



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
8 August 2014

Original: English

## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### Sixty-second plenary session

Paris, 9-11 April 2014

## Report of the sixty-second plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

### Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction .....	3
A. Attendance .....	3
B. Agenda and procedure .....	3
C. Opening statements .....	3
II. Matters arising from the 45th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission .....	3
III. What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value? .....	4
A. Introduction .....	4
B. Session 1: Understanding the value of official statistics .....	4
C. Session 2: Strategies for communicating the value of official statistics .....	5
D. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work .....	6
IV. Migration statistics .....	7
A. Introduction .....	7
B. Session 1: Measuring recent and changing migration patterns: Challenges and opportunities .....	7
C. Session 2: Methods to improve the measurement of migration .....	8
D. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work .....	9
V. Work of the High-level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services .....	10
VI. Reports, guidelines, recommendations, etc. prepared under the umbrella of the Conference .....	11
A. Gender equality indicators .....	11

---

B.	Recommendations on climate change related statistics .....	11
C.	Global production .....	12
VII.	Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region .....	13
A.	Substantive discussion on leading, composite and sentiment indicators .....	13
B.	Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau .....	14
C.	Follow-up to the Conference of European Statisticians 2013 seminar on challenges in implementing System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and measuring sustainable development .....	15
D.	Follow-up to the Conference of European Statisticians 2013 seminar on challenges in providing access to micro-data for research.....	16
VIII.	Programme of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme .....	16
A.	Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists .....	16
B.	Programme planning documents for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme.....	16
C.	Guidelines for procedures and practices for ECE bodies.....	17
IX.	Selection of topics for seminars at the CES 2015 plenary session .....	17
A.	Modernisation of statistical production and services and managing for efficiency .....	17
B.	The response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals .....	17
X.	Other business .....	17

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Attendance**

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its sixty-second plenary session in Paris from 9 to 11 April 2014. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States of America.

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the Eurasian Economic Commission; European Commission (Eurostat); European Free Trade Association (EFTA); International Labor Organization (ILO); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); World Trade Organization (WTO) and University of London.

### **B. Agenda and procedure**

3. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/86 and Add.1) was adopted.

### **C. Opening statements**

4. Mr. W. Smith, Chair of the CES and its Bureau, chaired the Conference. He opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

## **II. Matters arising from the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission**

5. Mr. S. Schweinfest, UNSD, informed the Conference about the 2014 session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) which:

(a) Celebrated the adoption of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by the United Nations General Assembly. The Friends of the Chair Group on the Implementation of Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics will continue to work on implementation guidelines;

(b) Reviewed the work of the Friends of the Chair on Broader Measures of Progress, who had produced a compendium of statistical notes to inform the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Close engagement of the statistical community in this process will be essential for the measurement of SDGs in the future;

(c) Created a global working group on the use of Big Data for official statistics. China will host a global conference on Big Data in October 2014;

(d) Proposed to celebrate the next World Statistics Day on 20 October 2015 with the general theme "Statistics for better decision-making and development".

6. UNSD commended the CES for providing a well-functioning link between the global and regional work in statistics. The 46th session of UNSC will be held on 3-6 March 2015 focusing on social and demographic statistics (population and housing censuses, migration and refugees), global household survey programme, human development report and the new topic of governance.

**1. Action taken by the Conference**

7. The Conference took note of the main outcomes of the 2014 United Nations Statistical Commission session.

### **III. What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?**

#### **A. Introduction**

8. The seminar was organized by the United Kingdom, Sweden and Eurostat. Ms. J. Matheson, United Kingdom, chaired the seminar. In the opening remarks, she addressed the challenges in defining the criteria for the value of information and how this relates to official statistics. She reflected on the implications of the Big Data phenomenon for the statistical community, the need to communicate the value of official statistics and who is the target audience for this.

9. Mr. J. Pullinger, the President of the UK Royal Statistical Society, delivered a keynote speech. He discussed the role of official statistics in getting the full value from the huge amounts of available data. Often the information available on the web and disseminated through media does not present a fair view of reality: the extremes are amplified and there is too much undifferentiated information. Official statistics must compete with the other data providers by being reliable, objective and impartial. Mr. Pullinger emphasized that the value of official statistics is assessed by users.

#### **B. Session 1: Understanding the value of official statistics**

*Documentation: ECE/CES/2014/ 20-22, 32, 50*

10. The session was organized by Ms. M. Kotzeva, Eurostat. It was based on papers by Australia, Mexico, Romania, Eurostat and the Committee on Products and Sources of the High-level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services (HLG).

11. The session discussed how to define and understand the value of official statistics from a user perspective and explored what national statistical offices could learn from the private sector in this regard.

12. The session organizer underlined the need to make official statistics distinct in the eyes of users, explain better its value, and identify measures to increase public interest. The unique value of official statistics lies in being based on the Fundamental Principles but it is challenging to convey this to users.

13. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Strategic choices have to be made to decide where official statistics fit in today's competitive world of many data producers;

(b) It becomes increasingly important to be proactive in explaining the value of official statistics compared to the vast amounts of data available in the public domain, such

as Big Data. National statistical offices (NSOs) should explore how Big Data could be used as an additional source to improve timeliness and relevance of official statistics;

(c) The value of official statistics is linked with its utility, relevance and impact. While impartiality and independence are critically important to build up credibility, the users also expect official statistics to be relevant to the questions they ask. Statistical offices often put the emphasis on methodological soundness but some users may value more the emotional side and link to their everyday problems;

(d) Official statistics are often used as a benchmark against which data from other sources are checked. Therefore, official statisticians should build partnerships with other data providers to help them deliver better information. The focus of discussion should shift from making a difference between official and non-official statistics to how to work with partners, including from private sector, to improve the quality of their data. For example, statistical offices could provide a quality stamp on statistics by other producers;

(e) Strategies are needed to change user perceptions and educate users. Users sometimes perceive official statistics as expensive, slow, not user-friendly and too much focused on methodological detail. Overcoming this perception should be based on understanding the users' needs both in terms of issues to be addressed and timeframes. Official statistics have at their disposal means that allow to respond rapidly to emerging data needs, for example by running quick surveys on issues of high policy relevance;

(f) It would be useful to be able to attach an economic value to official statistics as a public good, e.g. by providing examples of the cost of wrong decisions based on bad quality data;

(g) Globalization makes it increasingly important to be able to compare data, therefore official statistics have the additional value of coherence and comparability. Improving international comparability and quality assurance has an impact on statistics in all countries;

(h) The value of official statistics should be promoted as a global asset. Cooperation and joint actions at the international level in this area are important.

## **C. Session 2: Strategies for communicating the value of official statistics**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/ 23-25, 33-35

14. The session was organized by Ms. C. Uhrlander, Sweden. It was based on papers by France, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey and Eurostat.

15. The session discussed goals, target groups, strategies and results of communicating the value of official statistics. The session also touched upon increasing the value of statistics by opening data more widely to users and promoting the re-use of data.

16. The session organizer noted that the purposes of communicating the value of official statistics are manifold: securing trust, making users and potential users aware of what official statistics can offer and improving response rates.

17. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The paradigm of communicating official statistics should change to a market orientation, moving from production centric to demand driven approach and from stove-pipe to integrated approach.

(b) To improve relevance, statisticians should react to what is happening in the country by telling stories and providing integrated information related to everyday life. A

challenge here is to keep the balance between being politically relevant without becoming political;

(c) Translating practical utility into concrete actions is quite complex and requires many steps. An efficient communication strategy should allow to profile clients, tailor services to the needs of different groups of clients and use different platforms to contact users, including social media;

(d) NSOs cannot meet all needs of all users in all possible platforms. Therefore they should collaborate with media and look for other partners to reach the different audiences. Official statistics need to encourage others to re-disseminate the data by adding value to it and create platforms for users to incorporate the data into their applications;

(e) Young people, graduate students and market analysts can be used as multipliers of statistics. It is important to educate users through regular education systems. This can be done through different means ranging from optional statistical courses in classrooms to a dedicated university level programme in official statistics;

(f) Respondents are a specific group of users and statistical offices need to be more flexible and supportive towards them. Communicating the value of official statistics to respondents can help to increase the response rates and improve quality of data;

(g) The new approaches to increase use of data and improve accessibility have to be tested on users. Experience shows that some user groups prefer less flexibility, such as default navigation patterns, preselected data, etc. An editorial webmaster can be employed whose task is to ensure that the website is coherent, interesting and lively;

(h) It is very important to tailor the language to users, by using plain language instead of statistical terms, and providing access to data by commonly known keywords;

(i) The reputation of official statistics should be constantly monitored among different categories of users. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators should be used to gather feedback on the effectiveness of specific tools of communication and visualization. User feedback should be turned into concrete measures for improving the data collection and production process;

(j) Improving the mix of skills in the statistical organizations to better communicate official statistics is critically important in the highly competitive information industry. Marketing and branding skills are needed in addition to the traditional communication skills;

(k) Exchange of experience, developing and sharing common methodology, solutions and tools at international level would be very useful.

## **D. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work**

18. The session organizer concluded that to find solutions, it is necessary also to talk with stakeholders outside the circle of official statisticians. It will be useful to develop common tools, for example under the guidance of the High-level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services. There is a lot of potential for activities to follow up from the seminar. A forum to discuss the related issues would be useful.

### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

19. The Conference encouraged countries to use the rich resource of papers and ideas produced by the seminar and agreed on the follow-up actions as listed below:

(a) There is a lot of potential and interest to continue work related to the value of official statistics. There are things that the global statistical community can do together to make a paradigm shift from product to market orientation in communicating official statistics. The existing expert groups should be used for this purpose as much as possible;

(b) The Conference asked the High-level Group for Modernization of Statistical Production and Services to review possible actions to share best practices and develop common tools and solutions in this area;

(c) The Conference asked the Bureau to review the work of the expert meetings on statistical dissemination and communication. It is important to go beyond traditional approaches of communicating official statistics and deal with strategic issues;

(d) The CES Steering Group on Human Resources Management and Training could address the issues related to developing the skill mix that is necessary for effectively communicating the value of official statistics;

(e) The Conference recognized the need for developing a common language and terminology related to the value of official statistics and its communication;

(f) Measuring the economic value of official statistics through collection of examples and case studies would be useful.

20. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised during the seminar. The CES Bureau will discuss at its next meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.

## **IV. Migration statistics**

### **A. Introduction**

21. The seminar was organized by UNECE and Mexico in collaboration with Norway, Russian Federation, CIS-STAT and UNSD. Mr. A. Ortega, Mexico, who chaired the seminar, emphasized that migration was a human rights issue and encouraged country cooperation for providing sufficient data for policy makers, particularly for monitoring the conditions of migrants.

22. Mr. T. Guillen Lopez, from El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Mexico, delivered a keynote speech. He provided an overview of the current state of migration in Mexico focusing on the challenges in measuring undocumented migration. He identified data needs and gaps, and called for new strategies, including the establishment of national systems of migration statistics with special attention to measuring undocumented migration.

### **B. Session 1: Measuring recent and changing migration patterns: Challenges and opportunities**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2014/ 26-28, 36-43

23. The session was organized by Ms. E. Nørgaard, Norway and Ms. K. Osaki-Tomita, UNSD. It was based on papers by Denmark, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, OECD and UNSD.

24. The session addressed specific challenges for the collection of statistics on new migration flows which are due to changing economic situations in many countries. The session also considered the use of different data sources for compiling migration statistics, including population censuses, administrative sources and data from unofficial sources.

25. Ms. E. Nørgaard underlined the challenges to statistical production posed by increasing mobility of people and changing migration patterns. She noted the different concerns of migrant sending and receiving countries, such as emigration, labour, and return migration in the sending countries, and temporary and circular migration and integration of migrants in receiving countries. New data sources can improve the coverage, comprehensiveness and quality of migration statistics, and multiple data sources should be used. Harmonizing migration variables across data sources and across countries is the key to improving the quality of migration statistics, particularly if data on migration are to be exchanged between countries.

26. The presentation by Ms. C. Thoreau and Mr. P. Herve of OECD identified the three main challenges to migration statistics: the changing migration patterns and different forms of mobility, the need to monitor migration flows by detailed characteristics, and the need to compile data by country of origin. They also emphasized the need to improve the labour market conditions of migrants and their descendants.

27. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Even though progress has been made in the collection of migration statistics, there is still need for improvement, including better use of available sources;

(b) Harmonization of terms and definitions related to migration is required to provide consistent data within and between countries. Different types of migration were identified where measurement should be improved, such as emigration, labour migration, irregular migration, short-term migration, and circular migration. Collaboration with researchers was also suggested as a means to improve data quality;

(c) Data exchange was widely discussed and encouraged, as mirror statistics between countries allow to improve data quality. Cooperation between countries should be reinforced and expanded, with the possibility of sharing micro-data. In this connection, data quality assessment frameworks need to be put in place;

(d) Measurement of the economic and social impact of migration, including on migrants themselves is important. A broader vision is needed to include social integration and human rights of migrants and their descendants;

(e) There is a need to develop follow-up mechanisms to evaluate the implementation of international methodological guidelines on migration statistics, the progress made and the new challenges faced in countries.

28. The session organizers concluded that there is increasing demand for detailed migration data on a number of different topics, including irregular, circular, and new migration patterns. There is an increased need to harmonize definitions and concepts used and to develop relevant methods to analyze these data. It was considered important to continue measuring the economic and social impact of migration.

## **C. Session 2: Methods to improve the measurement of migration**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/ 29-31, 44-49, 52

29. The session was organized by Mr. A. Surinov, Russian Federation and Ms. I. Zbarskaya, CIS-STAT. It was based on papers by Azerbaijan, Finland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Norway, United Kingdom, CIS-STAT, Eurostat and a joint paper by Estonia and Finland.

30. The session focused on using innovative methods to improve the measurement of migration. It discussed practical ways for improving the measurement of emigration, which



is a specific challenge, by using administrative data, including migration-related questions on censuses or other surveys, and exchanging data across countries.

31. Ms. I. Zbarskaya noted that it is necessary to combine information from various statistical and administrative sources for capturing all migration flows which can be very diverse. Migration statistics have an important influence on population figures. Improved harmonization of basic definitions would help to improve accuracy and comparability of migration statistics. Collaboration among countries to compare mirror statistics facilitates identifying discrepancies caused by different definitions, coverage, statistical treatment, classification practices and data sources.

32. Mr. G. Lanzieri, Eurostat, gave a presentation on bridging the gap between migration research and statistics. He discussed the use of mirror statistics, the different results when comparing countries' immigration and emigration data, and the need for estimation techniques to improve measurement. Mr. Lanzieri briefly described different estimation methods, including some of their challenges, and called for international coordination in using estimation techniques.

33. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Harmonized and comparable data are needed to reconcile differences in data on migration flows between countries. Exchange of data and increased cooperation between countries are indispensable in this regard;

(b) A full array of sources should be used to measure migration, including administrative data, household surveys and innovative sources (e.g. Big Data). National legal frameworks have to be taken into account when combining different data sources. For this purpose, statistical offices should improve internal cooperation and become more involved with the owners of the different data sources;

(c) Use of estimation procedures was supported by some countries, though it is not clear to what extent these estimates could be integrated into official statistics. Novel forecasting methods could provide leading indicators on trends and patterns before full data are collected;

(d) It is important to measure the social and economic impact of migration. Though there is less policy interest in this area, statisticians should provide data to inform this debate.

34. The session organizers concluded that despite the complex nature of migration statistics, efforts must continue to improve migration statistics through harmonization of concepts and definitions. All available information sources on migration and new methods and technology should be used to improve measurement. There is no quick solution but steady progress will allow to overcome the challenges.

35. In conclusion, the Chair of the seminar reminded that migration has always been part of human history. Despite the complexity of measuring migration, the challenge is to ask the right questions and keep in mind the human side of migration, particularly its impact on countries of origin and destination, as well as on migrants themselves.

## **D. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work**

### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

36. The Conference agreed that good progress has been made in developing migration statistics over the last few decades. At the same time, there is an increasing need for better and more detailed information. The Conference agreed on the following actions:

- (a) improving the harmonization of concepts and definitions across and within countries;
- (b) increasing cooperation between countries, including data exchange;
- (c) development of a harmonized framework for assessing data quality;
- (d) the continuation of international efforts in developing methodologies for measuring emerging patterns of migration;
- (e) improving measurement of the economic and social impact of migration and the measurement of socio-economic conditions of migrants;
- (f) increase the use and integration of multiple data sources for measuring migration, including the use of administrative records and improving cooperation with register authorities;
- (g) involving users of statistics in the work for developing migration statistics. Enhance collaboration with other international organizations and the Global Migration Group;
- (h) creating appropriate mechanisms for follow-up on the implementation of methodological guidance related to migration statistics.

37. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised during the seminar. The CES Bureau will discuss at its next meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.

## **V. Work of the High-level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/1-3, 51

38. Mr. P. Dalton, Ireland, Chair of the High-level Group (HLG) for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services, presented the annual report of the Group focusing on the main achievements and forthcoming priorities. In 2014, the four newly set up Modernization Committees will be fully operational, namely the Committees on (i) organizational frameworks and evaluation; (ii) production and methods; (iii) products and sources; and (iv) standards. Implementing the Common Statistical Production Architecture will continue with the development of components for different functions of statistical production. Developing methodologies and a quality framework for the use of Big Data for official statistics will be a particular area of focus. New task teams are being established, and the need for continuing involvement and support by Member States was stressed.

39. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- (a) the work programme is ambitious but positive results have already been realized through the pooling of experience and ideas between organizations;
- (b) the continued involvement of other international organizations, including Eurostat, in the work of the HLG is important;
- (c) continuity and follow-up of activities beyond the one-year horizon of HLG projects is very important. The Modernization Committees have an important role in this respect;
- (d) further work is needed to disseminate the results of HLG activities, including beyond the UNECE region.

**1. Action taken by the Conference**

40. The Conference approved the annual report of the High-Level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services, including the outcome of work in 2013, and progress so far on the 2014 projects.

41. The Conference suggested that future work could include the continuation of projects launched in 2014 if needed, a harmonized approach to microdata access, sharing of best practices, improved dissemination of products to users, and publicizing the HLG activities and outputs to the wider statistical community.

42. The Conference strongly supported the work of the HLG and appreciated the concrete outputs prepared, as well as the idea to open meetings from time to time to interested non-members.

43. National and international statistical organizations were invited to support the work programme of the HLG, and commit resources for implementation actions.

**VI. Reports, guidelines, recommendations, etc. prepared under the umbrella of the Conference****A. Gender equality indicators**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/4, Add.1-2

44. The Conference reviewed the report on gender equality indicators prepared by the Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality. Prior to the CES plenary session, the secretariat conducted an electronic consultation of the report with the CES members. The responding countries and organizations expressed support to the report and provided suggestions for revising and clarifying the text. The Conference welcomed the good work of the Task Force and called for continued collection and improvement of gender statistics.

**1. Action taken by the Conference**

45. The Conference supported the outcome of work of the Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality, including the suggestions for further work as outlined in document ECE/CES/2014/4/Add.1.

46. The Conference asked the Task Force to revise the report taking into account the comments from the electronic consultation and the discussion at the CES 2014 plenary session.

47. The report will be submitted for final endorsement to the October 2014 meeting of the CES Bureau. The Bureau will also decide on the next steps of future work.

48. The report will be presented at the Global Forum of Gender Statistics in Mexico in November 2014.

**B. Recommendations on climate change related statistics**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/5, Add.1-2

49. The Conference reviewed the *Recommendations on climate change related statistics*, prepared by the Task Force on Climate Change Related Statistics. The recommendations aim to support development of climate change related statistics and to enhance the role of official statistics in greenhouse gas inventories. An electronic

consultation of the Recommendations was carried out prior to the CES plenary session. All responding countries and organizations supported the endorsement of the Recommendations by the CES and acknowledged their value for further work.

50. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Developing an internationally comparable set of key climate change related statistics should be considered a priority. The set should provide flexibility for taking into account national circumstances and priorities;

(b) Countries will need support from international organizations to implement the Recommendations. Specific task forces should be set up to develop methodological guidance focusing on priority areas;

(c) Deriving new indicators should start by examining the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA). Countries will need guidance on how to use this framework for climate change related statistics;

(d) Setting up a forum involving national statistical offices, greenhouse gas inventory producers and other international organizations to exchange best practices would be highly useful.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

51. The Conference endorsed the *CES Recommendations on climate change related statistics*, including the suggestions for further work, subject to the amendments as described in document ECE/CES/2014/5/Add.1 Section V.

52. The Conference expressed support for follow-up work as listed below:

(a) Establishing a small steering group to provide direction to countries in implementing the *CES Recommendations on climate change related statistics*;

(b) Establishing a regular expert meeting for producers and users of climate change related statistics with the participation of key organizations involved in the measurement of climate change and related phenomena. The purpose would be to share ideas and experience, collaborate, discuss concepts and measurement issues, and identify areas where practical methodological guidance would be needed;

(c) Defining a set of key climate change related statistics;

(d) Exploring the use of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework for climate change related statistics;

(e) Promoting further harmonization and coherence between the greenhouse gas inventory data and official statistics.

53. The Bureau will discuss the next steps of future work at its meeting in October 2014.

### **C. Global production**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/6, Add.1-3

54. The Conference was informed about the progress of work in drafting the *Guide to measuring global production* developed by the Task Force on Global Production. An electronic consultation of the draft Guide was carried out with the CES members prior to the CES plenary session. All responding countries and organizations considered the Guide a useful and comprehensive source of clear and coherent recommendations. Additional country case studies were provided during the consultation. The Task Force will review all comments received and take them into account in finalizing the Guide, including feedback

from international expert groups on open conceptual and classification issues. The Guide will be submitted to the CES 2015 plenary session for endorsement.

55. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) It will be important to ensure consistency with the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the 6th Edition of the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM6) throughout the Guide, especially regarding the open issues with factoryless goods producers;

(b) The UN Statistical Commission recently set up a Global Working Group on Internationalization. The Group should closely examine the outcome of the CES Task Force work and take its findings into account.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

56. The Conference reviewed the *Guide to measuring global production*, and welcomed the good progress achieved by the Task Force on Global Production.

57. The Conference agreed with the proposal of the Task Force to revise the Guide taking into account the comments from the global consultation and the discussion at the CES 2014 plenary session. The Conference also agreed with the timetable for finalization of the Guide, as outlined in ECE/CES/2014/6/Add.1 Section IV.

58. The Conference emphasized the need for clarity in the guidance on the treatment of factoryless goods producers. In this respect the Conference recognized the importance of advancing the consultation on the industrial classification of factoryless goods producers. This could have a significant impact on the implementation of the 2008 SNA.

59. The Conference supported the creation of a forum in the form of an expert meeting for exchanging practical experience on data collection and compilation methods in respect to global production arrangements. The Conference asked UNECE and the Group of Experts on National Accounts, jointly with Eurostat and OECD, to provide such a forum.

60. An update of the Guide in 5 to 7 years from now should be envisaged to reflect new examples of good country practices.

61. The Conference emphasized the importance that the Global Working Group on Internationalization created by the UN Statistical Commission should closely collaborate with the CES Task Force to avoid duplication of work and to make the best use of work done so far.

## **VII. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

### **A. Substantive discussion on leading, composite and sentiment indicators**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/10, Add.1, 11/Add.1

62. The Conference discussed the role of official statistics with regard to leading, composite and sentiment indicators based on the findings of an in-depth review of this topic by the CES Bureau in January 2014, and an electronic consultation among CES members prior to the CES plenary session. The aim of the discussion was to seek further input from all CES members for the possible follow-up work. Further work would be specifically needed to define the role of national statistical offices and consider the communication strategies with regard to these indicators.

63. The following proposals were made in the discussion:

(a) There is great demand for the leading, composite and sentiment indicators. The expertise and neutrality of the national statistical offices puts them in a good position for preparing and disseminating such indicators. Several national statistical offices have good experience in this area;

(b) Some national statistical offices do not consider it necessary to deal with composite indicators, since this is done by the private sector. It was noted that composite indicators often simplify the reality, do not have sufficient quality control, their compilation methods are not always transparent and the weights assigned to the components are arbitrary;

(c) As a minimum, national statistical offices are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics to compile such indicators, as stipulated by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

(d) National statistical offices could study the performance of leading indicators to analyze their usefulness;

(e) Any further work in this area should target the leading, composite and sentiment indicators separately as the related issues are different and the role of national statistical offices in compiling these indicators varies.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

64. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the in-depth review of leading, composite and sentiment indicators and official statistics. The results of the electronic consultation among CES members showed support for setting up a small international group or organizing a seminar to discuss the role of official statistics and the challenges in producing and disseminating leading, composite and sentiment indicators.

65. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised in the electronic consultation and during the discussion at the CES plenary session.

### **B. Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/7, Add.1, 8, Add.1, 9, Add.1, 11, Add.1

66. The CES plenary session was informed about the outcomes of the recent in-depth reviews on Big Data (carried out in October 2013); entrepreneurship statistics (October 2013); and measurement of social protection (January 2014). An electronic consultation was carried out prior to the CES plenary session and all responding countries and organizations supported the outcomes of the reviews.

67. The Conference noted the main outcomes of the in-depth reviews as follows:

(a) Big Data: The CES Bureau launched a project under the HLG to specify priority areas for action for the statistical community regarding Big Data;

(b) Entrepreneurship statistics: The CES Bureau asked the CES Task Force on statistical business registers to address the issues that relate to business registers. Eurostat, OECD and UNECE Secretariat will prepare a proposal for possible future activities on the remaining issues for decision at the October 2014 Bureau meeting;

(c) Measurement of social protection: The CES Bureau recognized the need for more harmonization in the area and asked UNECE Secretariat, OECD, World Bank and

ILO to report to the October 2014 Bureau meeting with a proposal for possible further work.

68. At its meeting in January 2014, the CES Bureau selected the topics for the next in-depth reviews as follows:

- (a) Demographic projections (in October 2014);
- (b) Measuring extreme events and disasters (in October 2014);
- (c) Process-oriented approach to statistical production (in February 2015);
- (d) Labour movements and globalisation (in February 2015).

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

69. The CES plenary session endorsed the outcomes of the in-depth reviews on Big data, entrepreneurship statistics and measurement of social protection.

70. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised in the electronic consultation on the outcomes of the reviews prior to the CES plenary session at its October 2014 meeting. The Secretariat will forward the comments by countries and organizations to the authors of in-depth review papers and the relevant Task Forces to be taken into account in further work.

### **C. Follow-up to the Conference of European Statisticians 2013 seminar on challenges in implementing System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and measuring sustainable development**

*Documentation: ECE/CES/2014/12*

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

71. The Conference expressed support for follow-up activities to the CES 2013 seminar on measuring sustainable development and implementation of SEEA as described in document ECE/CES/2014/12.

72. The Conference welcomed the pilot testing of the indicators from the CES Recommendations on measuring sustainable development by eight countries (Australia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine). The CES Bureau will review the proposal by the OECD Statistical Committee to extend the testing of the Recommendations to more countries. The Conference will be informed about the results of this exercise.

73. Countries and international organizations were invited to contribute to the stocktaking reports on measuring transboundary impacts in the context of sustainable development, measuring sustainable development at different scales, and linking subjective and objective indicators. Volunteering countries and organizations were asked to contact the UNECE Secretariat (tiina.luige@unece.org).

74. The Conference supported the organization of a joint UNECE/OECD seminar on the implementation of SEEA, possibly in spring 2015.

## **D. Follow-up to the Conference of European Statisticians 2013 seminar on challenges in providing access to micro-data for research**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/13

### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

75. The Conference expressed support for follow-up activities to the CES 2013 seminar on microdata as described in document ECE/CES/2014/13 and asked the Bureau to follow-up on the progress of work, taking into account the work of the OECD Expert Group on Microdata Access.

76. Countries and international organizations were invited to contribute case studies for the wiki-based version of the publication *Managing Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata Access*.

77. The Conference asked the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services to consider the development of a common approach to access microdata, an issue that emerged as a follow-up to the work of the OECD Expert Group on Microdata Access.

## **VIII. Programme of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme**

### **A. Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/14, 15 and addenda

78. The Conference welcomed the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division in implementing the Statistical Programme for 2013 and reviewed the main achievements in 2012-2013. The Conference took note of 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.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

79. The Conference adopted the Biennial Evaluation Report of the Statistics subprogramme for 2012-13 (ECE/CES/2014/14) and the report on the implementation of the 2013 Statistical Programme (ECE/CES/2014/15).

### **B. Programme planning documents for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/16, 17

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

80. The Conference adopted the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2014 (ECE/CES/2014/16), including the list of planned meetings, and the Strategic Framework of the Statistics subprogramme for 2016-17 (ECE/CES/2014/17).



## C. Guidelines for procedures and practices for ECE bodies

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/53

81. Following the request of the Conference, the CES Bureau reviewed in January 2014 the *Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies*, adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe. The CES Bureau agreed that the *Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau* are in line with the ECE Guidelines.

### 1. Action taken by the Conference

82. The Conference took note of the *Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies*.

## IX. Selection of topics for seminars at the CES 2015 plenary session

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2014/18, 19

83. Taking into account the results of the survey carried out among the CES members in March 2014 and the recommendation by the CES Bureau, the following topics were selected for the CES seminars in 2015:

### A. Modernization of statistical production and services and managing for efficiency

Seminar organizers: Ireland, the Chair of the High-level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services, and Italy.

The following countries volunteered to contribute to the seminar organization: Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Republic of Moldova and United States.

Papers offered by: Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia (possibly), Sweden, Turkey, United States (possibly) and Eurostat.

### B. The response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals

Seminar organizer: Switzerland

Session organizers: France and Sweden

Papers offered by: Italy, Mexico, Poland, Portugal (possibly), Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Eurostat, OECD (possibly) and UNSD.

84. Countries and international organizations wishing to provide papers for the seminars are requested to inform the UNECE Secretariat by the end of August 2014.

## X. Other business

85. The 2015 CES plenary session will take place on 15 – 17 June a.m. 2015 in Geneva, back-to-back with the OECD Statistics Committee meeting.

86. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating the main documents for the CES plenary session into the three official languages of ECE (English, French and

Russian). The documents to be translated include the provisional agenda, report, one main paper for each sub-item on the agenda, and six main papers for each of the 1-day seminars held during the CES plenary session.

---