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

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

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

**Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD meeting on the management of statistical information systems**  
(Geneva, 17-19 February 2003)

### **INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1**

The meeting will be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 17 to 19 February 2003,  
starting on 17 February 2003 at 9:30 a.m.

#### **I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

1. The main objectives of the regular meetings on management of statistical information systems are the following:

- To provide a forum for the exchange of experiences among informatics managers from National Statistical Offices and other government agencies and international organizations undertaking statistical activities.
- To make recommendations in order to coordinate the activities of different international organizations in the area of statistical information processing.
- To collect, discuss and make available the practices in the management of statistical information processing, as well as to encourage the exchange of practices in all other particular areas included in Programme Activity 2 of the Integrated Presentation.
- To assess the activities undertaken within all programme elements included in Programme Activity 2 of the Integrated Presentation, and to make recommendations on future directions of work within these programme elements to the Bureau and the Conference of European Statisticians.
- To facilitate and encourage the implementation of standards and recommendations in the field of statistical computing among national statistical offices and other concerned agencies in the UNECE region.

2. The Meeting is primarily intended for: informatics managers from national statistical offices and other concerned national and international agencies; and statisticians and informaticians responsible for the coordination, planning and management of complex projects in the field of statistical information processing.

#### **II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING**

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

- (i) Measures for the improvement of quality at IT management level;
- (ii) The impact of technical measures and standards on data quality;
- (iii) Efficient management of increasing technical complexity;

- (iv) Review and follow-up to the activities of the Conference of European Statisticians in the field of statistical information processing.

5. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature and expected outcomes of topics (i) – (iv) are provided in Section IV of this Information Notice.

### III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

6. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the Meeting. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization. All participants attending the Meeting 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, with a reference to the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD meeting on Management of Statistical Information Systems.

7. Representatives from national statistical offices and international organizations who wish to participate should complete the registration form and return it to the UNECE secretariat. The registration form, plan of the UN premises at Geneva and explanation on how to obtain the ground passes will be provided in the Information Notice No. 2 which will be issued at the beginning of November.

### IV. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

8. The documents and their summaries may be submitted in any of the official languages of the UNECE (English, French, Russian). The following deadlines and requirements apply:

- Authors must submit a two-page summary of their paper in one of these languages to the UNECE Secretariat by **31 November 2002 at the latest** for translation into the other two languages. The Secretariat cannot guarantee that summaries submitted after this deadline will be translated into the other languages.
- The full versions of papers, not exceeding 10 pages, should be delivered to the UNECE Secretariat by **20 December 2002 at the latest**.
- The UNECE Secretariat is able to process documents submitted in MS Word and Word Perfect.

9. For each substantive item on the agenda the discussants will invite 2-3 speakers to write an **invited paper** and to present them at the Meeting. All other participants are welcome to submit a **supporting paper** to any topic of the agenda. The supporting papers will be distributed to the delegates. They will be summarized by the discussants and the issues raised in them will also be discussed.

10. Invited and supporting papers along with their summaries will be made available on the website of the UNECE Secretariat at the following location:

**<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.02.msit.htm>**

Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the meeting. Documents posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

11. Simultaneous interpretation from and into English, French and Russian will be provided. The draft conclusions of the meeting will be available in all three languages.

## **V. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA**

### **Topic (i): Measures for the improvement of quality at IT management level**

12. This topic encompasses strategies, practices and experiences of informatics managers in improving the quality of services and products within their agencies. Informatics is a primary enabler of statistical information processing within NSOs and international statistical agencies, including services in information management (IM), information systems (IS) and information technology (IT). Contributions that define frameworks for the definition and measurement of quality in these domains, or that relate to management initiatives in improving quality levels of products and services are requested. By “products” we mean software systems and tools that can be used in statistical information processing. “Services” encompasses both operational (infrastructure) services and development or project management services.

### **Topic (ii): The impact of technical measures and standards on data quality**

13. Data quality may be composed of the following seven dimensions: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, coherence and completeness. Many of the technical measures and standards introduced in the last years have either a direct or an indirect impact on a subset of the quality dimensions. Output databases contribute to the accessibility, comparability, coherence and completeness. Electronic publishing creates higher user expectations, which influence, among others, timeliness and punctuality, clarity and relevance. Electronic data collection contributes to the timeliness of the data. Being in the centre of electronic data, standardized metadata influence most of the quality aspects.

### **Topic (iii): Efficient management of increasing technical complexity**

14. For this agenda item, emphasis should be placed on the management of statistical data and processes. Many NSOs have been reconsidering their statistical processes and have tried to unify them in some way to deal with the need to produce consistent output. Papers could discuss how the statistical processes have changed and how the complexity of these processes is kept under control from an IT perspective.

15. The other aspect of this agenda item is the issue arising from the management of increasingly complicated infrastructures with respect to both the infrastructure itself and also the complications of managing projects in an increasingly complex environment caused by integration. Papers could report on successful practices or software to assist in this process.

### **Topic (iv): Review and follow-up to the activities of the Conference of European Statisticians in the field of statistical information processing**

16. At its June 2002 plenary session, the Conference of European Statisticians conducted an in-depth review of statistical data collection and processing. As an outcome of the review, it asked the international organizations to follow up on the following issues:

- To investigate the possibility of developing a common system (portal) for monitoring data collection activities by international organizations;
- To ensure the development of data sharing models;
- To give both NSOs and other data providers easy access to statistics available in the international organizations in a form allowing comparisons and use in national dissemination programmes;
- To put in place secure and operational methods and tools for the transmission of sensitive information. The experiences from the STADIUM/STATEL solution supporting GESMES CB should be considered in this context;
- To investigate the possibility of defining a standard codification scheme for economic time-series (for national accounts and balance of payments) with an initial focus on short-term indicators;

- To work with national statistical offices to facilitate the reuse of their standard products.

The UNECE, Eurostat and OECD secretariats will prepare a background note outlining a possible action plan related to the six above issues.

17. The meeting is also expected to assess the activities undertaken within all programme elements included in Programme Activity 2 of the Integrated Presentation, and to make recommendations on future directions of the work within these programme elements to the Bureau and the Conference of European Statisticians, namely: (i) statistical data confidentiality; (ii) statistical data editing; (iii) electronic data reporting; (iv) statistical metadata (METIS); (v) statistical output for dissemination to information media; and (vi) geographical information systems. The UNECE Secretariat will prepare a note on the present and planned activities in these areas. The participants are invited to submit papers and discuss expected achievements and proposed amendments to the work programme.

## **VI. FURTHER INFORMATION**

18. For further information, please contact the following organizers:

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