

**Second meeting of the 1999/2000 Bureau**

(Oslo, 10-11 November 1999)

**Summary of the main conclusions of the meeting****I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The second meeting of the 1999/2000 Bureau was held in Oslo from 10-11 November 1999. The following members of the Bureau attended: Svein Longva (Chair), Pilar Martin-Guzman, Hallgrimur Snorrason and Rein Veetousme. Donal Murphy and Tadeusz Toczynski, whom the Bureau had co-opted to serve on the Bureau until the 2000 CES plenary session in place of former Bureau members Ed Outrata and Adrian Abrahamse, also attended. The following permanent participants also attended: Yves Franchet, Paola Garonna and Louis Kincannon (Hermann Habermann was unable to attend, but Willem de Vries attended on his behalf). Mikhail Korolev of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States attended at the invitation of the Bureau. The Bureau had also invited Carol Carson of the IMF to attend, but she could not attend because of illness. Members of the Bureau were assisted by the following persons: Jan Byfuglien, Olav Ljones and Bjorg Moen of Statistics Norway; James Whitworth of Eurostat; Janice Owens of OECD. At the invitation of the Chairman, Adrian Abrahamse and Ronald Luttkhuizen of Statistics Netherlands also attended the part of the meeting dealing with agenda items 1 and 2. John Kelly of ECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

**II. IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES****a) Programme activity 3, economic statistics**

2. **P.E. 3.1, Implementation of the SNA:** The Bureau agreed attention of the Conference at the 2000 plenary session should be called (**action by the ECE secretariat**) to the importance of countries throughout the region attempting to implement the 1993 revised version of the SNA to the fullest extent practicable. The Bureau recognized that the amount of work involved was considerable, and that CITs and some other countries may encounter difficulties in achieving full implementation. The Bureau considered that it would be helpful if the work involved would be prioritised and if intermediate steps would be defined. It was agreed that Eurostat and OECD (**action by Eurostat and OECD**) would look into the situation at the expert level, so that they could make proposals to the next meeting of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on SNA. The Bureau also concluded that ECE, Eurostat and OECD should look into the possibility of having the April 2000 joint meeting on national accounts consider this issue in order to advance the situation.

3. The Bureau agreed that the objectives of the PE should be amended in the manner proposed by the Rapporteur (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

4. **P.E. 3.2, Money and banking, Government Finance and Balance of Payments:** The

Bureau agreed that the objectives of the PE should be amended in the manner proposed by the Rapporteur (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

5. **P.E. 3.3, International trade in goods:** The Bureau agreed that attention of the CES should be drawn (**action by the ECE secretariat**) to: (i) work progressing in OECD on its database (**OECD agreed to supply the wording**), and (ii) to the increasing tendency of NSIs relying on electronic discussion groups which are generally composed of a small number of countries that work together in exchanging information and identifying efficient ways forward.

6. **P.E. 3.4, Transport statistics:** Yves Franchet expressed interest in the possibility of ECE and Eurostat jointly organising a meeting in the field of transport statistics. It was agreed that ECE and Eurostat should look into the possibility of the Conference, the ECE's Inland Transport Committee and Eurostat jointly organising the meeting (**action by the ECE secretariat and Eurostat**).

7. **P.E. 3.5, Distributive Trade:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the excellent work being done by the Voorburgh Group in this field (the Rapporteur (Eurostat) was asked to provide more specific and relevant wording for this) (**action by the ECE secretariat and Eurostat**).

8. **P.E. 3.7, Tourism:** Eurostat agreed to serve as Rapporteur in this project in the future. Attention of the Conference should be called to the good progress being made by OECD and the WTO in developing a single joint manual of tourism accounts for submission to a forthcoming session of the Statistical Commission (**action by the ECE secretariat and Eurostat**).

9. **P.E. 3.8, Other marketed services and non-market services:** Attention of the Conference should be drawn (**action by the ECE secretariat**) to the fact that a major objective of Eurostat and the international statistical community in the coming years will be to get EU Candidate Countries and other countries in transition to develop their statistics in this field to levels attained in other countries. In this connection, Eurostat asked ECE to look into the possibility of it organizing a meeting in the Conference's work programme to help activate other countries interest in making progress in this field (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

10. **P.E. 3.9, Consumer prices:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the joint work being undertaken by ECE, ILO, OECD, the World Bank, IMF and Eurostat on the preparation of an updated version of the ILO manual on consumer price indices and on a new manual on producer price indices (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

11. **P.E. 3.9, PPPs and other prices:** The Bureau noted that several international organisations are engaged in methodological work on imputed rents in terms of PPPs, national accounts and CPI, but that that work is being done in each organisation independently and without any form of coordination. The Bureau asked Eurostat and OECD to look into this situation and report back to the Bureau at the Bureau's next meeting (**Action by Eurostat and the OECD in terms of input to the next Bureau meeting**).

12. **P.E. 3.10, Agriculture statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to: (a) The Technical Action Plan for the Improvement of Agriculture Statistics, and how that is contributing to a reduced response burden on countries; (b) the increasing interaction between agriculture and the environment; and **8** the growing use of GIS in agriculture statistics (the Rapporteur (**Eurostat**) was asked to provide more specific and relevant wording for this) (**action by the ECE secretariat and Eurostat**).

13. **P.E. 3.13, Science and technology statistics:** The Bureau agreed that the outputs of this P.E. should be amended in the way that the Rapporteur had recommended (Action by the ECE secretariat). It also agreed that attention of the Conference should be called to the important work being undertaken on the preparation of manuals (e.g. the Frascati Manual on research and development, the Oslo manual and the Canberra manual) in this field (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

14. **P.E. 3.14, Business registers and administrative records in support of economic statistics:** The Bureau agreed that attention of the Conference should be called to the important progress that has been made in the development of business registers by countries in Europe over the course of the last few years (**action by the ECE secretariat**). Eurostat suggested that data that the ECE collects from non-EEA countries should be included in a database and made available to other organisations. ECE agreed to look into this possibility (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

#### **b) Programme activity 5, Environment Statistics**

15. The Bureau considered whether a new programme element devoted to sustainable development indicators should be included in PA 5. It concluded that work in this area was not confined to the field of environment for it is cross-cutting and relevant to both social and economic policy-making. It recommended, therefore, that the new P.E. be added to P.A. 2 (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

16. **P.E. 5.1, Sectoral concepts, definitions and classifications:** The Bureau agreed that it would be useful to present information in the IP under this P.E. separately by theme (e.g. emissions, waste generation and treatment, land use and cover, etc.) (**action by the ECE secretariat**). It also considered that it would be useful to designate different organisations as the **Lead organisation** for specific work areas. Eurostat agreed to present proposals along these lines to the next Bureau meeting (**action by Eurostat**).

17. The Bureau expressed concern about the fact that the European Environment Agency is routinely invited to ECE-Eurostat joint meetings on environment statistics but generally it does not attend. The Bureau agreed that the Chairman of the Conference should send a letter to the EEA prior to the next meeting, to inform it of the importance the Bureau attaches to the EEA's participation in these meetings (**action by the ECE secretariat and the Chairman**).

18. **P.E. 5.2, Environmental accounting:** The Bureau agreed that work by the World Bank in this field was not sufficiently reflected in the Integrated Presentation. It asked the ECE secretariat to follow up on this with the World Bank so that this can be rectified (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

19. The Bureau also considered that the World bank should be encouraged to participate more actively in the inter-agency work being undertaken in the field of environment accounting. It suggested that the UNSD should call a meeting involving the World Bank and all the other relevant organisations to discuss improved cooperation and coordination in this field (**action by the UNSD**).

20. **P.E. 5.3, Environmental databases and reporting:** The Bureau agreed that attention of the Conference should be called to the necessity of international organisations to streamline and coordinate their data collection activities in the field of environment statistics (**action by the ECE secretariat**). The Bureau recognised, however, that progress would not likely occur unless NSIs complained more forcefully about the situation. Eurostat agreed to suggest a possible way forward at the next Bureau meeting (**action by Eurostat**).

21. The Bureau also stressed the importance of the European Environment Agency cooperating more closely with other international agencies that are engaged in environmental reporting in this region. It asked the Chairman to bring this to the attention in the letter that he is to send to it (see para. 17 above) (**action by the ECE secretariat and the Chairman**).

#### **c) Programme activity 6**

22. The Bureau had no special comments on this programme activity area.

#### **d) Other considerations concerning the Integrated Presentation**

23. The Bureau agreed that for purposes of the 2000 plenary session, an experiment should be conducted in preparing the IP. In this experiment, PAs 1-3 and 5-6 should be prepared in the usual way, but the PEs in PA 4 should be prepared in a new format using the headings that are shown in the Annex to this report (Wim DeVries agreed to supply ECE with standard text to explain and define each heading, so that organizations supplying information for inclusion in the IP will have a common understanding of the type of information that should be supplied under each heading) (**action by Wim DeVries**). In this new format, organisations will not be expected to report on recurring work, but to focus instead on new activities that are planned to be undertaken and on recurring activities that will not be worked on in the future. The Bureau agreed that guidance should be sought from the Conference at the 2000 plenary session to determine whether the alternative approach used in PA 4 in this experiment should be applied in future years to the entire IP.

24. The Bureau agreed that attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that this experiment is being undertaken in response to the request made by the UN Statistical Commission to have the integrated presentations that are prepared by both the ECE secretariat for the ECE

region at by the UNSD at the world level focus more on statistical methodology (**action by the ECE secretariat**). The Bureau also agreed that in this experiment, information on coordination issues and joint data collection that up until now has been presented in the separate ECE-Eurostat-OECD joint paper on joint data collection should henceforth be presented at the programme element level in the IP. The Bureau agreed that this should apply to all six PAs, and not only to PA 4 (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

**Note:** See also paras. 37-38 below, concerning the outcome of the Bureau's discussion on the classifications of fields of statistics used by the Conference and by the ACC.

### **III. TOPIC FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION AT THE 2000 PLENARY SESSION**

25. Adrian Abrahamse informed the Bureau of his plans for organizing this session at the plenary session. The Bureau generally supported the approach that he planned to use. However, it suggested that the overview paper that Statistics Netherlands planned to prepare should make reference to the pressure that is often placed on NSIs in CIS countries to provide individual level data on persons and businesses for administrative purposes. It was also suggested that the paper should be broadened to include dimensions of quality of the data, and particularly with respect to administrative data that are used in making international comparisons. (**Action by Statistics Netherlands**).

26. The Bureau welcomed the plans of Statistics Netherlands to prepare a paper before the end of 1999 which would provide concrete guidance to the authors of invited papers on the direction they should take in their papers and on the themes they would address in their papers. Adrian Abrahamse agreed that Statistics Netherlands would provide the ECE secretariat with a list of the names of the countries and organizations that will be preparing invited papers for each of the themes to be covered in the seminar session (**action by Statistics Netherlands**).

27. Hallgrimur Snorrason indicated that he would prefer it if the seminar session could be held on one day instead of having it on part of two separate days. John Kelly indicated that this could not be done unless the total amount of time devoted to the seminar session would be reduced to around five hours, for operational requirements involved in having the draft report written and translated necessitate that the seminar session be held on the last full day of the plenary session, and approximately 45 minutes have to be reserved at the end of the plenary session for the election of officers (10 minutes) and for the adoption of the report of the meeting (35 minutes). The Bureau agreed to review the planned timetable of the plenary session at its next meeting, when additional details on the Adrian Abrahamse's plans for the seminar session will be available (**action by the ECE secretariat and the Bureau**).

### **IV SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS**

28. Louis Kincannon indicated that the OECD would welcome receiving feedback from the Conference at the 2000 plenary session on its work and plans in this field. The Bureau agreed that a short time slot should be reserved at the plenary session for an agenda item dealing with this. The

OECD agreed to prepare a short paper for the plenary session for this purpose (**action by the OECD and the ECE secretariat**).

29. The Bureau agreed that a new programme element entitled **Sustainable development indicators** should be added to Programme Activity 2 (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

5. ECE-EUROSTAT-OECD JOINT PAPER ON DATA COLLECTION

30. See para. 24 above.

## **VI. PROGRAMME ELEMENTS TO BE REVIEWED IN DEPTH AT THE 2000 PLENARY SESSION**

31. The Bureau agreed that the Conference should consider the following three topics in greater depth at the 2000 plenary session as part of its review of the Integrated Presentation:

a) Harmonized CPIs (part of PE 3.9). Tadeusz Toczynski offered a paper from Poland which could serve as the basis of this in-depth review, and Eurostat expressed its willingness to contribute input to that paper (**action by Tadeusz Toczynski and Eurostat**).

b) Agriculture statistics (part of PE 3.10). **Rein Veetousme** agreed that Estonia would prepare the paper that could serve as the basis of the in-depth review on this topic (**action by Rein Veetousme**). (The Bureau considered that countries in transition would likely be most interested in this topic).

c) Aging and social security reform (part of (new) PEs 4.2 and 4.7). Pilar Martin-Guzman offered a paper from Spain to serve as the basis of this in-depth review (**action by Pilar Martin-Guzman**).

32. The Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to send a letter to all members of the Conference prior to the 2000 plenary session, in order to obtain their views and suggestions for topics and programme elements that should be reviewed in depth at the 2001 and later plenary sessions (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

## **VII. PLANNED WORK PROGRAMME OF THE ECE=s POPULATION ACTIVITIES UNIT**

33. The Bureau stressed the importance of the Unit coordinating its planned work on both census comparability studies in the 2000 round of censuses and on the development of census codebooks with both Eurostat and the ECE Statistical Division (**action by the ECE/PAU, ECE/STAT and Eurostat**). The Bureau also considered that the planned work programme is too extensive (especially given that the resource base that is required to carry it out is not yet assured), and it called therefore for some streamlining to be introduced into it (**action by the ECE/PAU**).

34. The Bureau had some skepticism about the planned work programme in the field of FFS-type surveys. It considered that activities in the second phase of the project should not be

undertaken until the first phase of the project has been evaluated and the resources that will be required for the next phase are available. The Bureau asked the Unit to prepare a note for the next meeting of the Bureau outlining what countries participated in the first phase of the project, what countries are likely to participate in the second phase, how and when the first phase of the project is to be evaluated, and the finances that are expected to be made available at the national and international level for the next phase of the project (**action by the ECE/PAU**).

35. Notwithstanding the above reservations, the Bureau was generally supportive of the general direction of the PAU's planned work programme. The Bureau also endorsed the proposal of the Unit to include a meeting on **Generations and Gender -- Research into their Behaviour and Quality of Life** in the Conference's work programme. This meeting is intended to provide an opportunity for statisticians and population specialists to review the Unit's proposals for future data collection and analysis in this field, prior to submitting them to the Conference for approval.

#### **VIII. IMF REPORTS ON OBSERVANCE OF CODES AND STANDARDS**

36. This topic had been added to the agenda to enable Carol Carson to provide the Bureau with an updated oral progress report on the IMF's work in this field. Since illness prevented Carol from participating in the meeting, the Bureau decided to take this topic up again at its next meeting (**action by the secretariat**).

#### **IX. CONFORMITY BETWEEN CLASSIFICATIONS OF FIELDS OF STATISTICS USED BY THE ACC AND THE CES**

37. The Bureau agreed that the CES classification of statistics used in the IP should be amended so that it would correspond more closely with the revised statistics part of the ACC Programme Classification contained in SA/1999/8. This involves (**action by the secretariat**):

- a) changing the title of P.E. 3.4 to **Transport and communication statistics**;
- b) changing the title of P.E. 3.10 to **Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics**;
- c) separately identifying within PA 4 (social and demographic statistics) **Social security statistics** (the secretariat has decided to separately identify them in P.E. 4.13 (Statistics of household income and expenditures, of the welfare of the population and of poverty and income inequality); and
- d) separately identifying within PA 5 (Environment statistics) a new programme element on **Meteorology statistics**

38. The Bureau agreed that it would be useful to have the CES classification correspond to the ACC classification to the greatest extent possible, so that there would be only one classification at the global level. However, it noted that the CES classification is a more detailed one than the ACC classification, and the Bureau agreed that greater detail should not be sacrificed. Therefore, it asked the ECE secretariat amend the classification of statistical activities that will be used for purposes of preparing the new version of the Integrated Presentation for the 2000 plenary session so that it would correspond as much as possible with the ACC classification, without sacrificing any of the greater detail that currently exists in the CES classification (**action by the secretariat**).

## **X. WORK THAT THE 1999 PLENARY SESSION DELEGATED TO THE CES BUREAU**

### **a) Possible future international statistical work in SE Europe**

39. The Bureau discussed this topic on the basis of the report by Eurostat on the outcome of the August 1999 Donors= meeting that was held in Helsinki on the margins of the ISI meeting, and on an oral report by Paolo Garonna of his October 1999 mission to Kosovo and neighbouring countries. The Bureau agreed that with so many national and international actors and NGOs involved in this region, there are major risks of lack of coordination. The Bureau agreed that there is an important role that the Conference can play with respect to coordinating statistically related work undertaken in the region. To facilitate that, it agreed that an item should be included on the agenda of the 2000 plenary session. Paolo Garonna agreed to prepare a short note on this to serve as the basis of the Conference=s consideration of that topic (**action by Paolo Garonna and the secretariat**).

### **b) Prioritisation of the Conference=s work programme**

40. The Bureau asked the secretariat to prepare for it at its next meeting a proposed approach that the Conference could take to prioritise its work programme, which would meet the specifications that the Economic Commission for Europe laid down at its April 1999 session (**action by the secretariat**).

### **c) Relations between official and academic statisticians**

41. The Bureau agreed to discuss this topic again at its next meeting, based on a note that Pilar Martin-Guzman agreed to prepare concerning possible links between the IAOS and the Bernouilli Society for Mathematical Statistics and Probability, and a note that Tadeusz Toczynski offered to prepare describing how the polish CSO works closely with academic institutions in Poland (**action by Pilar Martin-Guzman, Tadeusz Toczynski and the ECE secretariat**).

### **4) Performance indicators for statistical offices**

42. The Bureau agreed that it should consider this topic in about a year=s time, based on developments that take place between now and then.

### **e) Urban and rural definitions and classifications**

43. The Bureau agreed that this topic should be taken up again at its next meeting, based on an issues paper that Eurostat offered to prepare (**action by Eurostat and the secretariat**).

## **XI. DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM PLAN**

44. Under this item, at the request of the ECE=s Office of the Executive Secretary, the Bureau reviewed the draft text that is proposed to be included in the UN=s **AMedium-Term Plan@** for the ECE Statistical Division. The Bureau was generally satisfied with the text, but it agreed that the

fourth bullet in the draft text should be amended to read **A**To support and promote the development and implementation of commonly agreed statistical standards and concepts ...**@(action by the secretariat)**.

## **XII. RAPPORTEUR OF P.E. 1.2**

45. This subject was raised as an item of **A**Other business<sup>@</sup>. Norway agreed to replace Iceland as the Rapporteur of this programme element (**action by the secretariat**).

## **XIII. DATES AND VENUE OF THE NEXT BUREAU MEETING**

45. The Bureau agreed that the Bureau should hold its next meeting in Geneva, and that the dates be 25-26 January 2000.

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**Ongoing methodological work:** Summary description to be supplied by each organisation.

**Priority objective of the methodological work to be undertaken in the next two years:** Brief description of specific, tangible methodological outputs (e.g. to produce a handbook on ...). (to be supplied by the Rapporteur organisation for purposes of this experiment with PA 4).

**New activities to be undertaken in the next two years (and recurring activities which will cease to be undertaken in the future):** Summary statements by each organisation.

**Issues of coordination in joint data collection:** Information to be supplied by the ECE secretariat, based on relevant parts of the ECE-Eurostat-OECD-UNSD joint paper on joint data collection prepared for CES Bureau meetings.

**Meetings:** Meetings in this field of statistical activity to be organised in the next two years by each of the organisations.

**Attention of the Conference is drawn to:** Information to be supplied by the ECE secretariat, based on decisions taken by the CES Bureau.

**Rapporteur:** Country that agrees to act as the Rapporteur for the Conference in this field of statistical activity (The current Rapporteurs in the CES Integrated Presentation will be asked to propose a country that could serve in this capacity).

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