



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

CES/2001/4  
3 April 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

---

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

Forty-ninth plenary session  
(Geneva, 11-13 June 2001)

**MATTERS THAT THE BUREAU DECIDED SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE  
ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE**

**(EXCERPTS FROM THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMME)**

**Introduction**

1. This document brings together into a single document the list of matters that the Bureau decided should be brought to the attention of the 2001 plenary session. It is a compilation of the various items that are listed throughout the Integrated Presentation under the heading "Attention of the Conference is drawn to" sections of each Programme element in the Integrated Presentation. In accordance with this, material in this document is presented for each field of statistics separately, and listed following the same sequence of fields of statistics that are presented in the Integrated Presentation.

Action by the Conference:

2. The Conference is invited to consider the various issues listed in this document that the Bureau decided should be brought to the attention of the Conference at the plenary session, and to raise for discussion at the plenary session ones that members of the Conference consider merit being discussed further at the plenary session. In addition, under this agenda item the Conference is expected to:
- analyse the implications that the review of the "integrated presentation" made by the Bureau, and the matters to which the Bureau called the attention of the Conference, have for the programme of Work of the Conference.
  - identify issues or suggestions that through the Bureau should be referred to the attention of other organisations whose activities are reflected in the "integrated presentations".
  - identify issues on which the Bureau should focus in the next round of review of the integrated presentation, with a view to proposing concrete and practical follow-up suggestions

3. It is anticipated that discussion on any of the issues listed in this document (or on any other issues that are associated with the Integrated Presentation) would take place towards the end of the Conference's review of the Integrated Presentation (see agenda item 3).

### **Programme Activity 1: Organisation And Operation of Statistical Services**

This part of the Programme is concerned with the challenges national statistical systems are faced with on the one hand in relation to pressures for increased and more co-ordinated activities at the international level, and on the other hand with respect to the growing demand for local and regional information in sub-national statistical systems. Statistical activities are strongly affected by the major policy trends taking place in the ECE region, i.e. the deepening and widening of the European Union, the transition to the market economy in central Europe and the CIS, and the consolidation of the transatlantic dialogue between Europe and North America.

#### **1.1 Promotion and Co-ordination of Multilateral Statistical Work**

- The CES Bureau discussed co-ordination issues at its October 2000 meeting. The Bureau noted that the highest and best forms of co-ordination have been achieved among the organisations that are represented on the Bureau, but that greater difficulties are experienced in achieving similar levels of co-ordination with organisations that are not represented on the Bureau. The Bureau discussed several examples of co-ordination that are not up to the expected standard, such as the conflicting mortality estimates that are being produced by WHO-Geneva and the UN Population Division (see PE 4.9 for additional details). The Bureau agreed that the attention of the Conference should be called to this at the plenary session.
- The Bureau agreed that attention of the Conference should also be called to the fact that the Bureau and the Conference have mechanisms in place that help them to identify problems of co-ordination, but that they do not have many tools available to them for solving problems when they arise. The Bureau also agreed that it is easier to ensure co-ordination at the national level if there is good co-ordination available at the international level.
- Eurostat and OECD are looking into the possibility of developing an annual work programme of joint activities which would provide a detailed outline of areas of common interest, targets and list of actions.

#### **1.2 Management and Policy Issues of Direct Concern to the Presidents of National Statistical Offices**

- The Bureau considered that attention of the Conference should be called to the growing difficulty statistical offices and other institutions are having in ensuring confidentiality in the modern world.
- It also agreed that the attention of the Conference should be called to the increasing demand national and international statistical offices are facing for regional statistics.

#### **1.3 Countries in Transition in the ECE Region**

- The Bureau considers that there is a need for greater clarity in the planned future work of international organisations showing what provisions have been made for planned future assistance to individual countries in transition.
- It also considers that there is insufficient focus upon assessing whether international organisations are meeting the needs of users, and that greater transparency is needed in the co-operation that takes place between international organisations so as to ensure that the support being provided to countries in transition is of the required high quality.
- The Bureau also considers that the support given to CITs must be relevant to the statistical needs of the countries, regardless of whether these needs are economic or social in nature.
- The Bureau also calls the attention of the Conference to the benefits that countries in transition could receive by receiving technical assistance from the international community to assist them to

take advantage of the rapid developments that are occurring in the field of information and communications technology, particularly with respect to the emergence of new strategies for statistical data collection, data processing and dissemination

## **Programme activity 2: Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues**

There is a growing need to share experience and identify good practise in the application to official statistics of the new tools and techniques provided by technological change, the e-economy and the information society. Management in statistical offices of information and communication technology (ICT) requires a strategic and comprehensive stance in developing pertinent programmes and policies for improving the collection, processing and dissemination of official statistics. The major issue of the work in this area is the development of standard classifications, methods, norms and metadata concepts as well as other tools that allow national and international statistical activities to be fully integrated in and adapted to the rapidly changing new ITC environment, and especially to the growing role of the Internet. New ways have to be found to ensure that the growing number of users have access to, and make an optimal use of statistical information for decision making. A powerful drive in this endeavour is the need to integrate the meta-information systems of the major international organisations involved, like the IMF, Eurostat and OECD. This is consistent also with the need to reduce the burden on respondent countries and institutions. As the Internet becomes the primary mean of interaction between the statistical agency and its “customers”, demands change in a fundamental way. The expectation of the public regarding the Internet is in fact significantly different from that regarding traditional sources of government information. Data confidentiality, accessibility, timeliness, coherence and relevance become the key issues in what is at stake in this process.

### **2.1 Management of Information Technology Infrastructure**

- There is a growing demand from users to be given access to micro-data, and this is resulting in increased concern of statistical offices about the importance of ensuring data confidentiality.
- Increased co-operation between NSIs, academia and research institutes in the re-engineering of statistical production is needed, bearing in mind rapid developments occurring in the field of ICT.
- The Bureau noted that the ECE/Eurostat Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Technology (Geneva, February 2001) recommended that a Website on best practices in statistical ICT applications and transfer of know-how be developed in this area.

### **2.2 Statistical Data Collection and Processing**

- The Bureau noted the growing concern about issues of data privacy and confidentiality in NSIs.
- It also noted the growing conflict NSIs are encountering between their desire to increase their usage of administrative records so as to lessen the response burden on respondents and increase the coverage of the statistical product on the one hand, and concerns about privacy and confidentiality on the other.

### **2.3 Dissemination and Interchange of Statistical Information**

- Attention of the Conference is drawn to the outcome of the Work Session on Statistical Metadata (Washington, November 2000), and especially to the proposal by the IMF that its Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB) serve as an anchor for statistical metadata and that the common XML-based language for statistical metadata and data be developed.
- The pressure on NSIs to provide the public with access to a wide range of statistics on the Internet free of charge is increasing.
- The Bureau noted the impact that the pressures for providing users with data on the Internet is having on pricing policies.

## **2.4 Statistical Classifications**

- The Bureau noted the effort being made by Canada, the United States and Eurostat to bring about a greater degree of convergence between ISIC/NASE and the North American Industrial Classification System.
- The Bureau considered that it would be useful to establish a link between statistical classifications and the classifications that are used internally in businesses (e.g. bar codes).
- The Bureau calls attention of the Conference to the development of new classifications, definitions and measurement indicators for the Information Communication technology (ICT) sector. The classification of ICT commodities, goods and services, electronic commerce ,and the role of enterprises in the New Economy are the target tasks. International co-operation among OECD, Eurostat, the Voorburg Group and other active players in this field is seen as being an important vehicle for accelerating progress in this development.
- The statistical community does not adapt sufficiently quickly to needs of updating and amending classifications. In such cases, international organisations that are recognised as having "responsibility" for given classifications should give consideration to the possibility of issuing "provisional or tentative" updated classifications that countries could use on an interim basis until such time as the new classification is adopted and approved in its final form.

## **2.5 Statistical Research and Development**

- The Bureau noted the importance of ongoing co-operative methodological and research work with member states and other organisations in relation to the harmonisation requirements of the new policies (monetary union, information society, etc.), globalisation and the needs to reach a critical mass.
- The Bureau highlighted the need of technology transfer. In 2001, work on a new Eurostat project should start that will reinforce the dissemination, valorisation and transfer of research outcomes. A large number of suppliers and users from NSIs is expected to participate.
- The Bureau underlined the importance of solutions being developed through research and development programmes for the new concepts, methods and technologies that are needed in the field of statistics because of rapid development that are occurring in the field of ICT.

## **2.6 Geographical and Regional Data**

- The Bureau noted that the first Joint ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Methodological Issues Involving the Integration of Statistics and Geography will be held in Tallin Estonia in September of 2001.
- The Bureau welcomed the improved co-ordination of statistics and geography that is occurring in the European Union between statisticians and cartographers, and their planned work aimed at investigating whether it is possible to define more homogeneous territorial building blocks at the European level that would complement (but not replace) the 'NUTS' approach.
- The Bureau noted the growing demand for geographical and regional data.

## **2.7 Human Resource Development**

- The Bureau underlined the importance of achieving improved co-ordination in the field of statistical training. It considered that one way of achieving this might be by the greater exchange of information among countries.

## 2.8 Sustainable Development Indicators

- The Bureau noted the good co-operation that is taking place among OECD, Eurostat, the European Environment Agency and other relevant international organisations on the development of indicators useful for monitoring sustainable development.
- The Bureau noted the dichotomy that exists between the practical approach whereby a series of indicators for sustainable development are chosen from data sets generally available for most of the countries of interest, and a more theoretical approach of deciding in principle what sort of indicators would be desirable. For the UN and World Bank, because their membership is so much larger and include so many countries with less extensive data bases, rather simpler indicators have been chosen initially based to a large extent on availability. In OECD and the EU greater consideration is being given to a more theoretical framework in the hope that there will be sufficient political momentum behind the question to permit subsequent development of more focussed indicators.
- The Bureau noted that the OECD's next steps in work on sustainable development, that includes dealing with the preparation of a set of illustrative indicators and necessary supporting information on indicators on sustainable development.

### **Programme Activity 3: Economic Statistics**

This Programme Activity focuses on activities related to the development of standards and methods in various areas of economic statistics carried out by supra-national and international organisations. A whole range of manuals and handbooks, as well as internationally compatible databases are illustrated. It is worth mentioning that most of these handbooks and manuals are produced collectively by several international organisations, through inter-secretariat working groups and task forces.

Emphasis is also placed on international co-operation and technical assistance to countries in transition, and particularly to the CIS and countries in the Balkan region.

### 3.1 Implementation of the System Of National Accounts

- Future action in joint data collection (concerns transition economies): ECE and Eurostat both collect national accounts data from EU candidate countries. Outstanding issues of timeliness, data detail, data transmission formats and reliability need to be resolved before this overlap can be eliminated. These questions have been reviewed in the past and will be revisited from time-to-time as new developments warrant;
- The Bureau discussed key areas of economic statistics where it is considered most important that international organisations produce methodological manuals;
- The Bureau noted "minimum set of standards for complying with the SNA '93 that the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts has developed for CITs;
- National accounts serve as the conceptual and empirical basis of a large proportion of NSIs' economic analysis and research, and their analytical measurements are encountering greater difficulty in keeping up with the changing economic environment. The situation is also characterised in the European Region for growing pressure to develop short-term statistics, which can be used to monitor and to complement the SNA. There is a resulting growing problem of fragmentation. National accounts serve as one of the few instruments available for helping to keep things together and there is a need to further strengthen its empirical and analytical bases.

### 3.2 Money and Banking, Government Finance, and Balance of Payments

- Future action in joint data collection (concerns transition economies): UNCTAD and Eurostat will endeavour to resolve the issue during the course of 2001, subject to resource constraints.
- A series of IMF manuals have recently been published or are in the stage of being finalized (see text in PE 3.2, Strategic Medium-Term Goals and under activities of IMF).

### 3.4 Transport Statistics

- International statistical work is being conducted in the field of transport statistics by various international organizations, but that there is comparatively little international statistical work underway in the field of communications.

### 3.6 International Trade in Services

- In March 2001, the Statistical Commission adopted the draft Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSTIS), prepared by the inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (OECD, WTO, Eurostat, UNSD, UNCTAD and IMF).

### 3.7 Tourism

- The Bureau noted the success that different international organizations have experienced in developing and agreeing to joint data collection activities in this field, but that to maintain this progress the situation needs to be continually monitored

### 3.8 Other Marketed Services, and Non-Marketed Services

- Problems in joint data collection (Structural Business Statistics): In 2000, discussions between Eurostat and OECD on the set of data that is similar and agreement of data transmission from Eurostat and OECD. In 2001, continuation of these discussions in order to finally identify the common data set and to agree on data transmission (including transmission formats). In 2002, start of data transmission based on an agreed timetable (continuation in the following years).
- Future action in joint data collection (Information Society Statistics, see also PE 3.11 and PE 3.13): The OECD Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS), after having developed an OECD activity-based definition of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, is now collecting internationally comparable ICT supply data and extending the ICT sector definition to a commodity-based one. The WPIIS has decided to create an Expert Group on "Defining and Measuring E-commerce". Fourteen countries and Eurostat are participating in the Expert Group.

### 3.9 Price Statistics, Including Purchasing Power ParITIES

- The Bureau noted the increasing tendency to measure prices on the basis of bar codes;
- Work on the preparation of a new manuals on price statistics is progressing

### 3.10 Agriculture, Forestry And Fishery Statistics

- Future action in joint data collection (agriculture other than economic accounts for agriculture): In 2000, a test has been undertaken by Eurostat and FAO for agriculture price statistics. Thereafter, other types of data sets will successively be identified and included in framework of Common Data Consultation and Utilization. Should be completed within a period of a few years after the initial test phase.
- Future action in joint data collection (fishery statistics): Following a joint Eurostat/FAO/OECD meeting with national statisticians in February 2000 and discussions on this topic in the OECD Committee for Fisheries proposals are being formulated to minimise the duplication of demands made on the national services and to improve the exchange of data between the international agencies.
- Future action in joint data collection ( Agri-environment indicators): See PE 5.1

### 3.11 Industrial Statistics

- Future action in joint data collection (short term industrial indicators): Since 1997 discussions have been held between OECD and Eurostat with regard to closer cooperation. For the moment there is no plan for a joint data collection activity.
- Future action in data collection on SME statistics: Data collection will continue to be carried out by OECD.

### 3.14 Business Registers And Administrative Records In Support Of Economic Statistics

- The Bureau noted the increasing concerns some countries have about confidentiality issues in this field;
- The Bureau drew attention to the importance of using links between business registers and international trade statistics in studies of globalization.

## **Programme Activity 4: Social And Demographic Statistics**

This Part of the Programme covers a wide range of statistics in the social and demographic spheres that are of interest to National Statistical Institutes in the UN/ECE region. The statistically-related work that the various international organisations undertake in these fields are influenced not only by the major policy trends that are taking place in countries of the ECE region but by the outcome of the deliberations and exchange that take place among Governments at major UN global meetings in this field (e.g. major world meetings on women and gender, ageing, the Social Summit, etc.).

As in the field of economic statistics, work by the Conference and by the ECE secretariat in this field of statistics is focussed on selected subject-matter areas of statistics such as population and housing censuses and international migration statistics where efforts are concentrated on developing and promoting the implementation of internationally accepted standards and methods, and in the field of gender statistics where attention is concentrated on developing a Regional Gender Statistics Website for use in monitoring progress and change. In addition, the ECE secretariat also works closely with other international organisations in organising joint meetings in selected other fields of statistics in the Conference's work programme such as health statistics (with WHO), labour statistics (with ILO), and education and cultural statistics (with UNESCO).

### 4.1 Demographic Statistics (Including Projections, Migration, Fertility And Families And Households)

#### General

- The Bureau agreed that the attention of the Conference should be called to the decision recently taken by the Council of Europe to abolish its European Population Committee (CDPO) and to replace it by a 12-member ad hoc committee whose membership is expected to rotate over time. The secretariat of the Council of Europe subsequently indicated that the Committee is expected to continue to exist as an ad hoc committee with 15 country membership but whose meetings would be open to other Council of Europe Member States.

#### Projections

- At its last meeting the ACC Sub-Committee on Statistics was informed that the UN Population Division and WHO Geneva have failed to reach agreement on a common set of estimates of adult mortality. It was also informed that WHO Geneva intends to produce and publish its own set of estimates. Both the ACC Subcommittee on Estimates and Projections and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities are addressing the co-ordination issues involved.

#### Migration statistics

- The Bureau noted the serious problems of the lack of international comparability in the field of international migration statistics. It recognised that this is a very difficult field and that little

progress is likely to be made in the short-term future by countries in making their national immigration and emigration statistics internationally more comparable.

#### Population Ageing

- The second World Conference on Ageing will be held in Madrid in April 2002. In addition, the ECE Population Activities Unit will organise an ECE Regional Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin from 11-13 September 2002. The Conference is expected to consider and adopt a regional implementation strategy for the revised International Plan of Action on Ageing that the April 2002 Madrid meeting is expected to adopt.

#### **4.2a Population and Housing Censuses**

- The Bureau noted that some countries in the region have concluded that that it would be advisable for them to begin exploring other possible alternatives to their censuses, in case developments in their countries necessitate that in future the country will have to rely on alternative or new sources of data for census-type data. The Bureau also noted that several countries in the region including several CIS countries (e.g. the Russian Federation and the Ukraine) have had to postpone their census because of inadequate funding available to them for financing the census.

#### **4.2b Statistics on Population Groups of Special Interest**

- There is a large amount of statistical work being undertaken by international organisations on various population groups of special interest, such as children, adolescents, women and the elderly. However, the co-ordination of the data collection by international organisations and NGOs on these population groups is not as advanced as with reference to other work areas.

#### **4.4 Labour Statistics**

- The Bureau noted that there is a need for improved co-ordination by international organisations engaged in data collection and dissemination in this field of statistics, and particularly with reference to subject-matter areas such as employment and unemployment, on wages and earnings, and in new work areas such as work aimed at developing statistics that can be used to describe the dynamics of labour markets.
- The ILO Bureau of Statistics plans to begin its preparations for the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians, which is tentatively scheduled for 2003. The proposed agenda includes consideration of statistical standards in the form of “a revised resolution on consumer price indices”; a new “resolution on labour indicators”; discussion on “child labour statistics”, “the quality of employment”, “working time” and the “demand for labour”; “reconciliation of labour statistics from different sources; and the need to revise ISCO-88.

#### **4.5 Education and Training Statistics**

- The Bureau noted that the absence of time-series data for education statistics and indicators is a general problem in the field of education statistics that would be useful to try to address, but that this would require NSIs to invest the resources that are needed to compile an international time series with respect to the main education statistics aggregates such as total enrolment and expenditures, completion, and educational attainment.
- It also noted that there is volatility and a lack of comparability of data on continuing education and training, and that this problem could be minimised if national and international statistical offices invested more in work aimed at improving the development of common definitions and measurement standards in this area.
- The Bureau also noted that currently interest in the determinants of educational outcomes and in the measurement of the non-market returns to education is growing.

#### **4.7a Statistics of Household Income and Expenditures, of the Welfare of the Population, and of Poverty and Income Statistics**

- The Canberra Group on household income has made significant advances in finalising the draft chapters on a future handbook on household income statistics. The Canberra Group held a meeting in Luxembourg in May of 2000, and that is likely to be the last meeting that the Group will have, because the handbook is expected to be presented to the spring 2001 session of the UN Statistical Commission for endorsement.
- The recommendations of the Canberra Group have been taken up by Eurostat and treated concretely in its work on reporting on social exclusion and poverty at the EU level that focuses on income concepts and definitions, measurement of income and poverty, and social exclusion and rules for quality reporting. The plan is to develop a more practical manual for the EU countries.
- Co-operation is now established between Eurostat, the OECD, LIS and the UN on income, poverty and social exclusion statistics.
- Future activities by EU and EEA countries conducted under the umbrella of Eurostat will be related to further harmonisation of income concepts and variables and longitudinal analysis of social exclusion and poverty based on the ECHP.

#### **4.7b Social Security Statistics**

- The Bureau noted that further work is needed in the field of social protection statistics on analysing differences and inconsistencies between the SOCX and the ESSPROS (European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics) data bases, so that the questionnaires and, eventually, the methodologies can gradually be harmonised. It also noted that in the field of social protection, closer co-operation is needed between NSIs and other Ministries involved in collecting and compiling administrative data -- such as the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Security -- so as to ensure higher quality data could become available.

#### **4.8 Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics**

- A publication entitled "Surveying Crime: A Global Approach" was recently published by ISTAT and UNICRI. The volume provides a broad overview on the issue of integration of data sources on crime and criminal justice.
- The topic of monitoring corruption is being dealt with by UNICRI and CICP as a priority field, within the framework of the UN "Global Programme against Corruption".

#### **4.9 Health Statistics**

- The expected adoption by the World Health Assembly of a Common Framework on Measuring and Reporting on the Health of Populations (see CES/2001/28, report of the October 2000 Joint ECE/WHO preparatory Meeting on measuring Health Status).
- OECD and WHO have established a framework for co-operation between the two organisations in the field of health statistics. Ongoing co-operation is occurring between them in the development of guidelines for the collection of health data and accounts. A Steering Committee has been established that, among other things, brings together experts on health accounts from WHO, OECD, World Bank, USAID and a number of other experts from the donor community.
- The Bureau noted the good relations between the OECD and Eurostat in this area, and emphasised the need for co-ordination of work on health care and resource definitions, but it also considered that co-ordination problems in this field by all players have not yet been entirely resolved, particularly with respect to data collection.
- Co-ordination issues and points on joint data collection: Informal agreements exist between WHO, OECD and Eurostat for improvement of data collection, harmonised data collection and analysis, the use of common instruments, mutual exchange of data of common interest. Close

collaboration has also been developed with ILO in the field of Occupational Health and Safety statistics.

#### **4.10 Gender Statistics**

- The establishment of a joint ECE/UNDP regional Gender Statistics Website;

#### **4.11 Other Work in the Field of Social and Demographic Statistics**

##### **4.11a Social Indicators and Frameworks**

- The Siena Group on Social Statistics held its seventh meeting in Maastricht in May 2000. The theme of the meeting was accounting in social statistics and indicators for social development. The themes of future meetings of the Siena Group will concentrate on social indicators and developments in social statistics.

##### **4.11b Multi-Purpose Social Surveys**

- The Bureau noted Eurostat's plans to continue working towards definitions and measurement rules of harmonised basic variables on persons and households that are to be included in all social surveys.
- Some NSIs are becoming increasingly concerned about procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of data drawn from panel surveys and other sources.

##### **4.11c Registers and Administrative Records for Social and Demographic Statistics**

- The Bureau considered that work being undertaken by international organisations on socio-economic classifications and on key indicators should be more closely associated and strengthened.
- Some NSIs are becoming increasingly concerned about procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of data drawn from administrative records and registers.

### **Programme Activity 5: Environment Statistics**

This part of the Programme reflects the concern of the Conference to develop an integrated system of internationally comparable environment statistics which can assist decision-makers in formulating policies that are environmentally sustainable. Environment statistics continue to show substantial data gaps and quality problems, and continuous improvement of the regular reporting and dissemination is a concern in most countries. Environment statisticians play a crucial role in providing society with concepts, classifications and definitions and also need to be involved at an early stage in the development of environmental indicators and sustainability indicators. Environmental accounting is an increasingly important way for recording the use of natural resources and integrates economic and environmental thinking.

#### **5.1 Sectoral Concepts, Definitions, Classifications and Environmental Databases**

- Problems encountered with the Kyoto Protocol: The Bureau noted that in addition to the technical problems associated with the application of the "Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change", a major problem is the non-ratification of the Protocol by some major countries. Without its ratification, the Kyoto Protocol will not be as effective an instrument for reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.
- Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs): The Bureau welcomed the collaboration between OECD and the ECE on the programme for Environmental Performance Reviews continues to be

very successful. In the course of the year 2000, reviews have been carried out for six countries and follow-up reports have been produced for three countries.

- **Problems in joint data collection:** The Conference in 2000 asked the organizations concerned to coordinate better their data collection activities and to simplify their questionnaires and make them less complex. The issue has been further discussed between OECD, Eurostat and EEA together with countries. The Eurostat meeting with Member States on environment statistics discussed the issue in September 2000. The urgent need to improve data availability and quality was recognised by the meeting participants. The Joint OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire should be reviewed with the aim of concentrating on the most important tables. There was a general understanding that lead organisations should be nominated for each area. For Eurostat, priority questionnaires would be waste, water and environmental expenditure, and until new systems are in place also the land use. (See also the explanation under 3.10 1 (Land use and Landscape) on the LUCAS survey and the evaluation in 2001 and 2002). Air emission data need to be discussed between EEA, Eurostat and OECD to find a solution, building on the reporting to the conventions. The Air Quality, Inland Water Quality and Marine Environment sections should be reviewed by the EEA against other reporting systems, with the aim that these systems should provide OECD with the data needed for European countries. For Noise and Wildlife there are currently no other data source. (A meeting at Director level between OECD, Eurostat and EEA has taken place in February to further progress the issue).
- **Agri-environment Indicators:** The Bureau was informed that a joint OECD/Eurostat data collection is being discussed in the area of agri-environment indicators. In a first phase it could cover nitrogen balances, pesticides, emissions of climate gases and organic farming. Data already available is planned to be pre-filled. Later on the data collection could be extended to cover also other indicators. The data collection will be further discussed between the secretariats and with countries at Eurostat and OECD meetings.

## **5.2 Environmental Accounting**

- The Bureau encouraged Eurostat and OECD to agree on a mutually agreeable division of labour, this will be discussed at the autumn meeting of the Bureau.
- The Bureau noted that work has continued on the revision of the United Nations' handbook on integrated environmental and economic accounting (SEEA), an activity carried out by the United Nations Statistical Division in collaboration with the London Group on Environmental Accounting, World Bank, OECD and Eurostat. It is expected that the manual will be completed by the end of July 2001.

## **Programme Activity 6: Dissemination and Support for Secretariat Activities**

Coordination is a primary concern in all the work of the Conference. This program activity is concerned with the data collection policies of the international organisations and helps to ensure that duplication in their data collections is avoided and that the reporting burden on national offices is kept to a minimum. Data dissemination activities are also covered in this part of the work programme.

### **6.1 Co-ordination of International Data Collection**

- The Bureau noted that in the past few years Internet has been increasingly adopted by many international organisations not only for dissemination purposes but also for data collection. These innovations represent an opportunity to reduce the burden on NSIs. However, in order to take fully advantage of this opportunity, a high level of coordination among international organisations on data collection is required.