

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For information

Third Meeting of the 2005/2006 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 20-21 February 2006
Agenda

Item 12a of the Provisional

FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BUREAU AND THE CONFERENCE

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

Table of contents

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU	2
Progress of work and strategies of international organizations.....	2
CES Seminars	2
Population and Housing Censuses	2
Human resources and training.....	2
Development and adoption of standards and recommendations by the Conference and its Bureau	2
DECISIONS RELATED TO THE DATABASE OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES (INTEGRATED PRESENTATION) AND SPECIFIC STATISTICAL AREAS	3
Purpose, structure and compilation of the Database of International Statistical Activities.....	3
Statistical Domain 1. Social statistics	3
SA 1.1 Population and Migration	3
SA 1.2 Labour statistics	4
SA 1.5 Income and consumption	4
SA 1.7 Human settlements and housing	4
SA 1.9 Culture statistics.....	4
SA 2.7 Prices	5
SA 3.1 Environment statistics.....	5
SA 3.3.1 Living conditions, poverty and cross-cutting social issues	5
SA 3.3.4 Globalization.....	5
SA 3.3.5 Indicators related to Millenium Development Goals	6
SA3.3.6 Sustainable development	6
SA 4.3.1 Population and housing censuses	6
SA 4.6 Statistical confidentiality and disclosure protection.....	6
SA 5.5 Management and development of technological resources.....	7
SA 5.7 Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building	7

INTRODUCTION

1. The note on follow-up to decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference has been prepared systematically since the October 2002 meeting. It permits the identification of possible delays and facilitates taking decisions for further action. The note is updated for each Bureau meeting and for the CES plenary session.
2. The present note follows up on the main decisions taken by the Bureau and Conference as reflected in the respective reports. Actions undertaken before 2005 are summarized in a short form under History; decisions and follow-up from 2005 are given in more detail. Under each decision, the action to be taken or that was taken is indicated.
3. The decisions are grouped in two sections: I. Decisions related to the work of the Conference and its Bureau; and II. Decisions related to the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA/IP) and specific Statistical Activities (SAs). The SAs are presented according to the new DISA/IP classification.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU

Progress of work and strategies of international organizations

4. History: at the June 2002 plenary session, it was agreed that, periodically, discussion should be devoted to the progress of work of international organizations and their strategies. The IMF presented its statistical activities to the Bureau in October 2003, the World Bank in October 2004 and Eurostat in October 2005.

Action: Bureau to select at its February 2006 meeting the organization to present its statistical activities in October 2006.

CES Seminars

Population and Housing Censuses

5. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference selected population and housing censuses as the topic for the CES seminar in 2006. The Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses will organize the seminar. The Bureau reviewed an outline of the seminar in October 2005.

Action: the Bureau will review an updated outline of the seminar at its February 2006 meeting.

Human resources and training

6. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference selected human resources and training as the topic for the second CES seminar in 2006. Czech Republic will organize the seminar. Canada, Finland, Eurostat and IMF volunteered to contribute to the seminar. The Bureau reviewed an outline of the seminar in October 2005.

Action: the Bureau will review an updated outline of the seminar at its February 2006 meeting.

Development and adoption of standards and recommendations by the Conference and its Bureau

7. October 2005 Bureau: in connection with a reaction from a private researcher to the Draft Guidelines on Access to Microdata, the Bureau decided to discuss in February 2006 the issue of making draft documents available on the web.

Action: the UNECE secretariat prepared a paper on the procedure for development and adoption of standards and recommendations by the Conference and its Bureau to be discussed at the February 2006 Bureau meeting. The paper also deals with the issue of distributing and making public the drafts under development.

DECISIONS RELATED TO THE DATABASE OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES (INTEGRATED PRESENTATION) AND SPECIFIC STATISTICAL AREAS

Purpose, structure and compilation of the Database of International Statistical Activities

8. History: in October 2004, the Bureau approved the new classification of international statistical activities. The name of the database was changed to Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA/IP). The new classification was successfully tested on the 2005 DISA/IP and the 2006 issue of the database has been prepared using the new classification.

Action:

- i) in October each year, the Bureau will select the topics to be reviewed in-depth in February next year based on the replies to a survey carried out among the Heads of statistical offices at the time of the CES plenary session; the Bureau will also identify the countries/IOs who will be asked to prepare the Rapporteur Reports;*
- ii) the UNECE secretariat will identify the issues and problems for those statistical areas from the DISA/IP for which the required expertise is available in the UNECE and seek advice and contributions from the Bureau members for the remaining areas;*
- iii) the issues and problems will be discussed at the February meetings of the Bureau; the Bureau will select the issues that should be brought to the attention of the Conference (prepared as a separate document for the plenary session);*
- iv) from 2006 on, the UNECE secretariat will include hyperlinks to the statistical programmes or other relevant documents of the member countries on the UNECE website.*

Statistical Domain 1. Social statistics

9. History: the Bureau discussed social statistics at its October 2003, June 2004 and October 2004 meetings. Concern was expressed about harmonization of social statistics and international cooperation in this area. In February 2005, the Bureau supported the proposal for a joint UNECE/Eurostat meeting on social statistics.

June 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau decided to have the first meeting of UNECE directors of social statistics on 29-30 September 2005.

October 2005 Bureau meeting: Eurostat informed the Bureau about the outcome of the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD meeting of Directors of Social Statistics held in September 2005. The Bureau agreed with the proposed actions for future work. It was decided to establish a Task Force to develop concrete proposals to examine emerging issues in social statistics. The Bureau was informed that the Chairman of the Task Force planned to begin work already in November and to report back to the Bureau in February 2006.

Action: at the beginning of 2006, it was still premature to report on the developments with the Task Force, therefore the Task Force will inform Bureau at its next meeting.

SA 1.1 Population and Migration

Migration statistics

10. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau recommended that the joint UNECE/Eurostat seminar on migration statistics (21-23 March 2005, Geneva) create a Steering Group to prepare a programme of work on migration for coming years. The Bureau also recommended setting up a clearinghouse to maintain information on international projects in migration statistics.

June 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau decided to set up a Friends of the Chair group to develop the Terms of Reference (ToR) for further work on migration statistics. Australia,

Canada, Italy, Russia, United States, Eurostat, OECD, IMF and the World Bank volunteered to be members of the group. Canada agreed to chair the group. United States offered to develop the first proposal for the ToR.

October 2005 Bureau: the Bureau reviewed and endorsed the Work Plan to improve migration statistics developed by the US Census Bureau with input by Statistics Canada. The Bureau approved the TOR for the Task Force on Measuring Emigration using data collected by the receiving country prepared by the UNECE secretariat.

Action: the Bureau will review the progress of work in February 2006.

SA 1.2 Labour statistics

11. June 2005 plenary session: the countries' written comments to the Rapporteur Report on this issue indicated general support for priority to be given to measurement of working hours. Australia and Canada expressed interest in contributing to the work on developing supplementary questions that could be added to the Labour Force Survey to measure the actual hours worked.

Action: to be discussed by the Bureau in February 2006 or at another future meeting.

SA 1.5 Income and consumption

12. October 2005 Bureau: the Bureau was informed of the UNECE/Eurostat/FAO/OECD work on statistics on rural development and agriculture household income and the preparation of the International Handbook on Rural Household, Livelihood and Well-Being.

Action: in February 2006, the Bureau will be asked to discuss how to formally endorse the Handbook beyond the Joint meeting that endorsed it in June 2005 in Rome.

SA 1.7 Human settlements and housing

13. History: in February 2004, the Bureau approved the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group on Human Settlements and Housing. The Bureau requested the Steering Group to prepare a programme of work and related timetable and to present progress reports to the Bureaux of the CES and the Committee on Human Settlements (CHS).

Action: according to the Work Plan of the implementation of the UNECE reform, the UNECE activities on human settlements and housing statistics are discontinued.

SA 1.9 Culture statistics

14. History: in February 2003, the Bureau approved the proposal for the organization of a joint UNECE/UIS-UNESCO/Eurostat meeting in 2004-2005 to establish a work plan for the coming years. OECD expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group. The meeting was not included in the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2004, 2005 and 2006 because of lack of resources. In February 2005, the Bureau asked Eurostat to consider taking over the organization of this meeting.

October 2005 Bureau: Eurostat informed that they are still considering the organization of the meeting on culture statistics in view of the recent reorganization of Eurostat. OECD is planning to hold a workshop on measuring the economic importance of culture.

Action: Eurostat still to consider organizing the meeting on culture statistics?

SA 2.7 Prices

15. October 2005 Bureau meeting: the meeting discussed the UNECE work on PPPs in connection with the UNECE macroeconomic database. Vladimir Sokolin referred to the work undertaken by ROSSTAT, Eurostat and OECD to calculate the PPPs for the CIS countries and the difference in the results from this comparison and the results published by the UNECE Statistical Division.

Action: UNECE to review in cooperation with CIS-STAT and ROSSTAT the extrapolation procedures used for PPPs in the UNECE macroeconomic database.

SA 3.1 Environment statistics

16. History: at the February 2002 and October 2002 meetings, the Bureau noted the growing network of national and international organizations dealing with environmental issues and a need for better coordination of the data collection in this area. This topic was briefly considered at the February and October 2003 meetings and discussed in depth at the CES 2004 plenary session. The Conference asked the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (ISWGES) to review the issues related to overlaps in data collection, identify the actions to be taken to improve coordination, detect areas that are not sufficiently covered and look at mechanisms to take into account user requirements. In October 2004, the Bureau was informed that the ISWGES did not discuss the topic at its October 2004 meeting. In February 2005, the Bureau was informed that there is still no progress and decided to discuss environment statistics at a future meeting.

October 2005 Bureau: it was decided to ask ISWG-ENV to prepare a paper for the February 2006 meeting of the Bureau (action coordinated by Eurostat).

Action: the Bureau will consider the topic at its February 2006 meeting.

SA 3.3.1 Living conditions, poverty and cross-cutting social issues

17. June 2005 plenary session: in countries' written comments to the Rapporteur Report on this issue, it was proposed that a workshop be organized to develop an agenda for future action. It was pointed out that it is important to clarify which organization or country will take a lead in this work.

October 2005 Bureau: it was noted that one possibility is to undertake the work within the Social Statistics Project.

Action: the Task Force on Social Statistics to consider dealing with this issue.

SA 3.3.4 Globalization

18. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Globalization in June 2003, an experiment on measuring the activities of multinational enterprises (MNE) was carried out. The Bureau approved the terms of reference for the MNE Project (chaired by Statistics Canada) in October 2003. Progress reports were presented at the June 2004 plenary session and at the October 2004 Bureau meeting.

June 2005 plenary session: the Conference agreed with the proposal made by Statistics Canada that the MNE project in its current configuration be terminated. The project was taken over by Eurostat. The Bureau considered it important to ensure that the non-EU members are kept fully informed about this work.

Action: Eurostat to report regularly to the Bureau about the project and take stock of the issue at the in-depth review of globalisation in February 2006.

SA 3.3.5 Indicators related to Millenium Development Goals

19. History: the October 2004 Bureau discussed the country reporting on indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). A UNECE survey of the situation in the UNECE region was considered necessary. In February 2005, the Bureau discussed how to achieve the political recognition of the role of official statistics in the MDG process and to bring to the attention of the policy people the concerns with data on MDG indicators.

October 2005 Bureau: the Bureau was informed of the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division to assess the capacity of countries to report on MDGs. A survey is being carried out. The UNECE had explored with UNSD the possibility to coordinate the survey with the Friends of the Chair Group set up by the Statistical Commission carrying out the assessment of MDG indicators at global level.

Action: the UNECE conducted a survey on the ability of UNECE member countries to report on the MDG indicators; the UNECE secretariat will inform the Bureau about the results of the survey at a future meeting.

SA3.3.6 Sustainable development

20. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference agreed that further work is needed in the area of measuring sustainable development. It was agreed that a group of countries should develop terms of reference to be discussed by the CES Bureau at a future meeting.

October 2005 Bureau: Statistics Sweden presented the TOR for a Task Force on Sustainable Development Indicators. The Bureau approved the creation of an OECD/UNECE Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development.

Action: a new outline for the work of the Task Force will be presented to the Bureau in February 2006.

SA 4.3.1 Population and housing censuses

21. History: in October 2003, the Bureau approved the terms of reference for a Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and reviewed the work plan for preparing the new set of recommendations for the 2010 round of censuses. The new recommendations are planned to be formally adopted by the Conference in 2006. The Bureau reviewed progress reports in February and October 2004 and February 2005.

June 2005 plenary session: the Conference selected Population Censuses to be the topic for one of the seminars at the 2006 CES plenary session.

***Action: i) the new CES census recommendations, revised after the December 2005 meeting, will be reviewed by the Steering Group on 22-23 February 2006;
ii) the Conference is expected to adopt the new recommendations at its 2006 plenary session. (See also: para 5 on the CES seminar on population and housing censuses.)***

SA 4.6 Statistical confidentiality and disclosure protection

22. History: as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata in June 2003, a Task Force was created to develop a set of guidelines for confidentiality protection (the Terms of Reference approved in October 2003). Progress reports were

presented to the Bureau in February and October 2004, February and October 2005, and to the Conference in June 2004 and 2005.

Action: i) it is expected that the Bureau will approve the “Core Principles and Good Practice Guidelines on Managing Confidentiality and Microdata Access” as interim Guidelines at its February 2006 meeting;

ii) the Guidelines are planned to be endorsed by the CES plenary session in June 2006;

iii) after endorsement, UNECE will publish the Guidelines and will link the Guidelines to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

iv) UNSD to include the Guidelines in their database of good practices in official statistics;

v) UNECE to share with OECD the results of the survey on international access to microdata.

SA 5.5 Management and development of technological resources

23. June 2005 plenary session: the Conference considered it useful to establish a working group to further explore the issues surrounding EDR. The Chair of the seminar, Katherine Wallman, requested the assistance of Heli Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland), Ivan Fellegi (Canada) and Brian Pink (New Zealand) to help in drafting terms of reference for this group.

October 2005 Bureau: the Bureau approved the TOR for the work of the Task Force.

Action: the Task Force will report to the Bureau in February 2006.

SA 5.7 Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building

24. February 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau requested UNECE, Eurostat and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS to prepare a proposal on how to improve the coordination of technical assistance in the UNECE region.

October 2005 Bureau meeting: the Bureau discussed the proposal prepared by UNECE and Eurostat and a separate note prepared by CIS-STAT. The Bureau asked for a revised version of the paper to be prepared to take into account comments of the October 2005 meeting.

Action: the Bureau will discuss at its February 2006 meeting the coordination of technical cooperation in UNECE region based on an updated version of the paper.

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