

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

For decision
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Third meeting of the 2006/2007 Bureau  
Geneva, 12-13 February 2007

Item 12 of the Provisional  
Agenda

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISING THE CES SEMINAR SESSIONS**

**Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE SEMINARS**

1. The 50th CES in 2002 decided that the CES plenary sessions should be organised in three modules: a formal session and two seminars - one focusing on foundational issues of statistical systems and the other one on new, emerging issues. The topics for the seminars are selected by the CES Bureau based on consultation with all members of the CES.
2. The aim of the seminars is to:
  - provide a forum for addressing the issues of current interest to Heads of national and international statistical agencies where all member countries and organizations have the opportunity to contribute papers and to participate in the discussions on an equal footing;
  - discuss the region's common statistical problems, exchange opinions and knowledge, formulate common solutions and recommendations;
  - provide an opportunity for all CES members to discuss new conceptual work in its early stages, in part to help avoid the drifting apart of statistical systems;
  - provide a forum for in-depth interaction and exploration of issues dealing with leading-edge emerging topics;
  - provide an opportunity for interaction with policy makers and other users of statistics, e.g. by inviting keynote speakers;
  - make recommendations and initiate follow-up work if needed;
  - promote cooperation in addressing problems (e.g. by establishing joint Working Groups, Task Forces, etc.).

**ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

3. An Organising Committee, set up under the auspices of the Bureau, is responsible for the preparation of each seminar. The Seminar Organisers and Session Organisers form the Organising Committee. The Organising Committee is chaired by the Head of an NSO (or his/her representative).

**SEMINAR ORGANISER (ORGANISING COUNTRY)**

4. The Seminar Organiser is responsible for the overall preparation of the seminar. The Seminar Organiser:

- proposes the topics for the sessions: one topic per session is recommended. For each topic, the focus and issues should be clearly stated (what the Conference is invited to do and what the discussion hopes to achieve);
- prepares the outline of the seminar for the October and February meetings of the Bureau;
- identifies/invites the Session Organisers, and together with them identifies/invites Discussants for the sessions;
- in cooperation with the Session Organisers, identifies/invites a keynote speaker, if considered appropriate;
- chairs the seminar at the CES plenary session (the Head of the NSO of the organising country (or his/her representative) acts as the Chairman of the seminar). The individual sessions can be chaired by Session Organisers;
- offers conclusions and recommendations to the Conference about follow-up work, if any, at the end of the seminar.

### **SESSION ORGANISER (ORGANISING COUNTRY)**

5. They are responsible for the content of the session. The Session Organiser:
  - invites the main issue papers – 1-2 invited papers (maximum 3). Invited papers can be prepared by members of the Organising Committee or other invited authors. The Session Organisers are encouraged to keep in close contact with the authors to ensure that the papers cover the main issues that are considered important for the session and that the papers are completed on schedule;
  - together with the Seminar Organiser, identifies/invites the Discussant(s) for the sessions;
  - chairs the individual sessions at the meeting, if so decided (this can also be done by the Seminar Organiser): ensures that the time schedule is respected and coordinates the discussion, giving the floor to the Discussants and participants;
  - makes a short summary of the discussion at the end of the session, and makes recommendations for possible follow-up work arising from the session, if any (about 3-5 minutes). (This can also be made by the Discussant).

### **DISCUSSANT**

6. A designated Discussant is selected for each session (there may also be several Discussants per session). The Discussant:
  - introduces the topic;
  - introduces the authors of invited and supporting papers;
  - briefly introduces the invited papers;
  - draws out key points from both invited and supporting papers (preferably by looking at the topic in general, not paper by paper);
  - raises questions to the authors of invited papers;
  - raises questions for general discussion from the floor;
  - makes proposals for further work and follow-up actions;
  - the Discussant, rather than the Session Organiser, may also make a short summary of the session.
7. Discussants are encouraged to use PowerPoint, slides, etc. to make their presentations easier to understand. The Discussant's presentation is expected to take no more than 20

minutes. It is recommended that a maximum of seven slides be used. Discussants should keep in mind that, in general, it takes about two to three minutes to elaborate on each slide.

8. The seminar may begin with a keynote speech delivered by a well-known and prominent person who may come from outside official statistics (e.g. representative of stakeholders, users, academia). The keynote speech should set the stage for the seminar, e.g. by looking at the topic from a wider viewpoint.

## INVITED PAPERS

9. These are the main issue papers for the sessions. Invited papers should be designed to stimulate discussion and to pose issues rather than settle them. **The invited papers are translated in the three official languages (E,F,R) and should not be more than eight pages long, including graphs and diagrams** – **deadline** for submission to the ECE secretariat is **15 March 2007** to ensure the translation. If the invited paper is not submitted in time, it is distributed in English only. However, simultaneous interpretation is provided during its discussion.

## SUPPORTING PAPERS

10. Once the Organising Committee agrees on the topics, the ECE secretariat will invite all CES countries and international organizations to contribute 'supporting papers' if they so wish. Supporting papers are not translated. They are made available in English only. However, Discussants can refer to them during their presentations.

## TIMING

11. The general timeframe of the seminar has to take into account the following constraints:
- according to the requirements of the UN Conference Services/interpreters, the morning and afternoon sessions can last up to 3 hours each (coffee break is counted as working time for the interpreters), lunch break has to be two hours;
  - if the seminar is on the first day of the Conference, about 20-30 minutes will be needed for the opening of the CES;
  - if the seminar takes place on the last day of the Conference, about 20-30 minutes will be needed for the closing and adoption of the report;
  - a maximum 20 minutes from the beginning of the seminar can be allocated for a keynote speech, if applicable.
12. In general, the recommended working time of the meeting is as follows:
- Morning session 9:30 –12:30, including a 15-20 minute coffee break around 11:00
  - Lunch 12:30 –14:30
  - Afternoon session 14:30 - 17:30, including a 15-20 minute coffee break around 16:00
13. Within this working time and depending on the number of sessions, the Seminar and Session Organisers can allocate the time to individual sessions as they see fit. For example:
- if the seminar has four sessions, two in the morning and two in the afternoon;

- if the seminar has three sessions, one session in the morning and two sessions in the afternoon, or the other way round;
- if the seminar has two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSIONS**

- One of the most important parts of the seminar is the general discussion, allowing countries and organizations to present their experiences, opinions, problems, etc. and to brainstorm on possible ways to address the problems. Therefore, the time allocation of the sessions should be such that at least half of the total time allocated for each session is devoted to discussion.
- The use of a detailed timetable is extremely useful. The Session Organiser/Chairman should make sure that it is strictly followed.
- The seminar starts with a general introduction by the Seminar Organiser/Chair (about 3-5 minutes).
- The keynote speech, if applicable, then follows (maximum 20 minutes).
- The Session Organiser/Chair may say a few words to start the session (3-5 minutes).
- The Discussant will then take the floor to introduce the topic, drawing out key points from papers, raising questions to authors of invited papers and for the general discussion from the floor (no more than 20 minutes).
- Individual papers will not be presented at the seminar (neither invited nor supporting papers).
- After the Discussant's presentation, each author of an invited paper will have a maximum of 7 minutes to answer the questions raised by the discussant.
- General discussion from the floor will follow for about about half of the session's time (usually 40-50 minutes). The discussion should be steered by the Session Organiser/Chairman.
- The Session Organisers/Discussants make a short summary of the discussion and make recommendations for follow-up work arising from the session, if any (about 3-5 minutes).
- At the end of the seminar, the Chairman of the seminar (Seminar Organiser) will offer conclusions and recommendations to the Conference about follow-up work, if any.

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