INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1*

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting will be held from 27 June to 29 June 2012 in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9.30 a.m.

2. The objective of the meeting is to exchange experiences and best practices on the communication and dissemination of statistics. The meeting will address the challenges faced by statistical organizations to communicate effectively with all their audiences and stakeholders. Attention will be focused on social media, new ways of engaging audiences, measuring the effectiveness of communications, building credibility and internal communication.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

3. The work programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive themes:

   (i) Social media;
   (ii) New ways of engaging audiences;
   (iii) Measuring the effectiveness of communications;
   (iv) Building credibility and getting numbers across to the wider world;
   (v) Internal communication

4. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature of topics (i) – (v) are provided in Section VII below. A detailed agenda will be prepared at the beginning of June and published on the meeting website.

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 Switzerland in the country in which the delegates reside, with reference to the UNECE Work Session on the Communication of Statistics.

* Information on the venue and local arrangements in Geneva (hotel accommodation, transportation etc.) will be provided at a later date in Information Notice No. 2.
Participants are requested to fill in the attached Conference registration form, which will also be available in Word format on the website at the address indicated in paragraph 11. It should be sent to the UNECE secretariat by 31 March 2012 (as indicated on the form) so that it may be processed well in advance of the meeting.

IV. REGISTRATION AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Delegates should complete the registration form sent with this notice and return it to the UNECE Secretariat (vadim.isakov@unece.org) by 31 March 2012. All participants are asked to provide a brief written report (2 pages) on the topics to be discussed at the meeting. Refer to paragraphs 12-13 below for more information.

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

Delegates are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. Information about accommodation options in Geneva can be found at the following link: http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch

Further information about the meeting venue will be provided in a second information notice to be published on the meeting website in March 2012.

VI. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The working language of the meeting will be English. All documents should be submitted in English.

Meeting documents will be made publicly available on the website of the UNECE Secretariat at: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.06.dissemination.htm. Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website (available from early June) 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

Each participating organization is requested to provide a brief written report (2 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 their summaries will be presented to all delegates as background information. They will also be valuable in assisting the session organizers to develop their sessions and guide the discussion.

A template for these reports is attached. They should be submitted to the UNECE Secretariat by 30 April 2012 via email to vadim.isakov@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 31 March 2012 by completing the relevant section of the registration form.

- Final papers should be emailed to vadim.isakov@unece.org at the UNECE Secretariat by 30 April 2012 at the latest.

- Authors who intend to present their written papers are invited to email their presentations to vadim.isakov@unece.org by 18 June 2012 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 (.doc) or Rich Text File (.rtf) 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): Social Media

Social media presents an opportunity for statistical organizations to re-envision how they communicate with users. As more organizations join the conversation with online communities, communication strategies become more sophisticated and best practices emerge. This session will feature both theory and practical examples of social media.

Potential topics may include:

- The plan: How to develop a successful social media plan
- The goal: How social media can support the branding of official statistics, increase engagement with audiences, support collection activities
- The venue: Which social media are fit for statistical data or information. What are the right venues to reach a specific audience
- The implementation: How social media can be fully integrated with traditional communication strategies
- The mitigation strategies: How to manage the risks of two-way communication
- The evaluation: How to measure the impact of social media. What are the indicators of a successful social media campaign
- The experience: What made your social media communications successful (or not..)? Now is the time to share your lessons learned
18. **Topic (ii): New ways of engaging audiences**

The world of the Internet is changing fast. Users of our websites are much more in control and they will decide what they are interested in. The users want interaction. We can no longer just disseminate our data through the website in the classical way with lots of tables and written articles. Users are looking for more visual ways of "reading" our data. They are asking for film and short movies. Data visualisations help the user to better understand our complex data. The frequent users are asking for open data, so the machines can do the work. Once open data are available, do we need to build apps or will the community know much better what to do with our data? If the public start using our data more and more how can we be sure people will still know us (data branding). Lots of developments to look out for and lots of interesting opportunities to move ahead. This session will present developments and experiences in the different countries.

Potential topics may include:

- Mobile devices (practical examples, but also strategic choices; do different user groups use different devices?)
- New visualisation methods/examples
- E-books
- Audiovisual communication (practical examples but also strategic choices. Do different user groups use different devices?)
- Open data including apps (should we develop them ourselves?), data branding. It would be interesting to hear which countries already offer open data (machine readable) and how do they do it. Do you have problems with metadata? Have you had experience of misuse of the data?
- Being where the users are (maybe we should not make our own student sites, but make our information available on sites where students go anyway)

Papers on innovative communication techniques involving new media are most welcome.

19. **Topic (iii): Measuring the effectiveness of communications**

In the private sector, communications strategies have at least one obvious evaluation criterion: is the resulting increase in revenue greater than the cost? In the public sector statistical community, however, there is usually no comparable single measure that is universally accepted. How do we define success in our world? What do we mean by effectiveness? How do we identify objective metrics and take reproducible measurements to evaluate our return on investment? Can we use the same tools and measures to evaluate personal contacts, printed material, Web-based outreach, and social media?

This session is an opportunity to share and reflect on organizational strategies and experiences on the theme of evaluating communications. We are particularly interested in case studies focused on lessons learned in this area.

Potential topics may include:

- Defining success criteria for communications initiatives up front and refining the metrics over time
- Case studies of communications strategies that proved their worth – or, of particular interest, have been abandoned due to poor performance
- Using measurement results to make a business case for agency investment
- Useful tools to track customer interest, usage, and redistribution rates
- Comparative data on the effectiveness of communicating through personal contacts, printed material, Web-based outreach, and social media – audience demographics, size, geography, topics of interest, etc.
20. **Topic (iv): Building credibility and bulldozing crises: getting numbers across to the wider world**

How do we get our messages across to external users? How do we reach our 'stakeholders'? Do we seek to retain their long-term interest, develop a dialogue, and respond to their needs? Or do we disseminate data as effectively and efficiently as possible for short-term gain? Managing our relationships with everyone from journalists and politicians to policy-makers and the wider public is a key component of communication across UNECE member countries.

This session will focus on the methods used to generate effective two-way communication with stakeholders. It will seek to examine both long-range methods of managing users' expectations, including horizon-scanning, advanced briefings and event planning, and also look at short term ways of handling unpredictable crises.

Papers might also examine the role of communication and dissemination within the context of an individual statistical project or product launch, or examine the management challenges and solutions associated with involving external stakeholders and feedback in shaping individual projects and products. Contributions about measuring, monitoring and reporting external communication, dissemination and media coverage, would also be appreciated.

21. **Topic (v): Internal communication**

The role of internal communication in boosting employee engagement is rapidly gaining in importance, with costs of staff disengagement translated into multi-billion figures. According to the UK's Chartered Management Institute, the cost of staff disengagement for the British economy alone is 59 to 65 billion GBP (68 – 75 billion Euros).

Not surprisingly, frustrated, uncommitted or disaffected staff do not perform their duties to the full of their abilities, which directly affects overall productivity. At a time when an increasing number of organisations are hiring "engagement managers", we look into ways of boosting staff engagement levels:

1. The *Beyond intranet and newsletter* presentation will shed light on the new, additional internal communication practices as utilised by Eurostat, where satisfaction levels with the work done by the internal communication team has this year reached a record 92% (as per 2011 staff opinion survey). Have you tried to organise an exhibition of the works of art done by your colleague in the office next door or published an interview with a jazz band member who also happens to be a European Commission statistician?

2. It is our opinion that the changing role and subsequent follow-up of internal staff opinion surveys deserve a closer look. Are other benchmarks than '100% satisfaction level' needed for the interpretation of staff survey results? Maybe we should accept that staff will never be fully happy with their working environment? Finally, what happens when the survey results are not followed up by management?

3. Employee engagement goes down when improvement actions proposed by staff are ignored by senior management. Good communication between managers and staff is therefore crucial. While managers are the fastest growing occupational group, all too often their management styles are authoritarian and bureaucratic. We look at ways of changing this state of affairs.

4. And, finally, the use of social media is moving beyond the area of external communication. In an era of growing employee mobility, flexible working and hot desking, an increasing number of companies are using social media to engage, unite and educate staff. We hear from a proponent of the use of social media as a tool for a stronger internal communication.
VIII. FURTHER INFORMATION

22. For further information, please contact:

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