

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For decision

Meeting of the 2013/2014 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 21-22 October 2014

Item 5 (d) of the Provisional
Agenda

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF
STATISTICS ON SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Note prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with OECD, World Bank and ILO

*In February 2014, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of measuring social protection, and recognised the need for more harmonisation in this area. However, the Bureau decided to postpone the decision about further work to allow taking into account the outcome of the meeting of the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) in May 2014. As requested by the Bureau, the Secretariat prepared a note on the outcome of the SPAIC-B May 2014 meeting. **On the basis of this note, the Bureau is invited to discuss possible follow-up work in this area.***

I. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE IN-DEPTH REVIEW

1. In February 2013, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) selected measurement of social protection for an in-depth review. The CES Bureau conducted the in-depth review in February 2014, based on a paper prepared by the Secretariat.
2. **The review noted that a large number of organisations are involved in the collection, harmonisation and dissemination of social protection statistics, but the resulting statistics are often difficult to reconcile.** In many cases, differences in measuring social protection stem from different classifications and purposes of the statistics, and it may not be possible to impose universal standards for all purposes. However, a certain level of harmonization would be useful to facilitate international comparability.
3. **The scope of social protection is not universally agreed upon and currently there is no globally agreed framework or guidelines in the area.** The Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) was established in 2012 as a result of the G20 Development Working Group to enhance global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues. One of the objectives of the Board is to promote exchange of knowledge, policy experience and good practices, as well as data and information.
4. **The Bureau acknowledged that social protection is a complex area of high policy importance, but stressed that future work under CES should only be undertaken if it adds value to the existing initiatives.** One of the suggestions for future work was organizing a CES seminar to discuss the issues and challenges in this area. The Bureau asked the Secretariat, in consultation with OECD, the World Bank and ILO, to inform the Bureau about the outcomes of the May 2014 meeting of the SPIAC-B before deciding about possible further work related to measuring social protection.

II. MEETING OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION BOARD

5. The fifth meeting of the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board was held on 5-6 May 2014 at the ILO headquarters in Geneva. There were 47 participants from 29 international organizations and other partner institutions. The first day of the meeting covered Social Protection Floor country operations, social protection inter-agency assessment tools, social protection in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and global cooperation and learning with a focus on Africa. The second day of the meeting was a full-day session on social protection assessment tools.

6. The meeting opened with a session on the One-UN Social Protection Floor country operations, which aim to ensure a minimum level of social protection for developing countries. Members were invited to submit inputs to the One-UN SPF country team operations matrix, which logs 2014-2015 activities on social protection systems and floors, along with contact information.

7. The second session focused on social protection inter-agency assessment tools. The session was divided into two parts. The first part was a briefing on the progress made so far and the next steps in the development of coordinated tools. The second part discussed the governance of the social protection interagency assessment tools, including possible management mechanisms and procedures. Members discussed a proposed Bank-hosted secretariat/facility for the Inter-agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) tools, but no final agreement was reached.

8. The third session covered social protection in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Members were briefed on the recent developments of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development (OWG) and a technical meeting on Social Protection and the post-2015 agenda held in New York on 12 March 2014. It was suggested that the group prepare inputs for the OWG co-chairs on a social protection coverage baseline. Members were called to increase post-2015 advocacy efforts, particularly with Southern partner countries, to raise the profile of social protection. The SPIAC-B secretariat will support the preparation of technical inputs and provide strategic information to facilitate advocacy efforts.

9. The fourth session centered on global cooperation and learning and Africa. The progress made and challenges faced in implementing the 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation were discussed. Members were offered space on the social protection gateway by the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) to create a central forum for discussions and materials, including those of the SPIAC-B secretariat and the Interagency Social Protection Assessment Tools suite.

10. The second day of the meeting, a full-day session on Social Protection Assessment (SPA) tools, began with a presentation of proposals for the design and work plan for SPA tools. General criteria were agreed upon for selecting instruments and a number of instruments were proposed for development. The group reviewed progress of several SPA tools in development. A social protection policy and national dialogue tool was introduced for possible integration into the Core Systems Diagnostic Instrument (CODI).

11. **The meeting did not address issues on harmonisation or international comparability of official social protection statistics.** All presentations from the meeting are available online at: <http://www.ilo.org/newyork/issues-at-work/social-protection/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board/fifth-meeting/lang--en/index.htm>

III. PROPOSAL FOR THE BUREAU

12. **The Bureau is invited to discuss possible follow-up activities in the area of social protection statistics.**

13. The Bureau may consider the possibility to bring the issue of international comparison of social protection statistics to the attention of the SPIAC-B and request information about planned initiatives in this area. The Bureau may also consider inviting one of the member organisations of the SPIAC-B, e.g. OECD, ILO or World Bank, to inform the Bureau at a future meeting about the work and planned initiatives of SPIAC-B concerning harmonisation and international comparability of social protection statistics.

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