IMPROVING THE WAY WE MEASURE THE INCREASING CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN NATION-BUILDING

by

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In line with the call of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action to consider unremunerated work in the System of National Accounts (SNA), Virola and De Perio\(^2\), presented during the 7th National Convention on Statistics (NCS) in 1998 a satellite account on the contribution of women to the economy for the period 1990-1997. This was updated in 1999\(^3\) to include estimates for 1998 and in the 2007 NCS with estimates for 2000-2006.

The 1998 and 1999 papers used parameters on hours of unpaid work from the 1988 and 1992 studies of Illo et. al.\(^4\) for Bicol and Mindanao while the 2007 paper used hours of unpaid work from the 2000 pilot Time Use Survey (TUS) conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO) among sample households in Quezon City and Batangas.

Results of these studies show that for the period 1990-1998, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would have increased by about 37 percent if unpaid work is counted and that women’s contribution would increase from about 35-40 percent of conventional GDP\(^5\) to about 50 percent when unpaid work is taken into account. On the other hand, for the period 2000-2006, accounting for unpaid work, GDP would have increased by 66-94 percent!

Obviously, the estimates are significantly affected by the parameters on hours of unpaid work. The big disparity between the 1990-1998 and the 2000-2006 estimates in the addition to GDP when unpaid work is counted is caused by the fact that the 2000 TUS showed large increases in the hours of unpaid work when compared to the results of the Illo studies in 1988/1992. For instance, unpaid work per day of employed men increased from

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\(^5\)Conventional GDP does not include unpaid housework services such as: a) cleaning, decoration and maintenance of the dwelling unit; b) cleaning, servicing and repair of households durable goods, including vehicles; c) preparation and serving of meals; d) care, training and instruction of children; care of sick, infirm or old; and e) transportation of member of the households or their goods.
1.2 hours/day to 5.1 hours/day; while that for the unemployed/not in the labor force, increased from 1.9 hours/day to 5.2 hours/day. On the other hand, the parameter increased from 4.3 hours/day to 6.6 hours/day among employed women, and from 6.6 hours/day to 8.0 hours/day for women who are unemployed/not in the labor force. These parameters from the Quezon City/Batangas TUS pilot seem to be too high and need to be assessed.

In the 1998 study, Virola and De Perio recommended that periodic time-use surveys should be conducted by the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) and that resources be made available to institutionalize these surveys. In addition, NSCB Resolution No. 12, Series of 2005, instructed the NSO and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW, then National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women) to jointly take the lead in conducting a National TUS, in collaboration with the NSCB and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). Unfortunately however, no follow-up TUS activity has been made since the 2000 pilot TUS.

In response to renewed calls to value women’s unpaid work and in line with the country’s commitment on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly on MDG 3, it is necessary to reinvigorate efforts and to muster the political will to invest resources so that more accurate statistics in this area can be generated by the PSS.

This paper is NSCB’s contribution to the continuing agenda towards a more accurate valuation of women’s contribution in nation-building. In the absence of more updated and more credible parameters on unpaid house work from a national TUS, this paper will undertake simulation exercises using different hours of unpaid work to come up with estimates of “women GDP/GNP”. In addition, it will present indicators on employment and education that can enhance the assessment of the role of women in the economy. It is also hoped that this paper can contribute towards sustaining the interest of gender advocates in promoting the agenda on the measurement of the contribution of women to the economy.

**Key words and phrases:** Millennium Development Goals, gender equality, Gross Domestic Product, unpaid work, production boundary, Time Use Survey, Philippine System of National Accounts (PSNA), SNA, women’s contribution to the economy, women GDP, employment, education.