

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For discussion and
recommendations

Second Meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 2-3 November 2011

Item 2(a) of the Provisional
Agenda

UNECE COMMENTS ON IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF EDUCATION STATISTICS

Note prepared by the secretariat

1. UNECE welcomes the in-depth review on education statistics (document ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/2) and agrees on the need to provide more guidance to statistical offices on how to deal with the different aspects of education statistics. This note summarises the comments that were made in the discussion of the in-depth review paper in the UNECE Statistical Division.
2. UNECE supports the directions for future developments proposed in the paper. Better international cooperation, linking of data from different sources and making greater use of administrative data are also envisaged as important directions in improving social statistics in general. This would require close cooperation of statistical offices with the authorities in charge of the administrative data collection. Opportunities for linking data depend largely on the legal environment, which would vary largely between countries and would be difficult to change with arguments for better statistics only. Demonstration and sharing of good practices from many countries would support progress in these areas.
3. Life-long learning is gaining importance as working lives are becoming longer. Specific measurement challenges are related to this phenomenon and would need to be reflected as one of the directions for future development. The measurement of life-long learning would particularly benefit from the longitudinal datasets for which the paper argues.
4. Topics of interest for further analysis include the effect of migration on the growth of human capital stock, brain drain or brain gain. Such work could be linked to the recent and ongoing work on the measurement of human capital and to the work of the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development. In this context, a distinction between educational capital and the more general concept of human capital would be useful. The quality aspects of education and of teaching staff would be another topic where work towards better measurement could be undertaken.
5. Many countries of the UNECE region are monitoring the second Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education where the official indicators are the net enrolment ratio in primary education, proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary and literacy rate of 15-24 year-old women and men. In countries engaged in the monitoring of this Goal, strengthening of education statistics should build capacity to produce these indicators regularly and improve their accuracy and reliability.
6. Overall, the review paper would have benefited from considering the experience of a broader range of countries. For example, the proposals on longitudinal datasets (section III.D) and administrative data (III.E) could be further developed based on the solid experience of many countries in these areas.

7. A task force to undertake work on the recommended actions such as the creation of a framework or good practice guide could be coordinated by an organization with well established expertise and mandate in the area of education statistics. In particular, any work on classifications for education statistics would have to be coordinated by UNESCO in line with its mandate. UNECE would be open to participate in providing the secretariat service to such task force.

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