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

Twenty-fifth session of the Working Party  
on Electronic Data Processing  
(Geneva, 18-21 February 1997)

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

The session will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
starting on 18 February at 10.00 a.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Election of officers
3. Impact of new technology on statistical data processing
4. The use of efficient methods and techniques in statistical data collection and processing operations
5. New methods and techniques in the dissemination of statistical information
6. Assessment of other activities related to statistical information technology
7. Future work
8. Other business
9. Adoption of the report

### Notes on substantive items of the agenda

The twenty-fifth session of the Working Party is convened pursuant to the decision of the Conference of European Statisticians taken at its 1996 plenary session (see the report of the session, ECE/CES/50, para 35).

#### Item 3: Impact of new technology on statistical data processing

The following countries plan to contribute papers as the basis for discussion on this topic: Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, United States, OECD and UN/ICC.

Discussion under this topic is expected to focus on the strategic management issues related to technological changes such as the growth of client-server approaches to computing. The Working Party may wish to take note of new EDP technologies used by national statistical offices in the ECE region and their impact on statistical data processing, bearing in mind also implications on the managerial policy of NSOs.

The Working Party may also wish to note the main conclusions reached at the May 1996 Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems and Related Matters (ISIS'96). The seminar considered the following as key topics for the future study in this field: use of communication technologies for external and internal dissemination of data; management, development and operation of statistical IT projects; automation of data collection and its role in achieving lower costs and greater efficiency.

#### Item 4: The use of efficient methods and techniques in statistical data collection and processing operations

The secretariat has been informed that the following countries will provide papers as the basis for the discussion on this topic: Croatia, Germany, the Netherlands (2) and United States (2).

Attention of the Working Party is drawn to the fact that the November 1996 Work Session on Statistical Data Editing considered that the evaluation of data editing methods and techniques should be a priority topic in its future work on statistical data editing.

The Working Party may wish to consider the major orientation of the activities being undertaken under programme element 2.2 -- Statistical data collection and processing -- of the programme of work of the Conference.

Item 5: New methods and techniques in the dissemination of statistical information

Contributions from the following countries and organizations will provide the basis for discussion under this topic: Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and OECD.

At its October 1996 meeting the Bureau of the Conference encouraged the Working Party (time permitting) to take up the matters of the development of international standards for EDI, and the progress many international organizations are making in establishing and implementing metadata policies concerning statistical data dissemination.

At the same meeting the Bureau of the Conference also asked the October 1996 Work Session on Statistical Metadata to begin work on the preparation of a set of guidelines for minimum standards to be met in putting metadata on Internet. The Work Session established a special Working Group to work on the preparation of the draft guidelines. The first draft is to be presented to the Bureau at its 27-28 February 1997 meeting. The draft will also be submitted to the Working Party for consideration.

Item 6: Assessment of other activities related to statistical information technology

The attention of the Working Party is drawn to other activities related to statistical information technology being undertaken within the framework of the sub-programme 2 of the Integrated Presentation of the International Statistical Work in the ECE Region (CES/1996/R.30/Add.2).

The Netherlands will present a proposal concerning the further work in the area of Statistical Disclosure Control/Data Confidentiality (CES/WP.9/R.27).

Item 7: Future work

Attention of the Working Party is drawn to the fact that the Bureau of the Conference will recommend to the Conference at its 1997 plenary session to change the status of the Working Party to an ad-hoc expert group (i.e. to give it the same status as all other meetings convened by the Conference in its work programme), subject to the understanding that future meetings of this group would continue to perform the same types of useful functions as the Working Party has been performing up until now.

Under this agenda item the Working Party is invited to consider the timing and substantive agenda topics that it may wish to recommend to the Conference for the proposed next meeting of the Working Party/ad hoc group of experts referred to above. It may also wish to consider whether to recommend that the group be referred to as the "Group of experts on EDP", or some other name.