

الأمم المتحدة
اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا

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Commission Economique et Sociale
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EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
MEASUREMENT ISSUES IN LABOUR STATISTICS
Beirut, 29-30, June 2011

Information Note

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Although most ESCWA member countries collect and disseminate annual data on the labour force, there are still serious gaps in some internationally recommended indicators and the reliability of others is uncertain. According to ESCWA Statistical Abstract 2010, about six out of the fourteen member countries of ESCWA provide annual estimates of the rate of unemployment for the period 2001-2007.

This situation could be due to several factors: (1) the lack of skilled human resources in the field of labour statistics in some countries; (2) the lack of financial resources to undertake comprehensive labour force surveys regularly in some countries; (3) discrepancies in definitions and the implementation of international recommendations in labour statistics; and (4) difficulties in capturing relatively new but important indicators such as those pertaining to decent work, informal employment, underemployment and unemployment dynamics. Currently, we lack a full picture of the labour force, including underutilization of labour especially among the youth, in some ESCWA member countries.

Recently, there has been an increase in the demand for reliable and comparable labour force data including data on youth and women in the labour market, informal sector employment, underemployment, school to work transition, and on decent work/ working conditions. Indeed, mass protests that swept several Arab countries earlier this year demanded governments' states to improve living conditions and to offer decent jobs for youth. Therefore, a full picture of labour force is needed to enable policy makers and planners to draw realistic development plans as well as a strategic picture of the human security conditions in countries of the ESCWA region. Good quality labour force data are also needed for use in policy-informed analytic research by academic researchers in universities and NGOs.

To this end, and based on 9th ESCWA Statistical Committee recommendations, ESCWA's Statistics Division is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on measurement issues in Labour Force Statistics at the UN-House in Beirut during the period 29-30 June 2011.

The outputs of this EGM can be used to improve plans and implementation of data collection and dissemination of reliable labour statistics in the ESCWA region. In addition, this EGM is expected to help us identify needs for capacity building in specific areas in labour statistics, and establish a regional working group/task force on labour statistics. Ultimately, our aim is to facilitate the production of high-quality labour statistics to a variety of users, including policymakers, civil society organizations, and academics.

A. Main areas of discussion

The participants will present and discuss studies prepared by experts on the following subjects:

- a) Challenges in measuring women's participation in the labour force;
- b) Measuring underemployment and Informal employment;
- c) Measuring employment dynamics and school to work.

B. Participants

Regional and international experts in labour statistics or related areas

C. Documents

- a) An overview of labour force surveys in the ESCWA Region (ESCWA)
- b) Experts' papers

D. Language

The language of the workshop will be in English.

E. Venue and time of the workshop

The workshop will be held during the period of 29-30 June 2011, at ESCWA UN-House in Beirut, Lebanon.

F. Administrative arrangements

1- Requirements: Participants are requested to:

- Send a copy of their passports to this following e-mail address: sinnoz@un.org,
- Make their own arrangements for a visa to Lebanon (if needed; experts with European or American passports will get the visa at the airport)

2- Accommodation: A list of hotels, in Beirut, will be sent to the participants to make their own reservations.

G. For further information, contact:

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