



**PROGRESS OF
THE WORLD'S WOMEN**

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WOMEN | WORK & POVERTY

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WORKING POOR IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Around the world, the working poor in the informal economy include those who work:



On Streets or In Open Spaces:

- street vendors
- push-cart vendors
- waste pickers
- roadside barbers
- construction workers



In Fields, Pastures, and Forests:

- small farmers
- agricultural labourers
- shepherds
- forest gatherers



In Small Shops and Workshops:

- scrap metal recyclers
- shoe makers
- weavers
- garment makers and embroiderers
- paper-bag makers



At Home:

- garment makers
- embroiderers
- shoemakers
- artisans or craft producers
- assemblers of electronic parts



DEFINITION OF INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT*

- **Self-Employment in Informal Enterprises:** self-employed in small unregistered or unincorporated enterprises, including:
 - *employers*
 - *own account operators*
 - *unpaid family workers*
- **Wage Employment in Informal Jobs:** wage workers without legal or social protection who work for formal or informal firms, for households or for no fixed employer, including:
 - *employees of informal enterprises*
 - informal wage workers such as:
 - casual or day labourers
 - contract workers
 - domestic workers
 - industrial outworkers (also called homeworkers)

Note:

- * The international definition of the “informal sector” that was adopted by the 1993 International Conference of Labour Statisticians included only those who work in informal enterprises (shown in *italics* above). The newly expanded definition of “informal employment” has been endorsed by the 2002 International Labour Conference and the 2003 International Conference of Labour Statisticians

WOMEN AND MEN IN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT: DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- Fact #1 – The majority – 50 to 90 percent – of the total workforce in developing countries is employed in the informal economy**
- Fact # 2 – Women are more likely to be engaged in informal employment than formal employment, with the exception of the North Africa (where a significant share of women workers are in the public sector)**
- Fact # 3 – Informal employment is generally a larger source of employment for women than for men in most countries outside of North Africa**
- Fact # 4 – Women are concentrated in the more precarious types of informal employment**

SEGMENTATION OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY: BY SEX, AVERAGE EARNINGS, AND POVERTY RISK

Poverty Risk Average Earnings

Segmentation by Sex

Low

High



High

Low



Employers

Predominantly Men

Informal Wage
Workers: "Regular"

Own Account Operators

Men and Women

Informal Wage Workers: Casual

Industrial Outworkers/Homeworkers

Predominantly
Women

Unpaid Family Workers