

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

UNECE Work Session on the Communication and Dissemination of Statistics
(13-15 May 2008, Warsaw, Poland)

INFORMATION NOTICE No.1

At the invitation of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the work session will be held in
Warsaw, Poland from 9.30am on 13 May to 5pm on 15 May 2009

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. At its 2008 plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians included the Work Session on Statistical Dissemination and Communication in its 2008-2009 meeting programme. At the kind invitation of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the meeting will be held from 13 to 15 May 2009 in Warsaw, Poland.
2. The objective of the meeting is to exchange experiences about the communication and dissemination of statistics and to collect and publish best practices, guidelines and recommendations on this topic. The programme of the meeting will focus on strategic and management issues of communication. Particular attention will be on issues surrounding management of statistical communication, improving internal communication, working with the media, communicating in a crisis and managing credibility, education and outreach strategies for communicating with particular target groups and costing models for statistical services.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

3. The programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:
 - (i) Managing communication
 - (ii) Improving internal communication: working better together
 - (iii) Working with the media
 - (iv) Communicating in a crisis and managing credibility
 - (v) Education and outreach strategies for communicating with hard-to-reach groups
 - (vi) To charge or not to charge: fundraising, access licences and costing models
4. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature of topics (i) – (vi) are provided in Section VII below. A detailed agenda will be prepared in March/April and published on the meeting website (www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.dissemination.htm).

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

5. The target audience of the meeting includes managers and experts responsible for communication and media relations in national and international statistical organizations.
6. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. All delegates must be accredited by the competent authority of their country or international organization. All delegates attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas must be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Poland in the country in which the delegates reside, with reference to the UNECE Work Session on the Communication and Dissemination of Statistics.

IV. REGISTRATION AND CALL FOR PAPERS

7. Delegates should complete the registration form sent with this notice and return it to the UNECE Secretariat (jessica.gardner@unece.org) by **20 February 2009**. All participants are asked to provide a brief written report (2-4 pages) on the topics to be discussed at the meeting. Refer to paragraphs 12-13 below for more information.

8. Papers and presentations about any of the topics on the agenda are hereby requested. Participants intending to submit a paper should take note of the deadlines and requirements in paragraphs 14-16 below.

V. ACCOMMODATION

9. Delegates are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. Information about accommodation options in Warsaw can be found at www.warsawtour.pl/index.php?lang=5. Further information about the meeting venue will be provided in a second information notice to be published on the meeting website (www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.dissemination.htm) during January 2009.

VI. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

10. This meeting will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation in Russian. Documents should be submitted in English.

11. Meeting documents will be made publicly available on the website of the UNECE Secretariat at: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2009.05.dissemination.htm. Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website (available from early April) and bring their own copies to the meeting. Written papers posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

Reports from all participating agencies

12. Each participating organization is requested to provide a brief written report (2-4 pages) on the current situation and issues in their office regarding each of the meeting topics. These reports will not be presented or explicitly discussed during the meeting, but will be collated into a booklet and provided to all delegates as background information. They will also be valuable in assisting the session organizers to develop their sessions and guide the discussion.

13. A template for these reports is attached. They should be submitted to the UNECE Secretariat by **13 March 2009** via email to jessica.gardner@unece.org.

Call for papers to be presented at the meeting

14. The following deadlines and requirements apply to the submission of papers and associated presentations:

- The intention to submit a paper should be communicated to the UNECE Secretariat by **20 February 2009** by completing the relevant section of the registration form.
- Final papers should be emailed to jessica.gardner@unece.org at the UNECE Secretariat by **13 March 2009** at the latest.
- Authors who intend to present their written papers are invited to email their on-screen presentations to jessica.gardner@unece.org by **29 April 2009** so they can be installed on the projection equipment. Presentations will not be made available to delegates before the meeting, unless requested by the presenters.

15. Papers should be submitted in Microsoft Word or Rich Text File formats. The UNECE Secretariat will send each author a template containing the header, document number and format. The recommended length for each paper is up to five pages of text (3,000 words).

16. Authors of papers will be allocated time to give a presentation on their paper, highlighting the main issues. The length of time for this presentation will be confirmed by the session organizer after the abstract has been received. PowerPoint presentations or Adobe Acrobat full screen presentations may be used.

VII. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

17. Topic (i): Managing communication

This topic will focus on the management of communication and dissemination functions within a statistical office. Discussion should include the role of communication and dissemination within the context of a statistical programme, examples of organizational and governance models, possible internal conflicts and management challenges and solutions. This may include recruitment, training and retention of staff in the communication field, and the required skills and competencies for managing communication in a statistical office.

18. Topic (ii): Improving internal communication: working better together

Internal communications is a key element in the success or failure of an organization. Contrary to the norms in the 1980s and 1990s, internal communications no longer stems only from a human resources perspective. Good internal communications is essential when an organization wants to implement change, motivate, ensure transparency, inform, promote engagement, set standards, provide access to central information and much more. The way that internal communications encompasses all work-related communications within an organization can also have an important impact on the way that the organization communicates with the external world.

In the session on internal communications, it would be interesting to explore the role that internal communications plays in your statistical organizations, including examples of good practices and challenges as well as the impact of the latest technologies.

19. Topic (iii): Working with the media

In 2004 this group produced its first guide 'Communicating with the Media'. The media, whether broadcast, online, social or written, are a constant thread of discussion and are vital both to the success of our communications efforts and the reputation of our organizations.

In this session we will discuss working WITH the media. We are looking for examples from many different countries of proactive efforts to cooperate with the media to produce better and more accurate coverage of our statistics. We will look at ways we can engage the media more successfully, and how we can help journalists use statistics better, including providing them with statistical training. We might also look at how we can help prepare our statisticians to be more effective media spokespersons, including providing them with in-house media training. We want to hear about both the success stories and some of the pitfalls and the lessons learnt from them.

20. Topic (iv): Communicating in a crisis and managing credibility

The reputation of a statistical agency may be its most valuable asset. Our effectiveness depends on the public's trust in our accuracy, impartiality, and reliability. But sometimes things go wrong. Disasters can range from a significant estimation error to a breach of confidentiality to an accusation of bias or impropriety.

In the event of a crisis it is vitally important that statistical agencies communicate effectively with the media and the public at large. Any hint of an attempt to play down the importance of the crisis or the significance of the error can have huge repercussions. Managing the credibility of the agency through circumstances like these requires careful advance planning and competent real-time execution.

This topic is an opportunity to share and reflect on agency strategies, experiences, and lessons learned regarding crisis communications, drawing on both our successes and our failures in this area.

21. Topic (v): Education and outreach strategies for communicating with hard-to-reach groups

Much has been written about strategies for communicating with hard-to-reach audiences - from defining who is hard-to-reach to providing best practices and case studies on effective outreach methods.

National statistical agencies are faced with the challenge of reaching many target audiences, for a variety of purposes, such as conducting population or business censuses, and surveys of all kinds. Without a doubt, each country acknowledges that there are segments of their diverse population with whom it is difficult to communicate, much less secure participation.

Solutions range from technological to educational. Rapid advances in technology provide potential solutions -- for select audiences -- including blogs, podcasts, and social networking. Outreach to hard-to-reach groups may include educating children to reach parents, working with minority media, providing in-language information and interpretation, and partnering with local, specialized groups to ensure cultural sensitivity and to encourage understanding and even participation by that community.

This session explores numerous ways of communicating with populations that are hard to reach, by virtue of language, literacy, marginalization, location, access to technology and/or distrust of government agencies.

22. Topic (vi): To charge or not to charge: fundraising, access licences and costing models

- Should 100 % of a statistical agency's services be free of charge?
- How should large organizations that require tailored statistical information be treated?
- How do statistical agencies learn about needs for new services if their activities are entirely financed by state budget funding?

Often, but not always, budget funding is conservative in character. It can take years to gain funding for a new development and budget planning is often more about defending existing resources than introducing new service options. Chargeable services may be an appropriate method for testing the real needs and viability of new service fields.

This session will provide an opportunity for discussing the themes above, along with related issues such as efficient ways of interacting with users of statistical systems, customer databases and customer relationship management systems.

VIII. FURTHER INFORMATION

23. For further information, please contact:

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