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**TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THE UNECE  
STATISTICAL DIVISION FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 2003 – MAY 2004**

Note prepared by the ECE secretariat

**BACKGROUND**

1. The technical cooperation activities in statistics are carried out by the Regional Adviser on Statistics and other professional staff of the UNECE Statistical Division. Within the UNECE region, the countries of Southeast Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are the main beneficiaries of this cooperation.
2. The group of Southeast Europe and CIS covers a range of countries, which are at different stages of their economic and social development. In Southeast Europe, Bulgaria and Romania are official candidates to EU membership and are expected to become EU members within three-four years, while Croatia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have applied for the status of candidate to EU membership. The official granting of the status of market economy by EU to Russia in May 2002 has marked the progress toward the integration of the EU and Russia within a “common European economic space”.
3. The other countries in Southeast Europe are facing various challenges in their progress towards a market economy. Some of them are far more advanced than others. In the CIS countries, leaving aside Russia, there is also a considerable diversity in the development of a market economy. This calls for a tailored development of statistics in the region, accompanied by a sustained technical cooperation by international organizations that are active in the area.

4. The implementation of the European Union programme CARDS has been launched at the national and at the regional level in Southeast Europe. Beyond the European Union, the international community, including UNECE, EFTA, the Council of Europe, UNDP, IMF and the World Bank, is devoting attention and resources to strengthening the statistical capacity in these countries.

5. The EU TACIS programme is a major source of technical cooperation in the CIS countries, with the exception of Belarus and Tajikistan. UNECE and other international organizations such as UNDP, the World Bank, IMF and the CIS Inter-State Statistical Committee are also active in the region.

6. The overarching reference in dealing with development at world level in recent years has been the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The UN Secretary General presented his second report to the UN General Assembly on 2 September 2003. With regard to monitoring the progress towards the MDG, the report stressed that the capacity of countries to provide reliable statistics for monitoring trends needs to be considerably strengthened in order to provide sound measurement of their needs and achievements. UNDP has received the assignment of leading the UN efforts to coordinate the MDG and the country-level monitoring activities associated with it.

7. Against this background, the UNECE and other international organizations have devoted a significant amount of human and financial resources to the development of economic and social statistics in Southeast Europe and the CIS.

## **UNECE TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

### Bilateral activities

8. At the request of the national authorities and/or international organizations that are active in the respective country, the UNECE Statistical Division cooperates with individual member countries in order to strengthen their statistical capacity. Priority is given to countries of Southeast Europe and the CIS.

### **Azerbaijan**

9. In cooperation with UNDP, an assessment of the production and use of gender statistics will be conducted in June 2004, in the framework of the global UNECE/UNDP project on gender statistics.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

10. The Report on the global assessment of the national statistical system that was carried out in cooperation with Eurostat in the first half of 2003 was approved by the national statistical authorities in September 2003.

**Croatia**

11. In cooperation with Eurostat, a global assessment of the national statistical system of the Republic of Croatia was carried out in April-May 2004. The final report will be submitted to the national statistical authorities in June 2004 for approval.

**Republic of Moldova**

12. At the request of the national authorities, assistance was provided to the Department of Statistics and Sociology in November 2003 on the draft law of official statistics.

13. In the framework of the Paris 21 Task Team "Improving Statistical Support for Monitoring Development Goals", UNECE contributed to the case study on Moldova. This included a joint UNECE-World Bank-EU-UNDP visit to Chisinau in January 2004 to assess obstacles and opportunities faced by Moldova in monitoring progress towards its own development goals and MDG.

**Serbia and Montenegro**

14. At the request of national authorities, assistance was provided in July 2003 to the three statistical offices of Serbia and Montenegro, of the Republic of Serbia, and of the Republic of Montenegro to develop three new statistical laws, coherent with international and EU standards and between themselves, as a result of the reorganization of the country with a new constitution.

15. In cooperation with UNDP, an assessment of the production and use of gender statistics was conducted in May 2004, in the framework of the global UNECE/UNDP project on gender statistics.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

16. The International Observation and Monitoring Mission of the 2002 Population Census in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was concluded in January 2004, after the release of the first results of the Census in November 2003. The UNECE Statistical Division has been actively involved in the work of the Steering Committee of the Mission, which was lead and mainly funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

**Ukraine**

17. In cooperation with UNDP, an assessment of the production and use of gender statistics was conducted in November 2003, in the framework of the global UNECE/UNDP project on gender statistics.

**Multilateral activities**

18. Technical assistance is also provided in the form of sub-regional workshops and multi-country advice in specific statistical areas for countries of Southeast Europe and the CIS. Over the last twelve months, UNDP and Eurostat have been the main donors to enable countries to participate in these activities.

## **National Accounts**

19. Special seminars and work sessions have been organised by UNECE for countries with economies in transition in the area of national accounts, back-to-back with regular meetings of national accounts experts.

- A special UNECE session on national accounting issues of concern to transition economies was organised in Paris on 10 October 2003, back-to-back with the annual OECD meeting of national accounts experts. The topics for discussion were: (i) flash estimates of GDP; and (ii) the allocation of financial intermediation services indirectly measured.
- A similar UNECE session on national accounts for CIS countries and other transition economies was organised in Geneva on 27 April 2004, back-to-back with the UNECE/Eurostat/OECD meeting on national accounts. The topics for discussion were: (i) methods used to estimate the non-observed economy; and (ii) new developments on financial intermediation services indirectly measured.

## **Human development statistics and social trends reporting; MDG indicators**

20. The joint UNECE/UNDP project on “Human Development Statistics and Social Trends Reporting in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS”, which started in 2001 with UNDP funding, ended in December 2003. The last activities related to this project were related to MDG indicators and gender statistics.

- As already reported last year, MDG Indicators have been incorporated into the proposal of standard statistical indicators for national human development reports and discussed with human development analysts in the workshop organised in Bratislava in May 2003. Furthermore, a part of the remaining funds of the project have been used to finance the participation of chief statisticians of Kyrgyzstan and Hungary in the Inter-Agency and Expert meeting on MDG Indicators organised by the UN Statistics Division and UNDP and hosted by UNECE in Geneva from 10-13 November 2003.
- The UNECE Gender Statistics database was launched in June 2003, finalising a major step in the improvement of the regional capacity to produce and disseminate relevant indicators on gender parity. In cooperation with UNDP, UNECE organised in the second half of 2003, and continued in the first half of 2004, an assessment of the production and use of gender statistics in countries of Southeast Europe and the CIS. In addition to a survey of current practices covering 27 countries, country visits were organised to Ukraine, Serbia and Montenegro, and Azerbaijan (see above ‘Bilateral activities’).

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