



**Economic and Social
Council**

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Group of Experts on National Accounts

Eighth Meeting
Geneva, 25-28 April 2006

INFORMATION NOTE

The meeting is organised jointly with Eurostat and OECD

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. One of the main objectives of the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on National Accounts will be to discuss the current process of updating the 1993 SNA and to obtain countries' feedback on the proposed changes. The UN Statistical Commission recommended that the issues under review be consulted with all UN countries and that the Regional Commissions be involved to ensure the regional coverage. The main issues under consideration include: financial issues; general government accounts; treatment of non-financial assets (Canberra II); and measuring capital stock and capital services.

2. The Task Forces working on the review of the SNA - the Task Force on Financial Services, Task Force on the Harmonization of Public Sector Accounts and the Canberra II group (non-financial assets) - would finalise their reports and provide them to the Advisory Expert Group (AEG) on the update of 1993 SNA by the end of 2005. In February 2006, the AEG will have its last meeting to discuss the issues under revision.

3. For the first time, all the decisions and recommendations on the forty-four issues under revision will be brought together in a consolidated way and presented at the Joint Meeting on National Accounts, following the February 2006 Meeting of the AEG on the update of the 1993 SNA. Therefore, it is essential that large participation of all countries in the UNECE region and other UN members be ensured in order to exchange views on the AEG consolidated set of decisions and to discuss them from the point of view of their consistency. Another main topic at the meeting will be the way ahead and how to proceed with the implementation of the SNA Rev.1 once adopted by the Statistical Commission.

4. The second part of the Joint Meeting will include:

- a full day seminar on the issues related to Internationalization and Globalization and their Effect on National Accounts to be organized and chaired by the ONS, UK;
- Session on National Accounts and Employment Data (organised and chaired by Statistics Netherlands);
- Session on Regional Aspects in the National Accounts (organised and chaired by Statistics Canada);
- Session on Long Time Series when Major Changes Occur (organised by the UNECE);
- Session on Non-observed Economy in National Accounts (organised by the UNECE).

II. DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE MEETING

Review of the 1993 SNA

Session organiser: Carol Carlson (SNA Update, Project Manager), Anne Harrison (SNA Update, Editor), OECD and IMF.

Duration of the session: one and a half days (25 April and 26 April - morning)

5. *Issues to be discussed:* Measurement of non-financial assets, recommendations of Canberra II Group; Financial issues, including insurance, pensions, etc; Government-public sector issues; Units and classifications; External issues, including the recommendations of the Task Force on Harmonisation of Public Sector Accounts and BOPCOM.

Invited papers: countries, international organizations.

Seminar on internationalization and globalization and how to deal with them in National Accounts

Seminar organiser: ONS, UK

Duration: one day (27 April)

6. *The issue:* the ever-increasing globalization of the world's economies sets new challenges for national accounts. As economic distance shortens, trade and political barriers are lowered, and as companies operate across national boundaries, so the measurement of national economies through the traditional national accounts framework becomes more difficult. The aim of this session is to identify and describe characteristics of globalization that pose statistical challenges, to indicate short-term approaches to tackle the problems, and longer term strategies.

7. *Topics to be discussed:* more companies organise their activities on a global basis. The interaction of parents with subsidiaries and with foreign affiliates places greater emphasis on capturing trade and flows of profits etc. within multinational organizations but across national borders. Toll processing where ownership of goods does not change, the sharing of intellectual property around the world and the associated international trade in this property all demand special collection and measurement techniques. And it is essential that an appropriate business register be created enabling a survey system to establish the relevant statistics.

8. *Outcome:* countries that have researched and tackled globalization measurement problems in the national accounts will share their progress with other countries that may not be so advanced. Participants will gain a sense of what is possible and achievable in the area of measuring cross-border flows as they affect balance of payments and national accounts. This should provide a useful basis on which to develop a country strategy allowing for globalization in measuring the economy, and perhaps some ideas for introducing new collections to inform some of the more difficult areas of the national accounts.

Invited papers: UK, Canada, USA, the Netherlands, Israel and Carol Carson (Manager of the SNA update).

National Accounts and Employment Data

Session organiser: Statistics Netherlands

Duration of the session: half a day (28 April – morning)

9. *The issue:* labour is both a complex and a dynamic phenomenon that can be measured through various sources and viewed from different perspectives. Because of the different sources and perspectives, NSOs often publish different sets of labour market data that are incompatible. The inconsistencies between the sets of data lead to difficulties in interpretation and uncertainty about the results. It is therefore important that the labour market statistics are placed within a solidly defined framework. The ideal framework is that of the National Accounts, because this guarantees consistency with the main economic indicators.

10. *Topics to be discussed:* the integration of labour market data in the National Accounts via compensation of employees; the use of registers as a source of labour market data in the National Accounts; (in)consistency between various sources on labour market data such as the production surveys, the labour force survey and the structure of earnings survey; the compilation of hours actually worked in the National Accounts framework (consistent with productivity measures), and the question of whether the EU's Labour Cost Index should be based on the National Accounts.

11. *Outcome:* the aim of this session is to discuss the possibilities and methods to incorporate labour market data consistently in the National Accounts. Based on the discussion, steps can be taken for a future framework for labour market data embedded in the National Accounts.

Invited papers: Eurostat&OECD, Statistics Norway, Statistics Canada and Rosstat, (Russian Federation).

Regional aspects of National Accounts

Session organiser: Statistics Canada

Duration of the session: half a day (28 April – afternoon)

12. *The issue:* over the last decade, demand for regional and local statistics has expanded significantly. Understanding the links between regions and the national economy is becoming a high priority in many countries. They need to understand the causes of changes in regional economies and to better measure the wellbeing of the residents of the regions for policy making.

13. Many NSOs have put in place a regional statistical program. In some countries, the statistics are very integrated with the various accounts of the System of National Accounts; in other countries, the integration is much less advanced while regional statistical programs are at their early phase in a majority of countries.

14. *Topics to be discussed:* despite the efforts of NSOs to develop their regional programs, complex issues have to be faced. The issues are first of a conceptual nature (treatment of head offices, how to allocate, by region, spending by central government, allocation of operating surplus by region). Statistical issues are potentially important as well. How collectable are the data by region, are regional estimates of as good a quality as the national ones?

15. Sampling, coverage and timeliness are other key factors in developing regional statistics programs. These factors influence the quality and the usefulness of the data as well as the costs of the program.

Invited papers: CIS-Stat, Statistics Netherlands, Eurostat, Statistics Canada,

Long time series when major changes occur

Session organiser: UNECE

Duration of the session: 75 minutes (26 April – afternoon)

16. *The issue:* consistency of national accounts time series is required by all users in order to follow the development of the economy over time, to conduct macroeconomic analysis, and to make forecasting and economic modelling. Moreover, consistency is vital for international comparability of data. When big methodological changes are introduced, both the individual

country time series for and the comparability across countries are affected. It is therefore important that the revision process is planned and organised carefully.

17. *Topics to be discussed:* implementation of revisions could be looked at from both a country NSO and an international organization perspective. Some requirements for consistency can be underlined, namely that major changes to definitions should be made at the same time; there should be links between different classifications (double coding is useful); and changes should be coordinated. It is important to plan and organise the revision process carefully. A good infrastructure (coding system) is needed. Transparency and adequate information to users is important; it is wise to present revisions in a positive way, emphasizing the improvements that the changes bring.

18. *Outcome:* the session would discuss strategies in implementing revisions. Countries would share their experiences and learn from each other.

Proposed contributions: Rosstat (Russian Federation) and Eurostat.

Non-Observed Economy in National Accounts

Session organiser: UNECE

Duration of the session: 75 minutes (26 April – afternoon)

19. *Issues to be discussed:* the session will deal with country practices in measuring the Non-observed Economy (NOE) in the UNECE and OECD countries. The UNECE carried out the Survey of National Practices in Estimating the Non-observed Economic Activities in National Accounts in 2002 and 2005. Thirty-eight countries have replied to the 2005 survey so far and the replies are currently being analysed and processed. By April, the draft report should be available and will be circulated. AEG recommendations on the informal sector and illegal activities would be also represented.

20. *Outcome:* the presentations will be followed by a short discussion on the problems and issues encountered in measuring non-observed economy in countries and the formulation of eventual future work in this area.

Proposed contributions: UNECE, AEG recommendations.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

21. A session organiser prepares and chairs each session.

22. The authors of invited papers will have the opportunity to present their papers and to answer any questions. Some supporting papers will also be briefly presented. A general discussion will follow.

IV. WORKING LANGUAGES AND DOCUMENTATION

23. The working languages of the meeting are English, French and Russian. English/French/Russian interpretation will be available.

24. The invited papers will be sent for translation into the three working UNECE languages: English, French and Russian. In order to ensure their translation, invited papers should reach the UNECE secretariat in electronic form by **3 February 2006**. Supporting papers should reach the UNECE secretariat by **3 March 2006**, as they will be distributed in their original language only.

25. Both invited and supporting papers should be send in electronic form (preferably as a Word document of no more than 8 pages in length, including tables, references, etc.) to Ms. Tihomira Dimova at tihomira.dimova@unece.org

26. All the documentation for the meeting will be available on the UNECE web site at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2006.04.sna.htm>. The French and Russian versions will be posted on the web page as soon as the translation is completed. Delegates are encouraged to download the documents from the website and to bring their own copies to the meeting.

V. PARTICIPATION, VISA REQUIREMENTS AND REGISTRATION

27. In accordance with standard UNECE practice, national statistical offices in the UNECE region are invited to send their experts. Furthermore, OECD member states and other United Nations member states are also invited to participate. A number of international organizations, e.g. UN, OECD, Eurostat, IMF and the World Bank are also invited. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization.

28. All participants attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participants reside, with a reference to the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on National Accounts. If necessary, the UNECE secretariat can provide a letter to facilitate obtaining a visa. This can be requested from Ms. Josephine Rauss of the UNECE secretariat (e-mail: josephine.rauss@unece.org; fax: +4122 9170400; tel.: +4122 917 4135).

29. Representatives from national statistical offices and other government bodies as well as from international organizations who wish to participate should print and complete the Conference Registration form available in Annex II to the present note. Registration forms should be sent by fax or e-mail to Ms. Josephine Rauss (e-mail: josephine.rauss@unece.org; fax: +4122 917 0400) by **15 March 2006**.

30. The information will be used to register participants with the UN Security Section and to obtain ID badges from Security offices. If you are to be accompanied by your spouse, please complete a separate registration form for her/him.

VI. ACCOMMODATION IN GENEVA

31. **Participants are requested to make their own travel and hotel reservations.** The

UNECE secretariat in Geneva is not in a position to provide such services to delegates. Participants are advised to book hotel accommodation well in advance of the meeting, because hotels in Geneva are often fully booked for large conferences or other events. In order to assist participants in organizing their accommodation, the UNECE secretariat provides a list of hotels on its website (<http://www.unece.org/stats/geneva.e.htm>). If difficulties are encountered, participants may contact their Permanent Mission in Geneva for assistance.

VII. SECURITY MEASURES AND ACCESS TO THE VENUE

32. In order to enter the Palais des Nations, where the meeting will be held, all participants need to obtain a security pass (ID badge). For this purpose, please present yourself with your passport and the original of your completed Conference Registration form at the Villa Les Feuillantines or Porte de Pregny (information will be provided later; see the map in Annex I) by 8:30 a.m. at the latest on the first day of the meeting. The Security Identification Office is open Monday to Friday from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (non-stop). For identification and security reasons, delegates are requested to wear their security badges at all times while inside the Palais des Nations. Please also note that, due to new security procedures in place in the Palais des Nations, we advise delegates not to bring large luggage (e.g. suitcases) to the Palais. Such luggage is not permitted into the building, and there is only limited storage space for it at the Pregny entrance.

33. There are two gates that can be used by participants to enter the UN premises (see the map on Annex I): the pedestrian passage at Place des Nations (tram 13, buses 5 and 8, stop Nations) and the Pregny Gate (Avenue de la Paix 14, buses 8 and 18, stop Appia).

VIII. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDANCE

34. All queries concerning the meeting should be addressed to:

Ms. Lidia Bratanova
CES and National Accounts Section
Statistical Division, UNECE
Palais des Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

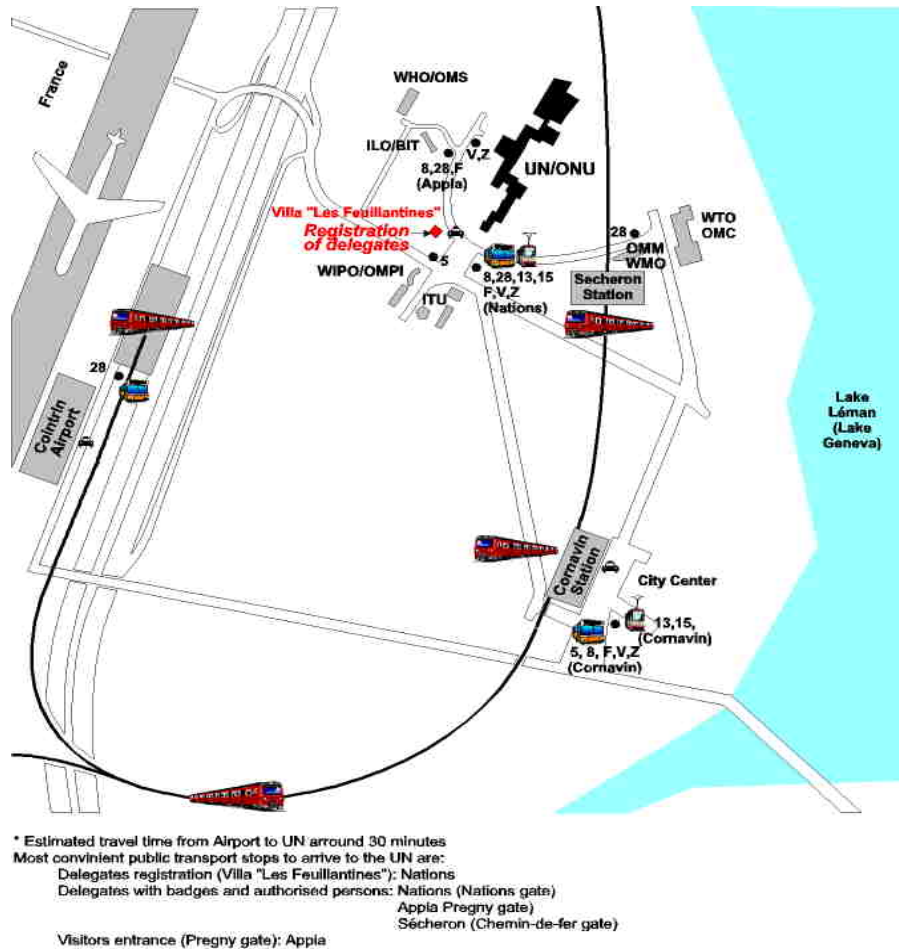
Tel: +41-22 917 1227
Fax: +41-22 917 00 40
E-mail: lidia.bratanova@unece.org

Ms. Tihomira Dimova
CES and National Accounts Section
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Palais des Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

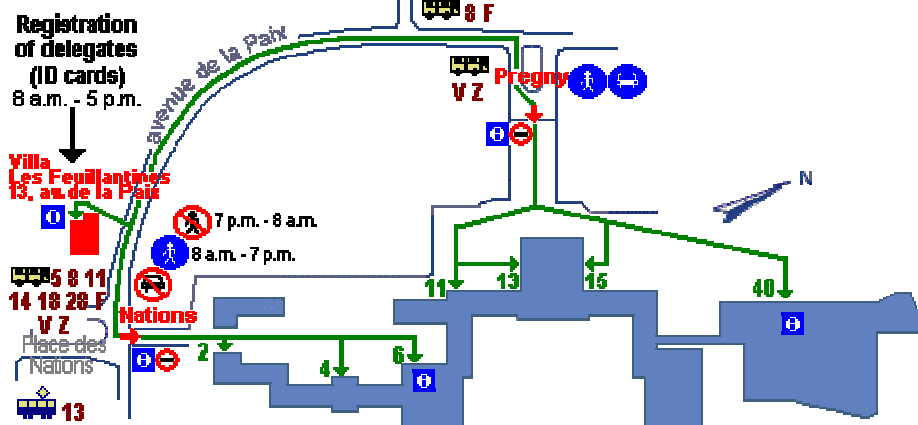
Tel: +41-22 917 1906
Fax: +41-22 917 00 40
E-mail: tihomira.dimova@unece.org

ANNEX I MAPS

How to find the UN building in Geneva:



Where to obtain the entry pass (Security Identification Office, Villa les Feuillantines, 13 avenue de la Paix):



Entry for delegates with valid ground pass: "Place des Nations gate" and "Pregny gate"
 Entry for visitors: "Pregny gate" only. **Note: a valid passport or photo ID is needed to obtain the ground pass and to gain the entry to the UN premises.**

ANNEX II.
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA
Conference Registration

Please Print

Date

Please print this form, complete it and fax it to the UNECE Secretariat (+41-22-917 00 40).
Please **BRING THIS ORIGINAL** with you to Geneva. An additional form is required for spouses.

Title and dates of the meeting:

Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on National Accounts (Geneva, 25-28 April 2006)

Delegation of Country, Organisation or Agency:

Participant	Family Name	First Name
Mr. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Mrs <input type="checkbox"/>		
Ms <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Of Birth	(DD/MM/YYYY)
	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	

Participation Category

<input type="checkbox"/> Head of Delegation Members	<input type="checkbox"/> Observer Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Participating <u>From / Until</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Delegation Member	<input type="checkbox"/> NGO (ECOSOC Accred.)	<input type="checkbox"/> From <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Observer Country	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Until <input type="text"/>
<p>Do you have a badge issued as a Mission diplomat or employee, NGO card issued in Geneva or a Long Duration conference badge issued at Geneva? If so, PLEASE <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

Origin of Identity Document	Passport or ID Number	Valid Until
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Official Telephone No.	Fax No.	Official Occupation
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Permanent Official Address		
<input type="text"/>		
Address in Geneva		
<input type="text"/>		
Email Address		
<input type="text"/>		

On Issue of ID Card
Participant Signature
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
Date
<input type="text"/>

Security Use Only
Card N°. Issued
<input type="text"/>
Initials, UN Official
<input type="text"/>