



## **OECD FINAL PROJECT REPORT ON THE ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON**

### **MEASURING WELL-BEING AND FOSTERING THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETIES**

#### **Introduction**

This document presents the Final Report on the Asia-Pacific Conference on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering the Progress of Societies. It summarises the main highlights of the event and compiles a number of associated documents in the form of Annexes.

#### **Executive Summary**

The Statistics Directorate and the Development Centre of the OECD, with assistance from the Government of Japan (the Economic Social Research Institute, attached to the Cabinet Office) and other regional organisations (ADB, ESCAP, KOSTAT), organised the Asia-Pacific Conference on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering the Progress of Societies of 5-6 December 2011. The conference was the second in a series of regional conferences being conducted in preparation for the 4th OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policies, to be held in New Delhi in October 2012. It gathered around 180 policy makers, statisticians, academics, and other stakeholders from 30 countries across the Asia-Pacific region, as well as representatives from Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

The conference took place at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS). As for other regional conferences, its goal was to deepen on-going reflection on how to measure well-being and progress, enhance the relevance of measures and analysis for addressing key policy issues, and establish concrete outputs, such as establishing frameworks for future work. It constituted the primary mechanism for shaping the Asia-Pacific contribution to the 4th OECD World Forum.

The conference started with a series of opening addresses from the lead organisations. OECD Deputy Secretary-General, Rintaro Tamaki, outlined the importance of OECD's work on measuring well-being and its strong relation to ongoing discussion on the economic crisis and development. The official welcome was delivered by Motohisa Furukawa, Japanese Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy. The keynote address from Karma Tshiteem, Secretary of the Bhutanese Gross National Happiness Commission, focused on Bhutan's pursuit of Gross National Happiness. The opening session concluded with an address by OECD Chief Statistician, Martine Durand, which set the scene for the conference by describing the OECD and national/international initiatives on measuring well-being and progress. This was then followed by a series of thematic sessions, combining plenaries and break-up.

The Material Conditions theme included sessions on "Inequalities: outcomes and opportunities", "Employment and human capital", and "Housing and urban infrastructure". The main messages emanating from these sessions concerned: the importance of measuring informality, under-employment, quality of education, and social protection; the importance of looking at assets and their distribution, in addition to income; the fact that the rapid urbanization experienced by the region raised challenges for how living conditions in urban centres are measured; and the need to move beyond the standard measures of extreme poverty used in poor countries towards measures



that capture the emergence of an increasing middle class in the region (e.g. taking account of the cost of urban living).

The Sustainability and future challenges theme included sessions on "Governance and participation", "Age and gender perspectives" and "Vulnerability to natural/man-made disasters and environmental risks". Highlights include the following: ageing poses particular challenges for assessing well-being in the Asia-Pacific region; women confront specific well-being challenges such as caring for children and the elderly, dealing with unfriendly working environments, and discrimination; governance should be understood as a separate dimension of well-being, while noting the need for a better conceptual framework, for translating this framework into tangible measures, and for recognising the large differences in types of governments in the region; and, finally, that governments need to manage extreme risks, recognising both their perceived and actual consequences, and providing transparent information on their effects.

The Quality of life and societal behaviour theme included sessions on "Subjective well-being", "Social relations", and "Time use". It was observed that: several countries in the region have existing programmes to measure subjective well-being and are using the results to influence policy; while social and family relations are very important for many dimensions of well-being, ageing, urbanisation and internet are changing their nature and quality; and, finally, that time-use surveys have the potential to better inform on the well-being of people, such as work-life balance, caring, leisure and social relations (while some data exist, NSOs in the region need to increase their capacity to analyse them and achieve further harmonization).

The conference ended with three plenary sessions. The first, on National well-being and policy making, focused on the work of New Zealand's Treasury in putting well-being at the heart of policy making. The second, on Challenges for official statistics in the Asia-Pacific region, focused on existing processes and capacity building at the regional level. The third (and final) session set out some Tentative conclusions, in order to move forward the measurement agenda and establish regional momentum towards the 4th World Forum in New Delhi. These draft conclusions (attached, and to be finalized, following feedback from participants, in January) recognize the following: i) the global drive to move 'beyond GDP', highlighted by the recent UN resolution (sponsored by Bhutan and adopted by consensus) and by a number of country-specific initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region; ii) the demand for a new development framework based on the notion of well-being, the need for the official statistical community to respond to this demand, and its possible implications for post-MDG discussions; iii) the measurement of well-being goes beyond money income, requiring the consideration of both objective and subjective dimensions, starting from individuals but considering societal well-being as its final goal; iv) the importance that the Asia-Pacific regional voice in the field of measuring well-being be conveyed to the 4th World Forum in New Delhi in October 2012, with proposals for specific outputs and future activities. The conference conclusion also highlighted a number of cross-cutting issues that are especially relevant to the Asia-Pacific region, such as: i) the importance of taking into account different spatial units (urban/rural, regions, cities); ii) recognizing cultural differences; iii) undertaking further research in a number of dimensions (subjective well-being, governance, social ties); iv) taking into account the large differences in statistical capacities across the region; iv) the special role that the ESCAP Statistical Committee will play to promote and coordinate efforts in the region; iv) the roles of both official and non-official statistics, and of private/public partnerships; v) the active contribution from the scientific and business communities in the region (e.g. by creating a regional research network and a blog hosted by Wikiprogress); and vi) the need to engage and communicate with the public.



## **Description of Annexes**

Annex A contains the final agenda (in English) for the Conference, arrived at in consultation with ESRI and other members of the Organising Committee.

Annex B contains (1) a document on Measuring Well-Being and Progress, (2) An Executive Summary for How's Life, and (3) a document on How's life in Japan?

Annex C contains the final conclusions of the Conference (in English), taking into account the various keynote speeches, cross-cutting round tables and themed sessions which took place over the two day event, and also considering any issues which arose during the post-event consultation period.

Annex D contains the list of chairs and speakers at the Conference (in English).

Annex E contains the representatives from National Statistical Organisations at the event (in English).



## Annex A

# Final Agenda for the Conference



## ***Asia-Pacific Conference on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering the Progress of Societies*** ***5-6 December 2011, Tokyo, Japan***

### Overview

The Asia-Pacific Conference on *Measuring Well-Being and Fostering the Progress of Societies* is one of a series of regional conferences being conducted in preparation for the 4<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policies, to be held in New Delhi in October 2012. It will gather around 250 regional policy makers, statisticians, academics, and other stakeholders with a specific interest in the field. The Conference is jointly organised by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Economic and Social Research Institute of Japan (ESRI), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Statistics Korea (KOSTAT) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in collaboration with the OECD Development Centre and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) Secretariat.

The purpose of the Conference will be to deepen on-going reflection on how to measure well-being and the progress of societies, enhance the relevance of measures and analysis for addressing key policy issues, and lead to concrete outputs, such as establishing frameworks for future work. It will be the primary mechanism for shaping the Asia-Pacific contribution to the 4<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum through open and frank exchanges of view, sharing of experiences, deepening of knowledge and understanding, and regional agenda setting. The Conference will take place at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Tokyo, Japan on 5-6 December 2011.

### Agenda

The two-day event will include a keynote address by a prominent regional policy-maker on how well-being measures can inform policies from an Asia-Pacific perspective. The Chief Statistician of OECD, Martine Durand, will then set the scene for the Conference by describing the latest national and international initiatives on measuring well-being and progress.

There will then follow a series of themed sessions. These sessions will be in three stages. Stage 1, in plenary, will involve the session chair presenting a general overview of three different issues relating to each theme. Stage 2, in parallel, will involve each workshop chair broadening these issues and facilitating deeper reflection. Stage 3, in plenary, will begin with each workshop chair reporting back on concerns, ideas, and proposals raised in the parallel workshops; and will then end with general discussion and conclusions by the session chair.

## Annex A: Final Agenda for the Conference



The three themed sessions will focus on people's material conditions and on some of the critical aspects of people's quality of life. Possible themes for the parallel workshops include inequalities, employment and human capital, housing and urban infrastructure, governance and participation, quality of life of specific groups, natural disasters, subjective well-being, social relations, and time use.

The Conference will close with two special sessions. The first, to be chaired by Brian Pink, Chief Statistician of Australia, will look at the challenges for official statistics in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of implementation and capacity building. The second, to be chaired by Martine Durand, Chief Statistician of OECD, will aim to distil overall conclusions from the Conference and look at moving forward the measurement agenda: defining targets, setting benchmarks, and achieving concrete outcomes.

Conclusions from the Conference will be collected by a Drafting Group, appointed in advance. This Group will take note of the reports from the Workshops, concrete proposals emerging from general discussion, and conclusions from the Chairs of each session. This information will then be proposed as the main conclusions of the Conference during the closing session. The proposed text will be posted on the Conference website for comment until the end of December. Thereafter, it will represent the contribution of the Asia-Pacific Conference to the 4<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum to be held in New Delhi in October 2012. This text will put strong emphasis on operational conclusions, institutional commitments and concrete follow-up actions.

### Contact

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## **Day 1            Monday 5 December 2011**

08:30 - 09:00    Registration and refreshments

### **09:00 – 10:00    Opening session**

Facilitation by the Master of Ceremonies  
*Junko UCHINO, Executive Research Fellow, ESRI*

Welcome address  
*Motohisa FURUKAWA, Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy (10 minutes)*

Introductory addresses  
*Rintaro TAMAKI, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD (10 minutes)*  
*Shuzo NISHIMURA, Director General, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Japan (10 minutes)*  
*Juzhong ZHUANG, Deputy Chief Economist, ADB (10 minutes)*  
*Kilaparti RAMAKRISHNA, Director, ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (10 minutes)*  
*Hoe-Jeong KIM, Director General for Planning and Coordination, KOSTAT (10 minutes)*

### **10:00 – 10:30    Keynote address**

Measuring well-being: Bhutan's pursuit of Gross National Happiness  
*Karma TSHITEEM, Secretary, Gross National Happiness Commission , Bhutan*

10:30 – 10:50    Refreshments

### **10:50 – 11:10    Setting the scene**

National and international initiatives on measuring well-being and progress: A description of some of the key ongoing initiatives and the role of regional conferences in the lead up to the 4<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policies in New Delhi in October 2012.  
*Martine DURAND, OECD Chief Statistician*



## THEME 1: Material conditions

### 11:10 – 11:50 Material conditions (part 1 in plenary)

Introduction by Session Chair: Shailaja CHANDRA, Senior Report Writer, Government of India (10 minutes)

Overview address

Juzhong ZHUANG, Deputy Chief Economist, ADB (20 minutes)

Transfer to parallel workshops (10 minutes)

### 11:50 – 13:00 Material conditions (part 2 in parallel)

1a	1b	1c
<b>Inequalities: outcomes and opportunities</b>	<b>Employment and human capital</b>	<b>Housing and urban infrastructure</b>
<i>Workshop Chair 1a: Riti IBRAHIM, Ministry of Planning Statistics Division, Bangladesh (4 minutes)</i>	<i>Workshop Chair 1b: Douglas BROOKS, Assistant Chief Economist, ADB (4 minutes)</i>	<i>Workshop Chair 1c: Takashi OMORI, Tokyo City University (4 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 1ai: Roger RICAFORT, Oxfam, Hong Kong (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 1bi: Kensuke TANAKA, OECD Development Centre (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 1ci: Phung Thi Thanh Thu, Indochina Research and Consulting, Vietnam (12 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 1aai: Romina BOARINI, OECD (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 1bii: Pattama TEANRAVISITSAGOOL, NESDB, Thailand (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 1cii: Leslie TANG, Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong (12 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 1aiii: Inhoe KU, Seoul National University (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 1biii: K Narayanan UNNI, Dy Director General, MOPSI (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 1ciii: Geoff WOOLCOCK, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia (12 minutes)</i>
<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>	<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>	<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch (*light buffet*)

### 14:00 – 14:50 Material conditions (part 3 in plenary)

Building Common Ground: Session Chair (*facilitation*)

Reports: Workshop Chairs (*10 minutes each*)

General discussion (*15 minutes*)

Conclusions: Session Chair (*5 minutes*)

Transfer of speakers (*10 minutes*)





## THEME 2: Sustainability and future challenges

### 15:00 – 15:40 Sustainability and future challenges (part 1 in plenary)

*Introduction and overview address by Session Chair: Naoto YAMAUCHI, Chair of the Commission on Measuring well-being, Osaka University (30 minutes)*

*Transfer to parallel workshops (10 minutes)*

### 15:40 – 16:50 Sustainability and future challenges (part 2 in parallel)

2a	2b	2c
<b>Governance and participation</b>	<b>Age and gender perspectives</b>	<b>Vulnerability to natural/man-made disasters and environmental risks</b>
<i>Workshop Chair 2a: Jessamyn O. ENCARNACION, NSCB, Philippines (4 minutes)</i>	<i>Workshop Chair 2b: Porameteer VIMOLSIRI, NESDB, Thailand (4 minutes)</i>	<i>Workshop Chair 2c: Vince GALVIN, Statistics New Zealand (4 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 2ai: Imogen WALL, ABS, Australia (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 2bi: Taiichiro NISHIKAWA, Mayor of Arakawa City (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 2ci: Nick JOHNSTONE, OECD (12 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 2aii: Terue OHASHI, Tohoku University (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 2bii: Yoko NAKAGAKI, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Japan (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 2cii: Johan HAVENAAR, Department of Psychiatry, Utrecht University Hospital (12 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 2aiii: Robert MANCHIN, GALLUP (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 2biii: (12 minutes) Shailaja CHANDRA (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 2ciii: Yukiko UCHIDA, Kyoto University (12 minutes)</i>
<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>	<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>	<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>

16:50 – 17:10 Refreshments

### 17:10 – 18:00 Sustainability and future challenges (part 3 in plenary)

*Building common ground: Session Chair (facilitation)*

*Reports: Workshop Chairs (10 minutes each)*

*General discussion (15 minutes)*

*Conclusions: Session Chair (5 minutes)*

**18:00** End of day 1

**19:00** Evening reception



**Day 2: Tuesday 6 December 2011**

08:30 – 09:00 Refreshments

**Theme 3: Quality of life and societal behaviour**

**09:00 – 09:40 Quality of life and societal behaviour (part 1 in plenary)**

*Introduction by Session Chair: Haishan FU, Director, Statistics Division, ESCAP (10 minutes)*

Overview address

*Shinsuke IKEDA, Osaka University (20 minutes)*

*Transfer to parallel workshops (10 minutes)*

**09:40 – 10:50 Quality of life and societal behaviour (part 2 in parallel)**

<b>3a</b>	<b>3b</b>	<b>3c</b>
<b>Subjective well-being</b>	<b>Social relations</b>	<b>Time use</b>
<i>Workshop Chair 3a: Hoe-Jeong KIM, KOSTAT (4 minutes)</i>	<i>Workshop Chair 3b: Wynandin IMAWAN, Deputy Chief Statistician, Statistics Indonesia (4 minutes)</i>	<i>Workshop Chair 3c: Cassandra GLIGORA, ABS, Australia (4 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 3ai: Yoshiyuki SODEKAWA, Social Planning Division, Dentsu Inc., Japan (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 3bi: David CHAN, SMU Singapore (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 3ci: Noriko TSUYA, Keio University (12 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 3aii: Marco Mira D'ERCOLE, OECD (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 3bii: Wenmeng FENG, China Development Research Foundation (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 3cii: Man Yee KAN, University of Oxford (12 minutes)</i>
<i>Panellist 3aiii: Paul FRIJTERS, University of Queensland, Australia (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 3biii: Takayoshi KUSAGO, Kansai University (12 minutes)</i>	<i>Panellist 3ciii: Jayoung YOON, Korea Labour Institute (12 minutes)</i>
<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>	<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>	<i>General discussion (30 minutes)</i>

10:50 – 11:10 Refreshments

**11:10 – 12:00 Quality of life and societal behaviour (part 3 in plenary)**

*Building common ground: Session Chair (facilitation)*

*Reports: Workshop Chairs (10 minutes each)*

*General discussion (15 minutes)*

*Conclusions: Session Chair (5 minutes)*

*10 minute transfer of speakers*

## Annex A: Final Agenda for the Conference



### **12:10 – 12:40 National well-being and policy making**

Putting national well-being at the heart of policy making: Lessons from the experience of the New Zealand Treasury

*Ben GLEISNER, Head, Living Standards Project Team, New Zealand Treasury (20 minutes)*

General discussion (10 minutes)

12:40 – 14:00 Lunch

### **14:00 – 16:00 Round table**

Challenges for official statistics in the Asia-Pacific region: Existing processes and capacity building at the regional level.

*Chair: Brian PINK, ABS, Australia*

Introduction: Chair (10 minutes)

*Kaushal JOSHI, Senior Statistician, ADB (15 minutes)*

*S K DAS, MOSPI, India (15 minutes)*

*Yeongseop RHEE, National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences, Korea (15 minutes)*

*Haishan FU, Director, Statistics Division, ESCAP (15 minutes)*

*Eric BENSEL, Paris 21 (15 minutes)*

General discussion (30 minutes)

Conclusions: Chair (5 minutes)

16:00 – 16:20 Refreshments

### **16:20 – 18:00 Conference conclusions**

Moving forward the measurement agenda: defining targets, setting benchmarks, achieving concrete outcomes.

*Chair: Martine DURAND, OECD Chief Statistician*

Summary of tentative conclusions

*Chair (15 minutes)*

General discussion: Moving forward (20 minutes)

### **18:00 End of the conference**

Press conference for heads of convening organisations



## **Annex B**

- **Measuring Well-Being and Progress**
- **Executive Summary for *How's Life***
- **How's life in Japan?**



# MEASURING WELL-BEING AND PROGRESS

## 1 On-going research on measuring well-being and progress

- » Material living conditions
- » Quality of life
- » Sustainability

## 6 Dissemination: The OECD Better Life Initiative

## 7 Key events

## 7 Related initiatives

## 8 Further reading

For almost 10 years, the OECD has been looking beyond the functioning of the economic system to the diverse experiences and living conditions of people and households. Measuring well-being and progress is a key priority that the OECD is pursuing through research, dissemination of existing data via the OECD Better Life Initiative and key events such as the OECD World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policies”. This brochure provides background information on these three streams of work being led by the OECD Statistics Directorate.

*“Measuring Progress of Societies, [...] has become fundamental for development and policy-making in general. Improving the quality of our lives should be the ultimate target of public policies. But public policies can only deliver best fruit if they are based on reliable tools to measure the improvement they seek to produce in our lives.”*

*Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General,  
24 May 2011, OECD Forum 2011, Paris*

## On-going research on measuring well-being and progress

The measuring well-being and progress agenda calls for improved and new statistics, aimed at complementing standard economic statistics (which are mainly focused on measuring the volume of market activity and related macro-economic statistics) and developing indicators that have a more direct bearing on people’s life. This work can be grouped under the three conceptual pillars of the OECD Measuring Well-being and Progress Framework which draws on previous OECD work, the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report (2009) and on-going national and international initiatives (see Box: “Understanding the issues”).

- » **Material living conditions**
- » **Quality of life**
- » **Sustainability**



## Understanding the issues

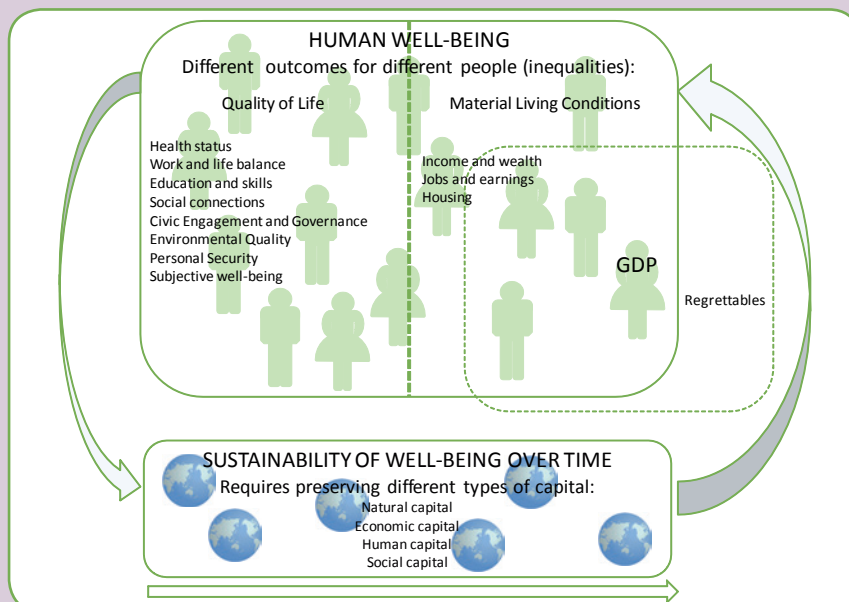
### Why measure well-being and progress?

In recent years, concerns have emerged regarding the fact that macro-economic statistics such as GDP, did not portray the right image of what ordinary people perceived about the state of their own socioeconomic conditions. While these concerns were already evident during the years of strong growth and “good” economic performance that characterised the early part of the decade, the financial and economic crisis of the past few years has further amplified them. Addressing such perceptions of the citizens is of crucial importance for the credibility and accountability of public policies but also for the very functioning of democracy.

### What is progress?

Societal progress is concerned with improvements in the well-being of people and households. It requires looking not only at the functioning of the economic system but also at the diverse experiences and living conditions of people. The OECD framework for measuring well-being and progress (see illustration below) is based on the recommendations made in 2009 by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress – also known as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission – convened by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, to which the OECD contributed. This framework can be categorised into three distinct areas: material living conditions, quality of life and sustainability, each with their relevant dimensions.

### OECD framework for measuring well-being and progress



The Measuring Well-being and Progress website: [www.oecd.org/measuringprogress](http://www.oecd.org/measuringprogress)



## Material living conditions

Measuring people's material living conditions (i.e. their command over commodities) requires looking not only at their income but also at their assets and consumption expenditures and how these are distributed among different population groups. It also requires taking account of goods and services produced by households for their own use that are never bought or sold, and which do not appear in traditional economic measures. The OECD is working to improve the measurement of material living conditions through the initiatives listed below.

### Measuring disparities in national accounts

The System of National Accounts (SNA) provides information on households' income, consumption and wealth through the "Household Accounts". However, this information only shows average conditions in the population. This average does not show the conditions of a "typical" person when there are important disparities across the population.

To overcome these limitations, a joint OECD-Eurostat Expert Group has been set-up under the auspices of the OECD Committee on Statistics (CSTAT), to look at how information on the distribution of income, consumption and wealth can be usefully integrated in national accounts, starting from existing survey and administrative data.

### Measurement of services produced by households for their own use

The measures of household consumption and production in the SNA, with the exception of household production of dwelling services imputed for home owners, do not include services produced by households for their own use, such as care for children and the elderly, cooking, cleaning, etc. However, these services are sizeable in all countries and the relative contribution they make to overall consumption differs significantly across countries. As a result, excluding them from the

measurement of material living conditions, can affect comparisons of living standards both over time and between countries. The OECD is pursuing work to estimate the monetary value of these services, with some results already published in various OECD reports in 2011 (i.e. *Going for Growth, Society at a Glance*).

### Differences between growth in real GDP per capita and real household income per capita

In many countries, real GDP and real households' adjusted disposable income (HADI) have grown at different paces over the past years, with the latter having risen more slowly than the former in several OECD countries. The causes behind this discrepancy are not well understood. The OECD is conducting work to explain what drives these different trends. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the disconnect between growth of real GDP per capita and of real HADI per capita in a few OECD countries.

### An integrated framework on income, expenditures and wealth

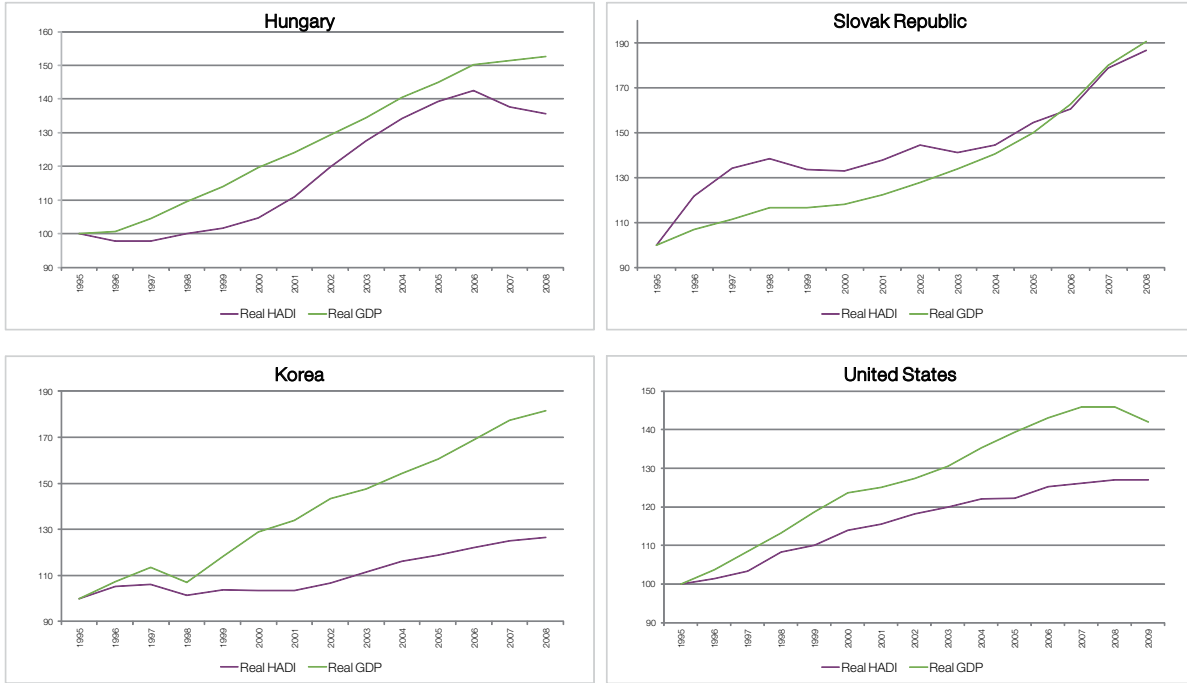
Most of the analysis on the material living conditions of households at the micro level (e.g. analysis of poverty, inequality) are based on income. However, material conditions and their sustainability over time also strongly depend on household wealth and consumption patterns. Currently, most household surveys do not collect joint information on income, expenditures and wealth and their distribution. An OECD Expert Group has been set up under the auspices of the CSTAT to develop guidelines on a joint framework as well as statistical standards for measuring the distribution of household wealth.

## Quality of life

Economic resources, while important, are not all that matters for people's well-being. Health, human contact, education, environmental quality, civic engagement and governance, security, and free time are all fundamental to our quality of life, as is



Figure 1. **Cumulated growth of real GDP per capita versus Household real net Adjusted Disposable Income per capita (HADI) in selected OECD countries (1995=100)**



Source: OECD, National Accounts database

people’s subjective experience of life. Measuring quality of life requires looking at all of these elements as a whole: economic and non-economic, subjective and objective as well as at disparities across population groups. The OECD’s work on quality of life focuses on a few of these aspects through the initiatives listed below.

### Developing guidelines on the measurement of subjective well-being

Indicators of subjective well-being have the potential of bringing critical information on people’s life, shedding light on the relationship between objective circumstances in which people live and their own evaluation and contentment with them. Figure 2 shows the average self-evaluation of life satisfaction, on a scale from 0 to 10 in OECD countries. Most of the existing subjective well-being measures have been developed outside the boundaries of official statistics. However, recently a number of important initiatives in this field have also been taken by National Statistical

Offices (e.g. France, Italy, the United Kingdom) and international organisations (e.g. Eurostat).

The OECD is preparing a set of guidelines for the collection and use of subjective well-being measures. These guidelines aim to provide international standards to be adopted by National Statistical Offices and other producers and users of survey-based subjective well-being data.

### Improved measures of environmental quality of life

Most of the existing measures of environmental quality of life rely on objective indicators, such as air pollution or water pollutants. While these measures are essential to evaluate the characteristics of the environment and their impact on well-being, much less information exists on people’s perception of the quality of the environment.

The OECD is conducting work to fill this gap, by building indicators on people’s satisfaction with the quality of air and water locally, satisfaction





with efforts to preserve the environment, attitudes towards global warming, level of concern related to environmental issues compared to other socio-economic issues and so on.

### Measures of resilience and vulnerability

In many countries, many individuals while not deprived in terms of their current conditions may fall into poverty in the event of adverse contingencies (e.g. losing a job, becoming sick, etc.).

The OECD is developing an “assets-based” framework for the identification of indicators of people’s resilience to various risks. As assets are the stock of wealth (tangible or intangible) used by households and individuals to generate well-being, those people who can count on one or more assets are less sensitive to risks and more resilient to the negative outcomes of a shock, i.e. they are less vulnerable. A broad view of assets is needed to assess people’s vulnerability, including: economic capital, human capital, social capital and shared assets (public services and social support).

## Sustainability

Sustainability of well-being over time can be assessed by looking at the set of key economic,

social and environmental assets transmitted from current to future generations, and whether these assets will allow people and their children to meet their needs in the future. The OECD is working to better capture the broad notion of economic, social and environmental sustainability through some of the initiatives listed below.

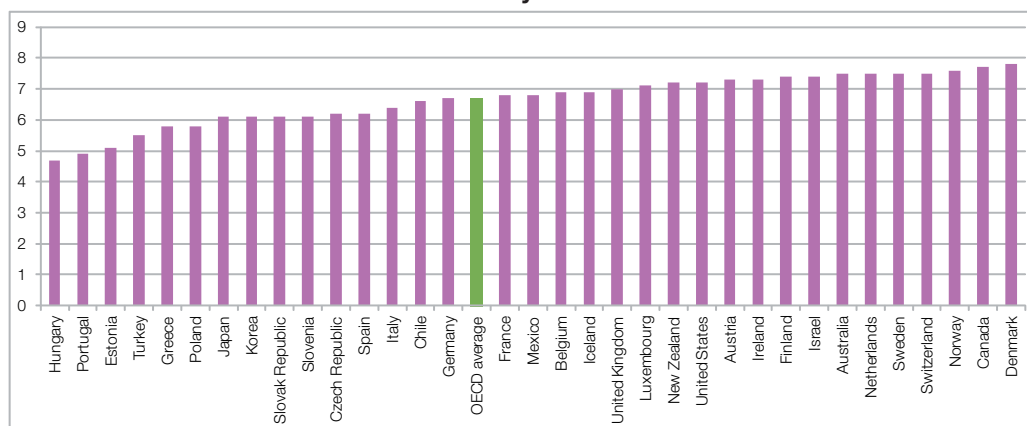
### Monitoring key natural resources

One critical element of a society’s asset base is provided by its natural resources. The OECD is developing indicators to monitor the stock of natural resources (both its quantity and quality) and assess the productivity of various natural resources as part of its work on the development of Green Growth Indicators (GGI). A related goal of this initiative is to analyse the impact of economic production on the available stock of natural resources.

### Estimates of carbon-emissions embedded in consumption

Carbon dioxide emissions are typically measured on the basis of what countries produce but the consumption of the associated products often occurs elsewhere. Measures that focus exclusively on production within national boundaries therefore only reveal one part of the picture. And because a country’s production of emissions may fall through,

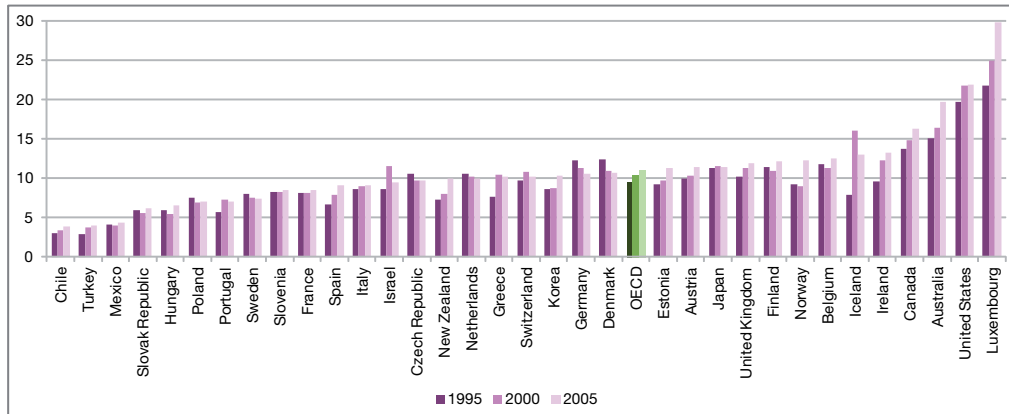
Figure 2. Life Satisfaction  
Average self-evaluation of life satisfaction, on a scale from 0 to 10  
2010 or latest year available\*



\*Estonia: 2009, Iceland: 2008, Israel: 2009, Norway: 2008, Switzerland: 2009  
Source: Gallup World Poll



Figure 3. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from consumption (tonnes per capita)



Source: OECD, Input-output database; OECD, STAN Bilateral Trade database; IEA (for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions)

for example, the off-shoring of domestic production or through higher import penetration, they may also paint a misleading picture of sustainability. Other things equal, consumption-based measures that embody all the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated in the production of a good or service are unaffected by such changes in the locus of production and provide a broader measure of sustainability, particularly in a global context. The objective of this project is to create national estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that reflect consumption, as supplements to the more conventional measures based on production. This project is also part of the work on GGI. Figure 3 shows estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person due to consumption.

### Measuring human capital

Sustainable well-being is directly linked to changes in all of a country's resources, including those that are not traded in market, such as human capital (i.e. the stock of competences, knowledge and skills embodied in people). The OECD is working to develop monetary estimates of human capital, to complement existing indicators of human capital based on years of schooling or levels of competencies. Monetary estimates of the stock of human capital are useful as they can be easily compared with stocks of physical capital. In addition, these estimates allow one to assess how monetary stocks of human capital are changing over time, so as to understand what countries need

to do to improve education and skills and their use in the labour market.

## Dissemination: The OECD Better Life Initiative

The OECD Better Life Initiative, launched in May 2011 on the occasion of the OECD 50th Anniversary under the theme "Better Policies for Better Lives", brings together several strands of the OECD's work on measuring well-being and progress. It includes an interactive tool, *Your Better Life Index* ([www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org)), which enables users to compare well-being across 34 countries,

based on 11 dimensions, listed in the OECD framework shown on page 2, by giving their own weight to each of the dimensions. It also includes a *Compendium of OECD well-being indicators* ([www.oecd.org/document/28/0,374,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_479\\_16764\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.htm](http://www.oecd.org/document/28/0,374,en_2649_201185_479_16764_1_1_1_1,00.htm)) which serves as background documentation for *Your Better Life Index*.



The choice of indicators was inspired by the OECD framework which focuses on individuals' and households' outcomes (rather than drivers and inputs) and on both objective and subjective features of well-being. A number of statistical criteria were taken into account when selecting the indicators for the 11 dimensions mentioned above: relevance (e.g. validity, depth, policy relevance), high-quality data (e.g. most indicators come from National Statistical Offices and official sources) and comparability across OECD countries. In addition, indicators were discussed with National Statistical Offices of the OECD member countries.

A more comprehensive publication, called *How's Life?*, will be released in October 2011; this publication will gather and analyse a range of indicators on the well-being of individuals and households in OECD and selected non-OECD countries. This publication will also provide information on inequalities in the various dimensions, as well as present selected indicators of sustainability.

The OECD Better Life Initiative website: [www.oecd.org/betterlifeinitiative](http://www.oecd.org/betterlifeinitiative)

## Key events

The OECD is continuing the dialogue on measuring well-being and progress through regional conferences and the OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policies". These conferences aim to deepen the on-going reflection on how to measure well-being and the progress of societies, enhance the relevance of measures and analysis for addressing key policy issues, and lead to concrete outputs, such as establishing frameworks for future work.

### Regional conferences

Several regional conferences are being organised in the lead up to the 4<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum. These events are jointly convened with National Statistical Offices and leading national and regional actors in different regions, in collaboration with

the OECD Development Centre and the PARIS21 Secretariat. The first regional conference took place in Latin America (Mexico City, May 2011). Preparations are underway for conferences in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

### OECD World Forums on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policies"

The OECD World Forums on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policies" gather decision makers, policy actors, social leaders, statisticians and academics to discuss how best to measure and foster the progress of societies. The 4<sup>th</sup> OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policies" will take place in New Delhi, India in October 2012. The previous OECD World Forums took place in Palermo (2004), Istanbul (2007) and Busan (2009). The outcomes of regional conferences will feed into the Delhi Forum whose goal is to share results and lessons learned from work on progress measurement by the OECD, other international organisations and countries in the different regions and to give impetus to concrete measurement programmes based on existing national and regional statistical capacities, mechanisms and tools.

## Related Initiatives



[www.wikiprogress.org](http://www.wikiprogress.org)



[www.wikigender.org](http://www.wikigender.org)



[www.wikichild.org](http://www.wikichild.org)



## Further reading

- » OECD (2011) *Compendium of OECD well-being indicators*, [www.oecd.org/document/28/0,3746,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_47916764\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/28/0,3746,en_2649_201185_47916764_1_1_1_1,00.html)
- » OECD (2011), *Towards Green Growth: Monitoring Progress: OECD Indicators*, OECD Green Growth Studies, OECD Publishing, [www.oecd.org/document/56/0,3746,en\\_2649\\_37425\\_48033720\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_37425,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/56/0,3746,en_2649_37425_48033720_1_1_1_37425,00.html)
- » Boarini R., G. Cohen, V. Denis and N. Ruiz (2011) “Designing Your Better Life Index: methodology and results”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Boarini R., M. Comola and C. Smith (2011) “The determinants of subjective well-being in OECD countries”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Boarini R., M. Comola and C. Smith (2011) “Well-being patterns around the world: new evidence from the Gallup World Poll”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Liu G. (2011) “Measuring the stock of human capital for comparative analysis: an application of the lifetime income approach to selected countries”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Scrivens K. and C. Smith (2011) “Measuring Vulnerability and Resilience in OECD Countries”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Ahmad N. (2011) “Embodied carbon dioxide emissions: domestic consumption and trade”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Johnstone N. (2011) “Individual and Contextual Determinants of the Perception of Air Quality: Evidence based on Micro-Data”, *OECD Environment Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Johnstone N. (2011) “Air Quality and Subjective Well-Being: Evidence based on Micro-Data”, *OECD Environment Working Papers*, OECD Publishing (*forthcoming*)
- » Trewin, D. and J. Hall (2010), “Developing Societal Progress Indicators: A Practical Guide”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, 2010/06, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kgzhxp6k7g0-en>
- » Hall, J., E. Giovannini, A. Morrone and G. Ranuzzi (2010), “A Framework to Measure the Progress of Societies”, *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, 2010/05, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5km4k7mnrkzw-en>

### Measuring Well-being and Progress

The brochure is published by the OECD Statistics Directorate. It can be downloaded from the OECD website at [www.oecd.org/measuringprogress](http://www.oecd.org/measuringprogress)

Editor in chief: Marco Mira d'Ercole

Editorial team: Romina Boarini, Guillaume Cohen, Martine Zaida

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## **Executive Summary of *How's Life? Measuring Well-Being*<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This executive summary is an excerpt of the Overview Chapter of the publication “How's Life? Measuring well-being”. The integral publication may be available in Japanese next year.

## Introduction: in quest of better lives

The OECD has a long tradition of work on social indicators and quality of life. More recently, the OECD has been leading the international reflection on measuring well-being and societal progress. In 2004, it held its first World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policies” in Palermo. Two more Forums have taken place, the first in Istanbul in 2007 (which led to the launch of the OECD-hosted Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies) and the second in Busan in 2009. Thanks to these and other efforts undertaken within the international community, measuring well-being and progress is now at the forefront of national and international statistical and political agendas.

On the occasion of the OECD’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, held under the theme “Better Policies for Better Lives”, the Organization launched the *OECD Better Life Initiative. How’s Life?*, which is part of this initiative, is a first attempt at the international level to go beyond the conceptual stage and to present a large set of comparable well-being indicators for OECD countries and, to the extent possible, other major economies. This set is still exploratory and will, over the years, be improved by taking into account the outcomes of a number of methodological projects at the OECD and elsewhere as these deliver their results and lead to better measures. Nonetheless, this work is critical, as broad-based, international evidence is provided for the first time on a range of aspects of well-being. The report aims to respond to the needs of citizens for better information on well-being and to give a more accurate picture of societal progress to policy-makers.

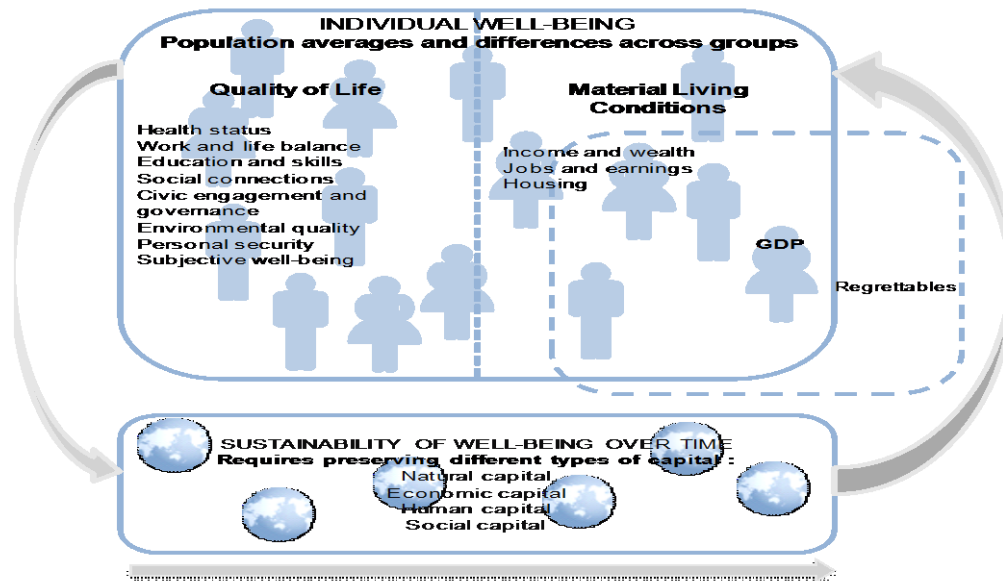
### Box 1.1 The OECD Better Life Initiative

The OECD Better Life Initiative includes both the *How’s Life?* report and the interactive, web-based tool *Your Better Life Index* ([www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org)). The *Your Better Life Index* aims to reach out to citizens, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of research and work on well-being: the voice of the public is critical in the debate on what matters most for the progress of societies.

Since its creation in 1961, the OECD has worked to help governments of member countries deliver good policies and improve the economic and social well-being of nations. The health of economies is of fundamental importance but what ultimately matters is the well-being of citizens. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary offers the opportunity to reaffirm the OECD’s commitment to contribute to people’s well-being through “Better Policies for Better Lives”.

## A framework for measuring well-being

The framework underpinning *How’s Life?* identifies three pillars for understanding and measuring people’s well-being: *i*) material living conditions; *ii*) quality of life; *iii*) and sustainability (see figure below). This approach draws closely on that proposed by Stiglitz *et al.*, (2009) by previous OECD work<sup>3</sup> and by measurement practices around the world.<sup>4</sup>



In terms of its *scope*, the approach shown in this figure distinguishes between wellbeing today and well-being tomorrow. It identifies, for the former, a number of dimensions pertaining to either material living conditions or quality of life that are critical to people’s lives; and, for the latter, a number of conditions that have to be met to preserve the wellbeing of future generations.

In terms of its focus, the approach:

- Puts the emphasis on households and individuals, rather than on aggregate conditions for the economy. This is because there may be discrepancies between the economy-wide economic situation and the well-being of households. Generally speaking, the report assesses the well-being of the whole population, though in some cases the focus is put on groups of the population who are more likely to face specific well-being trade-offs (e.g. work and life balance).
- Concentrates on well-being outcomes, as opposed to well-being drivers, measured by input or output indicators. Outcomes may be imperfectly correlated with inputs (e.g. health expenditure may be a poor predictor of health status if the health care system is inefficient) or outputs (e.g. the number of surgical interventions performed may say little about people’s health conditions).
- Looks at the distribution of well-being across individuals. This is especially important when there are disparities in achievements across population groups and when these are correlated across dimensions (e.g. when the likelihood of earning a low income is correlated with low educational achievement, poor health status, poor housing, etc.). In particular, *How’s Life?* looks at disparities across age groups, gender, income or socio-economic background.
- Considers both objective and subjective aspects of well-being. Objective components of well-being are essential to assess people’s living conditions and quality of life, but information on people’s evaluations and feelings about their lives is also important for capturing the psychological aspects of people’s “beings and doings” (e.g. feelings of insecurity) and understanding the relationship between objective and subjective components of well-being.

In terms of current well-being, *How’s Life?* considers the following dimensions:

- Under material living conditions: income and wealth; jobs and earnings; and housing.
- Under quality of life: health status; work and life balance; education and skills; civic engagement and governance; social connections; environmental quality; personal security; subjective well-being.

This thematic structure for current well-being covers many components, reflecting both individual capabilities (conditions in which some choices are made, and peoples’ abilities to transform resources into given ends, for instance, health; Sen, 1998) and material outcomes (e.g. income or consumption). Important “social assets” (such as

reliance on social protection systems) are not considered in this report or are considered to only a limited extent. Future editions of this report will integrate these aspects to the extent that appropriate indicators become available.

Ideally, comprehensive evidence on the sustainability of today's well-being should have been included in this report. However, data availability as well as well unresolved conceptual issues have imposed a narrower focus for the first issue of the report, namely, a focus on environmental sustainability (drawing upon the OECD Green Growth Strategy Indicators) and selected aspects of human capital sustainability.

The conceptual framework used in this report has been discussed with high-level representatives of National Statistical Offices of OECD member countries. There is nevertheless scope for improvement and further development, in particular with the objective of making the framework more relevant from the perspective of all countries covered by the analysis.

## Main findings of *How's Life?*

The following main average patterns emerge from this report:

- In most OECD countries, average measures of household income and wealth have increased over the past fifteen years. Alternative indicators of the material resources enjoyed and consumed by households point in the same direction, despite some differences between objective and subjective indicators.
- There are large differences in employment rates across OECD countries, with evidence of a general rise in most countries. Long-term unemployment is low in most OECD countries and has generally declined since the mid-1990s. The importance of both temporary work and involuntary part-time work has, however, increased slightly during the past fifteen years.
- Housing conditions are good in the majority of OECD countries, though housing costs constitute a major concern for households in many OECD countries.
- In most OECD countries, people can expect to live a long life, and great progress has been accomplished in emerging countries in reducing infant and adult mortality rates. However, a significant share of the OECD population reports chronic health problems and the number of those who suffer from serious disabilities is significant.
- The balance of work and non-work activities has changed considerably in recent decades, with overall gains in leisure and reductions in hours worked. These trends, however, mask the increased complexity of people's lives, with both men and women taking on a wider variety of tasks in the workplace and at home.
- Educational attainment has increased substantially over the past decades, with countries converging towards similar levels of education. However, the quality of educational outcomes, as measured by the reading skills of 15 year-old students, varies greatly across countries – though this variance has fallen over the past ten years.
- Social connections are relatively strong in all OECD countries, with the majority of people seeing friends and/or relatives on a regular basis, and reporting that they have someone to count on in times of need. There are wider cross-country variations in levels of interpersonal trust.
- In all OECD countries people enjoy a high level of political rights but they do not necessarily exert them effectively. Low trust in public institutions and declining levels of civic engagement point to a growing gap between how citizens and elites perceive the functioning of democratic systems.
- In most OECD countries the concentration of particulate matter in the air has dropped in the last twenty years, while remaining well above target levels. People living in emerging countries are exposed to much higher concentrations of pollutants and often live without basic services such as access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
- The number of homicides is low in most OECD countries, although with striking variations across countries. Assaults have decreased in most OECD countries, while they are still common in some emerging countries. The large majority of OECD residents feel safe when walking alone in their neighbourhood at night, even though there are significant differences across countries.
- For most countries average levels of subjective well-being are high. However, there are significant differences across OECD countries, with some reporting lower average levels of subjective well-being than many middle-income and developing countries, regardless of the measure used. While there is only limited information available on how subjective well-being has changed over time, it appears to have risen in some countries and stagnated in others.



Some of the important findings in this report concern the extent to which well-being outcomes vary across the population within each country. The report shows that the distribution of achievements is very uneven in all the dimensions analysed, though there are some countries where inequalities are consistently smaller (e.g. the Nordic countries). Another common pattern is that certain population groups, in particular people with lower incomes and less education, experience the largest disadvantages. Patterns by age and gender are in general more complex and differentiated across domains.

Some of the detailed patterns of inequality in well-being include the following:

- Compared to the OECD average, income inequality remains high in a few OECD countries and in emerging countries, and there is evidence that income is increasingly concentrated at the very top of the distribution. The number of income-poor people has increased in many OECD countries.
- There are large health disparities across income groups, part of which can be attributed to life-style and environmental factors. Furthermore, women tend to live longer than men, but they also report a lower health status as well as higher disability.
- The distribution of family chores is still strongly influenced by gender: men are more likely to work longer hours in paid work than women, while women spend longer hours in unpaid domestic work than men. Better-educated individuals are more likely to work longer hours than less-educated individuals, and better-educated women to be in employment in comparison with less-educated women. Time crunches are particularly sharp for parents.
- The elderly, the poor and the less-educated tend to have weaker networks of social support, in comparison with other population groups. Trust in others generally rises with people's education, age and income, though it tapers off at the high end of the age and income distributions.
- The poor, the less-educated and young people tend to participate less in political life. Trust in the judicial system and in the functioning of national government also tends to rise with people's education and income.
- Men are more likely to be the victim of crime, though women have the strongest feelings of insecurity. People living in large urban areas or their suburbs are more likely to be the victim of an assault and to fear crime. Social ties increase the feeling of security.
- Young people, the elderly and people from poor socio-economic backgrounds are the most vulnerable to pollution. In OECD countries, populations living in large cities or their suburbs are significantly less satisfied with their local environment than people living in rural areas or small towns.
- Women report slightly higher average life satisfaction than men, so do higher-income people and better educated individuals. Life satisfaction is also higher among those who have friends to count on and those who volunteer. Life satisfaction is lower for the unemployed and those with health problems.

### **The statistical agenda ahead**

One important objective of this report is to take stock of the quality and comprehensiveness of existing well-being statistics. Such an assessment is critical in order to move the statistical agenda forward and to ensure that statistics evolve in line with the needs of policy-makers and the general public.

To that end, each chapter of the *How's Life?* report discusses the validity of existing measures in the various well-being dimensions and provides a roadmap of the statistical developments needed in each field. The general message from this exercise is that a great deal of effort still needs to be made to improve existing measures for most of the well-being dimensions analysed in this report. In particular, there are still several gaps between the target and the actual concepts that existing indicators measure. Another problem, which is particularly serious for the quality of life domain, is that some of the relevant official statistics are not directly comparable across countries. As a second-best solution, this report has relied on statistics produced by non-official sources, despite their lower quality.

Some of the priorities for future work in this field are:

- The development of an integrated framework for measuring household income, consumption expenditures and wealth at the micro-level.
- The introduction of disparities between households with different characteristics into the national accounts framework.
- Better measures of the quality of employment, in particular measures of work safety and ethics, of workplace relationship and work motivation, as well as better measures of earnings inequality.
- Better measures of the quality of housing services beyond the availability of basic amenities, of housing

costs and affordability.

- Better measures of morbidity, as well as of mental health and disability in particular, along with better measures of risk factors and drivers of different health outcomes.
- Better measures of non-cognitive skills, such as social and personality skills, as well as measures of the cognitive development of young children and of the adult population.
- More harmonised and recurrent measures of time use data, as well as of time crunches and time stress.
- Better measures of social connections, social network support, interpersonal trust and other dimensions of social capital.
- Better methodologies and concepts for civic engagement indicators, in particular regarding how people perceive the quality of democratic institutions of the country where they live, so as to complement expert's assessments of specific practices within the public sector.
- Broader and more consistent measures of environmental quality, e.g. by moving from data on the concentration of various pollutants to information on the number of people exposed to them.
- More harmonised and complete measures of personal security and of various types of crimes, as well as of violence against women and children.
- A robust set of comparable measures of subjective well-being in its different aspects, as well as greater coverage by these measures across countries and over time.

## Conclusion

While the *How's Life?* report presents a range of well-being indicators, which can be used to paint a broad picture of people's lives, the measurement of well-being remains challenging. Future OECD work will aim to consolidate this effort, in particular by selecting better indicators. It will also be important to extend the scope of this report by better integrating sustainability considerations into the analysis, and by focusing on some groups of the population who have been largely ignored in this first edition (e.g. immigrants, people with disabilities). While national statistical offices have a critical role to play in developing better indicators in many fields, this report also aims to encourage greater discussion by policy makers and the general public about the best way to measure and co

Japan performs well in several areas of well-being, and ranks closely to the OECD average and in several dimensions ranks above average. Key highlights include the following:

- Money is an important means to achieving higher living standards. In 2008, the average Japanese household earned around 23,000 USD, close to the OECD average, and had a net financial wealth of 65,000 USD, which is almost double of the OECD average.
- In terms of employment, nearly 70 per cent of people aged 15 to 64 have a paid job, while the OECD average is 65 per cent. People in Japan work 1,733 hours a year, which is close to the OECD average, but almost 7 per cent is working fewer hours than actually wished, double than the OECD average. Japanese workers have lengthy commutes with almost 50 minutes per day spent travelling to and from work. When compared to other OECD countries, the Japanese also spend the least amount of time on leisure and personal care with a combined total of 14 hours per day . Looking at gender disparities, a higher number of men are employed (80 per cent compared to 70 per cent), even though more women (60 per cent) than men (52 per cent) have an upper-secondary degree. Girls tend to perform better than boys in PISA reading skills (with a 40 point difference, almost the equivalent of one year of schooling). 66 per cent of mothers with children have a paid job, same as the OECD average.
- Housing conditions are generally good with 77 per cent of people satisfied with their housing conditions. Although this percentage is high, it is still below the OECD average of 87 per cent.
- Having a good education is an important requisite to finding a good job. In Japan, 44 per cent of adults aged 25 to 64 have earned the equivalent of a University degree, one of the highest percentage among OECD countries. In terms of the quality of its educational system, the average student scored 520 out of 600 in their reading ability according to the latest data from the OECD *Programme for International Student Assessment*. This is among the highest in OECD countries. Students tend to perform well regardless of their own background or the school they attended.
- In terms of health, life expectancy at birth in Japan is 83 years, the highest rate in OECD countries, and Japan has one of the lowest infant mortality rates (around 2 deaths per 100,000 live births) in OECD countries. Moreover, only 4 per cent of Japanese people are obese, compared to 17 per cent on average in OECD countries. However, only 33 percent of the adult population reports being in good health. This may be partly explained by poor environmental conditions in urban centres: the level of concentration of atmospheric PM10 (tiny air pollutant particles small enough to enter and damage the lungs) is 27 micrograms per cubic meter of inhaled air, which is higher than levels found in most OECD countries.
- Concerning the public sphere, the Japanese report a strong sense of community but moderate levels of civic participation: 90 per cent of people believe that they know someone they could rely on in a time of need, this is close to the OECD average, while voter turnover, a measure of citizens' participation in the political process, was 67 per cent during recent elections, lower than the OECD average of 72 per cent. This can be partially explained by a low percentage (27 per cent) of Japanese reporting confidence in the National government, compared to 43 per cent on average in OECD countries.



- With regards to crime, Japan is among the lowest in terms of personal insecurity as compared to other OECD countries with only 1 per cent of people reporting being assaulted over the previous twelve months and only about 1 reported homicide per 100,000 inhabitants.
- When asked, people in Japan said that, on average, they were satisfied with their life by a rating of 6 points in a scale from 0 to 10; this level is lower than in many other OECD countries with a comparable level of income per capita, and below the OECD country average of 7, even if 87 percent of Japanese report more positive than negative emotions, with women tending to have both higher average levels.



## Annex C

# Final conclusions of the Conference



## Annex C: Conclusions of the Conference

### General

- There is a global movement towards going beyond GDP, highlighted by the recent UN resolution proposed by Bhutan and adopted by consensus (both developed and developing); and a number of country specific initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region.
- There is a demand for a new well-being based development framework and it is up to the official statistical community to respond to this; implications for post-MDG discussions.
- The measurement of well-being goes beyond GDP and money income, requiring the consideration of both objective and subjective dimensions. The measurement of well-being should start from individuals and consider societal well-being as a goal.
- It is important that the Asia-Pacific regional voice in the field of measuring well-being be conveyed to the 4th World Forum in New Delhi in October 2012, with proposals for specific outputs and future activities.

### Material Conditions

- Importance of measuring informality, under employment, quality of education, and social protection.
- Importance of taking into account assets, and their distribution, in addition to income.
- The Asia-Pacific region is leading in terms of GDP growth and urbanisation, which raises challenges for how we measure living conditions in urban centres.
- Need to move beyond the standard measures of extreme poverty used in poor countries; developing measures that capture the emergence of an increasing middle class in the region (e.g. taking account of the cost of urban living).

### Sustainability and Future Challenges

- Ageing poses particular challenges for assessing and measuring well-being in the Asia-Pacific region; it is important to take account of the life stages of individuals.
- Women confront specific well-being challenges such as caring for children and the elderly, dealing with unfriendly working environments, and discrimination more generally.
- Governance should be recognised as a separate dimension of well-being. However, there is still a need to design a better conceptual framework and translate this into tangible statistical standards - recognising the differences in types of governments in the region.
- Governments need to manage extreme risks, recognising both their perceived and actual consequences for well-being; providing transparent information is critical.



## Annex C: Conclusions of the Conference

### Quality of Life and Societal Behaviour

- Several countries in the region have existing programmes to measure subjective well-being and are already using the results to influence policy - although some noted the need for greater clarity in terms of concepts and policy use.
- Social and family relations are very important for many dimensions of well-being; ageing, urbanisation and internet are changing the nature and quality of social relations.
- Time use surveys have the potential to better inform on the well-being of individuals, such as work-life balance, caring, leisure, social relations; some data exist but NSOs in the region need to increase their capacity to analyse them and achieve further harmonisation and add items.

### Cross-Cutting Issues

- Measures of well-being need to take into account different spatial units (urban/rural, regions, cities).
- Cultural differences are important.
- Need for further research in a number of dimensions (subjective well-being, governance, social ties).
- Varied statistical capacities in different countries in the face of increased demand for new measures.
- ESCAP statistical committee should play a key role to promote and coordinate efforts in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Respective roles of official and non-official sources of statistics; private/public partnership.
- Leverage the contribution of the scientific and business communities (e.g. By creating an Asia-Pacific research network and a blog hosted by Wikiprogress, as well as to promote other regional and local academic initiatives).
- Engage and communicate with the public.

### Important Asia-Pacific issues for New Delhi

- Demographics/ageing/youth
- Gender
- Governance (presentation of ABS conceptual work in New Delhi)
- Natural disasters
- Pressure on statistical system needs to be recognised
- The role of development partners in statistical capacity building be recognised



## **Annex D**

# **List of Chairs and Speakers**



Speakers				
Name		Organization		
Eric	Bensel	Paris 21	OECD	
Romina	Boarini	Well-Being Expert	OECD	
Douglas	Brooks	Assistant Chief Economist	ADB	
David	Chan	Professor	Singapore Management University	Singapore
Shailaja	Chandra	Senior Report Writer	Government of India	India
S K	Das	Director General	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation	India
Marco Mira	d'Ercole	Head of Well-Being	OECD	
Martine	Durand	Chief Statistician	OECD	
Jessamyn O.	Encarnacion	Director	National Statistical Coordination Board	Philippines
Wenmeng	Feng	Program Officer	China Development Research Foundation	China
Paul	Frijters	Professor	University of Queensland	Australia
Haishan	Fu	Director	ESCAP	
Motohisa	Furukawa	Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy	Cabinet Office	Japan
Vince	Galvin	Deputy Government Statistician	Statistics New Zealand	New Zealand
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Cassandra Lee	Gligora	Director	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Australia
Johan	Havenaar	Department of Psychiatry	Utrecht University Hospital	Netherlands
Riti	Ibrahim	Secretary	Ministry of Planning	Bangladesh
Shinsuke	Ikeda	Vice Director ISER	Osaka University	Japan
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Nick	Johnstone	Environment Expert	OECD	
Kaushal	Joshi	Senior Statistician	ADB	
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Hoe Jeong	Kim	Director General	KOSTAT	Korea
Inhoe	Ku	Associate Professor of Social Welfare	Seoul National University	Korea
Takayoshi	Kusago	Professor	Kansai University	Japan
Robert	Manchin	Managing Director	The Gallup Organisation Europe	
Yoko	Nakagaki	Director	Cabinet Office	Japan
Taiichiro	Nishikawa	Mayor	Arakawa City	Japan
Shuzo	Nishimura	Director General	National Institute of Population and Social Security Research	Japan
Terue	Ohashi	Visiting Professor	Tohoku University	Japan
Takashi	Omori	Professor	Tokyo City University	Japan
Brian	Pink	Australian Statistician	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Australia
Kilaparti	Ramakrishna	Director	ESCAP	
Yeongseop	Rhee	Professor	Seoul National University	Korea
Roger	Ricafort	Director	OxFam Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Yoshiyuki	Sodekawa	Research Director	Dentsu Innovation Institute	Japan
Rintaro	Tamaki	Deputy Secretary-General	OECD	
Kensuke	Tanaka	OECD Development Centre	OECD	
Leslie	Tang	Deputy Commissioner	HKSAR	Hong Kong

Speakers				
Name		Organization		
Pattama	Teanravisitsagool	Director	NESDB	Thailand
Phung	Thi Thanh Thu	Research Officer	Indochina Research and Consulting	Vietnam
Karma	Tshiteem	Secretary	Gross National Happiness Commission	Bhutan
Noriko	Tsuya	Professor	Keio University	Japan
Yukiko	Uchida	Associate Professor	Kyoto University	Japan
Junko	Uchino	Executive Research Fellow	ESRI, Cabinet Office	Japan
K.Narayanan	Unni	Dy. Director General	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation	India
Porametee	Vimolsiri	Deputy Secretary General	The National Economic and Social Development Board	Thailand
Imogen	Wall	Social and Progress Reporting	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Australia
Geoff	Woolcock	Associate Professor	Griffith University	Australia
Naoto	Yamauchi	Professor	Osaka University	Japan
Jayoung	Yoon	Research Fellow	Korea Labor Institute	Korea
Juzhong	Zhuang	Deputy Chief Economist	ADB	



## Annex E

# Representatives from National Statistical Organisations

## Representatives of National Statistics Organisations

Name		Country
Yashar	Pasha	Azerbaijan
Kuenga	Tshering	Bhutan
Khin	Sovorlak	Cambodia
Zaza	Tchelidze	Georgia
Farideh	Dibae	Iran
Phetsamone	Sone	Lao PDR
Fathmath	Shafeega	Maldives
Tun Tun	Naing	Myanmar
Shokirov	Shodmon	Tajikistan
Elias	dos Santos Ferreira	Timor-Leste
Jamshid	Sharipov	Uzbekistan
Do	Thuc	Vietnam