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Reports of the Conference of European Statisticians' Bureau and Teams of Specialists

Report of the third meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with the Rules Governing the Work of the Conference and its Bureau (ECE/CES/2007/8), adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians at its fifty-third plenary session. Referring to the Rules, the Bureau acts as a steering body of the Conference. The report includes decisions taken by the Bureau at its 7-8 February 2012 meeting on the work carried out under the auspices of the Conference.

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I. Introduction

1. The third meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau was held in Luxembourg on 7-8 February 2012 at the invitation of Eurostat. The following members of the Bureau attended: Mr. E. Giovannini (Chairman), Mr. W. Smith, Mr. P. Potisepp, Mr. Eduardo Sojo Garza-Aldape, Ms. I. Krizman and Mr. O. Osaulenko. The following permanent observers also attended: Ms. M. Durand (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), Mr. P. Everaers (representing Mr. W. Radermacher, Eurostat), Mr. V. Sokolin (Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT)), Ms. A. McPhail (representing Ms. A. Bürgi-Schmelz (International Monetary Fund (IMF)), and Ms. L. Bratanova (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)). Mr. G. Bascand participated via videoconference for item 4d.

2. The following persons assisted the members of the Bureau: Ms. M. Gandolfo (ISTAT, Italy), Ms. A. Hocevar (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia), Ms. I. Muzychenko (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine), Mr. A. Kosarev (CIS-STAT), and Ms. M. J. Santos, Ms. A. Nilsson and Ms. C. Pereira de Sá (Eurostat). Ms. T. Luige of UNECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

3. Mr. M. Poulain and Ms. A. Herm (Université catholique de Louvain) for item 4c, Mr. K. Pesendorfer (Statistics Austria) for item 9b and Mr. W. Bier (European Central Bank) for item 12, participated at the invitation of the Chair. Mr. H. Van der Pol and Ms. A. Kennedy (UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)) for item 2a, Mr. G. van der Veen (Statistics Netherlands) for items 6 and 7, and Ms. K. Wallman (US Office of Management and Budget) for item 9b participated through audio- or teleconferences.

4. The following staff of the UNECE Statistical Division attended: Mr. S. Vale, Mr. P. Valente and Ms. A. Peltola.

II. Follow-up to in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas

A. Education statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/2 (UNECE)

5. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Bureau made an in-depth review of education statistics in November 2011. As a follow-up, the UNECE secretariat was asked to investigate whether countries would be interested in participating in two proposed activities, namely a Task Force on measuring e-learning, and sharing experience on integrating administrative, survey and census data on education. The UNECE secretariat sent out an e-mail asking which countries would be ready to be involved in this work. In response, five countries (Australia, Canada, Italy, Kazakhstan, United Kingdom) and OECD indicated interest in participating in a Task Force on e-learning. Nine countries (Australia, Austria, Belarus, Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom), Eurostat and OECD indicated their readiness to share good practices in integrating administrative, survey and census data on education. No country or organization offered to lead the work.

6. UNESCO participated in the discussion via a video-link and gave a short overview of their main activities. Their work priority is the implementation of the new International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). UNESCO will continue annual regular data collection, together with Eurostat and OECD. Thematic modules will be added to the questionnaires that will differ from country to country. UNESCO is also involved in

collecting data on science, technology and innovation. UNESCO cooperates with other international organizations on topics of common interest (e.g. with UNICEF on out-of-school children, school mobility, measuring different degrees of literacy, etc.).

7. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) Eurostat would like to see more detailed Terms of Reference for the work on e-learning before deciding about its possible involvement;

(b) The follow-up actions may not be needed so urgently as the coordination of work on education statistics has improved.

1. Conclusion

8. The secretariat will forward to Australia the country replies concerning the two proposed follow-up actions, i.e. the possible creation of a TF on e-learning, and the collection of good practices on integrating administrative, survey and census data on education. If Australia were ready to lead the work on either of the two proposals, terms of reference should be prepared for the next CES Bureau meeting.

9. The CES 2012 plenary session will be informed about the outcome of the review on education statistics.

B. Follow-up to the in-depth review on measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/3 (OECD)

10. The CES Bureau reviewed measuring information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation in November 2010. One of the conclusions of the review was that there may be scope for development of a conceptual framework and for better coordination of the many international initiatives in this area. To better inform the discussion, OECD provided a paper on the conceptual framework for measuring the information society and on international coordination of information and communication technology (ICT) statistics.

11. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Great effort has been made so far in measuring ICTs; more work needs to be done on measuring the impact of ICTs and on linking the ICT data with national accounts;

(b) New data collection methods beyond statistical surveys and new sources have to be explored to meet information needs in this area. Furthermore, measuring the impact of ICTs on economy and society requires linking data from different surveys which is difficult due to confidentiality issues and different samples used in surveys;

(c) The OECD Guide to Measuring the Information Society is widely used by many international organizations and in national surveys carried out by countries. The Oslo Manual prepared by OECD provides a framework for measuring innovation. It would be useful if these Manuals could be developed into standards to be adopted by the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC).

1. Conclusion

12. OECD will forward the Bureau comments to the OECD Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society (WPIIS) secretariat and will encourage them to link the work with the System of National Accounts (SNA). The CES Bureau members are encouraged to

raise the issue of developing UN standards to measure ICTs at the UN Statistical Commission.

C. Selection of topics for in-depth reviews by the Bureau in 2012-13

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/4 (UNECE)

13. The Bureau discussed possible topics to be reviewed in depth in 2012-13.

1. Conclusion

14. The following two topics that were selected earlier are planned to be reviewed at the 5-6 November 2012 meeting of the Bureau:

- (a) Banking, insurance and financial statistics - paper by IMF;
- (b) Poverty statistics - paper by Eurostat and Ukraine.

15. In addition, the following topics were selected to be reviewed in 2012-13 (the exact timing to be agreed later):

- (a) Open data – paper by Italy and UNECE with input from Canada, suggested additional contributors: United Kingdom and the World Bank;
- (b) Population ageing – paper by Ukraine, CIS-STAT and UNECE, suggested additional contributors: Austria and United States;
- (c) Entrepreneurship – paper by Eurostat and OECD with input from a few countries;
- (d) Political and other community activities, including volunteering – paper by Italy and Mexico, suggested additional contributors: United States, ILO.

16. Statistics related to population ageing will be discussed at the CES 2012 plenary session to obtain input from all CES members prior to the review by the CES Bureau.

D. Organization of the in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, including a common template for the in-depth review papers

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/5 (UNECE)

17. The Bureau discussed the organization of in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas based on a paper explaining the aim and procedure of the reviews. The following points were raised in the discussion:

- (a) The reviews are an efficient tool to promote coordination of international statistical activities, which is the key mission of the CES and its Bureau. The reviews are helpful in directing attention to specific topics and addressing emerging issues;
- (b) The reviews have provided good results. Among the most recent outputs can be mentioned the update of the *Canberra Group Handbook* and the *Guide on Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts*. Work is ongoing on the preparation of several guidelines started as a result of these reviews, such as improving statistical literacy, time-use surveys, and global production;
- (c) The reviews and their outcomes should be better communicated. The good quality papers prepared by countries and international organizations as a basis for the reviews deserve good visibility. It was suggested to address countries directly with an announcement about the outcome of the reviews;

(d) The in-depth reviews should not overlap with the annual review of a specific statistical topic by the UN Statistical Commission. Therefore, the UNSD informs the Bureau each year in October/November about the planned agenda of the upcoming Commission session;

(e) The Conference should approve/endorse the outcome of the reviews. This point should be included in step 8 in para. 14 of the paper describing the procedure (ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/5);

(f) The description of the activities of international organizations in the in-depth review paper should indicate the specialisation and value added of each organization in the area under review - to be included in para. 4 in the Annex of the paper (ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/5).

18. The paper prepared for the UN Statistical Commission on “Coordination of statistical activities in the United Nations” (E/CN.3/2012/15) was briefly discussed. The paper has been prepared as a follow-up to the decision of the UNSC 42nd session in response to concerns raised by Member States regarding the statistical content of the 2010 *Human Development Report* and the programme evaluation of the UN Statistical Division by the UN Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The coordination issues within the UN system should be first considered and resolved between the UN organizations before being discussed between the Member States;

(b) The discussion of the paper at the 42nd UNSC session should serve to improve the UN system coordination and implement the ‘One UN’ approach;

(c) Information on the activities of the UN Regional Commissions should be better shared. This could be a proposal for the UNSC Friends of the Chair group. The CES plenary session can be used as an opportunity for exchange of information about the work of other Regional Commissions.

1. Conclusion

19. The Bureau emphasised the important role of the in-depth reviews and the need to make the reviews and their outcomes more visible. The secretariat will update the document ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/5 to take into account comments made in the discussion. The document will serve as a CES Bureau recommendation for organizing the in-depth reviews and for preparing papers that provide the basis for discussion.

III. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe review

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/6 (UNECE)

20. The UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) is carrying out a review of UNECE and all its sub-programmes. The Bureau was informed about the discussion on the CES that took place at the 12 December 2011 meeting of the EXCOM. The Chair of the CES, Mr. E. Giovannini, presented the CES work to the EXCOM. He was successful in capturing the attention of the audience and engaging them in a lively discussion. The members of the EXCOM expressed strong support for the work undertaken by the Conference and the Statistical Division. The EXCOM noted that there is a need to further promote and communicate the good results of the work of the Statistics Subprogramme.

21. The secretariat thanked the Bureau for their support and valuable comments at its November 2011 meeting, which helped to improve the paper that was submitted to the EXCOM as a basis for the review.

22. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The bridging function of UNECE between Eurostat, OECD and the eastern countries (non-EU and non-OECD) is very important. This can not be achieved without good cooperation with Eurostat and OECD;

(b) The CES Bureau has a strong role in avoiding overlaps and duplication of work between the major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region;

(c) Countries also have a responsibility to ensure that programmes of work of international organizations are complementary through their membership in the different bodies.

1. Conclusion

23. The Bureau will be informed about the progress with the UNECE review at its future meetings.

IV. Work of the Conference of European Statisticians teams of specialists

A. Climate change related statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/7 (Task Force on statistics related to climate change)

24. The newly established Task Force on climate change related statistics presented its work plan. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Several Bureau members expressed strong support for the work of the Task Force;

(b) The OECD Environment Directorate advised caution in focusing the work most carefully and provided several examples of specific topics that could be considered;

(c) The roles and responsibilities of different agencies involved in climate change related statistics are often not well defined in countries. The Task Force can contribute to clarifying the role of statistical offices in climate change related work and to sharing good practices between countries;

(d) The Task Force could identify good practices in disseminating climate change related statistics. This topic could be placed on the agenda of the planned meeting on climate change related statistics in October 2012 in Geneva;

(e) Connecting climate data and socioeconomic data was considered as a first priority by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) at their meeting in December 2011. The socio-economic data provided by the statistical offices is not well known and used within the research communities dealing with climate change issues;

(f) Mexico expressed interest in participating in the Task Force.

1. Conclusion

25. The Bureau approved the work plan of the Task Force on climate change related statistics. The secretariat will invite Mexico to appoint a member to participate in the Task

Force. The OECD will forward the comments of the Environment Directorate to the UNECE. The Chair of the Task Force will contact the OECD Environment Directorate to discuss their comments in more detail.

B. Measuring quality of employment

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/8 (UNECE)

26. The draft Terms of Reference for a Task Force on measuring quality of employment were presented to the Bureau for approval. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The Bureau supported the work. The link to a number of other international initiatives is important and should be taken into account, such as the ILO decent work agenda, OECD “How is life” initiative, and the follow-up to the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission;

(b) Some countries are working on the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) indicators to be used in reporting by enterprises. The Task Force should look into these indicators to see whether the CSR and the quality of employment indicators could be aligned;

(c) The timetable should be shortened and the Expert Group should try to finish the work earlier than originally planned.

1. Conclusion

27. The Bureau approved the Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on measuring quality of employment with a notion that it would be desirable to speed up the work. The group will prepare an interim report covering the first four dimensions for the autumn 2013 meeting of the Bureau. The Bureau will then consider the timing of the remainder of the work. Germany will chair the group. The group is open to all interested countries to participate.

C. Migration statistics: Task Force on analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/9 (Task Force)

28. The final report of the Task Force on analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay definitions was presented by Mr. Michel Poulain (Chair of the Task Force) and Ms. Anne Herm from the Université catholique de Louvain. The report suggests continuing the work to prepare a proposal for a common international statistical definition of circular migration, and to draft guidelines to facilitate the national implementation of recommended international definitions of migration.

29. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Bureau members supported the continuation of the work to develop guidelines in this complicated area;

(b) There is a strong policy need for information on circular migration and on short-term migration both at the European and global levels;

(c) A European population register would help to measure migration in the EU. However, its implementation in practice is not yet feasible because of different national

legislation and issues of exchanging microdata, etc. A common register on non-EU citizens would be useful and could be more feasible;

(d) The OECD work on migration is not fully recognised in the report;

(e) Consideration should be given to the results of the work of Sweden's Committee for Circular Migration and Development;

(f) OECD would like to participate in the work of the Task Force.

1. Conclusion

30. The Bureau welcomed the Report. OECD will provide information to update the Report concerning their work in this area. The Report will be published and will be submitted to the CES 2012 plenary session.

31. The Task Force will prepare terms of reference for continuation of the work to be adopted by the Bureau via an electronic consultation.

D. Measuring human capital

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/10 + Add.1 (New Zealand and OECD)

32. As a follow-up to the CES 2011 seminar, a stock-taking report on measuring human capital is being prepared. Mr. G. Bascand chairs the small informal group working on the stock-taking report. He presented an extended outline of the report and a questionnaire to be sent to the CES members to obtain information on countries' activities in this area.

1. Conclusion

33. The Bureau supported the proposed way forward. OECD will send the questionnaire on human capital to the OECD countries. UNECE will organise the collection of information from the non-OECD countries. CIS-STAT will translate the questionnaire into Russian to facilitate the survey from the Russian speaking countries.

34. The first draft of the stock-taking report on measuring human capital will be presented to the CES Bureau in November 2012. The final report is planned to be submitted to the CES 2013 plenary session.

E. Global production

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/11 (the Task Force on global production)

35. The secretariat presented the work plan of the Task Force on global production. The Task Force proposed two amendments to the Terms of Reference adopted in November 2011, namely to add the task "measurement issues associated with administrative trade data" to paragraph 3 of the Terms of Reference, and to add the consultations between the Task Force and the "BOPCOM, and OECD Working Parties on national accounts and international trade" to the timetable. Some of the tasks in the timetable are advanced, as requested by the Bureau in November 2011.

36. Mexico expressed interest in participating in the Task Force.

1. Conclusion

37. The Bureau supported the work of the Task Force and endorsed the detailed work plan and the amendments to the Terms of Reference.

V. Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/12 (UNECE)

38. UNECE informed the Bureau about its activities carried out in response to the decision of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and the request by the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) to develop regional implementation plans for the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA). The UNECE focuses on the implementation in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and central Asia (EECCA). The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The 2011 Kiev workshop was useful for initiating the development of national implementation plans of the 2008 SNA. Ukraine is preparing a proposal on how to implement the recommendations of the workshop;

(b) The planned joint UNECE/EFTA/IMF seminar on government finance statistics in spring 2013 is very important for the EECCA countries to improve government finance statistics and bring them into compliance with SNA 2008;

(c) IMF welcomes the collaborative efforts and will contribute to the seminar on Government Finance Statistics in spring 2013;

(d) Eurostat has a leading role in the implementation of the European System of Accounts (ESA) 2010. The South-East European countries and Caucasian countries have committed to implement the ESA 2010. Therefore, coordination should be ensured with Eurostat for the workshops organised in connection with the SNA 2008 implementation in the EECCA countries;

(e) For CIS-STAT, the SNA2008 implementation is one of the priorities. CIS-STAT has translated the SNA 2008 into Russian and assists countries with the most important topics of SNA 2008 implementation. CIS-STAT cooperates closely with UNECE in this area;

(f) It would be useful to share the SNA 2008 implementation strategies between countries.

1. Conclusion

39. The Bureau supported the activity. Coordination will be ensured with Eurostat for all workshops organised by UNECE in this area. It is important to properly coordinate the timing of activities between, Eurostat, IMF, OECD, UNECE and other involved organizations.

VI. Seminar on data collection

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/13 (UNECE)

40. The seminar on data collection is organized following a recommendation by the 2011 CES plenary session. The Bureau discussed the organization of the seminar at its meeting in November 2011 and welcomed the preparations. The Bureau discussed the outline of the seminar. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The title of the seminar should be more flashy in order to convey the focus on new frontiers, cutting edge developments and innovative thinking in data collection. At the same time, the seminar should consider the new developments from a practical viewpoint and not deal with methods and technologies that are out of reach for statistical offices;

(b) The seminar is linked to other important topics, such as industrialisation of statistical production, greater use of administrative data, etc. It is important to consider the data collection from different perspectives;

(c) The Bureau suggested additional topics/issues that could be covered during the seminar, such as managing the respondent burden, maintenance of response rates and building relationships with data providers, managing data security risks, measuring performance and cost-effectiveness, and re-use of existing databases;

(d) It was suggested to either broaden topic (e) "Economies of scale from using common tools and methods" or break it into two sub-topics, one dealing with cost-effectiveness (measurement of performance, paradata), and the other one with organisational change (optimising the data collection activity in response to information on response-rate targets, cost and quality);

(e) The target audience should be more clearly defined and the programme adjusted to the audience. On one hand, it was pointed out that it will be difficult for statistical offices to decide which staff members should participate as the seminar covers a wide range of topics from new technologies to legal and institutional aspects. On the other hand, a wider participation was suggested to allow experts dealing with improvement of business processes, subject matter methodologies, IT experts and Chief Information Officers to benefit from a wider perspective on their work;

(f) IMF is considering participation in the seminar.

1. Conclusion

41. The CES Bureau supported the organization of the seminar. UNECE will update the outline and agenda to take into account the recommendations of the Bureau.

VII. Proposal for a high-level seminar on modernization of statistical production

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/14 (UNECE)

42. The Bureau discussed the draft programme for the High-Level Seminar on Modernization of Statistical Production to be organized jointly with the Russian Federation on 3-5 October 2012 in St. Petersburg, Russia. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The seminar should not only focus on the modernization of statistical processes but should also deal with services and outputs. "Statistical services" should be included in the title;

(b) The titles for sessions 4 and 5 should be more precise in order to describe what will be covered during these sessions;

(c) The meaning of "group discussions" should be clarified. Their organization has implications on the timing, simultaneous interpretation, the way the groups are set up, etc.;

(d) Italy and Eurostat offered to contribute to the seminar. Eurostat can provide input to sessions 2 and 3.

1. Conclusion

43. The CES Bureau supported the organization of the seminar, subject to the comments made.

VIII. Possible synergies with the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Population Unit on Ageing

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/15 (UNECE)

44. The Bureau discussed possible synergies between the work of the UNECE Population Unit on ageing and the CES. The UNECE Population Unit is dealing with implementation of the regional strategy on Active Ageing adopted by the Ministerial conference in Madrid in 2001. As of January 2011, the Population Unit is part of the UNECE Statistical Division. This provides an opportunity for strengthening the involvement of the statistical community in the measurement of population ageing and its consequences.

45. A small informal group is set up under the UNECE Working Group on Ageing to develop a dashboard of indicators on active ageing (the so-called Active Ageing Index (AAI)). The work is led by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna. Two workshops and a conference will be held in 2012. The Bureau was asked to consider the involvement of some NSOs in this work that, until now, has been led by academic researchers.

46. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) Active ageing can not be measured using a single index. The working group should develop a set (dashboard) of indicators;

(b) CIS-STAT is working on the statistical aspect of ageing and is ready to contribute to the work. CIS-STAT has prepared a paper on data sources for analysing ageing processes;

(c) Eurostat welcomes the opportunity to review the methodological approach and is willing to participate in the workshops;

(d) OECD has undertaken a lot of work on ageing, e.g. related to monitoring social outcomes of older people, pension, disability and mental health issues. However, OECD would like to further details of the work before deciding whether to contribute;

(e) Canada, Italy and New Zealand will investigate the possibility of contributing to the work;

(f) The time to invite countries to contribute is very short. When the dashboard will be available in September, countries can further consider their possible involvement;

(g) The data available from Eurostat and OECD should be used whenever possible instead of collecting data directly from countries;

(h) The definition of working age population should be changed to take the economic reality into account (to continue working beyond age 64). This issue should be taken up with the ILO.

1. Conclusion

47. The Bureau members will investigate whether their offices can contribute to the work on statistics related to population ageing.

IX. Preparations for the Conference of European Statisticians 2012 plenary session

A. Organization of the Conference of European Statisticians 2012 seminar “Challenges for future population and housing censuses based on lessons learned from the last census round”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/16 (Seminar Organizers)

48. Canada presented the updated outline for the CES 2012 seminar on population censuses. Mr. W. Smith (Canada) will chair the seminar. Italy will organise and chair the first session and CIS-STAT the second session. The following suggestions were made in the discussion:

(a) The CES seminar will take place on 6 June 2012 in Paris. A Joint UNECE/Eurostat expert meeting on population censuses will be held on 22-25 May 2012 in Geneva (two days devoted to register-based censuses and two days to general census issues). The link between the CES seminar and the expert meeting should be carefully considered. The expert meeting will close the cycle of the 2010 Population Census round with evaluation of the census implementation. Documents for the CES seminar will be taken into account at the expert meeting. The outcomes of the CES seminar will feed into the next expert meeting that will open the new cycle for preparation of the next census round;

(b) The value added from bringing the census experts to Paris should be clear. It would be useful for the census experts to benefit from the perspective of the Heads of Offices. However, some countries can not send their experts to both meetings. The possibility of webstreaming or recording of the meeting should be considered to allow for a cost-efficient way for census experts to listen to the discussion;

(c) Differentiating between invited and supporting papers is not considered useful. The Session Organisers should cover all papers in their summaries. It is important that the papers are relevant for the Heads of statistical offices and should avoid technical discussion;

(d) The Session Organisers' questions should focus on issues and not on specific (invited) papers. The time permitted for authors to reply to the questions should be added to the general discussion;

(e) The lunch presentations are a good innovation that can be used in future events;

(f) New Zealand offered a supporting paper on the strategy for population statistics in New Zealand.

1. Conclusion

49. The seminar will take place on Wednesday, 6 June. The Seminar Organisers will proceed with the preparations, taking the recommendations by the Bureau into account. The Session Organizers will pick up in their presentation the most interesting features from the invited and supporting papers, and will not make a distinction between these papers. Their questions will focus on issues to stimulate discussion and will not be addressed to specific countries. ECE will clarify with OECD the possibilities of webstreaming or recording of the seminar.

B. Organization of the Conference of European Statisticians 2012 seminar “Implementing the United Nations fundamental principles of official statistics, including issues related to coordination of national statistical systems”

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/17 (Seminar Organizers)

50. The Bureau discussed the organization of the seminar on Fundamental Principles (FP) based on an updated outline. Ms. K. Wallman (United States) will chair the seminar. Ms. J. Matheson (United Kingdom) will organise and chair the first session and Mr. K. Pesendorfer (Austria) the second session.

51. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia has informally contacted the President of Slovenia, Mr. Danilo Türk to invite him to give a keynote speech. The preliminary feedback is positive but there is no official confirmation yet.

52. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) UNECE will try to arrange for a short video of a few minutes with e.g. Carlo Malaguerra or Ivan Fellegi about the creation of the FP to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the FP.;

(b) The 1-page contributions on Fundamental Principles from the Heads of NSOs can be used during the seminar;

(c) It was not considered useful to make a distinction between invited and supporting papers. Some papers will still be called invited papers as the authors have already been contacted but all papers will be treated in the same way during the seminar. The Session Organisers’ summaries should cover the key points from all papers. The Session Organisers’ questions should focus on issues to stimulate discussion, not on individual papers. More time could be devoted to the Session Organisers’ presentation than currently planned;

(d) Different possibilities were considered how to give recognition to the authors while the papers are not presented. The authors of (some) papers could be invited to the podium to form a panel, or the authors could be given floor first during the general discussion. The Session Organisers can decide which approach to use;

(e) The general discussion is one of the most important parts of the seminar;

(f) Both invited papers for Session 2 are from the Nordic countries. The invited papers should not be country case studies, but focus on key tools of coordination and other more general topics that cut across countries. It is important to ensure that the session would cover different models of coordination of statistical systems. Examples from other countries with a different setup of the statistical system would be welcome. Germany, Russia and United States were mentioned as potential candidates in addition to the supporting papers from Lithuania, Mexico and Portugal;

(g) Eurostat’s paper belongs to the first session of the seminar.

1. Conclusion

53. The seminar will take place on Thursday, 7 June. The Session Organisers’ summary should cover the main points from all papers and the questions by the Session Organisers should be targeted to the main issues, not individual papers. The timing of the sessions will be adjusted to take into account the comments by the Bureau.

54. The secretariat will:

(a) Send an official letter from the UNECE Executive Secretary to invite the President of Slovenia to deliver a keynote speech at the seminar;

(b) Ask Heads of statistical offices to prepare a short text (maximum 1 page) for the CES 2012 plenary session on the importance of the FP in their country. The secretariat will compile the texts to be presented at the margins of the seminar (e.g. as posters);

(c) Draft an official letter from the UNECE Executive Secretary to the governments of the UNECE Member States to promote the FP on the occasion of their 20th anniversary. The text of the letter will be consulted with the Bureau;

(d) Organise a short video to be prepared with Carlo Malaguerra and/or Ivan Fellegi.

55. The CES Bureau will discuss at its next meeting the “Recommendations for organising the CES seminars” that were approved by the Bureau in 2008. The recommendations can be updated to take into account experience from the recent CES seminars.

C. Report on Measuring Sustainable Development planned to be submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians 2012 plenary session

56. The Bureau discussed the process and timing of finalising the Report on Measuring Sustainable Development. The Report was planned to be sent to the CES Bureau before the meeting but its finalisation has been delayed. The following points were made in the discussion:

(a) The Chair and Editor of the Report and the secretariat are currently working on improving the formulation, clarity and coherence of the text. The substantive questions have been agreed upon by the Task Force and no major input from the Task Force members is required for the time being. The efforts and active contributions by the Task Force members to the Report are well appreciated;

(b) The clarity and good quality of the Report is of utmost importance and its finalisation should not be rushed. The Report should tell a coherent story and advance the measurement of sustainable development by providing guidance to countries. It should be a step forward in view of all other initiatives and not just a summary of what has been done so far;

(c) The short narrative will be the key to the credibility of the Report, this has to be in line with the outcomes of other related international initiatives;

(d) The June 2012 CES plenary session can be used as an opportunity to collect comments on the Report and test whether it conveys a clear message;

(e) In addition, different occasions can be used to inform about the Report, e.g. the European Conference on Measuring Well-Being and Fostering the Progress of Societies (26-28 June 2012), the OECD Conference in India (October 2012), etc.;

(f) It is important to take into account the outcome of the Rio+20 meeting and the discussions around the Sustainable Development Goals to make the Report relevant.

1. Conclusion

57. The Bureau emphasised the need to ensure that the Report is of good quality, clear, well-structured and providing guidance on the measurement of sustainable development. There will be a short presentation of the Report to the CES 2012 plenary session to obtain

feedback from the Conference. Once the full draft Report is available, it will be sent for a formal written consultation to the CES members. Taking into account the results of the consultation, the Bureau will decide when and how the Report will be submitted to the CES for endorsement.

D. Preparation of the formal session, draft agenda and timetable for the 2012 plenary session

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/19 (UNECE)

58. The Bureau discussed the updated draft timetable of the CES 2012 plenary session.

1. Conclusion

59. The 60th CES plenary session will take place on 6-8 a.m. June 2012 in Paris. The secretariat will ask the other Regional Commissions to provide brief papers describing their current work to be considered under agenda item 2 (Meetings of the parent bodies of CES).

60. Items 8 (Impact of crises on statistical systems), 9 (Progress reports) and 10 (Selection of topics for CES 2013 seminars) will be moved to 7 June 2012, after the end of the seminar on Fundamental Principles. Items 5a (Report on measuring sustainable development) and 5b (Classification of crimes for statistical purposes) will be moved to 8 June. Item 7 (HLG-BAS strategy) will be the first item on the agenda on Friday, 8 June morning. Population ageing will be discussed under item 6a (to obtain input to an in-depth review by the Bureau).

61. A short summary of the main outcomes of the CES since the 2011 plenary session will be prepared in a brochure format to improve the visibility of the results of work achieved under the CES.

62. A draft report of the CES plenary session including the main decisions will be made available at the end of the meeting, as in previous years. However, the report will not be translated and not adopted during the meeting. A detailed report will be prepared during two weeks after the meeting and sent for comments to all participants. The final report will be adopted via electronic means. It will be translated into French and Russian.

63. A short Bureau meeting (15-20 minutes) will take place on 6 or 7 June to select the topics for the 2013 CES seminars.

X. United Nations biennial planning cycle and the related documents to be reviewed and approved by the Conference of European Statisticians and Bureau

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/20 + Add.1 (UNECE)

64. The Bureau discussed the documents that need to be reviewed and adopted by the CES and its Bureau in the context of the United Nations biennial planning and reporting cycle. Three documents were submitted to the Bureau for approval: the Biennial Evaluation Plan 2012-2013, Biennial Evaluation Report 2010-2011 and Implementation Report of the Statistical Programme in 2011. The following points were raised in the discussion:

(a) The planning and reporting documents are important in terms of accountability;

(b) Measuring the impact would be more relevant than measuring the number of outputs;

(c) The statistics subprogramme has fully achieved its targets in 2010-2011 except for the availability of statistical data on social and demographic issues. This is in line with the recommendations of the CES and Bureau to focus more on methodological work instead of data collection.

1. Conclusion

65. The Bureau approved the Biennial Evaluation Plan 2012-2013, Biennial Evaluation Report 2010-2011 and the Implementation Report of the Statistical Programme in 2011. The Bureau congratulated the secretariat for the high level of achievement of targets.

XI. Inventory of Task Forces and Working Groups

Documentation: ECE/CES/BUR/2012/FEB/21 (Eurostat)

66. Eurostat presented an updated inventory of current international working groups active in different areas of statistics.

1. Conclusion

67. The Bureau welcomed the inventory as an important exercise in avoiding duplication of work. The international organizations were asked to review the inventory after the Bureau meeting. Any corrections and feedback should be sent to Eurostat (ann.nilsson@ec.europa.eu). The Bureau will review the updated list at its autumn meeting.

XII. Presentation of the statistical activities of the European Central Bank

Documentation: PowerPoint presentation

68. Mr. W. Bier presented the statistical activities of the European Central Bank (ECB). A video on the ECB statistical work was displayed.

69. Both the European Statistical System (Eurostat and the NSIs) and the European System of Central Banks (ECB and NCBs) develop, compile and disseminate European statistics. The ECB is publishing data on monetary and financial statistics, external statistics, euro area accounts, government finance statistics and some general economic statistics. The ECB is one of the main users of its own euro area statistics and of the European statistics produced by other institutions. The ECB can issue its own regulations and guidelines.

70. The ECB statistical work is centralised in the Directorate General Statistics that reports directly to the ECB Executive Board. The work is governed by the ESCB Statistics Committee (STC) which develops new statistics and statistical methods and prepares Governing and General Council decisions in the area of statistics. Seven Working Groups and Task Forces work under the umbrella of STC in selected areas of economic, monetary and financial statistics.

71. The following points were noted in the discussion:

(a) The ECB and national banks run a survey on financial assets of households. Closer cooperation with national statistical offices would be useful to find synergies with the NSO surveys on household income and wealth to maximise the value of both initiatives. E.g. coordinating the samples would allow to study individual behaviours by linking microdata from these surveys. It would be interesting to link the results of the surveys with

national and financial accounts. Subdividing the household sector according to levels of income would allow to analyse the economic behaviours of the different income groups. The network of Central Banks and NSOs is expected to provide opportunities for closer collaboration in this area;

(b) OECD has set up an expert group on distribution of household income, consumption and wealth. The group is looking into possibilities to link data at micro level. Harmonising the concepts and definitions used in different countries and different surveys would be very important in this respect. Collaboration with ECB will be welcome;

(c) The ECB is using data from several commercial data providers (e.g. Bloomberg, Reuters) to monitor financial stability. It is still sometimes difficult to get data from other international organizations in a timely manner. Implementation of SDMX could help to improve the timeliness of data provision.

1. Conclusion

72. The Bureau thanked ECB for the interesting presentation. The Powerpoint presentation will be distributed to all meeting's participants for information and will be uploaded on the Bureau meeting's website.

73. ECB is welcome to provide input to the in-depth review of banking, insurance and financial statistics, which the CES Bureau will carry out in autumn 2012.

XIII. Dates and venue of the next Conference of European Statisticians Bureau meetings

74. The next CES Bureau meeting will take place on 5-6 November 2012 in Geneva.

75. It is desirable to have a preliminary planning of the dates of main meetings a few years in advance to better coordinate the timing of the meetings where Heads of Offices are expected to participate. The Bureau will discuss these dates at its November 2012 meeting

XIV. Other business

76. Mr. A. Kosarev was nominated as the Deputy Chairman of CIS-Stat. The Bureau congratulated him on this important assignment