

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**Report**  
**of the fifty-sixth plenary session**  
**of the Conference of European Statisticians**

*(Paris, 10-12 June 2008)*



**UNITED NATIONS**



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## NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

ECE/CES/74

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Attendance**

1. The Conference of European Statisticians held its fifty-sixth plenary session in Paris at the Headquarters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED). It was attended by representatives from Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of San Marino, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) Bratislava, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the following specialised agencies and intergovernmental organizations: the European Free Trade Association (EFTA); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS-STAT); the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); World Trade Organisation (WTO); European Central Bank (ECB); International Labour Office (ILO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); the Islamic Development Bank; and the World Bank (WB).

3. Ms. H. Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland) chaired the Conference.

### **B. Agenda and procedure**

4. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/73 and Add.1) was adopted.

### **C. Opening statements**

5. Ms. H. Jeskanen-Sundström, Chairman of the Conference, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the 56th plenary session of the Conference. Mr. M. Belka, Executive Secretary of the UNECE, addressed the meeting on 11 June 2008.

## **II. MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE'S PARENT BODIES**

### **A. February 2008 session of the UN Statistical Commission**

6. Mr. P. Cheung, Director of the UN Statistical Division, informed the Conference about the outcomes of the February 2008 UN Statistical Commission session.

### **III. COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK IN THE UNECE REGION**

#### ***A. Business statistics – outcomes of the in-depth review by the CES Bureau in 2007 and follow-up***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/5, ECE/CES/2008/5/Add.1

7. The Conference supported the conclusions and the follow-up actions recommended by the Bureau. At the request of the Bureau, Canada and Eurostat prepared a proposal with an outline for a possible CES seminar on business statistics to be organized in June 2009 which was presented to the Conference.

#### ***B. Statistics on income, living conditions and poverty***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/6, ECE/CES/2008/6/Add.1, ECE/CES/2008/33

8. The Conference supported the conclusions and the follow-up actions recommended by the Bureau.

9. The Conference was informed of the results of the survey conducted by the UNECE secretariat on the need to establish a small city group to update the Canberra Group Handbook on household income statistics. The Bureau will discuss the possible setting up of the group at its October 2008 meeting.

#### ***C. Gender statistics***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/7, ECE/CES/2008/7/Add.1

10. The Conference supported the conclusions and the follow-up actions recommended by the Bureau, including the three strategic areas as outlined in ECE/CES/2008/7 §4(d).

#### ***D. Culture statistics***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/9, ECE/CES/2008/9/Add.1

11. The Conference supported the conclusions and the follow-up actions recommended by the Bureau. The Conference's attention was drawn to the draft 2009 UNESCO Framework for Culture Statistics which is available on Internet for broad consultation ([http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev\\_en.php?ID=7146\\_201&ID2=DO\\_TOPIC](http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=7146_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)). The CES members were encouraged to send comments on the framework to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (e-mail [information@uis.unesco.org](mailto:information@uis.unesco.org)). The Conference was informed of a possible meeting on culture statistics to be jointly organised by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Eurostat and possibly UNECE in 2009.

## ***E. Environment statistics***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/8, ECE/CES/2008/8/Add.1

12. The Conference supported the conclusions and the follow-up actions recommended by the Bureau. The Conference was informed about the Bureau's decision to ask the UN Committee of Experts on Integrated Environmental Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) through its Chairman to prepare a proposal on how to address the issues raised in the in-depth review, taking into account the interests of different groups active in the area. The UNCEEA paper is planned to be considered by the CES Bureau at its October 2008 meeting.

## **IV. STATISTICAL METADATA**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/3

13. The topic was considered based on a paper prepared by the Steering Group on Statistical Metadata and presented by Mr. J. Fischer, President of the Czech Statistical Office.

14. The Conference called on managers in national statistical offices to pay attention to metadata as a vital management tool. This implies that metadata management should be an integral part of the high-level strategic plans of a statistical office. The attention of managers was drawn to document ECE/CES/2008/3 that provides good guidance in this respect. The Conference noted that:

- (a) Metadata are important, both for efficient corporate management of statistical offices and for users of statistics;
- (b) Metadata systems must not only be developed, but also maintained efficiently, through remodelling business processes accordingly and employing automation to the highest extent possible;
- (c) Metadata and metadata systems provide the necessary infrastructure for effective modern statistical information systems.

## **V. REPORT ON MEASURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/29; ECE/CES/2008/29/Add.1 and Add.2

15. The Conference discussed the *Report on Statistics for Sustainable Development* prepared by the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD), and the proposal by the CES Bureau for further work.

16. Both the Report and the proposal were consulted with the members of the CES in the course of May 2008. The Conference was informed about the results of the consultation.

17. The Conference congratulated the WGSSD for the work done on the *Report on Statistics for Sustainable Development*. The Report provides a good overview of different approaches on measurement of sustainable development with a particular focus on the capital approach. The Conference considered the Report to be a valuable contribution that can provide an impetus for the work on sustainable development statistics in national statistical offices. The Report was found to have a good balance between realism and theory.

18. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Several capital-related topics should stay on the research agenda and further work is needed before their measurement can become part of official statistics;

(b) The question was raised whether the measurement of total national wealth should be an explicit goal, given that it is important to seek an estimate for every element;

(c) More work is needed on critical thresholds of natural capital;

(d) Many groups are working on natural capital; therefore, the focus should be more on other forms of capital, e.g. human capital. In October 2008, the OECD will organize its first workshop on human capital in close cooperation with other organizations;

(e) For developing countries, the institutional capital (e.g. trust in government) is an important element to guarantee future development;

(f) GDP per capita is not an indicator of sustainability; this is especially relevant for commodity rich countries;

(g) Further work should coordinate with groups whose work is related to climate change, which is a highly policy relevant issue;

(h) Some concerns were expressed about the challenges to future work because of the difficulty of transferring economic concepts into statistical concepts.

19. In conclusion, there was general support for continuing the work in this area. However, the Conference highlighted the importance of coordinating the work with other groups working in related areas and avoiding any duplication of efforts. The future work should have a clear mandate and time horizon.

*Actions to be taken by the Conference:*

20. The Bureau will take into account the views and concerns expressed by the Conference and will discuss how to proceed further at its October 2008 meeting.

21. The Report will be also presented at the OECD Sustainable Development Meeting in September 2008.

22. The Report will be revised, taking into account the comments by the members of the Conference, and will be published by the UNECE secretariat as a joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD publication.

## **VI. UNECE STATISTICAL PROGRAMME AND WORK OF THE CES TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS**

### ***A. UNECE Statistical Programme: report on 2007 and plans for 2008***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/31

23. A short report on the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division in 2007 and plans for 2008 were presented for information.

### ***B. Progress report on the impact of globalization on National Accounts***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/32

24. The Conference was informed about the progress of work of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on the Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts.

### ***C. Progress reports on the Teams of Specialists working under the CES; reports of the CES Bureau meetings***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/1, ECE/CES/2008/2, ECE/CES/2008/4, ECE/CES/2008/4/Add.1, ECE/CES/2008/4/Add.2, ECE/CES/2008/4/Add.3

25. The Conference was informed about the work of the Teams of Specialists (Steering Groups, Task Forces) working under the auspices of the Conference.

26. The Conference took note of the Report of the Bureau meeting in October 2007 that approved the UNECE Statistical Programme 2008 (§36) and the strategic framework for the 2010-2011 biennium (§37). The Conference also took note of the Report of the February 2008 Bureau meeting. The Conference encouraged national statistical offices to participate in meetings included in the calendar of meetings (ECE/CES/2008/4/Add.3) and to submit documents for substantive items of meeting agendas.

## **VII. SEMINAR ON STRATEGIC ISSUES LINKED TO THE MEASUREMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONS**

27. This seminar was organised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis. Mr. S. Landefeld (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis) chaired the seminar.

28. The seminar focused on challenges facing official statistics in measuring international transactions due to the deepening globalization and increasing complexity of the international financial markets.

### ***Session 1: Policy drivers***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/10; ECE/CES/2008/11

29. The session was organised by Mr. R. Edwards (IMF). Mr. M. Allen (IMF) and Mr. N. Sheets (U.S. Federal Reserve Board) delivered keynote speeches.

30. In his keynote speech on “Global situation and policy challenges”, Mr. M. Allen summarized the main issues facing international financial policy makers – how to achieve an orderly unwinding of the global patterns of surpluses and deficits; how to reduce the risk of failure among overextended financial institutions; how to counter the global resurgence of inflation and possible recession; and how to accommodate the new distribution of financial assets (e.g. sovereign funds). He referred to the lack of reliable publicly available data in order to assess the vulnerability of and risks to the individual countries from financial market developments. He also pointed out the weakness of the underlying data on international investment positions, addressed uncertainties regarding oil sector data, and mentioned the emerging need to develop conceptual and statistical tools in order to assess the world’s combined demand management policies, by producing global indexes of monetary aggregates and price pressures.

31. The second keynote speaker, Mr. N. Sheets, addressed several important data issues that the US Federal Reserve deals with in shaping its policy and also as a producer of data on US investment portfolio positions. Among problematic areas touched upon were:

(a) Data on international trade: bilateral import data consolidation; difficulties in measuring trade in services; and measurement of import prices, including pass-through effects of foreign prices and exchange rate movements, and impact of frequent replacements and new entries in the basket of goods, etc.;

(b) Difficulties in measuring competitiveness with existing tools; and

(c) Issues in assessing the US net investment position: the growing gap between adjusted and actual net investment position; considerably lower returns on foreign direct investment inflows; and shortcomings in explaining portfolio capital gains and losses.

*Session 2: Selected measurement issues*

*Session 2a: Some current account issues*

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/12; ECE/CES/2008/13; supporting paper: ECE/CES/2008/37

32. The session was organised by Mr. J. Cadete de Matos (Bank of Portugal). Mr. S. Yitzhaki (Israel) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Hong Kong SAR- China, Eurostat, and a supporting paper by Hungary.

33. The session focused on the current account measurement issues arising from growing global inter-dependencies and from recent changes in the Balance of Payments (BOP) compilation methodology and revisions of economic activity classifications. The Conference recognized the substantial impact of these changes on data collection, compilation, presentation and interpretation, in particular of the external trade statistics. The issue of data on remittances – data quality problems and possible data sources – was also discussed. Questions were raised as to whether and to what extent the imputation based on various data sources is acceptable in compiling BOP statistics on remittances.

34. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Statisticians should take into consideration that any important changes in the measurement of international trade flows may impact on economic analysis and lead to misinterpretation;

(b) Data users may find it difficult to understand the blurred distinction between the trade in goods and trade in services that is due to the development of merchanting activities;

(c) The analysis of production processes becomes very difficult when only value added is reflected in trade data;

(d) Availability of timely detailed trade data for analysis might be compromised if gross flows are not recorded;

(e) ‘Bridging’ tables and better communication of changes to the data users are needed, particularly in the transition period;

(f) There are some fiscal problems affecting trade statistics compilation – many of the merchanting operations are done through off-shore groups for which the data are difficult to obtain;

(g) Limitations of using household surveys for assessing remittances are due in part to the sampling problems – migrant families are rarely included;

(h) A combination of different sources leads to improved statistics on remittances.

***Session 2b: Asymmetries in partner country data***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/14; ECE/CES/2008/15; supporting paper: ECE/CES/2008/34

35. The session was organised by Ms. A. Bürgi-Schmelz (Switzerland). Mr. S. Keuning (European Central Bank) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by the Netherlands Central Bank, a joint paper by the United States and the United Kingdom, and a supporting paper by Ukraine.

36. The session explored the conceptual links between various datasets and good practices among statistical offices, central banks and other compilers of statistics. The session dealt with two overriding themes: how to improve data quality through international cooperation and how to track the economic impact of globalization.

37. In the discussion, the following points were made:

(a) Important challenges are the lack of source data, the quality of data sources and particularly the legal constraints on the exchange of data between institutions and between countries;

(b) The issue of asymmetries in partner country data can often not be solved on a bilateral basis. It would benefit from a collective effort on a larger scale. For example, in the European region, the data exchange must be organised at two levels: between national statistical offices (NSOs) and national central banks (NCBs) at the national level, and between the European Statistical System and the European System of Central Banks at the European level;

(c) The issue of confidentiality was extensively discussed. Despite the existing difficulties of data exchange because of national security, protection of privacy, etc., some examples of successful cooperation between countries were given (e.g. counterparty Balance of Payments data between Canada and the United States). In addition, it was proposed that e.g. the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could consider a resolution advocating the exchange of confidential data for exclusively statistical purposes;

(d) The envisaged new EU legislation may include the possibility to exchange confidential data in the possession of NSOs and NCBs: however, it may require a separate implementation act for each type of statistics;

(e) Many imbalances occur because, for tax purposes, firms report some values of their operations in some countries and other values in other countries;

(f) The balance of payments data at the world level are reasonably good. By contrast, there are large differences and serious coverage problems on an individual partner country level. The IMF's Coordinated Direct Investment Survey can play an important role in helping to solve some issues concerning FDI;

- (g) Implementation of the envisaged methodological improvements in FDI statistics was seen as a high priority;
- (h) Several countries described efforts to address the asymmetries in partner country data (e.g. Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands);
- (i) Further work is needed towards a greater harmonization of methodologies in the area of statistics on trade in services;
- (j) The idea of having a lead compiler with regard to the multinational enterprises was welcomed, and its operationalisation merits some reflection at a future meeting.

***Session 3: Institutional arrangements for compilation of international accounts statistics***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/16; ECE/CES/2008/17; ECE/CES/2008/18; ECE/CES/2008/19; ECE/CES/2008/38

38. The session was organised by Ms. I. Krizman (Slovenia). Ms. L. Laliberte (IMF) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Switzerland, Austria, Russia and 2 papers by Canada.
39. The session focused on the effect of institutional arrangements on the measurement of international accounts. The purpose of the session was to share experiences and encourage views on the challenges that confront the high level management of data producing organizations in implementing harmonization across economic datasets. This is especially relevant since in most countries the responsibilities for international accounts statistics reside with organizations, typically the central bank, that do not have responsibility for the national accounts or for some of the underlying source data (e.g. customs data, regulatory data).
40. In the discussion, the following points were made:
- (a) There is currently an important debate on whether the traditional way of using bank information for measuring trade in services is sufficient;
  - (b) The question was raised as to whether there would be any benefit in harmonizing input-output tables at an international level. In response, some scepticism was expressed regarding the usefulness of such an initiative for answering questions related to reconciliation between macro and micro data;
  - (c) The integration and harmonization efforts have typically taken place between the NSOs of different countries or between the NSO and the central bank or the customs office. The importance of involving other key players like tax authorities and accounting bodies was highlighted.

(d) The difficulty to establish a market value for many of the new financial instruments calls for further cooperation with the accounting bodies;

(e) It is important to undertake international work to promote best practices in the area of integration of economic statistics and harmonization of economic accounts;

(f) Russia provided an example of successful cooperation with foreign authorities. Rosstat has signed a memorandum with Eurostat to access Eurostat data and actively works with colleagues from various countries;

(g) Canada and the United States gave an example of reconciliation of international accounts through an informal process of aggregate bilateral data confrontation.

### *Conclusion of the seminar*

41. In conclusion, the Chairman pointed out that there are several lessons learned from the discussion concerning the use of indirect estimates, where remittances, investment in intangibles, accrual accounting and risk assessment are some examples of issues on which to move forward. Collaboration with international accounting experts, for example concerning reconciliation of macro data exchanges, is considered very important. Sharing micro data at the international level is a long-term goal to be addressed. There is a need for further action concerning the standardisation of methods in related areas.

42. IMF will undertake a stocktake of the seminar and, as appropriate, follow up with data compilers. In the context of the forthcoming Coordinated Direct Investment Survey (CDIS), IMF will also consider organising a meeting that would bring together statisticians and representatives of a small group of significant multinational enterprises to familiarise the latter with the CDIS and to canvass data issues with them.

## **VIII. SEMINAR ON MEASURING POPULATION MOVEMENT AND INTEGRATION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD**

43. This seminar was organised by Germany and Eurostat. Mr. W. Radermacher (Germany) chaired the seminar.

44. Opening the seminar, Mr. W. Radermacher noted that migration is today one of the primary challenges for virtually all countries that have to deal with the consequences of immigration and/or emigration. Migration has increased significantly in the last years for political/institutional reasons (including EU enlargement, economic globalization) as well as because of changes affecting individual behaviour (developments in communication and international travel). Migration has significant consequences on societies of both sending and receiving countries from the demographic, social and economic viewpoint. These consequences may represent opportunities but also potential problems.

45. Official statistics in this context play a key role. However, there are a number of challenges for statisticians. The seminar addressed two major challenges:

(a) Improving the measurement of population mobility by providing better data on migration flows and stocks, and on the consequences of migration on the populations of origin and destination countries;

(b) Measuring migrants' integration, by producing the statistics that are required by policy makers for formulating integration policies and assessing their impact.

### ***Session 1: Demographic impact of migration***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/20; ECE/CES/2008/39; ECE/CES/2008/40; supporting papers: ECE/CES/2008/35; ECE/CES/2008/36; ECE/CES/2008/45

46. The session was chaired by Mr. G. Brückner (Germany). Mr. M. Heiniger (Switzerland) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Austria, Poland, Spain and supporting papers by Brazil, Latvia and the Netherlands.

47. The session was dedicated to the direct and indirect impact of migration on demography. The migrant population groups typically differ from the resident population with respect to many socio-demographic variables such as sex, age, fertility and mortality rates, household size and composition. The direct demographic impact of migration affects the size, structure and geographic distribution of the populations of origin and destination countries. The indirect demographic impact refers to the influence of migration on fertility, mortality, marriage patterns and family and household structure of the populations.

48. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Migration has a primary role to counterbalance the population decrease in receiving countries; however, the direct impact of migration in most cases will not fully compensate the effects of population ageing;

(b) The indirect impact of migration is often neglected and difficult to assess since it depends also on the modalities of the integration process;

(c) Measuring the impact of migration is complicated by the many different types of migration (long-term/short-term, permanent/temporary/seasonal, regular/irregular, return migration, circular migration, transit migration, etc.);

(d) Different migrant groups and demographic indicators related to migration can be used to study migration and its demographic impact; citizenship and country of birth are frequently used to identify migrants, but more detailed data on citizenship acquisition and country of birth of the

parents may permit identification of other migrant groups, like second generation migrants or population with foreign background;

(e) Administrative registers, surveys and other sources can be used to assess the extent of migration and its impact on the population; in several countries the main source of data is administrative sources, but the quality of these data depends on many factors including the purpose for which data are collected, definitions and registration practices;

(f) No one source can provide a full picture of the migration phenomenon; the best approach is to consider a range of different sources and integrate the results to provide a complete and consistent picture.

49. The Chair of the session concluded with the following key points:

(a) More and better data are needed on migration and the consequences on the population of sending and receiving countries;

(b) Although progress has been made in harmonising definitions and methodologies for collecting data on migration, further work is needed to better identify the different forms of migration, improve definitions and standardize methodologies;

(c) Exchanging migration data among countries may contribute to improving the completeness and quality of migration statistics, since measuring immigration is in general easier than measuring emigration.

### ***Session 2: Migration and labour markets***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/21; ECE/CES/2008/22; ECE/CES/2008/23

50. The session was chaired by Mr. M. Glaude (Eurostat). Mr. P. Hansen (Denmark) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Austria, Canada and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

51. The session considered the influence of migration on the labour markets of both source and destination countries. The impact of migration on labour markets depends on various factors, including the educational attainment and occupational qualifications of the migrants, as well as the scale of the population movements concerned. Migration may correct imbalances on the labour markets and produce positive effects in both sending and receiving countries. On the other hand, migration may also contribute to worsening the problems, for example when well-educated people from a developing country emigrate to developed countries, resulting in a brain drain in their countries of origin.

52. The following points were made in the discussion:

- (a) Given the diversity of issues involved when studying migration and assessing its impact on labour markets, a range of different data sources should be used;
- (b) The main sources of data in most countries are administrative sources, censuses, labour force surveys (LFS), other surveys; in addition, longitudinal studies are a good instrument to provide information on the economic and social integration of the first and second generations of migrants;
- (c) Cooperation between statistical offices and policy departments (including Internal affairs, Foreign affairs, Social affairs etc.) is crucial to identify what data are required for policy formulation and monitoring; furthermore, cooperation with the policy department is also necessary to improve the relevance and quality of data from administrative sources, like residence permits;
- (d) Cooperation with the academic and research community is important to identify data needed for research purposes, promote methodological developments (for instance, in the field of longitudinal studies) and to conduct detailed analyses based on microdata;
- (e) Statistics should help to assess the effects of policies aimed at attracting or discouraging economic migration, or at selecting migrants by educational attainment, profession or labour skills.

53. The Chair of the session concluded with the following key points:

- (a) Further work is still needed to improve and standardize the methodology, identify which migrant groups should be considered, what variables should be collected, and harmonize definitions;
- (b) Given the complexity of the phenomenon and the cross-cutting character of its consequences, no one data source can provide a complete and exhaustive picture. A range of different sources should be used, including registers, LFS and other surveys, censuses and longitudinal studies;
- (c) Cooperation with policy departments and the academic and research community is crucial to identify the data needs of the various stakeholders and to improve the relevance and quality of data from administrative sources.

### ***Session 3: Migration and society***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/24; ECE/CES/2008/25; ECE/CES/2008/26

54. The session was chaired by Ms. D. McGregor (New Zealand). Mr. J.-C. Dumont (OECD) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Germany, New Zealand and University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

55. The session focused on the social integration of migrants and the impact of migration on the societies of origin and destination countries. Measuring and analysing migrants' integration is becoming a key subject in the social and political agenda of many countries. There is growing

demand for statistical data to monitor integration, but in most countries the data provided do not fully meet the demand. The advantages and disadvantages of the various statistical sources providing relevant information were discussed, as well as what are the target groups, the dimensions of integration to be considered (i.e. employment and unemployment, housing, educational attainment, language, cultural links with origin and destination countries) and the relevant indicators.

56. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Different target groups can be identified when considering integration, including foreign-born, foreigners, native-born with at least one foreign-born parent (second generation), population with foreign background;

(b) Whenever possible, information should be collected on the different target groups separately, so that differences in integration between foreign nationals and naturalised immigrants can be evaluated;

(c) Statistics on integration are needed to assess the impact of policies aimed at selecting immigrants according to their education or labour skills;

(d) In general, there is no unique source of data that can provide all data needed to assess integration. Different sources are used in different countries, such as population censuses, Labour Force Surveys and other surveys, including those based on snowball sampling methods. All sources have relative advantages and disadvantages;

(e) In selecting the information to be collected, consideration should be given to the possible sensitivity of the questions: for instance, ethnicity is considered a sensitive topic in some countries but not in others.

57. The Chair of the session concluded with the following key points:

(a) Reliable and comparative statistics on immigrants and diasporas are essential to design sound migration and integration policies and to inform the public about migration phenomena;

(b) Data on the immigrant population are generally based on differing national definitions concerning who is an “immigrant”; this affects international comparability of results;

(c) Despite the potential role of diasporas as well as rising concerns regarding the risk of brain drain, origin countries still have little information on their emigrants;

(d) Exchanging migration data among countries may contribute to improve the completeness and quality of migration statistics since measuring immigration is in general easier than measuring emigration;

(e) There is no one-size-fits-all: different definitions, data sources and indicators should be considered to address different types of questions.

#### ***Session 4: Emerging statistical needs***

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/27; ECE/CES/2008/28; ECE/CES/2008/41; ECE/CES/2008/42; supporting papers: ECE/CES/2008/43; ECE/CES/2008/44

58. The session was chaired by Mr. G. Lemaître (OECD). Mr. E. Hoffmann (Norway) served as discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Eurostat, World Bank, UNECE, Migration Policy Group, and supporting papers by Italy and Bulgaria.

59. The session considered how to meet emerging statistical needs in the field of international migration and integration, considering in particular the need to ensure inter-country comparisons. In this context, it is fundamental to define common standards, for example on the definition of migrant populations and on minimum data sets. These common standards should also facilitate the exchange of data between countries.

60. Common statistical definitions relating to the key statistics on migration flow and foreign population stock variables have been defined in international recommendations and in European law. One challenge now is to encourage the more general application of these definitions. A number of factors call into question whether the currently defined and recommended migration statistics – even if fully and correctly implemented – respond to the changing needs for information.

61. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) The various data sources on migration (censuses, sample surveys (e.g. LFS), administrative records) can provide information on different aspects of migration and migrants, contributing to meeting emerging needs;

(b) Depending on the national context, LFS and administrative records will play different roles in providing statistics on migration. In countries with a relatively small immigrant population, registers can be considered as the best data source on their situation. In other countries, particularly when registers are not available, sample surveys (e.g. LFS) are considered the main source for statistics on migrants as well as on migration experience, although the risk of overloading the LFS should be considered, as this could have an impact on response rates and data quality;

(c) With regard to the use of administrative data, cooperation is essential with the administrations involved (i.e. Ministry of Interior, Immigration Services, etc.), as is the development of conceptual frameworks that may assist in arriving at statistics that are reasonably comparable between countries.

62. The Chair of the session concluded with the following key points:

- (a) There is no “magical” source of data on migration, but each country should consider the best sources in the national context;
- (b) In countries where administrative sources cannot provide relevant data, the LFS can represent a useful tool, although care should be taken not to overload the questionnaire;
- (c) Integration should be mainstreamed as a dimension of official statistics to be present in all planning of data collection and processing of statistics.

### *Conclusion of the seminar*

63. The Chairman concluded the seminar with the following key points:

- (a) There is a need for harmonized definitions and a harmonized methodology; this applies to all topics related to migration;
- (b) Addressing the issues raised during the seminar requires combining multiple sources – including administrative data and surveys;
- (c) Furthermore, international and/or inter-institutional collaboration is needed for obtaining best results (e.g. clearing house for mirror differences, data on diaspora questions);
- (d) The statistical development work should be demand-driven; this requires a strong collaboration between users, producers and migration experts, and will thus have to include politicians, statisticians, officials concerned with the regulation of migration and researchers;
- (e) The need to link information to first and second-generation migrants raises special requirements for data collection;
- (f) Migration has demographic, economic and social impacts; users should determine the relative priority given to these impacts in the work programme;
- (g) Current statistical data need to be improved and widened to meet the additional requests;
- (h) A multi-stage development effort will have to focus:
  - (i) in the first instance, on establishing foundations for a harmonized data set, which responds to the already established information requests;
  - (ii) in the second instance, on analytical work to be done with the newly created data – aiming at a continuous improvement of the data availability and quality and at making these data more “policy-relevant”; and

(iii) in a third and final step, on agreeing on a harmonized international indicator set – taking on board all lessons learnt during development.

## **IX. SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR SEMINARS TO TAKE PLACE DURING THE NEXT PLENARY SESSION**

Documentation: ECE/CES/2008/30

64. The UNECE carried out a survey in May 2008 among the members of the Conference to identify the topics for seminars to take place during the 2009 plenary session. Taking into account the survey results, the topics selected for the seminars in 2009 are given below.

### ***A. Seminar on foundational issues of statistical systems***

65. The following topic was selected for the seminar on foundational issues of statistical systems:

#### **Balancing principles of professional autonomy and accountability with the mandate to produce policy relevant data**

Seminar Organiser: Ireland

Session Organisers: Austria (session II), France (session III)

Papers were volunteered by: Austria, Australia, Bulgaria (Session II), Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Latvia, New Zealand, Norway (session I), Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Ukraine, UK, Eurostat (session II)

66. Three sessions are envisaged:

Session I: Relationships between statisticians and policy makers: maintaining independence while addressing demands.

67. The session will deal with drawing the “boundaries” of official statistics, and maintaining professional autonomy in an era of increasing demands for information for policy advocacy and public opinions.

Session II: Beyond the production of official statistics: creating synergies; avoiding conflicts.

68. The session will deal with performing functions beyond collecting and disseminating official statistics: forecasting and scenario-building; managing administrative registers for multiple uses; hosting computer centers.

Session III: Accountability “beyond the budget”: measuring and addressing public expectations.

69. The session will deal with how NSOs are held accountable to the public, how feedback is obtained and used, and managing public perception vs. statistical realities.

**B. Seminar on emerging issues**

70. The following topic was selected for the seminar on emerging issues:

**Strategic issues in business statistics**

Seminar organisers: Canada and Eurostat.

Session organiser: Portugal.

Papers were volunteered by: Brazil, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Finland, France (session II), Germany, Lithuania (session II), Norway (session I), Portugal, Slovenia (data linking in business registers), Spain (to be confirmed), Sweden, Switzerland, United States (2 contributions), UK (to be confirmed), OECD.

71. Two sessions are envisaged:

Session I: New domains and user needs in business statistics.

72. The session will identify and discuss emerging areas of business statistics where new developments are occurring. Among the areas that may be covered are: statistics describing the structure and activities of multinational enterprises; environment-related statistics; intangible asset accumulation; business strategies and innovation; emerging trends in entrepreneurship; and business demographics.

Session II: Burden reduction through the use of new production techniques, such as the integration of economic statistics: censuses, surveys and administrative data.

73. The session will deal with methods to reduce respondent burden, such as better integration of business statistics and the use of common, harmonized approaches with respect to business survey questionnaires; survey methodologies; use of administrative data and business registers.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. CES Bureau**

74. The Conference was informed that the Bureau co-opted Mr. G. O'Hanlon, Director General, CSO Ireland, as a member of the CES Bureau to replace Mr. W. Radermacher who has been appointed Director General of Eurostat.

**B. Tribute to Messrs. I. Fellegi, R. Edwards and H. Carré**

75. At the close of the plenary session, the Conference paid tribute to Mr. I. Fellegi, the Chief Statistician of Canada. Many significant contributions that Mr. I. Fellegi has made to the Conference of European Statisticians and to international statistical work in the UNECE region were cited. These include his serving on the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians and as

Chairman of the Conference. Mr. I. Fellegi played an important role in rationalizing the work of the Conference and its plenary sessions. The Chairman of the CES expressed appreciation to Mr. I. Fellegi for the contributions that he had made to international statistical work in the UNECE region. The UNECE Executive Secretary awarded Mr. Fellegi a UNECE certificate for his vision, inspired leadership and support as a longstanding member of the Conference and its Bureau.

76. The Conference also thanked Mr. R. Edwards, Director of the Statistics Department of IMF, for his valuable contribution as a member of the Conference and its Bureau. IMF has been an active partner in the CES work and Mr. R. Edwards' support of the work of the Conference and its Bureau is greatly appreciated.

77. Furthermore, the Conference thanked Mr. H. Carré, the Director General of Eurostat, for the support provided by Eurostat to the work of the Conference and to the many Teams of Specialists operating under the umbrella of the Conference.

### ***C. Announcements***

78. China informed the Conference of the forthcoming meeting of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) in October 2008 in Shanghai.

79. The CES Chairman informed the Conference about the Forum on Human Resources Management and Training that will take place in Skopje (3-5 September 2008) at the invitation of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

80. The IMF informed the Conference about the creation of a high-level group on System of National Accounts. The first meeting of the group will be organized in Washington, D.C. (tentatively planned for 17-18 November 2008 – dates to be confirmed).

81. The 2009 plenary session of the Conference will take place on 8-10 (a.m.) June 2009 in Geneva, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Statistics Committee.

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