



**INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON PROGRAM (ICP)
2021 CYCLE**

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

MARCH 14, 2022

MEETING MINUTES

The second meeting of the International Comparison Program (ICP) Governing Board for the 2021 cycle took place virtually on March 14, 2022. The main objectives of the meeting were to review the status of the 2021 cycle at the global and regional levels and the feedback received from countries to the ICP report at the 53rd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) on March 2, 2022. In attendance were the Board members and observers, and Board secretariat staff, as listed in Annex 2. The agenda and presentations accompanying the meeting are available [here](#).

Welcome address, opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

The Chair, Mr. Risenga Maluleke, Statistician-General, Statistics South Africa, opened the meeting. He welcomed new members to the Board: Mr. Zhandos Shaimardanov, Head of the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Mr. Leota Aliielua Salani, Acting Government Statistician, Samoa Bureau of Statistics; Dr Albert Park, Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank; and Mr. Haidar Fraihat, Cluster Leader of the Statistics, Information Society and Technology Cluster, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The proposed [agenda](#) was presented to the Board for adoption.

The Governing Board adopted the proposed meeting agenda.

Global progress report and feedback from the 53rd UNSC Session

Ms. Nada Hamadeh, ICP Program Manager, World Bank, noted that the [ICP report](#) presented for discussion at the [53rd UNSC session](#) received both oral and written statements from countries and regional bodies in support of participation in the program, with many noting the usefulness of the advocacy publication "[Purchasing power parities for policy making: a visual guide to using data from the International Comparison Program](#)" and their intentions to circulate it widely amongst their colleagues and national policy makers. The Commission urged countries to complete 2021 cycle activities in a timely manner and reiterated the need to incorporate the ICP into regular statistical work.

Ms. Hamadeh presented the [global progress report](#) for the ICP 2021 cycle, covering deliverables, governance, surveys, timetable, participation, research agenda, uses of purchasing power parities (PPPs)

and ICP data, advocacy and outreach, and funding, noting risks and mitigation actions as appropriate. She also thanked the Board's Co-Chairs for their support to the implementing agencies with advocacy to encourage country participation over the last year.

She emphasized that much progress has been made with many countries having completed surveys in 2021, despite the restrictions and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some countries and regions faced pandemic-related disruptions causing delays in both the start and completion of the surveys and, as a result, data collection has been extended into 2022 upon the recommendation of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Inter-Agency Coordination Group (IACG). If delays in data collection persist, the scheduled release of the ICP 2021 global results by the end of 2023 is at risk. Furthermore, the current crisis in Europe and Central Asia poses a risk for the participation of the Russian Federation in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) comparison, for the participation of Ukraine in the Eurostat programme, and for the linking of the CIS region through the Russian Federation and the OECD programme to the global results. A technical solution is being sought to this latter point, should a need arise. The TAG will be consulted on how to address these issues, as needed.

Ms. Hamadeh noted the current budget deficit, which may increase if some secured funding is jeopardized due to ongoing crises. Any deficit will impact the successful completion of the cycle, including the adequate quality assessment of results, which is crucial to validate the price and expenditure data collected and compiled during the pandemic period.

The Governing Board:

- ***noted the good progress made with the 2021 cycle despite pandemic disruptions, the delay in price collection in some countries and regions until 2022, and the new participation risks arising from the crisis in Europe and Central Asia.***
- ***asked the Global Office and the regional implementing agencies to work with the TAG on mitigation plans to address the participation risks and revert to the Board with a proposal.***
- ***requested that fundraising efforts be accelerated to (i) reduce budget deficits that may impact quality assurance efforts in the current cycle, and (ii) ensure sufficient funding for the next round.***
- ***noted that in-kind resources from ICP stakeholders can support the work to assess the use of alternative data sources and the COVID-19 impact on ICP results.***
- ***noted the usefulness of the PPPs for Policy Making publication in presenting the wide range of PPP uses.***

Regional progress reports

Eurostat-OECD PPP Programme

Mr. Paul Schreyer, Director and Chief Statistician, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Mr. Paul Konijn Head, Price statistics, Purchasing Power Parities, and Housing Statistics, Eurostat [reported on the Eurostat-OECD PPP Programme](#), with both noting a suspension of interactions with the Russian Federation and Belarus. This will impact the OECD's ability to accept and incorporate ICP data from the Russian Federation, and to facilitate the linking of the CIS countries to the OECD programme through the Russian Federation. Furthermore, there are risks to Ukraine's participation in the Eurostat programme. However, Eurostat remains in contact with Ukraine's national statistical office

staff and is supporting them where possible. Mr. Konijn noted that COVID-19 impacted both the level and structure of household consumption expenditures recorded for 2020. He also announced that an update of the 2012 Eurostat-OECD Methodological Manual on PPPs is scheduled to be published at the end of 2022.

Commonwealth of Independent States

Mr. Andrey Kosarev, Deputy Chairman, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), made a presentation on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the [CIS region](#). Uzbekistan has joined the comparison after experimental participation in ICP 2017, and while the participation of Turkmenistan is not officially confirmed, CIS-STAT provides operational materials and invites national statistical office staff to regional meetings. The turnover of ICP staff has impacted knowledge in some countries and CIS-STAT provides extra support in these circumstances. Mr. Kosarev also thanked the World Bank for funding assistance and noted that further funding is needed for consultancy services in methodological areas and communication and dissemination activities. He noted that the two guides on [Subnational PPPs](#) and the [integration of CPI and ICP activities](#) have been translated into Russian and promoted through a professional statistical journal. Furthermore, revised 2017 ICP results for the region were released in June 2021.

Africa

Mr. Louis Kouakou, Acting Director, Statistics Department, African Development Bank (AfDB) announced that the AfDB had secured funding for the ICP 2021 cycle and that surveys will commence in the next few weeks. Mr. Gregoire Mboya De Loubassou, Senior Statistician, AfDB, made a presentation on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the [Africa region](#). Funding for the 2021 cycle to eligible countries is disbursed via the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) acting as the executing agency. AfDB is supporting COMESA to overcome some procedural delays and anticipates that funds will be disbursed by end-March 2022, with data collection commencing in April 2022. Non-eligible countries have also committed to collecting household consumption data at the same time.

Asia and Pacific

Mr. Kaushal Joshi, Principal Statistician, Statistics and Data Innovation, Asian Development Bank (ADB), made a presentation on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the [Asia region](#). He noted that, while most countries completed their price surveys in 2021, three countries started surveys in 2022. He thanked the Governing Board Co-Chairs and the World Bank for their support in ensuring participation in the region. He also noted that reviewing and validating the inter-economy data in a timely and thorough manner will be challenging given the varying survey periods; however, many regional and bilateral workshops has been conducted to date. Furthermore, ADB is encouraging countries to undertake subnational PPP exercises and to integrate CPI and ICP processes.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Mr. Ronaldo Ocampo, Director, Statistics Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), made a presentation on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the [Latin America and Caribbean region](#), and thanked Ms. Philomen Harrison and CARICOM staff for their support and collaboration. He noted that Guyana had joined the comparison and efforts are ongoing to ensure the

full participation of Caribbean economies. The region has conducted a large number of workshops in both Spanish and English. In terms of risks, these include financial and human resource constraints, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on statistical process and competing priorities.

Western Asia

Mr. Haider Fraihat, Cluster Leader of the Statistics, Information Society and Technology Cluster, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), made a presentation on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the [Arab region](#). He noted the February 2022 publication of PPPs for the region covering the years 2018 to 2021 (forecast). He noted that Lebanon, Syria, and Tunisia had joined the program for the 2021 cycle. He also noted that the region has been pressing ahead with its use of big data tools and webscraping to collect price data alongside traditional field collection, and national statistical offices are seeing the benefit in terms of efficiencies and validation.

The Governing Board:

- ***noted that the different timing of surveys across regions and countries, and the impacts of ongoing crises and trade sanctions, pose challenges for comparability and extrapolation efforts. The detailed metadata collected will be crucial to analysis of the ICP results, and it is paramount that any limitations of the data are communicated transparently to users.***
- ***noted that efforts should be made to advocate the benefits of participating in the ICP and the many uses of its data to countries.***
- ***requested the Board secretariat to keep it updated throughout the year as to current and arising risks and mitigation actions.***

Next meeting and any other business

Mr. Maluleke announced that the next ICP Governing Board meeting is anticipated to be held around the UNSC's 54th session in March 2023 in New York.

He thanked ICP teams in national, regional, and global implementing agencies for their hard work. He closed the meeting by thanking the Board members and observers for their participation and contributions.

Annex 1: Meeting Agenda



International Comparison Program (ICP) Meeting of the Governing Board

Virtual Meeting
March 14, 2022
Agenda

Chair: Mr. Risenga Maluleke, Statistician-General, Statistics South Africa

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| 09:00 – 09:15 am | Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda |
| 09:15 – 10:15 am | Global progress report and feedback from the 53rd UNSC Session |
| 10:15 – 11:45 am | Regional progress reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eurostat-OECD PPP Programme (Eurostat and OECD)• Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT)• Africa (African Development Bank)• Asia and Pacific (Asian Development Bank)• Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)• Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) |
| 11:45 – 12:00 pm | Any other business and next meeting |

Annex 2: List of Participants

Country / Organization	Participant
Argentina	Marco Lavagna, Director, National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina
	Pedro Lines, Technical Director, INDEC
	Santiago Boffi, National Director of Price Statistics, INDEC
	Martín Chojo, Director of Institutional and International Relations, INDEC
Finland (Co-Chair)	Markus Sovala, Director General of Statistics Finland
Kazakhstan	Zhandos Shaimardanov, Head, Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms
	Zhasser Jarkinbayev, Acting Head of Bureau, Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms
Malaysia	Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics Malaysia
	Maslina Samsudin, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Statistics Malaysia,
	Nazaria Baharudin, Deputy Chief Statistician (Technical Development & Social), Department of Statistics Malaysia
	Norhauati Shuja, Statistician, Department of Statistics, Malaysia
	Siti Asiah Ahmad, Senior Director, Price, Income and Expenditure Statistics Division, Statistics Malaysia
	Wan Zarina Wan Mat, Department of Department of Statistics, Malaysia
	Yusrina Mohd Yusoff, Director, Statistics Malaysia
Mexico	Arturo Blancas, Director General, Economic Statistics, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI)
	Jorge Reyes, Deputy Director General of Prices Indices, INEGI
Nepal	Nebin Lal Shrestha, Director General, Central Bureau of Statistics Nepal
	Hem Raj Regmi, Deputy Director-General, Central Bureau of Statistics Nepal
	Gyanendra Bajracharya, Director, Central Bureau of Statistics Nepal
Qatar	Saleh Bin Mohamad Al Nabit, President, Planning and Statistics Authority, State of Qatar
	Asma Suwailam, Chief, Prices Section, Planning and Statistics Authority, State of Qatar
Senegal	Mamadou Ngalgou Kane, Directeur des Statistiques Economiques et de la Comptabilité Nationale, comme suppléant
South Africa (Chair)	Risenga Maluleke, Statistician General, Statistics South Africa
Suriname	Iwan Sno, Director General, Bureau of Statistics of Suriname
	Guiliano Koornaar, Manager, Economic Statistics Division of General Bureau of Statistics of Suriname

Annex 2: List of Participants Cont'd

Country / Organization	Participant
African Development Bank	Kouakou K. Louis, Acting Director, Statistics Department
	Gregoire Mboya De Loubassou, Senior Statistician, Statistics Department
Asian Development Bank	Dr. Albert Park, Chief Economist, Asian Development Bank
	Elaine Tan, Advisor, Office of the Chief Economist and Director General, and Head, Statistics and Data Innovation
	Kaushal Joshi, Principal Statistician, Statistics and Data Innovation
	Criselda H. De Dios, Associate Economics and Statistics Analyst, Statistics and Data Innovation
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	Philomen Harrison, Director, Regional Statistics
Eurostat	Paul Konijn, Head, Price statistics, Purchasing Power Parities, and Housing Statistics
International Monetary Fund	James William Tebrake, Assistant Director and Chief of the Real Sector Statistics Division
	Brian Graf, Senior Economist, Real Sector Statistics Division
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	Andrey Kosarev, Deputy Chairman
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development	Paul Schreyer, Director and Chief Statistician
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Juraj Riecan, Director, Statistics Division
	Haidar Fraihat, Cluster Leader of the Statistics, Information Society and Technology Cluster
	Majed Skaini, Statistician, Statistics Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Rolando Ocampo, Director, Statistics Division
	Claudia Andrea De Camino Ferrario, Statistician, Statistics Division
United Nations Statistics Division	Stefan Schweinfest, Director, Statistics Division
	Hermanus Smith, Chief, National Accounts Section
World Bank	Haishan Fu, Director, Development Data Group
	Nada Hamadeh, ICP Program Manager and Lead Economist, Development Data Group
	Marko Rissanen, ICP Team Lead and Senior Statistician, Development Data Group
	Edie Purdie, Consultant, Development Data Group