

ACC SUB-COMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

SA/1994/4

Twenty-eighth session

20 May 1994

Rome, 8-10 June 1994

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

REPORT ON TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR TASK FORCE ON MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY

Report Prepared by The World Bank

ACC SUB-COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS
TASK FORCE ON MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY

The ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics will recall the establishment of the above Task Forces at its twenty-seventh session and requested the World Bank to convene a Task Force to look into the statistical issues associated with the measurement of poverty. Preliminary draft terms of reference were prepared for consideration by a small group of agencies.

The World Bank after consultation with several agencies identified the following sets of issues which could constitute the main areas of work:

- (a) To prepare a situation or review paper, describing the activities of the various organizations involved in poverty measurement and the approaches they are adopting to do so. The review would be expected to look at both methods of collection and sources of data (household and community surveys, sentinel site surveillance, other forms of qualitative and quantitative assessment techniques), and at techniques for preparing poverty indicators from these data (poverty lines and their determination, poverty indicators and others);
- (b) To pull together different definitions of poverty, oriented towards the type of measurement being used (lack of monetary or non-monetary income, lack of assets, lack of access to so-called basic goods and services, lack of means to develop human capital - education, health and others);
- (c) To compare the different approaches to measurement of poverty, highlighting the relative strengths and weaknesses of each, with a view to proposing how different methods may be used to complement one another.

These suggestions were submitted to the Special Session of the Statistical Commission which broadly endorsed the mandate of the Task Force and requested it to:

- (i) Undertake a review of current practices in this field with a view to determining the principal approaches, concepts, sources of data and use of poverty indicators, and the degree of data comparability;

- (ii) Identify international agencies engaged in work on development of poverty data and consider how their compilation practices, analytical methodologies and dissemination might be better coordinated;
- (iii) Report its findings and recommendations to the Commission at its next session along with proposals for a further program of work to assist countries in this field.

The Bank in its role as the convener has prepared the attached questionnaire, which is being sent to all members of the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities. On the basis of responses to the questionnaire a meeting of the Task Force will be convened later in the year. Membership of the Task Force will be extended to all agencies that are engaged in the preparation of analysis of poverty, methodologies for its measurement and are assisting member countries in the collection of poverty-related data.

Further progress will be reported to the Sub-Committee at its next session.

**UN Statistical Commission
Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty**

The UN Statistical Commission has established a Task Force to look at the possibility of developing certain international standards for measuring and reporting on poverty. As a first step, the Task Force is undertaking a review of current practices in the measurement of poverty with a view to determining the principal approaches being used or promoted by the international agencies. We would be grateful if you would complete this questionnaire which will be the basis on which the review is compiled and return it with any supporting literature which your agency produces which describes the approaches used to measure and report on poverty by July 31st to:

*Ramesh Chander
Statistical Advisor
World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington DC 20433
USA*

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Designation: _____

Division/Unit: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

1. Would your agency be interested in participating in the poverty Task Force?
Yes _____ No _____

2. Is this organization in any way involved in the measurement or reporting on poverty and/or welfare?
Yes _____ No _____ (You need not continue with the questionnaire, but please return it to us, as is)

3. Which divisions/units are involved in the measurement or reporting on poverty?

Division/Unit	Activities related to poverty measurement and reporting

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS:

4. What publications/reports does the agency produce on poverty and its prevalence (please send copies of the most recent outputs)

Name	Frequency of reporting	Date of most recent publication	Description

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS:

5. Does the agency use a social indicators (education,, health, shelter etc.) approach to the measurement of poverty?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what indicators are used?

Indicator	How derived?	Sources	Poor/non-poor cut-off	Comments

6. Does the agency use an income/consumption based measure of poverty?

Yes _____ No _____ (go to question 13)

7. What is the recommended measure on which the indicator is to be based?

- Total household income _____
 - Total household expenditure _____
 - Per capita household income _____
 - Per capita household expenditure _____
 - Total household income per adult equivalent _____
 - Total household expenditure per adult equivalent _____
 - Other (specify) _____
-

8. What are the recommendations for defining a poverty line (please describe whether a relative or absolute concept of poverty is recommended and indicate what is meant by "absolute" and "relative")?

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9. Are different poverty lines used for different groups (regions/countries/hard core poor, etc.)?
Yes _____ No _____ (go to question 12)
10. If yes, is any attempt made to assure that the poverty lines have similar real values:
Yes _____ No _____ (go to question 12)
11. If yes, how is this done?
12. What index is recommended for measuring the degree of poverty (e.g. head count, poverty gap etc.)

DATA COLLECTION

13. Does the agency collect data through its own surveys.

Yes _____ No _____ (go to question 15)

14. If yes, please provide the following details:

- Name of survey _____
- Year of most recent survey _____
- To whom was the survey sent _____
- Number of countries covered _____
- Response rate (number of countries responding) _____
- How are the results published? (Name of publications) _____
- Is access to the data open to outsiders? _____
 - what is the form of access to data: _____
 - Commissioned tabulations _____
 - computer tapes/disks _____

15. Main problems with quality and usefulness of the data :

16. Does the agency assist country efforts to monitor poverty through their own surveys?

Yes _____ No _____

