

Media Update

14 March 2016

ILO

Press Release

ILO: Large gender gaps remain across broad spectrum of global labour market

New ILO report highlights the enormous challenges women continue to face in finding and keeping decent jobs around the world

14th March, 2016

GENEVA (ILO News) – Despite some modest gains in some regions in the world, millions of women are losing ground in their quest for equality in the world of work, according to a new report prepared by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as part of the ILO’s Women at Work Centenary Initiative .

“The report shows the enormous challenges women continue to face in finding and keeping decent jobs,” said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.

“Our actions must be immediate, effective and far-reaching. There is no time to waste. The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to pool our efforts and develop coherent, mutually supporting policies for gender equality.”

The report, *Women at Work: Trends 2016* examined data for up to 178 countries and concludes that inequality between women and men persists across a wide spectrum of the global labour market. What’s more, the report shows that over the last two decades, significant progress made by women in education hasn’t translated into comparable improvements in their position at work.

At the global level, the employment gender gap has closed by only 0.6



percentage points since 1995, with an employment-to-population ratio of 46 per cent for women and almost 72 per cent for men in 2015.

In 2015, 586 million women were working as own-account and contributing family workers across the world. As globally, the share of those who work in a family enterprise (contributing family workers) has decreased significantly among women (by 17.0 percentage points over the last 20 years) and to a lesser extent among men (by 8.1 percentage points), the global gender gap in contributing family work is reduced to 11 percentage points.

Although 52.1 per cent of women and 51.2 per cent of men in the labour market are wage and salaried workers, this in itself constitutes no guarantee of higher job quality. Globally, 38 per cent of women and 36 per cent of men in wage employment do not contribute to social protection. The proportions for women reach 63.2 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 74.2 per cent in Southern Asia where informal employment is the dominant form of employment.

The report also provides new data for up to 100 countries on paid and unpaid working hours and access to maternity protection and pensions.

Women work longer hours

Women continue to work longer hours per day than men in both paid and unpaid work. In both high and lower income countries, on average, women carry out at least two and a half times more unpaid household and care work than men. In developed economies, employed women (either in self-employment or wage and salaried employment) work 8 hours and 9 minutes in paid and unpaid work, compared to 7 hours and 36 minutes worked by men.

In developing economies, women in employment spend 9 hours and 20 minutes in paid and unpaid work, whereas men spend 8 hours and 7 minutes in such work. The unbalanced share of unpaid work limits women's capacity to increase their hours in paid, formal and wage and salaried work. As a result, across the world, women, who represent less than 40 per cent of total employment, make up 57 per cent of those working shorter hours and on a part-time basis.

In addition, across more than 100 countries surveyed, more than one third of

employed men (35.5 per cent) and more than one fourth of employed women (25.7 per cent) work more than 48 hours a week. This also affects the unequal distribution of unpaid household and care work between women and men.

The cumulative disadvantage faced by women in the labour market has a significant impact in later years. In terms of pensions, coverage (both legal and effective) is lower for women than men, leaving an overall gender social protection coverage gap. Globally, the proportion of women above retirement age receiving a pension is on average 10.6 percentage points lower than that of men.

Globally, women represent nearly 65 per cent of people above retirement age (60-65 or older according to national legislation in the majority of countries) without any regular pension. This means some 200 million women in old age are living without any regular income from an old age or survivor's pension, compared to 115 million men.

Other key highlights of the report

There has also been further segregation in the distribution of women and men across and within occupations, over the past two decades, as skill-biased technological work increases, notably in developed and emerging countries. Between 1995 and 2015, employment increased most rapidly in emerging economies; the absolute change in employment levels was twice as high for men as for women (382 million versus 191 million respectively), regardless of the level of skills required, indicating that progress in getting women into more and quality jobs is stagnating.

In developed countries, women spend on average 4 hours and 20 minutes on unpaid care work per day, compared to 2 hours and 16 minutes by men. In developing countries, women spend 4 hours and 30 minutes per day on unpaid care work, compared to 1 hour 20 minutes for men. Although this gender gap remains substantial, it has decreased in a number of countries, mostly due to the reduction in time spent on housework by women, but not to significant reductions in their time spent on childcare.

In terms of wages, the results in the report confirm previous ILO estimates that globally, women still earn on average 77 per cent of what men earn. The report notes that this wage gap cannot be explained solely by differences in

education or age. This gap can be linked to the undervaluation of the work women undertake and of the skills required in female-dominated sectors or occupations, discrimination, and the need for women to take career breaks or reduce hours in paid work to attend to additional care responsibilities such as child care. Though there has been some small improvement in reducing gender wage gaps, if current trends prevail, the report confirms estimates that it will take more than 70 years to close the gender wage gaps completely.

Getting to equal by 2030

The ILO theme for International Women's Day 2016 is "Getting to Equal by 2030: The Future is Now", reflecting the urgency of addressing these gaps if the U.N. 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is to be achieved. Nearly all of the agenda's goals have a gender component.

The report is also an important contribution to the ILO's Women at Work Centenary Initiative. The Initiative marks the commitment of ILO constituents to gender equality as the ILO approaches its centenary in 2019, and is geared toward identifying innovative action that could give new impetus to the ILO's work on gender equality and non-discrimination.

"Achieving gender equality at work, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is an essential precondition for realizing sustainable development that leaves no one behind and ensures that the future of work is decent work for all women and men," said Shauna Olney, Chief of the ILO's Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch .

The 2030 Agenda represents a universal consensus on the crucial importance of gender equality and its contribution to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. More jobs – and quality jobs – for women, universal social protection and measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and household work are indispensable to delivering on the new transformative agenda.

The report can be viewed at
http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/WCMS_457317/ang--en/index.htm



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