

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2016/2017 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 14-15 February 2017

Item III (g) of the Provisional
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR THE STEERING GROUP ON MEASURING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY**

Note by the Secretariat

This document presents the terms of reference for the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality. The Bureau discussed and approved the terms of reference for the Steering Group.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The UNECE Statistical Division has been involved in poverty statistics since the **in-depth review** of this topic by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in November 2012. Three **expert seminars** and three **capacity-building workshops** on poverty measurement were held in 2013 - 2016.
2. In January 2014, based on the conclusions of the 2013 seminar “The way forward in poverty statistics”, the Bureau established the Task Force on Poverty Measurement to develop guidelines and provide recommendations for improving the international comparability and availability of statistics on poverty and the related metadata. The Task Force is concluding its work and has submitted the draft **Guide on Poverty Measurement** to the Bureau for a review as document ECE/CES/BUR/2017/FEB/21.
3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development further emphasizes the importance of measuring poverty, inequality and vulnerability, in particular its goals 1 (‘End poverty in all its forms everywhere’) and 10 (‘Reduce inequalities within and among countries’). The current issues countries face include the lack of data sources for the calculation and disaggregation of SDG indicators, the need to clarify definitions for a number of indicators and to address the differences between national and international methodologies and definitions as well as to harmonize and standardize data to streamline their collection and processing. The principle of “leaving no one behind” requires capturing the hard-to-reach population, yet another challenge in collecting SDG data. Addressing these challenges of measuring poverty and inequalities requires close cooperation among countries within the statistical community.
4. In recent years, the UNECE expert seminars and workshops on poverty measurement have highlighted the many challenges in meeting policymakers’ information needs in this area. Participants have emphasized the importance of setting priorities for the necessary methodological development. The 2016 seminar proposed **to establish a Steering Group** to advance methodological work on measuring poverty and inequality, prepare expert meetings to discuss progress in this area, and follow up on the implementation of methodological guidance.

II. MANDATE

5. The Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality will regularly report to the CES Bureau. The Steering Group will identify priority areas where methodological work could be further undertaken. In such cases, after having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries and the availability of resources, the Steering Group will submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

III. OBJECTIVE

6. The objective of the Steering Group will be to provide direction to the CES work on poverty and inequality statistics, advance methodological development, capacity building and collaboration between users and producers of poverty and inequality statistics, and provide a mechanism for following up on the implementation of the CES guidance.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

7. The following activities and outputs are planned:

(a) Take forward methodological work on measuring poverty and inequality, and set priorities in this area taking into account the challenges in producing indicators for monitoring of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Follow up on the implementation of the *CES Guide on Poverty Measurement* and the progress of countries in measuring poverty and inequalities;

(c) Organize the UNECE expert meetings on measuring poverty and inequality; elaborate proposals for topics and solicit session organizers and discussants;

(d) Advise the UNECE Secretariat on the planning of capacity building activities in the area of poverty and inequality statistics to support the statistical systems in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

8. The Steering Group will ensure coordination of the CES work on poverty and inequality statistics with Eurostat, OECD, the World Bank and the leading research group of Oxford University on poverty measurement (OPHI), other relevant bodies and with current developments related to the monitoring of poverty under the Sustainable Development Goals.

V. TIMETABLE

9. The work on poverty and inequality statistics in the CES countries is ongoing. The Steering Group will be created for an initial period from 2017 to 2020.

VI. METHOD OF WORK

10. The Steering Group will work mainly via e-mail consultations and teleconferences. The Group will also have face-to-face meetings in conjunction with the annual UNECE expert meetings on poverty and inequality statistics, next to be held in July 2017.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

11. The following countries and organizations have expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group: Austria, Canada, Georgia, Italy, Poland, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat, OECD, Oxford University on poverty measurement, United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, and the World Bank, thus covering the different sub-regions in the UNECE. If necessary, other experts and agencies can also be consulted or asked to contribute, to consolidate the best available expertise.

12. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

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