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Selection of topics for seminar(s) to take place during the 2012 Conference of European Statisticians' plenary session

Selection of topics for the seminars to take place during the 2012 Plenary Session of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In May 2011, the UNECE secretariat conducted an electronic consultation with the members of the Conference on the possible topics for discussion at the 2012 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The list of topics sent to countries and international organizations for consultation is attached in Annex 1. The list of possible topics to be discussed at future plenary sessions has been regularly updated, based on the proposals from countries and recommendations by the Bureau. The list of CES seminars held so far is provided in Annex 2.

Member countries and the international organizations were invited to select topics to be discussed, to indicate whether their office would be willing to organise a seminar/session or prepare a paper for a specific topic, and to recommend new topics.

The present note provides a summary of the replies received.

I. Results of the survey: preferences

1. This year forty-five respondents sent their proposals. The following forty one countries and four international organizations replied to the survey: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, CIS-STAT, IMF, Eurostat, and UNCTAD.

2. **The topics that received most votes are presented in the next paragraphs, by decreasing number of preferences.** The countries/organizations who offered to organize a seminar/session or to present a paper are listed under each topic.

A. Most preferred topics

Topic (2) Coordination of national statistical systems

3. This topic received the highest number of preferences: 20 votes from countries.

4. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Lithuania, Sweden.

5. **Comments made:**

- Sweden considers this topic of great interest since its national statistical system is currently being examined with a view to possible reorganisation.
- Tajikistan: Important questions are how to strengthen the role of NSI in national coordination and what are the good practices in effective coordination.

Topic (1) Implementing the fundamental principles of official statistics

6. This topic received 18 votes (16 from countries and 2 from IOs).

7. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Netherlands, Switzerland (possibly).

8. **Comments made:**

- Tajikistan finds interesting the discussion on whether the member states would recognise the legitimacy of international organizations for measures taken in case of malpractices or infringement of the fundamental principles or any other international ethical standards.
- Eurostat supports the topic but warned that it could be a repetition of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) seminar and that the EU is quite in advance with the discussions on the Code of Practice.

9. **Note:** Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and the United States propose to combine topic 1 and topic 2.

Topic (3) Challenges for future population and housing censuses (based on lessons learned from the last round)

10. This topic received 17 votes (15 from countries and 2 from IOs).

11. Contributions offered on this topic:

Seminar organizer: Canada.

Papers: Australia, Brazil (on innovations and impacts in the 2010 Brazilian Population Census), Canada, Portugal.

12. **Comments made:**

- Australia: a stronger focus of the seminar looking ahead would be of greater value, particularly as many of us are looking to make greater use of digital technologies for a variety of reasons next time around.
- New Zealand prefers to focus on how to distinguish underlying data need from the way that work is currently being carried out (i.e. could we fit the models for resource allocation at a higher geographical level without losing much) and looking at how best to make use of administrative data that has partial coverage of the population.
- Turkey: Given the fact that almost all member countries will have conducted the population and housing censuses at the time of CES 2012, it will be useful to share the experiences, future challenges and possible solutions.
- United States believes that population censuses will overlap with the UNSC review scheduled for February 2012.

Topic (8) Modernising statistical production

13. This topic received 16 votes (15 from countries and 1 from IOs).

14. Contributions offered on this topic:

Session organizers: Netherlands, Sweden.

Papers: Brazil (on the challenge of implementing the management business process model in IBGE), Canada (on innovation in statistics), Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden.

15. **Comments made:**

- Netherlands offered to prepare a paper for this topic under the following themes: scanner data in CPI; and revision of economic statistics: subject LEED-database which links business data with employers' data (new output and new processes).
- New Zealand prefers to focus on methods for standardising after having modernised within separate groups and having a series of separate tools that now need to converge. The topic could cover also "the use of administrative data and data integration in official statistics". New Zealand is involved in a process of standardising its processes and systems to make them more sustainable. New Zealand can contribute by discussing experiences with building a generic IT infrastructure and set of tools and methods that can be used to produce a number of outputs, and the tension between the need to standardise and the benefits of continuing with separate systems customised to specific needs.
- Sweden: One interesting issue to explore would be to look into what has so far come out of the different initiatives in the area and to look further on coordination issues.

- Turkey: Such a seminar will contribute to the approach of NSOs towards statistical production and methodologies.
- Eurostat: The topic is part of the work of the High-Level Group for Strategic Directions in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS), and can be better taken up in 2013 or 2014.

Topic (6) Government statistics

16. This topic received 14 votes (11 from countries and 3 from IOs).

17. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Australia, Canada, Denmark (on the coordination between NSO, central banks and ministries of finance in GFS compilation), Norway.

IMF offers to contribute to the seminar.

18. **Comments made:**

- Australia supports a broader focus to the topic. The topic could also address how to better measure the role of government in a broader social context, not just the financial dimension. This would extend to identifying the cost and performance of government in the provision of services, government sector productivity, government contracting and partnerships - e.g. with the non-profit sector. The topic could further review the effectiveness of government in delivering outcomes, the effectiveness of various reform initiatives and the efficiency of different tax systems.
- IMF supports the topic with a broader focus and considers that there will be more time for preparations if this topic is selected for 2013.
- Germany suggests this topic for a possible CES seminar in 2013.
- Ukraine: The importance of this topic is determined by the introduction of the 2008 SNA that envisages substantial changes in the methodology for national accounts compilation based on government finance statistics and by the unfailing interest of our central executive bodies in the role and place of the government sector in the economy.
- Eurostat: The topic could become rather technical and may risk being EU dominated.

B. Topics that received less support

Topic (5) Time use surveys (TUS)

19. This topic received 9 votes from countries.

20. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Canada, Israel, Norway.

21. **Comments made:**

- Germany suggests this topic for a possible CES seminar in 2013/2014. A CES seminar on TUS in 2012 would be too early as Germany will conduct its next TUS in 2012/2013.
- New Zealand would like to focus on the demonstration of good practice in the use of TUS to produce data for policy makers.

Topic (4) Population ageing

22. This topic received 9 votes from countries (8 from countries and 1 from IOs).

23. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Belarus, Canada, Switzerland (possibly).

24. **Comments made:**

- New Zealand would like to focus on the concept of mainstreaming ageing in official statistics.
- Switzerland: This topic is policy relevant.
- United States: Population ageing and government statistics sound as if they might benefit from some collaboration, but this might be rather at a working party level.

Topic (7) Statistics on environment related housing

25. This topic received 7 votes (6 from countries and 1 from IOs).

26. Contributions offered on this topic:

Papers: Canada, Slovenia (on household energy consumption and impact on the environment).

27. **Comments made:**

- Eurostat: The topic is appealing but needs very good preparation; maybe better to address it in one or two years.

II. New topics proposed

28. Members of the Conference were also invited to propose new topics. Canada expressed interest in the topic of “innovation in statistics”, which could also fit into topic 8 “Modernising statistical production”. New Zealand suggests an additional topic on “the use of administrative data and data integration in official statistics” that could be addressed separately or combined with topic 8.

III. Conclusions

29. The 50th Conference delegated to the Bureau of the Conference the organization of the CES seminars, including the selection of topics. The Bureau will discuss the results of the survey and present the **proposal for the topics of the 2012 seminars to the Conference on 16 June 2011 under agenda item 12**. Depending on the decision on the duration of the CES plenary session in 2012, either one or two CES seminars will be held in 2012.

Annex I

The following list of possible topics for the seminar at the 2012 CES plenary session was circulated to countries and international organizations for consultation:

1. Implementing the fundamental principles of official statistics;
2. Coordination of national statistical systems;
3. Challenges for future population and housing censuses (based on lessons learned from the last round);
4. Population ageing;
5. Time use surveys (TUS);
6. Government statistics;
7. Statistics on environment related housing;
8. Modernising statistical production.

Annex II

CES seminars held since 2003

- 2003 Statistical confidentiality and microdata
Globalisation
 - 2004 National statistical systems
Measuring process and volume of the service sector
 - 2005 Improved data reporting
Sustainable development
 - 2006 Population and housing censuses
Human resources and training
 - 2007 Increasing the efficiency and productivity of statistical offices
Measuring capital – beyond the traditional measures
 - 2008 Strategic issues linked to the measurement of international transactions
Measuring population movement and integration in a globalized world
 - 2009 Balancing principles of professional autonomy and accountability with the mandate to produce policy relevant data
Strategic issues in business statistics
 - 2010 Spatial statistics
Impact of global crises on statistical systems
 - 2011 Organization of data collection and sharing, and the management challenges for the implementation of SDMX
Measuring human capital
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