COVID-19 impact on the household surveys

Asia-Pacific Regional Webinar

Draft Concept Note

Date and time: 1st June 2020, 12:00 – 13:00 (Bangkok time)

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1. Background

The restrictions imposed by many countries in the world to combat the Covid-19 have presented huge challenges to data collection operations, particularly to household-based surveys such as the labour force survey (LFS), Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), precisely when there is a massive increase in demand for information, including socio-economic impact of Covid-19. UN agencies have conducted assessments to understand the impacts of the pandemic on national statistical operations (for instance, ILO released a summary of its assessment early April 2020 for labour statistics). The assessments were followed up by several guidance notes to help countries maintain their data collection procedures when necessary and possible.[1]

The most immediate impact for most countries is the suspension of face-to-face interviewing, with a move to telephone interviewing being the main approach implemented or under consideration by many National Statistical Offices (NSOs). The existing guidelines provide guidance to countries on the range of options available and challenges to deal with in order to change their data collection approach, and maintain some continuity in data availability to the extent possible. However, many quality issues related to changing the mode of data collection and treatment of new and exceptional surveys remain unresolved for countries. While international standards, such as on labour statistics, remain a sound reference, it is important to further assess and clarify certain aspects of data collection and find best solution for some especial cases. For instance, in the case of LFS, job absences of uncertain duration, business closures, reduction in working hours, and overall reduced job search activity are exceptional cases that require special attention.

2. Objectives and participation

The ILO, UNESCAP, and UNICEF are collaborating to organize this webinar aiming to introduce existing guidelines, shed light on some practical aspects of mixing data collection modes and provide a platform for countries in Asia-Pacific region to exchange their expertise and learn from each other. The webinar intends to bring together statisticians from NSOs and other

[1] examples are available at https://ilostat.ilo.org/ , https://covid-19-response.unstatshub.org/, and https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Census_COVID19_digital.pdf, https://mics.unicef.org/news_entries/157/COVID-19-PANDEMIC-AND-IMPLEMENTATION-OF-MULTIPLE-INDICATOR-CLUSTER-SURVEYS-(MICS)

parts of the National Statistical Systems (NSS) who are dealing with (face-to-face) statistical data collection systems, in particular household surveys such as LFS, HIES, MICS and DHS.

3. Webinar modalities and tentative agenda

The format of the webinar would be a sequence of short presentations by UNESCAP, ILO, and UNICEF on the different challenges and options for NSOs to maintain the flow of data at this time. The proposed webinar duration is for one hour and half of the time will be allocated to Q&A and discussion after presentation. The short format of the webinar means follow up contacts can be planned to provide further guidance or support on a country by country basis as demanded and feasible.

The webinar will cover the following topics/ tentative timetable:

- Opening, by UNESCAP
- Surveys under lockdown: mixed mode designs and quality issues (ESCAP, 10-15 min);
- Case of labour force surveys: current ILO guidance (ILO; 10-15 min);
- MICS-PLUS under Pandemic situation? (UNICEF: 10- 15 min);
- Q&A and discussions;
- Wrap-up and way forward, by UNESCAP