



SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the Seventeenth International
Conference of Labour Statisticians
(Geneva, 24 November-3 December 2003)**

1. The Seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians took place from 24 November to 3 December 2003 in Geneva. The report of its proceedings is attached.¹
2. The Conference elected Dr. Eduardo Pereira Nunes (Brazil) as Chairperson, Mr. Joseph Archvadze (Georgia) as Vice-Chairperson and Ms. Pandu C. Kali (Namibia) as Reporter of the Conference.
3. The Conference examined the following agenda items:
 - I. General Report: General discussion on a number of topics, including the past and future statistical work of the ILO;
 - II. Household income and expenditure statistics;
 - III. Consumer price indices.
4. The Conference appointed two committees to deal with the substantive topics that were the subject of revised international standards for consideration by the Conference (agenda items II and III). Ms. Sylvie Michaud (Canada) was elected as Chairperson of the Committee on Household Income and Expenditure Statistics, and Dr. Paul Cheung (Singapore) was elected as Chairperson of the Committee on Consumer Price Indices. The reports of these committees are reproduced respectively after paragraphs 74 and 92 of the report of the Conference. The Conference adopted resolution I concerning household income and expenditure statistics and resolution II concerning consumer price indices, which appear in Appendix I to the report of the Conference.
5. The Conference's recommendations for the ILO's future work in these two areas consist of:

¹ ICLS/17/2003/4.

- supporting countries in the implementation of the ICLS resolutions and the production of statistics of household income and expenditure (HIES) and consumer price indices (CPI);
 - producing, along with other organizations, a technical guide to assist countries in implementing the HIES recommendations;
 - participating in a city group to be set up on household expenditure statistics, to further research into difficult conceptual and measurement areas that still exist;
 - building up the ILO's research capabilities in the area of price statistics.
- 6.** In the course of its work, the Conference established six working groups to deal with specific issues: the updating of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88); informal employment statistics; decent work indicators; statistics on trade unions and collective bargaining; gender mainstreaming in labour statistics; and working time statistics.
- 7.** The Working Group on the Updating of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) was chaired by Mr. György Lázár (Hungary). Its report appears after paragraph 42 of the report of the Conference. The Conference endorsed the resolution proposed by the Working Group, which is presented as resolution III in Appendix I to the report of the Conference. This resolution requests the Governing Body of the ILO to ensure that the Office, as the custodian of ISCO-88:
- will have the capacity to update this classification by the end of 2007 for the results to be available for use in the 2010 round of national population censuses; and
 - develops mechanisms, including consultations with national agencies and convening a meeting of experts, to make appropriate recommendations to the Governing Body.
- 8.** The Working Group on Informal Employment was chaired by Mr. Jacques Charmes (France). It agreed on the usefulness of complementing statistics on employment in the informal sector with statistics on informal employment. The Working Group proposed guidelines concerning a statistical definition of informal employment, which were adopted by the Conference. These guidelines provide a basis for the ILO to give follow-up to the request made by the 2002 session of the International Labour Conference to assist countries in the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics on the informal economy. The report of the Working Group and the guidelines appear after paragraph 34 of the report of the Conference.
- 9.** The Working Group on Decent Work Indicators was chaired by Ms. Tatiana Gorbacheva (Russian Federation). Its report is reproduced after paragraph 25 of the report of the Conference. It emphasized the need for more clarity on the underlying concept of decent work and the need for collecting such data from various sources. It encouraged the ILO to carry out more conceptual and empirical work on this topic and requested the preparation of a comprehensive report for submission to the Eighteenth ICLS. The Conference endorsed these recommendations and requested the ILO to convene a tripartite meeting of experts before the next ICLS.
- 10.** The Working Group on Statistics of Trade Union Membership and Collective Bargaining Coverage was chaired by Mr. Garth Bode (Australia) and its report appears after paragraph 54 of the report of the Conference. The Working Group examined concepts and definitions as well as appropriate sources and methods, and provided advice on future statistical work on these two topics. The Working Group recognized that statistics on trade

unions and collective bargaining were two important traditional measures of the labour relations field, although they did not cover all aspects of social dialogue for which other dimensions needed to be taken into account. The Conference agreed that further developmental work should be seen in the wider context of social dialogue and that these statistics should be discussed by the requested meeting of experts on decent work indicators.

11. The Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Labour Statistics was chaired by Dr. Linda L. Sabbadini (Italy). Its report is reproduced after paragraph 31 of the report of the Conference. This Working Group agreed that gender mainstreaming should permeate the entire statistical system and should occur from the design of the statistical instruments through to the dissemination of the statistics. It adopted a checklist of good practices for mainstreaming gender which the Conference endorsed. The Conference also requested that gender issues be considered in all aspects of the ILO's developmental work on labour statistics, as a core principle of this work.
12. The Working Group on Statistics of Working Time was chaired by Mr. José A. de Sousa Fialho (Portugal). Its report is presented following paragraph 37 of the report of the Conference. This Working Group unanimously agreed on the need to revise the current international statistical standards on working time, with particular emphasis on three issues: establishing definitions; collecting the information; and presenting the resulting statistics. The Conference recommended that future work in this area should include a tripartite meeting of experts before the presentation of a draft resolution to the Eighteenth ICLS.
13. The Conference also recommended that child labour statistics should be a topic for standard setting at the next ICLS. In addition, it identified other areas for developmental work, such as labour underutilization and labour demand, social security statistics, training statistics, statistics on international labour migration, statistics on workers with disabilities and labour accounting systems. The Conference also requested the ILO to continue its work on wages and employment-related income (including the updating of the *October Inquiry*²), its programme of printed publications and its technical assistance to countries. The Conference noted that adequate resources, both human and financial, would be required to implement all the recommended activities.
14. ***The Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues may wish to recommend that the Governing Body:***
 - (a) *take note of the report of the Conference;*
 - (b) *consider the recommendations of the Conference in carrying out the future programme of work of the Office; and*
 - (c) *authorize the Director-General to distribute the report of the Conference to:*
 - (i) *the governments of member States and, through them, to the national employers' and workers' organizations concerned, drawing particular attention to the three resolutions contained in Appendix I to the report and to the guidelines and checklist referred to in paragraphs 8 and 11 above;*

² ILO: *Statistics on occupational wages and hours of work and on food prices: October Inquiry results, 2001 and 2002.*

- (ii) the international employers' and workers' organizations concerned;
and*
- (iii) the United Nations and the other intergovernmental organizations and
non-governmental organizations represented at the Conference.*

Geneva, 17 February 2004.

Point for decision: Paragraph 14.