

## CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second Meeting of the 2012/2013 Bureau  
Geneva (Switzerland), 5-6 November 2012

## REPORT

I.	INTRODUCTION .....	2
II.	IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF SELECTED STATISTICAL AREAS .....	2
	A. Population ageing.....	2
	B. Banking, insurance and financial statistics .....	3
	C. Poverty statistics .....	4
IV.	UNECE REVIEW PROCESS; UNECE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME FOR 2013 .....	6
	A. National accounts.....	7
	B. Population and housing censuses .....	7
	C. Migration statistics.....	8
	D. Terms of Reference for the continuation of work for strategic developments in business architecture in statistics (HLG-BAS) .....	8
	E. Human resources management and training .....	9
	G. Outcome of the high-level seminar on modernization of statistical production .....	10
	H. Outcome of the seminar on new frontiers in data collection .....	11
V.	FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES 2012 SEMINAR ON MEASURING HUMAN CAPITAL ....	12
VI.	FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES 2012 SEMINAR ON IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS.....	12
VII.	PREPARATIONS FOR THE CES 2013 PLENARY SESSION .....	13
	A. Evaluation of the 60 <sup>th</sup> CES plenary session; recommendations for organising CES seminars .....	13
	B. Organization of the CES 2013 seminar “Challenges in providing access to microdata for research purposes”.....	14
	C. Organization of the CES 2013 seminar “Challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+20” .....	14
	D. Report on Measuring Sustainable Development.....	15
	E. Preparation of the formal session, draft agenda and timetable for the 2013 plenary session .....	16
VIII.	FOLLOW-UP TO THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20).....	17
IX.	PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) RELATED TO STATISTICS.....	18
X.	INVENTORY OF TASK FORCES AND WORKING GROUPS.....	19
XI.	DATES AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CES BUREAU MEETINGS .....	19
XII.	OTHER BUSINESS .....	19

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The second meeting of the 2012/2013 Bureau was held in Geneva on 5-6 November 2012. The following members of the Bureau attended: Mr. E. Giovannini (Chairman), Mr. W. Smith, Mr. E. Sojo, Mr. G. Bascand, Ms. I. Krizman, Mr. O. Osaulenko, and Ms. J. Matheson. The following permanent observers also attended: Ms. M. Durand (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), Mr. P. Everaers (representing Mr. W. Radermacher, Eurostat), Mr. A. Kosarev (representing Mr. Sokolin, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT)), Mr. R. Koehler (representing Ms. A. Bürgi-Schmelz, International Monetary Fund (IMF)), and Ms. L. Bratanova (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)).

2. Mr. R. Witt (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) attended for agenda item 9 at the invitation of the Chairman. The following persons participated at the meeting through an audioconference: Mr. W. Bier, Mr. H. Ahnert and Ms. L. Valdes (European Central Bank (ECB)) for agenda item 2b, Mr. G. van de Veen (Statistics Netherlands) for agenda item 4d, and Ms. Katherine Wallman (US Office for the Management and the Budget) for agenda item 6.

3. The following persons assisted the members of the Bureau: Ms. M. Gandolfo (ISTAT, Italy), Ms. I. Muzychenko (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine) and Ms. M. J. Santos (Eurostat). Ms. T. Luige of UNECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

4. The following staff of the UNECE Statistical Division also attended: Mr. C. Boldsen, Ms. T. Dimova, Ms. V. Etropolska, Mr. G. Gamez, Ms. A. Peltola, Mr. S. Vale, Mr. P. Valente and Mr. A. Vikat.

## **II. IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF SELECTED STATISTICAL AREAS**

### **A. Population ageing**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/2 (UNECE), 2/Add.1 (UNECE) and 2/Add.2 (Mexico)

5. The Bureau reviewed in-depth statistics related to population ageing based on a paper by the secretariat. The paper was first presented to the 2012 CES plenary session and subsequently updated based on the discussion at the CES. In addition, the Bureau discussed the draft terms of reference (TOR) for the creation of a task force on ageing-related statistics.

6. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The topic is of high policy relevance in many countries and the paper contains a lot of useful information that can be shared, including outside the region;

(b) The paper should include some text on the measurement of institutional population as well as information on the World Health Organization (WHO)-OECD-Eurostat data collection on health statistics and the European Health Interview Survey;

(c) Providing better access to micro-data and linking administrative and survey data have a great potential for improving ageing-related statistics. These issues need to be considered in future work on this topic;

(d) Communication and dissemination are the key to providing relevant information on ageing. A lot of data already exists but it needs to be made more useful and more easily available. Often these data are presented in individual research reports that are difficult to access on a consistent basis and to link with the data provided by NSOs;

(e) Better dissemination of ageing-related statistics to policymakers is an important issue that requires understanding of user needs. Involvement of policymakers in the task force would, therefore, be helpful;

(f) The objective of the task force could be defined more precisely in relation to a specific policy frame and key issues, to address the related data gaps and avoid too broad a mandate. The need to consider links with other issues, such as poverty, and work towards an internationally comparable set of indicators was mentioned;

(g) A small group of experts should define a more precise mandate for the task force. They should take into account the work of the expert group on the Active Ageing Index which will finalise its activities by the end of 2012 (its outcome will be circulated to the Bureau). The work can start with items 8(a) and (b) from the proposed TOR: provide an overview of existing sets of indicators for monitoring the ageing situation and policies, and of international data availability and comparability.

### Conclusions

7. The secretariat will update the in-depth review paper based on the discussion.
8. A preparatory group consisting of interested countries and organizations will develop more focused terms of reference for a task force on ageing-related statistics for the February 2013 meeting of the Bureau. Canada, Italy, United Kingdom, CIS-STAT, Eurostat and OECD expressed interest in participating in the work.

### **B. Banking, insurance and financial statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/3 (IMF), and 3/Add.1 (Mexico)

9. The discussion was based on a paper by IMF, and an additional note by Mexico.
10. The following points were raised in the discussion:
  - (a) The paper provides a good stock-taking of the activities in banking, insurance and financial statistics. There is good international cooperation in this area, especially following the G20 initiative to fill the data gaps revealed by the financial crisis. The importance of the G20 recommendations should be better emphasised in the paper;
  - (b) The paper could also discuss cooperation between central banks and national statistical offices. The practices differ between countries and it would be useful to identify the most efficient ways to collect the data. In the European Union (EU) countries, the ECB plays the role of a gateway for financial data relieving the Central Banks from the double reporting burden;
  - (c) The paper should include a section on household perspective and monitoring the financial and non-financial assets of households. The ECB Household Finance and Consumption Survey and its coordination with the national statistical offices are important in

this respect. An OECD expert group on household consumption, income and wealth aims to reconcile the definitions of income and wealth, and prepare guidelines on measuring household financial wealth;

(d) Financial inclusion is an emerging topic requiring attention. For example, Mexico is carrying out a special survey to measure financial inclusion. Some data on the issue are being collected through surveys that include questions on access to basic financial services, or via consumer confidence surveys;

(e) Reconciliation between national accounts and financial statistics, including exchange of microdata, could be given more prominence in the paper. This is important for data quality and understanding of the mechanisms between the financial and real sector activities. Currently, cooperation between the two areas is promoted by the one-day joint meeting of the OECD Working Party on Financial Statistics and the Working Party on National Accounts;

(f) As proposed in the paper, increasing focus needs to be brought on the non-banking financial sector (shadow banking). These data are not of as high quality as the banking sector statistics but are important in the context of analysing financial stability/vulnerability. Another area requiring more attention is the non-bank and insurance statistics;

(g) The emphasis of ECB work is moving from monetary policy towards supervisory tasks. Comparability of supervisory data is problematic even at the EU level. These data can provide information about financial stability and the key risk indicators;

(h) A reference to the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)-Eurostat seminars on rapid estimates held in Moscow (2010), Ottawa (May 2009) and Scheveningen, the Netherlands (December 2009) should be added to the paper, as well as the G-20 Data initiative;

(i) Financial literacy is becoming an issue of increasing interest. Questions on the competency of adults to read financial information will be added to the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

### Conclusions

11. Financial statistics are an area where many initiatives exist and are well coordinated. There is currently no need to launch new work in this area. There is room for further strengthening of cooperation between national statistical offices and central banks.

12. IMF will finalise the paper reflecting the discussion at the Bureau meeting. The paper will be submitted for information to the CES Plenary Session in June 2013.

### **C. Poverty statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/4 (Ukraine and Eurostat), 4 Add.1 (UNECE), 4 Add.2 (Mexico) and 4 Add.3 (World Bank)

13. The discussion was based on a paper by Ukraine and Eurostat, and additional notes by UNECE, Mexico and the World Bank.

14. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Bureau recognised that the paper could have reflected better the international work in this area. Additional issues that could have been covered are: measuring longitudinal poverty, dynamics of poverty, subjective measures, and measuring poverty by regions and population sub-groups, such as children, the elderly and young families.

(b) Addressing poverty measurement is urgent considering the on-going public discussion. The relative poverty measures that are often used do not reflect the impact of economic crisis and do not capture the way the general public views poverty;

(c) National practices in poverty statistics vary greatly. It would be helpful to move towards a coherent set of indicators for poverty measurement;

(d) Multidimensional measurement of poverty that goes beyond income is important. Several developments are underway to measure the share of people facing multiple deprivations, not only economic deprivation;

(e) The poverty data cut across different statistical areas. The challenge is how to re-organise such data flexibly and how to communicate the data efficiently to the different audiences;

(f) The EU countries have a set of indicators for poverty monitoring based on the data from the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). However, there is a need to bridge the gap between the EU and other countries and to identify emerging issues that will become important in the coming years;

(g) There is currently no international forum involving countries with different levels of development to discuss innovations in poverty measurement, share experience and take stock of country practices. Possible topics to be discussed at such a forum include: how to communicate poverty statistics, obtain feedback from policy analysts and identify emerging issues. To make such a meeting efficient, it is important to be clear about the target audience that may involve users and the academic community.

### Conclusions

15. The Bureau welcomed the review paper. OECD will provide more up-to-date information on the work on income and wealth following up on the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report (referring to para 76 from document ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/4). Mexico will send a new contribution to replace the note (ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/4/Add.2).

16. In view of all the issues raised in the discussion and not addressed by the in depth review, the Bureau asked the secretariat to organise a one-off event in 2013 jointly with OECD and CIS-STAT to discuss how to improve poverty measurement in the UNECE region. It is desirable that the World Bank be involved in the meeting. The Bureau will discuss an outline of the event in February 2013.

#### **IV. UNECE REVIEW PROCESS; UNECE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME FOR 2013**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/5 (UNECE)

17. The secretariat informed the Bureau of the progress with the UNECE review. So far the assessment of the work undertaken by the UNECE subprogramme on statistics has been positive. The final conclusions of the review will be submitted for approval to the April 2013 session of the Economic Commission for Europe. Possible changes to the UNECE programme of work will become effective as of January 2014. The Bureau will be informed of the outcome of the review.

18. The review praises the good coordination of work in statistics between Eurostat, OECD, World Bank, IMF, CIS-STAT and other international organizations. It also states that the statistics programme produces tangible outputs that have a clear value added within the UNECE region and beyond. The UNECE Executive Committee also underlined the importance of the work on measuring sustainable development and follow-up to Rio+20.

19. The draft programme of work of the UNECE Statistical Division in 2013 was presented to the Bureau for approval. The discussion of the programme focused on the activities that are new or substantially changed as compared to previous years.

20. The related Steering Groups and Task Forces were also reviewed. The terms of reference of currently active Steering Groups and Task Forces are available at:  
[www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html](http://www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html)

21. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The draft programme of work should better emphasise the leading role of UNECE in many areas of international statistics, and its outputs that have a global impact (para 9). The good coordination of work reduces the burden of member states and of other international organizations (para 12);

(b) The Bureau is interested in obtaining information on the amount of secretariat resources devoted to the different areas of work;

(c) Eurostat thanked the UNECE secretariat for the contribution to joint capacity building activities, in particular to the monitoring missions of population and housing censuses. Eurostat stressed the need for UNECE and Eurostat to continue to closely coordinate and discuss bilaterally their work in South-East Europe;

(d) It is desirable to develop guiding principles for selecting new initiatives for future work, such as: particular interest in the UNECE region, specific expertise is available, work is not undertaken elsewhere, there is a clear value added, etc.

#### **Conclusion**

22. The Bureau endorsed the 2013 programme of work of the UNECE Statistical Division, subject to the comments in para 21 and on individual work areas below.

**A. National accounts**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/6 (UNECE)

23. The Bureau discussed the terms of reference for the continuation of work of the Steering Group on National Accounts, set up in 2009. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Steering Group has worked effectively and produced tangible results;

(b) The work is particularly important for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The workshops and seminars organised jointly with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), IMF and UNSD have been very useful;

(c) The capacity building activities are closely coordinated with Eurostat, in particular in South-East European countries.

Conclusion

24. The Bureau expressed support for the work of the Steering Group on national accounts and approved the new terms of reference. Brent Moulton, US Bureau of Economic Analysis, will be invited to chair the Group. Eurostat confirmed their participation in the Steering Group.

**B. Population and housing censuses**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/7 (UNECE)

25. The Bureau discussed the proposal to establish a Steering Group to coordinate the preparation of the recommendations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses and the related task forces, as recommended by the 2012 CES plenary session.

26. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The changing concept of family and the increasing mobility of population may complicate census taking. The Steering Group should consider possible ways and tools to address these challenges, such as new definitions and methodologies and the risk of double counting;

(b) Eurostat is carrying out activities in support of developing census methodology in South East Europe including workshops and financing under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA);

(c) The Steering Group needs to ensure sufficient attention to the links of the population and agricultural censuses, and on measuring disability, as there are no specific task forces on these topics;

(d) The draft recommendations will include recommendations for register-based censuses in addition to traditional censuses. The Steering Group should consider how to accommodate the different methodological requirements of register-based and traditional censuses, and how to organise the work of the Task Forces to deal with register-based censuses, traditional censuses and mixed-mode censuses.

Conclusion

27. The Bureau expressed support for developing the recommendations for the 2020 round of housing and population censuses, and approved the terms of reference of the Steering Group and the Task Forces. Eurostat confirmed its participation in SG and specific TFs. The Bureau asked the Steering Group to report on the progress of work in October 2013.

**C. Migration statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/8 (UNECE)

28. The Bureau discussed future work in the area of migration statistics based on draft terms of reference for establishing a Task Force on measuring circular migration. The terms of reference were drafted in response to the Bureau decision in February 2012.

29. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Although there is a clear need for methodological work on measuring circular migration, the possible Task Force should consider widening the focus of the work;

(b) Some additional work is required before setting up a Task Force in order to clarify the concepts and to consider the need for including short-term and return migration in the scope of the work.

Conclusion

30. The secretariat will develop a short paper to explain the concepts and the need for further work on short-term, circular and return migration. The paper will define alternative objectives for a possible Task Force.

31. The secretariat will circulate the paper for electronic consultation inviting the Bureau members to propose a priority topic and express interest in participating in a related Task Force.

32. The secretariat will modify the terms of reference based on the outcome of the electronic consultation, and will present them to the Bureau for approval at its February 2013 meeting.

**D. Terms of Reference for the continuation of the work on strategic developments in business architecture in statistics**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/9 (UNECE)

33. The Bureau discussed the terms of reference for the continuation of the work on modernising statistical production undertaken by the High-level Group on Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS). The terms of reference were prepared by the UNECE secretariat with input from the High-level Group (HLG).

34. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The group should remain small enough to maintain efficiency of work, but should be open to engagement with all interested parties;

(b) The mandate of the group should be to frame a collective strategy for the modernization of statistical production and services, and to formulate and disseminate new ideas in the field. The terms of reference should emphasise the role of the HLG to coordinate and provide leadership, where needed, to activities concerning the modernization of statistical production;

(c) An intermediate level group of experts to bridge between the implementation of the HLG strategy and the work under different projects is needed. This intermediate level could be a network consisting of people that lead modernization activities in the national statistical offices. It could help to plan activities and monitor the progress with implementing projects, allowing HLG to focus on strategy and coordination;

(d) The human resource and management aspects are essential for successfully modernising statistical production. There should be a link between the work of the HLG and the proposed CES Steering Group on Human Resources Management and Training (see paras 38-41);

(e) The work to develop the Generic Statistical Information Model has been successful. Efforts should now focus on the communication and implementation of the model;

(f) Wider communication of the work of the HLG is needed. One possibility will be during the planned Friday seminar before the United Nations Statistical Commission session (22 February 2013). A regional approach to communication is also important, with seminars like the one held in October 2012 in St. Petersburg.

### Conclusions

35. The Bureau expressed support for the work on modernizing statistical production and services, and approved the terms of reference subject to inclusion of the changes in para 33 (b). The group will be called the “High-level Group on the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services”.

36. The Bureau decided to keep the membership of the HLG limited and agreed that there is a need to establish an intermediate level of governance. The HLG will prepare proposals on governance of the groups and activities it oversees for a forthcoming Bureau meeting.

37. The secretariat will prepare terms of reference for the establishment of a trust fund to support the HLG activities for the February 2013 Bureau meeting.

### **E. Human resources management and training**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/10 and 10/Add.1 (UNECE)

38. The Bureau discussed the proposed terms of reference for a Steering Group on Human Resources Management and Training (HRMT) prepared by the UNECE secretariat. The terms of reference are based on the experience with the UNECE workshops on HRMT, and the recommendations of the most recent workshop held in Budapest in September 2012. As an outcome of the seminars, a compilation of good practices in HRMT is planned to be finalised in spring 2013.

39. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The proposed Steering Group should address future challenges in HRMT in statistical offices, and coordinate work with the HLG on the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services. The issues should include the competencies of the future statisticians and the need for change management in the modernization of statistical offices;

(b) Electronic means, such as wikis and webinars, should be used to share experiences and good practices on a continuous basis.

#### Conclusion

40. The Bureau supported further work on human resources management and training, and recognized the critical role of HRMT in the process of modernizing statistical production and services.

41. The terms of reference of the Steering Group will be revised to better define the scope of work and the outputs and activities. The revised terms of reference will be circulated for electronic consultation to the Bureau. Australia, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom and Eurostat have expressed interest in participating in the Steering Group.

#### **G. Outcome of the High-level Seminar on Modernization of Statistical Production**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/20 (UNECE)

42. The Bureau was informed about the outcome of the High-level Seminar on Modernization of Statistical Production and Services held on 3-5 October 2012 in St. Petersburg.

43. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Efficient communication of the work on modernization of official statistics is important to achieve tangible results. A follow-up regional conference would therefore be welcome but should not duplicate other international events on similar topics that are planned for 2013/14 (DGINS, ISI);

(b) Both regional and global initiatives will be needed to inform countries about progress in this area and to enable sharing of innovative solutions. It was recommended in the current stage to focus on regional activities and consider organising a global conference later;

(c) Conferences on modernization of statistical production should avoid highly theoretical discussions and address practical issues that are relevant to most participants;

(d) The proposal from the St. Petersburg seminar to create a central point of contact for information and support on modernisation issues was supported.

#### Conclusion

44. The Bureau expressed support for organizing regional follow-up activities related to the modernization of statistical production.

## **H. Outcome of the Seminar on New Frontiers in Data Collection**

45. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the outcome of the Seminar on New Frontiers for Statistical Data Collection which took place on 31 October-2 November 2012 in Geneva. The main conclusions of the Seminar were:

- (a) There is considerable duplication of effort between organizations in data collection;
- (b) New data sources highlight the need for new methods, tools and quality frameworks;
- (c) The seminar is a unique forum for data collection managers and there was unanimous support for follow-up activities, including future meetings. The current informal organising committee should continue its work;
- (d) Topics for future meetings could include confidentiality and standards for data collection;
- (e) There is a strong need for a wiki to share experiences, ideas and documents.

46. The following points were raised in the discussion by the Bureau members:

- (a) The subject of big data was a key theme of discussions in the meeting. Big data could be a topic for a CES seminar in 2014;
- (b) New data sources are not only a source for official statistics, but could become an alternative to official statistics. Expertise should be developed for using the new kinds of data for official statistics and for combining multiple data sources;
- (c) Guidelines for cooperation with commercial partners will be needed;
- (d) A wiki platform is being created to collect good practices. This will facilitate possible future work on developing guidelines, and will support the maintenance of a network of data collection managers to exchange ideas and good practices.
- (e) The Bureau recommended as a first priority for the group to develop a network of focal points to exchange best practices on data collection, organise the documentation or/and have webinars to share expertise. Once this is in place, a follow-up physical meeting could be considered.

### Conclusion

47. The Bureau expressed support for follow-up activities in this area, and maintaining the network of data collection managers and developing a wiki to share good practices in data collection.

## **V. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES 2012 SEMINAR ON MEASURING HUMAN CAPITAL**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/11 (New Zealand and OECD)

48. The Bureau discussed the stock-taking report on measuring human capital prepared by OECD and a group of experts led by New Zealand as a follow-up to the CES 2012 seminar.

49. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The paper is well prepared reflecting the current status in measurement of human capital;

(b) The experimental satellite accounts were considered as a promising avenue for further development of human capital measures. Less emphasis was placed on estimating the differences between the cost-based and income-based approaches, and on non-economic returns of human capital;

(c) The results of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) will be released at the end of 2013, which is expected to attract policy interest in human capital.

### Conclusion

50. The Bureau supported the recommendations for further work proposed in the paper, while considering work on experimental satellite accounts as a priority.

51. Statistics New Zealand will coordinate the drafting of terms of reference for further work on measuring human capital to be considered at the February 2013 meeting of the Bureau. The work should have a longer-term goal with concrete deliverables in the short term to enable step-by-step progress in this complex area. Canada and United Kingdom expressed interest in participating in further work.

52. The report will be submitted to the June 2013 CES plenary session. OECD will publish the paper as an OECD working paper.

## **VI. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES 2012 SEMINAR ON IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/12 (UNECE)

53. The Bureau discussed the list of possible follow-up actions to the CES seminar on Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in June 2012. The Bureau also discussed the draft letter to country governments prepared by the secretariat to promote the Fundamental Principles.

54. Any follow-up activities in this area should take into account the work of the Friends of the Chair group on Fundamental Principles set up by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). The group is currently working on the analysis of the results of the UNSD survey on the implementation of the Principles, a new preamble to the Principles, and recommendations on how to strengthen the implementation of the Principles. These documents will be presented to the UNSC in February 2013. It is also planned to submit the Principles

with the new preamble to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations for endorsement.

55. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The wording of the letter to the Heads of government needs to be strengthened to support effective implementation of the Fundamental Principles. Such a letter is very important for the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The letter could be accompanied by the brochure on Fundamental Principles that the secretariat will prepare as a follow-up to the CES 2012 seminar;

(b) The timing of the letter was discussed. A possibility would be to send the letter around the time when the Fundamental Principles are submitted to ECOSOC to build up support for the endorsement of the Principles at the political level. Another possibility would be to send the letter after the endorsement of the Fundamental Principles by ECOSOC to increase awareness and draw the attention of country governments to the Principles;

(c) Eurostat supported the postponement of sending the letter to take into account the ongoing Global Assessments of statistical systems in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the current discussion on the EU statistical law and the process of signing the commitment of confidence by the EU Member States.

### Conclusions

56. The Bureau decided to postpone the follow-up activities identified during the CES 2012 seminar on Fundamental Principles until after the UNSC Friends of the Chair group has finished its work.

57. The Bureau asked the secretariat to organise a briefing to the 2013 CES plenary session on the outcome of the Friends of the Chair group.

## **VII. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CES 2013 PLENARY SESSION**

### **A. Evaluation of the 60<sup>th</sup> CES plenary session; recommendations for organising CES seminars**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/13 and 13/Add.1 (UNECE)

58. The results of the evaluation questionnaires of the 2012 CES plenary session were presented for information.

### Conclusion

59. The Bureau will discuss the organisation of the CES plenary sessions, including the organization of the CES seminars at a forthcoming Bureau meeting

**B. Organization of the CES 2013 seminar “Challenges in providing access to microdata for research purposes”**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/14 (Slovenia)

60. The Bureau discussed the organization of the CES 2013 seminar on access to microdata based on the outline prepared by the Seminar Organiser, Slovenia. New Zealand and United States will be the Session Organizers.

61. The following points were raised in the discussion:

- (a) The topic is of high importance;
- (b) The current outline covers a broad list of topics, the seminar should be more focused and drive towards a concrete outcome;
- (c) It is important to avoid technical discussion and deal with strategic issues, such as ethical questions related to microdata access, related legislation, etc.;
- (d) It would be desirable to invite as a keynote speaker an eminent researcher who uses microdata to obtain the views of microdata users;
- (e) The seminar outline should mention the recently set up OECD Expert Group for International Collaboration on Microdata Access with the mandate to increase coordination of cross-border access to microdata. OECD will provide a supporting paper on the work of the group;
- (f) The seminar could also deal with the issues of spatial microdata, combining microdata of businesses and individuals, and link to “big data”.

Conclusions

62. The seminar organizer will update the outline for the February 2013 Bureau meeting, taking into account the suggestions by the Bureau. The seminar will continue to follow the “CES format”, including summaries of papers by the session organisers and no presentations of individual papers. The seminar will take place on Tuesday, 11 June 2013. The deadline for invited papers will be 15 March 2013.

63. CES Bureau members were invited to make proposals for a keynote speaker.

64. The secretariat will help with the organization of the seminar. Eurostat will provide a paper for session 1. OECD will provide a paper for session 2 on international collaboration on microdata access. There will be no paper by Australia.

**C. Organization of the CES 2013 seminar “Challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+20”**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/15 (the Netherlands)

65. The Bureau discussed the organization of the CES 2013 seminar on the System of Environmental-economic Accounting (SEEA) and sustainable development based on an outline

by the Seminar Organizer, the Netherlands. Slovenia and Switzerland will be the Session Organizers.

66. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The seminar should primarily focus on how the report of the Task Force on measuring sustainable development and SEEA can be implemented and used. Less emphasis should be placed on opening ways for future work, such as how to deal with measuring risks and vulnerabilities, modelling environmental sustainability, etc.;

(b) Session 1 'Measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+20': the Bureau recommended to invite a policy maker as a keynote speaker (a possible suggested name was the EU representative in the MDG+ group, Gustavo Martin Prada, the Director of the EU Development Directorate);

(c) Currently the focus of the session is more on the report of the Task Force on measuring sustainable development (TFSD) and less on Rio+20 follow-up: this should be adjusted;

(d) The French paper could describe the lessons learned from the recent wide consultation on environment and sustainable development with the civil society in France;

(e) Session 2 'Implementation of SEEA': the session should consider the leadership role of the statistical offices in SEEA implementation. Sufficient attention needs to be paid to the issues of communication, coordination with other agencies and change management;

(f) The concluding part of the seminar should look at how official statistics can implement the decisions of the Rio+20 Summit.

### Conclusions

67. The seminar organizers will update the outline for the February 2013 Bureau meeting, taking into account the suggestions by the Bureau. The seminar will continue to follow the "CES format", including summaries of papers by the session organisers and no presentations of individual papers. The seminar will take place on Monday, 10 June 2013. The deadline for invited papers will be 15 March 2013.

68. The papers by Mexico, Eurostat and OECD were confirmed. There will be no paper by New Zealand.

69. The approval of the report of the Task Force on measuring sustainable development should take place during the 'formal business' part of the CES plenary session on Wednesday, 12 June to ensure that a maximum number of Heads of statistical offices are present.

### **D. Report on Measuring Sustainable Development**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/16 (Task Force on measuring sustainable development)

70. The Bureau discussed the draft final report of the UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Task Force on measuring sustainable development. The report was sent for electronic consultation to the CES

Bureau members on 9 October. Mexico, New Zealand and Ukraine provided written comments on the Report.

71. The written comments supported the conceptual framework and considered the Report to be well-structured, logical and a useful basis for reviewing national indicator sets.

72. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) There was general support to the Report. It was considered a substantial piece of work and a major step forward. Several countries have already used the draft Report in reviewing their sustainable development indicators (e.g. Slovenia and Ukraine). The Report is compatible with the Eurostat vision;

(b) The Report should be distributed as soon as possible so that it can be taken into account in the Rio+20 follow-up process and in developing the sustainable development goals;

(c) Some specific suggestions to improve the text included: to provide a more precise definition of the indicators, better explain the different asset boundaries used in the Report as compared to the SNA 2008 and SEEA, and better explain the limits of monetisation and what is acceptable from the viewpoint of official statistics;

(d) The Bureau considered necessary to have a “single pen” final language editing of the report. The secretariat was asked to organise the work;

(e) The Bureau should discuss follow-up actions once the Report is endorsed: how to implement the recommendations of the Report and how to proceed with the issues identified in the Report as requiring further work.

### Conclusions

73. The Report should be sent for electronic consultation to the CES members as soon as possible. In reviewing the Report, countries and organizations should be asked to focus on substance. The secretariat should organise the final editing of the Report, including the “single pen” language editing in parallel with the electronic consultation. The Report should be presented to the CES 2013 plenary session for endorsement.

74. The Bureau will discuss at its February 2013 or future meeting the possible follow-up actions that arise from the Report.

### **E. Preparation of the formal session, draft agenda and timetable for the 2013 plenary session**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/17 (UNECE)

75. The Bureau discussed the draft timetable of the CES 2013 plenary session. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Sufficient time should be allocated for considering the paper on measuring human capital. The paper can also be used as a background document for the CES 2013 seminar on SEEA, Rio+20 and sustainable development;

(b) The discussion on outcomes of the in-depth reviews should focus on 1-2 topics. Other reviews can be kept as background documents and be endorsed with the help of electronic consultations.

### Conclusions

76. The 61<sup>st</sup> CES plenary session will take place on 10-12 June 2013 in Geneva, starting at 9:30 on Monday, 10 June, and finishing by 12:30 on Wednesday, 12 June. The OECD Statistics Committee meeting will be held back-to-back with the CES, starting at 14:30 on Wednesday, 12 June.

77. UNECE will organise a workshop for the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia on measuring sustainable development, Rio+20 and implementation of SEEA. The workshop will start on Wednesday, 12 June afternoon and finish by Friday, 14 June lunchtime.

78. The stock-taking report on measuring human capital and the report of the Task Force on measuring sustainable development will be considered on Wednesday, 12 June.

79. Measuring poverty will be one of the in-depth review topics to be discussed under agenda item 7 “Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region” to obtain input for a possible meeting on this topic during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2013. The second topic will be chosen at the February 2013 Bureau meeting.

80. The secretariat will update the timetable of the CES 2013 plenary session for the 2013 February meeting of the Bureau.

### **VIII. FOLLOW-UP TO THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/8 (UNECE)

81. The Bureau discussed implications of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20) for official statistics based on a paper by the UNECE secretariat. The Rio+20 outcome document “The future we want” calls for concrete actions to improve data, information and monitoring of progress in policy implementation. The thematic areas for follow-up are expected to create demand for data to assess progress in specific areas. Furthermore, a process has been initiated to establish Sustainable Development Goals and the related targets and indicators.

82. The main message targeted at the statistical community is reflected in para 38 of the outcome document: “We recognize the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard we request the United Nations Statistical Commission, in consultation with relevant United Nations system entities and other relevant organizations, to launch a programme of work in this area, building on existing initiatives.”

83. The UN Statistical Division is organising a High-level Forum on “Response to the Rio+20 mandate for broader measures of progress” on the occasion of the UN Statistical Commission session on Monday, 25 February 2013.

### Conclusion

84. The Bureau noted that a proactive approach from the statistical community is needed to influence the process of defining the Sustainable Development Goals and the respective targets and indicators. It is important to ensure that the targets be measurable and take into account the availability of data. The Bureau members will explore avenues for considering the issue during the UNSC session in February-March 2013.

## **IX. PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME RELATED TO STATISTICS**

85. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) presented its activities related to environmental data and indicators. UNEP works with national governments to enable sound environmental management and sustainable development. UNEP employs in total 700 staff members globally. Within the United Nations, the organization is the voice of the environment by keeping the global environment under review. This role has been reaffirmed by the Rio+20 outcome document.

86. UNEP has currently 6 subprogrammes, dealing with climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and resource efficiency. A seventh subprogramme on “keeping the environment under review” will be added in 2014. This will introduce new emphasis on statistics. The publication “Global Environment Outlook” is the driving force of the UNEP data work. Its fifth issue was released before the Rio+20 Summit. The publication is based on the “Environmental Data Explorer” database that contains a core set and over 500 indicators with a focus on early warning data (available at [geodata.grid.unep.ch](http://geodata.grid.unep.ch)).

87. Important trends are presented in a publication “Keeping Track of our Changing Environment”. The UNEP experience with progress towards environmental goals shows that the goals that have measurable, quantifiable targets are easier to achieve. A new data platform will be launched and is currently available as a pilot version: [www.uneplive.org](http://www.uneplive.org).

88. UNEP has been one of the front runners in defining and measuring green economy. A series of publications on this topic has been issued, including a “Green economy report” and “Measuring progress towards green economy” (<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>).

89. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) UNEP is treating a remarkable amount of data as part of their regular work programme. A paper from a user perspective would be very useful for the CES 2013 seminar on sustainable development;

(b) Filling data gaps for indicators on green growth and green economy is challenging. Serious data gaps exist in the area of chemicals, waste and resource efficiency. The list of data gaps provided by UNEP in relation to the Global Environment Outlook is useful for statisticians.

### Conclusion

90. There is great potential for synergies in the work of UNEP and the international statistical system. The Bureau encouraged UNEP to share its best practices in the use of statistics and to

reach out to the global statistical system through the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA).

## **X. INVENTORY OF TASK FORCES AND WORKING GROUPS**

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/NOV/19 (Eurostat)

91. Eurostat presented an updated inventory of international working groups active in different areas of statistics. The inventory covers groups that involve members from different international organizations (therefore, the working groups/task forces under Eurostat and OECD are not included). The inventory is also available at the website of the Coordinating Committee of Statistical Activities (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/acsub-public/inventory.htm>).

### Conclusion

92. The Bureau welcomed the inventory as an important exercise in avoiding duplication of work.

## **XI. DATES AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CES BUREAU MEETINGS**

93. The next CES Bureau meeting will take place in Luxembourg on 5-6 February 2013. Thereafter, the Bureau plans to meet on the following dates: 22-23 October 2013 (possibly in the country of the Chair of the Bureau), 28-29 January 2014 and 21-22 October 2014.

94. The 61<sup>st</sup> CES plenary session will take place on 10-12 June 2013 in Geneva, starting at 9:30 on 10 June and finishing by 12:30 on 12 June. The OECD Statistics Committee meeting will start at 14:30 on 12 June 2012. The UNECE secretariat will organize a seminar for the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia starting on 12 June afternoon and finishing by 14 June lunchtime.

95. The 62<sup>nd</sup> CES plenary session will take place in Paris, during the week of 7-11 April 2014, back-to-back with the OECD Statistics Committee meeting.

## **XII. OTHER BUSINESS**

96. The Bureau reviewed the agenda of the UN Statistical Commission session that will take place on 26 February- 1 March 2013.

97. The Chairman drew the attention of the Bureau members to planning activities for the international year of statistics in 2013. The Chair of the CES will send a letter to the Heads of National Statistical Offices underlining the importance of promoting official statistics on this occasion.

98. The Bureau decided to co-opt Ms. M. Bruun of Finland as a new Bureau member to replace Mr. Priit Potisepp of Estonia. The Bureau will send a letter of appreciation to thank Mr. Potisepp for his commitment and constructive contributions to the work.

\* \* \* \* \*