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Report of the sixty-third plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

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I. Introduction

A. Attendance

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its sixty-third plenary session in Geneva, from Monday 15 June until Wednesday 17 June 2015. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States and Uzbekistan.

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat); Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC); European Free Trade Association (EFTA); International Labour Organization (ILO); International Telecommunications Union (ITU); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT); International Monetary Fund (IMF); International Road Federation (IRF); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); OECD Paris 21; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO ROE); World Meteorological Organization (WMO); World Trade Organization (WTO); University of London and University of Pisa.

B. Agenda and procedure

3. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/88) was adopted.

C. Opening statements

4. Mr. W. Smith, Chairman of the Conference, chaired the CES plenary session. He opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

II. Matters arising from the 2015 session of Economic Commission for Europe and the 46th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

A. 66th Session of the Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/1

5. Ms. L. Bratanova, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) informed the Conference of the main outcomes of the 2015 April session of UNECE.

1. Action taken by the Conference

6. The Conference took note of the main outcomes of the 2015 session of UNECE.
7. 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.”
8. 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.

B. 46th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

9. Mr. S. Schweinfest, UNSD, informed the Conference about the outcomes of the 2015 session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). He emphasized the following points:
 - (a) The United Nations led process to set up the Post-2015 Development Agenda has increased the visibility and expectations towards official statistics. The link between the regional and global statistical work is ever more important in this context;
 - (b) United Nations have recently taken several high-level decisions on statistics: the General Assembly resolutions on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development, and the World Statistics Day, as well as the Economic and Social Council resolution on the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses;
 - (c) UNSC set up an Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and a High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Post-2015 Monitoring. Statisticians managed to

convince policy makers that the indicator work requires time, resources and commitment, and that it is important to build a strong statistical system for the SDG monitoring. The list of indicators for monitoring SDGs is planned to be adopted by UNSC in March 2016;

(d) The UNECE region is leading the work on modernization of statistical production. This work has now been brought to global attention as part of the transformative agenda for official statistics, and will be regularly reported at future UNSC sessions;

(e) The 2015 UNSC session was a turning point in communication and outreach. In the context of data revolution, a World Data Forum will be organized in 2016 to provide a platform for policy makers, private sector, academia and civil society to discuss topical issues with the statistical community.

1. Action taken by the Conference

10. The Conference took note of the main outcomes of the 2015 United Nations Statistical Commission session.

III. Response by official statistics to the Sustainable Development Goals

A. Introduction

11. The seminar was organized by Switzerland, France and Sweden. Mr. G.-S. Ulrich, Switzerland, chaired the seminar. In the opening remarks, he stressed that a dialogue between statisticians and policy makers is required for ensuring that SDGs are measurable. He also underlined the importance of a sound conceptual framework for selecting the indicators.

12. Mr. C. Sommaruga, member of the Swiss National Council and president of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council, delivered the keynote speech "Sustainable Development Goals – Challenging the evaluation of national and international policies". He emphasised the crucial importance of high quality statistics for public policy making. Statisticians need to be involved in the selection of indicators to ensure that good quality data can be obtained. International comparability is very important to be able to adequately assess countries' performance.

B. Session 1: Monitoring SDGs at national level

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/19-24, 24/Add.1, 31-32, 44

13. The session was organized by Mr. P. Cuneo, France. It was based on papers by Denmark, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, United Kingdom and UNECE.

14. The session discussed the role of national statistical offices in monitoring SDGs. The papers submitted to the session described national experiences in measuring sustainable development and provided lessons learned from the process.

15. The Session Organizer noted that the measurement of SDGs will present a huge challenge for all statistical offices. In addition to collecting data and checking their quality, the role of national statistical offices as coordinators of the national statistical systems should be strengthened. Political support and dialogue with policy makers and other stakeholders is required. On the one hand, this allows to understand their needs. On the other hand, it should be used as an opportunity to advocate for the importance of good

quality official statistics, and for adequate financial resources needed to produce the data. Official statisticians can provide technical input to the political process of establishing SDGs and targets in terms of advice on quality and availability of data. The *CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development* are a good basis for an SDG measurement system, and should be used as a key reference.

16. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Official statisticians should work with policy makers but the SDGs measurement process should not become political. National statistical offices should maintain independence and objectivity. At the same time, the selection of indicators, including headline indicators, should not imply prioritisation of targets which are set up by the policy process;

(b) Cooperation with civil society, academia and private sector is needed to be able to provide the required data for monitoring of SDGs. Working together with researchers will help to analyse the interlinkages between different targets and make a synthesis of developments in different areas. It may also provide additional value to statistics;

(c) Producing good indicators requires resources. Reducing budgets of statistical offices has an impact on the amount and quality of data that can be produced;

(d) Statistical capacity building is important in all countries, including for stakeholders and different data producers within countries.

(e) The framework presented in the *CES Recommendations on measuring sustainable development* has to be adjusted to SDGs and targets. The conceptual framework can provide a coherent structure to measuring SDGs. In addition to current human well-being, it incorporates the future-oriented and transboundary aspects of sustainable development. The framework can help to coordinate the monitoring of SDGs at national, regional and global levels, to identify the links between the various targets and a set of headline indicators for SDGs;

(f) Communication of the indicators is very important. The indicator set should not be too big to ensure efficient and effective communication.

17. The Conference discussed the draft text of the ‘Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals’. The aim of the Declaration is to advocate for the central coordinating role of NSOs in national measurement and monitoring of SDGs. An electronic consultation of the draft text with all CES members was carried out prior to the CES plenary session. The CES members supported the Declaration and provided comments and suggestions for improving the text.

C. Session 2: Cooperation in monitoring SDGs at regional and global level

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/ 33-36

18. The session was organized by Ms. V. Palm, Sweden. It was based on papers by Eurostat, OECD, OHCHR, and UNSD.

19. The session focused on the involvement of the international organizations in defining the indicators and future monitoring of SDGs. The papers outlined what different international organizations can offer for the SDGs monitoring process. The session also discussed the possible next steps at international level towards setting up the monitoring system of SDGs in the UNECE region. It is important to agree and communicate who does what and when for measuring SDGs.

20. The Session Organizer noted that official statistics community has a lot to offer in monitoring SDGs: they can produce a substantial part of the indicators on SDGs, provide support in the interpretation of data, identification of trends and in capacity building, develop broader measures of progress for the long term analysis of sustainability, and provide advice on indicators that can be produced outside official statistics. The Session Organizer underlined the need to develop internationally harmonised indicators to fill data gaps. This will require closer communication between the statistical community and other data providers, such as researchers and international organizations.

21. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Monitoring SDGs at the global, regional and national level should be well coordinated;

(b) The role of international organizations in the monitoring and reporting on SDGs needs to be discussed and clarified;

(c) It will be a challenge to identify indicators that are internationally comparable while being relevant for the situation in individual countries. The NSOs at various stages of development should be able to produce these indicators;

(d) Existing conceptual frameworks should be used as much as possible. It would be useful to make an inventory of the existing frameworks and sets of indicators. This would also facilitate identifying gaps;

(e) More public buy-in to the SDGs and targets is needed, in particular in developed countries. The indicators should be relevant both for developed and developing countries;

(f) Monitoring of SDGs will increase the demand for disaggregated data to ensure adequate coverage of vulnerable groups. This requires the use of new data sources and wider use of administrative data, as well as modernization of statistical production and services. At the same time, providing more disaggregated data requires more resources, and addressing the related methodological, confidentiality and privacy issues. It can also increase the reporting burden on respondents;

(g) The human rights community has valuable experience on developing statistics on equality and non-discrimination in collaboration with official statistics;

(h) NSOs should take the lead in data revolution to maintain their leadership in statistics;

(i) UNECE can facilitate the required inter-disciplinary and interagency cooperation in monitoring SDGs. The Conference could provide a platform for experimenting with new data sources to improve usefulness and timeliness of data.

D. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work

Documentation: ECE/CES/89/Add.1

1. Action taken by the Conference

22. The Conference adopted the 'Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals' (ECE/CES/89/Add.1) and encouraged all national statistical offices and international organizations to use the Declaration for promoting the use of official statistics for monitoring of SDGs.

23. The Conference agreed on the follow-up actions as listed below:

(a) In conjunction with the mandate given to the UNSC, its Secretariat, UNSD, the role established for the Inter-Agency and Expert Group 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 monitoring SDGs 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 for measuring sustainable development* to the SDGs and the related targets (set up a small task force for this purpose).

24. 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.

25. 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.

IV. Modernization of statistical production and services and managing for efficiency

A. Introduction

26. The seminar was organized by Ireland and Italy in collaboration with Croatia, Finland, Hungary, and Slovenia. Mr. P. Dalton, Ireland, and Mr. G. Alleva, Italy, co-chaired the seminar. In the opening remarks, Mr. Dalton outlined the challenges of modernization and noted that modernization requires strong leadership and openness to change at all levels within statistical organizations.

27. Mr. D. Pedreschi of the University of Pisa gave a keynote address highlighting the challenges and opportunities of using new data sources. He gave examples of innovative uses of Big Data for analytical purposes, and emphasized the potential benefits of using the data generated by people's daily activities, such as mobility, consumption, health, etc. for analyzing the behavior of population groups.

B. Report of the High-level Group for Modernization of Statistical Production and Services

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/12, 43

28. Mr. P. Dalton, the Chair of the High-level Group (HLG) for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services, presented the annual report of the Group including its main achievements and forthcoming priorities. He emphasized the importance of

international collaboration. A growing number of people and organizations are getting involved in HLG projects and activities. Mr. Dalton presented ideas to formalize this collaboration through the creation of a “Statistical Modernization Community”, which would be open to all statistical organizations that are willing to collaborate on modernization activities. He commended the work of the HLG modernization committees which are comprised of, in his words “incredibly innovative people doing incredible things”.

29. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- (a) There is increasing competition to official statistics from the media and other private sector data producers;
- (b) It is important to reach a common understanding on how to communicate the value of official statistics;
- (c) Integrating data from different sources, including survey and administrative data, is a key element of the data revolution;
- (d) The work on a Modernization Maturity Model should be coordinated with the related initiatives in the European Statistical System;
- (e) The two key challenges in modernizing official statistics are:
 - (i) finding the right organizational structures to develop dynamic capabilities, and
 - (ii) effective communication of modernization activities.

C. Session 1: Statistical process modernization

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/26-28, 30, 37-39

30. The session was organized by Ms. M. Bruun, Finland and Ms. G. Vukovich, Hungary. It was based on papers by Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey and United States.

31. The session discussed conceptual models and practical implementation examples of modernization of statistical production. It focused on ways to standardize statistical processes and industrialize the production process to enhance product quality and cost efficiency. The session considered how to successfully manage change and drive the process, and which technologies and skills are important for enabling modernization.

32. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- (a) Many national statistical organizations are moving towards a process-based organizational structure;
- (b) Censuses provide an opportunity to develop methods and tools that can be rolled out to other areas of statistical production;
- (c) More effective mechanisms are needed to share information on modernization activities;
- (d) There are several challenges related to using new data sources: coverage, quality and getting access. A multi-national approach is necessary for multi-national sources;
- (e) Several organizations have successfully applied the Lean Six Sigma techniques to improve efficiency;

(f) It is important to address human resource, workforce planning and organizational culture issues within modernization programmes.

33. The session organizers concluded that modernization affects inputs, processes and outputs. Work is needed in all four key areas: culture, collaboration, change and communication.

D. Session 2: Product and service innovation

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/25, 29, 41-42

34. The session was organized by Mr. M. Kristof, Croatia and Ms. G. Ruzic, Slovenia. It was based on papers by Australia, the Netherlands, Poland, and Eurostat.

35. The session focused on product and service innovation to respond to new demands, including requirements to deliver more data, quicker and cheaper. Examples of innovative data-based services and initiatives to increase the value of official statistics were discussed. Participants shared their views on ways to improve access, usability and re-use of data to increase the value and quality of statistics.

36. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Rationalising statistical outputs is challenging, particularly cancelling certain products;

(b) Changing from a product-oriented to a customer-oriented strategy can require changes in the organizational culture;

(c) Presenting effective business cases can help to secure government funding for modernization initiatives;

(d) It is important to exploit the geo-spatial dimension of data;

(e) It is necessary to actively engage with different user groups;

(f) The principles of impartiality and objectivity must be observed when statistical organizations provide commentary to the released data;

(g) There is value in training staff to interact effectively with the media, including the use of secondments to media partners.

37. The session organizers concluded that there are many different ways to increase access to and re-usability of data. Statistical organizations are moving towards more dynamic dissemination and greater service orientation, including machine to machine transfers. It will be necessary to enhance skills and knowledge of staff in these areas, including through the exchange of experience.

E. Session 3: Panel discussion

38. The panel discussion was chaired by Mr. G. Alleva, Italy. The panelists were Mr. W. Smith, Canada, Ms. T. Dickinson, New Zealand, Mr. E. Sojo, Mexico, and Mr. A. Surinov, Russian Federation. The panel discussed the most important benefits and critical aspects in modernisation initiatives, and organisational approaches to modernisation.

F. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work

39. Mr. Alleva concluded the seminar by identifying common threads from the discussions in the different sessions:

- (a) Every organization faces growing user demands, emergence of new data sources, and budget constraints;
- (b) There is a general movement from subject-matter “stovepipes” to process-based organizations, with common production environments and generalized solutions;
- (c) There is a need to develop new skills and capabilities, including in the areas of strategic leadership and enterprise architecture, and to create a culture of continuous improvement, agility and change;
- (d) It is necessary to adapt statistical products to meet evolving user needs. This includes more dynamic dissemination, a service-oriented attitude, and options for machine to machine communication.

1. Action taken by the Conference

40. The Conference approved the annual report of the High-Level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics, including the outcomes of HLG activities in 2014, and work in progress.

41. The Conference supported the formalization of a Statistical Modernization Community.

42. 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.

43. 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 on priorities for future activities. The key conclusions were:

- (a) The continued importance of sharing experience and international collaboration activities was recognised. The 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) The challenge of cultural change should not be underestimated 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 in 2016 should address this;
- (f) There is a need for consistent communication by statistical organizations both within the national organizations and with key stakeholders.

V. Reports, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the umbrella of the Conference

A. Guide to Measuring Global Production

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/2, Add.1

44. The Conference reviewed the *Guide to Measuring Global Production*, prepared by the Task Force on Global Production, chaired by Ireland. Prior to the CES plenary session, the secretariat conducted an electronic consultation of the Guide with the CES members. The comments by countries and organizations showed broad support to the Guide.

45. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) A number of important conceptual issues, such as factoryless goods production and services related global production arrangements, are left for the research agenda. While the work in these areas should continue, the Guide already contains a lot of practical guidance, which is highly appreciated by countries;

(b) The Guide provides clearly formulated recommendations, which will enhance the international harmonization of statistics. At the same time the implementation of the Guide will involve significant resources due to the existing data gaps. The international cooperation and sharing of experience in data collection should continue and be strengthened;

(c) International trade in services statistics (ITSS) and statistics on foreign direct investment (FDI) will have to play a more important role in the context of globalisation. In the past these statistics were seen mainly as part of the balance of payments, which is hindering the development of their full potential. In the future, ITSS and FDI have to assume a much wider role putting more focus on their usefulness in the analysis of Global Value Chains;

(d) National accounts and trade statistics should form an integrated accounting system and not be seen as silos. This work will feed into the development of extended supply and use tables, which are seen as an important tool to further analyse globalization;

(e) The Guide provides good basis for further research. Any future work on the identified priority items will be supported and included in the agenda of the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (BOPCOM).

1. Action taken by the Conference

46. 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.

47. The Conference asked the Bureau to discuss the future work in this area.

B. International Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/3, Add.1

48. The Conference reviewed the *International Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* prepared by the Task Force on International Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers, chaired by Austria. The Guidelines aim to help countries by providing practical guidance and recommendations on the establishment and maintenance of statistical business registers. An electronic consultation of the Guidelines was carried out prior to the CES plenary session. All responding countries and organizations supported the endorsement of the Guidelines.

49. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Guidelines were found comprehensive and helpful in supporting countries to maintain and improve their statistical business registers;

(b) It was noted that the Guidelines will be important for other regions. The Guidelines will be presented to a meeting of a working group on business registers in Latin America in December. A possibility to translate the Guidelines into Spanish will be considered;

(c) One area for future work is elaborating best practices for coordination with other organizations that provide data for business registers, such as Central Banks.

1. Action taken by the Conference

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

51. The Conference encouraged the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group on Business Registers to address the proposed topics for future work.

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

C. Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/6, Add.1

53. The Conference reviewed the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*, prepared by the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, chaired by Canada, and nine Task Forces. Prior to the CES plenary session, the secretariat conducted an electronic consultation of the Recommendations with the CES members. The comments by countries and organizations showed broad support to the Recommendations.

54. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Many countries are moving away from the traditional census and are adopting alternative methods, such as internet response and the use of multiple data sources, including administrative registers;

(b) Population censuses are increasingly becoming part of integrated national statistical systems aimed at producing population data annually. Future recommendations will need to reflect these changes, putting more emphasis on the integration of different data sources;

(c) Work at the international level in view of the 2020 census round should provide countries with guidance on census quality management, quality assessment of administrative sources, internet response option, geographic information system (GIS) technology and other information technology solutions.

1. Action taken by the Conference

55. 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.

56. The Conference noted countries' needs for further work on population and housing censuses, and asked the CES Bureau to discuss the future work in this area.

D. Statistical Framework for Measuring Quality of Employment

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/4, Add.1-2

57. The Conference reviewed the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment, A Statistical Framework* prepared by the Expert Group on Measuring Quality of Employment, chaired by Germany. Prior to the CES plenary session, the secretariat conducted an electronic consultation of the Handbook with the CES members. All responding countries and organizations supported the endorsement of the Handbook.

58. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The importance of coherence with other existing frameworks such as those of Eurostat, ILO and OECD was emphasized. The suggested indicators on quality of employment could be possibly used for measuring SDGs;

(b) The Handbook was updated to reflect the resolution of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, which makes the Handbook applicable at the global level;

(c) The need for further work to follow-up on practical experiences with using the Handbook and compiling the indicators was highlighted.

1. Action taken by the Conference

59. The Conference endorsed the *Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment* and thanked all countries and organizations who contributed to the work of the Expert Group.

60. 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.

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

A. Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/7, 8, Add.1, 9, Add.1, 10, Add.1

61. The CES plenary session was informed about the outcomes of the recent in-depth reviews on population projections; measuring extreme events and disasters; and the process-oriented approach to statistical production. The Bureau carried out the in-depth reviews of the first two topics in October 2014 and the third topic in February 2015. The outcomes of the in-depth reviews were sent for electronic consultation to the CES members. All responding countries and international organizations supported the outcomes of the reviews.

62. The following proposals were made in the discussion:

(a) Population projections: After the completion of the current work of the Task Force on Population Projections, CES could consider extending the group's mandate to deal with methodologies and other aspects related to population projections;

(b) Measuring extreme events and disasters: National statistical offices often do not have a clear role in measuring extreme events and disasters. The work is, therefore, important and should be well coordinated across international organizations and countries where the responsible offices may vary depending on national arrangements;

(c) Process-oriented approach to statistical production: Moving towards process orientation is a complex undertaking due to many cultural and management issues, resistance to change and lack of resources. The seminar planned to be organized in 2016 by HLG and Turkey would be valuable for optimizing the use of resources by developing common tools for process oriented work across national statistical offices.

1. Action taken by the Conference

63. 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 a 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 national agencies responsible for disaster management can support disaster management and risk reduction;

(c) The HLG and Turkey will jointly organize a High-Level Seminar on Process-Oriented Approach to Statistical Production.

64. The Conference commended the countries who prepared the in-depth review papers which were of high quality, and the 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 their further work.

B. Substantive discussion on labour mobility and globalisation

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/7, 11, Add.1

65. The Conference discussed the measurement of labour mobility and globalisation based on the findings of an in-depth review of this topic by the CES Bureau in February 2015, and an electronic consultation among CES members prior to the CES plenary session. The aim of the discussion was to seek further input from all CES members for the follow-up work.

66. The following points were highlighted in the discussion:

(a) The measurement of labour mobility requires coordination across a number of statistical domains where the related concepts need to be clarified and harmonised internationally;

(b) It is necessary to explore the use of new national and international data sources and to improve their accessibility;

(c) It is important that the work of a new CES Task Force complements and does not duplicate the work of the ILO Working Group on Labour Migration.

1. Action taken by the Conference

67. 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.

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

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

VII. Programme of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme

A. Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/5, 14, 40

70. The Conference welcomed the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division in implementing the Statistical Programme for 2014.

71. The Conference was informed of the follow-up to the 2014 CES seminar on "What is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate that value?", and on the progress of work on measuring human capital.

72. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The UNECE work on statistical communication and the value of official statistics is of high importance to countries. Official statisticians are facing huge challenges, including due to the Data Revolution, the emerging Big Data sources and SDGs. It is essential to prepare a convincing message to the stakeholders and decision makers in support of the necessary investment in official statistics;

(b) Sharing good practices in this area is important. Particular attention should be paid to developing guidance on the use of social media in promoting the value of official statistics, and developing an internationally comparable set of indicators on the value of official statistics.

73. The Conference took note of 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.

1. Action taken by the Conference

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

B. Programme planning documents for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/15, 16

75. The Conference reviewed the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2015 and the programme planning documents of the Statistics subprogramme prepared in the context of the United Nations secretariat's biennial planning and reporting cycle. The documents were adopted by the CES Bureau at its meetings in October 2014 and February 2015. The UNECE Statistical Programme for 2015 is in line with the biennial Programme of Work for 2014-15 that the Conference adopted in 2013 and the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) approved in June 2014. The Programme of Work for 2016-2017 will be subsequently submitted to the UNECE EXCOM for approval.

1. Action taken by the Conference

76. 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).

VIII. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2016 Conference of European Statisticians plenary session

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/17, Add.1

77. 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:

A. Strategic partnerships

78. Canada volunteered to organise the seminar.

79. The following countries and organizations expressed interest to contribute to the organization of the seminar: Russian Federation, United States and Eurostat.

80. Papers were offered by Australia, Finland, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden and United States.

B. Geospatial information services based on official statistics

81. Austria volunteered to organise the seminar.
82. The following countries expressed interest to contribute to the organization of the seminar: Mexico, Slovenia, Sweden and United States.
83. Papers were offered by Australia, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, United States and Eurostat.

C. How to implement the monitoring system for SDGs

1. Action taken by the Conference

84. The Conference asked the CES Bureau to consider the format and duration of each of the seminars, and in particular how to organize the discussion on the 3rd topic "How to implement the monitoring system for SDGs".

IX. Election of the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau

Documentation: ECE/CES/2015/18

85. According to the rules governing the work of the Conference and based on the proposal put forward by Ms. A. 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).

X. Other Business

86. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating into the three official languages of UNECE (English, French and Russian) the main documents for the CES plenary session and the main documents of the following expert 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.

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