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NEW FRAMEWORK TO MEASURE QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Quality of employment is a concern to everyone who is currently employed or seeking work. It extends beyond illegal or regulated work to cover individual expectations regarding the time spent at work.

A group of international experts in labour force statistics met in Geneva on 14-16 October to discuss a conceptual framework for measuring the quality of employment, which aims at facilitating the understanding of the qualitative aspects of employment from the individual employee's perspective. This framework was developed by the Task Force on the measurement of the quality of employment, building on ILO's "decent work framework" and the European Commission's "quality of work indicators".

About 30 statistical indicators are proposed to measure the many different qualitative aspects of employment. The conceptual framework groups these indicators under the following seven dimensions: safety and ethics of employment, income and benefits from employment, working hours and balancing working and non-working life, security of employment and social protection, social dialogue, skill development and life-long learning, and workplace relationships and intrinsic nature of work. Participants agreed that the overall structure of the framework was adequate for measuring the quality of employment at the national level and made suggestions for improving specific indicators.

The meeting also featured country profiles highlighting issues around implementing the framework with a focus on selected dimensions. These country profiles and other documents for the meeting are available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.10.labour.htm>.

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USA TO FOLLOW UN RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHEMICALS

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) of the United States of America's Department of Labor published on 30 September a draft rule to modify its existing Hazard Communication Standards to conform to the [United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals \(GHS\)](#). The proposed rule is based on the third revised edition of the GHS, published in June 2009.

The GHS addresses classification of chemicals by types of hazards and proposes harmonized hazard communication elements. It aims at ensuring that information on chemical hazards be available in order to enhance the protection of human life and the environment during the handling, transport and use of these chemicals. The GHS also provides a basis for harmonization of rules and regulations on chemicals at national, regional and worldwide level and it has been designed to allow industry to self-classify its own products.

OSHA estimates that the adoption of the GHS will strengthen and refine its current regulatory system and will enhance workers' safety. In its statement, it noted that: "Although the GHS has the same general concept of an integrated, comprehensive process of identifying and communicating hazards, it provides more extensive criteria to define hazards in a consistent manner, as well as standardized label elements and Safety Data Sheet formats to help to ensure that the information is conveyed consistently."

According to OSHA, about 880,000 hazardous chemicals are currently used in the USA and over 40 million employees are potentially exposed to hazardous chemicals in over 5 million workplaces. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that in 2007, employees suffered 55,400 illnesses that could be attributed to chemical exposures while about 17,340 chemical-related injuries and illnesses involved days away from work.

It is expected that better information will enable employers and employees to take measures that would result in a reduction in the number and severity of chemical-related injuries and illnesses.



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OSHA's statement: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardcommunications/index.html>

Not an official record - For information only

START OF RECOVERY IN WOOD PRODUCTS MARKET SECTORS?

At its annual market discussions in Geneva on 13-14 October, the UNECE Timber Committee forecast an upturn in most wood products market sectors in 2010. However, experts concluded that it is far too early to speak about a recovery. The Committee adopted an official market statement with forecasts for each market sector.

After suffering the greatest decline in consumption since the oil crisis of the 1970s, with a fall of 8.5% in 2008, forest products markets were forecast to fall again in 2009, with one major exception – wood

energy, which was buoyed by Governments' policies for renewable energy sources for a green economy.

Using sawn softwood as a market indicator, the Committee forecast that the sector will rebound in 2010, with consumption increases in the UNECE subregions of the CIS, Europe and North America by 27.9%, 2.5% and 5.5% respectively. Overall in the UNECE region, sawn softwood consumption is forecast to increase by 4.3% in 2010.

Some of the key developments are:

- ▶ Certified forest area is increasing slowly and is concentrated mostly in North America and Europe, which represents 97% of the certified roundwood supply.
- ▶ Green building continues to be an important market driver, especially considering that 40-50% of the world's energy usage is for space and water heating and cooling.
- ▶ China is the UNECE region's major trading partner, especially for wood and paper products. It is the world's largest importer of roundwood, but imports decreased in the first half of 2009 by 18%, especially from Russia.
- ▶ Forests play an essential role in the global carbon cycle, yet thus far forestry projects have played a disproportionately minor role in greenhouse gas emissions trading, compared to their full potential.

For more information visit the Timber Committee website <http://www.unece.org/timber> or contact Ed Pepke (info.timber@unece.org).



FACTS AND FIGURES

NO EVIDENT GENDER GAP FOR PUPILS ENROLLED IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

There is little difference between the enrolment rate of boys and girls in secondary education in the UNECE region. This is an important sign of progress towards the MDGs. As described in the [Millennium Development Goals Report 2009](#), gender differences should be eliminated in all levels of education by 2015.

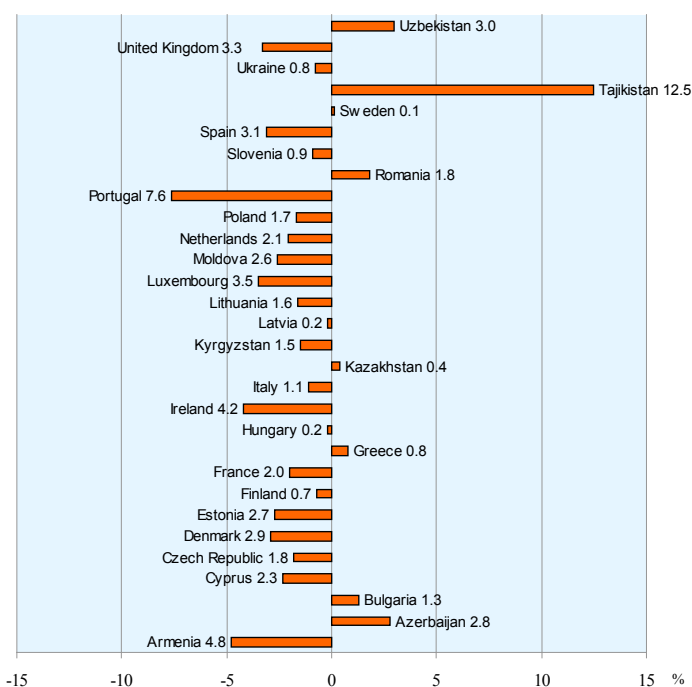
In most European Union countries, there are slightly more girls enrolled in secondary education (in Portugal, enrolment of girls exceeds boys by 7.6 percentage points, in Ireland by 4.2 and in Luxembourg by 3.5).

However, in Bulgaria and Romania, the gap is narrower and in favour of boys, with around 1.5 percentage points more boys than girls enrolled.

A different gender disparity can be seen in East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries. Tajikistan is one of the countries where the gender difference, favouring boys, is the largest of all UNECE member countries. In school year 2006-2007, there was a gap of 12.5 percentage points between the number of girls and the number of boys enrolled in secondary education.

Over the years, the enrolment rate is increasing in all UNECE countries for both girls and boys.

Gender gap in secondary education enrolment in selected UNECE countries, 2006-2007



Source: UNECE Statistical Database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data>)

Note: Gender gap is calculated from net enrolment ratio - number of pupils of the official school-age group (defined by each country) enrolled in secondary-level education per 100 persons of the same age group.