



# ► Data needs for measuring the care economy

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*ILO Statistics*

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Samantha Watson, Senior Statistician, ILO Statistics

[watsons@ilo.org](mailto:watsons@ilo.org)

## International Conference of labour statisticians (ICLS)



- Global standard-setting mechanism for work and labour statistics
- The ILO hosts and acts as Secretariat
- Meets every 5 years (since 1923)
- Tripartite structure:  
*Governments, Employers' and Workers' representatives*
- Provides a reference for official work and labour statistics

## ► Relevant international standards and classification schemes

- Existing **international statistical standards and classification schemes** provide a starting point for the harmonisation of care work measurement
- The 19th ICLS (Resolution I) Forms of Work Framework
- International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) – *currently undergoing a revision process (potential for introduction of a care work “jobs family”)*
- International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC, rev.5)
- International classification of activities for time-use statistics (ICATUS-16)

# Relevant international standards and classification schemes

## Resolution I

### Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization

#### Preamble

The 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians,  
Having reviewed the relevant texts of the resolution concerning statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment adopted by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1952) and the amendment of its paragraph 5 adopted by the 15th Conference (2000); the resolution concerning the measurement of underemployment and inadequate employment situations adopted by the 16th Conference (1998), as well as the guidelines endorsed therein concerning treatment in employment and unemployment statistics of persons on extended absences from work; and the guidelines on the implications of employment promotion schemes on the measurement of employment and unemployment, endorsed by the 14th Conference (1987),

Recalling the requirements of the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160), and the accompanying Labour Statistics Recommendation, 1985 (No. 170), and the need for coherence with other international statistical standards, particularly regarding the system of national accounts, working time, employment-related income, child labour, status in employment and work in the informal economy,

Recognizing the need to revise and broaden the existing standards in order to enable better statistical measurement of participation of all persons in all forms of work and in all sectors of the economy, of labour underutilization, and of interactions between different forms of work; as well as to provide guidelines on a wider set of measures than previously defined internationally, thereby enhancing the relevance and usefulness of the standards for countries and territories at all stages of development,

Calling attention to the usefulness of these standards to enhance the international comparability of the statistics, to their contribution to the measurement of decent work and of well-being of households and society in general, thereby supporting and facilitating the post-2015 development agenda, as well as to the achievement of gender justice,

Acknowledging that the relevance of measures of work in a given country will depend on the nature of its society, labour markets and all user needs, and that their implementation will therefore, to a certain extent, be determined by national circumstances,

Adopts this 11th day of October 2013 the following resolution in substitution for the resolutions of 1982 and of 2000, and for paragraphs (1) and (11) of the resolution of 1998, as well as for the guidelines from 1987 and 1998 cited above.

#### Objectives and scope

1. This resolution aims to set standards for work statistics to guide countries in updating and integrating their existing statistical programmes in this field. It defines the statistical concept of work for reference purposes and provides operational concepts, definitions and guidelines for:
  - (a) distinct subsets of work activities, referred to as *forms of work*;
  - (b) related classifications of the population according to their *labour force status and main form of work*;
  - (c) measures of labour underutilization.

<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter referred to as "countries".

## Reference concepts

**6. Work** comprises any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for own use.

- (a) Work is defined irrespective of its formal or informal character or the legality of the activity.
- (b) Work excludes activities that do not involve producing goods or services (e.g. begging and stealing), self-care (e.g. personal grooming and hygiene) and activities that cannot be performed by another person on one's own behalf (e.g. sleeping, learning and activities for own recreation).
- (c) The concept of work is aligned with the General production boundary as defined in the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) and its concept of economic unit that
  - (i) market units (i.e. corporations, quasi-corporations and household unincorporated market enterprises <sup>1</sup>);
  - (ii) non-market units (i.e. government and non-profit institutions serving households); and
  - (iii) households that produce goods or services for own final use.
- (d) Work can be performed in any kind of economic unit.

Source: Resolution 1, 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS (2013, page 3, paragraph 6)

## Relevant international standards and classification schemes

<i>Intended destination of production</i>	<i>for own final use</i>		<i>for use by others</i>					
<i>Forms of work</i>	<b>Own-use production work</b>		<b>Employment (work for pay or profit)</b>	<b>Unpaid trainee work</b>	<b>Other work activities</b>	<b>Volunteer work</b>		
	of services	of goods				in market and non-market units	in households producing	
							goods	services
<i>Relation to 2008 SNA</i>			Activities within the SNA production boundary					
			Activities inside the SNA General production boundary					

Source: ILO (2013) The 19<sup>th</sup> ICLS [resolution I concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization](#)

Resolution I of the 19th ICLS specifies five separate and mutually exclusive forms of work – **care work can be performed as any form or work** – the form of work is determined by the destination of the resulting goods or services – and the role of remuneration

This framework provides a foundation for the delineation of care work – and the characteristics of those who perform it – within each form of work, as well as for monitoring and mapping shifts in the distribution and volume of care work undertaken across different forms of work.

## Data sources: LFS core modules

Methods

### Statistical standards and methods

**Table of Contents**


- Standards
- [Methods and guidance](#)
  - Labour force survey (LF...
  - Communication of stati...
  - Measuring unpaid dom...
  - Population Census res...
  - Administrative data so...
  - COVID-19
- Research and development
- Key and emerging topics
- Publications

**Related pages**

- Standards and guidelines on labour statistics
- Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
- Capacity building and technical assistance
- Calendar


**Methods and guidance**

The ILO equips statisticians with practical tools, evidence-based methodologies and technical guidance to implement new standards and make the most of the data.




**Labour force survey (LFS) questionnaire toolkit**

Online resources for data producers to build or improve their labour force survey, such as PAPI and CAPI model questionnaires.



**Communication of statistics**

Resources for data producers to ensure an effective communication of statistics and methodologies, to make the most of the data produced and avoid misinterpretation, especially of breaks in series following the implementation of new standards in the LFS.



**Population Census resources**

Online resources for data producers to improve their population census to be in line with the latest international statistical standards for labour.

The ILO Department of Statistics equips statisticians with practical tools, evidence-based methodologies, and technical assistance to implement current standards.



Statistical standards and methods - ILOSTAT



# ► Data sources: LFS add-on module for own-use provision of services work



## Introducing the ILO light time-use module: a new tool to measure UDCW

- **Save time. Reduce costs. Report better.**
- **Deployment ready**  
Meets current standards and guidance on time-use statistics:  
ICLS | SNA | UN ICATUS | UNSD
- **Tried and tested**  
Subjected to extensive field piloting
- **Improved accuracy**  
24-hour 'yesterday recall' with 15-minute time slots
- **Comprehensive domain coverage**  
Pre-coded activity listings, records multi-tasking
- **Flexible reporting**  
Easily adapts to new contexts and diverse subjects
- **Better data capture**  
Embedded quality controls, recall aids and recovery sections for hard-to-capture domains

Measurement guide - Guidance on implementing the ILO light time-use module

Based on our pilot project [Learn more](#)

Discover a simple, cost-effective, and comprehensive approach to measuring unpaid domestic and care work (UDCW).

### The LFS light time-use module

Developed by ILO's Statistical Standards and Methods Unit (SSMU), the LFS light time-use module is an innovative tool for UDCW data collection.

- FLEXIBLE REPORTING**  
Easily adapts to new contexts
- IMPROVED ACCURACY**  
24-hour 'yesterday recall' with 15-minute time slots
- COMPREHENSIVE DOMAIN COVERAGE**  
Pre-coded activity listings and multi-tasking
- BETTER DATA CAPTURE**  
Embedded quality controls, recall aids and recovery sections for hard-to-capture domains
- DEPLOYMENT READY**  
Meets current standards and guidance on time-use statistics ICLS - SNA - ICATUS - UNSD
- TRIED AND TESTED**  
Subjected to extensive field piloting

**SAVE TIME. REDUCE COSTS. REPORT BETTER.**  
Every day, up to 16 billion hours are spent on unpaid domestic and care work activities, like cooking, cleaning, and caring for children and adults. Tracking hours spent on UDCW is imperative for countries to reduce inequalities, boost economies, and achieve global SDGs.

**16 BILLION HOURS**

**We're here to help!**  
Contact SSMU at [statistics@ilo.org](mailto:statistics@ilo.org) for more information about our support services for statisticians and implementation guidance on new labour standards.

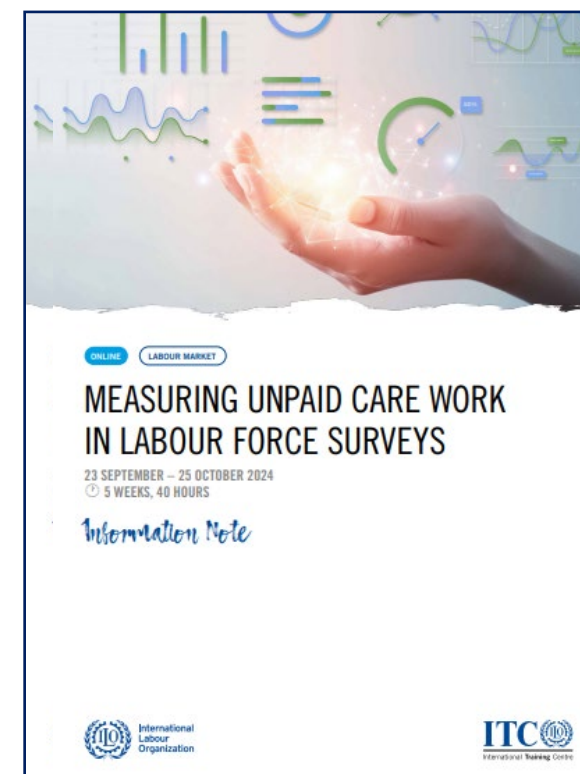
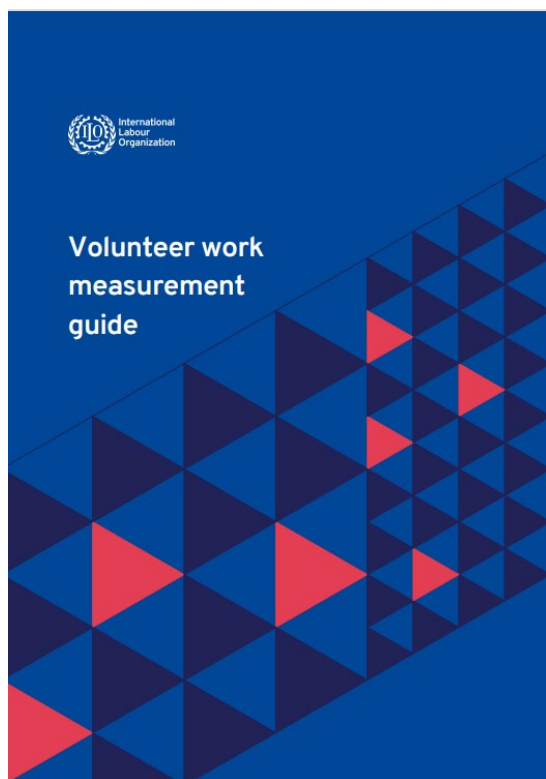


Statistical standards and methods - ILOSTAT

Advancing social justice, promoting decent work

► [ilo.org](https://ilo.org)

## ► Data sources: LFS add-on module for volunteer work



[Statistical standards and methods - ILOSTAT](#)



## ► New international statistical standards for the measurement of care work

- Mandated by ILO constituents through the 21st ICLS (October 2023) and the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference (June 2024) reiterated the request:

*“There is currently no internationally agreed statistical definition of care work and such a definition should be developed to promote harmonization and consistency of data on care, including in all applicable sub-sectors.” (ILC 2024)*

- The standards' setting process is guided by a *Technical Working Group of Experts* - ILO constituents and qualified observers
- First meeting of the TWG was held from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025. A second meeting will be held in November 2025. Annual meetings thereafter
- Draft standards to be finalised by 2028 for submission to the 22nd ICLS

## ► New international statistical standards for the measurement of care work

- Establish an internationally agreed **statistical definition of care work** to support regular data collection, harmonized across countries, and taking a wide range of data and policy needs into account
- Develop a **conceptual framework of care work**, together with a **meaningful typology of categories** of unpaid and paid care work performed as different **forms of work**, in line with existing international standards. **Define appropriate terminology** for care work performed within different forms of work.
- Define **measurement criteria for the concept of care work** performed within different forms of work and develop **indicator frameworks** and recommended **sub-groups for disaggregation**
- Formulate **recommendations and guidelines for data collection, analysis, and dissemination**, referring to relevant **data sources**

## Key measurement challenges

### ➤ At the conceptual level

- Variability in the conceptualisation and definition of “care work” – competing theoretical perspectives, narrow vs wide bounds – *relevant to all forms of work in which care work is performed – i.e., all forms of work*

### ➤ At the empirical level

- Varied reference periods for different forms of work: 30 days / one month; one week / seven days / 24-hours
- Sample sizes / level of precision for disaggregation of indicators
- Practical limitations of classification schemes (ISCO-08, ISIC-rev 5) for identifying care work performed as employment (and unpaid trainee work, volunteer work) at sufficient level of disaggregation (4-digit vs 2-digit)
  - Ongoing ISCO-08 revision process permits inputs around care work measurement – restructuring to promote cohesive categories, (and possible development of a *care work jobs family*)

## Key measurement challenges

### ➤ At the practical / operational level

- The need to minimise respondent burden – particularly in modular designs – places limits on the extent of contextual series' it is possible to include (e.g., wider care networks contextualizing own-use provision of services work)
- Modular design for time-use measurement creates distinct challenges (dependencies with parent survey around seasonality and sampling, time as a sample unit, intra-household analysis of caregiving roles)
- Resource constraints in many countries impede even modular time-use measurement, with national statistical organisations under increasing fiscal constraints

▶ **Thank you**