



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
16 August 2022

Original: English

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

Seventieth plenary session  
Geneva, 20-22 June 2022

## Report of the seventieth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

### I. Introduction

#### A. Attendance

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its seventieth plenary session on 20-22 June 2022. Most participants attended in person while some attended through remote connection.
2. The session was attended by representatives from Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.
3. The session was attended by representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat) and European Environment Agency (EEA). Representatives of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the following specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations also attended: Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Bank; Bank for International Settlements (BIS), Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-STAT), Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), European Central Bank (ECB), European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS (CIS-STAT), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), PARIS21, and the Statistical Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).
4. Representatives of Academia, non-governmental organizations, and members of the private sector also participated.



## B. Opening and adoption of the agenda

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/102

5. P. Dalton, the Chair of CES, chaired the plenary session. He opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/102) was adopted.
6. Ukraine, the European Union and Russian Federation made interventions.

## II. Thirtieth anniversary of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/17 and 29

7. The session marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of adoption of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The session was a culmination of an international anniversary campaign, which started in January 2022 and included celebration of each of the Fundamental Principles in 2-week intervals. Argentina, Armenia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, New Zealand, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom led the campaigns focusing on each Principle.

8. During the session, the Conference received congratulatory messages from Her Excellency Lotte Knudsen, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva, and Professor David Card, Professor of Economics at the University of California, co-recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 2021. An anniversary video prepared by Statistics Poland and the [anniversary website](#) with outputs from the campaign were also presented.

9. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) The adoption of the Fundamental Principles and their recognition at the highest possible political level of the United Nations General Assembly is a remarkable achievement by the international statistical community.

(b) It is important to continue linking new initiatives and responsibilities of the NSOs, such as data stewardship or using new data sources, with the Fundamental Principles and core values of official statistics to ensure that these developments are based on a solid foundation.

(c) Living the Principles is critical for all NSOs to maintain trust and set themselves apart from other data providers. Losing this trust by even one NSO can damage the trust in the entire community. Building capacity and supporting all NSOs to live the Fundamental Principles is crucial and should continue.

(d) The Fundamental Principles are not implemented at an equal level in all countries globally. Avenues for improving this could include preparing detailed guidance and explanation of Fundamental Principles, identifying indicators applicable to NSOs and individual statisticians, and intensifying the efforts in communicating the Fundamental Principles to politicians and the general public. The statistical community could also engage in a dialogue with other data producers and help them develop transparent principles for working with data.

(e) The anniversary campaign has been an opportunity to show the importance of compliance with the Fundamental Principles, explain how they are connected with everyday work of NSOs, and communicate this to the staff and general public. The developed outputs can also be used as training material for staff.

### Action taken by the Conference

10. The Conference took note of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of adoption of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by UNECE, and thanked all the national statistical offices and international organizations that have contributed to marking the anniversary.

11. The Conference reaffirmed its commitment to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and emphasized their continued importance.

12. The Conference encouraged all countries to use the shared resources to continue promoting and communicating about the Fundamental Principles and official statistics (available at [FPOS@30 anniversary website](#)).

### **III. Core values of official statistics and their mapping with Fundamental Principles**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/2 and 2/Add.1

13. The Conference discussed the draft list of core values of official statistics, their mapping to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and other standards, and proposals for future work on behaviours to demonstrate how the core values are implemented in practice.

14. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Many countries congratulated the Task Team that prepared the documents for this topic. The core values and Fundamental Principles were seen as more important than ever before. Therefore, having the core values clarified and stated explicitly is helpful.

(b) The core values should be seen as fully aligned with the Fundamental Principles, and not as an amendment or extension to those principles.

(c) Whilst other values and wording have been proposed, the current list of core values and their descriptions were seen as a good compromise bringing together diverse viewpoints.

(d) Future work on behaviours should include scenarios where statistical offices are secondary users of external data rather than owning the data themselves, and where data are provided for further processing by others. Practical examples would be welcome.

(e) Promoting and communicating the core values both within statistical offices and to external stakeholders will be very important.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

15. The Conference endorsed the proposed list of core values and their descriptions, and the mappings of core values to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and other standards (ECE/CES/2022/2).

16. The Conference supported the continuation of the work of the Task Team, with a focus on the elaboration of behaviours that demonstrate the implementation of the core values and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in practice.

### **IV. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

17. Under this agenda item the Conference considered the in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas: the outcomes of reviews carried out since the previous CES plenary session, and topics for the upcoming reviews in October 2022 and February 2023. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities in the UNECE region, identify gaps or duplication of work, and address emerging issues.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

18. The Conference confirmed the following topics of the upcoming in-depth reviews, and asked the Secretariat to report back on the outcomes of the reviews in June 2023:

(a) Data ethics (October 2022; led by Canada and the United Kingdom with contribution by Eurostat);

(b) Hard-to-reach groups in administrative sources (February 2023; led by Denmark; Eurostat will contribute);

(c) Measurement of well-being (February 2023; led by Israel; Mexico and OECD will contribute);

(d) Social cohesion (February 2023; prepared by Canada, Ireland, New Zealand (tbc), Poland, UK, Eurostat and OECD).

19. Countries who would like to contribute to the reviews are invited to inform the Secretariat (tiina.luige@un.org).

## **A. Outcome of the in-depth review on non-observed/informal economy**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/10 and 10/Add.1

20. The CES Bureau made an in-depth review of non-observed/informal economy in October 2021 based on a paper by Mexico, with contributions from IMF and UNECE (ECE/CES/2022/10). As an outcome, the Bureau stressed the importance of integrating the measurement of informal economy in the updates of the macroeconomic frameworks: System of National Accounts (SNA) and Balance of Payments Manual (BPM). When the framework is adopted, the Bureau considered important to plan the further work on testing and providing compilation guidance.

21. The Bureau also noted the distinction between the concepts of non-observed and informal economy taking into account the different analytical and policy purposes. Clear terminology and consistent user-producer communication is a way forward to avoid misunderstanding and misuse of these related and sometimes overlapping concepts.

22. The outcome of the in-depth review was consulted with the CES members in April-May 2022 (ECE/CES/2022/10/Add.1).

### **Action taken by the Conference**

23. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the in-depth review on non-observed/informal economy and supported the proposal on follow-up work on implementation of the forthcoming framework on measuring the informal economy.

24. The Conference requested the UNECE Steering Group on National Accounts to consider the best way to collect and analyse the experiences of UNECE member countries, and on this basis, identify good practices and develop practical guidance.

## **B. Outcome of the in-depth review on subjective poverty measures**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/9 and 9/Add.1

25. The Conference discussed the measurement of subjective poverty following the in-depth review conducted by the CES Bureau in October 2021, based on paper prepared by Poland (ECE/CES/2022/9). As a follow up step, the CES Bureau established a task force to develop a guide and a set of subjective poverty indicators. The outcome of the in-depth review was consulted with the CES member States in April-May 2022 (ECE/CES/2022/9/Add.1).

26. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The proposal to develop a guide on measuring subjective poverty, and clarify terminology and concepts was highly valued.

(b) Countries emphasized the important complementary role that subjective measures play with regard to reaching the poorest and making their voice heard. The Task Force should look at the intersection between objective and subjective measures. When the two types of measures are not aligned, other dimensions need to be examined.

(c) Subjective perceptions are dynamic, therefore timely data is needed to reduce a possible time lag between objective and subjective measures.

(d) A communication strategy is needed when both objective and subjective measures are produced.

(e) It was reiterated that the proposed list of indicators should be coherent, holistic and short. This will ensure their use in practice.

(f) Comparability across countries is a challenge. The variety in economic, social, political and cultural conditions across countries should be taken into account when measuring subjective poverty.

(g) The Task Force should consider consistency of the measures. The choice of measures of subjective poverty may lead to different assessment of the phenomenon. The perceptions can also differ significantly between household members.

(h) CIS-STAT and Belarus expressed willingness to participate in the Task Force.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

27. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the in-depth review on subjective poverty, supported the follow-up work on subjective poverty measures and invited countries to consider joining the Task Force.

28. The Conference requested the Task Force on Subjective Poverty Measures to present its report for endorsement to the 2024 plenary session of CES.

## **V. Work of the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/12, 12/Add.1-3

29. The Conference discussed the main results of the work of the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HGL-MOS) in 2021 and plans for the rest of 2022.

30. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) The HLG-MOS work is considered relevant, cutting edge and strongly supported. The role of the HLG-MOS and the Statistical Modernization Community is crucial for helping NSOs to evolve and maintain a culture of modernization.

(b) Many countries are using the outputs of this work in their statistical practice. The systematic implementation of common standards over time allows all participating countries to progress. The GSBPM and GAMSOS models, machine learning, input privacy-preserving techniques and work with synthetic data were mentioned with appreciation.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

31. The Conference approved the annual report of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS), including the outcomes of the activities carried out in 2021 and plans for the rest of 2022.

32. The Conference supported the continuation of work on modernization of official statistics. National and international statistical organizations are invited to support the HLG-MOS work programme and to become partners in the Statistical Modernization Community.

## **VI. Reports, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the umbrella of the Conference**

### **A. Measuring the value of official statistics**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/3, 3/Add.1

33. The document *Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework* was prepared by a Task Force chaired by the United Kingdom. It was consulted electronically with the CES members in March-April 2022. The feedback

received was positive with all respondents agreeing to endorse the document, subject to incorporation of comments received.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

34. The Conference endorsed the document *Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework*, subject to the amendments presented in the summary of the results of the e-consultation (ECE/CES/2022/3/Add.1).

35. The Conference supported the proposals for further work and invited countries to consider supporting the preparation of the online tool.

### **B. Statistics on children**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/4, 4/Add.1

36. The *Guidance on statistics on children: Spotlight on children exposed to violence, in alternative care, and with a disability* was prepared by a Task Force chaired by Canada. It was consulted electronically with the CES members in March-April 2022. The Guidance received positive feedback and all respondents agreed to endorse the document. The comments received from the consultation have been included in the final version of the Guidance, available on the CES plenary session web page.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

37. The Conference endorsed the *Guidance on statistics on children: Spotlight on children exposed to violence, in alternative care, and with a disability*.

38. The Conference supported the proposals for further work and asked the CES Bureau to advise on priorities for further work.

### **C. Forms of employment**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/5, 5/Add.1

39. The *Handbook on forms of employment* was prepared by a Task Force chaired by Canada. It was consulted electronically with the CES members in March-April 2022. The Handbook received positive feedback with all respondents agreeing to endorse the document, subject to incorporation of comments received. The comments have been included in the final version of the Handbook, available on the CES plenary session web page.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

40. The Conference endorsed the *Handbook on Forms of Employment* incorporating the amendments presented in the summary of the results of the e-consultation on the Handbook (ECE/CES/2022/5/Add.1).

41. The Conference encouraged countries to implement the Handbook, supported the directions for future work identified in the Handbook, and asked the CES Bureau to consider the proposals for future work on forms of employment.

### **D. Use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/6, 6/Add.1

42. The report on *Use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility* was prepared by a Task Force chaired by Italy. It was consulted electronically with the CES members in March-April 2022. The report received positive feedback with all respondents agreeing to endorse the document, subject to incorporation of comments received. The comments have been included in the final version of the document, available on the CES plenary session web page.

**Action taken by the Conference**

43. The Conference endorsed the report *Use of new data sources for measuring international migration*.

44. The Conference welcomed the creation of the Database on Innovations in Migration Statistics (DIMiS) and requested the Secretariat to develop procedures for including in the Database new materials when they become available.

**E. Measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/7

45. The Conference was informed about the report on *Measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men* prepared by the Steering Group on Gender Statistics.

**Action taken by the Conference**

46. The Conference welcomed the report and invited countries to use the proposed indicators and survey questions.

**F. Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA)**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/8 and 8/Add.1

47. A draft updated version of the Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA 2.0) was prepared by a Task Team led by Mexico. The Classification was consulted electronically with the CES members in April-May 2022. As it is planned to become a global classification, UNSD carried out an electronic consultation with the rest of the countries in parallel.

48. The overall feedback was positive and the majority of respondents supported endorsement of the CSA 2.0. However, some countries had concerns. The consultation also provided proposals for improving the Classification.

**Action taken by the Conference**

49. The Conference took note of the feedback received through electronic consultation, and requested the Task Team to continue work towards an internationally agreed global classification, as outlined in Section V of the document ECE/CES/2022/8/Add.1.

**VII. Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/1, 13-16, 14/Addenda, 16/Add.1 and INF.1

50. The Conference considered the Programme planning documents for the UNECE Statistics subprogramme, including reports on the implementation of the statistical programme in 2021, the reports of the CES Bureau and expert meetings, and work plans for the rest of 2022 and 2023-2024. The work plans and the related documents have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by the CES Bureau.

**Action taken by the Conference**

51. The Conference confirmed the decisions of the CES Bureau as reflected in their meeting reports, and approved the report on the implementation of the 2021 UNECE Statistical Programme (ECE/CES/2022/14 and Addenda).

52. The Conference adopted the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2022 (ECE/CES/2022/15).

53. The Conference adopted the Programme of Work for 2023 (ECE/CES/2022/16), including lists of planned publications and meetings (ECE/CES/2022/16/Add.1). The

Conference recommended the documents to be submitted to the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) for approval.

54. The Conference endorsed the outline of key components of the programme of work of Statistics subprogramme for 2024 (ECE/CES/2022/INF.1), including the amendment recommended by the Bureau.

55. The Conference welcomed the annual report of the Regional UN Coordination Group for Data and Statistics in Europe and Central Asia (ECE/CES/2022/13), and requested the Group to continue reporting annually on its work.

56. The Conference requested the CES Teams of Specialists to regularly report to the Conference, in particular when they have completed an important part of work, and present summaries of electronic consultations on their final outputs.

57. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating into English, French and Russian the main documents for the CES plenary session and the meetings of its Groups of Experts. The main documents include a provisional agenda, a report and one main document for each agenda sub-item. For the CES plenary session, the main documents include in addition six documents for each sub-session.

58. The Conference emphasized the importance of providing interpretation in English, French and Russian for the CES plenary session and the meetings of the Groups of Experts, and of recording all meetings listed in the meeting calendar.

59. The Conference took note of the decisions of the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission that have implications for its work, as presented in document ECE/CES/2022/1.

## **VIII. Topics of common interest to statistical and geospatial communities – joint session with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe)**

### **A. Strategic directions in official statistics and in geospatial work**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/18 and 19

60. P. Dalton (Ireland) outlined the strategic priorities of the CES and its Bureau (ECE/CES/2022/19). D. Henderson presented the Regional Strategy of UN-GGIM: Europe (ECE/CES/2022/18). The joint CES and UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session was invited to comment on areas of synergy between the strategies of the two communities.

61. The following points were made in the discussion:

62. Germany delivered a statement on the excellent cooperation between the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) and the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis). This includes BKG being officially recognised as an “other national authority (ONA)” by Eurostat, supporting better integration of geospatial agencies into the European Statistical System. This example could be followed in other countries.

(a) Several interventions highlighted the importance and value of close cooperation between the statistical and geospatial communities, and further integration of geospatial and statistical data, particularly in the context of data for the Sustainable Development Goals.

(b) It is important to respond to new challenges at the strategic level, and go directly to technical solutions. Quality frameworks, ethics frameworks and data strategies are needed as well as data management tools and approaches. There is a link to the on-going discussions on data stewardship.



**Action taken by the joint plenary session**

63. The joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session requested the secretariats to continue the current collaboration in areas of mutual strategic importance for the statistical and geospatial communities, including the preparation of an extension to the current collaboration agreement beyond the end of 2022 and organizing another joint plenary session in 2024.

**B. Moving online in mapping, data and statistics services**

64. This session was moderated by G. Marquez (Mexico). It featured presentations by D. Rozkrut (Poland) on “New and Improved Tools for Spatial Statistics: Spatial Statistical Data Project” and L. Hernø (Denmark) on “The Danish Basic Data Program, the Data-Distributor and the COVID-19 pandemic”.

65. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) It is important to use official data rather than non-official sources whenever possible.

(b) Data privacy and confidentiality issues should be considered. There is ever-increasing demand to provide more granular data for smaller geographical areas more frequently, but how far can we go in this direction while still maintaining confidentiality and respecting privacy? Data modelling may help.

(c) There is a need for strategic reflections on ethical issues, linked to discussions on data curation and data stewardship.

**Action taken by the joint plenary session**

66. The joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session recognized the importance of developing on-line statistical and geospatial products and services to meet emerging user needs and expectations, and requested the secretariats to take this into account in the activities and events of the various sub-groups of UN-GGIM: Europe and the CES, and to look for further opportunities to collaborate and exchange experiences in this area.

**C. Future work and future workplace – post-Covid-19 working modalities**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/30

67. The session was organized by Ireland and was chaired by P. Dalton. The discussion was informed by a presentation of the Future of Work Team under the HLG-MOS Capabilities and Communication Group, and a paper from Colombia. A panel, comprised of the Administrator General of the National Geographic Institute of Belgium and the Chief Statisticians of Albania, Canada and New Zealand, gave their perspectives and reacted to comments from participants.

68. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The challenges faced by countries during the Covid-19 pandemic presented many opportunities for improvement.

(b) Communication and communication tools have an important role in work. Being present in the office allows a lot of informal and non-verbal communication. It was a challenge that this disappeared while working from home, leaving only official communication issued by the organisation.

(c) Working from home was stressful for many people if they did not have a well-equipped working space. Being forced to work from home caused higher stress levels than when it is done by choice. Collaboration between countries helps to find solutions to alleviate the stress caused by the new way of working. Countries should share best practices/guidelines and build partnerships with other institutions.

(d) It will require a culture change and reshaping of leadership to make innovation a regular part of work and reduce bureaucracy. To attract new generations it is important to give an opportunity to experiment with new ideas that may fail.

(e) “Walk the talk” - organisations should practice their values. It is the values and not office space that holds organisations together, especially in the hybrid mode. Some organisations revised their values and strategies during the pandemic, introduced changes and celebrated working together with staff. High level principles should exist but they should be implemented through practical guidance that give staff direction.

(f) Generation Z (the generation born around 2000, perceived as being familiar with the internet from a very young age) is interested to work in organisations with strong values, wellbeing policies, flexibility and inclusiveness. Some countries have used the flexible working conditions as a way to attract new talent. The personality types should also be taken into account when looking for staff to work with data – people with certain characteristics prefer and excel in this type of work.

(g) The new generation can be attracted to take up studies in the area of statistics and cartography if they are convinced that they can save the world by making good data. Statistics can offer ‘cool’ jobs, for example in data hubs or researching new problems. Compared to other office work, statistics and geospatial work can offer stability, allow to see the results of your work and progress towards long-term goals and objectives. When integrating and analysing different data it is easy to find a sense and meaning in the work.

(h) To make the future work effective, leadership of people and understanding how to motivate them are important. Different things work for different people and the management should get to know people as individuals.

69. The participants acknowledged the major changes in working arrangements that were accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges these pose to NSOs. Not only the expectations of current staff have changed but also the nature of work and the required capabilities are changing rapidly. At the same time, new generations have different expectations from their job. Although the situation and the pace of change differs from office to office, all countries face the same issues. The joint plenary session therefore noted the importance of continuing work in this area.

#### **Action taken by the joint plenary session**

70. The joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session welcomed the work by the HLG-MOS Future of Work Team on future work and future workplace, including toolkits, job design, and reaching youth, and supported the continuation of the work taking into account the outcome of the discussions of the joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe session on this topic.

71. The joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session encouraged countries to join the Future of Work Team and/or contribute to the employee, employer and manager toolkits with material from their office.

## **D. Developments in data stewardship**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/20, 21, 29 and 31

72. The Conference was informed about the progress of work on data stewardship by U. Lee (Estonia), the Chair of the Task Force on data stewardship. The Secretariat presented the outcome of the interim electronic consultation on the Task Force’s report. The feedback was positive and provided suggestions how to further improve the report.

73. T. Petek, Chair of the UN-GGIM: Europe gave an overview of issues of integration of statistical and geospatial data. Strengthening institutions and governance is crucial. Standards, quality and accessibility are fundamental prerequisites for successful data integration. The presentation included twelve recommendations for a more effective geospatial data integration, in particular in the context of SDGs.

74. The documents contributed by Australia, Colombia and Poland, and the Bank of International Settlements provided useful information that will be incorporated in the final report being prepared by the Task Force.

75. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Data stewardship is about the future role of official statistics and statistical agencies: how NSOs position themselves in national data ecosystems, in setting standards and guidelines for the public sector, giving advice, and guiding people on access and use of data. Convincing arguments (rather than complaining) should be used when targeting an audience outside official statistics. The Task Force was encouraged to be brave, progressive and continue the work.

(b) Fundamental Principles and core values of official statistics could be of great benefit to all statistics producers and users in the national data ecosystem. Data stewardship can provide an opportunity to promote their use outside official statistics.

(c) The NSOs core role of producing official statistics must remain and validate activities related to other kinds of data, such as offering expertise on data quality assessments or data integration.

(d) Initiatives at national, regional and global level can increase the understanding of what constitutes data stewardship. The data stewardship role can be implemented in different ways in countries depending on the national context. Examples of how this looks like in practice in different settings are very helpful.

(e) The laws and regulations on access to data play an important role. In the EU the Data Governance Act can be a window of opportunity for NSOs to take on more responsibilities in the national data ecosystem.

(f) A useful starting point for data stewardship can be the ‘once only’ principle as part of the digitalisation of government administration. NSOs can play a key role here.

(g) To have an effective national data ecosystem, quality standards, metadata standards and interoperability are very important.

(h) Metadata constitutes the backbone of a national data ecosystem. NSOs should convince other partners about the crucial role of metadata and make it more visible. NSO can play a key role to identify and catalogue what kind of metadata and information are available in the public sector.

(i) Data stewardship requires specific skills. It will be useful to have a training programme for people working with data, as well as for management and data users. A data steward role may provide important and challenging tasks attracting staff to the statistical office in future.

(j) Data stewardship requires good collaboration with different stakeholders: expert users, data owners, other government agencies, etc. It is important to bring together the geospatial community (looking at ‘where’) and statisticians (looking at ‘what’ and ‘who’). In the EU countries, the developments around data governance can be an opportunity to open this dialogue and build up collective data custodianship. The joint session of CES and UN-GGIM: Europe is a good step in this direction.

(k) The statisticians in central banks are also increasingly aware of the need to make progress in this area. Improving data governance is a key element of the new G20 Data Gap Initiative. Central Banks as an important part of NSS should be represented in data stewardship work.

#### **Action taken by the joint plenary session**

76. The joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session welcomed the progress on the report on data stewardship, and encouraged other stakeholders in the statistical system and the public sector (such as central banks, geospatial agencies, other government agencies) to contribute to the work.

77. The joint CES/UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session supported the Task Force to continue and proceed with the second stage of the work to develop a maturity model and

possible guidance, and finalise the report taking into account comments from the electronic consultation. The report is planned to be submitted to the 2023 CES plenary session for endorsement.

## **IX. Collaboration with private data providers**

*Documentation:* ECE/CES/2022/11, 11/Add.1, 22-28

78. The session was chaired by J. M. Rodríguez (Spain). It discussed lessons learned from national statistical offices and international organizations on collaboration with private sector data providers, and examined challenges and opportunities for NSOs to access data held by the private sector for purposes of official statistics.

79. D. Rozkrut (Poland) presented the main outcomes of the in-depth review on collaboration with private sector data providers. He shared four cooperation models and summarised the factors that facilitated collaboration with private sector data providers, as well as the impediments. The outcome of the in-depth review was consulted with the CES members in April-May 2022. The feedback provided many useful comments that will be taken into account in future work on this topic (ECE/CES/2022/11/Add.1).

80. C. M. Miguel (Spain) gave a keynote speech on the transformation of network signalling into valuable mobility insights in Telefónica Tech. He explained how the data analytics enabled better decision-making in different industries and shared the experiences of collaboration with the National Statistics Institute of Spain on tourism and mobility data.

81. A. Arora (Canada) presented a summary of country experiences based on the papers submitted by Australia, Denmark, Kazakhstan, Mexico and Sweden. Country representatives provided further details on the lessons learned. The discussion considered five themes: (i) legislation and formal agreement, (ii) trust and social acceptability, (iii) collaboration and relationship between NSOs and the private sector, (iv) international community cooperation, and (v) engagement model.

82. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Real-time, high-frequency, actual data held by the private sector could generate valuable insights in a wide range of areas. Meanwhile, the increased challenges associated with the collection of primary data highlight the importance of collaboration with private data providers to enable the delivery of more timely and relevant statistics amid the rapidly changing socio-economic environment and users' needs.

(b) While the private sector has been monetising the data they have, it is essential to provide suitable incentives (e.g., social responsibility and brand image) to convince them to share the data for public good.

(c) A solid legal basis supports NSOs to get a formal ground for guaranteed access to data held by the private sector. A rigid and inconsistent interpretation of legislation could hinder the access to data. Continuous communication and stakeholder management could help explain the legislation and, more importantly, create trust and social acceptability from the public.

(d) It is crucial for NSOs to actively engage with private sector data providers to identify potential conflicts between the public and private sectors and to design appropriate collaboration models to ensure a sustainable partnership.

(e) The quality and continuity issues of data held by the private sector make it challenging for NSOs to integrate them with traditional data sources into official statistical production.

(f) Significant investments are required to enhance organizational capabilities and develop data management infrastructure to strengthen institutional readiness and efficiency for the acquisition of data held by the private sector.

83. L. Bratanova (UNECE) gave an overview of activities of international organizations related to access to data held by the private sector, covering six thematic areas: (i) principles

for accessing privately held data, (ii) communication and agreements with stakeholders, (iii) legislation, (iv) guidelines and handbooks for the use of privately held data, (v) common IT infrastructure, and (vi) trainings and competency building.

84. S. Schweinfest (UNSD) and B. Braaksma (Netherlands) presented the work of the Task Team on Global Facilitation of Access to Privately-held Data for Official Statistics, highlighting the efforts in facilitating data access for global value chains.

85. P. Dalton (Ireland) explained the rationale behind the drafting and revising processes of the 'Position statement on the access to data held by the private sector for purposes of official statistics'. He thanked national statistical offices and international organizations for their feedback on the draft document.

#### **Action taken by the Conference**

86. The Conference endorsed the outcomes of the in-depth review on collaboration with private sector data providers (ECE/CES/2022/11) and thanked CIS-Stat for translating the in-depth review into Russian.

87. The Conference adopted the 'Position statement on the access to data held by the private sector for purposes of official statistics' (ECE/CES/103/Add.1) and encouraged all national statistical offices and international organizations to use the document in their communications and negotiations about access to data held by the private sector.

88. The Conference asked the CES Bureau to discuss the follow-up to this session and decide on further steps at its October 2022 meeting.

## **X. Other business**

89. The seventy first CES plenary session is planned to take place during the week of 26-30 June 2023, back-to-back with the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP).

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