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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics
Vienna, Austria, 28 November 2018

CONCEPT NOTE

The Workshop will be held at Statistics Austria
Vienna, Austria
on 28 November 2018

I. TIME AND VENUE

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organising the *Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics*, with financial support from the Russian Federation and the United Nations Development Account. The Workshop will be held at Statistics Austria in Vienna, Austria, on Wednesday, 28 November from 9:30 am to 5.30 pm at the following address: Guglgasse 13, A-1110 Vienna (metro U3 stop "Gasometer"). The Workshop is followed by the *UNECE Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality* on 29-30 November.

II. BACKGROUND

2. The call for internationally comparable poverty measures is especially strong in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is therefore an appropriate time to promote synergies and cooperation within the statistical community and encourage countries to make efforts toward harmonisation of poverty statistics and aligning them to the monitoring needs for SDGs.

3. Countries use a variety of approaches involving different data sources, sampling methods, classifications and definitions. The degree of harmonization by applying international standards also varies. To assess progress, it is necessary to achieve measures that are comparable across countries by applying universal definitions and harmonized methodologies. A good balance should be found between national specificities and cross-country comparability.

4. UNECE is currently finalizing its 3-year project on harmonized poverty indicators for monitoring sustainable development in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

(EECCA). The objective is to strengthen the statistical capacity in these countries for producing comparable and reliable poverty indicators, including those necessary for monitoring SDGs. In the framework of the project, at the *High-level seminar on poverty harmonisation of poverty statistics* in October 2016, the statistical offices of EECCA countries decided to develop a model set of survey questions to harmonize their data collection on poverty.

5. Further, in June-July 2017, UNECE conducted an electronic consultation on the draft model set of survey questions. Based on the consultation, the questions and the related report were adapted to address the comments received and presented for discussion at the *Workshop on poverty measurement* (September 2017).

6. The next steps in the UNECE project included testing of the model set of questions in pilot countries in 2018. During this stage, the national statistical offices of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan offered their support in testing the model set and the related data collection.

III. PURPOSE

7. The purpose of the Workshop is to exchange experience and build statistical capacity for harmonisation of poverty measures, with focus on CIS countries. It will identify the main directions for further steps towards harmonizing poverty statistics.

8. The target audience are statisticians and analysts from national statistical offices.

IV. PROGRAMME

Introduction: Comparable statistics across countries for poverty monitoring

9. This agenda item will present efforts in compiling harmonised poverty data to improve cross-country comparability and address the needs for producing comparable indicators in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. International organizations will present experience with the harmonization of data sources and data collection. Country representatives are invited to highlight their most recent steps in addressing the SDG indicator requirements in producing poverty statistics.

Session A. Harmonization data collection on poverty in household surveys

10. Under this agenda item, the workshop will focus on the results of the testing of the model set of survey questions on measuring poverty implemented under the project "Harmonized poverty indicators for monitoring sustainable development in CIS countries".

11. UNECE consultant will present the conclusions and recommendations from testing the model set of survey questions for measuring poverty in pilot countries and lead the discussion on the topic. Representatives from countries participating in the pilot study will share their experience with the proposed model set.

Session B. Data disaggregation for poverty measurement

12. The objective of the session is to discuss countries practices in identifying and monitoring policy-relevant target groups for disaggregation of poverty measures. The Resolution 70/1 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states "*quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision-making.*" The issue of disaggregation is therefore particularly important in view of the SDGs indicators requirements.

13. Data collected through short questionnaire before the Workshop will serve as a basis for "small group" discussions. Representatives of each group will be invited to a panel to summarise the outcome of the discussion in their respective group and respond to questions and comments from participants.

Conclusions and way forward

14. The session will discuss the way forward to improve comparability and agree on next steps.

V. PREPARATION

15. The documents will be posted on the Workshop website at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2018.11.poverty.workshop.html>. Participants are encouraged to download the materials from the website and bring their own copies to the Workshop. Documents posted on the website before the Workshop will not be distributed in the meeting room.

VI. LANGUAGES

16. The working languages of the Workshop are English and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages.

VII. REGISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

17. For information on registration, visa, accommodation and logistics, please refer to [the information note](#) of the *Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality*, available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2018.11.poverty.seminar.html>.