



United Nations

Nations Unies

**United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
United Nations Development Programme**

**Expert Group Meeting on “The impact of the implementation
of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on the
achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”**

United Nations Office at Geneva

11-13 November 2009

**EQUAL ACCESS TO FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK
AS A POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY**

Expert paper prepared by:

Verena Schmidt *

Senior Specialist on Conditions of Work/ Gender Equality
International Labour Organization (ILO)
Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe

Division for the Advancement of Women
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations, New York
Fax: (212) 963-3463
daw@un.org
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>

** The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.*

Structure of presentation

- Platform for Action/ MDG 1B and its progress
- Decent Work
- Impact of Crisis on Employment
- Policy Conclusions on Employment and Gender Equality

Ban Ki-moon on the 2015 deadline to achieve MDGs:

“Time is short. We must seize this historic moment to act responsibly and decisively for the common good.”

Platform for Action

Para 47: “The uncertain global economic climate has been accompanied by economic restructuring as well as, in a certain number of countries, persistent, unmanageable levels of external debt and structural adjustment programmes.” [...]

The application of gender analysis to a wide range of policies and programmes is therefore critical to poverty reduction strategies.

Platform for Action

Para 58 (h): “Generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both the formal and informal sectors and adopt specific measures to address women’s unemployment, in particular their long-term unemployment”

Platform for Action

Para 58 (c): “Pursue and implement sound and stable macroeconomic and sectoral policies that are designed and monitored with the full and equal participation of women, encourage broad-based sustained economic growth, address the structural causes of poverty and are geared towards eradicating poverty and reducing gender-based inequality within the overall framework of achieving people-centred sustainable development”

Platform for Action

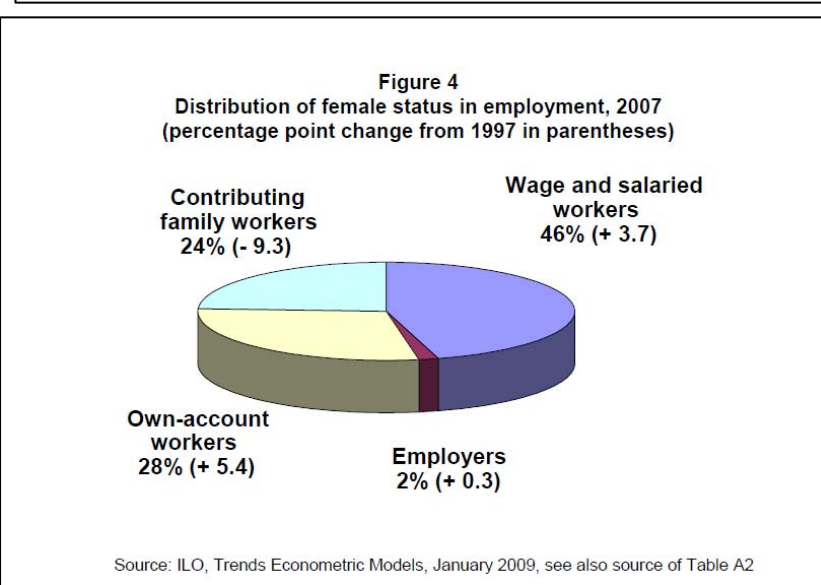
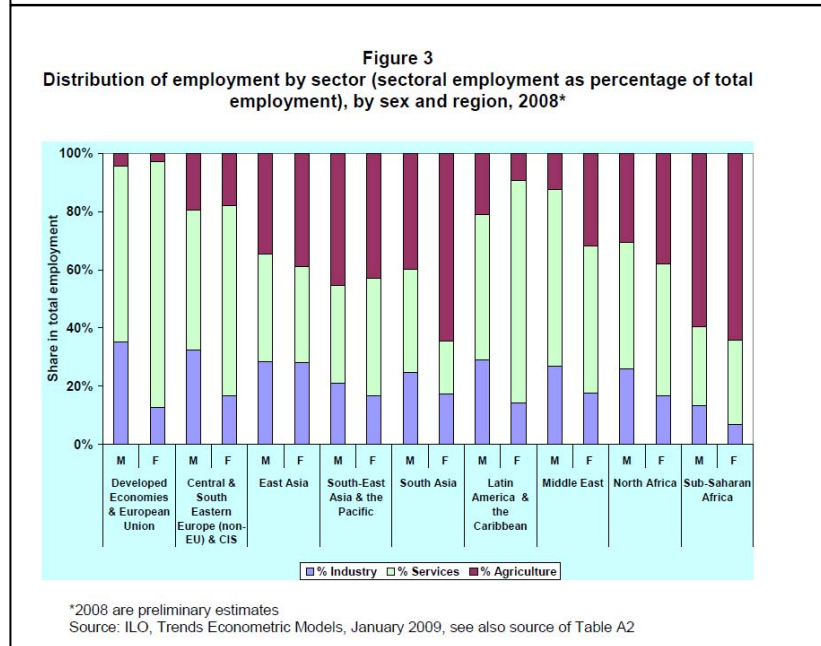
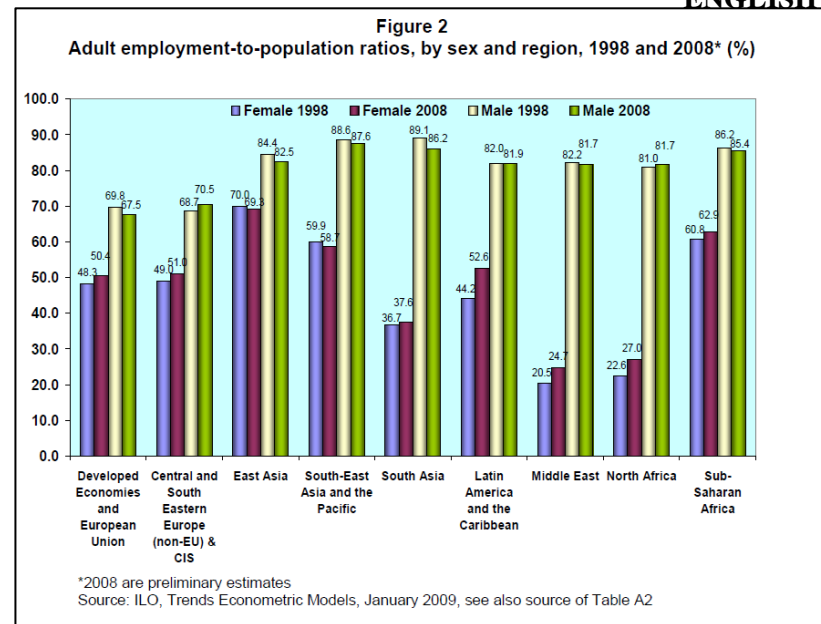
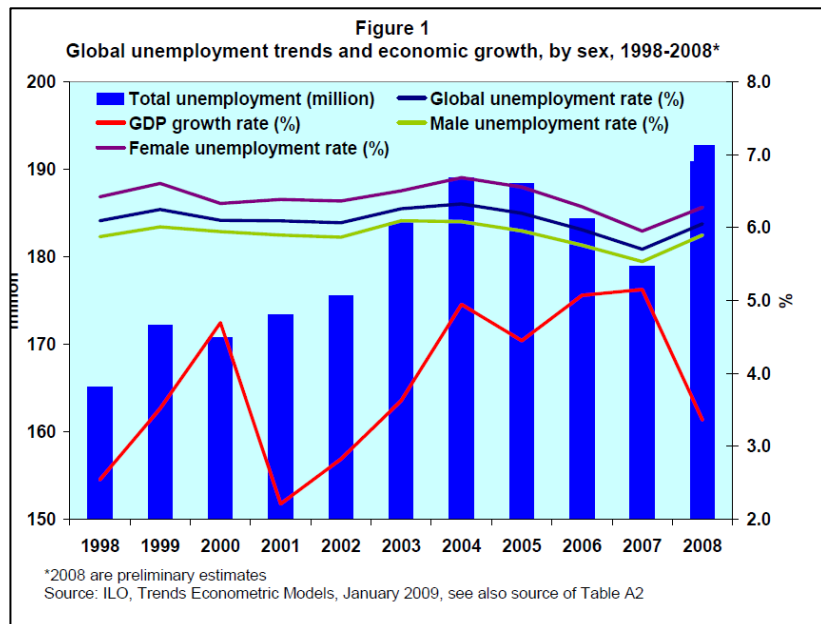
Para 175 (c): “Adopt policies that create an enabling environment for women’s self-help groups, workers’ organizations and cooperatives through non-conventional forms of support and by recognizing the right to freedom of association and the right to organize”

MDG Goal 1

- **ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER**
 - Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than 1 dollar a day
 - Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
 - Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

New MDG Target 1B – Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people (added in 2008)

- **Employment Indicators:**
 - 1.4 Growth rate of labour productivity (GDP per person employed)
 - 1.5 Employment-to-population ratio
 - 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below the poverty line (working poor)
 - 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment (vulnerable employment rate)



Impact of the Crisis on Gender Equality

- ILO predicts the loss of 51 million jobs by end of 2009
- In some developed economies, men initially experienced heavier job losses than women (construction, automobile, durable goods)
- In many developing countries, women are more affected by job losses (export manufacturing, service industries, supply chains, tourism)
- Gender-based vulnerabilities, including more limited legal benefits and protection, lack of decision-making authority and usually less access to, and control over, financial resources are likely to leave women more vulnerable to cope with the crisis than men
- Working conditions are becoming more precarious
- Single mothers are particularly vulnerable to the crisis (as they would be to any external shock)

Impact of the Crisis on Gender Equality

Global Employment Trends Update, May 2009

- Global unemployment scenarios moved upward to an increase of between 29 million and 59 million over the period 2007-2009
- Global unemployment rates of 6.5% and 7.4% in the two scenarios
- Impact of the crisis on vulnerable employment (own account workers and contributing family members)
- Workers in vulnerable employment would be between 48.9 and 52.8% of the total global workforce or between 1.49 billion and 1.6 billion workers

Global Jobs Pact

The Global Jobs Pact is a framework for the period ahead and a resource of practical policies for the multilateral system, governments, workers and employers. It consists of five parts. Gender perspectives are mainstreamed throughout:

- decent work response to the crisis;
- principles for promoting recovery and development;
- decent work responses, consisting of:
 - * accelerating employment creation, jobs recovery and sustaining enterprises,
 - * building social protection systems and protecting people,
 - * strengthening respect for international labour standards,
- social dialogue: bargaining collectively, identifying priorities, stimulating action;
- the way forward: shaping a fair and sustainable globalization; and
- ILO action.

ILO's report to G20 (Pittsburgh, Sept.09) on recovery packages shows 6 main types of measures being taken

1. New infrastructure investment – but does it give jobs to women?
2. Subsidies & tax reductions for small and medium enterprises (SME) – shared equally between sexes?
3. Direct credit to SMEs – the ones run by women too?
4. Cash transfers - a winner historically (i.e. in past recessions)- but do they reinforce gender-based differences?
5. Training for laid off workers – with skills to break occupational segregation?
6. Social dialogue – involving trade unions and employers' organizations more – but do women have a voice at the table?

Decent Work Agenda

- The ILO Decent Work Agenda aims to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.
- Four strategic objectives:
 - Principles and rights
 - Employment
 - Social protection
 - Social dialogue

Gender Equality and Decent Work

- Gender equality is considered essential to achieve decent work and it underpins all ILO work, with gender mainstreaming being the strategy to realise gender equality in the world of work.
- The work of the ILO in promoting gender equality also supports ILO's efforts to eliminate discrimination in the workplace.

ILO Gender Equality Conventions

- Equal Remuneration Convention 100, 1951
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111, 1958
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention 156, 1981
- Maternity Protection Convention 183, 2000
- Part-time Convention 175, 1994
- Homeworkers' Convention 177, 1996

Gender Equality in the World of Work

- Rights-based: a matter of human rights and justice
- Economic efficiency: good business sense for employers
- Development: instrumental in achieving economic growth and poverty reduction
- Inequalities accumulated over life cycle
- 'Decent Work' covers all who perform work

Platform for Action

- Para 206(f): “Develop a more comprehensive knowledge of all forms of work and employment by:
 - i. Improving data collection on the unremunerated work [...]
 - ii. Improving measurements that at present underestimate women’s unemployment and underemployment in the labour market [...]

Linking MDGs and Decent Work: Decent Work Indicators e.g. Employment

- Employment-to-population ratio, 15-64 years
- Unemployment rate
- Youth not in education and not in employment, 15-24 years
- Informal employment
- Labour force participation rate, 15-64 years [to be used especially where statistics on Employment-to-population ratio and/or Unemployment rate are not available]
- Youth unemployment rate, 15-24 years
- Unemployment by level of education
- Employment by status in employment
- Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment [to be used especially where statistics on informal employment are not available]
- Share of wage employment in non-agricultural employment
- Labour underutilization

Good practice from the World of Work

- Employment
- Social Protection
- Principles and Rights
- Social Dialogue

Policy responses-Employment

- Gender equality-central element in all aspects of employment creation, in macroeconomic frameworks, active labour market policies, skills and employability, enterprise development and employment-intensive infrastructure development
- Gender-based occupational segregation and unequal power relations must also be addressed
- Women’s skills need to be properly valued, and wages should match their educational advancements

Policy responses-Social Protection

- Social security systems - reformed to take into account the increased participation of women; and unequal treatment of women in pension schemes must be removed
- Occupational and safety needs of women and men need to be studied and policies developed taking into account reproductive health implications
- Maternity protection should be part of overall government responsibility
- Discrimination must be eliminated in recruitment of women of child-bearing age
- Paternity and parental leave need to be extended

Policy responses-Principles and Rights

- Governments must ratify ILO conventions; in particular conventions relating to discrimination and equal pay as starting points
- Existing and new legislation must be looked at through a gender lens to ensure they do not perpetuate discrimination against women
- Ratification of the ILO child labour conventions and action against the worst forms of child labour

Policy responses-Social dialogue

- Social dialogue and tripartism are essential policy tools to advance gender equality
- Participation of women must be increased
- Collective bargaining should address and include issues such as the gender pay gap, protection against discrimination, work-family measures, sexual violence and harassment, and the promotion of female employment
- Negotiators need to be trained on gender equality and equal pay

In Conclusion...

- Effectively implement international legal obligations, including core labour standards, and national law on gender equality
- Leverage partnerships with actors for change, including from the world of work
- Promote policy into action, and put an end to sex discrimination in the world of work...