

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second meeting of the 2004/2005 Bureau
10-11 February 2005, Geneva

Item 2(b): Integrated
Presentation

PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED PRESENTATION

Note prepared by the ECE secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. The UNECE Statistical Division has been compiling the Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work Programmes (IP) since 1993. The 2005 IP is the 16th edition of the document. Thirty international organizations (including some city groups and inter-secretariat working groups) contribute to the database.
2. There have been several changes in the compilation of the IP during the last few years:
 - since 2002, the IP is maintained in a database format and made available on Internet, the distribution of the paper version having been discontinued;
 - the time for considering the IP at the CES plenary session is substantially reduced, countries are invited to comment on the IP electronically, the comments are summarised by the UNECE secretariat and presented to the CES plenary session;
 - the activities of Eurostat, OECD and UNECE are included based on their Statistical Programmes;
 - starting from 2005, the background data for each statistical area are reduced to include only "Issues and problems" and "Attention of the Conference is drawn to";
 - since the beginning of 2005, the procedure of rapporteur reporting has changed: five topics (together with rapporteurs) are selected for in-depth review every year instead of reviewing the whole IP over a two-year period.
3. Some further improvements are foreseen for 2005, e.g. establishing a remote updating facility that would allow contributors to the IP to update it directly. This would enable contributors to make changes also in the course of the year, e.g. updating the information on expert meetings.
4. Due to the changes with the IP, there are some issues that need to be discussed to maintain the IP as an efficient tool for the coordination of international statistical work.

HEADINGS IN THE IP (ISSUES AND PROBLEMS)

5. In February 2004, the Bureau agreed that, for each statistical area of the IP should include information only under five headings (the sections "goals", "mid-term objectives" and "expected outcomes" should be discontinued with the 2005 edition) as follows:
 - "Issues and problems";
 - "Attention of the Conference is drawn to"
 - "Decisions recommended/taken by the Conference" – the text normally includes decisions taken by the Conference, usually "to approve the activities in a specific statistical area".
 - "Meetings" – a summary list of all expert meetings that are planned by the international organizations.
 - "Activities" – the activities undertaken by the international organisations in the respective area are listed.

6. **However, the process of updating the text in sections “Issues and problems” and “Attention of the Conference is drawn to” needs to be discussed.** Up to 2004, both sections of the IP were updated on the basis of suggestions made by the Rapporteurs in their reports, which provided sufficient input to maintain as relevant the information in the IP. The whole IP was reviewed in-depth within two years - Programme activities 1, 2 and 4 would be reviewed in-depth in one year and Programme activities: 3, 5 and 6 in the next year. In addition to the Rapporteurs reports, the Bureau would make comments and suggestions on the formulation of the issues and problems.

7. Last year, the review of the text on “Issues and Problems” for the 2004 IP edition was undertaken mainly by the ECE secretariat, since there were some problems with the preparation of the Rapporteurs reports. In addition, at its February 2004 meeting, the Bureau did not review most of the sections mainly because of other issues that were on the agenda and lack of time. Furthermore, the Bureau decided that, as of 2005, only five to six statistical areas should be reviewed in-depth each year. This means that “Issues and problems” for some statistical areas have not been reviewed by the Bureau for several years. With the new procedure that, in future, only 5-6 areas selected in advance by the Conference should be reviewed, it may happen that some statistical areas will not be reviewed for several years. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a procedure that would allow for regular updating of the “Issues and Problems” of all programme elements and thus keep the text relevant and up-to-date.

8. The second section in the IP - “Attention of the Conference” - could be considered as a subset of the “Issues and problems” – these are the issues and problems that the Bureau considers important and would like to draw to the attention of the top management of statistical offices. In earlier years, this section was again defined on the basis of the Rapporteurs reports and the recommendations of the Bureau in the course of the in-depth reviews. Following the reviews, a separate document was prepared, bringing together all sections on “Attention of the Conference should be drawn to” in the IP, for distribution at the annual plenary session where the Conference was asked to discuss these issues. However, in the last several years this procedure has been interrupted mainly because of the change of the format of the plenary sessions and lack of time during the “formal business session”. The Bureau is invited to consider whether this section of the IP is needed since no discussion on the issues raised in this section takes place at the plenary session.

9. It is proposed that the present section on “Decisions recommended/taken by the Conference”. The section was needed in earlier years when the statistical activities of the ECE were included in the IP (the IP was the programme of work of the ECE Statistical Division) and therefore the Conference was asked to approve the ECE activities. However, since a separate ECE Statistical Programme is now available that is approved by the Bureau and endorsed by the Conference, the section is no longer required.

10. *Proposal:*

- Remove the section “Decisions”;
- Remove the section “Attention of the Conference is drawn to”;
- The ECE secretariat should prepare each year in February a first draft of “Issues and problems” for those statistical areas where expertise is available. The ECE secretariat will seek advice and contributions from the Bureau members in defining the issues and problems, especially for those areas where expertise is not available, by circulating the draft in advance of the February meeting. In some cases the Bureau may decide to ask external Rapporteurs.
- In February, the Bureau will review the “Issues and problems” in the entire IP and make proposals for amendments. The proposals made in the Rapporteurs reports for in-depth review should be also considered.
- In February, the Bureau will select the topic/topics for in-depth discussion at the Conference and will decide which issues are most important that warrant being brought to the attention of the Conference.

- The nominated Rapporteurs that prepare reports for in-depth review at the February Bureau meeting should be invited to attend the meeting.

POSSIBLE INCLUSION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES OF SOME NSOs IN THE IP

11. The Bureau report of February 2003 (CES.BUR.2003/18) reads: “the Bureau noted that in some cases the Integrated Presentation and the rapporteurs’ reports are too “euro-centric”. It would be interesting to provide more information on what is taking place in countries such as the United States and Canada. It was agreed that, in cases where there are important activities in the United States or in Canada that would be of significant interest to other countries, they should be mentioned. The Bureau asked Statistics Canada to identify these cases”.

12. The issue of reflecting the statistical activities of the United States and Canada was again on the agenda of the Bureau meeting in February 2004. For this item, Statistics Canada prepared a note (CES/BUR.2004/38) “Significant Activities in Canada”, which described some activities undertaken in economic and social statistics – the note is annexed for easy reference. In our view, the note presented some very interesting work undertaken by Statistics Canada. The report of the same Bureau meeting (document CES/BUR.2004/43) reads: “The Bureau expressed some support for the proposal to include the statistical activities of the USA and Canada in IP. There was some concern, however, that the inclusion of the activities of individual countries in the IP could be open-ended, adding to its complexity when its key purpose is to help coordinate the statistical work that international organizations are undertaking”.

13. Since there was not a clear indication for follow-up work in this direction, the ECE secretariat did not contact any of the countries to contribute text to the 2005 edition of the IP.

14. *Proposal:*

- The Bureau is invited to decide on whether the statistical activities of individual countries such as Canada, US but also Australia and other countries should be documented in a regular way and if yes, whether to be presented in the IP or in a separate document.
- If a decision is taken to include the statistical activities of individual countries in the IP, then a mechanism for selecting the countries and collecting the information should also be developed.

TESTING THE NEW IP CLASSIFICATION

15. The Bureau, at its last meeting in October 2004, approved a new classification of statistical activities for the IP.

16. However, the 2005 edition of the IP is currently compiled according to the old classification. The transition to the new classification takes time and therefore it will not be possible to produce the 2005 IP according to the new classification of statistical activities for review by the Bureau at its meeting in February 2005.

17. The ECE secretariat is currently testing the new classification on the basis of the major contributions for the 2005 IP. Transition keys are being prepared between the new classification and the old classification, and also between the classifications used by Eurostat, OECD and UNECE in their Statistical Programmes and the new classification. This is not always a straightforward task. It should be noted that, in some cases, the new classification requires to split of the reported activities and this work is time-consuming.

18. It should also be noted that, depending on the results of the testing, there could be some adjustments to the classification in order to better streamline it with the breakdown of statistical areas used by the international organizations. In the course of testing the classification, the ECE secretariat is

also developing an annotated classification, including a short text that explains the logical structure of the new classification and what kind of activities are falling under each statistical area.

19. ***Proposal:***

- It is proposed that the results of the test be presented to the Bureau in October 2005. If the work is satisfactory, the new classification can be introduced with the 2006 edition of the IP.

* * * * *

ANNEX

**Paper presented at the Second Meeting of the 2003/2004 Bureau, Geneva, Switzerland,
12-13 February 2004**

CES/BUR.2004/38

27 January 2004

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES IN CANADA**Note by Statistics Canada****I. INTRODUCTION**

1. At its February 2003 meeting, the Bureau agreed that in some cases the Integrated Presentation and the rapporteurs' reports were too "euro-centric". It was also agreed that in cases where there were important activities in the United States or in Canada that would be of significant interest to other countries, they should be mentioned. Towards this endeavour, the ECE secretariat asked Statistics Canada to prepare a note on some of its significant work. In addition, Statistics Canada was asked to be the Rapporteur for Price Statistics and the CPI, replacing Eurostat for this programme activity.

2. The present note deals with activities in Canada only and highlights some of the major initiatives by Statistics Canada that could be of interest and of benefit to the statistical work of other countries. These highlights aim to provide new insight into timely work on global and cross-cutting issues as well as contribute to similar work being carried out in economic and social statistics by other national statistical offices and international organizations.

II. PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 3: ECONOMIC STATISTICSUse of Tax Data in Business Surveys

3. In order to alleviate reporting burden, particularly on small business, the Bureau embarked upon a program to greatly increase the use of business taxation data as a substitute for survey data in annual and sub-annual business surveys.

4. Since this project began in 2002, significant progress has been achieved. Survey data are being replaced with income tax data or data from the Goods and Services Tax (Canada's value added tax) whenever possible, both as planned tax replacement and for survey non-response. Over 50% of simple businesses previously in the sample will no longer be receiving annual survey questionnaires.

5. However, the move to tax data requires that two problems be overcome: first, financial data, as we collect them currently, do not line up neatly with what businesses report to tax authorities. This is dealt with via the initiative of the Chart of Accounts (COA). The COA is a standardized income statement and balance sheet that allows us to map financial performance measures that businesses normally keep in their accounting ledgers into economic variables required by STC to describe the performance of the economy. We are making progress here as all annual business surveys are scheduled to be COA compliant by 2005. The advantages of using the COA include harmonization of questionnaire content across all STC business surveys and ensuring their compatibility both with the demand side (i.e. SNA needs) and the supply side (business record keeping practices). This should,

therefore, improve the quality and timeliness of the information we receive, reduce collection and processing costs, and reduce respondent burden.

6. The second difficulty is that, for purposes of the Input-Output tables, we need to collect commodities used by businesses as inputs to their production, as well the commodities that they produce. Such information is not available from the tax data. Two approaches to overcome this latter problem have emerged. We will either send the existing survey to only a small sub-sample of small businesses, or we will develop a very short, commodity-only survey to be used for a small sub-sample of firms, perhaps to be collected using the telephone. In both cases, the information collected will then be used to impute the corresponding detail for the non-surveyed units. We have made progress on these methods to date: for the latter approach, a survey pilot project in the food processing industry is currently under way using a simplified one-page questionnaire.

Impact of New Economy

7. The sudden onslaught of the Internet, cell phones, DVD's, PDA's, digital cameras, and more and more powerful PCs considerably changed the way we live, think and work.

8. Statistics Canada launched a number of initiatives to shed light on "new economy" issues, some of which include: new surveys to measure the impact of ICT on households and businesses; adoption of new concepts, classifications and methodologies; a program that provides a comprehensive statistical profile of Canada's rapidly evolving information and communications technology (ICT) sector; and, two years ago, the establishment of a new research program for the Canadian economy in transition which aims to gauge the growth and development of the knowledge-based industries.

9. In 2000 and 2001, results of two new surveys on household Internet use and e-commerce were released that illuminated the ever-increasing impact of the new economy on Canadian households and business. These surveys are now collected annually. And, in 2001, data from the pilot survey on Information Technology occupations provided information on 21 occupations along with information on job vacancies, hiring, recruitment and retention practices, and training.

10. In order to better reflect the impact of rapid technological change on growth, in May 2001, Statistics Canada adopted the Chain Fisher Volume Index as the official measure of real expenditure-based Gross Domestic Product.

11. In 2001, the first Networked Canada publication was released that examined the growth and performance of the ICT sector on the basis of such variables as economic output, employment, exports, imports, revenues and research and development.

12. Recently, a new compendium was published that provides comprehensive information on economy-wide issues by sector, and covers ICT diffusion and use among business and households and governments, including in the health, education and justice sectors. The compendium further presents a collection of thematic articles on topical issues of the information society, such as the high-tech labour market, the digital divide, broadband use and deployment, and how cultural industries use ICTs.

13. In 2003, a series of analytical products provided insight into the Canadian economy in transition. The first study, released in May 2003, compared the production and performance of ICT industries and science-based industries with more traditional elements of the business sector. A second study investigated whether there were obvious regional differences developing across Canada using Statistics Canada's Business Register by profiling employment growth in ICT and science-based industries across provinces, urban and rural regions and individual cities during the 1990s. A third study provided new insights into the extent to which Canada's workforce has become more knowledge-based over the past three decades. This study identified a group of so-called "knowledge-intensive" occupations and charted their growth from 1971 to 2001. Using census data, the study examined the characteristics of this

knowledge-based workforce on the basis of education, sex, wages, industry, region and urban-rural areas.

III. PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 4: SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada

14. Canada is one of the few countries in the world that actively pursues admission of permanent residents as a tool to help build a stronger nation. In fact, since 1990, Canada has accepted more immigrants and refugees, in proportion to its population, than the U.S. and Australia. In the 1990's, 2.2 million immigrants were admitted to Canada - the highest number admitted in any decade in the past 100 years. These immigrants accounted for the largest source of the population increase in major urban centres and also represented a substantial proportion of the total labour force growth.

15. As positive settlement outcomes benefit both the immigrant, as well as the host society, there exists a need for information on recent immigrants - particularly the integration process, the factors that affect integration and the services used by immigrants to facilitate the process. This demand, coupled with static funding levels for settlement programming, makes empirical evidence more important in the design of more effective policies for settlement and integration.

16. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) is a comprehensive survey designed to study how recent immigrants adjust to living in Canada and to provide information on the factors that can help or hinder this adjustment. While full adaptation may take much longer to achieve, the LSIC is designed to examine the process during the critical first four years of settlement, whereby newcomers establish economic, social and cultural ties to Canadian society.

17. Although other data sources, such as the Census, provide topic coverage, they lack specific detail on key settlement issues. The LSIC was implemented to fill major data gaps and complement traditional sources of data in this area. The LSIC is the first national survey covering the recent immigrant population. Similar longitudinal immigration surveys have been initiated in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the Canadian province of Quebec with positive results.

18. The survey employs a longitudinal design, interviewing the same selected immigrants at three points in time after landing: six months, two years, and four years. The target population, including all immigrants and refugees aged 15 and over, accounted for about 170,000 of the total 250,000 persons admitted to Canada during the reference period. From the target population, about 21,000 individuals - representing as many immigrant categories, by province, as possible - were selected to participate in the survey.

19. The main topics being investigated in the survey include: housing, education, foreign credential recognition, employment, income, the development and use of social networks, language skills, health, values and attitudes and satisfaction with the settlement experience. Questions pertaining to the ability to access services have also been incorporated throughout the questionnaire. The majority of interviews are conducted face-to-face and last approximately 90 minutes. They are conducted in one of the 15 languages most frequently spoken by new immigrants, including English and French. All interviews are conducted with the use of computer-assisted interviewing technology and are conducted in all Census Metropolitan Areas and non-remote areas across Canada.

20. Traditional data sources often provide only a limited range of immigrant settlement experiences, leaving unknown the actual trajectory followed by each individual and how integration experiences influence each other. By examining newcomers' progress over time, LSIC affords the possibility of assisting researchers and policy-makers to go beyond existing descriptions of immigrant integration outcomes to an examination of the means by which newcomers achieve these outcomes - in essence, the "how" and "why" dimensions. Results from the first wave of data collection on LSIC were released in

September 2003. While this first wave of data will provide important benchmark information, the full value of the survey will be reached when the three waves of data collection are completed.

The Rise in Low-Income Rates among Immigrants in Canada

21. Viewed from an economic perspective, host countries such as Canada look to the skills and initiative of immigrants to promote economic growth. In particular, in the “knowledge-based” economy, host countries are seeking highly educated workers to improve their competitive advantage. Immigrants, for their part, look to their newly adopted country for the opportunity to use their skills to achieve higher standards of living for themselves and their children. But if immigrants are unable to convert their education and experience to productive use, the expectations of both the host country and the arriving immigrants will not be met.

22. Studies of earnings of “recent” immigrants (those arriving in Canada during the previous five years) pointed to a very significant deterioration in their labour market outcomes during the 1980s and 1990s. This was true both in absolute terms, and relative to comparable Canadian-born workers. This raised numerous issues regarding “why”. Statistics Canada has, and continues, to conduct numerous studies related to these issues.

23. As important as the studies of employment earning are (and virtually all studies of immigrant economic outcomes were of this nature), they provide only part of the picture. They exclude unemployed immigrants, those not in the labour force, and income from sources other than earnings, such as social transfer benefits. They also do not measure economic “well-being”, which is best done using income at the family level. The low-income rate is a simple, yet informative, measure of the changing economic welfare of families at the bottom end of the income distribution.

24. This particular study found that when focusing on outcomes at business cycle peaks, low-income rates among “recent immigrants” rose continuously from 25% in 1980, to 36% in 2000. During the same period low-income rates among the Canadian-born fell from 17% to 14%, and hence it was not deteriorating economic conditions that caused the increase among immigrants. While there was a shift in the characteristics of immigrants entering Canada during this period – notably they were more likely to come from Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe - analysis showed that this change accounted for much less than half of this rise in low-income, and possibly little of it.

25. In Canada, as in most western nations, there has been a drive to raise the educational qualifications of workers. Immigration policy was altered to increasingly attract the highly educated, and it produced results. In 1981, 19% of “entering” immigrants had a university degree; by 2001, 42% did so. But their economic outcomes deteriorated and low-income rates rose in spite of this change. Having a degree, even in engineering, did not protect entering immigrants from the rise in low-income. On the positive side, there are signs that the rate of “catch-up” with the Canadian born is faster among the more recent cohorts with poorer economic outcomes at entry, but it may still be that this “catch-up” will be a very long process.

26. The deteriorating economic outcomes for immigrants is not restricted to Canada, and was observed in the other major immigrant-receiving countries such as the U.S and Australia. The Australians have significantly altered their immigration policy in response to this information. While maintaining policy neutrality, Statistics Canada works closely with our immigration department to better understand this particular issue. This involves both the development of new, mainly longitudinal, data sources, and the conduct of research studies such as this “low-income” study.

Ethnic Diversity Survey

27. Due to increased immigration in recent years, the multicultural mosaic of Canada has been transformed considerably. The Ethnic Diversity Survey was developed to provide information on the

ethnic and cultural backgrounds of people in Canada. The survey was the first of its kind in Canada, collecting information on how these backgrounds relate to the lives of Canadians today, as well as providing information to better understand how Canadians of diverse ethnic background interpret and report their ethnicity.

28. To meet these survey objectives, the Ethnic Diversity Survey used the 2001 Census as the sampling frame. Respondents were selected according to their answers to questions related to their ethnic origin, their place of birth and their parents' place of birth. More specifically, the sample was stratified according to broad ethnic origin categories (Canadian, British, French, European and non-European origins, for example).

29. The sample for this survey was also stratified according to generational status in Canada, that is whether the respondent was first generation (born outside the country); second-generation (the offspring of foreign-born parents); or third or more generations in Canada. The number of generations in Canada was an important variable to understand the level of attachment people have to their ethnic background, as well as to better understand how people report their ethnic ancestry.

30. This detailed stratification allowed for an over-sampling of the foreign-born and the second-generation in Canada, as well as visible minorities. Selecting respondents from the 2001 Census ensured that the survey could reach people of many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, some of who may otherwise have been difficult to locate. As well, the survey interview was conducted in nine languages, including Canada's two official languages, to ensure good response rates among different ethnic and linguistic groups. The final sample size was 42,500 people.

31. The survey, conducted in 2002, analyzed the level of attachment which people have to their own ethno-cultural backgrounds, and how this affects their participation in the broader Canadian society. The survey results provided significant insights into the attitudes and characteristics of the first, second and third generation Canadians.

Aboriginal Peoples Survey

32. The 2001 Survey was developed in partnership with several national Aboriginal organizations, as well as representatives from Canada's federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Collection of data from Aboriginal People in Canada posed several challenges. The Aboriginal population is fairly small and dispersed throughout the country with concentrations of people in remote areas. Several best practices were undertaken to make this survey a success.

33. The involvement of Aboriginal peoples at all stages of the survey (including questionnaire development, collection and dissemination) was seen as essential to obtaining acceptance by the Aboriginal respondents. An Implementation Committee was created as the major decision-making body. This Committee was made up of a majority of Aboriginal representatives and a minority of representatives from the federal and provincial jurisdictions. The committee members agreed to leave politics at the door, and to have consensus-based decision-making.

34. Aboriginal people were hired as both interviewers and managers for data collection. A communication strategy for collection was developed with Aboriginal organizations. These organizations were instrumental in marketing the survey to constituents and this was essential for the resulting high response rate (84%).

35. The analysis and dissemination of data were designed to produce information which would be useful to Aboriginal communities. By working with national Aboriginal organizations, Statistics Canada sought to tailor the data products to the needs and interests of Aboriginal people and organizations. There are also opportunities for Aboriginal researchers and organizations to work collaboratively with Statistics Canada on joint analysis projects.

36. The initial results of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, released in September 2003, described the well-being, in the area of health, schooling and housing of the non-reserve Aboriginal population which includes over 70% of the total Aboriginal identity population in Canada.

Family Income and Participation in Post-Secondary Education

37. Post-secondary education has long had both economic efficiency and social equity goals. In Canada, as in other western nations, a highly skilled workforce is seen as essential to economic prosperity in the era of the “knowledge-based” economy. The post-secondary system is also seen as a vehicle for the promotion of social equity. Children from both poor and rich families should have the opportunity to participate at the post-secondary level, and reap the associated economic benefits.

38. Young Canadians, like their counterparts in many countries, have responded to the need for higher skills, and have been attending both colleges and universities in record numbers over the past two decades. The post-secondary participation rate increased during the 1980s in particular, and stabilized during the 1990s. This increased student load has not been accompanied by a comparable increase in government financial support, however, so that universities have been raising tuition fees to at least partially compensate for the falling revenues per student. This fee hike has raised questions regarding the social equity goal. Are the higher tuition fees placing a damper on participation in university by children from lower income families? Put another way, is the gap in participation at university between children from poorer and richer families increasing?

39. Statistics Canada undertook research to determine the trend in postsecondary education participation by family income over time. It found, contrary to the expectation of many, that while children from higher income households continued to attend universities at higher rates, there was no evidence to suggest that the correlation between family income and post-secondary participation increased between the late 1980s and late 1990s (the period covered by the study). In the late 90s, individuals from higher income families (over \$100K) were approximately twice as likely to attend university as their counterparts from low-income families (under \$25K), but this gap did not increase during the preceding decade during the period of rising tuition fees. On the contrary, if anything there was a minor narrowing.

40. Focusing on participation in university by children from lower income families (under either \$25K or \$50K), the concern of many, one observes a doubling during the 1980s, followed by levelling during the 1990s, the period of rising tuition fees. This flattening of participation rates occurred across all income groups during the 1990s.

41. Policy changes to the student loans program may have prevented the rising tuition fees from negatively affecting the participation rate gap. The loan limit was raised significantly in the early 1990s, and average student borrowing increase 50%.

42. Other Statistics Canada analysis showed that low-income families increasingly turned to the student loan program over this period. Between 1984 and 1999, the proportion of low-income families (below the LICO) with a student loan doubled, and the amount borrowed per family with a lone also doubled. Lower income Canadian families appear to have increasingly accepted the notion that higher education is a pathway to higher earnings, and increased their access to university accordingly.

Survey on mental health and well-being:

43. In September 2003, Statistics Canada released the results of the first-ever national survey on mental health and well-being. These national results from the household survey on mental health and well-being filled a data gap identified by all levels of government as well as health care professionals and individuals. In addition, the survey included a Canadian Forces supplement on mental health.

44. The household survey, designed to provide reliable, comprehensive and comparable data on selected mental health conditions, collected information from about 37,000 individuals, aged 15 and older, in all provinces. The topics included lifetime and past 12 month prevalence of various mental disorders (depression, mania, panic disorder, agoraphobia, social phobia), mental health problems (alcohol and drug dependence, gambling, suicide, eating trouble), access to and use of mental health care services; disability associated with mental health. The survey also collected information on determinants and correlates of mental health such as socio-demographic information, income, stress, medication use and social support.

45. In addition, the information collected from the survey included: the health status of the population including physical, mental and social well-being; the use of mental health care services such as visits to the doctor, admissions to hospitals and the use of medications; the factors that influence mental health such as work and lifestyle; and the determinants and correlates of mental health such as socio-demographic information, income, stress, medication use and social support. The supplement survey of the military measured the prevalence of five mental disorders: major depression, social phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder, and general anxiety disorder.

46. From almost all aspects of the survey process this was a challenging project for Statistics Canada. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the World Mental Health Survey, an initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO). However, when a national statistical organization embarks on this type of survey there are questions of the appropriateness for “governments” to ask question in very sensitive areas and covering topics that might affect the public’s perception of the agency. For example, questions on “post-traumatic stress” were considered too sensitive (questions on witnessing or participating in traumatic events including violence) for the household population but were the essential for the military population.

47. The sampling of the household survey was relatively straightforward. For the data collection process, anticipating that the interviewers could encounter difficult situations, a network of mental health professionals was established who could provide advice and support for the interviewing staff throughout the entire eight month collection period.

48. In the end, both aspects of the survey were very successful. The response rate in households was 77% and an even more impressive 80 % for the military sample. Of course the survey process is only part of the story. Even though the survey presented many new challenges, the survey results have been received with enthusiasm.