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Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda

Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Statistical Programme 2017

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the statistical programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for 2017. It is closely linked to the Biennial Programme of Work 2016-2017 (ECE/CES/2015/16), adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2015 and approved by the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in January 2016.

The Statistical Programme for 2017 was approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at its October 2016 meeting.

The preliminary list of meetings held or planned to be held from the start of 2017 is annexed to this document.

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I. Background

1. The annual statistical programme describes the activities to be carried out in 2017 to implement the UNECE biennial statistical programme for 2016-2017. The biennial programme was adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2015 (document ECE/CES/2015/16) and approved by the UNECE Executive Office (EXCOM) in January 2016. The annual programme describes:

- What the activity is about;
- Why the activity is needed, which issues or problems it addresses;
- The main focus of actions in 2017;
- The expected results and impact of these actions.

2. The programme takes into account the outcome of the UNECE review carried out by EXCOM in 2012. The review 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 overall objective is to improve 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 the 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 to support development of statistics. CES brings together experts to address a particular task and to develop outputs such as statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations 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).

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, Republic of Korea and South Africa. 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), IMF, the World Bank, etc.

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 international statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations; (3) capacity building; and (4) the UNECE statistical database.

7. The methodological work focuses on the following priorities: economy and globalization; population, gender and inequality; environment and sustainable development; institutional and legal frameworks; and statistical management and modernization. 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 the burden on national statistical offices. The Conference and its Bureau regularly discuss statistical work in the region, carry out in-depth reviews and organize seminars to explore foundational issues and emerging topics of official statistics.

9. Member countries select the substantive topics that will be discussed at the annual CES plenary sessions in a seminar format. The first 2017 CES seminar will focus on measuring poverty, which is an integral part of reporting on progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. High-quality poverty statistics are essential in making policy decisions for improving the economic and social conditions of the most vulnerable population groups. The Conference is also expected to endorse the recommendations on poverty measurement developed by a CES Task Force.

10. The second main topic at the CES 2017 plenary session will be the next generation of statisticians and data scientists. Official statistics are in competition for the best people: the business sector has realized the value of data scientists. The discussion will consider how to ensure that the statistical offices can attract a future generation of innovative statisticians.

11. The CES Bureau will steer the statistical work and will meet twice in 2017 to review in-depth selected statistical areas.

12. Some in-depth reviews carried out earlier by the Bureau will lead to follow-up work in 2017, such as:

- The review of diversification of population census methodology and sources leading to the renewal of the mandate of the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses until 2019 and to the establishment of a Task Force to develop guidance on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses.
- The issues raised by the review of strategic partnerships with the information industry were discussed at the 2016 CES seminar on strategic partnerships. In February 2017, the CES Bureau asked a small group co-led by Canada and the United Kingdom and consisting of Mexico, the Netherlands, Eurostat and UNECE to develop a work plan with concrete actions, responsibilities, timeline and expected outcomes for the October 2017 meeting of the Bureau.
- As a result of the review of geospatial data and a 2016 CES seminar on this topic, the CES Bureau has promoted collaboration between national statistical offices and

geospatial agencies. The Bureau asked UNECE to develop a concrete plan detailing the involvement of statisticians in geospatial activities in the UNECE region. The issue will be brought to the UNECE Commission Session for decision in April 2017. The work was launched to implement the July 2016 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management in all United Nations Regional Commissions.

- The review of leading, composite and sentiment indicators and an expert meeting organized in December 2015 led to the establishment of a Task Force to develop recommendations on good practices on leading, composite and sentiment indicators, and to facilitate exchange of experience in this area.

13. The CES Bureau is the custodian of the widely used Classification of Statistical Activities. The latest version of the classification dates from 2009. In 2017, UNECE will initiate a review of the classification to take into account the emergence of new statistical areas, such as climate change-related statistics and statistics on governance.

IV. Methodological work on statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations

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

15. 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, all CES members have the opportunity to comment on the outputs before they are 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.

16. 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, reducing the need for physical meetings.

17. The following five task forces plan to finalize their work and submit their recommendations to the CES plenary session in 2017: on unpaid household work, set of climate change-related indicators, population projections, measuring poverty, and value of official statistics.

A. Economy and globalization

18. UNECE is working with countries to implement international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, particularly in the areas of national accounts, impact of globalization, price statistics, business registers, business statistics and indicators. High-quality economic statistics are a prerequisite for the compilation of a number of indicators in the global framework for measuring SDGs.

19. UNECE promotes the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) to enable the provision of high-quality data for economic analysis and policies. Certain national accounts aggregates are also important for monitoring SDGs or are used as denominators in the SDG indicator framework. UNECE work on national accounts is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by UNSC. In 2017,

UNECE will focus on methodological work in the areas of measuring human capital, global production and use of statistical units in national accounts, as requested by the Group of Experts on National Accounts in 2016, convened jointly with Eurostat and OECD. As a first step of implementing the new *Guide on Measuring Human Capital*, several countries will pilot test Satellite Accounts for Education and Training. UNECE will also organize training workshops for the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in areas that countries have highlighted as priorities in their 2008 SNA implementation plans.

20. 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 national statistics. In 2017, UNECE jointly with Eurostat and OECD, will promote the implementation of the *Guide to Measuring Global Production*, published in 2016, by organizing a special meeting devoted to this topic. The meeting will share practical experience in collecting and compiling data on global production arrangements and will discuss further work arising from the in-depth review of exchange and sharing of economic data, and the possibilities to extend the recommendations of the Guide to financial statistics, as recommended by the Group of Experts on National Accounts in 2016. Exchange of economic data would open new possibilities to measure global production and trade more coherently, improve data quality and increase efficiency of statistical production.

21. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners, promotes the implementation of international recommendations on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The recommendations support countries in providing best possible data for the analysis of inflation and for economic and social policies, such as indexation of wages and social security allowances which are based on CPI. UNECE work contributes to the update of *the 2004 CPI Manual*, initiated under the auspices of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. The updated manual is planned to be discussed at the 2018 CPI Expert Group meeting. UNECE also contributes to the updating of the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP), which is used for classifying households' consumption expenditures in national accounts, household budget surveys and price statistics.

22. Together with Eurostat and OECD, UNECE supports the development of statistical business registers which are indispensable for efficient data collection and production of business statistics. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the *UNECE Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* in national statistical offices through Expert Group meetings, workshops and other activities. In 2017, the UNECE/Eurostat/OECD biennial meeting of the Expert Group on Business Registers will discuss methodological developments and good practices for establishing and maintaining statistical business registers.

23. The CES Bureau has recognized a growing interest in entrepreneurship statistics over the past years. Linking data from statistical business registers with data from population and social registers would help produce entrepreneurship statistics and understand, among other issues, the role of women in entrepreneurship. In 2017, the newly set up Task Force on Entrepreneurship Statistics will work on developing recommendations on how to use statistical business registers to support the production of entrepreneurship statistics. The draft recommendations will be discussed at an expert meeting with the aim to finalize them for endorsement at the CES plenary session in 2018.

24. UNECE, jointly with Eurostat and ILO, leads international work on measuring the quality of employment. The aim is to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. In 2017, a UNECE Steering Group will follow up on the implementation of the *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Quality of Employment* and ensure that it is kept up to date to reflect revisions to ILO standards, additional country experiences and emerging issues.

25. Leading, composite and sentiment indicators attract a lot of attention in the media and among policy makers, for instance by offering various country rankings. At the same time, there is a lack of international guidelines on the quality and compilation methods of the indicators, and the area is new to many national statistical offices. A new UNECE Task Force is developing recommendations for statistical offices on the production and dissemination of these types of indicators. The Task Force will organize a seminar on leading, composite and sentiment indicators in October 2017 to discuss the draft recommendations.

B. Population, gender and inequalities

26. UNECE develops statistics and statistical methods in areas of high policy relevance to respond to increasing demand for data on people's well-being, social environment and demographic change. The work in 2017 will focus on population and housing censuses, population projections, poverty and inequalities, migration, and gender issues.

27. UNECE supports countries' preparations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. Censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on population and housing stock, which is used to produce other statistics, for planning public infrastructure and services, and in the context of monitoring of SDGs. The ECOSOC resolution "2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme" from June 2015 provides a global mandate for this work. 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, in 2017 UNECE will organize an expert meeting and a workshop to support implementation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses*, with a focus on the modernization of census methodology and technology.

28. UNECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on measuring poverty and inequalities. The monitoring of SDGs on the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequalities (Goal 10) requires comparable data and a coherent set of indicators. In 2017, a UNECE Task Force will complete its work on guidelines for applying various measurement approaches to poverty, and for improving the international comparability of poverty definitions, methods and data sources. UNECE will hold an expert meeting to address the regional needs for new methodological work and support for measuring the SDG indicators on poverty and inequality. Work will be undertaken towards a common approach and harmonised survey tools for poverty measurement in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

29. UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration statistics. 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. The 2017 UNECE work session on migration statistics will discuss integration of data on migration, labour mobility, and the measurement of asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migration. A UNECE Task Force will continue work on guidelines for the integration of multiple data sources for measuring migration. Another Task Force will collect and analyse national practices in measuring labour migration. Both task forces are scheduled to complete their work in 2018. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data, UNECE will continue to update and improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics.

30. UNECE work on gender statistics aims at sharing knowledge and experience and building capacity in areas where data and indicators of gender equality are insufficient or lacking. The need for better gender statistics is evident for the monitoring of SDGs, particularly to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5). The

2017 UNECE work session on gender statistics will discuss the most topical issues in this area, such as monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda from the gender perspective, valuing unpaid household work, and measuring time use, violence against women and gender issues in vulnerable population groups. UNECE will promote the national application of its new toolkit for training the users of gender statistics. In 2017, a UNECE Task Force is expected to finalize guidelines on the measurement of unpaid household service work, which is a key area for understanding women's and men's contributions to the economy and society. New methodological work is considered on measuring gendered decision-making and power relations within the household.

31. UNECE promotes exchange of experience and dissemination of information on population projections. 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 2017, a UNECE Task Force is scheduled to complete the collection of good practices on communicating population projections to users, and finalize guidance on a UNECE database of metadata of national and international population projections.

C. Environment and sustainable development

32. UNECE activities in this domain aim at improving statistics related to the areas of high policy relevance. The work in 2017 will focus on statistics for SDGs, environment statistics, System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and climate change-related statistics.

33. UNECE will continue its strong involvement in measuring sustainable development in the context of SDGs. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* calls for a follow-up and review of the achievement of the goals and targets "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.

34. A CES Steering Group is developing a road map to implement the CES 2015 *Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*. The aim of the road map is to guide the CES work on statistics for SDGs. The Road Map provides guidance on how to (i) assess the readiness of countries to report on global SDG indicators; (ii) select regional, national and subnational indicators; (iii) set up the reporting system on global indicators and the related data flows at national and regional levels; (iv) identify the needs and priorities for capacity building, and (v) establish a communication strategy on statistics for SDGs. It also addresses collaboration between various international agencies in the UNECE region. The Steering Group aims to identify concrete actions to help countries in building up a system to provide data on SDG indicators. For example, the Group facilitates exchange of experience on National SDG Reporting Platforms that a number of countries are currently establishing. The regional road map will contribute to the Global Action Plan presented at the World Data Forum in Cape Town in January 2017. The first edition of the road map will be submitted to the CES plenary session in June 2017 for endorsement.

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

35. Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics for environmental monitoring. Providing data to measure the environment related SDGs (such as Goals 6, 14 and 15) will be a challenge for the countries with less developed statistical systems. The Joint Task Force of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES will support the improvement of the production and quality of environmental statistics in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe in line with the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The work contributes to the pan-European Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency, Eurostat and UN Statistical Division (UNSD).

36. The joint OECD/UNECE work promotes the implementation of the global standard on SEEA in the region. The aim is to evaluate data availability and support the capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data. The work in 2017 will focus on implementation of SEEA, particularly in the context of SDGs and climate change, as well as practical work in support of developing energy accounts, air emission accounts and accounts on environmental taxes and subsidies.

37. Work to improve the use of official statistics for climate change analysis involves statisticians and partners from the climate community, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the World Meteorological Organization. In 2017, UNECE will organize an Expert Forum to discuss progress towards implementing the *CES Recommendations on Climate Change-related Statistics*. UNECE and the Steering Group will support countries in developing their road maps to implement the *CES Recommendations* and will collect countries' good practices on a recently established wiki platform.

38. In 2017, a UNECE Task Force will finalize a set of core climate change-related indicators to enable countries to produce more comparable information on climate change, its causes and impacts. The set of indicators, refined on the basis of feedback from the 2016 Expert Forum and results of a survey on data availability, will be submitted to the CES plenary session for endorsement in June 2017. The Task Force aims to complement the set of indicators with practical guidance on data sources and methodologies to support the production of comparable climate-relevant indicators.

39. UNECE brings together statisticians and disaster risk experts, for instance from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, to develop official statistics for measuring extreme events and disasters. A UNECE Task Force aims at improving the ability of official statisticians to contribute to the monitoring of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction with existing data and statistics. In 2017, the Task Force will look into ways to better collaborate with the UN Open-ended Expert Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction to agree on consistent indicators and terminology and promote the reuse of existing data.

D. Institutional and legal frameworks

40. UNECE is exploring ways to increase the value of official statistics, and to measure and communicate it more effectively to society. A UNECE Task Force will launch a wiki platform to share best practices related to the value of official statistics, and submit its final recommendations to the CES plenary session for endorsement in June 2017. The outcomes are intended to help statistical offices to demonstrate the value of official statistics, especially when faced with increasing budget constraints and competition from the information industry.

41. The need to reinforce legal frameworks of statistical production has increased in many countries. A new UNECE Task Force is developing guidance on how to achieve this. Strong legal frameworks enable modernizing statistical systems, guaranteeing their independence and accountability, and ensuring high quality of statistics and data security. The Task Force will build on the *Generic Law on Official Statistics*, developed by UNECE, Eurostat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), under the UN Development Account project for selected countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2017, the Task Force will identify common elements of sound legal frameworks and draft good practice guidance on statistical legislation. The guidance will draw on an analysis of current strengths and weaknesses of legal frameworks of statistical offices and will take into account challenges arising from the institutional environment where statistical offices operate.

E. Statistical management and modernization

42. The UNECE High-level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) oversees and coordinates internationally the ongoing strategic changes in statistical production. It 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 progressed due to regular extrabudgetary contributions.

43. 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 2017 are data integration and data architecture. Four technical sub-groups will be established at the start of 2017 to contribute to the work of HLG-MOS, replacing the six sub-groups that operated during 2016.

44. The “Blue-skies thinking” sub-group will be the “ideas factory” for HLG-MOS activities. It will reflect the ongoing desire for creativity and agility to identify and evaluate new opportunities for official statistics. It will comprise a flexible pool of researchers, who will consider new ideas in brief evaluation projects (typically lasting no more than 6 months). The evaluation projects will be started if they have an active support of at least three statistical organizations (sponsors), and if they are in line with the HLG-MOS Strategic Framework.

45. The “Supporting standards” sub-group will support the implementation and use of the various standards and models (GSBPM, GAMSO, GSIM, CSPA, etc.) developed under the HLG-MOS to facilitate modernization activities. In 2017, this will involve:

- Providing support to implementers:
- Developing and publishing complementary materials to aid understanding and use of the standards and models, such as case studies, good practices, etc.;
- Organizing workshops and training to promote and ensure consistent use of the HLG-MOS standards and models, and related standards such as the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) and the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI);
- Managing the periodic reviews of the standards and models.

46. The “Processes and skills” sub-group will consider the organizational aspects of collaboration. Its responsibilities will include:

- Identifying organizational and other barriers to effective international collaboration, and how to overcome them;

- Reviewing governance models for efficient sharing of common tools, and promoting best practices;
 - Considering the human resources elements of statistical modernization, including skills development and change / risk management;
 - Advising on the effective communication of modernization activities;
 - Promoting the use of the Modernization Maturity Models and Roadmap.
47. The “Sharing tools” sub-group will support and encourage the practical implementation of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), including:
- Coordinating and analyzing the annual survey of investment intentions to identify emerging needs and collaboration opportunities;
 - Assessing the compliance of potential CSPA services, and helping developers to meet requirements;
 - Managing the various layers of the CSPA catalogue, and promoting its use;
 - Considering the application of CSPA principles to other dimensions of capabilities, including methods and algorithms.
48. Various events will be organized during 2017 to support the modernization work programme. These will include a high-level seminar on the process-oriented approach to statistical production, work sessions on data editing and confidentiality, and workshops on topics such as geospatial and statistical standards, dissemination and communication, and implementing CSPA.

V. Capacity building

49. UNECE aims to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems in the 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.
50. These UNECE activities include:
- Global Assessments of national statistical systems;
 - Capacity building workshops;
 - Advisory services to address country-specific needs;
 - Development of methodological guidance, survey tools and training material.
51. Capacity building activities are carried out in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, EFTA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CISSTAT) and other bilateral and multilateral partners.
52. UNECE capacity building activities are based on the findings and recommendations of Global Assessments of national statistical systems of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Global Assessments 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 reports represent a unique tool to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. They 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. Global Assessments have resulted in action plans to improve national statistics in all countries that have asked for a Global Assessment (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine). In 2017, the UNECE will continue with a second round of Global Assessments with the partner organizations Eurostat and EFTA, completing Global Assessments of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

53. In 2014-2017, UNECE is carrying out a United Nations Development Account project to strengthen the capacity of countries for the sustainable development of statistics. The project supports producers of official statistics in eight beneficiary countries³ in addressing statistical gaps in 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 2016. In 2017, UNECE will continue to provide advisory services and organize national and sub-regional workshops and training seminars in several statistical domains. A final workshop to assess progress and determine future priorities will be organized.

54. A new United Nations Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data will get underway in 2017 to support the production of indicators to measure progress towards SDGs. UNECE will be involved in the implementation of the project in six statistical areas: means of implementation (institutional environment), environment, population, gender, poverty, and economic statistics. The Programme will include a range of workshops and other capacity building activities scheduled up to the end of 2019.

55. The Working Group on Statistics of the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia⁴ (SPECA) meets annually to discuss the needs for capacity building and to coordinate donor activities. UNECE will organize the 2017 meeting in cooperation with partner agencies. The meeting will focus on improving capacity to provide the data needed for monitoring progress towards SDGs.

56. The Steering Committee of the multi-Donor Programmatic Trust Fund to Support Statistical Capacity Building in Eastern Europe and CIS Countries (ECASTAT) will finance a UNECE-led capacity building programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The programme, which will run from 2017 to 2020, will consist of a number of regional workshops and other training activities in the areas of national accounts, statistical business registers, prices, migration and remittances statistics. The Programme will also support experts' participation in statistical expert groups meetings.

57. In 2016-2017, UNECE is implementing a Project to Strengthen Statistical Capacity for Producing Comparable and Reliable Poverty Indicators for the monitoring of sustainable development in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. This entails a series of workshops and development of a common approach to poverty measurement in these countries. The project will address specific technical aspects of harmonizing the data collection relevant to poverty in household surveys and the methods of calculating poverty indicators. Furthermore, it will develop a model survey and related technical guidelines for a set of comparable poverty measures in the sub-region.

³ Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

⁴ Member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

VI. UNECE statistical database

58. UNECE provides a statistical database offering a wide range of information on member countries via free on-line interfaces in English and Russian. This work promotes open access to, and use of, data for evidence-based decision making, as requested in the 2030 Development Agenda.

59. 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. Work will be launched to consider how the database can support monitoring of SDGs. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues, and helps identify priorities for UNECE methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries.

60. To reduce response burden on countries, data are collected from, or in cooperation with, other international organizations when this is possible. UNECE has continued its work to streamline the database activities, which has increased efficiency of data collection and facilitated timelier update and release of statistical data series.

61. Work to identify and publish data on progress towards SDGs will be undertaken in 2017, building upon the MDG indicators available in the database, and an assessment of readiness of UNECE countries to provide data on SDG indicators.

62. The database provides the source data for the *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 2017.

63. 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. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

Annex I.

List of meetings from January 2017 to June 2018

<i>Jointly with</i>	<i>Meeting (venue)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Capacity Building</i>
	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	14-15 February 2017	
	Expert Meeting on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (Geneva, Switzerland)	10-12 am April 2017	
UNSD	Workshop on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals	12 pm-13 April 2017	X
Korean Statistical Information Service	High Level Seminar on the Process-oriented Approach to Statistical Production (Seoul, The Republic of Korea)	19-21 April 2017	
	Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (The Hague, Netherlands)	24-26 April 2017	
	National workshop on disseminating, communicating and using gender statistics (Astana, Kazakhstan)	29-31 May 2017	X
Eurostat, OECD	Meeting of the Group of experts on National Accounts: Measuring Global Production (Geneva, Switzerland)	31 May – 2 June 2017	
	65 th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, Switzerland)	19-21 (am) June 2017	
	Workshop on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-30 June 2017	
UNECE Env. Div.	13 th Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	29-30 June 2017	X
	Workshop on Poverty Measurement (venue to be confirmed)	3 July 2017 (tbc)	X
	Workshop on Implementing the Common Statistical Production Architecture (Wiesbaden, Germany)	3-5 July 2017	
	Seminar on Poverty Measurement (venue to be confirmed)	4-5- July 2017 (tbc)	
	Seminar on Leading, Composite and Sentiment Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	6-7 July 2017	
Eurostat	Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality (Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)	20-22 September 2017	
	Workshop on Implementing Efficiencies and Quality of Output (Geneva, Switzerland)	27-29 September 2017	
Eurostat, OECD	Group of Experts on Business Registers (Paris, France)	27-29 September 2017	
	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	2-3 October 2017	X
	Expert Forum on Climate Change-related Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	3-5 October 2017	
Eurostat	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	4-6 October 2017	
Eurostat, ILO	Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment (Geneva, Switzerland)	4-6 October 2017	
	CES Bureau meeting (Yerevan, Armenia)	10-11 October 2017	

	Workshop on Statistical Data Collection (Ottawa, Canada)	10-12 October 2017	
	Workshop and Work Session on Gender Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-20 October 2017	X
	Workshop on Migration Statistics	30-31 am October 2017	X
Eurostat	Work session on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	31 pm October - 2 November 2017	
Env. Progr.	14 th Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	November 2017 (tbc)	
EFTA	13 th SPECA Working Group on Statistics (venue to be confirmed)	November 2017 (tbc)	
UN-GGIM: Europe	Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Standards (Stockholm, Sweden)	6-8 November 2017	
	Workshop on Statistical Modernisation (Geneva, Switzerland)	21-22 November 2017 (tbc)	
	10 th Session of the Working Group on Ageing	23-24 November 2017	
	Workshop on Gender Statistics (Belgrade, Serbia)	27-28 November 2017	X
	Work Session on Gender Statistics (Belgrade, Serbia)	29 November-1 December 2017	
	CES Bureau Meeting (venue to be confirmed)	13-14 February 2018	
	Statistical Modernisation (tbc)	28 February – 2 March 2018	
OECD	Workshop on SEEA Implementation (Geneva, Switzerland) (tbc)	12-13 March 2018	X
OECD	Seminar on SEEA Implementation (Geneva, Switzerland, tbc)	14-15 March 2018	
	Expert Meeting on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (Geneva, Switzerland) (tbc)	17-19 April 2018	
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices (Geneva, Switzerland)	13-15 May 2018	
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	29 May - 1 June 2018	
	66 th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-20 June 2018	
