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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, Ms. Marjo Bruun, is pleased to submit her report to the 112th meeting of Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 14 December 2020.
2. The report presents highlights of the work undertaken in support of statistical development and the measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering achievements since the previous report in December 2019, and the major activities planned for 2021 and beyond. More information is contained in the report of the formal segment of the sixty-eighth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians held on 22 June as a hybrid meeting in Geneva, and the Chair's summary of discussions and conclusions from the informal virtual segment held on 22 p.m.-24 June ([documents ECE/CES/99](#) and [99/Add.1](#)). A detailed description of the activities planned for 2021 is provided in the UNECE Statistical Programme 2021 (document [ECE/CES/BUR/2020/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, 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 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Other countries outside the region, such as Brazil, China, Mongolia and South Africa 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, 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.
7. CES has quickly responded to the challenges caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic adjusting both the substance of its work and the working methods to provide efficient support to national statistical offices in the current conditions.
8. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the statistical work. Official statistics is playing an important role in supporting the management of the pandemic, assessing its impacts and planning for a strong, resilient, inclusive and sustainable recovery. National statistical offices (NSOs) have come under double pressure: massively increased demand for additional, timelier and more granular statistics, and new obstacles to actually collecting and producing the data.

9. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensifies the impact of the data revolution and digitalization. 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, such as administrative data and big data (satellite imagery and geo-spatial data, and data from mobile phones, scanners and social media) can increase the speed and efficiency of production and the quality of statistics. However, making use of such sources requires new methodologies and skills, and comes with the challenges of obtaining access to the data, securing a legal basis for such access, maintaining confidentiality, and the cost of handling vast amounts of data.

10. The data revolution and especially the COVID-19 pandemic has changed stakeholders' expectations and generated demand for more frequent and granular data, accessible online and available faster. New data providers emerge and publish 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. With the rapidly changing data ecosystem, the legislative and institutional infrastructure must also evolve. 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.

11. In many statistical offices the pandemic has become an accelerator of innovation to maintain business continuity in the exceptional circumstances. Investing in strengthening and modernizing official statistics is important especially in times of crisis as it is an essential part of the information infrastructure of a country.

12. 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

13. In 2020, the Bureau of the Conference reviewed in-depth three statistical areas 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. These reviews have led to the development of practical recommendations for countries to address the emerging challenges. The following reviews were undertaken: (i) measuring well-being in the era of the "digital society", (ii) role of the statistical community in climate action, and (iii) measuring circular economy. All [in-depth review papers](#) are available on the UNECE website.

14. 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 good example of this was the first joint plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians and UN-GGIM: Europe, which took place on 23 June 2020. The session discussed new roles for statistical and geospatial agencies in emerging national data ecosystems and areas for future work, and supported the renewal of the collaboration agreement between the secretariats of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM): Europe and UNECE for 2021-2023 (see also para 29).

15. As an outcome of the ECE and UN-GGIM: Europe collaboration agreement in 2018-2020, a series of joint events have been carried out (a joint High-Level Seminar on Strategic Partnerships (Geneva, April 2018), Workshop on Data Integration: Realizing the Potential of Statistical and Geospatial Data (Belgrade, Serbia, May 2019), Workshop on Implementing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (Minsk, Belarus, November 2019)). Since 2018, UNECE, UN-GGIM: Europe and Eurostat have also 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. In 2020, a UNECE task team started work on creating a geospatial view of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model.

B. New methodological guidelines and recommendations

16. In 2020, CES endorsed seven 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 finalised in 2020:

- (a) *Guide to sharing of economic data* aims to facilitate exchange and sharing of economic data to ensure correct measurement of global production and provide meaningful data on activities of multinational enterprises. It analyses concrete examples of data exchange, identifies obstacles and provides guidance, tools and principles to overcome the barriers to data sharing;
- (b) *CES set of core climate change-related indicators and statistics using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting* (version 2.0) and its [implementation guidelines](#) include 44 climate change-related indicators recommended for implementation in the region, describe the selection criteria for the indicators and the underlying statistics and SEEA accounts, and guide countries in establishing their national sets of climate change-related indicators;
- (c) *Poverty measurement: guide to data disaggregation* consolidates current and emerging good practices in disaggregating poverty indicators and in assessing their robustness, and provides recommendations to statistical offices for the production, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated poverty measures;
- (d) *New frontiers for censuses beyond 2020* offer an in-depth analysis of the future of population and housing censuses after the 2020 round, which will inform the recommendations for the 2030 round of censuses;
- (e) *Recommendations on measuring intra-household power and decision-making* make an inventory of existing indicators and sources, and provide recommendations to statistical offices for measuring the gendered dimensions of intra-household power and decision-making;
- (f) *Guidance on communicating gender statistics* assists national statistical offices in communicating to policymakers and the public on six key themes: gender pay gap, gender-based violence, the language of gender in statistical communication, maintaining impartiality when communicating gender statistics, interacting with users of gender statistics, and addressing data gaps in gender statistics;

(g) *Guidance on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics* shows how longitudinal data could be developed and used for international migration statistics, and proposes key longitudinal indicators related to the study of international migration and best practices for dissemination.

17. The Conference of European Statisticians also endorsed a new version of the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM) developed under the CES High-level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS). Alongside other models developed under HLG-MOS, GSIM provides a universal language that allows statistical offices to develop common tools using the same reference framework.

C. Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

18. 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 CES *Road Map on Statistics for SDGs* guides this work in countries. A second edition of the Road Map is currently in preparation to reflect new information, lessons learned and emerging challenges.

19. In 2020, UNECE launched its **regional platform on statistics for SDGs**, which consists of a knowledge hub and a dashboard and database of selected SDG indicators. 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 is for the general public and for policymakers for an easy way to see where their country stands among other countries of the region with respect to the implementation of SDGs.

20. 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. The first report *Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the UNECE Region* was prepared in 2020 providing an overview of the situation and trends in progress towards SDGs through the lens of 49 selected indicators under each of the 17 SDGs. Indicators were selected based on their relevance to the UNECE region and availability of data.

21. In 2020 a coordinating group of five UN Regional Commissions was established that agreed on a common approach for assessing progress towards SDGs and contributed to the SDG Moment at the UN General Assembly on 18 September 2020.

D. COVID-19 impact and response

22. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the work of NSOs, which have been faced with greatly increased demand for statistics to manage the pandemic and its impacts, combined with unprecedented obstacles to collecting data and producing statistics. NSOs have risen to this challenge showcasing the value of official statistics and delivering under difficult circumstances. In many statistical offices the pandemic has become an accelerator of innovation to maintain business continuity in the exceptional circumstances.

23. The pandemic has affected all areas of statistics and the related work is mainstreamed in all UNECE statistical activities, focusing on innovation and building resilience of the statistical systems. All expert meetings and capacity development activities held since the pandemic broke out have addressed the impact of COVID-19 in their thematic area. In addition, several dedicated webinars were organized to share experience, increase capacity and knowledge on:

- (a) providing statistics and geostatistical data for managing the pandemic;
- (b) data collection, dissemination and communication in the conditions of the pandemic, including a series of webinars on producing consumer price indices under lockdown;
- (c) related human resources management and training issues;
- (d) role of national statistical offices in the changing world and business continuity of official statistics – discussed in a joint informal session of CES and OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy on 24 June.

24. To support statistical production in the face of the crisis, UNECE has developed a [wiki platform on COVID-19 and official statistics](#) to guide statistical producers to existing and newly developed resources from UNECE and partners. The platform offers a space for national statistical offices and international organizations to share experiences and developments. It contains resources both on new statistical needs to support countries in managing the crisis, and on emergency measures to ensure continuity of statistical production in core areas of economic, social and demographic statistics such as national accounts, consumer prices, population censuses and household surveys.

25. CES has also changed its working methods to cope with the increased operational uncertainty. Physical meetings and workshops have been replaced by hybrid and online meetings and webinars.

III. Major activities planned for 2021 and beyond

26. 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 (v) 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. Responding to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and adjusting to the ‘new normal’ after the pandemic will be a cross-cutting thread throughout the work in all areas.

27. Following the increasing use of online and hybrid meetings, CES and the UNECE secretariat will continue to explore possibilities and try new approaches to make the best use of the advantages offered by the digital platforms of communication to continue to provide efficient support to countries and to adapt the working methods to the post-pandemic environment.

28. At its annual plenary sessions, the Conference focuses on topics selected by the Heads of statistical offices to address their most pertinent current challenges. To take into account the latest developments and most urgent priorities, the CES Bureau will make a final decision on the topics for the 2021 plenary session in February 2021. The main focus will be on sustaining organisational and product innovation in NSOs in post-COVID environment.

29. Cooperation with the geospatial communities will continue to better integrate statistical and geospatial data, by holding joint expert meetings and capacity development activities. The UNECE secretariat and UN-GGIM: Europe concluded a new collaboration agreement for the

period 2021-2023, similar to the agreement for 2018-2020. The Agreement is presented in Annex II to this report.

30. A joint task team to determine where geospatial and statistical standards need to be better aligned to ensure greater interoperability is planned to be established in early 2021. Whilst many capacity development activities are currently on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both the UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe remain committed to develop new activities when conditions become more favourable. Capacity development activities will be conducted in partnership with key partners in this area, particularly Eurostat and UNSD. A second joint plenary session of CES and UN-GGIM: Europe is planned to take place in 2022.

31. The CES Bureau is the custodian of the Classification of Statistical Activities widely used by countries and international organizations. In 2021, UNECE will work on updating the classification to take into account the emergence of new statistical areas, such as climate change-related statistics and statistics on governance.

A. Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

32. The statistical work of UNECE encompasses all SDGs, supporting national statistical offices to facilitate country-led reporting of statistics for SDGs.

33. UNECE work in this area is steered by the CES Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs. Its flagship publication, the *CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs* (UNECE, 2017)¹ is widely used by countries and international organizations. UNECE is currently developing a **second edition of the Road Map** to reflect new information, lessons learned and emerging challenges, to be released in 2021.

34. Drawing on UNECE practical guidance for online **national reporting platforms** (NRPs) for statistics for SDGs, an increasing number of countries are using such platforms to provide national data for the SDG indicators. The work will continue to facilitate SDG data transmission from NRPs to custodian agencies through exchanging knowledge and experiences in using the Application Programming Interface (API) and the Standard for Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX).

35. A Task Team on communicating statistics for SDGs will prepare guidance on how countries can most effectively communicate SDG statistics to stakeholders, including through the Voluntary National Reviews to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

36. 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 Task Team will test the matrix and provide guidance on using the matrix. This work aligns with the UNECE statistical capacity development strategy endorsed by CES in 2018.

37. In 2021, UNECE will continue developing its **regional platform on statistics for SDGs** launched in 2020. The platform consists of a dashboard and database of selected SDG indicators, and a **knowledge hub** providing information about UNECE work in this area and useful resources for experts. The dashboard and database will be further enhanced by extending the coverage of indicators, adding new features with assessment of the UNECE region's progress towards SDGs, and implementing a Russian version of the interface. The UNECE Statistical Division will produce the second report on progress towards SDGs in the region to inform the 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

¹ The Road Map is available also in Russian and Spanish.

38. 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 and globalization

39. UNECE works with countries to apply international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, which are a prerequisite for the compilation of many global SDG indicators, including all those with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the denominator. The main priority areas for 2021 include measuring economic growth, well-being and sustainability; globalization; digitalization; statistical business registers and entrepreneurship; quality of employment; and prices. UNECE will continue to support countries in producing statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing business continuity notes and methodological guidance.

40. UNECE promotes the implementation of the 2008 **System of National Accounts** (2008 SNA) to enable the provision of high-quality data for economic analysis and policies under the Global Implementation Programme, and contributes to the global effort of updating the SNA. The meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts (organized jointly with Eurostat and OECD) will inform countries of the progress achieved, seek feedback and facilitate the testing of the draft recommendations developed by the task teams working on the SNA research agenda in measuring globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability, informal economy and communication. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) in cooperation with other regional partners. A special session and a workshop for EECCA and SEE countries will be organized in 2021 to promote joint work among statistical offices and central banks on the consistency and overall quality of economic statistics.

41. Better measures are needed to assess how skills and knowledge acquired through education and training influence economic growth and productivity. In 2020 UNECE published a *Compilation Guide* to help countries construct internationally comparable **satellite accounts on education and training**. In 2021 UNECE will facilitate the use of the Guide in countries, which will ultimately enable the measurement of human capital. In addition, UNECE will launch an online inventory of satellite accounts produced by countries to facilitate sharing experience and best practice.

42. 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 will support implementation of the *Guide to Sharing Economic Data in Official Statistics* that CES endorsed in 2020. The Guide highlights the importance of data sharing to capture economic stocks and flows correctly in official statistics, and introduces practical ideas and common tools to make data sharing possible. The Group of Experts on National Accounts will serve as a forum for the network of experts on multinational enterprise groups.

43. UNECE will continue to collaborate with other international expert groups dealing with the impact of globalization on economic statistics, such as the United Nations Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics; the UN Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics; the Integrated Global Accounts project of Eurostat, and various OECD expert groups.

44. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Eurostat, IMF, OECD and other partners, promotes the implementation of international

recommendations on the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, which plays an important role in policymaking and is widely used for indexation of wages, pensions and social security allowances. The biennial meeting of the Group of Experts on CPI will discuss new data sources, the role of CPI in measuring the digital economy and well-being, methodological issues and meeting user needs. Building on the experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic, a special session will be devoted to the production of the CPI during lockdown to identify recommendations and good practices.

45. Together with Eurostat and OECD, UNECE supports the development of statistical **business registers** which are indispensable for efficient data collection and production of economic statistics. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the *Guidelines on statistical business registers* (UNECE, 2015) and *Guidelines on the use of statistical business registers for business demography and entrepreneurship statistics* (UNECE, 2019) in national statistical offices.

46. UNECE, jointly with Eurostat, ILO and OECD, leads the international work on **measuring quality of employment** which aims to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. The Steering Group on measuring quality of employment will work on updating the *Handbook on measuring the quality of employment* (UNECE, 2015) to reflect revisions of ILO standards, country experiences and emerging issues. These amendments will be discussed at the meeting of the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment in the second half of 2021.

C. Population and migration, gender, poverty and inequalities

47. There is an increasing policy demand for data on people's well-being, social environment and demographic change. The work in 2021 will focus on poverty and inequalities, migration, gender and population 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.

48. The UNECE Statistical sub-programme supports countries in carrying out the 2020 round of **population and housing censuses**, which represent the very foundation of statistical systems. Censuses cover the entire population and allow to produce statistics for various small population groups whose measurement is essential to ensure that 'no one is left behind'. The COVID-19 pandemic has profound impacts on censuses and many countries have postponed their 2020 census. To address these concerns, in 2021 UNECE will organize an expert meeting and a workshop to support implementation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses* (UNECE, 2015) and focus on mitigation strategies to ensure that censuses can go ahead. A UNECE task force will complete in 2021 the *Guidance on the measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses*.

49. UNECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on measuring **poverty and inequalities**. Measuring progress towards SDGs on the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequalities (Goal 10) requires comparable data and a coherent set of indicators. The 2021 UNECE expert meeting will focus on the application of two recently published guides: *Guide on poverty measurement* (UNECE, 2017) and *Poverty measurement: Guide to data disaggregation* (UNECE, 2020). It will also address regional needs for new methodological work, and challenges in measuring poverty and inequality under the new pandemic circumstances. A particular focus on timely provision of statistics would help government's policy response to COVID-19 in building back better their social protection, social security and employment policies as well as addressing pressing needs of vulnerable

populations (SDGs 1, 8, and 10). The task force on measuring social exclusion will complete its work in 2021. UNECE will continue to promote the use of the harmonized survey module for measuring poverty in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

50. UNECE aims to improve the availability, quality and international comparability of **migration statistics** in line with first objective of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the demands related to SDGs. The 2021 UNECE work session on migration statistics will discuss changes in the definitions of various categories of migrants, integration of data from multiple sources, use of longitudinal data for measuring migration, and measurement of hard-to-reach groups of migrants. A task force will develop guidance on the use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility. UNECE will continue to update and improve its *Clearing House on Migration Statistics*. A further test will be carried out of the harmonized survey module for measuring migration and remittances in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

51. The 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. In the COVID-19 crisis, gender issues attracted attention from the outset as women make up a large proportion of the care and service staff on the front lines of the immediate crisis response. Questions surrounding the economic impact on women and men, the burden of childcare amidst school closures, and the link between social isolation measures and gender-based violence place high demand on timely gender statistics. The 2021 UNECE work session on gender statistics will discuss the national statistical offices' responses to these challenges and address emerging issues. A team of experts will continue the collection and analysis of emerging practices in measuring gender identity. UNECE will continue to promote the national application of its toolkit for training users of gender statistics.

52. UNECE launches, jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), new work to improve the availability, quality, and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents and youth. In 2021, an inventory of the international databases in this area will be compiled, and selected national contexts will be analysed to make recommendations for best practices for definitions, data collection, and reporting. The focus is on (a) violence against children, adolescents, and youth; (b) children and adolescents in institutional care; and (c) children, adolescents and youth with disabilities.

D. Environment, climate change and hazardous events and disasters

53. UNECE activities in this domain aim to improve statistics of high relevance to environment policies and required to derive many SDG indicators. The main priorities in 2021 will include

- (a) climate change-related statistics and indicators,
- (b) environment statistics,
- (c) the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA),
- (d) statistics related to hazardous events and disasters (including the COVID-19 pandemic), and
- (e) measuring the circular economy.

54. Among the three pillars of sustainable development – economy, society and environment – data availability for the environmental pillar is the lowest. UN Environment estimates that there is insufficient data for about 68 per cent of the environment-related SDG indicators, making it very difficult to assess progress and understand the environmental

challenges². Providing data on environment-related SDGs (such as Goals 6, 14 and 15) is a challenge for all countries, especially those with less developed statistical systems. The Joint Task Force (JTF) of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES will continue to support the improvement 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*. In 2021, JTF will continue to review the Guidelines to align them with SDG indicators, the United Nations Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) and SEEA. 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.

55. 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 data availability and developing methods and sources for the necessary data. In 2021 the work will focus on identifying new techniques and data sources for compiling SEEA accounts (including Experimental Ecosystem Accounts), policy uses, communication strategies and coordination of work in the region.

56. As **climate change** is affecting all aspects of the economy and society, more and more data from national statistical offices are needed for climate-related policies and analyses. The annual UNECE Expert Fora for producers and users of climate change related statistics provide a platform for collaborating, sharing ideas and experience, discussing measurement issues, and identifying areas where practical guidance is needed. The UNECE Steering Group on climate change related statistics will continue to collect good practices through a [wiki platform](#). A specific focus of the work in 2021 will be taking stock of developments related to green finance and advancing measuring climate change adaptation. The Steering Group will continue to 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 on the implementation of the set of core climate change-related indicators, endorsed by CES in June 2020.

57. UNECE brings together statisticians and disaster risk experts, including from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), to develop official statistics on **hazardous events and disasters**. The *Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters* endorsed by CES in 2019, identify practical steps for NSOs to support disaster management and risk reduction. In 2021 the work will focus on the development of a set of recommended core indicators, implementation guidelines and statistical operationalization of the new hazard definition and classification presented in the 'UNDRR/ISC Sendai Hazard Definition and Classification Review Technical Report'³.

58. The UNECE Statistical Division will continue to maintain the wiki-platform *COVID-19 and official statistics* and organize webinars for NSOs to increase knowledge and share experience in producing the statistics that is required. A growing compilation of country case studies available on the wiki will be used as input to the development of implementation guidelines for the *Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters*, a set of core statistics and an 'emergency data kit' for statistical offices to use in emergency situations.

59. **Waste statistics** are of high policy interest in the context of SDGs, green economy, resource efficiency, circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, climate

² *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs* (UNEP, 2019). <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/measuring-progress-towards-achieving-environmental-dimension-sdgs>

³ <https://www.undrr.org/publication/hazard-definition-and-classification-review>

change and many other policy areas. However, there are important conceptual and methodological problems in this area that lead to incomparability of data. A UNECE task force, involving experts from countries, professional and international organizations (such as the Basel Convention Secretariat, Eurostat, OECD and UNSD) has been working to develop a conceptual framework for waste statistics. The framework will provide a basis for harmonizing the concepts and definitions, developing standard classifications and providing methodological guidance to produce better quality information for important waste-related policies. It is planned to present the framework to CES in June 2021 for endorsement.

60. The policy initiatives aiming to establish a **circular economy** are increasing in many countries and the European Union. However, there is no single internationally agreed upon definition of a circular economy and how to measure it. The CES Bureau decided to establish a Task Force in 2021 to explore how to harmonize approaches for measuring the circular economy, and provide a platform for exchange of experience and knowledge in this area, in close collaboration with UNSD, OECD, Eurostat and other international organisations.

E. Strategic and managerial issues

61. In 2021, UNECE will continue to provide a platform for national statistical offices to share experience in **modernizing the legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics** and discuss emerging issues posing legal challenges to national statistical systems. The work will focus on the legal aspects of data access, use and exchange, and accessing new data sources during the COVID-19 pandemic. National and international legal experts will be able to deepen the discussion initiated in the 2020 virtual expert meeting and identify needs for supporting materials and practical guidance.

62. Following up on the *Recommendations for promoting, measuring and communicating the value of official statistics* (UNECE, 2017), in 2021 a dedicated Task Force will continue gathering and analyzing examples of ways in which countries attempt to track and quantify the **value** of their statistical products. The work is heavily influenced by the changing perception of the value of statistics and the shifting balance among aspects of this value brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

63. 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).” In 2021, UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe will continue to promote dialogue between national bodies responsible for geospatial and statistical information. Further joint activities are envisaged, including a joint workshop with Eurostat to bring together experts from national statistical, mapping and geospatial agencies to share good practices.

64. UNECE co-chairs the UN Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia, which was established in 2020 as part of the UN reform process. This group brings together data and statistics focal points from UN agencies active in the region, as well as from UN country teams. Its main focus is on **coordinating statistical capacity development activities** in the region. In 2021, the group will be expanded to include representatives of non-UN organisations actively providing statistical capacity development in the region.

F. Modernization of official statistics

65. Producers of official statistics are facing many challenges operating in a continuously changing environment. The demand for new, more timely and granular statistical data is ever increasing while budgets are under pressure. UNECE works with countries to create models, standards, frameworks and guidelines to assist them in modernizing statistical organizations to meet these challenges. This work is steered by the CES High-Level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) consisting of a group of thirteen committed Chief Statisticians, led by Canada.

66. UNECE provides the secretariat for this work. It is implemented by four Modernization Groups (Supporting Standards, Sharing Tools, Capabilities and Communication, and Blue Skies Thinking Network) through annual projects, workshops and sprints. Due to the dynamic nature of this work, the main activities for 2021 are identified in an annual HLG-MOS conference by the end of 2020. In addition, a series of workshops are organized with an innovative focus on cross-cutting issues such as statistical dissemination and communication, data collection, data editing and confidentiality.

67. The Supporting Standards Modernization Group supports the **use of models and standards developed under HLG-MOS** such as the *Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations* (GAMSO), the *Generic Statistical Business Process Model* (GSBPM), and the *Generic Statistical Information Model* (GSIM). The models provide a universal language that allows statistical offices to develop common tools, and they are used as de facto standards throughout the world. In 2021 the work will continue on producing guidance on using GSBPM for geospatially enabled data, revising GSIM based on implementation experiences from countries and better linking the models.

68. **Reusing statistical tools** developed by colleagues, or developing such tools jointly, increases efficiency. The Sharing Tools Modernization Group supports and encourages practical implementation of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), a blueprint for statistical organizations which makes sharing easy. In 2021 the group will support organizations in sharing services and will add new services to the CSPA Service Catalogue.

69. The UNECE Modernization Group on **Capabilities and Communication** supports statistical organizations in creating a modern and agile workforce by providing guidelines on competency profiles, training, management issues, and other aspects needed to increase their efficiency. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the work was refocused to crisis management, internal communication, and remote working, training and recruitment. The work programme for 2021 will consolidate the new ways of working and communicating, and the lessons learned from how offices operated during the crisis.

70. The UNECE Blue Skies Thinking Network is the **innovation hub** of the modernization work programme looking for emerging opportunities for modernization of statistics. The discussion focuses on areas that have most potential to help statistical agencies confront the COVID-19 pandemic, such as synthetic data sets, secure multi-party computation, data science labs, chatbots, integrated platforms to support statistics production and other modern IT technologies.

71. Every year UNECE supports two **modernization projects** to address the most urgent matters facing statistical offices. In 2021, one of these projects will focus on input privacy-preservation techniques to develop ways to make privacy sensitive data available for analysis. The second project will focus on designing, assessing and communicating synthetic data, which can be used to share sensitive information, for example medical records of COVID-19 patients.

72. UNECE is one of the few organizations that delivers workshops in important cross-cutting areas of statistical production, bringing together experts from various domains for joint

work and exchange of practices. For 2021, UNECE is planning expert meetings and workshops on **statistical data collection, dissemination and communication**, and **statistical data confidentiality**.

G. UNECE statistical database

73. 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.

74. 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.

75. The **SDG dashboard** launched in 2020 will be further enhanced by extending the coverage of indicators, adding new features with assessment of the UNECE region's progress towards the goals and targets, and implementing the Russian version of the interface. The dashboard provides quickly and easily information on the UNECE countries' progress in achieving SDGs to a broad non-specialist audience in both PC- and mobile-friendly formats. 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.

76. The database provides the source data for publications such as the report for the annual UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, *UNECE Countries in Figures*, as well as for preparing regular short articles on economic and social development in the UNECE region, published in the UNECE Weekly newsletter and on the UNECE website. 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 2021.

77. 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

78. 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.

79. The following six teams fulfilled their mandate in 2020 and therefore ceased to exist:

- (a) Task Force on exchange and sharing of economic data;
- (b) Task Force on core climate change related indicators and statistics;
- (c) Task Force on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics;
- (d) Task Force on disaggregated poverty measures;
- (e) Task Force on communicating gender statistics;

- (f) Task Force on measuring intra-household power and decision-making.
80. The Conference endorsed the mandates of the following groups:
- (a) Task Force on statistics on children, adolescents and youth;
 - (b) Task Force on new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility.
81. The Conference also endorsed the Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2021, as contained in documents ECE/CES/2020/16 and ECE/CES/2020/16/Add.1.
82. The Executive Committee is invited to adopt the decisions listed in paras 79-80.

V. Follow-up to the 2019 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

83. The 2019 session of the Economic Commission for Europe requested the secretariat to publish a yearly report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the ECE region to support the discussions at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD), with the focus on SDGs under review by the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development that year, using existing data sets and statistics. UNECE Statistical Division prepared the first report *Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the UNECE Region* for the 2020 RFSD, and is preparing a second one for the 2021 Forum. To support this work, a [database](#) and [dashboard of SDG indicators for the UNECE region](#) was set up.

84. Furthermore, the 68th session of the Economic Commission for Europe in 2019 noted the work of cross-sectoral teams in nexus areas where multiple SDGs converge. UNECE Statistical Division is leading the nexus on measuring and monitoring progress towards SDGs, and actively participating in the nexus on sustainable use of natural resources.

85. One of the main topics of the 69th session of ECE in 2021 will be circular economy. The UNECE Statistical Division is launching work on measuring circular economy and will provide input to the session. An in-depth review of measuring circular economy was carried out in October 2020. The CES Bureau decided to establish a Task Force in 2021 to explore how to harmonize approaches for measuring the circular economy, and provide a platform for exchange of experience and knowledge in this area, in close collaboration with UNSD, OECD, Eurostat and other international organisations.

VI. Inter-sectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing inter-sectoral activities

Statistical database

86. The Statistical Division provides the necessary database infrastructure required by other UNECE divisions. For instance, the data collected by UNECE 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 CES work on statistics for SDGs contributes to the UNECE Nexus on Measuring and Monitoring Progress towards SDGs, led by the Statistical Division and coordinated by the Environment Division. Moreover, the Statistical Division acts as the UNECE focal point for the global SDG indicators and liaises with UNSD/DESA on related issues.

Environment

88. The work of CES on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, climate change-related statistics and environmental statistics feeds into the UNECE Nexus on Sustainable use of natural resources.

89. 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 were renewed by EXCOM in July 2018.

Disaster risk reduction

90. 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

91. 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, 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”, in particular targets 17.18 and 17.19.

92. UNECE capacity development activities include:

- Assessments of national statistical systems
- Capacity development workshops
- Advisory services to address country-specific needs
- Development of methodological guidance, survey tools and training material
- In-country capacity development projects.

93. In 2018, CES endorsed a new *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy*, which reinforces the principle that capacity development activities should be demand driven. Capacity development activities are carried out in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, EFTA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, CIS-STAT and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

94. In 2020, UNECE has carried out the first stage of a Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Kyrgyzstan, as well as various on-line training workshops and webinars for the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. During the year, capacity development funds have been re-focused to COVID-resilient activities, including in-country capacity development projects in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova and Serbia to support national responses to the pandemic.

95. Statistical capacity development activities contributed to progress in areas identified for improvement in assessments of national statistical systems. These assessments analyze the progress of countries with developing statistical systems in implementing international standards and the degree of compliance with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. They are carried out at countries' request jointly with Eurostat and EFTA.

96. To address member States' requests for assistance in implementing CES recommendations, including the *Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs*, UNECE is carrying out a UNDA-funded "Programme on statistics and data to build countries' capacity for monitoring progress towards SDGs". This programme will end in 2021, and UNECE, in collaboration with the other regional commissions and UN-DESA is preparing a follow-up to start in 2022.

97. UNECE is also implementing externally funded projects. One example is a project funded by the World Bank to "enhance coherence and integration of economic and social statistics in support of the implementation of 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA)". A second example is a project funded by the Russian Federation to support the CIS countries to provide high quality statistics and indicators to monitor progress towards SDGs, with a special emphasis on environment statistics.

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

98. 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, avoiding duplication of effort, and ensuring that all countries of the region benefit from the ongoing international statistical work in emerging areas.

99. Many international organizations contributed to the work of the Conference of European Statisticians in 2020. 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. In addition to the organizations that are members of the CES Bureau, the following partners can be mentioned:

United Nations organizations

- 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;
- International Labour Organization (ILO) – measuring quality of employment 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;

- UN-Women – capacity development in gender statistics and gathering harmonized statistics for the SDG indicator on gender equality in local government;
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – collaborating on statistics on gender in trade and use of new data sources;
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) – providing statistics for hazardous events and disasters;
- United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM: Europe) – collaborating to align geospatial and statistical standards and initiatives;
- 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;
- UN Climate Change (the UNFCCC secretariat), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and improving climate change-related statistics;
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – long-standing support for UNECE work on population and housing censuses;
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – work on statistics on children and youth.

100. As part of a United Nations Development Account project coordinated by UNDESA, UNECE works alongside nine other United Nations entities (UNDESA, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the four other Regional Commissions – ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA) to develop statistics and data for SDGs, and measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable population groups.

101. UNECE also works with over 30 other UN agencies on the management of geospatial information in the context of the UN Geospatial Network.

Other regional and international organizations

- 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 2020, EFTA has supported UNECE’s online capacity development events in a wide range of statistical areas;
- European Environment Agency – on climate change-related statistics;
- Global Forum for Geography and Statistics – webinars on using statistical and geospatial information;
- International Energy Agency – climate change-related statistics;
- Data Documentation Initiative – development and integration of standards for modernization of official statistics.

Academia

- University of Oxford's Poverty and Human Development Initiative (UK) – work on poverty measurement;
- Bennet Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge (UK) – climate change-related statistics;
- United Nations University – waste statistics;
- University of Geneva – business registers and globalisation;
- Deakin University (Australia), VITO research (Belgium), Acadia University (Canada), University of Ottawa (uOttawa), Privacy Analytics (Canada), IT Center for Science (Finland), University of Edinburgh (UK), Knexus Research (USA) – various projects related to modernization of official statistics;
- Universitat Rovira I Virgili (Spain), University of Oklahoma (USA) – statistical confidentiality.

Annex I

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 2020

<i>Title</i>	<i>Year endorsed</i>
<i>Guide to sharing of economic data</i>	2020
<i>CES set of core climate change-related indicators and statistics using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (version 2.0)</i>	2020
<i>Poverty measurement: guide to data disaggregation</i>	2020
<i>New frontiers for censuses beyond 2020</i>	2020
<i>Guidance on communicating gender statistics</i>	2020
<i>Guidance on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics</i>	2020
<i>Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), version 1.2.</i>	2020

II. Key events

Table 2.

Key events of the Conference of European Statisticians from January to December 2020

<i>Jointly with</i>	<i>Meeting (venue)</i>	<i>Date</i>
OECD	Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on SEEA implementation (Geneva, Switzerland)	13-14 February
	CES Bureau Meeting (Aguascalientes, Mexico)	25-26 February
	High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) Chief Statisticians Meeting (New York, USA)	1 March
	Task Force on Measuring the quality of administrative sources for censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-6 March
Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following meetings and workshops took place online, unless otherwise indicated		
Eurostat, UN-GGIM: Europe	Joint Eurostat/UNECE/UN-GGIM: Europe Workshop on integrating statistical and geospatial data	27 March
	Workshop on the use of artificial intelligence (machine learning) for the production of statistics	1-17 April
	Expert Meeting and workshop on statistics for SDGs	22-28 April
	Webinar on geo-statistical responses to the COVID-19 crisis	20 May
	How are national statistical offices contributing to managing the COVID-19 disaster?	10 June
	68 th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, Switzerland, hybrid meeting)	22-24 June

	Workshop on statistical data editing	31 August – 4 September
	Group of Experts on national accounts	1-18 September
	COVID-19 response in statistical data dissemination and communication	7-9 September
	COVID-19 response in human resources management and training	9-11 September
	Blue Skies Thinking Network pitch talks	16-17 September
	Joint UNECE/Eurostat/EFTA High-level Seminar for EECCA countries	23-24 September
	Expert Forum for users and producers of climate change-related statistics	28 September – 1 October
	Group of Experts on population and housing censuses	29 September - 1 October
	Data collection and the impact, challenges and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic	5-8 October
	UNECE Meetings on gender statistics	12-14 October
	Workshop on the use of artificial intelligence (machine learning) for the production of statistics	13-15 October
	CES Bureau meeting	15-16 October
Environment Division	Joint Task Force on environmental statistics and indicators	26 October
	Webinars on producing CPI under lockdown	21 October - 11 November
	Meetings on migration statistics	27-28 October
	ModernStats World workshop	27-30 October
	Workshop on ensuring statistical confidentiality (differential privacy)	29-30 October
	Expert Meeting on modernizing statistical legislation	3-5 November
	Webinar on the use of artificial intelligence (machine learning) for the production of statistics	16-17 November
	Annual workshop of the High-level Group for Modernization of Official Statistics	18-19 November
	Webinar on Statsbots	20 November
EFTA	Joint EFTA/UNECE Training workshop on climate change-related statistics for EECCA countries	18, 25 November and 2 December
	Meetings on measuring poverty and inequality	2-4 December

III. Key projects implemented under the Conference of European Statisticians in 2020

A. Programme on Statistics and Data – funded by UNDA 10th tranche

Areas: Means of implementation; Environmental pillar; Social and demographic pillar; Economic pillar.

Objective: To strengthen the statistical capacity of developing countries to measure, monitor and report on the sustainable development goals in an accurate, reliable and timely manner for evidence-based policymaking.

Duration: 2016 – 2020

B. Enhancing coherence and integration of economic and social statistics in support of the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts – funded by the World Bank ECASTAT project

Objective: To increase the capacity of countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in compiling national accounts and supporting statistics according to the recommendations of international statistical standards.

Target group and beneficiaries: National statistical offices, ministries of finance and central banks producing and using macroeconomic statistics in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

Duration: 2017 – 2020

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

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

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.

Duration: 2019 – 2021

Annex II

Collaboration agreement between UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe (2021-2023)

I. Summary

1. This agreement is an updated version of the first collaboration agreement between UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe, which covered the period 2018 to 2020. That agreement was endorsed by the 2017 plenary sessions of UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians, as well as the UNECE Executive Committee at its 95th Meeting (EXCOM/CONCLU/95).

II. Background

3. In 2011, ECOSOC established the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), to provide a forum for coordination and dialogue between Member States on topics related to geospatial information. Under this Committee, five regional geospatial expert groups have also been established, including UN-GGIM: Europe, which was created in autumn 2014.

4. In July 2016, ECOSOC adopted a resolution on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management (E/2016/L.28). The Resolution “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, and that the outcomes and benefits of the activities of those bodies be equally disseminated to all Member States in each region”. Support and collaboration arrangements have been established between the other UN Regional Commissions and the respective regional UN-GGIM bodies.

5. UN-GGIM: Europe and UNECE have been gradually deepening collaboration, mainly through participation in each-others events, and the organisation of a joint activities under the 2018-2020 collaboration agreement.

III. Strategic areas for collaboration

6. UN-GGIM: Europe and the UNECE Secretariat recognise the mutual benefits of working together, in particular, in terms of improving outreach and raising awareness of the respective work programmes, as well as strengthening capacity building activities and learning from each other.

7. UN-GGIM: Europe and the UNECE Secretariat have identified the following strategic areas as priorities for future collaboration, which are in line with the latest directions of work from the UN-GGIM Committee at global level:

- **Geospatial information for Sustainable Development:** In March 2017, the United Nations Statistical Commission agreed a framework of 232 indicators for the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Most of these Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators are broken down by multiple dimensions, including geospatial ones such as regional or urban/rural classifications. To provide the necessary data, combinations of statistical and geospatial information are required. Combining geospatial and statistical

expertise is crucial for measuring and monitoring the SDGs and tracking annual progress. In the UNECE region, UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians are ideally placed to ensure that the statistical and geospatial communities work together to meet this requirement.

- **Building networks and promoting communication:** The Joint Plenary Session of UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2020 noted that “Geospatial and statistical data are cornerstones of national data ecosystems, and statistical and geospatial agencies can support each other to enhance their roles. Sub-national data ecosystems to support local-level decision making are becoming important in many countries. There is a need for continued dialogue between statistical and geospatial communities, and undertaking joint activities with concrete outcomes to enhance the value of data.” The UNECE secretariat and UN-GGIM: Europe will facilitate this dialogue through further joint plenary sessions as well as joint activities at the expert level.
- **Integration of geospatial, statistical and other information, including capacity development:** In June 2017, the UN-GGIM: Europe plenary session agreed to open its activities to all UNECE member States. The Conference of European Statisticians welcomed this move, noting that “capacity building activities will be needed to support this wider participation”. The UN-GGIM Committee has “urged the regional committees to continue to reach out and engage with their respective regional statistical counterparts to further strengthen partnerships” and highlighted the importance of capacity building in the form of advocacy, regional and sub-regional workshops.
- **Involvement of other UNECE work programmes:** Whilst the primary focus has been on collaboration with UNECE’s statistical work programme, other work programmes, for example housing and land management, environment, transport and forestry, also have geospatial components in some of their activities. UNECE will ensure communication and collaboration with all of its relevant work programmes. This will include exploring how UNECE can help UN-GGIM: Europe to extend its outreach to these and other sectors.

IV. Concrete proposals for collaboration activities in 2021-2023

8. The UNECE Secretariat and the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe have agreed to pursue collaboration activities in the following areas in the period 2021-2023, with detailed priorities to be agreed annually taking into account evolving circumstances and the needs of our member States:

- Geospatial information for sustainable development:
 - Involve representatives of UN-GGIM: Europe in the work of the CES Steering Group on statistics for SDGs;
 - Identify activities where the CES activities could contribute to the UN-GGIM: Europe work plan related to SDGs.
- Building networks and promoting communication:
 - Promote dialogue between national bodies responsible for geospatial and statistical information, including earth observations. A second Joint Plenary Session of UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians is planned for 2022.

- Reduce obstacles to greater data sharing and more open data access, taking account of privacy and confidentiality requirements.
 - Develop wider communication networks based on the existing ones established by the geospatial and statistical communities.
 - Integration of geospatial, statistical and other information:
 - UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians have agreed to convene a joint task team to determine where geospatial and statistical standards need to be better aligned to ensure greater interoperability. This task team will report to the 2022 Joint Plenary Session.
 - Population and housing censuses are traditionally seen as statistical exercises, but they use and produce a lot of geospatial information. Determining the precise location of residences and work places is essential for local and national infrastructure and service delivery planning. UN-GGIM: Europe experts will be invited to the regular UNECE meetings on population censuses. Future work could include the elaboration of guidelines for implementing geocoding in censuses
 - Capacity development:

Following a series of joint workshops between 2017 and 2020, the scope for further joint events in specific technical areas will be considered. This will take into account national priorities and capacity building requirements of both bodies, particularly in the context of the SDGs, and will complement existing UNECE capacity development activities. Other partners will be involved as appropriate, including Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association, the UN/DESA Statistical Division, and others.
 - Involvement of other UNECE work programmes:

UNECE has established an internal network on geospatial information management, with representatives from all interested work programmes. This network will engage with the UN-GGIM: Europe Executive Committee to identify activities that would bring mutual benefits.
 - Cross-representation in the activities of the other body:

UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe will continue to invite representatives of the other party to join relevant meetings and activities, to improve understanding and to learn from each other.
 - Reporting on progress / work accomplished:

The UNECE Secretariat and UN-GGIM: Europe will report on collaboration activities, to the plenary sessions of UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians. Those bodies will be invited to comment on the activities reported, and to propose new ones.
-