

**Teleconference Call – 20 May 2008 –  
Advisory Committee - WIEGO Statistics Programme**

Participants: Joann Vanek (Chair), Jacques Charmes, Margarita Guerrero, James Heintz, Ralf Hussmanns, Renana Jhabvala, Mary Beth Graves (WIEGO). Grace Bediako, Martha Chen, Debbie Budlender and Jeemol Unni are members of the Advisory Committee but were not able to participate.

**1. Report on Project on Measurement of informal employment in developed countries**

James introduced this project by describing work he and Francoise Carre are doing with data for the United States and their finding that existing classifications do not allow for clear identification of some important employment statuses, for example independent contractors who may be dependent on one employer. Non-standard and precarious employment arrangements represent significant and often growing shares of employment and we need to better capture these employment arrangements in developed countries. A meeting will be held 31 October- 1 November at Harvard to: 1) bring together selected experts from national and international statistical services and researchers who have taken a lead in developing concepts and classifications for these new forms of employment ;and 2) to specify a framework to characterize and document the full range of employment arrangements in developed countries that are informal.. Funding for the workshop is being provided by WIEGO.

Follow-up: Ralf Hussmanns commented that this was an important effort and he felt the time frame was far enough in the future that he would be able to attend. Francoise and Joann will work on letters to potential participants and background material for the meeting early in June.

**2. Stock-taking on number of countries with data on informal employment and informal sector**

James also introduced this topic based on the analysis he did for Azita Berar at ILO titled “Statistics on Employment in the Informal Sector and Informal Employment: a summary of updated estimates from the ILO Bureau of Statistics database”. The database on informal sector contains statistics for 65 countries and the database for formal and informal employment contains statistics for 12 countries, including six countries in Latin America.

Follow-up: The Advisory Committee will be sent the report. In addition James will follow up with Azita on publication plans as will. Renana when they meet in June.

A discussion followed on what could be done to increase the number of countries in the ILO data base. Ralf Hussmanns discussed the ILO’s plans to update and consolidate the two data bases. A new and revised questionnaire will be circulated to countries within

the year to obtain official national data on these topics. In response to suggestions from members of the advisory committee, the following steps will be taken to increase the number of countries with information:

- The questionnaire will be sent to selected researchers/analysts so they can add their tabulations based on national data and the ILO definitions of informal employment, informal sector. These will be added to the data base, with information indicating the source;
- For countries where there is a WIEGO presence and surveys with relevant data, WIEGO will identify persons to assist ILO and the national statistical authorities in completing the questionnaire;
- Jacques offered to prepare tabulations for countries he visits;
- Jacques will also follow-up with the DIAL database in IRD on the possibility of using the data it contains in preparing estimates of formal and informal employment as well as doing more detailed studies of particular categories of informal workers. Uma Rani had tried unsuccessfully to have access to these data while at IRD and perhaps in her new position at the ILO can continue this work if access is permitted.

Given the new data and additional countries, Renana asked whether we could at this time begin preparation of an update of the 2002 ILO, *Women and in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*. James explained that the 2002 publication used estimates of informal employment prepared by the residual method; however now the priority is to use the data collected in surveys which cover both informal sector and informal employment. As yet there are not sufficient countries with these data. It is hoped that within a few years a new publication can be done and it is in the WIEGO statistics work plan.

### **3. Report on work on manual on surveys of informal employment/informal sector**

Ralf gave an update on the status of work on the manual. He said that work had been delayed because the authors do this work along with other responsibilities. His own contribution had been delayed because he had been given new assignments in connection with the next meeting of the ICLS. Although the Delhi Group is interested in the completion of the manual as soon as possible, the overriding goal is a high quality manual.

Follow-up: Joann and Ralf will meet on 9 June in Geneva to work on a revision of one of the chapters and discuss plans for completing the manual. Letters will be written to all of the team to obtain a date for the revision of the chapters already approved by the Delhi Group. The letter for Dr. Sastry will be copied to Renana. .

### **4. Report on United Nations Development Accounts Project – Interregional Cooperation on the Measurement of Informal Sector and Informal Employment**

Until recently, Marge was a technical advisor at ESCAP and worked on this project, both in the preparation of project documents and in the technical missions to the participating

countries in the Asia region, Mongolia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The project is interregional in scope with data collection activities also in St. Lucia for the ECLAC region and Palestine for the ESCWA region. The survey method is a one-two survey with modifications introduced in a labour force survey to measure informal employment and informal sector. A module is then introduced as a separate survey linked to the labour force survey to collect data on household unincorporated enterprises. A training seminar will be held this summer for 20 to 25 countries in the ESCAP region on undertaking such surveys. The prerequisite for an invitation to the seminar is that a country undertakes a labour force survey.

In addition to the countries covered by the Development Accounts projects Viet Nam is undertaking a survey of informal sector informal employment in two urban areas and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is supporting work in three countries – Armenia, Bangladesh and Indonesia. (Jeemol Unni is a consultant to the ADB on this work.)

These efforts in Asia should make significant improvements in the available data in the region in the next few years.

## **5. Report on 2-3 activities you are working on that relate to WIEGO Statistics Programme**

### **Jacques:**

All of his responsibilities at IRD leave little time for additional work. He will give himself a deadline for the completion of the chapter on national accounts for the manual on surveys of informal employment and informal sector. Jacques asked for Joann's help in checking with the UNSD on the availability of new official data for estimating the contribution of informal sector to GDP. This summer IRD will move to Marseilles.

### **Marge:**

Marge's new position is in Viet Nam. Among the issues she is dealing with is strengthening the labour force survey. Currently there are labour surveys done by both the Ministry of Labour and by the Statistical Institute. She will prepare an evaluation of the two surveys for ILO and UNDP.

### **James:**

- preparation of substantive materials the meeting on the measurement of informal employment in developed countries (see above),
- a review of the current state of statistics on informal employment in sub-Saharan Africa with Imraan Valodia. This is part of a larger project where similar reviews are done on Latin American by Victor Tokman and Asia by Marty.
- An ILO/ECE project funded by the World Bank on analysis of gender and the labour force, especially informal employment in Macedonia, Kazakhstan and Serbia. (Ralf had just been on mission to Kazakhstan and found that data are available for 2005 and 2006. Earlier it was thought that only a tabulation framework and not a report would be prepared for Kazakhstan). These activities reflect the recommendation of the Advisory Committee during the last

teleconference call that the WIEGO Statistics Programme take on technical advising in the tabulation and analysis of data.

### **Ralf**

- Contributes to an ILO project on the development of indicators on labour underutilization as a supplement of unemployment indicators
- Participant in discussions in the ILO in preparation for the 18<sup>th</sup> ICLS on the revision of standards on the measurement of employment and unemployment which were last revised at the 13<sup>th</sup> ICLS. Discussions involve the importance of maintaining a link between the definitions of employment and production in the national accounts. This grows out of the interest of developed countries dealing with volunteer work and non-economic work in the home
- Backstops project with NSD funded by the World Bank to develop statistics on gender and informal sector and informal employment in three countries of sub-Saharan Africa: Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

### **Renana**

- Following the request of the Network of Homeworkers for statistics on home-based workers, contributed to the formation of and is a participant on a committee working with the NSSO India on measurement of these workers. The report has not yet come out because of controversy within the committee on the distinction between dependent and independent homeworkers.

Renana added that in the South Asia context many economically active women are working out of their home—in some countries the figures is as high as 70 per cent.

Follow-up: Ralf suggested that this is an important issue and that WIEGO should write the Delhi Group to have the topic of measurement of homeworkers considered at its next meeting. Ralf added that this is also an important issue in the much needed revision of the Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE).

- Efforts are ongoing to form a new network of domestic workers and with this comes the need for more data. Ralf added that he had discussions on this within ILO and that data are available. Some follow-up will be done within ILO.
- Since Jeemol could not be part of the teleconference, Renana gave a brief overview of the China- India project highlighted the component on statistics where Dr. Sastry and Jeemol are working with researchers in China to design surveys of informal sector/ informal employment.

### **Joann.**

I highlighted two recent activities:

- the trip to Cambodia where with data supplied by James I made a presentation on informal employment in the country today and also advised the government on gaps and needed improvements on employment

- the work with Renana on a “communication tool” on SEWA’s role in the development of the Government of India’s development of statistics on informal sector and informal employment. The role of SEWA in advocating for good statistics on informal employment and the informal sector has been a model for WIEGO’s role more broadly in the development of statistics. This is also an example of a “best practice” in the collaboration of users and producers in the development of statistics on gender issues.