Since 2010 the discussion on poverty in Mongolia has been dominated by a discussion over the numbers. The four national household surveys conducted between 1995 and 2007/08 produced poverty estimates that are not comparable because of methodological differences from one survey to the next.

Additionally, there was disagreement over the official poverty estimate of 2007/08 and an alternative figure was produced. The lack of consensus on the extent of poverty in the country led to considerable confusion as different agencies used different estimates at different forums.

The methodological differences have since been resolved and a single poverty estimate for 2011 was released in May 2012. It was also agreed that the World Bank would support NSO to make backward projections to get comparable poverty estimates for 2007/08 and 2009.

Thus, a consistent and comparable, though imperfect, trend of poverty estimates is likely to be available soon for 2007/08 onwards that can be monitored and used for analytical purposes. Because of non-comparable survey designs it is not possible to make similar backward projections for the period prior to 2007/08.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

While the issue of numbers has been resolved satisfactorily, there is an issue which goes beyond estimates and projections. Because of rapid economic growth, Mongolia is now classified as a lower middle income country. Still, close to 30% of Mongolia’s population is below the national poverty line. This is difficult to understand and raises the following questions:
• What are the causes of poverty in Mongolia?
• What has been the impact of growth and public actions on poverty and inequality?
• Which actions are likely to be most effective in reducing poverty?
• What strategies should be developed for maximum impact on poverty reduction?
• In what areas can development partners support the government in reducing poverty?
• With a focus on multidimensional nature of poverty, what non-monetary indicators can help develop a holistic understanding of poverty in Mongolia?

Developing a common understanding on these issues is crucial for Mongolia’s future development.

DIALOGUE STRUCTURE

The development dialogue will have presentations by UNDP and NSO that will address the issues mentioned above. This will be followed by an open discussion that will provide an opportunity for an exchange of views among participants and help increase understanding of the issues and challenges to help contribute to development policy.