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

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)**

**ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)  
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE**

Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Seminar on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS)  
Sofia, Bulgaria, 21-23 June 2006

Topic (iv): Review and follow-up to the activities of the Conference of European Statisticians

**REVIEW AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**Invited Paper prepared by the ECE secretariat**

**Summary**

1. Following the tradition of the former UNECE Working Party on Electronic Data Processing (CES/WP.9), the framework for international cooperation in the field of management of statistical information systems in the UNECE region includes periodic reviews of CES activities concerning statistical information processing, statistical metadata, statistical data editing, geographical information systems, statistical confidentiality and electronic data reporting.
2. The ongoing activities currently concentrate on the following topics:
  - Statistical data confidentiality (jointly with Eurostat);
  - Statistical data editing;
  - Statistical metadata (jointly with Eurostat and OECD);
  - Electronic data reporting (jointly with Eurostat) (see ECE/CES/SEM.54/23).

### Statistical data confidentiality

3. The CES Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata is composed of the Heads of the National Statistical Offices of Australia (Chair), Canada, Denmark, Georgia, Italy and Poland. As a follow-up to the seminar on statistical confidentiality and microdata held at the 2003 CES plenary session, the Task Force is developing the Core Principles of Access to Microdata for adoption by the CES at the June 2006 plenary session. These Core Principles will represent a unique and important policy document to help NSOs to identify the best practices and to harmonize their approaches with other countries. It can help the countries that are in the process of setting up their legal basis and procedures of confidentiality, as well as the more advanced countries in confidentiality discussions with the user community. More information can be found on the UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/tfcm.htm>
4. The Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality was held in Geneva, Switzerland in November 2005. All background documents, presentations and the final report for the meeting are available on the website of the UNECE Statistical Division: (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2005.11.confidentiality.htm>).
5. The meeting recommended the following substantive topics for the study programme of the proposed 2007 work session:
  - Web/online remote access questions (techniques and organizational issues);
  - Glossary of terms for statistical data confidentiality;
  - Disclosure risk, information loss and usability of data;
  - Confidentiality aspects of tabular data, frequency tables, Geographical Information Systems, etc.;
  - Software for statistical disclosure control;
  - Synthetic data files for research/analysis training;
  - User case studies on practical applications (more countries);
  - User issues, SDC more visible to users.
6. The meeting also took note of ongoing and planned activities within the EU Computational Aspects of Statistical Confidentiality (CASC) project and in particular a conference on this subject that will take place in Rome in October-November 2006. More information can be found at: <http://neon.vb.cbs.nl/casc/>.

### Statistical data editing

7. The Work Session on Statistical Data Editing that took place in Ottawa, Canada in May 2005, agreed upon the publication of Volume 3. "Impact on Data Quality" of the Statistical Data Editing series. The publication comprises introductory texts and revised versions of some papers presented at previous work sessions. The publication will be available in spring 2006.
8. The next Work Session will take place in Bonn (Germany) at the kind invitation of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany from 25 to 27 September 2006. The programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:

- (i) Editing nearer the source;
- (ii) Editing data from multiple sources;
- (iii) Editing microdata for release;
- (iv) Macro-editing;
- (v) New and emerging methods.

All documentation for this meeting will be available on the website at the following address  
<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2006.09.sde.htm>

### **Statistical metadata**

9. The Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Work Session on Statistical Metadata was held in Geneva, Switzerland in April 2006. The participants reviewed the recommendations for future work put forward by the Task Force on Common Metadata Framework. The Framework is intended to serve as a guide for national statistical offices to the numerous existing metadata standards, guidelines and recommendations (that are often developed outside statistics). The value added of the Framework lies in summarizing the collective knowledge of metadata experts on the role of metadata within the survey cycle and management of the national statistical offices. The Task Force proposal focused on the completion and future maintenance of the Common Metadata Framework for national statistical offices according to the following general aspects:

- (a) The Framework shall be a living/evolving reference to standards, concepts, and best practices. An editorial board shall be created to ensure future maintenance of the Framework.
- (b) The Framework should be published in a form of a website, with some parts published in print (after the public and editorial group review).
- (c) The Framework shall comprise two types of content:
  - Text that is written for the Framework as its integral part;
  - Selected and edited contributions by countries (good practices).
- (d) It is important to add a general introduction, and provide “packaging” to link individual parts of the Framework.
- (e) In order to attract broader readership, each item of the framework should comprise a general overview, avoiding overly detailed technical information, with links to more technical and detailed papers.
- (f) Linked contributions may relate to multiple parts of the Framework.
- (g) All material included in the Framework should be accessible without restriction or charges.
- (h) Drafts will be made available for public review. After two rounds of review they will stay stable within the Framework for some (reasonable) time.
- (i) The Framework shall be updated with contributions from METIS 2006.
- (j) The editorial board should be open to all inputs within and outside the framework of METIS and ensure collaboration with other relevant groups.

All documentation for this meeting is available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2006.03.metis.htm>

### **Forthcoming events**

10. The following events are planned in 2006 in these fields:
- Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (Sofia, 21-23 June 2006);
  - Work session on Statistical Data Editing (Bonn, Germany, 25-27 September 2006);
  - Work Session on Electronic Data Reporting (Geneva, 6-8 November 2006) (see ECE/CES/SEM.54/23).

### **Other activities**

11. A related activity undertaken within the CES framework, the Work Session on Statistical Dissemination and Communication, will take place in Washington, D.C. (United States) from 12 to 14 September 2006. The objective of the meeting is to exchange experience in statistical dissemination and communication 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 statistical dissemination and communication, which is also within the framework of MSIS. The experts will also share their experiences in managing public/customer relations in light of increasing expectations of users.

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