ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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

For discussion and recommendations

Item 2(d) of the Provisional Agenda

FOLLOW-UP ON IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF MEASURING INFORMATION SOCIETY AND STATISTICS ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The CES plenary session in June 2011 discussed the outcome of the in-depth review of measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation (documents ECE/CES/2011/7 and Add.1). The Conference made the following conclusion:

> "The Conference welcomed the review and the inventory of groups working on statistics on information society, science, technology and innovation. The Conference noted that there may be scope for better coordination of the many initiatives undertaken in the area. The development of a conceptual framework may be considered. The CES members are invited to submit comments and suggestions on possible follow-up activities in this area to the secretariat. The Bureau will discuss possible ways forward at its 2-3 November 2011 meeting." (para 50 of the Report of the CES 2011 plenary session, ECE/CES/81).

II. COMMENTS FROM CES MEMBER COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS

2. As a response to the request for comments and suggestions after the CES plenary session, UNECE received replies from Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Mexico, Ukraine, Unites States and Eurostat. These are summarised below.

3. **Azerbaijan** applies the *Frascati* and *Oslo Manuals* for R&D and innovation statistics as well as Eurostat's *Methodological Manual for Statistics on the Information Society*, but finds that there is a need for more guidance for statistics on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in enterprises and its impact on labour productivity. On this basis Azerbaijan supports international cooperation to clarify conceptual issues in ICT statistics and provide guidance on the production of ICT statistics for analytical and research purposes.

4. **Czech Republic** has suggested minor updates to the inventory of groups working on information society, science, technology and innovation (ECE/CES/2011/7Add.1).

5. **Hungary** has responded that it is a major challenge to provide relevant and comparable statistics in this rapidly changing area, which also in Hungary attracts political interest. To this end Hungarian delegates take part in the development work of international organisations on science and technology statistics.

6. **Mexico** has raised two suggestions: a) To examine links between ICT and the System of National Accounts (SNA) to clarify the needs of the SNA and the potential impact of ICT on

the national accounts, other economic statistics and social and environmental areas; b) To develop further ICT statistics in the areas of education, government and the health sector.

7. **Ukraine** has responded that the following areas should have priority: a) Developments of international guidelines, including methodologies for organising the data work; and b) Definition of a general concept of information society statistics.

8. **United States** has responded that establishing yet another group to "coordinate" seems redundant. The role of the OECD Working Party of National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators (NESTI) is in fact to coordinate the measurement of statistics on science, technology, innovation and research and development. OECD/NESTI is composed of OECD member countries and a very broad spectrum of observer countries who are in fact active participants in NESTI. Further, most countries have representatives from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs). What might be appropriate is for the CES Bureau to coordinate with OECD/NESTI to determine which countries do not have representatives from their NSOs so that they may include representatives in the future. The inventory of groups working in the area should reflect that NESTI, in coordination with Eurostat, is undertaking a major project to review R&D data collection, definitions and overall content. In addition, there is a second major project covering how innovation data are collected as well as what are the appropriate questions to collect data on innovation. The second project is also being undertaken in conjunction with Eurostat. It is likely that both projects will result in changes to the *Frascati* and *Oslo Manuals*. These projects are being supported in part by a grant from our National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, National Science Foundation.

9. **Eurostat** in its response suggested mentioning the project on assessing the impact of using ICT on businesses performance in the inventory of groups working in the area, and also informed that the Careers of Doctorate Holders project has not been continued beyond the 2009 data collection due to unsatisfactory coverage.

III. FOLLOW-UP AND PROPOSALS FOR THE BUREAU

10. UNECE has updated the inventory of groups working in the area of statistics on information society, science, technology and innovation to reflect the comments received from Czech Republic, United States and Eurostat. The updated inventory has been made available on the web (as document ECE/CES/2011/7/Add.1/Rev. under the papers for the CES 2011 plenary session).

11. The Conference noted two issues for possible follow-up activities (1) better coordination of the initiatives undertaken in the area, and (2) considering the development of a conceptual framework.

12. Concerning the first issue, **coordination of initiatives, it is proposed to use the existing groups for this purpose instead of setting up any additional/new group.** United States suggested that the CES Bureau together with the OECD Working Party of National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators (NESTI) would determine which countries' NSOs are not represented in NESTI so that they may include representatives in the future. The secretariat could help with following up on that.

13. With regard to a **conceptual framework**, the in-depth review concluded that it is important to continue to develop and integrate the frameworks underpinning the statistics on

information society, science, technology and innovation to better assist in understanding the impact of these issues on the economy, society and the environment. **The Bureau is invited to discuss the practical steps that could be taken to implement this recommendation and which organization could take the lead on this work.**

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