



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
5 January 2021  
English  
Original: English, French and  
Russian

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Executive Committee

#### 113th meeting

Geneva, 22 January 2021

Item 4(b) of the provisional agenda

#### **Matters relating to the Conference of European Statisticians: decisions on matters relating to the Conference of European Statisticians**

### **Decisions relating to the Conference of European Statisticians**

#### **Background**

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its sixty-eighth plenary session on 22 June 2020 in Geneva as a hybrid meeting. The report of the session is contained in document ECE/CES/99.
2. In June 2020, the Conference adopted 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.
3. The Conference of European Statisticians has endorsed the mandates of the following teams of specialists:
  - (a) Task Force on statistics on children, adolescents and youth (2020–2022);
  - (b) Task Force on using new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility (2020–2022).
4. The Task Forces are created by the Conference and its Bureau to accomplish tasks with concrete deliverables and within a definite period of time, after which they cease to exist. The Task Forces work mainly by email and teleconferences and meet only on the occasion of relevant expert meetings. The creation of the groups has no budget implications for the United Nations Secretariat.
5. The Executive Committee is invited to approve the above decisions.
6. Further, the Conference encouraged the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe) to conclude a new collaboration agreement for the period 2021–2023, similar to the agreement for 2018–2020.

***Draft Decision***

7. The Executive Committee hereby approves 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.

8. The Executive Committee hereby approves terms of references of the following teams of specialists established under the Conference of European Statisticians, as contained in the annexes to the present document:

(a) Task Force on statistics on children, adolescents and youth (2020–2022), as contained in annex I;

(b) Task Force on using new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility (2020–2022), as contained in annex II.

9. The Executive Committee welcomes the renewal of the partnership agreement between the ECE Secretariat and UN-GGIM: Europe for the period 2021–2023.

## **Terms of reference for the Task Force on statistics on children, adolescents and youth**

### **I. Background**

1. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been ratified by 196 countries. CRC obliges international organizations, governments and other stakeholders to ensure that no child is left out of progress, that every child is supported to fulfil their rights and potential of development, has a supportive family environment, access to justice and is protected from violence, abuse and exploitation. Child protection systems exist to safeguard all children and their families from deprivations of their rights, preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse of children. The laws, policies, regulations and services that are constitutive of child protection systems, will not function – or at least not function properly – without quality, reliable and comparable data.

2. The UNICEF 2019 Report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlights that the lack of data is a major challenge to assess status and progress towards achieving SDGs. Even in high-income countries, where a larger share of indicators show that progress is more on track than in any other region, some indicators are missing as in other regions of the world. Data gaps in middle and high-income countries exist across sectors: on health and nutrition, quality education, and violence, abuse and exploitation. This is due to a combination of factors; some global SDG indicators measure issues that largely do not occur in the UNECE region (e.g., female genital mutilation/cutting) or simply data is not collected even though the issues exist (e.g., child marriage). In some instances, it occurs that data is collected but in a way that is not internationally comparable (e.g. violence against children).

3. The lack of standards and weak or inconsistent use of standards and internationally agreed definitions and recommendations in several statistical areas hinder comparability and exacerbate data gaps for all groups but especially for children and young people. Examples of these are to be found in the areas of violence against children and adolescents (including lack of standards); children and adolescents living in institutions (hard to sample); children with disabilities (lack of consistent application of existing standards). In each of those areas, there is expressed demand and political will to have data and indicators.

### **II. Mandate**

4. The Task Force on statistics on children, adolescents and youth reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) through its Bureau. It will be created for a period from end 2020 to 2022.

### **III. Objective**

5. The objective of the Task Force is to prepare guidance to improve the availability, quality and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents and youth towards more harmonized and rationalized definitions, methodologies and approaches across the countries participating in the Conference of European Statisticians.

### **IV. Planned activities and outputs**

6. The Task Force will carry out the following activities concerning statistics on children, adolescents and youth:

(a) Review data gaps, sources and collection mechanisms across countries in the UNECE region regarding indicators and disaggregations, in particular in the areas of

education, health, violence, care of children without parental care, and disabilities. This review will include the local definitions and use of age-based groups (children, adolescents, youth);

(b) Review the use of standards and recommendations, definitions, recommendations and methodologies that are internationally agreed;

(c) Develop a set of recommendations for a harmonized and rationalized improvement of the availability, quality and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents and youth.

## V. Timetable

7. The activities of the Task Force are planned for the period from March 2020 to June 2022, according to the following tentative schedule:

| <i>Dates</i>             | <i>Activities</i>  |
|--------------------------|--|
| December 2020            | Establishment of the Task Force and drafting of a work plan with activities, timing and division of work   |
| January – February 2021  | Reviewing data gaps, sources and collection mechanisms across countries in the UNECE region (activity <i>a</i> )   |
| March – April 2021       | Reviewing the use of standards and recommendations, definitions, recommendations and methodologies that are internationally agreed (activity <i>b</i> )  |
| May – October 2021       | Developing a set of recommendations for a harmonized and rationalized improvement of the availability, quality and comparability of statistics on children, adolescents and youth (activity <i>c</i> ) |
| October 2021             | Progress report to the CES Bureau  |
| November – December 2021 | Editing of the consolidated guidance   |
| January – February 2022  | Reviewing the full draft guidance by the CES Bureau  |
| March 2022               | Revision based on the comments by the CES Bureau   |
| April – May 2022         | Electronic consultation among all CES members  |
| June 2022                | Expected endorsement by the CES plenary session  |

## VI. Methods of work

8. The Task Force is expected to work mainly through e-mail and telephone conferences. A face-to-face meeting of the Task Force would be planned to discuss final results. In addition, informal meetings could be organized on the occasion of events attended by the majority of the Task Force members.

## VII. Membership

9. The following countries and organizations are members of the Task Force: Canada (chair), Ireland, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom, Eurostat, OECD, UNICEF and UNECE. The secretariat is provided by UNECE with support from UNICEF.

## **Terms of reference for the Task Force on the use of new data sources for measuring international migration and cross-border mobility**

### **I. Background**

1. Migration and other forms of cross-border mobility are issues of high policy importance. Demands for statistics in these areas have further increased in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018). The statistical community continues to be challenged to capture international migration and cross-border mobility in a way that would meet the growing needs of users.

2. Measurement of migration and cross-border mobility relies on a variety of sources, such as population and housing censuses, household surveys and administrative records, with each of them having their own strengths and limitations. Integration of data from different sources is often seen as a way to enhance the richness of data and reduce coverage or accuracy problems. Yet, even this would often not capture all dimensions of migration and cross-border mobility.

3. New non-conventional data sources, such as data gathered from the use of mobile telephones, credit cards and social networks — generally known as big and social media data — could be useful for producing migration statistics when used in combination with conventional sources. The UNECE *Guidance on data integration for measuring migration* proposes further work on utilising the potential of big data, “to share the emerging practices internationally, to support countries’ first steps towards harnessing the potential of such data for producing migration statistics”.

4. Notwithstanding the challenges of accessibility, accuracy and access to these new sources, examples are emerging that highlight their potential. The 2018 UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics illustrated the use of Facebook data for obtaining age profiles of ‘expats’ by origin and the use of geo-tagged tweets for estimating mobility. The 2019 work session featured an example from official statistics, from the United States Census Bureau, on the use of air passenger data for improving migration estimates. As more examples are emerging, they would need to be collected and analyzed, to support national statistical offices in embarking on the use of new data sources. Such activities should build on the results of the UNECE big data projects for official statistics and other initiatives that look at the relationship of official data providers and big data.

5. In October 2019, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Bureau reviewed in-depth the statistics on international migration and cross-border mobility, based on a paper by Mexico and a note by UNECE. The Bureau brought up the importance of gathering examples where national statistical offices are using the new data sources for producing official statistics in this area and pointed at the 2019 UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics as a pertinent forum to discuss this further. It requested the Secretariat and the Steering Group on migration statistics to present to the next Bureau meeting a proposal for further work on the use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility.

6. Participants of the UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics (Geneva, 29-31 October 2019) recognised the need to work towards using new types of data sources, such as mobile devices, social media networks, satellite images and Internet platforms, and to review existing examples of use of new data sources for the benefit of producing official migration statistics. To meet this need and the Bureau’s request, the UNECE Steering Group on migration statistics prepared the present terms of reference for the Task Force on the use of new data sources for measuring international migration and cross-border mobility.

## II. Mandate

7. The work of the Task Force is conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for a period from end 2020 to 2022.

## III. Objective

8. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidance for national statistical offices on the use of new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility.

## IV. Planned activities and outputs

9. The Task Force will carry out the following activities:

(a) Review existing experience and plans in national statistical offices for using new data sources for measuring migration and cross-border mobility;

(b) Identify examples from outside official statistics where new data sources have been used for measuring migration and cross-border mobility;

(c) Compile the examples into a reference tool and develop a mechanism for updating it with new examples;

(d) Analyze the collected material to guide national statistical offices in the use of the new sources.

## V. Timetable

10. The activities of the Task Force are planned for the period from end 2020 to 2022, according to the following tentative schedule:

| <i>Dates</i>                 | <i>Planned activities</i>   |
|------------------------------|---|
| December 2020                | Establishment of the Task Force and drafting of a work plan with activities, timing and division of work                  |
| January – February 2021      | Review existing experience in national statistical offices (activity <i>a</i> )   |
| March – April 2021           | Identify examples from outside official statistics (activity <i>b</i> )   |
| April – May 2021             | Compile the examples into a reference tool and develop a mechanism for updating it with new examples (activity <i>c</i> ) |
| June – September 2021        | Analysis of examples and drafting of guidance (activity <i>d</i> )  |
| October 2021                 | Meeting of the Task Force and presentation of the draft report to the UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics |
| October – November 2021      | Editing of the full report  |
| December 2021 – January 2022 | Review of the guidance by the CES Bureau  |
| February – March 2022        | Revision based on the comments by the CES Bureau  |
| April – May 2022             | Electronic consultation among all CES countries   |
| June 2022                    | Expected endorsement by the CES plenary session   |

## **VI. Method of work**

11. The Task Force will primarily work via e-mail, wiki workspace, and audio or video conferences. A face-to-face meeting of the Task Force is planned back-to-back with the UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics in October 2021.

## **VII. Membership**

12. The following countries and organizations are members of the Task Force: Canada, Georgia, Italy (Chair), Mexico, New Zealand, Turkey, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat, OECD, United Nations Statistics Division and UNECE. Potential contributors from outside the official statistics community have been identified in Australia, Germany, Switzerland and United Kingdom. UNECE provides secretariat to the Task Force.

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