

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

For discussion

Second Meeting of the 2007/2008 Bureau  
Helsinki (Finland), 18-19 October 2007

Item 2a of the Provisional  
Agenda

**IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF INCOME, LIVING CONDITIONS AND  
POVERTY STATISTICS**

**Note prepared by the UNECE Statistical Division**

1. When discussing income, living conditions and poverty statistics at its meeting in February 2005, the Bureau noted that:
  - the Canberra Group on Household Income Statistics has produced useful outputs and international recommendations;
  - the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) is engaged in the production of internationally comparable household income data for research purposes, and cooperation with the activities of the Canberra Group should be developed;
  - if a city group on household expenditure statistics is to be established, operating methods and expected output should be clearly specified;
  - because of lack of a standardised definition of poverty that would allow international comparisons, it appears more useful to support a multidimensional approach to poverty measurement.
  
2. Taking these comments into consideration the UNECE Statistical Division proposes the following issues to be considered.
  - (a) The Canberra Group, the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) and the Eurostat Working Group on Household Budget Surveys are engaged in work in the broad field of income, living conditions and poverty statistics. Furthermore, at the global level, the World Bank and UNSD are active in the area of poverty measurement; examples include the Global Poverty Monitoring Database of the World Bank and the planned UNSD “Handbook on Poverty Statistics: Concepts, methods and policy use”. Thus, it might be useful to explore the need to ensure or improve coordination and cooperation between the various working groups and organizations active in this area. It should also be noted that the International Labour Conference of Statisticians (ILCS) in December 2003 recommended the establishment of a City Group on household expenditure statistics, similar to the Canberra Group on income statistics.
  
  - (b) Most countries seem to support a multidimensional indicator approach for measuring poverty (including social exclusion). However, even with a multidimensional approach, it may be difficult to construct a common measure of poverty that can be used for comparisons between countries with different income levels and different structural and institutional set-ups. However, a regional approach might be possible. Although working groups and international organizations may develop differentiated approaches in order to meet country-specific requirements, it might be useful to consider some coordination of work in order to

develop a frame in terms of a set of internationally accepted principles and recommended practices for poverty measurement.

(c) The possibility should be considered of organising an expert group meeting under the auspices of the CES to develop an agenda for future actions in the area of income, living conditions and poverty statistics. The meeting could also consider the feasibility of a regional approach. The meeting should take stock of current activities and available materials (working papers, guidelines, recommendations, etc.) in the area. It should be noted that the CES plenary session in June 2005 recommended the organization of such an expert meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*