



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General

9 May 2014

Original: English

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### Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Group of Experts on National Accounts

Thirteenth session

Geneva, 6-9 May 2014

### Draft Report

#### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

The Meeting of Group of Experts on National Accounts, thirteenth session, 6-9 May 2014 was organized following the recommendations of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, eleventh session, Geneva, 30 April – 4 May 2012 (ECE/CES/GE.20/2012/2) and the provisions in the Programme of Work of the Statistics Sub-programme for the Biennium (2014-2015) (ECE/CES/2013/15).

The present document is the report of that Group of Experts, and is provided to inform the Conference of European Statisticians of the organization and outcomes of the meeting.

## I. Introduction

1. The Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts was held in Geneva from 6-9 May 2014. It was jointly organized with Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The meeting was attended by representatives from Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

2. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), European Central Bank (ECB), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the European Commission (Eurostat), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Mr. J. Vopravil of the Czech Republic attended as consultant at the invitation of the Secretariat. Mr. I. Mazrekaj and Mr. I. Berisha attended the meeting as invited experts.

3. The provisional agenda was adopted.

4. Mr. Brent Moulton (United States) chaired the session.

## II. Organization of the meeting

6. The following substantive topics were discussed on the basis of presentations, invited papers and supporting papers:

### A. First module: Special Session for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, South East Europe and other interested countries

- Progress with national implementation plans for the System of National Accounts, 2008 (2008 SNA)
- Update of the regional recommendations and further work to support implementation of the 2008 SNA

### B. Second Module: Expert Group on National Accounts

- Challenges and approaches to the implementation of 2008 SNA
- Expanded accounts for the household sector including non-profit institutions, serving households (NPISH)
- Measuring non-observed economy: informal and illegal
- Globalization and national accounts: accounting for global production
- Future work and adoption of the report

- Other business

### **III. Summary of the main conclusions reached at the meeting**

7. Recommendations for future work are given below. The detailed summary of the discussion on the above topics will be presented in a separate annex to this report. All documents for the meeting are available on <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.05.sna.html>

#### **A. First module: Special Session for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, South East Europe and other interested countries**

8. Significant progress towards implementation of the 2008 SNA has been achieved by the countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE). Finalization of the national programmes for improvements affecting measurements of GDP, GNI and other basic indicators continues to be the first priority of work in the region. In addition a number of key areas for further work were identified:

- Using an integrated approach for strengthening the statistics production process.
- Harmonization of national accounts statistics with other economic statistics (such as BoP and GFS), including issues related to sectorization.
- Revision and publication of time series, including communication with users and main stakeholders
- Data sources and coverage, including improving of statistical business registers and basic statistics.
- Measuring of imputed rents for owner occupied housing.
- Training involving experts from national statistical offices, central banks and ministries of finance.

9. The participants agreed that UNECE in cooperation with other partner organizations should continue to support implementation of the 2008 SNA in the countries through organization of workshops, provision of expert support and training. Countries asked UNECE to establish a mechanism for sustainable provision of technical assistance.

10. A workshop including representatives of statistical offices, ministries of finance and central banks should be organized in the course of 2015. The workshop should focus on institutional arrangements and harmonization of key macroeconomic statistics.

11. A special session will be organized in spring 2016 to address issues of common interest to the region. Possible agenda items include: measuring imputed rent for owner occupied dwellings, financial and insurance services.

#### **B. Second Module: Expert Group on National Accounts**

12. The participants emphasized the importance of a good communication strategy for the 2008 SNA revision. Statistics Canada, in consultation with the Steering Group on National Accounts (SGNA) and the ISWGNA, will develop a generic presentation and an underlying paper, which to assist countries in their dialogue with main users. Relevant

experience of countries that provided presentations to the meeting will be taken into account.

13. Ways of sharing experience on best practices in engaging stake-holders in the revision process, communication materials and tools should also be explored. UNECE in consultation with the SGNA will propose follow up activities.

14. Countries recognized the benefits from sharing experience on data sources and compilation techniques developed during the implementation of the 2008 SNA changes, such as expanding the assets boundary and measuring financial services. They also expressed support for ongoing work to expand the household sector accounts with distributional aspects.

15. Participants expressed interest in sharing information on data sources, methods and assumptions applied in measuring non-observed economy. A group composed of Mexico, Norway, Netherlands, United States, OECD, Eurostat and UNECE will consider follow up activities.

16. Following the request of the CES, UNECE jointly with Eurostat and OECD will organize a special meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts to discuss practical experience with data collection and compilation methods in respect to global production arrangements. The meeting will take place in the end of June 2015 and will be prepared in consultation with the SGNA and the Task Force on Global Production.

17. A further meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts will be organized on 4-6 May 2016. The following topics were proposed for the agenda of the 2016 meeting:

- (a) Measuring Human Capital
- (b) Statistical units and analytical use of supply-use and input-output tables
- (c) Institutional arrangements for the production of national accounts
- (d) Non-observed economy
- (e) Globalization issues
- (f) Assets boundary: mineral exploration

18. The following countries and international organizations expressed interest in organizing or contributing to the sessions for the 2016 meeting: for topic (a) Statistics Norway and the Task Force on Measuring Human Capital (session organizer), for topic (b) OECD (session organizer), for topic (c) BEA (session organizer), ESCWA for (f).

19. This report was adopted at the Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts held in Geneva on 6 - 9 May 2014.

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