



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CES/67
10 March 2005

Original: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-third plenary session
(Geneva, 13-15 June 2005)

Annotated provisional agenda of the 2005 plenary session

The 53rd Plenary Session will be held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, from Monday, 13 June until Wednesday, 15 June 2005. The meeting will commence at 9:30 on Monday, 13 June and will adjourn at 12:30 on Wednesday, 15 June.

Delegates should arrive at the Villa Les Feuillantines no later than 8:00 on Monday, 13 June to allow time for security clearance and registration. More general information is given in document CES/2005/INF.1. Documents for the meeting, maps of Geneva, lists of hotels and restaurants, and information for visitors to the Palais des Nations are available on the UNECE website for the meeting at:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2005.06.ces.htm>

Introduction

1. The 2005 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) will continue to follow the format introduced in 2002 by the 50th CES. The plenary session includes a formal session and two seminars. The formal session will deal with the review of general issues such as the international statistical work in the region, while the two seminars will focus on foundational issues of statistical systems and on new emerging issues. The following topics were selected by members of the Conference in June 2004 for the two seminar sessions in 2005: Improved Data Reporting and Measurement of Sustainable Development.

2. An annotated provisional agenda and a tentative timetable for the 2005 plenary session are presented below. All the documents for the meeting will be distributed in the usual way, but they will also be posted on the UNECE Statistical Division's website as they become available.

Provisional agenda and tentative timetable

Time	Item	Topic	Document
Monday, 13 June (9:30-12:30 and 14:30-17:30)			
9:30-9:45	1	OPENING ADDRESSES and ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	ECE/CES/67
9:45-9:55	2	MEETINGS OF THE PARENT BODIES OF THE CES – The February 2005 session of the ECE	CES/2005/1
9:55-10:00	8	Announcement on the election of the Bureau	CES/2005/2
10:00-17:30		FIRST SEMINAR SESSION ON FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS	
10:00-10:05 10:05-11:05 11:05-11:25 11:25-12:30	3	Seminar on “IMPROVED DATA REPORTING” Introductory comments by the Chairman: Katherine Wallman (United States) Session I: Using the Internet for business surveys Session organizer: Finland, Discussant: Ivan Fellegi (Canada) Invited papers: <i>Using the Web in collecting data for business statistics</i> (Finland) <i>Web-based Surveys at Statistics Austria: Issues, Decisions, and Solutions</i> (Austria) <i>The Security Model for Electronic Data Reporting</i> (Canada) General discussion <i>Coffee/tea break</i> Session II: Using the Internet for population censuses and surveys Session organizer: Canada, Discussant: Werner Haug (Switzerland) Invited papers: Canada Australia <i>Using Both Internet and Field Collection Methods for the 2006 Population Census</i> (New Zealand) General discussion	CES/2005/8 to CES/2005/19

Time	Item	Topic	Document
12:30-14:30		LUNCH	
14:30-15:45	3	Seminar on “IMPROVED DATA REPORTING” (cont.) Session III: Cognitive and usability testing and marketing in support of Internet reporting Session organizer: United Kingdom, Discussant: Heli Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland) Invited papers: <i>Usability and Accessibility Testing in Support of Internet Reporting</i> (United States) <i>Web versus Paper Questionnaires: A Design Comparison</i> (United Kingdom) <i>The Annual Business Inquiry</i> (Netherlands) General discussion <i>Coffee/tea break</i>	
15:45-16:05		Session IV: Reducing respondent burden through improved data reporting Session organizer: Sweden, Discussant: Milva Ekonomi (Albania) Invited papers: <i>Users' Needs versus Response Burden: How to Maintain the Balance?</i> (Lithuania) <i>Reducing Respondent Burden</i> (Australia) <i>Common Online Raw Data Entry Project: Electronic Data Reporting from German Enterprise Resource Planning Software</i> (Germany)	
16:05-17:20		General discussion Concluding remarks by the Chairman of the Seminar	
17:20-17:30			
Tuesday, 14 June (9:30-12:30 and 14:30-17:30)			
9:30-17:30		SECOND SEMINAR SESSION ON NEW EMERGING ISSUES	
9:30-9:40	4	Seminar on “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” Introductory comments by the Chairman: Svante Öberg (Sweden)	CES/2005/20 to CES/2005/27
9:40-10:10		Keynote speech by Svend Auken, Denmark	
10:10-11:10		Session I: The role of official statistics Session organizer: Dennis Trewin (ABS), Discussant: Heinrich Brünger (UNECE) Invited papers: Sweden Eurostat General discussion <i>Coffee/tea break</i>	
11:10-11:30		Session II: Frameworks and analytical tools Session organizer: Svante Öberg (Sweden), Discussant: Jarig van Sinderen, (Netherlands)	
11:30-12:30		Invited papers: Estonia Canada General discussion	

Time	Item	Topic	Document
12:30-14:30		LUNCH	
14:30-15:30	4	Seminar on "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT" (cont.) Session III: Case studies Session organizer: Vladimir Sokolin (Russia), Discussant: Walter Radermacher, (Germany) Invited papers: Switzerland Spain General discussion	
15:30-15:50		Coffee/tea break	
15:50-17:20		Session IV: Future needs and recommendations Session organizer: Ivan Fellegi (Canada), Discussant: Laurs Norlund (Eurostat) Invited papers: UK OECD General discussion	
17:20-17:30		Concluding remarks by the Chairman of the Seminar	
Wednesday, 15 June (9:30-12:30)			
9:30-12:30		FORMAL BUSINESS	
9:30-9:35 9:35-10:00 10:00-10:40 10:40-11:00	5	INTEGRATED PRESENTATION AND COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK IN THE ECE REGION Chairman's introductory comments Integrated Presentation: coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – issues and problems and Rapporteur Reports – revision of classification systems used in transport statistics – topics for in-depth review by the CES Bureau in February 2006 – UNECE Statistical Programme: report on 2004 and plans for 2005 – information on joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics Migration statistics: issues and problems Coffee/tea break	CES/2005/3 CES/2005/6 CES/2005/4
11:00-11:40	6	CONFIDENTIALITY AND MICRODATA: DRAFT GUIDELINES	CES/2005/5
11:40-11:50	7	SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR SEMINARS TO TAKE PLACE DURING THE NEXT PLENARY SESSION	CES/2005/7
11:50-12:00	8	ELECTION OF THE BUREAU; RULES GOVERNING THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU	
12:00-12:30	9	ADOPTION OF THE REPORT	Draft report

Explanatory notes to the agenda

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

3. The proposed provisional agenda and timetable were agreed upon by the CES Bureau at its February 2005 meeting. The provisional agenda and timetable are presented for the approval of the Conference.

Item 2: Meetings of the parent bodies of the CES: the February 2005 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

4. Information on the discussions held at the February 2005 session of the Economic Commission for Europe and on resolutions and decisions taken that have a bearing on the work of the Conference will be presented in **CES/2005/1**.

Item 3: Seminar on Improved Data Reporting: lead organiser United States

5. The seminar will be chaired by Katherine Wallman, United States. Other members of the organising committee are Finland, Canada, United Kingdom and Sweden.

Session I: Using the Internet for business surveys

Session Organiser: Finland, Discussant: Ivan Fellegi (Canada)

Invited papers by Austria, Canada and Finland

6. This session will cover the following issues: For which types of surveys does the Internet reporting option provide the most benefit for the statistical agency or respondent? What are the infrastructure requirements and associated costs to support a shift to Internet reporting? Are there net cost savings? At what point do cost savings begin to occur? What are the challenges agencies face when offering electronic reporting for surveys? What is the impact on response by client group? What is the impact on timeliness of filing and data release and on data quality? What is the desirable level of security protection for Internet business surveys?

Session II: Using the Internet for population censuses and surveys

Session Organiser: Canada, Discussant: Werner Haug (Switzerland)

Invited papers by Australia, Canada, New Zealand

7. This session will cover the following issues: Does the Internet reporting option provide benefits for conducting population censuses and surveys? Does it improve coverage? How does this compare to its use for business surveys? What is the impact on response by client group? On timeliness of filing and data release? How does this compare to the use of Internet reporting for business surveys? Can response be predicted and possibly influenced? What communications and incentives strategies can encourage Internet instead of paper form response? What are potential options for engaging youth (a group with disproportionately high undercoverage in many countries) to utilize the Internet response option? What are the infrastructure requirements and associated costs to support a shift to Internet reporting for population censuses and surveys, and how can they be planned for and controlled? Are there net cost savings? What are the challenges agencies face when offering electronic reporting for population censuses and surveys? How can confidentiality be ensured? How can NSOs best manage the multi-modal nature of censuses that include an

Internet response option? What is the impact on data quality, including reliably linking electronic responses to the real addresses where people live?

Session III: Cognitive and usability testing and marketing in support of Internet reporting

Session Organiser: United Kingdom, Discussant: Heli Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland)

Invited papers by the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States

8. This session will cover the following issues: How does questionnaire design vary for electronic vs. paper reporting? Is length an issue? Complexity? What are the key research findings regarding questionnaire design for electronic data reporting? What are best practices for working with potential respondents when developing Internet surveys, including developing and testing questionnaires? How can Internet response be encouraged through marketing, advance contact, and other methods, and how does this vary for censuses and surveys? What are the data integrity and security issues and how are these and their associated perceptions addressed in censuses and surveys?

Session IV: Reducing respondent burden through improved data reporting

Session Organiser: Sweden, Discussant: Milva Ekonomi (Albania)

Invited papers by Australia, Germany, Lithuania

9. This session will cover the following issues: What is the real cost of respondent burden? What are the legal and political mandates for burden reduction? How can the use and integration of administrative data reduce respondent burden? What are the issues related to working with administrative agencies in sharing data? How can increased cooperation with businesses reduce burden? How is data quality affected by reducing respondent burden? What actual burden reductions and cost reductions have occurred through increased use of administrative records?

Item 4: Seminar on Measurement of Sustainable Development: lead organiser Statistics Sweden

10. The seminar will be chaired by Svante Öberg (Statistics Sweden). Other members of the organising committee are Canada, Estonia, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Eurostat, OECD, UNECE and UNSD.

11. Sustainable development was accepted as a priority principle for future work of the UN at the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002. Several countries have implemented Sustainable Development Strategies, and the work with measurement and Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) has become an important tool to follow up the strategies, as well as for policy decisions. SDIs involve data from the environment, economic and social dimensions. The use of indicators depends on the availability of high quality data, which is an important issue to address. Furthermore, the clarification of the role of statistical offices is important. Another output from the seminar is to clarify the future needs and recommendations for further work.

Session I: The role of official statistics

Session Chair: Dennis Trewin (Australia), Discussant: Heinrich Brünger (UNECE)

Invited papers by Sweden and Eurostat.

12. This session will discuss the role of official statistics in the work on SDI. Official statistics should take the lead in this work. SDI presupposes long-term time series and continuity - which

are key tasks for the statistical system. High quality data on SDI should be provided. The work also requires integration between the three dimensions of sustainable development: ecological, economic and social. Ultimately, the countries should profit by having the bulk of statistical data within their respective statistical organizations. Among other issues that must be addressed are questions of financing the production of SDI, as well as integrating other sources external to official statistics.

Session II: Frameworks and analytical tools

Session Chair: Svante Öberg (Sweden), Discussant: Jarig van Sinderen (Netherlands)

Invited papers by Canada and Estonia

13. Conceptual frameworks are central to measuring sustainable development, since they define the scope and object of measurement. Without agreement on frameworks, countries may head in divergent directions with their measurement efforts.

14. A great number of SDI sets include many indicators, which makes these sets difficult to handle. In particular, decision-makers need a small number of indicators to be able to follow the development. GDP is a well-known aggregated economic indicator, which has become one of the most important economic indicators. There are also examples of aggregated measurements in the social area (welfare indices) as well as in the environmental field (the ecological footprint). The demand for a small number of indicators could motivate aggregated indicators. However, the question of feasibility of an aggregated measurement must be addressed.

Session III: Case studies

Session Chair: Vladimir Sokolin (Russia), Discussant: Walter Radermacher (Germany)

Invited papers by Spain and Switzerland

15. One of the main issues for the work with SDI is how to integrate the ecological, economic and social dimensions. An example of this can be found within integrated frameworks or decoupling indicators. Countries will present their different frameworks and the various processes by which the sets of indicators are selected. Some countries have based the indicators on the main goals of their national strategies for sustainable development. So far, work on SDI has mainly involved environmental experts, while interest has been limited among social and economic statisticians. Concerted action is needed to create a better balance between the three dimensions within the official statistics.

Session IV: Future needs and recommendations

Session Chair: Ivan Fellegi (Canada), Discussant: Laurs Norlund (Eurostat)

Invited papers by United Kingdom and OECD

16. Recommendations for future work will be discussed. In the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, areas like global partnership, good governance and production and consumption patterns were highlighted as important for future work. These areas, as well as the environmental area, may need other types of data and new statistics. The promotion of new statistics in the light of limited resources and the need for reduced response burden is essential. Another issue connected with future work is to engage countries that have not yet built up a system of measurement for sustainable development. Support should be provided to these countries to build up a SDI System. It is expected that the Conference will make concrete recommendations and proposals for the future international statistical work on sustainable development.

Item 5: Integrated presentation and coordination of international statistical work in the ECE region

17. This agenda item is concerned with issues affecting the coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region and with decisions and recommendations that the Conference is expected to take on the Integrated Presentation of international statistical work programmes (which also incorporates the UNECE Statistical Programme). The statistical work undertaken by the other UN Regional Commissions will be distributed for information in a separate document.

18. The UNECE secretariat will inform the meeting about some recent developments with the Integrated Presentation database, preparation of the Rapporteur reports and consideration of the issues and problems of international statistical work (**CES/2005/3**).

19. Under this agenda item, the document "Revision of classification systems used in transport statistics" is presented to the CES for endorsement (**TRANS/WP.6/2004/1/Rev.1**). The document is a result of four years work by the experts and has been adopted by the UNECE Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) and by the Inland Transport Committee.

20. Each February, the CES Bureau reviews the issues and problems in selected statistical areas, based on reports prepared by designated Rapporteurs. In order to select the statistical areas to be reviewed in-depth in February 2006, the UNECE secretariat will carry out a small survey at the CES 2005 plenary session (**CES/2005/6**). The Heads of the national and international statistical agencies will be asked to identify areas where they believe the most acute problems exist, requiring the attention of the top management of national and international statistical agencies (e.g. emerging issues, important areas that are neglected, insufficient progress, duplication of work, lack of cooperation between international organizations, etc.). The aim of the in-depth review by the Bureau is to make recommendations on how to solve the problems and to improve work in the selected domains.

21. The Conference will be informed about plans to organise a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics in September 2005, back-to-back with the EU annual Directors of Social Statistics meeting.

22. A short report on the work done by the UNECE Statistical Division will be presented for information. In addition, the reports of the various meetings organized by the UNECE secretariat in fulfillment of the work programme of the Conference since June 2004 are also distributed for information.

23. The Conference will consider migration statistics based on a Rapporteur Report prepared by the United States (**CES/2005/4**). The CES Bureau selected this topic for in-depth discussion at the CES 2005 plenary session at its meeting on 10-11 February 2005. The paper reviews international work in migration statistics in the ECE region and identifies issues and problems. The aim of the discussion is to find a way to resolve the identified problems in order to improve the quality of migration statistics.

Item 6: Confidentiality and microdata: draft Guidelines

24. As a follow-up to the Seminar on Confidentiality and Microdata in 2003, a Task Force chaired by Dennis Trewin is developing agreed international principles on the provision of access to microdata. A progress report of the work was considered at the CES 2004 plenary session. The draft Guidelines on Confidentiality and Access to Microdata are being prepared, taking into account the input from countries and discussions at different forums. The second round of the discussion on the Guidelines at the CES plenary session will allow countries to comment on the text before it is submitted for final approval to the CES Bureau in October 2005. The Guidelines are planned to be endorsed by the CES 2006 plenary session.

Item 7: Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the next plenary session

25. A list of possible topics for seminars to take place during the 2006 plenary session will be distributed by the ECE secretariat in advance of the plenary session to consult the CES member countries. The Bureau will submit a proposal for discussion and approval by the Conference.

Item 8: Election of the Bureau, rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau

26. The current term of all members of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians expires at the closing of the 2005 plenary session, on 15 June 2005. At the 2005 plenary session, therefore, elections for a Chair and for Vice-Chairs will be held for the two-year period June 2005 to June 2007.

27. The elections of the Bureau are governed by the rules adopted by the Conference at its 1991 plenary session (with minor amendments in 2003 and 2004). When elections are held, the ECE secretariat prepares a note explaining the procedure, which is distributed to the Conference members in advance. For many years, the note has included two annexes: annex 1 contains an excerpt from the report of the 1991 plenary session, paras. 97 to 99 of the report on "Future role and functioning of the Bureau of the Conference"; and annex 2 represents the annex II to the 1991 report, entitled "Report on structure and relations".

28. A consolidated document that describes the rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau has been prepared rather than referring to excerpts from previous reports. The Bureau has agreed on the text of the document that is presented to the Conference for endorsement (CES/2005/2).

Item 9: Adoption of the report

29. The Conference is expected to adopt the report of the 2005 plenary session before it adjourns. The report will be short and will be limited as far as possible to decisions taken by the Conference during the course of the plenary session. The final report of the plenary session will be produced within two weeks or so after the plenary session and will be made available on the ECE Web site.

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