

# **IARIW-BOK Conference on “Beyond GDP: Past Experiences and Future Challenges in the Measurement of Well-being,” April 26-28, 2017, Seoul, Korea (as of September 20, 2016)**

## Background and Motivation

The International Association for Research in Income and Wealth (IARIW), established in 1947, organizes conferences on topics related to income and wealth throughout the world, generally in partnership with national statistical offices.<sup>1</sup> In addition to its biennial General Conference, the IARIW also organizes special or regional conferences in non-General Conference years. In 2017, the IARIW will be organizing a special conference on the measurement of well-being in partnership with its institutional member, the Bank of Korea (BOK). This will be the first time that an IARIW conference will be held in Korea. This document presents a proposal for this event.

In the past decade there have been major advances in the measurement of well-being. In particular, a large number of well-being indicators, both objective and subjective in nature, have been developed that go well beyond the traditional well-being metric of GDP per capita. International organizations such as the OECD through its World Forums on Statistics, Knowledge and Politics as well as its *How's Life* report and Better Life Index, and the United Nations through its *World Happiness Report* have played a major role in contributing to the flourishing global debate on the measurement of well-being. The Stiglitz report released in 2009 *Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress* has also stimulated much work. Yet the issue of going beyond GDP remains highly topical, as seen, for example, in the cover story on the “prosperity puzzle” featured in *The Economist* April 30-May 6, 2016. Much remains to be done.

## Objective of Conference

The objective of this special IARIW-BOK conference is to advance the international debate on well-being measurement, both at the macro and micro levels, through an examination of past experiences and the identification of future challenges.

Papers are invited that contribute to a discussion of the following issues, among others:

- Do objective and subjective indicators of well-being show the same patterns across groups and over time and if not, what can account for these differences?

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<sup>1</sup> For example, national statistical offices that have co-organized special conferences with the IARIW include the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2007), Statistics South Africa (2011), the Brazilian statistical office (IBGE), and the Egyptian statistical office (CAPMAS). The IARIW has also co-organized two special conferences with the OECD (2011 and 2015). Since 2006 IARIW General Conferences have been co-organized with Statistics Finland (2006), Statistics Slovenia (2008), the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2010), the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (2012), Statistics Netherlands (2014), and the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2016). In 2018, the General Conference will be co-organized with Statistics Denmark .

- Should the measurement of well-being be based on the extension of the SNA or are other approaches needed? If the former path forward is more appropriate what SNA-based enhancements would provide useful information on well-being developments?
- How can income and wealth inequality considerations be best integrated into well-being measurement?
- What metrics best capture inequalities in quality of life dimensions (e.g. longevity, skills, political voice, etc.)?
- How can well-being metrics and frameworks capture challenges to the sustainability of living standards from, for example, an ageing population, and to the sustainability of ecosystems from greenhouse gases?
- What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of composite measures of well-being versus dashboards of indicators in shedding light on well-being trends or cross-national differences?
- Can statistical sources at the individual or household level (sample surveys, administrative data) cope with the challenges posed by the collection of diverse data on the multiple dimensions of well-being (income, health, social connections, etc.)?
- What are the conceptual issues raised by multidimensional measurement of well-being? Which solutions have been adopted in the past about the selection and weighting of dimensions, the indicator metrics, and statistical indices?
- What are the implications for policy-making of shifting the focus from GDP to alternative measures of well-being? Does this raise new challenges in terms of communication to the general public?

#### Size, Date and Location

The number of delegates attending IARIW special conferences in the past has been between 100 and 150. A similar number is expected for this conference.

The conference will take place April 26-28, 2017 at the Westin Hotel in Seoul, Korea.

#### Conference Program

The conference will take place over a three day period. The first two days will be devoted to the program and the third day will feature an excursion to places of interest to the international delegates. There will be a farewell dinner the evening of the second day of the conference.

The conference program will include paper sessions, keynote addresses, panels and a farewell dinner. It is expected that there will be 20-30 papers presented in plenary

sessions. If there are a large number of high quality submissions, parallel sessions or a poster session may be organized.

### Program Committee

A program committee composed of experts in the well-being research area has been established to oversee the development of the conference program. Andrea Brandolini, a well-known researcher in the well-being field, will chair the program committee. He served as IARIW Chair (2008-2010) and is currently the head of the Statistical Analysis Directorate at the Bank of Italy. Members of the program committee are Sabina Alkire from George Washington University and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, Albert Braakmann from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, Taehyoung Cho from the Bank of Korea, Hyunbae Chun from Sogang University, Andrew Clark from the Paris School of Economics, Martine Durand, Chief Statistician at the OECD, and Lars Osberg from Dalhousie University. The role of this committee is to identify potential paper givers to be invited to submit proposals and to review and make decisions on the proposals received. The work of the committee will be done by email.

### Organizational Responsibilities

The organization of the conference will be divided between the IARIW secretariat and the BOK. The IARIW secretariat will assume responsibility for communications with all conference paper givers and maintain the conference program on the IARIW website. The BOK will assume responsibility for the conference website, conference registration, and local arrangements.

The BOK will cover expenses of keynote speakers (excluding honouraria). The IARIW will cover the cost of the special issue of the *Review of Income and Wealth* that will contain selected papers from the conference. The BOK will cover the costs of the venue, meals, and the excursion.

There will be no registration fee for the conference, but all delegates, except those invited by the BOK or Korean residents, must be IARIW members, or join the IARIW. Delegates are responsible for their own travel and hotel costs.

The IARIW will provide some financial assistance to paper givers on a needs basis. The IARIW Financial Assistance Committee will consist of the Chair and Treasurer of the Association.

Selected papers from IARIW special conferences are normally published in special issues of the *Review of Income and Wealth*, edited by a sub-set (one or two persons) of the members of the program committee. Andrea Brandolini and Andrew Clark have agreed to serve as guest editors of the special issue.

Persons interested in presenting a paper at the conference are asked to submit a proposal of less than 1,000 words through the web tool posted at [http://iariw.org/paper\\_submission2017korea.php](http://iariw.org/paper_submission2017korea.php). The deadline for submissions is September 30, 2016.

## Timelines

May 18, 2016	Announcement of Call for Papers
September 30, 2016	Deadline for Receipts of Paper Proposals
October 31, 2016	Decisions on Proposals and Release of Preliminary Conference Program
November 15, 2016	Deadline for Applications for Financial Assistance
November 30, 2016	Decisions on Financial Assistance
March 31, 2017	Deadline for Receipt of Papers for Posting on IARIW Website
April 26-28, 2017	Conference
July 31, 2017	Deadline for Submission of Papers for RIW Special Issue
Fall 2018	Release of RIW Special Issue