



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

**Sixty-eighth plenary session**

Geneva, 22-24 June 2020

Item 2 of the revised provisional agenda

**Globalization and the future of economic statistics**

## **Globalisation, collaboration and coordination – outline for discussion**

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### *Summary*

This document outlines the discussion on “Globalization and the future of economic statistics” during the Conference of European Statisticians, including possible questions to be covered during the discussion.



## I. Goal and structure of the agenda item

1. The goal of this agenda item is to discuss the globalisation challenges to better understand user needs and how to build an economic statistics system that is responsive and provides timely and relevant information for policy makers. The compilation of economic statistics is increasingly challenging with emerging global production arrangements.
2. The session will first provide an understanding of how the national and global user needs have evolved in the context of globalisation. Then, the discussion will focus on how collaboration and coordination between national statistical entities and international statistical organizations could lead to a better integrated approach to produce high-quality economic statistics and eliminate the gap between what data national statistical offices (NSOs) can produce at country level and the fast-evolving data users' needs.
3. The session will also discuss what role the Conference of European Statisticians could play in supporting improvements to the statistical systems in the context of globalisation.
4. This item will begin with a brief introduction to policy maker needs, where they see data gaps and what they need from national statistical offices (15 minutes – Elliot Harris, Chief Economist of the United Nations).
5. Following this, there will be a short discussion related to concrete actions that NSOs can take to support integrated policy development and analysis (20 minutes).
6. The second half of the agenda item will focus on discussion related to the increased need for collaboration and coordination between national statistical offices and the international statistical system in order for the economic statistical system to be agile and responsive to the needs of policy makers. The discussion should focus on priorities and concrete steps that could be taken to build a more relevant and responsive economic statistical system.
7. As part of this discussion item there will be a brief update of the work from the fourth meeting of Friends of the Chair on Economic Statistics and the plan to go forward.

## II. Possible questions for discussion

8. Possible questions for discussion under the agenda item:
  - (a) Globalisation disrupts the traditional way NSOs are producing statistics and calls for more integrated approaches and new collaborative methods between NSOs, international organizations and academics. Without changes, the quality of economic statistics will decrease and the disjoint between users' needs and producers of statistics will increasingly grow in the future. What collaboration areas should be prioritized to guarantee the quality of economic statistics and quickly narrow the gap with the user's needs? Additionally, in a new collaborative structure, what should be the role of international organizations? What role could the CES play? (Example of areas of collaboration: global processing platforms; global business register; data / method / code exchanges; interoperability of systems; sharing of expertise; data sharing on multinational enterprises; access to new data sources owned by private companies; centralized global collection of data for the big digital players; common classifications; governance structure);
  - (b) The current COVID19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of providing timely, relevant data to policy makers and demonstrated concretely many of the challenges faced in a global economy. Many countries in the UNECE region had to dramatically change processes, procedures and methodologies to respond to these demands – bypassing normal protocols and often without guidance. How can international organizations take these new innovations and embed them into statistical standards and other guidance materials to ensure best practices and lessons learned are more widely shared?
  - (c) Back to normal (previous ways) is not likely to happen. NSOs have proven that they can adapt quickly and provide data in near real-time. There will be an expectation that NSOs can fill data gaps quickly. How can international organizations modify their working methods to respond to see beyond their traditional mandate and take advantage of

the “new normal” to modernize? Are there any lessons learned from the crisis that could be help to reduce the gap between global user needs and what data compilers can produce?

(d) Integrated policy analysis requires innovative data that can provide insight on the interlinked nature of the economy, the environment and society. What actions (i.e. guidance) can the global economic statistical system take (provide) to ensure the other dimensions are considered alongside standard economic measures such as GDP?

(e) Regional Commissions are important conveners and have played a significant role in pushing innovative thinking and the sharing of best practices but we must always be cautious not to duplicate efforts. What should the role of the CES be in this area?

(f) UNECE country NSOs in many cases have the “luxury” of having the staff and capacity to innovate and effect change at the global level. How do we harness this such that developing countries can benefit from the experimental/innovative work done in the region in order to modernize the system of economic statistics?

(g) Where do we go from here?

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