

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For discussion and
recommendations

Meeting of the 2013/2014 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 21-22 October 2014

Item 5(a) of the Provisional
Agenda

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON AGEING-RELATED STATISTICS

Prepared by the Task Force

*This document presents a progress report and plans on remaining activities of the Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics. The Task Force was set up in February 2013 and includes statisticians, policymakers and researchers. **The Bureau is invited to review the progress and provide advice on further work.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) conducted an in-depth review of statistics related to population ageing in November 2012. In follow-up, it established the Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics in February 2013 and approved its work plan in October 2013.
2. The Task Force includes statisticians, policymakers and researchers. The Bureau noted that this composition is challenging and the work should be organised carefully to ensure its progress. If the model adopted in this Task Force where statisticians, policymakers and academia work together is successful, it may be used in the future in other work areas of the Conference. The Bureau asked to review the progress of work of the Task Force annually.
3. The objective of the Task Force is to improve the availability, accessibility and comparability of statistical data in support of ageing-related policymaking in the framework of the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.
4. The terms of reference include the following activities and outputs:
 - a) Providing an overview of existing sets of statistical indicators for monitoring the ageing situation and policies;
 - b) Providing an overview of international data availability and comparability of ageing-related statistics;
 - c) Identifying domains that ageing-related statistics should cover;
 - d) Identifying in each domain data gaps that could be addressed using existing sources, through better processing and access to micro-data and linking administrative and survey data;
 - e) Developing recommendations to statistical offices for addressing the data gaps;

- f) Collecting and presenting good national practices in disseminating and communicating ageing-related statistics;
 - g) Developing recommendations to statistical offices for harmonising the dissemination and improving the communication of ageing-related statistics.
5. The Task Force includes members from 19 statistical offices (Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, United Kingdom, United States, CIS-Stat and Eurostat), 8 experts on ageing from other government agencies (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Georgia, Italy, Portugal, Serbia and United States), as well as 3 experts representing academia.
6. Emma Wright from the Office for National Statistics in the United Kingdom is the Chair of the Task Force.

II. PROGRESS OF WORK

A. Identifying topics that ageing-related statistics should cover

7. The Task Force first identified the topics that it should cover within the scope of ageing-related statistics (activity *c* as per terms of reference). These topics were mapped onto four areas that reflect the policy goals of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration¹:
- a) Longer working life;
 - b) Social inclusion;
 - c) Health, independence;
 - d) Intergenerational solidarity.
8. A fifth area of demographic measures of ageing was considered as a standalone topic.

B. Creation of a metadata repository

9. In order to address activities *a*, *b* and *d* of the terms of reference, the task force members reviewed data availability on ageing-related statistics in their respective countries and organizations. The large membership of the task force allowed such an approach to generate results across a wide variety of CES countries.
10. Firstly, a number of sets of indicators for monitoring ageing was examined, including the indicators for the Active Ageing Index (developed jointly by UNECE and the European Commission Directorate General on Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), indicators for monitoring the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and relevant EU and OECD indicators.
11. Of these, the 84 most relevant indicators were incorporated into a template to request information on their availability, use by policymakers, dissemination, source, periodicity, available breakdowns and inclusion of institutional populations in the calculation of the

¹ The ministerial declaration “Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing” adopted at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Vienna in September 2012, available at www.unece.org/pau/age/welcome.html.

indicator. In total, 18 UNECE countries replied to the survey. The replies formed a metadata repository for the Task Force's use.

C. First meeting of the Task Force

12. The Task Force is mainly working by utilizing an online workspace at the UNECE web site. The Task Force held a face-to-face meeting on 27 November 2013 in Geneva with 24 members participating.

13. The meeting reviewed the information collected on the indicators, considered national good practice examples in disseminating and communicating ageing-related statistics, and decided on a detailed work plan.

D. Follow-up work of the teams

14. To pursue the work in different substantive areas, the Task Force created five teams to focus on the four areas of the policy goals of the Vienna Declaration and on demographic measures. The Task Force appointed team leaders to organize the contributions from the teams, and developed a general guidance note for teams along with a toolkit of resources.

15. The teams have been analysing data gaps for their respective areas as well as drafting recommendations to address these data gaps. To date, four of the five teams have delivered concept notes containing the analysis of data availability and data gaps. The structure of these concept notes is presented in the Annex. Work is ongoing to revise and complement these drafts and to produce the remaining note.

III. PLAN FOR THE REMAINING WORK

A. Second meeting of the Task Force

16. The Task Force plans to hold a second meeting on 18-19 November 2014 in Geneva, back-to-back with the meeting of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing where several Task Force members participate.

17. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the concept notes prepared by the teams, in particular the recommendations and their streamlining, and to decide upon the next steps towards finalizing the Task Force's report.

B. Finalizing the report

18. From November 2014 to January 2015, the Task Force will work on the streamlining of its recommendations, filling in any remaining gaps in the report and editing the texts. It aims to present the final report to the February 2015 meeting of the CES Bureau.

ANNEX I. STRUCTURE OF CONCEPT NOTES

A. Ageing topics that require measurement

1. Specific topics from the Vienna Declaration policy areas were assigned to each team. A list of topics for measurement was supplied to each team as a starting point.

B. Availability of suitable data to measure ageing topics

2. The section considers the extent to which available data can be used to measure each of the ageing topics detailed in the previous section. The repository of metadata based on the survey on indicators in countries (described in section II.B) will be a particularly useful resource for this exercise, since it provides information on indicator availability by country. In this section, it is important to consider the following questions:

- How well do the indicators match the policy needs?
- Do the indicators appropriately characterise the issues within each of the ageing domains? Are additional data needed for conceptual reasons?

C. Addressing data gaps

3. For those policy topics that were identified in section A, and for which no suitable measure could be found in section B, this section should consider how the “gaps” could be filled. Important questions to consider include:

- Is it feasible to extend existing EU or other indicators to additional countries?
- Should other sources of data be explored? (e.g., SHARE, Gender and Generations Survey, etc.)

4. In many cases, the replies from countries to the survey on availability of indicators contained suggestions for alternate measures for certain topics, and these should be considered as ways of addressing any data gaps identified.

D. Quality and comparability of ageing data

5. This section includes comments on the quality and comparability of the ageing-related data within selected subject-areas. It is anticipated that the metadata repository will be a useful resource for this exercise, by providing information, such as age and sex breakdowns, periodicity, and sample size.

E. Dissemination and communication of ageing-related statistics

6. Here teams may review dissemination and communication practices for ageing-related statistics, and may wish to highlight examples of good practice. Where the metadata repository shows that certain indicators can only be made available through extra tabulation of microdata, some consideration of the implications of this for communication and dissemination might be

necessary. For example where such an indicator is the only source of data for an important topic. Alternatively, the teams may wish to comment on access policies for microdata.

F. Recommendations

7. This section summarises the recommendations of each team.

G. Further work required in this area

8. This section outlines specific areas where further work is required.

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