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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


UNDP Suriname, CARICOM and the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS) of Suriname organized a Conference on Poverty Measurement in Paramaribo, August 24th and 25th 2010. The overall objective of the Conference was to build consensus on the determination of an official poverty line for Suriname and related methods of poverty measurement, including the introduction of measurement of multidimensional poverty.

The presentations given by representatives from national, regional and international organizations provided insight in the current methods used in different countries to measure poverty, the advantages and disadvantages of the methods and the issues data producers need to focus on when considering harmonizing the methods of measuring poverty across countries.

Mr. Xavier Mancero from ECLAC explained three approaches used to determine the poverty line. These include the absolute, the relative and the subjective poverty line. The absolute poverty line is the most used approach and is the result of the sum of a food poverty line and a non–food poverty line. In his second presentation Mr. Mancero stated that poverty statistics tend to be difficult to harmonize and although there have been efforts made to harmonize poverty statistics among many countries it is not perceived as a priority at a national level.

Mr. Leonardo Gasparini from CEDLAS discussed the main reasons of measuring poverty, being (1) to monitor the performance of a country and (2) to obtain input from poverty indicators for social policy. Taking these reasons into consideration, both monetary and non-monetary indicators should be used to measure poverty. The monetary and non-monetary indicators are complementary and not substitutes of each other and therefore most countries in Latin-America have a dual system for measuring poverty. In his second presentation Mr. Gasparini stated that harmonization of poverty measurement is important for aggregation and cross-country comparison.

Mr. Sno from GBS gave an overview of the results of the Suriname Budget Surveys of 1999/2000 and 2007/2008. He also explained how the computation of the poverty line in Suriname is conducted. First a basic food basket is chosen, based on prices identified by the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, and subsequently, a total needs basket. Equivalence scales are used to deal with differences in household size and compositions. Then relevant poverty characteristics are determined to update the which the poverty line and the characteristics of poverty.

Mr. Forbes from the Jamaica Statistical Institute explained that the absolute poverty approach is used to
measure poverty in Jamaica. Absolute poverty is defined by Jamaica as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living. To determine the poverty line, a food basket to provide the minimum recommended dietary needs (following WHO standards) is established for a family of five of a specified age and gender composition, referred to as the “reference family”. The food in the menu is referred to as the “minimum food basket”. Mr. Forbes stressed that it is very important that once a country chooses a method, it sticks to it.

Mr. St. Catherine from the St. Lucia Statistics Department was involved in a number of studies where the methodology used to measure poverty was similar to the methodology used in St. Lucia. The approach most common used was the absolute poverty line. The absolute poverty line would be applied to the household expenditure data to determine whether a household or individual qualifies as being poor.

Ms. Harrison from CARICOM focused her presentation on the fact that the region needs to take into consideration that the purchasing power differs across countries. In addition there are other factors that may impact the application of a uniform methodology based on existing approaches to determining the poverty line and the related poverty indicators.

Mr. Delamonica from UNICEF stated that both the monetary and multi-dimensional approach should be used to measure poverty. The significance of multi-dimensional analysis for policy is that it provides information about the areas where poverty is more urgent and also that it can be disaggregated in order to guide policy. Mr. Delamonica explained that while there is a common consensus on the fact that a multidimensional method should be chosen to measure poverty, there is not yet consensus built on which multidimensional approach to use. The new Multidimensional Poverty Index (UNDP) applied in more than 100 countries is has now been presented as a standard approach.

Ms. Montaigne from EUROSTAT provided an overview on how poverty is measured in Europe. Basically the EU uses the Relative Approach to measure poverty. The indicators used to measure poverty are indicators of material deprivation with additional indicators (such as housing conditions and health); all the data is broken down by age group and gender.

Mr. St. Catherine explained the method of improving poverty targeting by using an unmet Basic Needs Index. The method, that has been used in a number of Caribbean countries with the assistance of ECLAC, allows targeting for social programmes and the implementation of poverty reduction strategies. There are however issues regarding the sensitivity of the index.

In his presentation Mr. Simons from the ILO stated that it is important to understand why the employed do not have enough income to lift themselves out of poverty and design employment policies and labor market policies that allow us to facilitate the working poor.

The presentation from data users provided information regarding why, from a user’s perspective, it is necessary to build consensus on a poverty line and a method on how to measure poverty. The information is used in discussions with the government and research on how to decrease poverty.
Summary of main findings and recommendations on poverty measurement:

- There is a need to agree on a national definition of poverty and if possible a national approach of poverty measurement.

- Both the monetary and the non-monetary approach should be used to measure poverty in Suriname. One approach should be used to complement, not to supplement the other. The monetary measurement currently used should be standardized or modified.

- For Suriname, it is recommended to use different ways to measure poverty in the predominantly market economies (urban areas) and in the predominantly non-market economies (areas in the hinterland).

- It was recommended to expand data collection to the hinterland areas, for which additional funding is needed.

- There is a need to evaluate the use of existing sources to determine how the information already available can be used.

- The economy has been growing in Suriname on a macro level, however, poverty has not decreased. The resources and technology available at the macro level should be used to determine why poverty does not decrease.

- Discussions should be held to agree on which multidimensional approach to use for poverty measurement.

- It is recommended to establish technical working groups to build consensus on the establishment of a monetary and multidimensional approaches to measure poverty.

- A proposal regarding a method that can be used to measure poverty in Suriname should be submitted to the government and policy makers.

- Efforts should be made to secure funding from the business community and the different ministries that need data related to poverty.

- The proceedings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from this conference should be made available to the policy makers as soon as possible.
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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

UNDP Suriname, CARICOM and the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS) of Suriname organized a Conference on Poverty Measurement in Paramaribo, August 24th and 25th 2010. The overall objective of the Conference was to build consensus on the determination of an official poverty line for Suriname and related methods of poverty measurement, including the introduction of measurement of multidimensional poverty.

National, regional and international experts from ABS, CARICOM, Statistical Institute of Jamaica, Saint Lucia Statistics Department, Centro de Estudios Distributivos, Laborales y Sociales (CEDLAS) from the Universidad De La Plata (World Bank’s partner), UNDP, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), International Labor Organization (ILO), UNICEF, and the statistical office of the European Union (EUROSTAT) contributed to the conference. Around 112 participants from the Government of Suriname, International Organizations and civil society participated in the Conference.

The Conference is framed in the context of the support that UNDP and CARICOM are providing to the Government of Suriname (GoS) in the process of designing and approving a National Strategy for the Development of Statistic (NSDS) that is led by the ABS. The NSDS is expected to provide the country with a strategy for strengthening statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system (NSS). The NSDS will provide a vision for where the NSS should be in five to ten years and will set milestones for getting there. It is also expected to present a comprehensive and unified framework for continual assessment of evolving user needs and priorities for statistics and for building the capacity needed to meet these needs in a more coordinated, synergistic and efficient manner.

The ABS has been producing estimates for poverty lines by size and composition of the household, mainly for the urban areas (i.e. Districts of Paramaribo and Wanica), since October 1990. These estimates are questioned by the national community because of the associated challenges with respect to the national representativeness of the income surveys on which they are based. The ABS encounters significant financial and to a lesser extent logistic challenges (a large part of the territory of Suriname is covered by rain forest) to conduct the surveys. There is a general consensus on the need to adjust the definition of poverty and the methodology to measure it in the country, adjusting the poverty line, and with the possible introduction of a multidimensional measure of poverty.

Suriname, like many other countries in the region and around the globe faces the challenges of measuring poverty. For the measurement of poverty, there is a large array of instruments that can be used, and the statistical offices identify those that are technically more relevant to their specific purposes, and practical in terms of their financial resources and technical and administrative skills.
## II. AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE

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<td><strong>8:00 - 8:30 hrs.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8:30 - 9:00 hrs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 1 Opening</strong>&lt;br&gt;08:30 – 08:35 Mr. Iwan A. Sno, Director, General Bureau of Statistics of Suriname&lt;br&gt;08:35 – 08:40 Ms. Philomen Harrison, Programme Manager, Statistics Division CARICOM&lt;br&gt;08:40 – 08:45 Ms. Marcia de Castro, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative&lt;br&gt;08:45 – 9.00 Ms. Iris Sandel Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning on behalf of the Minister of Finance, H. E. Wonnie Boedhoe</td>
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<td><strong>9:00 - 9:30 hrs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong> Presentation - Poverty as economic deprivation I, Mr. Xavier Mancero (ECLAC)</td>
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<td><strong>9:30 - 10:00 hrs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 3</strong> Presentation - Poverty as economic deprivation II, Mr. Leonardo Gasparini (CEDLAS)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10:00 - 10:30 hrs.</strong></td>
<td>Questions and answers regarding sessions 2 and 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11:00 - 11:25 hrs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 4</strong> Presentation - Country Case: Household Budget Surveys and Poverty Line computation in Suriname, Mr. Iwan A. Sno (ABS/GBS)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 5</strong> Presentation - Country Cases: Mr. Douglas Forbes (Jamaica Statistical Institute), Mr. Edwin St. Catherine (St. Lucia Statistics Department)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 6</strong> Presentation: Harmonizing Statistics in general and Poverty Statistics in particular in the Caribbean, Ms. Philomen Harrison (CARICOM)</td>
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<td><strong>14:05 - 15:00 hrs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 7</strong> Presentation: Harmonizing Income Poverty in Latin America, Mr. Xavier Mancero, (ECLAC) and Mr. Leonardo Gasparini (CEDLAS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>08:30 - 09:15</td>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong> Presentation - Multidimensional Poverty I, Mr. Enrique Delamonica (UNICEF)</td>
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<td>09:15 - 10:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong> Presentation - Multidimensional Poverty II: the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Mr. Jesús Eduardo Ortiz Juárez (UNDP)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 3</strong> Presentation - Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), Ms. Fabienne Montaigne (EUROSTAT)</td>
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<td>12:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Questions and Answers regarding sessions 3 to 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:00 – 14:45</td>
<td><strong>Session 6</strong> Presentation – The User’s Perspective Ms. N. Frierson (ATM), Mr. Marlon Powell (SOZAVO), Mr. Jack Mencke (University Institute for Graduate Studies and Research), and Ms. Dayenne Wiellingen (Suriname Trade and Industry Association)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:45 – 15:00</td>
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<td><strong>Session 7</strong> Plenary session - Summary of day 2, proposals, conclusions and way forward</td>
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III. SYNOPSIS OF PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS POINTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

DAY 1

SESSION 1: OPENING

Mr. Reynold Simons
Mr. Simons welcomes the participants and invites Mr. Sno, Ms. Iris Sandel, Ms. Philomen Harrison and Ms. Marcia de Castro to take their places at the head table.

Mr. Iwan A. Sno – Director General Bureau of Statistics of Suriname
Mr. Sno welcomes the guests and participants.

When it comes to poverty measurement there are many possibilities: objective versus subjective approach, uni-dimensional versus multi-dimensional approach, a statistical approach versus a normative approach and so on. Today’s conference seeks to reach consensus on the determination of an official poverty line for Suriname and the related methods of poverty measurement. Although, it is desirable to reach a consensus, everyone should realize that we may have to settle for an approach supported by a significant majority.

Mr. Sno thanks the participants for their attention.

Ms. Philomen Harrison – Programme Manager, Statistics Division CARICOM
Ms. Harrison welcomes the guests and participants.

The CARICOM Secretariat has collaborated with the General Bureau of Statistics in Suriname (GBS) and the UNDP in Suriname on this conference on poverty measurement.

The purpose of this conference is to build consensus on the determination of an official poverty line in Suriname and methods of measuring poverty including a multi-dimensional approach. At the PARIS21 Consortium meeting held in Dakar, Senegal from November 16th – November 18th in 2009, the participants unanimously affirmed that an effective and efficient statistical system is an essential element of good governance and that urgent action is still required if the data needed to monitor the Millennium Development Goals is to be provided by 2015. The meeting recognized that a lot has been achieved since 2000, but reaffirmed that much still remains to be done to deliver the vision of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS). Concerted and coordinated actions are required to make more effective use of statistical data to support poverty reduction policies and programs and to strengthen and sustain the capacity of statistical systems especially in developing countries. There is a collective responsibility to support the compilation, publication and use of statistics to ensure that, in the words of the Millennium Declaration “globalization becomes a positive force for all people in the world”.

This conference brings together international, regional and national experts which will ensure that the deliberations will be grounded, diverse, and counter perspective on the definition and measurement of poverty. To the extent possible it will provide a basis for comparability on a regional and national level. The special characteristics that contribute to poverty in Suriname must be a primary concern. Some balance therefore must be found relative to what exists elsewhere and what is country-specific from an objective and technical perspective.
There is an increasing awareness of the need to strengthen the statistical capacity to support the design, monitoring and evaluation of national development plans. Poverty reduction strategy should be based on a solid foundation relative to the poverty line and measures including all the socio-economic and environmental indicators that are relevant to defining the characteristics of the poor.

Ms. Harrison thanks the participants for their attention.

**Ms. Marcia de Castro – United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative**

Ms. de Castro welcomes the guests and participants.

There are five reasons why this conference is important:

1) Because it is about measuring how people are doing economically, socially and financially.
2) Because it is about the Millennium Development goals.
3) Because it is a month before President Bouterse will take part in the high-level summit in New York on the Millennium Development Goals. It is going to be his first international mission as President of Suriname on a very important occasion, where he will bring into vision where Suriname wants to be in the next 5 years.
4) Because it is 5 years before countries should attain the Millennium Development Goals.
5) Because it is about measuring how we collectively – as government, civil society, scholars, international organizations – are organizing ourselves to improve the lives of people.

This conference is part of a very successful partnership between the UN system and GBS to work together and design a national strategy for the development of statistics in Suriname. It also builds on all the important initiatives that have taken place before. UNDP facilitated in the production of a baseline study to assess the availability of social data and the capacity of key producers of social data in Suriname. Recently GBS, UNDP and SBF have launched a series of seminars to look at social data. It also builds on all the contributions of all the UN agencies based here.

Measuring poverty is an important issue because it is linked to the first Millennium Development Goal, namely to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. To measure how we can reduce by half the proportion of people who are living on less than US$ 1 - a day there are three poverty indicators:

1) The proportion of the population who are living on less than a US$ 1 - a day;
2) The poverty gap ratio;
3) The share of the poorest quintile in the national consumption.

There are a number of instruments that can be used to measure poverty. The role of the statistics offices worldwide is to identify the ones that are most adequate for these specific purposes and look at the practical, technical and financial resources available to examine how to deliver a good methodology to assess poverty. Suriname has also been exploring the best ways to approach the measurement of poverty.

UNDP is issuing the 20th Human Development Report this year and they developed a new innovative measurement that gives a multi-dimensional picture of poverty. This measurement will complement existing approaches to measurement of poverty and will introduce a range of deprivations that affect people’s lives.
This conference brings together professionals, government and legislators and will figure out what approach makes more sense in Suriname. This new approach can be used very effectively to help to keep the government in check to see how public policies are contributing to lifting people out of poverty and how to formulate a strategy that will improve the lives of people in Suriname.

Ms. de Castro thanks the participants for their attention.

**Ms. Iris Sandel – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning on behalf of the Minister of Finance, H.E. Wonnie Boedhoe**

Ms. Sandel welcomes the guests and participants.

The Minister of Finance cannot be here today, but is looking forward to the results of this conference. Poverty reduction and eradication are important issues. The issue of poverty reduction is included in the Multi-Annual Plan and in the Government Policy Declaration.

Everyone agrees that poverty is more than the lack of income and other resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. In 1995 at the Kopenhagen Summit, poverty eradication was identified as an ethical social political and economic imperative of mankind. The 24th special session of the General Assembly devoted to review the Kopenhagen 10 commitments decided to set a target to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by 2015. This target has been endorsed by the Millennium Summit in 2000 as the Millennium Development Goal no. 1. Suriname is also a signatory to the Millennium Declaration.

In the process of formulating effective policy to reduce or even eradicate poverty there is a need to define poverty as well as extreme poverty. This international conference that seeks to build consensus on the determination of an official poverty line for Suriname and the related methods of poverty measurements therefore comes quite timely for a number of reasons. One of these reasons is that the Annual Development Plan for the next 5 years will soon have to be submitted to Parliament.

Furthermore, to monitor the reduction of poverty we need to know our starting position. Information is needed on how many poor people there are in Suriname, where they live and what some of their other characteristics are. To answer these and other pertinent questions we need sound statistics on high-quality data collected continuously and preferably covering all of Suriname.

The collected data by GBS regarding poverty in Suriname has a somewhat limited coverage. The collected data regards the districts Paramaribo and Wanica. Although these districts cover almost 2/3 of the Surinamese population these poverty figures are not the poverty figures of the entire country.

Ms. Sandel wishes the participants a fruitful seminar and declares the seminar opened.
SESSION 2: PRESENTATION - POVERTY AS ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION I, MR. XAVIER MANCERO (ECLAC)

There are three approaches used to determine the poverty line:
1) Absolute Poverty Line;
2) Relative Poverty Line;
3) Subjective Poverty Line.

Absolute poverty line
This is the most common method. In this case the poverty line is built as the sum of a food-poverty line and a non-food poverty line.

1) Food Poverty Line - The food poverty line represents the cost of buying a food basket that meets nutritional requirements, usually based on observed consumer habits.
2) Non-food poverty line - In this case there is no normative requirement. A reference group is selected and the poverty line is defined as the expenditure in non-food items. This does not necessarily represent the cost of satisfying non-food basic needs. So this procedure may be interpreted more as “relative” than as absolute.

Relative Poverty Lines
In this definition poverty represents the inability to participate in the ordinary life of that society owing to a lack of resources. This approach is used in the European Union and usually presented with a basic set of social exclusion indicators.

Subjective poverty lines
In this case poverty is determined on the basis of people’s perception of their own well-being. This method has not been officially used in any country for the measurement of its poverty.

Deprivation of economic resources is an important dimension of poverty. Absolute poverty is the most common approach for poverty measurement. Although setting a poverty line is important there are more aspects to poverty.

SESSION 3: PRESENTATION - POVERTY AS ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION II, MR. LEONARDO GASPARINI

CEDLAS is currently conducting a project that includes monitoring poverty in Latin-America. Most data used in this presentation comes from this project.

Most countries have an official system that measures poverty through:
- Household surveys;
- Official methodology;
- A combination of both.

The main reasons for measuring poverty are the following:
- To monitor the performance of a country;
- To obtain input from poverty indicators for social policy.

Taking the aforementioned reasons for measuring poverty into account, both monetary and non-monetary multi-dimensional poverty indicators are used. The reason for using monetary indicators is partly that non-monetary indicators are slow to react to crises. The reason for using non-monetary
indicators is that you need census data. However, income data is not available in most cases for all geographical areas. There is also more noise in income than in other variables. The monetary and non-monetary indicators are complementary to each other and not substitutes of each other. Most countries in Latin-America therefore have a dual system for measuring poverty.

According to the definition of monetary poverty a person is poor if her household income/consumption is lower than a threshold or poverty line. To measure this, we need the following:

1) Data source - There are two types of surveys that are useful for poverty analysis: employment/income surveys and living conditions surveys. Most countries have information available on an annual basis;
2) Income or consumption - Consumptions might be a better measure because it is less volatile over the years and over the life cycle, underreport is not such a serious problem and it captures well-being after taxes;
3) Poverty Line - The idea of a poverty line is that it is monetary cost of affording a “basic standard of living”. The USD lines are standard for international poverty comparisons because of their simplicity and the lack of easy to implement alternatives.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING SESSIONS 2 AND 3

Ms. Tina Dulam, ADEK
You presented a graph where it seemed like the poverty line is decreasing. What does this mean?

Answer, Mr. Gasparini:
The graph shows the number of people below a certain poverty line for the whole of Latin-America. To set the poverty line we used an income of US$ 2.50 per day. Income poverty has actually been reducing in Latin-America. The reduction is a result of a growth in the economy for almost 10 years.

Ms. Beverly Laurence
You mentioned a certain approach being used for measuring the poverty line. Would you please explain how this approach works?

Answer, Mr. Mancero
The way in which many countries select a reference group is the energy intake method. The population is sorted according to per capita income. Then you calculate the average calorie intake per group. When the income increases, the energy intake also increases. Even though this approach has proven to be very useful, it has limitations. There is currently another method that has more consensus.

Ms. Ritfeld, GBS
If you put the data income against the percentage of the population in the Lorenz curve does it also reflect a reduction of poverty in Latin-America?

Answer, Mr. Gasparini
For the whole Latin-America there is an increase in inequality. In parallel with the increase in economic growth, the inequality is also increasing.
Mr. Wolf, University Institute of Social Studies

1) Mr. Mancero distinguished between absolute, relative and subjective poverty lines. I found this distinction confusing. The methods seem to point to different sources of data rather than to different poverty lines.

2) Mr. Gasparini used countries in Latin-America and Central America in his examples. Suriname relates more to Caribbean states. Does this result in a different type of outcome?

Answer, Mr. Mancero

1) The name absolute is to distinguish this method from a relative method. Both absolute and relative approaches are objective methods. To make a distinction from these methods the subjective method is used.

2) The question needs to be asked how well we can measure welfare with current instruments. There is the micro measurement of income that surveys provide and the GDP figures. GDP is growing, but apparently it is not going to the households. However, the fact that the economy is growing but the living conditions are not improving is not exclusive for Suriname. Also, we need to widen our analysis and not just analyze the most poor.

Remark Mr. Gasparini
Both monetary and non-monetary data can be used as indicators for poverty. I tried to make clear in my presentation that certain aspects of poverty can be captured better with monetary indicators and other aspects with non-monetary indicators.

Remark, participant
It seems we can pinpoint all the problems related to poverty with our technology. However, it seems as if poverty is increasing. We should focus on where we are going with all the information we have and why we are apparently losing the fight against poverty.

Remark, participant
There is an almost direct link between income and poverty. If someone has a certain income and earns money on a structural basis the person is often not poor. However, the link between income and poverty on a macro-level is more complex. Although the income of Suriname has gone up the last 8 years, poverty has apparently also increased.

Mr. Simons
Mr. Simons gives a short summary of the presentations and thanks the participants.

SESSION 4: PRESENTATION – COUNTRY CASE: HOUSEHOLD BUDGET SURVEYS AND POVERTY LINE COMPUTATION IN SURINAME, MR. IWAN A. SNO (ABS/GBS)

This presentation will concentrate on the Household Budget Surveys of 1999/2000 and 2007/2008. The presentation is limited to the so-called uni-dimensional “money poverty”.

The primary object of a Household Budget Survey is to yield a representative basket of goods and services and the concomitant weights. The first successful Household Budget Survey was conducted in 1952. Other successful Household Budget Surveys were conducted in 1968/1969, 1999/2000 and 2007/2008.
Mr. Sno presents a comparative overview of the Household Budget Survey of 1999/2000 and the Household Budget Survey 2007/2008. Also, the response rate of Suriname is compared to other countries and the comparison shows that Suriname is above average when it concerns response rate.

The computation of the poverty line in Suriname is conducted as follows:

- Step 1: Establish a Basic Food Basket
- Step 2: Move from Basic Food Basket to a Total Needs Basket
- Step 3: Use equivalence scales to reckon with differences in size and compositions
- Step 4: Establish the relevant poverty characteristics
- Step 5: Update poverty lines and poverty characteristics

SESSION 5: PRESENTATION – COUNTRY CASES: MR. DOUGLAS FORBES (JAMAICA STATISTICAL INSTITUTE), MR. EDWIN ST. CATHERINE (ST. LUCIA STATISTICS DEPARTMENT)

Mr. Forbes

In 1988 the government of Jamaica instituted the Human Resources Development Programme to monitor the distributional effects of structural adjustments on the poor. Through this programme the Jamaica Poverty Line project was established by the Planning Institute of Jamaica in 1989 and the estimation of poverty began.

Jamaica uses the absolute poverty approach to measure poverty. Absolute poverty is defined by Jamaica as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living.

The methodology used for estimating the poverty line is as follows. A menu of food is designed that would provide the minimum recommended dietary kilocalories per day as established by WHO for a family of five of a specified age and gender composition, referred to as the “reference family”. The food in the menu is referred to as the “minimum food basket”. The price of each kilocalorie of the food basket is calculated and then multiplied by the required kilocalorie intake. The poverty line also includes non-food expenditures such as clothing and transportation.

To estimate the population below the poverty line the total household expenditure of each household is divided by the sum of the Adult Equivalent consumption of each individual of the population.

The consumption data collected from the SLC is used to calculate a total consumption figure. The per capita household expenditure is then derived by dividing the total household consumption by the number of household members. The per capita expenditure is then arranged in ascending order from which deciles and quintiles are formed.

The Jamaican SLC was developed to capture information on a number of key variables that could give an estimate of the incidence of poverty in Jamaica. Its main purpose was to provide household-level data, establish baseline measures of household welfare and monitor the impact of the Jamaican Human Resources Development Programme on health, education and nutrition. The SLC is an annual survey.

Mr. Forbes gives a brief analysis of the poverty in Jamaica and recommends that countries choose a methodology to measure poverty that is close to the region. Once the choice for a certain methodology has been made it is important the country sticks to the chosen methodology.
Mr. St. Catherine
Mr. St. Catherine has been involved in studies in various countries where the used methodologies applied were similar to what was done in St. Lucia. The focus will be on the issues of the studies that have been done in various countries in the Eastern Caribbean.

The methodologies used are focused on inter-temporal comparisons of poverty. There is an absolute part of the poverty line, which is the food line and there is the relative part of the line which is the non-food line. There are various means of constructing the non-food line. The addition of the two results in the poverty line which you apply to your household expenditure data to determine whether a household or individual qualifies as being poor.

Over time the methodology used must be stable. Jamaica has kept the methodology used stable which has allowed it the possibility to compare the poverty line from year to year. This has not always been the case in some of the Caribbean studies that have been done.

There is the issue of the use of consumption expenditure versus income. Therefore, when conducting the studies most of the Caribbean relied on arguments provided by Deaton in a article dated in 1997, which shows that expenditure based economic status indicators are more reliable than indicators which are income based. Thus, most of the studies are based on the use of consumption based approaches.

There is also the issue of the use of equivalence scales. Every person in a household must be related to a reference person. In the case of Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean a male between the age of 19 and 29 was used. The equivalence scale is very important.

Living Standards Measurement Surveys from 2000 to present have been conducted. The approach used in defining the poverty line is to estimate the cost of a bundle of goods deemed to assure that basic consumption needs are met in the context of the country. It must be taken into account that people are not as rational as the poverty line that is set. However, the poverty line is derived from an optimization that is used in the software.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING SESSIONS 4 AND 5

Ms. Dulam, ADEK
I haven’t been able to find any data regarding poverty in Suriname. What is the current poverty level of Suriname and is it possible to compare Suriname’s poverty line to Jamaica’s?

Answer, Mr. Sno
There are not many countries that provide poverty data. The frequency of the surveys conducted to obtain the required information is 3-5 years. It is not necessary for Suriname to produce poverty data on an annual basis. GBS tries to get proper estimates when conducting household surveys.

Poverty lines are produced every quarter. I don’t know by heart what the level is. It is difficult enough to compare a male working in agriculture to a male working at an office in one country. So comparing different countries would be very difficult if methods are not harmonized.

Participant
Do you consider the households to be rational in making the choices for consumption?
SESSION 6: PRESENTATION – HARMONIZING STATISTICS IN GENERAL AND POVERTY STATISTICS IN PARTICULAR IN THE CARIBBEAN, MS. PHILOMEN HARRISON (CARICOM)

Some of the main reasons for harmonizing statistics are to ensure that comparison of statistics can occur over time and space, to produce statistics that are of a high quality and are in accordance with recommended international statistical standards and that they reflect the reality of the issues that are being measured. Central to the harmonization of statistics in the region are the efforts at regional integration and the need to ensure that the statistics produced across countries of the region can be compared.

Harmonizing poverty statistics across the region needs to take into consideration the purchasing power differences across countries and the different goods the poor would buy. In addition there are other factors within and across countries that may impact the application of a uniform methodology based on existing approaches to determining the poverty line and the related poverty indicators.

Ms. Harrison gives some background information regarding the regional integration framework and provides insight in the structure of the regional statistical system. Key aspects of the regional statistical system include the CARICOM Secretariat, the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) and the Technical Working Groups (TWG).

Ms. Harrison presents some examples of statistical activities and initiatives in the context of harmonization and an overview of projects with regard to poverty statistics in the region. Country Poverty Assessments have been conducted and/or financed in many cases through the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) consultancies. In a few cases they are own-funded by the countries sometimes supported by other organizations. The importance of this is that the CDB-financed consultancies would essentially provide for a harmonized approach in the methodology including the sample design, the key questions that are asked and in the approach to determining the poverty line and to calculating the key poverty indicators. The non-CDB financed assessments also bear major similarity with the CDB-financed studies since they are based on standard international approaches and in particular the approach of Jamaica.

Ms. Harrison concludes that while the area of Poverty Statistics seems to be harmonized in principle, structural differences within countries with respect to greater rural presence, indigenous groups and the need to incorporate the gender dimension may result in a less harmonized approach in conducting these assessments even though the basic over-riding theory being utilized remains harmonized. Similarly considerations of periodicity/timing and sampling design are of significance relative to the results that are obtained in the conduct of these studies in the small area level.
Mr. Mancero
At the end of the 70-ties most countries did not produce their own poverty estimations. ECLAC began producing its own based on countries’ household surveys. In the 80-ties countries started developing their own estimations and currently most countries have developed an official poverty line.

All poverty lines in the region are absolute poverty lines. The poverty lines in the region correspond to the approach of either ECLAC or the World Bank. In addition to the different methodologies used, household surveys and their measurement of incomes and expenditures are far from being harmonized.

Mr. Mancero presents a general overview of the used surveys for poverty lines, the welfare indicators and the equivalence scales in Latin-America. Poverty statistics tend to be difficult to harmonize. There have been some efforts to harmonize poverty statistics among some countries, but it is not perceived as a priority at a national level.

ECLAC has changed its methodology over the years. Some of these changes include:

- New nutritional requirements
- Selection of the reference group is not linked to the energy intake
- Incomes are not adjusted to National Accounts

The objective of the revised methodology is to provide an updated general framework that countries could adopt if desired.

Mr. Gasparini
Harmonization of poverty measurement is important for aggregation and cross-country comparison. Although it does not seem to be a priority on a national level there have been some efforts made on an international level.

The main comparability issues are related to the data sources used, income versus consumption approach and the method used for establishing the poverty line.

Poverty statistics in Latin-America are all computed from household surveys. Some countries chose income and other consumption. Comparisons should use the same variable. However, even when choosing the same variables there are many methodological decisions to construct a harmonized variable at household level. Efforts are made to harmonize the measurement of poverty. However, harmonization is limited, due to difference in coverage and questionnaires.

Mr. Gasparini concludes that national poverty lines in Latin-America are “similar” but still far from fully comparable. There is a need to advance toward harmonization in household surveys, variables and poverty lines.
SESSION 8: PLENARY DISCUSSION – SUMMARY OF DAY 1, PROPOSALS AND CONCLUSIONS

Mr. Sno
I think it is appropriate to use a lack of income to measure poverty. Maybe we could focus more on other issues that came up during the presentations such as what foods to use in the food basket, the different data sources used etc.

Remark participant
It is important to measure property as income. When measuring poverty, there are also other aspects that should be taken into account, such as the living areas (districts, interior).

Remark participant
The data collection has to be expanded to the rural and interior parts of Suriname.

Remark Mr. Sno
Due to the limited available funds and long distances between the various areas in Suriname, the coverage is not optimal yet. We started out in Paramaribo and have since expanded to other districts. When measuring poverty we only differentiate between adults and children. We do not differentiate on a gender basis to avoid building in biases.

Remark participant
Although we should recognize the gender difference, we have to determine whether someone’s sex is relevant. If it is not, there should not be made any difference between men and women. For example, the nutrition figures show that women weigh less and therefore consume fewer calories. It might be relevant to take this aspect into consideration.

Remark participant
In Suriname we have the interior, the indigenous people with their own cultures and the urban areas with their own utilities and such. If you want to measure poverty, should you use the same measurements for both areas? It is a totally different way of living.

Answer, Mr. St. Catherine
There are indeed going to be some challenges with regard to poverty measurement. It is, for example, difficult to value home grown agriculture. This is however a major component of consumption.

Remark, Mr. Mancero
In fact all the methodologies have a bias. They are used when you have a market economy. So if applied in a non-market economy, the outcome might not correspond with the reality. How to measure poverty depends on the context.

Remark participant
Some time ago there were indigenous people who were living as nomads. Then it was decided for them that they had to live in villages. They have adapted to a new kind of lifestyle. How do you measure their poverty before and now? In general, how do you measure poverty in a non-market economy?

Answer, Mr. Sno
The interior does not have a market-based economy. It is difficult to assess the poverty of a group of people that was forced to settle down.
**Question participant**
The people who used to live in the rural areas are moving to the city. This is another significant point to look at in the future. Maybe this is a project for the services of GBS, to monitor how they will move from tribal status to the urban status.

**Answer Mr. Gasparini**
You have to differentiate between the societies and use different approaches for the market and non-market economies. A poverty line would probably not be appropriate in a non-market economy. There is definitely a need for additional methods and definitions, since you can’t use the same model for market and non-market economies.

**Mr. Simons**
Regarding the appropriateness of the approach, most participants found that lack of income is a good way to measure poverty, but it is not good enough. Non-monetary issues must be taken into consideration as well. When measuring poverty it is important to look at the options people have. The fewer options people have, the more poor people are.

Mr. Simons thanks the participants for their contribution and closes day 1 of the seminar.
DAY 2
SESSION 1: PRESENTATION-MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY I, MR. ENRIQUE DELAMONICA (UNICEF)

Mr. Delamonica welcomes the guests and participants.

The following approaches can be used to measure poverty:
- Money metric;
- Basic needs;
- Social exclusion/deprivation.

Money metric approach
The money metric approach was used in the mid and late 80-ties. In developed countries the actual national poverty would increase when income increased. This was the result of the fact that people need more money for additional things that are available to people with a higher income. An example shows that when using the international poverty line of US$ 1 per day, the so-called “poor countries” are not so poor, and the countries closer to home are, according to this poverty line.

The money metric approach comes with some problems including valuation of imputed income, regional differences in prices and food baskets and non-market sources of welfare.

Basic needs approach
There are various definitions of the basic needs approach. For example the basic need for water, the basic capacity to read etc. The Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) established a common set of basic needs. Basic needs can be measured by using basically the same household survey to measure poverty. Measure directly what people actually enjoy. When one of the dimensions is not fulfilled, the person is considered poor. This sees to the incidence of poverty, but there is also the severity of the poverty that has to be measured.

Social exclusion/deprivation
One of the definitions used to define exclusion is: “The social process whereby a group is not allowed to fully enjoy the benefits of participation in society, mainly due to their belonging to that group”.

Mr. Delamonica concludes that countries should be aware of the fact that there is a difference between the national and the international poverty line. Both the monetary and multi-dimensional approach should be used to measure poverty. The significance of multi-dimensional analysis for policy is that it provides information about the topics where poverty is more urgent and also that it can be disaggregated in order to guide policy choices. In addition, using both methods avoids criticism that the multi-dimensional approach is not accurate. Mr. Delamonica also advises to measure poverty periodically and compare the results with other countries.
SESSION 2: PRESENTATION – MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY II, THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (MPI), MR. JESUS EDUARDO ORTIZ JUAREZ (UNDP)

Mr. Ortiz welcomes the guest and participants.

Presently there is common consensus about the fact that using strictly the monetary approach to measure poverty is misleading. Welfare is multi-dimensional. Now it has to be determined which other dimensions are relevant to include in the measurement of poverty. Well-being should also be measured by example the freedom to choose. However, the multi-dimensional approach to measure poverty including components of goods and services is a very complex method.

There has been a strong tradition in Latin-America in using the UBN approach to measure poverty in terms of the lack of specific needs. However, the UBN approach does not reveal the depth of deprivations.

The methodology of UNDP for a multi-dimensional approach of poverty measurement requires a definition of deprivation in each of the dimensions (as in the UBN approach). Subsequently, it is required to specify who should be multi-dimensionally poor among those individuals deprived.

Mr. Ortiz presents the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), that has been applied 104 countries around the world. The advantage of this new poverty measure is that it gives a “multi-dimensional” picture of people living in poverty in the developing world. It assesses a range of deprivations at the household level: from education to health outcomes to assets and services. The MPI is the product of $H$ (the percentage of people who are poor), and $A$ (the average intensity of deprivations).

According to this method, who is multi-dimensionally poor is determined as follows:
There are 10 indicators and 3 dimensions:

- Weight of health = 3.33
- Weight of education = 3.33
- Weight of standard of living = 3.33

Thus, any household whose deprived indicators’ weights sum up 33.3% or more is considered poor. When using this method, approximately 10% of the total population in Latin-America is considered multi-dimensionally poor.

The following is advised:

- Insert poverty within the broad objectives of social policy;
- Visualize the progress of social policy on multiple deprivations;
- Breakdown in subgroups.

Mr. Ortiz concludes that it is advised to determine the contribution of each dimension to the overall multi-dimensional poverty.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING SESSIONS 1 AND 2

Mr. Mancero
In both presentations multi-dimensional poverty is based on a very broad perspective of welfare, not just on basic needs. The difficulty to put in practice this method is the lack of data available on welfare, beyond basic needs. When collecting primary data, is it possible to collect more data to build welfare indicators?

Answer, Mr. Delamonica
We should include other questions in the surveys used to collect primary data, and this involves a lot of work and cost. Maybe we should try to be more ingenious when using the information from the questions we already use when collecting primary data.

Answer Mr. Ortiz
There is a gap between the theory and the available data in Suriname. In Mexico questions regarding personal security, political participation and such were included in the household survey. I don’t know if there are surveys like this in other countries.

Mr. Forbes
My problem with the multi-dimensional approach of poverty measure is the method. The method gives equal weight to the dimensions. However, in my opinion you can’t give the same weight to electricity - which is available to almost everyone – and to things like water, health and education.

Answer, Mr. Delamonica
There is a debate about this and there are reasonable arguments for both points of view. The advantage of giving equal weight to all the dimensions is that it is simple. If we agree that each dimension is a right, then all rights are equally important and all rights should have the same weight.

Answer, Mr. Ortiz
The law in Mexico indicates that the dimensions relate to constitutional rights, so one dimension does not weigh more than the other. I do acknowledge that this is a controversial issue.

Mr. Thomas Gittens, UNDP
In the presentation of Mr. Ortiz, the Mexican way of a multi-dimensional approach was presented. You can’t simply aggregate the monetary and the multi-dimensional method, so I would like to know what process Mexico uses and also if this is an accepted methodology.

Answer, Mr. Ortiz
The methodology used in Mexico includes using a poverty line in addition to another method. By law Mexico must measure multi-dimensional poverty. In Mexico the concepts “non-poor” and “vulnerable” are also used and this relates to people who are deprived from some dimensions mentioned on the list and experience some shortfall in income. This method allows the design of better social policy and also to allocate resources more efficiently.

Mr. Wolf, Institute for Social Studies
1) I am wondering if there is an overlap between access to social rights and monetary well-being. Are you not measuring the same thing twice?
2) Am I correct to conclude that according to the information in the presentation of Mr. Ortiz Africa is not poor?
Answer, Mr. Delamonica

1) No, we are not measuring the same thing twice, because we are not adding up. We are saying that this group experiences both monetary poverty and multi-dimensional poverty.

2) No, this is not correct. The largest, deepest and most severe deprivations still take place in South Africa.

Ms. Groenfelt
Is access defined in terms of ownership or access to for example a company card?

Answer, Mr. Delamonica
We define access as access to a certain service regardless of the ownership. For example when we define access of water, we take a number of aspects into account such as what type of water do you have, is the access to the water located inside or outside of your house, in a pump, a tank, a river etc. The best access to water would be access to water through pipe-water inside the house. So, determining the threshold is actually the point.

Ms. Venetiaan
Why not measure different things such as health and education and compare them?

Mr. Delamonica
We aggregate when we ask different questions. We would like to determine what is going on in a household as a whole. The dimensions measured include things such as nutrition and education. Poverty is constituted by at least not being able to have one of those dimensions.

Mr. Sno
In the two-way table, combining income and non-income child poverty presented by Mr. Delamonica, only the Headcount measure (P0) is used. Would it be possible to produce P1 and P2 in the two-way table?

Mr. Delamonica
This has not been done; I will look into it and come back to you on this issue.

SESSION 3: PRESENTATION STATISTICS ON INCOME AND LIVING CONDITION (EU-SILC), MS. FABIENNE MONTAIGNE (EUROSTAT)

Ms. Montaigne presents information on how poverty is measured in Europe. The legal framework in relation to the measurement of poverty is provided. The object of the legislation on this topic is to establish a common framework in order to obtain comparable and timely cross-sectional and longitudinal data on income, poverty and social exclusion.

The indicators used to measure poverty are the following:

1) Poverty indicator - These indicators include base indicators, main cross-sectional indicators, main longitudinal indicators and secondary indicators.

2) Material deprivation indicators - These indicators include “economic strain dimensions” such as the inability to face unexpected expenses and the ability to have a one week holiday once a year.

3) Additional indicators - These indicators include housing conditions and health.
4) Breakdowns - The breakdowns include breakdowns by age group and gender, but also by household type, educational level etc.

The Europe 2020 strategy includes the following five headline targets:

1) 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
2) 3% of the EU’s GDP should be invested in R&D.
3) The “20/20/20” climate/energy targets should be met.
4) The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
5) At least 20 million people should be lifted out of the risk of poverty and exclusion.

The commission’s original proposal was reducing poverty by lifting 20 million people out of poverty using the “at risk of poverty indicator”. However, member states had concerns about issues such as the multi-dimensionality of poverty, the diversity of the situation and priorities across the EU. The member states therefore requested to work on more indicators.

The commission therefore revised its proposal in June 2010 and based the EU-target on the following indicators:

1) At risk of poverty rate;
2) Severe material deprivation rate (4 items out of 9);
3) People living in jobless households (work intensity < 20%);
4) This proposal including these indicators was approved by the Council in June, 2010.

Ms. Montaigne indicated that the following website can provide additional information on the discussed subjects:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/introduction

SESSION 4: PRESENTATION – IMPROVING POVERTY TARGETING USING AN UNMET BASIC NEEDS INDEX, MR. EDWIN ST. CATHERINE

The method of improving poverty targeting by using an unmet Basic Needs Index has been used in a number of Caribbean countries with the assistance of ECLAC. The census is the only reliable source which the Statistical Office or any organization has on all “small areas”. The question is now how this information can be used in a meaningful representation of welfare and living conditions to allow useful analysis for the purpose of social planning, policy implementation and so on. This approach was used on the Census 2001 database of St. Lucia and in the Census 2001 database of Grenada.

The approach is as follows:

- Assign a score to each household asset or characteristic;
- Assign a score to each person;
- Convert all person scores into household scores;
- Sum all individual household scores to obtain a total household score;
- Aggregate the household scores to the small area level, the village/community or ED;
- Compute an average household score by community;
- Rank/Map communities based on these scores.
This method allows you to identify the areas you would target for your social programmes and the implementation of poverty reduction strategy.

There are issues regarding the sensitivity of the index. Even given the fact that most people who used the method are very confident that the ranking of communities using this index was generally right, there were questions about which community should be ranked higher than the other. Possible ways to improve this method have been introduced. These improvements will have to be tested but do already show promise regarding the improvement of both the sensitivity and the objectivity of the method.

SESSION 5: PRESENTATION – THE WORKING POOR IN THE CARIBBEAN, MR. REYNOLD SIMONS (ILO)

The English and Dutch speaking Caribbean countries are middle-income and high-income countries. However, these countries persistently face poverty. It is assumed that many of the working poor are located in the informal sector which has expanded in a number of countries in the late 80-ties and the 90-ties.

The ILO introduced the Basic Needs approach in the 70-ties, which was a way of looking at poverty from the point of view of basic needs. This approach took both the monetary poverty into account and the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty. Employment in the whole poverty base and measurement is a critical issue because it is the most sustainable way of moving people out of poverty. The poor usually have labor as their most important asset. The employers and unions are almost constantly engaged in collective bargaining on the primary income distribution in the country, so this is an important issue.

The notion of the working poor stems from the idea that those who despite being employed do not have the resources to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. The reason why we are looking at the working poor, is because we want to understand why the employed do not have enough income to lift themselves out of poverty. Also, we want to design employment policies and labor market policies that allow us to facilitate the working poor.

The definition of the working poor is as follows: those who are employed either as employees or self-employed during a specific reference period and who’s per capita household income or consumption expenditure is below the poverty line.

It is an issue to determine which poverty line to use. In the Caribbean the US$ 1,- a day and US$ 2 a day poverty line have little relevance for the societies. So ILO used the national poverty line as the major indicator. The US$ 1,- a day and US$ 2,- a day poverty has been used by ILO for cross-country comparisons.

In the US a 27 week period is used as the reference period in the definition for the working poor. In the EU a reference period of 6 months is used. The idea behind using a reference period is that the impact of expenditure and income on the household is not expected to be immediate. In the Caribbean such a reference period has not been used because the information is not available.

Definition of the working poor: the individuals engaged in either paid or self-employment that belong to a household with an adult equivalent per capita household income expenditure that falls below a specified poverty line. This would be one of the three poverty lines that were used in the studies, the US$1,- a day poverty line, the US$ 2,- a day poverty line and the national poverty line.
Mr. Simon presents the results for the countries that were covered and stresses that it is important to reach some level of consensus.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING SESSIONS 3 TO 5

Participant
In the 10th slide Ms. Montaigne spoke of ad hoc models used to measure poverty. Can you tell us more about this?

Answer, Ms. Montaigne
Each year we add a specific question. For example when we want to understand how children move from not poor to poor, we do not just ask where the person interviewed was living at the age of 14. We also asked about the educational level and occupations of the parents. This expands the scope of the question of living conditions to obtain a broader picture.

Mr. Sno
We have problems getting a response regarding income questions in the region. Do you allow substitution when you are faced with non-response?

Ms. Montaigne
We aggregate all data and use equivalence scales to obtain the total income of a household, for example a household including two adults and two kids. If one adult is working while the other one is unemployed, we take the income of the working person and then add employment benefit and allowance for the children. We then divide the total income and attribute that to each household member.

We also have a non-response problem. However, we can use the fiscal data to try and build a model for the different income components. But we really try to limit substitution.

SESSION 6: PRESENTATION – THE USER’S PERSPECTIVE MS. N. FRIPERSON (ATM), MR. MARLON POWELL (SOZAVO), MR. JACK MENCKE (UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH), AND MS. DAYENNE WIELLINGEN (SURINAME TRADE AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION)

Ms. Naomi Friperson
The policy intentions in the 2006-2011 Multi Annual Development Plan on Labor include ways to fight poverty. The Ministry of ATM does this, among other things, through various operative units and guaranteeing a minimum standard of living.

Poverty lines are significant indicators for social economic policy. Suriname has yet to develop a national definition for poverty.

Mr. Marlon Powell
There is a need to build consensus on the determination of an official poverty line for Suriname and the related methods of poverty measurement. There are several institutions that use their own
methodologies and mechanisms to determine poverty. An official poverty line for Suriname and related methods of poverty measurement is indeed necessary.

**Mr. Jack Mencke**

Since the 80-ties, there have been various attempts to estimate poverty in Suriname. None of these define poverty using non-income issues.

Mr. Mencke presents the effect of remittances, informal incomes and local social benefits on poverty. The effect of each indicator is relatively high. This shows that it is important to look at poverty in a broader framework. Also, it is necessary to increase the collaboration between the public sector, the private sector and the private households in Suriname to reduce poverty.

**Ms. Dayenne Wiellingen**

The Suriname Trade and Industry Association bases its definition of poverty on definitions used by ILO and the UN. As a result, the definition of poverty is based on income and basic needs.

To eliminate poverty, the focus should be on creating investment opportunities and decent work opportunities. Ms. Wiellingen explains that the outcome of poverty measurements is used, among others, in research and dialogue with the government.

Poverty can be decreased through creating employment, training and education, legislation and creating a social safety net.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING SESSION 6**

**Ms Hidalgo**

I liked the fact that you stressed the importance of remittances and informal income. Measuring household income is challenging. Measuring information about remittances and informal income is even more challenging. How do you think this could be approached?

**Mr. Mencke**

One of the main problems is that in Suriname we use the survey as the principal method to estimate informality and what percentage of the population lives below the poverty line. In 1993 there was underreporting of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd job. As a result, the figures are an overestimation of poverty. Also, all the bigger companies are increasingly using subcontractors. Chances are that a lot of the subcontractors do not register themselves as employed.

**Remark, Participant**

How do you deal with households that are self-sufficient?

**Answer, Mr. Mencke**

Households in the rural areas and the interior are a problem. As far as I know the only institute that intends to measure poverty in the interior is UNICEF. It is not their goal, but sometimes their surveys include questions on income and such.
SESSION 7: PLENARY DISCUSSION - SUMMARY OF DAY 2, PROPOSALS, CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Remark, Mr. Sno
Yesterday's conclusion was that we need both income/money-metric approach and a multi-dimensional approach. A money metric approach would have no meaning in the interior and in non-market economies. So in certain situations you need a multi-dimensional approach. We need sufficient funds to do something with this suggestion.

Remark, Ms. Hidalgo
The object of this conference is to build consensus on the need to revise the current poverty measurement. The participants have reached a general consensus. Now we have to brainstorm on what to do next to make this happen.

Question, Mr. Coffeng
Why are we measuring poverty at several governmental institutes?

Answer, Mr. Sno
This is no longer the case.

Ms. Cicilson
We need to define the meaning for poverty in Suriname before we start thinking of ways of how to measure it.

Remark, Mr. Sno
The question is whether it would be possible to have a national definition. We need a national approach to measure poverty, which does not have to be the same in all areas. If you want to use a definition on a national level, then you can define someone as poor, vulnerable or really poor. A strictly money-metric approach to measure poverty is not possible. We are well on our way when it comes to harmonizing, both in the urban and the rural area.

Remark, Mr. Wolf
We should look at the value of having our own definition for poverty in Suriname. I would be more interested in obtaining data and finding out what poverty in Suriname amounts to. I was informed this morning that Mexico has a legal framework for the definition. They know what main aspects regarding quality of life to address. I was wondering if it would be wise to use this methodology in Suriname.

Participant
Measuring income is important. However, we have to combine the income approach with the multi-dimensional issues. Hopefully we will be able to make policy regarding how we are going to measure poverty in Suriname.

Ms. Cicilson
Regarding the question on how to move forward after this conference, I would like to suggest that we split up the persons involved in data collection in two technical working groups. One will focus on the income approach of measuring poverty the other one on the multi-dimensional issues. This way, a year from now we will be able to actually see the results of this congress.
**Remark Mr. Sno**
The government has its own “next step programme”, as discussed yesterday by the Speaker of The National Assembly in an interview, which is based on reducing money based poverty. I support Ms. Cicilson and agree that we should install at least one working group, since I just finished discussing this possibility with Dr. Harrison of the CARICOM. There will be more funds needed, but if we succeed in combining the two methods and providing something tangible for the policy-makers, it might very well be possible to obtain funding.

There are about 17 data producers in Suriname. We need support to measure poverty properly. This conference was indeed organized to build consensus on measuring poverty, but perhaps we should also concentrate now on how to harmonize our approaches.

Everyone would like GBS to expand the coverage, but this entails expanding the budget of GBS. We need a team effort to measure poverty in Suriname.

**Remark, Mr. Simons**
It is all about the money with surveys, because surveys are expensive. To ensure that the survey is done with certain intervals you need some kind of funds available. The survey is done by GBS, but GBS should not have to be the only one to pay for conducting these surveys. We should look for ways of getting funding for these surveys. For example, the major user of the surveys is the Ministry of Labor. Time use surveys in the Interior would be useful for Suriname.

**Remark, Mr. Sno**
The sources of statistical data are surveys, censuses and administrative data. In terms of response, GBS is not doing badly. Access to administrative data is the limiting factor. Maybe you can add some questions in administrative registers.

**Mr. Coffeng**
Mr. Coffeng asks Ms. Groenfelt to give a summary of the main findings of the seminar and invites Mr. Gittens to close the seminar.

**Mr. Gittens**
Mr. Gittens congratulates the participants on the way this conference has proceeded and the quality of the contributions. There is a need to form partnerships and collaborate in order to implement the necessary next steps. Mr. Gittens thanks the organizers, participants and the chairpersons.
IV. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON POVERTY MEASUREMENT

The summary of main findings and recommendations is as follows:

- There is a need to agree on a national definition of poverty and if possible a national approach of poverty measurement.

- Both the monetary and the non-monetary approach should be used to measure poverty in Suriname. One approach should be used to complement, not to supplement the other. The monetary measurement currently used should be standardized or modified.

- For Suriname, it is recommended to use different ways to measure poverty in the predominantly market economies (urban areas) and in the predominantly non-market economies (areas in the hinterland).

- It was recommended to expand data collection to the hinterland areas, for which additional funding is needed.

- There is a need to evaluate the use of existing sources to determine how the information already available can be used.

- The economy has been growing in Suriname on a macro level, but however, poverty has not decreased. The resources and technology available at the macro level should be used to determine why poverty does not decrease.

- Discussions should be held to agree on which multidimensional approach to use for poverty measurement.

- It is recommended to establish technical working groups to build consensus on the establishment of a monetary and multidimensional approaches to measure poverty.

- A proposal regarding a method that can be used to measure poverty in Suriname should be submitted to the government and policy makers.

- Efforts should be made to secure funding from the business community and the different ministries that need data related to poverty.

- The proceedings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from this conference should be made available to the policy makers as soon as possible.
### V. ANNEXES

**Annex A - List of acronyms**

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<td>Caribbean Community and Common Market</td>
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<td>MPI</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional Poverty Index</td>
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<td>Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing in Suriname</td>
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Annex B - List of presenters

1. Mr. Xavier Mancero (ECLAC)
2. Mr. Leonardo Gasparini (CEDLAS)
3. Mr. Iwan Sno (GBS)
4. Mr. Douglas Forbes (Jamaica Statistical Institute)
5. Mr. Edwin St. Catherine (St. Lucia Statistics Department)
6. Ms. Philomen Harrison (CARICOM)
7. Mr. Enrique Delamonica (UNICEF)
8. Mr. Jesus Euardo Ortiz Juarez (UNDP)
9. Ms. Fabienne Montaigne (EUROSTAT)
10. Mr. Reynold Simons (ILO)
11. Ms. N. Frierson (Ministry of ATM)
12. Mr. Jack Mencke (University Institute for Graduate Studies and Research)
13. Mr. Marlon Powell (SOZAVO)
14. Ms. Dayenne Wiellingen (Suriname Trade and Industry Association)
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*Total n. of participants day* | 106    | 76
Annex D – Presentations

Day 1

1. Poverty as economic deprivation I, Mr. Xavier Mancero
2. Poverty as economic deprivation II, Mr. Leonardo Gasparini
3. Household Budget Surveys and Poverty Line computation in Suriname, Mr. Iwan Sno
4. Country Case (Jamaica), Mr. Douglas Forbes
5. Country Case (St. Lucia), Mr. Edwin St. Catherine
6. Harmonizing Statistics in General and Poverty Statistics in particular in the Caribbean, Ms. Philomen Harrison
7. Harmonizing Income Poverty in Latin America, Mr. Xavier Mancero and Mr. Leonardo Gasparini

Day 2

1. Multidimensional Poverty I, Mr. Enrique Delamonica
2. Multidimensional Poverty II: the Multidimensional Poverty Index, Mr. Jesús Eduordo Ortiz Júarez
3. Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), Ms. Fabienne Montaigne
4. Poverty Mapping in St. Lucia Mr. Edwin St. Catherine
5. Poverty and the working Poor Mr. Reynold Simons
6. The user’s perspective, Ms. N. Frierson, Mr. Marlon Powell, Mr. Jack Mencke and Ms. Dayenne Wiellingen
In December 1946, the colonial Government took an important step and instated the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS), as of 1 January 1947, which came directly under the Governor of the Colony Suriname. It took the Colonial Government seven years to realize that it needed to enact legislation to enable the ABS to function properly, and in 1954 the first Statistics Act, limited to provisions for the collection of proper economic data was passed. This act was never amended and was replaced only in 2002 with a more modern and up to date, albeit not perfect act. The present Statistics Act (S.B. 2002, no. 970 also changed the status of ABS from a Major Government Department to a Semi-autonomous Foundation, coming administratively under the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, which is overseen by a nine-member Commission for Statistics in Suriname.

As regards its structure the ABS is headed by a Director, supported by at most two Deputy Directors and has the following Divisions (between brackets relevant Sections) fulfilling its Core business:

- **Census Office**

The General Bureau of Statistics has to provide the Surinamese and International Community with sound statistics, which give an insight in the demographic, economic, social-cultural situation and development of the Republic of Suriname. The ABS endorses and lives by the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

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**CARICOM**

The CARICOM Secretariat is the principal administrative organ of the Community and is headed by a Secretary General who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Community.

The mission Statement of the Secretariat is to provide dynamic leadership and service in partnership with Community Institutions and groups, toward the attainment of a viable, internationally competitive and sustainable Community, with improved quality of life for all. The main functions of the Secretariat are:

Initiate or develop proposals for consideration and decision by the relevant Organs; Initiate, organise and conduct studies; Provide, on request, services to Member States on Community-related matters; Service meetings of the Organs and Bodies of the Community and take appropriate follow-up action on decisions taken; Collect, store and disseminate relevant information to Member States; Assist Community Organs in the development and implementation of proposals and programme; Mobilise resources from donor agencies to assist in the implementation of Community Programmes; Prepare the draft Work Programme and Budget of the Secretariat for examination by the Budget Committee; Provide, on request, technical assistance to national authorities to facilitate implementation of Community decisions; and Conduct, as mandated, fact-finding assignments in Member States.
UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations’s global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP operates in more than 166 countries, working with them in close collaboration on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

UNDP’s central mandate is to help developing countries build their own national capacity to achieve sustainable human development. As countries develop local capacity, they are more proficient in drawing on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. In this and other ways, UNDP helps developing countries to attract and use development aid effectively. In all our activities, UNDP encourages the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, world leaders placed development at the centre of the global agenda by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women by 2015. UNDP’s global network connects countries to the knowledge and resources needed to achieve the MDGs, while it also facilitates its partners and the United Nations System in raising awareness and tracking progress towards these goals.

UNDP has been operating in Suriname since 1994 supporting the Surinamese Government and the people to achieve national goals.

UNDP’s substantive focus in Suriname is as follows:

- Democratic Governance
- Poverty Reduction
- Energy and Environment
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery.