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Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Sixtieth plenary session
Paris, 6-8 June 2012

Annotated provisional agenda

The plenary session will be held at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Conference Centre, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75016 Paris, France, starting at 9:30 on Wednesday, 6 June 2012.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising for the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) from the United Nations Statistical Commission; work of the United Nations Regional Commissions.
 - (a) February 2012 session of the United Nations Statistical Commission;
 - (b) Activities of the United Nations Regional Commissions.
3. Challenges for future population and housing censuses based on lessons learned from the last census round.
4. Implementing the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, including issues related to coordination of national statistical systems.
5. Follow-up to the CES 2010 seminar on impact of global crises on statistical systems.
6. Programme of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Statistics subprogramme:
 - (a) Planning and reporting on the work of the UNECE Statistics subprogramme;
 - (b) Review of the UNECE;
 - (c) Reports of the CES Bureau and Teams of Specialists.
7. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2013 CES plenary session.
8. Strategy for implementing the vision of the High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS).
9. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region:

- (a) Substantive discussion to obtain input to the in-depth review of statistics related to population ageing.
 - (b) Outcome of the in-depth review of global manufacturing;
 - (c) Outcome of the in-depth review of education statistics;
 - (d) Outcome of the in-depth review of household survey methods;
 - (e) Organization of the in-depth reviews by the CES Bureau.
10. Reports, guidelines, recommendations, etc. prepared under the umbrella of the Conference:
- (a) Measuring sustainable development;
 - (b) International classification of crimes for statistical purposes;
 - (c) Analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions.
11. Other business.
12. Closing of the meeting.

II. Annotations

The sixtieth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) is convened at the request of the fifty-ninth CES plenary session (ECE/CES/81) and in accordance with the Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau adopted at the 2005 plenary session of the CES (CES/2005/2).

The plenary session includes a formal session and two seminars.

1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda

The proposed provisional agenda and timetable were agreed upon by the CES Bureau at its 7-8 February 2012 meeting. The provisional agenda will be presented for the approval of the Conference.

2. Matters arising for the Conference of European Statisticians from the United Nations Statistical Commission; activities of the United Nations Regional Commissions – for information

The agenda item will focus on the implications of the decisions of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) on the work of the CES and the UNECE Statistical Programme. Following the decision of the CES Bureau, a short overview of the activities of the other four United Nations Regional Commissions will be presented for information.

3. Challenges for future population and housing censuses based on lessons learned from the last census round – for discussion and recommendations

This part of the CES plenary session will be organised in a form of a one-day seminar. The organisers are Statistics Canada, the Statistical Office of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and UNECE. Statistics Canada will chair the seminar.

Virtually all countries have conducted a census of population and housing during the 2010 round of censuses. Major technological and methodological innovations have transformed the way censuses are carried out and have made them more efficient than in previous rounds, thus responding to the challenges of producing high quality data while controlling costs.

Increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden, privacy and decreasing participation in the census are challenging the conduct of future censuses in many countries. The Conference will discuss how the key information from censuses can continue to be collected, considering these challenges.

(a) Topic 1: 2010 round of censuses – innovations and lessons learned

The session, organised by Italy, will present some of the innovations in technology and methodology that were used or introduced in the 2010 round of censuses. A number of countries have adopted the use of registers to produce census information. Others have managed to increase the rates of self-response or overall response using emerging collection approaches such as the internet. Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and Short Message Service (SMS) have also been used for census operations.

What kinds of innovations were introduced and how did they respond to the challenges? What was the impact and the lessons learned?

(b) Topic 2: The future of censuses and their role for national statistical systems

The session, organised by CIS-STAT, will identify and discuss the future issues and challenges facing the census taking in many countries. In a time of fiscal restraint, the need to collect census information, or the periodicity of the collection, has come into question in some countries. Privacy has also been an increasing concern. Ensuring a high level of participation is becoming even more challenging, both globally and for key sub-groups of the population, impacting the quality of the results.

Drawing from the morning session, the session will explore how the lessons learned from the 2010 census round can contribute to improvements in the future. Are 'traditional' ways of collecting censuses obsolete? Should censuses be more closely integrated with other social survey programs? Can and should a lot of the information collected from censuses be obtained from registers or other sources? What should core census questions be?

In the closing session, the Chair of the seminar will summarize the main conclusions of the seminar based on the papers and discussion, aiming to identify emerging issues and ideas for follow-up activities.

4. Implementing the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, including issues related to coordination of national statistical systems – for discussion and recommendations

This part of the CES plenary session is organised as a seminar. The organisers are Austria, United Kingdom and United States in coordination with UNECE. United States will chair the seminar.

The seminar will discuss challenges in the implementation of the Fundamental Principles due to the evolving role of statistics and statistical offices. Special attention will be paid to the coordination of national statistical systems.

The 42nd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) called for regional assessments of the implementation of the Fundamental Principles and for development of a practical guide for their implementation. The seminar is expected to provide input to the global discussion on this topic led by the UNSC Friends of the Chair Group.

(a) **Topic 1: Implementing the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics**

The session, organised by United Kingdom, will discuss problems in the implementation of the Fundamental Principles. This includes the increased demand for professional independence and accountability while facing the budget cuts at both national and international levels. The session will consider how to increase awareness and recognition of the Fundamental Principles and resist effectively to the pressure from political authorities to intervene in statistical activities.

The session will also discuss institutional arrangements and practices for successful implementation of the Fundamental Principles. The issue of protection against misuse of statistical data will be addressed. Finally, the session will consider the need for guidance in implementing the Fundamental Principles.

(b) **Topic 2: Coordination of national statistical systems**

The session, organised by Austria, will focus on the coordination of national statistical systems, which is one of the most challenging Principles to implement in practice. The surveys on the implementation of the Fundamental Principles, carried out by UNSD in 2004 and UNECE in 2009, found that national coordination was among the least implemented Principles. The recent global assessments of national statistical systems in several countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia have confirmed that many countries experience difficulties in this area.

The session will cover national coordination from a wider viewpoint than coordination of statistical activities by other national producers of official statistics, taking into account also data providers and main users of official statistics.

(c) **Conclusions and recommendations for follow up work**

This session will be organised in the form of a panel discussion including the seminar organizers, Austria, United Kingdom and United States, and the Chair of the CES, Italy.

The session will draw conclusions from the discussion and consider possible follow-up actions to address the issues identified during the first two sessions. The aim is to propose concrete actions that can be taken jointly by countries and international organizations to promote the implementation of the Fundamental Principles and to overcome problems in this area.

5. Follow-up to the Conference of European Statisticians 2010 seminar on impact of global crises on statistical systems – for discussion and recommendations

As a follow-up to the CES 2010 seminar on impact of crises on statistical systems, the Conference recommended to prepare of a compilation of country experiences with lessons learned from the financial crisis. Statistics Canada prepared a summary paper on lessons learned from the crisis based on input from countries and international organizations. The contributions from countries are available at the following web address: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2010.06.ces/contributions.html>.

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

(a) Planning and reporting on the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme – for decision

The Conference will be invited to review and adopt the official documents of the Statistics subprogramme prepared in the context of the United Nations secretariat's biennial planning and reporting cycle. These documents have been approved by the CES Bureau at its meetings on 2-3 November 2011 and 7-8 February 2012. The following documents are submitted to the Conference for approval:

(a) Biennial Evaluation report of the Statistics subprogramme for 2010-2011 (ECE/CES/2012/15);

(b) Draft programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2012-2013, including Biennial Evaluation Plan for 2012-2013 (ECE/CES/2012/14);

(c) Draft Strategic Framework of the Statistics subprogramme for 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2012/16).

(b) Review of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – for information

The UNECE, at its 2011 spring session, initiated a review of the UNECE work and the implementation of the 2005 reform. The review is carried out by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM). It aims to provide concrete recommendations and proposals for future work priorities for each Subprogramme in the UNECE. The progress of the review process will be presented to the Conference briefly for information.

(c) Reports of the Conference of European Statisticians' Bureau and Teams of Specialists – for information

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 will be submitted to the Conference for information.

7. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2013 Conference of European Statisticians plenary session – for decision

The Conference will select the topics for the CES seminars in 2013 based on a proposal by the CES Bureau.

8. The High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics – for decision

In 2010, the CES Bureau created the High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS), comprising Heads of several national and international statistical organizations, to reflect on and guide strategic developments in the ways in which official statistics are produced. The CES 2011 plenary session supported the work and the vision paper of the HLG-BAS. The Conference will be invited to discuss and approve the strategy to implement this vision based on a paper by the HLG-BAS.

Furthermore, the HLG-BAS recommended that the CES be informed about the *Principles and Guidelines on Building Multilingual Applications for Official Statistics*. This document is prepared by the Statistical Information Systems Sharing Advisory Board and aims to facilitate software sharing by making it easier to implement different language versions. The document is presented to the Conference for information.

9. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region

This agenda item is concerned with the coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region and the decisions and recommendations that the Conference is expected to take on the respective issues. Important tools of coordination are the in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas by the Bureau with the aim to identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues. The reviews focus on strategic issues and highlight concerns of statistical offices of both a conceptual and a coordinating nature.

(a) Substantive discussion to obtain input to the in-depth review of statistics related to population ageing – for discussion and recommendations

The aim of the discussion under this agenda item is to seek input from all CES members for an in-depth review of statistics related to population ageing that the CES Bureau will undertake in autumn 2012/spring 2013.

(b) Outcome of the in-depth review of global manufacturing – for decision

The CES Bureau reviewed global manufacturing in November 2011, based on a paper prepared by the Netherlands. The Conference will be invited to endorse the outcome of the review.

(c) Outcome of the in-depth review of education statistics – for decision

The CES Bureau reviewed education statistics in November 2011, based on a paper prepared by Australia. The Conference will be invited to endorse the outcome of the review.

(d) Outcome of the in-depth review of household survey methods – for decision

The CES Bureau reviewed household survey methods in November 2011, based on a paper by Canada with input from Australia, Netherlands and United Kingdom. The Conference will be invited to endorse the outcome of the review.

(e) Organization of in-depth reviews – for information

The CES Bureau approved recommendations for organizing the in-depth reviews at its 7-8 February 2012 meeting. The document is presented to the CES for information.

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

10. Reports, guidelines, recommendations, etc. prepared under the auspices of the Conference

Three documents will be submitted to the CES 2012 plenary session for consideration.

(a) Measuring sustainable development - for discussion and recommendations;

The Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development was created to follow up on the work of a previous Working Group on this topic that resulted in the publication *Measuring Sustainable Development* (published in 2009). The new Task Force is developing a measurement framework and practical guidance for harmonisation of measuring sustainable development. An extended summary of the Report of the Task Force

was consulted with the CES in spring 2011 and was presented to the CES 2011 plenary session. The Conference supported the work.

The Conference will be informed about the progress of work.

(b) International classification of crimes for statistical purposes - for decision

The joint United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC)/UNECE Task Force on Crime Classification was set up by the CES Bureau to work on an international crime classification system for statistical use, in order to improve consistency and international comparability of crime statistics.

The Task Force prepared a draft report that was circulated for comments among experts of the CES member countries in March-April 2011. The revised report of the Task Force on "Principles and framework for an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes" was endorsed by the CES Bureau in November 2011. The report will be consulted electronically with all CES members in March-April 2012. Subject to the results of the consultation, the report will be submitted to the Conference for endorsement.

(c) Analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions - for information and discussion

The Task Force on analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions prepared a report on the impact of different duration thresholds on migration estimates. The CES Bureau discussed and approved the report at its 7-8 February 2012 meeting. The Bureau decided to submit the report to the CES 2012 plenary session to inform the Conference about this useful document.

11. Other business

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

12. Closing of the meeting

A draft report of the CES plenary session, including the main decisions, will be made available at the end of the meeting (in English). A detailed report will be prepared during the two weeks following the meeting and will be sent for comments to all participants. According to a decision by the CES Bureau in February 2012, the final report will be adopted electronically through e-mail consultation after the meeting. The report will be translated into French and Russian.

III. Organization of work

A detailed timetable will be made available on the official website of the Conference (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.06.ces.htm>) a few weeks before the plenary session.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item/Programme</i>
Wednesday, 6 June	
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