



**Statement by Juan Somavia  
Director-General of the International Labour Office  
on the occasion of  
World Statistics Day**

**20 October 2010**

Today we celebrate the first World Statistics Day. The UN General Assembly decided that on this day, the many accomplishments of statistics worldwide should be recognized by “dedicating further effort and resources to strengthening national statistical capacity”. It is an opportunity to reflect on the vital role of statistics in day-to-day policy-making and to commit to ensuring that ILO policy analysis and advice is underpinned by a sturdy statistical foundation.

National Statistical Offices, Ministries of Labour and other organizations producing relevant statistics on the world of work find themselves under pressure as more and more timely statistical data is asked of them. The ILO is addressing these challenges. We are working with our constituents to build their capacities; we are doubling efforts to collect data from countries where information is scarce.

The world is facing one of the worst jobs crises in decades and many are working in conditions that undermine the dignity of work. The crafting of decent work policies presents a major statistical challenge. Better and timelier statistics on the four dimensions of decent work: employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work, are increasingly demanded by policy-makers.

Better measuring progress in the realization of decent work is key to the realization of the Decent Work Agenda. We are placing high priority on enhancing the empirical basis of decent work policies and providing relevant and timely data that is being requested of us.

Today I would like to commend the commitment and hard work of a range of national institutions including employers’ and workers’ organizations who produce the surveys, censuses, administrative records, and other sources which enable us to compile and make available data internationally. It is essential that we find ways of sustaining and reinforcing the statistical capability that forms part of the solution to more effective policy-making.

The ILO is committed to constantly striving to improve its statistical capability to support national efforts. The mandate and capacity of the ILO Department of Statistics has been strengthened to meet this objective.

A more comprehensive set of data is indispensable to better diagnose trends shaping the world of work and ultimately the lives of women and men, families and communities. We need the skilful data producers and the sharp analysts who can relate their statistical capability to the realities of the world of work and who can communicate effectively with policy-makers and all who draw on their statistics to shape a world of decent work for all. Today, we celebrate “the service, the professionalism and the integrity” of official statistics in the world.

The international statistical community will find in the ILO a committed ally in this journey.

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