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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

Progress reports and work of the CES teams of specialists

Report of the second 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 23 February 2011 meeting on the work carried out under the auspices of the Conference.

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I. Introduction

1. The second meeting of the 2010/2011 Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) was held in New York on 23 February 2011. 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, Ms. V. Kolesnik (representing O. Osaulenko), and 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. V. Sokolin (Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT)), Ms. A. Bürgi-Schmelz (International Monetary Fund (IMF)), Mr. G. Cameron (representing S. Badiie, World Bank), Mr. S. Schweinfest (representing P. Cheung, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)), and Ms. L. Bratanova (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)). Mr. W. Smith (Canada), Mr. G. Bruinooge (Statistics Netherlands), and Ms. D. Welch (Statistics New Zealand) attended at the invitation of the Chairman.

2. The following persons assisted members of the Bureau: Ms. K. Blaise (OECD), Ms. A. Nilsson (Eurostat), Ms. H. Vihavainen (Statistics Finland), Ms. I. Muzychenko (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine) and Mr. A. Kosarev (CIS-STAT). Ms. T. Luige of the UNECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

II. Outline for the Conference of European Statisticians 2011 seminar “The organization of data collection and sharing, and the management challenges for the implementation of Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/2

3. 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) There is no need to convince the senior statisticians again of the importance of using Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX);

(b) Session 1 should focus on managerial aspects of organising data collection and sharing, including issues related to implementation, strategies, budgets, etc.;

(c) It was recommended to prepare guidelines for supporting papers, similar to those prepared for the seminar on human capital. The information about supporting papers should be sent to countries as soon as possible;

(d) IMF will prepare for the seminar a room document on the outcome of the global SDMX Conference to be held in May 2011.

1. Conclusion

4. The seminar organisers should proceed with the preparations of the seminar, taking into account the Bureau's comments. To facilitate preparations, the CES secretariat will follow up with seminar organizers via a teleconference.

III. Outline for the Conference of European Statisticians 2011 seminar “Measuring human capital”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/3

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

(a) Session 1: Canada, as the Session Organiser will make a presentation that covers the different aspects of policy relevance of human capital, and the links between human capital and other statistical measurement issues. This presentation will also summarise the issues raised in the invited and supporting papers. The invited paper by Canada will deal with the human capital from the viewpoint of sustainable development;

(b) Session 3: This session should bring the why and how together: try to link the different purposes of measuring human capital with the methods used, and identify the gaps. It is important to have the panel discussion well focused. It is recommended to give some questions to the panel members in advance to guide the discussion. OECD volunteered to help with organising this session.

1. Conclusion

6. The seminar organisers should proceed with the preparations of the seminar, taking into account the Bureau’s comments.

IV. Progress with guidelines and manuals planned to be submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians 2011 plenary session

A. Impact of globalisation on national accounts

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/4, ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/4/Add.1

7. The Bureau discussed the draft of the practical guide on the Impact of Globalization on National Accounts prepared by a Task Force chaired by the Netherlands. The Bureau noted that the group had done excellent work. It is an example of good leadership, efficient cooperation between international organizations and dedication of all persons involved.

1. Conclusion

8. The draft Guide will be updated to take into account the Bureau’s written comments submitted prior to the meeting. It will be sent for electronic consultation to the CES members in March 2011.

9. The countries will be asked to update their case studies in the Guide if more recent data are available. At the same time the Guide will be sent to the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts and the Committee for Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics for additional comments and presented for information to the March meeting of the Interagency Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and Statistics in Services. Pending the positive outcome of the consultation, the guide will be submitted to the CES 2011 plenary session for endorsement.

B. Update the Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/5, ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/5/Add.1 and Add.2

10. The Bureau discussed the draft update of the *Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics* prepared by a Task Force chaired by Australia. The Bureau expressed appreciation for the good work done by the Task Force. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) The aim of the Task Force was to update the Canberra Group Handbook, not to go into new conceptual work. This has to be clearly explained in a preamble to the document to avoid misunderstandings about its purpose. A group recently set up by OECD will deal with some of the wider issues of measuring income, consumption and wealth;

(b) The updated Handbook should include a summary table of the changes compared to the previous version of the Handbook.

1. Conclusion

11. The Task Force will update the draft Handbook, taking into account the Bureau's comments at the meeting and those submitted prior to the meeting. The updated Handbook will be sent for electronic consultation to the CES members in March 2011 with a view of submitting it for endorsement to the CES 2011 plenary session. If approved by the CES, the UNECE secretariat will publish the updated Handbook by the end of 2011.

C. Measuring sustainable development

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/6, ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/6/Add.1

12. The Bureau discussed the extended summary of the Report of the Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development (chaired by the Netherlands). The Bureau commended the Task Force for the good progress in the work. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Discussions on sustainable development and quality of life are ongoing at both national and international levels and the Task Force will need to take these developments into account;

(b) The links between this work and other related international initiatives should be clearly explained in the summary. The developments complement each other and some convergence of the approaches can be observed. The Task Force is closely following the related work of Eurostat and OECD (several members of the Task Force participate in the work of these organizations);

(c) The Report is more of an academic nature and can not be considered as recommendations or guidelines for official statistics; it is not intended to be endorsed by the CES plenary session;

(d) A lot of conceptual and definitional work still needs to be done and the Task Force is encouraged to continue its detailed discussions;

(e) It is important to collect as much feedback from countries and international organizations as possible, including after the CES 2011 plenary session;

(f) The outcome of the electronic consultation with the CES members will also feed into the work of the Task Force and its next meeting on 19-20 May.

1. Conclusion

13. The summary of the Report will be updated to take into account the Bureau's comments at the meeting and those submitted prior to the meeting. The updated version will be sent for electronic consultation to all CES members in March 2011 accompanied by some concrete questions to seek feedback on specific issues. The CES 2011 plenary session will be informed about the work of the Task Force. The consultation with countries will continue until autumn. The full report of the Task Force is planned to be submitted to the CES 2012 plenary session.

V. Preparation of the 2011 plenary session, draft agenda and timetable

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/7

14. The Bureau discussed the provisional agenda and timetable for the 2011 CES plenary session.

1. Conclusion

15. The Bureau approved the agenda of the CES 2011 plenary session with one correction: the title of the agenda item related to the High-level Group on Business Architecture in Statistics will be reformulated to clarify what the topic will deal with.

VI. Follow-up to decisions

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/8

16. A note on the decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference was presented to follow up on any decisions that have not yet been implemented or require clarification. Two issues were brought to the attention of the Bureau: the timing of the next in-depth reviews, and the Task Force on Pending Issues in Business Statistics.

1. Conclusion

17. At the June 2011 meeting, the Bureau will review in-depth household survey methods (based on a paper by Canada). *(Note: Canada informed the secretariat after the CES Bureau meeting that they are not in a position to prepare the paper for June 2011; the in-depth review of this topic will be therefore postponed to November 2011.)*

18. At the November 2011 meeting, the Bureau plans to review in depth the following topics:

- (a) Global manufacturing (based on a paper by the Netherlands);
- (b) Poverty (based on a paper by Eurostat, Brazil and Ukraine; a separate paper will be prepared by the World Bank);
- (c) Education statistics (based on a paper by Australia; following the discussion of the topic at the CES 2011 plenary session in June 2011).

19. As decided earlier, the Bureau will review in-depth in 2012 the following topics:

- (a) Banking, insurance and financial statistics (paper by IMF); and
- (b) Population Censuses (paper by UNECE).

20. The Task Force on Pending Issues in Business Statistics has completed its work. The Bureau thanked the Task Force for the work done and decided that there is currently no need to undertake any specific activities in this area in addition to work going on in other international fora.

VII. Dates and organization of the next meetings of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians; follow-up on the timing of the conference and the bureau meetings

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/FEB/9

21. The CES Bureau discussed the timing of the Conference and the CES Bureau meetings, to follow up on the discussion in November 2010. The following points were made.

22. Conference of European Statisticians plenary sessions

(a) The CES is an important constituent of the global statistical system and this mechanism should not be weakened. A lot of statistical development within the last 20 years has taken place in or has been initiated by the CES;

(b) It was proposed to hold the CES 2012 plenary session for two days: one day devoted to substantive discussion and decision making, and one day to a seminar;

(c) Several Bureau members were against shortening the CES plenary session. They stressed that it is a very important forum for the CIS countries, and helps them to learn about solutions to many emerging problems;

(d) Support was expressed for having a 2-day CES plenary session in one year and possibly a longer meeting (up to 3 days, including 2 seminars) every second year, if the CES plenary sessions and OECD Statistics Committee (CSTAT) meetings are held separately in even years;

(e) A joint seminar between CES and OECD CSTAT was considered useful for those countries who are not members of OECD;

(f) The OECD Statistics Committee meeting in even years (2012, 2014 etc.) has to take place in April in order to discuss and finalise their biennial budget and work programme plans.

23. Conference of European Statisticians' Bureau meetings

(a) The CES Bureau has achieved an effective separation of managerial and substantive work and should maintain its efficient work procedures in the future;

(b) There was support to reverting to two full Bureau meetings per year (in February/March and October/November);

(c) The spring meeting of the Bureau could take place back-to-back with another high-level meeting where most of the Bureau members participate. Two possibilities were mentioned: back-to-back with the ESSC in February in Luxembourg or in Washington, D.C. (as has been the case in the past). Eurostat noted that they would be pleased to host the CES Bureau meeting. *(The World Bank contacted the secretariat after the meeting and confirmed their willingness to host the meeting);*

(d) It would be difficult to hold a full Bureau meeting immediately before or after the UN Statistical Commission because of the many side-meetings that are already taking place;

(e) It is desirable to alternate the venue of the meeting between Europe and North America.

(f) The exact venues of the Bureau meetings should be agreed upon by the new Bureau to be elected at the end of the CES 2011 plenary session.

1. Conclusion:

24. The Bureau will prepare a proposal to the CES 2011 plenary session concerning the organization of future CES plenary sessions. The CES plenary sessions will continue to be held during the 2nd week of June as has been the case since its creation in 1952.

25. In odd years, when the CES plenary session is held back-to-back with the OECD CSTAT meeting, it will be held for two days: one day devoted to substantive discussion and decision making, and one day to a seminar. In even years, if the OECD CSTAT is held in April, the duration of the CES plenary session could be longer than two days.

26. The Bureau decided to go back to the frequency of meetings as per *Rules governing the work of the Conference and the Bureau* (ECE/CES/2007/8), that is, a meeting in spring (February/March) and a meeting in the autumn (October/November). The spring meeting could be held back-to-back with another high-level meeting where most of the CES Bureau members participate.

27. The venues for the meetings will be decided by the new Bureau to be elected in June 2011. It is desirable to alternate the venue regularly between Europe and North America. Eurostat, IMF and the World Bank expressed readiness to host future CES Bureau meetings at their premises.

28. Concerning the next CES Bureau meeting tentatively scheduled for Saturday, 18 June 2011, the secretariat will consult on this issue with the Bureau members. A meeting of the “old” and “newly elected” Bureaus could take place on 16 June, Thursday at 18:00 (after the afternoon session of the OECD CSTAT meeting) followed by a dinner.

VIII. Any other business

29. No papers will be made available on Internet.
