

First meeting of the 2008/2009 Bureau

Washington D.C. (United States), 20-21 October 2008

Item 2a of the Provisional
Agenda

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. STRATEGIC ISSUES OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE UNECE REGION

1. The comments presented below are a summary of the points raised at a discussion organised within the UNECE which was attended by representatives from the Statistical Division and the Trade and Timber Division.

2. Agriculture:

(a) For some UNECE countries there continues to be a need for integration of agricultural sector into business registers and harmonization of methods and practices;

(b) Work needs to be undertaken on better integration of agricultural statistics with other national surveys, including household surveys and environmental indicators;

(c) There is a need for an extended set of agricultural statistics to better respond to current demand for information about: food security, food prices, international trade, climate change, bioenergy, health and education, and genetically modified foods;

(d) The use of administrative data in agricultural statistics is still in its early stages in many UNECE countries; work needs to be undertaken to improve the use of administrative data, harmonization with major administrative data providers such as tax authorities, and standardization of common definitions; the need for international guidelines in this area should be evaluated;

(e) There appears to be an imbalance in the area of agricultural statistics, with an extensive range of statistics available on the supply of agricultural production side but limited statistics available on the demand side.

3. Forestry:

(a) Despite major progress and convergence around indicators of sustainable forest management, there has been an emergence of discrepancies between international classifications;

(b) There is a need for intersectoral cooperation with energy, in particular there is a desire to develop household surveys on renewable energy;

(c) There is a strong need for improving wood balance information to develop understanding of wood availability;

(d) Uneven reporting to international organizations has to be addressed;

(e) There is an ongoing problem with weak basic data (National Forest Inventory), which sometimes is non-existent;

(f) National practices in production/dissemination/analysis and publication of forestry statistics are inconsistent;

(g) There has been a decline in quality of intra-EU trade data, in particular with lowered reporting cut-offs and optional reporting of trade in weight units.

4. Fishing:

(a) National practices in production/dissemination/analysis and publication of fishing statistics are inconsistent.

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