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**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC  
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**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN  
STATISTICIANS**

**COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)**

**Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD  
Meeting on National Accounts**  
(Geneva, 24-26 April 2002)

## **REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on National Accounts was held in Geneva from 24 to 26 April 2002. It was attended by Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Yugoslavia. The European Community (Eurostat) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) attended. Japan and South Africa were present under article 11 of the terms of reference of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. A representative of the United Nations Statistical Division also attended.

2. The provisional agenda was adopted.
3. Mr. Ole Berner (Denmark) was elected Chairman.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING**

4. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting on the basis of invited papers and supporting papers:

- (a) Policy uses of national accounts;
- (b) Quality and reliability of national accounts;
- (c) Supply and Use tables: practical implications;
- (d) Capital investment, including software;
- (e) Price and volume measures of services;
- (f) Information items.

5. During the afternoon of 23 April 2002, a special session on national accounts for CIS Countries and other Transition Economies was organised by the UNECE and OECD. The main topic of the session was Benchmarking/Extrapolation in Quarterly National Accounts. Information was also provided on UNECE work on Estimation of Hidden and Informal Activities in Transition Economies.

#### **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS REACHED AT THE MEETING**

6. Recommendations for future work are given below. Other conclusions that the participants reached at the meeting and its special session on the above topics will be presented (in English only) in a separate report to be prepared after the meeting and distributed to participants. These conclusions will also be distributed, on request, to other interested persons.

#### **RECOMMENDED FUTURE WORK**

7. The meeting recommended that a further Joint ECE/OECD/Eurostat meeting be organised in the spring of 2004 in Geneva. It also recommended that the meeting be held under the general motto of "Responding to user needs". The following substantive topics were considered of greatest interest for possible inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting on national accounts:

- (a) Short-term statistics and their relation to national accounts;
- (b) Consistency of time series: practical solutions for defining long series when there are changes in methodologies and classifications;
- (c) The link between satellite accounts and national accounts (including: do we have to benchmark satellite accounts to national accounts?);
- (d) Quantitative methods to control the quality of national accounts (including the interaction with basic statistics);
- (e) Conceptual issues and recent methodological developments.

8. The meeting recommended that each topic be discussed in a separate session to be organised by a session organizer, selected in advance.

9. The meeting also recommended that the ECE secretariat in consultation with other international organizations undertake the following surveys:

- (a) Best practices in estimating service lives of fixed assets;
- (b) Countries' practices in estimating prices of exports and imports (including unit values).

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