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Interim report on progress of the UNECE Task Force on Measuring Intra-household Power and Decision-making

Note by the Task Force on Measuring Intra-household Power and Decision-making*

Abstract

This paper summarizes the first findings of the Task Force from an exercise to collect information on experiences, current practices, gaps, challenges and plans among countries represented on the Task Force. It finds that a variety of relevant questions on intra-household power and decision-making are already asked in surveys, but there is broad variation in their wording, purpose, the surveys in which they are included and therefore also the samples and units of analysis. The paper identifies both thematic gaps and methodological challenges which will be the focus of the continued work of the Task Force. Work Session participants are invited to contribute additional information to supplement the findings of this exercise.

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NOTE: The designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

I. Introduction

1. The movement for gender equality has made, and continues to make, huge strides. Women increasingly fill important roles in positions of power in business, politics, justice, culture and sport. Some of the world-shaping decisions of our time are being taken by women.
2. Power and decision-making has long been recognized as an important domain of gender equality, but has typically been conceived as something which exists and should be measured in the public sphere, by assessing female and male representation among holders of these powerful decision-making positions in politics, business, the legislature, etc.
3. But what happens behind closed doors? Who decides how households should be run, how money is spent, who goes out to work, and where? These kinds of questions are clearly much harder to answer than simply counting something objective like the numbers of female and male parliamentarians or judges. Counting up women and men in positions of power in business or local government is, undeniably, complex and fraught with definitional and methodological challenges, but they are challenges which we can see our way to meeting. International efforts are focused on figuring out these concepts, definitions and statistical methods in order to count up the women in decision-making roles and the number and nature of the decisions they make. On the other hand, measuring the degree of decision-making power that women and men wield within their couple relationships inside households is far more subtle and complex: from deciding what should be measured, how questions should be framed, and who should be asked, to agreeing on how the answers should be interpreted and analyzed.
4. To complicate matters further, the household has often been treated for the purposes of economics and statistics as a single unit, with shared interests and evenly-distributed power and resources. Hence, survey instruments have often been designed in ways that do not permit statisticians to distinguish resource allocation or decision-making at the individual level. For example, household budget or expenditure surveys tend to treat the set of related individuals within a household as their basic unit of measurement. Increasingly, however, it is becoming clear that individual-level data collection and analysis might reveal important intra-household inequalities, especially along the gender dimension.

II. Establishment of the Task Force

5. At the 2016 Work Session on Gender Statistics, proposals were therefore put forward for methodological work to explore the measurement of power and decision-making in the private sphere, noting that access to power outside the home will always be limited if power is still gender-divided within the home.
6. It was emphasized that intra-household power and decision-making differs from, but is closely interlinked with, the gender division of household labour, paid labour, and earnings, all of which are already firmly established as important in the measurement of gender equality. It is well known that women in all UNECE countries continue to spend longer on household work than men (even if only employed men and women are considered). The UNECE Task Force is moving beyond this, though, looking at ways to measure not only *who is doing the domestic chores*, but *who is making the domestic decisions*. Who decides how to spend or save money; how many children to have, and when, and what methods will be used to achieve reproductive goals? Who decides how children are educated and disciplined? Who manages the social and family obligations and activities of the household? Who gets to make the ‘important’ calls, and who is expected to decide on the mundane day-to-day things like meals, clothing purchases, shopping lists?

7. Support for the proposals led to the establishment by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in February 2017 of a Task Force¹, composed of representatives from 16 countries and organizations², which is now progressing with its work programme.
8. This paper summarizes the first findings from an exploratory exercise to assess current practices among Task Force countries in the collection and analysis of information on this topic, looking at commonalities and differences among countries, asking what currently works and what does not, and identifying gaps and challenges.
9. It then outlines the Task Force's planned next steps. The Task Force hopes to receive valuable input from Work Session participants to aid its continued work.

III. Information-gathering exercise

10. One of the planned activities of the Task Force is the compilation of an inventory of existing indicators, as well as information about the statistical surveys from which they are derived. This will be followed by an attempt at evaluating them in terms of conceptual validity, coverage, frequency, quality and standardization across sources and UNECE countries, as well as identification of aspects of the topic for which there are currently no adequate indicators.
11. As a first step in this process, members of the Task Force completed a set of questions about their current practices in gathering and analyzing information on the topic. They were asked the following questions:
 - Does your country have, within official statistics, any survey, or survey module explicitly devoted to intra-household decision-making? If yes, please give details: (what survey/module? what respondents? what periodicity? other useful info).
 - Do any of your surveys include questions on the following? If you answer yes to any, please give details about the survey and the specific questions.
 - (a) Reproductive decision-making (decisions about partnering, having children, using contraception, using SRH services)
 - (b) Decisions about labour market participation (deciding about what and when to work, take time out or reduce hours for child/elderly care...)
 - (c) Decisions about health care
 - (d) Decisions about social life and use of leisure time
 - (e) Decisions about children's education
 - (f) Decisions about expenditure and saving (big purchases, routine purchases), family budgeting and distributional regimes (whether/how couple shares money, seeking permission to spend, etc.)

¹The terms of reference of the Task Force can be found at
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2017/February/11-ToR_TF_on_Household_Power_final.pdf

²Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada (Status of Women Canada), Colombia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Philippines, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

- (g) Perception of control, degree of satisfaction with decision-making in any of the above categories, questions about how decisions are reached when there is disagreement.
 - How (if at all) are the data on these topics compiled and disseminated?
 - What challenges are you aware of in relation to these questions (interpretation by respondents, non-response, responses affected by presence of others, contradictory answers from partners...)
 - What surveys are you aware of outside of official statistics that include questions on any of these topics?
12. Responses were received from Canada, Colombia, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Serbia and Turkey (Bosnia and Herzegovina replied ‘no’ or ‘no data’ for all questions).

IV. Findings

A. Breadth and depth of topics covered

- 13. None of the eight responding countries reported having a survey dedicated to intra-household power and decision-making. Rather, modules on intra-household power and decision-making were included within surveys of various themes.
- 14. Seven of the eight responding countries reported having at least one survey module dedicated to intra-household power and decision-making. The breadth of topics covered varied substantially between countries. Of the six topic areas examined, Colombia, Mexico and Turkey reported survey questions related to five areas, Italy to four, Serbia to three, Canada and Lithuania to two and Bosnia and Herzegovina to none.
- 15. Colombia was the sole country to report, in addition to questions on specific decision-making topics, an overarching question that addresses whether an individual is consulted on important decisions for the family.
- 16. Of note, Mexico’s *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households* has included a module entitled “household decisions and personal liberty” since 2003. It asks women who are married or in a union, who in their household makes decisions related to sexual activity and reproduction, labour force participation, social activities and leisure, child-rearing, household expenditure and saving, as well as others. Response categories include the respondent only, the spouse or partner only, the respondent and spouse or partner equally, or another person. As of 2016, the response categories reflect more subtle distinctions, also allowing respondents to indicate that decisions are made “between [the couple], but a little more him” or “between [the couple], but a little more you.”
- 17. Mexico’s *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households* is unique among responding countries in that, beyond who makes decisions within the household, it also asks how decisions made by women are received by their spouse or partner. Each time a respondent indicates that they are the only decision-maker, a follow-up question asks:

And does your husband or partner....?

- respect or accept or support your decision
- fight or mistreat you
- is indifferent (doesn't mind, doesn't participate)

18. In addition to asking who makes several types of decisions, Mexico's *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households* asks women whether they need to ask their husband or partner for permission prior to engaging in certain activities, for example making a purchase or changing one's personal appearance. This line of questions could be helpful for understanding power dynamics in households.
19. In some countries, topics are covered with minimal detail while in others they are covered in considerable depth. For example, Serbia's *2010 Time Use Survey* includes a single question on household decision-making, in which respondents identify who in the household usually makes decisions on: the respondent's health, large or daily household purchases, what will be prepared for meals, and visits to friends or family members. As such, Serbia's single question covers three of the examined topic areas but in little depth. Canada responded with survey content covering two areas. Decisions related to social life and leisure is treated with a single question in the *General Social Survey on Family*. In contrast, as described in the related section below, decisions and power over household finances are covered in more detail including questions that address decision-making, resource sharing and control over assets.

B. Reproductive decision-making

20. Three of the eight responding countries reported survey content related to reproductive decision-making. Broadly, this content can be organized under four themes: sexual relations, use and method of contraception, number of children, and pregnancy and prenatal care. In some cases, questions are asked of women only, and in others they are asked of both women and men. The questions are usually presented in one of two forms. Either the respondent is asked directly about "who decides" on a specific topic, or respondents are asked about why they do or do not engage in a specific behaviour, and opposition from their spouse or partner is a response option.
21. Two countries, Colombia and Mexico, reported survey content asking who decides when to have sexual relations. In Colombia's *Demographic and Health Survey*, women and men are asked "Who in your household has the last word in the following decisions: have sex," while in Mexico's *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households*, women are asked "who decides, the majority of the time, in the household or in your couple: when to have sexual relations?"
22. Three countries, Colombia, Mexico and Turkey reported survey content surrounding the use and method of contraception. All three countries ask a question which gets at who decides whether to use contraception. In Colombia and Turkey's *Demographic and Health Surveys*, the question is asked indirectly to women as "what is the main reason you are not using a contraceptive method to prevent pregnancy," where one of the response categories is "husband or partner opposing." In Mexico's *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households*, the question is asked directly to women as "who decides, the majority of the time, in the household or in your couple: whether contraceptives are used." This survey also captures decisions about who in the couple will use contraception.
23. Questions surrounding the type of contraception used followed a similar structure to those regarding whether or not to use contraception. However, Colombia's survey also asks women whether they have ever "been forced to use a contraceptive method" against their will, and if so, by whom.
24. Mexico's *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households* asks women who decides whether or not to have children, and the number of children to have. Questions on the number of children to have are also included in Mexico's *Labour and Co-Responsibility Survey* and Colombia's *Demographic and Health Survey*. These questions were not addressed by other countries. In Canada's *General Social Survey on Family*, both women and men are asked several questions concerning their intentions to have a child in the future – however, these are asked at the individual level and not in relation to a partner.

25. In Colombia, women are asked whether the decision to become pregnant was made with their partner. In Turkey, women are asked if before they were pregnant they “wanted to get pregnant,” “would prefer to be pregnant later,” or “never want this pregnancy” before being asked the same questions about their husband or partner.

C. Decisions about health care

26. Only two of eight responding countries had any questions related to intra-household power and decision-making surrounding health care. This presents a significant data and knowledge gap.
27. In Colombia’s *Demographic and Health Survey*, women and men are asked to provide the main reason that they did not request or receive medical care. In addition, women are also asked why they have not had a pap smear. In both instances opposition from a partner or from parents are response options.
28. In Serbia’s 2010 Time Use Survey, women and men were asked a single question regarding health-care decisions. Namely, who in the household usually makes decisions regarding their health.

D. Decisions about labour market participation

29. Four of eight responding countries reported survey content related to decisions about labour market participation. This content reflects who decides whether a respondent can work (or study) as well as the amount of time the respondent (or their partner) spends working.
30. Colombia and Mexico both reported survey content assessing who in the household makes decisions about whether someone can work. Colombia’s *Demographic and Health Survey* asks whether the respondent’s partner has ever “forbidden [him/her] to work.” In Mexico’s *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households* women are asked “... who decides: whether you can work or study?” In addition, in this survey, women are asked whether they need to have permission from their husband or partner in order to work for pay or remuneration.
31. Italy was the only responding country to report survey questions assessing who in a couple makes decisions regarding the amount of time the respondent and his or her partner spend working.

E. Decisions about social life and leisure time

32. Six of eight responding countries reported survey content related to household decisions on social life and leisure time. The topics covered and approach vary across countries, however most survey questions can be classified as related to household or personal social and leisure activities, political activities, and personal liberty. Most questions are framed around who in the couple or household decides on activities.
33. For example, in Canada’s *General Social Survey on Family* women and men are asked “who in [their] couple mainly takes care of: organizing the household’s social life, for example, invitations for family and social occasions, outings, and keeping contacts.” A similar question is asked of women and men in Canada’s *General Social Survey on Canadians at Work and at Home*, except that in this instance the question includes other members of the household as possible responses and is not limited to those living with a spouse or partner.
34. Italy is the only country to refer directly to power in decision-making, rather than simply asking who decides. For instance, in the *Family and Social Subjects Survey*, women and men are asked “who, in

your couple, has more power in making decisions regarding the following arguments.” The topic areas examined are “friends,” “holiday destinations,” and “what to do in free time.”

35. Unlike other countries, Mexico’s *Survey on Relationship Dynamics in Households* also asks women whether they need to ask permission to engage in several types of activities. In particular, women are asked to indicate whether they have to ask for their husband or partner’s permission, notify their husband or partner or ask him for his opinion when they want to “buy something for [themselves] or change [their] personal appearance,” “participate in a neighbourhood or political activity,” “form a friendship with someone,” or “vote for a party or candidate.”
36. Turkey’s *Demographic and Health Survey* uniquely asks women who makes decisions regarding [her] marriage (response options are “herself,” “partner,” or “family,”) or divorce (response options are “herself,” “partner,” or “together”).

F. Decisions about child-related matters

37. Strictly speaking, only two of eight responding countries—Italy and Mexico—reported survey content related to decisions about children’s education.³ Both ask a single question about who in the couple or household makes decisions about the children’s education.
38. Turkey’s *Family Structure Survey* asks a broad question about who makes decisions regarding “child-related matters,” while Mexico’s *Surveys on Relationship Dynamics in Households* and *Labour and Co-responsibility* ask who makes decisions about “granting permissions” to children.

G. Decisions about household finances

39. Seven of eight reporting countries indicated having survey content broadly related to decisions regarding household finances. In particular, Task Force members were asked to consider: decisions about expenditure and saving (e.g., big purchases, routine purchases), family budgeting, and distributional regimes (e.g., whether/how couple shares money, seeking permission to spend).
40. The reported survey content suggests that several countries are currently collecting information on this topic in some depth. As such, this is perhaps the most fully developed of the topic areas under investigation, with many different survey questions being reported by countries.
41. For the purpose of this report, survey content in this topic area is divided into four subtopics: decisions on expenditure and saving, resource sharing, control and permission-seeking, and asset ownership.
42. Across all responding countries, questions concerning **expenditure and saving** decisions roughly take the form “who decided...” Four countries—Canada, Colombia, Italy and Turkey—reported questions that distinguish between “routine/daily” purchases and “large/expensive” purchases. In addition, Italy’s *Family and Social Subjects Survey* asks who has more power in making decisions regarding specific expenditures including leisure, home decoration, clothing, and economic support for parents or in-laws. Beyond this, three countries—Colombia, Mexico, and Serbia—reported survey content to assess who in the household or couple makes decisions about the respondent’s earnings versus their spouse or partner’s earnings.

³ While not directly related to decision-making, Canada’s *General Social Survey on Canadians at Work and at Home* asks “who in the household mainly takes care of: helping the children with homework?”

43. Questions concerning **resource sharing** range from very broad to quite detailed. Canada, Colombia, and Italy each reported survey content assessing how household expenses are shared across couples or households. For example, Italy's *Family and Social Subjects Survey* asks "How do you and your spouse or partner manage your common monthly expenses?" with the response categories: "you sustain expenses completely," "your spouse/partner sustains expenses completely," "you both sustain expenses equally," "you both sustain expenses in proportion to your income," and "you both sustain expenses without a fixed rule."
44. In addition to asking a similarly phrased overall question, Canada's *General Social Survey on Family* also takes a more detailed approach by assessing the relative financial contribution each partner makes to several types of expenses—namely, the rent/mortgage, groceries, child-related expenses, and household utilities. The form of these questions is "what is your financial contribution for paying...." and response categories include "for all," "for more than half," "for half," "for less than half," and "do not pay."
45. Questions that reflect **control over household finances and permission-seeking behaviour** were reported by Colombia, Italy, Mexico and Turkey. These questions take several different forms. For example, within the context of a battery of questions assessing gender-based violence, Colombia's *Demographic and Health Survey* asks women and men whether their partner has: "supervised the way you spend money," "threatened to take away economic support," or "taken away money or property?" In addition, some questions focus on permission-seeking. For instance, Italy's *National Financial Inclusion Survey* asks whether respondents have to "ask permission" from anyone before making a purchase.
46. Others questions are aimed at identifying how money is distributed within the household. For example, Italy's Family and Social Subjects Survey asks respondents how they and their spouse or partner manages household income, with response categories that include: "you manage the money and give part of it to your spouse/partner," "your spouse/partner manages the money and gives part of it to you," "you put all your money together and each person takes what he/she needs," "you put only part of your money together - the rest is apart," and "everyone manages their own money."
47. A potentially important component of household power and decision-making involves **asset ownership**. Italy's *Family and Social Subjects Survey* asks respondents to identify whether they or their spouse has a current bank or postal giro account, and to whom the account(s) are registered. Canada's *General Social Survey on Family* identifies whether respondents have their own personal bank accounts, joint accounts or both. It also asks where the respondent's income is deposited—whether in their own personal account, their partner's own personal account, or a joint account. Italy's *National Financial Inclusion Survey* also asks whether women or men are the owner of several types of assets including cultivatable land, cars or vans, or their dwelling, among others.
48. Ownership or control over various types of assets could be important in the event of a crisis situation. Mexico's *National Financial Inclusion Survey* asks whether assets could be sold or rented in order to cover an economic emergency. If not, respondents are asked why. One of the response options is that the respondent would "have to ask authorization of [their] partner, relative, or another person."

H. Perception of control, degree of satisfaction, resolution of disagreements

49. The majority of survey questions reported in this exercise are perception questions taking the form "who makes decisions about X in your couple/household." These questions will be useful to produce indicators that illustrate the gendered division of decision-making power in households.

50. In addition to these questions, another line of questioning could be used to assess the perceived acceptability of gendered decision-making roles, for example through the use of satisfaction scales. Questions of this nature were not reported by responding countries *per se*, although some questions could be indirectly related to satisfaction with decision-making roles.
51. In Italy's *Family and Social Subjects Survey*, for several types of decision addressed in a "who makes decisions about X..." question, a corresponding question asks "How often do you disagree with your spouse/partner" on decisions of the same nature.
52. Although none of the responses spoke directly to how decisions are reached when there is disagreement from a "process" perspective, some questions were framed as "who has the final say on decisions regarding X". For example, Colombia's *Demographic and Health Survey* asks "who in the household has the last word" over large purchases for the household.

I. Data compilation and dissemination

53. Several member countries are collecting data that could be used to begin assessing the gender dimension of intra-household power and decision-making. Moreover, existing databases and microdata files with relevant data were reported by several countries. That said, only two Task Force countries reported published reports with related content, and none specified routinely reporting on indicators derived from this survey content.

J. Data and analytical challenges

54. Responding countries identified some challenges related to collecting data on intra-household power and decision-making. It was noted, for instance, that questions related to decision-making within households may be perceived as intrusive, resulting in non-response bias. It was also mentioned that these questions are sensitive to the presence of non-respondents during interviewing, and thus it is important that steps are taken to have respondents answer questions alone.
55. One country reported that respondents sometimes had difficulty answering questions related to resource sharing. In particular, respondents found it hard to evaluate the share of the household's total income accounted for by their personal income⁴.
56. Another country noted that proxy responses may not be accurate. For example, when an individual is asked to report on the earnings of his or her partner it may be less accurate than if it were self-reported. This could result in biases in calculating the proportion of total household income contributed by women compared with men. Additionally, women or men may over- or underestimate their own power in the household.
57. Two countries that collect information which could be used to assess intra-household power and decision-making noted that while the data exist, they have not been analyzed through this lens. One country noted the need for analytical plans to achieve this goal.

⁴ This is borne out by the experiences of the 2010 EU-SILC ad hoc thematic module on 'Intra-household allocation of resources', in which it was found that respondents often experienced difficulties in understanding or answering questions on income pooling and sharing.

K. Surveys outside official statistics

58. While official statistics has not often given the topic a significant role to date, the analysis of gender imbalances in power in the domestic sphere is by no means a new area for academic research, especially in work focusing on developing countries and/or agrarian settings. As such, a number of international survey programmes, as well as purpose-built surveys conducted for individual studies, have included questions on the topics considered above. In some cases efforts have been made to construct indicators based on these. For example, the *Demographic and Health Surveys* contain questions on the decision to use contraception, the right to refuse sex, decisions about spending, healthcare, and visiting family and friends, among others. There is also a suggested indicator, the ‘Participation of women in household decision-making index’ based on some of these. The Task Force will collate information on these and draw upon the lessons learned from them in its work.
59. The Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS) merit a specific mention, as they constitute a key source of data on intra-household decision-making outside official statistics for several countries in the UNECE region (in some cases the surveys have been conducted by, or in partnership with, national statistical offices). Data for at least one wave are currently available for 19 countries. The survey, with a large sample size and multi-wave panel design, covers topics related to children, partners, parents, work and everyday life. It is one of very few surveys with a section explicitly designed to gather information on intra-household decision-making. Respondents who have either a co-resident or non-resident partner are asked “Who makes decisions about the following issues in your household?”, with six issues covering household finances, labour market participation, child-raising and social life. They are then asked a separate question about how household income is organized, followed by a question on partnership quality asking about the frequency of disagreement with their partner on a range of issues in the realm of household decision-making.
60. In spite of the significant potential offered by these questions, being among the very few survey questions expressly designed to cover this topic and with high degree of international comparability, they have to date been very rarely used. An online bibliography of over 1,200 research studies using GGS data reveals very few which make use of these questions, and none which attempt to analyze their validity or discuss methodological issues related to them. It could be assumed, however, that they are subject to the same challenges of respondent understanding identified by countries in the foregoing section.

V. Conclusions and next steps

A. Thematic areas for development

61. The information provided by reporting countries suggests a number of thematic areas in which there are gaps; either where questions are not asked, or where they are not thoroughly developed and so do not permit a detailed understanding of the power and decision-making dimensions.
62. There are several possible subtopics in the area of *reproductive decision-making*—for example, sexual relations, use and method of contraception, fertility intentions, and pregnancy and prenatal care—that could be further developed for depth and consistency in wording and application across countries. Greater understanding of decision-making processes in this area could be gleaned from surveying both women and men.
63. Survey content regarding intra-household power and decision-making about *health care* is very limited among Task Force member countries and could benefit from greater exploration.

64. Although half of the responding countries identified some existing survey content regarding intra-household power and decision-making related to *labour force participation*, this area could be further explored. In particular, understanding not only who makes the decision but the factors and processes related to these decisions could be useful to strategies to increase the labour market participation of women.
65. As noted, there is limited information available concerning decisions and power related to *children's education or other child-related matters*. The Task Force may wish to pursue this area further, perhaps also considering the intersection of gendered power and decision-making in the household as it relates to the gender of the children in the household.
66. The Task Force could consider current satisfaction questions related to the division of household labour as a basis for formulating *satisfaction questions on household decision-making*. For example, Canada's *General Social Survey on Family* includes a satisfaction question on the division of household chores that could be adapted to decision-making ("How satisfied are you with the way chores are divided in your household?")

B. Cross-cutting challenges

67. In addition to gaps in topic areas, the exercise revealed some overarching methodological issues that will need to be addressed through the work of the Task Force. Beyond the challenges reported by individual countries (described in paragraphs 54-57), the findings suggest the following.
68. First, if the Task Force is to suggest a harmonized approach in order for countries to produce comparable data, it will be important to consider the similarities and differences between questions used in different surveys, including their translational equivalence across languages.
69. Second, it will be necessary to consider who should be the target population for questions regarding intra-household power and decision-making; specifically, the age, sex, and marital status of respondents. In some of the cases reported, only women are interviewed, while in others both women and men are interviewed. In some cases, only people who are living with their spouse or partner are asked questions regarding intra-household power and decision-making. This usually reflects response categories for "who decides" questions that are "couple focused" versus "household focused."
70. Third, it is important to give some attention to the sampling unit and unit of analysis. They surveys analyzed in the current exercise take various approaches to sampling—some interview all respondents of a given age within a selected household, whereas others select a single individual within a household. In both cases, a single individual (e.g., a woman or a man in a couple) could be treated as the unit of analysis. The Task Force could, for instance, agree that indicators on household power and decision-making should be calculated from the responses of only women, or only men. Alternatively, the answers of women could be compared with the answers of men. However, when responses are provided by only a single individual in the household, this could result in gender bias where data from women and men are collected from different households. It is arguable that collecting data from all household members could provide a clearer understanding of household power and decision-making dynamics. At the same time, it will be important to assess the added value of such an approach against the additional cost of interviewing multiple members of a household, and the likelihood of countries being willing to adopt this approach for surveys whose main purpose is usually something other than the measurement of intra-household dynamics. These are considerations where the respective experiences of countries, both within and beyond the Task Force, could add great value.

71. Fourth, survey questions are not in and of themselves indicators. Once the Task Force has identified target areas for examination, with a common set of survey questions, it will be fundamental to consider how these data are used to calculate indicators of gender equality.
72. Finally, given the evident lack of routine compilation and/or dissemination of indicators derived from the rich variety of sources reported by responding countries, there is a clear need not only for international standards for the definition and production of indicators of intra-household power and decision-making, but also for guidance on their compilation and dissemination. As with many topics in gender statistics, this is a particular challenge due to the variety of sources and breadth of sub-domains under consideration, meaning that users (such as policymakers, researchers and those involved in advocacy) may require extra guidance to lead them to the relevant information.

C. Invitation for contributions

73. In light of the above, Work Session participants are invited to provide additional material that might be useful to the Task Force about surveys, survey questions, and indicators used in their countries. Participants can write to the secretary of the Task Force (fiona.willis-nunez@unece.org), or contribute via an online questionnaire which will be made available prior to the Work Session at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/hhdecisions>
