

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

Prepared by the Task Force

The Bureau set up a Task Force on statistics on children, adolescents and youth in February 2020 and reviewed its work plan in October 2020. The Task Force is providing an overview of existing definitions, standards and methods, and recommendations for statistical offices and for future international work.
The Bureau is invited to review the progress report and provide recommendations for the final part of the work.

I. BACKGROUND

1. At the June 2019 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), UNICEF called for CES to address information gaps for children, adolescents, and youth (ECE/CES/97). In October 2019, the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia presented its statistical activities to the CES Bureau. In follow-up, the Bureau established the Task Force on Statistics on Children, Adolescents, and Youth in February 2020 (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/FEB/8/Add.1) and approved its work plan in October 2020 (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/OCT/12).
2. The objectives of the Task Force are to prepare guidance to improve the availability, quality, and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents, and youth, and to develop recommendations for more consistent and harmonized definitions, methodologies, and approaches across the countries participating in the work of CES.
3. The Bureau endorsed three focus areas proposed for the Task Force, which were identified as priorities due to their policy relevance, the associated demand for quality data, and the existing methodological gaps:
 - a. Violence against children, adolescents, and youth;
 - b. Children and adolescents in institutional care;
 - c. Children, adolescents and youth with a disability.
4. The work plan includes the following activities and outputs:

- a. Compile an inventory of existing international and national data sources for statistics on children and youth, considering surveys, administrative, and other types of data sources;
- b. Review definitions, standards, and methods used in statistics on children and youth, and evaluate comparability of child-related statistics;
- c. Document practical and ethical challenges faced by NSOs and other data producers in data collection and reporting on children;
- d. In each focus area, identify data gaps that could be addressed using existing sources through improved international harmonization;
- e. Collect and present good national practices in producing, disseminating, and communicating statistics in each focus area, including examples of links with wellbeing outcomes such as poverty and education;
- f. Develop recommendations to statistical offices for addressing data gaps and for harmonizing the definitions, methodologies, and approaches used across countries and international organizations around statistics on children and youth;
- g. Publish a guidance that summarizes findings and provides recommendations.

5. The Task Force includes members from 6 countries (Canada, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America) and 3 international organisations (Eurostat, OECD and UNICEF).

6. Dafna Kohen from Statistics Canada is the Chair of the Task Force.

II. PROGRESS OF WORK

A. Inventory of international data sources on children, adolescents and youth

7. To begin its work, the Task Force collected information from the international organizations represented about ongoing and recent initiatives and existing data sources, definitions, methods, and standards related to statistics on children. This information was compiled in the Task Force's online workspace on the UNECE web site and informed the development of the Task Force's workplan and the questionnaire distributed to NSOs.

B. Inventory of national data sources on children, adolescents and youth: country questionnaire

8. To compile an inventory of national data sources across countries, the Task Force developed a questionnaire about data and statistics on children, adolescents, and youth focusing on the three focus areas (violence against children, institutional care, children with a disability) that was distributed to countries participating in the work of CES. The questionnaire addressed data sources, definitions, standards, indicators and publications for children and youth generally and across the three focus areas. Responses were received for 41 countries which were compiled into a repository for the Task Force's use.

C. Establishment of focus area teams

9. To compile and analyse the information provided by international organizations and NSOs and to draft the corresponding chapters of the guidance, the Task Force created four teams: one for each of the three focus areas and one for general issues related to statistics on children, adolescents and youth. Team leaders were appointed to organize the contributions from team members according to a generally agreed structure.

D. Review of definitions, standards and methods; documentation of practical and ethical challenges; identification of data gaps; identification of good practices

10. The focus area teams have been analysing the questionnaire information received for their respective areas, reviewing available data sources across countries, assessing comparability of definitions, standards and methods used, documenting practical and ethical challenges reported by NSOs, identifying data gaps, and identifying good practices. All four teams have produced well-developed chapter drafts that summarize the information received and describe their main findings. Work is on-going to revise and complement these drafts and to develop recommendations to NSOs.

11. The preliminary draft of the general issues chapter provides an overview of the international policies and protocols related to the collection and production of statistics on children and youth and the different frameworks for the measurement of children's rights and wellbeing. It justifies the focus on violence against children, children in alternative care, and children with a disability. The chapter analyzes the comparability of the statistical definitions of children and youth reported by data producers in the country questionnaire and summarizes additional information collected including the offices and agencies producing statistics on children and the types of data sources used and publications produced. The chapter also includes a discussion of the ethical considerations around collecting and producing data on children and youth.

12. The focus area chapters follow a similar structure (see guidance outline in the annex). Each chapter provides a summary of the types of data sources used across countries to produce statistics on the topic, a discussion of the concepts that require statistical definitions, and identification of the key indicators in the area. Each chapter also includes an assessment of data availability, comparability, and quality—highlighting good national practices—and describes the challenges reported by NSOs in producing data on these topics. The completed chapters will provide recommendations to NSOs for addressing these data gaps and challenges.

E. Regular online meetings from June 2020 to present

13. The Task Force has held 13 online meetings since June 2020 to share practices in their own countries and organizations, to develop the group's work plan, develop the country questionnaire, organize and discuss the analysis and drafting work being carried out by the focus area groups, and review progress towards outputs. In addition to these Task Force meetings, the focus area teams have met regularly to advance their work.

III. PLAN FOR THE REMAINING WORK

A. Development of recommendations to NSOs

14. From October 2021 to January 2022, the Task Force will work to develop recommendations for addressing data gaps and for harmonizing the definitions, methodologies and approaches used across countries and international organizations around statistics on children and youth.

B. Publication of the guidance

15. During this period, the Task Force will also fill remaining gaps in the guidance and edit its text. The Task Force will present the complete version of the guidance to the February 2022 meeting of the CES Bureau, to request approval for consultation among countries participating in CES.

**ANNEX
OUTLINE OF GUIDANCE ON
STATISTICS ON CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH**

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Importance and policy relevance
- B. Background and work of the Task Force
- C. Overview of the Guidance

II. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE PRODUCTION OF STATISTICS ON CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

- A. Introduction
- B. Frameworks for measurement
- C. Statistical definitions of children, adolescents and youth in use across countries
- D. Overview of statistics collected by National Statistical Offices on children, adolescents and youth
- E. Discussion of issues including ethical considerations, availability, accessibility and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents and youth
- F. Recommendations

III. STATISTICS ON CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

- A. Introduction
- B. Concepts that require measurement definitions
- C. Key indicators
- D. Availability, comparability and quality of indicators
- E. Addressing data gaps and challenges
- F. Dissemination and communication of data
- G. Recommendations
- H. Summary and conclusions

IV. STATISTICS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Structure the same as previous chapter

V. STATISTICS ON CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE

Structure the same as previous chapter

VI. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. General recommendations for the production of statistics on children, adolescents and youth
- B. Recommendations for statistics on violence against children
- C. Recommendations for statistics on children in alternative care
- D. Recommendations for statistics on children with a disability
- E. Future work

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