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**UNITED NATIONS**  
**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS  
**Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics to measure SDG 1**  
Geneva, Switzerland, 4 December 2019

## CONCEPT NOTE

### I. TIME AND VENUE

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organising the *Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics to measure SDG 1*, with financial support from the United Nations Development Account. The Workshop will be held at Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on Wednesday, 4 December from 9:30 am to 5.30 pm. The Workshop is followed by the *UNECE Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality: SDGs 1 and 10* on 5-6 December.

### II. BACKGROUND

2. The call for internationally comparable poverty measures remains strong in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since 2015, UNECE is working to promote synergies and cooperation within the statistical community towards harmonization of poverty statistics and its various measurement approaches, data sources, sampling methods, classifications and definitions. Later the same year, countries adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which strengthened further the UNECE mandate in support of poverty statistics, in particular in measuring progress towards Goal 1 “End Poverty” and Goal 10 “Reducing Inequalities”.

3. Following a 3-year project, in 2019, the UNECE Harmonized Survey Module for Poverty Measurement was finalized and made available online<sup>1</sup>. The module has been designed to provide a model set of survey questions for poverty measurement in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia with the objective to strengthening statistical capacity for producing comparable and reliable poverty indicators for monitoring sustainable development. The **model set of survey questions** was successfully tested in four countries – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – and steps are undertaken to integrate the questions in their regular surveys. The pilot countries reported during the *Workshop on Harmonization of Poverty Statistics (2018, Vienna)* successful completion of testing the model set of survey questions for poverty measurement and

<sup>1</sup> <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/HSQ/Harmonized+Survey+Module+for+Poverty+Measurement>

improved methodology and survey technology. The CIS countries are encouraged to align their work to the monitoring requirements for SDGs and respond to the need for comparable measures across countries while maintaining a good balance between national specificities and cross-country comparability.

### **III. PURPOSE**

4. The purpose of the Workshop is to exchange experience and build statistical capacity for harmonisation of poverty measures, with focus on CIS countries. It will identify the main directions for further steps towards harmonizing poverty statistics.

5. The target audience are statisticians and analysts from national statistical offices.

### **IV. PROGRAMME**

#### **Session A. Progress made on measuring SDG 1 “End poverty”**

6. Countries face a number of challenges in producing indicators related to SDG 1 “End poverty”, including data inconsistency, different approaches to disaggregation, missing metadata for national SDG lists, and no clear understanding on the use of proxy and complementary SDG indicators. Country representatives are therefore invited to share their experience in setting priorities in selecting the poverty indicators, highlight challenges and discuss progress made in producing the SDG 1 indicators (1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, and 1.4.1). The objective of this session is to strengthen the coordination at regional level in order to foster harmonization of poverty statistics and support countries in producing comparable SDG data. The session will conclude with a broad discussion on challenges and possible solutions in producing the above SDG 1 indicators.

#### **Session B. Harmonization of data collection on poverty in household surveys**

7. From 2016 to 2018 UNECE carried out the project “Harmonized poverty indicators for monitoring sustainable development in CIS countries” funded by the Russian Federation. The project facilitated the introduction of harmonized classifications of income and consumer expenditure based on the international practices, which will allow for harmonization of input data. These data enable producing comparable indicators for calculating absolute poverty rates using international thresholds and will serve the monitoring needs on measuring progress towards SDG 1.

8. Under this agenda item, countries are invited to present and discuss their continued efforts in compiling harmonized poverty data to improve cross-country comparability and on the use of model set of survey questions on measuring poverty in their surveys. Representatives from countries that participated in the pilot study are invited to share their follow up experience with the proposed model set.

## **Conclusions and way forward**

9. The session will discuss the way forward to improve comparability and agree on next steps.

## **V. PREPARATION**

10. The documents will be posted on the Workshop website at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51513>. Participants are encouraged to download the materials from the website and bring their own copies to the Workshop. Documents posted on the website before the Workshop will not be distributed in the meeting room.

## **VI. LANGUAGES**

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

## **VII. REGISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

12. For information on registration, visa, accommodation and logistics, please refer to the information note of the *Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality*, available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51514>.