Global concerns about inequalities are growing, and for good reason. High and growing inequalities are increasingly understood to undermine prospects for sustainable development through a multitude of channels. Inequality isn’t new; what is new is the attention it’s getting, particularly in terms of exploring possibilities for moving from rhetoric to policy responses.

However, global narratives on inequalities and how best to address them have not yet fully connected with the transition and developing economies of Europe and Central Asia.¹ This is partly because of the region’s post-socialist heritage, which left relatively equal (compared to other developing countries) distributions of income, relatively broad access to social services, and relatively small gender disparities. Unfortunately, there are worrying signs that these advantages are being lost—and that problems of inequality and vulnerability are growing and converging with those of other regions.

In order to address these gaps, UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS initiated the regional Dialogue on Inequalities in January 2015, in the form of a regional forum held in Istanbul. Together with civil society partners and leading specialists on the region, UNDP at this meeting identified key analytical and programming areas in which more effective responses to the region’s inequality challenges could be crafted. These focused in particular on issues of:

- Better measurement of income and non-income inequalities;
- Labour market exclusion, employment, and social protection;
- Gender inequalities;
- Inequalities and health;
- Inequalities, governance, and peacebuilding; and
- Inequalities, natural capital, and resource management.

Since the January 2015 meeting, work to address these issues has proceeded in a number of directions. These have included:

- Follow-up participation in a number of regional meetings on inequalities, including a dedicated session at the European Foundation Centre Annual General Meeting in Milan in June, and the Southeast European Inequalities Workshop (co-sponsored with the Economics Institute of Zagreb) held in Zagreb in September;

¹ Reference is to the programme countries/territories whose development aspirations are supported by UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS. These are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (as per UNSCR 1244 (1999)), Kyrgyzstan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
• A number of analytical products (including on migration in Central Asia) and blog postings on inequalities in the region;

• Analyses of the inequality-related dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are the lynchpin of the post-2015 global development agenda; and

• The drafting of a regional human development report on inequalities.

In order to assess and build on the progress made to date, a second Dialogue on Inequalities regional forum on inequalities—rebranded as the Istanbul Development Dialogues (2016): “#TalkInequality”—will be held on 9-10 February, 2016. This meeting (a draft programme for which is appended to this document as Annex 1) will include:

• **Keynote addresses from leading experts on inequalities and the post-2015 development agenda**, both in this region and globally;

• **Presentations on/information exchange regarding recent development in research and analysis on inequalities** and programming to address them in the region, by UNDP and partners;

• **A stakeholder consultation on the regional human development report on inequalities**, with participation of experts, representative of international development organizations, civil society, and other important partners; and

• **A side meeting of the regional Poverty Measurement Task Force**, led by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (please see Annex 2).
Annex 1—*Istanbul Development Dialogues (2016): #TalkInequality*

**Location:** The [Istanbul Marriott Hotel Sisli](http://www.istanbulmarriottsisli.com), Abide-i Hurriyet Caddesi No.34381 Sisli—Istanbul, www.istanbulmarriottsisli.com; info.marriottsisli@marriott.com; phone: +90 212 375-0100

**Tuesday, 9 February:**

8.30 – 9.00: Registration

9.00 – 9.15: Welcoming remarks: Ms. Cihan Sultanoğlu, Director, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS

9.15 – 11.00: Introductory session—“Setting the stage”

- Moderator: Mr. Rastislav Vrbensky
- Keynote address: Ms. Rania Antonopoulos, Alternate Minister of Labour, Greece, “Employment, Social Inclusion, and Austerity”
  - Questions, answers, discussion
- Short presentations and panel discussion (Davos style):
  - Dr. Nick Galasso, Oxfam America, “What Do the Richest 1% Have that the Rest of Us Do Not?”
  - Dr. İpek İlkkaracan, Istanbul Technical University, “Caring Labour as a Systemic Source of Inequalities and Purple Economy as a Solution”
  - Dr. Richard Filcak, Slovak Academy of Sciences, “Roma Exclusion and Environmental Justice”
  - Questions, answers, discussion

11.00 – 11.15: Coffee break

11.15 – 11.30: UNDP’s Regional Human Development Report on Inequalities—An Overview: Mr. Ben Slay, senior advisor, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS

11.30 – 13.00: Labour markets, gender inequalities, and social protection

- Moderator: Ms. Louisa Vinton, UN Resident Coordinator, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Presentations
- Commentary and discussion

13.00 – 14.00: Lunch

14.00 – 15.30: Inequalities, natural capital, indicators, and measurement

- Moderator: Ms. Dafina Gercheva, UN Resident Coordinator, Moldova
- Presentations
- Commentary and discussion

15.30 – 16.30 Inequalities and health

- Moderator: Mr. Alexander Avanessov, UN Resident Coordinator, Kyrgyz Republic
- Presentations
- Commentary and discussion
16.30 – 16.45: Coffee break

16.45 – 17.45: Inequalities and inclusive governance

- Moderator: Mr. Stefan Priesner, UN Resident Coordinator, Uzbekistan
- Presentations
- Commentary and discussion

17.45 – 18.00: Day 1 conclusions

- Moderator: Mr. Rastislav Vrbensky
- Speaker: Mr. Ben Slay

19.00: Reception

Wednesday, 10 February

9.00 – 10.00: Open Forum—Partners’ presentations

- Moderator: Ben Slay
- Presenters: TBD

10.00 – 11.30: Inequality corners (I)

11.30 – 11.45: Coffee break

11.45 – 13.15: Inequality corners (II)

13.15 – 14.00: Lunch

14.00 – 15.00: Report back from corners

- Moderator: Ben Slay
- Presenters: TBD
- Commentary and discussion

15.00 – 15.15: Coffee break

15.15 – 17.00: Programmatic follow up

- Moderator: Mr. Ben Slay
- National programming and country case studies
- Commentary and discussion

17.00: Concluding remarks: Mr. Ben Slay
Annex 2—Second meeting of the Regional Task Force on Poverty Measurement  
(Istanbul, 11-12 February 2016)

CONCEPT NOTE

Time and venue

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is organizing jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the second meeting of the Task Force on Poverty Measurement in Istanbul, Turkey under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The meeting will be held back-to-back to the UNDP’s “Dialogue on Inequalities for countries in Europe and the CIS”. The meeting will take place in Istanbul Marriott Hotel Şişli, on 11 February 2016 from 10 am to 6 pm, with a lunch break from 1 to 3 pm; and 12 February 2016 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Background

2. The ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda have further strengthened the importance of measuring multidimensional phenomena of poverty, inequality and vulnerability. The United Nations General Assembly’s Open Working Group proposed ‘End poverty in all its forms everywhere’ as the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). As with the other goals, it needs to be monitored with indicators that matter nationally and are comparable internationally. It is expected that regional reporting mechanisms will also play a significant role in facilitating the reporting at regional level, taking into account regional priorities and ensuring a link between the national and the global level.

3. In January 2014, the Bureau of the CES established the Task Force on Poverty Measurement, following up on the conclusions of the UNECE Seminar “The way forward in poverty measurement” held in Geneva in December 2013. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidelines and provide recommendations for improving the international comparability and availability of statistics on poverty and the related metadata. The Central Statistical Office of Poland leads the Task Force. Altogether, nine countries and four international organizations participate.

4. During the first meeting of the Task Force on Poverty Measurement held on 7-8 May 2015 in Geneva, the Task Force discussed challenges concerning poverty measurement. Major concerns included the definition of poverty, metadata, regional and international comparability, excluded groups of populations, and the entanglement between technical definitions and the political factor, among other concerns.

5. The Task Force agreed that the members will produce draft guidelines, currently named “Guide on Poverty Measurement”, organised into three substantive chapters by poverty type, namely: monetary poverty, subjective poverty, and multidimensional poverty, with a following recommendations chapter that draws from the recommendations made in individual chapters.

6. The Task Force produced an agreed upon outline for the Guide along with the assignment of tasks and chapter responsibilities to Task Force members. Key dates were agreed upon as well; primary among them was the production of extended chapter outlines by 8 June 2015 and the production of 1st drafts of chapter components by 16 November 2015.

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2 These include the national statistical offices of Georgia, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, as well as Eurostat, the OECD, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute, UNDP, and the World Bank.
7. All the Task Force documents are loaded on a wiki platform maintained by UNECE. The Task Force members are invited to use the wiki platform for loading their contributions and providing comments.

8. The second Task Force meeting will be held back-to-back to the UNDP’s Regional Dialogue on Inequalities. The UNDP event will feature presentations of recent regional research on inequalities and discussions of concrete policy and programming responses. Discussions, among other things, will include the role of social protection, anticorruption, health, natural capital, gender, green economy and growth of middle class in combating various forms of inequality. Members of the Poverty Task Force Group may benefit the discourse on interdependency of poverty and inequality by attending both events.

PURPOSE AND MEETING OUTLINE

9. The main purpose of this meeting is to take stock of the progress made by the Task Force in the construction of the Guide. The Task Force will be presented with the feedback from the electronic consultation on the drafts chapters 1 to 4 that will take place between 16 November 2015 and 15 December 2015. The Task Force will review any remaining gaps and inconsistencies, based on the consultation results. The discussion will take place in the order of the chapters, as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction (led by Poland, UNDP, UNECE)
- Chapter 2: Monetary poverty (led by UK)
- Chapter 3: Subjective poverty (led by Poland)
- Chapter 4 Multidimensional poverty (led by OPHI).
- Conclusions and Recommendations

10. The meeting will then decide the next steps (leaders and content) in drafting the remaining two chapters, as follows:

- Chapter 5: Recommendations for improving comparability, including on presentation
- Chapter 6: Challenges for the future

11. Finally, the meeting will close with a discussion of future work and steps towards the organization and finalization of the Guide by 31 May 2016.

DOCUMENTATION AND LANGUAGES

12. All necessary documents for the Task Force will be made available on the wiki. Task Force members should be familiar with the 1st draft components along with any other additional documents relevant to the meeting. The Task Force meeting and all documents will be in English.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

13. The first draft chapter components should be completed by 16 November 2015 to provide time for Task Force members to review and comment on these drafts.

14. The electronic consultation between the Task Force members will take place between 16 November 2015 and 15 December 2015.
15. In preparation for the meeting, the Task Force members should be familiar with all first draft components of the Guide which should be available on the wiki by the same date.

REGISTRATION AND Logistics

16. Please, see the enclosed UNDP logistics note for further details. Contact person is Elena Danilova-Cross, Poverty and Inequality Programme Specialist of UNDP Regional Hub (elena.danilova-cross@undp.org)

INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

17. All queries concerning the Meeting should be addressed to the Secretariat:

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