



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 229 – 16-20 July 2007

Executive Secretaries' high-level dialogue

The High Level Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries with the Economic and Social Council on 6 July addressed, from a regional perspective, the theme for the thematic discussion, "Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies" and the theme for the annual ministerial review, focusing on strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger.

Long-term sustainability emphasized

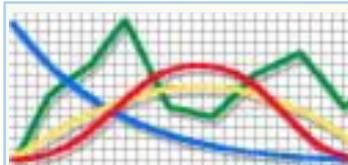
The Executive Secretaries presented a regionally-nuanced analysis on the relationship between growth and equity within their respective regions. They made concrete suggestions on strategies and policies required to ensure that absolute poverty and economic inequality are reduced while also promoting overall growth, and the achievement of the MDGs at the national level. They put particular emphasis on long-term sustainability of development. At the same time, the presentations addressed donor governments to ensure that the manner by which official development assistance (ODA) is provided supports reducing poverty and promoting pro-poor growth.

Pro-poor growth

Several key messages emerged from the presentations to help guide governments instituting policies to promote pro-poor growth. Specific macroeconomic fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policy recommendations were made by ESCWA, and ECE stressed that pro-poor growth is intricately linked to pro-employment policies. ESCAP noted that the promotion of public expenditure on public goods such as health and education, rural infrastructure, and water sanitation is a precondition for pro-poor growth. At the same time, the presentations also stressed the need to specifically target policies to assist vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities or the rural poor, and ensure that the empowerment of women is prioritized.



Official statistics are getting more and better integrated



Statistical offices around the world are engaged in many activities targeting different decision-makers in specific areas. Statistical activities differ by their purpose which might be knowledge about the population, about economic development, about social issues like poverty, health, education, and many other aspects of the socio-economic situation of society. Statistical activities also differ from the scientific viewpoint because different methods and techniques are used for processing different kinds of data, for example for statistics on international trade, on household income, on national accounts. These are the reasons why many diverse tools, databases and processes have been put into place.

This diversity allows better knowledge about society, but it also adds too much complexity to the management of statistical offices. The IT tools developed for particular surveys often cannot be reused for others. The quality of different data collections is variable. Statisticians are aware of these problems and see a solution in the better integration of the different processes.



UNECE experience in land administration sought in Asia and the Pacific

Countries from the UNECE and Asian regions came together in Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia (27-28 June 2007) to exchange experiences and to discuss good practices in land administration. The workshop on "Good Land Administration – its Role in Economic Development" was organized by the Administration of Land Affairs, Geodesy and Cartography of Mongolia (ALAGaC) and the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP).

Mr. Enkhbold, Prime Minister of Mongolia, in his opening speech highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to land administration, as land policies are linked to social and economic development, and poverty reduction while keeping an environmental balance. Participants agreed that every country should have a formal system of registration for land and property rights to ensure security of tenure, to facilitate good governance and public and private investments in real estate, and to achieve the overall goal of making the best use of land and its associated resources for the benefit of all citizens.

At the workshop and in a subsequent round table discussion, the experience of the Working Party on Land Administration in the UNECE region was presented.



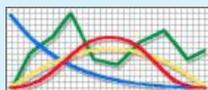
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The chairperson of the Working Party, Mr. Kreuzer (Germany), pointed out its value as an international network of professionals within the framework of the UNECE. Its various activities – such as studies, land administration reviews in individual countries and thematic workshops – are highly recognized. Asian and Pacific countries envisage establishing a similar body in their region to benefit from international cooperation and mutual exchange of knowledge. ☘

For more information contact Michael Kunz (michael.kunz@unece.org).

ECA identified poverty, unemployment, income inequality and commodity-dependence among the key challenges confronting Africa's increasingly determined efforts for sustainable development. It also stressed that the challenges should be addressed at three levels: national, regional and global. ECLAC called for its member States to continue their efforts to improve good governance and income distribution, and to increase the efficiency and financing of social policies to achieve the MDG targets. It also outlined the ways in which middle-income countries should be assisted in their efforts to be integrated into the global economy.

Within the context of an interactive Dialogue, the participating delegations from all regions reiterated their strong support for the regional commissions and for the critical role that they play in supporting nations through analytical work and technical cooperation, as well as in promoting regional integration. The delegate of the United States made a concrete recommendation for the regional commissions to play an active role in the evaluation of the "One UN" pilot initiatives on coherence. ☞



continued

The integration efforts address the synergies between individual statistical surveys, consistency of official statistical data and improved efficiency. Corporate management and governance structures are being implemented. The integration of statistical processes begins with the integration of statistical metadata systems. Statistical metadata describe the structure of data collected and disseminated by statistical offices, the processes used for estimations, aggregations and other transformations, data management processes and quality. Statistical metadata should also record changes to statistical surveys with time.

The integration of metadata focuses on three aspects. Harmonizing metadata through the statistical cycle from data collection through processing to dissemination and archiving is one of them. Another aspect concerns integration of metadata used for individual statistical surveys in order to benefit from synergies and to ensure higher consistency of official statistics. There is also an aspect of international harmonization and comparability being addressed through international harmonization of statistical metadata models.

Integration became a leading topic of the Workshop on statistical metadata held in Vienna on 4-6 July. The main theme was the role of statistical metadata through the statistical survey cycle. Case studies prepared by Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden were discussed in this context along with several contributions from other countries. The Case Studies and outcomes of the workshop will be added to the Common Metadata Framework (CMF) website maintained by UNECE (<http://www.unece.org/stats/cmf/>). Discussions will continue at next year's Work Session on Statistical Metadata (METIS 2008), to take place in Luxembourg on 8-11 April 2008. ☞

For more information contact Juraj Riecan or Jessica Gardner (support.stat@unece.org).

Facts and figures

Many women in Europe tend to postpone childbirth

At present, in the Nordic countries women have their first child on average at the age of 28, which is roughly 3.3 years later than in the early 1980s. A similar pattern of change can also be observed in the ten East European countries depicted in the graph: the mean age of women at the birth of the first child has increased by some three years over the last 25 years. The tendency of postponing childbearing is not restricted to the countries in this sample; it is, in fact, common across Europe.

There are a number of factors that may contribute to this phenomenon. One explanation may be that more women seek to establish a career, hence obtaining financial security before giving birth to their first child. Also, in a number of European countries, the recession at the beginning of the 1990s aggravated the youth labour market situation, boosting in turn the incentives for young people to pursue a higher level of education and resulting in the postponement of family formation.

Source: UNECE Gender database (<http://www.unece.org/stats/data.htm>) and Eurostat.

Note: The indicator refers to the weighted average of the age-specific fertility rates of first order births.

* Data for Norway refer to the average of 1986-1990 instead of 1980.

Mean age of woman at the birth of first child

