



INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON PROGRAM (ICP)

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

FEBRUARY 26, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

The third meeting of the International Comparison Program (ICP) Governing Board for the 2021 cycle took place on February 26, 2023, at the Millennium Hilton New York One UN Plaza, New York, United States, as a hybrid event.

The main objectives of the meeting were to review the status of the 2021 cycle at the global and regional levels. In attendance were the Board members and observers, and Board secretariat staff, as listed in Annex 2. The agenda and presentation accompanying the meeting are available [here](#).

Welcome address, opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

The Chair, Mr. Markus Sovala, Director General of Statistics Finland, opened the meeting. He invited Ms. Haishan Fu, Chief Statistician and Director of the Development Data Group, World Bank, to provide opening remarks. She noted the positive progress with the ICP 2021 cycle despite the setbacks caused by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine and looked forward to the timely publication of results.

The Chair presented the proposed [agenda](#) to the Board for adoption.

The Governing Board adopted the proposed meeting agenda.

Global progress with ICP 2021 cycle

Ms. Nada Hamadeh, Manager, Economic, Debt and Price Data Unit, World Bank, presented the [global progress report](#) for the ICP 2021 cycle, covering the 2021 cycle timeline and milestones, participation and data submission status, governance activities, risks and mitigation measures, replicability and transparency of ICP results, and uses and outreach.

The number of participating economies for the ICP 2021 cycle is expected to be similar to the ICP 2017 cycle, during which 176 economies participated. Operational activities are still ongoing in all ICP regions according to schedule, despite the delays in selected regions and economies caused mainly by the disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meeting frequency for all governance and coordination bodies is expected to increase in this final year of the cycle, with a 4th quarter of 2023 virtual meeting envisaged for the Governing Board. Results are scheduled to be released by the end of 2023, with outreach activities anticipated for the first half of 2024. The [ICP report](#) submitted for information to the United Nations Statistical Commission's 54th session invites members to ensure the timely completion of the 2021 cycle, begin preparations for the 2024 cycle, and incorporate the ICP into national statistical programs.

Ms. Hamadeh updated the Board on Sir Angus Deaton's intention to step down as Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Chair and that Mr. Paul Schreyer, Chief Statistician and Director of Statistics and Data Directorate, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and current TAG Alternate Chair, has agreed to take up the role of TAG Chair going forward. She noted that a few vacant membership positions existed on the TAG.

Mr. Schreyer updated the Board on the most recent meeting of the TAG, held in December 2022, which discussed the impact of COVID-19 and war in Ukraine on ICP, the ICP Research Agenda, and new uses of PPPs and ICP data. Regarding the impact of the pandemic on data collected by Eurostat and OECD, Mr. Schreyer noted a negligible effect on annual average prices, but a more pronounced effect on expenditure weights. Furthermore, as Russia is no longer participating in the OECD comparison, and thereby preventing the linking of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region through Russia, experiments are underway to link the CIS region directly to the global program, following the standard ICP linking methodology. The next TAG meeting is scheduled for summer 2023.

Ms. Hamadeh noted recent uses of purchasing power parities (PPPs) and ICP data, including the World Bank update of the international poverty lines to 2017 PPPs, which recognized the stability of the ICP methodology and results between the most recent ICP cycles. She also noted the use of ICP food price and expenditure data in new diet cost and affordability indicators published by the Food Prices for Nutrition project and used by United Nations agencies in monitoring food security.

She also noted a forthcoming World Bank paper exploring the use of PPPs, instead of market exchange rates through the Atlas method, in classifying economies by income level. The classification is used both for operational purposes, to determine lending terms, and for analytical purposes, to broadly group countries by level of development. A consultation on the paper is currently underway.

Ms. Hamadeh closed her presentation by suggesting that the Board consider sending a letter to National Statistical Offices (NSOs) urging them to complete the 2021 cycle in a timely manner and to begin preparations for the 2024 cycle.

The ICP Governing Board noted:

- ***the progress made with the ICP 2021 cycle, despite the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine;***
- ***the need to identify a new approach to link the CIS region into the global set of ICP results;***
- ***the need to approach the NSOs on completing the ICP 2021 cycle activities in a timely manner and to begin preparations for the ICP 2024 cycle;***
- ***the need to identify sustained funding for the program and to strengthen advocacy efforts; and***
- ***the current and anticipated uses of PPPs.***

Regional progress reports

Africa

Mr. Louis Kouakou, Acting Director, Statistics Department, African Development Bank (AfDB), briefed the Board on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the Africa region, including the status of data and metadata submissions and validation, and workshops and technical assistance provided to countries. He emphasized the need to have a sufficient lead time for each cycle to ensure countries had sufficient time to prepare and find resources. He also noted that countries needed support in leveraging consumer price index (CPI) data for ICP price collection.

Asia and Pacific

Mr. Kaushal Joshi, Principal Statistician, Statistics and Data Innovation, Asian Development Bank (ADB), briefed the Board on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the Asia region, including the status of data and metadata submissions and validation, and workshops and technical assistance provided to countries. He noted that where surveys were delayed beyond 2021 a standardized methodology for backcasting data had been adopted, while regular regional workshops continue, and bespoke technical assistance has been carried out in several economies. Mr. Joshi noted the use of the ICP Asia Pacific data management tool by economies and the development and piloting of a CAPI tool for household data collection, and initiated work on web-scraping.

Commonwealth of Independent States

Mr. Andrey Kosarev, Deputy Chairman, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), briefed the Board on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the CIS region, including the status of data and metadata submissions and validation, and workshops and technical assistance provided to countries. He noted the need for the CIS linking to the global program to be modified, and the preference of not applying productivity adjustment at regional stage. Furthermore, he said it was important to minimize the breaks for the CIS economies in the global ICP time series.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Mr. Ronaldo Ocampo, Director, Statistics Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), briefed the Board on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, including the status of data and metadata submissions and validation, and workshops and technical assistance provided to countries. He noted that some economies have faced natural disasters and complex political situations, which have had an impact on their statistical operations, and the support of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) for the program. Technical assistance has been provided to economies on the compilation of expenditures and price surveys and frequent regional workshops continue throughout the cycle.

Western Asia

Mr. Majed Skaini, Statistician, Statistics Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), briefed the Board on the implementation of the 2021 cycle in the Western Asia region, including the status of data and metadata submissions and validation, and workshops and technical assistance provided to countries. He noted that advocacy to integrate the ICP with other statistical programs had helped participation rates, while positioning the ICP as an ongoing activity helped to secure regional support. He also noted that the United Arab Emirates are producing subnational PPPs and are harmonizing data collection with subnational CPI lists for that purpose. Regional workshops and

economy-specific technical assistance continues, while the region works with AfDB on dual-participating economies and collaborates with UN-ECLAC on ICP and CPI activities.

Eurostat-OECD PPP Programme

Ms. Mariana Kotzeva, Director General, Eurostat, reported on two aspects regarding the Eurostat-OECD PPP Programme. First, an update of the Eurostat-OECD methodological manual on PPPs is currently underway and will be published in 2023. Second, Georgia and Ukraine are participating in the Programme under Eurostat's coordination. Efforts are underway to secure all required datasets for Ukraine's full participation in the ICP 2021 cycle.

The Governing Board noted:

- ***the progress made with implementing the ICP 2021 cycle in each region; and***
- ***the importance of ICP results and participation benefits the Program brings in terms of strengthening statistical capacity.***

Next meeting and any other business

Mr. Sovala suggested that the next ICP Governing Board meeting be held virtually in 4th quarter of 2023. He closed the meeting by thanking the Board members and observers for their participation and contributions.

The Governing Board agreed to hold the next meeting virtually in 4th quarter of 2023.

Annex 1: Meeting Agenda



International Comparison Program (ICP) Meeting of the Governing Board

February 26, 2023

Millennium Hilton New York One UN Plaza
New York, USA

Agenda

5:00 – 5:15 pm	Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda, <i>Meeting Chair</i>
5:15 – 6.00 pm	Overall progress with ICP 2021 cycle, <i>ICP Global Office</i>
6:00 – 6:45 pm	Regional progress with ICP 2021 cycle, <i>Regional Implementing Agencies</i>
6:45 – 7:00 pm	Any other Business and Closing remarks, <i>Meeting Chair</i>

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, Statistics Finland, Co-Chair
	Timo Koskimaki, Director of International Affairs, Statistics Finland
	Mari Yla-Jarkko, Director, Business Statistics, Statistics Finland
Malaysia	Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics Malaysia
	Ms. Ezatul Nisha Abul Rahman, Director of Strategic Communication and International Statistics Division, Department of 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
African Development Bank	Kouakou K. Louis, Acting Director, Statistics Department
	Ben Paul Mungyereza, Manager, Statistics Department
	Gregoire Mboya De Loubassou, Senior Statistician, Statistics Department
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
Eurostat	Mariana Kotzeva, Director General, Eurostat
International Monetary Fund	Albert Kroese, Chief Statistician
	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, Chief Statistician and Director of Statistics and Data Directorate
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	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
United Nations Statistics Division	Stefan Schweinfest, Director, Statistics Division
World Bank	Haishan Fu, Chief Statistician, and Director, Development Data Group

Nada Hamadeh, Manager, Economic, Debt and Price Data Unit, Development Data Group
Marko Rissanen, ICP Program Lead and Senior Statistician, Development Data Group
Edie Purdie, Consultant, Development Data Group
Nancy Kebe, Development Data Group
Catherine Van Rompaey, Program Manager, Development Data Group