

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second Meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau

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REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The second meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau was held in Geneva on 2-3 November 2011. The following members of the Bureau attended: Mr. E. Giovannini (Chairman), Mr. W. Smith, Mr. P. Potisepp, Mr. G. Bascand, Ms. I. Krizman, Mr. O. Osaulenko, and Ms. J. Matheson. The following permanent observers also attended: Ms. M. Durand (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), Mr. B. Pink (OECD Committee on Statistics), Mr. P. Everaers (representing Mr. W. Radermacher, Eurostat), Ms. I. Zbarskaya (representing Mr. Sokolin, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT)), Ms. A. Bürgi-Schmelz (International Monetary Fund (IMF)), and Ms. L. Bratanova (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)). Mr. M. de Haan (Statistics Netherlands) for agenda item 2(a), and Mr. O. Baddour and Mr. C. Blondin (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) for agenda items 3(c) and 12, attended at the invitation of the Chairman. Ms. Katherine Wallman (US Office of Management and Budget) for agenda item 10(b), Ms. J. Madans (US Centers of Disease Control and Prevention) for item 3(a), Ms. A. Me, Mr. E. Bisogno and Mr. M. Jandl (UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) for item 3(b) attended through audio- and videoconferences.

2. The following persons assisted the members of the Bureau: Ms. M. Gandolfo (ISTAT, Italy), Ms. A. Nilsson (Eurostat), and Ms. I. Muzychenko (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine). Ms. T. Luige of UNECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

3. The following staff of the UNECE Statistical Division also attended: Mr. C. Boldsen, Ms. T. Dimova, Ms. V. Etropolska, Mr. G. Gamez, Mr. S. Vale, Mr. P. Valente, Mr. A. Vikat and Ms. A. Peltola.

II. IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF SELECTED STATISTICAL AREAS

A. Education statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/2 (Australia), Add.1 (UNECE) and Add. 2 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS))

4. The discussion was based on a paper by Australia and comments on the paper by UNECE and UIS.

5. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Guidelines are needed on the measurement of e-learning. It was suggested to set up a small Task Force (TF) for this purpose. A compilation of good practices and/or establishing a wiki to exchange experience in this area could be potential outputs of the work. However, in some countries, e-learning is not a priority area of education statistics.

(b) Setting up a wiki related to education statistics may be a good idea but the amount of work needed for its maintenance should not be underestimated.

(c) Other areas proposed in the paper for further international work were early childhood education and lifelong learning. Early childhood education is an area where there are large data gaps. The measurement of lifelong learning would benefit from better integration of surveys and administrative sources as well as from longitudinal data that are expensive to

collect. Advances in the measurement of lifelong learning would allow better understanding of the long-term outcomes of educational systems for individuals and businesses.

(d) A lot of education statistics are collected outside statistical offices, which has led to the fragmentation of this statistical area. In some countries, it is difficult to access the data produced by different agencies. Such issues have to be resolved at national level.

(e) With respect to the proposal to advance the measurement of the quality of education, the Bureau was informed of a new OECD survey on this topic. Any decisions on further work in this particular area should take into account the results of the survey. Plans for future work on education statistics would also have to consider the activities of the OECD Indicators of Education Statistics (INES) group that is developing and consolidating indicators.

6. The Bureau considered it important that UIS be involved in decisions on further work on education statistics and asked for a preliminary consultation with UIS to check their availability. UIS sent comments on the in-depth review paper and their representative planned to attend the Bureau meeting but was not able to do so due to other urgent commitments. OECD offered to facilitate contact with UIS in planning further steps in this area.

Conclusions:

7. Australia will explore, with support by the secretariat, whether there is interest from countries in working on measuring e-learning. If enough countries are ready to contribute, Australia will draft terms of reference for a Task Force on this topic for the next Bureau meeting. (*Following the Bureau meeting, Switzerland expressed interest in being a member of the TF.*)

8. The Bureau asked the secretariat to investigate the feasibility of further work on compiling good practices on integrating administrative, survey and census data on education.

9. The Bureau will invite UIS to participate in the next Bureau meeting and give a presentation about their future work.

10. The secretariat will check when the next review of education statistics is planned by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) to see whether the issues identified in the review can be taken up at the global level.

11. The Bureau will further discuss education statistics at a future meeting.

B. Global manufacturing

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/3 (the Netherlands), Add.1 (the Netherlands, UNECE) and Add. 2 (UNECE)

12. The discussion was based on a paper by the Netherlands, including proposed terms of reference (ToR) for a Task Force on global production, and comments by UNECE and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The topic of globalization is a core work area of the CES. Related activities are undertaken both in economic statistics (such as the recently developed *Guide on impact of globalization on national accounts*) and social statistics, in particular on migration statistics (three Task Forces are working on different aspects of measuring international migration).

(b) The Bureau supported establishing a TF on global production to address the unresolved conceptual issues arising from the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) and the IMF Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6). The TF should focus on the core issues within national accounts and balance of payments and prepare guidance on implementation aspects in accordance with the proposed ToR.

(c) The TF will be established under the CES and the Steering Group on National Accounts. Global consultation would be ensured through the Advisory Expert Group (AEG) and the Inter-secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), as indicated in the ToR. UNSD offers its assistance for the global consultation on these issues. Broad consultation should also be sought through OECD, IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM), the Statistics Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), etc.

(d) The area of work of the TF closely relates to other initiatives such as the Eurostat TF on goods for processing, the European Statistical System's Center of Excellence on global value chains, and OECD work on trade in value added. Coordination should be ensured in order to avoid overlap.

(e) The Bureau supported the research items proposed in the in-depth review, but expressed concern about the broad scope of work. It requested the TF to establish a more detailed priority list of issues to be considered. The TF should try to advance the timetable starting with the most urgent issues in 2012 and leaving those that require more time for the second stage. The advanced schedule should support countries in publishing the first results according to the 2008 SNA.

(f) Global production is an important topic also for countries outside the UNECE region, and the TF should consider mechanisms to involve them in the work. This could be achieved in collaboration with IMF and OECD.

Conclusion:

13. The Bureau considered globalization as a core area of work for the CES and established the TF on Global Production under the auspices of the CES and the Steering Group on National Accounts. Statistics Netherlands will chair the TF. Canada, Finland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United States, Eurostat, IMF and OECD have expressed interest to participate in the TF. Additional countries and organizations are welcome to join the TF.

14. The TF will prepare a more detailed priority list of tasks and deadlines for the 2012 February Bureau meeting. The overall timetable should be reconsidered in order to advance the work. Good coordination through the ISWGNA and other relevant bodies is important to avoid overlap with related international initiatives. Broad consultation should be ensured in cooperation with UNSD.

C. Household survey methods

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/4 (Canada), Add. 1 (UNECE), Add. 2 (Ukraine) and Add.3 (Eurostat)

15. The discussion was based on a paper by Canada, and comments on the paper by UNECE, Ukraine and Eurostat. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) One of the main challenges related to household surveys is their integration with other data sources. Surveys are no longer discussed as individual tools but as part of a data collection system. Eurostat and many national statistical offices (NSOs) are currently working in this direction. Another opportunity to discuss the issues related to household surveys is provided by the international fora on data collection methods, such as the High-level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS) and the first expert meeting on data collection to be organised by UNECE in autumn 2012.

(b) Integration of surveys and administrative sources raises new issues that deserve attention, such as the different treatment of data and new methods and information technology (IT) tools needed to integrate the data from different sources. Furthermore, census data are becoming an increasingly important benchmark against which survey results are verified. All this has implications for the improvement of knowledge of staff and organization of work.

(c) Development of guidelines or handbooks is a slow process while the area is changing rapidly. Reviewing handbooks is also considered of low priority for developed countries. Establishing a wiki on household survey methods looks more promising as it would permit identification of the gaps where to focus further efforts.

(d) Official statistics should make use of the important advances on household survey methods in academic research. There is room for closer cooperation with academia in this area.

(e) Many countries have progressed quickly with new methodologies such as web surveys and could share their experience and software. The paper could explore more the modern approaches to household surveys.

(f) It was noted that the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and, until recently, the United Nations Statistics Division have been developing materials on survey methodology, primarily for less developed countries. There is a continuing need for guidance on traditional household survey methods in countries where labour cost is low while the cost of new IT tools is high.

Conclusion:

16. Household surveys are important building blocks of national statistical systems and they need to be better integrated with other sources. Some resources that allow further exploration of this integration already exist, but there is no single repository or entry point that links to all relevant resources. For the data collection expert meeting in 2012, the secretariat will prepare a list of available resources on this topic, such as web sites and international events, contacting the International Association of Survey Statisticians, the World Bank and other organizations as necessary.

17. Canada will update the paper reflecting the discussion at the Bureau meeting. The updated paper will be submitted to the CES 2012 plenary session for information.

18. The meeting on data collection in autumn 2012 (considered at the Bureau meeting under item III.E, see paras 40-43 below) should deal with data collection through household surveys, among other topics. A decision on further activities related to household survey methods is therefore postponed until the end of 2012 when the meeting on data collection has taken place.

D. Follow-up to the in-depth review on measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/5 (UNECE)

19. The Bureau discussed the follow-up to the in-depth review of measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation carried out in November 2010. The CES 2011 plenary session discussed the outcome of the review and concluded that there may be scope for the development of a conceptual framework and for better coordination of the many international initiatives in this area. The Bureau discussed possible ways forward. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The international work on information and communication technology (ICT) indicators is well coordinated. However, there is a need for better coordination of the different surveys related to ICT, research and development (R&D), innovation, etc. OECD offered to prepare a paper to further explain this issue.

(b) Conceptual frameworks exist for the measurement of information society, science, technology and innovation in the economic context. A core set of ICT indicators has been adopted by the UNSC. In the short term, the conceptual and measurement issues can be further clarified. Development of a framework addressing the impact of ICT on the whole society could be a longer-term objective.

(c) New areas that require work include the 2008 SNA and ICT, ICT related R&D, and developing ICT deflators. Ukraine informed about their work on ICT satellite accounts as a way to systematically measure this area.

Conclusion:

20. The inventory of groups working in the area has been updated and is available on the web (document ECE/CES/2011/7/Add.1/Rev.¹). OECD will prepare a paper for the 2012 February Bureau meeting on the state-of-the-art surveys related to ICT, innovation, etc. The paper could also explore the possibility of compiling ICT satellite accounts and the measurement initiatives going beyond the economic impact of ICT.

E. Next in-depth reviews

21. The Bureau reviews in-depth about four or five statistical areas per year with the aim to improve coordination of statistical activities in the UNECE region, identify gaps or duplication of work, and address emerging issues. The active contributions by the CES members and feedback from the participants of the CES plenary sessions show great interest in the in-depth reviews. The secretariat proposed to make the review papers more visible on the UNECE Statistical Division's website to better promote this useful coordination mechanism and to give recognition to countries and organizations who have prepared high quality papers as a basis for the reviews.

Conclusion:

22. Two in-depth reviews were planned to take place in February 2012: banking, insurance and financial statistics based on a paper by IMF, and measurement of poverty based on a paper by Eurostat and Ukraine. (*After the Bureau meeting, Eurostat and IMF informed the secretariat*

¹ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2011/7Add1Rev1.pdf>

that they will not be in a position to prepare the review papers by January 2012 and asked to postpone the two reviews for the autumn 2012 meeting of the Bureau.)

23. In February 2012, the Bureau will select topics for the next in-depth reviews to be conducted in 2012-2013. The secretariat will prepare a preliminary proposal. One of the topics will be discussed at the CES 2012 plenary session to obtain input for the review from all CES members.

24. The secretariat will gather all recent in-depth review papers and present them on the UNECE website to improve the visibility of this important coordination tool.

III. UNECE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME FOR 2012

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/6 (UNECE), Add.1 (UNECE)

25. The format of the UNECE Statistical Programme (SP) has been changed to follow the template used for reporting to the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM). The programme is presented in a narrative, textual format that can be used for various reporting and public relations purposes. In addition to staff of statistical organizations, the programme is targeted at different audiences, such as government agencies, diplomats, etc.

26. As in the past, the discussion of the programme focused on the activities that are new or substantially changed as compared to previous years. The various Steering Groups and Task Forces related to the activities were also reviewed under this agenda item.

A. Measuring health status

Documentation: ECE ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/7 (UNECE) and Add. 1 (UNECE and the Task Force on Measuring Health Status)

27. Ms. J. Madans, the Chair of the Task Force on Measuring Health Status (the so-called Budapest Initiative) presented the final report of the TF for approval. The report includes a survey module for measuring health state, entitled "Budapest Initiative Mark 2 Question Set". The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The work has been carried out in coordination with the Washington Group on disability statistics. The proposed survey module can be embedded in a larger set of questions developed by the Washington Group and further work on certain domains can be undertaken in this context. Developmental work and testing is continuing, particularly on questions for domains (e.g. learning) that are not included in the current set.

(b) Eurostat informed that it is highly probable that seven questions from the proposed set will be included in the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) module in 2014. Countries will be encouraged to start implementing the survey module and test the questions before that deadline.

(c) Countries can strengthen certain domains (i.e. cognition) or include additional domains (e.g. mental health) in the question set while implementing it.

Conclusion:

28. The Bureau welcomed the report of the Task Force on Measuring Health Status (Budapest Initiative), and endorsed it on behalf of the Conference, including the "Budapest

Initiative Mark 2 Question Set". The Task Force will clarify in the report the links between the proposed question set and the work of the Washington Group on disability statistics, and the need for further development of certain domains. The secretariat will circulate to all CES members the final report and the question set developed by the Budapest Initiative.

29. The Steering Group of the Budapest Initiative will continue to provide a focal point to countries for sharing experiences on measuring health status and disseminating the results of the work until October 2013, as set out in its TOR.

B. Crime statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/8 (UNECE), Add.1 (UNODC/UNECE Task Force on Crime Classification) and Add. 2 (UNECE)

30. Ms. A. Me, Mr. E. Bisogno and Mr. M. Jandl of UNODC presented to the Bureau the report of the Task Force on crime classification and the revised ToR of the Task Force. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Bureau supported the approach of classifying crimes according to their nature and not on the legal basis which differs across countries.

(b) Bridging the national crime classifications with the international ones requires an additional effort from statistical offices. However, it is essential for international comparability, for example in the context of measuring well-being.

(c) The Task Force worked in full coordination with the European Union (EU) and the Eurostat Working Group on crime statistics. UNODC is also collaborating with Eurostat in data collection related to crime.

(d) The UNSC will discuss crime statistics in February 2012 based on a paper by Mexico. This may be an opportunity to broaden the work to countries outside the UNECE region.

(e) As UNODC is also working on measuring corruption, there is scope for cooperation with the new OECD initiative to fight corruption called CleanGovBiz.

Conclusion:

31. The Bureau supported the work and endorsed the revised TOR of the Task Force. The *Principles and framework for an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes* will be sent for electronic consultation to all CES members with a view to being submitted for endorsement to the CES 2012 plenary session.

C. Statistics related to climate change

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/9 (UNECE) and Add. 1(UNECE)

32. The Bureau discussed a proposal to establish a Task Force on statistics related to climate change based on the outcomes of the UNECE survey on involvement of NSOs in climate change related statistics. The draft ToR address the needs for international work in this area identified by countries in the survey. The draft ToR were consulted with Statistics Finland, Norway and Eurostat prior to their submission to the Bureau, and the comments of these agencies were taken into account.

33. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) OECD presented the comments provided by the OECD Environment Department concerning the current reporting formats of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the balance between flexibility and harmonization.

(b) Several Bureau members expressed strong support for undertaking work in this area.

(c) The work can be carried out in stages: first, focusing on the drivers of the climate change, then identifying the possible links between official statistics and the measurement of climate by WMO to meet user needs, and lastly, discussing how to measure adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its impact. Establishing a framework for climate change related statistics over the longer term was considered necessary.

(c) Some countries have problems with providing the data required for the greenhouse gas emission calculations and with the different classifications used by official statistics and IPCC. There is scope for international work to address these concerns.

(d) The involvement of professional statisticians in statistics related to climate change is important. They need to work together with experts on climate change. Close cooperation with the UNFCCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other international initiatives will be required.

(e) The work of the Task Force should be focused and should not aim to cover too broad an area. It was considered a priority to clearly define the scope of work and what is meant under climate change related statistics, and assess the gap between user needs and available data.

Conclusion:

34. The Bureau expressed support for the work on climate change related statistics and for setting up a Task Force on this topic. It was decided to start the work with a small group developing a more detailed work plan and focusing on the issues in para 13 (a) and (b) of document ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/9, namely:

(a) Define the scope of work for the Task Force and what is meant by climate change related statistics; and

(b) Assess the gap between the user needs and the available climate change related statistics, including international reporting activities.

35. Canada, Finland, Italy, Norway, United Kingdom and Eurostat have expressed willingness to participate in the work. The Task Force will present a work plan to the Bureau in February 2012.

D. Strategic developments in business architecture in statistics

36. The UNECE secretariat reported the outcomes of the Workshop on Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics, held on 31 October – 1 November 2011,

and of the HLG-BAS meeting held immediately after the workshop. The resulting work programme consists of four main themes:

- (a) Developing a strategy document for presentation to the 2012 CES plenary session;
- (b) Defining the scope of the “industry” in which statistical organizations operate, including identifying users and their needs;
- (c) Improving communication about the work of the High-Level Group and the related expert groups;
- (d) Accelerating the development of the Generic Statistical Information Model, which will identify the information flows between different parts of the statistical production process.

Conclusion:

37. The Bureau welcomed the proposed work programme, observing that it is necessary to ensure that the right experts are involved in each task, and to keep the focus on meeting user needs. This work is one of the most strategic projects undertaken by the CES and, if successful, will have profound implications for the future of official statistics.

38. The HLG-BAS will report on progress to the February 2012 meeting of the Bureau. The next HLG-BAS meeting is planned to take place on 7 February 2012 in Luxembourg, back-to-back with the CES Bureau meeting. It was suggested to open part of the HLG-BAS meeting to all Bureau members.

39. The CES plenary session in June 2012 will discuss the strategy to implement the HLG-BAS vision for business architecture in statistics.

E. Data collection

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/10 (UNECE)

40. The secretariat presented a proposal for organising an expert meeting on data collection in 2012, following up on a recommendation by the Bureau from June 2011.

Conclusion:

41. The Bureau supported the organization of a meeting on data collection, planned to take place in autumn 2012 (date to be confirmed). The secretariat will prepare a draft agenda, with input from national data collection experts, for discussion at the February 2012 Bureau meeting. Estonia and New Zealand offered assistance in organizing the meeting, in addition to experts already identified. The target audience is mid-level to senior managers responsible for data collection activities.

42. The Bureau requested that the agenda should be forward-looking, consistent with the HLG-BAS vision, and should include the legal and institutional aspects of using new data sources, as well as consideration of new methods and technologies.

43. The Bureau will consider the need for follow-up activities related to organisational and management aspects of data collection after the above-mentioned meeting has taken place.

F. Business registers

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/23 (UNECE)

44. The Bureau considered a proposal to establish a Task Force to develop international guidelines on statistical business registers. The proposal was developed following a recommendation of the joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Expert Group meeting on business registers in September 2011. It was supported by the Steering Group of the Wiesbaden Group on business registers.

45. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) It is essential to coordinate the work of the Task Force with the CES work on strategic developments in business architecture in statistics (HLG-BAS). Statistical business registers are a fundamental part of the modernisation of the statistical production process and of the new business architecture of statistics. This aspect should also be reflected in the guidelines to be prepared by the TF.

(b) The TF should consider statistical business registers in conjunction with other registers, such as registers of public institutions, economic units, etc.

(c) The guidelines to be prepared by the TF should address issues of relevance to both developed and less developed statistical systems and provide practical guidance to help improve international comparability of business statistics.

(d) The TF should take advantage of the relevant existing materials and activities in its work, e.g. the UNSC Friends of the Chair Group on integrated economic statistics.

Conclusion:

46. The Bureau endorsed the ToR of the Task Force on developing international guidelines on statistical business registers subject to two amendments: inclusion of a reference to the HLG-BAS, and explicit mention of linking statistical business registers with other registers. Austria (Mr. N. Reiner) will chair the Task Force. Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Eurostat, OECD and UNSD have expressed willingness to be members of the Task Force. OECD will propose a Latin American country which could participate in the Task Force. The membership of the Task Force is open to other interested countries and organizations.

G. Quality of employment

47. The secretariat reported on the outcome of the meeting on Quality of Employment that took place on 31 October – 2 November 2011 in Geneva. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss feedback from the 20 country studies on the usability of the quality of employment indicators endorsed by the CES in June 2010.

48. Following the recommendation of the June 2010 CES plenary session, the meeting proposed to establish an expert group (Task Force) under the CES to develop operational definitions and guidelines for measuring quality of employment, and to explore the data sources. The expert group should address the difficult issues raised by a number of countries in relation to the subjective component in measuring the quality of employment. The following countries have expressed interest in participating in the expert group: Australia, Azerbaijan,

Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Luxembourg, Moldova, ILO, Eurostat and OECD.

Conclusion:

49. The secretariat will prepare draft terms of reference for an expert group (Task Force) on measuring quality of employment for the February 2012 Bureau meeting.

H. Other issues

50. The Bureau noted that six Task Forces complete their work during 2011. Three new Task Forces were set up during the meeting (TF on global production, TF on international guidelines on statistical business registers, and TF on climate change related statistics).

Conclusion:

51. The following amendments will be made to the Statistical Programme 2012 to reflect the Bureau decisions:

(a) The text related to measurement of quality of employment will be updated based on the outcome of the meeting on this topic, held on 31 October – 2 November 2011 (in para 40).

(b) Health statistics will remain in the programme of work in order to continue follow-up on the implementation of the “Budapest Initiative Mark 2 Question Set”.

52. The Bureau approved the 2012 Statistical Programme subject to the two amendments.

IV. UNECE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME IN STATISTICS FOR 2012-13

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/11 (UNECE) and Add. 1 (UNECE)

Conclusion:

53. The CES Bureau approved the UNECE Biennial Programme of Work in Statistics for 2012-2013.

54. The secretariat will prepare a short paper for the next meeting of the Bureau explaining the UN biennial planning cycle and the various documents that the Bureau needs to review and approve in this context.

V. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014-2015

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/12 (UNECE)

Conclusion:

55. The Bureau approved the Strategic Framework for 2014-2015 for the UNECE Subprogramme 03: Statistics.

VI. UNECE REVIEW

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/13, Add.1, Add.2 and Add.3 (UNECE)

56. The Bureau was informed about the review of the UNECE work undertaken by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) as a follow-up to the reform carried out in 2005. The

aim of the review is to identify future work priorities. The Bureau discussed the documents related to the CES to be submitted to the EXCOM.

57. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The document should highlight the value added of the Conference and its relevance for the partners in Europe and globally. The main value added of the Conference concerns the coordination of international work and the development of statistical methodology in areas not addressed elsewhere. Furthermore, the Conference plays an important bridging role between the EU and OECD members, and the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

(b) International cooperation is of high importance in the conditions of current financial limitations and budget cuts. Without efficient cooperation, statistical offices would have to develop their own solutions which would result in overlapping activities, duplication of work and compromised international comparability.

(c) The division of labour between the international organizations could be elaborated in more detail.

(d) The paper should place more emphasis on the importance of the work from user and stakeholder perspectives.

(e) The new/emerging issues converge around four main pillars: globalization, sustainable development and environment, streamlining statistical production, and population censuses and use of register data. Modernising and streamlining statistical production will result in greater efficiency, thus improving data quality and production of new statistical information to meet the needs of policy makers.

(f) It was proposed to add the implementation of the Fundamental Principles to the new/emerging issues focusing on the new challenges in this area.

(g) The lists of areas for enhancement, areas for downsizing and the emerging issues should be consistent. New and emerging areas of work should be distinguished according to different levels of priority.

Conclusion:

58. The secretariat should revise the documents, taking into account comments by the Bureau. (*Following the Bureau meeting, the updated version was consulted with the Bureau and submitted to the EXCOM.*) The document is expected to be an important contribution, driving the future work of the Conference.

VII. PRINCIPLES ON CONFIDENTIALITY ASPECTS OF STATISTICAL DATA INTEGRATION AND AN UPDATE ON NEW CASE STUDIES

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/14 (UNECE)

59. The UNECE secretariat reported on progress to update the two sets of CES principles and guidelines relating to statistical confidentiality: one dealing with general principles and guidelines for managing confidentiality and microdata access, and the other with data integration. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Eurostat micro data access policies are currently being revised, which may lead to some changes with respect to confidentiality issues.

(b) The guidelines are important for the OECD Expert Group for International Collaboration on Microdata Access, which plans to take stock of the different standards.

Conclusion:

60. The Bureau approved the proposal to publish case studies on managing confidentiality and microdata access electronically, and recommended to include a greater level of detail. Australia will circulate to the Bureau a set of documents explaining confidentiality issues to non-specialists, which could be linked to the electronic publication on *Managing statistical confidentiality and microdata access*.

61. A review of the *Principles and guidelines on confidentiality aspects of data integration undertaken for statistical or related research purposes* will be initiated after approximately one year. The review will take into account the comments received through an electronic consultation in spring 2011.

62. Guidelines may soon be needed on confidentiality issues related to geo-spatial data. This topic will be discussed at the next UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Confidentiality. The outcome of the discussion will be reported to the Bureau.

VIII. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES 2010 SEMINAR ON IMPACT OF CRISES ON STATISTICAL SYSTEMS

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/15 (Canada)

63. As a follow-up to the CES 2010 seminar on impact of crises on statistical systems, Canada prepared a paper on lessons learned by NSOs from the financial crisis. The CES Bureau provided recommendations for finalising the paper. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The paper should describe briefly the international initiatives undertaken in response to the crisis, such as the UNSD work on rapid estimates, the current work of IMF related to G20, etc.

(b) It is important to distribute the paper to all CES members to allow statistical offices to make use of experience acquired in responding to the crisis.

Conclusion:

64. The international organizations, members of the Bureau, will send to the secretariat brief information on activities started as a response to the crisis. Canada will incorporate this information in the paper as well as references to the websites of international conferences related to the topic. The paper will be submitted to the CES 2012 plenary session for information.

IX. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES 2011 SEMINAR ON MEASURING HUMAN CAPITAL

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/16 (New Zealand)

65. The CES 2011 seminar on measuring human capital concluded that a report should be prepared to take stock of the international work on measuring human capital, including the related work of OECD, the World Bank and UNECE. The Bureau discussed the outline of the report prepared by New Zealand.

Conclusion:

66. The Bureau agreed with the outline of the stock-taking report. The OECD will draft the report in consultation with the Chair of the small group of experts (New Zealand) and other members of the group, including Australia, Canada, Finland, Italy, Norway, Poland, United States, World Bank, Eurostat and UNECE. The Chair, with assistance from the OECD and the UNECE secretariat, plans to send a questionnaire to the CES members by the end of 2011 to collect information on their activities related to human capital. The CES 2012 plenary session will be informed about the progress of work.

67. The draft report is planned to be reviewed by the Bureau at its autumn 2012 meeting.

X. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CES 2012 PLENARY SESSION

A. Evaluation of the 58th CES plenary session

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/17 (UNECE)

68. The results of the evaluation questionnaires of the 2011 CES plenary session were presented for information.

B. Organization of the CES 2012 seminar “Implementing the UN fundamental principles of official statistics, including issues related to coordination of national statistical systems”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/18 (UNECE with input from Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Ukraine and United States)

69. The Bureau discussed the organization of the CES 2012 seminar on Fundamental Principles (FP) based on an outline prepared by UNECE in consultation with Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Ukraine and United States. United States will chair the seminar. The first session will be organised by the United Kingdom and the second session by Austria.

70. The following suggestions were made in the discussion:

(a) Celebration of the 20 years anniversary of the FP should focus on substantive issues and be short, relevant and forward looking. It was suggested that Heads of statistical offices be asked to write a short text about the importance of the FP in their country. These texts could be compiled and presented on the margins of the seminar (e.g. as posters).

(b) It is desirable to invite as a keynote speaker someone outside official statistics. Another possibility could be to prepare video clips of interviews with policy makers about their awareness and perception of the importance of the FP.

(c) How to increase awareness and recognition of the FP, especially among political authorities, is an important topic to be considered at the seminar. A related issue is how to promote the implementation of the FP among other producers of statistics both within and outside the national statistical system.

(d) The seminar could be organised according to the different Fundamental Principles focusing on the most problematic ones to implement, such as coordination and addressing misuse of official statistics. The papers should highlight good practices in dealing with these issues.

(e) The seminar should end with a concluding session to wrap up the discussion and consider possible follow-up actions.

(f) The organisers should guide the authors on the focus and length of the papers.

(g) A letter from the UNECE Executive Secretary to the governments of the UNECE member countries to promote the FP and underline their importance would be very helpful.

Conclusion:

71. The seminar organizers will update the outline for the February 2012 Bureau meeting, taking into account the suggestions by the Bureau. The seminar will take place on Thursday, 7 June 2012. It will continue to follow the “CES format”, including summaries of papers by the Session Organisers and no presentations of individual papers. A concluding session will be added for wrap-up and to consider possible follow-up to the seminar. The deadline for invited papers will be 1 March 2012.

72. The secretariat will ask Heads of statistical offices to prepare a short text (maximum 1 page) for the CES 2012 plenary session on the importance of the FP in their country.

73. The secretariat will draft an official letter from the UNECE Executive Secretary to the governments of the UNECE Member States to promote the FP on the occasion of their 20th anniversary. The text of the letter will be consulted with the Bureau.

C. Organization of the CES 2012 seminar “Challenges for future population and housing censuses based on lessons learned from the last census round”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/19 (Canada, CIS-STAT and UNECE)

74. The Bureau discussed the organization of the CES 2012 seminar on population censuses based on an outline prepared by Canada, CIS-STAT and UNECE. Canada will chair the seminar. The first session will be organised by Italy and the second session by the CIS-STAT.

75. The following suggestions were made in the discussion:

(a) The seminar should follow the traditional format of the CES seminars with papers summarised by the session chair instead of being presented by the authors.

(b) Session 1, on the 2010 round of censuses, should focus on the impact of the changes and innovations in census taking to draw lessons for the future.

(c) It is important to learn from country experiences. Short presentations on innovative methods by countries (maximum 10 minutes) could be organised outside the formal hours of the seminar, e.g. during the lunch break. Another suggested idea was to base the first session on one overview paper, adding factsheets on how the census was implemented in countries as background information.

(d) The UNECE paper prepared in 2010 should be updated to provide an overview of the census round in the region. The Austrian invited paper for session 1 could be extended to consider wider issues related to the register-based census, such as the frequency of census taking, how to safeguard the continuity and comparability of results, etc. It is desirable to have some papers from the Western Balkan countries, as they have made notable progress in census taking.

(e) The seminar should take into account the different approaches to conducting the census (the traditional census, register based and a combined approach), and the issue of how to make these data comparable.

(f) The papers for session 2 should be forward-looking and explore new ideas.

(g) A closing session should conclude the seminar and identify possible follow-up activities.

(h) Countries should consider bringing their census experts to the seminar to share experience.

Conclusion:

76. The seminar will take place on Wednesday, 6 June. The seminar organisers will proceed with the preparations and will update the seminar outline for the February 2012 Bureau meeting, taking into account the suggestions by the Bureau. The deadline for invited papers will be 1 March 2012.

D. Progress with the Report on Measuring Sustainable Development planned to be submitted to the CES 2012 plenary session

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/20 (UNECE)

77. The Bureau was informed about the progress of work of the UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The support for the work expressed by the 64th session of the Economic Commission for Europe held in March 2011, and its request to the CES to develop a framework for measuring sustainable development within the realm of official statistics, was welcomed.

(b) With regard to the recommendation of the 64th ECE session concerning the ECE work on environmental indicators, the Bureau noted that the ECE decision did not mention some core issues of environmental indicators requiring further work, such as indicators on clean air and sustainable transport and water quality.

Conclusion:

78. The draft report on Measuring Sustainable Development is expected to be sent to the CES Bureau for comments in January 2012. Subject to the agreement of the Bureau, the report is planned to be sent for electronic consultation to the CES members at the end of March 2012 and to be presented to the CES 2012 plenary session.

E. Preparation of the formal session, draft agenda and timetable for the 2012 plenary session

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/21 Rev. (UNECE)

79. The Bureau discussed the draft timetable of the CES 2012 plenary session. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- (a) It was suggested to combine agenda items according to topics.
- (b) The outcomes of the in-depth reviews could be merged into one presentation, or the agenda could focus on a few reviews instead of addressing all of them.
- (c) More time should be devoted to discussing the strategic developments in business architecture in statistics.
- (e) Information items should be distinguished from items for decision.
- (f) The population census seminar should take place on the first day of the CES plenary session, and the seminar on Fundamental Principles on the second day.

Conclusion:

80. The 60th CES plenary session will take place on 6-8 a.m. June 2012 in Paris. The secretariat will prepare an updated timetable of the CES 2012 plenary session for the 2012 February meeting of the Bureau.

XI. PROPOSAL FOR A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON MODERNIZATION OF STATISTICAL PRODUCTION, TO BE ORGANIZED IN COOPERATION WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/22 (UNECE)

81. The Bureau discussed the UNECE proposal for organising jointly with the Russian Federation a High-Level Seminar on Modernising Statistical Production in 2012. The seminar is targeted at the Heads of NSOs with a special focus on the CIS countries. The following points were raised in the discussion:

- (a) The session on effective coordination of national statistical systems should avoid overlap with a high-level seminar on this topic held in 2010.
- (b) CIS-STAT was asked to become one of the co-organisers of the meeting.
- (c) The meeting could also deal with the challenges in the implementation of statistical business registers with a particular focus on the CIS countries.

Conclusion:

82. The Bureau expressed its support in organising the meeting, and looked forward to following up with the preparation of this event.

XII. PRESENTATION OF THE STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

83. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) presented its activities related to collection, management and analysis of climate data. The role of the WMO climate work is to ensure international coordination of activities related to understanding, monitoring and predicting the state of the climate at various time and space scales. WMO Members produce statistical analysis of meteorological data based on national, regional and global observing networks, including upper-air networks, radar observations, satellite data and data collected at sea. In order to ensure globally sustained and coherent climate data, WMO applies standards for data collection, quality control, dissemination and exchange. Currently, the WMO uses 50 essential climate variables for long term climate assessment including 15 atmospheric, 19 oceanic and 16 terrestrial variables. The historical climate records date back to 1850. WMO promotes a continued data rescue effort and pays great attention to the data quality control and assurance. The WMO datasets are made available to research communities by leading international climate centres and regional climate centres. Climatological averages (climate normals) which consist of long term average statistics of countries are made available via UN Data.

84. Based on the climate data, the WMO releases an annual statement of the status of global climate as a summary authoritative assessment of the state of the climate, including statistical analysis of global temperature trends and variations, and the observed extreme weather and climate events in the world and by region. The WMO cooperates actively with the research community. The data are used for different research purposes, such as for the statistical analysis of climate extremes. More work is needed to improve the underlying statistical data provided by countries, especially for better understanding of the changes in the extreme climate events.

85. There is potential for linking the data produced by statistical offices and the climate data, e.g. in relation to agriculture, food security, water, health and socio-economic issues. The WMO will organise a meeting between the users of climate statistics and climate scientists on 15 December 2011 (for more information, see http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/wcp/wcdmp/gfcs_obs.php).

XIII. DATES AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CES BUREAU MEETINGS

Conclusion:

86. The next CES Bureau meeting will be held in Luxemburg on 7-8 February 2012. The secretariat will make a proposal for the timing of the 2012 autumn meeting in consultation with the members of the Bureau.

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

87. All papers of the meeting will be made available on Internet.

88. The Bureau decided to invite Mr. Eduardo Sojo Garza-Aldape, the President of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics of Mexico, to become a member of the Bureau, to replace Brazil. The Bureau thanked Mr. Eduardo Nunes for his dedicated and constructive service in the CES Bureau.

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