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**WOMEN, WORK, AND POVERTY:
DEFINING THE PROBLEM,
FINDING THE SOLUTIONS**

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RECENT TRENDS

Feminization of the Labour Force – in 2000, women comprised:

- over 40 per cent of the labour force in: East and South East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, South America and the Caribbean
- a third or less of the labour force in: West and South Asia, North Africa and Central America (UN 2000)

Informalization of the Labour Force – in 2000, informal employment comprised:

- around 50 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force in: North Africa and Latin America
- over 70 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force in: Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO 2002)

WOMEN, WORK, AND POVERTY: NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Unemployed = seeking employment:

- women have higher unemployment rates than men
- but unemployment is not the most serious issue
 - 6 % of global workforce is unemployed
 - 49% of global workforce earns <\$2/day
 - 19% of global workforce earns <\$1/day

Under-Employed = employed but without:

- sufficient work
- sufficient earnings

Over-Worked = long work days:

- paid work:
 - time- or piece-based work at low wages
 - over-time work, often without compensation
- unpaid care work + household chores

GENDER SEGMENTATION OF LABOUR MARKETS

Formal Labour Markets:

- women are *less* likely than men to be in the *private sector*
- women are *more* likely than men to be in the *public sector*

Informal Labour Markets:

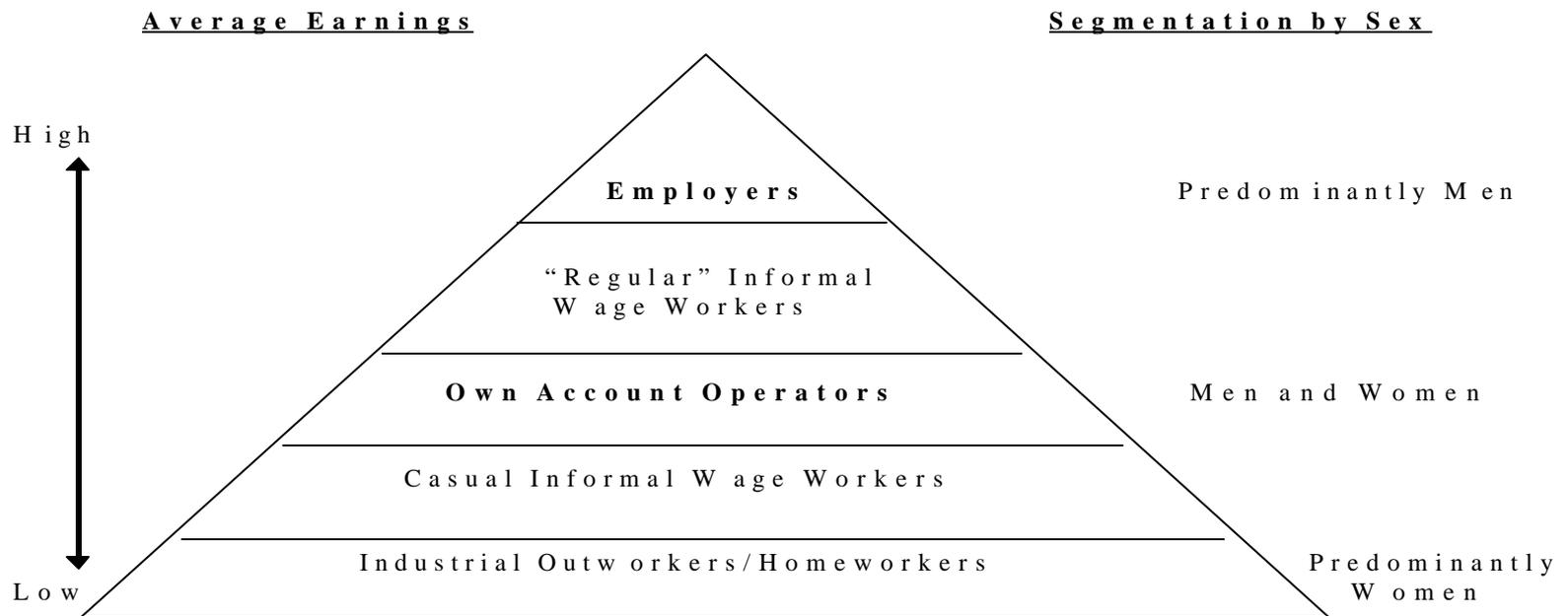
- women are *more* likely than men to be *informally employed*
- *within* the informal economy:
 - women are *less* likely than men to be *micro-entrepreneurs* who hire others
 - women are *more* likely than men to be *own account operators*, except in agriculture
 - women are *more* likely than men to be *industrial outworkers + unpaid family workers*

HIERARCHY OF AVERAGE EARNINGS

- Within the formal economy, average earnings are higher in the public sector than in the private sector
- Average earnings in informal employment are well below average earnings in formal employment, with two exceptions:
 - informal employers (in most countries)
 - informal public wage workers (in some cases)
- Within the informal economy, there is a hierarchy of average earnings:
 - informal employers
 - “regular” informal wage workers
 - own account workers
 - “casual” informal wage workers
 - industrial outworkers
 - unpaid contributing family workers

GENDER GAP IN AVERAGE EARNINGS

- women's average earnings tend to fall below those of men in identical employment statuses, both formal and informal
- within the informal economy, women are disproportionately represented in the segments with lower average earnings



FINDING THE SOLUTIONS: A POLICY FRAMEWORK

- # 1 – renewed focus on *expanding formal employment* – by putting employment creation and decent work at the centre of economic policy
- # 2 – increased efforts to *formalise* a) *informal enterprises* by creating commercial incentives and simplifying registration procedures + b) *informal jobs* by providing/negotiating, more benefits and protections
- # 3 – series of *targeted interventions* in support of the informal workforce to:
 - increase assets + market access + competitiveness
 - improve terms of doing business + being employed
 - secure legal rights to property + worker benefits
 - provide protection against risks and vulnerabilities
- # 4 – necessary *pre-conditions* for effective policy response:
 - increased *visibility* in national labour force statistics and in national gender and poverty assessments
 - increased *voice* in policy-making and rule-setting institutions – through organization + representation