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**Meeting with the Chair of the  
Conference of European Statisticians**

**Report by the Chair**

## Report by the Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians

1. The Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians, Mr. Padraig Dalton, is pleased to submit his report to the 132<sup>nd</sup> meeting of EXCOM on 13 February 2024.
2. The report presents highlights of the work undertaken in support of statistical development and the measurement of SDGs, covering achievements since the previous report in January 2023, and the major activities planned for 2024 and beyond. More information is contained in the report of the seventy-first plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians held on 22–23 June 2023 in Geneva (document [ECE/CES/105](#)). A detailed description of the activities planned for 2024 is provided in the Statistical Programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) 2024 (document [ECE/CES/BUR/2023/OCT/14](#)).

### I. Introduction

3. The objective of the UNECE statistical sub-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 ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)”. This objective encompasses all SDGs since it is designed to improve monitoring across all policy areas.
4. The work is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians and focuses on the priorities set by member States. The Conference consists of the Heads of the national statistical organizations (NSOs) in the UNECE region and the OECD member countries. Other countries outside the region, such as Brazil, China and Mongolia also actively participate in the work of the Conference.
5. The Statistical Division acts as secretariat for CES. It works in close collaboration with international organizations active in statistics in the region, such as the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The Chief Statisticians of these organizations participate in the CES Bureau to ensure coordination of work and avoid duplication. The work of CES also responds to the global initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), which sets the global statistical standards.
6. The CES work assists the national statistical systems in producing high-quality statistics and data in an increasingly interconnected, dynamic and digitized world. The rapid change in technology, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, and the use of data analytics and data science have created opportunities for statistical offices. Furthermore, the use of new data sources can increase the speed and efficiency of production and the quality of statistics. However, obtaining access to the new sources that are often privately owned requires a legal basis and new methodologies, skills and technology, and comes with the challenge of ensuring data quality and confidentiality.
7. The stakeholders have now higher expectations and demand more frequent and granular data, accessible online and available faster. Data has become a strategic asset and new data providers emerge publishing non-official statistics, which compete with official statistics although they may not follow the same standards of methodological and ethical rigour. In this increasingly competitive environment, national statistical offices need to maintain their relevance and remain the trusted information providers. In the new emerging data ecosystem statistical offices can play a much wider role based on their extensive experience with ensuring data quality, protection of privacy, handling data, etc. Many statistical offices are taking on a data stewardship role to promote the use and re-use of high-quality data as a strategic asset. Supporting the development of new business models, new

partnerships and use of new sources and technologies are crucial to modernize official statistics and release the full value of official statistics.

8. Investing in strengthening and modernizing official statistics is crucial as it is an essential part of the information infrastructure of a country. International cooperation on developing common approaches and tools and exchanging experience becomes even more important in these conditions, especially for countries who may not have resources for investing in modernisation on their own.

9. The CES Bureau regularly discusses **issues of strategic importance** for official statistics, looking ahead and focusing on challenges and opportunities in the coming years. These discussions feed into the work programme and shape the future activities. The priority strategic issues identified in October 2023 include the **changing role of official statistics in the new digital world, utilising the emerging technologies, ensuring access to data (including administrative and privately held data), maintaining public trust, and securing financial and human resources for official statistics**. Streamlining international efforts on emerging technologies (such as Artificial Intelligence (**AI**) and **Cloud**) is of particular importance as it has the potential to fundamentally reshape the way statistical organizations operate. More detail on how these issues have already been and continue to be addressed in the work programme is provided below, especially in the work on modernising official statistics.

10. All statistical work of UNECE is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, since it supports member States in measuring and communicating progress towards the 2030 Agenda. This is in accordance with the *Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring SDGs*, adopted by CES in 2015.

## II. Achievements over the past twelve months

### A. Streamlining international statistical work on emerging issues

11. In 2023, the Bureau of the Conference reviewed in-depth four statistical areas: (i) measurement of well-being; (ii) social cohesion, (iii) hard-to-reach groups in administrative sources, and (iv) use cases for alternative population bases, with the purpose of addressing emerging issues, improving inter-agency coordination and eliminating overlaps and gaps in statistical activities undertaken by various international organizations in the UNECE region. The papers for [in-depth reviews](#) (including the ones carried out previously) are available on the UNECE website.

12. These reviews have already led to the following further work:

(a) Collecting information on how the concept of **social cohesion** is measured in different countries and identifying good practices, to be finalised by October 2025;

(b) Setting up a Task Force to work on identifying the types of **hard-to-reach groups** in different countries, and collect best practices in using information on hard-to-reach populations from administrative sources (subject to approval by EXCOM). The Task Force is expected to finalise its report in 2025;

(c) Setting up a Task Force to develop guidelines on the **measurement of well-being** for countries that produce or consider producing well-being indicators (subject to approval by EXCOM). The Task Force is expected to finalise its report in 2025.

13. Furthermore, **integrating statistical and geospatial data**, particularly in the context of statistics for SDGs, has increasing importance. Following up on the support by EXCOM to this direction of work, UNECE has developed a closer partnership between the statistical and geospatial communities in the region. A joint UNECE, Eurostat, UN-GGIM Europe Workshop on Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Data was organized in October 2023. It brought together experts from national statistical, mapping and geospatial agencies, and fostered stronger links between statistical and geospatial communities across the UNECE region, facilitated greater collaboration and encouraged greater integration of geospatial and statistical information by promoting stronger institutional partnerships and the use of

common standards. Work on standards issues related to the integration of statistical and geospatial information started in 2023. The work brings together representatives from national statistical and geospatial organisations across the UNECE region to discuss the current use of standards, to explore any issues and constraints, and to identify priorities and future actions regarding the use of standards to improve the harmonisation and interoperability of statistical and geospatial information.

14. Since a number of years, UNECE, UN-GGIM: Europe and Eurostat have organized annual meetings on the integration of statistical and geospatial information, to promote greater coordination of activities. Wider communication networks have been established by sharing information on contacts, including on SDGs and population and housing censuses.

## **B. New methodological guidelines and recommendations and other key outputs**

15. In 2023, CES endorsed four statistical guidelines and recommendations, developed by dedicated teams of specialists. These teams of specialists are set up by CES for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, timeframe, output and a sunset clause. All the statistical guidelines and recommendations are prepared in close collaboration with main international partners, in particular Eurostat, OECD, IMF and UN/DESA. All guidelines and recommendations are available on the UNECE website. The following guidelines were endorsed in 2023:

(a) *List of behaviours demonstrating the implementation of the core values and the Fundamental Principles in practice;*

(b) *Data stewardship and the role of national statistical offices in the new data ecosystem* clarifying the terms related to data stewardship and public data governance, and the tasks of NSOs that this may include in different settings;

(c) *Joint UNECE/OECD guidelines for measuring circular economy. Part A: Conceptual framework, statistical framework and indicators* presenting the draft conceptual framework, a statistical framework and a proposed indicator set for monitoring progress towards a circular economy, including examples of measurement frameworks used by countries, and other regional and national examples on measuring the circular economy;

(d) *Measuring hazardous events and disasters: set of core disaster-risk-related indicators* recommended for regular production by NSOs to (a) strengthen evidence for disaster risk; (b) inform about the state of disaster risk in an internationally comparable way; (c) support monitoring and reporting on international policy agreements; (d) ensure consistency and coherence of information across administrative boundaries, and (e) add value to existing statistics.

16. UNECE developed these outputs in cooperation with countries and the following partner organizations: Bank for International Settlements, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), European Environment Agency, Eurostat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IMF, OECD, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UNSD, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Meteorological Organization, the World Resources Institute and University of Extremadura.

17. The Statistical Division, in cooperation with UNSD, has developed a detailed *inventory of Thematic and Extended Accounts*, offering comprehensive insights into the economic accounts published by countries worldwide. The inventory provides information and links to about 950 accounts from almost one hundred countries, covering around 40 different topics, such as tourism, culture, digital economy, human capital, unpaid household work, healthcare, water, timber, waste, energy, minerals, etc. The inventory will be launched in January 2024.

18. In response to a growing recognition of the transformative power of **Large Language Models (LLMs)**, an advanced AI system that understands and generate texts at a human-like

level, a white paper *LLMs for Official Statistics* was developed. The paper brought together various national and international statistical organisations working on LLMs, sharing practical use cases in the context of official statistics, exploring the potential of this fast-changing technology and discussing the way forward for responsible use of LLMs. Based on experiences and lessons learned from statistical organizations, *Cloud for Official Statistics* explored the main themes related to the use of Cloud such as procurement, security and capacity.

19. The key activities in the area of capacity development are the **reviews of national statistical systems** (Global Assessments) or **specific sectors** to assess the alignment with internationally agreed methodology and practices, and provide recommendations for further improving and modernising the national statistical systems. These reviews are conducted jointly by UNECE, Eurostat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The reviews provide detailed recommendations for the sustainable development of national statistical systems. They form the basis for national statistical development strategies of countries, and are used by international donors for planning capacity development activities. In 2023, Global Assessments were conducted in **Kazakhstan** and in **Georgia**. Additionally, sectoral reviews were conducted in Georgia on the implementation of a process-based statistical production and **Republic of Moldova** on the national statistical IT infrastructure.

### C. Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

20. The work of the UNECE Statistics sub-programme is fully aligned with SDGs in support of national statistical offices as providers and national coordinators of statistics on SDGs. Measuring progress towards SDGs is a big challenge for the national statistical offices. The data on the 231 global SDG indicators come from many different national and international sources and have to be provided to over 50 international organizations responsible for the SDG indicators. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the CES *Road Map on Statistics for SDGs*, published in 2022, guides this work in countries, reflecting new information, lessons learned and emerging challenges. In 2023, UNECE and the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs supported countries and tracked the process in implementing the recommendations of the Road Map.

21. In 2023, UNECE continued to maintain and improve its **regional platform on statistics for SDGs** launched in 2020, which consists of a knowledge hub and a dashboard and database of the SDG indicators used in the UNECE regional progress assessment. The purpose of the platform is to communicate developments on measuring SDGs in the UNECE region, provide easy access to up-to-date indicators on implementing SDGs, and to disseminate data and metadata. The platform serves a broad range of audiences interested in SDGs. The knowledge hub and the database are primarily designed for statisticians and other professionals interested in methodologies, comparability of indicators, and analyses. The dashboard – available in English and Russian – is for the general public and for policymakers as an easy way to see where their country stands among other countries of the region with respect to the implementation of SDGs.

22. The UNECE Commission session in 2019 requested for a yearly report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region to support the discussions at the sessions of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. According to the 2023 report, entitled *“Growing challenges for sustainable development: can the UNECE region turn the tide in 2023?”*, the UNECE region is on track to achieve only 21 SDG targets by 2030. For 79 targets, progress must accelerate if the target is to be met, while for 15 targets, the current trend needs to be reversed. In addition to the overall progress assessment, the publication contains stories provided by agencies, United Nations country teams, and all UNECE programmes, showing concrete ways in which progress towards SDGs is made in the region.

### III. Major activities planned for 2024 and beyond

23. The statistical work of UNECE will focus on the following **priority areas**: (i) statistics for SDGs; (ii) economy and globalization; (iii) population and migration, gender, poverty and inequality; (iv) environment, climate change and hazardous events and disasters; and (iv) strategic and managerial issues and modernization of official statistics. Capacity development in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia will focus on areas highlighted by the assessments of national statistical systems in these countries.

24. Learning from the experiences with online meetings during the Covid-19 restrictions, CES and the UNECE Secretariat will continue to combine traditional and new approaches to organising meetings. Due to budget restrictions, the formal meetings will take place in person. These will be alternated with online meetings as needed to make the best use of the advantages of the digital communication platforms and provide efficient support to countries.

25. At its annual plenary sessions, the Conference focuses on topics selected by the Heads of statistical offices to address their most pertinent current challenges. The topics for the 2024 plenary session will be selected based on a survey among all CES members carried out in January 2024, to ensure that they address the current concerns of top management of NSOs.

26. **Cooperation with the geospatial communities** will continue in order to better integrate statistical and geospatial data. The project “Supporting the integration of geospatial and statistical data across the UNECE region”, financed mainly by a grant from Eurostat, started in September 2022 and will finish in April 2024. UNECE will continue to foster stronger links between the statistical and geospatial communities across the UNECE region, facilitate greater collaboration and encourage greater integration of geospatial and statistical information by promoting stronger institutional partnerships and the use of common standards. The UNECE Task Force on Standards Issues relating to the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information will continue its work in 2024. Capacity development activities will be conducted in partnership with key partners in this area, particularly Eurostat and UN-GGIM: Europe.

#### A. Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

27. The statistical work of UNECE encompasses all SDGs, supporting national statistical offices to facilitate country-led reporting of statistics for SDGs. In 2024, work will continue to enhance the **UNECE regional platform for data on SDG indicators** launched in 2020. In 2024, the dashboard and database of selected SDG indicators (in English and Russian) will be further enhanced and their coverage of indicators expanded. UNECE is also maintaining a *knowledge hub on statistics for SDGs* where more detailed information about its work in this area, as well as useful resources for experts, is available.

28. In 2021 the Conference endorsed a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of its flagship publication, the *CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs* that is widely used by countries and international organizations. In 2024, UNECE will continue to work on supporting countries in implementing the recommendations of 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 in their work in this area. In 2024, the priority items include the development of a concept for training material on the role of NSOs for the SDGs intended primarily for new NSO staff, work on the conceptual and practical challenges of SDG indicator availability assessments, and finalize the update of a self-assessment tool for indicator availability.

29. The Steering Group will promote the use of tools developed by its Task Teams. A Task Team on statistical capacity development has prepared a matrix as a self-assessment tool for statistical offices to identify their needs and priorities for capacity development. The matrix has gone through pilot testing in some countries and is expected to be published in early 2024. Another Task Team has prepared materials to help countries with their automatic data transmission to the UNSD DataLab using SDMX.

30. A Task Team on **Communication of statistics for SDGs** will continue its work to improve effective communication of the role and provision of statistics on SDGs to various stakeholders. The current focus is to collect a best practice repository of materials through communication fortnights – bi-weekly Task Team meetings on specific topics related to communication of SDG data.

31. As in previous years, the Statistical Division will prepare the regular 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 2024 report will assess the UNECE region's progress towards the goals and targets. It will also show actions towards implementing the SDGs, to be provided by all UNECE programmes and the agencies and United Nations country teams represented in the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia.

32. 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.

## B. Economy, globalization and well-being

33. 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 SDG indicators, including those with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the denominator. The main priority areas for 2024 include measuring economic growth, well-being and sustainability; globalization; informal economy, statistical business registers; quality of employment and new forms of employment; and price statistics. UNECE will also contribute to the Beyond GDP initiative.

34. UNECE promotes the **implementation and update of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA)** to enable the provision of high-quality data for economic analysis and policies. The meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts (organized jointly with Eurostat and OECD) will inform countries of the progress towards the 2025 SNA update, seek feedback and facilitate the testing and implementation of the new recommendations in the areas of measuring globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, informal economy and communication. Issues related to the Beyond GDP initiative, measuring SDGs and post-Covid recovery will also be addressed. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the SNA and consultation and testing of the SNA Update recommendations in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-East Europe (SEE) in cooperation with regional partners.

35. Better measures are needed to link economic development to broader framework of measuring well-being and sustainability. UNECE has published several guides to help countries construct internationally comparable statistics on human capital, unpaid household service work and education and training. These will become part of the updated SNA. In 2024, UNECE continues to facilitate the implementation of these Guides.

36. In 2024, UNECE will update the inventory of **thematic and extended accounts** and launch a new user-friendly website that will facilitate the sharing of experience and best practice between countries, including on the production of the thematic and extended accounts included in the 2025 SNA Update.

37. 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*. In 2024, UNECE will continue to promote the implementation of the Guides, and contribute to the third phase of the IMF-led Data Gaps Initiative (DGI) Task Team on data sharing agreements.

38. UNECE will also collaborate with other international expert groups dealing with the **impact of globalization on economic statistics**, such as the Integrated Global Accounts

project of Eurostat, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics the UN Network of Economic Statisticians, and OECD expert groups.

39. Following an in-depth review of the **measurement of well-being**, the CES Bureau in 2023 decided to establish a Task Force to develop guidelines on the measurement of well-being for countries that produce or consider producing well-being indicators. The guidelines will synthesize existing frameworks into operational recommendations focusing on core indicators of well-being where harmonisation and improved international comparability is feasible. The guidelines will also provide typology and definitions, and advise on data sources, compilation methods and communication. The Task Force is expected to finalise its report in 2025.

40. Over the last couple of years, price increases on goods and services have renewed the interest in the **consumer price index** (CPI) and the role of the CPI in measuring the impact of inflation on households' standard of living. UNECE is a member of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (together with Eurostat, ILO, IMF, OECD and World Bank) that coordinates international work on price statistics. In cooperation with ILO, UNECE organises biennial meetings of the Expert Group on Consumer Price Indices. The next meeting of the group that will take place in 2025 will discuss, among other things, the use of data sources (including big data and administrative data), the development of resilient production systems and CPIs for measuring households' standard of living.

41. UNECE supports the development of **statistical business registers** which are indispensable for efficient data collection and production of economic statistics. UNECE supports the implementation of the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* (UNECE, 2015) in national statistical offices. In cooperation with Eurostat and OECD, UNECE will organise the biennial meeting of the Expert Group on Business Registers in 2024 to discuss modernisation of the business register, utilisation of administrative data and the challenges associated with the measurement of the digital economy, globalisation and multinational enterprises.

42. UNECE, jointly with Eurostat, ILO and OECD, contributes to the international work on **measuring quality of employment** responding to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. In 2024, UNECE will organise the biennial meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment to discuss current and emerging issues. In addition, the Steering Group on Quality of Employment will consider updating the *Handbook on Measuring the Quality of Employment* (UNECE, 2015) to reflect revisions of ILO standards, country experiences and emerging issues.

43. Over the previous decade 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 has been growing interest from policy makers in statistics to describe the development of the labour market. In response, the *Handbook on Forms of Employment* was prepared and endorsed by CES in June 2022 to assist countries in producing relevant, coherent and internationally comparable statistics on forms of employment. In 2024, UNECE will follow up on topics of further work identified in the Handbook, including conceptual issues, measurement challenges and sharing of country experiences.

### C. Population and migration, gender, poverty and inequality

44. There is an increasing policy demand for data on people's well-being, social environment and demographic change. The work in 2024 will focus on poverty and inequality, migration, gender, children, and population and housing 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. A task force will be



working in 2024 on identifying and measuring hard-to-reach groups in administrative sources.

45. UNECE supports countries in preparing for, conducting, processing and disseminating data from their **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.

46. The resolution of the Economic and Social Council 2020 *World Population and Housing Census Programme* provides a global mandate for this work. In 2022, thirteen task forces under the CES Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses embarked on a multi-year effort to develop the *CES Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses of the 2030 Round*. In 2024, they will analyse results of the comprehensive survey of national practices in censuses of the 2020 round and develop the text of the recommendations for the 2030 round. An expert meeting and capacity development workshop in October 2024 will provide an opportunity for the task forces to present their progress to the entire community of census experts, engaging them to tackle any challenges brought to light during the work. The results of the comprehensive survey will be compiled into a publication and online interactive tool to permit detailed analyses of how countries across the region conduct their censuses.

47. UNECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on **measuring poverty and inequality**. Measuring progress towards SDGs on the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequality (Goal 10) requires a comparable, multidimensional and coherent set of indicators. In 2024, UNECE will hold an expert meeting to advance the methodological work on the additional needs on measuring poverty and inequality. Work will be completed on a set of subjective poverty indicators that could be used for international comparison and providing related guidance to national statistical offices. Work will be undertaken in 2024 to collect information on how the concept of social cohesion is measured in different countries and to identify good practices. UNECE will continue to promote the use of its harmonized survey module for measuring poverty. The work will follow 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, 2022).

48. UNECE aims to improve the availability, quality and international comparability of **migration statistics**. This responds 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 2024 meeting of the Group of Experts on Migration Statistics will discuss use of administrative data and new data sources for measuring migration, results from the 2020 population census round on migration data, definitions of international migration and mobility, and measurement of emigration. New work will be launched in 2024 on measuring emigration and on new forms of migration. 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.

49. 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 monitoring of SDGs, particularly to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5) and for developing gender-responsive policies. In 2024, the UNECE Steering Group on Gender Statistics will pursue methodological work on measuring gender stereotypes and gender discrimination, and collect information on emerging national practices of measuring technology-facilitated violence against women. UNECE will continue to promote the national application of its

*Toolkit for training users of gender statistics, Guidance on communicating gender statistics and Guidance on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men.*

50. In 2022, UNECE published guidance that provides recommendations for more harmonized definitions, methodologies and approaches to **statistics on children** across the countries participating in the CES. In 2024, UNECE, together with UNICEF, will for the first time convene an expert meeting for focal points on statistics on children in national statistical offices, other relevant national agencies, and international organizations. The purpose is to support countries in the implementation of the *Guidance on statistics on children* and identify priority areas for methodological work. The meeting is expected to address harmonization of concepts and issues related to the use of surveys and administrative data, including legal and ethical frameworks specific to data on children.

#### **D. Environment, climate change and hazardous events and disasters**

51. UNECE activities in this domain aim to improve statistics that are of high relevance to environment policies and required to derive many SDG indicators. The main priorities in 2024 will include:

- (a) Climate change-related statistics and indicators;
- (b) Environment statistics;
- (c) System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA);
- (d) Statistics related to hazardous events and disasters; and
- (e) Measuring circular economy.

52. Among the three pillars of sustainable development – economy, society and environment – data availability for the environmental pillar is the lowest. The lack of resources for producing environmental information and statistics is a challenge for many CES countries, resulting in data gaps and insufficient quality of these statistics (UNEP report *Measuring Progress: Environment and the SDGs*<sup>a</sup>). The measurement in relatively new policy areas, such as circular economy, sustainable infrastructure or disaster-risk reduction is challenging for national statistical offices, ministries of environment and other related governmental agencies in all CES member States.

53. The Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI) under the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) 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 have recently been reviewed to align them with SDG indicators, the United Nations Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA). This revised set of indicators and statistics is recommended for regular production in the region. 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. Over the last years more and more countries with developed statistical systems have been participating in the work of the JTFESI, given the fact that it also addresses new policy areas and their information demands. Therefore, in June 2023, CES endorsed the Terms of Reference of the Joint Working Group on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (a joint body under the CES and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP)) as a standing body open for all UNECE and CES member countries under the CES and CEP. However, endorsement by the Committee on Environmental Policy is still pending.

54. 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

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<sup>a</sup> <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/measuring-progress-environment-and-sdgs>

data availability and developing methods and sources for the necessary data. In 2024, the work will continue with a focus on using SEEA for producing statistics and indicators on disaster-risk and circular economy, 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.

55. As **climate change** affects all aspects of the economy and society, more and more data from national statistical offices are needed for climate-related policies and analyses. The UNECE annual Expert Forum for producers and users of climate change related statistics provides a platform for collaborating, sharing ideas and experience, discussing concepts and measurement issues, and identifying areas where practical guidance is needed. In 2024, a dedicated Task Force will finalize a guidance document on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives – the reporting under the Paris Agreement, meeting information needs of national policymaking in the areas of climate change adaptation, mitigation and just transition, and informing the public about climate-related issues. The UNECE Steering Group will continue to collect good practices in climate change-related statistics through a wiki platform and an annual good practice sharing exercise *Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice*, and support the implementation of the *CES Recommendations on Climate Change-related Statistics* proposing holistic and systemic approaches to the development of climate change-related statistics. The Group will also follow the implementation of the *set of core climate change-related indicators*, endorsed by CES in June 2020.

56. 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**. In 2021, UNECE Statistical Division in collaboration with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics (IAEG-DRS), organised the first global Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics bringing together statisticians with disaster risk management experts, researchers and NGOs. The UNECE Statistical Division continues to contribute to the global Expert Fora organized annually to improve official statistics for better managing and monitoring disaster risk. In June 2023, CES endorsed the *Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators*. In 2024, the Set will be tested and further refined, and practical implementation guidelines will be developed. UNECE will also contribute to the UNDRR activities supporting support the statistical operationalisation of the *UNDRR/ISC Sendai Hazard Definition and Classification Review Technical Report*.

57. The policy initiatives aiming to establish a **circular economy** are increasing in many countries and the European Union. In June 2023, CES endorsed the *Joint UNECE/OECD Guidelines for Measuring Circular Economy (Part A)* which provide a conceptual foundation and a set of proposed indicators for measuring circular economy. In 2024, the Task Force on measuring circular economy will continue with its work by drafting implementation guidelines, defining the key statistics and data sources (with a particular attention on SEEA and Framework for Development of Environmental Statistics) and describing the required institutional collaboration.

## E. Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics

58. 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).

59. In 2024, UNECE will continue to provide a platform for national statistical offices to share experience in **modernizing legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics** and discuss emerging issues posing legal challenges to national statistical systems. A review of the *Generic Law of Official Statistics* (GLOS), initiated in 2023, will continue in 2024, based on the lessons learnt from the use and implementation of GLOS in more than 20 countries all over the world.

60. The rapidly expanding and evolving landscape of data production and sharing is an opportunity for NSOs to reconsider their position and role in the national data ecosystem. In June 2023 the CES endorsed a report *Data Stewardship and the Role of National Statistical Offices in the New Data Ecosystem*. In 2024, the work will continue to support NSOs in taking up a stewardship role in different country contexts. The work is planned to focus on a core set of responsibilities of NSOs as data stewards, the related challenges, barriers and opportunities, and consider practical examples of data stewardship implementation in countries.

61. 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).” A joint CES and UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session was organized in 2022 and is planned again for 2024. UNECE will follow-up on the outcome of the joint UNECE, Eurostat, UN-GGIM Europe Workshop on Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Data that took place in October 2023. UNECE will continue to foster stronger links between the statistical and geospatial communities across the UNECE region, facilitate greater collaboration and encourage greater integration of geospatial and statistical information by promoting stronger institutional partnerships and the use of common standards. The UNECE Task Force on Standards Issues relating to the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information will continue its work in 2024. Capacity development activities will be conducted in partnership with key partners in this area, particularly Eurostat and UN-GGIM: Europe. Pending funding, UNECE will continue to promote dialogue between national bodies responsible for geospatial and statistical information and organise a second joint workshop on integrating statistical and geospatial data in 2024 or 2025.

## F. Modernization of official statistics

62. Producers of official statistics operate in a continuously changing environment with the pace of change accelerating every year. The need to monitor and respond to increasingly complex issues that current society faces has led to an increase in the demand for timelier and disaggregated official statistics. As many statistical organizations adopt new data sources such as administrative data and various forms of big data to meet evolving user needs, this subsequently gives rise to additional challenges pertaining to analysis methods, data access, data integration, ethical use and privacy protection. At the same time, the growing competition with other data providers requires statistical organizations to improve communication of statistical products while advocating the value of official statistics and promoting their brand as a trusted data provider.

63. UNECE works with national and international statistical organizations to create models, standards, frameworks and guidelines to assist them in their modernization efforts. The UNECE High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistics (HLG-MOS) actively steers the modernization of statistical organizations and UNECE provides the secretariat for the group. HLG-MOS provides a common platform for experts to develop solutions in a flexible and agile way through various expert groups, projects, workshops and other activities. The work of HLG-MOS is carried out by four Modernization Groups (Supporting Standards, Capabilities and Communication, Blue Skies Thinking Network, and Applying Data Science and Modern Methods) and HLG-MOS Projects. Expert meetings are organized

on cross-cutting topics such as dissemination and communication, data collection, statistical data editing and statistical confidentiality, with focus on new developments.

64. To meet the growing demand for more data with limited resources, it is important to make the production process more efficient and cost-effective. The models developed under HLG-MOS such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO), the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), the Common Statistical Data Architecture (CSDA) and the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), aim to help statistical organizations industrialize and modernize their production system. The models provide a common language to facilitate communications within and between organisations, and conceptual frameworks to analyse the overlap of works, which consequently facilitate the development of shared services. The Modernization Group on **Supporting Standards** helps the users of the HLG-MOS models and leads their further development to ensure the models remain relevant in the fast-changing working environment. In 2024, the Group will work on the revision of GSBPM, GAMSO and CSDA, and linking GSIM with other international implementation standards such as SDMX and Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), among others.

65. The Modernization Group on **Applying Data Science and Modern Methods** focuses on how to develop, implement, promote, support and facilitate the implementation of data science and modern methods needed for modernization of statistical business processes. In 2024, the Group will work on application of responsible AI in statistical organizations, ensuring reliability in official statistics through uncertainty quantification of machine learning methods, and graph modelling for granular data.

66. A modern, flexible and agile workforce is important for statistical organizations to ensure organizational adaptability and resilience. **Strategic communication** and brand management have become crucial while influence of non-traditional information sources such as social media has grown stronger than ever. The Modernization Group on Capabilities and Communication supports statistical organizations by providing guidelines on competency profiles, training, management and communication-related issues. The group works on emerging topics in **human resource management** and communication in statistical offices. To respond to the growing importance of ethics for social acceptability, it is planned to expand the scope of work under the ethical leadership task team and organize a workshop on ethics in early 2024. The group will also work on the communication perspectives on the use of AI for official statistics and HR data analytics.

67. The field of official statistics must ensure that it remains adaptive to the changing environment. While there are always new technologies and tools coming up, not every new idea is relevant to official statistics. Therefore, it is important to quickly identify what is relevant and discuss how the community could collaborate in a concrete manner. The Blue Skies Thinking Network serves as an **innovation** hub of HLG-MOS. The network collaborated with the Applying Data Science and Modern Methods Group to explore the potential of Large Language Models (LLMs) for statistical organizations and initiate the development of the HLG-MOS white paper on LLMs. In 2024, the network will continue to consider new and emerging topics and start collaborative teams to jointly embark on new areas of work.

68. Every year HLG-MOS selects 2-3 topics related to new technologies and innovations that require concerted effort from the broad community. Then these topics are worked on as annual HLG-MOS Projects. For 2024 projects, two topics are selected: **Statistical Open-Source Software** and **Generative AI**. The open-source project aims to develop a common understanding of how to move forwards to a comprehensive use of open-source software for official statistics production. The AI project will build on the LLM white paper and continue sharing experiences and identifying opportunities for co-development of concrete AI solutions.

69. Statistical production processes often involve functions that are common across different domains such as: **collection, editing, confidentiality** and **communication**. UNECE is one of the few organizations that organizes expert meetings on these cross-cutting areas of statistical production, bringing together experts from various domains for exchange of

knowledge and practices. In 2024, UNECE is planning meetings on statistical data collection and data editing.

## G. UNECE statistical database

70. 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.

71. Emphasis is placed on providing 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 compilation of data 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 statistical systems in countries.

72. The SDG dashboard 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 quick and easy access to information on 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.

73. 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, which has increased efficiency of data collection and facilitated timelier update and release of statistical data series. Further improvements are expected in the work related to the database maintenance, such as usage of various Python-based statistical software packages, and data processing through the data science approach. It is expected that using the Python programming language will shorten the software development time and free human resources for design of visually attractive and easy-to-use web applications.

74. The database provides the source data for the report for the annual UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. 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 2024.

75. 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.

## IV. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

76. The work of the Conference is undertaken by steering groups and task forces created for the fulfilment of a particular initiative of the member States. All teams of specialists work according to detailed terms of reference with a concrete timetable and deliverables. The CES Bureau regularly reviews the progress of work of the groups, and they cease to exist upon completion of their task.

77. The following teams completed their work in 2023:

- (a) Task Force on data stewardship;
- (b) Task Team on core values of official statistics.

78. The Conference endorsed the mandates of the following groups:

- (a) High-Level Group for the modernisation of official statistics (HLG-MOS) (2024-2028)
- (b) TF on measuring well-being (2024-2025)
- (c) TF on hard-to-reach groups on administrative data sources (2024-2025)

79. The Conference also adopted the Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2024, as contained in documents ECE/CES/2023/16 and ECE/CES/2023/16/Add.1, and recommended it to EXCOM for approval.

80. The Executive Committee is invited to adopt the decisions listed in paras 78-79.

## V. Follow-up to the 2023 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

81. At its June 2023 plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) considered the Commission decisions (document E/2023/37) and took note of the decisions that have implications for its work, including continuing producing the annual report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the ECE region. The high-level theme of the seventieth Commission session “Digital and green transformation for sustainable development in the region of the UNECE” was relevant to the CES work in many areas, such as statistics for SDGs, economic and environmental statistics, and statistical modernisation.

82. As part of its high-level segment, the Commission held a roundtable on “Digital and green – the twin transformations to advance sustainable development”. The CES Chair, Mr. Pdraig Dalton moderated two segments of one of two panels on “Enhancing trust and transparency: Using digital tools to support the green transformation” – Segment A: Data for effective and evidence-based policymaking and Segment C: Innovative ways to relate with the public, share information and design policy.

83. In Segment A, Mr. Pdraig Dalton, highlighted the role of trustworthy and transparent information as key to addressing the multi-dimensional challenges facing our world today. He emphasized that policy makers increasingly required complex insights drawn from the evidence that are of high quality, timely and in sufficient detail. To meet the demands, all available data sources need to be used. Accessibility is key, and the data must be planned and structured correctly from the outset so it can be linked and integrated. In Segment C, he highlighted the importance of transparent, internationally agreed principles, standards, treaties, etc. to provide effective access to high quality data and information for participatory and inclusive decision-making, as demonstrated by various ECE tools.

84. The CES work contributes to further strengthening the work of the Commission in support of digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region, in particular in the areas of economic, environment and climate change-related statistics and modernization of official statistics.

85. As follow-up to the ECE session in 2021, the Commission welcomed the progress report on the work of the Commission on circular economy (see document E/ECE/1507, including the CES work on its measurement. This work is continuing to support the implementation of the *Joint UNECE/OECD Guidelines on Measuring Circular Economy* (see paragraph 57 [above](#) for more details).

## VI. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

### Statistical database

86. The Statistical Division provides and maintains the necessary database infrastructure required by other UNECE divisions. For instance, the data collected by the Transport and

Forestry Divisions are maintained and accessible via the online UNECE statistical database. The Statistical Division coordinates the UNECE data production for consistency of data and terminology, and maintains the technology and methods used for data collection, storage and dissemination.

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

87. The Statistical Division acts as the UNECE focal point for the global SDG indicators and liaises with UN/DESA on related issues. In 2023, the Statistical Division contributed to the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development through preparing the annual report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region. The 2024 report is already in preparation.

## **Environment**

88. The intersectoral activity on environmental statistics and indicators carried out jointly with the Committee on Environmental Policy assists the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as South-East Europe to strengthen and harmonize environmental statistics. The terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators were renewed by EXCOM in January 2023.

## **Climate change**

89. The Statistical Division contributes with its work on climate change-related statistics to the internal UNECE Task Force on Climate Action. The UNECE Task Force brings together experts working on climate change-related issues in different UNECE divisions to improve the coordination and communication of UNECE activities in this field. The Statistical Division organised, jointly with a number of other international organizations, an official side-event on *Enabling climate action through data, transparency and finance* at the COP28 in Dubai.

## **Circular economy**

90. The Statistical Division contributes with its work on measuring circular economy to the internal UNECE Task Force on Circular Economy. This includes an active contribution to the discussion on circular economy related definitions and concepts used within UNECE. The statistical measurement guidelines drafted jointly with OECD make strong reference to circular economy related work carried out by other Divisions (for example forestry and trade).

## **Disaster risk reduction**

91. The Statistical Division collaborates with the UNECE focal point on disaster risk reduction in the work related to measurement of hazardous events and disasters.

## **VII. Technical cooperation activities**

92. 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, (EECCA) 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).



93. 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. The work follows the *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy* (2018) reinforcing the principle of user driven capacity development activities.

94. UNECE capacity development activities include:

(a) **Global Assessments of national statistical systems and sector reviews** of specific areas of official statistics at the national level

(b) Capacity development **workshops**

(c) **Advisory services** to address country-specific needs

(d) **Field projects** implemented in partnership with national statistical offices and UN country teams

(e) Development of **methodological guidance and training materials**.

95. 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), UN Women, the World Bank, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

96. 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. The Global Assessment of Kazakhstan was conducted and published in 2023, while the strategic review of Georgia is drawing to a close in early 2024. In 2024, Global Assessments of the national statistical systems of Uzbekistan and Armenia will be conducted, and preparations will start for a Global Assessment in Tajikistan in early 2025.

97. High-Level meetings for Chief Statisticians and deputies from EECCA countries were organized in 2023 to support national missions and visions with respect to the modernizing the role and organisation of national statistical offices, for example with respect to data stewardship and governance, statistical legislation, and the use of new data sources. In 2024, similar events are planned to further strengthen national and regional leadership in continuous modernisation of official statistics to ensure that relevant data will keep being made available to policy makers, businesses and the general public.

98. A **United Nations Development Account project** that started in September 2022 will continue throughout 2024, in partnership with UNSD, other UN Regional Commissions, UNEP and UNODC. A range of workshops and other statistical capacity development activities were already and will be carried out under the project, with a focus on supporting post-Covid recovery and innovation, for example using big data sources for producing consumer price indices and job vacancies, using administrative and other registers as a basis for the national household and population census, multi-dimensional poverty measurements, improving measuring the quality of employment, improving the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting, environmental and climate change and disaster related statistics, moving to a process based organisation, or in modernizing national statistical legislation.

99. The UNECE Secretariat provides advisory services in response to specific requests from the EECCA and SEE countries. These services include advice on specific methodological questions, provision of statistical guidance and advice on how to reach out to experts in national and international organizations in areas where the Secretariat does not have relevant expertise. For example, in 2023 such services were provided to Georgia

(various modernisation models and tools) and the Republic of Moldova (statistical IT infrastructure). For 2024 services are planned in Georgia (establishment of a population register; capacity to produce climate change-related statistics and disaster-related statistics; energy accounts and energy statistics), the Republic of Moldova (capacity to produce climate change-related statistics and disaster-related statistics; capacity to produce and quality of selected parts of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting), and Kazakhstan (multi-dimensional poverty measurement; timeliness and frequency of price statistics and related economic statistics).

100. UNECE chairs the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics in Europe and Central Asia (the 17 so-called programme countries), which comprises UN and non-UN bodies active in statistics at the regional level, as well as focal points on data and statistics from UN country teams. Annual reports are submitted to the CES plenary sessions.

## **VIII. Cooperation with other organizations**

101. The Conference and its Bureau maintain very good cooperation and close working contacts with the other international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region. Eurostat, OECD, CIS-STAT, IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations Statistics Division of DESA are permanent observers in the CES Bureau. Most activities and methodological work are undertaken jointly with Eurostat and OECD allowing efficient use of resources and ensuring that all countries of the region benefit from the ongoing international statistical work in emerging areas. The activities are thoroughly discussed to avoid duplication of effort and, in case of joint work, to have a clear division of labour building on the strengths and different membership of the participating organizations.

102. Many international organizations are contributing to the work of the Conference of European Statisticians. The cooperation takes the form of joint meetings, joint capacity development projects or activities, partnership in developing recommendations and guidelines, and contribution to the work of the CES task forces and task teams. In addition to the organizations that are members of the CES Bureau, the following partners can be mentioned.

### **United Nations organizations**

103. From the United Nations System:

(a) All UN Regional Commissions: the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) – developing statistical capacity across all statistical domains, including climate change, hazardous events and disasters, SDG-related indicators and economic statistics; sharing of common approaches and methodologies in measuring progress towards SDGs;

(b) International Labour Organization (ILO) – measuring quality of employment and consumer prices, revision of standards for statistics on informality, and ensuring that economic and social statistics align with labour-related international standards and definitions; development and integration of standards for modernization of official statistics;

(c) UN Women – capacity development in gender statistics and gathering harmonized statistics for the SDG indicator on gender equality in local government;

(d) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – collaborating on statistics on gender in trade and use of new data sources;

(e) United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) – collaboration in the organisation of annual Expert Fora for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics, and close collaboration in drafting guidelines for measuring hazardous events and disasters with official statistics;

- (f) United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) – collaborating to align geospatial and statistical standards and initiatives;
- (g) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – capacity development activities to help countries produce environment-related SDG indicators and co-chairing the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia, bringing together data and statistics focal points from regional bodies and UN Country Teams;
- (h) UN Climate Change (the UNFCCC secretariat) – improving climate change-related statistics;
- (i) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – long-standing support for UNECE work on population and housing censuses;
- (j) United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – work on statistics on children and youth;
- (k) International Organization for Migration (IOM) – capacity development on migration statistics
- (l) World Meteorological Organization – hazardous events and disasters.

104. As part of a United Nations Development Account project coordinated by UNDESA, UNECE is working alongside seven other United Nations entities (UNDESA, UNEP, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the four other Regional Commissions – ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA) to support national statistical systems to recover from the COVID pandemic and increase their resilience to future disasters.

105. UNECE also works through a UN Geospatial Network with over 30 other UN agencies on the management of geospatial information.

### **Other regional and international organizations**

106. The following partners outside of the United Nations System can be mentioned:

- (a) Asian Development Bank – on economic statistics;
- (b) Eurasian Economic Commission – on statistics for SDGs and economic statistics;
- (c) European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – supporting statistical work in countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia through technical cooperation and capacity development activities in a wide range of statistical areas;
- (d) European Environment Agency – on climate change-related statistics;
- (e) Global Forum for Geography and Statistics – webinars on using statistical and geospatial information;
- (f) International Energy Agency – climate change-related statistics;
- (g) Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) – population censuses, statistics on migration, poverty and inequality, and statistics for SDGs.
- (h) PARIS21 – statistics for SDGs, climate change-related statistics;
- (i) Data Documentation Initiative – development and integration of standards for modernization of official statistics.
- (j) Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) – hazardous events and disasters, statistics for SDGs.

### **Academia**

107. The following organizations from the academia can be mentioned:

- (a) University of Oxford's Poverty and Human Development Initiative (UK) – work on poverty measurement;
- (b) University of Geneva – business registers and globalisation;
- (c) Deakin University (Australia), Delft Technical University, VITO research (Belgium), Acadia University (Canada), University of Ottawa (Canada), Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain), University of Cardiff (UK), University of Edinburgh (UK), University of Oklahoma (USA), IT Center for Science (Finland), privacy Analytics (Canada), Sarus and Knexus Research (USA) – various projects and activities related to modernization of official statistics;
- (d) University of Extremadura (Spain) – disaster-related statistics.

## Annex

### Key deliverables and events of Conference of European Statisticians and its secretariat

#### I. Key outputs

Table 1  
Key outputs of the Conference of European Statisticians in 2023

<i>Title</i>	<i>Year</i>
<i>Growing Challenges for Sustainable Development: Can the UNECE Region Turn the Tide in 2023?</i>	2023
<i>List of behaviours demonstrating the implementation of the core values and the Fundamental Principles in practice</i>	2023
<i>Data stewardship and the role of national statistical offices in the new data ecosystem</i>	2023
<i>Joint UNECE/OECD guidelines for measuring circular economy. Part A: Conceptual framework, statistical framework and indicators</i>	2023
<i>Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators</i>	2023
<i>The role of brand management, marketing and crisis communication for Statistical Organizations</i>	2023
<i>Cloud for Official Statistics</i>	2023
<i>Large Language Models for Official Statistics</i>	2023
<i>Social Cohesion: Concept and Measurement</i>	2023

#### II. Key events

Table 2  
Key events of the Conference of European Statisticians from January to December 2023

<i>Jointly with</i>	<i>Meeting (venue)</i>	<i>Date</i>
	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	15-16 February 2023
OECD	Joint OECD-UNECE Seminar on Implementation of SEEA (Geneva, Switzerland)	13-15 March 2023
Eurostat, IEA	Joint UNECE/IEA/Eurostat Webinar on Administrative Microdata for Climate Change, Energy and Environment Statistics	30 March 2023
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Statistics for SDGs (Geneva, Switzerland)	12-13 April 2023
	Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	25-27 April 2023
UNEP, EU, STATEC Luxembourg, Austrian Environment Agency	Regional training on air quality and emissions to air statistics and indicators	4-5 May 2023
	Workshop on Gender Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	9 May 2023
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Gender Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	10-12 May 2023

	Machine Learning for Official Statistics Workshop (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-7 June 2023
All RCs, UNSD, UNDRR	Third Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics (Bangkok, Thailand)	5-7 June 2023
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices (Geneva, Switzerland)	7-9 June 2023
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection (online)	12-14 June 2023
	Conference of European Statisticians 71 <sup>st</sup> plenary session (Geneva, Switzerland)	22-23 June 2023
	Conference of European Statisticians seminars on data ethics, and timeliness, frequency and granularity of official statistics (Paris, France)	28 June 2023
EFTA, Armstat	Workshop on the Generic Law of Official Statistics (Yerevan, Armenia)	4-5 July 2023
	Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-related Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-30 August 2023
	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-19 September 2023
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	20-22 September 2023
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Confidentiality (Wiesbaden, Germany)	26-28 September 2023
	CES Bureau meeting (Cardiff, United Kingdom)	9 - 10 October 2023
EFTA	Workshop on Financial Accounts for EFTA partner countries (Brussels, Belgium)	9-11 October 2023
	Expert Meeting on Dissemination and Communication of Statistics (Lisbon, Portugal)	11-13 October 2023
	Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	16-17 October 2023
	HLG-MOS Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	21-22 November 2023
	Workshop on Harmonization of Poverty Statistics to Measure SDG 1 and 10 (Geneva, Switzerland)	27 November 2023
	Meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Poverty and Inequality (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-29 November 2023
UNDRR, UNU, UNOPS	COP28 Side Event: Enabling climate action through data, transparency and finance (Dubai, United Arab Emirates)	5 December 2023

### III. Key projects implemented under the Conference of European Statisticians in 2023

#### A. Supporting the integration of geospatial and statistical data across the UNECE region – funded by Eurostat

108. *Objective:* to foster stronger links between the statistical and geospatial communities across the UNECE region, facilitating greater collaboration and encouraging greater integration of geospatial and statistical information by promoting stronger institutional partnerships and the use of common standards.

109. *Target group and beneficiaries:* national statistical offices and geospatial agencies from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

110. *Duration:* October 2022 – April 2024.

**B. Strengthening statistical capacity of the CIS countries for providing high quality statistics and indicators to monitor progress towards SDGs – funded by the Russian Federation**

111. *Objective:* to strengthen statistical capacity of CIS countries to provide high quality statistics and indicators to monitor progress towards SDGs, focusing on environmental statistics.

112. *Target group and beneficiaries:* National statistical offices and government agencies working on statistics for SDGs in the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

113. *Duration:* 2019 – June 2025.

**F. Statistics and Data Project - Resilient and agile National Statistical Systems (NSS) to meet post-COVID-19 data needs to recover better – funded from the United Nations Development Account (14th tranche)**

114. *Objective:* To improve the resilience and agility of NSS to meet COVID-19 data needs to recover better.

115. *Target group and beneficiaries:* National statistical offices and government agencies working on relevant official statistics in the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

116. *Duration:* September 2022 – October 2025.

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