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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

Progress reports and work of the CES teams of specialists

Report of the first meeting of the 2010/2011 Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with the Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau (ECE/CES/2007/8), adopted by the Conference at its fifty-third plenary session. Referring to the Rules, the Bureau acts as a steering body of the Conference. The report includes decisions taken by the Bureau at its 3-4 November 2010 meeting on the work carried out under the auspices of the Conference.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	4
II. In-depth review of selected statistical areas	4
A. Time-use surveys	4
B. Measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation	5
C. Follow-up to in-depth review on secondary and mixed sources of official statistics	6
D. Selection of topics for in-depth reviews by the Bureau in 2011	7
III. Meeting with the top management of the UNECE	8
IV. UNECE Statistical Programme for 2011	8
A. Migration statistics	8
B. Gender statistics	9
C. Environmental indicators	9
D. Statistics related to climate change	9
E. High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics	9
F. Management of statistical information systems	10
G. Statistical dissemination and communication	10
1. Statistical literacy	10
2. Guide to communicating with the media	10
H. Human resources development in statistical offices	11
I. Technical cooperation	11
V. Business statistics	11
VI. Follow-up to the ces 2010 seminar on the impact of global crises on statistical systems	12
VII. Preparations for the CES 2011 plenary session	13
A. Evaluation of the 58 th CES plenary session	13
B. Organization of the CES 2011 seminar “Organization of data collection and data sharing /implementation of the standard for statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX): management challenges from the national perspective”	13
C. Organization of the CES 2011 seminar “Measuring human capital”	13
D. Progress with CES guidelines and manuals planned to be submitted to the CES for approval	14
1. Impact of globalisation on national accounts	14
2. Update the Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics	14
3. Measuring sustainable development	14
4. Principles on confidentiality and privacy aspects of statistical data integration	15
E. Preparation of the formal session, draft agenda and timetable for the 2011 plenary session	16
VIII. Presentation of the statistical activities of the world trade organization	16

IX.	Duration and timing of future ces plenary sessions. dates and venue of the next CES	
	Bureau meetings	17
X.	Other business	18

I. Introduction

1. The first meeting of the 2010/2011 Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) was held in Geneva on 3-4 November 2010. The following members of the Bureau attended: Ms. H. Jeskanen-Sundström (Chairman); Mr. B. Pink; Mr. E. Pereira Nunes; Mr. G. O'Hanlon; Ms. I. Krizman, Mr. O. Osaulenko, and Ms. S. Evinger (representing Ms. K. Wallman). The following permanent observers also attended: Ms. M. Durand (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)); Mr. P. Everaers (representing Mr. W. Radermacher, Eurostat); Mr. M. Korolev (representing Mr. V. Sokolin, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT)); Ms. A. Bürgi-Schmelz (International Monetary Fund (IMF)); and Ms. L. Bratanova (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)). Mr. W. Smith (Canada), Mr. B. Störtzbach (Federal Statistical Office of Germany) for agenda item 2(a), Ms. S. Teltscher (International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) for agenda item 2(b), and Mr. H. Escaith (World Trade Organization (WTO)) for agenda item 8, attended at the invitation of the Chairman.

2. The following persons assisted members of the Bureau: Ms. K. Blaise (OECD), Ms. M. João Santos (Eurostat), and Ms. I. Muzychenko (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine). Ms. T. Luige of UNECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

3. The following staff of the UNECE Statistical Division also attended: Mr. G. Gamez, Mr. A. Vikat, Mr. S. Vale, Mr. P. Valente, Ms. T. Dimova, and Ms. V. Etropolska.

II. In-depth review of selected statistical areas

A. Time-use surveys

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/2 (Germany), Add.1 (comments by countries and international organizations), Add.2 (Germany) and Add.3 (UNECE)

4. The discussion was based on a paper by Germany, comments on the paper by countries and international organisations, and the proposed terms of reference for the creation of a Task Force on time-use surveys.

5. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) There is an increasing demand for time-use surveys (TUS) as a follow-up to the Stiglitz Commission report and the importance of these surveys to measure the quality of life, well-being, non-market work, gender equality, etc.;

(b) The need to make the TUS more cost effective and find new efficient ways to undertake the survey (e.g. by using a lighter version) was highlighted, many countries can not undertake the survey because of the high cost;

(c) The frequency of undertaking a TUS once in 10 years is not enough to meet the policy needs for the TUS data;

(d) Statisticians should also look for alternative ways to produce some of the data obtained through the TUS (for example, include a diary as part of another household survey, use other surveys on employment arrangements and family life);

(e) It is important to harmonise the TUS and to move towards a common classification of time-use activities. Insufficient harmonisation significantly reduces the value for money of this expensive and complicated survey;

(f) Sometimes the data are not used to their full potential, sharing good practices in how to communicate the results of TUS and promote their use would be needed;

(g) The countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) have a lot of experience in running the TUS, the CIS Statistics Committee is interested in participating in the future work to be undertaken on this topic.

1. Conclusion

6. Australia will send some written comments to the secretariat on the in-depth review paper by Germany.

7. The Bureau approved the TOR for the creation of the Task Force on time-use surveys. The following Bureau members expressed interest to participate in the Task Force: Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Slovenia (to be confirmed), Ukraine, United States, CIS Statistical Committee, Eurostat and OECD. The Bureau stressed the need for the TF to take into account the on-going work of the EU Sponsorship Group on Measuring Progress, Well-being and Sustainable Development and asked this to be specifically mentioned in the TOR. The Task Force should adjust the timetable if necessary to be able to make use of its results.

B. Measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/3 (Australia), Add.1 and Add. 2 (comments by countries and international organizations) and Add. 3 (Excerpt from the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA))

8. The discussion was based on a paper by Australia, comments on the paper by countries and international organisations, and an excerpt from the DISA. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The topic is very important for countries and international organizations. Research, development and innovation are high on the policy agenda in many countries;

(b) A lot of work is being done in this area and there are many international players. There is a need for more transparency about the work of the different groups active in this area. The global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development is a good example for cooperation at the international level and for developing international standards on ICT statistics. An organisational map of the groups working in this area would be useful;

(c) There is a tension between consistency and relevance of the data. The area is developing rapidly and it is challenging to take the changes into account in official statistics, including in surveys and classifications;

(d) The importance of a comprehensive framework was acknowledged. However, it is difficult to develop the framework and programs in pace with the speed of change;

(e) The data demand in this area is constantly changing and users sometimes have too high expectations. At the same time, statisticians have to find a flexible mechanism to be able to adapt to new data demands in this area. Allowing users to combine the data and to provide access to microdata can be part of the solution;

(f) Identifying the gaps in data availability that can be filled via microdata and administrative data would be useful;

(g) It is necessary to have a coordinated approach to the surveys conducted in countries, and to keep track of the response burden at enterprise level;

(h) Some Bureau members felt that the surveys undertaken by international agencies on research, development and innovation could be better coordinated, NSOs are often not involved and not aware of these;

(i) Measuring innovation in the public sector is a challenge;

(j) The EECCA countries have to be brought more into this work; data availability on information society in these countries is not good.

1. Conclusion

9. As proposed in document ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/3 point 49(c), Australia, OECD and the secretariat will make an inventory of the groups working in this area with the help of the International Telecommunication Union. The issues related to the need of identifying data gaps that can be filled via microdata and administrative data, and the lack of data for the EECCA countries will be reflected in the paper.

10. The Bureau will discuss the proposals for further work in this area (possibly through electronic consultation) when the inventory of the groups is prepared. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the in-depth review and the proposals for the way forward.

C. Follow-up to the in-depth review on secondary and mixed sources of official statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/4, Add. 1 and 3 (UNECE), Add.2 (United States)

11. The Bureau reviewed the use of secondary and mixed sources for official statistics in June 2010. The in-depth review paper was updated to take into account the comments by the Bureau members at the June meeting (Add.1). Steve Landefeld, the Chair of the UN Friends of the Chair Group on Integrated Economic Statistics, provided a summary of the work of the Group in relation to the use of secondary data sources (Add.2). Furthermore, following the Bureau decision, the secretariat circulated to the CES Bureau members the existing training materials on "Using administrative sources for official statistics" (Add.3).

12. Concerning the updated in-depth review paper, the following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Para 9 needs to be more elaborated, there is some UN work going on in the area;

(b) Para 24 can be developed further: an additional issue is that the administrative data may be not fit for purpose;

(c) Para 31 concerning the cooperation with various stakeholders should be developed further. This is a crucial point, as the use of other sources often implies extensive efforts of harmonization in a preliminary stage (not only for administrative data);

(d) It was recommended to remove or reformulate the second sentence of para 34. The issue is that political pressure can begin to override statistical quality concerns and secondary sources can potentially start to compete with official statistics. Para 34 starts with a reference to population censuses, while the second sentence was mainly written having in mind economic statistics (e.g. using Google data);

(e) The main issue is not to distinguish between official and non-official data, but between data that meet and data that do not meet the quality standards of official statistics. It is also necessary to have enough information to be able to judge about the data quality. The official statistical system can help to improve the quality of the non-official statistics, e.g. by providing quality guidelines. Official statisticians could establish a dialogue with the producers of statistics outside the system to improve the quality of their data.

13. The Bureau noted that there is no overlap with the work of the UN Friends of the Chair Group on integrated economic statistics: the problems and issues considered are different.

14. The Bureau discussed the proposal by the Committee on Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) concerning the use of non-official data by international organizations for production of international statistics. The issue has been raised because some international organizations are using non-official sources to fill in the missing data for countries. In this respect, the CCSA has proposed to set up a group to develop principles for combining data from different sources. The Bureau stressed that in cases of missing data for countries, the international organizations should first contact the national statistical organizations. The issue of using non-official data should be addressed at the level of the UN Statistical Commission.

1. Conclusion

15. The in-depth review paper on the use of secondary and mixed sources for official statistics (document ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/4 Add.1) will be updated based on the comments made by the Bureau. Eurostat will send more detailed comments on the training material by e-mail. The 2011 CES plenary session will be informed about the outcome of the in-depth review. A more detailed discussion on this topic may be held during the next CES plenary session.

16. The secretariat will maintain the knowledge base on Administrative and Secondary Sources In STatistics (ASSIST) that contains links to relevant training materials, papers, conferences and publications in the form of a wiki on the UNECE Statistical Division's website.

17. The training material on the use of administrative sources in statistics (document ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/4 Add.3) will be sent to the Bureau members for more comments (deadline: 20 December 2010).

18. The Bureau will discuss the issue of use of non-official data by international organizations and the CCSA proposal for the development of principles for combining data from different sources when there is a more concrete proposal for possible future work on this topic.

D. Selection of topics for in-depth reviews by the Bureau in 2011

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/5 (UNECE), ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/26 (United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD))

19. The following statistical areas were selected to be reviewed in-depth during 2011-2012:

- (a) Topics for 2011:
 - Education (paper by Australia)
 - Global manufacturing and international trade (paper by the Netherlands)

Household survey methods (paper by Canada);

(b) Topics for 2012:

Population Census (paper by UNECE)

Banking, insurance and financial statistics (paper by IMF)

20. The Bureau decided to review the topic of poverty based on a paper on the enlarged concept/approach on measuring poverty to be prepared by Eurostat, Brazil and Ukraine. The topic of education will be discussed at the 2011 CES plenary session to get input to the in-depth review by the Bureau from all CES members. The deadline for the paper to be submitted to the UNECE is 15 March 2011 to ensure translation of the document.

III. Meeting with the top management of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

21. The Bureau met with the UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary, Andrey Vasilyev. Mr. Vasilyev underlined that the CES is one of the oldest UNECE sectoral committees and is well recognised in the UNECE region and beyond. Under the guidance of the Bureau, the Conference has produced a significant number of practical outputs and has an important role in supporting the global processes. The Conference is innovative in its work methods, as well as in the substantive topics covered.

22. It was noted that Geneva is a hub of international statistics and this provides a good opportunity to build a network of the statisticians working in the international organizations based in Geneva. The value of exchanging ideas, experiences and staff between the organizations was highlighted. The current UN policies promote mobility within the UN but this could be explored also between other international organisations.

23. The Chair of the Bureau emphasised the importance of inviting statisticians to participate and contribute to the discussions at the UNECE Commission Session was underlined. This possibility will be discussed further when the topics for the Commission session in spring 2011 have been selected.

IV. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme for 2011

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/6 (UNECE)

24. The Bureau discussed the draft UNECE Statistical Programme (SP) for 2011 focusing on the activities that are changed as compared to the previous years' programme, and the various Steering Groups and Task Forces that are related to the activities.

1. Conclusion

25. The Bureau approved the 2011 Statistical Programme subject to a correction in Annex II: Outputs planned in 2011: the "Guidelines on seasonal adjustments" is replaced by "Guidelines on seasonal adjustments for the EECCA countries".

A. Migration statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/7 and Add. 1 and 2 (UNECE)

26. The Bureau was informed about the progress made in the area of migration statistics. The Bureau approved the revised terms of reference for the Steering Group on migration statistics, and the terms of reference for the creation of a Task Force on measurement of the socio-economic conditions of migrants. Finland will not participate in the Task Force, Denmark may be interested to participate (*to be confirmed*).

B. Gender statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/8 and Add.1 (UNECE)

27. The Bureau was informed about the progress of work related to gender statistics. The Bureau approved the extension of the mandate of the Steering Group on Gender Statistics for two years, the continuation of the Task Force on the Measurement of Gender-based Violence for one year, and the terms of reference for the creation of a Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality.

C. Environmental indicators

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/9 (UNECE)

28. The Bureau approved the terms of reference for the continuation of the work of the Joint Intersectoral Task Force on Environmental Indicators for two more years.

D. Statistics related to climate change

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/10 (UNECE) and Add.1 (Norway)

29. The Bureau discussed the draft questionnaire for the survey on involvement of NSOs in statistics related to climate change. The following amendments were proposed:

- (a) Clarify what is meant by “being involved” in the work related to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in section A, questions 1 and 4;
- (b) Add a question in Part A on the sources (stationary, mobile and household sources) on the basis of which the organisation calculates GHG emissions;
- (c) Reformulate the question on the so-called MRV approach (measurement, reporting and verification) in Part C question 13. It is not yet decided whether or how NSOs will implement this approach.

1. Conclusion

30. The secretariat will finalise the questionnaire and send it to all CES countries in the beginning of 2011.

E. High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics

31. The Bureau was informed about launching the work of the High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS). The members of the HLG-BAS are: the Netherlands (Chair), Australia, Italy, Slovenia, United States, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE. The Chairs of the expert groups working on Management of Statistical Information Systems, Statistical Information Systems Sharing Advisory Board and Statistical Metadata participated at this first meeting as observers.

32. The HLG-BAS held its first face-to-face meeting on 2 November in Geneva. The Group will make a proposal to the CES 2011 plenary session on how the Group plans to fulfil its steering role and how it envisages to achieve coherence in the developments in this area at a global level. The Group plans to propose specific projects that could be undertaken by a group of countries to move towards a more harmonised production process in official statistics. A progress report on the work of the HLG-BAS will be presented to the Bureau at its meeting in autumn 2011.

F. Management of statistical information systems

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/11 (UNECE)

33. The Steering Group on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS) set up in 2002 has been steering the UNECE work in areas related to statistical information technologies. With the launching of new initiatives, the leadership in several areas (such as metadata, dissemination) is now provided by other groups (and particularly the HLG-BAS). It was proposed to discontinue the Steering Group on MSIS. The meetings on this topic can be prepared by an organising committee as the need arises.

34. Furthermore, the secretariat informed the Bureau about the work on development of an inventory of international statistical standards following the decision of the UNSC in February 2010. The UNSC requested the CCSA to take up this work. The work is undertaken by a group CCSA members consisting of UNSD, UNECE, ILO, the World Bank and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics of Mexico. UNECE together with the UNSD will develop a progress paper for the 2011 UN Statistical Commission. A prototype of the inventory will be presented to the CCSA in February 2011. The Bureau will be informed about the outcome of the work.

1. Conclusion

35. The Steering Group on MSIS was discontinued. The Bureau thanked the Steering Group for its productive work over the years. The Bureau decided to review the work in this area at a future meeting.

G. Statistical dissemination and communication

1. Statistical literacy

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/12 (UNECE)

36. The Bureau discussed the proposal for preparing the *Guidelines on improving statistical literacy* by the Steering Group on Statistical Dissemination and Communication. It was considered useful to complement the guidelines with good practices of countries.

a. Conclusion

37. The Bureau approved the proposed outline in document ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/12.

2. Guide to communicating with the media

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/13 and Add.1 (UNECE)

38. The Steering Group on Statistical Dissemination and Communication has substantially revised the *Guide to communicating with the media* issued in 2004, to be

published as Part 3 in the series *Making data meaningful*. The Guide was presented to the Bureau for comments.

a. Conclusion

39. It was decided to extend the deadline for providing written comments on the Guide until two weeks after the Bureau meeting. The secretariat will proceed with publishing the Guide after taking into account the comments.

H. Human resources development in statistical offices

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/14 (UNECE)

40. The Bureau was informed about the outcome of the second forum on Human Resources Management and Training in Statistical Offices (14-16 September 2010, Geneva) and discussed possible future work in this area.

1. Conclusion

41. The proposal for future work on human resources management and training was approved. Canada, Eurostat and IMF expressed interest to participate in the Organising Committee for the next forum to be held in 2012 in Budapest, Hungary.

I. Technical cooperation

42. The Bureau considered proposals for technical cooperation activities in statistics in 2011.

1. Conclusion

43. The Bureau expressed support for implementing the technical assistance activities as planned in the Statistical Programme 2011.

V. Business statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/16 (Canada and Eurostat)

44. The Bureau considered the follow-up to the CES seminar on business statistics in June 2009 based on a paper prepared by Canada and Eurostat. The document presented an outline for a paper on access to business microdata: opportunities and challenges. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) It is not clear whether the paper would add anything substantial to the *Guidelines on confidentiality and access to microdata* approved by the Conference in 2006;

(b) The country case studies included in the Guidelines have been very useful but would need updating. For example, new IT solutions are available for managing confidentiality, there are developments with remote access, etc.;

(c) The issue of the remaining papers ((1) reduction of the perceived respondent burden and (3) user demands for new business statistics) could be further discussed at the February CES Bureau meeting.

1. Conclusion

45. The secretariat will ask countries to update and add new case studies in the *Guidelines on confidentiality and access to microdata*.

VI. Follow-up to the 2010 Conference of European Statisticians seminar on the impact of global crises on statistical systems

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/15 and Add.1 (Canada), ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/17 (IMF, Eurostat and OECD)

46. The Bureau considered the follow-up to the CES 2010 seminar on the impact of global crises on statistical systems based on two documents: an overview of actions undertaken in this area (by IMF, Eurostat and OECD), and an outline for a paper on lessons learned from the crisis at a country level (by Canada).

47. It was noted that considerable progress has been made in addressing the financial crisis and filling the data gaps over the last two years. The Conference should be informed about these developments during the 2011 CES plenary session.

48. The Bureau discussed the outline of the paper on countries' lessons learned from the crisis, prepared by Canada. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Part C: the modifications were also necessary to the models and compilation methodologies. For example, some assumptions and methods for national accounts and seasonal adjustment that have been developed in a constantly growing economy are no longer valid; it became difficult to distinguish between outliers and a permanent change in levels, etc. It would be helpful to exchange experience and develop a common approach how to solve such problems;

(b) Part C, point (c): the issue concerns not only data gaps but also the increasing amount of non-NSO and non-government data used (e.g. from banks, research institutions, etc);

(c) Part E: the communication strategy should also deal with explaining how the official statistics differ from other non-official sources to help interpret these data;

(d) Some of the activities will continue after the crisis, in particular those described in part C and F. It is important to identify the lessons learned to be prepared for the next crisis;

(e) It will be useful to get information about the responses to the crisis not only at country level but also at the level of the European Statistical System;

(f) OECD is preparing a meeting of the Working Party on financial statistics to meet the demand from users to better understand the links between financial data and the real economy. It will be useful to have in future a report on this initiative to the CES Bureau.

1. Conclusion

49. The paper by IMF, OECD and Eurostat will be updated to inform the CES 2011 plenary session about the developments following the CES 2010 seminar on impact of crises on statistical systems.

50. Canada will update the outline for the paper summarising the lessons learned from the crisis. The secretariat will circulate it to the CES members asking for country contributions. From the Bureau members, Australia, Brazil, Finland, Ireland, Slovenia and Ukraine volunteered to report on their national experiences. Eurostat can draft a contribution on the ESS response to the financial crisis. Canada will finalise the paper for the CES 2011 plenary session.

VII. Preparations for the 2011 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

A. Evaluation of the 58th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/18 (UNECE)

51. The results of the evaluation questionnaires of the 2010 CES plenary session were presented for information.

B. Organization of the Conference of European Statisticians 2011 seminar “Organization of data collection and sharing, and the management challenges for the implementation of Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/19 and Add.1 (UNECE, Netherlands and World Bank)

52. The Bureau discussed the organization of the seminar based on an updated outline prepared by UNECE in consultation with the Netherlands and the World Bank. The following suggestions were made in the discussion:

- (a) It is important that the seminar focuses on issues at the management level;
- (b) Because of the specifics of the topic, it is planned that the invited papers will be presented by countries, and the Session Organiser will mainly facilitate the discussion (this is different from the usual practice at the CES seminars);
- (c) The organizational models for data collection from secondary sources can be different in countries that have a well developed system of administrative registers;
- (d) Countries and organizations should be encouraged to prepare supporting papers;
- (d) IMF will prepare a supporting paper informing about the outcome of the SDMX conference that will take place in May 2011 in Washington, D.C.

1. Conclusion

53. The secretariat will proceed with the preparations of the seminar and will update the outline for the February 2011 Bureau meeting.

C. Organization of the Conference of European Statisticians 2011 seminar “Measuring human capital”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/20 (New Zealand, Canada and UNECE)

54. The Bureau discussed the organization of the seminar based on an updated outline prepared by New Zealand, Canada and UNECE. The following suggestions were made in the discussion:

- (a) The keynote speech should be skipped to allow for more time for discussion;
- (b) There should not be more than two invited papers per session;

(c) The presentations should be done in a way that is of interest to Chief Statisticians of all countries, not only to the ones that are measuring human capital as a driving force for economic growth;

(d) OECD offered to prepare an additional supporting paper on alternative approaches to measuring human capital (based on the PIAAC survey of adult competencies);

(e) The seminar organisers should provide more guidance to the authors of supporting papers.

1. Conclusion

55. The seminar organisers will proceed with the preparations of the seminar and will update the outline for the February 2011 Bureau meeting.

D. Progress with Conference of European Statisticians guidelines and manuals planned to be submitted to the Conference for approval

1. Impact of globalisation on national accounts

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/21 (Netherlands)

56. The Bureau was informed about the progress of work of the Group of Experts on the Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts (GGNA), organised jointly with Eurostat and OECD. The GGNA is developing a Practical Guide, which will assist countries in dealing with the distortions caused by globalisation on national accounts and related source statistics. The Bureau noted that the Guide is a very important outcome of the work of the Conference.

a. Conclusion

57. Countries are encouraged to collaborate in the preparation of the Guide and to provide case studies. The draft publication will be sent to the CES Bureau for comments in January 2011. It is expected to be sent for electronic consultation to the CES members in the end of March 2011 and be presented to the CES 2011 plenary session for approval.

2. Update of the Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/22 (Australia)

58. The Bureau was informed about the progress of work in updating the *Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics*. The Bureau emphasised that the outcome of the work is important and is very much expected.

a. Conclusion

59. The draft updated Handbook will be sent to the CES Bureau for comments in January 2011. It is expected to be sent for electronic consultation to the CES members by end of March 2011 and be presented to the CES 2011 plenary session for approval.

3. Measuring sustainable development

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/23 (Netherlands)

60. The Bureau was informed about the progress made with the report being prepared by the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The work has gone a long way and is very important for official statistics. However, the timetable of having the report ready for the CES 2011 plenary session may be too optimistic;

(b) Some Bureau members considered the "future oriented view" to be too restrictive to measure sustainable development, while the integrated view covers the broad concept of sustainable development;

(c) The report should address properly the issue of quality standards of official statistics or that would not be compatible with a proper monitoring of sustainable development as described in the Brundtland report and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy;

(d) The work is more of an academic nature, it can not be considered to lead to a statistical standard, the high level quality requirements of official statistics have to be followed when implementing it in practice;

(e) The framework has to offer flexibility by including the distributional aspects and international aspects of sustainable development, and to reflect the outcome of the Stiglitz report;

(f) The limitations of the monetisation techniques should be well reflected in the report;

(g) Imputation techniques should be reduced to a minimum and communicated in a clear way;

(h) The work was undertaken in response to the proliferation of sustainable development indicators aiming to propose a core set of indicators for international comparability. It is a challenge to balance international comparability and national relevance in this area.

a. Conclusion

61. The Bureau expressed support for the work and considered it as a very important development. The secretariat took note of the comments and will make sure that these are duly taken into account at the meeting of the Task Force on 18-19 November. The Bureau considered that it is probably premature to present the final report to the CES 2011 plenary session. More detailed information on the report will be sent to the CES Bureau in January 2011 and the secretariat will inform on the progress at the February 2011 Bureau meeting. The Bureau will then decide how to proceed with the presentation of this work at the CES 2011 plenary session.

4. Principles on confidentiality and privacy aspects of statistical data integration

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/24 (UNECE)

62. The Bureau discussed how to consider at the CES 2011 plenary session the *Principles and Guidelines on Confidentiality Aspects of Data Integration Undertaken for Statistical or Related Research Purposes* (adopted by the CES in 2009) that were planned to be reviewed in June 2011. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) It will be useful to know how these principles have been implemented in practice in countries. Australia could provide a case study on that;

(b) More time may be needed to test the principles, two years may be too short to gather enough experience.

a. *Conclusion*

63. The secretariat will send a letter to countries reminding them about the need to test the Principles and ask for case studies on their use in practice. The information will be presented briefly at the CES 2011 plenary session.

E. Preparation of the formal session, draft agenda and timetable for the 2011 plenary session

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/25 (UNECE)

64. The Bureau discussed the draft timetable of the CES 2011 plenary session. The secretariat informed about a planned social event organised jointly with the Swiss authorities to promote Geneva as a hub of international statistics.

1. Conclusion

65. The Bureau decided on the following changes to the agenda and timetable of the CES 2011 plenary session:

(a) The first seminar will be shortened to allow for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda to deal with the proposal by the HLG-BAS;

(b) The report on measuring sustainable development may be considered differently from other guidelines to be adopted by CES;

(c) There will be no discussion about developing principles of combining data from different sources;

(d) The topic to get input to the in-depth review by the CES Bureau will be education statistics;

(e) Short time (about 5 minutes) will be allocated for informing the Conference about the testing of the *Principles of confidentiality aspects of data integration*;

(f) The CES members will be asked to provide updated case studies on the *Principles of confidentiality and microdata access*, approved by the CES in 2006.

VIII. Presentation of the statistical activities of the World Trade Organization

66. The World Trade Organization presented its statistical activities to the CES Bureau.

67. Until recently, the WTO statistical work has been mainly undertaken to meet the internal demand to support trade negotiations and monitoring. Until 2008-09, the access to the tariff data was restricted for internal use and these data had to be legally certified by countries. The global financial crisis helped to raise the status of statistics within WTO, to be proactive in tariff data collection and use official sources to fill in the gaps in country data, and to disseminate the data publicly. Demand for closer monitoring of the global economy led also to the development and dissemination of new short-term trade indicators.

68. The WTO is also involved in theoretical work to develop and maintain standards in trade statistics, and participates in interagency cooperation to support research on international trade. Since the Doha round of trade negotiations, the WTO has a strong component of technical assistance towards developing countries.

IX. Duration and timing of future Conference of European Statisticians plenary sessions. Dates and venue of the next Bureau meetings

69. The Bureau discussed the organisation of future CES plenary sessions in light of the planned changes to the timing and duration of the OECD Statistics Committee's (CSTAT) meeting that has been held back-to-back with the CES plenary sessions since a number of years. The CSTAT would like to increase the duration of its meeting to two days instead of one and a half day, and to hold the meeting earlier (during April-May) every second year because of the OECD's schedule for preparation of the biannual Programme of Work and Budget.

70. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) There is a consensus that the CES plenary session and the OECD Statistics Committee meeting should continue to be organised back-to-back which is in the interest of countries;

(b) It is difficult for the Chief Statisticians to participate in back-to-back meetings that last for longer than 4 days due to their workload in the offices;

(c) Several Bureau members proposed that within the 4 days duration, one or two days could be convened jointly on a topic of common interest to both intergovernmental bodies;

(d) The format of the CES seminars was created in 2002 to allow for enough time for thorough consideration of the substantive and topical issues in official statistics (both foundational and emerging topics), the issues are complicated and can not be addressed without allocating proper time for discussion;

(e) The CIS Statistics Committee on behalf of all the CIS countries supports continuing with the current timing and duration of the CES plenary sessions. The discussions at the CES are very important for the CIS countries. It would be also very difficult to change the timing because of the links to other high-level meetings organised by the CIS-STAT;

(f) The timing of the CES plenary session in June has been maintained for many years because it is part of the distribution of other international meetings in statistics over the year. The June timing is taken into account by other international organizations when planning their activities;

(g) For the IMF, the timing in April would be difficult because of the meetings held with the heads of NSOs and Central Banks of selected countries. IMF made a plea not to hold the CES plenary session in April;

(h) One possibility would be to hold the CES and CSTAT meetings separately during the years when the CSTAT budget has to be prepared;

(i) It was proposed to explore whether an alternative working arrangement could be found for dealing with issues such as enlargement, and adopting the OECD work programme on statistics by using other means such as written procedures, video-conferencing, etc.

1. Conclusion

71. The discussion to find the best solution on the organization of the CES plenary session and the CSTAT meetings will continue.

72. The current timing and duration of the CES Bureau meetings is different from those specified in the *Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau* (ECE/CES/2007/8). It was decided to test this arrangement in 2009 for two years. The results will be evaluated in autumn 2011. The Bureau will decide on the timing and duration of its future meetings in autumn 2011, taking into account the experience with the current arrangement and the outcome of the discussion on the organization of the CES plenary session and the CSTAT meeting.

73. The Bureau confirmed the dates and venue of the next CES plenary session and the Bureau meetings as follows:

(a) CES Bureau meeting: 23 February 2011 at 8:00 - 9:30 in New York (back-to-back with the UN Statistical Commission);

(b) 59th CES plenary session: from the morning of 14 June to noon 16 June 2011 in Geneva (back-to back with the OECD Statistics Committee meeting on 16 June afternoon and 17 June 2011);

(c) CES Bureau meeting: 18 June 2010 (Saturday) in Geneva;

(d) CES Bureau meeting: 2-3 November 2011 in Geneva.

X. Other business

74. Mr. Oystein Olsen, the Director General of Statistics Norway was recently appointed the Governor of the Central Bank of Norway. The Bureau recognised his contribution and constructive input to the work of the Conference and the Bureau, and his dedication to the cause of official statistics.

75. The Bureau decided which papers from its 3-4 November meeting will be made available on Internet.
