be able to describe and understand decent work around the world, since each country, regardless of size, is in a sense an equivalent observation for analysis and description. Rather, the point being made here is that the precision of world and regional estimates are sensitive to the availability of data and information for large countries.

*Implication 13 for World Decent Work Report: World and regional estimates are greatly improved when data are available for a few large countries in each region.*

## **5.4 Usefulness of national collaborating scholars**

Given the importance of large countries for world and regional estimates, it makes sense to make a special effort to obtain available data and information for large countries. This could be done by having "collaborating scholars" for a selection of large countries. Collaborators could be paid a small annual fee to find available national data and information for core statistical and legal framework variables. The IFP-SES program in ILO used this approach successfully, and has demonstrated that it is practical.

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Taking into consideration the monetary and supervisory costs that would be required to maintain a network of national collaborators, it would make sense to exclude countries in the Developed Economies and EU because data are more readily available for these countries. For other countries, it would make sense in our opinion to select a small number of countries from each region. As a first thought, the following 14 countries are suggested: Russia, Turkey and Ukraine from Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS countries; China, India and Indonesia from Asia; Brazil and Mexico from Latin America; Iran and Egypt from Middle East and North Africa; and Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Kenya from Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>37</sup> These countries include 71, 79, 54, 38, and 35 percent of each region's labour force respectively. These countries also include 57 percent of the world's labour force; together with Developed Economies and EU, they include 74 percent of the world's labour force. This set of countries is, in our opinion, small enough to be practical in terms of setting up and monitoring a network of national collaborators. At the same time, more complete information and data for these countries would significantly improve regional and world estimates. This list of countries is intended to start discussion and other lists would be acceptable. The point here is that a manageable effort to obtain available data and information for a relatively small set of countries would go a long way toward improving the quality of world and regional estimates of decent work and therefore of an ILO World Decent Work Report.

*Implication 14 for World Decent Work Report: A network of national collaborating scholars should be established for a select number of the largest countries in each region of the developing world to help improve world and regional estimates and information on decent work.*

## 6. Summary and conclusions

This paper has been concerned with the possibility of an annual ILO report on decent work and what this might look like. This paper, thus, needs to be seen in the context of on-going discussions in the ILO and the International Labour Conference of whether there should be regular reports on decent work, and if so what they should look like, as well as in the context where most of the other UN agencies have an annual world report. There are many advantages for the ILO if it was to publish an annual World Decent Work Report. It would improve ILO's visibility and image with the public, media, scholars, and social partners; it would help frame policy debates and influence public opinion; and it would help focus ILO's own internal work. This paper focused on what an annual world overview of decent work might look like. This could be Part I of an annual report (followed by a theme-specific Part II that changes every year), or it could be a stand-alone publication. Discussion and recommendations in this paper assume that an ILO World Decent Work Report would need to cover all aspects of decent work, be published annually, and be evidence-based and so include indicators and information on all aspects of decent work.

<sup>37</sup> This list started with the two largest countries in each region. South Africa and Kenya were added for several reasons. Percentage of Sub-Saharan Africa's labour force in its two largest countries (Nigeria and Ethiopia) is relatively low at 27 percent; data will often not be available for the two largest countries in the region; Sub-Saharan Africa is very diverse; and South Africa and Kenya are large and have relatively good information bases. Ukraine was added, because inclusion of Turkey in this region is questionable. Indonesia was added, because it would also help represent Asian and Pacific countries that include 9 percent of the world's labour force.

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This paper began with a discussion of how ILO describes decent work, its organizing framework since 1999, and what this implies as regards its measurement. It is pointed out that decent work is a comprehensive concept covering all aspects of work including for example employment opportunities, earnings, fair treatment, and social dialogue; that decent work is of concern for all workers, female and male, and not just for employees or modern sector workers; that the decent work concept is especially concerned with the situation of the worst off and most vulnerable and therefore with the need for working conditions to meet minimum acceptable standards; and that decent work is concerned about sustainability over the long run and so with productivity.

Discussion turned next to recommendations on how to measure decent work so that an annual decent work report could be evidenced-based. It was pointed out that two quite different types of information are required, both: (i) information on the legal framework for work (such as the right to organize and bargain collectively; anti-discrimination laws; minimum wage and maternity leave laws; and unemployment insurance and occupational safety and health laws), as well as (ii) statistical indicators of working conditions (such as employment rates; earnings; safety levels; and unionization rates). It is emphasized that a core set of decent work indicators and variables are required in order to focus efforts and ensure that measurement efforts are manageable and feasible. With this in mind, a core set of statistical indicators for working conditions and core set of variables for legal information are suggested. It is also argued that while working conditions in the labour market can be measured by statistical indicators, the legal framework for work is too complex to be easily condensed into simple quantitative variables and therefore that legal information should be presented in tables and not converted or aggregated into quantitative variables or indicators. Based in large part on the core set of decent work indicators suggested in this paper, the ILO Policy Integration Department is presently testing its own core set of indicators in several countries.

This paper then reviewed annual global type reports of other international organizations and the ILO itself in order to help draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding what a future ILO World Decent Work Report could look like. Some recommendations from this review included: the structure and length of an annual decent work report should not be fixed in the first issue but should be allowed to evolve and improve over time; sections in a report should discuss the situation of regions because of large differences in decent work across regions; a complete set of data and information on decent work should be provided online with a selected subset of this provided in an appendix of the publication; and the considerable expertise and experience of ILO regional teams in preparing and publishing annual reports on employment should be drawn on.

The last section of this paper provided recommendations on how to improve measurement of decent work. It is argued that ILO needs to invest more in improving the information base on decent work, and that the ILO is faced by a chicken and egg problem as regards an annual report and an information base on decent work. An annual ILO flagship World Decent Work Report could help provide needed motivation and a framework for measuring and monitoring decent work around the world. It is also recommended that a network of ILO developing national collaborating scholars be established in the largest countries in each region in order to help identify and vet information and data on decent work. It is pointed out that such a network would not be expensive and would go a long way towards ensuring reasonably precise regional and world estimates for statistical decent work indicators.

Table 1. Statistical Decent Work Indicators of Working Conditions Suggested by ILO Policy Integration Department and ILO's Asian and Pacific Region

Major Aspect of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator	ILO Policy Integration Department	ILO Asian and Pacific region	Comments re inclusion in new core list (when not yes & yes in cols 3 & 4)
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>				
	Labour force participation rates	Yes	Yes	
	Employment to population ratio	Yes	Yes	
	Unemployment rate	Yes	Yes	
	Youth unemployment rate	Yes	Yes	
	Youth non-activity rate	No	Yes	Drop due to questionable meaning
	Wage employment share non-agricultural employment	Yes	No (see below)	Variant of below
	Casual/daily employment	No (see above)	Yes	Variant of above
<b>Unacceptable Work</b>				
	Children not in school (% by age)	Yes	Yes	
	Children in wage employment or self-employment (% by age)	Yes	No	Proxy for hazardous child labour that has no intly accepted definition
<b>Adequate Earnings and Productive Work</b>				
	Inadequate pay rate (% employees receive < living wage)	Yes	Yes	
	Average earnings in selected occupations	Yes	Yes (for casual/daily workers)	
	Real per capita earnings	No (see above)	Yes	Similar to above. Possible context indicator.
	Recent job training	Yes	No	Drop due to limited data availability
<b>Fair Treatment in Employment</b>				
	Occupational segregation by sex (index & % of non-agricultural wage employment in male-dominated and female-dominated)	Yes	No	Important for gender and decent work. Also important for C111



Major Aspect of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator	ILO Policy Integration Department	ILO Asian and Pacific region	Comments re inclusion in new core list (when not yes & yes in cols 3 & 4)
	occupations)			
	Female share of managerial and administrative occupations (% & ratio relative to female share of non-agricultural employment)	Yes	Yes (% female only)	Important for gender and decent work. Also important for C111
	Female share of non-agricultural wage employment	Yes	Yes	
	Female to male pay ratio for selected occupations	Yes	No	Important for gender and decent work. Important for C100
	Female to male ratios or differences for other indicators	Yes	No	Important for gender and decent work
<b>Decent Hours</b>				
	Excess hours (% of employed with > 48 & % with > 60 hours per week)	Yes	Yes	
	Time-related underemployment rate	Yes	No	Drop due to limited data availability
<b>Balancing Work and Family Life</b>				
	Employment rate for women with children under school age	Yes	No	Drop due to limited data availability
<b>Safe work</b>				
	Fatality rate (per 100,000 employees & per 100,000 employees in manufacturing)	Yes	Yes (employees only)	Rate for manufacturing only would reduce affect of sectoral distrib of employment
	Non-fatality injury rate	No	Yes	Drop due to poor quality data
	Labour inspection	Yes	No	Drop due to limited data availability
	Occupational injury insurance coverage	Yes	No	Include in legal framework information
<b>Security of Work</b>				
	Tenure less than 1 year (% employed)	Yes	No	<b>Drop due to limited data availability</b>
	Temporary work (% employees)	Yes	Yes (number casual/daily workers)	

Major Aspect of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator	ILO Policy Integration Department	ILO Asian and Pacific region	Comments re inclusion in new core list (when not yes & yes in cols 3 & 4)
<b>Social Protection</b>				
	Social security expenditure (% GDP & separately for health, and old age)	Yes	Yes (percent GDP only)	Simplify to % GDP & % govt expenditures due to limited data availability
	Old age pension coverage (% > age 65 with pension, % LF contributing to pension, average pension per mo.)	Yes	No (see below)	Simplify by dropping % LF contributing to pension due to limited data availability
	Social security coverage for wage and salary earners	No (see above)	Yes	Similar to above. Drop due to limited data availability
	Public expenditure on needs-based cash income support	Yes	No	Drop due to limited data availability
<b>Social Dialogue and Workplace Relations</b>				
	Union density rate	Yes	Yes	
	Collective wage bargaining coverage rate	Yes	Yes	
	Strikes and lockouts	Yes	Yes	Drop due to questionable meaning
	Number of enterprises belonging to employers' organization	No	Yes	Drop due to questionable value
<b>Socio-Economic Context</b>				
	Informal economy employment (% employment and % non-agricultural LF and/or urban LF)	Yes	No (included in an expanded list of decent work indicators)	
	Growth rate of output per employed person	Yes	Yes	
	Income inequality (ratio top 10% to bottom 10%)	Yes	Yes	
	Poverty Rate	Yes	Yes	
	Employment by sector (especially % non-agriculture and % manufacturing)	Yes	Yes	
	Employment by employment status (especially % employee)	Yes	Yes	
	Inflation rate (CPI)	Yes	No	Keep as important
	Education of adult population (literacy rate & secondary)	Yes	No	Keep as important

Major Aspect of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator	ILO Policy Integration Department	ILO Asian and Pacific region	Comments re inclusion in new core list (when not yes & yes in cols 3 & 4)
	school graduation rate)			
	Output per employed person (in PPP)	Yes	No	Keep as important
	GDP per capita and growth rate (in PPP)	Yes	No	Keep as important

Notes:

LF indicates labour force.

Second tier indicators suggested by ILO's Asian and Pacific region are not included in this table.

Table 2. Suggested core decent work statistical indicators of working conditions

Characteristic of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator (S indicates if indicator should be measured by sex) <sup>a</sup>	Aspects Not Measured (generally due to limited data)	Comments
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>			
Employment	Labour force participation rate (by age) (S) a		Needed to calculate other indicators. Higher value not necessarily indicative of improved decent work.
	Employment to population ratio (ages 25-54) (S)	Extent of part-time work	Higher value does not necessarily indicate improved decent work. Use of common age group increases intl comparability.
	Unemployment rate (S)	Long-term unemployment. Under-employment. Involuntary part-time work	Should consider also reporting unemployment rate for employees only and/or for urban areas only.
	Youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24) (S)		
	Wage employment share of non-agricultural employment (S)		Wage employment needed to calculate other indicators. Casual/daily employment suggested by ILO Asian and Pacific region.
Child Labour and Forced Labour (Unacceptable Work)	Children not in school (% by age) (S)	Regularity of attendance and extent of learning	
	Children in wage employment or self-employment (% by age) (S)	Hazardous and worst forms of child labour (only regional and world estimates available)	No intly accepted definition of hazardous child labour. Children in wage or self employment is proxy for hazardous and worst forms of child labour. Hazardous child labour and worst forms of child labour are focus of ILO C182.
		Forced labour (only world and regional estimates of reported cases available)	Most forced labour not observed. As consciousness increases, observed estimates will also increase.
<b>Earnings</b>			
Adequate Earnings	Inadequate pay rate (% employees receive < living wage) (S)		Methodology to estimate living wage in Anker, 2005.

Characteristic of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator (S indicates if indicator should be measured by sex) <sup>a</sup>	Aspects Not Measured (generally due to limited data)	Comments
	Average earnings in selected occupations (S)		Available in ILO's KILM from ILO's October Inquiry. Could add wages of casual/daily workers as suggested by ILO's Asian and Pacific region.
		Recent job training	Limited data for developing countries.
Benefits	Social security expenditure (% GDP & % government expenditures)	Separate %s for health, old age, and other due to limited data.	Expenditure to GDP calculated as beneficiaries per capita * expenditures per beneficiary / GDP per capita. Data available for approx 30 developing countries in new Social Security Inquiry.
	Old age pension coverage (% > age 65 with pension) (S)	Old age coverage for current workers due to limited data	Use of common age range increases international comparability. Data available for approx 30 developing countries in new ILO Social Security Inquiry.
	Health care expenditures not financed out of pocket by private households (% health care expenditures & % GDP)		Suggested by ILO's SEC/SOC as a proxy for health care coverage. Uses available WHO data.
		Cash income support for the poor	Limited data.
<b>Fair Treatment</b>			
Non-Discrimination	Occupational segregation by sex (index & % of non-agricultural wage employment in male-dominated and female-dominated occupations) (specifically for S)		Comparability problems associated with different levels of detail in national occupational classifications need to be taken into account.
	Female share of managerial and administrative Occupations (% & ratio relative to female share of non-agric employment) (specifically for S)	Female professional and technical workers	Female share of professional and technical workers not included because women are mainly in only two such occupations, nurses and teachers.
	Female share of non-agricultural wage employment (specifically for S)		See Employment Opportunities
	Female to Male Pay Ratio for Selected Occupations (specifically for		See Adequate Earnings

Characteristic of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator (S indicates if indicator should be measured by sex)a S)	Aspects Not Measured (generally due to limited data)	Comments
Hours	Excess hours (% of employed with > 48 & % with > 60 hours per week) (S)		48 hours max allowed in ILO C1. Data often reported for 50+ hours but this should be good proxy for over 48 hours. KILM expected to measure this in future.
		Underemployment	KILM includes time-related underemployment but has data for only 12 developing countries.
		Irregular and/or asocial hours that conflict with family responsibilities	Limited data. Can be favorable when voluntary.
Balancing Work and Family Life		LFPR for women with young children, or LFPR for women in main reproductive ages	Limited data. Higher value does not necessarily indicate more decent work.
		Irregular and/or asocial hours that may conflict with family responsibilities	Important to also look beyond LM for constraints faced by women workers (see socio-economic context indicators such as fertility rate)
		Child care arrangements	Complex. Limited data.
Safe Work	Fatality rate (per 100,000 employees & per 100,000 employees in manufacturing) (S)		Fatality rate data need to be cleaned (e.g. drop obviously poor quality country data after establishing acceptable ranges of values). National value is sensitive to LM structure, as fatality rates differ by sector (e.g. higher in mining, agric and construction and lower in services). Suggestion is to also report rate for manufacturing only. Data cover only formal sector as mostly come from insurance records.
		Non-fatal injury rate	Non-fatal injury data are not reliable. Under-reporting varies greatly across countries (e.g., ratio of reported non-fatal injuries to reported fatal injuries ranges from about 2 in Pakistan, Turkey and Zimbabwe to about 800 in Denmark and UK).
		Labour inspectors per 100,000 employees	Possible. But would require new data collection system. Also would ignore effectiveness of inspectors and cover mainly formal sector. ILO's SAFEWORK has concluded that available data are weak.
Stability and Security of Work	Temporary work (% employees) (S)		Comparability problems to measure temporary positions. Counter-cyclical; value rises with economic upturn as newer workers hired. Data may be limited. Report by age or for > age 25 because values much higher for younger workers. Included in hope of having one indicator here.

Characteristic of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator (S indicates if indicator should be measured by sex) <sup>a</sup>	Aspects Not Measured (generally due to limited data)	Comments
		Tenure less than 1 year (% employed)	Limited data in developing countries. Counter-cyclical; value rises with economic upturn as newer workers hired. Report by age or for > age 25 because values much higher for younger workers.
<b>Social Dialogue and Workers' Voice</b>			
Workers' Voice	Union density rate (S)		Need to take into consideration when unions are not free. For practical reasons may need to use outside academic (e.g., Visser).
Social Dialogue	Collective wage bargaining coverage rate (S)		For practical reasons may need to use outside academic (e.g., Visser).
		Strikes and lockouts	Questionable meaning for decent work, as low (high) value could indicate ineffective (effective) right to strike. Limited data for developing countries.
<b>Socio-Economic Context</b>			
	Informal economy employment (% employment and % non-agricultural LF and/or % urban LF) (S)		Needed to calculate other DW indicators. When possible, should provide separate estimates for different definitions (e.g. size of establishment, social security coverage, etc.).
	Growth rate of output per employed person		DW less sustainable when labour productivity does not increase.
	Education of adult population (literacy rate & secondary school graduation rate) (S)		Proxy for skill level of adult LF. Use 15+ for literacy rate and 25+ for secondary school graduation rate.
	Employment by sector (especially % non-agriculture and % manufacturing) (S)		Needed to calculate other DW indicators. Also affects observed values of other DW indicators.
	Employment by employment status (espec. % employee) (S)		Needed to calculate other DW indicators. Also affects observed values of other DW indicators.
	Wage share of GDP		DW less sustainable when income inequality is high. Also affects equity.
	Income inequality (ratio top 10% to		DW less sustainable when wage share is low. Also affects equity.

Characteristic of Decent Work	Decent Work Indicator (S indicates if indicator should be measured by sex) <sup>a</sup>	Aspects Not Measured (generally due to limited data)	Comments
	bottom 10%)		
	Poverty rate		Natl poverty rates estimate should be included in addition to poverty rates estimated by World Bank's \$1 and \$2 a day. Will allow poverty measurement in upper-middle and high-income countries, where Bank assumes < 1% poverty.
	GDP per capita (growth rate & level in PPP)		
	Development level		World Bank classifies countries into low-, lower- middle, upper-middle, high-income levels.
	Urbanization rate (% LF & % population) (S)		Needed to calculate other DW indicators.
	Total fertility rate		Higher fertility rate increases family responsibilities burden. Especially important for women who are mainly responsible.
	Inflation rate		Needed to calculate other DW indicators. Very high rate may indicate economic distress.
	Working poor (S)		Working poor considered socio-economic context variable, because it is a household concept.
		Number of employers' organizations	Questionable value. Does not consider number of workers covered or influence of organizations on companies.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> S indicates usefulness of separate female and male values expressed as female to male ratio and/or as female-male difference as appropriate. Limited data availability for separate female and male rates is likely to be a problem for several core indicators.

LF indicates labour force. LM indicates labour market. LFPR indicates labour force participation rate.



**Table 3. Data availability by region of selected suggested core decent work statistical indicators of working conditions**

Region	Decent work statistical indicator of working conditions			
	Union Density Rate	Occupational Fatality Rate	Social Security Expenditure (% GDP)	Labour Force Participation Rate
<b>Developed Economies and EU</b>				
Countries with data	35	32	36	35
% countries with data	97%	92%	100%	97%
% LF with data	98%	99%	100%	100%
% years with data (countries with data)	52%	84%	80%	86%
<b>Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS</b>				
Countries with data	14	9	13	15
% countries in region with data	78%	50%	72%	83%
% LF in region with data	94%	84%	88%	92%
% years with data (countries with data)	17%	89%	59%	56%
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>				
Countries with data	13	8	18	22
% countries in region with data	38%	24%	53%	65%
% LF in region with data	94%	7%	97%	97%
% years with data (countries with data)	33%	81%	39%	41%
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>				
Countries with data	7	10	13	26
% countries in region with data	20%	29%	37%	74%
% LF in region with data	69%	69%	75%	97%
% years with data (countries with data)	14%	67%	60%	49%
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>				
Countries with data	15	7	10	16

Region	Decent work statistical indicator of working conditions			
	Union Density Rate	Occupational Fatality Rate	Social Security Expenditure (% GDP)	Labour Force Participation Rate
% countries in region with data	32%	15%	21%	34%
% LF in region with data	51%	17%	32%	54%
% years with data (countries with data)	19%	35%	47%	22%
<b>Middle East and Northern Africa</b>				
Countries with data	4	5	9	10
% countries in region with data	21%	26%	47%	53%
% LF in region with data	32%	33%	47%	68%
% years with data (countries with data)	14%	83%	52%	41%
<b>Total Non-Developed Economies &amp; Non-EU</b>				
Countries with data	53	40	63	89
% countries in region with data	35%	27%	41%	58%
% LF in region with data	84%	22%	85%	90%
% years with data (countries with data)	21%	71%	61%	42%
<b>World</b>				
Countries with data	88	72	99	124
% countries in world with data	47%	38%	52%	66%
% LF in world with data	86%	35%	87%	92%
% years with data (countries with data)	33%	77%	68%	54%

Notes:

Percentages are rounded to the nearest percent.

<sup>a</sup> Note that the number of fatalities is estimated for all countries in ILO Introductory Report: Decent Work – Safe Work.

<sup>b</sup> Note that labour force participation rates are estimated for all countries in the online database [EAPPEP](#).

Sources

Main source: ILO IFP-SES & LABORSTA, LABORSTA, IMF, LABORSTA. Second source: EU, See note a, OECD, See note b. Third source: OECD, Eurostat, ILO Social Security Inquiry.

**Table 4. Legal Framework for Decent Work Information**

Characteristic of Decent Work	Description	National Level		Evidence of Implementation Effectiveness	Coverage of Workers a, b		Intl level Ratification of ILO Conventions
		Law or Policy?	Benefit Level		in Law	in Practice	
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>							
Employment	Government commitment to full employment	Natl law or stated govt policy?	nr	Full employment committee met last year?	nr	nr	C122
	Unemployment insurance	Natl law?	Number of weeks		Who is covered? Rough %Wa	Rough %Wa	C102
Child Labour and Forced Labour (Unacceptable Work)	Child labour	Compulsory education	Number of years			Enrolment rates (see statistical indicators)	C138; C182
	Forced labour			Complaints received by ILO; Media or other reports of complaints	nr	nr	C29; C105
<b>Earnings</b>							
Adequate Earnings	Statutory minimum wage	Natl law?	Real min wage index. e Min wage relative to living wage. Min wage relative to wages in selected occupations and manufacturing. Inflation since last min wage adjustment.		Who is covered? Rough %Wa	Rough % Wa	<b>C131</b>
Benefits	Pension	Natl law?	Replacement rate		Who is covered? Rough %Wa	See statistical LM indicators	
<b>Fair Treatment</b>							

Non-discrimination	Anti-discrimination law based on sex of worker (specifically for Gender)	Natl law?	nr	Court cases in country. Ntl mechanisms. Complaints received by or known to ILOd	nr	nr	C100, C111
	Anti-discrimination law based on race, ethnicity, religion or national origin	Natl law?	nr	Court cases in country. Ntl mechanisms. Complaints received or known to ILOd	nr	nr	C100, C111
Hours							
Balancing Work and Family Life	Paid maternity leave (specifically for Gender)	Natl law?	Number weeks and % replacement rate		Rough %Wa	Rough %Wa	C183
	Paid paternity leave or paid parental leave (specifically for Gender)	Natl law?	Existence for men (also possibly number weeks and % replacement rate for men)		Rough %Wa	Rough %Wa	C156
Safe Work	OSH insurance	Natl law?	Earnings related cash benefits for injured workers (replacement rate)	OSH Board exists?	Rough %Wa	Rough %Wa	C155
Stability and Security of Work							
<b>Social Dialogue and Workers' Voice</b>							
Workers' Voice	Freedom of association and right to organize	Natl law limiting right?	nr	Limitations on type of union allowed. Complaints received by or known to ILOd. Democracy. Whether union free of govt.	Who is covered? Rough %Wa	nr	C87
Social Dialogue	Collective bargaining	Natl law?	nr	Natl tripartite	Who is covered?	nr	C98

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right

board/council for labour issues? Whether natl board meets regularly? Democracy. Complaints received by or known to ILOd.

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Notes:

nr indicates not relevant. W indicates workers.

<sup>a</sup> Coverage of workers should be reported using broad size categories only, such as: < 10% (relatively few), 10-32% (some), 33-66% (about half), 67-89% (most), 90+ (virtually all or all), with the specific categories to be determined later after some experience. To make a rough estimate for a country, one would need rough estimates of for example employment by employment status, employment by sector, and employment by size of establishment. Non-agricultural wage employees will often be a reasonable base population.

<sup>b</sup> Separate values for women and men should be estimated whenever possible. In this way, gender differences between men and women could be measured, although in practice this will often be difficult.

<sup>c</sup> ILO Convention No.183 on maternity leave specifies 2/3rds replacement pay as the minimum acceptable. If one would like to simplify information on maternity leave into one "number", there are some obvious possibilities (although this does not need to be done). Option 1 would code countries as either in conformance with or not in conformance with ILO Convention No.183 (i.e., 1 if national law where replacement rate GE 2/3rds; 0 otherwise). Option 2 would calculate the number of full-time weeks of income received (i.e., number of weeks \* % replacement pay rate). Option 3 would allow for three possible values for each country (1 for national law that in full compliance with ILO Convention No.183, 0.5 for national law not in full compliance with C183, and 0 for no national law). Reporting the complete information is preferred.

<sup>d</sup> Complaints received by ILO are biased in the sense that less democratic countries are less likely to report complaints.

<sup>e</sup> In countries with multiple minimum wages, it would be useful to report a range of values as well as some of the most important. Importance could be judged based on number of workers covered and/or on representation of typical low wage workers.

<sup>f</sup> Main purpose is to indicate if paid leave extends to fathers. For this reason, benefit level is not as important as it is for the maternity leave.

<sup>g</sup> Missing here are other national laws that affect gender equity and reflect disadvantages for women workers. For example in some countries, women do not have equal opportunity for entrepreneurship, as women do not always have equal rights to land and business ownership, bank accounts, access to credit, etc. Although this is an important area of gender inequality, it is not included in this table because it would require considerable new efforts to collect required information.

Table 5. Review of 16 annual world publications of other international organizations

Organization	Report	Frequency	CD with data	Online data	Statistical Appendix	Part I World Overview	Comments
1. WHO	World Health Report	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes. Some tables are the same over the years, some change.	No. Part I introduces report's main theme for the year (different theme each year).	
2. UNDP	Human Development Report	Once a year	Yes	Yes	Yes. Some tables are the same over the years, some change.	No. Part I introduces report's main theme for the year (different theme each year).	Includes human development index (HDI).
3. IMF	World Economic Outlook	Twice a year (September and April)	No	Yes	Yes. There are 45 identical tables, which are updated every publication.	Yes. Part I World Overview. Includes some global indicators, e.g. world real GDP growth, consumer prices, world trade volume, ...	Part I consist of: Chap. 1: Global prospects and policy issues – and Chap. 2: Country and regional perspectives.
4. World Bank	World Development Report	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes. Some tables are same each year. Other tables relate to the main theme of report.	No. Part I Overview introduces report's main theme for the year (different theme each year).	Subject each year changes. Includes e.g. poverty, economic growth, ...
5. UNAIDS	Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic	Once every two years	No	Yes	Most indicators are the same over the years. There are HIV/AIDS estimations and data.	Yes. Part I World Overview. Presents global figures on HIV/AIDS (people living with HIV/AIDS, prevalence rate, ...).	Many common points between reports, e.g.: prevention, and access to treatment.
6. UN-DESA	World Economic Situation and Prospects	Once a year	No	Yes	Significant number of tables, which are updated every year.	Yes. Part I World Overview. Called Global Outlook. Presents every year macro economic prospects for world economy.	Report is relatively short in comparison with others.
7. UNCTAD	World Investment Report	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes. Some tables are the same every year. Some tables are different and related to the new theme each year.	Yes. Part I World Overview. Based on similar subjects over the years.	Similar themes are treated over the years on investment & FDI.

Organization	Report	Frequency	CD with data	Online data	Statistical Appendix	Part I World Overview	Comments
8. OECD	Employment Outlook	Once a year	No	Yes: with pass-word: <a href="https://www.oecd.int/olis">https://www.oecd.int/olis</a>	Yes. Statistical appendix. Same tables every year.	No. Yes prior to 2003 a Part I World Overview chapter 1 called "Recent labour market developments and prospects"	Different theme every year now.
9. ISSA	Social Security Programs Throughout the World (SSPTW)	Once every two years	CD: Yes (but to stop)	Yes: access with pass-word: <a href="http://www.issa.int">www.issa.int</a>	No	No Part I World Overview chapter.	Publication is now split into 4 volumes. Each volume covers a region, and each volume is updated every 2 years.
10. FAO	The State of Food and Agriculture	Once a year (since 2001-except one volume for 2003-2004)	Yes	Yes	Yes. 9 common tables since volume 2003-2004.	Yes. Part I World Overview. Structure of report has changed since its start in 2001. But "World review" and "Regional review" chapters have been maintained.	Since 2003-2004 report, there is a part called "world and regional review - facts and figures" that only uses bullet points and graphs.
11. World Bank	Global Economic Prospects	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes, but not published every year (e.g. not in 2005 or 2006). Other years, usually 3 appendixes with tables and analysis: "Regional Economic Prospects", "Global Commodity Price Prospects", "Global Economic Indicators"	No. Short overview chapter introduces main theme of report for that year (different theme each year). Appendixes come closer to a Part I World Overview.	
12. World Bank	Global Development Finance	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes. Appendixes present data on debts, resources, and debt indicators by groups of countries.  There is separate volume with country tables.	No. Short overview chapter introduces theme of report for that year (different theme each year).	2 volumes every year: "Analysis and statistical appendix" concerned with regions, and group of countries. "Country tables" compiles data indicators for countries.

Organization	Report	Frequency	CD with data	Online data	Statistical Appendix	Part I World Overview	Comments
13. World Bank	Doing Business	Once a year (since 2004)	No	Yes	Yes. Some tables are the same; some are different over the years.	No. Overview chapter introduces theme of report for that year (different theme each year).	
14. UNESCO	Education for All	Once a year (since volume 2003/04)	No	Yes	Yes. Large number of tables and indicators every year. Some are the same every year; some are different over the years.	No. Short overview chapter mainly introduces theme of report for that year (different theme each year).	Seems to have replaced the publication called World Education Report.
15. UNICEF	The State of the World's Children	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes. 10 tables are roughly the same over the years (Basic indicators, nutrition, health, HIV/AIDS, education, ...).	No Part I or World Overview chapter.	
16. UN-DESA	World Economic and Social Survey	Once a year	No	Yes	Yes. Started in 2006. There are 7 tables.	No. Overview chapter is concerned with special topic for the year (different theme each year).	



Table 6. Review of ILO annual “multi-country” publications

Report	Periodicity	CD	Online	Statistical Appendix	Part I/Overview	Comments
1. World Labour Report	Irregular. Now stopped	No	No	Yes	No Part I world overview. Chapter 1 introduces special theme of report.	Last volume in 2000.
2. World Employment Report	Irregular. Supposed to be every 2 years.	Yes	Yes: <a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/wer2004.html">http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/wer2004.html</a>	Yes	No Part I world overview. Chapter 1 introduces special theme of report.	Last volume 2004-05. 2001 previous volume. Next volume expected in 2007.
3. Global Employment Trends	Once a year (since 2003)	No	Yes: <a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/global.html">http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/global.html</a>	Yes. Some tables same over the years, some change.	No Part I world overview. Chapter 1 introduces special theme of report.	
4. Labour Overview – Latin America and Caribbean (Panorama Labourale)	Once a year	Yes	Yes: <a href="http://www.oit.org.pe/portal/documentos/labover05.pdf">http://www.oit.org.pe/portal/documentos/labover05.pdf</a>	Yes. Same tables every year.	Yes. Part I overview gives overall regional picture.	Non-neutral statements provided in headings.
5. Labour and Social Trends in Asia and the Pacific	Once a year (started in 2005)	No	Yes: 2006 <a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asia/Bangkok/14arm/download/labour.pdf">http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asia/Bangkok/14arm/download/labour.pdf</a>	Yes. Mostly same tables every year, a few change.	Yes. Part I overview chapter gives overall regional picture.	Non-neutral statements provided in margin.

Table 7. Concentration of workers in relatively few countries, by region and for world

Region a/World	To reach at least 1/2 of LF			To reach at least 2/3 of LF		
	Number countries	% countries	Countries	Number countries	% countries	Added Countries
Developed Economies & EU	3	9%	USA, Japan, Germany	6	17%	UK, France, Italy
Central & E Europe (non EU) & CIS b	2	11%	Russia, Turkey	3	17%	Ukraine
Asia and the Pacific	2	6%	China, India	2	6%	
Latin America & Caribbean	2	6%	Brazil, Mexico	4	11%	Columbia, Argentina
Sub-Saharan Africa	6	13%	Nigeria, Ethiopia, Congo, S Africa, Tanzania, Kenya	10	21%	Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique, Madagascar
Middle East and Northern Africa c	4	22%	Iran, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco	6	33%	Sudan, Iraq
World	5	3%	China, India, United States, Indonesia, Brazil	13	7%	Russia, Japan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Germany, Mexico, Viet Nam

Notes:

a KILM regions used. LF indicates labour force.

b Inclusion of Turkey in this region instead of Middle East and North African region is questionable. If Turkey were included in a different region, Ukraine would be required in addition to Russia to reach 50% and also Uzbekistan would be required to reach 66.7% in Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS.

c If Turkey were included in the Middle East and North African region, Turkey would replace Morocco to reach 50% and replace Iraq to reach 66.7%.

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