

**The Role of Household Surveys  
in Support of the Sustainable Development Agenda**

**Side Event at the 4<sup>th</sup> IAEG-SDG Meeting,  
Geneva, 17 November 2016**

Household surveys are a key component of every national statistical system. They are a source of information for the compilation of national accounts and multiple socio-economic statistics and indicators crucial for supporting evidence-based policy-making and investment decisions. Household surveys are the main, and at times unique, source of data for measuring many of the Sustainable Development Goals indicators. Much progress has been achieved over the past decades by most countries. National and international survey programs have generated large volumes of data, and contributed to improving data availability as well as methods, practices and statistical capacity. But the situation remains highly unsatisfactory. Major data gaps remain, especially in low-income countries and fragile states. Surveys are still often conducted in an ad-hoc, haphazard manner based on uncertain and inadequate funding. Relevance and timeliness of the data are far from optimal. International standards and good practice, when available, are not systematically adopted, resulting in comparability and reliability issues. Standards and properly tested methods remain to be established and widely adopted. Innovative solutions are needed to make surveys more cost-effective, and to increase the value of their data by better integrating them with data from other sources and other types. Too many datasets remain inaccessible to a range of users, and therefore remain under-exploited. And the technical and financial capacity to implement coherent and quality national survey programs is insufficient or not sustainable. Solving these issues must be part of our data revolution. Achieving this goal will require coordinated action at the national, regional and global levels.

After a 30-year hiatus, the global statistical community has rallied to bring household surveys back to the attention of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), which in its 46<sup>th</sup> session endorsed the establishment of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS) in order to foster the coordination and harmonization of household survey activities. The ISWGHS's main goals are to support the work of the UNSC in endorsing global standards for household surveys by developing best practices and strengthening countries'

capacity in the design and implementation of household survey programs. The work and coordinating role of the ISWGHS are being augmented by a number of on-going initiatives by key development partners who are increasingly coming together to support this global effort and ensure improved coordination under the aegis of the ISWGHS. In particular, three long-lasting household survey initiatives, namely the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) have contributed over the past decades to support low and middle income countries in producing much needed microdata to monitor national and international targets and inform policy-making and investment decisions. As the SDG agenda takes off and demand for household survey data increases, there is a need to assess how some of the development partners supporting international household survey initiatives are gearing up to better support countries, both technically and financially, in their concerted effort to monitor progress towards achieving the SDGs.

In order to raise awareness about the ISWGHS and its role in contributing to the SDG agenda while also sharing information on on-going efforts by international household survey initiatives in support of the program of countries' household survey systems and the work of the ISWGHS, an event is being organized on the side of the upcoming meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> IAEG-SDG in Geneva. The side event is also meant to give an opportunity to countries and IAEG-SDG representatives to voice their concerns, if any, express their support and make suggestions on the plans by development partners to support household surveys as a key source of SDG data. The event will be held on Thursday, 17 November 2016 from 13:00-14:30.

13:00-13:05	Background, Motivation and Objectives of the Side Event	Francesca Perucci, UNSD
13:05-13:15	The ISWGHS: a Plan for Coordinated Action	Rafael Diez de Medina, ILO
13:15-13:35	The LSMS and the WB Household Survey Program	Talip Kilic and Umar Serajuddin, World Bank
13:35-13:55	The MICS Program	Attila Hancioglu, UNICEF
13:55-14:30	Q&A	All participants