



**INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON PROGRAM
TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP AND TASK FORCES**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The 47th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), held in March 2016, discussed the future of the International Comparison Program (ICP), in light of the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair group on the evaluation of the ICP 2011.

The UNSC instituted the ICP as a permanent element of the global statistical work program. Starting from 2017, the Program will be regularly conducted at more frequent intervals. The aspiration is to work towards implementing the ICP based on the “rolling survey approach”, consisting of a system of rolling surveys over a cycle, in order to decrease the burden on national statistical offices and allow flexibility in conducting the surveys according to the specific conditions of participating countries.

The UNSC also noted the necessity to explore synergies in the production of price statistics by seeking closer alignment between ICP and CPI survey activities, in order to further decrease the demands of the Program on national statistical offices.

In order to ensure comparability of Purchasing power Parity (PPP) estimates between ICP comparisons, the UNSC recommended that no major changes in methodology should be introduced in the ICP 2017 comparison; thus, the short-term technical research agenda will focus on methodological aspects related to building PPP time series and fine-tuning established methods and procedures to improve the quality of the estimates.

To ensure the methodological soundness and overall quality of PPP estimates, the ICP Governing Board will establish a Technical Advisory Group to guide the program’s research and methodological developments. The work of the Technical Advisory Group will be supported by Task Forces that tackle specific technical issues on the research agenda.

The purpose of this note is to describe the role, responsibilities and functioning of the ICP Technical Advisory Group and Task Forces.

II. ICP TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

The ICP Technical Advisory Group is a technical body, which:

- (i) assures methodological soundness and overall quality of the PPP estimates;
- (ii) ensures transparency of the PPP estimation process; and
- (iii) supports the establishment of a permanent and more frequent ICP.

The Technical Advisory Group, in collaboration with the ICP Inter-Agency Coordination Group, will set forth a technical research agenda to inform future ICP comparisons, for the Governing Board’s review and approval.

The Technical Advisory Group will be formed of prominent experts in the fields of index numbers, PPPs, price statistics and national accounts, with knowledge of national statistical systems and capacity-building challenges across various regions. The membership will bring together a group of leading academics, practitioners, former Chief Statisticians, and prominent users.

Members participate in their own independent capacity and not as representatives of any specific region or institution.

III. ICP TASK FORCES

The Technical Advisory Group forms Task Forces on specific topics and invite recognized experts on the practical application of index numbers, PPPs, price statistics and national accounts to take part in them, as needed, to develop concrete proposals to address the various research agenda items, for the Technical Advisory Group's consideration.

Given that the short-term technical research agenda will focus on methodological aspects related to building PPP time series and improving the quality of the estimates, examples of Task Forces include:

- (i) Task force on moving to a rolling survey approach and producing PPP time series
- (ii) Task force on ensuring PPP reliability and quality
- (iii) Task force on exploring ICP/CPI synergies

The duration of each Task Force will vary depending on the technical area assigned to the Task Force. As the technical research agenda evolves, additional Task Forces can be formed to look into other PPP research areas and methodological improvements.

As encouraged by the UNSC, the ICP Inter-Agency Coordination Group and Technical Advisory Group will also work closely with the standing international working groups on price statistics and national accounts, both to widen the consultation on methodological development and to involve as many countries as possible in the process.