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

Contents

I.	Introduction	3
	A. Attendance	3
	B. Opening and adoption of the agenda	3
II.	New data sources – accessibility and use	3
	A. Accessing new data sources	3
	B. Skills needed to use new data sources	4
III.	Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau	6
IV.	Reports, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the umbrella of the Conference .	6
	A. Measuring hazardous events and disasters	6
	B. Measuring older populations in institutions	6
	C. Leading, composite and sentiment indicators	7
	D. Satellite account for education and training	7
	E. Strategic communications framework	7
	F. Strategic partnerships	8
V.	Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals	8
	A. Road Map on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals	8
	B. Regional platform on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals	9
	C. Rotation of members of IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB from UNECE region	9
VI.	Emerging role of national statistical offices as offices for statistics and data	10
	A. Emerging data system opportunities and issues	10
	B. Approaches to data system stewardship	10



VII. Work of the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics	12
A. Annual report	12
B. New versions of General Statistical Business Process Model and Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations	12
VIII. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2020 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians.....	12
A. Seminar 1: Implementing the role of NSOs in an era of expanded possibilities.....	13
B. Seminar 2: Impacts of globalisation and digitalization on the future of economic statistics .	13
IX. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region	13
A. Outcomes of the recent in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians.....	13
B. Use of satellite image and Earth observation data in official statistics	14
X. Matters arising from the 68th session of Economic Commission for Europe and the 50th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission	14
XI. Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	15
A. Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists	15
B. Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.....	15
C. Priorities for capacity development in South-East Europe and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia	15
XII. Election of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians	16
XIII. Other business	16

I. Introduction

A. Attendance

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its sixty-seventh plenary session in Paris, from 26 to 28 June 2019. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the Eurasian Economic Commission, European Free Trade Association (EFTA), European Commission (Eurostat), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Road Federation (IRF), Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.

3. University of Maryland, University of Mannheim and Dataprovider.com were also represented.

B. Opening and adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/CES/96

4. Ms. M. Bruun, the Chair of CES, chaired the plenary session. She opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/96) was adopted. Mr. John Pullinger, Vice-Chair of CES, chaired agenda items 4 (c) – (f) and 7 – 14.

II. New data sources – accessibility and use

5. Switzerland and United States organized the seminar. Mr. B. Moyer (United States) chaired the seminar.

A. Accessing new data sources

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/20, 30-34, 39-41, 43

6. This session was organized by Switzerland and was chaired by Mr. B. Loison and Mr. I. Lugano. The discussion was based on papers from Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Mexico, Norway, Republic of Korea, Eurostat, OECD, UNCTAD and UNSD. The session focused on success stories and challenges faced by NSOs in obtaining data from alternative sources, with special emphasis on legal obstacles and partnerships.

7. Prof. Frauke Kreuter (University of Maryland and University of Mannheim) gave a keynote presentation. She stressed that use of alternative sources requires different type of work and skills than traditional sources, but it does not reduce the costs and amount of work. Both technical and ethical questions should be taken into account. Deep expertise in the subject area and good knowledge about the data generating process is required to interpret the data and assess its quality. Formulating well the research question and focusing on who

will be using the results can help to identify the right data sources and design the right product.

8. Mr. Loison presented the issues identified in the papers submitted to the session. He highlighted different strategies adopted by national statistical offices (NSOs) and lack of a common approach in improving access to alternative data sources.

9. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) There has been considerable progress in recent years in using new data sources: many success stories and partnerships established with data providers. However, there has not yet been a systemic change: partnerships are sometimes based on personal relationships, the legal framework often does not allow access to necessary sources, and one-off approaches are used. We should look ahead and think strategically.

(b) It is important to convince the policymakers and general public of the need and value of using the new data sources for reducing response burden, providing additional insights and improving timeliness of data. Building trust and explaining the privacy and security safeguards is important. A common narrative that could be used for this purpose across countries would be useful.

(c) Improving the legal framework to give NSOs access to administrative data and privately-owned data is needed. Negotiating with private sector is a long and difficult process and contracts are often time-limited. This presents a problem for stable statistics production. Having examples of successful cases and a common international approach would facilitate such agreements on both sides.

(d) International coordination for working with multinationals is needed to strengthen the position of NSOs and prevent that data are moved to countries where the companies are not obliged to provide data. Approaching the multinationals as an international statistical community instead of countries doing it one-by-one is more likely to lead to a successful outcome. This will also improve the comparability of data. It would be helpful to have an action plan at UNECE level (e.g., a common road map for NSOs).

(e) International technical standards are also very important to facilitate access to new data sources. It can be technically difficult for private companies to extract the needed data or obtain the desired quality. Companies need incentives to take on this additional burden to give access to their data. The incentive does not always have to be financial. It can be seen as providing a social good in which many big companies may be interested to maintain a good image. NSOs should have an impartial approach and not prefer some commercial providers to others.

(f) To make progress in this area internationally, we should prioritise and focus on a few issues (like use of scanner data, mobile phone data, etc.). It was recommended to progress in small steps, work on project basis, aim to get quick results, and pair up with enthusiastic people. Small amounts of money can go a long way if the tools and experiences are shared. It was also recommended to focus on user needs and start from identifying the question that needs to be answered.

(g) Acquisition and use of data from alternative sources may involve considerable initial investments to set up the necessary mechanisms. These are worthwhile only if the data source is expected to be sustainable. Cost of acquiring the data, developing applications to read the data and training experts may vary significantly depending on the country and possibility of establishing partnerships with data owners.

B. Skills needed to use new data sources

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/23, 24

10. The session was organized by the United States and chaired by Mr. W. Beach. The session was based on papers from Slovenia and Sweden.

11. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) A wide range of hard and soft skills are necessary to use new and alternative data sources, such as statistics, IT, data science, mathematics, economics, domain knowledge, communications, management and leadership. The importance of judgement, ethics, negotiation skills, and user engagement is also growing. Multidomain experts are especially valuable.

(b) Multi-disciplinary teams are necessary to respond to the challenges and facilitate cross learning. This should be kept in mind when recruiting new staff. Cross-country and cross-organization communication is important.

(c) The whole-of-government approach can provide a good opportunity for cooperation with other government agencies in sharing and acquiring new skills. However, it is not easy to find out where particular skills are. Definitions of the new roles linked to use of new data sources and the related skills would be useful.

(d) Training of existing staff is crucial for building up institutional expertise given the competition for such skill set on the labour market. This includes providing in-house learning opportunities, learning by doing, being curious and not being afraid of failure.

(e) Integrating staff development and innovation into regular activities are key to get buy-in from regular staff on the new ideas and introducing change. Retention of trained staff is a challenge.

(f) In attracting new employees with desired skills, it is important to inspire students to work in public service, provide opportunities for internships and case studies, and team up with academia. A key benefit which may also help to retain staff is providing access to unique datasets.

Action taken by the Conference

12. The Conference recognized the opportunities and challenges that statistical offices have encountered in using new data sources, and the skills staff need to use these data sources successfully. The Conference proposed to develop an action plan focusing on the following key issues related to data access and data skills:

(a) Communicating importance of data access to politicians (aiming for potential legislative changes in future);

(b) Technical standards, including a focus on geographic detail;

(c) Case studies of sustainable partnerships with the private sector;

(d) Identifying the jobs, skills, and strategies to advance the use of new and alternative data;

(e) Identifying cross-country and cross-organizational pilot projects related to data skills needed for new and alternative data.

13. The work should take into account and coordinate with the existing initiatives (e.g. HLG-MOS) and platforms (e.g. the Global Data Platform and the UN Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics).

14. The Conference decided to set up an informal Task Team, led by Switzerland and the United States, to develop an action plan on access to data and the necessary skills to follow up on the conclusions of the seminar. Denmark, Slovenia, Sweden, HLG-MOS, UNSD and Prof. Frauke Kreuter (University of Maryland and University of Mannheim) agreed to participate in the Task Team. The Team will prepare a concept note on how to move forward in this area by end of September. The CES Bureau will discuss in October 2019 how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.

III. Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/2, 2/Add.1

Action taken by the Conference

15. The plenary session approved the updated *Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau* and related *Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within CES* and *Procedure for adopting products and recommendations by CES* (ECE/CES/2019/2).

16. The Conference took note of the renovation of the Palais des Nations in Geneva during the coming six years. Members of the Conference of European Statisticians were encouraged to express interest in hosting future plenary sessions of the Conference and selected expert meetings convened under the Conference.

17. Russian Federation expressed interest in hosting the plenary session of the Conference in future.

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

A. Measuring hazardous events and disasters

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/3, 3/Add.1

18. The Conference reviewed the *Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters*, developed by a Task Force chaired by Italy. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- (a) Recommendations are timely and the topic is highly relevant;
- (b) More guidance on identifying small, medium, and large-scale disasters is needed;
- (c) A clarification on aligning the Disaster Related Statistics Framework and Sendai framework methodologies with existing statistical standards and frameworks should be added to future work.

Action taken by the Conference

19. The Conference endorsed the *Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters*, subject to the amendments presented in document ECE/CES/2019/3/Add.1. Developing criteria for identifying small, medium, and large-scale disasters, and a clarification about the need to align the Disaster Related Statistics Framework and Sendai framework methodologies with existing statistical standards and frameworks will be added to the list of issues for further work.

20. The Conference commended the chair of the Task Force, Italy, for successfully leading this challenging work. The Conference supported the continuation of the work on statistical operationalisation of measuring hazardous events and disasters, as well as on other issues for further work listed in chapter 9 of the Recommendations. The Bureau will discuss any follow-up work at its October 2019 meeting.

B. Measuring older populations in institutions

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/6, 6/Add.1

21. The Conference reviewed the *Recommendations on measuring older populations in institutions*, developed by a Task Force chaired by the United Kingdom.

Action taken by the Conference

22. The Conference endorsed the *Recommendations on measuring older populations in institutions*, subject to the amendments presented in document ECE/CES/2019/6/Add.1, and commended the chair, the United Kingdom, for leading the work. The CES Bureau will discuss how to take forward the issues for further work identified in the Recommendations.

23. UNICEF pointed out that there are also information gaps about youth and children, for example children in residential care and violence against children, and called for CES to address these gaps.

C. Leading, composite and sentiment indicators

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/4/Rev.1, 4/Add.1

24. The Conference reviewed the *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators*, developed by a Task Force chaired by Sweden and Denmark.

Action taken by the Conference

25. The Conference endorsed *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators* (ECE/CES/2019/4/Rev.1) and commended the chairs, Sweden and Denmark, who led the work. The Conference asked the CES Bureau to follow up on possible further work and exchange of experience in the area of leading, composite and sentiment indicators.

D. Satellite account for education and training

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/5/Rev.1, 5/Add.1

26. The Conference reviewed the *Satellite account for education and training: compilation guide*, developed by a Task Force chaired by Norway. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) In the United Kingdom, the topic generated high interest among policymakers as it is addressing a topical issue of measuring human capital;

(b) Similarly like system of environmental-economic accounts, satellite account for education and training allows to bring other types of capital into a unified framework. Furthermore, it helps to solve some issues in national accounts related to measuring education, health and other service sectors.

Action taken by the Conference

27. The Conference endorsed *Satellite account for education and training: compilation guide* (ECE/CES/2019/5/Rev.1) and commended the chair, Norway, for the excellent leadership of the Task Force. Countries are encouraged to further test the proposed framework and share the results, challenges and any solutions they develop. The Conference asked the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on National Accounts to provide a forum for exchanging such experience. UNECE will communicate with UNSD to ensure a wider uptake of this Guide at the global level.

E. Strategic communications framework

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/7, 7/Add.1

28. The Conference reviewed the *Strategic communications framework*, developed by a Task Team (chaired by Canada) under HLG-MOS. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) It is not enough to compile and disseminate accurate data and statistics. NSOs need to have a strategic communications plan, be able to create insights into data, engage

with users and communicate in a simpler language using attractive presentation techniques, such as data visualization. This reflects a cultural change in official statistics.

(b) Mapping agencies can be key partners for improving communication of statistics and data.

Action taken by the Conference

29. The Conference endorsed the *Strategic communications framework* (ECE/CES/2019/7/Rev.1) developed under HLG-MOS, and encouraged countries to make use of the framework. The value of case studies from countries was highlighted. The Conference supported continuation of the work on Phase 2 of the framework.

F. Strategic partnerships

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/42

30. The Conference was informed about the principles and framework for strategic partnerships presented in the *Modern partnership framework for official statistics*.

Action taken by the Conference

31. The Conference welcomed the *Modern partnership framework for official statistics* (ECE/CES/2019/42) prepared by Canada following a High-Level Seminar on this topic in April 2018. Members of the Conference were encouraged to use the framework and the associated maturity model, and to provide any feedback to the secretariat for possible follow-up activities.

V. Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

A. Road Map on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/8

32. The Conference considered the report from the Steering Group on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (co-chaired by Poland and Sweden) on the implementation of the CES Road Map. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Exchange of experience and solutions between countries has been very useful in setting up national reporting mechanisms. This should be further promoted and facilitated.

(b) The observations made by countries and custodian agencies in the UNECE data flow pilots were very useful for improving the process of providing data on global SDG indicators; further guidance to find feasible practical solutions on this should be provided in the second edition of the Road Map.

Action taken by the Conference

33. The Conference welcomed the good progress made in implementing the *CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs* presented in document ECE/CES/2019/8. The Conference highly appreciated the piloting of data flows from countries to custodian agencies responsible for SDG indicators carried out by a Task Team led by France and Turkey. Thirty-seven countries and seven custodian agencies participated in the two voluntary pilots covering twenty SDG indicators. The results of the pilots were communicated to the global working groups and led to many practical recommendations to improve the data flows, SDG indicator methodologies and metadata.

34. The Conference encouraged countries and organizations to contribute to the preparation of the Second Edition of the Road Map. The Second Edition should focus on practical advice to reduce the burden and simplify the work on statistics for SDGs.

B. Regional platform on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/8/Add.1

35. The Conference considered the proposal on developing a regional platform on statistics for SDGs to support the preparation of the UNECE regional progress report on SDGs. The following comments were made in the discussion:

(a) Countries supported a knowledge hub for sharing knowledge and tools, and setting up an SDG indicator dashboard;

(b) Using (semi-)automatic methods to obtain the data from existing online databases should be considered. The total workload should not be underestimated as not all countries have national reporting platforms;

(c) Focus should be on data that is already collected from countries, easily accessible, regularly produced and where there are no methodological challenges;

(d) Caution should be exercised when disseminating data from countries and custodian agencies side by side. Different values, if not well documented, can lead to confusion. To avoid that, the platform should apply principles and guidelines on disseminating global and national data, developed under the auspices of United Nations Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

Action taken by the Conference

36. The Conference supported developing a UNECE regional platform on statistics for SDGs composed of three elements and building on the available UNECE infrastructure and MDG experience, as presented in document ECE/CES/2019/8/Add.1. The knowledge hub was considered very important.

37. The Conference asked the Secretariat to implement the proposal together with a Task Team composed of Canada, Denmark (lead), Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden and the United Kingdom, considering the following points:

(a) The database should make use of existing sources, such as databases of UNSD, Eurostat, OECD, CIS-Stat, etc.;

(b) A regional platform can be an additional incentive for countries to set up National Reporting Platforms on SDG indicators. However, the workload in obtaining country data should not be underestimated. There should be a balance between ambitions and feasibility;

(c) If different data from countries and international databases are presented side by side, the differences should be clearly explained to avoid confusing users.

38. Progress report on the regional platform on statistics for SDGs should be presented to the Bureau and the Conference.

C. Rotation of members of IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB from UNECE region

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/9

39. Ms. Bruun informed the Conference about the rotation of members of IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB from the UNECE region and recalled the principles presented in document ECE/CES/2019/9.

Action taken by the Conference

40. The Conference took note of the rotation of the members of IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB from UNECE region for the 2019-2021 term. The nominations were sent to UNSD on 14 June 2019.

VI. Emerging role of national statistical offices as offices for statistics and data

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/25

41. Canada, New Zealand and United Kingdom organized the seminar. Mr. A. Arora (Canada) chaired the seminar.

42. The seminar used as important background material the paper prepared by Estonia, Canada, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and UNECE, and the results of a survey conducted among NSOs by seminar organizers in May 2019.

A. Emerging data system opportunities and issues

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/22, 25-27, 35-38

43. The first session of the seminar was organized by Canada and United Kingdom and chaired by Mr. J. Pullinger. The session was based on papers by Albania, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Romania, United Kingdom and Eurostat.

44. Mr. B. Braaksma (Netherlands) and Mr. C. Branbergen (Dataprovider.com) delivered a keynote speech. The speakers demonstrated how strategic partnership with a win-win approach to collaboration provided a solution to measuring the internet economy in the Netherlands.

45. Ms. H. Berard (Canada) presented the key issues identified in the papers submitted to the session and the results of a short survey conducted among NSOs. The survey showed that overwhelming majority of NSOs see the need to change and undertake new roles. Most offices plan to adapt through establishing strategic partnerships, gaining access to new data sources and acquiring new skills to use these new sources.

46. In a panel discussion, Ms. M. Kotzeva (Eurostat), Mr. B. Kroese (Netherlands), Mr. M. Mägi (Estonia), Mr. C. Sharrock (United Kingdom) and Mr. G. Barrends (Dataprovider.com) reflected on the new opportunities and challenges for national statistical offices brought about by changes in the national data ecosystems.

47. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) NSOs in many countries are considering how to go beyond their traditional role to support the evolving data ecosystems. This thinking should start from considering again what is the core task of NSOs and their essential value. Changing culture through creating conditions to enable partnerships, leadership and smart risk taking are key to using the opportunities arising from the new data systems.

(b) NSOs have a lot to offer to potential partners: strict principles, transparency and quality. NSOs have to preserve these and other strengths resulting from Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to remain trustworthy.

(c) Effective communication promoting what NSOs have to offer is crucial for creating win-win partnerships with policymakers, other government agencies and private sector. Policy makers should be engaged upfront in the process. It can be hard to overcome the scepticism of other government agencies. A common narrative on this topic would be helpful. Internal communication is also needed to get on board staff in the office.

(d) Private sector entities are enthusiastic about data sharing if they consider it good for their business. Setting up partnerships is an investment that takes time and effort, and aligning values. NSOs should actively look for opportunities to cooperate with those who are willing.

(e) NSOs should carefully consider what roles they can take up. A possible task for NSOs can be not to govern data but metadata (explaining where the data is, what it means, what is its quality), support building up metadata systems and their interoperability.

(f) There is still a huge gap between the available data and an infrastructure and standards that enable to disseminate and use it. Websites for disabled were mentioned as one example where technical harmonization and standardisation is needed.

(g) It is important to discuss confidentiality and clarify the difference between privacy, security and confidentiality.

(h) A concrete action plan for supporting NSOs as part of a larger data ecosystem and sharing of good practices are needed.

B. Approaches to data system stewardship

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/21, 28, 29

48. The session was organized by New Zealand and chaired by Ms. R. Milicich (New Zealand). It was based on papers from France, New Zealand and Serbia.

49. Ms. R. McGrath (New Zealand) presented the summary of issues identified in the papers and relevant results from the survey conducted among the NSOs before the seminar. Mr. A. Arora (Canada), Mr. D. Kalisch (Australia) and Mr. P. Malkov (Russian Federation) described the roles that their organizations are adopting in the new data ecosystems.

50. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) There are various approaches to NSOs' roles in data system stewardship: Chief Statistician may assume the role of Chief Data Steward/Officer formally (New Zealand) or informally (Ireland). The role may be performed by someone outside of NSO (Australia) or may not exist at all while the responsibility falls under another agency and NSO plays an advisory role (Slovenia).

(b) Many factors can drive the national setting: tasks performed by other agencies, existing resources, and if and when an NSO decides to play an active role in this area.

(c) Assuming responsibility for governance of other agencies' data can pose a risk of decreasing trustworthiness of statistics produced by NSO; it is key to consider what are the core strengths and tasks of NSOs and whether new roles strengthen or weaken their position.

(d) Understanding of the main terms of data governance/stewardship and the underlying functions still varies. Harmonization of these definitions will be key in further collaboration on common principles and standards. Defining the minimum set of core responsibilities for a data steward would be useful.

(e) The structure of new data ecosystem may be complex but figuring out roles and responsibilities of various actors and communicating them to other partners and general public is crucial.

(f) A toolkit providing NSOs with good practices, guidance and tools for implementing the new role is needed. Concrete case studies should demonstrate risks and opportunities of alternative approaches.

Action taken by the Conference

51. The Conference discussed the emerging role of NSOs as potential data stewards for national governments. NSOs in many countries are encountering a range of opportunities and challenges related to the development of national data infrastructures and ecosystems, and are seeking ways to contribute to these developments and re-define their roles accordingly.

52. The Conference identified the following actions for the way forward:

(a) A follow-up seminar will take place at the 2020 CES plenary session dealing with the implementation of the new role of NSOs in an era of expanded possibilities. The seminar could lead to creating a toolkit for good practice and leadership of NSOs in national data ecosystems. The seminar should have a practical focus moving from thinking to implementation. It should include case studies and considerations of the impact of the new role on core activities of NSOs, as well as the importance of soft skills linked to

communication and strategic partnerships. Implications for trust and ethics could also be considered;

(b) An informal Task Team (consisting of Albania, Canada, Estonia (lead), Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland and the UNECE Secretariat) will reflect on the results of the 2019 seminar and prepare a paper synthesising the experience and different approaches demonstrated at the seminar, proposals made at the Conference, and a possible action plan with issues to be taken forward. The paper will also propose next steps for discussion by the CES Bureau. This paper will provide a key input to the 2020 follow-up seminar.

53. The Conference asked the Bureau to discuss the follow-up and decide on further steps at its October 2019 meeting.

VII. Work of the UNECE High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics

A. Annual report

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/10

54. Mr. A. Arora (Canada), Chair of the UNECE High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) presented the annual report of the Group including its main achievements and priorities for 2019.

55. The following points were raised during the discussion:

(a) Countries highly value the work of HLG-MOS and find it useful in practice. For example, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine is currently implementing a process-oriented approach fully in line with GSBPM.

(b) The innovative ways of working were appreciated, such as using sprints, and identifying new topics and priorities quickly.

Action taken by the Conference

56. The Conference approved the annual report of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS), including outcomes of the activities carried out in 2018 and plans for the rest of 2019 (ECE/CES/2019/10).

57. The Conference strongly supported the continuation of the work on modernization of official statistics. National and international statistical organizations were invited to support the HLG-MOS work programme and to become partners in the Statistical Modernization Community.

58. In view of support to discussing the practical implementation of models developed under HLG-MOS (as a proposal for CES 2020 seminars) this topic will be also discussed at the Conference in 2020, under the regular agenda item devoted to HLG-MOS.

B. New versions of Generic Statistical Business Process Model and Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/10/Add.1

59. The Conference took note of the recently completed review of Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO), whose previous versions were endorsed by the Conference in June 2017. The review involved two rounds of broad consultations with country experts and users of the models from all CES members and resulted in minor changes that do not affect the structure of the two models.

Action taken by the Conference

60. The Conference endorsed the new versions of GSBPM (5.1) and GAMSO (1.2) (ECE/CES/2019/10/Add.1).

VIII. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2020 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/11, 11/Add.1

61. Taking into account the results of the survey carried out among the CES members in May 2019 (ECE/CES/2019/11) and the recommendation by the CES Bureau (ECE/CES/2019/11/Add.1), the Conference selected the following topics for seminars at the CES plenary session in 2020:

A. Seminar 1: Implementing the role of NSOs in an era of expanded possibilities

Seminar organizers: Denmark and HLG-MOS in collaboration with Albania, Colombia, Poland and the Russian Federation.

Papers offered by: Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal (tbc.), Slovenia and Eurostat.

62. The seminar will be a follow-up to the 2019 seminar on ‘Emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data’. A key contribution to the seminar will be the paper to be prepared by the informal Task Team led by Estonia (see para 52(b)).

B. Seminar 2: Impacts of globalisation and digitalization on the future of economic statistics

Seminar organizers: Finland, Canada and Norway.

Papers offered by: Czechia, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, the United States, Eurostat and OECD (tbc).

63. The seminar will build on the outcomes of the work by the Friends of the Chair Group on the Future of Economic Statistics (chaired by Canada) and the Task Force on sharing of economic data (chaired by Finland), whose report is expected to be submitted to the 2020 plenary session for endorsement.

64. The proposal for this seminar topic included also aspects of digital transformation and digital economy. The CES Bureau decided to keep this discussion separate to better focus the CES seminar. Discussion on better measurement of the digital transformation, informed by the recent activities of Eurostat, OECD and IMF in this area will be held during the October 2019 Bureau meeting and, subsequently, as a standalone item on the agenda of the 2020 plenary session.

65. The CES Bureau will discuss the organization of the seminars at its October 2019 meeting.

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

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

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/17, 18, 19

Action taken by the Conference

66. The Conference endorsed the outcomes of the in-depth reviews of (i) statistics and data on cities (based on a paper by the Netherlands and Eurostat), (ii) various types of satellite accounts (based on a paper by Canada), and (iii) measurement of gender identity (based on a paper by Canada and the United Kingdom).

67. The Conference took note that the upcoming in-depth review topics for October 2019 and February 2020 will be:

- (a) International migration and cross-border mobility (paper led by Mexico);
- (b) Measuring well-being in the era of “digital society”: implications for official statistics (paper led Canada);
- (c) Role of statistical community in climate action (paper by Steering Group on climate change related statistics chaired by Luxembourg);
- (d) Subjective poverty measures (leader tbc, with input from New Zealand and the United States);

68. All in-depth review papers are available at: www.unece.org/stats/ces/reviews.html.

B. Use of satellite image and Earth observation data in official statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/16

69. The Conference discussed use of satellite image and Earth observation data in official statistics, following the in-depth review conducted by the CES Bureau, based on a paper prepared by Canada and Mexico. The Conference raised the following issues:

- (a) More opportunities for NSO experts to build up skills in the field of geospatial data are needed. Some training courses have been provided by the European Statistical System Training Programme, Statistics Norway and EFTA.
- (b) International organizations should support smaller countries in getting access to geospatial data.
- (c) A seminar for experts to build knowledge in using satellite image and Earth observation data would be useful.

Action taken by the Conference

70. The Conference welcomed the in-depth review on the use of satellite image and Earth observation data in official statistics (ECE/CES/2019/16), endorsed its outcomes and thanked the authors, Canada and Mexico.

71. The Conference noted the growing importance of integrating statistical and geospatial data, particularly in the context of statistics for SDGs, and that implementation is now moving forward quickly in many countries. Improving skills and access to data is an essential requirement for progress.

72. The Conference called for greater coordination of international activities in this field and reaffirmed its support for the work of the Secretariat to develop closer partnerships between the statistical and geospatial communities, in collaboration with the UN Committee

for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, Eurostat, the Global Working Group on Big Data, the HLG-MOS project on machine learning, and the United Nations Statistics Division.

73. The CES Bureau will reflect further on this topic at its meeting in October 2019.

X. Matters arising from the 68th session of Economic Commission for Europe and the 50th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/1

Action taken by the Conference

74. The Conference reaffirmed decisions of the 68th session of the Economic Commission for Europe and 50th session of the United Nations Statistical Commissions that have implications for its work, as presented in document ECE/CES/2019/1.

75. The Conference encouraged countries to provide input to the 2020 comprehensive review of the global list of SDG indicators. An open consultation will be carried out in July-August 2019 (see <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/2020-comp-rev/>). The CES members were also encouraged to provide ideas for a theme for the World Statistics Day in 2020.

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

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

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/14

76. The Conference welcomed the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division in implementing the Statistical Programme in 2018.

Action taken by the Conference

77. The Conference confirmed the decisions of the CES Bureau as reflected in their meeting reports and approved the report on the implementation of the 2018 UNECE Statistical Programme (ECE/CES/2019/14 and Addenda).

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

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/13, 15, 15/Add.1

Action taken by the Conference

78. The Conference adopted the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2019 (ECE/CES/2019/13) including the list of planned meetings, and the Programme of Work for 2020 including the Publication Programme (ECE/CES/2019/15) and the list of meetings planned in 2020 (ECE/CES/2019/15/Add.1)

79. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating into the three working languages of UNECE (English, French and Russian) the main documents for the CES plenary session and its meetings in 2019-2020 in the following areas:

(a) Environment and multi-domain statistics (climate change, environmental-economic accounting);

(b) Demographic and social statistics (gender statistics, population and housing censuses);

- (c) Economic statistics (national accounts, global production, business registers, consumer prices and quality of employment);
- (d) Statistical modernization (human resources management and training);
- (e) Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals.

80. The main documents include a provisional agenda, a report and one main document ECE/CES/2019/ for each sub-item on the agenda. For the CES plenary session, the main documents include in addition six documents for each sub-session.

C. Priorities for capacity development in South-East Europe and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

81. The secretariat presented the results of a survey on priorities in capacity development activities that were updated through a written consultation with the seventeen programme countries in May 2019.

82. The Conference expressed support for the four priorities identified in the consultation and the need to reflect these in the terms of reference for the UNECE Regional Advisor in Statistics.

Action taken by the Conference

83. The Conference noted that the seventeen UNECE countries eligible for capacity development support (“programme countries”) provided their top priority areas for capacity development in response to a survey conducted for the 66th plenary session, and re-confirmed them by written consultation in May 2019.

84. The programme countries, and the Conference as a whole, decided that the priority areas for statistical capacity development in the programme countries are (i) statistics for SDGs, (ii) population and housing censuses, (iii) geospatial information management and (iv) modernizing official statistics. These priorities will be reviewed at least every three years.

85. The Conference requested that the terms of reference for the UNECE Regional Advisor in Statistics be updated to include specific references to the importance of geospatial information for the programme countries.

XII. Election of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians

Documentation: ECE/CES/2019/12

Action taken by the Conference

86. 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 2019-2021 term of office:

Ms. Marjo Bruun (Finland) as Chair;
and the following Vice-Chairs of the Bureau:

Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan (Armenia);
Mr. Konrad Pesendorfer (Austria);
Mr. Anil Arora (Canada);
Mr. Pdraig Dalton (Ireland);
Mr. Julio Santaella (Mexico);
Ms. Liz MacPherson (New Zealand);
Mr. Dominik Rozkrut (Poland).

XIII. Other business

87. The 68th CES plenary session will take place on 22-24 (a.m.) June 2020 in Geneva, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (24 p.m.-25 June 2020) and the plenary session of UN-GGIM: Europe, as decided by the 66th CES plenary session (ECE/CES/95).
