

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For written
comments

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Agenda

GENDER STATISTICS AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Prepared by the Steering Group on Gender Statistics and the Secretariat

The UNECE Steering Group on Gender Statistics has launched an initiative to support the collection of internationally comparable data on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on gender equality. A short questionnaire is being distributed and the first findings will be discussed at the online meeting on gender statistics on 13-14 October 2020.

The Bureau is invited to comment on the initiative and consider participation of their organizations in this activity.

1. The Covid-19 global pandemic has had an immediate effect on statistical systems, generating unprecedented challenges for data collection operations and threatening the quality and volume of available data. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for reliable and timely statistics to inform policymakers and the public about changes in society and the economy. Gender equality issues have attracted attention from the outset of the crisis. Women make up a large proportion of the care and service staff on the front lines of the immediate crisis response. Questions surrounding the socio-economic impact on women and men, the burden of childcare and domestic tasks amidst school closures, and the link between social isolation measures and gender-based violence have placed gender statistics at the forefront of national statistical offices' responses to the crisis.
2. These challenges may present opportunities for innovation and the introduction of new methods, practice and products in service of relevant gender statistics. For many countries, the most timely and cost-effective way to collect data on the economic and social impact of the Covid-19 crisis on women and men will be to add to or adapt existing national household survey instruments to include questions related to the crisis and recovery.
3. The social and economic impacts of Covid-19 will last far longer than the pandemic itself. As a result, the renewed demand for gender statistics will persist after the immediate monitoring needs of the pandemic are met. From this perspective, it may be desirable to introduce a short, standard set of questions for use in recurring household surveys that will not only capture the immediate effects of the pandemic but will also provide comparable data over time on the longer-lasting consequences of the crisis.

4. Under its general objective to provide direction to the CES work on gender statistics, the activities of the Steering Group on Gender Statistics¹ include launching and steering the development of guidelines and surveys of best practice.
5. To provide practical guidance to countries and support the collection of internationally comparable data for the region, **the Steering Group is exploring the development of a minimum set of questions** data producers might add to household surveys such as household budget and expenditure surveys or labour force surveys to measure the differentiated impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men.
6. At the time of writing the present note, a short questionnaire is being distributed to gender statistics focal points in UNECE countries to map the current Covid-related activities in the area of gender statistics, and to understand the needs for gender statistics in the conditions of the pandemic. The first findings will be discussed at the UNECE virtual meeting on gender statistics devoted to this topic, on 13-14 October 2020.
7. It is expected that the Steering Group would present its recommendations in the first quarter of 2021.
8. **The Bureau is invited to comment on the initiative and consider participation of their organizations in this activity.**

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¹ Terms of reference of the Steering Group on Gender Statistics approved in February 2019, ECE/CES/BUR/2019/FEB/6 Add.1. The Steering Group currently includes members from Switzerland (chair), Australia, Canada, Georgia, Ireland, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, UN Women, Eurostat, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), CIS-Stat, and the OECD Development Centre.