

**United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe**

# **Report of the Conference of European Statisticians**

**Sixtieth plenary session  
Paris, 6-8 June 2012**



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*Note*

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

ECE/CES/83

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Attendance**

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its sixtieth plenary session in Paris, from Wednesday 6 June until Friday 8 June 2012. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan.

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat); European Free Trade Association (EFTA); International Labour Organization (ILO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

3. Mr. E. Giovannini (Italy) chaired the Conference.

### **B. Agenda and procedure**

4. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/82 and Add.1) was adopted.

### **C. Opening statements**

5. Mr. E. Giovannini, Chairman of the Conference, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Mr. S. Alkalaj, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), delivered an opening statement emphasising the important role of the Conference in international statistics.

## **II. Matters arising for the Conference of European Statisticians**

### **A. February 2012 session of the United Nations Statistical Commission**

6. Ms. G. Vukovic, Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), informed the Conference about the decisions of the February 2012 session of the UNSC which have implications on the Conference's work:

(a) Implementation of the 2010 round of censuses: UNSC urged the UNSD and the Regional Commissions to promote the exchange of country experiences in census taking. The Commission welcomed early initiation of work for the third revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses and asked UNSD to establish an Expert Group to begin assessing the challenges faced in the 2010 round;

(b) UNSC adopted the central framework of the 2012 System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) as an initial version of an international standard, while

acknowledging that further improvements are necessary on specific issues. A strategy for the global and regional implementation of SEEA will be developed. UNSC also discussed the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) that will be presented for final adoption at the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the UNSC in 2013;

(c) A Friends of the Chair (FOC) group is finalising a proposal for a revised preamble of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. A programme review of the Fundamental Principles will be carried out at the February 2013 Commission meeting. The FOC group has been asked to propose strategies to further re-enforce the Principles;

(d) Drafting an indicator framework for a post-2015 development agenda has started and will be discussed at the 2013 session of the UNSC. This framework will consist of new development indicators that will succeed and replace the Millennium Development Goals in 2015.

7. UNECE presented a report on the statistical development in the UNECE region at the February 2012 session of the UNSC. The Commission congratulated the CES on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary and acknowledged the efficient coordination mechanism of the Conference as a good model to be followed by other regions. The CES seminars in June 2012 will contribute to the UNSD work on Population and Housing Censuses and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

## **B. Activities of the United Nations Regional Commissions**

Documentation: Room document 1

8. Following the decision of the CES Bureau in February 2012, a short overview of the statistical activities of the five United Nations Regional Commissions was presented for information.

## **III. Seminar on challenges for future population and housing censuses based on lessons learned from the last census round**

### **A. Introduction**

9. The seminar was organised by Canada, CIS-STAT and UNECE. It was chaired by Canada. In the opening remarks, the seminar Chair, Mr. W. Smith, stressed that major technological and methodological innovations have transformed the way censuses are carried out. The new approaches have made the censuses more efficient than in previous rounds, thus allowing to produce high quality data with less resources. At the same time, increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy are challenging the conduct of future censuses in many countries.

### **B. Session 1: 2010/2011 round of censuses – innovations and lessons learned**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/20 - 22, 30 - 38, 41, 42/Rev.1, 55, 56

10. The session was organised by Italy. It was based on papers by Albania, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, CIS-STAT and UNECE.

11. The session focused on the innovations in technology and methodology used in the 2010 round of censuses. A number of countries have produced census information based on registers. Others have succeeded in increasing the response rates through new collection approaches such as the Internet. The Conference discussed the impact and lessons learned from implementing the new approaches.

12. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Compared to the 2000 census round, in 2010 the number of countries in the UNECE region who used register data for the census has more than doubled. A register-based census has a number of advantages, including limited costs (once the register-based statistical system has been set up), short data processing time, no burden on respondents, and improved consistency with other register-based statistical products;

(b) In order to adopt the register-based approach, the national statistical office should build trust in the society, make sure that adequate legislative framework is in place, and pay particular attention to data protection because of the huge amount of personal data available in registers;

(c) Census data obtained from registers are not always fully comparable across countries. In some cases, registers use different definitions or lack some of the information required for statistical purposes. Further work is needed on the household definition and on the link between dwellings and households for register based censuses;

(d) The quality of data collected through a register-based census should be verified against other sources, including sample surveys. For example, the total population from registers can differ from the usual resident population if there are many long-term emigrants who are still present in registers. This could lead to counting migrants in the population of two countries. Quality guidelines on using data collected from different sources, including administrative data, should be developed;

(e) Is the register-based census still a census? Some countries planning to adopt this approach are considering to use some other term than “census”;

(f) Innovative approaches for combining data from different sources were developed, which in some cases involved data from many administrative sources and sample surveys. Internet self-enumeration and use of hand-held devices for non-response follow-up were also adopted in various countries conducting field data collection, allowing a paperless census;

(g) Countries that focused on promoting Internet self-enumeration achieved high response rates. This collection method also helped to reduce processing costs and improve data quality due to filters and logical controls. Some countries who offered Internet as the preferred data collection option obtained high pick-up rates, for example 65% in Estonia, 54% in Canada and 50% in Portugal. However, it is difficult to estimate the pick-up rate and the necessary processing capacity in advance as the results of a pilot census may be misleading;

(h) A solution to reduce costs and respondent burden could be the use of a short form for the majority of respondents and a long form with detailed questions only for a sample of the population.

13. During the lunch break, presentations on the experience with the 2010 census round and plans for future censuses were made by Austria, Italy, Eurostat, United Kingdom, Russian Federation and Canada<sup>1</sup>.

### **C. Session 2: the future of censuses and their role for national statistical systems**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/23 - 25, 39, 40, 53, 54

14. The session was organised by CIS-STAT. It was based on papers by Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and Eurostat.

15. The session was dedicated to challenges facing the future of censuses in many countries, including concerns over costs, data quality, frequency and timeliness of results, respondent burden, decreasing participation and privacy aspects.

16. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The challenges in census taking are similar across countries but solutions differ because of many factors, such as legal background, access to technology, public sensitivity to privacy issues, and existence and quality of administrative data sets. The new international census recommendations should take into account that the different methodological approaches and a multitude of data sources used in countries have an impact on the international comparability of the results;

(b) Many countries aim at maximising the use of administrative data to reduce costs and burden on respondents;

(c) Some countries propose a continuous or rolling census – as the one already adopted by France - instead of the ten-year periodicity. Italy and Israel are considering an approach based on combining administrative data and continuous sample surveys to produce annual data. This would result in lower costs and less need for human resources that could be stable over time;

(d) One of the complications of the rolling census is the treatment of migrants, particularly in the case of highly mobile populations. It is important to share among countries the limited experience available in dealing with this issue;

(e) In some countries, the participation in the census or in the sample surveys that provide the long-form data is voluntary. This leads to problems due to selective non-response. However, making participation mandatory could provoke a negative reaction from some respondents;

(f) Communication of census related information to the population is particularly important when the census methodology is relatively complex or has been changed, as the results may not be fully comparable with previous censuses or other countries;

(g) To ensure as much as possible data comparability between traditional and register-based census, efforts need to focus on harmonising the output, whereas the current census recommendations often focus on the input and the process. International guidance is needed for assessing the quality of a census and setting the minimum quality requirements;

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<sup>1</sup> The presentations are available at the CES 2012 plenary session website:  
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.06.ces.html>



(h) Future international work on census methodology would benefit from organizing the work in sub-groups of countries that use similar methodology.

#### **D. Session 3: conclusions and follow-up activities**

17. The Conference reviewed the proposal for future work on population and housing censuses in the UNECE region developed by countries' experts at the Joint UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, 24-25 May 2012).

##### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

18. The CES endorsed the proposals for future work reflected in the report of the Expert Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses (document ECE/CES/GE.41/2012/2), subject to the following amendments:

(a) For the work on census methodology, sub-groups should be created composed of experts from countries that have a similar methodological approach to the census. This would facilitate the exchange of experience and discussion on common problems and issues;

(b) An additional Task Force should be created on quality requirements for the 2020 round of censuses. The United Kingdom will chair this Task Force.

19. The Task Forces will review the experience with the 2010 round of censuses and will develop the CES Recommendations for the 2020 round of censuses, to be submitted to the CES for adoption in June 2015. The CES encouraged the census experts from national statistical offices and international organizations to participate in the Task Forces. The work will also contribute to the Principles and Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Censuses to be developed at the global level by UNSD.

### **IV. Seminar on implementing the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, including issues related to coordination of national statistical systems**

#### **A. Introduction**

20. The seminar was organised by Austria, United Kingdom and United States, in coordination with UNECE. It was chaired by United States. Ms. K. Wallman, the Chair of the Seminar, noted in her opening remarks that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, adopted 20 years ago, have stood the test of time and continue to play an important role as ground rules for modern statistical systems.

21. The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. C. Malaguerra, who was the Chair of the Conference at the time when the Fundamental Principles were adopted in 1992. Mr. Malaguerra reminded the Conference about the historical context in which the Fundamental Principles were established, and of the hard work and commitment of the persons involved in the consultation process to finalise the Principles. He commended the Conference on its successful work and stressed the need for continuous improvement of official statistics to ensure the full implementation of the Fundamental Principles. Mr. Malaguerra emphasised the importance of having the Principles adopted by a political authority at the world level, by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

## **B. Session 1: implementing the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/28, 29, 43 - 49, 57, 58, Room document 2

22. The session was organised by United Kingdom. It was based on papers by Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Georgia, Italy, Romania, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Kyrgyzstan, Eurostat, UNECE, and a compilation of short contributions from 33 countries.

23. The session discussed challenges in the implementation of the Fundamental Principles. The growing demand for professional independence and accountability while facing budget cuts was seen as a major challenge at both national and international levels. The session considered how to increase awareness and recognition of the Fundamental Principles and resist effectively the pressure from political authorities to intervene in statistical activities.

24. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Both institutional and practical arrangements are needed for enhancing implementation of the Fundamental Principles. One of the issues where more guidance and exchange of experience would be useful is protection against misuse of statistical data;

(b) Several Central Asian and East European countries highlighted the important role of the Fundamental Principles in the development of sound national statistical systems during the democratization process. The transition from centrally planned to market economy required redefining the role of official statistics in society and making it clear to governments and other users that official statistics must meet international standards and be independent from policy makers;

(c) A number of countries stressed that the Fundamental Principles contributed significantly to building trust and confidence in professional and politically independent official statistics. Currently, most national statistical laws of the UNECE countries make reference to the Fundamental Principles;

(d) The content of the Fundamental Principles should not be changed but more practical guidance on their implementation would be useful;

(e) The Fundamental Principles should be submitted for endorsement to the relevant political body of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The preamble to the Principles is being redrafted for that purpose following the decision of the UNSC;

(f) More efforts should be devoted to the promotion and explanation of the Fundamental Principles to major stakeholders, including users of official statistics;

(g) The Fundamental Principles apply to all producers of official statistics in a country, not only to the national statistical office; adherence to the Principles should be regularly assessed within the national statistical system;

(h) Applying Fundamental Principles has a cost: maintaining the high quality of statistics requires sufficient financial resources.

## C. Session 2: coordination of national statistical systems

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/26, 27, 50, 51, 52

25. The session was organised by Austria. It was based on papers by Finland, Lithuania, Mexico, Portugal and Sweden.

26. The session focused on the coordination of national statistical systems, which is one of the most challenging Principles to implement in practice. The recent Global Assessments of national statistical systems in several countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia have confirmed that countries experience difficulties in this area.

27. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The national statistical office's task of coordinating the statistical system should be reflected in the statistical law. The tasks and mandates of the different entities in the system should be clearly defined and there should be a joint vision and targets across the system. Not coordinating would lead to duplication of effort, higher costs and reduced data comparability;

(b) Both a legal basis and incentives are important for efficient coordination;

(c) The choice between soft or strong coordination depends on the legal, institutional and cultural background of a country. Soft coordination can provide a means for closer cooperation with the data producers who are not part of the statistical system, such as the holders of administrative registers;

(d) Coordination strongly relies on the human factor. Communication is important to build up partnerships and to convince other agencies that coordination provides advantages. The other entities in the statistical system need to see the clear value added offered by the coordination function of the national statistical office, for example expertise, quality assurance, facilitation of the use of resources;

(e) Examples of coordination tools that have worked well in some countries were mentioned, such as the statistical office allocating activities and the related budget across agencies, approving information collections and business surveys carried out by other agencies, etc. The possibility to use these tools depends on the organization of the statistical system;

(f) Coordination of the national statistical system is usually understood to deal with concepts, methodology and classifications. However, the other aspects should not be neglected such as data collection (including from administrative sources), data dissemination and microdata exchange;

(g) The role of the Chief Statistician as a spokesperson for the national statistical system is essential. The Chief Statistician's personality has an impact on ensuring the trust towards and accountability of the national statistical system.

## D. Session 3: conclusions and follow-up activities

28. The Conference concluded that more guidance and sharing of good practices are needed for countries in applying the Fundamental Principles. Practical tools to facilitate the implementation of the Principles would be useful, following the approach of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The guidelines should also deal with the following issues that are not explicitly mentioned in the Fundamental Principles:

(a) Professional independence;

- (b) Adequacy of financial and human resources;
- (c) Access to micro-data for research purposes.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

29. The Conference agreed on the following possible actions to support the implementation of the Fundamental Principles:

(a) Work towards achieving a political commitment to the Fundamental Principles: the endorsement of the Principles by ECOSOC and a pledge to adhere to the Principles by governments;

(b) Establish a mechanism of monitoring adherence to the Principles, such as agreeing on common standards of compliance and establishing a tool to collect information on the implementation (e.g. through United Nations Regional Commissions);

(c) Organise workshops to share good practices and develop tools to support the implementation of the Principles, such as a standard self-assessment tool (including benchmarks and indicators), communication tools to build awareness among governments, politicians, media, etc.;

(d) The secretariat to send a letter to the governments of UNECE countries on behalf of the UNECE Executive Secretary to raise awareness of the Fundamental Principles and their important role for a democratic society;

(e) Prepare a brochure devoted to the 20th anniversary of the Fundamental Principles including the keynote speech of Mr. C. Malaguerra, summaries of the CES seminar sessions, quotes from country contributions, etc.;

30. The CES members were invited to provide input to the survey on Fundamental Principles to be carried out by the UNSD for the UNSC programme review in February 2013. The CES members were also encouraged to organise support at country level (through Ministers of Foreign Affairs and country missions to the United Nations) to the endorsement of the Fundamental Principles by ECOSOC.

31. The Conference welcomed the rich debates during the seminar and asked the secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised in the course of their work. The CES Bureau will discuss at its next meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.

## **V. Impact of crises on statistical systems**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/11

32. As a follow-up to the CES 2010 seminar on the impact of crises on statistical systems, Statistics Canada prepared a summary paper on lessons learned from the financial crises. Sixteen countries and six international organizations contributed to the paper. The Conference welcomed the document and encouraged statistical organizations to make use of the compilation of country experiences available at the following web address: [www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.06.ces/contributions.html](http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.06.ces/contributions.html).

## **VI. Progress reports and approval of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2012-2013**

### **A. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme: programme of work for 2012-2013 and other related documents**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/13, 13.Add.1, 14 - 16

33. The Conference reviewed the planning and evaluation documents related to the UNECE Statistics subprogramme. These documents were approved by the CES Bureau at its meetings on 2-3 November 2011 and 7-8 February 2012.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

34. The Conference welcomed the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division in implementing the Statistical Programme for 2011 and 2012, and endorsed the plans from June 2012 onwards, including the list of planned meetings (ECE/CES/2012/13 and Add.1).

35. The Conference endorsed the Biennial Evaluation report of the Statistics subprogramme for 2010-2011 (ECE/CES/2012/15), the Draft programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2012-2013, including the Biennial Evaluation Plan (ECE/CES/2012/14) and the Draft Strategic Framework of the Statistics subprogramme for 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2012/16).

### **B. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe review of the statistics subprogramme**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/17

36. The Conference was informed about the progress of the review of the implementation of the 2005 reform of UNECE. The review is carried out by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM). It aims to provide recommendations for future work for each UNECE subprogramme, including statistics.

37. EXCOM discussed the Statistics subprogramme at its meeting on 12 December 2011. The Chair of the Conference gave a presentation that was well appreciated.

38. EXCOM set up Friends of the Chair Groups to make a more detailed assessment of each UNECE subprogramme. The following countries/organizations participate in the group to review statistics: the Russian Federation, Turkey and European Commission.

39. EXCOM will prepare concrete recommendations for the future UNECE work priorities to be submitted for adoption at the 2013 spring session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

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

40. The Conference encouraged the Chief Statisticians of the Russian Federation, Turkey and Eurostat to provide briefings on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians to their representatives in country missions to United Nations and international organizations in Geneva in order to facilitate the important review work. [Note: the Friends of the Chair meeting on statistics took place on 2 July 2012. In addition to the Friends of the Chair, Belarus, Cyprus and Serbia participated in the meeting. The country

representatives expressed high appreciation of the Conference's work and supported the work under the UNECE Statistics subprogramme.]

### **C. Progress reports on the Teams of Specialists working under the Conference of European Statisticians, follow-up to decisions taken by the Conference and its Bureau**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/19 and Addenda

41. The Reports of the CES Bureau Meetings, progress reports of the Teams of Specialists working under the auspices of the Conference, and reports from expert meetings were submitted to the Conference for information.

## **VII. Selection of topics for seminars during the 2013 plenary session of the Conference**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/18

42. Taking into account the results of the survey carried out among the CES members in May 2012 and the recommendation by the CES Bureau, the following topics were selected for the CES seminars in 2013:

- (a) Challenges in providing access to microdata for research purposes

Seminar organizer: Slovenia

Session organizers: New Zealand, United States (possibly)

Contributions offered by: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Romania, United States (possibly), Eurostat and OECD;

- (b) Challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow up to Rio+ 20

Seminar organizer: the Netherlands

Session organizers: Slovenia, Switzerland

Contributions offered by: Australia, Azerbaijan, France, Germany, Mexico, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Eurostat and OECD.

### **A. Action taken by the Conference:**

43. The CES Bureau will discuss the organization of the 2013 CES seminars at its 5-6 November 2012 meeting. Countries and international organizations are invited to send to the UNECE secretariat their offers for possible contributions by 14 September 2012.

## **VIII. The High-level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/8, 10

44. The Chairman of the High-Level Group on Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS) gave an overview of the work of the Group and presented the strategy to implement the HLG-BAS vision endorsed by the Conference in

June 2011. He thanked countries for the strong support to the strategy shown in the electronic consultation prior to the CES plenary session. Furthermore, he drew the attention of the Conference to the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM) being developed as a key tool for integration within and between organizations.

45. The following points were raised during the discussion:

(a) There is a need for a communication strategy to reach a wider audience within statistical organizations. Chief Statisticians can help to spread the information within their organizations;

(b) Official statistics have to react to the growing availability of data sources. There is much interest in the topic of “big data”;

(c) It is important to start from a consideration of user needs, and adapt outputs and processes accordingly;

(d) Specific implementation actions can be undertaken by small groups of organizations. The use of common standards should ensure that the outputs are usable by all countries;

(e) Outreach of the HLG-BAS activities to other regions of the world was considered very important;

(f) The importance of bringing together statistical and information technology experts to implement the strategy was stressed. This may require changes in institutional culture;

(g) Geographical integration and the use of geo-referencing for data should be more explicit in the strategy, as well as links to academic and private sector organizations within the wider “information industry”;

(h) It was suggested to strengthen the HLG-BAS coordination role with more focus on leadership;

(i) Participants stressed the need to accelerate the work undertaken by the HLG-BAS, and provide a clear timetable so that national initiatives can be aligned.

46. The Conference was informed about the *Principles and Guidelines on Building Multilingual Applications for Official Statistics*. This document was prepared by the Statistical Information Systems Sharing Advisory Board to facilitate software sharing by making it easier to implement different language versions.

## **A. Action taken by the Conference**

47. The Conference expressed its strong support for the work of the HLG-BAS and endorsed the strategy. The Conference stressed the long-term nature of the HLG-BAS strategy and the need to commit resources to common activities for mutual benefit.

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

### **A. Statistics related to population ageing**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/1

48. The Conference discussed statistics related to population ageing based on a paper by the secretariat. The aim of the discussion was to provide input for the in-depth review of this topic that the CES Bureau will undertake in November 2012.

49. Several participants emphasised the high policy relevance of the topic. It was noted that the terms of reference of a possible Task Force should clearly formulate the roles of statisticians and policy makers in the group. Canada, Hungary, United States, Eurostat and CIS-STAT expressed willingness to contribute to the work on this topic.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference:**

50. The secretariat will update the paper based on the discussion and subsequent contributions. The Bureau will undertake the review at its meeting in November 2012.

### **B. Global production**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/3, Add.1

51. The CES Bureau reviewed the issue of measuring global production in November 2011 based on a paper prepared by the Netherlands. As an outcome of the review, the CES Bureau established a Task Force to develop further practical guidance on measuring global production.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

52. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the review, and supported the further work on measuring global production.

### **C. Education statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/2, Add.1

53. The CES Bureau reviewed education statistics in November 2011 based on a paper prepared by Australia.

54. The recommendations of the review paper included the following actions to be taken:

- (a) Set up a Task Force on measuring e-learning;
- (b) Develop a framework or best practices guide for the use of administrative data in education statistics.

55. Australia, Canada, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, United Kingdom, OECD and Eurostat have expressed interest in participating in the Task Force in measuring e-learning. Australia, Austria, Belarus, Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Eurostat and OECD have expressed readiness to share good practice in integrating administrative, survey and census data on education. No country or organization volunteered to lead either of the two activities. If no agency should be ready to chair a



potential Task Force on these topics, the start of the activities will be put on hold until a later date.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

56. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the review. Countries were encouraged to inform the secretariat of their readiness to lead a Task Force on e-learning or on the use of administrative datasets in education statistics.

### **D. Household survey methods**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/4, Add.1, 2

57. The CES Bureau reviewed household survey methods in November 2011 based on a paper by Canada with input from Australia, the Netherlands and United Kingdom.

58. The Bureau concluded that one of the main challenges related to household surveys is their integration with other data sources. The Bureau decided to wait for the outcome of the UNECE Seminar on New Frontiers for Statistical Data Collection in October 2012 before launching any new work in this area.

#### **1. Action taken by the Conference**

59. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the review. The CES Bureau will consider the need for any follow-up work related to household surveys at a future meeting. This will allow taking into account the conclusions of the Seminar on New Frontiers for Statistical Data Collection to be held in October 2012.

### **E. Organization of in-depth reviews by the Bureau of the Conference**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/5, 12

60. The attention of the Conference was drawn to the recommendations for organizing the in-depth reviews that the CES Bureau approved in February 2012 (ECE/CES/2012/5).

61. Furthermore, the in-depth reviews make use of the UNECE Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA) that provides information about the statistical work of around 30 international organizations active in the UNECE region. The progress made in updating the DISA for the year 2012 was presented briefly for information. The database is available at [www.unece.org/disa](http://www.unece.org/disa).

## **X. Conference of European Statisticians reports, guidelines and recommendations**

### **A. Measuring sustainable development**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/9, Add.1

62. The Netherlands, Chair of the Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development (TFSD) presented an update on the progress with finalising the report of the Task Force. The report outlines a measurement framework that can be considered a step towards harmonisation of the measurement of sustainable development. At the previous CES plenary session in June 2011, the Conference reviewed the executive summary of the report

and supported the work. This year, the parts of the Report covering the main messages and a short narrative were presented to the Conference.

63. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Report should take on board the outcome of the Rio+20 Summit, the European Framework for Measuring Progress (E-frame) project and the OECD Global Forum on Measuring Well-Being for Development and Policy Making (October 2012);

(b) It is important to bring the work to policy attention so that it could be taken into account when developing metrics on sustainable development and eventual post-2015 sustainable development goals;

(c) Eurostat has some reservations concerning indicators to be developed and the use of capital approach in relation to quality standards of official statistics. The Report should clearly state that the assumptions behind monetisation which are not based on scientific and empirical evidence cannot be considered as official statistics. The flexibility given in the Report for the choice of the categorisation method of the indicators, the scope of approach (future oriented or integrated view), and the quality constraints may limit the comparability of indicator sets;

(d) As sustainable development entails a trade-off between well-being now and in the future, the factors that contribute to well-being in the future should be assessed. For this purpose, a good evaluation of the stock of capital that is passed on to future generations is necessary;

(e) The measurement framework proposed in the Report is flexible and can incorporate the outcome of the Rio+20 Summit. The four types of capital used in the report are in line with the United Nations System of Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA).

#### **1. Action by the Conference**

64. The TFSD will continue work on finalising the Report. The draft Report will be sent to the CES members for consultation in spring 2013 and is planned for submission to the CES June 2013 plenary session.

### **B. International classification of crimes for statistical purposes**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/6, Add.1

65. The “Principles and framework for an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes” developed by the Joint Task Force on Crime Classification of UNECE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was presented to the Conference. Twenty-one countries and international organizations provided comments on the document in the electronic consultation carried out prior to the CES plenary session. The countries expressed general support to endorsing the document and made some specific proposals for amendment.

66. The Conference stressed that the Task Force’s work should be used in the development of the global crime classification. Therefore, the outcome of the work should be communicated to international statistical bodies in other regions and to the United Nations Statistical Commission. The active role of UNODC in the work of the Task Force was gratefully acknowledged.

**1. Action by the Conference**

67. The Conference endorsed the “Principles and framework for an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes” presented in document ECE/CES/2012/6, subject to the inclusion of the amendments indicated in document ECE/CES/2012/6 Add.1.

**C. Analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2012/7

68. The Conference was informed about the final report of the Task Force on Analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions. The Bureau discussed and approved the report at its meeting on 7-8 February 2012.

**1. Action by the Conference**

69. The Conference welcomed the report. The Conference highlighted the importance and policy relevance of measuring long-term and short-term migration and its links to defining resident population in censuses. The Conference supported further work in this area.

**XI. Other business**

70. The 2013 plenary session of the Conference will take place in the week of 10-14 June 2013 in Geneva.

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