



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
13 March 2013

Original: English

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### Sixty-first plenary session

Geneva, 10-12 June 2013

### Annotated provisional agenda

The plenary session will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9:30 on Monday, 10 June 2013.

#### I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising for the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) from the 2013 session of Economic Commission for Europe.
3. Challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+ 20.
4. Challenges in providing access to micro-data for research purposes.
5. Work of the High-level Group on the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services.
6. Reports, guidelines, recommendations, etc. prepared under the umbrella of the Conference:
  - (a) A conceptual framework and suggested indicators for measuring sustainable development;
  - (b) A stock-taking report on measuring human capital;
  - (c) Guidelines for harmonizing time use surveys.
7. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region:
  - (a) Poverty statistics;
  - (b) Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the CES Bureau: Banking, insurance and financial statistics; population ageing; and political and other community activities including volunteering;
  - (c) Outcome of the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) Friends of the Chair group on Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

8. Programme of work of the UNECE Statistics subprogramme:
  - (a) Reports of the CES Bureau and Teams of Specialists, and approval of the UNECE Statistical Programme 2013;
  - (b) Programme planning documents for the UNECE Statistics subprogramme 2014-2015.
9. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2014 CES plenary session.
10. Election of the CES Bureau.
11. Other business.
12. Closing of the meeting.

## **II. Annotations**

The sixty-first plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians is convened at the request of the sixtieth CES plenary session (ECE/CES/83) and in accordance with the Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau adopted at the 2005 plenary session of the CES (CES/2005/2).

The plenary session includes a formal session and two seminars.

### **1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda**

The proposed provisional agenda and timetable were agreed upon by the CES Bureau at its 5-6 February 2013 meeting. The provisional agenda will be presented for the approval of the Conference.

### **2. Matters arising for the Conference of European Statisticians from the 2013 session of the Economic Commission for Europe – for information**

The agenda item will focus on the implications of the decisions of the UNECE on the work of the CES and the UNECE Statistical Programme.

The outcome of the review of the UNECE work, including that of the Statistics subprogramme, will be presented to the Conference for information. The review provides concrete recommendations and proposals for future work priorities for each subprogramme in the UNECE.

### **3. Challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+ 20 – for discussion and recommendations**

This part of the CES plenary session will be organised in a form of a one-day seminar. The organisers are the Netherlands, Switzerland and Slovenia. The Netherlands will chair the seminar.

The seminar is held to discuss the implications for statistical community of two important international developments. First, the seminar responds to the increased policy attention to sustainable development in the context of follow-up to the Rio+20 Summit, establishment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the post-2015 development agenda, and second, to the adoption of the SEEA by the UNSC in February 2012.

**(a) Topic 1: Measuring sustainable development in follow up to Rio+20**

The session, organised by Switzerland, will discuss how the national and international experience with sustainable development indicators could contribute to the development of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the related targets and indicators through a participatory process. The question how official statistical community could be integrated in the process of establishing the SDGs will be addressed. The role and responsibility of official statistics versus the policy makers and governments in the definition of SDGs will be discussed. The session will also refer to the work undertaken by the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Task Force to develop a conceptual framework and indicators for measuring sustainable development. (The conceptual framework is submitted to the CES for endorsement under agenda item 6a.)

The session will also address the global dimension of measuring sustainable development. As a result of globalisation, the sustainable development of a country can not be viewed in isolation. A new challenge is therefore to measure the interactions between countries from the perspective of sustainable development.

**(b) Topic 2: Key challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting**

The session, organised by Slovenia, will discuss how to implement SEEA taking into account national circumstances, and how to support the implementation in countries through international cooperation. The SEEA has the potential to generate a wide range of statistics and indicators which need to be further adapted to countries' priorities and policy needs. The session will discuss the use of SEEA as a measurement framework for policy initiatives, such as "Green Growth" or "Green Economy". The session will address the key challenges in implementing SEEA and discuss how to approach the need for coordination and communication between the national statistical office and national environment agencies and ministries, the need for a multidisciplinary approach, and the challenges in data availability.

**(c) Conclusions and recommendations for follow up work**

The session will draw conclusions from the discussion and consider possible follow-up actions to address the issues identified during the first two sessions. The aim is to propose concrete actions that can be undertaken jointly by countries and international organizations.

**4. Challenges in providing access to micro-data for research purposes – for discussion and recommendations**

This part of the CES plenary session will be organised as a seminar. The organisers are Slovenia, New Zealand and the United States. Slovenia will chair the seminar.

The seminar will discuss how to deal with the many strategic challenges in balancing the growing demands for access to micro-data for research purposes with the requirements of statistical confidentiality.

The methods and technologies to manage confidentiality have developed significantly over the last decade. The CES has adopted two guidelines: *Managing Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata Access: Principles and Guidelines of Good Practice* (2007) and *Principles and Guidelines on Confidentiality Aspects of Data Integration Undertaken for Statistical or Related Research Purposes* (2009). More and more organisations provide access to micro-data for research purposes and the procedures are less heavy than before. Micro-data are one of the basic elements of an efficient business process and play an important role in the

industrialization of statistical production. Sharing resources and data with data archives is another element of gaining efficiency. Providing access to microdata will help statistical organisations to strengthen their position in competition with other data producers.

On the other hand, the growing amount of freely available raw data from multiple sources ('big data') can increase the risk of disclosure through the use of sophisticated data matching techniques, data visualisation and Geographic Information Systems. Furthermore, globalization has generated needs for access to micro-data across borders.

The seminar aims to take forward the common thinking in this area stimulated by good practices from national statistical organisations, and promote forward-looking innovative approaches.

**(a) Topic 1: Drivers for micro-data access**

The session, organised by the United States, will address the evolving user requirements for micro-data access. It will consider who the key users are and what drives the increasing needs for microdata access. The session will consider the linkage, use and reuse of data for internal and external research purposes; whether there is a difference in providing access to social and business data and how to deal with combined enterprise and household data; and trans-border access to micro-data. New phenomena, such as 'big data' and 'open data', as well as new tools, such as Geographic Information Systems, create both opportunities and challenges for managing confidentiality.

**(b) Topic 2: How should national statistical offices respond - moving from risk avoidance to risk management**

The session, organised by New Zealand, will focus on rethinking the services on micro-data as part of the business strategy of national statistical offices. Analyses of micro-data are becoming increasingly important for taking adequate evidence-based decisions. How could the production process be streamlined to improve micro-data access for research purposes? Should micro-data be a service in its own right or only a by-product of statistics? Can the research community participate in funding the infrastructure?

The session will also consider the policies, rules and procedures to be applied and the processes needed to assist the users of micro-data. The session will touch upon the issue of cooperation between the national statistical offices and other data providers in creating data archives for researchers.

**(c) Conclusions and recommendations for follow up work**

The session will draw conclusions from the discussion and consider possible follow-up actions to address the issues identified during the first two sessions. The aim is to propose concrete actions that can be undertaken jointly by countries and international organizations.

## **5. Work of the High-level Group on the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services – for decision**

The report on implementing the strategy of the High-level Group (HLG) on the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services will be submitted to the Conference for approval. The report includes a proposal for a new governance structure of the work undertaken under the HLG. The CES Bureau created the High-level Group in 2010 to guide strategic developments in the ways in which official statistics are produced. During the 2011 and 2012 plenary sessions, the Conference expressed strong support for the work and endorsed the vision and the strategy for modernising statistical production and services developed by the HLG.

A document explaining the issues surrounding the use of 'big data' in the official statistics community is submitted to the Conference for information (ECE/CES/2013/20).

## **6. Reports, guidelines, recommendations, etc. prepared under the umbrella of the Conference**

Three documents will be submitted to the CES 2013 plenary session for consideration.

### **(a) A conceptual framework and suggested indicators for measuring sustainable development – for decision**

The Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development was set up by the CES Bureau in 2009 to develop a conceptual framework and a suggested set of indicators for measuring sustainable development. The work followed up from a previous Working Group on this topic that prepared the publication *Measuring Sustainable Development* (2009). The Conference reviewed the executive summary of the report of the Task Force in 2011, and the "Main messages" and "Short narrative" in 2012. The Conference strongly supported the work.

The CES Bureau reviewed the full text of the report including the conceptual framework and suggested indicators in November 2012, and asked the secretariat to conduct an electronic consultation with all CES members which was carried out in December 2012-January 2013. The responding countries and organizations supported the report. Many countries emphasised its importance for clarifying and harmonising the complex area of measuring sustainable development. Several countries sent substantive comments and editorial suggestions that will help to improve the text. The report will be updated before the CES plenary session to take into account the comments received. The secretariat will provide a summary of the feedback from the electronic consultation. Subject to the positive outcome of the consultation, the report will be submitted to the Conference for endorsement.

### **(b) A stock-taking report on measuring human capital – for decision**

As an outcome of the CES seminar on Measuring Human Capital in June 2011, the Conference asked a small group of experts to prepare a report taking stock of what has been done so far in measuring human capital. The report was prepared by OECD and an expert group led by New Zealand. The CES Bureau reviewed the report in November 2012 and supported the recommendations for further work proposed in the report. The report will be consulted electronically with all CES members in March-April 2013. Subject to the positive outcome of the consultation, the report will be submitted to the Conference for endorsement. The report has also been made available as an OECD statistics working paper (STD/DOC(2012)4) in November 2012.

### **(c) Guidelines for harmonizing time use surveys – for decision**

The CES Bureau set up the Task Force on Time Use Surveys in November 2010 to prepare guidelines to help countries in carrying out the time-use surveys and to improve the comparability of the results at the international level. The CES Bureau reviewed the draft Guidelines at its meeting in February 2013 and decided to send the Guidelines for electronic consultation to all CES members in March-April 2013. Subject to the positive outcome of the consultation, the Guidelines will be submitted to the Conference for endorsement.

## **7. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

This agenda item is concerned with the coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region and the decisions and recommendations that the Conference is expected to take on the respective issues. Important tools of coordination are the in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, carried out by the CES Bureau with the aim to identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues. The reviews focus on strategic issues and highlight concerns of statistical offices of both a conceptual and a coordinating nature.

### **(a) Poverty statistics – for discussion and recommendations**

The CES Bureau reviewed poverty statistics in-depth in November 2012. In view of the many issues and challenges in this area, the Bureau asked the secretariat to organise, together with OECD and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), a seminar to discuss how to improve poverty measurement in the UNECE region. The outline of the seminar will be presented to the Conference.

The aim of the discussion is to seek input from all CES members in preparation of a seminar on poverty statistics planned to be held on 2-4 December 2013.

### **(b) Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau – for decision**

The reports of in-depth reviews carried out by the CES Bureau since the previous CES plenary session in June 2012 will be submitted to the Conference. The CES Bureau reviewed banking, insurance and financial statistics in November 2012; population ageing in November 2012 and; political and other community activities, including volunteering in February 2013. The Conference will be invited to endorse the outcomes of the in-depth reviews.

### **(c) Outcome of the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission Friends of the Chair group on Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics – for information**

The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission Friends of the Chair group on Fundamental Principles of official statistics.

## **8. Programme of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme**

### **(a) Reports of the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau and Teams of Specialists and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2013 – for information and for decision**

The Conference will be invited to consider the documents related to the UNECE statistical work programme in 2012-13 as follows:

(a) The UNECE Statistical Programme for 2013 will be presented for approval. It was approved by the CES Bureau at their November 2012 meeting. The UNECE Statistical Programme 2013 is in line with the Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2012-2013, approved by the Conference in June 2012;

(b) The report on the implementation of the 2012 Statistical Programme will be submitted to the Conference for information;

(c) The Reports of the CES Bureau Meetings, progress reports of the Teams of Specialists working under the auspices of the Conference, and reports from expert meetings will be submitted to the Conference for information;

(d) A compilation of good practices in human resources management and training based on selected papers from the CES 2006 seminar and the related workshops organised in 2008, 2010 and 2012 will be presented to the Conference for information.

(e) A document on the key directions for future and key policy messages based on the initial findings of the CES Task Force on statistics related to climate change will be presented to the Conference for information. The document will include interim recommendations on how to improve the involvement of national statistical offices in climate change related statistics. The Task Force is preparing a report to be submitted to the Conference for approval in 2014.

**(b) Programme planning documents for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme 2014-2015 – for decision**

The Conference will be invited to review and adopt the official documents of the Statistics subprogramme prepared in the context of the United Nations secretariat's biennial planning and reporting cycle. These documents have been approved by the CES Bureau at its meeting on 5-6 February 2013. The following documents are submitted to the Conference for approval:

(a) Draft Programme of Work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2013/15);

(b) Draft Publications Programme of the Statistics subprogramme for 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2013/16);

(c) Draft Biennial Evaluation Plan of the Statistics subprogramme for 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2013/17).

**9. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2014 Conference of European Statisticians plenary session – for decision**

The Conference will select the topics for the CES seminars in 2014 based on a proposal by the CES Bureau.

**10. Election of the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau – for decision**

The current term of all members of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians expires at the closing of the 2013 plenary session, on 12 June. At the 2013 plenary session, therefore, elections for a Chair and for Vice-Chairs will be held for the two-year period from June 2013 to June 2015.

**11. Other business**

Any additional issues that the Conference needs to be informed of can be taken up under this agenda item.

## **12. Closing of the meeting**

A draft report of the CES plenary session, including the main decisions, will be adopted at the end of the meeting (in English only). A detailed report will be prepared during the two weeks following the meeting and will be sent for comments to all participants. The finalised report will be translated into French and Russian.

## **III. Organization of work**

A detailed timetable will be made available on the official website of the Conference (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.06.ces.html>) a few weeks before the plenary session.



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<i>Date</i>	<i>Item/Programme</i>
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**Monday, 10 June**

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