

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

First phase approved

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Aguascalientes (Mexico), 25-26 February 2020

Item III (f) of the Provisional
Agenda

**NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON
MEASURING HAZARDOUS EVENTS AND DISASTERS**

Prepared by the Task Force and the Secretariat

The Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters was first set up in February 2015. The Task Force prepared the “Recommendations on measuring hazardous events and disasters” which the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed in June 2019.

The Bureau discussed possible further work in this area in October 2019 based on the issues identified in the Recommendations and a proposal by the Task Force. The Bureau supported continuation of the work and asked the Secretariat to prepare new terms of reference for the Task Force.

The CES Bureau is invited to review and approve the new terms of reference of the Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) set up a Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters in February 2015 with the aim (i) to clarify the role of official statistics in providing data related to hazardous events and disasters, and (ii) to identify practical steps for NSOs, in coordination with national Disaster Risk Management Agencies, to support disaster risk reduction.

2. The Task Force prepared the *Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters* which CES endorsed in June 2019. The CES Recommendations were published in November 2019.¹

3. The Task Force identified a list of issues for further work, presented in Chapter 9 of the Recommendations. The issues fall into four main areas:

- (i) preparing practical guidance for the implementation of the Recommendations;
- (ii) statistical operationalization of terms, definitions and classifications used in disaster risk management;
- (iii) developing a recommended set of core statistics and indicators; and

¹ See <https://www.uncece.org/stats/extreme.html>

- (iv) establishing a community of practice, exchange of experience and knowledge.

4. At its meeting in October 2019 the CES Bureau supported the Task Force's proposal to continue the work (ECE/CES/BUR/2019/OCT/12) and asked the Secretariat to prepare new terms of reference for the Task Force. The new terms of reference are presented below addressing all the main areas listed above.

II. MANDATE

5. The work of the Task Force is conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Task Force will be extended for a period of four years (until June 2024). Its work will be organised in two phases, as described in Section V.

III. OBJECTIVE

6. The main objective of the Task Force is to support the implementation of the CES Recommendations and address issues for further work, presented in Chapter 9 of the Recommendations.

7. In pursuing this objective, the Task Force will cooperate with the UN agencies and other international organizations working in this area, building upon the expert network which has already been established.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

8. The planned activities and outputs of the Task Force, presented in the order of priority of the work, are the following:

A. Drafting of implementation guidance

9. Preparing practical guidance for the implementation of the CES Recommendations is among the priority issues for further work (main area (i)).

10. The CES Recommendations, together with the *Disaster-related Statistics Framework* (DRSF) developed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), provide a useful tool helping to begin or to improve producing official statistics related to hazardous events and disasters. However, more practical guidance for implementation is needed, taking into account the different national priorities, institutional settings and already available data. This guidance could be in a form of a road map and it should help to prioritise the required actions.

11. The implementation guidance will also address which measures can be taken to use the required statistical information for disaster-risk management while preserving statistical confidentiality.

12. The main output of this activity will be a document with practical guidance for NSO and NSS for improving statistics for measuring hazardous events and disasters. The document will also provide guidance for strengthening the roles and responsibilities of NSO and NSS in this area.

13. The implementation guidance will include national case studies.

B. Recommending a set of core statistics and indicators

14. Another priority issue mentioned in the CES Recommendations for further work is the development of a set of core statistics and indicators, including suggestions for official statistics to be quickly available and in sufficient quality in case of emergency situations (main area (iii)).

15. Several countries are developing hazardous event and disaster-related indicator sets. This work should be internationally coordinated to ensure availability of comparable official statistics and to maximise its use. A recommended set of core statistics and indicators will help countries to prioritise their implementation efforts and to have an internationally comparable set of information on hazardous events and disasters.

16. The main output of this activity will be a recommended set of core statistics and indicators, complementary with the already existing UNECE set of core climate change-related statistics and indicators, and closely aligned with the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement reporting.

17. The set of core statistics will also include suggestions for official statistics required quickly and in sufficient quality in emergency situations (“emergency data kit”). The disaggregation of information needed for the different uses, such as disaggregation by sex, age-group, income, economic activity, etc., will be identified and taken into account.

C. Establishing a community of practice, exchange of experience and knowledge

18. The Task Force can contribute to the establishment of a community of practice and to the exchange of experience and knowledge in this subject area, which is among the issues for further work (main area (iv)).

19. During the course of its work, the Task Force has established good working relationships with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Eurostat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and other key players working on this emerging issue.

20. NSOs and other members of NSS need to continue engaging with these and other organisations to further define and establish the role of official statistics in this area. However, as noted in the report on disaster-related statistics to the 2019 meeting of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSD et.al., 2019), there is currently no formalised mechanism in place to ensure long-lasting cooperation across disciplines and organisations. Presently, coordination and cooperation occur on an ad-hoc basis within technical expert groups with different mandates. Coordination and cooperation efforts are needed to develop common strategies, to address the diverse community of practice, to jointly develop methodologies and terminologies, and to efficiently support sustainable implementation.

21. To support these efforts the Task Force suggested the creation of a forum for regular exchange of knowledge and experience related to hazardous events and disasters similar to

the UNECE Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change Related Statistics.² Such a forum would provide an opportunity for sharing ideas, experience and good practices, identifying challenges and possible solutions, and discussing collaboration, coordination and roles among the statistical community, other involved agencies and the relevant international organizations.

22. ESCAP, ECLAC as well as UNDRR and UNSD have expressed their interest in organising such an event jointly with UNECE in 2021. The meeting could provide the starting point for a series of regular expert meetings organised alternately in different regions in the future.

23. The main output of this activity will be an expert meeting on measuring hazardous events and disasters in the year 2021. The meeting will be organised in close collaboration with other international organisations active in this area.

D. Statistical operationalisation of Sendai Framework terminology and indicator methodologies - providing contributions to work at the global level

24. From NSO and NSS perspective the statistical operationalisation of terminology, definitions and classifications used in this area is of very high priority. It is mentioned in the list of issues for further work (main area (ii)). However, many of these activities are done by other expert communities, often under the auspices of UNDRR.

25. The Task Force can contribute to these efforts by participating in technical expert groups, providing substantive contributions and reviewing of draft outputs.

26. The *Report of the Open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction* (endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2017) together with the *Technical guidance for monitoring and reporting on progress in achieving the global targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (UNISDR, 2018) contributed a lot to the global harmonisation of terminology and methods used for measuring hazardous events and disasters.

27. However, many of the terms, definitions and classifications used in disaster-risk management and in the Sendai Framework still are not fully operational from a statistical perspective.

28. There are several ongoing initiatives to further harmonise terms, definitions and classifications, including

- a) the ongoing work of the ESCAP Expert Group on disaster-related statistics, and their Disaster-related Statistics Framework;
- b) the development of an exhaustive international hazard classification by the UNDRR Technical Working Group on Sendai Hazard Definitions and Classification (established in 2019).

29. The Task Force will, to the extent possible and useful, provide contributions to these and other similar expert groups that may emerge in the future.

30. One concrete task will be to review from a statistical perspective the draft hazard classification which the UNDRR Technical Working Group on Sendai Hazard Definitions

² See <http://www.unece.org/statistics/meetings-and-events.html?id=3214#/0/0/0/41189/>.

and Classifications prepared in 2019. ESCAP and ECLAC have expressed their interest to collaborate with the Task Force and UNDRR in this work.

V. TIMETABLE

31. The Task Force is foreseen to be re-established in March 2020 and to work until June 2024. The work will be finished with endorsement of the Task Force's reports by the CES in June 2022 (first phase) and June 2024 (second phase).

32. The work will be organised in the following two phases:

a) Phase I will last from March 2020 until June 2022. The implementation guidance and the initial set of core statistics and indicators will be submitted to the 2022 Bureau for review and for the 2022 CES plenary session for endorsement. A first expert meeting will also be organised during this phase. This phase will also include work of the Task Force to review the revised hazard classification.

b) Phase II will last from July 2022 until June 2024. During this phase the implementation guidance and the initial set of core indicators will be tested (e.g. in form of pilot implementations) and, if necessary, refined. This phase may also include the organisation of a second expert meeting (depending on the outcomes of the first meeting) and further work to support efforts in statistical operationalisation of Sendai framework terminology and indicators. The final report of the Task Force will be submitted to the CES Bureau for its February 2024 meeting.

A. Phase I (March 2020 – June 2022)

33. One of the first substantive activities will be the review of the revised hazard classification (activity D) from a statistical point of view. It is expected that this work will last from March – December 2020.

34. The main work on the set of core statistics indicators (activity B) will be carried out from September 2020 – November 2021.

35. The work on the implementation guidance (activity A) is planned start in October 2020 and to be finished with an expert review by November 2021.

36. The organisation of a first expert meeting (activity C) will start 8 months before the meeting date, which is still to be determined.

B. Phase II (June 2022 – June 2024)

37. The focus of phase II will be on pilot testing of the set of core statistics and indicators and refining the set of indicators (activity B), if necessary.

38. A second expert meeting (activity C) may be organised, depending on the outcomes of the first meeting.

39. The second phase also includes a review of the implementation guidance (activity A) developed in phase I, taking into account the growing experience of countries, the refined set of statistics and indicators as well as outcomes and recommendations of the expert meetings.

40. Ad-hoc contributions to other initiatives to improve the statistical operationalisation of Sendai Framework terminology and indicator methodologies (activity D) can be made throughout the entire working period of the Task Force. Task Force members, in consultation with the CES Steering Group on climate change-related statistics, will decide on a case-by-case basis on the Task Force’s contributions.

41. A final report of the Task Force’s activities will be drafted in November/December 2023 for submission to the February 2024 CES Bureau.

C. Gantt chart

42. A detailed work plan for 2020 – 2024 (including milestones and interim deliverables) will be drafted in the first two months after extending the mandate of the Task Force. The following presents an indicative timetable in form of a Gantt chart.

Working Phase Activity / Year and quarter	Phase I												Phase II					
	2020				2021				2022				2023				2024	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Re-establishing Task Force and drafting of work plan	█	█																
Statistical review of revised hazard classification (activity D)		█	█	█														
Initial set of core indicators and statistics (activity B)				█	█	█	█	█	█									
Implementation guidelines (activity A)				█	█	█	█	█	█									
Organisation of an expert meeting (activity C)					█	█	█											
Submission of documents to CES Bureau												█						
E-consultation and submissions to CES Plenary												█						
Pilot testing of set of core statistics and indicators (activity B)												█	█	█	█			
Organisation of a second expert meeting (activity C)													█	█	█			
Refinement of set of core statistics and indicators (activity B)													█	█	█	█		
Review of the implementation guidelines (activity A)													█	█	█	█		
Ad-hoc contributions to other international work (activity D)		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
Submission of documents to CES Bureau																	█	
E-consultation and submissions to CES Plenary																	█	█

VI. METHODS OF WORK

43. The Task Force will work primarily by e-mail, wiki workspace and telephone conferences. Physical meetings of the Task Force could be organised back-to-back with other meetings that would be attended by a significant number of Task Force members, such as the Expert Forum on climate change-related statistics.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

44. The following countries and international organizations have already expressed their interest to participate in the work of the Task Force under a renewed mandate: Italy, Mexico, Turkey, ECLAC, ESCAP, FAO, WMO and UNDRR.

45. The membership continues to be open for representatives and experts from all countries and international organizations.

46. UNECE will act as Secretariat of the Task Force.

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