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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Sixty-fourth session

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(Item 4(f) of the provisional agenda)

**MINUTES ON THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION HELD BETWEEN
REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
AND THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS ON
THE BULLETIN OF HOUSING AND BUILDING STATISTICS
(Palais des Nations, Geneva, 5 June 2003, 9 a.m.)**

1. The informal consultation was attended by Ms. Doris Andoni (Albania), Mr. Wolfgang Förster (Austria), Ms. Daniela Grabmüllerová (Czech Republic), Ms. Hana Hanková (Czech Republic), Mr. Martti Lujanen (Finland), Mr. Kai Skoglund (Finland), Ms. Judit Székely (Hungary), Mr. Paul van der Laan (Netherlands), Ms. Elena Szolgayová (Slovakia), Mr. Oscar Yau (United Kingdom), Ms. Christina von Schweinichen, Mr. John Kelly, Ms. Sylta Paysen and Ms. Cecilia Batac (UNECE secretariat).
2. The consultation was chaired by Mr. Martti Lujanen, representative of the Committee on Human Settlements, and co-chaired by Mr. Paul van der Laan, representative of the Conference of European Statisticians.
3. The objectives of the consultation were:
 - (a) To streamline the contents of the Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America. This involved reviewing the current version of the ECE housing questionnaire and identifying data that are:
 - (i) Useful and therefore should be retained;
 - (ii) Not very relevant and therefore should be removed;
 - (iii) Relevant but not on the ECE questionnaire and therefore should be added;
 - (b) To consider ways of creating synergies with other initiatives taken by international organizations and member countries.

4. As a preliminary step to meeting the first objective, the secretariat had already made revisions to the ECE questionnaire following an analysis of it. Some items of the questionnaire had been taken out because of the low number of replies in the past, while others had been integrated into one item. Other items had been retained despite the low number of replies due to their apparent usefulness or obvious importance. (See the second column of the Annex for a summary of the revisions.)
5. The participants had a thorough discussion on the revised format of the questionnaire and suggested additional revisions on some items. These proposed changes are summarized in the third column of the Annex.
6. The participants agreed on all the revisions made, the further revisions proposed and the change in the ECE Bulletin's title.
7. In addressing the second objective, the discussion focused on how best to avoid asking for the same or similar data from national statistical offices, since this obviously constituted duplication of work for the reporting countries. A comparison of the data collected by EU and ECE was made and presented by the secretariat. From this comparison, the commonalities and similarity of the type of data collected by the two organizations were highlighted.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. It was proposed that the title of the ECE bulletin "Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America" should be changed to "Housing Statistics for Europe and North America" since most building-related statistics in the questionnaire were taken out.
9. The participants agreed to use the housing data collected for the EU bulletin "Housing Statistics in the European Union" to pre-fill the ECE questionnaire prior to sending it to EU member countries.
10. It was suggested that a more simplified search path should be found to overcome the difficulty in locating housing statistics information on web sites of international organizations.
11. It was suggested that the statistical tables on housing posted on the ECE web site, which were currently available in PDF format, should be made available in Excel. The secretariat agreed.
12. The secretariat would furnish the country in charge of the next publication of the EU bulletin "Housing Statistics in the European Union", that is Denmark, of the changes in the ECE housing questionnaire as a result of the consultation.
13. In view of the overall responsibilities that the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau had for coordinating international statistical work in the ECE region, the summary overview paper outlining needed improvements in the coordination and dissemination of housing statistics

produced by different international organizations and bodies in the ECE region that Mr. Lujanen had prepared should be amended and submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at a forthcoming meeting. The participants asked Mr. Kelly of the ECE Statistical Division to liaise with Mr. Lujanen in facilitating and arranging that.

14. The participants agreed to prepare and submit the minutes of this meeting to the Committee on Human Settlements for endorsement at its sixty-fourth session.

Annex
CHANGES TO THE ECE QUESTIONNAIRE

Items in the ECE questionnaire that were revised / removed	Revisions made	Further revisions proposed during the consultation
Part 2 - Housing and related statistics		
Dwellings completed with 5 rooms	} integrated into "Dwellings completed with 5 rooms and more"	} split "Dwellings completed with 5 rooms and more" into Dwellings with 5 rooms Dwellings with 6 rooms and more
Dwellings completed with 6 rooms		
Dwellings completed with 7 rooms		
Dwellings completed with 8 rooms and more		
Dwellings completed per 1000 inhabitants, in urban areas	<i>removed</i>	
Dwellings completed per 1000 inhabitants, in rural areas	<i>removed</i>	
Dwellings begun during the year	<i>removed</i>	
Dwellings under construction at year end	<i>removed</i>	
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1946-1960	} integrated into "Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1946-1970" } integrated into "Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1981 and later"	} split "Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1981 and later" into Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1981-1990 Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1991-2000 Dwelling stock, period of construction, 2001 and later
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1961-1970		
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1981-1985		
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1986-1990		
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1991-1995		
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 1996-2000		
Dwelling stock, period of construction, 2000-2005		
Dwellings with a kitchenette	<i>removed</i>	
Dwellings without a kitchen or kitchenette	<i>removed</i>	
Dwellings, occupied	} reformatted as: Dwellings, occupied Dwellings, owner-occupied Dwellings, other-occupied Dwellings, vacant	} split other-occupied dwellings into "Dwellings, occupied, rented" and "Dwellings, occupied, other"
Dwellings, vacant		
Tenure of dwellings: Owned		
Tenure of dwellings: Other		
Part 3 - Production of building materials		
Other building materials, other bricks	<i>removed</i>	
Other building materials, plaster	<i>removed</i>	
Other building materials, roofing tiles, clay tiles	<i>removed</i>	
Other building materials, roofing tiles, cement tiles	<i>removed</i>	
Other building materials, roofing tiles, asbestos-cement tiles	<i>removed</i>	
Other building materials, thermal insulation materials	<i>removed</i>	
Other building materials, ready-mixed concrete	<i>removed</i>	

Items in the ECE questionnaire that were revised / removed	Revisions made	Further revisions proposed during the consultation
Part 4 - Wholesale price indices of building materials and input and output price indices for housing construction	<i>removed entirely</i>	
Questions under this dimension pertain to wholesale price indices of:		
cement, clay bricks, other bricks, small concrete blocks, lime, plaster, clay roofing tiles, cement roofing tiles, asbestos-cement tiles, thermal insulation materials, sheet glass, prefabricated concrete elements, ready-mixed concrete, steel, and sawnwood. Other items under this dimension are total output and input price indices for housing construction, and input prices indices for housing		
Part 5 - Structure of the building industry		
Number of firms with 100 to 199 employees	<i>integrated into "Number of firms with 100 employees and over"</i>	<i>delete this entire part</i>
Number of firms with 200 to 499 employees		
Number of firms with 500 to 999 employees		
Number of firms with 1000 employees and over		
Remaining items of part 5 pertain to total number of employees, and value of output in firms with the following number of employees:	<i>all items removed</i>	
up to 5 employees		
6 to 19 employees		
20 to 49 employees		
50 to 99 employees		
100 to 199 employees		
200 to 499 employees		
500 to 999 employees		
1000 employees and over		
Part 6 - Dwellings and average space of dwellings by number of rooms, by useful and living floor space		
Dwellings with useful floor space 50 m2 to 99 m2		<i>split into "Dwellings with useful floor space 50 m2 to 74 m2" and "Dwellings with useful floor space 75m2 to 99 m2"</i>
Dwellings with useful floor space 150 m2 to 199 m2		
Dwellings with useful floor space 200 m2 to 249 m2		<i>integrate into "Dwellings with useful floor space 150 m2 and more"</i>
Dwellings with useful floor space 250 m2 and more		<i>same structure proposed for living floor space of dwellings</i>

Items in the ECE questionnaire that were revised / removed	Revisions made	Further revisions proposed during the consultation
Part 7 - Number of persons in a household, useful and living floor space, by tenure		
Items in this part pertain to total households, and number of households in "owner-occupied" and "other-occupied" dwellings with useful floor space and living floor space as follows:		
under 50 m ²		
50 m ² to 99 m ²		split the size "50 m ² to 99" into
100 m ² to 149 m ²		"50 m ² to 74 m ² " and "75 m ² to 99 m ² "
150 m ² to 199 m ²		} integrate into "150 m ² and more"
200 m ² to 249 m ²		
250 m ² and more		
unknown		
Part 8 - New non-residential buildings completed	removed entirely	
Items in this part pertain to total number, gross floor area, and gross volume of all non-residential buildings, and of different types of non-residential buildings as follows:		
Industrial buildings		
Commercial buildings		
Educational buildings		
Health care buildings		
Other buildings		
Part 9 - Value of construction put in place (in national currency units)		
Residential construction, new construction	removed	
Residential construction, total improvements	removed	
Residential construction, improvements, additions	removed	
Residential construction, improvements, alterations in or on the dwelling	removed	
Residential construction, improvements, improvements outside the dwelling	removed	
Residential construction, improvements, major replacements	removed	
Non-residential construction, new buildings	removed	
Non-residential construction, improvements	removed	
Part 10 - Size, facilities and period of construction in dwellings by tenure		
Total owner-occupied dwellings built 1946-1960	} integrate into "Total owner-occupied dwellings built 1946-1970"	add to this part of the questionnaire a category for rented-occupied dwellings (distinguished from other-occupied dwellings)
Total owner-occupied dwellings built 1961-1970		
Total other-occupied dwellings built 1946-1960		
Total other-occupied dwellings built 1961-1970		
Part 11 - Number of rooms in a dwelling, number of persons in a household, total number of households by tenure		
Items in this part of the questionnaire pertain to households in "owner-occupied" and "other-occupied" dwellings with number of rooms as follows:		
1 room		} add to this part of the questionnaire a category for rented-occupied dwellings (distinguished from other-occupied dwellings)
2 rooms		
3 rooms		
4 rooms		
5 rooms		
6 rooms and more		
unknown		