

Meeting of the 2017/2018 Bureau
Yerevan (Armenia), 10-11 October 2017

Approved

Item IV (c) of the Provisional
Agenda

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON DISAGGREGATED POVERTY MEASURES

Prepared by the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality

This document contains the proposed terms of reference for the Task Force on Disaggregated Poverty Measurement. The Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality prepared these terms of reference based on the conclusions of the 2017 CES seminar on poverty measurement and the challenges identified in the Guide on Poverty Measurement. The Bureau discussed and approved the terms of reference.

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. Four expert meetings and four capacity-building workshops on poverty measurement were held in 2013-2017. A CES task force was established in 2014 to prepare the Guide on Poverty Measurement (document ECE/CES/BUR/2017/OCT/14/Add.1) that the Bureau is invited to approve at the present meeting. In February 2017, the Bureau established the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality to provide direction to the CES work on poverty and inequality statistics.
2. The seminar on poverty measurement held at the 2017 CES plenary session took stock of the achievements and challenges and identified several possible actions for the way forward. The Conference decided that the Bureau would discuss at the October 2017 meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.
3. Based on the challenges identified in the Guide on Poverty Measurement, the conclusions of the CES seminar and information on current methodological work by international organisations, the Steering Group chaired by the United States examined the different possible follow-up actions and prepared a proposal. The proposal was presented and discussed at the meeting of the UNECE Expert Group on Measuring Poverty and Equality on 26-27 September 2017 in Budva (Montenegro) with participation from 29 countries.
4. Designing and implementing policies for poverty alleviation requires far more detailed information than an overall national estimate can provide. It is important to understand how different population groups and areas are affected and how existing policy measures influence poverty. The pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is

to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. Disaggregated measures are needed to be able to monitor the commitments and design policies.

5. The dimensions recommended by the United Nations Statistical Commission for disaggregation of all Sustainable Development Goal indicators include sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability or geographic location. Furthermore, the dimensions of employment status, housing tenure and receipt of social transfers are deemed highly relevant for poverty measures.

6. Achieving these breakdowns is related to several methodological challenges described in the Guide for Poverty Measurement. These include the measurement of sharing of resources within households, as well as coverage of hard-to-reach populations and population living in institutions. Furthermore, the comparability of poverty measures across groups may depend on appropriate measurement of housing wealth and social transfers in kind, as well as price differences on the sub-national level. Finally, sampling precision needs to be quantified and improved to ensure robust assessments for sub-groups.

7. Considering these issues and challenges, the Expert Group on Measuring Poverty and Equality recommended to pursue methodological work on addressing the challenges of disaggregating national poverty estimates and asked the Steering Group to prepare terms of reference for a task force on this topic.

II. MANDATE

8. The Task Force on Disaggregated Poverty Measures reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) through its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for a period of three years. It will present its full report to the Bureau at the end of the second year of its mandate. In the third year, the Task Force will finalise the report based on comments from the CES Bureau and from the consultation among all CES members.

III. OBJECTIVE

9. The objective of the Task Force is to consolidate current and emerging good practices in disaggregating poverty indicators and in assessing their robustness.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

10. The Task Force will collect and analyse good practices in producing, analysing and disseminating disaggregated poverty measures. These practices would include the following:

- a) Assessment of survey designs, sampling precision, intra-household data and coverage on the sub-national level;
- b) Innovative strategies and survey designs to cover hard-to-reach populations and population living in institutions;
- c) Methods to account better for differing consumption needs of different population sub-groups, such as children, older people or those with a disability;

d) Inclusion of social transfers in kind, housing wealth and imputed rent in the measurement of poverty.

11. Based on the analysis, the Task Force will develop recommendations to statistical offices for the production, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated poverty measures.

V. TIMETABLE

12. The following timetable is foreseen:

Nov-Dec 2017	Launching the Task Force – identifying the countries and organizations interested to participate in its work
Jan-Feb 2018	Discussion of work plan
Mar-July 2018	Collection of good practices
Sep-Dec 2018	Review and analysis of the collected information, including identification of data gaps
Jan-June 2019	Discussing and drafting the recommendations and conclusions
July-Sep 2019	Editing the report
Oct 2019	Review of the full report by the CES Bureau
Oct-Dec 2017	Revisions to address comments from the CES Bureau
Jan-Apr 2020	Electronic consultation among CES members
June 2020	Expected endorsement of the report by the CES plenary session

VI. METHODS OF WORK

10. The Task Force is expected to work mainly via email and telephone conferences and using a common workspace at the UNECE wiki platform. It will meet once a year back-to-back with the meetings of the UNECE Expert Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

11. The following countries and organizations indicated interest in participating in the Task Force: Austria, Canada, Mexico, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat, OECD, World Bank and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (United Kingdom). Membership is open to additional countries or organizations. UNECE will provide the secretariat.

* * * * *