

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality: SDGs 1 and 10
Geneva, Switzerland, 5-6 December 2019

CALL FOR PAPERS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organising the *Expert meeting on measuring poverty and inequality: SDGs 1 and 10* under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in Geneva, Switzerland on 5-6 December 2019.
2. The meeting is preceded by the Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics to measure SDG 1 in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, which UNECE will organize in Geneva on 4 December 2019, with financial support from the United Nations Development Account.
3. The present **call for papers** is prepared by the UNECE Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality. Experts are invited to contribute **papers** for the meeting according to the programme below. The agenda will be prepared taking into account the interest expressed, and the proposals offered for contributions.
4. Details on the organization of the Expert meeting will be provided in an information note issued separately by the Secretariat. Information about the Workshop will be provided closer to the meeting date.
5. The call for papers is addressed to statisticians, researchers and analysts from national statistical offices (NSOs), ministries and other government agencies that produce or use poverty statistics and who wish to present their papers.

II. PURPOSE

6. The contributions will allow countries to exchange experience and reach conclusions on the challenges in poverty measurement and approaches taken to address them. The objective is to take forward the methodological work on measuring poverty and inequality, achieve greater comparability and reliability of poverty statistics, and strengthen multilateral cooperation.

III. PROGRAMME OF THE EXPERT MEETING

7. The Steering Group proposes the following substantive topics for the 2019 Expert meeting:

Topic A:	Disaggregation of poverty indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Topic B:	Improving response rate and sampling precision in surveys
Topic C:	Supplemental poverty measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assets-based poverty and inequality b) Individual level poverty measures c) Indexes of multidimensional poverty d) Subjective poverty
Topic D:	Impact of social transfers on poverty
Topic E:	Longitudinal poverty measures
Topic F:	Use of administrative data for measuring poverty
Topic G:	Spatial patterns of poverty

Topic A: Disaggregation of poverty indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

8. The pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first is especially relevant for those living in poverty or facing the risk of poverty. Disaggregated measures are therefore much needed for producing meaningful poverty indicators that can help monitor commitments and design policies. Some vulnerable or disadvantaged groups are particularly hard to count in general population surveys – either because they are hard to reach, such as the homeless, undocumented migrants, members of ethnic minorities or older people living

in institutions, or because they are hard to identify, such as gender minorities. This session discusses how to adapt data collection to fulfil the 'no-one left behind' commitment and reach beyond the traditional survey methodologies to capture those groups, that are most exposed to the risk of poverty. Participants are invited to submit examples of current country practices on disaggregating poverty measures or on efforts made towards producing comparable disaggregated poverty measures to meet the SDG monitoring needs.

Topic B: Improving response rate and sampling precision in surveys

9. In this session, participants are invited to address two main challenges in conducting surveys for data collection on poverty – increasing the response rate and improving the sampling precision in the measurement of poverty. The session underlines the importance of reducing both sampling and non-sampling errors, e.g. using calibration methods and weighting techniques and improvement of coverage for hard-to-reach population groups.

Topic C: Supplemental poverty measures

10. Any methodology for measuring poverty relies on a number of assumptions and a multitude of decisions about how to set the poverty threshold, how to define resources and how to implement any particular methodology. While it is impossible to avoid these assumptions, countries are developing supplemental or experimental poverty measures to assess their impact and improve accuracy of measurement. This session will cover the following issues: assets-based poverty and inequality, individual level poverty measures, indexes of multidimensional poverty and subjective poverty.

a) Assets-based poverty and inequality

11. In research, the joint consideration of income and wealth has been recognized as important in measuring poverty. However, up until now, in most national poverty statistics, income from assets and rentals (interest, dividends, rental income etc.) are considered but not the assets themselves. The official measurement of poverty is therefore usually limited to the measurement of income poverty. This is primarily because statistical offices lack the required data but also because suitable international concepts for integrating assets into the measurement of poverty are still under development. Proposals for papers on the conceptual and methodological approaches that integrate both income and wealth in the poverty measurement are welcome.

b) Individual level poverty measures

12. Typically, surveys are conducted at household level and provide little information on the intra-household distribution of resources. The standard assumption in empirical

analyses on poverty and deprivation is that all household members share equal living conditions. Increasingly researchers and statisticians are challenging this assumption.

c) Indexes of multidimensional poverty

13. 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. This session will focus on countries experiences in addressing indicator and data requirements to develop measures on multidimensional poverty and on ways to improve comparability when constructing MPI.

d) Subjective poverty

14. Countries integrate subjective measures in their surveys in various ways to help identify the most vulnerable categories. The questions evaluate the perception of the respondent on his/her (or the household as a whole) ability to meet various needs or ask about the individual self-assessment of his/her income level. The obtained estimates vary significantly due to different methods and cultural perceptions of well-being and poverty. The measures are also influenced by the age, gender, and the region of the respondent. Subjective estimates could complement both monetary and non-monetary poverty measures and help create adequate policies in addressing the poverty phenomenon.

Topic D: Impact of social transfers on poverty

15. Since statisticians do not impute all types of social transfers in kind existing in a country, their impact on poverty rates is usually found insignificant. Continued efforts for their estimation (e.g. on access to services such as health, education, child and long-term care, lifelong learning, etc.), however, could provide valuable insights for the development and assessment of social policies to fight poverty and inequality.

16. The session will discuss imputation challenges (e.g. measuring intra-household transfers) and methodologies for incorporating these resources into the poverty measure. Countries are invited to present their national experience in producing estimates on social transfers in kind, including on experimental basis, and accounting for them in the poverty measurement.

Topic E: Longitudinal poverty measures

17. Poverty is a phenomenon which is known for its tendency to persist and recur throughout a lifetime. Being poor or having a low income for one year is not the same as having it for several years, which is considered by researchers already a major problem.

Moreover, a child born to parents living in poverty faces a higher risk of poverty because poverty can spread through generations. It is therefore important to explore the longitudinal perspective of poverty, including its duration and frequency. This session will invite participants to discuss how to better evaluate the “depth” of poverty, i.e. identify the characteristics of the persistently poor and the circumstances (e.g. unemployment, retirement, single parenthood, etc.) associated with entry into and exit from poverty.

Topic F: Use of administrative data for measuring poverty

18. In most countries, household income microdata primarily come from household surveys developed specifically for that purpose. However, in a number of countries (for example, the Nordic countries), registers are the main source of information on the distribution of household income.

19. Both types of source have their own strengths and limitations. Where possible, it is recommended that producers of poverty statistics using income as a welfare measure adopt hybrid approaches, taking information on some components of income from administrative sources (such as tax records or benefits data), and matching this with survey data containing information not available from registers. Participants are welcome to share their experience with the use of administrative data for poverty measurement.

Topic G: Spatial patterns of poverty

20. Significant geographic variation in the rates of poverty may be due to differences in resource endowments, education, health services, and other factors. Regional price differences, for example, can cause the same bundle of goods to be more expensive in one region than in another. Furthermore, research has found that spatial patterns of income and consumption poverty persist over time, even when overall poverty rates decline. Consequently, data sets that provide information for the incidence and magnitude of poverty across space have gained an increasing attention and could provide complementary information for policy. Papers are welcome on measuring poverty or inequality within sub-national policy contexts.

IV. INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

21. Papers can be submitted in English or Russian. Authors of papers submitted in Russian are encouraged to provide a short abstract in English (maximum one page). Papers and slides provided in Russian will be translated to English to the extent possible if they were delivered by the deadlines listed below. A limited number of papers will be translated from English to Russian.

22. Papers will be made available at the [meeting page](#)¹.

23. Please take note of the following deadlines:

1 July 2019

Indicate **intention** to contribute a paper and/or presentation. Please use the [online form](#)² to submit your short **abstract**.

15 October 2019

Submission of full final versions of **papers**. It is recommended not to exceed 15 pages, including charts, annexes and references. The papers should be submitted in Word format to the UNECE Secretariat, Ms Vania Etropolska (vania.etropolska@un.org).

15 October 2019

(participants funded by UNECE by **20 August**)

Meeting registration on the [meeting page](#).

15 November 2019

Submission of **PowerPoint presentations** to the UNECE Secretariat, Ms Vania Etropolska (vania.etropolska@un.org)

24. Contributors are reminded that the success of the meeting depends upon the ability to translate materials in advance and the opportunity for participants to read the papers before the meeting. Therefore, it is important to strictly adhere to the deadlines above.

V. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

UNECE Secretariat

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¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51514>

² <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/poverty/2019+Expert+meeting>