

**DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE 63rd PLENARY SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Decision 1: Matters arising from the 2015 session of the Economic Commission for Europe and the 46th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (Agenda item 2)

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) took note of the main outcomes of the 2015 sessions of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).
2. The Conference supported the *UNECE High-Level Statement on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Expected Sustainable Development Goals in the ECE region (E/ECE/1475)*, and agreed that UNECE is well placed to continue to make a strong contribution to sustainable development especially by “contributing to an effective framework to measure and monitor sustainable development by developing high-quality data and modern statistical production building on the more than 20 statistical standards and recommendations adopted by the CES, including work on measuring poverty, demographic changes and gender equality issues, and recommendations to measure sustainable development that help national statistical offices to produce and analyse data.”
3. The Conference reaffirmed the following key issues raised at the UNECE Commission Session:
 - (a) The availability of statistics is crucial for evidence-based policy decisions;
 - (b) The cross-cutting targets are especially challenging to measure. UNECE can play an important role in facilitating the required interdisciplinary and interagency cooperation;
 - (c) The *CES Recommendations for measuring sustainable development* provide a valuable framework in the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
 - (d) The importance of strong institutions and good governance for an efficient process of measuring and monitoring SDGs should be promoted;
 - (e) The regional dimension in measuring and monitoring sustainable development is important. Indicators taking into account the regional circumstances are needed to address regional policy priorities;

- (f) The Conference could play a leadership role, as requested, to provide a platform for experimenting on how to use new data sources and improve the usefulness and timeliness of data;
- (g) The use of geospatial data needs to be developed for providing an evidence base for measuring and monitoring SDGs.

Decision 2: Response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda item 3)

- 4. The Conference adopted the *Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* (ECE/CES/2015/45) and encouraged all national statistical offices and international organizations to use the Declaration for promoting the use of official statistics for SDG monitoring.
- 5. The Conference agreed on follow-up actions as listed below:
 - (a) In conjunction with the mandate given to the UNSC and its Secretariat, UNSD, the role established for the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on SDGs in proposing SDG indicators, and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post-2015 monitoring, launch work on a road map for the development of official statistics for SDG monitoring in the UNECE region. This road map could include:
 - (i) An outline of the setup of reporting on SDGs in the UNECE region (who does what and when);
 - (ii) Identification of new areas of statistics (such as governance) where internationally harmonized indicators need to be developed in cooperation with international organizations, academia, civil society, and other stakeholders;
 - (iii) A strategy on how to reinforce communication with other data providers and users of official statistics, including policy makers;
 - (iv) A strategy on how to deal with the required disaggregations of data;
 - (v) A plan for the necessary capacity building for reporting on SDGs;
 - (vi) Collaboration between various international agencies in the UNECE region.
 - (b) Adjust the *CES Recommendations on measuring sustainable development* to the SDGs and the related targets (set up a small task force for this purpose).

6. The road map for the region could contribute to a future action plan at a global level to succeed the Busan action plan for statistics adopted in 2011.

7. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised during the seminar. At its next meeting, the CES Bureau will discuss how to implement the proposed follow-up actions. The Conference encouraged members of CES to use the rich resource of papers and ideas produced by the seminar.

Decision 3: Modernisation of statistical production and services and managing for efficiency (Agenda item 4)

8. The Conference approved the annual report of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services (HLG), including the outcomes of HLG activities in 2014, and work in progress.

9. The Conference supported the formalization of a Statistical Modernisation Community.

10. The Conference strongly supported the continuation of the work of the HLG and appreciated the concrete outputs prepared. National and international statistical organizations were invited to support the HLG work programme, and to pool resources to improve efficiency.

11. The Conference agreed that modernizing statistical products and processes is a key priority for all statistical organizations in the context of data revolution. The Conference agreed that international coordination of this work should be ensured through existing structures, and asked the HLG to take the seminar outcomes into account when deciding priorities for future activities. The key outcomes were:

- (a) The continued importance of sharing experience and international collaboration activities was recognized and mechanisms to facilitate this should be further developed;
- (b) Data integration is becoming increasingly important to statistical organizations given the growing number of available data sources;
- (c) Statistical organizations are providing innovative dissemination mechanisms to meet evolving user demands;
- (d) It is important not to underestimate the challenge of cultural change when implementing modernization initiatives;
- (e) There is a need for further exchange of experience on how the different organizational structures can support modernization initiatives. The planned High-Level Seminar on this topic will address this;

- (f) There is a need for consistent communication by statistical organizations both within the national organizations and with key stakeholders.

Decision 4: Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (Agenda item 6a)

12. The Conference endorsed the outcomes of the in-depth reviews on population projections; measuring extreme events and disasters; and process-oriented approach to statistical production, including the next steps as follows:

- (a) The Task Force on Population Projections will prepare a collection of good practices on communicating population projections to users and provide guidance on the establishment of an UNECE database of metadata about national and international population projections;
- (b) The Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters will clarify the role of official statistics in providing data related to extreme events and disasters, and identify practical steps how national statistical offices, in coordination with the relevant national agencies, can support disaster management and risk reduction;
- (c) The HLG and Turkey will jointly organize a High-Level Seminar on the Process-Oriented Approach to Statistical Production.

13. The Conference commended the countries who prepared the in-depth review papers, which were of high quality, and countries and organizations that contributed to the reviews and provided comments during the consultation. The Secretariat will forward the comments to the relevant task forces to be taken into account in further work.

Decision 5: Guide to Measuring Global Production (Agenda item 5a)

14. The Conference endorsed the *Guide to Measuring Global Production*, and commended all countries and organizations that contributed to the conceptually challenging work. The Conference agreed with the need for further work and:

- (a) Recognized the importance of sharing country experience and best practice;
- (b) Supported the organization of expert meetings to discuss issues related to global production;
- (c) Highlighted the usefulness of developing foreign direct investment and trade in services statistics beyond their use for national accounts and balance of payments to properly analyse different aspects of globalization;

(d) Supported the research agenda and further work on conceptual issues such as factoryless goods production, service-related global production arrangements and constant price estimates;

(e) Agreed that the Guide would be updated once the above further work has been completed and in light of the practical evidence collected by that time.

15. The CES Bureau will discuss the future work in this area.

Decision 6: International Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers (Agenda item 5b)

16. The Conference endorsed *the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers*, and thanked all countries and organizations that contributed to the establishment of the new Guidelines.

17. The Conference encouraged the joint UNECE, Eurostat, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Expert Group on Business Registers to address the proposed topics for future work.

18. The Conference welcomed the initiative of the United Nations Statistics Division in New York to seek endorsement of the Guidelines at the global level by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Decision 7: Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (Agenda item 5c)

19. The Conference endorsed the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*, and thanked all countries and organizations that contributed to this important achievement.

20. The Conference noted many countries' intentions to progress innovative approaches to collecting information on population and housing, and asked the CES Bureau to discuss future work in the area and prepare documents to meet the above mentioned countries' needs.

Decision 8: Statistical Framework for Measuring Quality of Employment (Agenda item 5d)

21. The Conference endorsed *the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework* and thanked all countries and organizations that contributed to the work.

22. The Conference supported the proposals for further work, including continuing to organize expert group meetings on measuring quality of employment. The Conference asked the CES Bureau to decide on the next steps.

Decision 9: Substantive discussion on labour mobility and globalization (Agenda item 6b)

23. The Conference endorsed the outcome of the in-depth review on labour mobility and globalization and supported establishing a Task Force on Measuring Labour Mobility and Globalization. Work should be undertaken in close cooperation with the International Labour Organization's Expert Group on this topic.

24. The following countries and organizations expressed interest in participating in the Task Force: Austria, Poland, Turkey, Eurostat, OECD and World Trade Organization.

25. Austria together with the UNECE Secretariat will draft terms of reference in consultation with the interested countries. The Conference asked the CES Bureau to decide on the next steps in October 2015.

Decision 10: Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians (Agenda item 7a)

26. The Conference adopted the report on the implementation of the 2014 UNECE Statistical Programme (ECE/CES/2015/14).

Decision 11: Programme planning documents for the UNECE Statistics subprogramme (Agenda item 7b)

27. The Conference adopted the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2015 (ECE/CES/2015/15) including the list of planned meetings, and the Programme of Work for 2016-2017 including the annexed Publication Programme (ECE/CES/2015/16).

Decision 12: Selection of topics for seminars at the CES 2016 plenary session (Agenda item 8)

28. Taking into account the results of the survey carried out among the CES members in May 2015 and the recommendation by the CES Bureau, the following topics were selected for discussion at the CES plenary session in 2016:

1. Strategic partnerships

Seminar organizer: Canada

Session organizers: Russian Federation, United States and Eurostat

Papers offered by: Australia, Finland, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden and United States

2. Geospatial information services based on official statistics

Organizers: Austria in collaboration with Mexico, Slovenia, Sweden and United States.

Papers offered by: Australia, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, United States and Eurostat.

3. How to implement the monitoring system for SDGs

Organization: The Conference asked the CES Bureau to consider the format of this discussion at its next meeting.

29. Countries and international organizations wishing to provide papers are requested to inform the UNECE Secretariat by the end of August 2015.

Decision 13: Election of the CES Bureau (Agenda item 9)

30. According to the rules governing the work of the Conference and based on the proposal put forward by Ms. Aija Zigure, the most senior Chief Statistician present at the Conference and previous Vice-Chair of the Conference, the Conference elected the following members to serve on the Bureau for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 terms of office:

Mr. W. Smith (Canada) as Chairperson;

and the following Vice-Chairpersons of the Bureau:

Mr. S. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia);

Mr. K. Pesendorfer (Austria);

Ms. M. Bruun (Finland);

Mr. E. Sojo Garza-Aldape (Mexico);

Ms. L. MacPherson (New Zealand);

Mr. B. Aydemir (Turkey);

Mr. J. Pullinger (United Kingdom).

Decision 14: Other business (Agenda item 10)

31. The CES 2016 plenary session will take place on 27-29 April 2016 in Paris, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy.

32. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating the main documents for the CES plenary session into the three official languages of UNECE (English, French and Russian), and the main documents of the following meetings to be held under the Conference: national accounts and globalization; business registers; consumer prices; quality of employment; human resources management and training; gender statistics and population and housing censuses. The main documents include the provisional agenda, the report, one main paper for each sub-item on the agenda, and in addition six main papers for each seminar held during the CES plenary session.

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