

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Meeting of the 2018/2019 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 14-15 October 2018

REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) was held in Geneva on 14-15 October 2018. The following members of the Bureau attended: Ms. M. Bruun (Chair, Finland), Mr. S. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia), Mr. A. Arora (Canada), Mr. M. Kristof (Croatia), Mr. J. Santaella (Mexico), Mr. W. Holzer (representing Mr. K. Pesendorfer, Austria), and Mr. J. Pullinger (United Kingdom). The following permanent observers also attended: Mr. V. Sokolin, (CIS-STAT), Ms. M. Kotzeva (Eurostat), Mr. J.-R. Rosales (representing Louis Marc Ducharme, IMF), Ms. M. Durand (OECD) and Ms. L. Bratanova (UNECE).
2. The following persons assisted members of the Bureau: Ms. A. Safyan (Armenia), Mr. A. Kosarev (CIS-Stat) and Ms. M.-J. Santos (Eurostat). Ms. T. Luige (UNECE) served as Secretary of the meeting. Ms. D. Ibrahimaj (Albania), Mr. R. Hermans (Netherlands), Mr. B. Loison and Mr. B. Rothen (Switzerland), and Ms. Gulnara Roll (UNECE) participated in the meeting for selected agenda items at the invitation of the Chair.
3. The following staff of the UNECE Statistical Division also attended: Mr. C. Boldsen, Ms. M. Cwiek, Mr. T. Gjaltema, Mr. M. Nagy, Ms. J. Park and Mr. S. Vale.
4. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) sent written comments on selected agenda items. The comments were presented to the Bureau and taken into account in the discussion.

II. IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF SELECTED STATISTICAL AREAS

(a) Statistics and data on cities

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/2 by the Netherlands and Eurostat, and Add.1 by UNECE)

5. The Bureau reviewed in-depth statistics and data on cities based on a paper by the Netherlands and Eurostat, and comments prepared by UNECE. The Bureau raised the following issues:
 - The demand for data describing cities is growing, spurred by local and international policy interests, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Climate Agreement. Furthermore, the 68th UNECE Commission in April 2019 will focus on the theme of “Smart and Sustainable Cities”, and the theme of cities will also be taken up at the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in March 2019.
 - It is important to look at the needs of policy makers for statistics at subnational level, how such data are, or could be used, and how NSOs can make the data more accessible (through data hubs, secure research services, training on how to use the data, etc.).
 - A key challenge for official statistics is the lack of harmonized definitions and consistent use of terminology. For example, there is no single, internationally agreed definition of urban/rural although this breakdown is used frequently in official statistics.
 - It may not be possible to agree on common definitions that would be applicable to all countries. Rather, agreeing on a taxonomy of related terms and their use may be a more fruitful approach. Different countries could use different thresholds for defining towns, cities, human settlements, etc.
 - Partnerships with cities can be challenging and it is essential to maintain objectivity. Cities may be interested in data for political purposes, and may create their own standards which can undermine official statistics. Furthermore, providing data and statistics on small areas can increase risks to data confidentiality. Data generated by cities are not typically considered part of official statistics and the cities sometimes do not want to

cooperate with NSOs. At the same time, the data may look very ‘official’ as it is created by local governments.

- On the other hand, many municipalities are looking for support from NSOs as they do not have the expertise in statistics. Especially the small municipalities have very low capacities.
- It is important for NSOs to be involved in statistics on cities to develop methodology and set standards to improve quality and international comparability. Otherwise there will be a problem of data coherence, and outputs may be duplicated.
- There is a strong link between city statistics and financial statistics as cities need to be financially sustainable. IMF has issued standards on financial statistics for provincial and municipal governments – a reference to this should be added to the paper.
- At international level, a number of organizations are working to improve measurement at subnational level, including on cities. In addition to the collaborations currently mentioned in the paper, the work of UN Population Division, ILO, and IMF should be noted. Further information on the current capacity development work of the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit can be provided.
- For a broader view it would be useful to get information on more countries and practices, including on the use of data on cities. A survey should look at types of partnerships of NSOs with cities, nature of data/statistics of interest, and collect case studies. It will be useful to focus on the countries and cities who are leading in this work. E.g., OECD has a group of champion mayors (80 big cities) and could try to facilitate connections with the involved experts.
- OECD provided written comments and suggested to add a list of references to the paper.

Conclusion:

6. The authors will update the paper to reflect the CES Bureau discussion and additional information on international activities in this area. The paper will be presented to the CES 2019 plenary session for information. NSOs that are active in this area will be encouraged to contribute to the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit’s activities related to statistics on cities.

7. UNECE will carry out a survey on NSO’s involvement in the production of statistics on cities (and other subnational units), and their engagement with cities in this area.

8. The Bureau will consider further follow up with regard to the harmonization of definitions and terms after the UN Statistical Commission discussion on subnational measurement in March 2019.

(b) Use of satellite image data in official statistics

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/3 by Canada and Mexico and Add.1 by UNECE)

9. The Bureau discussed the in-depth review on the use of satellite imagery and earth observation technology in official statistics, based on a paper by Canada and Mexico and comments by UNECE. The Bureau raised the following issues:

- The paper gives a very good summary of the use of satellite imagery and earth observation technology in official statistics, and the related challenges;
- Satellite and earth observation data are becoming essential sources for official statistics. For example, SDGs provide a driver for increased use of these data;
- Satellite and earth observation data are increasingly being made available for free and in open format but they require new skills to process effectively. This will require capacity

development and new partnerships with data providers. “Analysis ready” datasets reduce the need for processing but are often expensive and should be well documented with proper user guidance.

- A cost-benefit analysis of the use of satellite and earth observation data would be useful.
- The official statistical community needs to reflect more on its requirements for satellite and earth observation data. This could start from identifying what questions could be answered using these data, and what key statistical products could be prepared. These can be different in countries with different level of development. Looking at what data are available on the market and what applications are needed would be also useful. A “sprint” session could be organised to clarify these requirements.
- More work on developing common standards between the statistical and geospatial communities is needed.
- Machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques can help to make sense of large amounts of data but these are new for many statistical organisations and require new skills.
- International cooperation would be useful to contact big geospatial tools providers as a community to get discounts or special types of licences.
- Various groups are working on related topics and a summary of all activities would be useful. CCSA plans to conduct a stock taking exercise of the reference data sets and tools used by international organizations. UNSD is creating a UN system network on geospatial information. The private sector is very active and has formed a world council of corporations on geo-spatial information.
- It will be useful to systematically document and share case studies of national practices in using satellite and earth observation data (for example, from the recent Helsinki Conference).
- This in-depth review could be discussed more in detail at the next CES plenary session.

Conclusion:

10. The in-depth review paper will be updated to reflect the Bureau’s discussion, including information on the international groups and activities mentioned above. It will be submitted to the CES plenary session in June 2019.

11. The secretariat will hold a sprint session with a small group of experts from interested countries and international organisations in early 2019 to formulate the requirements of the official statistics community regarding satellite and earth observation data. Following the sprint and the discussion at the CES plenary session, the secretariat and authors of the in-depth review paper will present a proposal for follow-up activities to the Bureau in October 2019.

(c) Role of national statistical systems in the new data ecosystem (ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/4 by UNECE)

12. The Bureau continued a discussion on this topic that started in February 2018, taking into account the outcomes of the relevant CES, OECD and EU meetings. The following issues were raised:

- The new data ecosystem can be seen both as a threat and as an opportunity for NSOs. The threat rather targets how official statistics operates than the paradigm of official statistics itself. The main competitive advantage of official statistics continues to be its focus on professionalism, impartiality, practical utility, and good track record of cooperating with other stakeholders.

- The potential new role goes beyond producing statistics to new functions, e.g. validating statistics produced by others, data stewardship, acting as a data hub, collecting data on behalf of others. Statisticians may be asked to lead in economic and scientific analysis more generally, and bring in expertise that is helpful for government. It will be useful to discuss the experiences in different countries in such new areas.
- NSO should participate in a government wide discussion on data policies and strategies to have a clearly defined role for an NSO in this. NSOs should strengthen partnerships and the relationship with other stakeholders who are also currently redefining themselves in the new data ecosystem.
- Considering the new role should start from a user-centric view: talking to people who need the data and analysing how to provide data that would allow taking better decisions at policy and individual citizen level.
- While considering a possible new role, NSOs should continue delivering on their core mandate. Maintaining a certain level of resources is necessary to be able to implement the core mandate. This is especially challenging in smaller countries with less financial resources.
- Different countries may need to progress in this area in different ways and at different pace. It is important to share experience and not to duplicate efforts.
- It will be useful to develop collectively guidance on what kinds of skills are needed for taking on a new role and how to acquire them.
- There is increasing pressure from state administration to use data from statistical process to take decisions about individuals and therefore confidentiality becomes a big issue.
- This new role is also opening up new sources of information, allowing to produce more timely and granular data. From strategic viewpoint this is the way to be more effective.
- Experience shows that with the increase of using big data and other new data sources the need for official statistics also increases to serve as a benchmark.
- Considering the new role of NSOs in the new data ecosystem should build on the outcomes of the discussions on this topic at other fora, and the CES work on value of official statistics, statistical legislation etc. It is important to address a variety of national circumstances with countries of different sizes, institutional setup, budgetary situation, etc. to see a diversity of practices and identify useful lessons learned.
- As a follow-up, a background paper could be prepared for the 2019 CES seminar on the new role of NSOs integrating the strategic questions and key messages of the Statistics Netherlands' paper *Big Data Strategies for Official Statistics*¹ (DGINS 2018) and other relevant materials. The paper could serve as a basis to shape a vision and strategy for future and to identify concrete steps forward;
- After the CES 2019 seminar the new role of NSOs, a foresight exercise exploring different possible future scenarios would be beneficial. OECD could help to organize this.

Conclusion:

13. The Secretariat will lead preparation of a background paper for the CES 2019 seminar on emerging role of NSOs, building on the papers from different fora. The topic will be further

¹ <http://www.dgins2018.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20-NL-DGINS-Session-2-paper-Struijs-Big-Data-Strategies.pdf>

reviewed at the CES Bureau meeting in October 2019.

14. The Bureau will consider carrying out a foresight exercise at a later stage.

III. PREPARATION OF THE CES 2019 PLENARY SESSION

(a) Organization of the 2019 CES seminar on “New data sources – accessibility and use”

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/5 by Switzerland and United States)

15. The Bureau discussed the organization of the 2019 CES seminar *New data sources – accessibility and use* based on a draft outline prepared by the seminar organizers Switzerland and the United States. The Bureau made the following points:

- The topic is important, and the paper provides a good starting point for the organisation of the seminar.
- More time will be needed for discussion. The seminar chairs should present a summary of issues raised in papers, instead of presentations by countries. The agenda should be revised to take this into account.
- It is important to ensure that the discussion is at the level of Heads of statistical offices.
- The seminar should build on the discussions on new data sources at other fora and on international experience. Eurostat and OECD could prepare a paper on where we stand today with regard to use of new data sources. The seminar should bring in new elements and aim at identifying concrete further steps to support the use of new data sources in official statistics.
- In addition to the countries listed in the seminar outline, Mexico offered a paper for the seminar.

Conclusion:

16. The seminar organizers will update the outline based on the recommendations of the Bureau and present it at the February 2019 Bureau meeting. The Secretariat will work together with the seminar organizers on updating the outline.

(b) Organization of the 2019 CES seminar on “Emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data”

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/6 by Canada, New Zealand and United Kingdom)

17. The Bureau discussed the organization of the 2019 CES seminar *Emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data* based on a draft outline prepared by the seminar organizers Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The following issues were raised:

- More countries should be invited to share their experience to cover a diversity of approaches (e.g. Canada, and Russian Federation were mentioned in addition to countries that have already volunteered to contribute). The contribution may be in a form of an oral intervention.
- Concrete examples should be provided of what the emerging role means and how it works in practice.
- The seminar can discuss what kind of possible roles NSOs could have. Some questions could be given to countries in advance of the seminar.
- The seminar should focus on how NSOs are leading the change associated with the emerging challenges: how to deal with requests to change their mandate, how to

respond to growing demands and maximise the opportunities within NSOs operating constraints, etc.

- It would be useful to have a paper summarising the strategic thinking in this area at international level (see also para 13 of this report).
- Eurostat and OECD offered to prepare a joint paper, possibly also with IMF, on how international organisations are facing these issues.
- The seminar should lead to a concrete outcome proposing next steps to be taken to support NSOs in their emerging role.

Conclusion:

18. The seminar organizers will update the outline based on the comments by the Bureau and present a new version in February 2019.

(c) Draft agenda and timetable for the 2019 CES plenary session
(*ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/7 by UNECE*)

19. The Bureau reviewed a draft agenda and timetable for the 67th CES plenary session. It will take place on 26-28 (a.m.) June 2019 in Paris, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (24-25 June 2019).

20. It was proposed to select the use of satellite image data and earth observations as the in-depth review topic to be discussed more thoroughly during the CES 2019 plenary session. The scope of the topic could be widened to deal with use of geo-spatial data in official statistics more broadly. It would be also good to bring into the discussion representatives of other communities, either private sector or earth observations (e.g. GEO).

21. In June 2019, elections of the CES Bureau will be held. According to the *Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau*, the Bureau is elected for two years. Each individual member can be elected to a maximum of four consecutive terms (eight years). It was noted that currently the Heads of NSOs in countries often have shorter terms of office (e.g. five years) and the Bureau may wish to review the Rules from this viewpoint at its next meeting.

Conclusion:

22. The Secretariat will consult with experts how to define the focus of the discussion related to the use of satellite image data and earth observations at the CES 2019 plenary session.

23. The Bureau will review the *Rules governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau* (ECE/CES/2007/8) at its February 2019 meeting.

24. The Secretariat will update the timetable of the 2019 CES plenary session for the February 2019 meeting of the Bureau.

IV. UNECE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME

(a) Strategic partnerships
(*ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/8 by Canada and United Kingdom*)

25. The Bureau reviewed the report prepared by the informal group on strategic partnerships, co-led by Canada and the United Kingdom, comprising Mexico, the Netherlands, Eurostat, Paris21 and UNECE. As requested by the Bureau, the report included principles and a framework

for creating strategic partnerships, and a maturity model. The paper provides a good tool for statistical offices to move forward with establishing strategic partnerships. It is important to ensure that statistical offices know about this tool and use it.

Conclusion:

26. The Bureau thanked the members of the group for successfully completing the work. HLG-MOS is invited to consider the paper and decide whether any follow-up activities should be done under their work programme.

27. The Secretariat will send the paper to all statistical offices encouraging them to use it, and ask for feedback and ideas for possible follow-up.

28. The Bureau will revert to this topic after a few years when experience has been acquired on implementing the recommendations of the paper, to see if further activities are needed.

(b) Climate change-related statistics

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/9 by the Steering Group)

29. The Bureau reviewed the progress report of the Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics and the new terms of reference. The Bureau welcomed the work and expressed support for the activities of the Steering Group. UNSD provided written comments supporting the work as an active member of the Group.

30. Finland noted that it is ready to share experience on the good cooperation that has been established in the country on the IPCC greenhouse gas inventory where Statistics Finland is responsible.

Conclusion:

31. The Bureau approved the updated terms of reference for the Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics for the period 2019-2023.

(c) Measuring hazardous events and disasters

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/10 and Add.1 by the Task Force)

32. The Bureau reviewed the progress report of the Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters. The Bureau noted the following:

- The work is very important as the demand for data on hazardous events and disasters is growing, including in the context of SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Good cooperation with other international organizations active in this area has been built up, including UNISDR, ESCAP, UNSD, WMO and GEO.
- NSOs can assist in the production, coordination and dissemination of disaster risk data given their traditional strengths in coordination of the national statistical system and ensuring data quality. This complements the work of disaster risk management agencies by providing benchmark data and enabling comparisons of risk and resilience over time. The work can be connected also with humanitarian aid, and looking at the reconstruction longitudinally.

- The role that an NSO can take in this area depends on each country's institutional environment. The draft report describes a core role that each statistical office should take, and additional roles that depend on the circumstances in each country.
- NSOs in some countries (e.g. Canada) see an increased need to respond with real-time data to regional or local crises, such as floods, forest fires, tornadoes, incidence of drug use, etc. In some countries statistics are used for predictive modelling of possible crises (e.g. in Finland administrative data are used to predict who in society is in the risk of being left behind).

Conclusion:

33. The Task Force will finalise the report and submit it to the CES Bureau 2019 February meeting. Subject to agreement by the Bureau, the report will be sent for wide consultation and to the CES 2019 plenary session for approval.

(d) Statistics for SDGs: progress report

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/11 by the Steering Group and UNECE)

34. The Bureau reviewed the progress report of the Steering Group on Statistics for SDGs, focusing on the findings from the second pilot of data flows from countries to the custodian agencies that are responsible for the global SDG indicators, and plans for a second edition of the *Road map on statistics for SDGs*. The Bureau noted the following:

- The Steering Group and its task teams/task forces are doing very good work that has an influence on global processes.
- At the global level there is urgency for official statistics to do more. Political pressure is building up due to an impression that official statisticians are moving too slowly. A strong signal about concrete progress being made should be sent before the HLPF in 2019. Solutions should be found at the UN Statistical Commission level to build trust in official statistics as a tool for monitoring SDGs.
- A conflict still exists between the data provided by international organizations and by countries, as was the case already with MDGs. SDGs provide an opportunity to develop a solution. The grounds for good collaboration have been set. Countries and custodian agencies are working on ways to clarify the discrepancies in data. The guidelines and principles developed by IAEG-SDGs and the Coordinating Committee of Statistical Activities (CCSA) play an important role. However, in practice, validation of data by countries may make the process even longer, as the differences have to be worked out indicator by indicator.
- Filling the global SDG database through a complex data validation process is time-consuming and costly. What makes it worth the effort is the positive side-effect of building a constructive dialogue between the countries and international organizations. The process allows to clarify and improve the methodologies and metadata, and better identify capacity building needs.
- The high number of countries (38) participating in the UNECE voluntary pilot of data flows of SDG indicators shows the importance that countries are paying to this issue. Building on this experience, some African countries piloted the data flows using the UNECE questionnaire, and ESCAP discussed data flows at its Statistical Committee meeting in October 2018.
- The first edition of the *CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs* has been very useful for the practical work. In many countries it has enabled statistical offices to take a

lead in this area. Therefore, updating the Road Map is very important to move to the next stage, building on lessons learned and addressing emerging issues.

Conclusions:

35. The Bureau supported the work under the Steering Group and the plans for the second edition of the *Road Map on statistics for SDGs*.

(e) Modernising statistical legislation
(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/12 by UNECE)

36. The Bureau reviewed the proposal for further work on modernizing statistical legislation. The Bureau expressed support for the work completed by the Task Force on Common Elements of Statistical Legislation led by United Kingdom and Latvia.

37. UNSD provided comments underlining the complementarity of the UNECE work and the *Handbook of Statistical Organization* being updated by UNSD. The Handbook reflects the UNECE guidance on statistical legislation, as well as the models developed under the auspices of the High-Level Group on Modernization of Official Statistics.

Conclusion:

38. The Bureau supported the proposal for further work on modernising statistical legislation and requested the Secretariat to prepare a concept note for a biennial expert meeting on statistical legislation for the February 2019 meeting of the Bureau.

(f) Quality of employment
(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/13 by the Steering Group)

39. The Bureau reviewed the progress of work of the Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment and the proposals for future work. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- The *Handbook on measuring quality of employment* is very useful providing practical guidance to countries with different institutional and legal backgrounds. Carrying out a survey on this topic can also increase awareness among respondents about their rights related to quality of employment.
- Important topics to consider are the new forms of employment, such as teleworking, platform work and other forms of work related to digital economy. Common approaches are needed on how to classify such types of employment and overcome the practical measurement challenges.
- Eurostat will re-join the Steering Group from mid-2019.

Conclusion:

40. The Bureau approved the proposals for future work and the updated terms of reference for the Steering Group on Measuring Quality of Employment for the period 2019-2023. The Group will report to the Bureau in October 2019 on how the work will be organised. The Bureau will review the work in 2021 after the completion of the first phase.

(g) UNECE Statistics Programme of Work documents
(*ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/14*)

41. The Bureau discussed the draft UNECE Statistical Programme for 2019. Under the Statistical Programme, the various steering groups and task forces created by CES and its Bureau were considered. The terms of reference of the active groups are available at www.unece.org/stats/ToS.html. Canada sent useful written comments concerning their engagement in different activities of the Programme.

Conclusion:

42. The Bureau adopted the Statistical Programme for 2019 subject to reflecting the suggestions made in the discussion on individual items presented in Section IV of this report.

V. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH POLICYMAKERS
(*ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/16 by UNECE*)

43. In June 2018, the Bureau decided to launch discussion on meaningful engagement with policy makers. This includes issues related to a shift towards populism, guaranteeing the stability of national statistical system in the conditions of political instability, and interacting with policymakers who follow different principles and values than NSOs.

44. The Bureau discussed the topic based on a paper by the Secretariat summarising the replies from the CES Bureau members and the organizers of 2018 CES seminars (Albania and Poland) to a request to elaborate on the related issues. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- The topic raised a lot of interest among the CES members because it means different things to different countries. Discussion on this topic should be focused on trying to solve specific problems. The four questions in the beginning of the paper are a good starting point.
- It should be defined more precisely which policy makers we are talking about. These could include parliamentarians, ministries, government, state administration, politicians, regional and city governments, etc. It would be interesting to get a few policy makers to talk about how policies have changed over time and their pressures.
- A possible focus of the discussion is the NSOs and Chief Statisticians' leadership role in engaging with policy makers. Some aspects of this will be considered at the CES 2019 seminar on emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data.
- Engagement depends on the political culture of a country, system of government administration and the position of NSO within the system. There is a difference between those countries where official statistics is created mainly based on registers and those based on surveys. Situation may be also different in other regions of the world where the trust among institutions and cooperation of NSO with the central bank and ministry of finance are not very strong.
- It may be useful to identify elements that determine the quality of a statistical system and see how to move towards better quality national statistical systems.
- It would be useful to exchange positive examples of dealing with policy makers, and to share sensitive issues among Chief Statisticians allowing to learn from each other. For example, an informal discussion could be held among a group of Chief Statisticians to further clarify the focus of any possible future work.

Conclusion:

45. Some aspects of the topic will be discussed during the CES 2019 seminar on the new role of NSOs. The Bureau will come back to the issue in October 2019 to see if a follow-up will be needed.

VI. PRINCIPLES OF ROTATION OF THE MEMBERS OF IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB IN UNECE REGION

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/17 by UNECE)

46. The Bureau discussed the proposed principles for rotation of the members of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) and the High-level Group on Partnership, Cooperation and Capacity Building (HLG-PCCB) in UNECE region, updated based on feedback received during the June 2018 CES plenary session. The following points were noted:

- The rotation should be carried out based on agreed principles and criteria.
- Principles and criteria should be used also at the global level.
- Allowing flexibility in implementation of the principles will support ongoing work while maintaining inclusiveness in membership.
- Staggering rotations will allow smoother transition by maintaining the knowledge base of each group. The notion of partnering can be used to ensure a transition of knowledge between the outgoing and incoming members of the groups. However, this approach should be used also at the global level to keep a balance between different regions. This should be discussed by UNSC.
- The principles should be implemented differently for IAEG-SDG and HLG-PCCB, recognizing the differing role and composition of the groups.
- One of the aims of HLG-PCCB is to give strategic direction for capacity development and for raising funds for this purpose. Unfortunately only a few countries actively contribute and drive forward the work of HLG-PCCB. This should be brought to the attention of UNSC.

Conclusion:

47. The Bureau approved the updated principles of rotation of the members of IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB in UNECE region, which will be implemented in the next rotation round in 2019.

VII. FOLLOW-UP TO THE 2018 CES PLENARY SESSION

(a) Evaluation of the 66th plenary session

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/18 by UNECE)

48. The results of evaluation questionnaires of the 2017 CES plenary session were presented for information. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- A number of participants asked for more time for discussion. Early availability of papers is important for good discussion.
- It was considered necessary at the CES seminars to hear from countries in different situations: to learn from countries that are statistically advanced and have a lot of resources, as well as from what other countries can do with less resources.
- The use of interactive applications was appreciated.
- The small group discussions had a mixed evaluation. Many countries evaluated it positively but there were also a number of critical remarks.

(b) Follow-up to the CES 2018 seminar on “Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics”

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/19 by Poland and UNECE)

49. The Bureau discussed the proposal prepared by Poland and the Secretariat on follow-up work arising from the CES 2018 seminar on “Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics”. The Bureau noted that developing interactive electronic guidance on measuring what matters would be useful but their scope and content should be more clearly specified. The guidelines should be practical and take into account that new topics can emerge at a fast moving pace.

50. In this context, the Bureau discussed also the division of labour between the Bureau and High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS). The following points were raised:

- HLG-MOS can be seen as the innovation arm of the Bureau.
- HLG-MOS discusses practical technical issues while the CES Bureau gives strategic direction.
- When HLG-MOS identifies strategic gaps, these should be brought back to the Bureau and the CES plenary session.
- The overlap of members of both groups is a positive feature.
- The HLG-MOS work has to be well focused in line with its recently redefined vision (June 2018) and structure (February 2017).

Conclusion:

51. A small Task Team including the organisers of the CES seminar, will develop a concept note, a plan and an outline of the contents of the guidance on measuring what matters for the CES Bureau meeting in February 2019.

52. The secretariat will prepare a scheme showing the groups working under HLG-MOS and their tasks for the February 2019 Bureau meeting to bring more clarity into the issue.

(c) Follow-up to the CES 2018 seminar on “Getting the message across: strategic reflections on modernizing statistical communication”

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/20 by Albania and UNECE)

53. The Bureau discussed the proposal prepared by Albania and the Secretariat on follow-up work arising from the CES 2018 seminar on strategic reflections on modernizing statistical communication. The following points were made:

- Communication issues are addressed by several expert groups and HLG-MOS. It is important that these groups coordinate with each other;
- Crisis management and communication overlaps with risk management. Some guidelines on risk management have been produced under HLG-MOS. However, this work is no longer active and there is a need to continue dealing with this topic.
- A statistical communication maturity model would be very useful. The Bureau will consider the model in February 2019 and then decide how to follow-up on this work.
- The CES 2019 seminar on emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data will cover some of the issues, therefore a separate high-level seminar on communications is not needed.

Conclusion:

54. The Bureau will decide in February 2019 how to follow-up on the work related to risk management, including crisis management, and the development of a communication maturity model.

55. The UNECE Expert Group on Statistical Dissemination and Communication will be asked to define the communication skill set needed by all staff in a statistical organization. The Group will be also asked to convert the publication on statistical literacy into a wiki format and update it with new case studies.

VIII. CES GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENDORSEMENT IN 2019

(a) Leading, composite and sentiment indicators

(ECE/CES/BUR/2018/OCT/21 and Add.1 by the Task Force)

56. The Bureau reviewed the updated draft *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators*, and made the following comments:

- The Guidelines were considered very useful for guiding NSOs on the production of leading, composite and sentiment indicators. They complement existing methodological guidance in this area.
- The typology of indicators used in the Guidelines, including the distinction between indicators with and without reference series, identification of pros and cons, and guidance on reaching out to stakeholders were found particularly useful.
- It would be good to further clarify the differences and similarities between leading indicators and different types of rapid estimates, such as flash estimates and now-casting statistics.

Conclusion:

57. The Secretariat will update the *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators* to take into account comments by the Bureau, and will circulate them for electronic consultation among all CES members. UNSD will conduct a global consultation with countries that are not members of CES. Subject to a positive outcome of the consultation, the Guidelines will be submitted to the 2019 CES plenary session for endorsement.

IX. DATES AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Conclusion

58. The Bureau confirmed the dates and venues of the next meetings as follows:

- 28 February - 1 March 2019 (Washington D.C., back-to-back with the UN Statistical Commission)
- 16-17 October 2019 (Croatia offered to host the meeting in Zagreb)
- 18-19 February 2020 (Geneva, tbc.)

59. The 67th CES plenary session will take place on 26-28 (a.m.) June 2019 in Paris, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (24-25 June 2019).

60. The 68th CES plenary session is proposed to take place in the week of 22 June 2020 in Geneva, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy and the plenary session of UN-GGIM: Europe, as decided by the 66th CES plenary session (ECE/CES/95).

X. OTHER BUSINESS

61. The Bureau decided about the papers that will be made available on the public website.

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