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Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda

Reports of the CES Bureau and Teams of Specialists, and approval of the UNECE Statistical Programme 2013

Statistical Programme for 2013

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The document presents the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe statistical programme for 2013. It is closely linked to the biennial programme in document ECE/CES/2012/14, approved by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2012. The two documents describe the work plan in a different format and are required for different purposes.

The Statistical Programme for 2013 was approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at the 5-6 November 2012 meeting.

The preliminary list of meetings planned to be held from June 2013 onwards is annexed to this document. The list of meetings and workshops held between June 2012 and June 2013 is provided in document ECE/CES/2013/18/Add.1.

I. Background

1. The document presents the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) statistical programme for 2013. It is closely linked to the biennial programme approved by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2012 (document ECE/CES/2012/14). Furthermore, it takes into account the documents prepared in the context of the UNECE review by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM), and the decisions of the relevant meetings of the CES Bureau and EXCOM.
2. The UNECE EXCOM supported the activities of the UNECE statistics subprogramme during the UNECE review meetings. The Conference will be informed of the outcome of the review under agenda item 2.
3. The aim of the current document is to provide a short overview of the main areas of work and future results. The text is used for various reporting and public relations purposes and for various audiences: members of the EXCOM, members of the Conference, staff in the statistical offices and international organizations, diplomats in country missions to the United Nations in Geneva, government agencies, and any other interested persons.
4. The activities are described according to the following general structure:
 - (a) A short general description of what the activity is about;
 - (b) Why the activity is needed, which issues or problems it addresses;
 - (c) Where is the mandate coming from: link to a United Nations initiative, United Nations decision or other broader work;
 - (d) The main actions in 2013;
 - (e) The expected results and impact.
5. The document is provided to the Conference as the basis for considering the UNECE statistical work programme in 2013. The CES Bureau approved the UNECE statistical programme 2013 in November 2012.

II. Introduction

6. The UNECE works with member countries to improve national statistical information needed for effective economic, social and environmental policy making, and for assessing the progress against international development goals. The work in this area is governed by the UNECE Sectoral Committee on Statistics, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) to ensure that it focuses on priorities of member countries. Furthermore, the work responds to the global initiatives of the UN General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).
7. The main objective of the work is to improve the national official statistics and their international comparability, promote close coordination of international statistical activities, respond to any emerging needs for international statistical cooperation, and develop and adopt statistical standards in the UNECE region¹. The work follows and promotes the UN

¹ ECE/CES/2007/8 'Rules and Procedures governing the work of the CES, its Bureau and teams of specialists'.

Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, a standard that was first adopted by UNECE in 1992, and globally by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994.

8. The CES addresses the current priorities of member countries in a flexible and coordinated way. Flexibility is ensured by using teams of specialists created for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, output and time frame. The UNECE has a leading role in several areas and produces outputs such as standards, guidelines and recommendations on statistics, which often have a global impact.

9. The statistics subprogramme will focus on a selected number of subject areas, in particular those where UNECE can provide added value and complement the statistical work of other international organizations. The priority subject areas as identified by the CES Bureau are: sustainable development; globalization; population censuses and registers; and modernization of statistical production. The work is undertaken in close cooperation with experts from countries and international organizations, including countries from outside the UNECE region.

10. The work is carried out in four main areas: coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region; methodological work to develop and promote the implementation of statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations; capacity building; and the UNECE statistical database.

III. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

11. Promoting coordination of the international statistical work in the region is one of the key tasks of the CES. Efficient coordination is important for avoiding duplication of work, finding synergies, using resources efficiently and reducing burden on national statistical offices and other international organizations. Furthermore, international cooperation enshrined in the Fundamental Principles of official statistics² is an important factor contributing to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

12. The CES is composed of the Heads of the national statistical organizations in the UNECE region and includes in addition Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and South Africa. The major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region also participate in the work, such as the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), OECD, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS countries, IMF, World Bank, etc.

13. The Conference and its Bureau provide a platform for coordination of international statistical work. There are several mechanisms to ensure the coordination in practice: the regular meetings of the Conference and its Bureau, the CES seminars exploring foundational issues of statistical systems and emerging topics, in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, and the Database of International Statistical Activities. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the Conference, as well as undertakes substantive work mandated by the Conference and its Bureau.

14. The topics for the CES seminars are selected by the member countries and address issues of current interest. In 2013, the first seminar will deal with challenges in providing access to micro-data for research purposes. The methods and technologies to manage confidentiality have significantly improved during the last decade, and more countries allow access to micro-data. At the same time, the growing availability of micro-data

² Decision no. C(47) of the Economic Commission for Europe, 1992.

increases the risk of disclosure. This seminar will focus on how to deal with the strategic challenges in balancing the growing demands for access to micro-data for research purposes with the requirements of statistical confidentiality.

15. The second seminar of the Conference in 2013 will deal with challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+20. The newly adopted standard SEEA allows to understand the linkages between economy and environment and to provide data for economic policy making taking into account the environmental concerns. Its implementation in the conditions of budget restrictions poses many challenges related to coordination across many different organizations in a country, data availability, lack of standards, etc. The Rio+20 Summit resulted in growing policy attention to sustainable development and reiterated the need for its monitoring, in particular in the context of the discussion on post-2015 development goals. The seminar will provide a forum for top managers of statistical offices to discuss the activities related to Rio+20 follow-up.

16. The CES Bureau will meet twice in 2013 to steer the programme of work of the Conference and ensure that it reflects the priorities of member countries. The Bureau will review in-depth three areas of international statistical work in 2013. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities, identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues. The first topic, entrepreneurship, is gaining increasing political attention given the role of entrepreneurs in stimulating economic growth. This calls for development of statistical methodology for measuring entrepreneurship which crosses the boundaries of statistical areas and requires combining data on business demography and performance with characteristics of individuals and households.

17. The second topic to be reviewed in-depth is open data. The topic was selected for a review in response to the exponentially growing availability of data from different sources, such as government data, administrative registers, web databases, etc. Making use of the increased data supply is an opportunity but also a challenge for official statistics. It raises strategic issues such as how to respond to the competition from private sector and research organisations, and how to deal with methodological issues related to confidentiality, processing, linking and managing large data sets.

18. The third in-depth review will be about political and other community activities, including volunteering. This area is increasing in importance in societies. Apart from the International Labour Organization (ILO) manual on the *Measurement of Volunteer Work*, many scattered initiatives exist. None of them brings together the measurement of community activities, the role of third sector, volunteering, good governance and social capital.

19. In addition, the three in-depth reviews carried out at the end of 2012 on population ageing; banking, insurance and financial statistics; and poverty statistics will lead to follow-up work in 2013.

20. The UNECE Statistical Division maintains an annually updated Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA) as a tool for coordination. The database is a compendium of the annual statistical programmes of international organizations within the UNECE region. The 2013 issue will be available online to be used by countries and international organizations to foster cooperation and avoid duplication of effort.

IV. Methodological work in various statistical areas

21. The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations to improve the efficiency, quality and

comparability of official statistics. The work is demand driven, initiated by the Conference and its Bureau.

22. Flexibility of work is ensured by using teams of specialists (steering groups, task forces) set up by the CES Bureau. The groups are created for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, membership, output, time frame (2-3 years) and a sunset clause. The work will result in methodological and practical guidelines, collections of leading practices in statistics and training materials available on the web. To ensure high quality and relevance of the outputs, they are consulted with all CES members before being approved by the Conference. Public access to all documents will ensure transparency and accountability.

23. The work of the Task Forces on Measuring Sustainable Development, on Time Use Surveys and on Indicators of Gender Equality is planned to be finalised in 2013. At the end of 2012 and in 2013, several new task forces will start working on drafting CES Recommendations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. Subject to the approval of the Bureau, the Task Forces on Circular Migration and on Statistics Related to Population Ageing will also start to work in 2013.

A. Economic statistics

24. The UNECE is working with the countries to further develop and promote implementation of international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, particularly in the areas of national accounts, globalization, price statistics, business registers and short-term statistics.

25. The UNECE promotes the implementation of the new global standard: 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) which provides a comprehensive framework for producing economic accounts adapted to the new policy needs and the fast changes in the global economy. This work is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by the UN Statistical Commission. The work is undertaken in consultation with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts which coordinates globally the implementation of the standard. In 2013, UNECE will continue to support the implementation of 2008 SNA in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia by providing methodological guidance and training workshops. In addition, the preparations for the biennial Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts in 2014 will begin.

26. Globalization, in terms of growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services, has a significant impact on the economy and poses challenges to the compilers of statistics in all countries. In 2011, the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the guide *The Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts*. In accordance with the priority areas for future research highlighted by *the Guide* a new Task Force was established at the end of 2011 to work on the conceptual and measurement challenges posed by global production. The Task Force will address the unresolved conceptual issues arising from 2008 SNA and the Balance of Payments Manual revision 6 (BPM6) in relation to global production and develop further guidance on implementation aspects. The Task Force plans to prepare a draft report by October 2013.

27. UNECE, in cooperation with ILO, IMF and other partners promotes the implementation of international standards and recommendations on Consumer Price Indices (CPI). The biennial meeting of the Expert Group on Consumer Price Indices in June 2012 confirmed the needs for a revision of the existing CPI Manual (2004) to reflect technical and methodological developments over the previous decade, for example on calculation practices and the use of and developments in electronic data collection methods. The revision of the CPI Manual will be undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations

Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, of which UNECE is a member, and be discussed at the CPI Expert Group meeting in 2014. UNECE will continue its work on other short-term economic statistics, such as compilation of industrial production statistics and supporting the practical implementation of seasonal adjustment in national statistical offices.

28. The UNECE supports the development of statistical business registers, which are indispensable for efficient data collection and for the production of business statistics. At the request of countries, the CES Bureau set up a Task Force to develop international guidelines on statistical business registers. The Guidelines will focus on the use of business registers to integrate economic statistics and improve the efficiency of the statistical production process. The Guidelines will, therefore, also address issues raised by the High-level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics.

B. Social and demographic statistics

29. In recent years, the need to measure people's well-being and social environment has increased. The policy relevance of demographic statistics is further accentuated by the growing implications of population ageing on all spheres of society. The 2012 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing reinforced the call for improved statistics on ageing. Many major policy documents, including the Beijing Platform of Action and the Millennium Declaration, emphasise the importance of gender equality and call for improving its measurement. Preparation to the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly is providing an impetus for strengthening international efforts to improve the measurement of migration. The review of the UNECE statistical activities by EXCOM noted that work on social statistics related to measuring well-being, poverty and social inclusion should be considered of high priority. UNECE activities in social and demographic statistics aim at improving statistics related to all these areas of high policy relevance. The work in 2013 will focus on population and housing censuses, population ageing, migration, gender, time-use and crime statistics.

30. Population and housing censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on the population and the housing stock which is used to produce other statistics, and for planning public infrastructure and services. However, if carried out in the traditional way, censuses are the most complicated and expensive statistical operation that a country undertakes. There are increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy which challenge the conduct of future censuses in many countries. Therefore, there is room for further work on innovative methods of census taking, making use of registers and other sources. UNECE coordinates the work done in many countries on the modernization of censuses through increasing use of registers and other solutions that improve their efficiency.

31. In 2013, UNECE will undertake a regional review of the 2010 round of censuses based on an on-line survey, and start the revision of the *Conference of European Statisticians Census Recommendations* in preparation for the 2020 census round. Based on the results of the survey, new task forces composed of national census experts and coordinated by UNECE will revise the CES census recommendations and prepare a version for the 2020 census round by the first half of 2015. The activities are carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Population Fund and Eurostat. UNECE will also participate in the international monitoring mission for the population and housing census planned in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013.

32. In migration statistics, UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration data in the member countries, in response to the

strong demand for more and better data on migration. In 2013, subject to the approval of the CES Bureau, UNECE will start new work on the measurement of circular migration, with the aim to agree on the international statistical definition of this phenomenon and the harmonisation of its measurement. The topic has high policy relevance as the Global Forum on Migration and Development sees the promotion of circular migration as one of the keys to international migration's contribution to development.

33. Two existing Task Forces are scheduled to complete their work in 2013: on improving migration and migrant data using household surveys and other sources, and on measuring the socio-economic conditions of migrants. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data among countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, UNECE will continue to improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics. A full-scale update will be carried out in 2013.

34. Many major policy documents, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration, emphasise the importance gender equality, which requires measurement of progress towards this goal as well as measurement of women's and men's different roles and different access and control of resources. UNECE work on gender statistics includes sharing knowledge and experience at biennial work sessions, developing guidelines and indicators, collecting and disseminating data and building capacity in member countries. In 2013, the Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality will complete its work on a set of indicators to describe gender inequalities and to monitor gender-relevant policies.

35. This set of indicators serves as the regional framework in the capacity-building project on gender statistics that UNECE is carrying out together with two other regional commissions and UNSD in 2012-2014. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of and links between producers and users of statistics to monitor, measure and analyse progress in achieving gender equality. The activities in 2013 include: a sub-regional workshop, national level stakeholder consultations to formulate national action plans; and pilot national data collection that addresses selected data gaps using common instruments.

36. In this context, UNECE will continue promoting the use of its major outputs in gender statistics: the *Manual on gender statistics*, multimedia training tools and the survey module on violence against women.

37. Time-use surveys provide indispensable data on quality of life and well-being and shed light on unpaid work, living conditions and gender equality. Time-use statistics have a particularly important role in current international efforts to enhance the measurement of social progress beyond the use of GDP. The need for better harmonisation and timeliness of time-use statistics has led to the establishment of a Task Force on Time-use Surveys. In 2013, the Task Force will complete its work on guidelines for harmonising time-use surveys and improving comparability of time-use statistics.

38. Crime statistics is an area where international comparability is very difficult to achieve, because data are collected mainly for national purposes and depend largely on the legislation and the justice systems of the different countries. To overcome these difficulties, UNECE works in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Commission. The UNECE Task Force on Crime Classification has developed the principles and framework for an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes. In 2013, it will further elaborate case studies of defining and classifying selected offences with a view to developing a full international classification of crimes for statistical purposes.

39. Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. The corresponding statistics thus cut across a broad range of topics and are in high demand by policymakers; however, they

remain dispersed and have gaps and inconsistencies. Subject to the approval of the CES Bureau, a joint Task Force of statisticians and policymakers will start to work in 2013 to develop recommendations to statistical offices for improving and harmonising the collection and dissemination of ageing-related data. This will lead to a dashboard of indicators recommended to statistical offices for regular production of data based on existing data collection mechanisms.

40. UNECE has been leading the work on measuring quality of employment jointly with Eurostat and ILO to respond to the demands for data on the qualitative aspects of employment from the workers' perspective, beyond traditional labour force statistics. UNECE published in 2010 the report on *Potential indicators for measurement of quality of employment* which provided the underlying concepts and structure for the quality of employment indicators. In February 2012, the CES Bureau established a new Task Force on Measuring Quality of Employment to review the conceptual structure of measuring quality of employment; revise the set of indicators; and to develop operational definitions and guidelines. In 2013, the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment will meet to discuss the first part of the draft report.

C. Sustainable development, environment and climate change statistics, and Millennium Development Goals

41. The UNECE at its 2011 spring session emphasized the importance of good quality statistical data to address the growing concern about sustainable development. High quality statistical information is crucial to formulate adequate and evidence-based policies and monitor their implementation. However, many different approaches and indicator sets exist in this area. Therefore, the Commission requested the Conference to develop recommendations and agree on a common framework for measuring sustainable development within the realm of official statistics.

42. A Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force is working towards harmonising the approaches to measuring sustainable development. The work follows up from a conceptual framework based on the capital approach (published in 2009) which focuses on monitoring the economic, environmental, human and social capital left for future generations. The framework is extended to cover the issues of current well-being, quality of life and the international aspect of sustainable development. A thorough analysis of available data and indicators helps to identify indicators that have a sound conceptual basis and are relevant for monitoring the implementation of national sustainable development strategies. The resulting report is expected to be finalized in 2013. Furthermore, UNECE will promote the application of the framework for measuring sustainable development, taking into account the follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference and the development of the post-2015 development goals. This work will have a particular focus on countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

43. The CES seminar in 2011 explored the measurement of human capital as a major driver of economic growth, sustainability and productivity. Many conceptual and measurement problems need to be solved before countries can develop official statistics in this area. As a follow-up to the CES seminar, a stock-taking report of the leading initiatives and main problems and issues in measuring human capital is planned to be presented at the 2013 CES plenary session.

44. Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics to strengthen environmental monitoring. In response, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of European Statisticians launched in 2009 a Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators. The objective is to improve environmental

data production and promote comparability of environmental statistics in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. In 2013, the joint Task Force will continue to review methodologies and produce time series of selected environmental indicators from the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The work is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency. In 2013, the Statistical Division will also promote the implementation of the newly adopted standard, the SEEA in the region and will evaluate the data availability and capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data.

45. Under a United Nations Development Account project, capacity building will be undertaken in the East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries in 2012-2013 to support the implementation of international recommendations and good practices in producing indicators on environmental sustainability. In 2013, a desk study on the state of environmental statistics in specific areas, e.g. waste statistics and air-environment statistics, will be completed, and priority issues will be addressed in the planned two workshops. The activities will be coordinated with the UNSD, European Environment Agency and Eurostat.

46. The Rio+20 Summit has emphasized that climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority. There is an increasing need for new information to support analysis of climate change. A UNECE survey showed that many statistical offices are involved in the work related to greenhouse gas emission inventories, and many produce other statistics related to climate change. The Conference, therefore, set up a Task Force to identify priorities for the further development of climate change related statistics in national statistical offices. In 2013, the Task Force will finalise a report analysing user requirements and proposing measures to make the wide range of existing environmental, social and economic statistics more useful for analysing the impact of climate change and for producing greenhouse gas inventories.

47. UNECE will provide support to its member countries in measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The work will be conducted in close collaboration with the regional commissions and UNSD. In 2013, UNECE will organise a sub-regional workshop and advisory missions on the monitoring of MDGs. The UNECE database of MDG indicators will be further developed as a tool for resolving discrepancies of data from different sources. Specific attention will be given to the persistent data gaps, insufficient use of official national data, and discrepancies among indicator values compiled by national, regional and international agencies. The results will feed into the development and monitoring of post-2015 development goals and other work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on MDG Indicators.

D. Streamlining statistical production

48. In response to demands from heads of national and international statistical organisations, the UNECE established a High-level Group on Business Architecture in Statistics in 2010. Subject to the decision of the Bureau, this group will have a renewed mandate to oversee and coordinate international work in the rapidly changing areas of statistical production and dissemination to ensure the continued relevance and efficiency of official statistics. The Group coordinates the activities of relevant expert groups in the UNECE region to ensure that they are working towards common goals. This coordination is based on a vision for industrialising the future production and products of official statistics, which was endorsed by the CES in June 2011, and a strategy to implement that vision, endorsed by the CES in June 2012.

49. The technological part of this work is driven by expert groups on software sharing and on the management of statistical information systems. A wiki platform contains an inventory of statistical software and other materials available for sharing to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences between statistical organizations. The aim is to encourage more efficient and sustainable national statistical production systems. Topics to be considered during 2013 include the impact of the “open data” movement, and the practical implementation of the Generic Statistical Information Model, which is due to be released at the end of 2012.

50. Statistical data editing is currently a very resource-intensive activity for national statistical organizations. It includes the validation and correction of incoming data, and methods to deal with missing data. In line with the vision for industrialising statistical production, an electronic knowledge-base has been created, which will be further expanded and updated during 2013.

51. Statistical data confidentiality is another important topic for official statistics. An expert group meeting will be organised on this topic in autumn 2013. In addition to the high-level CES seminar on access to microdata, this meeting will consider the implications of new methods and technologies, as well as the impact of initiatives such as “open data” and “data without boundaries”. A wiki site documenting good practices in statistical confidentiality and microdata access will be maintained and enhanced.

52. A Steering Group on statistical metadata is developing a set of standards and good practices in the form of a Common Metadata Framework. The efficient management and use of statistical metadata – the information that describes and defines statistical data – is recognised as an important topic by the CES. As well as organising an expert group meeting in spring 2013, the main tasks will be to further enhance the documentation of metadata standards and good practices. The Common Metadata Framework is a living reference tool, mostly published only in electronic format, so that it can be rapidly updated to reflect new ideas and technologies. It includes the Generic Statistical Business Process Model, an important tool for standardisation and benchmarking of statistical production that has rapidly become a global standard, and has been adopted by the major partners of UNECE.

53. UNECE promotes sharing experience and good practices on human resources management and training in national statistical offices. Based on the outcome of an international workshop on this topic in September 2012, a compilation of best practices will be produced in 2013. An interactive wiki has been established for distribution of experiences and training materials to draw attention to initiatives for better human resources management.

54. A Steering Group on statistical dissemination and communication will organise an expert meeting in summer 2013 to mark the completion of the four-part *Making Data Meaningful* series. Other topics for discussion include possible guidelines for the use of social media, and the communication implications of the streamlining and modernisation of official statistics.

55. The UNECE provides mechanisms for communication to facilitate exchanges of ideas between national and international statistical organizations. Examples include facilitating the implementation of the Generic Statistical Information Model by statistical organisations, and on-going work to harmonise standards between the statistical and data archive communities.

V. Capacity building activities

56. The UNECE aims to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe to implement international standards and guidelines. Particular attention is paid to promoting the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that provide basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems.

57. The UNECE capacity building activities include:

- (a) Training workshops;
- (b) Global assessments of national statistical systems;
- (c) Advisory services provided by the UNECE experts to address country specific needs.

58. The capacity building activities are carried out in coordination and in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, Economic Free Trade Association (EFTA), OECD, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PARIS21, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), the World Bank, IMF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

59. The UNECE, together with Eurostat and EFTA, conducts global assessments (GA) of national statistical systems of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. The purpose is to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. This helps the national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and the international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. GAs recently conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine are expected to result in action plans to improve national statistics according to the recommendations. In 2013, the partner organisations (EFTA, Eurostat and UNECE) will organise a major event for East and South-East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries, including Turkey, to discuss how to support, monitor and coordinate the implementation of the recommendations provided in the GAs.

60. The UNECE capacity building activities are planned based on the findings of global assessments and the needs of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. In 2013, UNECE will organise sub-regional workshops and advisory services to address current challenges in economic, social and environment statistics, streamlining statistical production and improving the indicators for monitoring the achievement of MDGs. The capacity building will be supported by promoting the exchange of national good practices at sub-regional level, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of networks of experts.

61. The Programme Working Group on Statistics of the UN Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)³ meets annually to discuss needs for capacity building and coordinate donor activities. The UNECE will work in 2013 on the development and fund-raising of three capacity building programmes: on economic statistics, including the

³ Member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

implementation of the 2008 SNA; regional migration statistics; and streamlining statistical production of SPECA countries. These projects would complement the on-going capacity building activities in the region.

VI. UNECE statistical database

62. The UNECE provides a unique statistical database offering a wide range of information on member countries via free on-line English and Russian interfaces. This database provides the source data for the popular *UNECE Countries in Figures* publication, as well as regular short articles on the economic and social development of the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2013.

63. Particular emphasis is placed on providing data on areas of high political importance to the United Nations system, such as progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (under a mandate from the 2005 UNECE reform), and issues relating to gender equality. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues, and helps identify priorities for methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics.

64. The UNECE statistical database is also used to disseminate the data of other UNECE work programmes. It currently includes transport and forestry statistics. Preparatory work to identify suitable data on energy and environment issues will also be undertaken in 2013. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE.

Annex I

List of meetings planned to be held June 2013 onwards

1. 61st plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (10-12 June 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.06.ces.html
2. Workshop on Sustainable Development and implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (12-13 June 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.06.environ.html
3. 8th SPECA Project Working Group Meeting, jointly with EFTA (13 June 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.06.speca.html
4. Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (2-4 July 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.07.viron.html
5. High-level event on censuses and migration statistics with policymakers and data producers of CIS countries (September 2013, Russian Federation) – *to be confirmed*
6. Group of experts on business registers (2-4 September 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.09.busreg.html
7. Meeting on measuring quality of employment (11-13 September 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.labour.html
8. Seminar on data collection (25-27 September 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.09.coll.html
9. Joint UNECE-Eurostat Group of experts on population and housing censuses (30 September - 3 October 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.census.html
10. Joint UNECE-UNFPA Workshop on population and housing censuses (4 October 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
11. Joint workshop on implementation of 2008 SNA and links to government finance statistics (October 2013, Istanbul, Turkey) – *to be confirmed*
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.census2.html
12. Meeting on climate change related statistics (8-9 October 2013, Geneva, Switzerland) – *to be confirmed*
13. Meeting of the 2013/2014 CES Bureau (22-23 October 2013)
Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.bureau.html
14. Work session on statistical data confidentiality (28-30 October 2013, Ottawa, Canada)

Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.confidentiality.html

15. Eurostat/UNECE Work session on demographic projections (29-31 October 2013, Rome, Italy)

Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.projections.html

16. Workshop on Implementation of the 2008 SNA and Linkages to the Government Financial Statistics Manual for the EECCA and SEE countries, jointly with EFTA and Eurostat (30 October - 1 November 2013, Istanbul, Turkey)

17. Second workshop on waste statistics for EECCA countries (November 2013) – *to be confirmed*

18. Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (4-6 November 2013)

Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.11.environ.html

19. Workshop on the modernisation of statistical production and services (25-27 November 2013, Geneva, Switzerland) – *to be confirmed*

20. Meeting of the Task Force on ageing-related statistics (27 November 2013, Geneva)

21. Joint UNECE/OECD/CIS-STAT seminar on poverty measurement in the UNECE region (2-4 December 2013, Geneva, Switzerland) – *to be confirmed*

Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.12.poverty.html

22. Meeting of the 2013/2014 CES Bureau (28-29 January 2014)

23. Workshop on gender statistics (17-18 March 2014, Geneva, Switzerland) – *to be confirmed*

24. Work session on gender statistics (19-21 March 2014, Geneva, Switzerland)

Website: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.03.gender.html

25. 62nd plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (during the week of 7-11 April 2014, Paris, France) – *to be confirmed*

26. Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (April 2014, Paris, France) – *to be confirmed*

27. Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, jointly with Eurostat and OECD (6-10 May 2014, Geneva, Switzerland) – *to be confirmed*

28. Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (spring 2014) – *to be confirmed*

29. Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (spring 2014, Paris, France) – *to be confirmed*

30. Meeting of the Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices, jointly with ILO (4-6 June 2014, Geneva, Switzerland)

31. Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (7-9 July 2014, Geneva, Switzerland)

32. Work Session on Statistical Communication (summer 2014) – *to be confirmed*

33. Workshop on the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services (autumn 2014) – *to be confirmed*

34. Meeting of the 2013/2014 CES Bureau (21-22 October 2014)

35. Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (3-5 November 2014, Geneva, Switzerland)
