

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For discussion and
recommendations

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Item V of the Provisional
Agenda

NEW CHALLENGES IN CAPACITY BUILDING

Prepared by the Secretariat

New challenges are extending the need for capacity building beyond the traditional statistical areas and beneficiary countries which are the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The Bureau considered the new challenges and ways to adapt the UNECE capacity building activities to meet them.

I. BACKGROUND

1. For years, UNECE has been carrying out activities in support of building the statistical capacity of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). However, the new challenges, such as producing statistics for the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), linking statistics and geospatial information, using big data and modernizing statistical production are extending the need for capacity building. In addition to EECCA countries, many UNECE countries would benefit from some kind of capacity building in the new challenging areas of statistics, related to modernisation of official statistics and reporting on SDGs.

2. In 2014-2015, UNECE carried out 13 training workshops and undertook a number of advisory missions to improve the statistical capacity in countries with developing statistical systems. These activities contributed to strengthening countries' national capacities, particularly in the EECCA countries, and implementing effectively international standards and good practices in the production of economic, social, demographic and environmental statistics.

3. These activities supported countries' capacity to compile gender-sensitive indicators and report on the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. The work also contributed to assessing countries' readiness for the SDG monitoring.

4. UNECE tailors its capacity building activities to address EECCA countries' priorities as identified in Global Assessments of national statistical systems carried out jointly by UNECE, EFTA and Eurostat. Some donors, including Eurostat and the World Bank, plan their capacity building activities drawing on the conclusions of Global Assessments.

II. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND NEW CHALLENGES

5. UNECE will continue to support the EECCA countries with developing statistical systems in their national priority areas to bridge the gap between the different levels of statistical development in the UNECE region. These activities will include regional

workshops, work sessions back-to-back to international expert meetings and advisory missions at countries' request. To better support countries, in 2016 UNECE will start the "rotating scheme assessments" with partners to review progress against the recommendations of Global Assessments more frequently.

6. In 2016-2017, UNECE will conduct a number of national workshops and other activities carried out with funding from the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) 9th tranche project. The target countries of this project are Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The Generic Law on Official Statistics is one key result of this project.

7. At the same time, new challenges are arising. All countries will need to start providing the necessary statistics for the monitoring of SDGs as of 2016. To be successful in this work, statistical production may need to be modernized and new possibilities such as geospatial information and big data be better utilized.

8. The role of Regional Commissions, including UNECE, is to assist countries in responding to the needs for statistical development. To this end, a joint project of all Regional Commissions, coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), will be launched in the course of 2016. This UNDA 10th tranche project is expected to help respond to the following needs:

(a) Assess specific needs of national statistical systems, e.g. by using in-depth analysis of challenges similar to Global Assessments.

(b) Assist national statistical systems in foundational issues of official statistics, e.g. to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks of official statistics.

(c) Expand official statistics to new subject-matter areas, especially for the monitoring of SDGs, such as (but not limited to) multidimensional poverty, quality of life, governance, etc.

(d) Modernize official statistics building on the progress achieved and standards developed by the UNECE High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics.

(e) Build a platform for sustainable statistical capacity building including the development of e-learning tools.

(f) Build partnership for statistical capacity development among United Nations organizations and others to mobilize further resources.

III. FURTHER WORK

9. UNECE will continue to address the specific needs of the countries with developing statistical systems with an increasing focus on SDGs and the modernization of official statistics.

10. At the same time, there is a need to extend the statistical capacity building activities in the UNECE region beyond EECCA countries in view of implementing the outputs related to modernisation of official statistics and statistical reporting on SDGs.

11. Many of the UNECE countries would benefit from training workshops and meetings to discuss and share experiences on how to respond to new demands, e.g. (i) producing statistics for the SDG monitoring, and (ii) modernizing statistical production to make use of the latest technological possibilities, including using geospatial information and big data.

12. In general participation in these activities would need to be self-funded by countries. A limited amount of funding may be available from the UNDA projects for supporting the involvement of countries with developing statistical systems in the activities.

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