

Meeting of the 2017/2018 Bureau  
Geneva, 18 June 2018

Approved

Item 2 of the Provisional  
Agenda

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON MEASURING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

**Prepared by the UNECE Secretariat and the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality**

At its February 2018 meeting, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) conducted an in-depth review on measuring social exclusion. Based on the conclusion of the review, the UNECE Secretariat together with the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality prepared the present terms of reference for the Task Force on Measuring Social Exclusion. **The Bureau is invited to discuss and approve the terms of reference.**

### I. BACKGROUND

1. In February 2018, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) conducted an in-depth review on measuring social exclusion. Statistics Canada and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) prepared a paper summarizing the international activities in this area, which provided the basis for the review (document ECE/CES/BUR/2018/FEB/2). The Bureau asked the UNECE Secretariat together with the Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality, to prepare a proposal for follow up work to address the priority areas raised in the in-depth review for the next CES Bureau meeting.
2. Social exclusion is a broad concept for which no exact or widely accepted definition exists. As the methodology changes based on the definition used, this makes it challenging to quantify the number of people who face social exclusion, or the degree to which people are at risk of social exclusion. While many countries measure different aspects of social exclusion, very few surveys or statistical methods are specifically designed for this. Most numeric measurements of social exclusion rely heavily on methods that measure material and social deprivation, and then interpret an individual's level of social exclusion.
3. The concept of social exclusion is linked to that of poverty and material deprivation, and disentangling them is conceptually challenging. Moreover, social exclusion is generally discussed within the social cohesion and social inclusion framework, which although often used as synonyms, contain important differences. Distinction between these concepts, like social exclusion, social cohesion, material deprivation or multidimensional poverty is relatively nuanced and makes social exclusion complex to communicate.
4. Social exclusion strongly depends on the economic, cultural and policy context in the country. Although full harmonisation of measures should not be the aim, designing and implementing policies for social exclusion requires far more detailed information. It is important to understand the prevalence, persistence and depth of social exclusion, the

multiple dimensions in which people could be excluded, and the policies that exist to combat social exclusion in the societies.

5. The traditional measures of exclusion or inclusion are changing with generations. Digitalisation, for example, is bringing a range of new issues and forms of social exclusion. In this context, a life-course perspective is important for measuring and understanding social exclusion.

6. Following the pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first, work is needed on collecting and systematising country experiences on measuring different aspects of social exclusion, and linking them to SDG indicators. A collection of such case studies would allow to better support policymaking in this area. The present terms of reference were developed for carrying out such work. The work would build on existing UNECE networks and expertise in the related area of measuring poverty and inequality.

**7. The Bureau is invited to discuss and approve the present terms of reference for the Task Force on Measuring Social Exclusion.**

## **II. MANDATE**

8. The Task Force on Measuring Social Exclusion reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) through its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for a period of two years. It will present its full report to the February 2020 meeting of the Bureau. The Task Force will finalise the report based on comments from the CES Bureau and from the consultation among all CES members, prior to submitting the report to the CES 2020 plenary session for endorsement.

9. The Task Force's work will be taken forward under the guidance of the CES Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

10. The objective of the Task Force is to consolidate current and emerging good practices in measuring social exclusion and in assessing their potential for delivering comparable results.

## **IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

11. The Task Force will collect national practices on the following:

- a) Concepts and frameworks for measuring social exclusion on the national level, including factors that lead to social exclusion, and groups of people facing social exclusion.
- b) Indicators used for measuring social exclusion.
- c) Measuring emerging aspects and forms of social exclusion resulting from recent developments in the society, e.g. digitalisation.

d) Communicating measures of social exclusion.

12. The Task Force will compile a collection of good practices and analyse them. The analysis will aim at the following outputs:

- a) Taxonomy of the use of different concepts related to social exclusion, including social cohesion, social inclusion, poverty and material deprivation.
- b) Identification of good practices in the production, analysis and dissemination of social exclusion measures.
- c) Demonstration of linkages to SDG indicators.

## V. TIMETABLE

13. The following timetable is foreseen:

Jun-Aug 2018	Launching the Task Force – identifying the countries and organizations interested to participate in its work
Sep-Nov 2018	Discussion of work plan and defining the scope of national practices to be collected
Dec 2018 – Feb 2019	Collection of information on national practices
March-Aug 2019	Review and analysis of the collected information
Sep-Dec 2019	Discussing and drafting the recommendations and conclusions
Jan 2020	Editing the report, submitting to CES Bureau for review
Feb 2020	Review of the full report by the CES Bureau
Mar-Apr 2020	Electronic consultation among CES members
June 2020	Submitting the report to the CES plenary session for endorsement

## VI. METHODS OF WORK

14. The Task Force is expected to work mainly via email and telephone conferences and using a common workspace at the UNECE wiki platform. It will meet once a year back-to-back with the meetings of the UNECE Expert Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality.

## **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

15. The following countries and organizations indicated interest in participating in the Task Force: Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, and Eurostat. Membership is open to additional countries or organizations. UNECE will provide the secretariat.

16. The Task Force will seek to involve in the group academia, and the custodian agencies responsible for the SDG indicators related to social exclusion to consider SDG monitoring needs.

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