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Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe:

**Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians,
its Bureau and Teams of Specialists**

Report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe / United Nations Children's Fund Expert Meeting on Statistics on Children

Prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the key outcomes of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe / United Nations Children's Fund Expert Meeting on Statistics on Children, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland on 4–6 March 2024. The meeting was organized at the request of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The Conference is invited to take note of its contents, and to provide any guidance as appropriate.

I. Attendance

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) / United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) expert meeting on statistics on children, including the annual session of UNICEF Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity (TransMonEE) network, was held in Geneva at the Palais des Nations from 4 to 6 March 2024.
2. The meeting was attended by participants from the following countries and organizations: Albania; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Canada; Croatia; Czechia; Finland; Georgia; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Latvia; Luxembourg; Montenegro; Netherlands (Kingdom of the); North Macedonia; Norway; Poland; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Serbia; Slovakia; Sweden; Tajikistan; Türkiye; Turkmenistan; Ukraine; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Uzbekistan; European Union (EU); European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); UNECE; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); UNICEF; UNICEF Hosted Funds – Education Cannot Wait, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT); Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and an international expert. There were 107 participants.

II. Organization of the meeting

3. D. Kohen of Canada chaired the meeting.
4. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting:
 - (a) Innovative approaches to data collection on children;
 - (b) Improvement of coherence and comparability of data on children with disabilities;
 - (c) Improving data on children in alternative care;
 - (d) Violence against children and the implementation of the International Classification of Violence against Children;
 - (e) Dissemination of statistics on children;
 - (f) Indicator systems to measure progress for children (TransMonEE network session);
 - (g) Current and future work on statistics on children.
5. Discussions were prepared and led for topic (a) by P. Shavishvili, Georgia; for topic (b) by B. Hearne, Ireland; for topic (c) by I. Millward, United Kingdom; for topic (d) by A. Dossanova, Kazakhstan; and for topic (f) by M. Savićević, Montenegro.
6. The presented documents and slides are available on [the web page of the meeting](#).

III. Future work

7. Participants appreciated the exchange of experience and good practice that took place at the meeting. To strengthen this exchange, to support implementation of the Guidance on statistics on children, and to discuss methodological work on statistics on children, it was recommended *to organize regular meetings of a Group of Experts on Statistics on Children* under the Conference of European Statisticians. These meetings would be linked with and benefit from the TransMonEE initiative and network.
8. To organize these meetings, and to formulate proposals, work plans and terms of reference for methodological work, it was recommended *to establish a Steering Group* composed of experts from committed member countries and international organizations. The

composition of the Steering Group would initially build on the present meeting's organizing committee with representatives of Canada, Ireland, Italy, United Kingdom, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNICEF and UNECE. Other interested countries and organizations would be welcome to join.

9. Participants recommended to *pursue methodological work on developing a minimum set of indicators* for the UNECE region, which would cover the three focus areas identified in the Guidance on statistics on children: violence against children, children in alternative care, and children with disabilities.

10. Participants recommended that national experts *facilitate and support the work on international classifications and indicators* as follows:

(a) Collect and exchange of good practice on producing statistics on violence against children according to the International Classification of Violence against Children;

(b) Support the development of the International Classification of Children in Alternative Care by piloting the draft classification in selected countries and summarizing findings from the country pilots;

(c) Exchange experience on child-related surveys to improve their international comparability and pertinence to the internationally agreed indicators and classifications.

11. It was decided that the plans for future work will be presented for review to the next meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, which will be held in October 2024.

12. The TransMonEE session, having taken note of the progress made with the actions decided at the 2022 Ankara meeting, recommended the following *actions and next steps for the TransMonEE network*:

(a) Agree with the focus of the next TransMonEE analytical series to be on violence against children, with relevant consultations with the network to be undertaken as part of the report development process;

(b) Continue and support the group of countries in the development and implementation of their *Data Improvement Plans on Children in Alternative Care*, including new countries planning to join in 2024;

(c) Welcome interests from countries to join a new group on *Indicator Systems to Measure Progress for Children*, which will bring together the interested countries for collective learning and exchange and supported by UNICEF;

(d) Conduct and take stock of country consultations on the first version of indicators of the Europe and Central Asia Child Rights Monitoring Framework as a potential core list of indicators on children.

IV. Adoption of the meeting report

13. The meeting adopted parts I–III of this report before adjourning. A summary of the discussion in the substantive sessions of the meeting will be presented in an annex to this report, to be prepared by the Secretariat after the meeting

Annex

Summary of discussions

I. Innovative approaches to data collection on children

1. This session included presentations from representatives of Italy, Norway, United Kingdom, Greece, Romania, Ireland and Georgia. Reflections on the papers and presentations were given by a representative from Georgia.
2. Discussion covered the challenge of converting innovatively collected data into *meaningful use and impact*. It is important for producers of statistics to go beyond only publishing reports, to engage with policymakers and other users to explain the statistics and facilitate their use.
3. Participants discussed the general trend towards *declining survey response rates* and how this affects surveys of children. It is hard to identify trends given that many of the child-specific collections are new, but in general the presenters found that the efficiency gains and reduced respondent burden of online formats have resulted in sufficient response rates for the resulting data to be useable. As with other surveys, a trade-off exists in which more complex and lengthy surveys result in richer data but a higher response burden, which in turn can reduce response rates.
4. Discussion also included the topic of *recruitment* for cognitive interviews and questionnaire testing. Informal methods such as beginning with the children of colleagues can offer a useful starting point. Social media and web advertising can also be valuable.
5. The importance of *metadata and quality assessment* was stressed. When surveys permit the use of adult proxies to provide data on behalf of children, this should be recorded, as should the presence of adults when children are being surveyed, as well as any degree of cooperative adult-child completion of a survey. For surveys conducted in multiple languages, the language in which a questionnaire is completed and the languages spoken by the responding children may also serve as important metadata. It would be interesting to analyse whether any of these factors impacts the data gathered.
6. An important topic of discussion was *dissemination of data* in ways that empower children, as the providers of data, to understand and use the results. Designing child-appropriate dissemination products is a significantly underdeveloped area of statistical dissemination in general. Dedicated outreach events with children, such as meetings in schools, offer one such opportunity.
7. Relatedly, *recruitment of children into surveys* needs to be carefully tailored to be child-appropriate, not merely limited to authorization letters sent to parents. Specially targeted methods of motivating participation of children could include quizzes, storytelling, games and specialized digital platforms. The purpose of the survey and the ways in which *privacy* will be protected must be conveyed to children in an age-appropriate manner. Protection of privacy can include preventing parents from seeing the answers their children have given, e.g. by disabling the ability to save and return to a partially completed questionnaire through a single link. The concept of *informed consent* needs to be considered carefully since children of different ages require different approaches in order to consider them duly 'informed'.
8. Participants agreed that the need for specific tailoring towards children is important not only in recruitment to a survey but also in the *design of surveys* themselves, in which it should be ensured that questions are understandable to children and that they have the knowledge to be able to answer. It was noted that sometimes questions can be included which do not actually have research value, but which add to the value of participation for the child respondents. Web applications may offer the potential for increasing the attractiveness of survey participation for children, for example by permitting real-time analyses such as charts of how the respondent's responses compare with others.

9. The discussion of innovative methods in data collection extended to innovations in *linking datasets* in order to extract greater value from them. Real-life examples of such linking include those reported by Ofqual, in which datasets on student attainment and examination bias have been combined with data on progression to university to offer insights on inequalities in higher education. Data linkage can be especially valuable where some data are derived from administrative sources. As in all administrative sources, coverage can be an issue – for example it was noted that in Ireland, a survey of babies based on a sample drawn from a birth register would exclude babies not born in Ireland.

10. Obtaining data from children in surveys presents challenges in all contexts, but it was noted that these challenges are heightened when the children concerned are not in private households but in *institutions*. Furthermore, children who are members of *hard-to-reach groups* may present additional challenges in survey recruitment or completion.

11. In concluding the session, the discussant noted that innovative approaches to data collection on children are crucial for gaining accurate and meaningful insights into their development, well-being, and experiences. *Inclusive approaches to incorporating all children into regular data collection* on all relevant topics is important in order to mainstream information on this significant population group into statistics and policy decisions made on the basis of statistics. The discussant stressed that any data collection involving children must *prioritize privacy, security, and ethical considerations*, and that this is facilitated by developing and adhering to strict ethical guidelines and legal requirements for protecting children’s rights and well-being.

II. Improvement of coherence and comparability of data on children with disabilities

12. This session included presentations from representatives of Canada (2 presentations), Belarus, Italy (2 presentations), UNHCR, SESRIC and Ireland. Discussion was led by a representative of Ireland.

13. Presentations illustrated a range of approaches to gathering data on children with disabilities, including examples relating to specific situations such as refugees. One area of focus of the session was examining the differences in *prevalence estimates* of disability, and the resulting interpretation of levels and trends, when different concepts are used as the basis of defining disability: namely, a medical model and a social and functioning model.

14. A common theme among the presentations was that of *data gaps*, which hinder the production of realistic rates of prevalence of disability among children, no matter which conceptual model is used. Related challenges include the difficulty of obtaining data disaggregated along other important dimensions, and significant hindrances to *comparability* across sources, geography and time, due to inconsistencies in definitions and methods. Compounding these challenges, the often-small samples of already small minority groups, along with imperfect sampling frames, can make it especially difficult to produce representative prevalence estimates.

15. The discussion brought up the positive aspects of the *child functioning module* (CFM) to best understand children’s lived experiences of disability. It was observed that many national surveys as well as international policy frameworks require that social statistics be *disaggregated* by disability status. As such, it could be surmised that this would serve as a motivator to drive the improved collection of disability data. However, resource limitations still limit the degree to which this driving force plays out in reality.

16. The topic of disaggregation also arose in discussion in the context of understanding prevalence of disabilities within different groups of children. *Children are not a single homogeneous group*. Studies in Canada, for example, have identified patterns in childcare attendance and likelihood of having a medical diagnosis, when disaggregating data on children by age and by location.

17. The potential of *administrative data* for producing disability statistics on children was discussed. While coverage may be high and respondent burden low or absent, it can be difficult to reconcile the use of functioning models of disability with administrative sources.

There are very few examples so far of applying CFM-based data in administrative sources (one such example comes from Serbia, where it was noted that this has taken many years of development and implementation). *Linking administrative data with survey data* based on a social model of disability can offer a promising and powerful middle ground, not only in producing prevalence estimates but in providing significant contextual information about the experiences of children with disabilities. Administrative sources may also be limited in the extent to which they can provide a complete picture of rare or hard to capture events, such as forced displacement. One key use of administrative data is in providing information on populations at risk (for example, those with a medical diagnosis).

18. In discussing the *relative advantages and disadvantages of medical and social concepts of disability*, it was suggested that rather than attempting to define one or the other as ‘correct’ or superior, it is better to examine how they can be used together to combine their merits. In addition, it is necessary to raise awareness of what each model does or does not tell us, so that policymakers can be empowered to better interpret the data and use them for policies in support of children with disabilities. This is especially important since interest groups and those with political agendas tend to choose whichever prevalence rate best serves their interests, without an understanding of why medical and CFM-based estimates may vary widely. The communication challenges become difficult when there is, to the uninitiated user, an apparent ‘choice’ of indicators. Participants also observed that prevalence estimates are not the only indicators of disability. Use of services and receipt of assistance can also point to the experience of disability. These can differ significantly from official prevalence estimates, as was observed for example in North Macedonia.

19. It was observed that *population censuses* remain one of the fundamental sources of data on disability prevalence, and that care must therefore be taken to ensure that censuses gather data on disability among children. The Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on censuses, which are currently under comprehensive review and development, should offer clear guidance on the application of the CFM and on collection of information on the youngest children.

III. Improving data on children in alternative care

20. The session included presentations by Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, Romania, UNICEF headquarters and North Macedonia office, with discussion led by the United Kingdom.

21. The country experiences showed a great *variation* in how children in alternative care are defined and categorized in statistics, both in administrative and survey sources. Definitions differ in the way they distinguish between institutional care and care in small-group homes as well as between categories of family-based care. There is also lack of data on informal alternative care, such as on children raised by grandparents when parents work abroad.

22. *Lack of consistency* across sources makes it difficult to describe the characteristics of children in alternative care, produce estimates and compare rates by region, year, sex/gender, age group and placement type. Some data are being collected on stocks, such as prevalence (number of placements), while others are collected on flows, e.g., number of children entering and leaving during a specified period. Disaggregation by sex, gender, age, placement type is usually available. However, breakdowns are often missing by other pertinent variables, such as citizenship, disability, ethnicity, and the parental status of children in alternative care. Censuses sometimes do not count children in family-based care arrangements (such as foster care), children living with extended families and children in institutions.

23. While data needs to speak to the national context, international definitions and standards can provide more clarity based on best practices and lessons learned. UNICEF received the green light from the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications to *develop an international classification of alternative care for children* and will establish a task force for this purpose. The task force will be composed of representatives from national statistical offices and government entities, as well as academia, civil society and international organizations. Countries interested to join are welcome.

24. All presenters emphasized the importance to *clarify the responsibilities* of national statistical offices and line ministries in data management and production of statistics on children in alternative care and the importance of following the fundamental principles of official statistics.

25. *Coordination* should be in place to ensure that data across agencies are consistent. Data is often compiled in a non-centralized manner. In Canada, the jurisdiction lies with provinces and territorial governments, not at a federal level. The Canadian Public Health Agency took the lead to bring together the data from the regional authorities and worked on it to make it comparable and suitable for analysis. The initiative took place following policy demands to report on children in out-of-home care, including on indigenous children.

26. *Administrative data* is the key source in producing statistics on children in alternative care. Using multiple sources, however, helps to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Azerbaijan provided example of using different data sources, including childcare facilities, centralized digital register of children without parental care, household surveys and census to produce statistics on children in care. While administrative data is good to measure prevalence, survey data can capture outcomes that occur as a result of an intervention (e.g., health outcomes). Participants noted the potential of linking data and microdata from various sources that relate for example data collected from schools and social workers that refer to the same child. It should be kept in mind however that such individual data contains sensitive information and access to it should be carefully considered.

27. Social workers need to be made aware of the important role they play as data providers and be informed about the purpose in producing and contributing to the data. Further quality checks during data production should be made on a regular basis. The statistical office of Belarus demonstrated their experience in conducting *quality assessments* by validating administrative data against data collection from census and other surveys. Croatia gave an example with verifying public health data and noted the challenge of recording correct and complete diagnosis.

28. Romania was the first country in Europe that considered a *Primero* registration system. *Primero* is an *open-source software platform* and in the case of Romania it has dual use: (a) a management tool for supporting and protecting children from Ukraine displaced in Romania and (b) a statistical tool for providing data and insight on the flow of unaccompanied or separated children. The platform was launched in July 2022 by the National Authority for the Protection of Children Rights and Adoption. As of January 2024, the database includes over 35,000 cases. The platform produces disaggregated data on unaccompanied and separated children, violence against children, children in alternative care, and children with disabilities. It allows to identify trends on child movements in and out of Romania.

29. The work from UNICEF North Macedonia was an important reminder that underneath statistics are children that undergo challenging and nuanced experiences which cannot always be seen through the data. This shows the value of tracking the same child along his/her experience through various alternative care options and provide data that will allow analysis of the reasons why the child left the care home. In addition, statistics should monitor the quality of children's journey through care, including violence, separations from siblings and other situations of vulnerability, all of which can have serious impacts on the well-being and outcomes of care leavers. New potential indicators could serve to *assess child experiences*, such as number of children separated from siblings, change placements more than twice by the time they reach age 18 and placed close to their habitual place of residence.

30. *Data on life course of a child* would provide helpful information for policy in terms of experiences compared to those of the general population during childhood years as well as adult lives. The unique identifier in that context has a potential for tracking child experiences while keeping data protection and confidentiality.

IV. Violence against children and the implementation of the International Classification of Violence against Children

31. The session included presentations by Italy, United Kingdom, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU-FRA) and UNICEF, with discussion led by Kazakhstan.

32. At its 2023 session, the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted *the International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC)*, which aims to improve quality and availability of statistical data related to VAC and to help standardize the measurement across countries and achieve better international consistency and comparability of statistics. Following its adoption, UNICEF initiated tools and strategies to foster the classification's implementation. Consultations with various stakeholders are currently taking place, including statistical offices and line ministries. The following main challenges have been outlined:

- (a) Data availability and quality varies considerably across regions and countries;
- (b) Data harmonization across multiple agencies (ministries of health, education, social welfare, and the law enforcement and criminal justice system) is in most cases absent;
- (c) There are no dedicated surveys on VAC that collect comprehensive data at regular intervals and in a comparable manner;
- (d) There is a widespread lack of technical capacity on VAC data at national level;
- (e) There are no common definitions across countries.

33. The *implementation* of the classification depends on effective communication and on promoting its benefits to the government bodies involved in producing VAC statistics. Kazakhstan, for example, is already using the classification in data collection from schools.

34. In many instances, there is *connection between violence against women (VAW) and VAC*, both in terms of actors and victims of violence. EU-wide surveys on gender-based violence (GBV) and VAW can provide information concerning VAC. This takes place by collecting data in several ways:

- (a) Women's experiences of violence before certain age, e.g., age of 15 (age threshold varies between countries);
- (b) Women reporting on their children being exposed to violence at home;
- (c) Women reporting on violence during their childhood experience.

35. The survey results can be used along with data from other sources to better *understand the extent and nature of selected forms of violence* in childhood as experienced by women and girls, including experiences of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. They can also help to explore the relationship between women's childhood experiences and violence experienced in adulthood.

36. The results of the *EU-GBV and VAW surveys* should be specifically considered alongside other efforts made by the EU to strengthen data collection on VAC, including the harmonization and further use of both administrative and survey statistics, as well as available qualitative research. Eurostat has started a task force to develop guidelines on data collection on VAW.

37. Data collection on VAC can be implemented through a module in VAW or victimization surveys or mainstreamed in other existing data collection methods. Two statistical offices presented their recent *efforts to capture data on VAC* and provided examples of good practices. In Italy, Istat has launched a project that aims to identify and systematize the various sources currently available on VAC and use both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to design the appropriate measurement framework, involving different stakeholders. The consistency of the sources should be checked to avoid double counting, as for example in the case when multiple acts were committed on the same unit (poly-victimization) or the same act was classified under different categories, e.g., a physical or psychological violence.

38. In the United Kingdom, *the Crime Survey for England and Wales* of the Office for National Statistics is the key source of data on VAC. The survey asks adult respondents about their experiences of abuse as a child. Since 2009, children aged 10 to 15 years have also been interviewed in households where the adult's interview has been conducted and data was collected on their experience of violence in the past 12 months. In addition, the United Kingdom is considering a new online survey that specifically targets children using a sample from administrative sources. This will allow the Office for National Statistics to produce comparable data on experiences of violence for children under the age of 18. The Child Abuse Prevalence survey is expected to be pilot tested end of 2024 or early 2025.

39. The VAC data has a complex and sensitive nature and *ethical aspects* need to be considered. These include safeguarding of respondents, parental consent, managing respondent privacy and others. Special attention should be given to developing questionnaires to be completed independently by minors and the impact the questions may have on the child. It was noted that after the COVID outbreak the conduct of questionnaires have become more difficult, including receiving parents' consent.

40. The discussion focused on *dissemination* of the results to governments and to what extent VAC data, being very sensitive, can be *used for policy* that protects the affected children. The England and Wales face-to-face crime survey is an example of how the survey was used for developing a legislation to provide support and protection from bullying and other VAC online. In the survey if children disclose a criminal violence, they were also asked whether this was reported to the police or other institutions. Another aspect important for policy is to distinguish between increased number of violence acts and increased awareness and therefore increased reporting of violent acts.

41. In conclusion, the participants noted that *measuring prevalence and nature of violence against children is challenging*. Working with data users and having data groups will improve the understanding of the risks and issues that impact children and will make sure they are included correctly in the questionnaires. Both international and national efforts are needed to obtain a comprehensive picture on the size and the nature of the phenomenon and assess trends. Designating a national entity that leads the work on VAC data and the involvement of statistical offices in regular data production would help ensure that children's voices are reflected in statistics.

V. Dissemination of statistics on children

42. The session included presentations by Belarus, United States, and CIS-Stat.

43. The presenters showed *various sources and interactive platforms* for information on children that are publicly available. CIS-Stat presented statistical compilations that contain data on children and youths, including the annual "Statistical yearbook of CIS-Stat" and the biennial "Youth in the Commonwealth of Independent States: statistical portrait" issued jointly with UNFPA as part of SDG reporting. The CIS-Stat database and policy briefs also contain information on children. Most of the data available in these sources covers the topics of education, child-related health, child poverty and inequality.

44. Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States *regularly publish data on children*. In Azerbaijan, for example, every year, the State Statistics Committee publishes a statistical compilation titled "Children in Azerbaijan" in Azerbaijani and English. Other countries have gone further and have developed interactive platforms. Belarus demonstrated a universal user-friendly [data portal on child-related statistics](#) that contains 220 indicators from 8 data providers. Various disaggregations and metadata are available. The support from UNICEF Belarus and UNICEF Regional Office was gratefully acknowledged. Georgia, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova have also established interactive websites on children.

45. In the United States, *a children's forum* was founded in 1994 to foster collaboration among federal agencies and improve data related to children and families. Currently it consists of 23 agencies and departments, and it is an example of successful interagency collaboration. The forum has established frameworks with key indicators on well-being of

children across the following domains: family and social environment, economic circumstances, healthcare, physical environment and safety, behaviour, health and education. Considerable work lies behind the published data in ensuring consistency of the data provided by different sources. The indicators are regularly reviewed and updated. The data are published at a [dedicated website](#). Dissemination is carried out also through social media (America's children@childstats).

46. Countries noted good practices to address some general *challenges* when communicating data on children and encouraged the use of methodological explanations and table footnotes to help provide clarifications. Methodology changes such as data collection interruption due to COVID and the consequences that may have on comparability should be properly reflected.

47. The discussion also touched upon the *evaluation of dissemination* plans and countries tracking specifically *how data is being used and understood* through follow up campaigns and activities. The United States has a user-survey asking the users how often they use the data and in which way. They also analyse who is their target audience. Statistics Canada invests a considerable effort in data literacy and regularly offer courses to experts from external departments and policy programs on how to use the data.

VI. TransMonEE network session: Indicator systems to measure progress for children

48. The TransMonEE network meeting was held on 6 March. Holding it in conjunction with the UNECE/UNICEF expert meeting facilitated valuable exchanges of experiences and highlighted the *potential for enhanced thematic and geographic synergies*. Participants identified opportunities to strengthen these synergies through in-depth examinations of countries' best practices, effectively advancing the child statistics agenda and addressing data gaps.

49. UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia provided *updates* since the 2022 Ankara meeting along TransMonEE's three dimensions:

(a) The *regional database*, which consolidates a wealth of comparable data on children across all domains of child rights from diverse sources, serves as a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and social advocates. The enhanced TransMonEE database structured according to Child Rights Monitoring framework's domains and sub-domains offers a powerful data query and the dashboard, which complements the database by showcasing a curated selection of indicators for exploring trends and comparing data.

(b) *Partnerships* with approximately 30 national statistical offices (NSOs) focus on enhancing data availability on specific groups of children or topics where global standards are lacking and comparability is challenging, such as alternative care and children experiencing violence. Several countries increased data availability and improved data collection processes and coordination on topics that require cross-sectoral work under NSO leadership. Three countries have conducted the assessment of alternative care data systems and identified key areas for improving data on children in alternative care.

(c) The *network* comprising NSOs provides a platform for collaboration among data producers, users, and policymakers, thereby facilitating further progress toward improved data and utilization for informed decision-making to uphold the rights of every child. A series of online meetings and webinars were conducted for the network on selected topics. The [TransMonEE analytical series](#) has resumed after a pause, focusing on data on children in alternative care that used the TransMonEE data.

50. The TransMonEE network session focused on *indicator systems* to measure children's progress. It featured presentations from UNICEF, the European Union Social Protection Committee Indicators sub-group with the European Commission, CISSTAT, and NSO representatives from Kazakhstan, Finland, Türkiye, Tajikistan, Republic of Moldova and Georgia. The representative of Montenegro moderated the discussions.

51. Participants engaged in discussions regarding *the Child Rights Monitoring framework* developed by the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, which offers a comprehensive approach to monitoring the situation and rights of children through statistics, data, and analysis. The framework provides a basis for selecting indicators to measure progress for children, with significant policy implications. National partners reaffirmed the initiative's relevance, as discussed during the 2022 meeting held at Ankara (Türkiye), and were invited to participate in the review process for the initially mapped indicators of the Child Rights framework, considering specific criteria.

52. Participants agreed that further efforts are required to *harmonize and learn from various frameworks* toward establishing a regional core list of indicators on children. For example, the first version of the EU monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee brings together available data on children in need and their access to essential services. Synergies can be strengthened between the EU monitoring framework and the TranMonEE database to close the data gaps. The Federal Interagency Forum of the United States showcased the model of key national indicators of well-being of children from 23 Federal Agencies and Departments for improving data availability on children and families through better coordination and collaboration among Federal agencies.

53. The *pivotal role of NSOs* in establishing an effective and sustainable collaborative platform for enhancing data quality and sharing experiences and results was emphasized. Examples from Kazakhstan and Türkiye demonstrated how NSOs can coordinate efforts to ensure broad stakeholder access to child-related data. Discussions underscored the importance of stakeholder collaboration and clear mandates for data collection and exchange, given the cross-sectoral nature of child statistics.

54. Additionally, participants stressed the importance of *involving children* in framework development, data collection, and dissemination processes. Kazakhstan showcased a model of intergovernmental collaboration to enhance multi-dimensional child data at both national and sub-national levels, while experience of Türkiye highlighted NSO collaboration with various institutions to effectively integrate administrative and survey data on children.

55. Discussions underscored the potential of administrative data, the complementarity of survey data, and, most importantly, *the need to translate data into tangible outcomes for children*. Maintaining a focus on monitoring children's well-being and rights implementation was highlighted.

56. Participants recognized the necessity of enhancing the *statistical literacy* of stakeholders, including policymakers, civil servants, media professionals, and children themselves, to ensure that technical data and indicators are accessible to diverse users. Georgia shared its child-friendly portal for teenagers as an exemplary tool, presenting statistics in an easily understandable format. It allows children and youth to get information on the country's socioeconomic situation and improve their knowledge of statistics through exciting quizzes.

57. Despite significant progress in improving child statistics at the national level, *data gaps remain prevalent*, particularly concerning vulnerable children. The comprehensive mapping of child data and statistics in Finland is aligned with the National Child Rights Strategy. This helps to identify information gaps, categorize indicators and develop a roadmap to address these gaps effectively. Tajikistan shared its experience conducting landscape analyses of child data systems and developing a roadmap for enhancing child statistics using child-related SDG indicators as a framework.

58. Countries are increasingly developing *statistical dashboards and portals* dedicated to children. CIS-STAT, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia showcased data dissemination tools at regional and national levels. Furthermore, there was a suggestion to transition from static publications to interactive electronic formats, such as SDMX, to enhance functionality and accessibility, particularly for visually impaired stakeholders.