



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/CES/2009/45/Add.1
10 June 2009

ENGLISH ONLY

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-seventh plenary session
Geneva, 8-10 June 2009
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**PROPOSAL FOR TOPICS FOR SEMINARS TO TAKE PLACE
DURING THE 2010 PLENARY SESSION**

Note by the secretariat

1. In May 2009, the UNECE secretariat conducted electronically a survey to consult with the member countries of the Conference and international organizations on the possible topics for discussion at the 2010 CES plenary session. The results of the survey are presented in document ECE/CES/2009/45. The number of responses is high compared to previous years. A total of 43 responses was received, of which 37 from countries and 6 from international organizations.

2. Based on the results, the Bureau decided that the following topics be proposed for the 2010 CES seminars:

• **FOR THE SEMINAR ON FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS:**

The impact of the global crises on statistical systems

Seminar Co-Organizers: IMF, OECD.

Session Organizer: Netherlands.

Papers: France, Netherlands, New Zealand, WTO.

“Friendly supporters”: Eurostat, UNSD, UNECE.

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3. The Bureau proposes to revise the title of the topic from “The global financial crisis and the demand for official statistics” to “The impact of the global crises on statistical systems”. The topic received the highest number of preferences (17 votes) in the survey conducted by the UNECE secretariat.

Objective

4. This seminar aims at exchanging experiences in view of the new challenges arising from global crises. The topic seeks to stress the importance of a holistic view on official statistics in light of global crises and their evolution.

Background

5. With the outbreak of the financial crisis, countries have begun reconsidering their policies. The crisis has caused multidimensional impacts on both developed and developing countries. The need to find the right tools to measure these impacts from a national and international perspective has emerged. The idea would be to look at the implications for the national statistical systems in the 21st century with the national statistical offices (NSOs) being the main producers of official statistics.

6. Next year’s seminar on this topic will address the issues when the activity caused by the crisis may have abated somewhat and analysis of the implications for statistics can be better distilled.

Seminar

7. The seminar will provide food for thought by:

(a) Providing a stocktaking of statistical initiatives in the financial, economic, social and environmental fields taken to address the crisis;

(b) Covering the crisis developing from the financial sector and its impact on the economic, social and environmental sectors from the perspective of NSOs;

(c) Making use of national official statistical systems with their broad coverage of topics in monitoring one-off crisis events from different perspectives including the financial, economic, social and environmental perspectives;

(d) Discussing how changed needs and new priorities for information can be addressed while minimizing additional data reporting requests;

(e) Addressing the differences in the tasks of statisticians, regulators and policy analysts.

- **FOR THE SEMINAR ON EMERGING ISSUES:**

Spatial statistics / Role of a spatial dimension in official statistics

Seminar co-organizers: Mexico, Eurostat.

Session organizer: Austria, Brazil, United States, Eurostat.

Papers: Austria, United States.

Objective

8. The objective of this seminar is to exchange experiences and best practices in using geo-referenced (spatial) data and to discuss the ways forward in opening access to the geographical dimension of statistical information. The topic received strong support (10 votes).

Background

9. Geo-referenced data are becoming more and more important. This is due to the increasing demand for detailed regional and spatial information as well as the greatly increased possibilities to collect and process these data and affordability for many users of geographical information systems software. Moreover, there are increasing demands for and challenges associated with linkages of various data also on a geo-spatial basis. In domains like housing, agriculture, land use, environment and also in fields like social stratification, energy and transport as well as business statistics, the possibility to relate characteristics and events via geographical coordinates and perform analysis is an undisputable trend confronting statistical offices. The spatial code, if it is a geo-reference via coordinates or via a region code, is considered one of the basic uniting elements in statistics to which characteristics of persons, households and enterprises can be attributed to and that can be used for record linkage. The request for such data comes from a wide range of users. On the national as well as regional scale for planning purposes, such information is considered essential. Also from the viewpoint of academic research oriented micro data analysis, these types of data are desired.

10. The issue can be discussed along several lines:

(a) From the conceptual framework point of view (focus on the need of infrastructures, on points, on grids, on legal or natural regions) on thematic areas (the metropolitan area, urban area, rural, neighborhoods, morphological areas, and more in general how to define regional entities);

(b) From a data collection point of view (spatial dimensions of available data, e.g. population census, aerial and satellite photography, field observations, remote sensing and of course the substitution of other sources and related reduction of response burden);

(c) From an analysis point of view (spatial aggregations, spatial autocorrelation and simulation methods, analysis of different layers);

(d) From the mere methodological point of view (use as sampling frame, IT solutions) and dissemination (maps, charts, characteristics of points aggregated to areas etc);

(e) And, finally, from the point of view of serious challenges (confidentiality issues, identifiable codes).

Seminar

11. It is proposed to organize the seminar along some of the lines as described above in sessions, with a special emphasis - as the NSOs are clearly in a different state of development in this field - on the possible exchange of knowledge and identification of some common issues and topics for further development and harmonization. The use of spatial statistics in domains such as population and agriculture (think about using geo codes in the population and agricultural census, plan enumeration areas, collect and disseminate data) and environmental statistics can be taken as thematic examples. Furthermore, the potential role of NSO's in using geo-referenced statistics could be discussed.

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