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5th UNWTO International Conference on Tourism Statistics – Tourism: An Engine for Employment Creation

Session III: Employment in the Tourism Industries: Measurement Issues and
Case Studies

Keynote: ILO/UNWTO joint project on employment in the tourism industries: statistical component

By Igor Chernyshev

ILO, Geneva, March 2009

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1



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Employment in the Tourism Industries

Tourism is a rapid growing phenomenon and tourism activities, taken as a whole, are accounting for a growing share of the economic activity in most countries and this upward trend looks likely to continue in the future.

Tourism involves a wide range of different activities, types of establishments, employment contracts and working arrangements.

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2





Employment in the Tourism Industries

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Tourism provides working people with income and working experience and therefore contributes to their social inclusion and personal development.

The tourism employment pattern is characterized by notable differences between regions of a country and between seasons of the year.

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3



Employment in the Tourism Industries

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Employment is a variable of major importance in the economic analysis of productive activities and this is also the case for tourism.

However, the facts and findings presented in the Keynote paper only confirm that the world of work in tourism, in general, and the economic value of tourism in terms of employment, as source of productive labour in particular, remain inadequately measured and insufficiently studied.

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4





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ILO/UNWTO Joint Project

To fill this gap, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) are collaborating in the measurement of employment and decent work in tourism.

This collaboration was formalised through the agreement on cooperation signed between the two organisations, which is also referred to as the *ILO/UNWTO Joint Project on Employment in the Tourism Industries*.

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5



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ILO/UNWTO Joint Project

The global objective of the agreement is to improve and strengthen the cooperation between the two UN agencies in enhancing the national capacity of the member States in measuring employment in the tourism industries.

The agreement is referring to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the relevant international labour Conventions on fundamental principals and rights at work and on the promotion of tourism sector specific Conventions and Recommendations.

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6





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ILO/UNWTO Joint Project

The agreement is also an example of joint activities between UN agencies in order to improve the *Delivering as One* approach to delivering coherent activities and of mainstreaming employment and the Decent Work Agenda in the tourism sector.

One of the areas covered by the agreement is the improvement of national sources and methods of data collection on employment in the tourism industries.

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7



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ILO/UNWTO Joint Project: Statistical component

To meet the Project's challenges and implement successfully the statistics component of the agreement, the two organisations launched a set of joint statistics initiatives which encompass the following areas of collaboration:

- To write a new chapter on measuring employment in the tourism industries to be included in the *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008)*. Accomplished.
- To prepare a joint publication *Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics: Employment in the Tourism Industries (Special edition)*. Accomplished.
- To preparation of a *Technical Guide on Best Practices of Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries*.
- To test and propose a core set of decent work statistical indicators for measuring various dimensions of decent work in the tourism industries. Present case studies with examples illustrating the use of data from different sources with the objective to analyse both the coverage and quality of labour force employed in the tourism industries.

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8





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International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008), Ch. 7: Employment in the tourism industries

In line with the request of the UNWTO and the UNSD as well as its mandate as the lead international agency in the field of labour statistics, the ILO prepared a new chapter for the IRTS 2008 on measuring employment in the tourism industries. The chapter was prepared with contributions from the UNWTO member States and largely discussed internationally.

Future

The ILO and the UNWTO have agreed to concentrate their efforts on the promotion of Chapter 7 and providing technical advice to the national data producers of tourism statistics to strengthen their technical capacity in collecting data on employment in the tourism industries. The extent of the realisation of this initiative will depend on both human and financial resources available and/or put at the disposal of the ILO and the UNWTO by international statistical and donor communities as well as the interest and commitment of national data producers to regularly collect and publish/disseminate these data.

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9



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Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics – Employment in the Tourism Industries (Special Edition)

Responses were received from over 100 countries and territories, of which 81 sent their returns with questionnaires completed.

The analysis of the information received revealed that out of these 81 countries and territories, only a few produce comprehensive sets of statistics on employment in the tourism industries.

As for the others, they collect a limited number of variables on tourism characteristic activities and only a small fraction of them either also produce or have started to prepare for producing the TSA.

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Tourism: An Engine for Employment Creation (Bali, Indonesia, 30 March – 2 April 2009)

10





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Sources and Methods in Labour Statistics – Employment in the Tourism Industries (Special Edition)

At the same time the publication showed that Australia, Austria, Canada, France, New Zealand, Portugal and Spain have both the most comprehensive set of statistical tools for measuring employment in the tourism industries and the most exhaustive list of statistical variables produced. In addition, Brazil seems to have quite a complete set of statistical sources, produces and disseminates valid data on employment in the tourism industries through the internet.

In order to change the situation and improve national sources and methods of data collection of employment in the tourism industries, the ILO and the UNWTO will channel their efforts to promoting the best practices of data collection to enhance technical capacity of national data producers in interested countries.



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Technical Guide on Best Practices of Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries.

The Guide will largely draw on the descriptions documented in the *Sources and Methods, Labour Statistics: Employment in the Tourism Industries (Special edition)* and describe the methods used by countries with highly developed tourism statistics which regularly produce and publish/disseminate comprehensive data sets on various characteristics of persons employed in the tourism sector.

Additionally, the Guide will contain general information about the tourism sector as well as comprehensive chapters on statistics on employment in the tourism industries, their importance for the analysis of the tourism-related labour markets and understanding of the tourism's role and potential in jobs creation and providing people with access to income. Also, the issue of international comparability of statistical data will be discussed.

Finally, the Guide will contain examples of reports and analysis of the tourism-related labour markets written by countries with advance tourism statistics.





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ILO concept of decent work

The concept of Decent Work has been defined by the ILO and endorsed by the international community as *opportunities for women and men to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity*. (Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General).

Decent Work provides a unified framework for the major areas of ILO work and draws attention to the relationships between its four strategic objectives:

- Fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards
- Employment and income opportunities
- Social protection and social security
- Social dialogue and tripartism.

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Tourism: An Engine for Employment Creation (Bali, Indonesia, 30 March – 2 April 2009)

13



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Measuring decent work in the tourism industries

The tourism sector can be further stimulated by providing decent working conditions for both persons employed and potential employees in the multibillion-dollar tourism industry.

Progress in advancing decent work in the tourism sector would have a significant impact on a large segment of the population at both domestic tourism areas and countries of major tourism destinations.

This is a win-win situation for all: the benefit for workers is obvious through improved working conditions; the value for employers is evident in better motivated staff, increased service quality and competitiveness.

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14





Measuring decent work in the tourism industries

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The work will be carried out using the ILO decent work (DW) conceptual framework and based on the list of DW indicators proposed by the ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the Measurement of Decent Work (8-10 September 2008) and the *Resolution concerning further work on the measurement of decent work* adopted by the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (24 November – 5 December 2008)

The developmental work of the ILO and the UNWTO within the DW indicators initiative will concentrate on the selection of the tourism industry-relevant DW indicators from the above ILO list of DW indicators; preparation of indicator-specific definitions; and guidance on their application and interpretation.

Also, case studies to test the applicability and robustness of the indicators selected would be carried out and country profiles on decent work in the tourism sector prepared for selected countries.

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Tourism: An Engine for Employment Creation (Bali, Indonesia, 30 March – 2 April 2009)

15



Future work

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In order to assist countries in the all these developments, enhance the implementation of the IRTS2008 and strengthen national capacities of data collection, the ILO and the UNWTO should combine their efforts and target the preparation of the *Technical Guide on Best Practices of Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries* by the end of 2009.

At the same time, work should be intensified on the development of the tourism-relevant DW indicators, including carrying out of case studies to test the applicability and robustness of the indicators selected and preparation of country profiles on decent work in the tourism industries for selected countries.

An interim report on the results of this collaboration should be prepared by spring 2010.

In their efforts to meet the targets set and successfully implement the statistics component of the *Joint Project on Employment in the Tourism Industries*, the ILO and the UNWTO should largely draw on national practices and experiences, as well as seek cooperation with and technical support from the international statistical community working in areas of tourism and labour statistics.

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16





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Reducing decent work deficits globally



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17

