



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

DIALOG ON INEQUALITIES

Meeting Report¹

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Executive summary

- The *Dialog on Inequalities* was held in Istanbul on 21-22 January 2015. It brought together representatives of UNDP and partner organizations from some two dozen countries, to focus on issues of inequalities in the developing and transition economies of Europe and Central Asia. Key emphases were on developing a deeper understanding of the causes, trends, and natures of inequalities in this region, and the design and implementation of appropriate policy and programming resources—particularly in the context of emerging post-2015 development frameworks. All meeting materials can be found at [UNTeamworks](#) and [UNDP website](#) for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States.
- Global narratives on the development risks posed by inequalities, and how best to address them, have not yet fully connected with the region’s transition and development challenges. This is partly because of its post-socialist heritage, which left relatively equal (compared to other developing countries) distributions of income, relatively broad access to social services, and relatively small gender disparities. Unfortunately, there are worrying signs that these advantages are being lost—and that problems of inequality and vulnerability are growing and converging with those of other regions. Issues of labour market exclusion and employment are particularly pressing in many European and Central Asian countries.
- Analyses of inequalities in the region and of programming to respond to them are often hindered by the paucity of quantitative data—particularly once discussions go beyond income inequalities. These lacunae are particularly important in the post-2015 context, in which the characteristics of the indicators that will be used to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals are currently the focus of international discussion.
- Gender inequalities were found to be at the heart of broader concerns about inequality in the region—not only among development specialists, but also among the citizens and civil society representatives who have participated in UN-sponsored regional and national consultations around the post-2015 development agenda.
- The meeting participants found that improvements in governance structures and institutions must play key roles in addressing the region’s inequality challenges.
- Although the region reports relatively small health inequities, this picture is not fully shared across the region. Moreover, the meeting found that, since the 2008 economic crisis, social and economic inequities within and between countries have become more pronounced.
- Labour market exclusion and lack of decent employment opportunities continue to be a major driver of inequalities in the region—particularly for women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups. This has increased burdens on the region’s social protection systems, which—while more extensive than in many other developing countries—face serious challenges linked to informality, demographics, fiscal constraints, and the absence of well function mechanisms to address the consequences of discrimination.
- The proposed regional human development report focusing on inequalities—that would not be a “launched and done” report but rather a process for generating human development papers on various dimensions of inequality, that could ultimately be combined into a single volume, and could also serve as a platform for partnerships and on-going dissemination of research and expertise—received broad approbation at the meeting.
- In addition to this, meeting participants called for:
 - More attention to working on inequalities at the local level—including via inequality-related capacity development initiatives for local governments and civil society organizations;
 - More spirited defence of minimum income levels, to help social policies to better respond to inequalities;
 - Closer cooperation among UN agencies, and with the World Bank and leading NGOs, on inequality issues;
 - Closer linkages between social assistance, social services, social protection, with a focus on protection for the working poor (for example, social protection cannot be based on the assumption that decent formal sector employment is available, and vulnerable workers just need to look more actively for it).

Introduction

Global concerns about inequalities are growing, and for good reason. High and growing inequalities are increasingly understood to undermine prospects for sustainable development through a multitude of channels. Inequality isn't new; what is new is the attention it's getting, particularly in terms of exploring possibilities for moving from rhetoric to policy responses.

However, global narratives on inequalities and how best to address them have not yet fully connected with the transition and developing economies of Europe and Central Asia.² This is partly because of the region's post-socialist heritage, which left relatively equal (compared to other developing countries) distributions of income, and relatively broad access to social services, as well as relatively small gender disparities. Unfortunately, there are worrying signs that these advantages are being lost—and that problems of inequality and vulnerability are growing and converging with those of other regions. Issues of labour market exclusion and employment are particularly pressing in many European and Central Asian countries—as are challenges of addressing this exclusion without further depreciating the region's vulnerable natural capital.

The *Dialog on Inequalities*, which was held in Istanbul on 21-22 January 2015, brought together representatives of UNDP and partner organizations from some two dozen countries, to focus on these issues. Key emphases included developing a deeper understanding of the causes, trends, and natures of inequalities in this region, and the design and implementation of appropriate policy and programming resources—particularly in the context of emerging post-2015 development frameworks. The event also featured the presentation and discussion of recent UNDP global and regional research on inequalities.³ All *Dialog on Inequalities* materials can be found at [UNTeamworks](#) and [UNDP website](#) for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States.

Session 1: Global and regional perspectives on inequalities

Important contributions to the *Dialog on Inequalities* were made by **leading experts on inequalities** in this region, who also served as keynote speakers. These included:

- Ms. [Sascha Gabizon](#), Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future, (Brussels);
- Sir [Michael Marmot](#), Director, Institute of Health Equity, University College, London;
- Ms. [Ipek Ilkcaracan Ajas](#), Faculty of Management, Istanbul Technical University; and
- Mr. [Marek Dabrowski](#), Professor of the Higher School of Economics (Moscow); Co-founder of the Centre for Social and Economic Research (Warsaw); and Non-Resident Scholar at Bruegel (Brussels).

Ipek Ilkcaracan: *Care labour as a source of inequality*

Original research conducted by Professor Ilkcaracan shows that significant reductions in gender gaps in health and education in Turkey have not translated into equivalent reductions in inequalities, in terms of access to income and jobs, and in political participation, for women. Female labour force participation rates are low, labour market segregation remains, and gender pay disparities are persistent. Professor Ilkcaracan found that these inequalities often reflect women's uneven bargaining power within the household. Reductions in income inequalities between men and women are therefore needed to leverage changes in other domains, as higher incomes can strengthen women's intra-household positions.

² Reference is to the countries/territories whose development aspirations are supported by UNDP's Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS. These are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (all references to which were understood within the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)—both at the meeting and in this report), Kyrgyzstan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

³ These include UNDP's [Humanity Divided](#) global inequality study, as well as its [Regional Poverty, Inequality, and Vulnerability](#) study.

Cultural norms and discrimination are often used to explain wage and income gaps among men and women. However, Professor Ilkcaracan argued that these gaps are reflections of intra-household divisions of labour (in which women typically devote more time to the care of children, the elderly, and the sick)—which in turn are influenced by the availability of affordable, good quality social services. For example, in Turkey:

- Only 13% of households have two members who earn significant incomes on the labour market;
- 41% of all non-agricultural households have single male breadwinner; and
- The poverty risk for the first group is twice as high as for the second group.

In such circumstances, poverty reduction initiatives should focus on reducing intra-household inequalities by improving access to affordable, good quality social services. Progress in creating an enabling macroeconomic environment, to promote the accelerated creation of decent jobs, is also needed. So are good quality surveys, to generate labour-market and household time use survey data that are disaggregated by gender.

Sir Michael Marmot: *The social determinants of health and sustainable human development*

Professor Marmot argued that access to highest attainable health standards is a human right, and focused on the pernicious effects of inequality on health. He pointed out that health and sustainable human development are inextricably linked, and called for systematic approaches to addressing social-economic and environmental determinants of health/health equity. Professor Marmot also recognized that UNDP, and the UN system, can play a critical role in adopting “whole of society” approaches to health.

Almudena Fernández: *Humanity Divided*

Ms. Fernández⁴ presented UNDP’s [Humanity Divided](#) global study on inequalities. She began by calling attention to the “inequalities of outcomes versus opportunities” question—and by noting that outcomes and opportunities are often highly interdependent. Ms. Fernández also argued that horizontal inequalities should be of special concern, as they tend to be very stubborn and persist over time. She pointed to the +35% increase in inequality in the Europe and Central Asia region (albeit from the low baseline), and highlighted the concerns raised by this increase.

Ms. Fernández argued that economic growth does not need to be sacrificed in order to reduce inequalities. Of a sample of 24 developing countries (examined by the [Humanity Divided](#) study) with above average annual growth rates (3% or more) during the last 20 years, 13 of these were able to maintain or lower inequality. These countries’ experience shows that tax systems and redistribution social benefits matter. For example: whereas the average redistributive impact of taxes and transfers was 11% in the upper middle-income countries examined, they were 4% in the lower middle-income countries and 3% in the low-income countries. However, even among low- and lower middle-income countries there are cases where taxes and transfers reduce inequality by more than 30%. Ms. Fernández concluded by emphasizing the importance of pursuing measures that can reduce inequality while also investing in the replenishment (rather than further depletion) of natural capital.

The ensuing discussion highlighted the following points:

- Income inequality data from various regions of the world do not tell the whole story. For example:
 - In some regions (e.g., Arab States) limited data availability reduce the importance of “regional” trends.
 - The Netherlands and Bangladesh have very similar levels of income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient. But *de facto* levels and characteristics of inequality are very different.

⁴ Social protection policy specialist, UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

- While inequalities in Latin America have long history, our countries twenty years ago were extremely egalitarian. Rapid increases in inequality are therefore *perceived* more negatively than in other regions.
- Increasing inequality is also apparent in non-income areas. This is apparent, for example, in the deteriorating quality of education, and in the underrepresentation of women in political bodies.
- Just as narratives about inequalities should be linked to environmental sustainability concerns, they should also be aligned with conflict, disaster prevention, climate change adaptation, and resilience programming and policies. This is apparent, for example, in the impact of the Aral Sea disaster on disparities and inequalities in neighbouring regions.
- Better survey data for measuring non-inequalities are critical in fashioning appropriate policy and programmatic responses. For instance, time use inequalities can be captured through the methodology used in the harmonized EU time use survey (which is also used in non-EU countries). Such methodologies should also be applied on the subnational level—e.g. in Kazakhstan via the subnational multi-indicator cluster survey.
- The relationships between tax systems and inequality in the region are quite complicated. Most countries rely extensively on indirect taxation (e.g., VAT, social security levies). In addition to being regressive in their incidence, many of these measures also reduce formal-sector employment by tax labour—as opposed to capital or natural resources.
 - In principle, inequalities could be reduced by reducing the role of such levies and increasing the role of direct, progressive taxes on personal (and corporate, property, and other forms of) income. In practice, however, informality and post-communist legacies are so strong in the region that reliance on direct taxes often results in extensive tax evasion that reduces the *de facto* share of tax revenues paid by relatively wealthy households and companies.
 - As a result, in the decade prior to the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 many countries reduced *de jure* personal and corporate income tax rates—and experienced increases in tax revenues, due to reduced incentives for tax evasion (combined with capacity building in tax administrations and strong economic growth). In the slower-growth environments that have obtained since then, the fiscal bounties associated with these “flat tax” reforms have been more disappointing. Meanwhile, few countries in the region have succeeded in deriving significant revenues from property taxes—in part because of lingering confusion concerning property rights and appropriate methodologies for assessing property values.
 - Many government budgets in the region rely extensively on tax and non-tax revenues produced by the exploitation of energy and other natural resources. However, rather than reflecting sustainable resource management concerns, these revenue streams are typically associated with preferences for maximizing short-term extractive-sector profits and revenues. Moreover, in many countries these policies are accompanied by extensive household/commercial energy subsidies—the tariffs for which in many case remain below long-run cost recovery levels. (The same applies to tariffs for water and other natural resources.)
 - So while (in the longer term) both social and environmental sustainability concerns would be well served by reducing tax burdens on labour, and increasing them on capital and natural resources; progress in this direction at the moment is slow. Efforts to accelerate movement in this direction could begin with improvements in national data on the *de facto* incidence of various forms of taxation.

Session 2: Inequalities in Southeast Europe and the former USSR (the “regional landscape”)

Sascha Gabizon: *Inequalities and the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals in the region*

Ms. Gabizon provided an overview of inequality issues in the regional context, against the backdrop the on-going discussions around the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda. She also linked these issues to work done by Women in Europe for a Common Future in the region, particularly in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia.

Marek Dabrowski: *Inequalities in a globalized economy (few remarks)*

Mr. Dabrowski argued that reducing inequalities should not replace the elimination of extreme poverty as the overarching development goal in the region. He also suggested that continuing efforts to strengthen market forces are critical to addressing both poverty and inequality concerns.

Ben Slay, UNDP senior advisor: *Income inequalities and beyond in Europe and Central Asia*

Mr. Slay presented UNDP's [Regional Poverty, Inequality, and Vulnerability](#) regional study, focusing on time series national income inequality trends (using Gini coefficients, based on the World Bank's POVCALNET data). Mr. Slay argued that national trends in income inequalities are quite diverse across the region, and while Gini coefficients increased sharply in most countries after 1990, these increases were neither universal nor monotonic. Moreover, in some countries, these trends would seem to be sharply at odds with popular narratives about pre- and post-transition inequalities. This points to the importance both of regional heterogeneity, as well as of on-going concerns about the veracity of income inequality data in the region.

The ensuing discussion highlighted Oxfam's recent study on the global wealth held by the [world's richest 1%](#)—pointing to the importance inequalities in wealth as well as in income. But however serious the region's problems may be with income inequality data, they are even more pronounced when it comes to data on the distribution of wealth. The data used in Thomas Piketty's recent [Capital in the 21st Century](#) study on wealth inequality are not available for most countries in the region, for example.

Sessions 3, 4: Unpacking inequalities in the region; from analysis to programming

These sessions were based on discussions in, and reporting back from, thematic working groups (“inequality corners”), on five topics:

- Gender inequalities
- Measuring inequalities
- Inequalities and inclusive governance
- Inequalities and health
- Inequalities, employment, and social protection

“Gender inequalities”

Understanding the full spectrum of gender-based disparities requires a multidimensional view of what constitutes and drives restrictions on choice and access. It also requires consideration and application of the concepts of autonomy, social acceptance, livelihoods, and political agency.

While there is today much greater equality in secondary and tertiary education enrolment rates than was the case 20 years ago, results are more mixed in the area of health. And while male and female life expectancy rates vary greatly across the region, women outlive men by almost [10 years \(on average\)](#).

Women's labour force participation rates have increased over the past 20 years. However, they still remain well below that of men—[ranging from 60% in Balkans and Turkey to almost 80 % in Eastern Europe and CIS](#)

countries. Moreover, despite the progress in closing the gap in education outcomes, gender wage gaps and job segregation persist; women's labour force participation has increased by replacing men in more vulnerable, lower-paying jobs. Wage gaps (which range from 8-30% across the region) also reduce women's ability to negotiate within the household. Women remain grossly underrepresented among political decision makers. Despite moderate increases in the past 20 years, less than 25% of the region's parliamentarians are women.

Finally, social norms and stereotypes continue to prevent advancements in women's education, skills and capabilities from translating into equivalent advancements in incomes, livelihoods, and agency. Narrowing gender gaps in education and health may not be sufficient to reduce gender disparities in other domains of human well-being, such as accessing leadership positions in various fields.

Gender inequalities are therefore at the heart of broader concerns about inequality in the region—not only among development specialists, but also among the citizens and civil society representatives who have participated in UN-sponsored regional and national consultations around the post-2015 development agenda.

Ms. Sascha Gabizon opened the discussion in this “inequality corner” by summarizing the goals and targets on gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda in general, and the draft sustainable development goals in particular. Ms. Ipek Ilkcaracan spoke about the gendered impact of social policies on women's access to the labour market in Turkey. Ms. Rana Kotan presented innovative initiatives addressing gender inequality issues in Turkey.

In addition to emphasizing the issues raised above, the discussion in this corner touched on:

- women's predominant role in unpaid care work;
- non-existent or inefficient social care infrastructure;
- women's access to productive resources;
- the feminization of poverty in the region;
- intra-household gender inequalities;
- violence against women; and
- the interplay of cultural norms and stereotypes, economic pressures, declining fertility rates, and new medical technologies, which are increasingly translating into “son preference” in some countries of the region.

Participants made the following recommendations to UNDP:

- In line with the emerging post-2015 development framework, take more holistic views of gender inequalities in the region, *inter alia* by addressing:
 - Access to quality education for women and girls, and links to economic empowerment;
 - Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health rights;
 - Ending violence against women and girls and harmful practices;
 - Promoting women's voices, leadership and influence; women's participation in peace and security; and women's contributions to environmental sustainability.
- Strengthen UNDP expertise and programming to promote gender equality, by:
 - Fostering initiatives that both empower women (training, women's rights and awareness raising) and involve men and boys as partners in achieving gender equality;

- Supporting grassroots organizations (e.g., community service centres) to better identify and address gender concerns;
- Partnering with women's organizations, *inter alia* in the design of national SDG strategies;
- Reviewing the ways in which UNDP engages with civil society organizations to strengthen their role in gender-aware policy advocacy and policy making;
- Promoting gender-disaggregated data production, collection, and analysis, with an eye towards household, class, and ethnic distinctions to make the roles and status of women and girls more visible and understandable for informed policy analysis and reporting;
- Developing national capacities for collecting and using gender-disaggregated data, to strengthen informed policy-making and promote the harmonization of data available for a comparative sub-regional analysis;
- Developing socio-economic programmatic and policy analytics to support the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, particularly in terms of gender budgeting, cost-benefit analysis of expanding social care services, maternity and paternity leaves and other care-related services, and costing of domestic violence. Participants recommended developing regional approaches on the potential of expanding social care services as a strategy for achieving gender equality in the labour market and inclusive growth.
- Supporting security sector and judicial reform by providing police officers and judges with the training needed to address cases of violence against women;
- Promoting awareness-raising involving religious and community leaders;
- Working with such actors as UN Women, UNFPA, ILO, international NGOs, national and local women's organizations and platforms, foundations, and academia, in order to better advocate for policy change; and
- Enhancing UNDP's stand-alone gender equality programming, while continuing to mainstream gender across UNDP's entire programming portfolio.

Participants made the following broader policy recommendations:

- The proposed SDGs include a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5), as well as gender-specific targets and indicators in other goals. This provides important opportunities for UNDP (in cooperation with other UN agencies) to strengthen national policy responses and support national partners in the implementation of the gender dimensions of the SDGs. Joint action could be particularly important in helping countries to develop national targets and related policies, as well as monitoring and accountability mechanisms (including the development of specific national and sub-regional indicators for the targets) to measure progress towards achieving the SDGs.
- Strengthen national accountability frameworks for the implementation of gender-sensitive policies;
- Collect meaningful gender-disaggregated data and design more gender-sensitive indicators;
- Put the economic empowerment of women at the forefront of national development agendas as a key to reducing poverty and inequality and promoting economic growth.
- Strengthen social protection systems and expand the provision of social services to increase women's labour force participation.
- Strengthen national guarantees of women's access to and control over lands and inheritance.
- Support strategies to integrate unpaid care work in the paid work sector.

- Strengthen national accountability, in particular in Balkans countries, for the implementation of the [Istanbul Convention on preventing and addressing violence against women and domestic violence](#).

“Measuring inequalities”

When applied to discussions of inequality, the proposition “if it can’t be measured, it can’t be managed” certainly makes one think. Analyses of inequalities and programming to respond to them are often hindered by the paucity of quantitative data—particularly once discussions go beyond income inequalities, and particularly in the context the transition and developing economies of Europe and Central Asia.

The Gini coefficient needs to be supplemented by other indicators of income and non-income inequalities that can capture and monitor the complexities of social differentiation and inform policy responses.

Two developments in the global post-2015 discussion during the second half of 2014 merit particular attention in this regard. The first is the publication of [A World That Counts](#)—the report of the UN Secretary General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. In addition to pushing issues of measurement, indicators, and data toward the centre of the post-2015 debate, this report calls for the “data revolution” needed to use more and better indicators, and to underpin national transitions to sustainable development. The publication of the proposed [Sustainable Development Goals](#) by the inter-governmental Open Working Group, is the second important development.

This “inequality corner” explored the on-going and prospective application to regional inequality issues of such indicators as:

- Other (besides the Gini coefficient) income inequality measures—particularly the “Palma” and “Bottom 40%” indicators;
- Multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI);
- Inequality-adjusted human development index (IHDI);
- The social exclusion index (SEI);
- The human opportunity index (HOI); and
- The gender development index (GDI)

Brief presentations on these indicators included:

- “Measuring inequalities and the post-2015 agenda”, Ben Slay (UNDP senior advisor)
- “The multi-dimensional poverty index as a measure of inequality”, Elena Danilova-Cross (UNDP programme specialist, poverty and inequality); and
- “The social exclusion index (SEI) as a measure of inequality”, Mihail Peleah (UNDP programme specialist, green economy and employment).

This “corner” also benefitted from national presentations. On Turkey:

- While official interest in using the MPI seems to be growing, the focus seems to be on using absolute (rather than relative) poverty indicators.
 - Half of the weight would go to economic indicators, half to social indicators. In particular:

- Its educational component seems likely to include indicators for literacy rates and the completion of compulsory education.
 - Its health component would include indicators concerning access to doctors and medication in the last 12 months.
 - Its housing components would include indicators for people per room or facilities.
- Data sources would include household budget survey data, as well as data drawn from the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC), including at the NUTS1 and NUTS2 levels.
- However:
 - The MPI methodology is yet to be agreed among relevant ministries and Turkstat.
 - Once the endorsement is given, the time lag associated with calculating and using the MPI (to inform policy-making) could be 2-3 years. This will limit the MPI's policy relevance. Which ministries will use it?
 - The proposed MPI is not internationally comparable.

In Tajikistan (the region's sole remaining low-income country), policy makers are increasingly focusing on inequalities, exclusion, and vulnerability (amongst different groups), rather than on extreme income poverty. National assessments point to a decline in absolute income poverty from 81% in 1997 to 35.6% in 2013, with a forecast of 31.5% for 2015. The Statistical Office and experts are therefore increasingly interested in learning more about the MPI, as a measure of relative poverty (inequality) as well as absolute poverty. (For more, please see the presentation by Rustam Babajanov of UNDP-Tajikistan on "Mainstreaming Human Development").

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UNDP Country Office has developed regional- and municipal-level indicators to show spatial inequalities, which can be used for regional development policies. (For more, please see the presentation by Envesa Hodzic-Kovac of the UN Residents Coordinator's Office, on "Bosnia and Herzegovina Regional Disparity Assessment 2010"). A similar set of indicators was developed in Armenia (for more on this, please see the presentation by Nairuhi Jrbashyan, "Multidimensional poverty measurement—some considerations and experience in Armenia").

Commentary and broader discussion of the practical application and relevance of these indicators for better measuring issues of inequality in the region also touched on UNDP's support for national statistical offices, and policy makers dealing with inequality issues (particularly in the post-2015 context). Particular issues raised included the following:

- In many countries, there are on-going debates about which poverty measures are most suitable.
 - In principle, it is accepted that the importance of accurately measuring relative poverty (inequalities) increases as countries become more wealthy. In the poorest low-income countries, where much consumption takes place in kind, a great deal of emphasis is placed on such indicators as nutrition (as a measure of deprivation) and mortality. As incomes rise and livelihoods and consumption are increasingly monetized, income poverty takes on new significance. It is in wealthier societies, where absolute material deprivation (hopefully) loses its significance, that relative poverty/inequality (and associated indicators) may take on their greatest significance.

- However, it is not always clear whether (and the circumstances in which) income- or consumption-based indicators are most appropriate. Nor is it clear when the time comes for “graduation” from one measure to another.
- What, specifically, should be done to better measure non-income inequalities?
 - Many countries in the region are showing increasing interest in multi-dimensional poverty indicators. However, the emphasis remains focused on crafting MPIs as measures of absolute, rather than relative deprivation. The potential of using MPIs as synthetic, composite indicators of inequalities has yet to be tapped.
 - Thanks to UNDP’s Human Development Report Office, we are familiar with such composite inequality indicators as the inequality-adjusted HDI and the GDI. These measures use data from well-recognized databases that allow for international comparability. Are such measures enough for measuring inequality in our region? Or should we expand the use of new inequality indicators that have been piloted in/adapted for our region, such as the social exclusion index—for which large, internationally comparable data bases are not available?
- How reliable are indicators drawn from national statistics that face spatial, locational, and quality issues?
 - In societies characterized by high mobility, people often but they live and work in places that are different from where they are officially registered. This limits the effectiveness of social services whose finances are linked to locational indicators (e.g., numbers of households registered in a given locality).
 - We also have quality issues that are not captured by quantitative indicators. In much of the region, access to education is very high by international standards. But there are growing concerns about the quality of education and functional illiteracy.
 - How to craft indicators that can combine national and sub-national data to best reflect issues of decentralization and community development?
- How do we get around legal barriers that limit access to data (which may be collected but are not made available to the public)? What can be done when policy decisions to make data publicly available are not executed?
- In some countries, educating women is seen as a way to increase their value vis-à-vis marriage opportunities. Well educated young women are therefore sitting at home (awaiting appropriate marriage proposals), rather than participating in the labour force. In such circumstances, how are data showing high levels of female education to be interpreted?

“Inequalities and inclusive governance”

The relationship between governance and inequality is well-established in development literature. Political systems and processes determine both policy choices and the provision of basic public services, which have a significant bearing on non-income dimensions of well-being. Governance structures and institutions are key mechanisms through which income inequality exacerbates and perpetuates other inequalities.

UNDP’s <<Humanity Divided>> report details how improvements in governance can have a significant positive impact on health—including maternal mortality and under-five mortality rates. Governance improvements in

this area may be more significant than improvements in income inequality or increases in health spending. Similar impacts can be seen in education and nutrition, though the relationship is not uniform across sectors.

In relation to gender inequality in education, governance is also more significant than both income levels and economic growth. Further, inclusive governance is a major factor in determining state capacity to respond to environmental challenges and climate change, as well as in how sustainably and equitably energy is used.

This “corner” sought to:

- Outline the conceptual linkages between aspects of governance and forms of inequality, detailing the vicious and virtuous cycles that can emerge from these relationships;
- Identify the most relevant issues, dynamics and trends in the region specifically, in relation to both governance systems and inequalities—with particular attention to such key lines of exclusion as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, urban-rural disparities, people living with disabilities, and sexual orientation;
- Identify the inequality consequences of governance failures—whether in service delivery, access to justice or decision-making, or of a more economic nature (e.g., concerning the distribution of benefits from natural resource development); and
- Identify best practices and lessons learned in terms of practical approaches to these issues, both regionally and globally.

The relationship between inclusive governance and inequalities. The quality and inclusiveness of governance is a major determinant of the quality of services and of protections. It also affects access to decision-making, and the extent to which governments truly see their responsibility as being downwards to the citizenry. *Humanity Divided* details how discrimination is linked to inequalities, whether it be discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, or in terms of an urban/rural divide or people with disabilities. The importance of rights-based approaches was stressed.

Addressing these inequalities (which are of both an income and non-income character) requires the recognition that policy and legal frameworks, where designed to address inequalities and provide services, are ineffective without the capacity of institutions to implement them. It also requires an emphasis on monitoring, participation, transparency, and an understanding of accountability of government to the people. For example, in the discussion of the recent “Top 1%” statistic from Oxfam, it was argued that the “complicity of governments” is a major factor in perpetuating inequalities. It was also argued that the issue may be one of global poor and global rich. Its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan commits UNDP to address inequalities as well as eradicate poverty. The universal nature of the post-2015 agenda provides a platform of addressing these issues.

Regional specifics. The region contains a range of countries that are generally heading towards stronger governance mechanisms, and who have the political will needed to address inequalities and rights. At the same time, there is a worrying trend in other countries towards decreasing space for inclusion—particularly for civil society—and a lack of effective parliamentary engagement, decreasing representativeness (as the traditional means of people’s engagement in governance).

With regards to specific country experiences, the discussion emphasized the following points:

- Access to credit is much more difficult for female entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan than their male counterparts, and that they have to be “twice as successful to get credit”. It was also argued (also on the basis of Kyrgyzstan)

that reliance on extractives makes the quality and distributive role of governance institutions even more important. An inequality “double whammy” can occur in those situations, whereby local citizens are excluded from the economic gains but disproportionately affected by the environmental costs.

- Examples from the Western Balkans (Albania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro):
 - Highlighted possible trade-offs between ensuring equal access to decision-making and “getting things done” (this is not a new concern, but one that remains important to institutional design); and
 - Showed that high-level decisions to address inequalities are being taken, but are not always being translated into institutional action and delivery. Montenegro provided an example of interventions which sought to review the participation of the people in monitoring and participation mechanisms that existed.
- From Moldova, we heard that political crisis continues to prevent the formation of a functioning government because, in effect, “the country is run by two oligarchs”. This point resonated with participants from other countries, who questioned whether governance institutions that are dominated by wealthy elites should be expected to act on behalf of the population as a whole. In response, it was noted in Armenia that foundations are seeking to align interests of “oligarchs” with those of vulnerable groups, bringing them around the same table to discuss solving problems together.
- With reference to Albania and Moldova (but also more broadly), problems of polarization were discussed, whereby two parties pursue zero-sum approaches to access to resources and consolidation which exclude citizens generally (“when elephants fight, it’s the grass that suffers”). The political stalemates that result from this polarization was noted as a potentially global trends in democracies.
- The robustness of public institutions that deal with business interests without perpetuating inequalities was likewise a theme of the discussion. Central Asia was identified as sub-region where rule of law and access to justice are of particular importance in the face of endemic corruption.

Inadequate capacity of local governance institutions—which were seen as playing essential roles in addressing inequalities—and the problem of residual over-centralisation in many countries of the region, was also discussed. The related lack of capacity of civil society in the region, to organize and mobilize to protect rights and tackle inequalities, was likewise discussed. In many countries, both governments and CSOs are perceived to be unrepresentative. This also reflects a lack of knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities, as well as the absence of a sense of empowerment to organize and demand change.

On the other hand, experience from Georgia shows that supporting citizen engagement and monitoring, including at the local level, can be effective in empowering and translating into meaningful change. The inclusion of minorities in these exercises has resulted in changes in how these groups vote based on increased knowledge and engagement.

The shortage of data relating to governance and inequalities was raised a stumbling block for policy development in the region. The importance of data was particularly emphasized in terms of dispelling myths about the costs of tackling inequalities; while data availability concerns were raised with reference to the complete absence of useful comparable data on people living with disabilities.

Recommendations. Participants made the following recommendations to UNDP:

- Develop platforms for dialogue with “the rich” and “elites”, to help find common areas for problem-solving, based on shared incentives and interests—engaging them beyond traditional “redistributive” narratives in an “equal stakeholder” format.
- Build on UNDP’s already robust local-level programming to help local governments, civil society, and vulnerable groups to relay and respond to the needs of all local groups—and link with national policy and legislative change, particularly where discrimination is concerned.
- Develop analytics to more closely identify how engagement with specific institutions on inequality issues can be made more strategic (this involves understanding which governance institutions can make the largest impact).
- Develop indicators to assess the capacity of government institutions to include vulnerable groups in decision-making processes, particularly with regard to natural resource management.
- Develop a toolbox of measures that have been tried and proven within the region (particularly as concerns people living with disabilities) and could help make elections and parliaments more accessible. This could include special branding for products made by people with disabilities, and peer education.
- Engage more with research-based partners to use all available data to inform programming.
- Expand UNDP’s on-going work with governments and media on participatory monitoring systems, *inter alia* to support the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.
- Focus on the implementation of SDG 16 (on inclusive and peaceful societies), which will involve monitoring the (still to be agreed) indicators.
- Include disaster risk management in UNDP’s approach to inequalities, particularly via research and the redesign of response mechanisms.
- Help align budgets with national priorities on addressing inequalities.
- Develop more platforms for South-South/East-East cooperation between governments and civil society for work on inclusive governance.
- Improve knowledge management and communication tools concerning UNDP governance programmes which address inequalities, to better disseminate its success stories.

“Inequalities and health”⁵

The region reports relatively small health inequities. This reflects long and sustained improvements in the lives people are able to lead, relatively strong social cohesion, increasingly affluence, and relatively developed welfare states and education and health services. However, this picture is not fully shared across the region. Moreover, since the 2008 economic crisis, social and economic inequities within and between countries have become more pronounced.⁶

⁵ The full set of presentations and background information from the “Inequities and health” corner can be accessed [here](#).

⁶ [Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region: Final report](#).

*The interplay of social, economic, and environmental factors determine population health and the distribution of health outcomes. In order to maximize potential co-benefits for both health and development, and to prioritize areas for action, policies and programming for health and development should be more closely integrated.*⁷

Discussions in this corner focused on the following topics:

The SEEDs of health. A recent analysis of UNDP’s development projects in Europe and Central Asia was conducted with a health equity lens, to identify how they address the social, economic and environmental determinants (SEEDs) of health. All thematic areas of UNDP’s national work in the region were covered, with 50 projects assessed in greater detail. A comprehensive methodology was used, including a detailed review of background documentation and information, in-depth interviews with selected project managers and comprehensive analysis looking at the various levels of determinants (individual, community, service and structural) and key dimensions of inequity (related to gender, the life-course stages, disability, marginalized groups, ethnicity, place of residence, area deprivation, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status). Key findings included:

- Significant untapped potential to create synergies between development and health, with co-benefits for development priorities and population health improvements, is present. A very small number of the project managers interviewed were aware of the fact that their project did actually have an impact on health/health equity.
- Integrating health aspects into development projects can contribute to reducing health inequities—especially since a significant part of UNDP’s work is with marginalized and vulnerable populations.
- UNDP is well positioned to support coherent actions across the whole of government and society to improve population health and the distribution of health outcomes.

HIV prevention, treatment, and care. According to UNAIDS, there are approximately 1.3 million people living with HIV in the developing and transition economies of Europe, Central Asia, and the Russian Federation. Russia and Ukraine account for over 85 percent of the HIV cases, with the epidemic also growing in Uzbekistan. Over the past year, mortality from AIDS-related causes has increased by 5% (according to [UNAIDS estimates](#)). The challenges posed by the rise of HIV are closely related to the human rights situation of key populations most at risk of HIV infection. Several countries in the region criminalize HIV transmission; at least two impose travel and immigration restrictions on people living with HIV. Of particular concern is the situation of people who inject drugs, trends towards the re-criminalization of sex work (particularly in Central Asia), and the introduction of punitive homophobic laws that effectively prevent men who have sex with men and transgender people from accessing HIV-related services (testing, treatment, care, support). The situation with migrants in the former Soviet republics is also particularly worrying, since many do not have health insurance. This can lead to interruptions in treatment (which can be fatal for people living with AIDS), as well as for co-infections (in particular tuberculosis). Treatment of co-infections is associated with significant out-of-pocket expenses in some Central Asian (and other) countries (e.g., the costs of treatment for hepatitis C can be unconscionable).

Responses to HIV in the region reflect the concentrated nature of the epidemic among key populations—people who use drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender people, migrant workers, and persons in closed settings. Since all countries in the region (except for Tajikistan) are now classified as middle-income countries, prospects for strengthened domestic funding for HIV responses are improving. However, this also limits

⁷ [Ensuring Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All: Addressing the Social, Economic and Environmental Determinants of Health and Health Divide in the Context of Sustainable Human Development.](#)

access to external donor funding (especially from the Global Fund) for NGOs who provide essential services to the groups that are at highest risk of contracting HIV.

HIV response in the Arab states. Health inequalities in the Arab states are in many respects similarities to those reported in the developing and transition economies of Europe and Central Asia. Both regions are experiencing a concentrated HIV epidemic among key populations at higher risk of infection. The majority of Arab states are considered to be conflict-affected or fragile, with 16 out of the 22 countries experiencing emergencies and crises. Some 58 million people are affected; these numbers constitute more than half the world's refugees and the largest global concentration of displaced persons. Lessons learnt from work on HIV in crisis and humanitarian settings could inform responses in both regions (taking into consideration cultural specificities). Gender inequalities are a key driving factor for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases in the Arab states (HIV is both a cause and a result of gender inequality and gender-based violence). The vulnerability of girls and women to HIV is a reflection of deeper, gendered inequalities, many of which are embedded in law, culture and traditional practices. Some similarities are apparent in Central Asia.

International Bill Of Rights (Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and Comment 14 Interpretation). There is a strong link between the rights to health as stipulated by the International Bill of Rights (Article 12 of the ICESCR and Comment 14 interpretation) and the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health (SEEDs). UN Human Rights instruments recognize social, economic, and environmental factors as crucial for the protection, upholding, and fulfilment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Rights-based approaches to development programming and addressing inequalities could be done through the perspective of the accomplishment, gaps and lists of issues (LOI) of countries in the region, as documented during the periodic review process. The assessment, reporting, and shadow reporting could be a valuable source of information for evidence-based programming, and an avenue for policy influence towards overcoming health inequalities in the region.

Addressing non-communicable diseases. Non-communicable diseases are the leading causes of death worldwide; more people die each year from NCDs than from all other causes combined. Addressing NCDs (cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases, and diabetes are particularly important in this region) is crucial to ensuring improved life quality and life expectancy in the region. Multi-sectoral responses are the only effective way of offsetting the epidemic. Work is conducted under the lead of WHO and within the framework of the regional UN joint taskforce on the non-communicable diseases and social determinants.

Mental health. Mental health is a serious problem in the region. However, despite the strong linkages to inequalities, mental health is poorly addressed in the post-2015 agenda, particularly in the regional and country consultations and the proposed SDGs. In many cases, laws and policies regulating the response and support provided to persons with mental disabilities in the region lead to further marginalization and discrimination. Better addressing mental health issues is an important factor in improving health in much of the region.

Health, health equity, and CCA-UNDAFs. In collaboration WHO and working through the UN's Peer Support Group, UNDP has supported the integration of health and health equity into CCA-UNDAF documents across the region.⁸ It is especially important as these will be the framework documents for UN programming in the upcoming five years agreed and endorsed by the governments. This work focuses on providing whole-of-government approaches to problems of health, education, energy, agriculture, sports, transport, communications, urban planning, environment, employment, and social and economic development. Main lessons learned include:

⁸ Common country assessments and UN development assistance frameworks are the multi-year planning documents that guide UN programming at the national level, and which are approved by national governments. Regional advisors from various UN agencies who support these processes make up the peer support group.

- Projects developed under different (than health) programming frameworks are not always cognizant of their implications for health.
- Very few country plans apply whole-of-government approaches to problems (e.g., NCDs) that require multi-sectoral solutions.
- The disaggregated data needed to inform policies and programmes to address national health-related inequities are rarely (if ever) available. More generally, the national data needed for the accurate measurement and monitoring on the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health and health outcomes is an over-arching concern, requiring much on-going work.
- Awareness of NCDs (and their multi-sectoral determinants) as pressing health and development issues (including in development partners' funding priorities) is weak.
- Data and analyses showing the costs of action and inaction in response to these threats, which would make an economic case for integrating health (especially the rising burden of NCDs) into UNDAFs, are lacking in most countries.

Recommendations. Participants made the following recommendations to UNDP:

- Review health and health equity impact assessments (including UNDP's recently adopted social and environmental standards and screening procedure).
- Develop SEEDs screening and monitoring tools for Health and Health Equity to support co-benefits for health and development.
- Pilot these activities in interested countries (Belarus has indicated interest for this work in 2015).
- Provide policy advice and technical assistance to help repeal punitive norms and advocate for the adoption of enabling legislation to protect the rights of key populations at higher risk of HIV—particularly to improve their access to treatment.
- Further build the capacity of government and civil society sectors, especially in the field of effective and cost-efficient service provision and human rights/gender-based approaches to HIV programming.
- Step up the provision of technical support to countries in crisis or post-crisis situations (e.g., in the Balkans, Ukraine)—*inter alia* in mental health.
- Strengthen efforts to use the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to promote health and health equity.
- Further develop NCD legal assessment tools.
- Accelerate the work of the joint UN taskforce on NCDs country assessments (Belarus—action plan follow-up; Turkey—2015).
- Support efforts to address the environmental dimensions of health and health equity (e.g., in Kosovo).
- Support civil society efforts to demand for action on mental health.

- Collaborate with the Salzburg Global Seminar and relevant stakeholders to fully integrate health into global development agenda and national strategies.
- Further support UN country teams through the Peer Support Group and UN coordination to strengthen the role of SEEDs and health equity in CCA-UNDAFs in 2015 (Albania, Montenegro, Ukraine) and beyond.

“Inequalities, employment, and social protection”

Inequalities in employment opportunities and outcomes are closely linked to the income inequality discussion, but also to inequality in other non-income dimensions. Lack of employment or low quality employment lead to lower incomes, affecting household ability to access quality health and education services, or to compensate for poor access to resources. With the loss of the full employment guarantee—which, like rising income inequality, was generally considered in the 1990s as an unavoidable and necessary consequence of marketization—access to decent quality employment has become a key development challenge in the region. Poorly financed social protection programmes have faced significant challenges in compensating for a lack of access to minimum incomes through work and work-related social insurance schemes.

The drivers of inequalities in employment opportunities are often associated with the economic growth patterns that have taken hold in much of the region. Most of the former Soviet republics rely on the export of unprocessed natural mineral wealth (oil, gas, gold, other minerals)—capital intensive sectors are sometimes based on a single enterprise (for example, the TALCO aluminium plant in Tajikistan, or the Kumtor gold mining complex in Kyrgyzstan). Such growth patterns have at best limited employment-generation possibilities. In the Western Balkans, slow economic growth, high tax burdens, and incomplete structural reforms have produced exceptionally high unemployment rates. While employment growth in Turkey has been faster, job growth is hard pressed to catch up with hundreds of thousands of new labour-market entrants every year. Governance issues, entrenched elite interests, and rent-seeking, are also important factors hindering the transition to more labour-intensive growth patterns, despite recent and more persistent calls for “diversification” of national economies.

For specific groups, discriminatory attitudes and social norms also contribute to unequal employment outcomes—as has been well-documented for the Roma population in the Western Balkans.⁹ In Central Asia, and several other countries of the region, entrenched political attitudes and a disinterest in rural development have contributed to labour market inequalities. These have driven mass labour migration to Russia and other countries,¹⁰ which in turn has arguably given rise to new forms of inequalities (those with and those without access to remittances), and created new challenges for social protection (protecting those left behind in broken households). On the other hand, a recent World Bank study suggests that the last decade has seen reductions in inequality, and that growth in the region since 2005 (or in 2005-2010) can on the whole be characterized as “inclusive”.¹¹

Social protection can be defined and approached in many different ways, and this affects expectations with regard to the role it should play, and the instruments which should be used to perform these roles. For the purposes of the corner discussion, social protection was understood in its “traditional” habitat of social insurance, social assistance, and some aspects of active labour market policies, as well as local social services for households with special needs. However, in line with the UN Social Protection Floor-Initiative, these traditional social protection components need

⁹ See, for example, [Roma Poverty from a Human Development Perspective](#), UNDP, 2014.

¹⁰ See [Trade and Human Development in Central Asia](#), UNDP, 2014.

¹¹ As a whole the incomes of the bottom 40% grew 1.2% faster than for the economy as a whole, on an annual average basis (see [Regional Poverty, Inequality, and Vulnerability](#) pp. 21-22; reference is to Maurizio Bussolo and Luis F. Lopez-Calva, [Shared Prosperity: Paving the Way in Europe and Central Asia](#), World Bank, 2014, particularly p. 14).

to be combined with other policy areas (in including employment but also health, education, water and sanitation) to address exclusion and inequalities in an integrated manner.

<<Humanity Divided>> approaches social protection as one of the redistributive measures which can contribute to growth while reducing inequality. In combination with other redistributive measures (including for example consumer subsidies, and progressive taxation), social protection can raise the incomes of the poorest households by providing a minimum of income security necessary for investing in human capital and income generating activities. One of the peculiarities of the region is that, compared to many middle income countries in the world, and with the exception of Turkey, the region's transition economies inherited well-developed systems of the core components of social protection—although not a tradition of tackling discrimination, or of individual case management to ensure rights to protection (see below). On the whole, these inherited systems have been adapted and kept “alive”, but significant gaps in coverage, as well as reductions in impact, are evident. For example, the large numbers working in the informal sector, including on small agricultural plots, as well as most labour migrants, are now excluded from social insurance schemes (pension, sickness, maternity) and have no rights to work safety guarantees or minimum wages.¹² This in itself represents a new dimension of inequality in access to protection.

This corner discussed the links between employment, social protection, and social inclusion policies and programming, and their relation to the inequalities debate in the region. Representatives from think tanks from Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and Southeast Europe) were asked to provide insights and guide discussion on sub-regional specifics. The main focus was on current and future policy and programmatic responses, sharing good examples and lessons learned, and making concrete proposals for analytical and programmatic follow-up, by UNDP and in partnership with other agencies.

Inequalities in employment outcomes were seen as a manifestation of income inequalities that also had implications for non-income dimensions of inequality. Most of the discussion concentrated on the role (actual and potential) of social protection to address income, employment, and other inequalities, and in particular on the need for policy responses in the field of social protection to be based on realistic assessments of the employment situation, and better linked to labour market policies.

Globally, UNDP's approach to social protection is based on two main principles: (i) inclusiveness (implying a focus on hard-to-reach marginalized populations); and (ii) comprehensiveness—implying the need to provide protection to the vulnerable and those at risk across the lifecycle; and that social protection should be cross-sectorial, in order to address the multi-dimensional aspect of vulnerabilities. Policy links between employment and the more traditional elements of social protection are particularly important in this respect. However, in practice social protection systems remain very fragmented, and de-linked from parallel employment and social policies.

Most session participants shared the view that lessons from other regions about policy responses from social protection design and implementation are limited—largely because this region inherited relatively well developed systems, and relatively large amounts of money are spent on maintaining them (compared to other regions). However, since the effectiveness of these systems has deteriorated for a number of reasons, it is time for countries to step back and take a new look at the role and functions of social protection. This in fact may be more difficult than the tasks facing developing countries in Africa and Asia, which are starting from scratch in designing social protection systems.

There was also broad agreement concerning the need to further develop local social services, to better identify and reach out to the most vulnerable, as well as to ensure the design of appropriate protection and inclusion mechanisms. The structure of social protection spending likewise shows some similarities across the region: the greatest portion is spent on pensions, while only a small portion is allocated to social assistance and minimum income

¹² In Uzbekistan for example, 38% of the workforce was employed in the informal sector in 2009, an increase of 1.7 million since 2002; 43% of working youth were employed in the informal sector. See the Centre for Economic Research, *Development Focus*, no.10, 2013, Tashkent.

guarantees, and even smaller amounts for social services. The group was likewise in broad that it is gender together with other individual and/or spatial characteristics that determine the risk of exclusion from employment and access to quality social services. By contrast, differences were noted among session participants concerning the relative effectiveness of formal social protection measures, compared to private/individual responses (e.g., migration and remittances).

Participants called attention to the need for international/development organisations to more closely align their approaches to social protection. Whereas the World Bank and IMF (and, recently, the EU) have emphasized austerity under macroeconomic stabilisation policies, UNICEF, UNDP, and others have been promoting universal approaches and expanded social protection. While some signs have appeared that donors increasingly see a need for more coordinated approaches—particularly at the global level (e.g., with the publication of the joint World Bank/UNICEF social protection strategy)—this convergence is not yet reflected on the ground.

Participants agreed that the main driver of income inequality, and inequalities in employment outcomes and opportunities, is “jobless growth”—particularly the paucity of good quality jobs. In addition to structural economic issues, governance questions, entrenched elite interests, corruption, and rent-seeking practices were identified as important drivers of inequality in employment. Since social protection systems in the region were designed for situations of full employment, and since such situations are only rarely found, this raises the question of whether the design and financing of social protection needs to be reconsidered.

Social protection infrastructure is relatively well established in the region, but it was described by one participant as being “on life-support”—fragmented, elite-captured, expensive, and ineffective. In most countries, the majority of resources are used to finance pensions (in some countries for war veterans), with only small amounts left over for social assistance schemes and social services. Across the region, social protection could take on a more “transformational” role in systematically and effectively reaching out to the excluded. However, the risk of capture by local elites remains, and monitoring and evaluation systems would have to be incorporated into their design. Overall, public policies and resources could be more focused on developing social services rather than endless discussions on how to better target social assistance.

A recent public opinion survey (in the Southern Caucasus) found that the public would be supportive of policies to extended coverage of social assistance, introduce better targeting, and even some types of conditional cash transfers. However, there are still widely held concerns among policy makers in the region that social assistance/cash transfers encourage passivity and dependency. Such perceptions distract from the more positive roles that social assistance can play in building resilience, or encouraging investment in human capital. In any case, current levels of migration and remittances—which are quite high (by international standards) in much of the region—provide additional proof that vulnerable individuals do not sit passively waiting for others to bring about improvements in their situation.

Prejudices regarding recipients of social assistance (abusers of public funds) are being challenged in Turkey. The group was informed about the results of a research project which found that users would on the whole rather work for minimum wage than receive social assistance. It would be worth hearing more about this initiative as well as about a new social assistance scheme being piloted in Turkey—which is a clear attempt to reach out to the most deprived persons and households in hard-to-reach groups, and to improve their access to social protection measures.

Employment and social protection policies and programmes in the region are rarely well coordinated. Social assistance schemes do not necessarily promote employment, even part-time employment. Active labour market policies, which address long-term labour market structural mismatches, have not been linked to social assistance programmes. One participant suggested that more attention should be paid to the experience of social entrepreneurship in the region, as a way of including and employing persons with disabilities.

Sub-regional perspectives—Central Asia. Thanks to good growth performance as a result of commodity price booms (and remittance inflows), many governments in Central Asia have fiscal space to invest in social protection and social services. However, due to the structure of these economies, the share of quality jobs in overall employment is very low. Most jobs are in the informal sector, and migration/remittances still play an important role—particularly in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (but also, increasingly, Uzbekistan). This reliance on remittances (from Russia and Kazakhstan) means that continued improvements in welfare are contingent on economic growth in these countries migration destination countries. When this growth falters (as is currently the case in Russia), large implications for the poorer Central Asian countries may ensue.

Governments across the sub-region are making efforts to ensure universal access to social services. However, access to good quality services is declining—especially in rural and remote areas—and out-of-pocket costs are increasing. Moreover, despite devoting relatively large amounts of fiscal resources on social protection, the impact of these expenditures is often uncertain. Since the bulk of social protection spending goes to old age pensions, funds left over for social assistance targeting the poor and vulnerable are often symbolic. Moreover, because the size of the average pension is typically close to the minimum subsistence level, access to a pension (or employment) does not imply protection against poverty. There is a high demand for social services, and they also have a large potential for promoting inclusion, while reducing leakages in the use of public resources.

Sub-regional perspectives—Southeast Europe. Economic growth in this sub-region has been slower than in others (here Turkey is an exception), and has tended to have a “jobless” character. This has had significant implications for poverty and inequalities. However, as in the two other sub-regions, policy makers face difficult choices in trying to accelerate economic growth. If governments try to attract foreign investments by offering cheap labour (given the competition from countries with even weaker or no social protection systems), they could be supporting the “race to the bottom”. The region is also facing massive private debt, a melting middle class, frozen social mobility, high youth unemployment rates, slow school-to-work transitions, as well as the re-emergence of urban poverty. It is not uncommon for young people to acquire gainful employment only in their late 20s—leading to “prolonged adolescence” in the sub-region.

Rather than activate, mobilize, and integrate, social policies are too often captured by interest groups (e.g., war veterans). Although the scope and number of active labour market policies have expanded, fragmentation continues to reduce their effectiveness. These policies tend to have a dual nature: they either support people who are likely to find work in any case; or, when they target vulnerable groups, these policies are not combined with adequate additional support/social services. Experience with decentralization of social services has been mixed. Local social services could be more impactful and effective, but decentralized service provision also requires trained professionals, skills, capacities, and fiscal commitments. Otherwise, this form of decentralization can actually contribute to increases in inequalities (for example, if services are concentrated in larger urban areas).

Housing assistance and access to cheap transportation should be considered essential social services in the sub-region.

Sub-regional perspectives—South Caucasus. A public opinion survey carried out in the three countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) indicates that government priorities are seen to be increasing economic growth rather than protecting the poor. The relatively scattered and poor employment data point to huge gender gaps in labour statistics. Some 40-50% of survey respondents support the expansion of social assistance coverage, and are willing to see some conditionality attached to social assistance programmes.

Recommendations. Participants made the following recommendations:

- Advocacy for the positive roles which social protection can play—in achieving rights, and promoting other socio-economic policies—should be stepped up. Such advocacy can address punitive attitudes (including when experimenting with conditional cash transfers—“you will not get cash unless . . .”), and strengthen the focus on how cash can help access other services, to improve development outcomes.
- UNDP should work closely with partners—with UNICEF on social services, with the World Bank on administrative/delivery aspects, etc. There are signs that both organizations are increasingly open to cooperation, realizing that no one agency can cover the entire social protection space.
- The roles that social protection can play, and the instruments to fulfil these roles, should be redefined in the region. In particular:
 - The concept of minimum income needs to be defended, and minimum income levels need to be re-defined (made more realistic) in most countries.
 - Social assistance should be more closely linked with access to social services—possibly via rights-based approaches, as UNDP has already accumulated considerable experience in this area (i.e., decentralized service delivery). But there is a need for further exchange on this. Housing and public transport should be seen as basic services, and when appropriate included in the social protection equation.
- Links between social protection and social inclusion should be strengthened, with a focus on protection for the working poor, based on realistic assessments of the long term nature of national employment circumstances. For example, social protection cannot be designed on the assumption that decent formal sector employment is available, and vulnerable workers just need to be pushed to look more actively for it.
- Examples shared from sub-regions showed clearly that there is scope for more mutual learning and programming.
- While the social protection floor approach has been effective in other parts of the world, it would be hard to implement in the region. Social services might be a better focus in terms of policy response.
- There is a lack of reliable employment statistics in the region; official statistics do not always capture underemployment or migration. More qualitative data to capture information on household coping strategies over longer periods of time should also be gathered. The example from the South Caucasus shows that public opinion surveys can be important in this respect.

Session 5: “Open Forum”

This session was devoted to the presentation of projects and programming to address inequalities, chiefly by representatives of organizations invited to participate in the *Dialog on Inequalities*. Presentations included the following:

Ms. Daria Ukhova: Oxfam’s work on inequality

Main pillars:

- Oxfam’s global campaign on inequality (“Even it up”)
- Projects within the global inequality campaign
- Oxfam’s work on inequality in the region

Key messages included the following:

- Extreme inequality is threatening to undo much of the progress made over the past 20 years in reducing poverty.
- This situation is not inevitable—it’s the consequence of political and economic choices. Things don’t have to be this way.
- There are many methodological issues related to measuring inequality. Should global inequality trends be judged on the basis of in-country inequality data?
- Key global policy issues include “tax havens”, global minimum wages/incomes, fossil fuel subsidies.

Mr. Michael Fembeck (Essl Foundation): The Zero Project

This project has achieved important success in reducing barriers (ideally to “zero”) facing people with disabilities.

Key thematic areas of work include: employment (2013), accessibility (2014), independent living, personal and political rights (2015), and education (2016).

Key success factors:

- Network throughout all different stakeholders: International organizations, international umbrella organizations, governments and administrations on all levels, NGOs and disabled peoples organizations, activists and grassroots organizations, international companies, social entrepreneurs, academics, foundations
- “Crowd intelligence” (“democratisation”)
 - Small contributions and win-win-situations
 - Lean organisation: Operational team, partners, network knots
 - Research, Conference, Website, Communications

Mr. Žarko Papić, Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion: Social welfare reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Papić’s presentation focused on the political economy of social policy reform, in order to reduce inequality. Its key messages included the following:

- Social welfare reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina should focus on better targeting of the poor, and the elimination of discrimination and inequality.
- The social welfare system in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have an influence on reducing poverty and inequality. In fact, social transfers are regressive.

- In 2012, benefits for war veterans amounted to 60% of total non-contributory cash benefits (in 2007, this share was 68%).
- The political dimension of reforms is crucial—why there is big difference between veteran and civilian benefits? War disabilities and non-war disabilities. Veterans’ lobbies matter; political parties buy votes.

Mr. Žarko Šunderić, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Government of Serbia: *Inequality in Serbia*

- Inequality is not good, but perfect income equality is not our goal. Our goal is to reduce extreme inequality because it hurts sustainability and social cohesion.
- As long as extreme form of poverty (by European standards) exists, it should continue to be in focus.
- In addition to the inequality level, it is important to assess living standards and the quality of life for the poorest population groups.
- Income, as a measure of well-being and inequality, does not take into account the in-kind provision of public services such as healthcare, education or housing. In-kind consumption matters, especially in less developed countries.
- Additional, more complex analyses of inequality in Serbia are necessary.
 - OECD social cohesion study.
 - Material deprivation index (under construction now) to capture intra-household distribution of resources.

Ms. Nairuhi Jrbashyan, Yerevan State University: *Multidimensional spatial poverty measurement in Armenia*

- Armenia has some experience in calculating multidimensional poverty indices.¹³
- Sub-national regional development data are collected annually, by survey. These data are used to guide investment projects for local, regional development.
- This methodology can be replicated in other countries.

Ms. Envesa Hodzic-Kovac, UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Regional Disparity Assessment 2010: Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- The assessment was based on official data for 17 different territorial units/regions and 142 municipalities, reflecting 43 different inputs (economic, poverty, social, infrastructure).
- Some 24 indicators were developed: on demographics, education, access to communal services, quality of life, living standards, transport infrastructure and health; employment; economic disparities, social inclusion, and vulnerable groups.
- These data and indicators were compatible with the findings of the official household budget and labour force surveys, as well as with administrative data.
- This methodology can be replicated in other countries.

A representative of the Government of Moldova presented that country’s experience with the “small area deprivation index”. Key points included the following:

- This index is a very useful tool for measuring regional disparities, and for targeting budgetary and extra-budgetary (donor) resources for regional development.
- The index is calculated for each of 843 rural communities. It is based on complex indicators, including data on demographics, education, infrastructure, social protection, and environment.
- This methodology can be replicated in other countries.

¹³ See “Social Vulnerability Index in Armenia”, “Deprivation Index of Rural Population in Armenia”, and “Modified Human Poverty Index in Armenia”, *Armenia Social Trends*, numbers 4,5,7 (2004-2007).

Ms. Sarah Emami, UNDP consultant, *Programming for health equality: lessons learnt from UNDAF processes.* This presentation largely summarized the content contained in the “*Health, health equity, and CCA-UNDAFs*” section above.

Mr. Rustam Babajanov, UNDP-Tajikistan Human Development Officer, *Human Development and Inequalities in Tajikistan*

- Attempts to measuring inequality in Tajikistan face two major problems:
 - Incomes and employment turn out to be non-measurable; and
 - In-kind support to families significantly distorts the picture.
- A regional human development indicator is being introduced in Tajikistan, and will be used as a measure to judge performance of regional administrations.

Session 6: A Regional Human Development Report on Inequalities?

The meeting’s final session was devoted to considering the production of a UNDP regional human development report (RHDR) on inequalities that would reflect:

- past experience with regional human development reporting; with
- initial internal discussions concerning the 2015 RHDR topic;
- the large and growing importance of social media; and
- the use of inequality, exclusion, and vulnerability themes as an over-arching framework, within which a number of sub-topics can be considered.

This approach does not see the preparation of RBEC’s 2015 RHDR as an isolated event, but rather as part of a process devoted to dialogue, consultations, and partnerships in which the *Dialog on Inequalities* figures prominently. The *Dialog on Inequalities* meeting therefore served as an opportunity to continue consultations with national and regional partners—including with external (as well as internal) stakeholders.

Regional Human Development Reports offer human development perspectives on important regional issues in ways that can support regional and national programming. Past RHDRs produced in the RBEC region include:

- *Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies* (2011);
- *Living with HIV in Eastern Europe and CIS* (2008);
- *Bringing Down Barriers: Central Asia Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security* (2005);
- *Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe* (2005);
- *Reversing the Epidemic* (2004);
- *Avoiding the Dependency Trap* (2003)

Preparations for the next (2015) RBEC RHDR were stepped up in September 2014, when a series of possible topics were presented to a meeting of RBEC deputy resident representatives in Istanbul. This was followed by the elaboration of concept notes on the topics discussed, which included:

- [Governance and peace](#);
- [Human capital](#);
- [Inequalities](#);
- [Social sustainability and youth employment](#);
- [Sustainability and austerity](#)

These topics and their concept notes were then the subject of a [regional e-discussion](#) on UNDP's Teamworks internal knowledge platform. Whereas the "inequalities" topic received the most votes at the deputy resident representatives' meeting (with "social sustainability and youth employment" placing second), the "social sustainability and youth employment" topics attracted the most attention in the regional e-discussion. However, the relatively small number of participants in the e-discussion argues against excessive reliance on the results of this consultative modality in determining the RHDR's focus. Moreover, a number of participants in these discussions called attention to potential complementarities and synergies across these topics.

No less important than questions about "what" the topic of RBEC's next RHDR should be are questions about "how" the RHDR should best codify and disseminate knowledge on these (and related) issues. With the emergence of social media as pre-eminent communications platforms, the days of bulky, paper, "written, launched, and done" reports are over. Space has instead been created for shorter, tailored, more cost-effective knowledge products that combine analytics with the ability to position knowledge to best reflect the interests of key stakeholders and partners. This underscores the importance of reconceptualising the RHDR not as a publication—but as a:

- process for the on-going generation and codification of knowledge—which could *inter alia* follow up on the results of the *Dialog on Inequalities* meeting; and
- platform for knowledge codification and dissemination.

The session began with introductory presentations past RHDRs by Ms. Elena Danilova-Cross and Mr. Mihail Peleah of UNDP, emphasizing the role and characteristics they play in UNDP research and analysis, programming, and advocacy. This was followed by a proposed vision for the RHDR "what" and "how" by UNDP's Mr. Ben Slay. In this way, RBEC's 2015 RHDR would be a report, process, and platform corresponding to the above logic. In particular, it would:

- Consist of a number of thematic components that are articulated in (or draw from) the:
 - "Inequalities" and "Social Sustainability and Youth Employment" thematic concept notes—and other concept notes, where relevant;
 - The regional paper on [Poverty, Inequality, and Vulnerability in the Transition and Developing Economies of Europe and Central Asia](#) prepared for the *Dialog on Inequalities*;
 - The *Dialog on Inequalities* outcome document, as well as other documents, submitted by partners at the meeting; and
 - Where relevant, other UNDP publications, including:
 - Regional studies on:
 - [Addressing Social, Economic and Environmental Determinants of Health and the Health Divide in the Context of Sustainable Human Development](#);
 - [Sustainable Energy and Human Development in Europe and CIS](#);
 - [Roma Poverty from a Human Development Perspective](#); and
 - "The Human Development Impact of the 2014 flooding in the Western Balkans" (forthcoming);
 - Relevant national studies, both those produced by UNDP (e.g., [Economic and Social Vulnerability in Georgia](#)) and by partners.

- Seek to update the data on social exclusion presented in the 2011 RHDR on social exclusion—and in this way promote the expanded use of the social exclusion index as a quantitative measure of exclusion in the region; and
- Be accompanied by the design and implementation of an RHDR/inequalities-related knowledge dissemination work programme (via the RBEC website), which would:
 - Facilitate the dissemination of inequality-related content that has been developed (e.g., in the above-mentioned publications); and
 - Identify appropriate dissemination strategies/timelines for this and other content that will be generated within the framework of the RHDR.

These were followed by presentations by Ms. Cherie Hart and Mr. Ariel Rubin of UNDP’s regional communications team, proposing how work on the RHDR could engage people and partners via online platforms. These presentations emphasized continuous content generation and dissemination, on focusing on people, and on making the analysis of the RHDR accessible and of interest to the broader media.

Participants were asked to react to proposals for the “what and how” of the next RHDR. There was overall support for the proposals put forward, with the following points were raised in the discussion:

- The “sustainability and austerity” topic did not attract much support in the previous consultations, and is difficult to tackle explicitly under the inequalities umbrella. However, the topic is important, and we should not lose sight of it.
- Inequalities is a good focus, as not enough has been done to translate the recent contributions of Piketty, Stiglitz, etc. into the regional context. The report could have added value if it can help create comparative data. It would be good to look at how the social protection floor can be applied to our region, and implications for SDGs in our region. The report could be very timely and relevant if it is clearly linked to SDGs, and helps set out the implications of the SDGs for the region in terms of programming, policy response, data and measurement.
- Governance, including the link between conflict and peace, disaster risk, and inequalities is relevant to our region. This link should be strengthened in the theoretical framework. (Ukraine shows hoe governance is vital to meeting the needs of those affected by conflict) Humanity Divided included the results of a survey of policy makers. This was good in drawing attention to the political context and political space for actions to address inequalities.
- Climate change should also be taken into account, including its possible impact on vulnerability, policy options, and impact on migration. It may be good not just to consider the current situation, but also to do some forecasting, as the climate change discussion has shown that policies and scenarios could be useful to illustrate and stress how policy choices could affect inequalities in the future. However, data limitations make this option difficult to pursue.
- Participants emphasized the importance of aligning short, snappy messages with a full report that people will read, and which will have impact. If we want to influence policy makers, and also academics/ civil society who can have influence over policy decisions and hold politicians to account, then we need a report which is solid.

It needs to set out how inequalities can be measured, and what on concrete recommendations for policies that can be effective in tackling poverty, inclusion, and inequalities.

- The question of how to have the most outreach, and how to keep people engaged in the dialogue was discussed. It is important not just to rely on social media, but also to take the report (or at least a three-page summary) directly to people. Social media have an evolving range of tools, but they should not detract from the need for good content and substance. Although the number of “hits” cannot be used as a measure of policy influence, the internet has clearly changed the possibilities for knowledge exchange, and has to be used intelligently. Reports, information are much more accessible, but we have less time to read them. The trick therefore is to present content in an interesting way. It will be important to have good clear messages, and also case examples on addressing inequalities. There is a need to avoid jargon, and make good use of photos, images, and the like. However, photos, images, etc. should be used not for the sake of using them, but to reinforce findings.
- The idea of constant engagement around the report was well received, as it allows us to take the topic further, engage more people and capture more sub-topics. Crowd sourcing to engage broad public in policy debates has already been used successfully by some UNDP country offices (e.g., Albania).
- In considering the best tools for outreach, it may be useful to define the audience for the RHDR, as this will affect decisions on the language, and communication tools used. It is important to include the target group from the very beginning, for example in the choice of topic. It is also important to have realistic expectations regarding policy impact, since policy makers need time to digest.
- *Humanity Divided* was more of a traditional “launch and done” report. There was good social media interest in the first days, but there was no follow up with clients who the report was supposed to influence.
- The example of the large regular reports released by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change was put forward. These large, weighty scientific reports have digestible three-page summaries for policy makers.
- Different audiences can be reached through different tools. Our audience is not hard-core academia, but we interact with them on the policy side and its links with academic work. We are reaching out to the policy community, public, NGOs, and they can be reached through similar means.
- It was pointed out that many governments (especially those that are fulfilling policy conditionalities for EU accession and integration) are experiencing “policy recommendation fatigue”. If the RHDR wants to have policy influence in the SEE region, and engage policy makers, it should ensure that there are links to what is being advocated/pushed by EU. The report should not tell policy makers what to do. Rather the approach would be: “you have concerns, and here are some experiences, suggestions.”
- It should also be remembered that implementation is important. Any recommendations also have to mention governance and means of implementation.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1—MEETING AGENDA

21 January: <i>Inequalities—Trends and implications, global and regional perspectives</i>	
Time	Activity
8.30	Registration
9.00	Opening remarks—Rastislav Vrbensky (Manager, Istanbul Regional Hub, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS)
<i>Session 1: “Global and regional perspectives on inequalities”</i>	
9.15	<p>“Inequalities: Global and regional perspectives”</p> <p>Moderator: Ben Slay (Senior Advisor, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS)</p> <p>Keynote speakers (20 minutes each)</p> <p>Ipek Ilkcaracan Ajas (Faculty of Management, Istanbul Technical University) Michael Marmot (Director, Institute of Health Equity, University College, London)</p> <p>Presentation of UNDP’s <i>Humanity Divided</i> global study of inequalities in developing countries: Almudena Fernandez, UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (15 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion (50 minutes)</p> <p>Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inequalities in developing countries: Global trends and challenges What policies and programmes seem effective in reducing inequalities? Links to the SDGs, post-2015 agenda
11.00	Coffee break
<i>Session 2: “Inequalities in Southeast Europe and the Former USSR”</i>	
11.15	<p>“Inequalities: The regional landscape”</p> <p>Moderator: Rastislav Vrbensky, Regional Manager, Istanbul Hub, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS</p> <p>Keynote speakers (20 minutes each)</p> <p>Sascha Gabizon (Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future)</p>

	<p>Marek Dabrowski (Professor of the Higher School of Economics (Moscow); Non-Resident Scholar at Bruegel (Brussels))</p> <p>Presentation of UNDP’s <i>Regional Poverty, Inequality, and Vulnerability</i> regional study: Ben Slay, Senior Advisor, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS (15 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion (50 minutes)</p> <p>Guidance on the split for “Inequality Corners”</p> <p>Moderator: Ben Slay, Senior Advisor, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS</p>		
13.15	Lunch		
Session 3: “Unpacking inequalities in the region” (“Inequality corners”)			
14.45	<p>Participants split into five “inequality corners” (working groups) that will:</p> <p>Reflect on morning presentations</p> <p>Focus on thematic/sectoral dimensions of inequalities in the region</p> <p>Identify key policy and programming challenges</p> <p>Propose appropriate responses</p> <p>Be supported by a moderator and rapporteur</p> <p>Coffee will be available</p>		
<p>Inequality Corner 1:</p> <p>Gender dimensions of inequality</p> <p>Presentation 1</p>		<p>Inequality Corner 2:</p> <p>Measurement, data, and indicators</p> <p>Presentation 1</p> <p>Presentation 2</p> <p>Presentation 3</p>	<p>Inequality Corner 3:</p> <p>Inequalities and inclusive governance</p>
<p>Inequality Corner 4:</p> <p>Health and inequalities</p> <p>Presentation 1</p>		<p>Inequality Corner 5:</p> <p>Inequalities, employment, and social protection</p> <p>Presentation 1</p> <p>Presentation 2</p> <p>Presentation 3</p>	

17.00	Concluding remarks, setting the stage for Day 2 Moderators: Rastislav Vrbensky, Ben Slay
18.30	Reception (in hotel)
22 January: "What is to be done?"	
Session 4: From analysis to policies and programming	
08.50	Video presentation on Sustainable Development Goals, Paul Ladd, Head, Team on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, UNDP, NY Presentation of "inequality corner" results Moderator: George Bouma (UNDP Regional Sustainable Development Team Leader)
09.00	Each "corner rapporteur" makes a 10-minute presentation on outcomes of her/his Day 1 corner discussions, followed by 5 minutes of discussion General discussion
10.30	Coffee break
Session 5: Programming to address inequalities	
10.45	Open forum to share experiences Oxfam's inequality work, and its application to the region. Presenter: Daria Ukhova Social Welfare Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Presenter: Director Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion (IBHI) Zero Project-approach. Presenter: Michael Fembek, Head of the project Inequality in Serbia. Presenter: Zarko Sunderic, Head of Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Government of Serbia Multidimensional poverty measurement: some considerations and experience in Armenia Regional Disparity Assessment 2010: Bosnia and Herzegovina Brief Overview. Presenter: Envesa Hodzic-Kovac, Development, Research and M&E specialist Programming for health equality – lessons learnt from UNDAF processes in the ECIS region. Presenter Ms. Sarah Emami, Regional Consultant for the effective integration of HIV, Health and Development into CCA-UNDAF processes in EECA; Poverty and inequality in Tajikistan. Presenter: Rustam Babajanov, Manager of UNDP "Mainstreaming Human Development" project

	Moderator: Ben Slay
13.00	Lunch
Session 6: A Regional Human Development Report on Inequalities?	
Moderator: Rastislav Vrbensky	
14.30	Introduction—Ben Slay
14.35	Previous Regional Human Development Reports in Europe and Central Asia— Elena Danilova-Cross (UNDP programme specialist, poverty and inequality) ; Mihail Peleah (UNDP programme specialist, green economy and employment)
14.55	A vision for the report “what” and the “how” —Ben Slay (UNDP senior advisor)
15.05	Dissemination platforms— Cherie Hart (UNDP regional communications advisor) ; Ariel Rubin (UNDP regional communications specialist)
15.30	Discussion

Session 7: Conclusions

16.30 Concluding remarks—Ben Slay

ANNEX 2—LIST OF PARTICIPANTS¹⁴

Dialog on Inequalities, Istanbul, Turkey, 21-22 January 2015			
List of Participants			
#	Name	Position, Organization	Country
1	Eno Ngjela	Programme Officer, UNDP Albania	Albania
2	Entela Lako	Programme Officer, UNDP Albania	Albania
3	Yesim Oruc	Country Director, UNDP Albania	Albania
4	Ylli Cabiri	Executive Director, Human Development Promotion Center, UNDP Albania	Albania
5	Armine Hovhannisyan	Results-Based Management and Gender Focal Point, UNDP Armenia	Armenia
6	Artak Melkonyan	American University of Armenia, former CEO of “IdeA Foundation”	Armenia
7	Nairuhi Jrbashyan	Senior Consultant, Assistant Professor	Armenia
8	Michael Fembek	ESSL Foundation	Austria
9	Fuad Huseynov	Deputy Head of Social Security Policy Dept., Ministry of Labor and Social Protection Population	Azerbaijan
10	Matin Karimli	Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population	Azerbaijan
11	Nato Alhazishvilli	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan
12	Alexandra Makarova	Programme Associate for the Economic Portfolio, UNDP Belarus	Belarus
13	Tatiana Makarevich	Head a.i., Grants Implementation Unit, UNDP Projects funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Belarus	Belarus
14	Sascha Gabizon	Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future, Brussels	Belgium
15	Envesa Hodzic-Kovac	Development Research and M&E Specialist, UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina
16	Nand Shani	Senior Expert on Inclusive Growth, Regional Cooperation Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina
17	Žarko Papić	Director, IBHI – Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion	Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹⁴ In alphabetic order, by country/territory.

18	Jasmina Papa	Advisor on Social Protection	Croatia
19	Paul Stubbs	Senior Research Fellow, The Institute of Economics, Zagreb	Croatia
20	Elfatih Abdelraheem	Policy Specialist, HIV, Health and Development, UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, Regional Bureau for Arab States, Egypt	Egypt
21	Louisa Vinton	UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, UNDP FYR Macedonia	FYR Macedonia
22	Vesna Dzuteska Bisheva	Head of Social Inclusion Unit, UNDP FYR Macedonia	FYR Macedonia
23	Ketevan Vashakidze	President, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Georgia	Georgia
24	Koba Turmanidze	President, Caucasus Research Resource center Georgia	Georgia
25	Nanobashvili George	Economic Development Team Leader	Georgia
26	Tatia Batsikadze	Advisor at Economic Development Service, Economic Council Administration under Prime Minister of Georgia	Georgia
27	Murat Narkulov	Programme Associate, Governance and Local Development Unit	Kazakhstan
28	Denis Nushi	Human Development Research Project Manager, UNDP Kosovo*	Kosovo*
29	Ereblina Elezaj	Research Analyst for Socio-Economic Policies, UNDP Kosovo*	Kosovo*
30	Elmira Shishkaraeva	Country Programme Gender Coordinator, UNDP Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan
31	Nazgul Tashpaeva	Independent Expert, ex-Minister of Social Protection	Kyrgyzstan
32	Pradeep Sharma	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan
33	Roza Nuria Choibaeva	Programme and Policy Analyst, UNDP Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan
34	Narine Sahakyan	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Moldova	Moldova
35	Rodica Nicoara	Deputy Head, Policy Analysis and M&E, Ministry of Economy of Moldova	Moldova
36	Boban Gledovic	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare	Montenegro
37	Miodrag Dragisic	ARR and Social Inclusion Team Leader, UNDP Montenegro	Montenegro

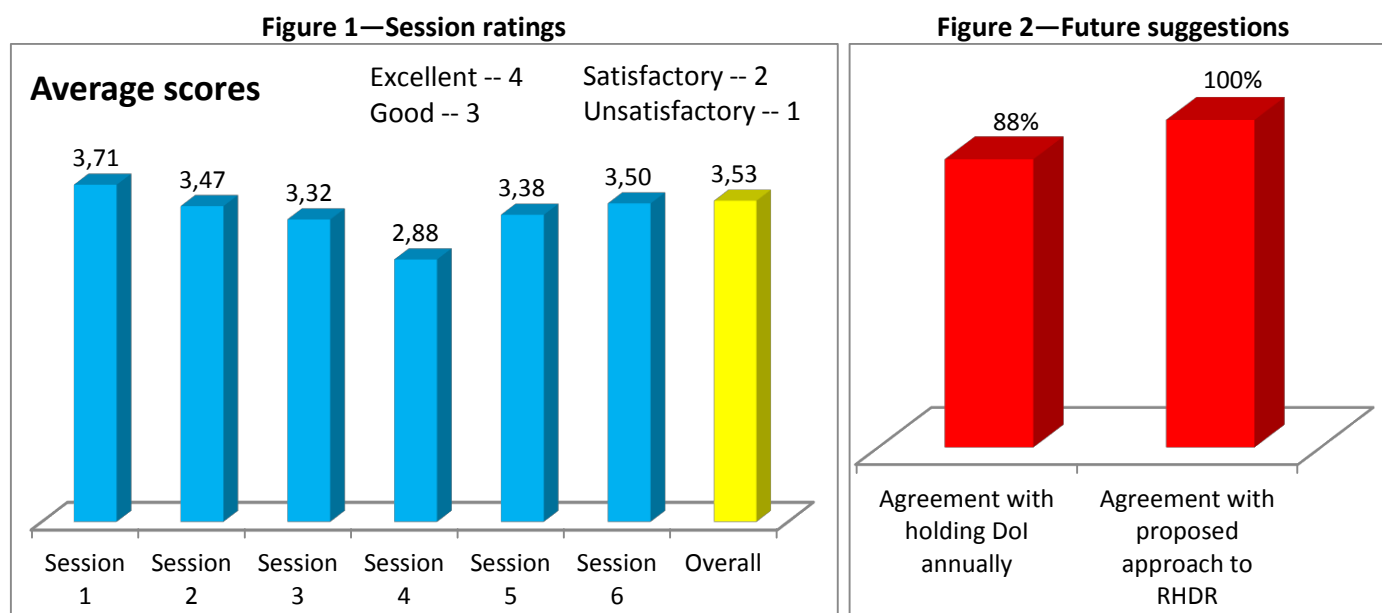
38	Tomica Paovic	Policy and Human Development Analyst, UNDP Montenegro	Montenegro
39	Roman Mogilevskii	Head of Research, Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Central Asia, Kyrgyz Republic	Non-UN
40	Marek Dabrowski	Professor of the Higher School of Economics (Moscow); Co-founder of the Centre for Social and Economic Research (Warsaw)	Russia
41	Daniel Varga	Programme Associate, UNDP Serbia	Serbia
42	Gordana Matkovic	Programme Director of the think tank Center for Social Policy	Serbia
43	Jelena Tadzic	Programme Officer	Serbia
44	Ljiljana Dzuver	Assistant Minister, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	Serbia
45	Vesna Jaric	Project Coordinator (Gender Expert), UNDP Serbia	Serbia
46	Žarko Šunderić	Team Manager, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Government of Serbia (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)	Serbia
47	Alexander Zuyev	Resident Representative/ UN Resident Coordinator UNDP Tajikistan	Tajikistan
48	Gulru Kayumova	Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade	Tajikistan
49	Mubin Rustamov	Assistant to Resident Representative / Programme	Tajikistan
50	Rustam Babajanov	Project Manager, Mainstreaming Human Development in Tajikistan	Tajikistan
51	Zebo Jalilova	Programme Analyst, UNDP Tajikistan	Tajikistan
52	Adrien Licha	Coordinator, UCLG-MEWA	Turkey
53	Aferdita Mekuli	Local Governance and Decentralization Specialist, BPPS	Turkey
54	Alia El-Yassir	Deputy Regional Director, UN Women, Turkey	Turkey
55	Andrey Pogrebnyak	Operations Manager, UNDP IRH	Turkey
56	Ariel Rubin	On-line Communications Consultant, UNDP IRH	Turkey
57	Armen Grigoryan	Team Leader and Advisor, Disaster Risk Reduction (ECIS), UNDP IRH	Turkey

58	Asli Hekimoglu	Programme Assistant, UNDP IRH	Turkey
59	Barbora Galvankova	Knowledge Management Associate, UNDP IRH	Turkey
60	Ben Slay	Senior Strategic Advisor, UNDP IRH	Turkey
61	Berna Bayazit	Programme Manager, UNDP Turkey	Turkey
62	Boyan Konstantinov	Programme Specialist on HIV, Human Rights and Law Access	Turkey
63	Cansu Demir	Intern, UNDP IRH	Turkey
64	Cengiz Cihan	Senior Economist, UNDP Turkey	Turkey
65	Cherie Hart	Communications Advisor, UNDP IRH	Turkey
66	Christoph Hamelmann	Regional Team Leader, HIV and Health, UNDP IRH	Turkey
67	Daniela Carrington	Programme Specialist, Climate Change, UNDP IRH	Turkey
68	Dmitri Mariyassin	Team Leader/ Partnership Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
69	Elena Danilova-Cross	Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
70	Filiz Bikmen	Senior Program Officer, EMpower Turkey, EMpower Emerging Markets Foundation	Turkey
71	George Bouma	Team Leader, Sustainable Development, UNDP IRH	Turkey
72	Gregory Sanders	Regional Security Advisor, UNDP IRH	Turkey
73	Haluk Levent	Professor and director of TEAM (Research Center at IKBU), Istanbul Kemerburgaz University (IKBU) / TEAM	Turkey
74	Harry Gibbs	International Consultant, UNDP IRH	Turkey
75	Havva Gün Etyemez	Deputy Secretary General, Writers and Journalists' Women's Platform Foundation	Turkey
76	Ieva Vezbergaite	Intern- UNDP IRH, PhD Student Sabanci University	Turkey
77	Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir	Director and Representative to Turkey, UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional	Turkey

78	Ipek Ikkaracan	Faculty of Management, Istanbul Technical University	Turkey
79	Jennifer Butler	Senior Advisor, HIV, Advisor, UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Turkey	Turkey
80	John Macauley	HIV, Health and Development Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
81	Kadir Uysal	Field Focal Point, ILO, Turkey	Turkey
82	Kamil Arli	Diplomatic Correspondent, Zaman Media Group	Turkey
83	Karolina Mzyk	Policiy Specialist, Foundations, UNDP IICPSD, Istanbul	Turkey
84	Marta Diavolova	Regional Adviser on Partnerships and MIC, UNFPA, EECA Regional Office , Turkey	Turkey
85	Martin Krause	Senior Global Energy Policy Advisor & Energy and Env. Practice Leader	Turkey
86	Mihail Peleah	Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
87	Milica Begovic	Programme Specialist, Knowledge and Innovation, UNDP IRH	Turkey
88	Murat Akşit	Deputy Secretary Genera, Medialog Platform	Turkey
89	Nigina Abaszadeh	Regional Gender Advisor, UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Turkey	Turkey
90	Ozlem Altug	Country Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
91	Rana Kotan	Sabancı Foundation	Turkey
92	Rastislav Vrbensky	Regional Hub Manager, UNDP IRH	Turkey
93	Robert Bernardo	Programme Specialist: Capacity Development & Institutional Strengthening, UNDP IRH	Turkey
94	Sanjar Tursaliev	Country Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
95	Sheila Marnie	Programme Advisor, Sustainable Development, UNDP IRH	Turkey
96	Shelley Inglis	Team Leader, UNDP IRH	Turkey
97	Sisi Tang	Editor, Stratfor Inc.	Turkey

98	Stefan Liller	Country Programme Specialist, UNDP IRH	Turkey
99	Sümeyye Saral	Project Officer, UCLG-MEWA	Turkey
100	Tolga Aksoy	Deputy Secretary General, Journalists and Writers Foundation's Abant Platform	Turkey
101	Yusuf Yuksel	Department on Social Protection, Ministry of Development	Turkey
102	Zeynep Karataş	New's Reporter, Today's Zaman	Turkey
103	Myrat Begliyev	Vice-Rector of International University for the Humanities and Development of Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan
104	Anna Chernova	Senior Regional Policy Coordinator (CIS and the Middle East), Oxfam Great Britain, UK	UK
105	Daria Ukhova	Inequality Policy Adviser, Oxfam Great Britain, UK	UK
106	John Lotherington	Program Director, Salzburg Global Seminar, UK	UK
107	Michael Marmot	Director, Institute of Health Equity, University College, London	UK
108	Ruth Bell	Senior Advisor UCL Institute of Health Equity, London	UK
109	Sarah Emami	Independent Consultant, United Kingdom	UK
110	Katerina Rybalchenko	Senior Programme Manager, UNDP Ukraine	Ukraine
111	Liudmyla Cherenko	Head of Department, Institute for Demography and Social Studies (National Academy of Science of Ukraine)	Ukraine
112	Olga Krentovska	Head of Strategic Department, Ministry of Social Policy	Ukraine
113	Almudena Fernandez	Policy Specialist on Social Protection, UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programming Support	USA
114	Zarif Jumaev	Programme Associate, Poverty Reduction UNDP Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan
* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).			

Meeting evaluations were filled out and returned by 17 participants.¹⁶ The tabulated results of these evaluations are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. They indicate that most respondents viewed the meeting as either “excellent” or “very good” (scoring for responses to this question averaged 3.53 points out of 4). 88% of the respondents favoured holding the *Dialog on Inequalities* every year; 100% of the respondents were in favour of the approach described in session.



Specific comments are shown below.

Session 1: “Global and regional perspectives on inequalities”

- Helped to create a general picture of the problem
- Very well balanced, complementary presentations
- Very informative and useful. Overall situation, trends, main issues were revealed.
- Presentations were really sharp and to the point.

Session 2: “Inequalities in Southeast Europe and the Former USSR”

- Useful evidence
- Very informative and useful. Situation, trends, main issues were revealed for the group of countries.
- The session complemented well the first session, but presentations of Ms.Gabizon and Prof. Dabrowski could have been a bit more regionally focused than they were.

Session 3: “Inequality corners”

¹⁵ Based on 17 received forms. Rating is an average of individual evaluations.

¹⁶ This represents about one third of the participants who were present for the entire meeting.

- This was the part of the meeting that allowed maximum participation from the participants
- Inequality corner created very interesting discussion and raised important issues
- Comprehensive in presentation of data and programs and also some searching analyses
- Some deep comparative analysis of different measurement indicators of inequalities will be desirable for further discussions (maybe include also education Gini and Palma, health Gini and Palma, Atkinson Gini, entropy, statistical and descriptive indices, etc.)
- Was very useful to learn and develop the regional vision on gender inequalities issues
- The discussion was really lively and engaging. But by the end it was too focused on the situation in Turkey.(gender)

Session 4: “Inequality corners: Reporting back”

- I believe if there was a unified reporting template and power points, it would have been easier for participants to follow up
- Reports varied a bit but much of interest
- Comprehensive summary and conclusions on the issues discussed in the Corners.
- The session seemed a bit formal and reporting from different corners was very different. Having a common structure for feedback report could have helped.
- Comments related to planned Kosovo Human Development Report 2014/2015 on Public Health have not been mentioned at all...

Session 5: “Open forum to share experiences”

- It was an useful way to share experiences
- Great opportunity to hear from a spread of colleagues
- Very good opportunity to present and to share practices and experiences in different countries. Very useful.
- This session, for Oxfam, was a really good chance to do some message testing. It was also interesting to see how participants approach the issue (e.g. the inequality vs. social mobility debate).

Session 6: “A regional human development report on inequalities?”

- Although an important piece of the meeting, but the timing was not enough
- Very promising theme for the report!
- Presented vision of the regional HDR on inequalities raised very important issues.
- The posts from UN Teamwork came too short!

Overall meeting assessment

- Given the first experience, it is really good organizing.
- Would be even more interesting if there were participants representing business community/so called “1%” to understand their perspective and engage in the dialogue
- In overall, the meeting was very productive.
- A very worthwhile knowledge exchange

Future question 1: Do you think the “Dialog on Inequalities” should be repeated yearly (or less often)?

- Although the subject lies under sustainable development which by de facto require time, but changes happen and impact inequality, so annual meeting is recommended.
- Biannually
- I think, the importance of the issue is very high
- Annual sounds good

- Yes, very important to share experiences, developments and new approaches at the stable basis.
- It is important during the 'transitional period' when moving to post-2015 agenda
- I think working on inequality in your region is really crucial, especially because neoliberal ideology have been so entrenched among the policy makers there.

Future question 2: Do you agree with the approach to a regional human development report on inequalities proposed at the meeting?

All "yeses"

- Suggestion – reveal issues regarding formal and non-formal institutions (shadow economy, corruption, rule of law, non-formal employment, information asymmetry, etc.). Co-relations of these issues with sustainable growth, business environment, and living standards, opportunities and inequalities.
- Sub-regional HDRs can be considered.