



## Workshop on Inequality of Opportunity

39 Boulevard de la Tour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris, France  
14 January 2015

*Sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*

*This one-day workshop will be held at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Paris at the margin of the plenary meeting of the HLEG that will take place at the OECD Headquarters. The goal of the workshop is to identify the types of metrics that best describe inequality of opportunity, the changes in statistical practices that would be required to facilitate the production of these metrics in the future, and their policy and analytic uses. The preparation of this agenda has been informed by discussions with François Bourguignon, Joseph E. Stiglitz, Jean-Paul Fitoussi and Martine Durand, as well as with Tim Smeeding, professor of Public Affairs and Economics at University of Wisconsin-Madison, a leading scholar in this field who is currently spending a sabbatical year at the OECD. While several workshops and conferences have been held recently on this subject (e.g. the workshop organised on 16 May 2014 by the US Administration for Children and Families in Washington, D.C.; and the conference on Economic Opportunity and Inequality organised on 17 October 2014 by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston), the distinctive feature of the HLEG workshop will be the **focus on measurement**, and the effort to provide a **comparative perspective** to the issues at hand.*

*Organised in collaboration with:*





Wednesday 14 January	
9:00 – 9:30	<p><b>Welcome and setting the scene</b></p> <p><b>Isabel Mota</b>, Trustee and Member of the Board, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation  <b>Martine Durand</b>, OECD Chief Statistician and HLEG Co-Chair  <b>François Bourguignon</b>, HLEG Coordinator of Sub-group on Multidimensional and Global Inequalities  <b>Joseph E. Stiglitz</b>, HLEG Coordinator of Sub-group on Multidimensional and Global Inequalities</p>
9:30 – 11:15	<p><b>Session 1: How should we understand the notion of ‘inequality of opportunity’?: concepts and theory</b></p> <p>Chair: <b>Ravi Kanbur</b></p> <p><i>Discussions of inequality of opportunity are typically marred by different concepts and theoretical perspectives. On the conceptual side, relevant issues are whether the focus should be on people’s circumstances or on observed outcomes, the role of individual effort in explaining outcomes, and the use of absolute or relative measures of mobility. On the theoretical, more traditional explanations of intergenerational linkages based on the human-capital model of Becker and Tomes have been confronted by other perspectives, which have emphasised the importance of positional externalities or the rationing of top positions. What types of concepts and measures are best suited to describe inequality of opportunities? Does the human capital model provide an adequate understanding of the factors at work? What other theoretical perspectives are most important? What are the strengths and weaknesses of approaches to inequality of opportunity that are based on simple correlations across generations?</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Key concepts and links to welfare economics”: <a href="#">Erik Schokkaert</a>, Leuven Catholic University</li> <li>• “Economic theory and practical lessons for measuring equal opportunities”: <a href="#">Miles Corak</a>, Professor of Economics with the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa</li> <li>• “Can we unambiguously rank societies in terms of their inequality of opportunity?”: <b>Joseph E. Stiglitz</b>, University Professor, Columbia University, Columbia Business School, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (Department of Economics) and the School of International and Public Affairs</li> </ul>
11:15 – 11:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>

Organised in collaboration with:





Wednesday 14 January (continued)	
11:45 – 13:15	<p><b>Session 2: What do we know about the intergenerational transmission of economic resources?</b></p> <p>Chair: <b>François Bourguignon</b></p> <p><i>Much of the evidence on inequality of opportunity relates to economic resources (i.e. individual earnings, household income, wealth holdings). What do we know from evidence in each of these fields? What are the links between static measures of inequalities and dynamic/intergenerational ones? Are these various types of intergenerational transmissions linked to each other? How are economic advantages transmitted from one generation to the next? What are the transmission mechanisms at work (e.g. inheritances, networks, access to internships)? What are the links between each of these transmission mechanisms and the various dimensions of economic inequalities?</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The intergenerational transmission of economic resources and the importance of family background”: <a href="#">Anders Björklund</a>, Professor of Economics, Swedish Institute for Social Research</li> <li>• “What are the links between (static) measures of income inequality and dynamic measures of intergenerational mobility”: <a href="#">Tim Smeeding</a>, A &amp; S Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs and Economics University of Wisconsin-Madison</li> <li>• “Intergenerational transmission of household wealth and the role of bequests”: <a href="#">Daniel Waldenström</a>, Professor of Economics, Uppsala University</li> </ul>
13:15 – 14:30	Lunch

Organised in collaboration with:





Wednesday 14 January (continued)	
14:30 – 16:30	<p><b>Session 3: What do we know about the intergenerational transmission of various aspects of people’s quality of life?</b></p> <p>Chair: <b>Martine Durand</b></p> <p><i>Evidence on the transmission of advantage and disadvantage across generation extends to other dimensions of people’s quality of life. This session will focus on the available evidence on intergenerational transmission of health and education, and on the role of families and geography in this transmission. Questions to be addressed include: does the consideration of these fields leads to different conclusions on the strengths of the links between generations? Is intergeneration transmission stronger, or weaker, in the case of quality of life outcomes than in the case of economic resources? What is the role of families in the inter-generational transmission of attitudes from parents to children?</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The effects of early life influences on socioeconomic outcomes”: <a href="#">Bhash Mazumder</a>, Senior Economist and Research Advisor and Director, Chicago Census Research Data Center</li> <li>• “Evidence on the intergenerational transmission of educational opportunities and outcomes”: <a href="#">Dirk Van Damme</a>, Head of Innovation and Measuring Progress Division, OECD Directorates on Education and Skills</li> <li>• “Families and the reproduction of inequality: How parents and partners influence social mobility”: <a href="#">Laura Tach</a>, Assistant Professor of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University</li> <li>• “Should social mobility be measured and analyzed differently in low income and high income economies?”: <a href="#">Ravi Kanbur</a>, T.H. Lee Professor of World Affairs, International Professor of Applied Economics and Management and Professor of Economics, Cornell University</li> </ul>
16:30 – 17:00	<i>Coffee break</i>

Organised in collaboration with:





## Wednesday 14 January (continued)

17:00 – 18:00

### **Final Roundtable: Implications for Research and Policy**

*The final round table will bring together the main conclusions of the day. What metrics should feature into a comprehensive dashboard of indicators on inequality of opportunity? What are the roles of administrative and survey data in providing the information required to better measure inequality of opportunity? What are the policies bearing most directly on inequality of opportunity? What types of educational policies will be most (and least) effective in increasing equality of opportunities?*

Chair: **João Caraça**

Participants: **Ravi Kanbur, François Bourguignon, Martine Durand**

*Organised in collaboration with:*

