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Agenda

STATISTICAL PROGRAMME 2019

Prepared by the Secretariat

The document presents the UNECE statistical programme for 2019. **The CES Bureau adopted the programme in October 2018.**

Table of contents

I.   Introduction

A.   Purpose of the document

1.   The document presents the activities that the Statistical Division of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will carry out in 2019 to implement the UNECE statistical programme for 2018-2019[1]. The document is in line with the biennial programme which is the main official document in the United Nations planning and budgeting system that provides the basis for allocating the budget and planning the necessary United Nations support services for the substantive work programmes.

2.   While the official biennial work programme presents the work at an aggregated level, the current document describes the work in more detail explaining:

- • The main activities in 2019;

- • Why the activities are needed, and which issues they address;

- • The expected results and impact of these activities.

B.   Objective and strategy of the UNECE Statistical Division

3.   According to the Strategic Framework for 2018-2019, approved by the United Nations General Assembly, the objective of UNECE Statistical Division is "*to develop official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians*".

4.   The UNECE Statistical Division strives to achieve this objective through four interconnected streams of work carried out in close cooperation with the member States (see Figure 1): (1) streamlining of international statistical work in the UNECE region; (2) methodological work to develop and promote guidelines and recommendations to enhance quality of statistics; (3) capacity development in particular to measure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and (4) the UNECE statistical database. The work of the Division is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) to ensure that it focuses on the priorities of member countries. It is carried out in close cooperation with other international organizations active in statistics, such as Eurostat, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD). Furthermore, the work responds to the guidance provided by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) and global initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).

5.   The UNECE EXCOM considered the work of the Conference most recently in December 2017. Members of EXCOM appreciated the work carried out under CES to promote independent, good quality statistics that are fundamental for a democratic society. Countries noted that they benefit greatly from working with CES, mentioning in particular

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[1] The UNECE biennial programme in statistics for 2018-2019 was adopted by CES in June 2017 (ECE/CES/2017/13) and was approved by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 27 November 2017. It is based on a Strategic Framework for 2018-2019 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 2016.

the areas of modernization of statistical systems, statistics for SDGs, developing common statistical methodologies, and capacity building. It was stressed that there is a strong need to consider the issue of geospatial data in future work. EXCOM commended the good cooperation between UNECE and the statistical bodies of OECD and the European Union and noted that Regional Commissions have an important role to promote such cooperation at the global level. It was emphasised that the products of UNECE are relevant beyond its region as well as to the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Figure 1. Interconnected work streams of the UNECE Statistical Division

6. The UNECE Statistical Division supports **streamlining international statistical work** in the region through providing the secretariat for the Conference of European Statisticians – the highest level intergovernmental statistical body in the UNECE region and a platform for regional coordination of international statistical work.

7. Guided by the priorities and needs of the member States expressed through the Conference, the UNECE Statistical Division carries out **methodological work** by mobilizing and servicing teams of national experts and assisting them in turning their knowledge and experience into international statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of best practices.

8. Driven by demand of member States, the UNECE Statistical Division participates in assessing the gaps in national statistical systems and undertakes **capacity development** activities to support the implementation of international guidelines and standards, with a particular focus on the guidelines developed under CES.

9. Finally, UNECE provides a **statistical database** focusing on areas of high political importance, giving insights into measurement issues, and helping identify priorities for UNECE methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries.

10. All CES work is guided by the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics[2], a standard developed by CES, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 (resolution A/RES/68/261).

11. The work of UNECE Statistical Division is strongly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for a follow-up and review of the achievement of the goals and targets "*based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts*"[3.]

12. The UNECE Statistical Division works on statistics for SDGs in two main directions. First, it supports the national statistical offices in their role as coordinators and providers of statistics for SDGs. Second, it undertakes methodological and national statistical capacity development work in demographic, social, economic, and environment statistics that supports producing statistics and indicators for measuring progress towards SDGs in specific subject areas.

C. UNECE Statistical Division and Conference of European Statisticians in the international statistical community

13. UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), which is the highest level intergovernmental statistical body in the UNECE region and a platform for the regional coordination of international statistical work.

14. The Conference is comprised of the Heads of national statistical offices of 56 UNECE member states, OECD member countries and some other countries outside the region (for example, Brazil, China and Mongolia). According to the Rules governing the work of the Conference, any United Nations Member State who regularly participates in activities of the Conference can become a member. The Heads of statistical services of the international agencies that participate regularly in the CES work also actively participate.

15. The Conference and its Bureau pay particular attention to avoid duplication of work and to efficiently use the available resources. The Conference undertakes work on emerging topics to support development of statistics and brings together experts to develop outputs, such as statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of good practice, which often have a global impact. Through the Conference countries share the resources for statistical development by exchanging expertise and using an international pool of experts.

16. Work of the Conference is driven by member countries represented in the Conference, and by the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission. In addition, general guidance is given by UNECE EXCOM consisting of government representatives of the UNECE member countries.
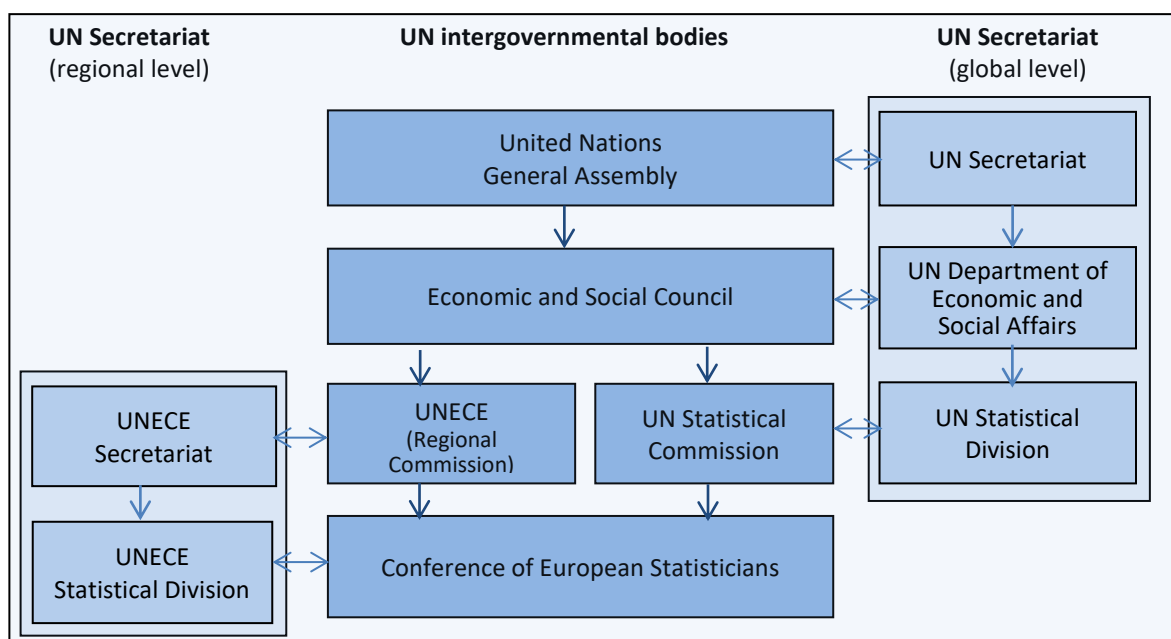
17. The Conference of European Statisticians meets under the joint auspices of UNECE and the United Nations Statistical Commission. It works under the overall guidance of Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. All regional commissions, including the UNECE Secretariat, report to the United Nations Statistical Commission about statistical activities in their region.

18. An explanation of the UNECE Statistical Division and CES within the United Nations institutional structure is provided in Figure 2.

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[2] See: http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/docs.fp.e.html
[3] See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld , para 74

Figure 2. Conference of European Statisticians and the UNECE Statistical Division in the United Nations intergovernmental structure

19. The UNECE Statistical Division cooperates closely with other international organizations active in the international statistical community, such as OECD, Eurostat, CIS-STAT as well as specialized agencies, United Nations programmes and funds, related organizations or other United Nations bodies wherever relevant.

20. The contribution of the UNECE Statistical Division to the international statistical community is guided by the priorities and needs of the CES members. The region is diverse comprising both developed and developing statistical systems. This diversity provides a good basis to deal with the new and emerging issues while ensuring that the results of the work are applicable in countries with different levels of statistical development. The exchange of knowledge, practices, new developments and challenges provided by CES is enriching to all participants. There are several examples of issues that have first been raised in the countries with developing statistical systems that have turned out to be of high interest also to countries with more advanced systems and have resulted in tools that are useful for all countries in the region.

II. Annual programme of work

21. In 2019, the work of UNECE Statistical Division will focus on the following priorities: statistics for SDGs; economy and globalization; population and migration, gender, poverty and inequality; environment, climate change and hazardous events and disasters; modernization of official statistics, and strategic and managerial issues. Capacity building focuses on areas highlighted by global assessments of statistical systems.

A. Streamlining international statistical work in the UNECE region

22. Coordination of international statistical work in the region is a key task of Conference of European Statisticians with the aim to avoid duplication of work, find synergies, use resources efficiently and reduce the burden on national statistical offices.

The Conference and its Bureau regularly discuss statistical work in the region, carry out in-depth reviews and organize seminars to explore foundational issues and emerging topics of official statistics. In its annual plenary session, the Conference endorses the main outputs, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the CES work programme.

23.   The main topics at the annual CES plenary sessions are selected by member countries and discussed in two seminar sessions. The first CES seminar in 2019 will focus on "**New data sources – accessibility and use**". Statistical offices increasingly turn to alternative data sources, such as geospatial data, big data or administrative data to address the new demands and increase the efficiency and quality of the regular data production. The extent to which such sources can be and are used already for producing official statistics varies greatly depending on the domain and country. The seminar will demonstrate concrete cases of using new data sources for official statistics and will identify the related challenges with the aim to initiate work on finding common solutions.

24.   The second main topic at the 2019 CES plenary session will be strategic reflections on "**Emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data**". NSOs in many countries are taking on leadership roles as data custodians in their governments. The ability to create new value and release new policy insights from data is critically dependent on building and maintaining public confidence in the trusted sourcing, management, and use of data. The seminar would address a number of strategic and operational issues related to NSOs playing a data stewardship role.

25.   The CES Bureau will steer the statistical work under the Conference and will meet twice in 2019 to review selected statistical areas in-depth, such as various types of satellite accounts and measurement of gender identity. Some in-depth reviews carried out earlier by the Bureau will lead to follow-up work in 2019, such as:

- Better measurement of economy in the conditions of globalization calls for the development of innovative and secure ways to **exchange data on large multinational enterprises.** As an outcome of the review on this topic, the Bureau set up a Task Force to find practical solutions on how to exchange and share economic data between countries while fully respecting the confidentiality of respondents' data.

- The review of **gaps in gender statistics** highlighted the need for further work on communication, use and interpretation of gender statistics. In February 2018, the CES Bureau established a new Task Force on communication of gender statistics and decided to conduct an in-depth review on measuring gender identity in February 2019.

- The review of **measuring social exclusion** showed that although many countries have inclusive growth and non-exclusiveness on their policy agenda, the concept of social exclusion remains ambiguous and its measurements incomparable. In June 2018 the Bureau set up a Task Force on measuring social exclusion with the objective to consolidate current and emerging good practices in measuring social exclusion and in assessing their potential for delivering comparable results.

26.   The CES Bureau is the custodian of the widely used **Classification of Statistical Activities**. The latest version of the classification dates from 2009. In 2019, UNECE will initiate a review of the classification to take into account the emergence of new statistical areas, such as climate change-related statistics and statistics on governance.

B. Methodological work on statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations

27. The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations to respond to countries' demand to improve the quality and comparability of official statistics and efficiency of statistical production.

28. The methodological work is conducted through teams of specialists set up by CES or its Bureau for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, membership, output, timeframe and a sunset clause. The UNECE Statistical Division contributes to the work of teams of specialists by playing a catalyst role – mobilizing the groups and assisting them in turning their knowledge and experience into international statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of best practices. UNECE provides the secretariat for the teams, and equips them with tools, such as wiki spaces (which allow common working spaces and discussion forums) and teleconferences to connect experts and foster the collaborative work. Some teams of specialists use new working methods, such as "sprint sessions" to deliver results in a short time frame.

29. To ensure high quality and relevance of the outputs, all standards, recommendations and guidelines developed by the CES teams of specialists are consulted electronically with all CES members (close to 70 countries from UNECE region and beyond) before endorsement by the Conference.

30. The following six task forces plan to finalize their work and submit their recommendations for endorsement to the CES plenary session in 2019: waste statistics; measuring hazardous events and disasters; leading, composite and sentiment indicators; satellite accounts on education and training; measuring old-age population in institutions; and intra-household decision-making.

(i) Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

31. The work of the UNECE Statistical Division is fully aligned with SDGs, facilitating country-led reporting of statistics for SDGs in two main ways. First, UNECE is **supporting national statistical offices as providers and national coordinators of statistics on SDGs**. The related activities are described in this section. Second, the Statistical Division undertakes **methodological work and national statistical capacity development to inform policy decisions for the achievement of SDGs through work on demographic, social, economic, and environment statistics**. The capacity development is directly related to SDG 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development", in particular targets 17.18 and 17.19. The thematic work is described in respective sections throughout the document with reference to the SDGs which measurement this work supports.

32. The United Nations General Assembly resolution *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*[4] (2030 Agenda) calls for a country-led follow-up and review process that will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated (para 74g of 2030 Agenda). This requires unprecedented coordination in statistical methodology, data flows and communication.

33. These challenges cut across goals and thematic domains. National statistical offices are responsible for reporting annually on 232 indicators for 17 SDG goals and 169 targets. Fifty agencies across the United Nations system and beyond (the so-called custodian

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[4] A/RES/70/1

agencies) are charged with receiving and harmonizing these national statistics and preparing regional and global aggregates for the United Nations Statistical Division for inclusion in the United Nations Secretary General's annual report on progress towards SDGs.[5] This raises the issue how to coordinate the data flows and how to ensure that countries have a say what data is available for them in international databases. The issue of transparency, efficiency and country-accountability in data flows is not new. However, the breadth, scope and ambition of the 2030 Agenda have urged focus on resolving these long-standing issues to better monitor progress for SDGs and to improve global statistics generally.

34. UNECE work in this area is steered and coordinated through the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs. Its flagship publication, the *UNECE CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs (2017)*[6] is widely implemented by countries and international organizations alike. UNECE is starting to develop a second edition of the Road Map to reflect new information, lessons learned, and emerging challenges, to be released in 2020. The Steering Group maintains a wiki where more detailed information about the work, as well as a lot of useful resources for experts working on statistics for SDGs is available[7].

35. The work progresses in four main areas. Providing practical guidance on using public, online **national reporting platforms** (NRPs) for monitoring national statistics for SDGs[8] will come to conclusion in early 2019 with releasing guidance on facilitating data flows from NRPs to custodian agencies. The guidance will have a particular focus in practical data transmission processes (such as the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange, (SDMX)).

36. In 2019, the results of the second pilot study of **data flows** will be released. The pilot study is exploring ways to improve communication and data flows between countries and custodian agencies in the harmonization of SDG statistics. Building on the success of the first pilot in 2017, the second pilot in 2018 involved 40 countries and 6 custodian agencies focusing on the more difficult cases where countries need to validate data which are not sent directly to agencies by countries. The practical recommendations resulting from the pilot will provide input to the 2019 United Nations Statistical Commission discussions on guidelines on SDG data flows. In addition, a review of existing data flows for tier 1 indicators (i.e., where the agreed methodology exists, and many countries are able to provide data) will be undertaken, with a view to improving the overall efficiency of SDG data flows.

37. A Task Team on **communicating statistics for SDGs** will prepare guidance on how countries can most effectively communicate SDG statistics to stakeholders, including identifying best practices in communicating statistics in Voluntary National Reviews to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

38. A Task Team on **statistical capacity development** will identify common priorities for statistical capacity building within the UNECE region and will explore how to match country needs to available technical assistance resources. This work aligns with the UNECE statistical capacity development strategy that CES endorsed in 2018. It will be implemented in a demand driven and modular way, to develop practical solutions.

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[5] See: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018.

[6] See: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2017/ECECESSTAT20172.pdf. The Road Map is available also in Russian and Spanish.

[7] https://statswiki.unece.org/display/SFSDG/Statistics+for+SDGs+Home

[8] As of June 2018, 32 countries within UNECE CES have or plan to produce an NRP.

(ii) **Economy and globalization**

39.   UNECE is working with countries to implement international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, which are a prerequisite for the compilation of many global SDG indicators, including all the indicators having GDP in the denominator. Main priority areas for 2019 include measuring economic growth, globalization, statistical business registers and entrepreneurship, human capital, quality of employment, prices and leading, composite and sentiment indicators.

40.   UNECE promotes the implementation of the 2008 System of **National Accounts** (2008 SNA) to enable the provision of high-quality data for economic analysis and policies under the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by UNSC. In 2019, UNECE will focus on methodological work on measuring human capital, global production arrangements and exchange of economic data. UNECE will also continue to support the implementation of the 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) in cooperation with other regional partners. As a follow-up to previous activities a special workshop for EECCA and SEE countries will be organized in 2019 with the aim to promote joint work among statistical offices and central banks and/or ministries of finance on the consistency and overall quality of economic statistics.

41.   Better measures are needed to assess how skills and knowledge acquired through education and training influence economic growth and productivity. A CES Task Force is coordinating a pilot test of satellite **accounts for education and training and** based on the results will prepare a Compilation Guide with recommendations for the construction of internationally comparable satellite accounts for education and training. The draft Guide will be presented for endorsement to the CES plenary session in June 2019.

42.   In a globalised world, enterprises operate in complex value chains that span multiple countries making "national" accounting increasingly challenging. The **exchange of economic data between countries** is, therefore, becoming a necessity, as identified in the *Guide to Measuring Global Production*. It is expected that the Group of Experts on National Accounts will launch a network of experts on large and complex enterprises to enable the sharing of best practices in working with multinational enterprise groups and collect consistent data on their global activities. In 2019, a Task Force on exchange and sharing of economic data will develop guidance, tools and principles for the exchange of economic data based on enablers and obstacles identified in a review of current data exchange practices. The draft findings will be discussed at the 2019 meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts.

43.   UNECE will continue to collaborate with other international expert groups dealing with the **impact of globalization on economic statistics**. As part of this, UNECE will contribute to the work of United Nations Expert Group on international trade and economic globalization statistics and the Integrated Global Accounts project of Eurostat.

44.   UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners, promotes the implementation of international recommendations on the **Consumer Price Index** (CPI), which plays an important role in policy making and is widely used for indexation of wages, pensions and social security allowances. In 2019, the CES Steering Group on CPI will begin preparations for the 2020 Expert Group meeting on CPI. As part of the ECASTAT programme on capacity building in economic statistics, UNECE plans to organise a regional workshop on CPI compilation for EECCA countries in 2019.

45.   Together with Eurostat and OECD, UNECE supports the development of **statistical business registers**, which are indispensable for efficient data collection and production of economic statistics. In 2019, UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the *UNECE Guidelines on the use of statistical business registers for business demography and*

entrepreneurship statistics in national statistical offices. The fifteenth meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers, organized jointly by UNECE, Eurostat and OECD will focus on the role of statistical business registers in the modernisation and integration of statistical production. The meeting will also consider utilising administrative data sources, web portals for respondents, statistical units in the statistical business registers and globalisation and business demography. A special session will discuss the challenges in producing statistical business registers in EECCA and South East European countries.

46.   UNECE, jointly with Eurostat, ILO and OECD, leads the international work on **measuring the quality of employment** aiming to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. In 2019, the UNECE Steering Group on measuring quality of employment will revise the *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Quality of Employment* (2015) to reflect revisions of ILO standards, country experiences and emerging issues. These topics will be discussed at the meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment that is tentatively planned for 2019.

47.   **Leading, composite and sentiment indicators** attract a lot of attention in the media and among policy makers, as they are often used to produce various country rankings. At the same time, there are no international guidelines on the quality and compilation methods of the indicators, and the area is new to many national statistical offices. The UNECE Task Force on leading, composite and sentiment indicators will finalise its work on developing recommendations on the production and dissemination of these types of indicators, and submit for endorsement at the 2019 CES plenary session.

(iii)   Population and migration, gender, poverty and inequalities

48.   UNECE develops statistical methods in areas of high policy relevance to respond to increasing demand for data on people's well-being, social environment and demographic change. The work in 2019 will focus on poverty and inequalities, migration, gender, population censuses, demographic projections, and ageing. Many challenges relate to the need to increase the use of administrative data and measure hard-to-reach population groups. This area of work is of particular importance for monitoring of the progress in the implementation of SDGs as numerous indicators require population data in the denominator and should be disaggregated by sex and migratory status.

49.   UNECE supports countries' preparations for the 2020 round of **population and housing censuses**. Censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on population and housing stock, which is used to produce other statistics (including many indicators where number of population is a denominator), and to plan public infrastructure and services. The resolution of Economic and Social Council "*2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme*" provides a global mandate for this work. There are increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy, which call for new and more efficient methodological solutions. To address these concerns, in 2019 UNECE will organize an expert meeting and a workshop to support implementation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses*, with a focus on the modernization of census methodology and technology. As an increasing number of countries aim at using administrative sources in the 2020 census, a UNECE Task Force is preparing *Guidance on the measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses*, to be completed in 2020. The UNECE Steering Group on Censuses is conducting an in-depth analysis on the future of population and housing censuses after the 2020 round.

50.   The growing demand for **population projections** for a variety of policy and planning needs has led to advances in projection methodology and to the production of projections by many organizations. In 2018, UNECE established a database on population

projection metadata, and published *Recommendations on communicating population projections* prepared by a dedicated task force. In 2019, UNECE will organize a region-wide expert meeting on the implementation of the Recommendations, the use of the database, and further work on demographic projections.

51.   UNECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on **measuring poverty and inequalities**. The measuring of progress towards the SDGs on the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequalities (Goal 10) requires comparable data and a coherent set of indicators. In 2019, UNECE will hold an expert meeting to address the implementation of the CES *Guide on Poverty Measurement,* regional needs for new methodological work, and challenges in measuring the SDG indicators on poverty and inequality. The Task Force on disaggregated poverty measures will continue its work on developing recommendations for national statistical offices by 2020. A new task force will review practices in measuring social exclusion and assess their potential for delivering comparable results.

52.   UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of **migration statistics**. This responds to the strong demand for collecting and utilising data on migration, expressed, among others, in the first objective of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018. The 2019 UNECE work session on migration statistics will discuss integration of data from multiple sources, the measurement of labour mobility, and asylum seekers and refugees, and the use of big data for measuring migration. A Task Force is developing guidelines on how to incorporate longitudinal data into annual migration statistics, which will be completed by 2020. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data, UNECE will continue to update and improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics. New harmonised survey modules will be developed and tested for measuring migration and remittances in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

53.   UNECE work on **gender statistics** aims at sharing knowledge and experience and developing capacity in areas where data and indicators of gender equality are insufficient or lacking. The need for better gender statistics is clear for the monitoring of SDGs, particularly to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5). In measuring women's power and decision-making, statistics are almost entirely limited to the public sphere of life, while the policy frameworks also include decision-making in the sphere of families and households that is not covered in such statistics. In 2019, two Task Forces will continue their work on developing guidance to statistical offices, respectively, (1) on measuring the gendered dimensions of intra-household power and decision-making, and (2) on the communication of gender statistics to policymakers and the public. Additionally, a team of experts will analyse different emerging practices in measuring gender identity. UNECE will continue to promote the national application of its toolkit for training the users of gender statistics.

54.   **Population ageing** has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. Ageing-related statistics are, therefore, in high demand by policymakers, as confirmed again in the Lisbon Declaration of the 2017 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing. Recent work on the UNECE *Recommendations on ageing-related statistics* (2016) revealed that there is no standardized approach for collecting data on people living in institutions while this group may constitute a large part of older population. In 2019, the UNECE Task Force will continue its work on developing guidelines for statistical offices on whether, when and how to include institutional populations in the production of statistics on ageing-related topics.

(iv)   Environment, climate change and hazardous events and disasters

55.   UNECE activities in this domain aim at improving statistics of high relevance to environment policy which are required to derive many SDG indicators. The main priorities

in 2019 will include climate change-related indicators, environment statistics, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and statistics related to hazardous events and disasters.

56.   Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics for environmental monitoring. Among the three pillars of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, data availability for the environmental pillar is the lowest. Providing data on environment related SDGs (such as Goals 6, 14 and 15) is a challenge for all countries but especially for the countries with less developed statistical systems.

57.   The Joint Task Force of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES will support the improvement of the production and quality of **environmental statistics** in EECCA and SEE countries in line with the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. In 2019, the Task Force will review these guidelines to align them with SDG indicators, the United Nations Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) and SEEA. The work contributes to the pan-European Shared Environmental Information System and is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency, Eurostat and UNSD. A possibility to link the Shared Environmental Information System with national SDG reporting platforms will be examined.

58.   UNECE supports the implementation of the global **System of Environmental-Economic Accounting** in the region, jointly with OECD. This includes building capacity in support of SEEA, providing a platform for exchange of knowledge and experience, assessing data availability and developing methods and sources for the needed data. The work in 2019 will focus on implementation of SEEA in the context of SDGs, climate change and other policy applications as well as identifying new techniques and data sources for compiling SEEA accounts, communication strategies and coordination of work in the region. The UNECE Statistical Division will also carry out training workshops and advisory missions to build capacity of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in this area.

59.   Work to improve official statistics for **climate change** analysis involves statisticians and partners from the climate community, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In 2019, UNECE will organize an Expert Forum to discuss progress towards implementing the *CES Recommendations on Climate Change-related Statistics* in response to the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework on Disaster-risk Reduction and SDG 13. The UNECE Steering Group will continue to support countries in developing road maps to implement the *CES Recommendations* and collect the resulting good practices for sharing in a wiki platform. A UNECE Task Force is refining the initial set of core climate change-related indicators to enable countries to produce comparable information on climate change, its causes and impacts. In 2019, the Task Force will develop practical guidance on data sources and methodologies to support the production of the indicator set.

60.   UNECE brings together statisticians and disaster risk experts, including from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), to develop official statistics for **hazardous events and disasters**. A UNECE Task Force will finalise its recommendations to clarify the role of official statistics in providing data related to hazardous events and disasters. The recommendations will identify practical steps that NSOs, in coordination with national agencies responsible for disaster management, can take to support disaster management and risk reduction. The recommendations will be submitted for endorsement to CES in June 2019.

61.   **Waste statistics** are of high policy interest in the context of SDGs, green economy, resource efficiency, circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, climate

change and many other policy initiatives. However, there are important conceptual and methodological problems in this area: the lack of internationally harmonized concepts, definitions and methodologies leads to incomparability of data. There is no international classification of waste for statistics outside the European Union (EU). Important aspects of waste management, such as illegal waste collection and trade, illegal dumping, informal waste picking and waste management by private sector are not included in official waste statistics and are difficult to capture in statistics. The problems result mainly the lack of common framework on waste statistics. In 2019, the UNECE Task Force on waste statistics, involving experts from countries, expert institutions and international organizations (such as Basel Convention Secretariat, Eurostat, OECD and UNSD), will finalise a conceptual framework on waste statistics to be submitted for endorsement to CES in June 2019. The framework will provide a basis for harmonising the concepts and definitions, developing standard classifications and providing methodological guidance to provide better quality information for important waste-related policies.

(v) Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics

62. The first Fundamental Principle states that official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the government, the economy and the public with data […]. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information." To be able to honour this commitment, official statistics needs a strong legal and institutional basis. As the landscape of information producers is rapidly changing, the legislative and institutional infrastructure should support developing new business models, engaging in partnerships and using new data sources and technologies to allow modernization of official statistics and removing unnecessary barriers to releasing the full value of statistics. Common standards and practices rarely exist in this area of work. UNECE activities in this domain aim at strengthening the responsiveness, accountability and transparency of statistical institutions to ensure access to high quality information, as enshrined in SDGs (Goal 16).

63. In 2019, UNECE will continue to promote and disseminate the CES *Guidance on modernising statistical legislation* (2018) to enable continuous development of statistical systems with partners, guarantee independence and accountability, and ensure data security and high quality of statistics.

64. Following up on the *Recommendations for promoting, measuring and communicating the value of official statistics* (2017), in 2019 UNECE will pilot test the approaches to measure the value of official statistics with interested countries. UNECE will update the wiki platform with best practices to share results of countries' innovative work. The best practices are intended to inspire statistical offices to increase the value of statistics, and the pilot testing, in turn, will help to demonstrate that value in concrete terms.

65. **Partnerships** are becoming increasingly important for national statistical organizations, in areas such as data acquisition, geospatial information management and data for SDGs. In 2019, UNECE will disseminate and promote principles and framework for creating **strategic partnerships** developed in 2018 as the outcome of a High-Level Seminar on Strategic Partnerships.

66. As a follow-up to the CES 2018 seminar on "Measuring what matters", a task team of international experts will develop guidance on **how to identify and quickly respond to changing user needs**. It will be disseminated, along with examples of good practices, via an interactive electronic platform.

67. The growing importance of **integrating statistical and geospatial information** calls for closer collaboration between geospatial experts and statisticians. The resolution of Economic and Social Council (E/2016/L.28) "*requests that the regional commissions*

provide relevant support, upon request and as appropriate, to the work of the regional bodies of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)." In 2019, UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe will continue to promote dialogue between national bodies responsible for geospatial and statistical information. In 2019, a joint workshop on the integration of data from different sources is envisaged, building on previous joint events in 2017 and 2018. The aim is to bring together experts from national statistical, mapping and geospatial agencies to share good practices.

(vi)   Modernization of official statistics

68.   In recent years, many national and international statistical organizations have initiated developments to restructure the statistical production process to address the challenges and harness the opportunities resulting from new data availabilities and technological advances. These developments have significant implications for the structure and efficiency of statistical organizations, and a major impact on strategic decisions related to budget, human resources and corporate strategy. UNECE is working with countries to create frameworks, models and guidelines that will assist them in their modernisation journey and collaboration efforts. This work is overseen by the High-level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS), which coordinates the relevant expert groups and ensures that they work towards common goals based on the CES vision for modernizing official statistics.

69.   The work under HLG-MOS aims at innovating, developing new standards and tools, building capabilities and sharing tools for statistical production. It is carried out by four Modernization Groups (Supporting Standards, Sharing Tools, Developing Organisational Resilience, Blue Skies Thinking Network), through annual projects and through workshops on specialized topics on dissemination and communication, data collection, statistical data editing and statistical confidentiality. Due to the dynamic nature of this work, there is a very short timeline between planning of activities and their implementation. As every year, the main activities of four modernisation groups as well as topics of HLG-MOS projects for 2019 will be identified in an annual HLG-MOS workshop by the end of 2018. In line with the new vision adopted in 2018, the focus areas for HLG-MOS in 2019 include active engagement with key stakeholders and enabling statistical organizations to be a trusted data authority.

70.   The Supporting Standards Modernization Group supports the **implementation and use of models developed under HLG-MOS** to facilitate modernization activities (Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (**GAMSO**), Generic Statistical Business Process Model (**GSBPM**), and the Generic Statistical Information Model (**GSIM**). In 2018, this group reviewed GAMSO, GSBPM and GSIM to ensure that these models remain relevant and are aligned with each other. In 2019, the group will work on consolidating materials and practical examples to communicate the models more clearly. GSBPM is already in wide use. The group will link GSIM objects with GSBPM processes and work on improving the further use of GAMSO and GSIM. The group will also actively support organizations implementing the models.

71.   The Sharing Tools Modernization Group supports and encourages **the practical implementation of the Common Statistical Production Architecture** (CSPA). In 2019, the group will focus on communicating and stimulating the sharing of statistical services and the benefits of using CSPA compatible services based on CSPA 2.0, aligned with this vision in 2018. The group will also continue helping organizations share services in the most pragmatic way possible. New services will be shared in the CSPA Service Catalogue that was renewed in 2018.

72.   The Modernization Group on **Developing Organizational Resilience** (formerly the Capabilities and Communication Group) supports the corporate areas of statistical

organizations through providing guidelines on competency profiles, training, management issues, and other methods for increasing the efficiency of statistical organizations (for example lean management). In 2019, the group will focus on improving organizational resilience of statistical offices and helping them to define target operating models in an increasingly complex environment. Additionally, it will promote the capabilities training material and guidelines on risk management developed in 2018, and follow the activities resulting from the CES Bureau in-depth review of emerging issues in statistical communication in 2018, and from discussions at the HLG-MOS and their annual workshop.

73. The Blue Skies Thinking Network is the **innovation hub** of the modernization work programme, which allows to quickly assesses new opportunities for official statistics to support innovation. The outcome of an assessment can be a concrete proposal for further work, a completed piece of work or a recommendation that the work should not proceed. In 2018, the Network's Machine Learning Team completed an in-depth study on various aspects of machine learning in the context of official statistics. Topics can be proposed by group of countries at any time and if accepted will be added to work of the Network for 2019.

74. As a follow-up to the CES 2018 seminar on "Getting the message across: strategic reflections on modernizing statistical communication", the organising committee of the workshop on dissemination and communication will define the communications skill set needed by all staff in a statistical organization. The topics of branding statistical organizations, and how to react to fake news will also be considered.

C. Capacity development

75. UNECE aims to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems in all member countries, and particularly those in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, to implement international standards and guidelines and meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Particular attention is paid to promoting the *United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*, which provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems. In June 2018 the CES endorsed a new UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy[9], which reinforces the principle that capacity development activities should be user driven.

76. UNECE capacity development activities include:

- Global Assessments of national statistical systems;

- Capacity development workshops;

- Advisory services to address country-specific needs;

- Development of methodological guidance, survey tools and training material.

77. Capacity development activities are carried out in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, EFTA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CISSTAT) and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

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[9] See:
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2018/CES_10_rev1__Statistical_capacity_development_strategy_rev.pdf

78. UNECE capacity development activities are based on the findings and recommendations of **Global Assessments of national statistical systems** of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Global Assessments are carried out in cooperation with Eurostat and EFTA and are used by various donors active in the region, such as the World Bank. The reports represent a unique tool to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. They help national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. Global Assessments have resulted in action plans to improve national statistics in all countries where they have been conducted. In 2019, UNECE, with the partner organizations Eurostat and EFTA, expects to complete a Global Assessment of **Georgia**, and a joint overview of the national statistical system of **Uzbekistan**. A Global Assessment of **Belarus** will be started.

79. A **United Nations Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data** will continue in 2019, to **support the production of indicators to measure progress towards SDGs**. UNECE will be involved in the implementation of the project in six statistical areas: means of implementation (institutional environment), environment, population, gender, poverty, and economic statistics. The Programme will include a range of workshops and other capacity building activities scheduled up to the end of 2019.

80. The Steering Committee of the multi-Donor Programmatic Trust Fund to Support Statistical Capacity Building in Eastern Europe and CIS Countries (**ECASTAT**) will continue to finance a UNECE-led capacity building programme for the **implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics** in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The programme, which runs from 2017 to 2020, consists of regional workshops and other training activities in the areas of national accounts, statistical business registers, prices, migration and remittances statistics. The Programme also supports participation of experts from the target countries in statistical expert groups meetings.

D. UNECE statistical database

81. UNECE provides a statistical database offering key statistics on member countries via free on-line interfaces in English and Russian. This work promotes open access to, and use of, data for evidence-based decision making, as requested in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

82. Emphasis is placed on providing data on areas of high political importance to governments and to the United Nations system, such as issues relating to migration, globalization and gender equality. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues and helps identify priorities for UNECE methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries.

83. To reduce response burden on countries, data are collected from, or in cooperation with, other international organizations when this is possible. UNECE has continued its work to streamline the database activities, which has increased efficiency of data collection and facilitated timelier update and release of statistical data series. Further improvements are expected in the work related to the database maintenance, like automated generation of gender questionnaires and easier maintenance of the macroeconomic database. It is also planned to redesign the statistical database website to make it more responsive and user and mobile device friendly.

84. The database provides the source data for publications, such as the *UNECE Countries in Figures*, as well as for preparing regular short articles on the economic and social development in the UNECE region, published in the UNECE Weekly newsletter and on the UNECE web page. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and

identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2019.

85.   The UNECE statistical database is also used to disseminate data for UNECE policy work. It currently includes statistics on key socio-economic issues such **as globalization, population, education, employment, work-life balance, road traffic accidents, inland transport, forest resources and protection as well as biological diversity**. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

Annex I.
List of meetings from January 2019 to December 2019

Jointly with	Meeting (venue)	Date	Capacity Building
OECD	Seminar on SEEA Implementation (Geneva, Switzerland)	20-21 February 2019	
	CES Bureau Meeting (Washington, D.C., United States)	28 February-1 March 2019	
	Modernisation Sprint (Geneva, Switzerland)	25 a.m.-29 March 2019	
	Work Session on Demographic Projections (Geneva, Switzerland)	8-10 April 2019	
OECD, Eurostat	Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	9-12 April 2019	
	Expert Meeting on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (Geneva, Switzerland)	15-16 April 2019	
UNSD	Workshop on Statistics for SDGs (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-18 April 2019	
	Workshop on Data Integration (Geneva, Switzerland)	15-17 May 2019	
	Work Session on Gender Statistics (Neuchâtel, Switzerland)	15-17 May 2019	
	Measuring Global Production (Geneva, Switzerland)	27-29 May 2019	
	Workshop on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication (Gdansk, Poland)	12-14 June 2019	
	67th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Paris, France)	26-28 a.m. June 2019	
	ModernStats World Workshop (Geneva, Switzerland)	26-28 June 2019	
	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	16-17 September 2019	
Eurostat	Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-20 September 2019	
	Workshop on Culture Evolution (Geneva, Switzerland)	25-27 September 2019	
	Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment (to be confirmed)	September 2019	
OECD, Eurostat	Group of Experts on Business Registers	30 September-2 October 2019	
	Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	3-4 October 2019	
	Workshop on Statistical Data Collection (Geneva, Switzerland)	9-11 October 2019	
	CES Bureau meeting (venue to be confirmed)	16-17 October 2019	
	Workshop on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-29 October 2019	
Eurostat	Work Session on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	29-31 October 2019	
	Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality (Geneva, Switzerland)	29-31 September 2019	
Environment Division	Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-29 October 2019	
	SPECA Statistical Working Group (to be confirmed)	October/November 2019	
	Workshop on Modernisation of Official Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	19-22 November 2019	
	Workshop on Harmonization of Poverty Statistics (Geneva,	4 December 2019	

Switzerland)

Expert Meeting on Measuring Poverty and Inequality (Geneva, Switzerland)   5-6 December 2019

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Switzerland)

Expert Meeting on Measuring Poverty and Inequality (Geneva, Switzerland)