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In-depth review of measurement of current well-being

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Summary

This document served as basis for the in-depth review of the measurement of well-being conducted by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in February 2023. It provides an overview of conceptual and measurement challenges and country practices and a summary of international activities and highlights the need for guidelines for measurement of well-being for countries that produce or consider producing well-being indicators. Section VIII of the document summarizes the discussion of the CES Bureau and its decisions in February 2023.

The Conference is invited to endorse the outcomes of the in-depth review.

I. Executive summary

1. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) regularly conducts in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities in the UNECE region, identify gaps or duplication of work, address emerging issues and facilitate exchange of best practices and mutual learning.

2. In February 2022, the CES Bureau selected the measurement of well-being for an in-depth review. The Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel agreed to lead the review. The report of the review was drafted by Israel with contributions by Netherlands, Mexico, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Secretariat. A survey on country practices was carried out for CES member countries as part of the review. The scope of the review was limited to the measurement of current well-being in a national context (well-being 'here and now'). Broader measures including sustainability (well-being 'after') and well-being 'elsewhere' were not considered.

3. Section II provides the background for the review and a brief historical overview of the developments in measuring of well-being. Section III outlines the scope of the in-depth review and presents terminology and different approaches to measuring well-being. Section IV summarises national experiences based on a survey to CES member countries carried out in July 2022. Section V provides an overview of international activities in measuring and publishing well-being indicators. Section VI summarises the challenges in the measurement of well-being identified in the review. These include conceptual issues and terminology, the dimensions of well-being, international comparability, methodological issues, data sources and timeliness and communication of well-being indicators. Section VII provides the conclusion of the review and recommendations for possible further work. Section VIII summarizes the discussion and decisions of the Bureau in February 2023.

II. Background

4. Since the early 1960's there has been an interest in the use of social indicators to measure well-being or quality of life and the state of society 'beyond GDP'. This started in the USA and spread over the world in the following decade, in particular when the OECD became involved. In 1970, OECD launched the social indicator development program, which resulted in a list of social indicators in 1982 (OECD 1973; 1982 and 1986). From 1968 with the creation of the "Club of Rome", there was also growing attention on the environmental consequences of economic growth. This resulted in the report *Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al., 1972) and, eventually, the so-called *Brundtland-report* (*Our common future*) in 1987 (WCED, 1987).

5. Due to the economic and financial crises in the mid-1980's attention shifted to economic indicators. There were also critical voices questioning the usefulness of social indicators for policy decisions. Still, in Europe several monitoring systems continued throughout the 1990's. At global level, the *Human Development Index* (UNDP), which comprises indicators on health, education and income, has been published yearly since 1990. Since 2000, the political interest in social indicators gradually increase and around 2005 several international organisations[1] took the initiative for a conference titled *Beyond GDP*. The main goal was to clarify the best way to measure "progress". While this conference resulted mainly in a growing awareness, a second follow-up conference that took place in 2009 led to a road map on measuring progress and a report by the European Parliament, *Report on GDP and beyond - Measuring progress in a changing world* (European Parliament, 2011).

6. In 2009, the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission report on the *Measurement of economic performance and social progress* (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009) was published and received with large political interest. The 2009 Commission was reconvened by Stiglitz, Fitoussi and Durand in 2015, resulting in two follow-up volumes: *Beyond GDP: Measuring*

[1] The European Committee, the European Parliament, the Club of Rome, the OECD and the World Wide Fund for nature (WNF).

What Counts for Economic and Social Performance (Stiglitz, Fitoussi & Durand, 2018) and *For Good Measure: Advancing Research on Well-being Metrics Beyond GDP*. (Stiglitz, Fitoussi & Durand, 2018).

7. Although research on subjective measures of well-being has a rich history on its own from the 1960's onwards, it was only after 2009 that subjective indicators were acknowledged more widely also by policy makers as an indispensable part of measuring quality of life or well-being. Subjective indicators, such as happiness and life satisfaction, were also adopted in existing international quality of life measurement systems, such as the yearly report of the UNDP on the Human Development Index[2] and the report on *Measuring Progress, Well-being and Sustainable Development* (Eurostat, 2011).

8. The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report initiated numerous discussions on beyond GDP and led to growing interest in measuring well-being as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing economic, social and environmental aspects, subjective well-being and sustainability incorporating both subjective and objective indicators. Multidimensional measures of well-being have attracted much attention by media and decision makers and feed into national discussion but are also sometimes used to rank and compare countries. While many well-being indicators are produced outside of official statistics, a growing number of national statistical offices and international organizations also began to produce well-being indicators. In 2011, the OECD developed its multidimensional framework for measuring well-being and the *Better Life Index*. More recently, the demand for information about citizens' well-being was accentuated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

9. Although there is broad consensus about the multidimensional nature of well-being, there is a lack of internationally agreed guidelines on the production of well-being indicators to guide countries, clarify typology, harmonise practices and improve international comparability, such as in many other areas of official statistics.

III. Scope and the statistical area covered

10. This section includes an overview of the main issues that characterize the measurement of well-being that will be explored further on in this review.

A. The purpose of measuring well-being

11. *The purpose of measuring well-being* - indicators of well-being strive to give a holistic and complete picture of the current life situation of individuals, households and communities, including both positive and negative aspects. Well-being indicators focus on what matters for people's life in the context measured. This approach differs considerably from using only conventional income measures that address only one aspect of people's life. Well-being measures provide information that can be used for assessing the overall life situation of citizens and households and can enter into policy formulations and decisions.

B. Terminology and the meaning of well-being

12. The concept of well-being is a broad multidimensional concept covering nearly all aspects of human life. This is probably one of the reasons why it is difficult to summarize the meaning of well-being in one universal definition. Nevertheless, there are many similarities between the different perspectives and definitions of well-being. Most definitions consider well-being as a state where all human needs are met and in which individuals can pursue and fulfil their goals in order to achieve a satisfactory quality of life.

13. In the ongoing debate about well-being, the use of different terms such as happiness, quality of life, social welfare and more reflects some of the nuances in the views on well-being. Well-being can be considered inherently subjective or as comprising both objective and subjective aspects. It includes the quality of the conditions that affect our lives, such as

[2] https://hdr.undp.org/reports-and-publications

the environment and the economy but it also takes into consideration the aspects of our lives that we determine ourselves, these include our feelings about ourselves and overall life satisfaction, our sense that what we do in life is worthwhile, our day-to-day emotional experiences (happiness and anxiety) and our wider mental well-being. These considerations make the measurement of well-being one of the most challenging tasks in official statistics.

Box 1
Well-being as understood in this in-depth review

This report adopts the broad definition of well-being of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report. Hence, well-being is considered from the perspective of individuals and households and refers to the different aspects of life that are crucial to meeting human needs and the ability and freedom to pursue one's goals, to thrive and feel satisfied with life.

Well-being is understood as a multidimensional concept that encompasses economic, social, cultural, psychological and environmental dimensions. It includes material living standards (income, consumption, wealth, housing), subjective well-being (life evaluation, affects, sense of meaning and purpose of life), health, education, work and leisure, civic engagement, social life, safety and the environment.

To provide a full picture of well-being, measures of all dimensions should aim to reflect the outcome for individuals and households and assess inequalities between population groups. To this end, dimensions may include both objective and subjective measures.

Well-being may be considered over time and thus include the aspect of sustainability or future well-being (well-being 'later') and over space (well-being 'elsewhere'). This in-dept review focuses on current well-being at national level (well-being 'here and now').

C. Well-being as a multidimensional concept

14. As mentioned earlier, the most common approach to measure well-being is to consider this a multidimensional phenomenon. This means that different dimensions should be considered to measure well-being. Well-being dimensions cover practically all the different aspects that comprise people's lives. The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report is considered a milestone in the development of measuring well-being. The report emphasized the importance of a multidimensional definition of well-being and included a recommendation for 8 well-being dimensions:

(a) Material living standards;

(b) Health;

(c) Education;

(d) Personal activities including work;

(e) Political voice and governance;

(f) Social connections and relationships;

(g) Environment (present and future conditions);

(h) Insecurity, of an economic as well as physical nature.

15. Although different measurement frameworks refer to slightly different dimensions, they represent a generally agreed broad scope of well-being and underline its multidimensional nature. It is also agreed by the different approaches that there is a need to adopt a multidimensional approach "beyond GDP" and measuring not only economic activity and market production for describing how well-off people are.

D. Approaches to measuring well-being

16. It is possible to distinguish three main approaches to measuring well-being beyond GDP. The *first approach* focuses on objective indicators of the living conditions and refers to domains such as income, education, work, health and social networks. The *second approach* considers well-being as inherently subjective in nature and thus focuses on subjective indicators of peoples' perception of well-being, happiness, satisfaction with life in general or particular aspects of it. This is often referred to as subjective well-being (SWB). The *third approach*, which follows that of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report and the OECD framework for measuring well-being, includes both objective and subjective indicators. It combines the so-called "capabilities" (opportunities and conditions one has in life) and the "functionings" (what people do with their living conditions; their achievements) and considers material living conditions, quality of life factors and social life. In this review, well-being is conceived in this third way.

17. Regardless of the approach, well-being is usually measured by use of a framework that consists of several dimensions, which together make up overall well-being. For each dimension, a number of individual statistical indicators are selected to provide a picture of the dimension. The statistics can then be published in *scoreboards* showing the individual indicators by dimension.

18. The measurement of well-being may also include *composite indicators*. A composite indicator is formed by aggregating individual indicators into a single measure. For instance, a composite indicator can be formed for the dimension "education" by aggregating the individual indicators selected for measuring education. Ultimately, composite measures for all dimensions could be compiled, and a single overall composite indicator for well-being be derived by aggregating the dimensions into one measure. An example of a composite measure of well-being is presented in Box 2.

19. A composite indicator can in one glance provide an overall score of a dimension of well-being or even overall well-being, in the same way as the GDP measures all economic activities. It is debatable whether it is possible to derive a meaningful single indicator that grasps all complexities of life and human well-being. In addition, a single composite indicator will not support evidence-based decision making. To this end, one would need to know what drives the development in the composite indicator, i.e., what individual indicators or dimensions are causing the change in the overall composite measure.

Box 2
An example of a composite subjective measure of well-being - the Dutch Personal Well-being Index

One example of a composite measure of subjective well-being is the Personal Well-being Index (PWI) of Statistics Netherlands.[3] Based on the dimensions of quality of life outlined in the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi-report, the PWI is constructed based on people's self-reported satisfaction with eight dimensions:

- Material living standards
- Economic risks
- Education and profession
- Health
- Institutional participation and trust
- Social cohesion and relations
- Physical safety
- Natural environment and living environment.

The scores on the dimensions are equally weighted and aggregated into a composite index. Hence, the PWI can be used as a quality-of-life measure instead of a single life satisfaction indicator, reflecting the combined impact of the dimensions on overall well-being.

[3] For more information, see The Personal Wellbeing Index.

E. Objective and subjective indicators

20. An important characteristic is the use of objective and subjective indicators in potentially all dimensions of well-being to create a more comprehensive picture of individual well-being. Since the 1960's, national and international developments in measuring well-being have contributed considerably to the use of subjective indicators in official statistics. Diener, one of the most noted researchers in subjective well-being, and his co-authors argued that "How people feel and think about their lives is essential to understanding well-being in any society that grants importance not just to the opinions of experts or leaders but to all people in the society" (Diener et al., 2003).

21. Objective indicators examine people's life conditions, resources and capabilities such as income and housing, employment status, level of education, environmental conditions etc. Examples of objective well-being measures that reflect life conditions and status include indicators of life expectancy, infant mortality, employment rate, exposure to air pollution, housing and income. These conditions can be connected to an individual's subjective well-being in general and to the subjective well-being in specific dimensions.

22. Based on the OECD definition, subjective well-being is considered as "good mental states, including all of the various evaluations, positive and negative, that people make of their lives and the affective reactions of people to their experiences" (OECD, 2013, p. 31). It is common to distinguish between three types of subjective well-being: *evaluative* (assessment of life situation), *affective* (feelings or emotional states) and *eudemonic* (sense of meaning and purpose in life), briefly presented in Box 3[4]. A classification of types of subjective well-being is helpful to obtain a structured description and measurement of the phenomenon. Many existing well-being frameworks combine these three types of subjective well-being and explore their relations and interdependencies. However, there is still no single conceptual (nor statistical) scheme that unites the field.

Box 3
Different types of subjective well-being

Types of subjective well-being	Explanation	Survey question examples
Evaluative	A person's cognitive evaluation of his/her life (life satisfaction) or specific aspects of it, e.g. social life, health, house, safety, material living conditions, job situation.	Can you indicate on a scale from 1 to 10 how satisfied you are with the life you're living now?
Affective	A person's particular feelings or emotional states (e.g. happiness, joy, sadness, anxiety or anger), are typically measured with a specific time reference period.	To what extent did you feel nervous in the last 4 weeks? To what extent did you feel calm in the last four weeks?
Eudemonic	A person's sense of meaning and purpose in life, beyond evaluative and affective states (autonomy, competence, social engagement, altruism etc.).	To what extent do you think your life is worth living? Do you feel that you contribute to the society?

[4] The Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being (OECD, 2013) provides more details about the different types of subjective well-being.

F. Measuring inequalities

23. In addition to focusing on the individual and household perspective it is of high importance to measure distributions and identify inequalities in the society. Inequalities not only in income and wealth but also in health, education and subjective well-being and other areas inform about gaps among population groups or geographical areas and puts a spotlight on deprived population groups.[5] Measuring inequalities in income and wealth is one of the issues considered in the ongoing update of the System of National Accounts (SNA) to better reflect societal well-being. The update of the SNA is also addressing other topics that may be of relevance in measuring well-being, such as unpaid household service work, health care, labour, education, and environmental-economic issues.

G. Sustainability of well-being

24. Sustainability of well-being focuses on the future of well-being and on the ability to ensure that future generations would be able to enjoy the same level of well-being as the current generation or even better. This means that current well-being must be achieved and managed in ways that do not come at the expense of future generations. It also means that most measures of the sustainability of well-being differ from measures of current well-being. Most measurement frameworks consider indicators of current well-being as indicators of current life outcomes while the measurement of well-being sustainability focuses on inputs and the resources that we need to manage to achieve and maintain the desired outcomes. Different types of capital, mainly natural capital, economic capital, human capital and social capital, represent these resources, and the measurement focuses on flows and changes in stocks of the resources.[6]

H. Methodological issues and challenges

25. The main methodological challenges in measuring well-being are associated with the definition of the dimensions, the selection and compilation of individual indicators and the weighting and aggregation of individual indicators if composite measures are compiled. The aggregation of individual indicators may be particularly challenging for national statistical offices (NSOs) since this may be interpreted as a judgment on the relative importance of the indicators. This is probably a main reason why many NSOs refrain from producing composite indicators on well-being.

26. In a *scoreboard approach*, individual indicators are compiled and presented for each dimension of the framework. There is no weight associated to the individual indicators or the dimensions so that judgments about the importance of the indicators or the dimensions are left for the users of the statistics. The scoreboard format is helpful for decision making and policy purposes as it provides granularity down to the level of the individual indicators which helps to understand policy trade-offs and synergies and examining inclusion (distributions). Evidence suggests that countries in which policy-makers are using well-being indicators to inform decision-making apply the scoreboard approach. The OECD (like the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report) does not recommend combining dimensions into a single composite indicator of well-being, and instead recommends a dashboard approach.

27. In a *composite indicator*, individual indicators for a dimension are aggregated into one measure covering the dimension. At the next level of aggregation, composite measures for all dimensions may be weighted into one overall measure of well-being. However, publication of composite indicators entails some risks and uncertainties. Firstly, aggregating indicators into one measure assumes perfect substitutability in the way that an increase in one indicator can be offset by a decrease in another indicator. For instance, that a gain in, say, income can completely offset losses in health.

[5] For more details on measuring inequalities see, for an example: Measuring well-being dispersion on discrete rating scales (Burger and Beuningen, 2020)

[6] See Measuring Well-being and Progress: Well-being Research - OECD

28. Secondly, the aggregation of individual indicators into a composite measure requires that a weight is assigned to each indicator. The weights can be determined in different ways (e.g. equal weighting, by use of statistical methods or expert judgement). However, irrespective of how the weights are determined the publication of composite measures may give the impression of value judgments and send misleading policy messages on the importance of the individual indicators. Hence, compilation and publication of composite measures is particularly challenging for NSOs since this may be interpreted as a judgment on the relative importance of the indicators. This is probably a main reason why many NSOs refrain from producing composite indicators on well-being.[7]

I. Timeliness

29. Timeliness is an overarching quality characteristic of official statistics. The constant challenge of producing reliable statistics and at the same time publishing up to date data relevant to current events has been intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic. The rapidly changing situation has increased the need for "real time" or at least more up-to-date well-being statistics to facilitate decision making. This new reality also increased the need to exploit alternative data sources and developing new methods and tools for data collection. On this background, the challenge is to leverage on lessons learned for implementation in the production of ongoing well-being statistics.

IV. Overview of country practices

30. To gather information on current practices of measuring well-being, a country survey was carried out in July 2022. The survey questionnaire, which included 17 questions, is included in the annex. Responses were received from statistical offices in 39 countries[8] – 34 UNECE member countries and 5 countries outside the region. The main outcome of the survey is summarised below.

31. Overall, a majority of countries (30 out of 39) reported having a well-being measurement framework. Among these countries, nine produce well-being indicators in all the 12 dimensions[9] included in the survey: Income, Jobs, Housing, Health, Education, Environment, Subjective well-being, Safety, Work-life Balance, Community, Civil Engagement, and Trust. The dimensions used most frequently by countries are Income (29 countries), Subjective well-being (29 countries), and Health (26 countries). On the other hand, Civil engagement (13 countries), Community (16 countries), and Work-life balance (17 countries) are the least commonly used dimensions.

32. In addition to the 12 dimensions included in the survey, some countries mentioned the use of other dimensions. These extra dimensions are interrelated with those already included in the survey but possess some additional characteristics or differences. Examples of additional dimensions in use include:

(a) Poverty, material deprivation and consumption;

(b) Access to public and private services and quality of services;

(c) Landscape and cultural heritage, arts and culture participation;

(d) Innovation, research, and creativity;

(e) Leisure and sports activities;

[7] *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators* (UNECE, 2019) discusses the methodological challenges in compiling composite socio-economic indicators in more detail.

[8] Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Poland, Portugal, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and United Kingdom

[9] These are the 11 dimensions of current well-being in the OECD well-being framework and *Trust* (which in the OECD framework is included under social capital under resources for future well-being).

(f) Politics and institutions;

(g) Religiosity.

A. Data sources and availability

33. Household surveys (e.g., social surveys, labour force surveys, household expenditure surveys, time use surveys) are used by all countries to gather information on well-being. About a third of the countries use administrative data sources; only two countries reported using big data or other data sources (e.g. mobile data on commuting time, data from international travel platforms). Well-being indicators at regional or local level are published in most countries.

B. Reference periods and timeliness

34. Most of the countries produce indicators on well-being on an annual basis. Annual data is typically published 9-12 months after the reference period. In some countries, it is possible to publish some of the indicators quarterly or monthly based on availability of data sources. Quarterly data is typically published 2-4 months after the reference period.

35. Depending on the data source, some indicators are produced with a much less time lag than others. For example, in the UK, data on "Personal Well-being", which includes individuals' feelings of satisfaction with life, whether they feel the things they do in their life are worthwhile and their positive and negative emotions, are available for publication after five days. In Mexico, daily reports on well-being are generated based on data from Twitter where tweets are classified into groups of emotional state by use of machine learning.

36. During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns, several countries collected and published quarterly, monthly, and even more frequent data to meet the demand for timely data. These statistics, including flash estimates, were generated based on ad-hoc activities and were mostly not continued on a regular basis.

C. Conceptual framework

37. Several frameworks are used for the measurement of well-being in countries. The frameworks used share common characteristics that stem from the theoretical framework of the Stieglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report such as stressing the need for the use of a multidimensional measurement framework, the use of objective and subjective measures and focusing on outcomes for individuals and households. Two conceptual measurement frameworks that are most frequently used by countries are Eurostat's Quality of Life framework (through the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey) and the OECD conceptual framework for measuring well-being.

38. Most EU countries base their national framework on the EU-SILC measurement framework. This includes objective and subjective measures and has a multidimensional perspective using monetary and non-monetary measures focusing on individuals and households. Basing the framework on survey data only has limitations since data on some indicators such as, e.g. life expectancy and air quality, cannot be collected through surveys.

39. The OECD framework is also common among EU and non-EU OECD member countries. One of the main characteristics of the OECD framework is the multidimensional view of well-being and the distinction between current well-being and future well-being. The OECD guidelines on measuring subjective well-being (OECD, 2013) is a key reference for measuring subjective well-being and making the distinction between the different types of subjective well-being.

40. The *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development* (UNECE, 2014) is another framework used by several countries when deriving their own well-being measurement framework. The framework, which aims to harmonize the different ways in which sustainable development has been measured, distinguishes between three conceptual dimensions of sustainable development, i.e., human

well-being of the present generation in one country (referred to as “here and now”), the well-being of future generations (“later”) and the well-being of people living in other countries (“elsewhere”).

D. Reasons for producing well-being indicators

41. A majority of countries reported that the decision to measure well-being in their offices was driven by legal mandate. Internal initiatives within the NSO are another important drive for countries to produce well-being measurement. Several countries reported that they have both the legal basis and the drive from within the NSO to support their well-being measurement practice. Furthermore, countries’ measurement of well-being also responded to initiatives from research institutes or international organizations, as well as to interests among decision makers, policymakers and large audience of population.

E. Policy use of well-being indicators

42. A majority of countries reported that well-being indicators are used for policy purposes. Countries reported that well-being indicators are commonly used to assess socio-economic development within countries, monitor policy strategies and operational programmes, and inform future national plans. Well-being indicators are also often linked to budgetary planning. In some countries, the budget is constructed based on well-being consideration and is framed as a "well-being" budget. About a third of the countries reported having no policy use of the indicators or having no knowledge within the statistical office on whether the indicators are used for policy purposes.

F. The use of subjective and objective well-being indicators

43. In practice, both subjective and objective indicators are considered when trying to measure different dimensions of well-being. Subjective and objective indicators are very often used in combination by countries to complement each other. In the questionnaire, countries were asked to indicate which of four types of subjective well-being they measure: life evaluation, affective well-being, eudemonic well-being and hedonic well-being. Table 1 below summarizes the results. Evaluative well-being is the most common type of subjective well-being used by countries whereas eudemonic well-being is the least used subjective well-being measure.

Table 1
Use of types of subjective well-being[10]

Type of subjective well-being	*# of countries*
Evaluative well-being (reflective assessment of a person’s well-being)	27
Affective well-being (time-related feelings or emotional states)	20
Hedonic well-being (happiness)	17
Eudemonic well-being (sense of meaning and purpose in life)	11

44. The use of several additional types of subjective indicators were mentioned by countries, including self-perceived health and mental health, self-perceived financial situation, expectations for the future, and measures of trust (in institutions and general trust).

[10] The survey questionnaire included the three types of subjective well-being listed in Box 3, plus an additional one, hedonic well-being, which was added to increase the possibility that respondents recognize the specific type(s) of well-being applied to their country.

G. Composite indicators

45. Countries were asked in the questionnaire whether they produce single indicators, series of indicators (e.g. scoreboard) or composite indicators (e.g. well-being index) on the dimensions. About 1/4 of the countries indicated the use of composite indicators in their well-being measurement framework. Table 2 presents the dimensions for which countries reported they produce composite indicators. Building a composite indicator requires that the individual indicators that enter into the dimension are aggregated into one single measure. It is thus essential to select the individual indicators and decide which weight should be assigned to the indicators in the aggregation. For countries who produce composite indicators, about half specified applying an equal weighting method and the other half applied a differential weighting method. However, in the case of differential weights, limited information is provided on how the weights were derived.

Table 2
Use of dimensions in composite indicators

	Income	*Jobs*	*Housing*	*Health*	*Education*	*Environ-ment*	*Subjective well-being*	*Safety*	*Work-life balance*	*Community*	*Civil engage-ment*	Trust
Belgium	x	x		x	x			x		x		x
Cyprus	x	x	x									
Georgia	x	x		x								
Greece	x			x	x				x			x
Mexico	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Netherlands	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Portugal	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Serbia	x					x						
Total	8	6	3	6	5	3	3	4	4	3	3	4

H. Measurement of future well-being (sustainability)

46. About a third of the countries reported having a framework for the measurement of future well-being based on the capital approach (for instance, the OECD defines four dimensions based on capital approach to measure economic, natural, human and social sustainable well-being). Countries are less familiar with the conceptual framework of the capital approach for measuring future well-being. Some countries also mentioned an overlap between work on SDG indicators and future well-being indicators.

I. Challenges in measuring well-being and needs for future international work

47. Several common challenges and needs for future work were raised by countries:

(a) Harmonization and comparability across countries – to understand and analyze national and international trends in well-being, efforts should be focused on harmonizing scope, concepts and terminologies, and developing common methodological approaches to well-being measurement.

(b) Capacity building related to composite indicators – composite indicators can contribute to strengthening the ability of NSOs to communicate well-being data to the public and policy makers. The need for capacity building on composite indicators was expressed mainly by countries who do not use composite indicators in their current measurement framework.

(c) The use of subjective indicators – strengthening the reliability of subjective measures is deemed critical. Subjective indicators undoubtedly provide essential insights to well-being measurement, however, tackling methodological and measurement difficulties remains a challenging task.

(d) Improving timeliness – an issue of high importance for improving the use of statistics and especially of well-being statistics as countries have learned during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns.

(e) New data sources for well-being – countries expressed their interest in exploring the possibilities of using new data sources such as big data for well-being indicators. This is closely linked to the challenge of improving timeliness and increasing relevance of well-being indicators. Learning from countries who have experience in this field is mentioned as beneficial.

(f) Communication of well-being indicators – many countries indicated that the communication of well-being indicators is a major challenge and that guidance and examples of good practices on how to communicate well-being indicators in formats to serve different user groups, including policy makers, would be helpful.

V. Overview of international activities

A. Summary

48. This section gives an overview of the most known well-being measures compiled by international organisations and others (NGOs and research institutions). The most commonly known frameworks for measuring well-being are summarised in table 3.

49. Two prominent frameworks compiled by international organisations are the OECD *Framework for Measuring Well-being and Progress* and Eurostat's *Quality of Life Indicators*. Both are multidimensional frameworks covering material living conditions, quality of life factors, including subjective well-being, and social life. The *Human Development Index* (UNDP) is also multidimensional but includes only three dimensions (health, education and income). The *World Happiness Report* (UNSDSN) takes a different approach and is based on people's self-assessment of their life situation collected in a global survey (Gallup's world poll).

50. The most quoted measures compiled by private organisations are the *Quality of life Indicator* (CEOWORLD), *Best Countries Index* (U.S. News and World Report), *Quality of Life Index* (Numbeo) and *Quality of Living* (Mercer). These are all multidimensional and covers most dimensions of well-being although the Numbeo and Mercer frameworks exclude subjective well-being. The *Life Evaluation Index* (Gallup) is based on a global survey (Gallup's world poll) in which people are asked to evaluate their life situation. While not a multidimensional measure, this index is often quoted and used in other frameworks.

Table 3
Commonly known frameworks for measuring well-being

International organisations				
Framework	*Framework for Measuring Well-being and Progress* *OECD*	*Quality of Life Indicators* *Eurostat*	*Human Development Index* *UNDP*	*World Happiness Report* *UNSDSN*
Method and coverage	Multidimensional Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi-type. Covers material living conditions, quality of life factors and social life (10/11 dimensions)		Covers three dimensions: health, education and income (GNI/capita)	Based on Gallup's world poll on life evaluation. Overall score is decom-posted into seven dimensions

Private organisations					
Framework	*Quality of Life Indicator* *CEOWORLD*	*Best Countries Index* *U.S. News and World Report*	*Quality of Life Index* *Numbeo*	*Quality of Living* *Mercer*	*Life Evaluation Index* *Gallup*
Method and coverage	Multidimensional: covers most dimensions of well-being		Multidimensional: covers most dimensions; excludes subjective well-being		Subjective, self-assessed life satisfaction

51. There is a large overlap in the dimensions that are covered in the multidimensional frameworks, reflecting a broad consensus in this area. Nevertheless, some dimensions are defined in different ways and different individual indicators are selected to cover the dimensions across the frameworks. Hence, even if dimensions are defined in the same way, the individual indicators selected may differ which will reduce comparability across frameworks.

52. The above-mentioned frameworks are presented in more details in the following paragraphs, grouped in three categories: well-being measures developed by international organizations; well-being measures developed by NGOs, research institutions and private organisations; and well-being measures with a specific focus on the health dimension.

B. Well-being measures developed by international organizations

1. OECD - Framework for Measuring Well-Being and Progress

53. In 2011, building on existing research and the recommendations made in 2009 by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, the OECD developed the OECD Framework for Measuring Well-Being and Progress. The framework is built around two main components: *current well-being* and *resources for future well-being*.

54. The OECD framework for measuring current well-being comprises objective and subjective indicators for eleven dimensions of well-being. The dimensions cover *material living conditions* (income and wealth, work and job quality, housing), *quality-of-life factors* (health, knowledge and skills, environment quality, subjective well-being, safety), and *social life* (work-life balance, social connections, civic engagement). Population averages along with inequalities as measured by differences in outcomes across groups (age, sex, education), differences between the top and bottom quintiles, and deprivation are also considered to assess the full distribution of current well-being outcomes.

55. Based on this framework, since 2011 the OECD has produced its biennial flagship reports on well-being: *How's Life? Measuring Well-Being*[11]. The reports aim at exploring the

[11] The reports are available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/how-s-life_9789264121164-en

factors that drive well-being to achieve greater progress for people and countries. The reports summarize the well-being of people and households in OECD and partner countries and explore the gaps and inequalities, progress and trends of well-being outcomes in the countries.

56. The framework also underpins the OECD *Better Life Index* released and updated since 2011. The Better Life Index is an interactive tool that covers a subset of the dimensions in the official OECD Well-being Framework. It builds off the OECD's dashboard approach to the measurement of well-being, in which users can assign their own weights to each dimension of well-being and calculate their personal well-being index.

57. The current well-being dimensions of the OECD framework and Eurostat's Quality of Life indicators are summarised in table 4. For more information on the OECD framework for measuring well-being and relevant OECD initiatives, please visit the website.

Table 4
Dimensions of OECD and Eurostat frameworks

	OECD - Framework for Measuring Well-Being and Progress	*Eurostat - Quality of life indicators*
Material living conditions	• Income and wealth • Work and Job Quality • Housing	• Material living conditions (including income, material and social deprivation, housing) • Productivity or main activity
Quality of life factors	• Health • Knowledge and skills • Environment quality • Safety • Subjective well-being	• Health • Education • Natural and living environment • Economic security and physical safety • Overall experience of life
Social life	• Work-life balance • Social connections • Civic engagement	• Leisure • social interactions • Governance and basic rights

2. Eurostat - Quality of life indicators

58. The Quality of life framework was developed by Eurostat in 2012 to complement the traditional measures of economic and social development, such as GDP. It is part of the 2009 European Commission's "GDP and beyond" landmark initiative to further develop economic, environmental and social indicators, taking into account the household and individual perspectives.

59. Eurostat publishes Quality of life indicators for the EU-27 countries as well as for Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. It includes the following nine dimensions: material living conditions, productivity or main activity, education, health, leisure and social interactions, economic security and physical safety, governance and basic rights, natural and living environment, and overall experience of life.

60. The main data source is the EU survey on Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The EU-SILC included ad-hoc modules on subjective well-being in 2013 and 2018. It is foreseen that the indicator on life satisfaction in EU-SILC will be collected yearly starting with 2021 and the indicator of being happy will be collected every 6 years starting with 2022. More information about the Eurostat quality of life indicators is available on the website.

3. Eurofound - European Quality of Life Surveys

61. The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), conducted by Eurofound, provides a comprehensive overview of the quality of life in European countries. The survey contains a broad range of objective and subjective indicators capturing different aspects of quality of life, such as employment, people's levels of happiness, and how they perceive the quality of their societies and public services. The survey also aims to monitor quality of life trends over time and contribute to the European policy debate on living conditions. Eurofound has

conducted the EQLS four times since 2003 with four-to-five-year intervals between them. The next survey is tentatively scheduled for 2026. For more information on the Eurofound European Quality of Life Surveys, see the website.

4. Eurofound - Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey

62. To monitor the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on people's lives, Eurofound launched the Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey in April 2020. The survey includes questions about the impact of Covid-19 on mental well-being, health and safety, work and telework, people's work-life balance, and financial situation. As of May 2022, the electronic survey has been launched five times. Each round of the survey had a slightly different focus. For example, the aim of the first round was to assess the immediate social and economic effects of the pandemic, the third round included questions about attitudes towards vaccines and the fifth round focused on housing, living and financial conditions, work–life balance and the division of labour at home. The fifth round also touched upon the uncertainties caused by the war in Ukraine, rising inflation and cost of living. More information about the Eurofound Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey is available on the website.

5. United Nations Development Programme - Human Development Index

63. The Human Development Index (HDI) provides an alternative approach of looking at development, it measures development of countries by well-being factors rather than by economic growth alone. The HDI is a summary composite measure which assesses a country's average performance in three fundamental areas of human well-being: health, education, and standard of living. Specifically, the HDI uses life expectancy at birth to measure the health dimension, average years of schooling for adults (25 years and older) and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age are used to measure the education dimension, the standard of living dimension is measured by gross national income (GNI) per capita. For more information on the Human Development Index, please visit the website.

6. United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network - World Happiness Report

64. The World Happiness Report is an annual publication issued by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). SDSN is an independent global network launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2012 with the aim to find solutions for the world's most pressing environmental, social and economic problems, which today translates into implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

65. The World Happiness Report has been issued since 2012 and includes a worldwide country happiness ranking that is based on persons' evaluation of their own lives. The ranking is determined by answers to a single question that asks respondents to rate their current lives on a scale from 0 to 10, the so-called Cantril ladder. The published country rankings are three-year averages coming from the Gallup World Poll.

66. The report looks further into six factors that might explain country differences in happiness levels. These are the levels of GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom to make life choices, and perceptions of corruption. In addition to country rankings, each World Happiness Report is devoted to specific topics affecting global well-being at the time when the report is written. For more information on the World Happiness Report, please visit the website.

7. United Nations - Sustainable Development Goals

67. The SDGs framework consists of 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 individual indicators. For each goal, the framework provides a scoreboard consisting of several targets and indicators. Almost all 17 SDGs goals can be considered to be closely related or connected to well-being. Well-being is explicitly mentioned in Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. It includes 9 targets and 21 indicators which are all related to health (e.g. mortality rates, the prevalence of infectious diseases, coverage of essential health service, hygiene standards). Aside from Goal 3, numerous SDG goals address different dimensions of well-being (e.g. income, education, employment, safety etc.). For more

information on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs, please visit the website.

8. Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts - Update of the 2008 System of National Accounts

68. One of the three priority areas in the update of the 2008 SNA is well-being and sustainability (the other two are globalisation and digitalisation). The work is based on a recognized need for more insight into household well-being and sustainability issues in addition to traditional economic measures and considers well-being and sustainability as complex multidimensional phenomena. An SNA Task Team on well-being and sustainability considers the following six areas: 1) Distribution of household income, consumption saving and wealth; 2) Unpaid household service work; 3) Labour, education and human capital; 4) Health and social conditions; 5) Environmental-economic accounting; 6) A broader framework to bring all dimensions together. The aim is to guide regular compilation of extended modules on well-being and sustainability, mainly drawing on already existing guidelines and allowing flexibility in frequency of compilation and integration of non-monetary measures. The work will focus on economic/material well-being and quantitative/objective indicators. More information is available in the document.

9. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – online inventory of Satellite Accounts

69. As a follow-up to an in-depth review of satellite accounts in February 2019, the UNECE Statistical Division created an online inventory of SNA satellite accounts compiled by countries. The satellite accounts supplement and expand the core SNA concepts and accounts by providing additional information and granularity in selected areas, such as, e.g. households and non-observed activities, transport and tourism. The inventory includes a number of satellite accounts relevant to the measurement of well-being, including distributional accounts (5 countries), health accounts (38 countries), social activities accounts (15 countries), education accounts (12 countries) and environment accounts (SEEA (90 countries) and non-SEEA (13 countries) frameworks).

C. Well-being measures developed by NGOs, research institutions and private organisations

1. CEOWORLD Magazine - Quality of Life indicator

70. The CEOWORLD Magazine ranks the quality of life of 165 countries based on a composite indicator that comprises 10 dimensions: Affordability, Economic stability, Family-friendly, A good job market, Income equality, Political neutrality & stability, Safety, Cultural influence, Well-developed public education system, and Well-developed public health system. Each dimension is measured by one or more indicators. Indicators and the dimensions are equally weighted to arrive at the overall index. Data sources include the EIU Index, World Economic Forum, Global Insight, the Global Gender Gap Index, Gini, and Gender Gap Index, The Legatum Prosperity Index, Transparency International, Environmental Performance Index, Better Life Index, CIA World Factbook, World Bank, and UNDP Annual Report. For more information about this indicator, please visit the website.

2. U.S. News & World Report - Best Countries ranking

71. The U.S. News Best Countries ranking ranks “best” countries based on a set of 76 indicators (“attributes”), assembled in partnership with the BAV Group and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Indicators include affordability, safety, the job market, level of income equality, economic and political stability, and the quality of public education and health systems. Information on the indicators is collected from a survey of more than 17,000 people from across the globe. For each indicator, scores are normalized to allow for aggregation. For 2021, indicators were grouped into 10 “sub-rankings”: Adventure, Agility, Cultural Influence, Entrepreneurship, Heritage, Movers, Open for Business, Power,

Social Purpose and Quality of Life. For more information on the U.S. News Best Country rankings, see website.

3. Numbeo - Quality of Life Index

72. Since 2012, Numbeo, a private company, has published a national composite quality of life index for countries based on indicators of purchasing power, safety, health care, cost of living, property price to income ratio, commuting time, pollution, and climate. Numbeo compiles a composite quality of life index for each country and ranks countries according to this index. For more information on the Numbeo's Quality of Life Index, see website.

4. Mercer - Quality of Living Index

73. Mercer produces a Global Quality of Living Index for 140 cities. The index encompasses 39 indicators distributed into ten categories: political and social environment, economic environment, socio-cultural environment, medical and health considerations, schools and education, public services and transport, recreation, consumer goods, housing, and natural environment. The index is developed for the adjustment of salaries as the main purpose. For more information on the Mercer's Quality of Living Index, please visit the website.

5. Gallup – The Life Evaluation Index

74. The Life Evaluation Index measures how people rate their current and expected future lives. Respondents are asked to imagine a ladder, a Cantril scale from 0 to 10, with the lowest rung representing the worst possible life and the highest rung representing the best possible life. People rate where they stand today and where they expect to stand in the future. Based on how they respond, they are classified as thriving, struggling or suffering. The Life Evaluation Index has been compiled since 2006 based on a world poll covering each year at least 100 countries. The results for 2021 were based on national probability-based surveys in 116 countries conducted through telephone or face-to-face interviews. Gallup's life evaluation data are used as input in other frameworks, including the *World Happiness Report* (UNSDSN) and the *Happy Planet Index*. For more information on the Gallup Life Evaluation Index, see the website.

6. Global Happiness Council - Global Happiness and Well-being Policy Report

75. The Global Happiness Council (GHC) is a global network of academic specialists in happiness in areas ranging from psychology, economics, education, public health, civil society, business and government. The GHC identifies best practices at the national and local levels to encourage advancement of the causes of happiness and well-being. For more information on the Global Happiness Council, please visit the website.

7. The Wellbeing Economy Alliance - Happy Planet Index

76. The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is compiled by the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, a global coalition of organizations, alliances, movements and individuals working to promote sustainability and ensure that decision-makers prioritize the long-term well-being of people and the planet. The HPI aggregates three indicators - life expectancy, well-being and ecological footprint - into a composite overall indicator. Well-being is measured by how satisfied the residents of each country say they feel with life overall, on a scale from zero to ten, based on data collected as part of the Gallup World Poll. Thus, well-being in this index is in fact measured by subjective life satisfaction. For more information on the Happy Planet Index, please visit the website.

D. Well-being measures with a specific focus on the health dimension

77. Different multidimensional measures of health are being produced by national and international organisations. These includes, for an example, the World Health Organisation's Five well-being Index (WHO-5), Bloomberg's Global Health Index and the Global Health Security (GHS) Index compiled by the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the John Hopkins Center

for Health Securtity. While they have specific focus on health it would be natural to consider these when establishing a broader framework for measuring well-being.

VI. Challenges

78. Based on the review of measurement of current well-being and the survey that was carried out, the following issues and challenges can be identified.

A. Conceptual issues and terminology

79. Different international frameworks, such as provided by OECD and Eurostat are available but to some extend differ and are linked to the policy agendas of the organisations. There is thus a lack of internationally agreed statistical guidelines that could provide definitions of concepts and common terminology to support countries in compiling well-being indicators.

B. The dimensions of well-being

80. Dimensions such as income, employment, housing, health, education, safety, social life and environment are included in most countries' measures of well-being. However, the set of dimensions varies from country to country. In addition, the dimensions are often defined (and labelled) in different ways and cover different aspects.

81. Countries include subjective well-being in their frameworks in different ways. It can be covered in one dimension (as in the OECD framework), or different aspects (indicators) of subjective well-being can be included in different dimensions, e.g. employment, health or social life. life. Subjective indicators can be presented separately, or they may be aggregated into one single composite measure, such as in the Dutch Personal Well-being Index (see Box 2).

82. In the survey, countries also reported on other dimensions covered in national frameworks, including access to private and public services, consumption, leisure, transport, art and culture and national economic measures (e.g. inflation and government debt).

C. International comparability

83. To guide countries and improve international comparability, countries (including Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland) mentioned the need for international guidelines that could provide concepts and definitions, guidance on the selection of dimensions and calculation methods. Countries also mentioned the particular challenges in compiling international comparable measures for subjective well-being due to cultural differences and language issues.

84. Most well-being indicators compiled by NSOs are made for national purposes. Differences in practices can to some extent be explained by the fact that countries tailor their frameworks to the national context and the intended use of the indicators. Hence, guidelines on measurement of well-being should leave room for adaption to the national context and use of the indicators.

D. Methodological challenges

85. A range of methodological challenges are linked to the compilation of well-being indicators. These include the definition of the dimensions of the well-being framework, the selection and compilation of indicators and different approaches to measuring inequalities.[12]

[12] *Guide on poverty measurement* (UNECE, 2017) provides more information on measuring inequalities.

Compilation of subjective indicators and their inclusion in the framework as well as weighting and aggregation of individual indicators into composite measures are also mentioned as challenges by many countries.

86. To provide meaningful information for decision making, scoreboards must be produced covering the dimensions and indicators of the framework. NSOs may decide to compile composite indicators for specific dimensions of well-being where this meets user needs. This will require a careful process to decide on weighting and aggregation methods.

E. Data sources and timeliness

87. Data sources and timeliness is mentioned by some countries (Italy, Portugal, Slovenia) as challenges. Most well-being indicators rely only or to a great extent on annual data and are released to the public with a considerable time lag compared to the reference period. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the need for more timely indicators for households' well-being and the need to examine and exploit new data sources, e.g. big data and social medias.

F. Communication

88. Well-being statistics can be disseminated in many ways: as individual indicators, as a scoreboard or by use of composite measures or a combination of these. Because of the complexity and multidimensional nature of well-being the communication should be carefully planned and may involve consultation with stakeholders and user groups. Publication of composite measures may help to reach out to some user groups, including medias, but may also be questioned and raise criticism for being political or value laden.[13] In all cases, sufficient documentation and explanations must be made available to users to facilitate correct interpretation and use of the indicators.

VII. Conclusion and recommendations for future work

89. In its broader sense well-being encompasses a time dimension (sustainability or well-being 'after') and a space dimension (well-being 'elsewhere'). However, the scope of this in-depth review has been limited to consider the measurement of well-being 'here and now' disregarding the time and space dimensions.

90. The in-depth review revealed big interest in the measurement of well-being but also challenges and different practices among countries. 30 countries in the survey carried out as part of the review replied that they produce statistics on well-being but in different ways. Depending on the dimension of well-being, 6-20 countries produce single indicators, 8-13 countries produce scoreboards, and 3-6 countries produces composite indicators. 9 countries replied that they don't compile well-being indicators.

91. Two thirds of the countries that replied to the survey do not compile measures of sustainability or future well-being. The production of such statistics requires substantial resources and the development of suitable compilation systems and data sources. In many countries, this will require capacity development and allocation of national resources. The in-depth review did not consider the measurement of future well-being and the related challenges in any detail and has not considered proposals in this regard.

92. The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report, the OECD Well-being Framework and Eurostat's Quality of Life Indicators are widely accepted and used frameworks. While they broadly follow the same multidimensional approach there are also differences in terms of typology, the definitions of dimensions and the selection of individual indicators, and they are, to some extent, constructed with different purposes. Hence, a set of statical guidelines targeting CES member countries would be helpful to define the scope and the dimensions of well-being,

[13] The dissemination and communication of composite indicators is discussed in detail in *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators* (UNECE, 2019).

clarify terminology, provide operational definitions, and give practical guidance on calculation methods and communication.

93. Taking into consideration the findings of the review, the CES Bureau is invited to consider establishing a Task Force to develop guidelines for measurement of well-being to support countries that produce or consider producing well-being indicators. The framework should focus on the following:

(a) Suggest a multidimensional framework for measuring current well-being, including defining the scope and the core dimensions of current well-being;

(b) Provide definitions and terminology**;**

(c) Suggest possible indicators for the different dimensions of current well-being;

(d) Provide guidance on measurement and calculation methods for objective and subjective indicators and on aggregation and weighting of individual indicators into composite measures;

(e) Provide guidance on utilisation of (new) data sources and ways to improve timeliness;

(f) Provide guidance and examples of good practices in dissemination and communication of current well-being measures.

94. To solicit further information and inputs from countries, the Task Force should organise a seminar for national experts to share experiences and good practices in measuring current well-being.

95. In developing the guidelines, the Task Force should consider existing frameworks and material relevant for measuring well-being, including the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report, the OECD framework for measuring well-being and progress and Eurostat's quality of life indicators. The Task Force should also take into consideration the work on measuring well-being in the update of the SNA and other relevant material.

VIII. Discussion by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians

96. The CES Bureau conducted the in-depth review of measurement of well-being at its meeting in February 2023. The in-depth review was based on a paper by Israel, with contributions by the Netherlands, Mexico, OECD and UNECE. The following comments were made in the discussion:

(a) The report was found comprehensive and helpful in directing further work on measurement of well-being. Several frameworks for measuring well-being exist, including OECD's Framework for measuring Well-being and Progress, Eurostat's Quality of Life Indicators, SDGs and the 2025 System of National Accounts (SNA). Hence, the Bureau did not see a need for an additional framework. Further work should take existing frameworks as a starting point and focus on synthesizing these into operational guidelines to assist countries in producing well-being indicators;

(b) The guidelines should focus on a limited number of core indicators across the dimensions of well-being where harmonisation and improved international comparability is possible. The guidelines should clarify typology, provide definitions and give guidance on data sources, compilation methods and communication. The challenges in producing composite indicators and their limitation in providing information for policy making were highlighted;

(c) National well-being frameworks are developed to serve national purposes and adapted to specific conditions and needs in countries. The guidelines should give leeway to national frameworks to adapt to country needs and inclusion of country specific indicators. The guidelines should be forward looking. In the drafting of the guidelines, it will be important to coordinate with ongoing work, including on Beyond GDP, the SDGs and the SNA update.

97. The following countries and organisations expressed interest in joining a task force to draft the guidelines on measuring well-being: Canada, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Poland, United Kingdom, OECD, UNSD and Leiden University (Netherlands).

98. The CES Bureau supported establishing a task force to develop guidelines on the measurement of well-being for countries that produce or consider producing well-being indicators. The Secretariat should reach out to countries and organisations that expressed interest in joining the work to initiate the drafting of the terms of reference of the task force. Israel will chair the task force. The terms of reference should be submitted to the 2023 October Bureau meeting for approval.

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