



Economic Commission for Europe**Conference of European Statisticians****Seventy-first plenary session**

Geneva, 22-23 June 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening and adoption of the agenda**Annotated provisional agenda for the seventy-first plenary session**

The plenary session will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland starting at 14:30 on Thursday, 22 June 2023.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda.
2. Work of the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics.
3. Moving towards open-source technologies – strategic and managerial perspective.
4. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region:
 - (a) Outcomes of the recent in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians;
 - (b) Hard-to-reach groups in administrative sources;
 - (c) Social cohesion.
5. Reports, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the umbrella of the Conference:
 - (a) Core values of official statistics and the related behaviours;
 - (b) Data stewardship;
 - (c) Measuring circular economy;
 - (d) Set of core disaster-risk-related indicators.
6. Access to privately held data
7. Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe:
 - (a) Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists;
 - (b) Matters arising from the 2023 United Nations Statistical Commission and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe sessions;



- (c) Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.
- 8. Data ethics – a key enabler of social acceptability.
- 9. Timeliness, frequency and granularity of official statistics.
- 10. Election of the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau.
- 11. Other business.
- 12. Adoption of the report and closing of the meeting.

II. Annotations to agenda items

The seventy-first plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) will convene in accordance with the *Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau* (CES/2019/2). It will take place on 22-23 June 2023 in Geneva. The meeting will be held in person, with simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian. An online connection will be provided.

Agenda items 8 and 9 will be further considered during an informal session (in English only) taking place on 28 June 2023 in Paris, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP). The session will be held in person, with the possibility for online connection.

The meeting timetable will be made available on the CES website (<https://unece.org/statistics/events/CES2023>). Information about the online platform and connection details will be sent to registered participants a few weeks before the meetings.

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda

The provisional agenda was agreed upon by the CES Bureau at its February 2023 meeting. The provisional agenda is presented for the approval of the Conference.

2. Work of the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics – *for decision*

The High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) was set up to guide strategic developments in the ways official statistics are produced. The Conference has expressed strong support for the work, endorsed the vision and strategy for modernizing official statistics, and asked HLG-MOS to present annual reports to the CES plenary session.

HLG-MOS will submit its annual report to the Conference, including the outcomes of recent projects in the area of statistical modernisation and updated terms of reference, for approval. HLG-MOS will also inform about its plans for further work.

3. Moving toward open-source technologies – strategic and managerial perspective – *for discussion and recommendations*

This topic was selected for discussion at the CES plenary session by the CES Bureau in February 2023, based on the outcome of an electronic consultation with all CES members. The session will be chaired by Ireland.

A number of NSOs are currently undergoing or planning to move from traditional software to open-source technologies such as R or Python. This is a huge transformation for statistical offices and an important step towards developing capacity to acquire and process large volumes of data, such as Big Data.

A CES discussion on this issue will consider (i) how NSOs are going about such a transformation; (ii) what the strategic challenges and implications are; and (iii) lessons learnt that can be shared among countries who are preparing for such a transformation.

4. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

(a) Outcomes of the recent in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians – *for decision*

The Conference will be invited to approve the outcomes of four in-depth reviews carried out by the CES Bureau since the previous CES plenary session (“Data ethics” in October 2022; “Hard-to-reach groups in administrative sources”; “Measurement of well-being”; and “Social cohesion” in February 2023). These reviews are important tools of coordination to address emerging issues and identify gaps or duplication of work. The reviews focus on strategic issues and highlight concerns of statistical offices of both a conceptual and a coordinating nature.

The Conference will be invited to confirm the topics for in-depth reviews in 2023 and 2024 selected by the CES Bureau, based on the results of an electronic consultation carried out by the Secretariat in January 2023 among the CES member countries and international organizations.

The Conference will also be informed about the updated guidelines for organizing the in-depth reviews that the CES Bureau approved in October 2022 (ECE/CES/2023/12).

(b) Hard-to-reach groups in administrative sources – *for decision*

The Conference will discuss the outcomes of the in-depth review of hard to reach groups in administrative data sources in more detail, based on a paper prepared by Denmark. As a result of the review, the CES Bureau decided to establish a Task Force to clarify the concepts and identify cross-cutting issues and best practices in getting access to hard-to-reach populations in administrative registers, with focus on policy-relevant groups. The CES discussion will provide input for the work of the Task Force.

(c) Social cohesion – *for decision*

The Conference will discuss in more detail the outcomes of the in-depth review of the measurement of social cohesion, based on a paper prepared by Canada. As a result of the review, the CES Bureau decided to establish a task team to collect information on how the concept of social cohesion is measured in different countries and to identify good practices. The CES discussion will provide input for the work of the task team.

5. Reports, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the umbrella of the Conference

Four documents are planned to be submitted to the 2023 CES plenary session for endorsement.

(a) Core values of official statistics and the related behaviours – *for decision*

The 2022 CES plenary session endorsed a 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). The Conference supported the continuation of the work to elaborate behaviours that demonstrate the implementation of the core values and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in practice.

In February 2023, the CES Bureau reviewed the draft description of behaviours that demonstrate the implementation of the core values and the Fundamental Principles, and decided that the document should be sent for an electronic consultation to all CES members. Subject to a positive outcome of the consultation, the Conference will be invited to endorse the document (ECE/CES/2023/1).

(b) Data stewardship – for decision

The Bureau established a Task Force on data stewardship in February 2021 to clarify the terms related to data stewardship and public data governance, and the tasks of NSOs that this may include in different settings. A first consultation on a preliminary draft was carried out in spring 2022. The final draft takes into account the feedback received from this first consultation and the developments that have taken place meanwhile.

In February 2023, the CES Bureau reviewed the draft report *Data stewardship and the role of national statistical offices in the new data ecosystem* and decided that it should be sent for an electronic consultation to all CES members. Subject to a positive outcome of the consultation, the document will be submitted to the 2023 CES plenary session for endorsement (ECE/CES/2023/2).

(c) Measuring circular economy – for decision

The Bureau established a Task Force on measuring circular economy in February 2021 to draft practical guidelines for measuring circular economy. The guidelines should define the measurement scope; clarify key terms and definitions; identify statistics and indicators needed from the policy point of view; identify possible data sources; and describe the required institutional collaboration. The work is undertaken in close collaboration with the OECD Expert Group on a new generation of information for a Resource Efficient and Circular Economy.

The draft conceptual framework (including a headline definition of a circular economy), a statistical framework and a proposed indicator set for monitoring progress towards a circular economy (Part A of the Guidelines) has been prepared. Guidance on data sources and on using indicators, the required institutional collaboration, and more case examples (Part B) will be prepared once Part A has been endorsed by the CES.

In February 2023, the CES Bureau reviewed the Part A of the Guidelines and decided that it should be sent for an electronic consultation to all CES members. Subject to a positive outcome of the consultation, the document will be submitted to the 2023 CES plenary session for endorsement (ECE/CES/2023/3).

(d) Set of core disaster-risk-related indicators – for decision

The Bureau established a Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters in February 2020 to support the implementation of the *CES Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters* (2019). The Task Force has developed a set of core disaster-risk related indicators recommended for regular production by NSOs. The Task Force will continue the work until 2024 and, as the next step, will develop the implementation guidelines and core statistics needed for producing these indicators, taking into account the feedback received from the CES Bureau and an electronic consultation among member countries on the proposed set of core indicators.

In February 2023, the CES Bureau reviewed the proposed set of indicators related to hazardous events and disasters and decided that it should be sent for an electronic consultation to all CES members. Subject to a positive outcome of the consultation, the document will be submitted to the 2023 CES plenary session for endorsement (ECE/CES/2023/4).

6. Access to privately held data – for discussion and recommendations

The CES 2022 plenary session considered collaboration with private data providers, 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. The CES Bureau considered the next steps in the work on collaboration with private data providers in October 2022 and February 2023, and expressed strong support to undertake further work related to access to privately held data.

The Conference will be informed about the developments since the 2022 CES discussion: the decisions on further work and other related international activities.

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

(a) Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists – for decision

The Conference will be invited to approve the reports related to the UNECE statistical work programme as follows:

- (i) Report on the implementation of the UNECE Statistical Programme in 2022;
- (ii) Reports of the CES Bureau meetings, progress reports of Teams of Specialists (Steering Groups and Task Forces) and reports of expert meetings;
- (iii) Annual report of the Regional UN Coordination Group for data and statistics in Europe and Central Asia.

(b) Matters arising from the 2023 the United Nations Statistical Commission and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe sessions – for information

Under this item, the Conference will be informed about the implications of the decisions of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2023 and the UNECE session in April 2023 on the work of Conference.

(c) Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – for decision

The Conference will be invited to review and adopt the official planning documents of the Statistics subprogramme prepared in the context of the United Nations Secretariat's planning and reporting cycle:

- (i) UNECE Statistical Programme for 2023. The document is in line with the Programme of Work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2023 (ECE/CES/2022/16), adopted by the Conference in June 2022;
- (ii) Programme of Work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2024, including publications programme. The draft programme of work follows the annual budget format approved by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 77/267 adopted on 30 December 2022. The draft programme of work is based on the Statistics subprogramme's proposed programme plan for 2024, reviewed by the ECE Executive Committee in January 2023 as part of the ECE proposed programme budget for 2024, and submitted for consideration by the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The Conference will be also invited to review the "Outline of key components of the UNECE Statistics subprogramme for 2025" and provide recommendations on these components, as necessary. Recommendations agreed by the Conference and included in its decisions will be reflected in the proposed programme plan of the Statistics subprogramme for 2025.

8. Data ethics – a key enabler of social acceptability – for discussion and recommendations

This topic was selected for discussion at the CES by the CES Bureau in October 2022, following an in-depth review based on a paper prepared by Canada and the United Kingdom.

The session will be chaired by the United Kingdom, and moderated by Canada.

Data ethics is an important element to achieve social acceptability. These are two intertwined topics, putting forward the idea of public interest and public good. The aim of the discussion is to raise awareness in the statistical community about this area and sensitize statisticians that ethics questions have to be considered in the production process from the beginning.

Data ethics is an evolving topic in the conditions of new technologies, new data sources, linking data, etc. The concept is simple but difficult to achieve in practice. The evolving role of the national statistical offices as offices for data may put data ethics into a new light: how do we apply data ethics, the European Statistics Code of Practice and Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in the new situation? The session should identify what further activities are needed.

The session will consider how to implement efficient and robust data ethics practices across the statistical system, and address the following questions:

(i) How do NSOs define data ethics and ensure that this definition remains appropriate and relevant given the fast-moving and ever-changing wider data landscape.

(ii) How to embed good data ethics practices in how collecting, using and disseminate data? How to ensure that it is done transparently and efficiently meeting the needs of different stakeholders?

(iii) What role do NSOs play in shaping wider thinking on data ethics both domestically and internationally? How do NSOs communicate their data ethics work? How can NSOs best influence wider thinking on the ever-evolving topic of data ethics and get the voice of statisticians heard in these wider debates?

The session will also clarify the concept of social acceptability, as it refers to the acceptance and trust that a particular analysis, methodology, or use of data has from the public or relevant stakeholders. Data ethics is a crucial aspect of the social acceptability in the realm of data and statistics, as adherence to ethical standards helps to ensure public trust and maintain a positive reputation.

9. Timeliness, frequency and granularity of official statistics – for discussion and recommendations

This topic was selected for discussion at the CES by the CES Bureau in February 2023, based on the outcome of an electronic consultation with all CES members. The session will be co-chaired by Canada and another co-chair (to be confirmed).

Timeliness of official statistics relates to fundamental questions about what official statistics is, meeting users' needs, and how to achieve that data is 'fit for use', while there should not be a trade-off or hierarchy between the different quality dimensions.

The pandemic created heightened demand for timeliness and frequency, and NSOs achieved great gains in improving these, which were widely welcomed by many stakeholders. The gains need to be sustained and spread to different areas of statistics and among countries. Having seen that statistics *can* be produced rapidly, frequently and with more granularity, users are unwilling to return to the pre-pandemic status quo. A balance should be found between the core statistics, where the classical quality dimensions such as accuracy cannot be compromised, and the more experimental statistics, where the results can be 'good enough' and still give useful insights with a faster turnaround.

The session will (i) share examples of approaches to improving timeliness, frequency and granularity from different countries and statistical domains, (ii) examine the challenges of improving timeliness, frequency and granularity; (iii) identify which approaches could be spread to other statistical areas in which they are not yet applied; (iv) exchange good practices in ensuring transparency and communicating the different quality dimensions.

10. Election of the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau

The current term of all members of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians expires at the closing of the 2023 plenary session. At the 2023 plenary session, therefore, elections for Chair and Vice-Chairs will be held for the two-year period from June 2023 to June 2025.

According to the Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau (CES/2019/2), the election of the Bureau is carried out on the basis of a proposal by the most senior previous Chairman of the Conference who consults the proposal with all CES members.

11. Other business

Any additional issues that the Conference needs to be informed of can be taken up under this agenda item.

12. Adoption of the report and closing of the meeting

The decisions concerning individual agenda items will be adopted at the end of the relevant agenda items. A detailed report will be prepared after the Conference and will be sent for comments to all participants. The finalized report will be translated into French and Russian.
