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15 December 2014

ENGLISH ONLY

**UNITED NATIONS**

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

**Seminar on poverty measurement**

(Geneva, 5‑6 May 2015)

INFORMATION NOTE FOR PARTICIPANTS

# Time and venue

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organizing the Seminar on poverty measurement under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and with financial support from the United Nations Population Fund. The Seminar will be held in room VIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It will start at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 5 May and finish on Wednesday, 6 May by 5.30 p.m.

# Background

1. The recent discussions on the post-2015 development agenda have further strengthened the importance of measuring poverty, inequality and vulnerability. The United Nations General Assembly’s Open Working Group proposed ‘End poverty in all its forms everywhere’ as the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). As the other goals, it needs to be monitored with indicators that matter nationally and are comparable internationally. It is expected that regional reporting mechanisms will also play a significant role in facilitating the reporting at regional level, taking into account regional priorities and ensuring a link between the national and the global level.
2. While it is recognized that the indicators used on national, regional and global levels may differ, more coherence is needed. Currently, there is no coherent set of indicators to measure and monitor poverty in the UNECE region. For the various indicators, a large variety of definitions, methods and primary data sources are available and there are no uniform national or international guidelines for their application. Based on recommendations from the UNECE seminar “The way forward in poverty measurement” in 2013, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) 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.
3. The participants of the 2013 seminar appreciated the exchange of experience and good practice and recommended the UNECE secretariat to organize a follow-up seminar. The Seminar is included in the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2015, which is approved by the Conference of European Statisticians and the UNECE Executive Committee.

# PURPOSE

1. The main purpose of this Seminar is to allow countries to exchange experiences and discuss issues of poverty measurement in the UNECE region and beyond. The Seminar will also provide the opportunity to discuss the results achieved by the CES Task Force on Poverty Measurement and propose further methodological work.
2. The target audience of the seminar consists of statisticians and analysts from national statistical offices, ministries and other government agencies that produce or use poverty statistics.

# AGENDA

## Practices in the UNECE region

1. Under this agenda item, the CES Task Force on Poverty Measurement will share the results of its work on an inventory of methods used in the UNECE region, obtained through a questionnaire to national statistical offices.

## Poverty lines based on income or consumption

1. This session discusses the methodological issues in producing estimates and establishing poverty lines based on income or consumption. The issues would include, among others, the following:
2. Considerations for identifying the poverty line
3. Accounting for price differences over time and on sub-national level
4. Measurement of vulnerability to fall below the poverty line
5. Consideration of costs of earning
6. Consideration of remittances
7. Inclusion of in-kind benefits
8. Benefits of absolute and relative measures
9. Communication with users

## Multidimensional poverty

1. In addition to the income and consumption, a household may suffer from a range of other deprivations, and the multidimensional character of poverty is now broadly recognised. Health, education and living standards are the dimensions used in Multidimensional Poverty Index. Social inclusion, nutrition, employment, empowerment and personal security, and pension contributions are other relevant aspects. The session will also consider the broader issue of measuring inequality. Examples of issues for discussion in this session include:
2. Conceptual considerations for building multidimensional indicators
3. Use of the Alkire-Foster method in different contexts
4. The relation between poverty, inequality and social exclusion
5. Communication with users

## Survey methodology

1. Many specific methodological issues relate to the surveys that aim at measuring poverty and inequality. This session could address, among others, the following issues:
2. How to build the weights for household members when using household survey data
3. Sampling errors, sample size for measuring the situation of vulnerable groups
4. Measuring intra-household differences in resource distribution for better understanding of poverty among women, children, the elderly and disabled persons
5. Reliability of poverty measures for sub-groups and small areas;
6. Approaches to ensure coverage of low and high income groups, ethnic minorities and vulnerable population groups and overcoming specific issues leading to non-response in those categories
7. Use of novel technologies for data collection

## International comparability

1. There is a strong need for data that is comparable internationally and over time, to allow monitoring internationally agreed policy goals, such as SDGs. This session includes an overview of the status of work on poverty indicators in the SDG framework. Further issues for discussion in this session include:
2. Dissemination of metadata
3. Retrospective estimation of new indicators
4. International micro-data access
5. Comparability of existing indicators
6. Methods and programs to harmonize methodology and primary data sets
7. Adaptation of methodology and indicators to local needs

## Future work

1. This panel discussion will bring together the conclusions from the sessions and discuss their implications for the future of poverty measurement in the UNECE region, in the light of on-going international activities, such as the process of identifying indicators for monitoring SDGs and the activities of the CES Task Force on Poverty Measurement.

# DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND LANGUAGES

1. Participants are invited to submit a paper for any topic on the agenda.
2. The working languages of the Seminar are English, French and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages.
3. Papers and slides provided in Russian will be translated to English to the extent possible, if they were delivered by the requested deadline. A limited number of papers will be translated from English to Russian. Authors of papers submitted in Russian are strongly encouraged to provide a short abstract in English.
4. Abstracts should be submitted by **16 February 2015**. The abstract should include:

* the title of the presentation
* a clear description of the issues addressed in the paper
* each author’s name and e-mail address
* institutional affiliation

1. The full final versions of papers should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat in Word format by **20 March 2015**. It is recommended not to exceed 10 pages including charts, annexes and references.
2. Papers, abstracts and presentations should be submitted electronically to Mr Andres Vikat, e-mail andres.vikat@unece.org.
3. Papers will be made available on the UNECE website at the following location: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2015.05.poverty.htm>.
4. Presenters are encouraged to use PowerPoint presentations, and to send them to the UNECE Secretariat by 1 May.
5. Participants are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the Seminar. Documents posted on the website before the Seminar will not be distributed in the conference room.

# PARTICIPATION AND REGISTRATION

1. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the Seminar. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization.
2. All participants attending the Seminar are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participant resides, with a reference to the UNECE Seminar on Poverty Measurement. If a formal invitation letter is required by the Embassy, this can be requested from the UNECE secretariat, e-mail [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:mdg.stats@unece.org).
3. Participants are requested to register online **by 10 April 2015**. the on-line registration form available through this link: http://bit.ly/1xosjuN. Please copy the link in the common browsers like Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome. The online meeting registration guideline is available at: <https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR/Online+Meeting+Registration+Guidelines>. Should you have any questions, please contact the UNECE secretariat, email [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org) or tel +41 22 917 4147.
4. In order to enter the Palais des Nations where the Seminar is being held, all participants need to obtain a security pass (ID badge). For this purpose, please present yourself with your passport at the UN Security Identification Office at Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations (Avenue de la Paix 14, Buses 8 and 28, Stop Appia), **by 8:30 a.m.** on Tuesday, 5 May 2015. The Security Identification Office is open Monday to Friday from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (non-stop). For identification and security reasons, delegates are requested to wear their security badges at all times while inside the Palais des Nations.
5. Practical information for seminar participants, including links to maps of Geneva and the Tourist Office where hotel reservations can be made, is available at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>. A map of the Palais des Nations where you can find the Security Identification Office located at the Pregny Gate is available at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/UN_Map.pdf>

# IMPORTANT DEADLINES

* **16 February 2015**: submission of abstracts
* **20 March 2015**: submission of full papers
* **10 April 2015**: registration

# Logistics

## Accommodation in Geneva

1. Participants are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. The UNECE secretariat in Geneva is not in a position to provide such services to participants. Participants are advised to book hotel accommodation well in advance of the meeting since available rooms are limited due to other meetings and events taking place in Geneva. Maps of Geneva, list of hotels and information for visitors to the Palais des Nations are available on the following website: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>. The following information is also available:

* The closest hotel to Palais des Nations is the 5-Star Intercontinental.
* Cornavin, Suisse, Les Nations are four-star hotels and within 7-10 minutes to the Palais des Nations by buses 8, 5, 28, F, V, Z and tram 15.
* There are several three-star and four-star hotels near Cornavin, the main train station. These hotels are moderate in price and are 10 minutes by bus or tram and 25-30 minutes on foot from the Palais des Nations. Examples include: Eden, Manotel, Mon Repos, des Alpes, International and Terminus, Montana, Savoy, Suisse, and Windsor. Newly opened hotel Ibis Genève Centre Nations is in Grand Pre and in 5 minutes by bus.

## Free public transport in Geneva

1. Geneva International Airport now offers incoming passengers a free ticket for public transport. The free tickets are available from a machine in the airport’s baggage collection area and allow you to use any public transport (train, tram, bus) in Geneva and surrounding areas for a period of 80 minutes. Look for the machine pictured below after collecting your luggage and before walking out through the customs area.



1. The Geneva Airport is approximately 4 kilometres from the city centre. The train is the most efficient way to get into the city. Follow the signs to the airport railway station from the arrivals area. All trains leaving from the airport stop at the central Geneva-Cornavin station. The journey takes six minutes. The buses 5 and 28 will bring you from the airport to the Place des Nations.
2. Taxis are readily available from the airport. They are metered, so costs will vary, the journey from the airport into the city centre will usually cost around CHF 30.
3. When checking-in at your hotel you should receive a free [Geneva Transport Card](http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/index.php?rubrique=0000000417&lang=_eng), enabling you to use the entire Geneva public transport system free of charge throughout your stay.
4. Tourist and public transport information is available at the [Unireso](http://www.unireso.com/) information desk in the airport arrival hall after you go through customs. More information on Geneva’s free public transport initiative is available from:

* Public transport from Geneva Airport: <http://www.gva.ch/en/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-67/>
* Free Geneva Transport Card:  
  <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/index.php?rubrique=0000000417>

## Currency

1. The exchange rate of the euro and the Swiss franc is now around 1.20 francs per 1 euro and is subject to daily market fluctuations. For conversion rate, please consult <http://www.ubs.com/1/e/index/bcqv/calculator.html>. Currency exchange facilities are available in the city centre and at the UBS bank branch at Palais des Nations, located on the ground floor of C building (door C6). It is open from 8:30 to 16:30, with no lunch break, from Monday to Friday.

# INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

1. All queries concerning the Seminar should be addressed to:

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| Mr. Andres Vikat  Chief  Social and Demographic Statistics Section  Statistical Division, UNECE  Room C.440  Palais des Nations  Tel +41 22 917 2764  E-mail [andres.vikat@unece.org](mailto:andres.vikat@unece.org) | Ms. Oyunjargal (Oyuna) Social and Demographic Statistics Section Statistical Division, UNECE Room C.450  Palais des Nations Tel +41 22 917 4147 E-mail [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org) |