

Third Meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau
Luxembourg, 7-8 February 2012

For decision

Item 2(c) of the Provisional
Agenda

**SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEW BY THE CES BUREAU
IN 2012-2013**

Prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The CES Bureau regularly undertakes in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas. These reviews enable the Bureau to promote the coordination of international statistical activities in the region, and to ensure that duplication of work is avoided and emerging issues are addressed. The aim of the discussion is to identify problems and propose follow-up actions at the international level to address the issues identified by the review.
2. The Bureau has decided that about 3-4 topics should be reviewed each year. The selected topics should respond to the following criteria:
 - (a) There are significant developments in the area.
 - (b) There are significant coordination issues.
 - (c) There is a lack of activities at the international level.
3. The topics for in-depth review are selected from the 56 statistical areas listed in the DISA¹ classification of statistical activities. The topics may be either single topics, or ad hoc groupings from among the 56 statistical areas in the classification. The Bureau also nominates a country/organization to prepare an issue paper, which serves as a basis for the discussion. The Bureau members and other agencies actively involved in the area are invited to contribute short notes to the discussion.
4. Furthermore, the Bureau has decided that it would be useful to discuss the topics selected for in-depth review at a CES plenary session prior to the discussion at the Bureau meetings. In this way, input can be obtained from the CES members. The approach has been successfully used during the last few years (with the topics of statistical dissemination and communication; time-use surveys; and measuring information society and statistics on science, technology an innovation, and education statistics).

¹ Database of International Statistical Activities, available at : www.unece.unog.ch/disa/

5. Two topics “Banking, insurance and financial statistics” and “Poverty statistics” were supposed to be discussed in February 2012 but were postponed for a review in autumn 2012.

6. Two topics previously considered by the Bureau for review were also postponed to a later stage to wait for the outcome of work already undertaken. These are: climate change related statistics, and population and housing censuses. A Task Force is working on climate change related statistics and an in-depth review in this area should be carried out after the TF completes this work. The future work on population and housing censuses will depend on the outcome of the CES 2012 seminar on this topic. Therefore, any in-depth review of this area could take place as a possible follow-up activity to the CES 2012 seminar.

7. In order to facilitate the discussion, the secretariat has prepared a list of potential topics that could be reviewed in 2012-2013, provided in Annex 1. The Bureau could select from this list, or propose any other topics. The current classification of statistical activities is provided in Annex 2 – the topics can be either single topics or combinations of topics from the classification. The list of topics that have been reviewed in depth since 2005 when a new approach to the in-depth reviews was established by the Bureau, is provided in Annex 3.

8. **The Bureau is invited to:**

(a) **Select topics to be reviewed in-depth during 2012 and 2013.**

(b) **Nominate the countries or international organizations to prepare the issue papers to provide basis for the discussion.**

(c) **Select the topic that will be discussed at the 2012 CES plenary session prior to the review by the Bureau.**

ANNEX 1

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEWS IN 2012-2013 PROPOSED BY THE UNECE SECRETARIAT

I. LIST OF POSSIBLE TOPICS TO BE REVIEWED IN 2012-2013 (4 TOPICS SHOULD BE SELECTED)

- A. Statistics related to population ageing
- B. Migration statistics
- C. Measurement of social protection
- D. Process-oriented approach to statistical production
- E. Open data
- F. Human Resources Management and Training in Official Statistics
- G. Leading, composite and sentiment indicators and official statistics
- H. Energy statistics
- I. Entrepreneurship statistics
- J. Political and other community activities, including voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, volunteering

II. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE TOPICS

A. Statistics related to population ageing (DISA 1.1 Population and migration; 3.3.2 Gender and special population groups)

1. Ageing as a demographic trend is expected to remain for decades, requiring societies to adapt. The statistical community may expect a continuing policy demand for indicators that capture this phenomenon and its societal consequences in many statistical domains, all of which may require adjustments for better capturing of ageing-related issues.

2. The topic could focus on the following aspects:

(a) Mainstreaming ageing in official statistics: considering ageing-related aspects across all statistical domains.

(b) Adjustment of specific statistical domains for better capturing of the impact of ageing:

- (i) Labour
- (ii) Social protection
- (iii) Education
- (iv) Health

(c) Use of alternative measures of chronological age and life expectancy.

(d) Longitudinal measures of life course dynamics are increasingly in demand: How can official statistics contribute?

(e) Indicators for monitoring the implementation of the UNECE Regional Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and official statistics.

B. Migration statistics (DISA 1.1 Population and migration)

3. As international migration continues to grow and achieve prominence on the political landscape, so does the need for improving the collection and quality of migration data. The United Nations estimates that between 2000 and 2010 the number of migrants worldwide increased by 20%, to its current level of 214 million. This growth in international migration has corresponded to increased prominence of the related policy discussion, exemplified by the 2006 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly and subsequent Global Forums on Migration and Development. A conclusion of these meetings was that international migration could play an important role in national development, provided it was supported by appropriate policies and development strategies.

4. However, in many countries migration statistics still remain incomplete, inaccurate, out-of-date, or non-existent. There is still a great need for improved data quality and accessibility, which are critical for making evidence-based policy decisions and informing public debate. In addition to improvement of basic data on the size of migration, information on the characteristics of migrants, as well as the impact of migration on both migrants themselves and the places they move to and leave, could be improved.

5. In October 2005, the CES Bureau endorsed a “Work Plan to Improve International Migration Statistics” (CES/BUR.2005/13) prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau with inputs from Statistics Canada. The plan included a number of activities to be carried out by various Task Forces reporting to the UNECE Steering Group on Migration Statistics. In November 2010, the Steering Group reported to the CES Bureau on the progress made, and revised TOR were approved. Between 2012 and 2013, it is expected that all of the activities in the work plan will be concluded.

6. The Bureau may wish to review the progress made by the CES groups and any other international organizations active in the area, and discuss about priorities for future work in this field.

C. Measurement of social protection (DISA 1.6 Social protection)

7. The latest international statistical recommendation on social security was the Resolution concerning the development of social security statistics, adopted by the Ninth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (April-May 1957). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_087550.pdf

8. Measuring social protection is important especially in the midst of financial crisis where issues around government/private spending and human well-being are constantly being weighed against each other. The question that governments around the developed world are asking today is "How can we save the maximum with minimum impact on our well-being?" Measuring social protection is of particular interest, as it constitutes an important cost but also a crucial benefit. Here are a few issues around social protection that require resolving:

(a) Clarification of statistical concepts: Statistical definitions for social security, social protection and components. An important issue is measuring the cost and effect (based on the share of people actually receiving benefits) versus legal coverage (based on eligibility).

(b) Using and reconciling multiple data sources (administrative records and household surveys).

(c) Designing indicators geared towards policy use.

(d) Possibilities/issues for international comparability.

9. Social protection is a cross cutting issue linked to different topics like employment/labour statistics (e.g. it is a sub-dimension for measuring quality of employment), national accounts (also through satellite accounts on health) and the general work on social and demographic aspects. Links to the Stiglitz report and its work on broader measures of well-being could also be further explored.

D. Process-oriented approach to statistical production (related to DISA 5.5 Management and development of technological resources, but not limited to that)

10. Many statistical organisations have moved to, or are considering implementing a more process-oriented approach to statistical production, as part of moves to streamline or “industrialise” official statistics. These initiatives are closely linked to the vision of the High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics, endorsed by the CES in June 2011.

11. Whilst statistical production has traditionally been organised in domain-specific “stovepipes”, some organisations have moved towards a more functional approach, grouping together core functions such as data collection, processing and dissemination, across statistical domains. This approach may lead to increases in efficiency, but may also have certain drawbacks in terms of lack of overview of individual staff members of the production process and its purpose.

12. What type of organizational structure best supports statistics production taking into account increasing demands and financial constraints? It would be valuable to share experiences with implementing different organizational structures, to try to identify some good practices and common lessons learned.

E. Open data (DISA 5 Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics)

13. Governments in several countries (e.g. USA, Norway, New Zealand, UK, France, Australia and even Moldova) are developing policies to make all sorts of official data more available to the public. Typically this includes big administrative registers in areas such as education or health, but it can also include data on government purchases and payments, and even road traffic flows.

14. The growing political focus on “open data” raises many challenges for official statistics, cutting across all domains. It raises strategic issues such as how to respond to the threat of competition from private sector and research organisations getting access to

micro-data that in some cases have not even been available to the NSOs until now. There are strategic and methodological issues around confidentiality and processing / linking large data sets, and there are the IT issues about how to manage such volumes of data. The official statistics community needs some sort of coordinated response, or at least a mechanism for sharing of ideas / experiences on open data.

F. Human Resources Management and Training in Official Statistics (DISA 5.4 Management and development of human resources)

15. The management and development of human resources (HR) are integrated and necessary parts of the development of statistical offices concerning both the way in which work is organized and the statistics produced. This is reflected in the paper "Strategic vision of the High-level group for strategic developments in business architecture in statistics" presented at the CES plenary in 2011. The development of the HR also appears as a prerequisite for national statistical offices to meet the needs and demands of tomorrow. If working processes and the statistical end products as well as the role of the NSOs as such will change so should the profile of the HR. At the same time statistical offices meet a number of challenges on human resources:

(a) How to attract and retain young and qualified staff - the digital generation - for the tasks of tomorrow? Should the image of official statistics and national statistical offices be re-considered to help attracting the staff we would like to attract; recruiting policies; skills development?

(b) Motivation of staff: Leadership development for tomorrow's tasks, which takes into account different institutional frameworks; change management in official statistics; development of modern working environments, e.g. flexible work arrangements and telecommuting.

(c) Training in statistical offices: How to organize in-house training: formal and informal learning; the use of E-learning; how to measure the cost/benefit of training? In addition to this the challenges on human resources management are often aggravated in periods of budget restrictions or cuts, while the offices are asked to 'do more with less'. A number of countries have implemented sophisticated HR development and training programs, including recruiting policies, mobility schemes, career paths, competence mapping; new organisation of work; training of new staff and e-learning. Exchange of experiences and good practices would be useful to many countries.

16. An in-depth review of the issue, or the organization of a CES seminar, could address some of the strategic issues raised by the HLG-BAS.

G. Leading, composite and sentiment indicators and official statistics (the topic deals with certain aspects of DISA 4.5 Dissemination and 5.1 Institutional frameworks and principles, role and organization of official statistics)

17. Different indicator sets have been developed by countries and international organizations to meet the demand for evidence based policy making in a wide variety of areas. New initiatives to identify leading, composite or sentiment indicators are currently discussed internationally. Some countries are concerned about the possible compromise to

statistical institutions' objectivity or reliability if they engage in producing leading, composite or sentiment indicators.

18. The growing demand for such indicators is evident; the question is how the national statistical offices react to this challenge? OECD and European Commission have published a "Handbook on constructing composite indicators", and OECD releases a set of composite leading indicators regularly. This is a cross-cutting issue that is not explicitly in the mandate of any international organization. At the same time, different countries and organizations have acquired practical experience with setting up indicator sets following the different global summits and to monitor important policy strategies. Exchange of views and practical experiences in statistical offices would be helpful to guide countries with less experience and might lead to the development of a set of guidelines or recommendations.

19. An overview of who has done what in this area and how the official statistical community could meet this challenge would be useful.

H. Energy statistics (DISA 2.4.2 Energy)

20. Detailed, complete, timely and reliable energy statistics are essential to monitor the energy situation at a country level as well as at an international level. Energy statistics on supply, trade, stocks, transformation and demand have been traditionally collected and being used as the basis for energy policy decisions.

21. A new area in energy statistics that has recently caught the attention is energy statistics related to environment. This covers mainly the renewable energy, which is energy derived from natural processes that are replenished constantly. Another area where new initiatives have been undertaken is measuring energy efficiency and producing related indicators.

22. The discussions on climate change have undoubtedly stimulated the development of renewable energy in order to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. Therefore, there is a strong need for better monitoring this development and consequently to strengthen the reporting and dissemination of timely and reliable information on renewables, including the development of environmentally related energy indicators. This is a major challenge since a large part of renewable energy is not commercially marketed (fuelwood, solar collectors) and/or is located in remote areas. The International Energy Agency has undertaken work in this area.

23. The international work on energy statistics is led by the International Energy Agency (IEA) with the involvement of some other international organizations, such as UNSD and Eurostat. In some countries, energy statistics is produced by the statistical office but in many countries it is done by another government agency. An overview of the international work on energy statistics and its relation with other statistical areas (environment, housing, economy, climate change, etc.) would be useful to assess the situation and identify possible actions to improve work in this area.

I. Entrepreneurship statistics (DISA 3.3.7 Entrepreneurship)

24. This relatively new topic was included by the Bureau in the classification of statistical activities only in 2010. It crosses the traditional boundaries of economic and social statistics, integrating data, often from a range of different sources. It combines topics such as the demography and performance of businesses with the characteristics of individuals, households and societies.

25. In the current economic climate, the role of entrepreneurs in stimulating economic growth is being given increasing attention, and the development of statistical methodology to measure this phenomenon has been a priority for several statistical organizations. Therefore, it seems appropriate for the Bureau to review what has been achieved so far, and to provide guidance on the future direction of this increasingly important and policy-relevant area of work.

J. Political and other community activities, including voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, volunteering (DISA 1.10 Political and other community activities)

26. This area is increasing in importance, including in the context of good governance, social capital, etc. There is not much work in official statistics at the international level in this area.

27. The CES Task Force on measuring volunteering completed its work in 2008. The TF identified a number of recommendations on defining volunteer activities and measuring volunteering. The work contributed to the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* which was adopted by the ICLS in 2008. The ILO is also collecting data related to trade unions. The World Bank is undertaking work on measuring governance. A lot of work on measuring (good) governance is undertaken outside official statistics: in the research and academic area, and by agencies like the Economist Intelligence Unit, Gallup World Poll, etc.

28. The review could focus on the following issues: How much is official statistics involved in this area? How much should or can it be involved? The area is quite wide and it could merit a review by the Bureau to get an overview of what is being done, what the links are with official statistics, and whether there are gaps where international activities would be useful

29. A closely related topic “The role of the 3rd sector (voluntary sector or non-profit sector)” was proposed by Walter Radermacher in February 2008 for an in-depth review.

ANNEX 2

CLASSIFICATION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES

Domain 1: Demographic and social statistics

- 1.1 Population and migration
- 1.2 Labour
- 1.3 Education
- 1.4 Health
- 1.5 Income and consumption
- 1.6 Social protection
- 1.7 Human settlements and housing
- 1.8 Justice and crime
- 1.9 Culture
- 1.10 Political and other community activities
- 1.11 Time-use

Domain 2: Economic statistics

- 2.1 Macroeconomic statistics
- 2.2 Economic accounts
- 2.3 Business statistics
- 2.4 Sectoral statistics
 - 2.4.1 Agriculture, forestry, fisheries
 - 2.4.2 Energy
 - 2.4.3 Mining, manufacturing, construction
 - 2.4.4 Transport
 - 2.4.5 Tourism
 - 2.4.6 Banking, insurance, financial statistics
- 2.5 Government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics
- 2.6 International trade and balance of payments
- 2.7 Prices
- 2.8 Labour cost
- 2.9 Science, technology (and innovation)

Domain 3: Environment and multi-domain statistics

- 3.1 Environment
- 3.2 Regional and small area statistics
- 3.3 Multi-domain statistics and indicators
 - 3.3.1 Living conditions, poverty and cross-cutting social issues
 - 3.3.2 Gender and special population groups
 - 3.3.3 Information society
 - 3.3.4 Globalisation
 - 3.3.5 Indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals
 - 3.3.6 Sustainable development
 - (3.3.7 Entrepreneurship)
- 3.4 Yearbooks and similar compendia

Domain 4: Methodology of data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis

- 4.1 Metadata
- 4.2 Classifications
- 4.3 Data sources
 - 4.3.1 Population and housing censuses; registers of population, dwellings and buildings
 - 4.3.2 Business and agricultural censuses and registers
 - 4.3.3 Household surveys
 - 4.3.4 Business and agricultural surveys
 - 4.3.5 Other administrative sources
- 4.4 Data editing and data linkage
- 4.5 Dissemination, data warehousing
- 4.6 Statistical confidentiality and disclosure protection
- 4.7 Data analysis

Domain 5: Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics

- 5.1 Institutional frameworks and principles; role and organisation of official statistics
- 5.2 Statistical programmes; coordination within statistical systems
- 5.3 Quality frameworks and measurement of performance of statistical systems and offices
- 5.4 Management and development of human resources
- 5.5 Management and development of technological resources (including standards for electronic data exchange and data sharing)
- 5.6 Coordination of international statistical work
- 5.7 Technical cooperation and capacity building

ANNEX 3

TOPICS REVIEWED IN-DEPTH SINCE FEBRUARY 2005

- Technical cooperation (February 2005, paper by Eurostat)
- Migration statistics (February 2005, paper by United States)
- Income and consumption (February 2005, paper by Canada)
- Labour statistics (February 2005, paper by Italy and ILO)
- Transport statistics (February 2005, paper by Denmark)
- Quality frameworks and the link with institutional frameworks and principles (February 2006, paper by Sweden, in cooperation with Eurostat and IMF)
- Statistics on Globalisation (February 2006, paper by Canada and United Kingdom)
- Justice and crime statistics, including the safety concept (February 2006, papers by Italy and the Netherlands)
- Health statistics (February 2006, papers by United States and OECD)
- SDMX initiative (February 2007, paper by SDMX sponsors)
- Population statistics (February 2007, paper by UNECE)
- Business statistics (February 2007, notes by IMF, Finland, UNSD, UNECE, Eurostat, Canada)
- Income, living conditions and poverty (October 2007, paper by OECD)
- Gender statistics (October 2007, paper by UNECE)
- Culture statistics (February 2008, paper by Finland)
- Environment statistics (February 2008, paper by Eurostat)
- Agricultural statistics, including forestry and fisheries statistics (October 2008, paper by Eurostat, in cooperation with United States and Brazil)
- Measurement of labour cost (October 2008, paper by OECD)
- Housing statistics (February 2009, paper by Poland)
- Statistical dissemination, communication and publications (October 2009, paper by the CES Steering Group on Statistical Dissemination and Communication)
- Government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics (October 2009, paper by IMF)
- The use of secondary and mixed sources for official statistics (June 2010, paper by UNECE)
- Time-use surveys (November 2010, paper by Germany)
- Measuring the information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation (November 2010, paper by Australia)
- Education statistics (November 2011, paper by Australia)
- Global manufacturing (November 2011, paper by the Netherlands)
- Household survey methods (November 2011, paper by Canada)

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