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STATISTICAL COMMISSION and ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Technology
(Geneva, Switzerland, 15-17 February 1999)

INFORMATION NOTICE

The meeting will be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland from 15 to 17 February 1999, starting on 15 February at 9:30 a.m.

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The Meeting is convened under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). Its purpose is to study managerial issues connected with computerization of statistical information, to exchange national experiences and to promote international cooperation in this field. An important aim of the Meeting is to assist the National Statistical Offices of countries in transition in solving problems raised in statistical information technology. The Meeting is primarily intended for managerial staff in national statistical offices, but also for the IT experts, statisticians and subject-matter specialists concerned.

II. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

2. Representatives of all member countries of the ECE and of interested international organizations are welcome to participate in the Meeting. Participants from other State Members of the United Nations may also attend. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization.

III. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

(i) Adoption of the agenda.

- (ii) Election of officers.
- (iii) **The impact of Internet on the statistical production and dissemination process.**
Invited paper by Germany, supporting papers by Canada, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands (2), Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden and United States (2)
- (iv) **Economic issues associated with the implementation of modern IT and management of human resources as driving forces to improve the timeliness and quality of statistical data.**
Invited paper by Norway, supporting papers by Estonia, Latvia, United States and OECD
- (v) **Integration of statistical activities at the national and international levels, including data modeling strategies and standards needed for statistical data integration.**
Invited paper by Sweden, supporting papers by Latvia and Tajikistan
- (vi) **The technologies and methods in the implementation of the 2000 round of Censuses.**
Invited paper by Ireland, supporting papers by the Czech Republic, France, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and United States
- (vii) **Year 2000 problem**
Invited paper by Canada
- (viii) Future work.
- (ix) Other business.
- (x) Adoption of the conclusions reached at the Meeting.

The provisional agenda with the tentative timetable will be made available on the ECE Statistical Division's WWW-site in the middle of January 1999.

IV. METHOD OF WORK

3. The agenda items will be considered based on two main categories of papers, **invited papers** and **supporting papers**. The organizers of the meeting have contacted a small number of countries asking them to prepare invited papers for specific agenda items. The invited papers will provide the main basis for discussion and will be presented by their authors. Supporting papers will not be presented by their authors but by the Session Organizer or the Discussant and the issues raised in them will also be discussed.

4. The sessions of substantive agenda items ((iii)-(vi)) will start with the presentation of the invited papers by their authors, followed by a brief question period. Supporting papers will then be introduced by the Discussants. The authors of the supporting papers will have a brief opportunity to answer questions concerning their papers. The authors of both invited and supporting papers are encouraged to contact the Discussants well in advance of the meeting in order to prepare for the discussion and to take into account their requirements. The list of Discussants of the individual sessions and their relevant contact information are provided below.

V. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

5. The meeting will focus on the substantial topics listed in the Programme of Work of the Conference of European Statisticians under Programme activity 2: *Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues*, Programme element 2.1: *Management of information technology infrastructure (see CES/1998/34/Add.2)*.

6. **Agenda item (iii): The impact of Internet on the statistical production and dissemination process**

Discussant: Christophe Alviset

Addr.: INSEE
18, Bd. Adolphe Pinar
75675 PARIS CEDEX 14
France

Tel.: (331) 4117 5322
Fax: (331) 4117 6146
e-mail: sec@dg75-c501.insee.atlas.fr

7. Discussion under this agenda item will deal with the managerial aspects of the use of Internet for statistical data production and dissemination. Topics like advertising statistical information via Internet, policy issues dealing with the interaction of Internet with other communication networks, confidentiality strategy related to the Internet dissemination, and others can be considered. Conducting of Internet users' analysis, and its feedback on the statistical production and dissemination, pricing policies of the Internet dissemination could be also of interest to participants.

8. **Agenda item 4: Economic issues associated with the implementation of modern IT and management of human resources as driving forces to improve the timeliness and quality of statistical data**

Discussant: Jan Byfuglien

Addr.: Statistics Norway
Postboks 1260
2201 Kongsvinger
Norway
Tel.: (47) 6288 5302
Fax: (47) 6288 5030
E-mail: jan.magnar.byfuglien@ssb.no

9. This section will focus on the impact of IT development on the organization of statistical services in statistical agencies. The discussion will deal with the cost-effective management of IT services, and the use of modern technology for cost savings, improving timeliness and quality of statistical data. Furthermore, measuring the cost of IT, and estimation of IT-related savings can be touched upon. Human resources management issues, e.g. the strategy in training and requalification of statistical staff, career management of IT staff, and the changing role and responsibilities of IT personnel and subject-matter statisticians in statistical agencies are other important topics which should be considered during the discussion.

10. Agenda item 5: Integration of statistical activities at the national and international levels, including data modeling strategies and standards needed for statistical data integration.

Discussant: Heinrich Brüngger

Addr.: Swiss Federal Statistical Office:
Espace de l'Europe 10
CH-2010 NEUCHATEL
Switzerland
Tel.: (4132) 713 61 48
Fax: (4132) 713 60 02
e-mail: heinrich.bruengger@bfs.admin.ch

11. The discussion in this session will focus on the strategies of the statistical information systems architecture as a tool for the integration of statistical activities on both the national and international level. The meeting may wish to discuss strategies of diverse types of statistical information systems, like survey processing oriented systems, clearing-house systems (data warehousing), registers and/or analytical processing systems. The discussion may consider in more detail possible approaches to the design of corporate warehouses and their integral components, that is raw data and related metadata, observation registers, multidimensional statistics, electronic documents, global metadata, etc. Other issues that warrant being brought to the attention of the meeting are standards related to the implementation aspects of the statistical information system architecture.

12. Agenda item 6: The technologies and methods in the implementation of the 2000 round of Censuses.

Discussant: Aidan Punch

Addr.: Central Statistics Office
Ardee Road
Rathmines
DUBLIN 6.
Ireland
Tel.: (353 1) 497 7144 ext 4316
Fax: (353 1) 496 4597
e-mail: puncha@cso.ie

13. The discussion is expected to deal with managerial considerations of organizing the use of modern technologies in Census 2000, the impact of this use on planning census data processing and dissemination, indications of the trial censuses to the organization of the Census 2000, training of census enumerators and on the use of new methods (CAPI, ICR, scanning, digital mapping, etc.), and innovative approaches to be used in producing census results and for disseminating census data.

14. Participants' attention is drawn also to the UN/ECE Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses (Dublin, 9-11 November 1998). The meeting's documentation is available on the Internet at the following address: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/1998.11.census.htm>. The following papers can be recommended as particularly relevant to the management of statistical information technology:

CES/SEM.40/6: When image met ASCII. Data processing in the 1995 census

- of population and housing in Israel;
- CES/SEM.40/9: Quality control and results validation (United Kingdom);
- CES/SEM.40/12: Dissemination and use of data in the Swiss population censuses (Switzerland);
- CES/SEM.40/13: Data dissemination plans for the United States Census Bureau for Census 2000 (United States); and
- CES/SEM.40/24: IMPS crosstab and map viewer for data dissemination (United States).

15. Agenda item 7: Year 2000 problem

Discussant: Barbara Slater

Addr: Statistics Canada
26-A, R.H. Coats Building
OTTAWA k1A OT6
Canada

Tel.: (1613) 951 9932
Fax: (1613) 951 4948
e-mail: slatbar@statcan.ca

16. The discussion will focus on the impact of the Year 2000 on statistical agencies, and on the managerial responsibility for finding solutions to the related problems. Within statistical agencies the Year 2000 (Y2K) problem can affect both the statistical and non-statistical information systems, such as administrative, personnel, procurement and finance systems. Furthermore, the Y2K problem should be addressed in a wider statistical environment involving data suppliers and data users on both the national and international level. Finding solutions to these problems in a statistical agency is not limited to the technology. It needs to be addressed organization-wide at the level of top management, in order to plan and monitor the corrective actions, human and financial resources, the availability and cost of external expertise, and the extent to which the organisation is dependent on external computer systems (telecommunications, financial institutions, electricity supply, etc.).

VI. DOCUMENTATION

17. National and international statistical offices have been encouraged to prepare invited and/or supporting papers for the individual substantive agenda items. The full text of the papers will only be circulated in the ECE working language(s) in which they are received. If the summary of the paper is submitted 3 months before the meeting, it will be translated and circulated in all three of the ECE's official working languages (English, French and Russian).

18. All documentation for the meeting will be made available on the ECE Statistical Division's WWW site:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/1999.02.msit.htm>

Hard copies of documents will be sent out to participants only if requested (please send an e-mail to josephine.rauss@unece.org). The UN/ECE Secretariat will inform participants by e-mail about which documents are available on the Internet.

19. Supporting papers which are not submitted by 30 November 1998 cannot be accepted as official papers for the Meeting. They will be processed as Conference Room papers, i.e. the summaries will not be translated into the official languages and the papers will be distributed in the conference room only. Participants having such papers to be reproduced and distributed are requested to submit the text in hard copies or via e-mail (to the address jana.meliskova@unece.org), in one of the official languages (English, French, Russian), to the ECE secretariat. Such material must be submitted at least two months before the meeting to allow time for processing before the session at which it is supposed to be considered.

VII. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

20. English, French and Russian are the official working languages of the Meeting. Full simultaneous interpretation from and into these languages will be provided. Conference room documents prepared during the Meeting, such as draft conclusions, will be issued in the three official languages.

VIII. ACCOMMODATION, PASSPORT AND VISA REGULATIONS

21. Participants are requested to make their own hotel reservations. In order to assist participants in organizing their accommodation, the ECE secretariat provides a list of hotels on its WWW site (www.unece.org/stats). Follow the link "See also: Geneva" on the home page.

22. All participants attending the Meeting and persons accompanying them are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participants reside.

IX. INFORMATION, MAIL, CORRESPONDENCE

23. Unless otherwise specified, all correspondence regarding the Meeting should be addressed to:

Economic Commission for Europe

Mrs. Jana Meliskova
Statistical Division
Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
SWITZERLAND
Tel.: (41-22) 917-4150
Fax: (41-22) 917-0040
e-mail: jana.meliskova@unece.org