



UNU-WIDER – DISD DESA

# Workshop on Inequality

**Date:** 6 May 2019

**Time:** 9:30 – 18:00

**Location:** United Nations Headquarters

**Conference Rooms:** S-2726 & S-2727

## Concept Note

### Introduction

During the last decades, there has been an increasing interest all over the world in monitoring and understanding inequality both within and between countries. The increasing availability of data and analytical tools to overcome comparability issues has been essential in these developments. Reducing all types of inequalities is now part of the agenda of governments, international organizations and other international actors. The best expression of this growing concern is the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 10 and its pledge to leave no one behind, which highlights the crucial role of reducing inequalities in achieving other SDGs. Yet, important limitations regarding the available data still apply, especially when it comes to low-income countries and/or analyses in the long run.

During the last three decades, the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) has played an active role in this process promoting and disseminating research on inequality and hosting and updating important databases. Inequality has been a central theme of the 2014-18 UNU-WIDER work programme on 'Transformation, Inclusion, and Sustainability'. Thanks to the extensive worldwide network of outstanding researchers that made this possible, inequality will continue being an integral part of UNU-WIDER's future as well.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), at its turn, has brought the inequality predicament to the attention of Member States, making use of data and research provided by UNU-WIDER among others. As part of its policy-oriented research, DESA first addressed inequality in 2005 warning, in its *Report on the World Social Situation 2005*, of an inequality predicament and concluding that failure to address this challenge would jeopardize social development. DESA has, since that time, continued to address inequality as a central topic in its analytical and normative work, and inequality is now at the forefront of the policy debate. Indeed, key messages from DESA's *Report on the World Social Situation 2013* were used by the UN system post-2015 task team to promote the inclusion of an inequality goal in the 2030 Agenda.

This aim of the workshop is to contribute to the in-depth review of SDG 10 during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality', in July 2019. Specifically, the workshop will bring together a number of outstanding international scholars and the UN community to present and discuss lessons learned about measuring and analysing trends in inequality, focusing on the conceptual framework and evidence base.

The workshop will be organized along two main topics. The morning sessions will address different strategies to overcome inequality data limitations, with relevant examples for developing countries and for comparisons across countries or over long periods of time. Relatedly, UNU-WIDER will introduce the new updated World Income Inequality Database (WIID), a comprehensive database allowing to track long-term inequality trends all over the world, and will present a proposal for its standardization. The afternoon sessions will be devoted to lessons learned and implications of recent research on inequality between and within developing countries, particularly within the largest middle-income countries (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa). There will also be a discussion of group-based inequalities, central to the ideal of the 2030 Agenda that no one should be left behind from the development process.