

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For information

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Item 10b of the Provisional Agenda

**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS – UNECE SURVEY ON COUNTRIES’
CAPACITIES TO REPORT ON MDG INDICATORS**

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

BACKGROUND

1. The Bureau discussed at its meeting in October 2004 the need “to take stock of data collection methods” and considered it useful to have a review of the capacity of countries to report on the MDG indicators in a sustainable way as part of official statistics. The Bureau also agreed that “a UNECE report on the situation in UNECE member countries would be very timely”.

UNECE ASSESSMENT OF COUNTRY CAPACITY TO PRODUCE MDG STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

2. As follow-up to the request of the Bureau to produce a UNECE report to assess the capacity of countries to report on MDG, UNECE developed a questionnaire addressed to national statistical offices in their role of coordinators of national statistical systems. The questionnaire aims at collecting information on member states’ data production and dissemination in the main areas relating to MDG (poverty, hunger, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, environment, ITC, slums, unemployment). The objective of the questionnaire is not only to assess the current availability and quality of MDG indicators, but also to evaluate the capacity of countries to routinely produce the underline statistics needed to produce the MDG indicators in a sustainable way.

3. The questionnaire covers three areas:

- i) data production: availability and quality of main sources providing official statistics on MDG related areas (sample surveys, censuses, administrative data);
- ii) availability of indicators for monitoring MDGs and their level of disaggregation;
- iii) national system/process for MDG monitoring and data dissemination and the role of the national statistical office.

4. The questionnaire was made part of the joint UNECE-UNICEF-UNDP activities carried out in the region to coordinate the data collection on MDG-related statistics and the efforts to support the countries to strengthen their statistical capacity. It is expected that countries will reply to the questionnaire by mid-November and that a preliminary analysis of the results be prepared by UNECE for the Bureau meeting in February 2006.

5. The UNECE secretariat has explored with UNSD the possibility of coordinating the efforts of the Friends of the Chair Group set up by the UN Statistical Commission to carry out the assessment of MDG indicators at global level. However, it appears that the nature of the two assessments is quite different. UNSD focuses on the data reported by international organizations, while UNECE focuses on data produced directly by countries. If the assessment at global level requires feedback from countries, the countries in South-East Europe and CIS will be approached twice: first by UNECE (jointly with UNICEF and UNDP regional offices) and then by UNSD. The letter sent to the countries for the

UNECE assessment briefly explained the different nature of the two assessments and alerted the countries to the need to report later to UNSD to provide feedback for the report to the UN Statistical Commission.

OTHER UNECE ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF MDG STATISTICS

6. The UNECE has recently finalized an MDG report for South-East European and CIS countries. The report aims at providing a regional overview of the progress made in the region to achieve MDG and to highlight the regional dimension in working toward the achievement of the MDG. The report also shows the work carried out in UNECE to support MDG. In relation to statistics, the report includes:

- data series for MDG-related indicators considered relevant for the region;
- an analysis of the progress made based on the data series;
- a brief analysis of the capacity of countries to report on MDG indicators and the need to support the production and dissemination of statistics in order to improve the availability and quality of MDG-related indicators;
- a description of the work of the ECE Statistical Division in supporting the production and use of MDG indicators.

The report is currently in a draft format and it is expected to be finalized by end-October.

7. As follow-up to a regional inter-agency meeting hosted by the UNICEF regional office and the UNDP Regional Centre, a joint UNECE-UNICEF-UNDP task force was set up in June 2005 with the objective of rationalizing the MDG-related data collection in the region. After carrying out its first task of making an inventory of MDG-related data collected by international agencies active in the region, the scope of the task force has broadened and UNECE, UNICEF and UNDP are increasingly implementing joint activities in the field of MDG statistics and indicators. Among these activities are the implementation of joint workshops and the executing of the UNDP-funded project on Improving statistical capacity and MDG literacy chaired by UNECE.

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