

## CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

First meeting of the 2002/2003 Bureau  
(Oslo (Norway), 17-18 October 2002)

### REPORT OF 17-18 OCTOBER 2002 MEETING

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The first meeting of the 2002/2003 Bureau was held in Oslo from 17-18 October 2002. The following members of the Bureau attended: Svein Longva (Chair), Hallgrímur Snorrason, Vladimir Sokolin and Tadeusz Toczyński. Kathrine Wallman was unable to attend the meeting but participated in the discussions on agenda items 4 and 10 via a teleconference. She also sent to the Bureau recent comments for each agenda item. The following permanent participants also attended: Yves Franchet, Enrico Giovannini and Heinrich Brügger. The UNSD was represented by Willem de Vries. Mikhail Korolev of CIS-STAT attended at the invitation of the Bureau. Carol Carlson of IMF was unable to attend the meeting but followed the discussion on agenda item 4 via a teleconference. The following persons assisted members of the Bureau: Björg Moen, Jan Byfuglien and Olav Ljones of Statistics Norway, Maria Helena Figueira of Eurostat, Janice Owens of OECD and Andrey Kosarev of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Russian Federation. Lidia Bratanova of UNECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ECE STATISTICAL DIVISION

2. Svein Longva welcomed Heinrich Brügger as the new Director of the UNECE Statistical Division. He noted that this is an interesting time for the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau in view of the EU enlargement. The EU enlargement requires that the Conference change the way it works. Many of the Candidate Countries' experts already participate in the Eurostat Working Parties. It was suggested that the ECE secretariat prepare a paper, in consultation with Eurostat and OECD, on the consequences for the Conference of the enlargement, to be considered by the Bureau at its February 2003 meeting (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

3. The Bureau was informed about staff developments in the Division and the new changes in priorities as set up by New York. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare a note on its activities for consideration by the Bureau at its February meeting (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

#### INFORMATION ITEMS BY MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

4. Willem de Vries informed the Bureau about the outcome of the latest meeting of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) held on 15-16 October in Paris. The main item on the agenda was to develop a plan for revision of 1993 SNA. The Group looked at various options. It was agreed not to launch a new revision but rather to deal with a number of methodological issues through the various EDGs and discussions at expert meetings and to try to finalise a revised version of 1993 SNA by 2008. The proposal, including the list of issues to be reviewed, will be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Statistical Commission in March 2003.

5. The ISWGNA also discussed the creation of an Advisory Group, as requested by the Statistical Commission, to guide the revision process. The Group agreed on a list of 15 persons who will participate in their personal capacity. The geographical distribution is taken into account.

6. The Bureau was also informed of the progress made with the SEEA Handbook. The Statistical Commission asked the Group of friends of the Chair, lead by Svein Longva, to look at the Handbook. Afterwards, Statistics Canada was asked to edit it. The final text, of about 700 pages, is available on a CD-ROM and will be sent to the five organisations involved in its preparation for final review. The final text will soon be posted on the web and the UNSD will proceed with its publication.

7. Enrico Giovannini informed the Bureau of recent plans to reorganise the OECD Statistics Directorate. The Division on Non-Member Countries will be suppressed and a new Division created. The Statistics Directorate is also facing some financial difficulties. This will affect the work with the CIS countries and some transition countries (e.g. the projects with the Baltic states will be cancelled). The Directorate will focus its work with non-member countries on six countries: Russia, China, India, South Africa, Indonesia and Brazil. Some work will be still undertaken with the Balkan countries in the area of national accounts and PPPs.

8. The Bureau expressed satisfaction with the work on the SEEA Handbook. It is expected that the printed version will be available for the SC in March. The Bureau noted that the way the ISWGNA had decided to deal with the revision of 1993 SNA was reasonable. The Bureau asked the UNSD to circulate the list of issues that will be reviewed in the revision process (**action by UNSD**).

9. The Bureau also noted that the changes that will take place in OECD Statistics Directorate might have implications on some planned joint work.

#### **OUTCOME OF THE 50TH CES PLENARY SESSION**

10. The Bureau noted that the 50th plenary session was successful in managing to discuss important issues and at the same time to maintain a certain air of celebration. However, the results of this discussion will only be evident in the coming years. The general participation of Heads of Offices was higher than usual and it is important that in future the Conference maintains an active audience. In this regard, the Fellegi/Franchet paper greatly contributed in launching the discussion. The Bureau thanked the two authors for their contribution.

11. Eurostat noted that the Conference had always played a leading role in statistics since 50 years and that this should continue in future. In this regard, the Report of the Conference (para.19) was mentioned, which draws the attention of the Conference to the need for better coordination of statistical data collection among various international organisations, improved efficiency of data collection and decreased reporting burden. In this context, OECD informed the Bureau of a recent initiative to experiment data sharing models in the area of national accounts using a standard codification system. Five countries volunteered to participate in the experiment. UNSD supported the initiative and expressed interest in cooperation.

## **FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BUREAU AND THE CONFERENCE**

12. The basis for discussion under this agenda item was a note prepared by the ECE secretariat proposing a format for monitoring on decisions taken and recommendations made by the Bureau and the Conference and, more importantly, on their implementation. It is expected that a certain format for internal monitoring will facilitate the work of both the Bureau and the ECE secretariat.

13. The Bureau reviewed the decisions taken at its February meeting and by the Conference at its June session as presented in the ECE note (doc. CES/BUR.2002/2).

### **Decisions taken under PE 1.1. Promotion and coordination of multilateral statistical work, PE 3.8, Other marketed services and non-marketed services, 3.9 Price statistics and PE4.7b Social security statistics**

14. The Bureau decided to review these decisions in February 2003 in the context of the review of the Integrated Presentation.

#### **PE 5.1 Sectoral concepts, definitions, classifications and environmental databases**

15. In February 2002, the Bureau asked OECD and Eurostat to consider the possibility of preparing a document to identify the various institutions collecting environment data in order to control the requests for environment data to countries. The Bureau was informed that no work had been undertaken by the two organisations. However, as there is a problem with collecting environment statistics, the Bureau agreed to come back to the issue at a future meeting.

16. The UNSD informed the Bureau that a paper dealing with environment statistics was under preparation for the Statistical Commission. It was suggested that Eurostat and OECD use the paper as a starting point for further work (**action by Eurostat and OECD**).

17. The Bureau also asked Statistics Norway to prepare a note on its national experience in dealing with requests coming from various IOs for future discussions by the Bureau (**action by Statistics Norway and ECE secretariat**).

#### **PE 5.2, Environmental accounting**

18. OECD informed the Bureau of recent work related to the implementation of statistics for measuring sustainable development. A paper on indicators for sustainable development was prepared with support from Statistics Norway. An issue paper on accounting frameworks for evaluating sustainable development policies is under preparation together with Statistics Netherlands for a workshop to be held in March 2003, in which countries will be invited to present their national experiences in this field.

19. Eurostat informed the Bureau that one of the conclusions of the last SPC meeting was that the Director General of Eurostat would write a letter to the UNSD to request the creation of an Intersecretariat Group on Sustainable Development Statistics to coordinate the activities of the different international organisations such as OECD, UN and European Environment.

### **P.E. 2.1 Management of information technology**

20. The Bureau was informed by the ECE secretariat that since June 2002 a lot of material had been loaded on the website on Best IT Practices in Statistical Offices hosted by OECD. The website will be regularly discussed at the annual ECE-Eurostat-OECD Meetings on Management of Statistical Information Systems. In the interim period a Steering Group set up by the three organizations will follow the website's development and updating.

21. OECD noted that it is important to involve top managers in the national offices to contribute to the website. The Bureau agreed that a joint letter on behalf of the three secretariats be sent to Heads of Offices (**action by ECE, Eurostat and OECD**).

22. Eurostat noted that NSOs develop IT technologies that are often unknown to the IOs. The Conference could play a role in this regard and look at case studies and papers in order to draw the attention of the Conference to the issue. It was suggested that the topic of IT management be considered for the seminar part of the Conference in 2004.

23. The Bureau decided to come back to the issue at its February 2003 meeting. The Bureau asked the Steering Group to approach the NSOs, collect information on the development of IT technologies and produce a paper for the Bureau. This paper should be less technical and should focus on more political issues (**action by ECE**).

### **P.E. 2.2 Statistical data collection and processing**

24. The Bureau agreed that the coordination of statistical data collection among various international organisations has to be strengthened at the technical and managerial levels. Transmission of data to international organisations has to become an integrated part of countries' dissemination programmes. The Bureau also agreed that Eurostat and OECD prepare a joint paper on data collection related to the SDMX<sup>1</sup> (Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange) initiative for consideration by the Bureau at its February 2003 meeting and for possible further discussion at the June 2003 plenary session (**action by ECE, Eurostat and OECD**).

25. The Bureau was informed by the ECE secretariat of the creation of a Task Force composed of representatives of ECE, Eurostat and OECD to follow up on the decisions taken at the 2002 plenary session. In June, the Conference asked the IOs to investigate the possibility of developing a common system (portal) for monitoring data collection activities by IOs. The Task Force will come up with a proposal for an action plan to be presented at the February 2003 ECE-Eurostat-OECD Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems. The Bureau agreed that, based on the results of the February meeting, an issue paper could be considered for possible discussion at the 2004 Conference (**action by ECE**).

### **Decisions not related to specific Programme Elements**

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<sup>1</sup> SDMX is a joint initiative by BIS, ECB, EUROSTAT, IMF, OECD and UN. The goal of SDMX is to establish open standards for collecting and disseminating statistical data and metadata by electronic means.

26. In June, the Conference discussed the possibility for organizing an additional module during the seminar part dealing with the interaction between international organizations. The Bureau decided not to have a fourth module at the forthcoming Conference in June 2003.
27. Also in June, the Conference discussed the possibility of regular discussion devoted to the work of international organisations and their strategies. Some countries feel that they cannot comment on the policies of some international organisations such as IMF, WB and ILO as they do not have Statistical Committees. Therefore, there is certain interest in discussing the strategies of these IOs.
28. The Bureau decided to continue discussing the possibility of holding debates at the Conference on the strategies of some IOs. In this context, the Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to invite the IOs to contribute information on their strategies for circulation at the Conference (**action by the ECE secretariat**).
29. The Bureau briefly discussed the recommendation of the last Conference to reconsider its leading role in strengthening official statistics outside the European region. The exchange of information and knowledge between Regional Commissions and Committees of Statistics could enhance support for official statistics in the less advantaged regions. The Bureau agreed that the ECE secretariat invite other Regional Commissions to contribute information on their planned future work, to be distributed as background information at future plenary sessions of the Conference. Another possibility is to present the information as an annex to the Conference's Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work (**action by the ECE secretariat**).
30. OECD proposed that the PARIS 21 group should also prepare an information note on its statistical activities (**action by OECD**).
31. The Bureau commended the ECE secretariat for preparing a very useful document on follow-up to decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference. The Bureau agreed that a similar document be prepared for each future Bureau meeting. The note will be helpful for monitoring the implementation of decisions taken by it and the Conference. The Bureau also considered the possibility that a similar note be made available as a document for the CES plenary sessions. It was also suggested that the document include information on outputs/accomplishments and on the outcomes/results of the meetings that have been held by the secretariat and the implications for holding additional meetings on the various topics (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

#### **PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEMINAR SESSIONS AT THE 2003 PLENARY SESSION**

32. The ECE secretariat informed the Bureau of the consultations carried out to select the two topics for the seminar part of the Conference in 2003. The secretariat consulted all participants when finalising the list of possible topics. The Bureau, as mandated by the Conference, after some consultations selected two topics: (i) Challenges for traditional approaches to confidentiality protection over the next ten years for the first seminar session; and (ii) Globalisation: record keeping of multinational enterprises, FDI vs. exports for the second seminar session. Statistics Sweden and Statistics Canada were invited to be respectively the lead countries for the two sessions. Both offices contributed short outlines for the organisation of their sessions for consideration by the Bureau. IMF also contributed a note with possible topics for the session on Globalisation.

33. The Bureau noted that, during the consultations for selecting the topics, several issues emerged. Firstly, that transition countries are practically interested in every topic, even if the topic is not a priority for them at the moment. It will be extremely useful for them to listen to discussion on new emerging issues in order to better understand what they will confront in the future. Secondly, transition economies should be represented and contribute to topics where they have some interesting experience on which to report. Thirdly, that countries that are not ECE members but that regularly participate in the Conference sessions, such as Australia, Japan and others, be also considered as possible members of the organising committees and active contributors to the seminar sessions.

34. Michael Korolev noted that in view of the fact that transition economies are interested in all topics, the Bureau should consider to reformulate the first session of the seminar part. The Bureau agreed that the first session should refer to topics of interest to both transition and developed statistical systems.

a) Challenges for traditional approaches to confidentiality protection over the next years

35. The Bureau reviewed the short outline for organising the session prepared by Statistics Sweden. It was noted that the topic is of special interest to most transition economies and more particularly to the Russian Federation, which is working on a new statistical law. Vladimir Sokolin noted that Russia will participate actively in the discussion. He proposed that confidentiality be also discussed from the point of view of the users.

36. The Bureau agreed with the four sessions as proposed by Statistics Sweden as well as with the idea of how to organise the separate sessions. The Bureau members made the following comments:

- Support for the session on general overview; proposal for a general overview of using the microdata from different user perspectives;
- Use of microdata: a lot of meetings have been held to discuss access of users to microdata; therefore, the use of microdata should be discussed in a manner which is of interest to Heads of Offices, to include issues such as: legal aspects (the threat of confidentiality legislation by other legislation); what should be protected by confidentiality legislation; perception of statistical confidentiality with respondents; involvement of statistical offices in maintaining the registers;
- The title of the session should be considered – one proposal is: Access to microdata: problems and solutions;
- Some doubts were expressed concerning the proposed invitation of a Nobel Prize winner;
- The sessions should avoid technical discussions;
- The following issues were also proposed for possible discussion: do we want to have the same confidentiality rules for natural persons and enterprises; transparency of markets versus confidentiality; confidentiality across countries, mainly in Europe but also globally; role of NSOs in checking the behaviour of other public bodies in dealing with confidential data for statistical purposes.

37. The Bureau agreed to devote one full day session to the issue of confidentiality. The scope of the discussion should be broadened and technical discussions avoided. The session should focus on strategic and management issues. The Bureau decided that Russia, UK, USA and ECE secretariat be members of the organising committee and assist Statistics Sweden in organising the session. Eurostat was invited to contribute a paper based on recent legislation adopted by the EU. It was also suggested that the ECE secretariat consult member countries and ask them to send a paragraph or two about their concerns with confidentiality of data. This kind of information can help the organisers to focus the discussion. In this

context, recent work done by ECE on publishing proceedings from joint ECE/Eurostat meetings to deal with confidentiality issues was mentioned (**action by Statistics Sweden, ECE and Eurostat**).

38. The Bureau decided to ask Statistics Sweden to start the preparations for the session in cooperation with the other committee members. Statistics Sweden will be invited to attend the Bureau meeting in February 2003.

b) Globalisation: record keeping of multinational enterprises, FDI vs. exports

39. The Bureau reviewed the organization of the session on the basis of the outline prepared by Statistics Canada and the note with possible topics submitted by IMF. The Bureau agreed with the outline of the session as described by Statistics Canada. The Bureau also welcomed the issues proposed in the IMF note. The following comments were made:

- IMF as a global organization could identify issues of global interest;
- Member countries should be involved in the discussion and should be contributing;
- Some concern was expressed as to whether the discussion on item (i) Globalisation questions that users of statistics want answers to, would be of enough interest to heads of offices, so as to have one session on this subject;
- The discussion envisaged under the third bullet of item (ii) Implications for the national enterprise: establishment business model - should be well defined;
- It was suggested that a paper be considered linking the topic of confidentiality with the issue of globalisation.

40. Eurostat informed the Bureau of a CEIES<sup>2</sup> seminar on globalisation being planned for 19-20 June 2003. The seminar will gather together business people and economists. In view of the fact that the Conference will also discuss globalisation, Eurostat will try to reschedule the seminar for earlier dates, so that its outcome is brought as an input to the discussion at the Conference on 10-12 June 2003 (**action by Eurostat**). The Bureau agreed that, if rescheduling is successful, a member of the CEIES be invited to report to the Conference in June 2003 (**action by ECE**).

41. Eurostat also expressed interest in contributing a paper/s to the session on globalisation (**action by Statistics Canada, ECE and Eurostat**).

42. OECD informed the Bureau about the OECD Handbook on globalisation. It was proposed that the Handbook be circulated in advance to ECE member countries for information and in preparation for the discussion at the Conference (**action by OECD and ECE**).

43. The Bureau agreed that Statistics Canada, Poland and IMF be members of the organising committee for the session on globalisation. It was also agreed to invite INSEE of France to contribute to the work of the committee and to share its experience from a European perspective (**action by Eurostat**). The Bureau asked Statistics Canada to proceed with the organisation of the session in cooperation with the other members of the committee. Statistics Canada will be invited to attend the Bureau meeting in February 2003 (**action by Statistics Canada and ECE**).

44. In conclusion the Bureau noted that the expectations for the seminar part of the Conference next year are high and it is important that all participants involved in its preparation work well in coordination to make it a success. It was agreed that :

- The success of the seminar session will depend on its organization;

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<sup>2</sup> CEIES stands for Comité consultative européen de l'information statistique dans les domaines économique et social ; in English : 'The European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres'.



- Long speeches should be avoided and floating discussion prevented;
- The sessions should follow a strict timetable;
- Presentations of papers should not be long;
- More time should be allocated for interventions from the floor and for general discussion

45. The Bureau decided to recommend that both lead countries, Statistics Sweden and Statistics Canada, seek assistance and support from the ECE secretariat whenever necessary for contacting countries, distribution of material, etc. or for any other help concerning the organization of the sessions. The Bureau asked the lead countries to follow strictly the deadlines for preparation of the session as described in document CES/BUR.2003/3 (**action Statistics Sweden and Statistics Canada and the ECE secretariat**).

#### **POSSIBLE REVIVAL OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS**

46. The basis for discussion under this agenda item was a note prepared by UNSD. The Bureau was informed of recent work undertaken by UNSD in reviewing the current state of social statistics and the need for a framework. An expert group meeting on Setting Scope of Social Statistics will be held in New York in May 2003. The final goal of this work is to produce a handbook.

47. The Bureau discussed the contribution of the Conference of European Statisticians to the work on developing the framework. One possibility is to have a discussion on the topic in 2004. Furthermore, the Bureau and the Conference could contribute to the UNSD expert group.

48. Eurostat noted that it is ready to contribute to the discussion. However, in order to develop a consistent framework, it is important to define in advance how far the organizations could go into this. The Bureau was informed that social and demographic statistics will be the topic for next year's DGs meeting in September 2003. The Chief statisticians of EU member states plus Candidate Countries will attend the meeting. The topic is Social statistics – needs for harmonization and limits of harmonization. It was proposed that the outcome of this Eurostat meeting be used as an input to an eventual discussion at the Conference in 2004 (**action by Eurostat and ECE**).

49. The Bureau noted that, before embarking on the preparation of the handbook, it is important that the issue of social and demographic statistics as a framework be reviewed carefully. It should also be reviewed in the context of official statistics. It was stressed that whatever work is initiated, a serious stocktaking is needed before moving to the next step as a proposal. The Bureau was informed of some activities undertaken by the USA in this area. A workshop will be held in February 2003. It was suggested that Eurostat take part in this workshop.

50. The Bureau agreed that a note on the review of the social and demographic framework be prepared for the Bureau meeting in February 2003 (**action by UNSD**).

#### **BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF THE CES**

51. The discussion was based on a note prepared by Carlo Malaguerra. The Bureau agreed that Bureau members should not review the draft chapters for the Book as they are published under the name of the respective authors. Carlo Malaguerra as editor of the Book, together with the ECE secretariat, should be responsible for the final version. A foreword to the Book should explain who contributed and under whose auspices the Book is published. The ECE secretariat will publish the Book. It will be

disseminated to the CES member states and other national and international statistical agencies (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

52. Michael Korolev informed the Bureau that CIS-STAT had already translated 3 chapters into Russian and 4 chapters are in the process of being translated. The editor has not submitted the other chapters of the Book.

53. The Bureau noted that no translation in French had yet been done. INSEE volunteered to do this.

#### **DATABASE ON INTEGRATED PRESENTATION**

54. The Bureau reviewed the progress made in converting the IP into a database based on a paper prepared by the ECE secretariat. The Bureau agreed that the third phase - remote updating of the IP - should be speeded up. Eurostat suggested helping with the work. The Bureau agreed that Eurostat and OECD send a joint mission to ECE to review the needs for the work on the database. A joint paper on the outcome of the mission and the needs for finalizing the project will be reported to the Bureau in February 2003 (**action by ECE, Eurostat and OECD**).

#### **CHANGING THE WAY 'OUTPUTS' ARE MEASURED**

55. The Bureau discussed the issue of how the outputs of the ECE secretariat are measured based on three documents prepared by the ECE secretariat – CES/BUR.2003/9 and its addenda 1-2.

56. The Bureau noted that the plenary session no longer provides the time to consider the extent to which the work programme has been carried out during the past year. Given that fact, it would be useful if the Statistical Division would prepare a list of accomplishments/products/meetings held for the plenary session. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare an update of document CES/BUR.2003/9 for review by the Bureau in February 2003 (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

57. The Bureau agreed to look at the meetings in the CES work program to ensure that each meeting has a specific purpose and/or product in mind. If resources are to be linked with achievements, the meetings need to be more than just an exchange of information on national practices, and they should not be used as a vehicle for, or substitute for, technical assistance in statistics. Some of the topics for work sessions have been around for a while: a review should be made to determine what is needed to conclude such efforts. Future meetings should not be scheduled just because participants feel they wish to have more meetings on a particular subject (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

58. The Bureau noted that the two types of outputs as identified by the ECE secretariat in para. 5 of document CES/BUR.2003/9 and the processes described in para. 6 give a reasonable characterisation of the work. However, it was noted that technical assistance should also be included in the list of outputs.

59. Some members of the Bureau thought that meetings in the UN context should be considered as an output. However, it was noted that even though the meetings played their role in the past, the ECE secretariat should go beyond that. One cannot measure performance only through a meeting. The meetings and working groups should have a mandate.

60. The Bureau welcomed the proposal made by the ECE secretariat to use Task Forces or Steering Groups to work on a specific output within a specific timeframe. It was also noted that the secretariat

should make a formal request to the national statistical offices to provide the experts for the task forces, rather than contact national experts directly (**action by ECE**).

61. The Bureau discussed the recently created Steering Group in the field of management of statistical information systems in the ECE region. The Group, which is a joint undertaking by Eurostat, OECD and ECE, submitted a note to the Bureau (document CES/BUR.2003/9Add.2) describing its objectives, expected achievements, target audience and partnership. The Bureau noted that this is a good example of how future joint meetings should be organised.

62. The Bureau decided that any joint meetings in future be prepared by a Steering Group or Task Force. The Steering Group should submit to the Bureau for its review a note/terms of reference to define the activities of the Group, its final output, the process for achieving the output and the time framework. The Bureau agreed that the proposal described by the ECE secretariat in document CES/BUR.2003/9/Add.2 is a good example (**action by the ECE secretariat in cooperation with Eurostat and OECD**).

63. The Bureau also decided that the Integrated Presentation should gradually introduce the new form of presentation of outputs as identified in doc. CES/BUR.2003/9. The ECE secretariat was asked to prepare a brief note/instructions to be sent to all international organisations and ask them to identify, where possible, the outputs. The note should be consulted in advance with the Bureau (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

64. However, the Bureau agreed that the process of moving towards reporting according to the agreed set of outputs will take some time. Furthermore, the change should be gradual. Therefore, the Bureau decided, before approaching all international organisations that contribute to the IP, to first ask the Rapporteurs to prepare their reports to the Bureau in February according to the new form for identifying the outputs (**action by the ECE secretariat and the Rapporteurs**).

65. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare a list of the ECE activities that are planned for next year for review by the Bureau at its meeting in February (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

#### **HOW TO MAKE PUBLIC WHAT IS DISCUSSED BY THE CONFERENCE**

66. The discussion was based on notes prepared by the ECE secretariat and OECD. The Bureau agreed that before deciding on how to make public what is discussed by the Conference it is important to define who is the audience. There was a general agreement that the middle management in statistical offices is one targeted audience. It is important that staff in the national statistical offices plus the international organisations are informed about the work of the Conference. For example, the Integrated Presentation is not very well known or used by the middle management.

67. There was general agreement that, in order to catch the attention of journalists through press releases, one needs a story to tell. It might be more interesting to the reporters to sit in on the discussions and they could then write their own stories. Both topics to be discussed by the Conference in June 2003 - confidentiality and globalisation - are interesting enough and perhaps it will be possible to prepare short documents backed by a story.

68. The Bureau agreed that there is a need for a document written in a less formal way to inform the staff in national statistical offices. One possibility is that the ECE Statistical Division produces its own

Newsletter. However, it was decided to investigate the possibility for a joint Newsletter with UNSD **(action by the ECE and UNSD)**.

69. The Bureau also noted that the idea of using the ECE Statistical Journal is good and should be pursued, but the Journal is a subscription document. It was proposed that the ECE look at the subscription list to see who the subscribers are **(action by the ECE secretariat)**.

70. The Bureau decided that the ECE secretariat should prepare Highlights for the Conference in June 2003. The Highlights should be ready by the end of June and distributed widely to all statistical offices and international organisations. Translation into French and Russian should be ensured by the ECE secretariat. The ECE secretariat will consult the details with the ECE Press Officer and inform the Bureau in February **(action by the ECE secretariat)**.

### **COORDINATION OF WORK ON HEALTH STATISTICS WITH THE WHO**

71. The Bureau expressed disappointment with the lack of cooperation with the WHO. All efforts for achieving better cooperation have failed. As a result, given the structure and the scope chosen for the World Health Survey (WHS), it may well happen that the WHS results differ from the results of national health surveys and there is a risk that two different sets of data are published.

72. The Bureau asked the Chairman to write a letter on behalf of ECE, Eurostat and OECD to Mrs. Schmögnařova, ECE Executive Secretary, requesting her to write to Dr. Brundtland, Director-General of the WHO, so that she meets with the Bureau in February. The Bureau felt that a meeting with the top-level management of the WHO could be useful **(action by the Chairman of CES and the ECE secretariat)**.

73. The Bureau was informed that the Statistical Commission in March next year will also discuss the issue of lack of cooperation with the WHO. In this context, it was noted that the outcome of the meeting of the Bureau with WHO officials could be used as an input to the discussion at the Statistical Commission **(action by the Chairman of the Bureau and the ECE secretariat)**.

74. The Bureau was also informed of the forthcoming Joint ECE/WHO meeting to be held in Geneva in 2003. It was noted that the meeting might discuss the results of the WHS. However, the lack of coordination with other IOs and the shortcomings of carrying out the survey outside the official statistics should be made clear.

### **INFORMATION ON THE UNECE STEERING GROUP MEETING**

75. The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the UNECE Steering Group Meeting held on 17 September 2002. The purpose of the meeting was to assist the ECE in the preparations of the programme budget submissions for the biennium 2004-2005. Chairmen of all PSBs were invited to participate. Unfortunately, no Bureau member could attend the meeting because of the late notice. It was noted that dates for future meetings of that kind should be announced in advance, so that Bureau members can plan their eventual participation.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

76. Eurostat informed the Bureau that the DGINS<sup>3</sup> meeting held in September 2002 in Palermo discussed the future of the European Statistical System in view of the EU enlargement. One purpose of the meeting was to reflect on the legal identity of the European Statistical System. The meeting also discussed how the various working groups will work in future. It was suggested that some information on the outcome of this meeting be distributed at the Conference in June 2003 (**action by Eurostat and ECE secretariat**).

77. OECD informed the Bureau that a consultant is currently reviewing the work of the various working parties in OECD – some 175 subsidiary bodies exist at present. During this review the issue of creating a Statistical Committee would come up. There is a general feeling in OECD that the proposal may be accepted. The report is expected in November. The Bureau was also informed of the recent reorganisation of the Directorate for Education, Employment and Social Affairs, which was split into the Education Directorate and the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Directorate.

78. The Bureau was also informed of recent work undertaken by Eurostat to coordinate its work on the Quality Assessment Framework with that carried out by IMF. Both international organisations will present reports to their respective Executive Boards. Eurostat also works on the issue with OECD. It was proposed that a presentation be made at the 2003 Conference. Eurostat will check with IMF and report to the Bureau in February (**action by Eurostat**).

79. The Bureau thanked the ECE secretariat for the excellent preparation of the meeting and for the very good documents that were presented and that served as the basis for discussion. The Bureau also thanked Svein Longva and Statistics Norway for hosting the meeting and for the first-rate organisation of the meeting.

#### **DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT BUREAU MEETING**

80. The Bureau confirmed that its next meeting will be held on 13-14 February 2003 in Geneva. Statistics Canada and Statistics Sweden will be also invited.

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<sup>3</sup> DGINS stands for Directeur généraux des Instituts Nationaux de Statistique.