



Economic Commission for Europe**Conference of European Statisticians****Sixty-eighth plenary session**

Geneva (hybrid meeting), 22 June 2020

Report of the sixty-eighth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians**I. Introduction****A. Attendance**

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its sixty-eighth plenary session on 22 June 2020 as a hybrid meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants attended in person while most attended through remote connection. The meeting was attended by representatives from Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the European Central Bank (ECB), European Commission (Eurostat), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA); United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UN SIAP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS (CIS-Stat), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Statistical Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).



B. Opening and adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/CES/98/Rev.1

3. Ms. M. Bruun, the Chair of CES, chaired the plenary session, which was held as a hybrid meeting on Monday, 22 June. She opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The Conference adopted the provisional agenda (ECE/CES/98/Rev.1). The following agenda items were considered during the hybrid meeting and the decisions taken during the relevant sessions:

Item 1. Opening

Item 2. Globalization and the future of economic statistics

Item 4. New Conference of European Statisticians guidelines and recommendations

Item 5. Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

4. The following agenda items were considered in the informal sessions on 23 and 24 June in English only:

Item 3: Measuring digital transformation

Item 6: New roles for statistical and geospatial agencies in emerging national data ecosystems (joint session with UN-GGIM: Europe)

Item 7. How official statistics can help to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, including providing data for Sustainable Development Goals (joint session with UN-GGIM: Europe)

Item 8. Data stewardship – National Statistical Offices in the changing world (joint session with OECD CSSP)

Item 9. Business continuity of official statistics (joint session with OECD CSSP).

5. The outcome of the deliberations during informal sessions will be summarized in Chair's conclusions.

II. Globalization and the future of economic statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/2020/22, 23, 24, 25

6. The discussion was organized by Canada, Finland and Norway. Mr. G. Axelsen (Norway) chaired the session. The Conference noted that globalisation disrupts the traditional way national statistical offices (NSOs) are producing statistics and calls for more integrated approaches and new collaborative methods between NSOs, international organisations and academia. The current Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated many of the challenges faced in a global economy. New data sources and experimental indicators require efforts to ensure quality and confidentiality.

7. Mr. E. Harris, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, delivered a keynote speech. He stressed the importance of three megatrends: (i) technological innovation; (ii) urbanisation and rising inequalities; and (iii) environmental degradation and climate change. These megatrends both shape globalization and are driven by it. Mr. Harris suggested a holistic and integrated approach requiring a broader set of metrics to provide an assessment of developments across the three pillars of sustainable development: economy, society and environment. He called for integration of different statistical registers to provide a critical infrastructure to address issues at granular geographic levels. He also welcomed the new business models that statistical offices have adopted in response to Covid-19 pandemic for producing more timely and experimental statistics based on new data sources and partnerships.

8. Mr. É. Saint-Pierre (Canada) presented an update of the work of the Friends of the Chair on Economic Statistics. An assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of the current the system of economic statistics, including its governance and

infrastructure, were carried out. To make the system more responsive and agile, a number of improvements were identified. The reaction of the statistical system during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated relevance, responsiveness and resilience that can serve to further improve the system.

9. The participants agreed that the Conference can play an important role in:
 - (a) Identifying key areas where progress is crucial and develop relevant methodological guidance, recommendations and tools to support international comparability (e.g. use of new data sources, sharing of economic data, statistical legislation);
 - (b) Strengthening the network of experts on multinational enterprises (MNEs) and Large Cases Units (LCUs) through the CES Group of Experts on national accounts;
 - (c) Identifying issues emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and embedding them in the work of the expert groups;
 - (d) Facilitating sharing of experience and good practices through meetings and seminars, including in virtual format.

III. New Conference of European Statisticians guidelines and recommendations

Documentation: ECE/CES/2020/2, 2/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/4, 4/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/5, 5/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/6, 6/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/7, 7/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/8, 8/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/9, 9/Add.1; ECE/CES/2020/17/Add.1-2; ECE/CES/2020/19-21

10. The Conference endorsed the following documents subject to the amendments presented in the summaries of electronic consultations:

- (a) *Guide to sharing economic data;*
- (b) *Updated set of core climate change-related indicators and statistics using SEEA, its implementation guidelines and indicator metadata sheets;*
- (c) *Poverty measurement: Guide to data disaggregation;*
- (d) *Guidance for measuring intra-household power and decision-making;*
- (e) *Guidance on communicating gender statistics;*
- (f) *Guidance on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics;*
- (g) *New frontiers for censuses beyond 2020;*
- (h) *Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), version 1.2.*

11. The Conference encouraged countries to implement the materials listed above, supported the directions for future work identified in the guides, and asked the CES Bureau to consider how to implement the proposals for future work.

12. Furthermore, the Conference endorsed the outcomes of the in-depth reviews on:
 - (a) International migration and cross-border mobility (ECE/CES/2020/19);
 - (b) Measuring well-being in the era of the “digital society”: implications for official statistics (ECE/CES/2020/20);
 - (c) Role of the statistical community in climate action (ECE/CES/2020/21).
13. The Conference took note of the topics for the upcoming in-depth reviews:
 - (a) Measuring circular economy (paper by Finland et al., October 2020);
 - (b) New forms of employment (Canada, February 2021);
 - (c) Subjective poverty measures (lead country to be confirmed, February 2021).

IV. Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for 2020 and 2021

Documentation: ECE/CES/2020/13, 14-16 and 16/Add.1

14. The Conference approved the report on the implementation of the 2019 UNECE Statistical Programme (ECE/CES/2020/14) and adopted the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2020 (ECE/CES/2020/15), and the Programme of Work for 2021 (ECE/CES/2020/16), including the list of planned publications and meetings (ECE/CES/2020/16/Add.1).

15. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating into English, French and Russian the main documents for the CES plenary session and the expert meetings under the Conference's work programme from July 2020 to the end of 2021 in the areas of environment and multi-domain statistics, demographic and social statistics, economic statistics, and statistical modernization.

16. The Conference took note of the creation of the Regional UN Coordination Group for Data and Statistics in Europe and Central Asia (ECE/CES/2020/13) and looks forward to receiving annual reports of its work.

17. The sixty-ninth CES plenary session is planned to take place on 23-25 a.m. June 2021 in Paris, back-to-back with the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy.
