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MAPPING VOLUNTEER WORK AROUND THE WORLD
World's Labor Statisticians Adopt New Guidelines for Measuring Volunteering

The International Labour Organization announced today that the world's labor statisticians have for the first time adopted guidelines for measuring the work of volunteers using labor force and other household surveys.

At the recently concluded 18th International Conference of Labor Statisticians in Geneva, Switzerland, 260 statisticians representing a cross-section of the world's official statistical agencies supported proposals for the ILO to proceed with the issuance of a *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer* work developed with the assistance of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies. The manual will suggest an international definition of volunteer work and offer guidelines for countries to use in measuring such work.

"The work of volunteers is one aspect of labor that has not been covered adequately in statistical systems up to now," noted Sylvester Young, director of the Bureau of Statistics of the International Labour Office. "We are delighted that a method for measuring such work, which contributes so much to the quality of life and the relief of suffering throughout the world, will now be developed."

"Volunteers comprise nearly half of the workforce of the world's nonprofit organizations, yet it has remained largely invisible in official economic statistics," explained Lester Salamon, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies. "Now we can highlight and measure this important renewable resource for social and environmental problem-solving and thus lay the groundwork for policies to promote it."

The support of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians paves the way for final testing, drafting, and publication of the proposed manual in 2009 and ultimately for its use by countries around the world.

Data generated by the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies in 37 countries reveal that at least 12 percent of the adult population in these countries volunteers, representing the equivalent of 20.8 million, full-time equivalent workers, and making a \$400 billion contribution to the economy.

Support for the measurement of volunteer work was widespread at the ICLS. Participants pointed to the important contribution volunteers made to disaster relief and also emphasized the role of volunteers in rural education. Some governments indicated they had already begun to measure volunteer work through organizational surveys. Participants complimented the ILO and the Johns Hopkins Center for bringing this topic forward, emphasizing that labor statistics needed to measure all aspects of work and that volunteering was clearly one of them.

About the center:

The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies seeks to improve understanding and the effective functioning of not-for-profit, philanthropic, or "civil society" organizations in the United States and throughout the world in order to enhance the contribution these organizations can make to democracy and the quality of human life. The Center is part of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and carries out its work through a combination of research, training, and information-sharing both domestically and internationally. More information on the center is available at <http://www.jhu.edu/ccss>.

Information about the JHU-ILO Volunteer Measurement Project can be found at www.jhu.edu/ccss/volunteering.

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