

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

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Agenda

STATISTICAL PROGRAMME 2016

Prepared by the Secretariat

*The document presents the draft UNECE Statistical Programme for 2016. **The Bureau discussed and approved the work programme.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. The annual statistical programme for 2016 is closely linked to the UNECE biennial programme of work 2016-2017 in statistics, adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2015 (document ECE/CES/2015/16). It complements the biennial programme by providing a short description of each activity, according to the following structure:

- (a) **What** the activity is about;
- (b) **Why** the activity is needed, which issues or problems it addresses;
- (c) Where the **mandate** comes from: link to a United Nations initiative, CES, CES Bureau decision or other;
- (d) The **main actions** in 2016;
- (e) The expected **results** and impact of these actions.

2. The programme takes into account the outcome of the UNECE review by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) which acknowledged that “the UNECE Statistics subprogramme, the Conference of European Statisticians and its related subsidiary bodies work within current mandates in an efficient way, producing concrete results (methodological principles, recommendations, guidelines and databases) in a regular and ongoing way that have clear value added for the region and beyond, and that attract extra-budgetary funding including from outside the region.”.

II. INTRODUCTION

3. According to the Strategic Framework for 2016-2017, UNECE works with member countries “to improve the quality of official statistics at the national and international levels, and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the UNECE region”. The work is carried out in close cooperation with countries and international organizations, including from outside the UNECE region. The aim is to improve national statistical information needed for policy making, and for assessing progress made towards international development goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Work is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians¹ to ensure that it focuses on priorities of member countries. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the Conference which plays a central role in coordinating international statistical activities among the UNECE countries and beyond, helping to strengthen, modernize and harmonize statistical work. CES undertakes work on emerging topics, concepts that are difficult to define or hard to measure, and new sources, tools and processes. CES brings together experts to address a particular task and develop outputs such as statistical standards, guidelines and repositories of good practice which often have a global impact. Furthermore, the work responds to the guidance provided by EXCOM and global initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).

5. All CES work is guided by the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, a standard developed by CES, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 (resolution A/RES/68/261).

6. The work is carried out in four main areas: (1) coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region; (2) methodological work to develop and promote the implementation of statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations; (3) capacity building; and (4) the UNECE statistical database.

7. The methodological work focuses on the following priorities identified by CES, its Bureau and EXCOM: sustainable development; globalization; population issues including poverty and inequality; and modernization of official statistics. The capacity building focuses on areas highlighted by global assessments of statistical systems.

III. COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK IN THE UNECE REGION

8. **Coordination of international statistical work in the region** is a key task of CES with the aim to avoid duplication of work, find synergies, use resources efficiently and reduce burden on national statistical offices. The Conference and its Bureau regularly discuss statistical work in the region, carry out in-depth reviews and organise seminars to explore foundational issues and emerging topics of official statistics.

9. Member countries select the substantive topics for discussion at the annual CES plenary sessions. In 2016, the CES will focus on **strategic partnerships** with the information industry. Partnerships are ever more important in responding to increasing data needs, e.g. in the context of the upcoming reporting on SDGs combined with technological advances and data revolution. The Conference will discuss the strategic choices and identify the way forward in building partnerships.

10. The second main topic at the CES 2016 plenary session will be **how to implement the monitoring system for SDGs** in UNECE region, following the expected adoption of the

¹ CES is composed of the Heads of the national statistical organizations in the UNECE region and includes in addition Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand and Republic of Korea. The major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region also participate in the work, such as the statistical office of the European Commission (Eurostat), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS-STAT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, etc.

global list of indicators by UNSC in March 2016. The outcome document “Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development” calls for regional commissions, including UNECE, to coordinate the review and follow-up on the sustainable development agenda at the regional level.

11. The third topic of the Conference in 2016 will deal with **geospatial information services based on official statistics**. The Conference will exchange experience in linking statistics with spatial data, and consider how to advance the development of geospatial information services in statistical offices.

12. The CES Bureau will meet twice in 2016 to steer the CES programme of work and review in-depth selected areas of international statistical work.

13. Some in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau earlier will lead to follow-up work in 2016, such as:

- The review of **population projections** led to establishing a Task Force to prepare a collection of good practices on communicating population projections to users, and provide guidance on the establishment of a UNECE database of metadata about national and international population projections.
- The review of **measuring extreme events and disasters** led to setting up a Task Force to clarify the role of official statistics and identify practical steps how national statistical offices can support disaster management and risk reduction by providing relevant data.
- Following the review of **process-oriented approach to statistical production**, UNECE will organize a High-Level Seminar in 2016 to consider how to develop common tools for moving towards process-oriented organization of work across national statistical offices.
- As a follow-up to the review of **labour mobility and globalization**, the Conference discussed the challenges in this area in June 2015, and supported establishing a Task Force on measuring labour mobility and globalization. The Bureau decided to set up the group in October 2015.

14. UNECE maintains a **Database of International Statistical Activities** (DISA), a compendium of the annual statistical programmes of international organizations in the UNECE region. The CES Bureau is the custodian of the classification of statistical activities used in the database. The latest version of the classification dates from 2009. It will be updated in 2016 to take into account the emergence of new statistical areas since then, such as climate change related statistics, etc.

IV. METHODOLOGICAL WORK IN VARIOUS STATISTICAL AREAS

15. The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations to respond to countries’ demand to improve the efficiency, quality and comparability of official statistics.

16. Flexibility of work is ensured by using teams of specialists (steering groups, task forces). The groups are set up by CES or its Bureau for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, membership, output, timeframe and a sunset clause. To ensure high quality and

relevance, the outputs are consulted with all CES members before being approved by the Conference. New working methods are being piloted in modernization activities, where there is a stronger need to deliver results in a much shorter time frame using “sprint sessions”, short-term task teams, etc.

17. To foster collaborative work within the teams of specialists, UNECE maintains a set of tools such as wikis (which allow common working spaces and discussion forums), and organizes web conferences to connect experts, while reducing the need for physical meetings.

18. Five groups finalized their work in 2015. These are the Task Forces on global production, business registers, quality of employment, population and housing censuses, and socio-economic conditions of migrants. Three Task Forces are working to finalize their recommendations and submit these to the CES plenary session in 2016, namely the task forces on ageing-related statistics, measurement of human capital and circular migration. The Conference will also be informed of new standards for statistical production, developed by the UNECE High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production (HLG-MOS), such as the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO) and the Generic Statistical Data Editing Models.

A. Globalization and the economy

19. UNECE is working with countries to further develop and promote implementation of international **standards and recommendations** to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, particularly in the areas of national accounts, globalization, price statistics, business registers and short-term statistics.

20. UNECE promotes the implementation of **the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA)** which is the internationally agreed statistical standard for compiling and presenting economic data for the purposes of policy-making, and monitoring sustainable economic growth in a changing global economy. This work is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The work is undertaken under the coordination of the regional advisory body, the Steering Group on National Accounts, and in consultation with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts which coordinates the implementation of the standard globally. In 2016, the Group of Experts on National Accounts, convened jointly with Eurostat and OECD, will discuss measuring human capital and natural resources, and how to deal with the challenges posed by globalization. UNECE will also continue to support the implementation of 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in cooperation with regional partners through the organization of special sessions, workshops, methodological guidance and training.

21. **Globalization**, in terms of growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services, has a significant impact on the economy and makes it difficult to compile statistics in all countries. In 2015, UNECE published the *Guide to Measuring Global Production*, which deals with conceptual and measurement challenges posed by global production and helps countries to produce statistics adapted to economic analysis and policy needs in a globalized world. In 2016, UNECE will promote the implementation of the *Guide* in the CES member countries and will provide a forum where compilers and users of official statistics could share experience on data collection and compilation methods.

UNECE will also follow up on the research agenda of the Guide and on further methodological work recommended by the 2015 Expert Group meeting on Measuring Global Production. The work will be closely coordinated with other international expert groups dealing with the impact of globalization on economic statistics.

22. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners promotes the implementation of international standards and recommendations on the **Consumer Price Index** (CPI). CPI plays an important role in national policy making both in economic and social spheres. It is the most well-known indicator of inflation, a barometer of the performance of the economy, and often used for indexation of wages and social security allowances. Therefore it is of utmost importance to keep the CPI compilation methods up-to-date to reflect the latest technical and methodological developments. UNECE, together with ILO, IMF, Eurostat, OECD, World Bank and OECD is currently updating the CPI Manual. A first outline of the updated Manual will be discussed by an Expert Group meeting in May 2016, organised jointly by UNECE and ILO. The meeting will also discuss the dissemination of CPIs, use of new data sources (scanner data and data from the web), calculation methods, sampling and CPIs for specific population groups.

23. UNECE supports the development of **statistical business registers**, which are indispensable for efficient data collection and for the production of business statistics. In August 2015, UNECE published the new international *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers*, endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2015. The publication provides practical guidance and recommendations to countries on how to establish and maintain a statistical business register. UNECE will promote the Guidelines through Expert Group meetings, workshops and other activities. The United Nations Statistics Division will initiate the process of seeking endorsement of the Guidelines by the United Nations Statistical Commission for global use. In 2016, UNECE will also work on possible measures to support and monitor the implementation of the Guidelines in national statistical offices.

24. UNECE has been leading work on measuring **quality of employment** jointly with Eurostat and ILO to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. The CES plenary session endorsed in June 2015 a statistical framework for measuring quality of employment, including practical recommendations on measurement issues. UNECE will continue to lead work in this area to follow-up on the implementation of the framework, and ensure that it is kept up to date in light of additional country experiences and emerging issues.

25. UNECE organized a Seminar on **Leading, composite and sentiment indicators** on 8-10 December 2015 to discuss the role of national statistical offices in the production and dissemination of these types of indicators. The national statistical offices are in need for guidance and recommendations in this area to meet the growing demand for leading, composite and sentiment indicators. In 2016, UNECE will follow-up on the outcome of the Seminar, possibly to develop international guidance and recommendations (subject to the decision of the CES Bureau in February 2016).

B. Population, including poverty and inequality

26. UNECE activities in **social and demographic statistics** aim at improving statistics related to the areas of high policy relevance. The work in 2016 will focus on population and housing censuses, population projections and on the measurement of population ageing, migration, gender issues, poverty and human capital.

27. UNECE is supporting member countries' preparations for the 2020 round of **population and housing censuses**. Population and housing censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on the population and the housing stock which is used to produce other statistics, for planning public infrastructure and services, and in the context of monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals. The ECOSOC resolution "2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme" from June 2015 provides a global mandate for this work. From 2012 to 2015, UNECE coordinated the preparation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses* which were adopted by CES in June 2015. The new recommendations reflect the diversification of census methodology and data sources. There are increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy, which call for new and more efficient methodological solutions. To address these concerns, UNECE will embark on a series of expert meetings, workshops and training activities to support implementation of the new recommendations, with a focus on the modernization of census methodology.

28. In **migration statistics**, UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration data in the member countries. This responds to the strong demand for more and better data on migration, expressed, among others, at the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly. In 2016, the UNECE biennial work session on migration statistics will focus on the use of administrative data, labour migration, measuring asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migration, and on communication. A CES task force will finalize guidelines on the production of statistics on circular migration. Further methodological work was launched to provide guidelines on the integration of multiple data sources for measuring migration. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data, UNECE will continue to update and improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics. In follow-up to the in-depth review on measuring labour mobility, work will start on collecting good national practices on utilizing the various sources necessary to measure this phenomenon.

29. UNECE work on **gender statistics** aims at sharing knowledge and experience and capacity building in areas where data and indicators of gender equality are insufficient or lacking. The need for better gender statistics is evident for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; the 20-year review of the Beijing Platform of Action emphasized it again this year. In 2016, the UNECE biennial work session on gender statistics will discuss the most topical issues in this area, such as gender pay and pension gaps, measuring work-life balance, gender-based violence, power and decision making in the household, etc., finalize a toolkit for training users of gender statistics and promote its use through sub-regional workshops. A CES task force will continue developing guidelines on the measurement of **unpaid household service work**, which is a key area for understanding women's and men's different contributions to the economy and society. New methodological work is considered on measuring gendered decision-making and power relations within the household.

30. The monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals on the reduction of **poverty** (Goal 1) and inequalities (Goal 10) requires comparable data and a coherent set of indicators. Following an in-depth review and seminar in 2013, the CES Bureau launched a task force to harmonize poverty measurement and establish a set of poverty indicators for countries in the UNECE region. Beside national statistical offices, the task force includes experts from major international organizations active in poverty measurement, such as Eurostat, OECD, UNDP and the World Bank. In 2016, the task force will complete its work. UNECE will hold a seminar on poverty measurement and a workshop on measuring poverty and inequalities.

31. The growing demand for **population projections** for a variety of policy and planning needs has led to advances in projection methodology and to the production of projections by many organizations. An in-depth review by the CES Bureau revealed that there are currently no established practices on how to communicate the uncertainty of the projections to the users. Furthermore, there is no single repository providing basic information about all the different projections produced by national and international organizations. In 2014, the CES Bureau launched a task force to address these issues by collecting good practices on communicating the projections to the users and by providing guidance on a UNECE database of metadata about national and international population projections. The outputs of the task force will be reviewed in 2016 at the region-wide expert meeting jointly organized by UNECE and Eurostat.

32. Since 2013, a CES task force has been working on improving and harmonising **ageing-related statistics**. Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. These statistics are, therefore, in high demand by policymakers. However, they remain dispersed and have gaps and inconsistencies. The 2012 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing and the 2013 UNECE International Conference on Population and Development reinforced the call for improved statistics on ageing. In 2016, the Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics, composed of statisticians, policymakers and academics, will finalize its work on recommendations to national statistical offices in this area.

33. Since 2013, a CES task force is pursuing work on the **measurement of human capital**. Statistics on the stock of human capital are needed to understand drivers of economic growth, the functioning of the labour market and to assess the long-term sustainability of a country's development path. Furthermore, information on the human capital distribution among population sub-groups is crucial for understanding inequality, social inclusion and quality of life. In 2016, the task force will complete its work and present the *Guide for measuring human capital* to the CES plenary session. The Guide will contain recommendations on the methods and sources to compile human capital measures, including a satellite account on education and training.

C. Sustainable development and other multi-domain statistics

34. UNECE activities in this domain aim at improving statistics related to the areas of high policy relevance. The work in 2016 will focus on: measuring sustainable development, environmental statistics, System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), climate change-related statistics and the value of official statistics

35. Sustainable development is high on the policy agenda in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 development framework. The new goals and targets were agreed upon in September 2015. The outcome document “Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development” underlines the importance of follow-up and review of the achievement of the goals and targets. This should be “based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”².

36. UNECE will continue its strong involvement in **measuring sustainable development** to establish a measurement system for the SDGs and targets in the region. The Interagency and Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDG) is currently developing a global list of SDG indicators that is planned to be adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2016. The UNECE Statistical Division actively contributes to the global process and the monitoring of SDG indicators, in particular by maintaining an electronic collaboration platform (wiki) for the IAEG-SDG.

37. The set of global indicators should be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels. The *CES Recommendations on measuring sustainable development*, prepared jointly with UNECE, Eurostat and OECD, and adopted by CES in 2013, provide a good basis for the SDG measurement at the regional level. As the CES Recommendations were prepared before the SDG intergovernmental process started, a dedicated Task Force is adjusting the CES Recommendations to the SDGs and targets so that it could be used for the SDG measurement in the UNECE region.

38. The CES plenary session in June 2015 adopted a ‘Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals’. Following the decision of the Conference, UNECE will launch work on developing a road map to implement the Declaration. The road map will address the mechanism for monitoring of SDGs in the UNECE region, identification of new areas where official statistics need to be developed, guidance on how to deal with required data disaggregations, communication strategy, capacity building needs and collaboration between various international agencies in the UNECE region. The regional road map will contribute to a future action plan at a global level. The CES will discuss the road map and a way forward in measuring SDGs in UNECE region at its plenary session in April 2016.

39. Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics for environmental monitoring. Providing data to measure the SDGs related to environmental issues, such as Goals 6, 14 and 15 will be a challenge for the countries with less developed statistical systems. A Joint Task Force of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES is striving to improve the production and quality of **environmental statistics** in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. The work is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), Eurostat and UNSD. It contributes to the pan-European Shared Environment Information System (SEIS). In 2016, the Joint Task Force will focus on addressing methodological challenges in producing data for SEIS and in support of policy development in the fields of environment, sustainable development, green economy and

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> , para 74

SEEA. The work will base on the indicators from the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*.

40. In 2016, UNECE will continue to promote the implementation of the global standard, the **System of Environmental-Economic Accounting** (SEEA) in the region, in collaboration with existing working groups and UNSD, and evaluate data availability and capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data. CES decided to organise a seminar in autumn 2015, jointly with OECD, to share experience and discuss specific problems in this area. The seminar identified priorities and practical steps for work in 2016 to support countries of the region in SEEA implementation.

41. UNECE works to improve **climate change-related statistics** with key partners from the climate community, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, World Meteorological Organization, European Commission Directorate-General on Climate, EEA and the Food and Agriculture Organization. At an Expert Forum, held in September 2015, countries re-enforced the *CES recommendations on climate change related statistics*, endorsed by CES in 2014 and asked for guidance for prioritizing national actions. In 2016, the UNECE Steering Group will focus on developing a road map with practical examples and collecting good practices to illustrate ways to implement the *CES recommendations*. A UNECE Task Force is identifying a set of key climate change-related indicators that countries could produce in a comparable way. Currently only a few countries have a set of climate change related indicators, and the sets comprise different indicators. The initial set of indicators will be presented at the Expert Forum for feedback in 2016. Another Task Force is working on measuring extreme events and disasters and plans to present their first findings to the network of experts in 2016. These activities will significantly improve the ability of official statisticians to contribute with their key competence and existing data to the monitoring of issues related to climate change in the context of SDGs, the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction and the Paris climate agreement.

42. A UNECE Task Force is working to improve the way **the value of official statistics** is measured, understood and communicated to decision makers and society at large. The aim is to provide tools that statistical offices could use to demonstrate the value of official statistics when faced with increasing budget constraints and competition from the information industry. In 2016, the Task Force will share the first recommendations on how to measure and communicate the value of official statistics more effectively.

D. Modernization of statistical production

43. The UNECE High-level Group for the **Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS)** oversees and coordinates internationally the ongoing strategic changes in statistical production. The United Nations High-level Panel's Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda called for a data revolution that would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision making and ensure increased support for statistical systems.

44. The UNECE HLG-MOS **coordinates the activities of relevant expert groups in the UNECE region** to ensure that they are working towards common goals. This work is based on a vision for modernizing official statistics, endorsed by CES in June 2011, and a strategy to implement that vision, endorsed by CES in June 2012. The modernization work has

attracted substantial extra-budgetary contributions, including from outside the UNECE region, which indicates the added value of this work.

45. The key priorities for HLG-MOS are identified by chief statisticians and representatives of relevant CES and other expert groups at workshops held in November each year. The main topics to be considered in 2016 were decided at the end of 2015. Four modernisation committees contribute to the work of HLG-MOS.

46. The Modernisation Committee on Organizational Frameworks and Evaluation will consider topics related to human resources, training, change management and competency profiles. Outputs on these topics will include guidelines and good practices to support the wider modernization agenda.

47. The Modernisation Committee on Production and Methods will work on topics such as the **development and maintenance of the UNECE Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA)**, and identifying key trends in methodology and technology that could be harnessed to improve statistical production. This work will ensure the continued support and enhancement of previous HLG-MOS outputs, and enable statistical organizations to profit from them to the greatest extent possible.

48. The Modernisation Committee on Products and Sources will consider issues related to data collection and dissemination such as the use of mobile devices and the use of multiple collection modes and output channels. The outputs will include guidelines and good practices to support statistical organizations in their modernization activities.

49. The Modernisation Committee on Standards will manage and enhance the documentation of key statistical standards and frameworks developed under HLG-MOS. For example, the **UNECE Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the UNECE Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM)**, important tools for standardisation and benchmarking of statistical production, have rapidly become global standards, and have been adopted by the major partners of UNECE. Outputs will include case studies of national implementations and enhanced documentation to facilitate the understanding and use of these standards.

V. CAPACITY BUILDING

50. UNECE aims to **enhance the capacity of national statistical systems** of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to implement international standards and guidelines. Particular attention is paid to promoting the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems. According to the Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda “too often development efforts have been hampered by a lack of the most basic data about the social and economic circumstances in which people live”.

51. The UNECE capacity building activities include:

- (a) **Global assessments of national statistical systems;**
- (b) **Training workshops;**
- (c) **Advisory services** by the UNECE experts to address country specific needs.

52. UNECE carries out capacity building activities in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PARIS21, World Bank, IMF, CIS Statistical Committee, Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

53. The UNECE capacity building activities are based on the findings and recommendations of **global assessments (GA) of national statistical systems** of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. GAs are carried out in cooperation with Eurostat and EFTA, and are used by various donors active in the region, such as the World Bank. The GA reports represent a unique tool to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. It is a bridge between statistical engineering (law, coordination, NSO's organization, processes, dissemination) and final products. GA reports help national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. Since 2009, GAs conducted in almost all target countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine) have resulted in action plans to improve national statistics. In 2016, UNECE will continue with a second round of GAs with partner organizations to follow-up with the implementation of the GA recommendations of the first round. Ukraine and Kazakhstan will be the first two countries to be covered by the second round.

54. In 2014-2017, UNECE carries out a **United Nations Development Account project**³ to strengthen the capacity of countries for the sustainable development of statistics. The project supports producers of official statistics in eight beneficiary countries⁴ in addressing statistical gaps to allow for the monitoring of economic, social and environmental reforms. The project builds on the recommendations of the global assessments of national statistical systems conducted between 2009 and 2013. In 2016, in the framework of this project, UNECE will provide advisory services and organize national and sub-regional workshops and training seminars in several statistical domains. The objective will be to help countries develop the legal framework for statistical production and implement GA recommendations in priority areas, defined by the national statistical offices.

55. Based on the findings of global assessments, UNECE will organize sub-regional workshops and advisory services to **address current challenges** in economic, social and environment statistics, modernizing statistical production and legal frameworks for official statistics, and reporting on SDGs. The capacity building will be supported by promoting the exchange of national good practices at sub-regional level, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of networks of experts.

56. The United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECAs) on Statistics⁵ meets annually to discuss needs for capacity building and to coordinate donor activities. UNECE will work in 2016 on the development of and fund-raising for **capacity**

³ The title of the UNDA 9th tranche project is "Supporting the implementation of the global assessment recommendations in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia".

⁴ Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

⁵ Member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

building programmes: on economic statistics, including the implementation of the 2008 SNA; regional migration statistics; reporting on SDGs; and modernization of statistical production.

VI. UNECE STATISTICAL DATABASE

57. UNECE provides a **statistical database** offering a wide range of information on member countries via free on-line English and Russian interfaces. This work promotes open access to, and use of, data for evidence-based decision making, as requested in the Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

58. Particular emphasis is, therefore, placed on **providing data on areas of high political importance** to governments and to the United Nations system, such as issues relating to migration, globalization and gender equality. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues, and helps identify priorities for methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries. To reduce response burden on countries, data are collected from or in cooperation with other international organizations when this is possible.

59. The database provides the source data for the popular *UNECE Countries in Figures* **publication**, as well as for preparing regular short articles on the economic and social development in the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter and on the UNECE web page. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2016.

60. The UNECE statistical database is also used to **disseminate data for UNECE policy work**. It currently includes statistics on key socio-economic issues such as globalization, population, education, employment, work-life balance, road traffic accidents, inland transport, forest resources and protection as well as biological diversity. A Clearing House on Migration Statistics is provided to improve data consistency at the regional level. Further work to identify and publish suitable data on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals will also be undertaken in 2016. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

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