



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

CES/2005/WP. 2
1 June 2005

ENGLISH ONLY

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-third plenary session
(Geneva, 13-15 June 2005)

Agenda item 5

**FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BUREAU AND THE
CONFERENCE**

Note prepared by the ECE secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. The note on follow-up to decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference has been prepared systematically since the October 2002 meeting. It permits the identification of possible delays and facilitates taking decisions for further action. The note is updated for each Bureau meeting and for the CES plenary session.
2. The present note follows up on the main decisions taken by the Bureau since its February 2002 meeting and by the Conference in 2002, 2003 and 2004, as reflected in the respective reports. Actions undertaken before 2005 are summarized in a short form under *History*; decisions and follow-up from 2005 are given in more detail. Under each decision, the action to be taken or that was taken is indicated.
3. The decisions are grouped in two sections: I. Decisions related to the work of the Conference and its Bureau; and II. Decisions related to the Integrated Presentation and specific Programme Elements.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU

Progress of work and strategies of international organizations

4. History: at the June 2002 plenary session, it was agreed that, periodically, discussion should be devoted to the progress of work of international organizations and their strategies. The IMF presented its statistical activities to the Bureau in October 2003 and the World Bank presented its statistical activities to the Bureau in October 2004.

Action: Eurostat is invited to make a presentation at the October 2005 Bureau meeting.

CES Seminars and their follow-up

Globalization (June 2003)

5. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Globalization in June 2003, the Conference agreed that an experiment on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises (MNE) would be carried out. In October 2003, the Bureau approved the terms of reference for the creation of a Steering Group for the MNE Project (chaired by Statistics Canada). The CES Bureau serves as its Steering Committee. Progress reports were presented at the June 2004 plenary session and the October 2004 Bureau meeting.

Action: a progress report on the project will be presented to the 2005 Conference.

Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata (June 2003)

6. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata in June 2003, a Task Force was created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection (the Terms of Reference approved in October 2003). Progress reports were presented to the Bureau in February and October 2004, and to the Conference in June 2004. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the progress report was presented. The draft Guidelines will be presented at the CES plenary session in June 2005 for countries' comments and additional case studies. The amended version, as interim Guidelines, is planned for approval by the Bureau at its 2005 October meeting. The final endorsement by the Conference will take place in June 2006. The Bureau supported the proposed publication strategy for the Guidelines. It was proposed to also include the Guidelines (or a link to them) in the UNSD database on good practices in official statistics.

Action: i) an updated paper by Dennis Trewin will be considered at the CES 2005 plenary session;

ii) ECE will publish the Guidelines when finalized and will add a link to Fundamental Principles of official statistics;

iii) UNSD to include the Guidelines in their database of good practices in official statistics.

Improved data reporting (June 2005)

7. June 2004 plenary session: the Conference selected improved data reporting to be the topic for the seminar on foundational issues of statistical systems at the 2005 plenary session. The session organizer is the United States.

October 2004 and February 2005 Bureau meetings: the Bureau considered the outline of the seminar.

Action: the seminar is organized on 13 June 2005.

Measurement of Sustainable Development (June 2005)

8. June 2004 plenary session: the Conference selected Measurement of Sustainable Development to be the topic for the seminar on emerging issues at the 2005 plenary session. The Session organizer is Sweden.

October 2004 and February 2005 Bureau meetings: the Bureau considered the outline of the seminar.

Action: the seminar is organized on 14 June 2005.

Work of the Bureau

9. History: in February and October 2004, it was agreed that the papers should be disseminated to Bureau members two weeks in advance of the meeting to allow them to consult with staff and react on a detailed level. The Bureau members will provide written comments on documents to facilitate the discussion. Electronic discussion via e-mail (comments sent to all Bureau members) was considered sufficient. The secretariat should keep a record of all comments received.

Action: the ECE secretariat will disseminate papers two weeks in advance and keep a record of comments received.

Elections of the Bureau

10. February 2005 Bureau meeting: in connection with the elections of the Bureau, it was agreed that the text of the Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau should be updated.

Action: The updated text of the Rules is submitted to the CES 2005 plenary session for endorsement.

Definition of Steering Group, Task Force, etc.

History: the Conference adopted the guidelines for establishing the various teams or groups of experts that could work within the Conference of European Statisticians (CES/2004/8) in June 2004. In October 2004, the ECE secretariat presented an overview of the existing teams of specialists. Some groups were reclassified to be in accordance with the approved Guidelines.

Action: the ECE secretariat maintains on Internet an up-to-date list of all groups working under the auspices of the CES (<http://www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html>).

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE INTEGRATED PRESENTATION AND SPECIFIC PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

Purpose, structure and compilation of the Integrated Presentation

11. History: the Bureau decided at its February 2003 meeting to review the structure of the Integrated Presentation (IP) to reduce duplication and to eliminate those programme elements

that are no longer significant. In June 2004, the Conference approved the document CES/2004/3 on the purpose and plans for future development of the IP. In February 2004, it was decided to create a Task Force to revise the IP classification and to develop a proposal to make Rapporteur Reporting more effective.

October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau approved the new IP classification.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau discussed the IP and the procedure of Rapporteur reporting. The decisions taken are listed below.

Action: i) the new IP classification is being tested on the 2005 IP; the Bureau will be informed about the results of the test in October 2005;
ii) the “issues and problems” will be presented to the Conference in a separate document;
iii) the UNECE secretariat will identify the issues and problems for those statistical areas from the IP for which the required expertise is available in the UNECE and seek advice and contributions from the Bureau members for the remaining areas; these will be discussed by February meetings of the Bureau which selects those to bring to the attention of the Conference;
iv) for the 2005 plenary session, the UNECE secretariat has prepared a note for the Conference explaining the changed procedure; the note includes an excerpt from the Rapporteur’s reports reviewed by the Bureau in February 2005; the paper was sent to countries for written comments, which are summarized in Working Paper no. 5.;
v) a small survey will be carried out among the heads of statistical offices at the time of the CES plenary session in order to obtain their preferences for the topics to be reviewed in-depth in February 2006. Based on the replies, the UNECE secretariat will make a proposal to the 2005 October Bureau;
vii) the UNECE secretariat will include hyperlinks to the statistical programmes or other relevant documents of the member countries on the UNECE website.

P.E. 1.3 and 1.4 Technical cooperation

12. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau requested UNECE, Eurostat and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS to prepare a proposal on how to improve the coordination of technical assistance in the UNECE region.

Action: a proposal on how to improve the coordination of technical assistance in the UNECE region to be prepared for the October 2005 meeting of the Bureau

P.E. 2.1 Management of information technology

13. History: in October 2002, the Bureau asked the Steering Group on Information Technology to make a survey of the use of ICTs in NSOs with a focus on ICT policy issues.
October 2004 Bureau meeting: the Bureau considered the results of a pilot survey carried out in 2004 on the Role of National Statistical Offices in e-Services and the Development of IT in NSOs. The Bureau was in favour of organizing a full-scale survey but asked to review the proposed questionnaire before launching a full-scale operation.

Action: participants at the April 2005 Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems discussed the results of the pilot survey and identified the issues of common interest for more in-depth deliberation. The participants considered it more appropriate to share their experience on these issues through a direct discussion rather than a full-scale survey.

PE 2.3 Dissemination and interchange of statistical information

14. June 2004 plenary session: the desirability of common structural elements in the NSO websites was pointed out. It was recommended to deal with this topic at the UNECE work sessions on statistical dissemination.

Action: the Steering Group on statistical dissemination included the topic on the list of possible topics for the future expert meetings.

PE 2.7 Human resources and training

15. February 2005 Bureau meeting: at its October 2004 meeting, the Bureau decided to review in February 2005 Human Resources Development and Training. However, none of the countries contacted by the UNECE secretariat were in a position to prepare a paper in time for this Bureau meeting. The Bureau agreed that this topic would be suitable for a CES seminar and therefore decided not to deal with it at a Bureau meeting but to include it in the list of possible future seminar topics.

Action: human resources and training is proposed as the topic for a CES seminar in 2006.

PE 2.9 Millennium Development Goals and Human Development

16. October 2004 Bureau: the Bureau discussed the situation with country reporting on indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). It was considered important to use the Secretary General's report as an opportunity to highlight the problems with MDG. An ECE survey of the situation in the ECE region (similar to the ESCAP survey) was considered timely.

February 2005 Bureau: the Bureau discussed how to bring to the attention of the policy people the concerns with data on MDG indicators and to achieve the political recognition of the role of official statistics in the MDG process. Several options were discussed for preparing a corporate message that could be delivered at different levels: national, international, governments, ministries, politicians, national delegates to policy meetings, etc. The CIS Statistical Committee raised some questions concerning the information provided by the UNECE secretariat in its report on UNECE work on MDG monitoring in South-East European and CIS countries (CES/BUR.2005/38).

Action: (i) the UNECE secretariat will carry out a survey of the ability of UNECE member countries to report on the MDG indicators, a draft questionnaire to be sent to countries will be presented to the Bureau in October 2005;

(ii) the UNECE secretariat clarified the sources of data in the document CES/BUR.2005/38 and sent the revised paper to the CIS Statistical Committee for comments.

PE 3.4. Transport statistics

17. February 2005 Bureau: the Bureau was informed about the revised classification of transport statistics. The classification should be endorsed by the CES. Given the time limits at the CES plenary session, a written procedure for consultation of the classification with countries was used.

Action: the revised classification of transport statistics was sent for written comments to countries; the comments are summarized in Working Paper no. 6, the revised classification is submitted to CES 2005 plenary session for adoption.

PA 4. Social statistics

18. History: the Bureau discussed the situation with social statistics at its October 2003 and June 2004 meetings. Concern was expressed that not enough is being done to improve international cooperation in social statistics and the area is not sufficiently covered by international standards and definitions. In October 2004, the Bureau recommended to develop common modules for social surveys by a small number of countries working together on a voluntary basis. It was recommended to organise a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics to identify potential areas of cooperation.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau supported the proposal to organise a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics, back-to-back with the EU yearly Directors of Social Statistics meeting on 27-28 September 2005. The meeting could give strategic guidelines on the areas in which common modules for social surveys could be developed. A Task Force needs to be set up consisting of selected countries representing different regions to develop the harmonized modules.

Action: the UNECE secretariat and Eurostat will organise a joint meeting on social statistics back-to-back with the Eurostat meeting for Directors of social statistics. The organizers are developing a concrete agenda for the meeting and identifying the possible outcomes (Italy, Australia and the United States offered help in developing the agenda). The United States was appointed Chair of the Organizing Committee. The proposal is submitted to the Bureau to be considered at its June 2005 meeting.

PE 4.1 Migration statistics

19. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau recommended that the joint UNECE/Eurostat seminar on migration statistics (21-23 March 2005, Geneva) create a Steering Group to prepare a programme of work on migration for coming years. The Bureau also recommended setting up a clearing house on migration statistics to maintain information on international projects in migration statistics.

The issue was considered at the March 2005 seminar. 13 countries expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group. The Terms of Reference are being prepared.

***Action: i) the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group on migration statistics will be submitted to the October 2005 Bureau meeting for approval;
ii) OECD to report on the improvements of its work on migration statistics at the October 2005 Bureau;
iii) migration statistics will be discussed in-depth at the CES 2005 plenary session.***

PE 4.2a Population and housing censuses:

20. History: in October 2003, the Bureau approved the terms of reference for a Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and reviewed the work plan for preparing the new set of recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses. It was proposed that the new recommendations be formally adopted by the Conference in 2006. The Bureau reviewed the progress reports on the work in February 2004, October 2005 and February 2005.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: it was proposed to include in the Task Forces representatives from Nordic countries to take into account the requirements of register-based censuses. It was also recommended to coordinate the work with the UN working groups on population and housing censuses.

Action: i) the chairs of the Task Forces were invited to consider in their work not only traditional censuses, but also other forms of census such as register-based censuses;

- ii) Nordic countries are represented in the Steering Group and in several Task Forces;*
- iii) the communications of the Steering Group and the Task Forces are regularly copied to UNSD, and representatives of the UNECE and the Task Forces have been included in the UN working groups to ensure coordination with the work on the revision of the global recommendations;*
- iv) in the course of the first half of 2005, the Task Forces have been working to prepare the first draft of the new recommendations, which will be reviewed by the Steering Group at a meeting on 20-22 June;*
- v) the new recommendations will be discussed at a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on 12-16 December 2005.*

PE 4.3 Human settlements and housing statistics:

21. History: in February 2004, the Bureau approved the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group on human settlements and housing. The Bureau requested the Steering Group to prepare a programme of work and related timetable and report them to the Bureaux of the CES and the Committee on Human Settlements (CHS). It also requested the Steering Group to present progress reports to both Bureaux.

Action: the work has been delayed; the Steering Group plans to present to the Bureaux of the CES and CHS a progress report later in 2005 or early in 2006.

PE 4.6 Culture statistics:

22. History: in February 2003, the Bureau approved the proposal for the organization of a joint ECE/UIS-UNESCO/Eurostat meeting in 2004-2005 to establish a joint work plan for the coming years. OECD expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group on culture statistics (if it is set up), given its involvement in the area of adult education. The meeting was not included in the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2004 and 2005 because of lack of resources.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau asked Eurostat to consider whether they can take over the organization of this meeting. If not, it can be dropped from the list of planned activities.

Action: Eurostat still to consider organizing the meeting on culture statistics.

PE 5.1 Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases:

23. History: the Bureau noted the growing network of national and international organizations dealing with environmental issues and a need for better coordination of the data collection in its February 2002 and October 2002 meetings. Preparation of a paper on this topic was discussed at the February and October 2003 meetings. Environment statistics was discussed in-depth at the CES 2004 plenary session. The Conference asked the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (ISWGES) to review the issues related to overlaps in data collection and identify the actions to be taken to improve coordination. It also asked the ISWGES to detect areas that are not sufficiently covered and look at mechanisms to take into account user requirements. In October 2004, the Bureau was informed that the ISWGES did not discuss the topic at its October 2004 meeting. The topic could not be considered at the 2005 CES plenary session.

February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau will discuss environment statistics at its 2005 October meeting

Action: environment statistics to be discussed at the 2005 October Bureau meeting.

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