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Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment**Twelfth session**

Geneva, 14 – 16 May 2024

Report**Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The document presents the key outcomes of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Quality of Employment, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 14-16 May 2024. This report is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of the meeting.

The meeting was organized following a decision of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2023 (ECE/CES/2023/15) and the recommendation of the previous meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment in November 2021 (ECE/CES/GE.12/2021/2).

I. Introduction

1. The twelfth meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 14 – 16 May 2024. It was organized by the UNECE Steering Group on Quality of Employment.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives from Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Korea (Republic of), Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, and United States of America.
3. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Eurostat, International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Gdansk University of Technology (Poland) and University College London (United Kingdom).
4. The meeting was chaired by Frank Schüller (Germany) and Isabelle Marchand (Canada). Isabelle Marchand (Canada), Silvia Perrenoud (Switzerland), and Shun Wu Fang (Singapore) acted as session chairs.
5. All background documents and presentations of the meeting are available on the website: [Meeting of the Group of Experts on Quality of Employment | UNECE](#).

II. Organization of the Meeting

6. The meeting was divided into 4 sessions, a keynote speech, an information item from ILO, as well as a panel discussion:
 - (a) Session 1: Measurement of quality of employment
 - (b) Session 2: New forms of employment
 - (c) Session 3: Administrative and other data sources for measuring quality and forms of employment
 - (d) Session 4: Progress of work on Measuring Quality of Employment
 - (e) Keynote: Job quality and wellbeing in the global economy
 - (f) Information item: Impact of the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)
 - (g) Panel discussion: Quality of employment among immigrant population

III. Summary of the main discussions and conclusions reached at the meeting

A. Session 1: Measurement of quality of employment

Session chair: Isabelle Marchand, Canada

7. The session featured discussions on various country experiences with applying the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment (UNECE, 2015), researching specific indicators or sets of indicators, and implementing new international labour statistics classifications such as the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18). The objective was for countries to exchange knowledge and learn from each other's experiences with quality of employment indicators.
8. The session included presentations by Statistics Sweden, State Statistics Service of Ukraine, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, Mexico), Gdansk University of Technology, and Statistics Canada.
9. In the first presentation, Sweden presented their research on the relationship between educational attainment and labour market outcomes of women after the birth of their first child. The presentation highlighted that key factors which affect diverse quality of

employment outcomes include family decisions and the impact of childbearing on women's career paths. The presentation extends beyond income considerations to explore shifts in occupations and commuting times linked to women's employment situations following childbirth. As underscored in subsequent discussions, this presents a complex scenario requiring additional analysis and research for deeper understanding.

10. Ukraine provided an overview of their results and future outlook regarding indicators for measuring quality of employment. The presentation showed that the State Statistics Service of Ukraine utilized a variety of sources, including administrative data, household surveys, and enterprise surveys to gather information on quality of employment.

11. The third presentation highlighted Mexico's approach for measuring the quality of employment of dependent contractors in three cities in Mexico: Saltillo, Toluca, and Oaxaca. Using the Quality of Employment (QoE) framework, they outlined a portrait of quality of employment for dependent contractors within the contexts of labour informality and digital platform usage.

12. Dagmara Nikulin from Gdansk University of Technology shared their research findings on factors associated with informal employment and the shadow economy within Polish industries. The study utilized a dataset of firms' use of informal workers to analyse the factors prompting companies to hire such workers. The findings indicate that both structural characteristics and the perception of obstacles in establishing a business are significant factors influencing an employer's decision to hire workers informally.

13. The final presentation detailed the Canadian experience in utilizing aggregate data to generate job quality profiles and explored potential applications for use in other countries. The strategy outlined in the presentation demonstrated that while examining single dimensions of employment quality is valuable, further insights can be obtained by simultaneously analysing multiple dimensions to create comprehensive job quality profiles. The presentation introduced an experimental approach that could be utilized in countries lacking a dedicated quality of employment survey.

14. In summary, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) face both common and unique challenges in balancing the need to collect and produce core labour market indicators and quality of employment data. NSOs use various sources, such as administrative data, household surveys, and enterprise surveys, to produce quality of employment indicators. As progress is made, NSOs are beginning to address the challenge of measuring dependent contractors and different forms of employment. Additionally, all presentations underscored the specific contexts in which quality of employment arises, emphasizing that gender differences remain crucial to understanding variations in quality of employment.

B. Session 2: New forms of employment

Session chair: Silvia Perrenoud, Switzerland

15. The presentations of the session touched on country experiences in measuring new and emerging forms of employment.

16. Finland presented the trends and changes in teleworking over the past few years in the post COVID-19 period. The study found an increase in the prevalence and intensity of remote work across different employee groups. It also analysed the extent to which employees can influence the amount of telework they do, their telework environment, and whether they have evaluated this environment and the conditions of remote work with their employer. Additionally, the results revealed gender differences in remote work, mainly due to gender segregation and structural changes in the labour market.

17. A further presentation from Finland analysed changes in forms of employment within the employed population during the 2000s and their impact on labour market precariousness and job security. The study showed a slight decrease in full-time employees with unlimited duration contracts by 2022 compared to 2000, with more significant increases in part-time employees and self-employed individuals without employees. It also highlighted the development of new forms of employment (zero-hour contracts, temporary agency work,

light entrepreneurs, and digital platform work) in Finland. The study concluded that while there is no permanent increase in subjective job insecurity, its distribution has shifted, affecting even highly educated individuals, upper white-collar workers, and public sector employees, who are now less protected from dismissal and unemployment.

18. Switzerland's presentation highlighted the main findings of the 2024 publication "Shift Workers in Switzerland 2002-2022" issued by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The study examined the developing patterns of shift work, along with the characteristics (such as sex, nationality, age, and major occupation group) and health status of shift workers in Switzerland.

19. Mexico's presentation outlined the conceptual and methodological design and results of measuring dependent contractors and digital platform work using Mexico's Labor Force Survey (EFL) 2019. The survey facilitated the measurement of new employment categories based on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18). This study contributed to a better understanding of quality of employment within these emerging categories of employment.

20. Eurostat introduced the work of its ongoing task force on Digital Platform Employment (DPE) measurement. The task force developed a framework for integrating DPE measurement into the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), outlining definitions, methodology, a model questionnaire, and more. The presentation shared the results and lessons learnt from the pilot survey conducted in several EU member states in 2022, as well as ongoing efforts to prepare an ad-hoc Labour Force Survey module for implementation in all EU member states by 2026.

21. OECD presented the Handbook on Measuring Digital Platform Employment and Work, a collaborative effort involving the OECD, ILO, and the European Commission, which was developed in response to the increasing policy demand for enhanced statistics in this area. The presentation provided an overview of the handbook, which begins with a proposed definition and conceptual framework for digital platform employment and work. It also examines the main statistical methods used to measure digital platform employment and work and evaluates previous statistical initiatives by NSOs within this framework.

22. The session underscored the ongoing significance and policy relevance of accurately measuring new and emerging forms of employment, reflecting evolving labour market trends and providing insights on a changing workforce.

C. Session 3: Administrative and other data sources for measuring quality and forms of employment

Session chair: Shun Wu Fang, Singapore

23. The presentations from various countries highlighted the pivotal role of administrative data in enhancing the accuracy and comprehensiveness of national labour statistics. By integrating data from diverse government records and administrative sources, valuable insights into labour market trends and dynamics can be gained. This approach not only reduces the burden on survey respondents but also significantly improves data collection efficiency.

24. The session delved into several important dimensions of employment quality that benefit from the use of administrative data. For instance, Statistics Poland's innovative use of administrative data to measure commuting time highlighted how combining information from different sources can provide a nuanced understanding of workforce mobility and spatial dynamics. The attendees also noted opportunities to enhance this approach by incorporating precise geographical coordinates or address-level data to better capture commuting distances and patterns.

25. Singapore's presentation on the gig economy underscored the complexities of tracking digital platform workers due to the absence of a centralized register. Despite these challenges, initiatives by Singapore's Manpower Research and Statistics Department (MRSD) to collaborate with platform providers demonstrated promising steps toward improving data accessibility and reliability. This collaborative effort aims to balance the need for enhanced

data insights with stringent data privacy protections, ensuring that workers' rights and personal information are safeguarded while enabling robust analysis and policy formulation.

26. Estonia's approach to using registry data for wage and salary statistics illustrated another aspect of the utility of administrative data. By conducting surveys of approximately 6,000 enterprises and integrating data from employment registers, income tax returns, and business databases, Statistics Estonia streamlined data collection processes and significantly reduced data collection burden by 8,000 man-hours. This method not only provided detailed insights into wage trends across different sectors and demographics but also extended coverage to smaller enterprises that might otherwise be underrepresented in traditional surveys.

27. Furthermore, longitudinal studies on low-wage workers by ISTAT in Italy exemplified how administrative data can offer insights into wage dynamics over time and inform targeted policy interventions in tackling low-wage traps. The comparative analysis between sectors, using administrative data, revealed disparities in earnings across contractual arrangements. The attendees also discussed the possibility of including an education dimension in analysing the risks of persistent low wages.

28. Sweden's introduction of the Population's Labour Market Status (LMS) in 2022 represented a milestone in leveraging administrative data for labour market analysis. By harnessing data from comprehensive administrative registers, Statistics Sweden enhanced the frequency and granularity of labour market reporting, addressing challenges such as high non-response rates in traditional surveys. Meanwhile, ISTAT's integration of extensive administrative data from labour, legal, and tax registers exemplified efforts to refine employment metrics, notwithstanding challenges related to data consistency and classification.

29. In conclusion, the presentations and discussions highlighted the pivotal role of administrative data in advancing the understanding and measurement of employment quality. By utilizing administrative sources, countries can overcome traditional survey limitations, such as high non-response rates and data collection inefficiencies, to produce more accurate and timely labour market statistics. This shift not only enhances the granularity and scope of employment metrics but also facilitates more informed policy-making and targeted interventions to improve labour market outcomes.

30. However, the session also underscored several critical challenges that need to be addressed. Data privacy concerns remain a paramount issue, necessitating robust safeguards to protect individual information while ensuring data accessibility for statistical purposes. Moreover, discrepancies in definitions and inconsistencies in the classifications used across different administrative datasets pose challenges to achieving standardized and comparable metrics across regions and over time.

31. Despite these challenges, the collective efforts showcased in the session reflect a global commitment to advancing methodologies and practices in the use of administrative sources. A consensus emerged that while there is no one-size-fits-all solution, continuous innovation and collaboration offer pathways to enhance the accuracy, relevance, and effectiveness of labour market measurements. Countries and international organizations are encouraged to continue pushing the frontier of administrative data usage, exploring new data partnerships, and methodological refinements to further improve the measurement of quality of employment statistics.

D. Session 4: Progress of work on Measuring Quality of Employment

32. The session included reports of work by the Steering Group in four areas:

- 1) Forms of employment
- 2) Creating job quality profiles
- 3) Integrating ICSE-18 in the Quality of Employment framework
- 4) Proposal on updating the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment

Forms of employment (Lead: Statistics Canada)

33. Canada gave a summary of the work completed on forms of employment since 2021. In 2022, an UNECE Handbook on Forms of Employment was developed by a CES task force led by Statistics Canada. Following the publication of the Handbook, a subgroup on forms of employment was established under the Steering Group on Quality of Employment to continue moving forward work in this area. Main objectives and activities of the subgroup on forms of employment include, but are not limited to:

- Developing practical guidance on data collection and measurement challenges;
- Sharing of experiences and good practices in measuring new and emerging forms of employment among countries;
- Monitoring conceptual and methodological developments related to the measurement of forms of employment and making relevant updates to definitions and guidelines.

Creating job quality profiles (Lead: Statistics Canada)

34. In response to interest from members of the Steering Group on Quality of Employment, a subgroup was formed to work on the topic of job quality profiles. As part of the subgroup's activities, Canada drafted a brief document offering guidance on creating job quality profiles, introducing an experimental approach that could be utilized in countries without a dedicated quality of employment survey. The guide will be available on the Expert group's Wiki page after the meeting for countries to access and test.

Integrating ICSE-18 in the Quality of Employment framework (Lead: ILO)

35. The classification of status in employment as defined in ICSE-93, is deeply integrated within the Quality of Employment framework. In some instances, the employment status category directly contributes to the definition of specific indicators, while in others, it is used as a recommended category to disaggregate indicators. However, with the introduction of the new International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18) as defined in the resolution concerning statistics on work relationships adopted at the 20th ICLS in 2018, there will be notable implications at various levels for the framework. A subgroup led by ILO has been established to assess the impact of the changes brought about by ICSE-18 on the Quality of Employment framework.

36. ILO introduced the assessment paper prepared by the subgroup which evaluates the direct impact of ICSE-18 on the existing indicators across each of the seven dimensions of the quality of employment framework. The focus of the paper lies on aligning and addressing any inconsistencies regarding indicator definitions, along with proposing potential new indicators associated with ICSE-18 that can enhance the understanding of each dimension. The paper also discusses impacts on the current recommendations for dissemination within the framework and proposes strategies for aligning them with ICSE-18.

37. The subgroup's paper proposed two approaches to ensure alignment of the Handbook with ICSE-18: a restrictive approach and a more ambitious approach. Both approaches will be taken into consideration during the potential launch of the update of the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment for further deliberation and decision.

Proposal on updating the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment (Lead: Federal Statistical Office of Germany, Statistics Canada)

38. The Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment was endorsed by the CES plenary session in 2015 and published in the same year. The Steering Group on Quality of Employment was established in 2015 to guide and oversee the CES work on quality of employment.

39. Several developments since 2015 necessitate an update of the Handbook to maintain its relevance and practical usability. These developments include updated international statistical standards and classifications in employment statistics, changes in labour markets, the emergence of new data sources, and countries' experiences and feedback on the practical implementation of the Handbook's recommendations.

40. The Steering Group presented the proposal to update the Handbook and received support from participants of the meeting. The proposal will be submitted for consideration by the CES Bureau in October 2024. If endorsed by the Bureau, a task force would be established to undertake the update of the Handbook.

E. Keynote: Job quality and wellbeing in the global economy

Speaker: Francis Green, Professor of Work and Education Economics, University College London

41. In his keynote speech, Professor Francis Green, an expert in Work and Education economics at University College London, explored the interconnected themes of job quality, wellbeing, and the global economy.

42. He highlighted that statistical analyses based on diverse data sources demonstrate the critical impact of job quality on overall wellbeing, more so than other life domains.

43. The presentation showed that job quality has evolved during the opening decades of the 21st century, driven by factors such as economic growth, changing power resources, technological changes, managerial practices, and country-specific institutional factors. Notable trends in job quality over the past two decades include an average increase in real wages, overall improvements in the physical work environment, and a deterioration in work intensity.

44. Professor Green concluded by emphasizing the need to enhance measurement and research on job quality. He strongly recommended addressing data scarcity by incorporating questions on job quality into general social surveys in official statistics.

F. Information item: Impact of the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)

Speaker: Michael Frosch, ILO

45. The ILO provided a summary of the outcomes from the 21st ICLS which are expected to have an impact on the Quality of Employment framework. These outcomes include the new statistical resolution concerning statistics on the informal economy, the update of the resolutions and guidance on the measurement of work-related income, minor amendments to the 19th ICLS resolution I: resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, and the forthcoming work on care work, digital platform work, updates to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), and labour migration statistics, among others.

G. Panel discussion: Quality of employment among immigrant population

Moderator: Frank Schüller, Germany

Panellists: Agnieszka Zgierska, Poland; Boon Heng Ang, Singapore; Elisa Benes, ILO; Andres Vikat, UNECE

46. Experts from national statistical offices and international organizations engaged in discussions regarding the measurement of quality of employment among immigrants. Panellists offered insights from the perspectives of both data producers and users. They emphasized the challenges associated with data collection, stressed the importance of having accurate definitions, and underscored the necessity of deriving relevant and meaningful results.

47. In recent years, there has been an increasing public debate on the impact of immigration on labour markets. Policy discussions have centred on the potential contributions of high-skilled workers and the integration of low-skilled migrants into the labour market. This highlights the importance of data on the status of migrants in labour markets, essential for analysing potential polarization, wage disparities, and working conditions.

48. There are several established reporting frameworks, such as the ILO's "Decent Work Agenda", United Nations (UN)'s SDG indicators, and UNECE's "Quality of Employment framework". However, detailed information specifically concerning migrants is often insufficient. It has been suggested that introducing indicator breakdowns based on migrant status could help address this information gap.

49. Another identified data challenge is the potential disparity between national perspectives and practices in data collection on population and migrants compared to international concepts and recommendations. In certain instances, additional definitions are required.

50. It was noted that while sample surveys often reveal limitations in measuring migration, population or migration registers often lack sufficient labour market-related information for assessing quality of employment. Combining data from both sources could offer a promising approach for future reporting.

51. There was consensus on the need for providing recommendations regarding the utilization of data sources and establishing common standards. Additionally, the necessity for regular communication between data users and producers to align their respective needs was further emphasized.

IV. Proposal for future work

52. The following topics were suggested for further work:

- 1) Update of the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment:
 - Ensure alignment with the 19th, 20th, 21st ICLS resolutions
 - Facilitate cross-fertilization with the work on forms of employment
 - Update existing indicators and suggest new indicators
 - Maintain consistency with the update of the SNA 2025
- 2) Explore the use of administrative and other data sources for quality of employment indicators
- 3) Follow up on emerging new forms of employment
- 4) Promotion of the statistical framework, including developing new products (e.g., a how-to guide on creating job quality profiles)

53. The Steering Group on Quality of Employment should follow-up on the suggested topics for further work. The participants recommended an expert group meeting should be organised in 2026.
