Launch of Global Center of Excellence on Gender Statistics and the First Global Conference on Gender Equality and the Measurement of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

10 – 11 September 2018
Mexico City
To Be Aware (Estar Pendiente) of Care for Dependents (and beware of how it is conventionally measured)

- Activities versus responsibilities
- Time constraints and legal rules
- Inconsistent measurement
- Consequences for policy
Diverse Terms Categorized in Diverse Ways...

- Supervisory care
- Passive care
- “Looking after” children
- Children “in your care”
- Being “on-call”
- “Estar al pendiente”

Primary activities?
Secondary activities?
Both?
Distinct from but overlapping activities?
...and Operationalized in Diverse Ways

• Included or not included on an “activity list”? 

• Specifically incorporated into survey instrument?

• Included in instructions to enumerators?

• Left at the discretion of respondents?
Empirical Consequences

Estimates of total time devoted to care of children and other dependents— and therefore, of total time devoted to unpaid work-- are NOT COMPARABLE across most national surveys.

NOT JUST “NOT HARMONIZED”—OFTEN NON-HARMONIZABLE!
Implications for Gender Equality

Men are much more likely to provide supervisory care than active care.

Ignoring supervisory care understates their contribution.

But treating supervisory care (often combined with leisure activities) the same as active care overstates their contribution relative to women.
Implications for Development Policy

• Difficult to accurately compare effects of public child care provision or other family policies on time use across countries.

• Difficult to even ascertain effects of public child care provision within countries:

• Australian and U.S. data suggest it reduces supervisory child care time significantly but has little effect on active care time.
Thanks for your attention!

For more information or details please contact me at

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