

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS
Sixty-sixth plenary session
(Geneva, 18-20 June 2018)

20 June 2018

**DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE 66th PLENARY SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Decision 1: Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics (agenda item 3).

1. The Conference recognized the challenges that statistical offices face in view of a growing interest in measuring areas that are new to official statistics or are difficult to measure. These challenges include the need for cultural change to increase flexibility, and to develop closer relationships with stakeholders to better anticipate their needs. Strategic partnerships, effective leadership and development of new capabilities amongst staff are key to meeting these challenges.
2. The Conference identified the following possible actions for the way forward:
 - (a) Prepare interactive electronic guidelines on measuring what matters, including:
 - i. Suggested approaches to new emerging topics
 - ii. How to foresee which topics will be important?
 - iii. How to identify stakeholders' needs and keep track of their changing needs?
 - iv. How to react quickly and to identify and acquire the data needed for new topics/areas?
 - v. How to integrate new statistics with regular statistical production?
 - (b) Consider how any future work on this topic should be integrated with related work under the CES, including on strategic partnerships and modernisation of official statistics.
3. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised during the seminar. The CES Bureau will discuss at its next meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.

Decision 2: Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators, interim report (agenda item 4a).

4. The Conference expressed support for the draft *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators*. The Conference underlined the growing importance and interest in leading, composite and sentiment indicators as ways to provide timely information about economic and social development, and noted that the Guidelines should address issues

related to international comparability and disaggregation of indicators. The Conference agreed on the proposed time plan and asked the Task Force to take into account the comments received during the electronic consultation and at the CES plenary session in finalizing the Guidelines.

Decision 3: Use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses (agenda item 4d).

5. The Conference endorsed the *Guidelines on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses* (doc. 4/Rev.1) subject to the comments made and the amendment suggestion made by Germany.

Decision 4: Improving collaboration with UN-GGIM: Europe on geospatial data and statistics (agenda item 5).

6. The Conference approved the proposal for deepening the collaboration between the UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe, presented in document 13.

7. The Conference agreed to hold a common session of a day or half a day of the CES and UN-GGIM: Europe in 2020. The UNECE will also host the plenary session of UN-GGIM: Europe back to back with the Conference in 2020.

Decision 5: Work of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (agenda item 6).

8. The Conference approved the annual report of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics, including the outcomes of the activities carried out in 2017 and plans for the rest of 2018 (doc. 12).

9. The Conference strongly supported the continuation of the work on modernization of official statistics. National and international statistical organizations were invited to support the HLG-MOS work programme and to become partners in the Statistical Modernization Community.

10. The Conference endorsed the new vision of the Group (doc. 12/Add.1) to respond to the needs of national statistical offices in a timely and effective manner.

Decision 6: Getting the message across: Strategic reflections on modernizing statistical communication (agenda item 7).

11. The Conference emphasised the importance of effective communication for maintaining the relevance of official statistics and maximizing its value to society. Communications is integral to the strategic plan of a statistical organisation.

12. The Conference identified the following possible actions for the way forward:

- (a) Develop the communication maturity model and a roadmap for statistical organisations,
- (b) Define the communication skill set needed by all staff in a statistical organisation,
- (c) Develop guidance on positioning and communicating the role and value of statistical organisations,

- (d) Share best practices in increasing statistical literacy (for example, in the younger population),
- (e) Integrate risk, communication and crisis management work to help build more resilient statistical organisations.

13. The Conference asked the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to follow up on the issues raised during the seminar. The CES Bureau will discuss at its next meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.

Decision 7: Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2019 plenary session of the CES (agenda item 10).

14. The Conference selected the following topics for seminars at the CES plenary session in 2019:

- (a) **Seminar 1:** New data sources – accessibility and use
Seminar organizers: Switzerland and United States, in collaboration with Eurostat, OECD and UNSD.
Papers offered by: Georgia; Germany; the Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovenia; South Korea; Sweden; Switzerland; UNCTAD.
- (b) **Seminar 2:** Emerging role of NSOs as offices for statistics and data
Seminar organizers: Canada, New Zealand and United Kingdom, in collaboration with UNSD
Papers offered by: Albania, Estonia, Finland (tbc), Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia.

15. The CES Bureau will discuss the organization of the seminars at its October 2018 meeting.

Decision 8: Progress in implementing the *CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs* (agenda item 8a).

16. The Conference welcomed the very good progress made in implementing the *CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs*. The work should continue under the guidance of the CES Steering Group, including the four subgroups of the Steering Group which are developing practical tools to support the implementation of the Road Map in the areas of national reporting platforms, data flows, statistical capacity, and communication of statistics for SDGs. The Conference noted that these inputs also have contributed to work at the global level. Countries interested to join the subgroups are invited to contact the UNECE secretariat. The Conference supported the proposal for a second edition of the Road Map, recommended to maintain it online as a living document, and requested the Steering Group to prepare a plan and timetable for its preparation.

17. The Conference took note of the document 39 describing briefly the overall governance structure and institutional setup of the custodian agencies that are responsible for the production of global SDG indicators. The Conference noted the complexity of coordinating the work across the diverse organizational structures within the UN system and with other organizations, which may create challenges in building a transparent and efficient system for providing global SDG statistics. The Conference welcomed the work being done by countries and agencies in this area, including by IAEG-SDGs and the Coordinating Committee of

Statistical Activities (CCSA) to develop implementation guidelines on data flows (planned to be submitted to the UN Statistical Commission session in March 2019).

Decision 9: Principles for rotation of members from the UNECE region of the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators and the High-Level Group on Partnership, Cooperation and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda (agenda item 8b).

18. The Conference discussed the *Principles for rotation of members from the UNECE region of IAEG-SDGs and HLG-PCCB* (doc. 9). The Conference agreed in principle that some transparent principles for rotation are needed. The Conference emphasised the importance of having a good balance between keeping the continuity of the work and giving an opportunity for new countries to be involved. Several possible solutions were proposed, such as staggering the terms of members in the groups so that the changes would take place at different times, establishing a mechanism for a smooth transfer of knowledge between the outgoing and incoming members, etc. The tasks of the two groups are different and the rotation principles may also differ. It was emphasised that the members of the groups should communicate and consult with other countries from their subregion. The Secretariat will update the document to reflect comments from the discussion, to be considered at the October 2018 meeting of the CES Bureau.

Decision 10: Strategy for capacity development in UNECE region (agenda item 9).

19. The Conference endorsed the UNECE Statistical capacity development strategy (Doc. 10/Rev.1). The results of the electronic consultation concerning the capacity development priorities in countries will be taken into account in planning future UNECE capacity development activities. The Conference also noted that capacity development in the areas of economic, social and demographic and environment statistics, and the projects and activities already started should continue.

Decision 11: Common elements of statistical legislation (agenda item 4e).

20. The Conference endorsed the *Guidance on common elements of statistical legislation* developed by a dedicated Task Force, subject to the amendments presented in document 6 Add.1. The Conference supported to change the title to *Guidance on modernising statistical legislation*, which better reflects the nature of the document.

21. The Conference supported the proposals for further work including reviewing the Guidance in 5 years as proposed by the Task Force, and asked the CES Bureau to decide on the next steps.

Decision 12: Entrepreneurship statistics (agenda item 4f).

22. The Conference endorsed the *Guidelines on the use of statistical business registers for business demography and entrepreneurship statistics*, subject to the amendments presented in document 5 Add.1.

23. The Conference encouraged the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group on Business Registers to address the topics proposed for further work and research in Chapter 7 of the Guidelines.

Decision 13: Data integration for measuring migration (agenda item 4b).

24. The Conference endorsed the *Guidance on data integration for measuring migration*, subject to the amendments presented in document 2/Add.1. The Conference stressed the need to continue working on migration statistics, and asked the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Sessions to follow up on issues suggested in the Guidance and the comments made by the Conference.

Decision 14: Measuring international labour mobility (agenda item 4c).

25. The Conference endorsed *Measuring international labour mobility*, subject to the amendments presented in document 3 Add.1. The Conference emphasized the importance as well as the complexity of the topic, where further work may be needed.

Decision 15: Matters arising from the forty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (agenda item 2).

26. The Conference reaffirmed the decisions of the 49th UNSC session that have implications for its work, as presented in document no. 1, including the work on statistics for SDGs, migration and refugee statistics, national accounts, environmental-economic accounting, climate-change related statistics, and extreme events and disasters.

Decision 16: Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists (agenda item 11a).

27. The Conference confirmed the decisions of the CES Bureau as reflected in their meeting reports, and approved the report on the implementation of the 2017 UNECE Statistical Programme (document 14 and Addenda).

Decision 17: Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (agenda item 11c).

28. The Conference adopted the UNECE Statistical Programme for 2018 (document 15) including the list of planned meetings.

29. The Conference emphasized the importance of translating into the three working languages of UNECE (English, French and Russian) the main documents for the CES plenary session and its meetings in 2018-2019 in the following areas:

- (a) Environment, multi-domain and geo-spatial statistics
- (b) Demographic and social statistics (gender statistics, population and housing censuses)
- (c) Economic statistics (national accounts, global production, business registers, consumer prices and quality of employment)
- (d) Statistical modernization (human resources management and training)
- (e) Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

30. The main documents include a provisional agenda, a report and one main document for each sub-item on the agenda. For the CES plenary session, the main documents include in addition six documents for each sub-session.

Decision 18: Work of the Expert Group on national accounts (agenda item 11b).

31. In view of the importance of the issues discussed by the Group of Experts on National Accounts, organized jointly by UNECE, Eurostat and OECD, and to ensure the continuity of work, the Conference agreed to a resource neutral change in its intergovernmental structure by converting the Expert Group on National Accounts from an ad-hoc meeting into a standing body under the Conference. The Conference adopted the terms of reference for the Expert Group on National Accounts and recommended to present these to the UNECE Executive Committee for approval.

Decision 19: Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by CES Bureau (agenda item 12).

32. The Conference endorsed the outcomes of the in-depth reviews of (i) emerging issues in statistical communication (based on a paper by Ireland), (ii) gaps in gender statistics (based on a paper by Mexico and the Secretariat), and (iii) measuring social exclusion (based on a paper by Canada and Mexico), and the follow-up actions by the CES Bureau. The Conference noted that all in-depth review papers are available at: www.unece.org/stats/ces/reviews.html.

Decision 20: Exchange and sharing of economic data, interim report (agenda item 4g).

33. The Conference welcomed the interim report of the Task Force on exchange and sharing of economic data and expressed support for the work.

34. The Conference supported the proposal to create an international network of experts on multinational enterprise groups and recognized the need for a regular international forum building on the joint UNECE, Eurostat and OECD Group of Experts on National Accounts. These meetings should regularly discuss issues related to the data of multinational enterprise groups and the sharing of economic data for statistical purposes.

35. The Conference recommended that the work should continue in small steps, paying attention to issues related to confidentiality, communication and legislation to support data sharing for statistical purposes. The first step should be to look into the opportunities to exchange data for statistical purposes within current statistical laws.

36. The Conference asked the Task Force to take into account the comments and input provided by the 2018 CES plenary session in the further work.

Decision 21: Other business (agenda item 13).

37. The 67th CES plenary session will take place on 26-28 (a.m.) June 2019 in Paris, back-to-back with the meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (24-25 June 2019).
