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CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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Approved

Item 4(a) of the Provisional Agenda

WORK PLAN FOR THE TASK FORCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE RELATED STATISTICS

Prepared by the Task Force

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) established a Task Force (TF) on climate change related statistics (ECE/CES/BUR/2011/NOV/9) in November 2011. The Task Force includes 15 members from Canada, Finland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, United Kingdom, the European Environment Agency, the EU Directorate-General for Climate Action and UNECE. The Task Force elected Mr. Robert Smith of Statistics Canada as Chair and Mr. Leo Kolttola of Statistics Finland as Vice Chair. The CES Bureau approved this work plan at their meeting in February 2012.

2. The proposed list of issues to be covered by the TF is presented in section II and the timetable in section III. The work plan takes into account the priorities set by the CES Bureau. It proposes a step-by-step approach to advance the work on climate change related statistics. The TF work aims at identifying and prioritizing those areas that are most needed and where national statistical offices (NSOs) can best contribute with concrete actions.

3. Furthermore, the work plan takes into account the priorities expressed by CES countries in response to a UNECE survey conducted in 2011 at the request of the CES Bureau. The survey explored the involvement of NSOs in climate change related statistics and identified issues of common concern. It was carried out in close collaboration with Eurostat and in coordination with the UN Statistics Division (UNSD). The UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting expressed their support to the work. In total, 47 countries from the UNECE region and beyond replied to the questionnaire.

4. The work plan also reflects the recommendations of the two global conferences on climate change and official statistics organized in 2008 by UNSD. In addition, it makes use of the issues raised in the programme review prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) in February 2009.

II. PROPOSED LIST OF ISSUES FOR THE TASK FORCE

A. Define the scope of climate change related statistics

5. Climate change related statistics can cover anything from statistics describing global warming to those on economic or social impacts of climate change. A framework for climate change related statistics will be defined by the TF in order to establish their scope. The framework will be consistent with the UN Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (currently under revision), the UN System of Environment-economic Accounts and the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES).

6. The scope of climate change related statistics covers at least the following areas:

- Activity data for producing GHG inventories.
- Greenhouse gas emission inventories.
- Climate and climate change.
- Consequences/impact of climate change (e.g. landslides, floods etc.).
- Measures taken to reduce climate change and/or its adverse effects.
- Statistics on adaptation costs.

7. The work will focus on areas where the NSOs can contribute. The framework will also give consideration to the climate change related indicators that should be derived from the statistics.

B. Assess the gaps between existing statistics and users' needs

8. The TF will identify needs for climate change statistics in both the policy and scientific domains to determine where the most pressing data needs are. These needs will be identified using both the framework for climate change related statistics (see above) and the needs of users (which the TF will assess) as guides. The TF will pay particular attention to identifying needs that could be filled by NSOs. For example, a World Meteorological Organization meeting of the scientific climate change observation network, in December 2011, identified a need for data on the socio-economic impacts of climate change. Linking the existing statistical data on population, human/economic activities and environment would enable a more integrated analysis of climate change, adaptation and mitigation.

9. The TF will then review existing NSO data relevant for climate change analysis. By comparing needs against available data, the TF will aim at identifying gaps in existing statistics to find areas for improvement for NSOs.

10. Finally, the TF will prioritize the identified gaps that could effectively be filled by NSOs. It will come up with concrete proposals for mainstreaming climate change considerations in official statistics production. These could include areas where new statistics should be developed or basic statistics should be improved, such as those mentioned by the ABS programme review: energy supply, production of industrial commodities, government finance statistics, agriculture, forestry, transport, international trade, land use, the management of waste water and waste, etc.

C. Review existing relationships between NSOs and the agencies responsible for GHG emission inventories and consider how to strengthen the role of NSOs

11. The two global conferences in 2008 suggested that GHG emission inventories should become part of official statistics even if the NSO is not the reporting institution. Similarly, the programme review by ABS noted the following role for official statistics:

> "To provide the best available data for use in climate change assessment, policy- and decision-making, including relevant statistical data for input into greenhouse gas emission inventories and climate change models."

12. Clearly, the role of NSOs in this context should be considered. The TF will explore the relationships between NSOs and other agencies responsible for GHG emission inventories. It will consider how the role of NSOs could be strengthened, for example, by making better use of existing statistics, developing new statistics or coordinating the statistical work with data producers.

13. There are differences in practices with regard to e.g. classifications and quality assurance applied in compiling GHG inventories and the ones used in official statistics. Improved linkages between the two will be sought, taking into consideration the criteria of official statistics.

D. Identify good practices among NSOs in climate change related statistics

14. A major task identified by the ABS programme review was the compilation of good practices in climate change related statistics. The TF proposes to start this work by organizing an expert meeting in 2012 to share current experience and to initiate a dialogue between official statisticians and other parties involved in climate change related statistics. The meeting will be open to all countries and organizations. The TF will identify examples of good practices among NSOs and consider establishing a knowledge base to gather and exchange practical experience between countries.

E. Identify the statistical infrastructure required to report climate change related statistics

15. The programme review by ABS noted the following roles for official statistics:

> "To ensure that climate change aspects are considered in the development and maintenance of statistical standards and that these standards are promulgated outside official statistics.
>
> To develop and advocate statistical tools for the integration of economic, social and environmental information to support the analysis of the causes and impacts of climate change and related policy measures."

16. The TF will identify the statistical infrastructure (standards, classifications, methods, etc.) that is needed to report on climate change related statistics. It will examine the existing infrastructure in NSOs in order to identify gaps and will recommend priorities for improving this infrastructure. This analysis may also point out areas where harmonization is needed between the concepts, methods, classifications and data items of the NSO and the GHG inventories. Many countries have stressed the need to improve the consistency of GHG inventories with energy statistics, national accounts and SEEA.

F. Make recommendations for the next steps required for NSOs to better meet the needs for climate change related statistics

17. As concluded by the two global conferences, all actions to improve climate change related statistics have to be preceded by a review of the state of the art. This will be the focus of this TF as it aims to identify practical steps and priorities for future development of climate change related statistics so that they will better meet user needs. The final report will review the current state of climate change related statistics and highlight possibilities for NSOs to develop and streamline the work with a focus on their current strengths.

III. TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR THE WORK

18. The tentative timetable for the work is as follows:

By when	Task
2011	
Dec	TF constitutes itself, selects the chair(s) and starts its work
2012	
Jan	Scope of work for the TF defined and a work plan drafted
Apr	**TF meeting** to discuss division of work and prepare a wider meeting in November 2012. The meeting will also discuss: - (topic A) the scope of climate change related statistics - (topic B) conclusions of the UNECE survey and existing statistics in NSOs - (topic D) identify countries with good practices for the November meeting
May	**Progress report to the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA)**
Jul	(topic B) User needs, existing NSO data and gaps to be filled by NSOs identified
Aug	(topic C) Relationships between NSOs and the GHG agencies reviewed
Oct	**Progress report to the CES Bureau**
Nov	**Meeting on Climate Change Related Statistics,** Geneva, 19-20 November 2012
Nov	(topic A) Links to existing international statistical frameworks reviewed
Dec	(topic D) Several good practices identified (based on the November meeting)
2013	
Jan	(topic B) The gaps that could effectively be filled by NSOs prioritized
	(topic E) The requirements for statistical infrastructure assessed
Mar	(topic A) The scope of climate change related statistics defined
Apr/May	**Progress report to the UNCEEA**
May	(topic F) Recommendations for next steps drafted
Oct	**Draft report to the CES Bureau**
2014	
Mar	Broad consultation with countries of the draft report
June	**Final report to the CES plenary session**

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