

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
Online meetings on measuring poverty and inequality
Geneva, Switzerland (online meeting), 2-4 December 2020

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organising the *Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality* in reduced online format on 2-4 December 2020. In light of travel restrictions and health protection measures, a physical meeting is postponed until further notice. In the intervening period and until such a meeting can take place, UNECE is convening online meetings to provide with a platform to exchange current situations and plans.

2. The online meeting on measuring poverty and inequality will take place as follows:

DAY 1: Measuring poverty and inequality in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)	
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2 December (Wednesday)

09:00-12:00 CEST (Geneva time)

DAY 2: Measuring poverty and inequality	
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3 December (Thursday)

14:00-17:00 CEST (Geneva time)

DAY 3: Measuring poverty and inequality	
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4 December (Friday)

14:00-17:00 CEST (Geneva time)

II. PARTICIPATION

[Register online](#) by Monday, 23 November

3. The principal target audience is statisticians, researchers and analysts from national statistical offices (NSOs), ministries and other government agencies, international organizations and academia, who produce or use poverty statistics.
4. Only registered participants will be able to connect to the meeting. To register please complete [the online registration form](#) by **Monday, 23 November 2020**. Connection links and instructions for joining the events will be sent out by email approximately one week before the meeting.
5. The working languages of the meeting are English and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS

**Submit abstract: by Monday, 2 November to vania.etropolska@un.org
(see Annex 1 to fill out the form)**

6. The Covid-19 pandemic is exacerbating global inequalities and changes the poverty profile of people who are at risk of remaining or becoming poor during the pandemic. It is disproportionately harmful to certain groups of the society, especially those already in a vulnerable situation. The impact is multifaceted, along with unprecedented health risks there are also the economic and social implications across all countries and regions. In this context, the *UNECE Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality* is launching the present call for contributions in **response to the additional needs on measuring poverty and inequality during the pandemic and its aftermath**. The agenda will be prepared taking into account the interest expressed, and the offered contributions.
7. No written papers are requested. The events will consist of short presentations (7-8 minutes) followed by facilitated discussions. You are welcome to signal your wish to give a presentation during the events by **submitting an abstract of approximately 330 words** outlining your proposed contribution according to the themes listed in the next section. Abstracts should be submitted using the enclosed form (see Annex 1) and sent to vania.etropolska@un.org by **Monday, 2 November 2020**. The abstracts could be in either English or Russian languages. All abstracts received will be made available on the meeting website.

8. Contributors are reminded that the success of the meeting depends upon the ability to translate materials in advance of the meeting. Therefore, it is important to strictly adhere to the deadline for slides submission below.

Submit slides: by Monday, 16 November to vania.etropolska@un.org

IV. PROGRAMME OF THE MEETING

9. The topics listed below reflect the proposals and comments made during the last UNEC Expert meeting on Measuring Poverty and Inequality in December 2019 as well as the more recent discussions within the Steering Group following the pandemic outbreak.

A. Data collection on poverty during the pandemic

A1. The impact of the pandemic on the work of statistical offices

10. Estimation of the most vulnerable and poorest groups in society is often based on household surveys. The pandemic however has significantly affected the work of the statistical offices. Participants are invited to present a brief update on their experiences on data collection on poverty during the pandemic, with particular emphasis on any postponement or other significant change in plans. They are also welcomed to share information on adaptation to the physical contact restrictions and use of remote methods.

11. In July 2020, UNECE has undertaken first steps in gathering practices of national statistical offices in adapting their household surveys to the COVID-19 crisis situation with respect to poverty measurement. The study is available in [English](#) and [Russian](#). An analysis of the information provided by 25 countries in the first months of the crisis will be presented during this session and will be used to steer the discussion and identify areas in which the need for support is most pressing.

A2. The urgent need for data during the pandemic

12. The collection of information usually takes time, thus limiting the usefulness of the results in the current context of the pandemic. The participants are invited to contribute with experiences on any new activities undertaken or planned to evaluate the poverty-related impact of the crisis on the population. Such experience could include special surveys or studies designed for the pandemic crisis context or adding new questions into current surveys. A particular exchange on how the statistical offices are responding to the increased demand for timely data, e.g. efforts to reduce periods for taking surveys, shorter intervals between surveys, along with others, would be most useful.

A3. Data collection on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups

13. The Covid-19 pandemic is particularly harmful to certain groups of the society, especially those already in a vulnerable situation. Data collection on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, who may suffer disproportionately in the current crisis, including children, youth, elderly, disabled and ethnic or migrant minorities. Further discussions in this direction could build on the recommendations of the new guide *Poverty Measurement: Guide to Data Disaggregation*.

B. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

14. Disaggregation of poverty indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been regularly considered in the last expert meetings. A number of challenges persist such as lack of methodology for certain indicators, missing data disaggregation on key variables and absence of financial and technical support. Continued exchange and sharing of experience would therefore help countries improve their SDG reporting on poverty and inequality. The risks and threats to meeting the SDG goal of reducing poverty are now increased by the Covid-19 pandemic. Close coordination between countries and exchange of experience remain an important tool for strengthening national statistics on poverty and inequality in support of SDGs 1 and 10.

C. Urban and rural poverty

15. Urban and rural poverty is another topic of interest. There are complex development challenges with regard to urban mobility, consumption behaviour, future skills and jobs, and future of education. These all have become more relevant in the context of the pandemic, with big cities exceedingly affected. With the coronavirus crisis and the social distancing measures, a large part of the population had to adapt to a remote work and study environment on an extremely short notice.

D. Supplemental poverty measures

16. Any methodology for measuring poverty relies on several assumptions and decisions, e.g. how to set the poverty threshold or define resources. Countries are therefore developing supplemental or experimental poverty measures to improve accuracy of the measurement. These include adjustments for cost of living differences and household circumstances, social transfers in kind, disability cost, housing wealth, imputed rent, combining information on income, consumption and wealth, and unequal sharing of resources within households. Poverty profiles obtained from conventional measures should be compared to profiles that would be obtained from supplemental measures to assess their robustness.

17. The national statistical offices are invited to contribute specifically on their experiences with supplemental measures or measures which are tailored to groups including:

- **The use of register data for elderly or children.** Administrative data on children and elderly is both likely to exist from child or old age-related benefits as well as from a potentially relevant source if they are difficult to be interviewed directly.
- **Measuring housing vulnerability, homelessness and institutional accommodation.** These are all dimensions, which appear particularly pertinent for old age as well as children and refugees.
- **Combining information on income, consumption and wealth.** The *Guide to Data Disaggregation* also reveals that assets are especially relevant for valid comparisons of age groups.

V. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

18. The online meeting is in reduced format and the time for presenting is further limited. In case there will be topics which cannot be covered in the course of the online meeting, the UNECE secretariat welcomes proposals for follow up online events or virtual discussion platforms.

19. The UNECE Secretariat is available to respond to inquiries and provide additional information.

UNECE Secretariat

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