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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### Seventy-first plenary session

Geneva, 22–23 June 2023

Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda

#### **Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists**

## **Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2022**

**Prepared by the Secretariat**

### *Summary*

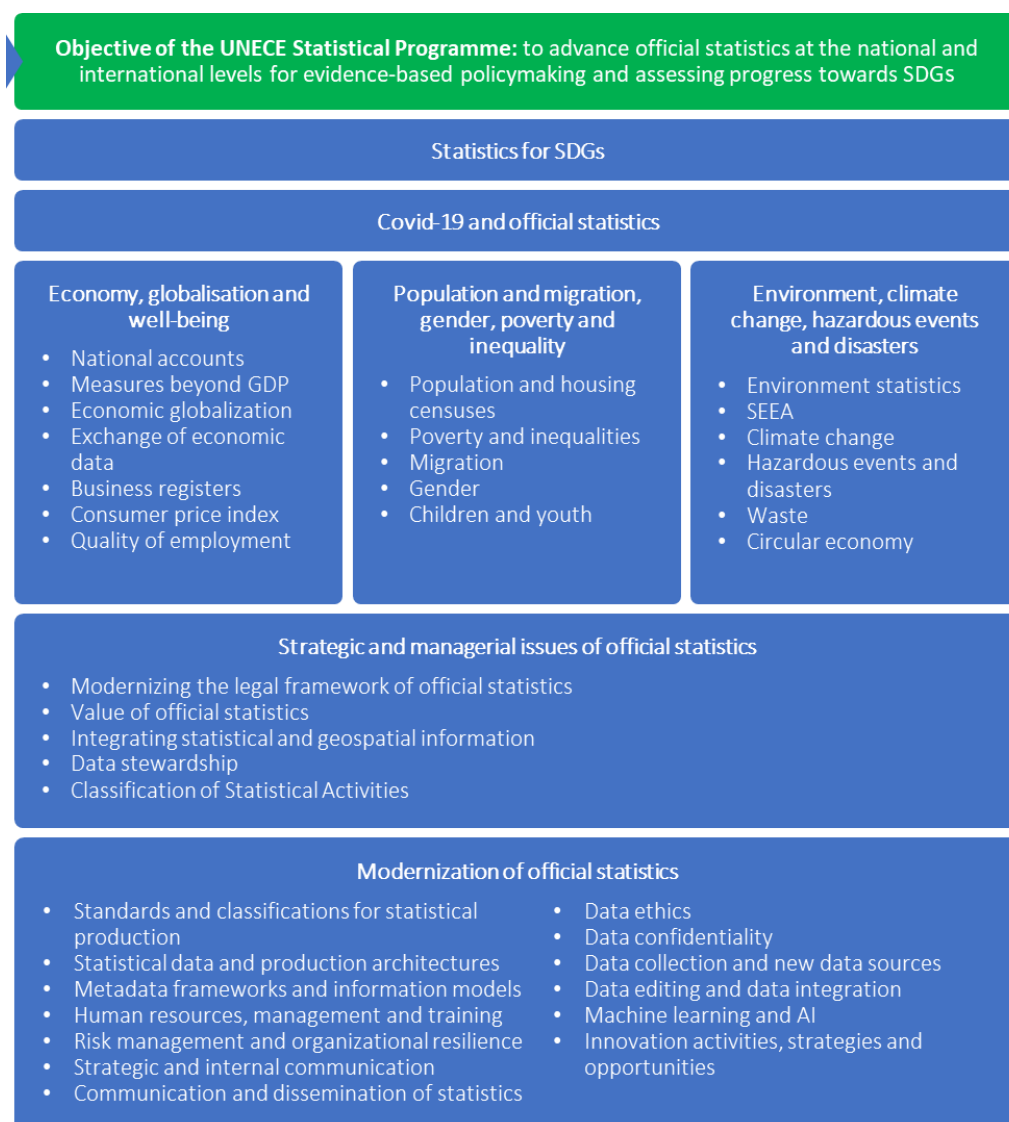
The document provides a short summary of the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2022. The annex includes the list of meetings organized in 2022. The document is submitted to the Conference for approval.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The objective of the UNECE statistical sub-programme is “to advance official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)”.
2. The work is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians and focuses on the priorities set by member States. The Conference consists of the Heads of the national statistical organizations (NSOs) in the UNECE region and the OECD member countries. Other countries outside the region, such as Brazil, China, Mongolia and South Africa also actively participate in the work of the Conference.
3. The Statistical Division acts as secretariat for CES. It works in close collaboration with international organizations active in statistics in the region, such as the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The Chief Statisticians of these organizations participate in the CES Bureau to ensure coordination of work and avoid duplication. The international and regional organizations which contributed to the work of the CES in 2022 are presented in section III.
4. The work 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.
5. All UNECE statistical work 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.

Figure 1.

**UNECE Statistical Programme – objective and areas of work****II. Description of the main accomplishments in 2022****A. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

6. In 2022, the Bureau of the Conference reviewed in-depth two statistical areas: (i) collaboration with private data providers and (ii) data ethics, 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 and older [in-depth review papers](#) are available on the UNECE website.

7. Obtaining sustainable access to data held by the private sector for purposes of official statistics is a key emerging issue for national statistical offices. In line with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, official statistics are an indispensable element in the information system of democratic societies. In today's rapidly changing society, collecting primary data from persons, households, businesses and institutions is associated with increasing challenges. At the same time, data generated by the private sector as part of its business have great potential for purposes of official statistics, enabling the delivery of more timely and relevant statistics amid the rapidly changing socio-economic

environment and users' needs, increasing efficiency of statistical production, and reducing respondent burden.

8. Given this, the 2022 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians called upon national governments and relevant ministries to support national statistical offices in their key coordinating role in the access to data held by the private sector for official statistical purposes. It called also upon international organizations to coordinate strategically the work undertaken by different international bodies dealing with the access to data held by the private sector to achieve greater specialization, more efficient use of human and financial resources, and wider dissemination of the results, as well as to support national statistical offices in their efforts to collaborate with the private sector<sup>1</sup>.

9. 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. In 2022, a second joint plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians and UN-GGIM: Europe took place, which requested the secretariats to continue the current collaboration in areas of mutual strategic importance for the statistical and geospatial communities, including the preparation of an extension to the current collaboration agreement beyond the end of 2022 and organizing another joint plenary session in 2024.

## **B. Methodological work**

10. The work of the UNECE Statistical Division is fully aligned with SDGs, facilitating country-led reporting of statistics for SDGs in two main ways.

11. First, UNECE is supporting national statistical offices as providers and national coordinators of statistics on SDGs, by providing guidance and a number of practical tools to facilitate its implementation. The 2nd edition of the *CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs*, finalized in 2021, guides this work in countries, reflecting new information, lessons learned and emerging challenges. In 2022, UNECE continued to maintain and improve its [regional platform on statistics for SDGs](#) launched in 2020, which consists of a knowledge hub and a dashboard and database of 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 dashboard – available in English and Russian – is for the general public and for policymakers as an easy way to see where their country stands among other countries of the region with respect to the implementation of SDGs. Moreover, the third report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region “[“Halfway to 2030: How many targets will be achieved in the UNECE region?”](#)” was prepared in 2022. The report provided a progress assessment identifying targets on which the overall progress in the region was good and the few areas where the course needs to be reversed. The report also takes a look at progress in gender equality – a contribution by UN Women – and presents stories and insights contributed by other agencies and United Nations country teams in the region. Anchored in data, the [insights from these stories](#) help understand the ways how change can be achieved.

12. Second, the Statistical Division undertakes methodological work and national statistical capacity development to inform policy decisions for the achievement of SDGs through work on demographic, social, economic, and environment statistics.

13. In 2022, CES endorsed four statistical guidelines and recommendations, developed by dedicated teams of specialists. These teams of specialists are set up by CES for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, timeframe, output and a sunset clause. All the statistical guidelines and recommendations are prepared in close collaboration with main international partners, in particular Eurostat, OECD, IMF and UN/DESA. All guidelines and

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<sup>1</sup> [ECE/CES/103/Add.1](#)

recommendations are available on the UNECE website. The following guidelines were endorsed in 2022:

(a) [\*Measuring of the value of official statistics\*](#) proposes a technique for identifying the components that make up the value of official statistics and for developing measurable indicators based on these components. The report reviews potential measures of value and showcases a diverse array of case studies of countries' efforts to quantify aspects of value;

(b) [\*Guidance on statistics on children: Spotlight on children exposed to violence, in alternative care, and with a disability\*](#) provides information about the data sources, definitions, standards and methods used in the collection of data and production of statistics on children, adolescents and youth. The Guidance focuses on three policy-relevant areas with methodological gaps: violence against children, children in alternative care, and children with a disability;

(c) [\*Handbook on forms of employment\*](#) proposes a conceptual framework that identifies and maps the relationships between concepts essential for measuring and identifying new and established forms of employment;

(d) [\*Use of new data sources for measuring international migration\*](#) presents national experiences with big data and new data sources. The report is accompanied by a literature database containing references of published works in migration-related matters using innovative methods and/or new data sources.

14. [\*Guidance on measuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men\*](#) was developed to provide practical guidance for data producers in measuring the ongoing and longer-term gendered impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. It includes proposed indicators and survey questions and advice on the key methodological considerations for data collection and dissemination.

15. In 2022, a revised *Classification of Statistical Activities* developed under CES was reviewed and endorsed by the Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications, which recommended it for approval by the United Nations Statistical Commission as an international standard. The revised Classification is already used by the Committee to organize the classifications of the International Family of Classification on the web.

16. In 2022, UNECE Task Forces have prepared the following outputs for submission to the 2023 CES plenary session for endorsement (subject to a positive outcome of a wide consultation before the plenary session):

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

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

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

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

17. UNECE developed these outputs in cooperation with countries and the following partner organizations: Bank for International Settlements, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), European Environment Agency, Eurostat, Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IMF, OECD, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UNSD, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the World Meteorological Organization, the World Resources Institute and University of Extremadura.

18. Under the auspices of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) three priority projects were carried out in 2022: the Input Privacy-Preservation Techniques (extension), Meta-Academy for the Modernization of Official Statistics, and the Data Governance for Interoperability Framework project. The main output of the previous year's Synthetic Data project was published as *Synthetic Data for Official Statistics: A Starters Guide*. These activities are in addition to the work of the core sub-groups on Applying Data Science and Modern Methods, Supporting Standards, Capability and Communication, the Blue Skies Thinking Network and the United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics (ONS)-UNECE Machine Learning Community Group.

### C. Thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

19. 2022 marked 30 years since the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics were first developed and adopted at the policy level by UNECE. In 1994, the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted these principles at the global level. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorsed the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics at policy level in 2013. In January 2014, they were adopted by the UN General Assembly.

20. As a global standard, the Principles underlie everything that the producers of official statistics do from the methods for collecting, processing and storing data to the ways how statistical offices disseminate statistics and communicate with those who use them. The Principles ensure independence from political influence and the right and duty to publicly correct misuse or misinterpretation of statistics. The Principles safeguard the trustworthiness of official statistics, enabling them to play a unique role as a public good that underpins sustainable development and democracy. Thirty years on, the Principles remain a collective manifesto for serving society with impartial, relevant and accurate information to guide decisions.

21. Wishing to mark this important milestone and to celebrate the origin of the Principles in the UNECE region, the CES Bureau called upon the secretariat to coordinate a communications campaign. The campaign aimed to focus the attention of the general public, users of statistics and even producers of official statistics on the continued importance of the Principles, showing how and why each of them matters to everyday life. The campaign consisted of the following main strands:

- (a) Ten campaigns corresponding to the ten Principles, each led by one to three countries and open to contributions from all other countries and organizations;
- (b) A video produced by Poland combining contributions from many countries, launched on the first day of the 70th CES plenary session in June 2022;
- (c) Video statements by high-level users and stakeholders, aired at the 70th CES plenary session;
- (d) A visual identity including logo, imagery, fonts, colour scheme, PowerPoint slides backgrounds and banners for social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc.) provided by Ireland, designed to bring coherence to the many different contributions;
- (e) Conventional and social media campaigns anchored in a series of short texts written by the secretariat.
- (f) [A microsite](#) bringing together highlights of developed materials (available in English with French, Russian and Spanish versions to follow in due course).

22. Details of the leaders and content of the mini campaigns and other activities can be found in document ECE/CES/2022/17 presented to the Conference at its 70th plenary session in June 2022. During this meeting a session was held to mark the anniversary, showcasing

many of the materials produced by countries and giving CES members the opportunity to comment on the role and future of the Principles.

23. To date the campaign has resulted in more than 330 original posts on social media and translation of the anniversary logo into 15 languages (Armenian, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, te reo Māori, Polish, Spanish, Romanian, Russian).

## **D. Capacity development**

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. In line with *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy* endorsed by CES in 2018, capacity development activities are demand driven. The 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.

27. Jointly with Eurostat and EFTA, UNECE carries out Global Assessments at the request of countries. Global Assessments analyze progress of countries with developing statistical systems in implementing international standards and compliance with the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. In 2021, UNECE finalised 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 Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

28. Statistical capacity development activities contributed to progress in areas identified for improvement in the Global Assessments. They are carried out at countries’ request often in partnership with other relevant international organisations and UN Country Teams.

29. A United Nations Development Account project was started in September 2022, in partnership with UNSD, other UN Regional Commissions, UNEP and UNODC. A range of workshops and other statistical capacity development activities will be carried out under the project, with a focus on supporting post-Covid recovery.

30. 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)”.

## **E. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe statistical database**

31. 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. The statistical database is available at: <https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb/en>, providing:

- Macroeconomic data (national accounts main aggregates, industrial production, labour force, wages, price indices, purchasing power parities, exchange rates, and globalization indicators);
- Social and demographic data with gender breakdown (population, fertility, families and households, work and the economy, education, public life and decision making, health and mortality, crime and violence, science and ICT, and life balance);
- Transport and forestry statistics provided by other UNECE Divisions;
- Clearinghouse for migration statistics for the CIS countries;
- Country overview tables and tables with a country ranking and country profiles, charts and maps.

32. 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.

33. In 2022, the [SDG dashboard](#) continued to provide 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.

34. The database provides the source data for the report for the annual UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and 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.

35. 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.

## **F. Websites and wikis maintained by the UNECE Statistical Division**

36. The UNECE Statistical Division's website (<https://unece.org/statistics>) provides information about the Division's work and includes links to final products and other materials. These links include:

- Knowledge Hub on SDGs: <https://w3.unece.org/sdghub/>;
- Online statistical profiles of UNECE countries in publication format, linked to the database: <https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb/en/PDFCountryProfiles>;
- Gender statistics website with multimedia training videos: <https://unece.org/statistics/gender-statistics>;
- Links to official statistical organizations: <https://unece.org/statistics/partners>.

37. In addition to the website, the Statistical Division maintains a collaborative Wiki platform for experts to communicate with one another and to share knowledge and tools. The Statistical Division has currently almost 100 wiki spaces with more than 2000 active users. All the wikis and knowledge bases on different subjects can be found at: <https://statswiki.unece.org>.

## **III. Cooperation with other organizations**

38. UNECE maintains very good cooperation and close working contacts with 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.

39. Many international organizations contributed to the work of the Conference of European Statisticians in 2022. 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:

#### **A. 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 consumer prices, revision of standards for statistics on informality, and ensuring that economic and social statistics align with labour-related international standards and definitions; development and integration of standards for modernization of official statistics;
- 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) – 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;
- World Meteorological Organization – climate change related statistics, hazardous events and disasters.

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

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

## **B. Other regional and international organizations**

- Eurasian Economic Commission – on statistics for SDGs and economic statistics;
- 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; EFTA supports UNECE’s 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;
- Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) – population censuses, statistics on migration, poverty and inequality
- PARIS21 – statistics for SDGs, climate change-related statistics;
- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) – managerial and strategic issues of official statistics;
- Data Documentation Initiative – development and integration of standards for modernization of official statistics.
- Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) – hazardous events and disasters, statistics for SDGs.

## **C. 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;
- University of Extremadura – measuring circular economy;
- University of Geneva – business registers and globalisation;
- Deakin University (Australia), Delft Technical University, VITO research (Belgium), Acadia University (Canada), University of Ottawa (Canada), Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain), University of Cardiff (UK), University of Edinburgh (UK), University of Oklahoma (USA), IT Center for Science (Finland), privacy Analytics (Canada), Sarus and Knexus Research (USA) – various projects and activities related to modernization of official statistics.

## **IV. Meetings organized in 2022**

42. In 2022, the UNECE Statistical Division organized 23 meetings and workshops presented in the Annex. Documents for public meetings are available at the [UNECE meetings web pages](#).

## Annex

### List of meetings held January to December 2022

Table 1.

#### Key events of the Conference of European Statisticians from January to December 2022

<i>Jointly with</i>	<i>Meeting (venue)</i>	<i>Date</i>
OECD	CES Bureau (Geneva, Switzerland)	23-24 February
	Modernization Sprint (Geneva, Switzerland)	10 March
	Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on Implementation of SEEA (online)	28, 30-31 March
	Expert Meeting on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (Geneva, Switzerland)	5-6 May
	Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-20 May
	Conference of European Statisticians 70 <sup>th</sup> plenary session (Geneva, Switzerland)	20-22 June
	ModernStats World Workshop (Belgrade, Serbia)	27-29 June
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Dissemination and Communication (online)	13-15 September
	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	19-20 September
	Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	21-23 September
	Group of Experts on Business Registers (Geneva, Switzerland)	26-29 September
	Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	29-30 September
	Special Session for EECCA and SEE countries on Supply and Use Tables and Input-Output Tables	3-5 October
	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Editing (online)	3-6 October
	CES Bureau (Cork, Ireland)	12-13 October
Environment Division	Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection (Rome, Italy)	19-21 October
	Group of Experts on Migration Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	26(pm)-28 October
	Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	3-4 November
	Expert Meeting on Modernization of Statistical Legislation (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-18 November
	HLG-MOS Workshop on the Modernization of Official Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	22-25 November
	Workshop on Harmonization of Poverty Statistics to Measure SDG 1 and 10 (Geneva, Switzerland)	7 December
	Group of Experts on Measuring Poverty and Inequality (Geneva, Switzerland)	8-9 December