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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Selection of topics for seminars to be held during the 2015 CES plenary session

Proposal for the seminars to take place during the 2015 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the Secretariat

1. In March 2014, the UNECE Secretariat carried out an electronic consultation with the members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on the possible topics for the seminars to be held during the 2015 CES plenary session. The results of the consultation are presented in document ECE/CES/2014/18. A total of 49 responses were received from countries and international organisations (IOs), including Azerbaijan, Ireland, Republic of Moldova and Poland who responded after issuing the document (ECE/CES/2014/18). Their votes¹ are taken into account in this paper.

2. The CES Bureau discussed at its short lunch meeting on 9 April 2014 at 12:30 the organisation of the 2015 CES seminars. Below is the Bureau proposal for the 2015 seminar topics based on the outcome of the electronic consultation.

¹ Additional 3 votes were casted for the topic (A) The response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals; 2 votes for (E) Modernisation of statistical production and services; 2 votes for (G) The next generation of statisticians and how do we prepare them?; 1 vote for (F) Strategic partnership on the way towards data revolution; 1 vote for (H) Managing for efficiency in statistical offices; and 1 vote for (J) Measuring governance.

I. The first seminar:

3. The following topic is proposed:

Topic (E) Modernisation of statistical production and services + topic (H) Managing for efficiency in statistical offices

Seminar organizer: Ireland, Chair of the High-level Group for the modernisation of statistical production and services (HLG); and Italy

The following countries volunteered to contribute to the seminar organisation: Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Republic of Moldova and United States.

The following countries or IOs volunteered to contribute papers: Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, United States (possibly) and Eurostat.

4. This combination of topics was supported by **30 votes**² (28 from countries and 2 from IOs). As an individual topic (E) modernisation received 20 votes, and (H) managing for efficiency received 17 votes.

5. It is proposed that the HLG would take the lead in organizing this seminar since many respondents noted the links between these topics and the work of the HLG. The seminar will provide an opportunity to discuss the modernisation of statistical production and services among a wider audience, including the Chief Statisticians of the CES member countries and many international organizations. It would allow promoting the HLG work more widely, provide input to the HLG activities and help to align these more closely with national priorities and requirements.

6. There are many new data demands, and new sources and technologies seem to offer new possibilities. However, the resources available for maintaining the existing statistical programmes have been reduced in many countries, and may continue to reduce in the coming years. The increasing user needs call for efficient use of resources so as to produce greater output with the same or fewer resources. Innovation and modernisation are essential, but the resources available for these tasks within individual statistical organisations are often not sufficient. To take advantage of the available opportunities, and improve the efficiency of regular statistical production, it is becoming increasingly necessary for organisations to collaborate, and pool their limited resources.

7. HLG is facilitating a number of initiatives to promote international collaboration around the theme of "standards-based modernisation". These activities are strictly demand-driven, responding to the needs of participating organisations. HLG notes that it will become increasingly important to accelerate work in improving efficiency of processes and to ensure wider acceptance and use of standards.

8. The seminar could discuss the following issues:

- The extent to which current modernisation initiatives meet the needs of the official statistics community;
- Innovative uses of statistical and non-statistical data sources to increase productivity and develop new statistical products and services;
- Initiatives aimed at increasing the efficiency of statistical production;
- Examples of ways to rationalise statistical production and re-organise existing survey processes to achieve greater efficiency;
- How to improve collaboration between statistical organisations and coordination between international modernisation initiatives.

² Votes from the same country or IO on both topics were calculated as one vote.

II. The second seminar:

9. The following topic is proposed:

Topic (A) The response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals

Seminar organizer: Switzerland

Session organizers: France and Sweden

The following countries and IOs volunteered to contribute papers: Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, Eurostat, OECD (possibly) and UNSD.

10. The topic received **17 votes** (16 from countries and 1 from an IO).

11. The UN-led stakeholder process to establish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will be valid for all countries is well underway. SDGs will build upon and eventually replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that set the international development goals till the end of 2015. In 2014, all inputs to the SDG process will be consolidated and the UN will launch intergovernmental negotiations to formally adopt the SDGs in September 2015.

12. The Rio+20 outcome document *The future we want* asked official statisticians to assist in the process of measuring progress and sustainable development. The *CES recommendations on measuring sustainable development*, resulting from the joint work by UNECE, Eurostat, OECD and a number of countries, were endorsed by CES in June 2013. The CES Recommendations are a timely input to the SDG process.

13. When the goals will be established, a reporting and monitoring mechanism needs to be set up. The main focus of the seminar will be on how official statistics can be most efficiently utilized in this process. The statistical community has to be ready for reporting on SDGs as of 2017-18. The CES seminar would provide a timely opportunity to discuss measuring SDGs, focusing on the following issues:

- What will be the mechanism for reporting and monitoring the achievement of SDGs at national and international level;
- Coordination of efforts in measuring SDGs, including coordination with international organizations and specialized agencies (such as ILO, WHO, UNICEF, etc.);
- The related organizational and managerial aspects (national and international);
- Adjusting the indicators to national circumstances, augmenting the global list with national indicators;
- Developing new partnerships, data sources and methods to better meet data requirements for SDGs (data revolution);
- Integration of statistics into decision making, how the indicators will be used to monitor progress in implementing the SD strategies;
- Building on lessons learned from the MDG process.