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**Economic Commission for Europe****Conference of European Statisticians****67<sup>th</sup> plenary session**

Paris, 26-28 June 2019

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau****Rules and procedures governing the work of the Conference  
of European Statisticians and its Bureau****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

At the February 2019 meeting, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) reviewed and agreed on some minimal adjustments of the *Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau* (ECE/CES/2007/8) and the related *Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Teams of Specialists within CES* and *Procedure for adopting products and recommendations by CES*. The aim of the adjustment is to align these documents with the terms of reference and rules of procedure of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), of which CES is a subsidiary body, and with recent developments in the work of the Conference.

The UNECE terms of reference and rules of procedure were updated in 2009 following the establishment of a UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM). The developments in the work of the Conference include the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the work of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics, requiring introducing provisions for adopting new types of products by the Conference, such as models and frameworks.

The document presents the *Rules and procedures governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau*, *Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Teams of Specialists within CES* and *Procedure for adopting products and recommendations by CES*. The changes are kept minimal to bring the text in line with the relevant UNECE documents and allow for improving clarity and making a few editorial corrections. The changes are presented in detail in document ECE/CES/2019/2/Add.1.

The document ECE/CES/2019/2 is presented to the CES 2019 June plenary session for approval.



# **I. Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau**

## **A. Structure and relations of the Conference**

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Its Rules are in line with the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Commission (E/ECE/778/Rev.5).

### **1. Objectives**

2. The objectives of the Conference are:

(a) To improve national statistics and their international comparability with regard to the recommendations of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, the Specialised Agencies and other appropriate bodies as necessary, and in response to global initiatives to measure progress towards internationally agreed development goals;

(b) To promote close coordination of the statistical activities in the UNECE region of international organizations so as to achieve greater uniformity in concepts and definitions and to reduce to a minimum the burdens on national statistical offices;

(c) To respond to any emerging need for international statistical cooperation both within the UNECE region and between the UNECE region and other regions;

(d) To discuss and adopt statistical standards, models and frameworks in the UNECE region.

### **2. Membership**

3. The Head of the statistical service of any member country of the United Nations that participates regularly in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe may be a member of the Conference.

### **3. Participation in the work of the Conference by statisticians from International Agencies**

4. The Heads of statistical services of the international agencies that participate regularly in the work of the Conference shall be invited.

### **4. Activities**

5. The Conference shall provide a forum for work on all statistical matters that are of interest to its members. In particular, it may:

(a) Decide on the collection and dissemination of internationally comparable statistics of UNECE member countries that are required by policy makers, enterprises, researchers and the general public in the UNECE region;

(b) Promote the development of statistical methodological guidelines and standards (concepts, definitions, classifications) as required for purposes of international comparability of statistics in the region);

(c) Assist in the improvement of the statistical infrastructure of countries both within and outside the UNECE region as required;

(d) Coordinate international statistical cooperation and the statistical work programme of the UNECE;

(e) Make the results of its work available to national statistical offices, international organizations, enterprises or any other user;

(f) Arrange for any study that may be required to further its objectives.

**5. Officers**

6. The Conference elects a Bureau and a Chairman according to rules laid down by the Conference.

**6. Subsidiary bodies**

7. The Conference may propose to the Economic Commission of Europe the establishment or discontinuation of subsidiary bodies, such as Working Parties or Teams of Specialists (Steering Groups and Task Forces).

**7. Secretariat**

8. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe places at the disposal of the Conference the staff and facilities necessary to assist it in the accomplishment of its objectives and work programmes.

**8. Meetings of the Conference**

9. Meetings of the Conference shall take place regularly once a year, preferably in June, at a time fixed by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat. Additional meetings may be convened by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat.

**B. Role and functioning of the Bureau of the Conference****1. Role of the Bureau**

10. The Bureau acts as a steering body of the Conference.

**2. Functioning of the Bureau**

11. The following rules shall apply to the functioning of the Bureau:

(a) Meetings of the Bureau will normally be held in February and October of each year. The need for the availability of all secretariat experts for the meetings, suggest that one meeting per year should preferably be held in Geneva;

(b) Additional Bureau meetings may be convened in conjunction with the annual plenary session of the Conference;

(c) Further meetings of the Bureau could be determined by the Bureau members or the Chairman of the Conference as the need arises;

(d) The documentation necessary for the Bureau meetings would be determined by the Bureau members in each case. As a rule, the secretariat should make all documentation available via e-mail at least two weeks prior of the meeting;

(e) As a rule, announcements for Bureau meetings are issued by the secretariat not less than six weeks in advance;

(f) For purposes of consultation with the Bureau, the secretariat may take initiatives on matters affecting the implementation of the work programme of the Conference, or in relation to other issues that are of interest to the Conference and the Bureau.

**3. Composition of the Bureau**

12. The following rules shall apply to the composition of the Bureau:

(a) Any member of the Conference is eligible for membership in the Bureau of the Conference. The members of the Bureau undertake to devote the time necessary to an adequate discharge of their duties;

(b) The Bureau is composed of up to 8 members, of whom 6 members should be from the UNECE member countries and the remaining one or two places be reserved for possible candidates from countries in other regions, to ensure reach out, transfer of knowledge and collaboration with other regions;

(c) If a Bureau member leaves the Bureau, a new member may be co-opted until the time of the next plenary session, when a new Bureau member is elected.

#### **4. Permanent observers and other participants**

13. The following rules shall apply to permanent observers and other participants of the Bureau meetings:

(a) Standing invitations are extended to the Director-General of Eurostat, the Chief Statistician of OECD, the Chairman of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy, the Chairman of the Interstate Statistical Committee of CIS, the Director of the IMF Statistics Department and the Director of the Development Data Group of the World Bank. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division is invited to participate in Bureau meetings as a representative of the United Nations Secretariat;

(b) The Bureau may invite to the meetings of the Bureau anyone who may facilitate its work.

#### **5. Election of the Bureau**

14. The following rules shall apply to the election of the Bureau:

(a) The election of the Bureau by the Conference is carried out on the basis of a proposal by the most senior previous Chairman of the Conference present at the plenary session concerned. The proposal should be prepared in such a way that it maximizes the chances of being adopted by consensus;

(b) If no previous Chairman of the Conference is present at the plenary session or in exceptional cases, the Bureau proposes the designation of a member of the Conference at the beginning of the plenary session, who will assume the task of preparing the proposal for the composition of the Bureau;

(c) The Conference elects its Bureau for a period of two years;

(d) Bureau members can be elected to four successive Bureaus. Any previous Bureau member can be re-elected to the Bureau after an interruption of at least two years.

#### **6. Election of the Chairman of the Conference**

15. The following rules shall apply to the election of the Chairman of the Conference:

(a) The Chairman of the Conference is elected by the Conference from among the members of the Bureau. The term of office is two years. The election is carried out on the basis of a proposal by the designated member of the Conference who is responsible for the proposal of the Bureau composition.

(b) If the post of Chairman of the Conference falls vacant, the Bureau designates an Acting Chairman from among the Bureau members until the time of the next plenary session, when a new Chairman is elected by the Conference.

(c) A Chairman of the Conference may be re-elected once. Any previous Chairman may be re-elected Chairman after an interruption of at least two years.

## **II. Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of the Teams of Specialists within CES**

16. The following guidelines are based on those determined by the Economic Commission for Europe in April 2010 and have been adapted for the purposes of Conference of European Statisticians (CES).

## A. Status and characteristics

17. A Team of Specialists<sup>1</sup> is an expert body that is established through a procedure set by CES and supervised either directly by CES or by its Bureau. Its main characteristics are as follows:

- (a) It addresses a specific area of activities under the broader theme covered by the parent body;
- (b) Its central function may be of an advisory or operational nature, or a combination of the two, depending on the tasks assigned by the Conference and/or its Bureau;
- (c) A set period of operation is normally defined but this can be extended after careful evaluation, by the Bureau, of the work achieved and the need to perform additional tasks;
- (d) Its meetings do not require full interpretation and translation, unlike the meetings of the formal ECE intergovernmental bodies.

## B. Membership and officers

18. Teams of Specialists are comprised of governmental experts and they can also include eminent specialists or representatives of international organizations, NGOs and the private sector, in compliance with the UN rules and practices in this respect. The procedure of nomination is established by the Conference and/or its Bureau. To the extent possible, consideration should be given to ensuring an appropriate geographical balance in the representation of these teams.

19. A Team of Specialists appoints its officers: a Chairperson and, if deemed necessary, one or two Vice-Chairpersons.

## C. Methods of work

20. CES or the Bureau have to determine the scope of issues and the achievements expected of the Team of Specialists, as well as to decide on the membership of the team. The proposed establishment of a team of specialists should be then submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

21. At its first meeting, the Team of Specialists adopts its work plan for its operational period, clearly defining its objectives and activities and making a time schedule for their implementation; the activities can include: undertaking studies; organising seminars and training workshops; drafting recommendations, guidelines, models and frameworks; collecting data; and providing information and training kits etc.

22. The resources required for implementing the work plan have also to be identified; depending on the amount of regular budget resources that can be devoted to servicing the Team of Specialists and the magnitude of the work to be done, the Team of Specialists may raise funds and/or solicit in-kind contributions in support of its activities, in compliance with the relevant UN rules and regulations.

23. The Team of Specialists reports to the Bureau, and where relevant to the Conference.

24. At the end of the operational period, the team submits a full report on its accomplishments to the parent body in order to share the achievements and conclusions of its work with the wider UNECE membership.

25. On the basis of this report, CES or the Bureau makes an evaluation and, if there is a need for extension, determines whether the team should be recommended for such an extension in order to continue its work and/or undertake supplementary activities. The

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<sup>1</sup> Teams of Specialists is a generic term including “advisory groups”, “ad hoc groups”, “steering groups”, “task forces”, etc.

recommendation for discontinuation or extension should then be submitted to the Executive Committee for final approval.

26. In the case where the duration of the team is extended, the membership should be reviewed by the parent body and, at the end of the new period of extension, a report on its achievements should also be submitted by the team of specialists to the parent body.

27. Should the parent body feel that a particular team of specialists has a standing character by nature of its continuing activity, it can on an exceptional basis propose to the Executive Committee to exempt that team of specialists from the sunset clause, giving appropriate justification. In this case, the mandate and standing nature of the concerned team of specialists should be reviewed every five years.

#### **D. The secretariat**

28. The UNECE secretariat, with the support of the members of the Team of Specialists, has the responsibility for:

(a) Handling official contacts, including correspondence, with governmental and nongovernmental experts as well as experts from international agencies involved;

(b) Assisting in the scheduling of meetings and other activities for adoption by the group;

(c) Cooperating with the members of the team in organising missions, workshops, seminars and training in member countries;

(d) In cooperation with the Chairperson of the team, preparing the report on the team's accomplishments at the end of the operational period and of any new period of extension.

#### **E. Role of the members of the Team of Specialists**

29. Members of the Team of Specialists, with the support of the secretariat as resources permit, undertake the substantive work, in particular the preparation of substantive documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the annual session of the parent body.

#### **F. Defining different types of Teams of Specialists**

30. Teams of Specialists that are created to fulfil particular objectives and their form and scope are determined by the terms of reference created for them. Taking into account the semantic analysis of the common types of Teams of Specialists, the following definitions are recommended:

(a) **Steering Group:** a committee set up to determine the order of business for another body, to set priorities or to manage the general course of an operation. It has a broad scope which incorporates the guiding of a set of meetings or general body of work rather than a focus on an individual task. Also, the CES Bureau has agreed that Steering Groups should advise the Bureau on work to be undertaken with specific objectives;

(b) **Organising Committee:** a body of persons appointed for a specific function by, and usually out of, a larger body, commonly for carrying out the preparatory work for a particular meeting (e.g. the seminar sessions of the Conference have been prepared by organising committees composed of several NSOs);

(c) **Task Force:** a group of experts in regular contact with each other, producing work or determining outcomes related to specific issues or problems. These groups then typically report their findings to a higher body, usually in a specific time-scale determined by that body.

31. The above recommendations should not necessarily predetermine the design of an organizational grouping. Therefore, where necessary, the guidelines suggested in this paper for creating organizational groups should be implemented with a degree of flexibility - creating a balance between clarity and effectiveness.

### **III. Procedure for developing products and recommendations**

#### **A. Background**

32. According to the *Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau*, one of the objectives of the Conference is “to discuss and adopt statistical standards, models and frameworks in the UNECE region”.

33. The present document outlines the different types of products that can be prepared under the umbrella of CES and the modalities for their development and adoption.

#### **B. Types of products and recommendations that are developed under the umbrella of the Conference**

34. There are basically two types of documents that can be developed under the auspices of the Conference.

##### **1. Type A: Principles, classifications, standards, manuals, handbooks, recommendations, guidelines, models and frameworks**

35. These products aim at standardizing processes, methods, etc. to ensure comparability among countries. Since they are developed in the UN framework, their implementation is not mandatory. However, adhering to the methods and practices described in these documents is an indication of professionalism and a guarantee to achieve better quality of output. Their aim is to help countries in implementing the agreed principles, classifications, standards, manuals, handbooks, recommendations, guidelines, and frameworks. The documents need to be agreed upon by the experts working in the area and consulted with as wide an audience as possible.

36. These standard documents should be adopted/endorsed by the Conference on the recommendation of the Bureau. The Bureau will consider in advance each product that will be presented to the Conference for endorsement.

##### **2. Type B: Best practices, surveys of countries’ practices, glossaries, etc.**

37. These products are supporting materials. Their purpose is to help countries in sharing experience and in implementing the various standards and recommendations. The aim is to identify what can be considered a good (or best) practice and to widely disseminate the information on that practice.

38. These kinds of documents should be endorsed by the relevant Teams of Specialists (Task Forces, Steering Committees and Working Groups) that have developed them. They can be published and disseminated under the responsibility of the secretariat.

#### **C. Procedure for developing products and recommendations**

39. For documents of type A and type B:

(a) The work to develop either of the above-mentioned two types of documents can be initiated by the Conference, its Bureau, or based on a recommendation of an expert meeting or a team of specialists.

(b) The development of the document should be based on Terms of Reference;

(c) The drafts are to be prepared by a team of specialists (usually a Task Force) or by the UNECE secretariat in cooperation with experts from countries and international organizations. The drafts should be consulted with the experts working in the area as widely as possible. This can be done through electronic consultation or/and at expert group meetings;

(d) Progress reports on the work should be submitted regularly to the Bureau or to the Conference. Depending on the nature of the document, the Bureau may decide that the document should not be made public before the Bureau approves the final draft;

40. For documents of type A only:

(a) The Bureau should discuss the final drafts before they are submitted to the Conference for adoption/endorsement;

(b) The final draft should be circulated to the countries well in advance of the plenary session that will adopt the product to allow enough time for a broad consultation;

(c) The adoption of the document by the Conference will be reflected in the report;

(d) Documents adopted by the Conference can be attributed to CES (e.g. CES guidelines, CES recommendations, etc.).

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