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Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe:
Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Statistical Programme 2022

Prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the statistical programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for 2022. It is closely linked to the Programme of Work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2022 (ECE/CES/2022/16), adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2021 and approved by the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in January 2022.

The Statistical Programme for 2022 was approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at its October 2021 meeting. The document is presented to the Conference for adoption.

The list of meetings held or planned to be held in 2022 is presented in the annex.

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I. Introduction

A. Purpose of this document

1.   This document presents the activities which the Statistical Division of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will carry out in 2022. The document is in line with the Programme of Work for 2022[1], which is the main official document in the United Nations' planning and budgeting system providing the basis for allocating the budget and planning the necessary United Nations support services for the substantive work programmes.

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

• The main activities in 2022;

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

• The expected results and impact of these activities.

B. Objective and strategy of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme

3.   According to the United Nations proposed programme budget for 2022 (A/76/6 (Sect.20)), the objective of the UNECE Statistical Programme is "to advance 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 UNECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)."

4.   UNECE strives to achieve this objective through four interconnected streams of work carried out in close cooperation with UNECE member States (see Figure 1): (1) streamlining international statistical work in the UNECE region; (2) methodological work to develop and promote guidelines and recommendations to enhance the quality of statistics; (3) capacity development, in particular to measure progress towards SDGs; and (4) the UNECE statistical database.

Figure 1.
Interconnected work streams of the Statistical Division of UNECE

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[1] A/76/6 (Sect.20)

5. The work of the Statistical Division is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians 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 the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The work also 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).

6. UNECE EXCOM considered the work of CES in January 2022. EXCOM appreciated the work of the Conference and supported the planned activities for 2022 and beyond. It was noted that UNECE was a key player in the global statistical world and contributed its regional know-how to the global level in the spirit of leaving no one behind. Countries commended the role of CES in promoting international statistical cooperation and sharing of best practice, highlighting in particular the guidance to statistical offices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. EXCOM emphasized the coordinating role of CES in the work on statistics for SDGs in the region. The UNECE regional platform and Dashboard on SDGs (available in English and Russian) and plans for its further development were welcome. The technical cooperation activities were highly appreciated. The work on measuring circular economy was considered very important.

8. EXCOM members noted with appreciation the work of High-Level Group for the Modernization of Statistics (HLG-MOS) in continuing to support the development of standards in response to the changing global context and emerging opportunities and supporting the global community for machine learning in official statistics.

9. All CES work is guided by the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, a standard developed by CES in 1992 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 (resolution A/RES/68/261). In 2022 the Conference will celebrate 30 years of adopting the Fundamental Principles by UNECE.

10. UNECE statistical work is strongly related to 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"[2]

11. UNECE works on statistics for SDGs in three main ways. First, it supports national statistical offices (NSOs) 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, supporting producing statistics and indicators for measuring progress towards SDGs in specific subject areas. Collecting and disseminating data on SDG indicators constitute the third component of this work. In 2022, UNECE will continue maintaining a regional knowledge hub on statistics for SDGs, including a platform providing data on SDGs for the UNECE countries.

12. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect the work of the Division in 2021 and will have a lasting effect on the way international work is carried out with a shift towards online collaboration. In 2022, the Division will continue maintaining a web platform providing support to countries on reorganizing their statistical work during the pandemic and explore how to make the best use of the available digital platforms.

[2] See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld, para. 74

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

13. UNECE provides the secretariat for CES, which is the highest-level intergovernmental statistical body of the UNECE region and a platform for the regional coordination of international statistical work.

14. CES comprises the Heads of NSOs of 56 UNECE Member states, OECD member countries and some other countries outside the region (for example, Brazil and Mongolia). According to the Rules governing the work of CES, any United Nations Member State which regularly participates in CES activities can become a member. The Heads of statistical services of international agencies also participate actively in CES work.
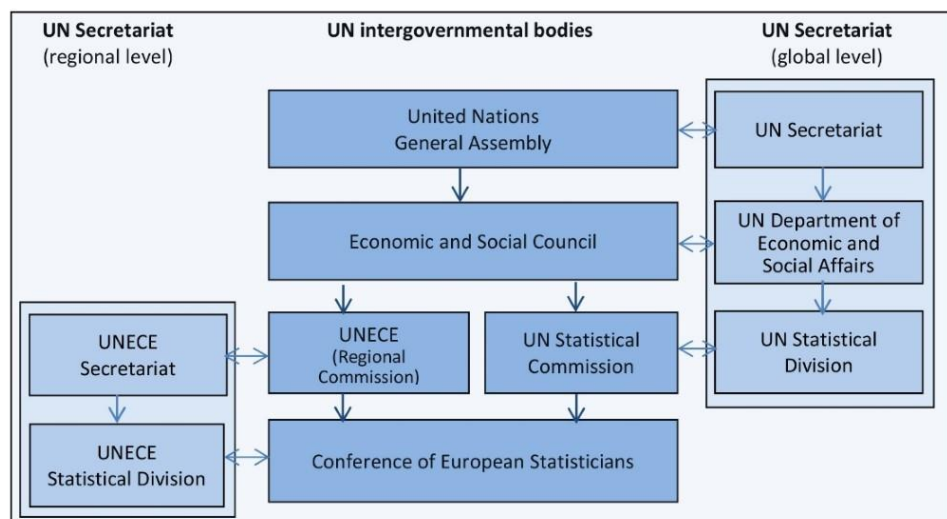
15. CES and its Bureau pay particular attention to avoiding duplication of work with other international organizations active in the region, and to making efficient use of available resources. CES undertakes work on emerging topics to support the development of statistics and brings together experts to develop products, such as statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of good practice, which often have a global impact. Through CES countries share resources for statistical development by exchanging expertise and using an international pool of experts.

16. The UNECE statistical work is driven by the priorities of CES member countries, as well as by the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission. In addition, general guidance is given by UNECE EXCOM, the UN Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

17. A representation of the UNECE Statistical Division and CES within the United Nations institutional structure is shown in Figure 2.

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

18. UNECE cooperates closely with other international and supranational organizations active in the region, such as OECD, Eurostat, EFTA, CIS-Stat, IMF, the World Bank, as well as United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds, related organizations or other United Nations bodies wherever relevant.

19. The UNECE region comprises both developed and developing statistical systems. This diversity provides a good basis to deal with 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 which have turned out to also be of high interest to countries with more advanced systems, and which have

resulted in tools that are useful for all countries in the region and beyond (e.g. the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the Generic Law of Official Statistics).

II. Annual work programme

20.   In 2022, UNECE statistical work will focus on the following priorities: statistics for SDGs; economy and globalization; population and migration, gender, poverty and inequality; environment, climate change, hazardous events and disasters, circular economy; modernization of official statistics, and strategic and managerial issues. Capacity development will focus on areas highlighted by assessments of statistical systems.

A. Streamlining international statistical work in the region

21.   Coordination of international statistical work in the region is a key task for CES aiming to avoid duplication of work, find synergies, use resources efficiently and reduce the burden on NSOs. CES and its Bureau regularly discuss international statistical work in the region, carry out in-depth reviews and organize seminars to explore foundational issues and emerging topics in official statistics. CES endorses the main outputs, guidelines and recommendations prepared under its work programme.

22.   At its annual plenary session, CES discusses selected emerging topics of high interest to the heads of NSOs. The CES Bureau will discuss the topics for the 2023 plenary session in October based on a proposal by the Secretariat taking into account the latest developments and most urgent priorities.

23.   The CES Bureau steers the statistical work under the Conference and meets twice a year to review selected statistical areas in depth. Some of the in-depth reviews carried out earlier by the Bureau will lead to follow-up work in 2022:

- Following the in-depth review of measuring circular economy in February 2020, a Task Force was set up in February 2021 to draft practical guidelines for measuring circular economy, including clarification of key terms and definitions, and identification of key statistics, indicators and data sources. The Task Force will continue work through 2022, planning to submit the guidelines to CES for approval in June 2023.

- Following the in-depth review of new forms of employment in February 2021, a Task Force was established in June 2021 to develop a conceptual framework to assist countries in producing relevant, coherent and internationally comparable statistics on different forms of employment, including the new forms such as 'platform' and 'gig' work (in alignment with the International Classification of Status in Employment 2018 (ICSE-18)). The Task Force plans to submit its final report for endorsement to the CES 2022 plenary session.

24.   The CES Bureau is the custodian of the widely used *Classification of Statistical Activities.* UNECE is reviewing the classification to take into account the emergence of new statistical areas, such as climate change-related statistics and statistics on governance, and will propose an updated version of the classification in 2022.

B. Methodological work on statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations

25.   The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations to respond to countries' demands to improve the quality and comparability of official statistics and efficiency of statistical production. The areas of methodological work are presented on Figure 3.

26.   The methodological work is conducted by 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 Statistical Division of UNECE convenes, mobilizes and manages
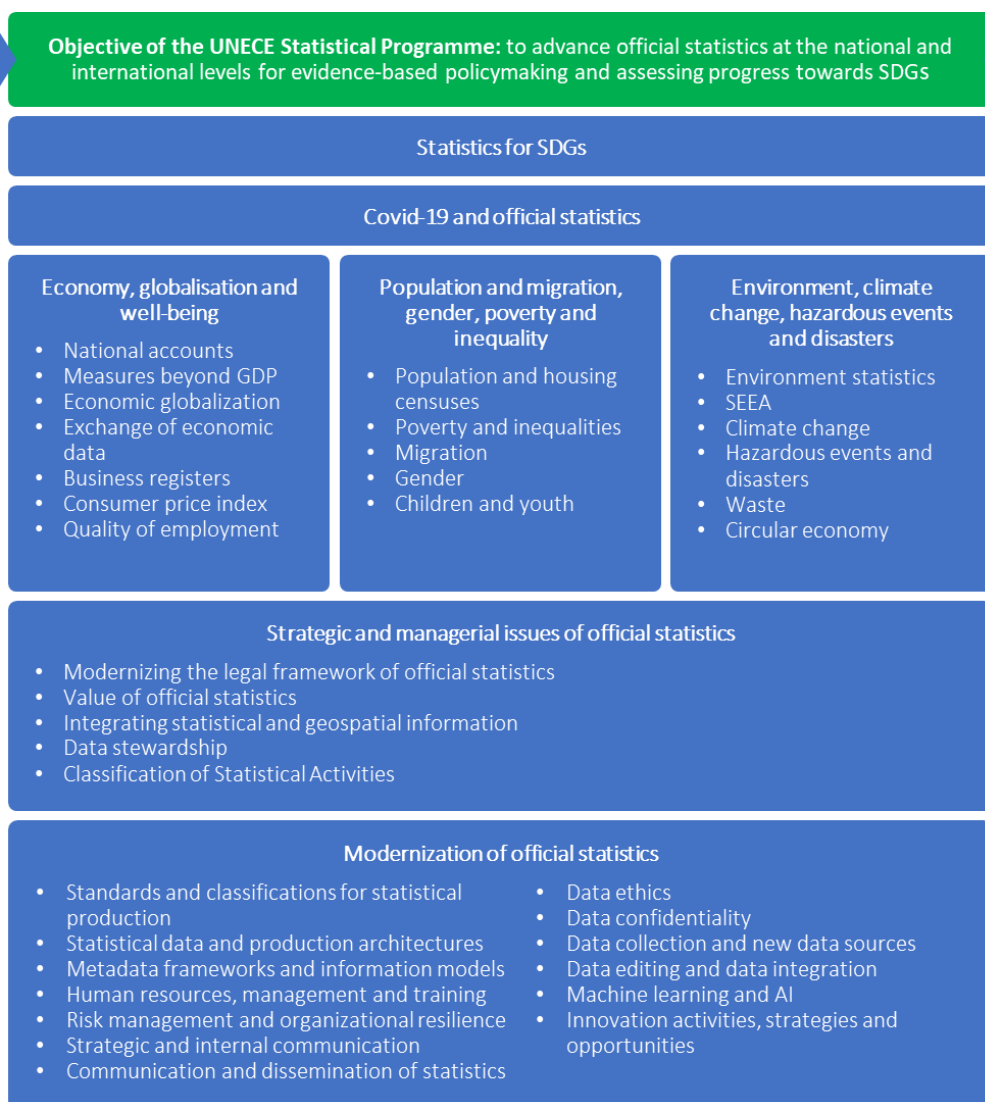
these groups, working with them to facilitate turning their knowledge and experience into international statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of best practices. UNECE acts as the secretariat for the teams and provides tools such as wikis (which allow common working spaces and discussion forums) and teleconferences to connect experts and foster collaboration. Some teams of specialists use modern working methods such as sprints to deliver results in a short time frame. The use of virtual forms of collaboration has been steadily increasing and has proven especially useful during the Covid-19 pandemic. This trend will continue but will be complemented by face-to-face meetings as soon as physical meetings become possible to maintain team spirit and motivation.

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

28. The following four task forces will finalize their work and submit their recommendations for endorsement to the CES plenary session in 2022: statistics on children, adolescents and youth; measuring of the value of official statistics; forms of employment; and use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility.

Figure 3.
Methodological work by the UNECE Statistical Division

1. Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

29. The UNECE statistical work encompasses all SDGs, supporting NSOs in facilitating country-led reporting of statistics for SDGs. In 2022, work will continue to enhance the

UNECE regional platform for data on SDG indicators launched in 2020. UNECE is also maintaining a *knowledge hub on statistics for SDGs* where more detailed information about its work in this area, and useful resources for experts, are available.

30. In 2021m the Conference endorsed a 2nd edition of its flagship publication, the *CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs* used widely by countries and international organizations. In 2022, the focus will be on supporting countries in implementing the second edition of the Road Map. UNECE work in this area is steered and coordinated through the CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs that establishes priorities and identifies concrete actions and tools that can support countries.

31. A Task Team on statistical capacity development has prepared a self-assessment tool for statistical offices to identify their needs and priorities for capacity development. The Task Team will continue testing the matrix focusing on its use by countries and possibly extending its use to other producers in the statistical system.

32. Another Task Team is planning to pilot automatic data transmission to the UNSD DataLab and use the results to compare the country data with data provided by international organizations responsible for selected SDG indicators. A new work stream will focus on communication with policy makers to explore how to better meet their needs and promote the use of official statistics for policy making.

33. In 2020, UNECE launched its regional platform for data on SDG indicators, which consists of a dashboard and database of selected SDG indicators in English and Russian, and a knowledge hub. In 2022, the dashboard and database will be further enhanced and their coverage of indicators expanded.

34. Since 2020, the Statistical Division prepares an annual report on progress with SDGs. Using internationally available data and an advanced statistical methodology commonly used by all five United Nations regional commissions, the 2022 report will assess the UNECE region's progress towards the goals and targets. It will be prepared in cooperation with the agencies and country teams represented in the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia.

35. The Statistical Division also undertakes methodological work and national statistical capacity development on demographic, social, economic, and environment statistics to inform policy decisions related to SDGs. The thematic work is described below in the respective sections.

2. Economy, globalization and well-being

36. UNECE works with countries to develop and 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 those with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the denominator. The main priority areas for 2022 include measuring economic growth, well-being and sustainability; globalization; digitalization; informal economy, statistical business registers; quality of employment and new forms of employment; and price statistics. UNECE will support countries in producing statistics considering the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic by providing methodological guidance.

37. 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, and contributes to the global effort of updating the SNA. The meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts (organized jointly with Eurostat and OECD) will inform countries of the progress achieved, seek feedback and facilitate testing of the draft recommendations developed by the task teams working on the SNA research agenda in measuring globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, informal economy and communication. Issues related to measuring SDGs and post-Covid recovery will be also addressed. UNECE will continue supporting the implementation of the 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) in cooperation with other regional partners. A thematic workshop for EECCA and SEE countries will be organized to ensure the

involvement of the countries in the consultation and testing of the SNA Update recommendations that are most relevant for this region.

38. Better measures are needed to assess how skills and knowledge acquired through education and training influence economic growth and labour productivity. In 2020, UNECE published a Compilation Guide, which aims to help countries construct internationally comparable **Satellite Accounts on Education and Training**. This Guide became the basis for developing extended accounts on labour, education and human capital, which will become part of the Updated SNA. In 2022, UNECE will facilitate the use of the Guide in countries and will assist the testing of proposed SNA extended accounts which will ultimately enable the better measurement of human capital and labour productivity.

39. In 2021, UNECE has launched an online inventory of satellite accounts produced by countries to facilitate sharing experience and best practice. In 2022, UNECE will update the inventory, which will also be used as a tool for baseline assessment and evaluation of countries abilities to produce the extended accounts included in the 2025 SNA Update.

40. In a globalized world, enterprises operate in complex value chains that span multiple countries, making "national" accounting increasingly challenging. The exchange of economic data between countries for statistical purposes is, therefore, becoming a necessity, as identified in the *Guide to Measuring Global Production* (UNECE, 2015). In 2021, UNECE published the *Guide to Sharing Economic Data in Official Statistics*. The Guide highlights the importance of data sharing to capture economic stocks and flows correctly in official statistics and introduces practical ideas and common tools to make data sharing possible. In 2022, UNECE will follow up with activities area to promote the implementation of the Guide and the exchange of experience between countries in this area. The Group of Experts on National Accounts will serve as a forum for the network of experts on multinational enterprise groups.

41. UNECE will continue to collaborate with other international expert groups dealing with the impact of globalization on economic statistics, such as the United Nations Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics; the Integrated Global Accounts project of Eurostat, upcoming United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians and various OECD expert groups.

42. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Eurostat, IMF, OECD and other partners, promotes the implementation of international recommendations on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which plays an important role in policymaking and is widely used for indexation of wages, pensions and social security allowances. Work in 2022 will include follow-up activities on the implementation of the 2020 CPI Manual, support on the compilation of the CPI during and after lockdown periods and preparation of the 2023 biennial meeting of the Group of Experts on CPI, which will discuss a range of topics, including new data sources and the role of CPI in measuring the digital economy and well-being.

43. 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. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* (UNECE, 2015) and *Guidelines on the use of statistical business registers for business demography and entrepreneurship statistics* (UNECE, 2019) in NSOs. In 2022, UNECE will organise the biennial meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers, jointly with Eurostat and OECD. A special session will discuss the challenges in producing statistical business registers in EECCA and SEE countries.

44. UNECE, jointly with Eurostat, ILO and OECD, contributes to the international work on measuring quality of employment which aims to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. The Steering Group on Quality of Employment will propose changes and amendments for updating the *Handbook on Measuring the Quality of Employment* (UNECE, 2015) to reflect revisions of ILO standards, country experiences and emerging issues.

45. Over the previous decade the labour market in many countries has been undergoing structural changes. New forms of employment have emerged, such as employment in the

'gig' economy, 'platform' work and 'teleworking'. These developments have significant economic and social impacts and there is increased interest from policy makers in statistics to describe the development of the labour market. As the global community looks ahead to the post Covid-19 recovery, new questions are being asked regarding the long-term effects of the pandemic on the prevalence of different forms of employment. At the same time, there is a lack of internationally agreed concepts and definitions allowing to produce coherent and comparable statistics on new forms of employment. To assist countries in this, a CES task force is developing a conceptual framework for measuring new and emerging forms of employment, planned to be presented to CES in June 2022 for endorsement.

3.   Population and migration, gender, poverty and inequalities

46.   There is an increasing policy demand for data on people's well-being, social environment and demographic change. The work in 2022 will focus on poverty and inequalities, migration, gender and population censuses. Many challenges relate to the need to increase the use of administrative data and to measure hard-to-reach population groups. This area of work is of particular importance for monitoring progress towards SDGs since many indicators require population data in the denominator and should be disaggregated by sex, migratory status and other variables.

47.   UNECE supports countries' preparations for population and housing censuses. Censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems. They provide the baseline information used to plan public infrastructure and services, and to produce SDG indicators and many other statistics where population is the denominator. Censuses cover the entire population and allow the production of statistics for various small population groups whose measurement is essential to ensure that "no one is left behind" in working towards the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

48.   The resolution of the Economic and Social Council 2020 *World Population and Housing Census Programme* provides a global mandate for this work. The Covid pandemic continues to have profound impacts on censuses of the 2020 round. Many of the censuses scheduled for 2020 or 2021 experienced delays from a few weeks to several years. The pandemic has triggered changes in methods, including accelerating some pre-existing trends. Taking into account these challenges and developments, in 2022 a series of task forces under the CES Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses will embark on a multi-year effort to develop the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses of the 2030 Round. In 2022 these task forces will develop their own detailed work plans to enable them to reflect the impacts of the rapid and recent changes in census-taking. An expert meeting and capacity development workshop in September 2022 will provide an opportunity for the entire community of census experts to contribute to this effort, as well as to share their experiences of conducting their censuses of the 2020 round.

49.   UNECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on measuring poverty and inequalities. Measuring progress towards SDGs on the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequalities (Goal 10) requires comparable data and a coherent set of indicators. In 2022, UNECE will hold an expert meeting to advance the methodological work on the additional needs on measuring poverty and inequality raised by the pandemic. Focus on timely provision of statistics and sharing best practices would support governments' policy response to COVID-19 on social protection, social security and employment, and in addressing vulnerable population groups (SDGs 1, 8, and 10). UNECE will continue to promote the use of its harmonized survey module for measuring poverty. The work will follow the recommendations of the available methodological guidance, including the recently developed documents – *Guide on Poverty Measurement* (UNECE, 2017), *Poverty Measurement: Guide to Data Disaggregation* (UNECE, 2020), and *Approaches to Measuring Social Exclusion* (UNECE, 2021).

50.   UNECE aims to improve the availability, quality and international comparability of migration statistics, responding to the strong demand for collecting and using 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. Ten SDG indicators are directly related to migration and a further 24 need to be disaggregated by migratory status. The 2022 meeting of the Group of Experts on Migration Statistics will

discuss changes in the definitions of various categories of migrants, consequences of the Covid crisis on migration flows and related measurement issues, use of administrative data and new data sources for measuring migration, results from the 2020 population census round on migration data. A task force will finalize a study on the use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data, UNECE will continue to update and improve its *Clearing House on Migration Statistics.* To improve data availability and comparability, UNECE will continue promoting use of its harmonized survey module for measuring migration and remittances.

51.   UNECE work on gender statistics aims to share knowledge and experience and to develop capacity in areas where data and indicators of gender equality are insufficient or lacking. Better gender statistics are needed for the SDGs monitoring, particularly to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5). The Covid-19 crisis has disproportionately affected women and girls, reversing gains towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. High-quality gender statistics are critical for monitoring the long-term social and economic impacts of the pandemic on women and men and for developing gender-responsive mitigation and recovery policies. In 2022, UNECE Group of Experts on Gender Statistics will follow up on the implementation of *its guidance on measuring the gender-related impacts of Covid-19, and* discuss new methodological work and the production of gender statistics for SDGs and Covid-19 recovery. UNECE will continue to promote the national application of its *toolkit for training users of gender statistics.*

52.   In 2020, UNECE launched, jointly with UNICEF, new work to improve the availability, quality, and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents and youth. In 2022, the Task Force on Statistics on Children, Adolescents and Youth will complete its work and publish guidance that provides recommendations for more harmonized and rationalized definitions, methodologies and approaches across the countries participating in the Conference of European Statisticians. The guidance will address statistics on children, and youth generally and also focus on three topics: (a) violence against children, adolescents and youth; (b) children and adolescents in institutional care; and (c) children, adolescents and youth with disabilities.

4.   Environment, climate change and hazardous events and disasters

53.   UNECE activities in this domain aim to improve statistics that are highly relevant for environment policies and required to derive many SDG indicators. The main 2022 priorities will include climate change-related statistics and indicators, environment statistics, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), statistics related to hazardous events and disasters (including the Covid-19 pandemic) and measuring circular economy.

54.   Among the three pillars of sustainable development – economy, society and environment – data availability for the environmental pillar is the lowest. UN Environment estimates that for about 58 per cent of the environment-related SDG indicators there is insufficient data, making it very difficult to assess progress and understand the environmental challenges[3]. Providing data on environment-related SDGs (such as Goals 6, 14 and 15) is a challenge for all countries, especially those with less developed statistical systems. The Joint Task Force (JTF) of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES will continue to support the improvement of the production and quality of environment 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.* The Guidelines are currently under review to align them with SDG indicators, the United Nations Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) and SEEA. This work will result in a revised set of indicators and statistics recommended for regular production in the region, for example by adding some *core climate change-related indicators* or by replacing some of the indicators with similar SDG indicators. 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.

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[3] 'Measuring Progress: Environment and the SDGs (UNEP, 2021).
https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/measuring-progress-environment-and-sdgs

55. UNECE supports the use of the global System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in the region, jointly with OECD. This includes building capacity in support of SEEA, providing a forum for exchange of knowledge and experience, assessing data availability and developing methods and sources for the necessary data. In 2022, the work will continue with a focus on identifying new techniques and data sources for compiling SEEA accounts (including Ecosystem Accounts), policy uses, communication strategies and coordination of work in the region. UNECE will also support building capacity for environment statistics and SEEA in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

56. As climate change is affecting all aspects of the economy and society, more and more data from NSOs are needed for climate-related policies and analyses. In 2022, UNECE will organize the annual Expert Forum for producers and users of climate change related statistics - a platform for collaborating, sharing ideas and experience, discussing concepts and measurement issues, and identifying areas where practical guidance is needed. The Steering Group will continue to collect good practices in climate change-related statistics through a wiki platform and an annual exercise "Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice". In 2022, the work will focus on the role of NSOs in providing data and statistics related to the Paris Agreement, including producing indicators for tracking nationally determined contributions and measuring climate change adaptation. The Steering Group will continue to support the implementation of the 2014 *CES Recommendations on Climate Change-related Statistics and* the 2022 *Set of core climate change-related indicators*.

57. UNECE brings together statisticians and disaster risk experts, including from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), to develop official statistics for hazardous events and disasters. The *Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters* (UNECE, 2019), identify practical steps for NSOs to support disaster risk management (DRM). The Recommendations also call for statistical operationalization of terms, definitions and classifications used in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the establishment of a forum for exchange of knowledge and experience. In 2021, UNECE Statistical Division in collaboration with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics (IAEG), organised the first global Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics. The Expert Forum recalled the need of improving official statistics for better managing and monitoring disaster risk. In 2022 the work will continue with a focus on supporting the statistical operationalization of the new hazard definition and classification presented in the *UNDRR/ISC Sendai Hazard Definition and Classification Review Technical Report* and the development of implementation guidelines for NSOs and their NSS. UNECE Statistical Division will also contribute to the work of the IAEG in maintaining a global community of practice and the identification of a research agenda for improving official statistics for DRM purposes.

58. The Covid-19 pandemic falls into the category of a biological disaster according to the Sendai Framework terminology. Since the beginning of the pandemic NSOs have been playing a crucial role in supporting the management of this disaster by providing the required statistics for policy makers and the general public. The UNECE Statistical Division will continue to maintain the wiki-platform *Covid-19 and official statistics* and support NSOs to increase capacity and knowledge in producing the statistics that is required.

59. The policy initiatives aiming to establish a circular economy are increasing in many countries and the European Union. However, there is no single internationally agreed upon definition of a circular economy and how to measure it. In 2020, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of measuring the circular economy, which recommended the drafting of practical guidelines on measuring circular economy by a Task Force. The Task Force was set up in February 2021 and has started drafting guidelines, including a definition of the measurement scope, clarification of key terms and definitions, identification of key statistics and indicators, identification of data sources (with a particular attention on SEEA and FDES) and a description of the required institutional collaboration. The work will continue in 2022 and is expected submit the Guidelines to CES for approval in June 2023.

60. 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 areas. However, there are important conceptual and methodological problems in this area that lead to incomparability of data. In June 2021 CES endorsed the *Framework on Waste Statistics* which was developed by an UNECE task force, involving experts from countries, professional and international organizations (such as the Basel Convention Secretariat, Eurostat, OECD and UNSD) . The framework provides a basis for harmonizing the concepts and definitions, developing standard classifications and providing methodological guidance to produce better quality information for important waste-related policies. In 2022, UNECE Statistical Division will continue working on some of these open issues, with priority on those relevant for measuring the circular economy.

5. Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics

61.   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 need a strong legal and institutional basis. As the landscape of information producers is rapidly changing, the legislative and institutional infrastructure must support the development of new business models, engagement in partnerships and use of new data sources and technologies to allow modernization of official statistics. UNECE activities in this domain aim to strengthen the responsiveness, accountability and transparency of statistical institutions to ensure access to high quality information, as enshrined in SDGs (Goal 16).

62.   In 2022, UNECE will continue to provide a platform for NSOs to share experience in modernizing legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics and discuss emerging issues posing legal challenges to national statistical systems. The work will focus on access to privately-owned data, data ethics, data governance and stewardship from regulatory perspective and lessons learnt from implementation of the *Generic Law of Official Statistics*. National and international legal experts will continue the discussions initiated in the 2020 and 2021 online expert meetings and identify needs for supporting materials and practical guidance.

63.   Following up on the *Recommendations for promoting, measuring and communicating the value of official statistics* (UNECE, 2017), in 2022 the Task Force on testing and further developing the framework will submit its final report to CES for endorsement. In 2022, the Bureau may decide to follow up on the recommendations of this work, including trialling a more strategic approach to determining value from a user perspective and increasing value, and gathering further case studies in an online repository, in particular those related to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the value of official statistics.

64.   The growing importance of integrating statistical and geospatial information calls for closer partnerships between geospatial experts and statisticians. An Economic and Social Council resolution (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 2022, UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe will continue to promote dialogue between national bodies responsible for geospatial and statistical information. Further joint activities are envisaged, including a joint workshop with Eurostat, and work on geospatial and statistical standards. The aim is to bring together experts from national statistical, mapping and geospatial agencies to share good practices.

65.   UNECE co-chairs the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia, which was established in 2020 as part of the UN reform process. This group brings together data and statistics focal points from UN agencies active in the region, as well as from UN country teams and key non-UN organisations. Its main focus is on coordinating statistical capacity development activities in the region, which will continue throughout 2022.

6. Modernization of official statistics

66. Producers of official statistics are facing many challenges and operate in a continuously changing environment. New, timelier and more disaggregated statistical data have to be produced. At the same time, budgets are under pressure and new producers enter the arena with non-official statistics, competing with official statistics. UNECE works with countries to create models, standards, frameworks and guidelines to assist them in their modernization and collaboration efforts. The UNECE High Level Group for the Modernization of Statistics (HLG-MOS) actively steers the modernization of statistical organizations, providing a common platform for experts to develop solutions in a flexible and agile way integrating various expert groups, projects, workshops and other activities.

67. UNECE provides the secretariat for this work, which is carried out by several Modernization Groups (Supporting Standards, Capabilities and Communication, Blue Skies Thinking Network, and a fourth group to be set up in 2022), through annual projects and several modernization and sprint workshops throughout the year. A series of workshops are also organized with an innovative focus on dissemination and communication, data collection, statistical data editing and statistical confidentiality. Due to the dynamic nature of this work, the main activities of the four Modernization Groups, as well as the topics of annual projects are identified at an annual HLG-MOS conference by the end of the previous year.

68. To work together within and between offices, it is a must to use the same models and standards. The Supporting Standards Modernization Group supports the use of models and standards developed under HLG-MOS to facilitate modernization activities such as the *Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations* (GAMSO), the *Generic Statistical Business Process Model* (GSBPM), and the *Generic Statistical Information Model* (GSIM). The group has prepared a statistical metadata glossary and consolidated materials and practical examples to better communicate and provide an integrated view of the various models. It also started to produce a guidance on how to use GSBPM for geospatial enabled data and started revising GSIM based on implementation experiences from countries and the findings of the group working on linking the model to GSBPM. These topics will continue in 2022.

69. Reusing statistical tools developed by colleagues, or developing such tools jointly, increases efficiency. The Supporting Standards Modernization Group also maintains and encourages practical implementation of the *Common Statistical Production Architecture* (CSPA), a blueprint for statistical organizations which makes sharing easy. In 2022, the group will continue helping organizations to share services in a pragmatic way. New services will continuously be added to the *CSPA Service Catalogue*.

70. Without developing complementary skills and creating a modern flexible and agile workforce, statistical organizations are not able to increase and improve the production of statistics. The Covid-19 pandemic has made this even more apparent. The UNECE Modernization Group on Capabilities and Communication supports statistical organizations by providing guidelines on competency profiles, training, management issues, and other aspects needed to increase their efficiency (for example lean management). The group works on emerging issues in human resource management in statistical offices such as Social Media strategies, ethical leadership and data ethics, culture change and skills and capability frameworks. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the work was refocused to crisis management, internal communication, and remote working, training and recruitment. The work programme for 2022 will continue to respond to the changes started or accelerated by the pandemic, such as consolidating new working arrangements and the increased role of communication.

71. Official statistics must remains adaptive to the changing environment and shifting landscape of challenges and opportunities. The UNECE Blue Skies Thinking Network is the HLG-MOS innovation hub, assessing emerging opportunities in the modernization of statistics. In 2021, a core group of high-level experts discussed and assessed various emerging areas, such as network data, hotspot joint biosecurity centre platforms, rapid survey systems and how to go from innovation to implementation as well as several modern IT technologies. The discussion focused on areas that had most potential to help statistical

agencies confront the Covid and other pandemic and the latest needs of policy makers, businesses and society at large. 'Pitch-talks' and other events were held to identify potential new topics that are of interest for official statistics in the coming years. In 2022, the network will continue to consider new and emerging topics and start collaborative teams to jointly embark on new areas of work.

72.   Every year UNECE supports two modernization projects. HLG-MOS selects these topics at the start of each year to ensure that they address the most urgent matters facing statistical offices. For example, in 2021 many countries worked jointly in the Synthetic Data Project to test methods to create data sets that maintain the information of the original source while not revealing any confidential information and making identification of individuals impossible. The work on Input Privacy-Preservation techniques, started in the second half of 2020, continued. Here countries work on developing ways to make privacy sensitive data available for analysis and for producing meaningful statistics for policy makers and the general public. To continue the successful work of an earlier Machine Learning project, a Machine Learning Community was set up in 2021, supported by the UK Office for National Statistics. For 2022, exceptionally three projects were selected (i) Input Privacy-Preserving Techniques project extension, (ii) Data Governance Framework to Achieve Data Interoperability, and (iii) Meta-Academy for the Modernization of Official Statistics.

73.   Several aspects of statistics are not domain specific. UNECE is one of the few organizations that delivers workshops in important cross-cutting areas of statistical production, bringing together experts from various domains for joint work and exchange of practices. For 2022, UNECE is planning expert meetings on statistical data collection, dissemination and communication of statistics, and statistical data editing, and will start the preparations for the 2022 expert meeting on statistical data confidentiality.

C.   Capacity development

74.   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 to meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The capacity development is directly related to SDG 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development" (targets 17.18 and 17.19).

75.   Special 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 CES endorsed a new *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy*, which reinforces the principle that capacity development activities should be user driven.

76.   UNECE capacity development activities include:

- Global Assessments of national statistical systems and sector reviews of specific areas of official statistics at the national level;

- Capacity development workshops;

- Advisory services to address country-specific needs;

- Field projects implemented in partnership with NSOs and UN country teams;

- Development of methodological guidance and training materials.

77.   Capacity development activities are carried out in partnership with other international organizations, in particular Eurostat, EFTA, United Nations country teams, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the CIS-STAT and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

78.   UNECE capacity development activities are based on the findings and recommendations of Global Assessments of national statistical systems. 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 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 2022, UNECE, with the partner organizations Eurostat and EFTA, expects to conduct a Global Assessment of Turkmenistan.

79. A United Nations Development Account project is expected to start in 2022, in partnership with UNSD, other UN Regional Commissions, UNEP and UNODC. A range of workshops and other statistical capacity development activities will be carried out under the project, with a focus on supporting post-COVID recovery.

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 development programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and to support statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The programme, which runs from 2017 to 2022, consists of regional workshops and other training activities in the areas of national accounts, statistical business registers, prices, migration and remittance statistics. The Programme also supports the participation of experts from the target countries in statistical expert group meetings.

D. Statistical database

81. UNECE operates a statistical database offering key statistics on member countries via free online 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 data on areas of high political importance to governments and to the United Nations system, such as SDGs, migration, globalization, gender equality, population, education, employment, work-life balance, road traffic accidents, inland transport, and forest resources. The data compilation on these topics gives insights into measurement issues and helps to identify priorities for UNECE methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of national statistical systems.

83. The SDG dashboard launched in 2020 will be further enhanced by extending the coverage of indicators and adding new features with assessment of the UNECE region's progress towards the goals and targets. The dashboard provides quickly and easily information on the UNECE countries' progress in achieving SDGs to a broad non-specialist audience in both PC- and mobile-friendly formats in English and Russian. The data are stored using the existing infrastructure of the UNECE statistical database, allowing users to build customized tables and graphs and to consult the metadata.

84. To reduce the response burden on countries, data are collected from, or in cooperation with, other international organizations when possible. UNECE has continued its work to streamline the database activities, increasing efficiency of data collection and facilitating timelier update and release of statistical data series. Further improvements are expected, such as usage of various Python-based statistical software packages, to shorten the software development time and free human resources for design of visually attractive and easy-to-use web applications. Development of data stories rich in visual elements will be explored in 2022.

85. The database is the data source for publications, such as the report for the annual UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, *UNECE Countries in Figures*, as well as for preparing regular short articles on economic and social development in the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter and on the UNECE website. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and to identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2022.

86.	The UNECE statistical database is also used to disseminate data for UNECE policy work. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

Annex

List of meetings from January to December 2022[4]

Jointly with	Meeting (venue)	Date
	CES Bureau (hybrid, Geneva, Switzerland)	23-24 February
	Modernization Sprint (Geneva, Switzerland)	10 March
OECD	Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on Implementation of SEEA (online)	28, 30-31 March
	Expert Meeting on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-6 May
	Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-20 May
	UN-GGIM Europe Plenary Session (Geneva, Switzerland)	20 June
	Conference of European Statisticians 70th plenary session (Geneva, Switzerland)	20-22 June
	ModernStats World Workshop (Belgrade, Serbia)	27-29 June
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication (Geneva, Switzerland)	29-31 August
	Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs	Mid-September
	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	19-20 September
	Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	21-23 September
	Group of Experts on Business Registers (Geneva, Switzerland)	26-29 September
	Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	29-30 September
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Editing (Vienna, Austria)	3-5 October
	Expert Meeting on Human Resources Management and Training (Brussels, Belgium)	11-13 October
	CES Bureau	12-13 October
	Workshop on Supply and Use Tables	Dates to be confirmed
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection (Rome, Italy)	19-21 October
	Workshop on Measuring Migration and Remittances (Geneva, Switzerland)	25-26(am) October
	Group of Experts on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	26(pm)-28 October
Environment Division	Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	3-4 November
	HLG-MOS Workshop on the Modernization of Official Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	14-16 November
	Expert Meeting on Modernization of Statistical Legislation (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-18 November
	Workshop on Harmonization of Poverty Statistics to Measure SDG 1 and 10 (Geneva, Switzerland)	7 December
	Group of Experts on Measuring Poverty and Inequality (Geneva, Switzerland)	8-9 December

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[4] Meetings may take place in hybrid or online format depending on the Covid-19 situation.