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ENGLISH ONLY

**UNITED NATIONS**

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Seminar on Poverty Measurement

(Geneva, Switzerland, 12-13 July 2016)

INFORMATION NOTE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The meeting will be held in room VIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.   
It will start at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 July 2016  
and finish on Wednesday, 13 July by 5.30 p.m.

# INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organising the Seminar on Poverty Measurement under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The Seminar will be held in room VIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It will start at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 12 July and finish on Wednesday, 13 July by 5.30 p.m. The meeting room is near the entrance door 11, one level up (the entrance is on the level of the second floor, the meeting room is on the third floor).
2. The meeting is preceded by the workshop on poverty measurement in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, which UNECE will organize in Geneva on 11 July 2016, in cooperation with Rosstat and CISSTAT, and with financial support from Russian Federation and the United Nations Development Account. The Workshop will identify the main directions for further steps towards harmonizing poverty statistics in the CIS region and aligning them to the monitoring needs for SDGs. More information about the workshop will be provided in due course.

# PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The Seminar will allow countries to exchange experience on the challenges in poverty measurement and ways to address them. The objective is to achieve greater comparability and reliability of poverty statistics and strengthen the multilateral cooperation. The Seminar will also provide the opportunity to discuss the results achieved by the CES Task Force on Poverty Measurement, in particular in drafting the Guide on Poverty Measurement.
2. The target audience of the Seminar consists of statisticians and analysts from national statistical offices, ministries and other government agencies that produce or use poverty statistics.

# AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1. The work programme of the meeting will consist of all or part of the substantive topics presented below. The agenda will be prepared before the meeting taking into account the papers contributed by meeting participants. The agenda and other documents will be posted on the meeting’s web page at http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2016.7.poverty.seminar.html.

## Measurement challenges in consumption and income poverty

1. This session will review countries’ experience in dealing with concrete issues that pose challenges to statisticians in providing monetary poverty estimates. Importantly, low household incomes or low levels of consumption do not necessarily imply a low standard of living. A household with a low income may be able to achieve a high standard of living through the use of savings or debt (based on an expectation of higher income in the future). Depending on the thresholds used, low levels of consumption may in part reflect individual choices. Additionally, levels of wealth, which are the third primary component of economic well-being are not typically taken account of in monetary poverty indicators.
2. Furthermore, the session will discuss how cash benefits, social transfers, including intra-household transfers, or rental income are taken into consideration when determining the poor. It will be also useful to learn about countries practices in accounting for own production, i.e. if households consume their own production or exchange it for some other goods.

## Linkages between poverty, inequality and vulnerability

1. Poverty, inequality, and socio-economic vulnerability issues are complex, whereas trends often provide mixed signals, e.g. growing incomes yet higher number of poor, deepening economic crisis yet stable poverty level, etc. Many countries that have reported good progress in poverty reduction show nevertheless large shares of the population that are vulnerable to poverty. In some regions, countries with lower levels of income inequality are likely to have smaller shares of their populations vulnerable to poverty, while in other regions the opposite may hold.
2. This session will discuss what definitions and measures to adopt in order to capture in the best way the linkages between poverty, inequality and vulnerability to poverty. Especially interesting will be to see the experience in different regions.

## Comparability issues in measuring multidimensional poverty

1. The multidimensional poverty approach to assessing deprivations at the household level can be tailored using country-specific data and indicators to provide a richer picture of poverty at the country level. The most precise multidimensional poverty index (MPI) is the one that consists of indicators and weights appropriate for the country. The global MPI estimates, however, are constrained by need for comparability. Comparable data on each of the indicators are not available for all nations.
2. This session will focus on how to address the comparability issue when constructing MPI and on the indicator and data requirements for the countries wishing to develop measures on multidimensional poverty.

## Poverty and inequality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

1. On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Goal 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” and Goal 10 “Reduce inequality within and among countries”. As with the other goals, they need to be monitored with indicators that matter nationally and are comparable internationally.
2. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators is developing a global indicator framework with majority of the indicators already agreed upon. With regard to Goal 1 and Goal 10, the numbers of indicators agreed are 9 and 12, respectively. Further three indicators for each of the two goals are currently under discussion. The session will open the floor for exchange of views about the readiness of the national statistical offices to produce these indicators. Equally important will be to examine the indicators’ potential to achieve international comparability while preserving their relevance for national policies.

## Communicating statistics on poverty and inequality

1. Reliable statistics is the corner stone of sound policymaking. High-quality poverty statistics enable policymakers to make choices that lead to economic and social benefits for the poor. Good metadata is a prerequisite to improving international comparability. It facilitates media and other users in understanding and communicating the information correctly. Poverty is a politically sensitive issue, which would need to be considered in presenting the information.
2. This session focuses on answering questions about how policymakers use poverty statistics, where they perceive shortcomings in poverty statistics, what additional data they need, and how the official statistics community could improve the provision of poverty statistics from the point of view of policymakers.

# DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND LANGUAGES

1. The working languages of the meeting are English and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in these languages.
2. Participants are welcome to submit a paper for any topic on the agenda. Authors of papers submitted in Russian are encouraged to provide a short abstract in English (maximum one page), if possible.
3. The following deadlines and requirements apply:

* Intention to participate and contribute a paper should be submitted by **26 February 2016**. If contributing a paper, please indicate the topic and attach a short abstract. Please, include author’s name, e-mail address and institutional affiliation.
* The full versions of the papers should be sent as Word files by **20 May 2016**.
* Presenters are encouraged to use PowerPoint presentations, and to send them by **5 July 2016**.
* All submissions should be addressed to the UNECE Secretariat, e-mail [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org)

1. Papers will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2016.7.poverty.seminar.html. The posted documents will not be distributed in the meeting room. Participants are encouraged to download them and bring their own copies to the meeting.

# PARTICIPATION, ACCREDITATION and REGISTRATION

1. The meeting is open to representatives of all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Representatives of other Member States of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may also participate in a consultative capacity, according to the terms of reference of UNECE (E/ECE/778/Rev.3, paras. 11, 12 and 13). All delegates must be accredited by the competent authority of their country or international organization.
2. All participants should register by **9 June 2016** by completing the online registration for the

Seminar: https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=I7EB4s

Workshop: https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=kf075I

1. The online meeting registration guideline is available at: [https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR](https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR/Online+Meeting+Registration+Guidelines).
2. All participants attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible at the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participants reside, with reference to the UNECE Seminar on Poverty Measurement. If necessary, the UNECE secretariat can provide a letter to facilitate obtaining a visa. Please indicate this need on the registration form or contact the Secretariat at [social.stats@unece.org](mailto:social.stats@unece.org).
3. In order to enter the Palais des Nations, all participants need to obtain a security pass (ID badge). For this purpose, please present yourself with your passport or ID with photo at the UN Security Identification Office at the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations (Avenue de la Paix 14, 1210 Geneva; buses 8, F, V, Z and 28, stop Appia) by 8.30 a.m. on your first meeting day. The Security Identification Office is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (non-stop). For identification and security reasons, delegates are requested to wear their security badges at all times while inside the Palais des Nations. A map of the Palais des Nations where you can find the Security Identification Office located at the Pregny Gate is available at <http://www.unece.org/meetings/UN_Map.pdf>

# ACCOMMODATION

1. Participants are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. The UNECE secretariat in Geneva is not in a position to provide such services to participants. Participants are advised to book hotel accommodation well in advance of the meeting since available rooms may be limited due to other meetings and events taking place in Geneva at the same time. Maps of Geneva, list of hotels and information for visitors to the Palais des Nations are available on the following website: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>. The following information is also available:

* The closest hotel to Palais des Nations is the 5-Star Intercontinental.
* There are several three-star and four-star hotels near Cornavin, the main train station. These hotels are moderate in price and are in 7-10 minutes by bus or tram and 25-30 minutes on foot from the Palais des Nations. Examples include: Les Nations, Cornavin, Suisse, Eden, Ibis Genève Centre Nations, Manotel, Mon Repos, des Alpes, International and Terminus, Montana, Savoy and Windsor.

# FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN GENEVA

1. Geneva International Airport now offers incoming passengers a free ticket for public transport. The free tickets are available from a machine in the airport’s baggage collection area and allow you to use any public transport (train, tram, bus) in Geneva and surrounding areas for a period of 80 minutes. Look for the machine pictured below after collecting your luggage and before walking out through the customs area.



1. When checking-in at your hotel, you can request a free [Geneva Transport Card](http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/index.php?rubrique=0000000417&lang=_eng), enabling you to use the entire Geneva public transport system free of charge throughout your stay.
2. The Geneva Airport is approximately 4 kilometres from the city centre. The train is the most efficient way to get into the city. Follow the signs to the airport railway station from the arrivals area. All trains leaving from the airport stop at the central Geneva-Cornavin station. The journey takes six minutes. The buses 5 and 28 will bring you from the airport to the Place des Nations.
3. Taxis are readily available from the airport. They are metered, so costs will vary, the journey from the airport into the city centre will usually cost around CHF 30.
4. Tourist and public transport information is available at the [Unireso](http://www.unireso.com/) information desk in the airport arrival hall after you go through customs. More information on Geneva’s free public transport initiative is available from:

* Public transport from Geneva Airport: <http://www.gva.ch/en/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-67/>
* Free Geneva Transport Card: <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/index.php?rubrique=0000000417>

# WEATHER

1. The weather in Geneva in July is pleasant, although it may rain. The average day temperature is 20.0 ºC. You can check the weather forecast at the local website: <http://www.meteoswiss.admin.ch/web/en/weather.html>. The conference room where the meeting will be held is air-conditioned and the temperature is maintained in the range of 20-22ºC.

# CURRENCY

1. The exchange rate of the euro and the Swiss franc is now around 1.09 francs per 1 euro and is subject to daily market fluctuations. For conversion rate, please consult http://www.ubs.com/global/en/bcqv/calculator.html. Currency exchange facilities are available in the city centre and at the UBS bank branch at Palais des Nations, located on the ground floor of C building (door C6). It is open from 08:30 to 16:30, with no lunch break, from Monday to Friday.

# INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

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## Map of the United Nations premises in Geneva

