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Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Fifty-eighth plenary session

Paris, 8-10 June 2010

Annotated provisional agenda

The plenary session will be held at the Conference Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, starting at 14:30 on Tuesday, 8 June 2010. A preliminary indication of time allocation is provided in part III. Organization of work.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda.
2. Meetings of the parent bodies of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES).
 - (a) Forty-first session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
3. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region.
 - (a) Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the CES Bureau in October 2009;
 - (i) Statistical dissemination, communication and publications;
 - (ii) Government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics;
 - (b) In-depth reviews to be conducted by the CES Bureau in November 2010;
 - (i) Time-use surveys (including the time-use related aspects of the political and community activities and volunteer work);
 - (ii) Measuring the information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation.
4. Progress reports and work of the CES Teams of Specialists.
 - (a) The UNECE Statistical Programme for 2010 and the report on the implementation of the 2009 Programme;
 - (b) The Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA);
 - (c) The reports of the CES Bureau Meetings, progress reports of the Teams of Specialists working under the auspices of the Conference and reports from expert meetings.

5. Manuals, guidelines, recommendations, frameworks, etc. prepared under the auspices of the Conference.
 - (a) Manual on gender statistics;
 - (b) Measuring of different emerging forms of households and families;
 - (c) Statistical measurement of quality of employment.
6. Spatial statistics.
7. Impact of global crises on statistical systems.
8. Selection of topics for the modules on new emerging issues, and on foundational issues of statistical systems to be organised during the 2011 CES plenary session.
9. Other business.
10. Adoption of the report.

II. Annotations

The fifty-eighth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) is convened at the request of the fifty-seventh CES plenary session (ECE/CES/75) and in accordance with the Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau adopted at the 2005 plenary session of the CES (CES/2005/2).

The 2010 plenary session of the Conference will continue to follow the format introduced in 2002 by the fiftieth session of the Conference (ECE/CES/62). The plenary session includes three parts: part one, formal business dealing with the review of general issues such as the international statistical work in the region; part two dealing with foundational issues of statistical systems; and part three dealing with new emerging issues.

1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda

The proposed provisional agenda and timetable were agreed upon by the CES Bureau at its 24 February 2010 meeting. The provisional agenda will be presented for the approval of the Conference.

2. Meetings of the parent bodies of the Conference of European Statisticians

Each year, a short overview is given of the meetings of the parent bodies of the CES, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC). As of 2007, the UNECE will meet every second year and there will be no meeting in 2010. Therefore, only the outcomes of the 41st session of the UNSC (23-26 February 2010) will be presented to the Conference.

3. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

This agenda item is concerned with the coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region and the decisions and recommendations that the Conference is expected to take on the respective issues.

The Conference will be informed about the regular in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas made by the CES Bureau. The reviews look at strategic issues in statistics in the next

five years or so, and deal with issues of concern to statistical offices of a conceptual and coordinating nature.

(a) Outcomes of the in-depth reviews conducted by the Bureau in October 2009

(i) Statistical dissemination, communication and publications

The Bureau made an in-depth review of statistical dissemination, communication and publications in October 2009. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the review.

(ii) Government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics

The topic was reviewed in depth by the Bureau in October 2009. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the review.

(b) In-depth reviews to be conducted by the Bureau in November 2010

The aim of the discussion under this agenda item is to seek input from all CES members for an in-depth review of international work in selected areas to be carried out by the CES Bureau in November 2010. The discussion should identify challenges for statistical offices in the selected areas and determine what the international statistical community and international organizations can do to assist national statistical offices in meeting these challenges. The focus should be on issues that are not yet sufficiently addressed at international level and identifying possible areas of duplication of work.

(i) Time-use surveys (including the time-use related aspects of the political and community activities and volunteer work)

Papers will be prepared by United Kingdom and Germany. The outcomes of the discussion will serve as input to the in-depth review, to be conducted by the CES Bureau in November 2010.

(ii) Measuring the information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation

A paper will be prepared by Australia. The outcomes of the discussion will serve as input to the in-depth review, to be conducted by the CES Bureau in November 2010.

4. Progress reports and work of the Conference of European Statisticians Teams of Specialists

Under this agenda item, the Conference will be informed about the implementation of the UNECE Statistical Programme and progress of work of the Teams of Specialists working under the auspices of the Conference, as follows:

(a) The UNECE Statistical Programme for 2010 and the report on the implementation of the 2009 Programme will be presented briefly for information;

(b) The progress made in updating the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA) and in the use of the DISA classification will be presented briefly for information;

(c) The Reports of the CES Bureau Meetings, progress reports of the Teams of Specialists working under the auspices of the Conference, and reports from expert meetings will be submitted to the Conference for information.

5. Manuals, guidelines, recommendations, frameworks, etc. prepared under the umbrella of the Conference

Three documents will be submitted to the CES 2010 plenary session for consideration.

(a) Manual on Gender Statistics

The Manual on Gender Statistics has been developed by the CES Task Force on Gender Statistics Training for Statisticians. It has benefited from the contributions of about 50 experts and several international organizations. The CES Bureau discussed the Manual in October 2009. The current version has been updated to take into account their comments.

Following the Bureau decision, the Manual will be sent to CES members for electronic consultation. Subject to the results of the consultation, the Manual will be submitted to the Conference for endorsement.

(b) Measurement of Different Emerging Forms of Households and Families

The document on Measurement of different emerging forms of households and families was developed by the CES Task Force on Families and Households. It was circulated to the CES Bureau for electronic consultation in December 2009/January 2010.

The document has been updated to take into account the comments by the Bureau. Following the Bureau decision, the document will be sent for electronic comments to the CES members. Subject to the results of the consultation, the Manual will be submitted to the Conference for endorsement.

(c) Statistical Measurement of Quality of Employment

The set of indicators for measuring quality of employment has been developed by the Task Force on the Measurement of the Quality of Employment established by the CES Bureau in June 2007.

The Bureau discussed the draft document of the Task Force at its February 2010 meeting. The document has been updated to take into account the issues raised.

The secretariat will circulate the updated document for electronic consultation to the CES members, together with the publication of the country pilot reports on quality of employment. The CES 2010 plenary session will be informed about the outcome of the consultation. The Bureau will discuss further work on statistical measurement of quality of employment at its 11 June 2010 meeting.

6. Spatial statistics

This part of the plenary session is organized by the Census and Geography Agency (INEGI), Mexico and Eurostat. The topic is considered in three sessions. The discussion will start with a keynote speech given by Mr. L.H. Backer (Statistics Sweden, Nordic Forum for GeoStatistics, European Forum for GeoStatistics, European GridClub).

Spatial statistics has received increased attention as the geo-referenced data become increasingly important. This is due to the greater demand for detailed regional and spatial information as well as the improved possibilities to collect and process these data. The spatial code is considered one of the basic uniting elements in statistics to which characteristics of persons, households and enterprises can be attributed. Linking various data on a geo-spatial basis in domains like housing, agriculture, land use, environment, social stratification, energy, transport and business statistics is an undisputable trend confronting statistical offices. On the national as well as regional scale, such information is considered essential for planning and analytical purposes.

(a) Sub-topic 1: Use of statistical grids in official statistics

The session is organised by Austria. Invited papers are prepared by Finland, United States, and Slovenia.

The provision of geo-referenced statistical data for small areas independently of administrative boundaries has become a new challenge for official statistics.

Statistical grids are a spatial reference system that can serve as the smallest statistical area unit for which – respecting statistical confidentiality – data may be provided to the user. Advantages of statistical grids are their independence of administrative (national or international) boundaries and their flexibility regarding the size of the grids. Grid data can be used for many purposes of spatial planning, analysis and research, but also for business purposes (e.g. in telecommunication).

The aim of this session is to exchange experience and best practices in using statistical grids in official statistics. This session should cover the various aspects related to creation, use and provision of statistical grids and grid-based data, with the focus on the use of statistical grids as an instrument to provide statistical data to users and as an instrument to delineate functional/thematic areas. The session should also provide indications on how statistical grids can complement traditional statistics based on administrative/statistical units, highlighting advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches also with respect to costs and benefit considerations, and in view of an improved support to decision making.

(b) Sub-topic 2: Spatial analysis - a tool for exploiting the combination of geographic and statistical information and improving dissemination

The session is organised by Brazil. Invited papers are prepared by Israel, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Mexico.

This session will look at examples of spatial statistics applied to different thematic areas (metropolitan area, urban area, rural area, neighborhood, morphological area, etc.). The examples will provide an overview of the potential of spatial statistics as well as the associated data needs, both in terms of added value to the original sources of information and in terms of improvement of the dissemination of results, in making them better accessible to specialists and the broader public.

The session will show the challenges associated with specific types of data, e.g. the definition of units depending on the area under study, or with the choice of the most promising types of analysis, and will show the costs and benefits related to the application of spatial analysis with respect to data collection.

The session will also present best practice examples of dissemination of spatially referenced statistics.

(c) Sub-topic 3: General discussion and conclusions

The session is organized by Mexico.

This session will take the form of a round table discussion. It will take into consideration the issue of confidentiality of spatial statistics for small countries or small areas within larger countries. The session will also set out recommendations which have arisen during the course of the discussion on spatial statistics.

7. Impact of global crises on statistical systems

The module on impact of global crises on statistical systems is organised by IMF and OECD. The discussion will start with a keynote speech given by Mr. P. Moutot, European

Central Bank, who will address data needs in the wake of the global crisis as seen from the policy side.

This part of the CES plenary session aims at exchanging experiences in view of the new challenges for national statistical offices arising from global crises. The topic seeks to stress the importance of a holistic view to official statistics in the light of global crises and their evolution.

With the outbreak of the financial and economic crises, countries have begun reconsidering their policies. The crisis has caused multidimensional impacts on both developed and developing countries. There is an issue about the role of statistical information and its adequacy before the crisis, but there is also a need to find the right tools to monitor developments while exiting the crises. And, finally, there is the question of lessons for the longer term statistical development.

(a) Sub-topic 1: Financial statistics, balance sheets and cross-border linkages

The session is organised by IMF. Invited papers are prepared by United States, Norway and the World Trade Organisation.

The crisis was not the result of a lack of proper economic and financial statistics, but did expose a lack of information as well as data gaps on key financial sector vulnerabilities. In short, the crisis once again reaffirmed that data gaps are an inevitable consequence of ongoing development of markets and institutions.

Information gaps have been identified in three main areas that are inter-related:

(a) Cross-border financial linkages: there are important international network connections that have developed and are not captured by available information;

(b) Vulnerability of domestic economies to shocks: this includes improving data availability to monitor the vulnerabilities embedded in the balance sheet positions of financial institutions, government, non-financial corporations and households;

(c) The build-up of risk in the financial sector needs to be better monitored, including the issue of better understanding where risks actually lie.

(b) Sub-topic 2: Communication and timeliness

The session is organised by Statistics Netherlands. Invited papers are prepared by New Zealand and Romania.

The crisis has demonstrated a need to improve the communication of official statistics and advance the interaction among the academic, policy and statistical communities, including national statistical offices. The need to improve the timeliness of data compilation and release is another important lesson of the crisis, with some data that could have been useful in monitoring events during the crisis being only available after a lengthy time lag. In this respect, visualisation tools for rapid indicators can be very helpful and informative for users. Furthermore, it is necessary to improve and modernise the statistical infrastructure in order to allow for rapid action and enough flexibility for it to be used in creative ways to address the crisis.

(c) Sub-topic 3: Social and household statistics

The session is organised by OECD. Invited papers are prepared by Sweden, the Netherlands and Eurostat.

As countries are exiting the crisis, there is a need to reinforce information in the area of social statistics and concerning households. One aspect of this session is therefore how statistical offices have reacted to provide relevant and timely social information to monitor the situation of the most vulnerable parts of society. The system of social statistics is not

typically geared to monitor quick and deep changes that may happen during crises. This may call for new solutions to collect data quickly, for instance by including relevant questions in ongoing social surveys. This leads to another, more general and forward-looking aspect to be considered in the discussion: what is the institutional response in terms of statistical infrastructure that national statistical offices can put in place to be reactive to sudden demands for data as they typically arise in situations of crisis, given that the specific area of the next crisis is hard to foresee?

(d) Sub-topic 4: Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work

This session will discuss the recommendations to the Conference for follow-up work and will formulate conclusions from the discussion on the impact of crises on statistical systems.

8. Selection of topics for the modules on new emerging issues, and on foundational issues of statistical systems to be organised during the 2011 Conference of European Statisticians plenary session

The Conference will select the topics for the plenary session in 2011 based on an electronic consultation with all CES members and a proposal by the CES Bureau.

9. Other business

Any additional issues that the Conference needs to be informed of can be taken up under this agenda item.

10. Adoption of the report

The Conference is expected to adopt the report of the plenary session, including the main decisions, before it adjourns. The report will be limited as far as possible to the key decisions taken by the Conference during the course of the plenary session. The final report of the plenary session will be made available on the UNECE Web site.

III. Organization of work

A detailed timetable will be made available on the official website of the Conference (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.06.ces.htm>) a few weeks before the plenary session.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item/Programme</i>
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Wednesday, 9 June

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