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MEASURING INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

WELCOMING REMARKS

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Thanks: Joann + Francoise Carre + James Heintz

Welcome

Harvard Kennedy School – Kennedy Park and the Charles River
New England – crisp cool fall weather + fall foliage
USA – election fever/last 5 days

Few words re WIEGO + why we convened this workshop

1. WIEGO = global research-policy network founded in 1997 – virtual network with 15 staff in 6 countries + 120 members in 35 countries + activities at any given time in 10 or more countries + Secretariat at Harvard Kennedy School

- Voice and Visibility - Policy Dialogues
- Voice – ORP
- Visibility – Statistics and Research
- Policy Dialogues – inclusive cities + fair/ethical trade + social protection

2. WIEGO Statistics Program – under able leadership of Joann

- Worked closely with Ralf Hussmanns of ILO as well as Ricardo Negreti of INEGI/Mexico and other members of the International Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (Delhi Group) – to formulate and promote concept of informal employment - endorsed by ILC in 2002 and ICLS in 2003
- Has been planning for this workshop for some time – first proposal dates back to

Triumvirate who planned this meeting: JV + JH + FC

3. Why do we think it is important to work toward a common framework across developed and developing countries for informal employment?

All of us here have a sense that “informal” or “nonstandard” work is increasing over time and across countries. The statisticians among us want to be able to better measure this phenomenon. The researchers among us want to be able to better analyze and understand what is happening. The WIEGO network and other advocates among us are concerned to have better statistical data and data analysis to use in our advocacy work with and for the working poor in the informal economy.

Three reasons: better **empirical picture** of the global workforce + **better conceptual or analytical understanding** of labor market dynamics + better **advocacy tools**

1 – **to capture and measure changes in labor markets/employment structure** that we are all aware of - we need **common statistical concepts** and **accurate measures** to improve our understanding of what is happening and where. It would be useful to know whether trends in informalisation in developed countries are similar to or distinct from the growth of nonstandard employment in developed countries. It would be great to have a global estimate of what share of the global workforce is informally employed – but this will require use of common concepts and measures over time and space.

2 – **to understand labor force dynamics and labor mobility = better conceptual or analytical understanding**

given the increased concern about global inequalities and the sheer numbers of working poor persons, we need to understand patterns of worker mobility (from one source of employment to another) and whether there are barriers to mobility – this will require panel datasets that are comparable in fundamental ways across countries

3 – **to make the case for the need to support the working poor in the informal economy** – we need local, national, regional, and global estimates of the size, composition, and contribution of the informal economy – this will require use of common concepts and measures across all countries

This is why this workshop is so important for WIEGO. We are truly delighted and excited to have all of you here – 8 official statisticians from 6 national statistical offices and the ILO + 9 researchers from 8 countries + 6 WIEGO staff from 2 countries (in all 24 from 11 countries)

Before the workshop starts, I would like to thank my WIEGO colleagues

JV + JH + FC

BG – who as always works to ensure we're all comfortable and well fed

PC – who is here to help BG

Thanks also to all of you for having the interest to come and for putting your trust in this unknown entity called WIEGO

Let the workshop begin....