

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For discussion and
recommendations

Meeting of the 2015/2016 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 21-22 October 2015

Item 4(f) of the Provisional
Agenda

**PROGRESS OF WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED STATISTICS AND
OUTCOME OF THE RELATED EXPERT FORUM**

Note by the Steering Group

*This document provides information on the outcome of the Expert Forum for producers and users of climate change-related statistics held on 2-3 September 2015 and progress of work of the Steering Group on climate change-related statistics and the related Task Forces. **The Bureau is invited to discuss the outcome of the Expert Forum, and provide advice on the next steps.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. In April 2014, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) endorsed the *CES Recommendations on climate change-related statistics* to improve the usefulness of existing official statistics for climate analyses and greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories. The Conference supported organizing regular expert meetings for producers and users of climate change-related statistics with the participation of key partners involved in the measurement of climate change.

2. In October 2014, the CES Bureau established the Steering Group¹ on Climate Change-related Statistics to guide the implementation of the *CES Recommendations* and advance international work in the area. The Steering Group will regularly report to the CES Bureau on all activities on climate change-related statistics, including on the outcome of expert meetings.

3. At the same meeting, the Bureau set up a Task Force on a Set of Key Climate Change-related Statistics and Indicators using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA). In February 2015, the Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters was set up to consider the role of national statistical offices in this area.

II. PROGRESS OF WORK

4. During the first year of its work, the Steering Group held eight web conferences and one face-to-face meeting. In addition to organizing an Expert Forum to discuss joint work among various producers and users of climate change-related statistics, the Steering Group carried out the following actions in line with its terms of reference and work plan:

¹ Steering Group members: Norway (chair), Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Directorate-General for Climate Action of the European Commission (DG CLIMA), European Environment Agency (EEA), Eurostat, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Energy Agency (IEA), Midsummer Analytics (consultant), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UNECE.

(a) **Steer CES activities in climate change-related statistics:** The Steering Group is coordinating the work of the two Task Forces through web conferences and a shared wiki space. To review the need for capacity building activities under the CES, the Steering Group prepared an analysis² of the key capacity gaps.

(b) **Provide advice on methodological work on climate change-related statistics:** The Steering Group provided feedback on the Task Forces' work, reported to the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) and commented, jointly with the Task Force on Indicators, on the proposed SDG indicators relating to climate change.

(c) **Identify and advance areas that require further methodological work:** The Steering Group produced a paper³, with UNFCCC in the lead, on how statistical offices could contribute to GHG inventory work in practice.

(d) **Foster the sharing of ideas and good practices to improve climate data and coherence of GHG inventories and official statistics:** In early 2015, the Steering Group prepared an information note on the assessment of the *IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* and sent it to national statistical offices. As a result, a number of countries contacted their national IPCC focal points to participate in the assessment of data availability. A letter was sent to IPCC stressing the benefits of involving official statisticians and making use of the *CES Recommendations* to increase coherence of data.

(e) **Increase collaboration with international organizations:** New organizations have joined the Steering Group: FAO with expertise on emissions from agriculture, land use and forestry and on challenges of developing countries; and IEA focusing on energy statistics which are a central element of the GHG inventories. Some Steering Group members have engaged in the *IPCC Task Force on National GHG Inventories*. At the Expert Forum, IPCC stressed the need to collaborate with official statisticians to increase the use of their data and knowledge of inventory compilation. Furthermore, WMO is closely engaged in the work to improve disaster risk and loss data and participates in the related Task Force.

(f) **Follow up on countries' progress with the CES Recommendations:** The Steering Group prepared a tool⁴ to prioritize the *CES Recommendations* which was discussed at the Expert Forum.

5. The two Task Forces are progressing according to plans, aiming to present their recommendations to the CES Bureau and the CES plenary session in 2017.

(a) The **Task Force on Indicators** has agreed on the approach to definitions and hierarchical relationships between data, statistics, accounting frameworks and indicators⁵. It prepared an inventory with 160 climate policy questions to be used for identifying the key indicators, and analyzed the use of SEEA for climate change indicators.

(b) The **Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters** started work in June 2015. The Task Force is reviewing available official statistics and current practices, and tackling terminological issues taking as a starting point the recommendations of the ESCAP Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics.

² [Paper on the capacity gaps in climate change-related statistics](#)

³ [Paper on national statistical offices' entry points to the greenhouse gas inventory system](#)

⁴ Available at the meeting website, under the session on road map as "Background paper: Recommendation ratings": www.unece.org/index.php?id=37898#/

⁵ [Developing a Set of Key Climate Change-Related Statistics: the UNECE Task Force's approach](#)

III. OUTCOME OF THE EXPERT FORUM

6. The Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-related Statistics⁶ took place from 2 to 3 September 2015, in Geneva. In total, 84 participants attended the meeting from 36 countries and 18 international organizations. They represented national statistical offices, environment agencies and ministries, meteorological services, disaster risk agencies, research institutes and international organizations.

7. The meeting discussed data needs of the new global climate change agreement (expected from Paris in December 2015) and the way forward in improving climate change-related statistics. Two sessions were dedicated to the work of the Task Forces, one on the set of indicators and one on the measurement of extreme events.

8. The **key outcomes of the Expert Forum** are as follows:

(a) New data needs of high political importance are arising from global initiatives that would benefit from the involvement of official statisticians, in particular the monitoring of climate agreements, SDGs and the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction.

(b) High-level support from the management of national statistical offices and stakeholders such as inventory agencies, governments and policy makers is crucial for developing statistics related to climate change.

(c) In addition to GHG inventories, national statistical offices' data are needed much more widely under the UNFCCC reporting, namely as baseline data for emission projections and for reporting on national circumstances, climate change adaptation and mitigation, technological exchange, financial resources and education. Increased collaboration between national statistical offices, inventory agencies and other data producers is essential for ensuring high quality reporting under UNFCCC.

(d) Statistical offices are developing good practices and new statistics in the field of climate change as shown by the presentations on new statistical products and improved collaboration with inventory agencies. Such examples should be collected to illustrate how the *CES Recommendations* could be implemented.

(e) Countries requested for support in preparing national development plans to implement the *CES Recommendations* and asked that their progress be assessed at future Expert Forums.

(f) Capacity building will be necessary to meet the increasing demands for climate relevant data. The countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia asked for a review of their challenges and organization of a special session at a future Expert Forum.

(g) The participants emphasized the need to take into account the data requirements for SDGs, the Sendai framework and reporting under UNFCCC when selecting a set of key indicators. They agreed with the Task Force's approach on indicator selection and made a ranking of policy questions to help identify the key indicators.

(h) A recurring issue at the Expert Forum was the importance of international work including statistical, climate, spatial, disaster risk and user communities. There is a need for clear definition of roles and responsibilities, especially in the measurement of extreme events and disasters.

9. The participants emphasized the role of **the Expert Forum as a unique and essential tool for countries and international organizations to:**

⁶ For the full report, see the meeting web page: www.unece.org/index.php?id=37898#/

(a) Share experience and good practices in the UNECE region and beyond as all countries are facing challenges due to climate change and will benefit from the collaboration.

(b) Share information between involved organizations and communities to align the work of national statistical offices, inventory agencies, ministries of environment and international organizations.

(c) Provide feedback to the UNECE Task Forces from the wider expert community.

IV. FURTHER WORK

10. To respond to each of the above outcomes of the Expert Forum, further work will focus on the following actions:

(a) Draft a narrative to demonstrate to stakeholders the added value that official statistics can offer to the monitoring of climate change and in support of climate policies.

(b) Seek wider support for the development of climate change-related statistics, e.g. inform the United Nations Statistical Commission about the *CES Recommendations* and propose a specific topic on climate change-related statistics for a future CES seminar, such as data needed for mitigation or adaptation.

(c) Identify additional actions to further align the work of statisticians, climate and disaster risk experts, researchers and spatial data experts.

(d) Collect examples of good practices and make them available as a web repository with links to individual actions proposed in the *CES Recommendations*.

(e) Develop a road map with a tool allowing countries to prioritize their actions to improve climate change-related statistics. The Steering Group could use this tool also to follow up on countries' progress in implementing the *CES Recommendations*.

(f) Consider ways to organize capacity building activities involving national statistical offices and other agencies that produce data related to climate change. Carry out a review of the challenges of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in the area of climate change-related statistics, and consider the need for training workshops, advisory missions, study visits or special sessions.

(g) The Task Force on Indicators will use the feedback from the Expert Forum to select the set of key indicators in line with related global initiatives. It is planned to present the initial indicator set for discussion at the next Expert Forum in 2016.

(h) The Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters has started its work to define the role of national statistical offices in the area and will report back to the Expert Forum in 2016.

11. Several participants of the Expert Forum asked for a printed version of the *CES Recommendations* in English and Russian. Currently, the *CES Recommendations* are only available as an electronic publication. The Secretariat suggests preparing a printed leaflet containing the introduction, conclusions of individual chapters and the recommendations and further work. These are available in three languages from the CES plenary session in April 2014.

12. In February 2015, the CES Bureau decided that CES Steering Groups should assess the implementation of CES guidelines and recommendations. **The Expert Forum was the first event to discuss and agree on the follow-up of the implementation of CES recommendations with countries.** The road map and reporting tool that the Steering Group will develop could provide one example to be considered by other CES Steering Groups in their respective areas.

13. The Steering Group is planning to organize the next Expert Forum in autumn 2016 to follow up on the implementation of the *CES Recommendations*.