

**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**Workshop on harmonisation of poverty statistics**  
(Geneva, 11 July 2016)

Organized in cooperation with Rosstat and CISStat, with financial support from the Russian Federation and the United Nations Development Account.

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**I. TIME AND VENUE**

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organizing the Workshop on harmonisation of poverty statistics under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The meeting is conducted with financial support from the United Nations Development Account project "Promoting equality" and the project "Harmonized poverty indicators for monitoring sustainable development in the CIS countries" funded by Russian Federation. The Workshop will be held in room VIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva on Monday, 11 July from 10 am to 6 pm, with a lunch break from 1 to 3 pm.

**II. BACKGROUND**

2. The ongoing global processes related to the implementation of SDGs call for action on poverty reduction. During the UN Statistical Commission session in March 2016, the SDGs indicators were agreed as a practical starting point on the proposed global indicators on measuring SDG goals and targets. They, however require further methodological guidance and technical refinement, especially in the field of poverty, inequality and vulnerability. Two important aspects in the selection process of poverty-related indicators are still to be addressed: defining the regional space and considering the trade-off between national relevance and international comparability. 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.

3. Development level and thus the specific national measurement needs vary significantly across the countries of Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia. Nonetheless, comparable measures are needed to assess progress in the context of other countries of the region and in the region as a whole. It is also necessary to update the poverty measures as economic and social circumstances and statistical methodologies evolve. Action towards data harmonization and comparability is thus vitally important.

4. This workshop will review the current practices of poverty measurement. It will identify the main directions for further steps towards harmonizing poverty statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia and aligning them to the monitoring needs for SDGs. Starting with the sources and methods, countries use different approaches to measure poverty. At the same time, more recent concepts like multidimensional poverty are yet to be applied in the region. Exchange of experience and guidance on good practices would be helpful for the interested countries to keep up with the new developments and strive towards comparable measures from the outset.

### **III. PURPOSE**

5. The main purpose of this Workshop is to exchange experience and build statistical capacity for harmonisation of poverty measures, with focus on the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

6. The target audience of the Workshop consists of statisticians and analysts from national statistical offices.

### **IV. WORKSHOP OUTLINE**

#### **A. Harmonisation of statistical concepts, definitions and methods on poverty**

7. The session will discuss the methodological challenges in collecting comparable information on essential demographic and socioeconomic variables, emphasizing the aspects relevant to countries of Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia. The session aims to provide some practical guidance on what the countries could do to achieve harmonisation of basic poverty statistics. The sources of data, i.e. the household and labour surveys will be the starting point in the discussions. The presentation by the World Bank on standardization of poverty data sources will set the stage for discussions on challenges in collecting harmonised poverty data and related measurement issues with regard to consumption aggregate, treatment of durable goods and housing expenses. The session will continue with specific examples from countries.

#### **B. First steps in developing multidimensional poverty measures (led by OPHI)**

8. The multidimensional concept is still very new in the countries of Eastern Europe Caucasus and Central Asia. The session will inform about multidimensional poverty approach and key issues linked to measuring various dimensions in assessing deprivations at the household level, e.g. poor health, job insecurity, social exclusion, malnutrition/obesity, lack of personal security, and insufficient pension contributions. Furthermore, the session will introduce the first steps and provide guidance to countries interested in developing multidimensional poverty measures. Among the issues for discussion are data requirements, addressing country specificities while ensuring comparability in the region, and compatibility with the other measurement approaches to poverty. The presentation will be provided by the research centre Oxford Poverty and

Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The session will continue with specific examples from countries.

## **V. REQUIRED PREPARATION FOR THE WORKSHOP**

9. The Workshop will discuss the existing data and the ways towards its harmonisation. The participants are invited to send their country **Questionnaire of household budget surveys**. The questionnaires should be submitted to the Secretariat ([social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org)) by **9 June 2016**.

## **VI. DOCUMENTATION AND LANGUAGES**

10. Participants are encouraged to download the background materials from the website <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41285#/> and bring their own copies to the Workshop. Documents posted on the website before the Workshop will not be distributed in the conference room.

11. The working languages of the Seminar are English and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages.

## **VII. IMPORTANT DEADLINES**

- **9 June 2016**: registration through <https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=kf075l> (funded participants will be contacted individually)
- **9 June 2016**: submission of the countries' Questionnaire of household budget surveys

## **VIII. REGISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

12. For information on registration and logistics, including accommodation in Geneva, free public transport and local currency, please refer to the information note of the Seminar on Poverty Measurement, available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2016.7.poverty.seminar.html>.

## **IX. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE**

13. All queries concerning the Workshop should be addressed to the Secretariat:

Secretariat  
Social and Demographic Statistics Section  
Statistical Division, UNECE  
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