

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second meeting of the 2000/2001 Bureau  
(Oslo, 2-3 October 2000)

**Report of the meeting**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The second meeting of the 2000/2001 Bureau was held in Oslo from 2-3 October 2000. The following members of the Bureau attended: Svein Longva (Chair), Len Cook, Hallgrímur Snorrason, Tadeusz Toczyński and Rein Veetousme. The following permanent participants also attended: Yves Franchet (on 3 October), Hermann Habermann and Paolo Garonna (Paul McCarthy, the Acting Director of the OECD Statistics Directorate, was unable to attend, but the OECD Statistics Directorate was represented by Georges Lemaitre and by Enrico Giovannini of ISTAT). Carol Carson of the IMF, Mikhail Korolev of CIS/STAT, and Carmen Alcaide and Carmen Arribas of the National Institute of Statistics of Spain also attended at the invitation of the Bureau. The following persons assisted members of the Bureau: Jan Byfuglien, Olav Ljones and Bjorg Moen of Statistics Norway; and Mariahelena Figueira of Eurostat. John Kelly of ECE served as Secretary of the meeting.

**II. IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES 1, 2 AND 4**

**a) Programme Activity 1, Organisation and operation of statistical services**

2. **PE 1.1, Promotion and co-ordination of multilateral statistical work:** The Bureau agreed that the highest and best forms of co-ordination have been achieved among the organisations that are represented on the Bureau, but that greater difficulties are experienced in achieving similar levels of co-ordination with organisations that are not represented on the Bureau. The following were cited as examples of co-ordination that are not up to the expected standard: tourism accounts; data collection in the field of health statistics; and conflicting mortality estimates produced by WHO-Geneva and the UN Population Division. The Bureau agreed that attention of the Conference should be called to this in the relevant section of PE 1.1 of the Integrated Presentation. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the fact that the Bureau and the Conference have mechanisms in place that help them to identify problems of co-ordination, but that they do not have many tools available to them for solving problems when they arise (**action by the ECE secretariat**). The Bureau also agreed that it is easier to ensure co-ordination at the national level if there is good co-ordination available at the international level.

3. The Bureau agreed that the following should be added as three additional Objectives of this PE: “To promote a more strategic and proactive approach to co-ordination; To promote coherent definitions of metadata and the dissemination of metadata; and To ensure the harmonisation and consistency in the definitions and classifications that are used by international organisations” (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

4. **PE 1.2, management and policy issues of direct concern to presidents of NSIs:** The Bureau agreed with the rapporteur’s proposed new wording of the problem statement and the strategic medium-term goal for this PE (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

5. One of the Bureau members thought that promoting the implementation of the Fundamental Principles was not sufficient as an objective in this PE. He suggested that consideration should also be given to revising or updating the Fundamental Principles.

6. Attention of the Conference should be called to the growing difficulty of ensuring statistical confidentiality in the modern world (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

7. **PE 1.3, Countries in transition in the ECE region:** The text under Objectives should be expanded to include the following additional objective: Both recipient countries and donor countries need to evaluate the progress being made by programmes that are intended to provide support to countries in transition (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

8. The strategic medium-term goals for this PE should be amended to read as proposed by Len Cook (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

9. Attention of the Conference should be called to the following: First, there is a need for greater clarity showing what provision has been made for assistance to countries in transition in the future. Second, there is insufficient focus upon assessing whether international organisations are meeting the needs of users and greater transparency is needed in the co-operation that takes place between international organisations so as to ensure that the support being provided to countries in transition is of the required high quality. The support must be relevant to the statistical needs of the countries whether these needs are economic or social (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

**b) Programme Activity 2, Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues**

10. **PE 2.1, Management of IT infrastructure:** The Bureau agreed in general with the proposed new text for the Objectives and Expected Outputs of this PE that the rapporteurs have proposed. However, it considered that an item concerning access to microdata should be added to the text on the Objectives as well as collecting data from the Internet. In terms of the Objectives relating to Eurostat, text should be added referring to the European Central Bank (ECB) (**Eurostat agreed to provide the text**).

11. With respect to the proposed new text that the rapporteur had suggested for the Expected Collective Outputs, that text should be amended to include reference to an updated report on guidelines and best practices being prepared (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

12. Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that there is growing demand from users for being provided access to microdata, even under given conditions, and that this is resulting in increased concern regarding confidentiality in providing access to the microdata (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

13. **PE 2.2, Statistical data collection and processing:** The Bureau noted that the ECE, as rapporteur, had provided proposed new text for both the Objectives and Expected Collective Output for this PE. However, the Bureau accepted the simplified version of that new text proposed by Tadeusz Toczynski in CES/BUR.2001/3/Add.1 (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

14. **PE 2.3, Dissemination and interchange of statistical information:** The Bureau considered that the usage of the term “interchange” in the title of this PE implied two-way traffic between respondents on the one hand and statistical offices on the other. The Bureau considered, however, that the work being done in the international organisations concerned only one-way traffic and therefore it felt that there was a need to address the two-way aspects of the traffic and particularly giving

something back to respondents in return for the data that they provide (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

15. The Bureau considered that it would be useful to have a discussion at a future plenary session dealing with the pricing of statistical products. The secretariat was asked to add this to the items of possible future seminar sessions at future plenary sessions. The Bureau also considered that something concerning the pricing of statistical products should be added to the Objectives for this PE (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

16. The Bureau accepted the proposed new text for the Expected Collective Output provided by the rapporteur that pertains to work to be undertaken by the ECE (**action by the ECE secretariat**). The text referring to the Expected Collective Output for both Eurostat and OECD remains unchanged.

17. **PE 2.4, Statistical classifications:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the effort being undertaken by Canada, the United States and Eurostat to bring about a greater degree of convergence between ISIC/NASE and the North American Industrial Classification System. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the need for links to be established between statistical classifications and classifications that are used internally in businesses (e.g. bar codes) (**action by the ECE secretariat**). This is important if NSIs are to have access to data in businesses in that manner. It was agreed that a point relating to this should be included in the Objectives of this PE (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

18. The Bureau accepted the simplified version of the Objectives and of the Expected Collective Output that Svein Longva had proposed for this PE in CES/BUR.2001/3/Add.1 (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

19. **PE 2.5, Statistical research and development:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the two issues that the rapporteur identified in his report to the Bureau (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

20. Future editions of the integrated presentation should provide a cross-reference in this PE to the new Internet web-site Eurostat is to establish which is expected to become available in the next few weeks (**Eurostat agreed to provide the reference**).

21. **PE 2.6, Geographical and regional data:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the joint meeting on methodological issues involving the integration of statistics and geography that Eurostat and the ECE will organise in Tallin in September 2001. Attention should also be called to the improved co-ordination that is occurring in the European Union between statisticians and cartographers, and in their planned work aimed at investigating whether it is possible to define more homogeneous territorial building blocks at the European level that would complement (but not replace) the 'NUTS' approach (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

22. **PE 2.7, Human resource development** Attention of the Conference should be called to the importance of achieving improved co-ordination in the field of statistical training. The Bureau considered that one way of achieving this might be by the exchange of information among countries (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

23. The Bureau accepted the proposed new text that Svein Longva supplied in CES/BUR.2001/3/Add.1 for both the Objectives and the Expected Collective Output (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

24. **PE 2.8, Sustainable development indicators:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the issues that Len Cook identified in CES/BUR.2001/3/Add.1 concerning this PE. The Bureau also accepted the new text proposed by Len Cook for strategic medium-term goals for this PE. Attention should also be called to the gaps that the rapporteur had identified in his report (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

25. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the growing concern about insufficient co-ordination between work being undertaken by OECD and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (**action by the ECE secretariat**). OECD assured the Bureau, however, that all of the relevant international groups working in this area had been invited to the various meetings that OECD had convoked on this subject. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the fact that work being conducted by the World Bank and others in the field of sustainable development is not currently reflected in the integrated presentation (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

c) **Programme Activity 4, Social and demographic statistics**

26. **PE 4.1, :Demographic statistics, including projections, migration, fertility, and families and households:** The Bureau discussed the different fields of statistics that are covered by this PE in turn.

i) **General comments**

27. The Bureau agreed that the attention of the Conference should be called to the decision recently taken by the Council of Europe to abolish its European Population Committee (CDPO) and to replace it by a 12-member ad hoc committee whose membership is expected to rotate over time. The Bureau also recommended that the Intersecretariat Working Group on Social and Demographic Statistics consider the implications of this development at its next meeting, in order to assess how Member States' interests in this work area can continue to be addressed in an intergovernmental forum that is open to a larger number of countries in the region (**Action by Eurostat, as the organisation hosting the next meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group**).

28. The Bureau also agreed with the Eurostat Rapporteur's conclusion that the Problem Statement and the Strategic Medium-term Goals for this PE are at too general a level, and are too ambiguously expressed. It asked the Rapporteur of each of the respective fields of statistics covered in this PE to insert proposed improved wording of the Problem Statement and Strategic Medium-term Goals in the updated version of the Integrated Presentation that is to be produced for review by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by ECE Statistical Division, ECE/PAU and Eurostat as Rapporteurs for parts of this PE**).

ii) **Projections**

29. Attention of the conference should be called to the fact that the UN Population Division and WHO Geneva have failed to reach agreement on a common set of estimates of adult mortality. Attention should also be called to the fact that WHO Geneva intends to produce and publish its own set of estimates. Both the ACC Subcommittee on Estimates and Projections and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities are addressing the co-ordination issues involved.

30. The Bureau asked Eurostat as Rapporteur for this part of the PE to propose more specific wording for the parts of the Problem Statement and Strategic Medium-term Goals that relate to projections, for inclusion in the updated version of the IP to be reviewed by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by Eurostat**).

### iii) Migration

31. Attention of the Conference should be called to the serious problems of the lack of international comparability in the field of international migration statistics, and to the fact that this situation arises because countries are very much dependent on national rules, practices and policies in this field (**Action by the ECE secretariat**). OECD indicated that it considered that progress was possible but required that international organisations sensitise countries to the need to provide statistics according to international guidelines which did not necessarily imply changes in the way migration is viewed nationally.

32. The Bureau asked the ECE Statistical Division, as Rapporteur for this part of the PE, to propose more specific wording for the parts of the Problem Statement and Strategic Medium-term Goals that relate to migration, for inclusion in the updated version of the IP to be reviewed by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by ECE Statistical Division**).

### iv) Fertility

33. The Bureau asked the ECE/PAU to submit a paper to the Bureau's next meeting on the evaluation of the FFS project that was recently carried out at the request of the Unit (**Action by the ECE/PAU**).

34. The Bureau asked the ECE Population Activities Unit, as the Rapporteur for this part of the PE, to propose more specific wording for the parts of the Problem Statement and Strategic Medium-term Goals that relate to fertility, for inclusion in the updated version of the IP to be reviewed by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by the ECE/PAU**).

### v) Families and households

35. The Bureau asked Eurostat, as the Rapporteur for this part of the PE, to propose more specific wording for the parts of the Problem Statement and Strategic Medium-term Goals that relate to families and households, for inclusion in the updated version of the IP to be reviewed by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by Eurostat**).

36. **PE 4.2a, Population and housing censuses:** The Bureau agreed that the text currently shown under the headings Problem statement and Strategic Medium-term Goals for this PE should be amended in the manner proposed by the Rapporteur (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

37. Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that some countries in the region have concluded that that it would be advisable for them to begin exploring other possible alternatives to their censuses, in case developments in their countries necessitate that in future the country will have to rely on alternative or new sources of data for census-type data. Attention should also be called to the fact that some CIS countries have had to postpone their census because of inadequate funding (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

38. **PE 4.2b, Statistics on population groups of special interest:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that there is a large amount of statistical work being undertaken by international organisations on various population groups of special interest, such as children, adolescents, women and the elderly. However, the co-ordination of the data collection by international organisations and NGOs on these population groups is not as advanced as with reference to other work areas (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

39. The Bureau asked the PAU, as Rapporteur of this PE, to review the Problem statement and medium-term goals of this PE, to ascertain whether they are in need of being updated (**Action by the ECE/PAU**).

40. **PE 4.3, Human settlement and housing statistics:** The Bureau asked Eurostat as the Rapporteur of this PE, to amend the wording of the Problem statement and the Strategic medium-term goals so as to ensure that the wording used also refers to the work in this field that is being undertaken by Eurostat. This new wording should be included in the updated version of the IP that is to be reviewed by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by Eurostat**).

41. The Bureau agreed that future Rapporteur reports for this PE should be prepared by Eurostat in co-operation with Habitat (**Action by Eurostat**). The Bureau also agreed that the Rapporteur shown in the IP for this PE should be amended to read "Eurostat, in co-operation with Habitat" (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

42. **PE 4.4, Labour statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the Rapporteur of this PE considers that there needs to be further development and extension of co-ordination at the intersecretariat level to ensure a more effective collection and dissemination of national data in this field by international organisations. Attention should also be called to the fact that the Rapporteur of this PE has indicated that expert meetings convened by different international organisations have identified improvements that should be made to the existing tools and programmes in this area, and particularly those that are being used to collect statistics on employment and unemployment, wages and earnings, as well as challenges related to new tools or programmes needed to develop statistics to describe the dynamics of labour markets (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

43. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the fact that the ILO Bureau of Statistics plans to begin its preparations for the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians which is tentative scheduled for 2003. Its proposed agenda includes consideration of statistical standards in the form of "a revised resolution on consumer price indices"; a new "resolution on labour indicators"; discussion on "child labour statistics", "the quality of employment", "working time" and the "demand for labour"; "reconciliation of labour statistics from different sources; and the need to revise ISCO-88 (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

44. The Bureau agreed that the wording of the Problem statement of this PE should be amended in the way suggested by the ILO. It asked the ILO as Rapporteur to develop more specific wording along those lines for inclusion in the updated version of the IP that is to be produced for review by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

45. The Bureau also agreed with Len Cook's recommended more specific wording of the Strategic medium-term goals for this work area shown in CES/BUR.2001/4/Add.1 (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

46. **PE 4.5, Education and training statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the Rapporteur of this PE considers: i) that: the absence of long time-series for education statistics and indicators is a general problem in the field of education statistics that needs to be addressed; ii) that there is a need for NSIs to invest the resources that are needed to compile long international time series with respect to the main education statistics aggregates such as total enrolment and expenditures, completion, and educational attainment; iii) that there is volatility and a lack of comparability of data on continuing education and training, and therefore a need to work towards a common definitions and measurement standards in this area.; and (iv) that there is a current growing interest in the determinants of educational outcomes and in the measurement of the non-market returns to education (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

47. **PE 4.6, Culture statistics:** The Bureau agreed that henceforth the IP should show the designated Rapporteur for this PE to be Eurostat, in collaboration with Unesco's Institute for Statistics (**Action by the ECE secretariat**). The Bureau also agreed that there is a need for improved and closer co-operation and co-ordination between Eurostat and Unesco's Institute for Statistics in this field (**Action by Eurostat**).

48. **PE 4.7a, Statistics of household income and expenditures, of the welfare of the population, and of poverty and income statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the recommendations of the Canberra Group have been taken up by Eurostat and treated concretely in its work on reporting on social exclusion and poverty at the EU level that focuses on income concepts and definitions, measurement of income and poverty, and social exclusion and rules for quality reporting. Attention should also be called to the fact that co-operation is now established between Eurostat, the OECD, LIS and the UN on income, poverty and social exclusion statistics. Attention should also be called to the fact that future activities will be related to further harmonisation of income concepts and variables and longitudinal analysis of social exclusion and poverty based on the ECHP (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

49. **PE 4.7b, Social security statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the Rapporteur of this PE considers that i) in the field of social protection statistics, further work is needed on analysing differences and inconsistencies between the SOCX and the ESSPROS data bases, so that the questionnaires and, eventually, the methodologies can gradually be harmonised; ii) in the field of labour market policy statistics, OECD and Eurostat should collaborate more closely to reduce as much as possible the response burden on participating countries, and to examine possibilities for developing a joint questionnaire; and iii) in the field of social protection, closer co-operation is needed between NSIs and other Ministries involved in collecting and compiling administrative data such as the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Security, so as to ensure higher quality data becoming available (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

50. **PE 4.8, Crime and criminal justice statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to publication "Surveying Crime: A Global Approach" that was recently published by ISTAT and UNICRI. The volume provides a broad overview on the issue of integration of data sources on crime and criminal justice. Attention should also be called to the fact that the topic of monitoring corruption is being dealt with by UNICRI and CICP as a priority field, within the framework of the UN "Global Programme against Corruption" (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

51. **PE 4.9, Health statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that OECD and WHO have established a framework for co-operation between the two organisations in the field of health statistics. Ongoing co-operation is occurring between them in the development of guidelines for the collection of health data and accounts. A steering committee has been established that oversees the development of the implementation guidelines for health accounts in low- and middle-income countries. The steering committee brings together experts on health accounts from WHO, OECD, World Bank, USAID and a number of other experts from the donor community (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

52. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the fact that there is no consensus among the international organisations on health output measurements. A lot of work needs to be done relating inputs to the outputs. Attention should also be called to the fact that the Bureau considered that it was not sufficiently clear what role a given international organisation should have (**Action by the ECE secretariat**). Attention should also be called to the fact that the Bureau noted the good relations between the OECD and Eurostat in this area, and emphasised the need for co-ordination of work on health care and resource definitions, but it also considered that co-ordination problems in this

field by all players have not yet been entirely resolved, particularly with respect to data collection (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

53. **PE 4.10, Gender statistics:** The Bureau agreed with Svein Longva's proposed amendments to the wording of the Problem statement and Strategic medium-term goals of this PE shown in CES/BUR.2001/4/Add.1 (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

54. **PE 4.11a, Social indicators and frameworks:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the Canberra Group on household income has made significant advances in finalising the draft chapters on a future handbook on household income statistics. The Canberra Group held its most recent meeting in Luxembourg in May of 2000, and that is likely to be the last meeting that the Canberra Group will have, given that the handbook will be presented to the spring 2001 session of the UN Statistical Commission for endorsement. However, Eurostat is planning follow-up work on developing a more practical manual for the EU countries (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

55. Attention of the Conference should also be called to the fact that the Siena Group on Social Statistics held its seventh meeting in Maastricht in May 2000. The theme of the meeting was accounting in social statistics and indicators for social development. The themes of future meetings of the Siena Group will concentrate on social indicators and developments in social statistics (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

56. **PE 4.11b, Multi-purpose social surveys:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the Rapporteur of this PE considers that it is important to continue the work towards definitions and measurement rules of harmonised basic variables on persons and households that are to be included in all social surveys. The Rapporteur also considers that in the future it will be important to maintain the current momentum aimed at persuading Member States to continue further improvement and harmonisation of their Household Budget Surveys (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

57. The Bureau agreed with Svein Longva's proposed new text for the Problem statement and Strategic Medium-term goals for this PE, given in CES/Bur.2001/4/Add.1 (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

58. **PE 4.11c, Registers and administrative records for social and demographic statistics:** Attention of the Conference should be called to the fact that the Rapporteur for this PE considers that the connection with associated work on socio-economic classifications and on key indicators should be further strengthened. He also considers that the current work on the harmonisation of core variables needs to be extended to eventually include the whole socio-economic spectrum. In addition, he considers that the role of this project in the development of an integrated system of social statistics that incorporates both survey and administrative data should be more closely defined and worked on with the active involvement and participation of other international organisations (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

**d) Some concluding observations on the Rapporteurs' Reports and on the Integrated Presentation**

59. The Bureau considered that the Rapporteur Reports that were prepared for this meeting of the bureau were in general above average in comparison to the reports that were prepared in earlier years. It thanked the Rapporteurs for the time and effort that they had invested in this regard. The Bureau discussed the possibility of having the reports edited and making them available to the plenary session as background documents, but Bureau members expressed mixed views on this. Therefore, it was



decided that the issue should be thought about between now and the February 2001 meeting of the Bureau, so that the Bureau could come back to it at that time (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

60. The Bureau agreed that the updated version of the IP that is to be produced for the 2001 plenary session should exclude the first five pages that are now given in each of the 6 addenda of the IP. The Bureau considered that it should be sufficient in the future editions of the IP to give that type of information only once, and in the document that serves as an introduction and overview of the IP (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

### **III. Plans for the topic of substantive discussion session at the 2001 CES plenary session**

61. The Bureau discussed the latest plans of the INE of Spain concerning its organisation of the seminar session at the 2001 plenary session, as presented in CES/BUR.2001/6. The Bureau considered that the original idea of having the session cover both small area statistics and statistics for small countries needed to be retained. The Bureau also agreed that the seminar session should focus on policy and dissemination issues of interest to Presidents of NSIs, and not on methodological issues that are of greater interest to experts. Carmen Alcaide agreed to take these considerations into account in further refining their proposal, and to forward an amended proposal to Bureau members shortly after the Bureau meeting for their reactions.

62. The Bureau also discussed the time schedule, the numbers of Invited Papers and other organisational aspects. The Bureau agreed that there should only be a small number of Invited Papers (maximum of 2 or 3 per topic), and that consideration should be given to have a Discussant introduce all the papers (i.e. both the Invited Papers and the Supporting Papers). There was also general agreement that the Supporting Papers should be very short, in one language only (preferably English), and that they avoid talking about national practices. It was also generally agreed that INE, as the Organiser of the session, be more pro-active and specific in advising the authors of the Invited Papers on the types of issues that they should cover in their papers.

### **IV. ECE-Eurostat-OECD joint paper on joint data collection**

63. This was an information item on the agenda. The Bureau noted that at its November 1999 meeting it had agreed that the information on co-ordination issues and joint data collection that Eurostat, the OECD and the ECE secretariat that in earlier years had been generally included in an ECE-Eurostat-OECD joint paper for the Bureau meeting, should henceforth be presented at the Programme Element level in the Integrated Presentation. In accordance with this decision, the three organisations will collaborate in doing this for the updated version of the IP that will be reviewed by the Bureau at its February 2001 meeting.

### **V. List of Programme Elements to be reviewed in depth at the 2001 plenary session**

64. Eurostat proposed in its note relating to this item that the PEs that the Bureau selects for in-depth review at any forthcoming plenary session should be restricted to ones that the Bureau reviews in depth at its preceding autumn meeting (i.e., PEs selected for in-depth review by the Conference at its 2001 plenary session, should be selected from PAs 1, 2 and 4 that the Bureau reviewed in depth at its autumn 2000 plenary session). However, other Bureau members considered that greater flexibility should be exercised in deciding which PEs should be reviewed in depth at the next plenary session.

65. The Bureau selected the following PEs for in-depth review at the 2001 plenary session (**Action by the ECE secretariat in notifying the countries and organisations concerned**):

- Dissemination of statistics, and the use of the Internet for the collection and dissemination of statistics (parts of PEs 2.1 and 2.3); this topic should be discussed on the basis of two “issue-oriented” papers that the bureau asked the UK and the ECE secretariat (as Rapporteur of these PEs) to prepare.
- Measuring the new economy and adapting to it (cross-cutting PEs in PA 3); the Bureau asked Canada (who had proposed this topic as a seminar topic for a future plenary session) and the OECD (as Rapporteur of several PEs in the field of economic statistics) to prepare issue-oriented papers that could serve as the basis for discussion of this topic.
- Review of new manuals and statistical standards under preparation in the field of economic statistics E.G. external debt, monetary and financing statistics), and their inter-relationships as well as their relationship with SNA 1993; the Bureau asked Statistics Netherlands (alternate back-up choice INSEE) and the IMF as Rapporteur to PE 3.2) to prepare issue-oriented papers that could serve as the basis for discussion of this topic.
- Demographic statistics, and population and housing censuses (PEs 4.1 and 4.2); The Bureau asked Poland and the Rapporteurs of PEs 4.1 and 4.2 (ECE, Eurostat and the PAU) to prepare issue-oriented papers that could serve as the basis for discussion of this topic.

66. The Bureau asked the secretariat to inform NSIs that the Bureau had selected the above four topics to be reviewed in depth at the 2001 plenary session, in the Conference’s review of the Integrated Presentation. It also asked the secretariat to inform countries that in comparison to earlier years, at the 2001 plenary session only a small amount of time will be reserved for the Conference to review the 40 or so remaining PEs in the Integrated Presentation. Countries should be invited to notify the Chairman of the Conference in writing prior to the plenary session any issues in the remaining parts of the IP that they consider warrant being discussed at the plenary session. The Bureau would then review those proposals and decide whether time should be reserved for discussion of them at the plenary session (**Action by the secretariat**).

## **VI. Seminar on benchmarking and monitoring social development**

67. The Bureau noted the outcome of the seminar on this subject that the ECE secretariat had organised in June 2000 in co-operation with Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. It also noted the ambitious programme of future work that is envisioned as follow-up to the seminar, and the proposed strategic role for the ECE and its PSBs in undertaking that work. The Bureau’s reaction to these proposals were somewhat muted. In general it considered that the resource base available to the Conference is too small to enable the Conference to do much substantive work as follow-up to the seminar, unless the Conference were to free up a significant amount of additional resources by ceasing work in other areas. There was also a general view that the Siena Group would be a more appropriate group to rely on for undertaking some of the various follow-up activities that have been proposed, particularly given that the Siena Group has decided that the themes of its future meetings Group will concentrate on social indicators and developments in social statistics (see para. 55 above).

## **VII. Work that the 1999/2000 CES Bureau carried forward to 2000/2001**

68. Under this agenda item the Bureau considered a number of issues that the Bureau at its November 1999 and January 2000 meetings had carried forward into its 2000/2001 work programme:

- a) Performance indicators for statistical offices

69. At its November 1999 meeting the Bureau agreed that it should consider this topic again in about a year. The Bureau agreed that this subject should be added to the list of possible future seminar sessions at future plenary sessions (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

b) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

70. The Bureau agreed that the 50<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the Conference in June 2002 might be the most appropriate time for the Conference to include an item relating to this subject in its agenda.

c) The ECE Statistical Division's post of Regional Adviser in Statistics

71. Paolo Garonna informed the Bureau that the Division's Statistical Adviser in Statistics was expected to take up his new duties in the Division sometime during the month of October 2000. In view of that, the Bureau decided to postpone its strategic discussion on the work programme of the Division's regional Adviser in Statistics until the Bureau's next meeting (around February 2001) (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

d) Outdated objectives of PE 2.1 of the Integrated Presentation

72. At its January 2000 meeting the Bureau agreed that the objectives of this PE were outdated, and it asked the ECE secretariat as Rapporteur of this programme element to update the text. The Bureau noted that the Rapporteur's Report that the Rapporteur had prepared for the November 2000 meeting of the Bureau contained the proposed new text on the objectives.

e) Possible different method of classifying activities in the "Activities and means" section of the Integrated Presentation

73. At the Bureau's January 2000 meeting Eurostat suggested that a further improvement might be able to be made to the Integrated Presentation by using a different form for classifying material in the "Activities and means" section. Wim DeVries of UNSD agreed to give further thought to this, and to report back to the Bureau at the Bureau's autumn 2000 meeting. Since Wim DeVries did not participate in the Bureau's October 2000 meeting, the Bureau agreed to come back to this question at the Bureau's next meeting (**action by Wim DeVries of UNSD and the ECE secretariat**).

f) Designation of "Lead Organisations" for different fields of environment statistics

74. The Bureau left this subject in abeyance, as discussion is still in progress between Eurostat and the OECD on it.

g) Possible conversion of the Integrated Presentation into a data base

75. The Bureau thanked Statistics Norway for the note that it had prepared for the Bureau meeting on this subject. The Bureau also noted that Statistics Canada had expressed interest in collaborating with Statistics Norway in doing exploratory work in this direction. It asked Statistics Norway to liaise with Statistics Canada in carrying the work forward, and to report back to the Bureau on the results achieved (**action by Statistics Norway and Statistics Canada, with the ECE secretariat playing a supporting role**).

76. The Bureau also had a general discussion of the Integrated Presentation under this item. There was general agreement that prior to the Bureau's next meeting, it would be useful to attempt to clarify

who the actual users of the Integrated Presentation are, and what they are using it for. In an attempt to clarify this, it was agreed that before the next meeting of the Bureau the ECE secretariat should ask all the Organisations that supply information for inclusion in the Integrated Presentation what they use the material in the IP for, and what their view of the IP is (**action by the ECE secretariat**). In addition, in order to provide a sample of countries' perspective, Bureau members should also be asked to supply the secretariat with the same type of information (**action by the ECE secretariat**).

77. There was general agreement that the IP should be viewed more as a background document at the plenary session, and that it should be a mechanism for the Bureau to identify issues emerging from it that warrant being discussed by the Conference at the plenary session. It also agreed that in recent plenary sessions too much time was being devoted to the IP, and particularly to the 40 or so PEs that are reviewed in a cursory manner. It agreed that for the 2001 plenary session, the Director of the ECE Statistical Division should write to NSIs to tell them the updated version of the IP is available on the Web, and to ask them to notify the Chairman or the ECE secretariat if they have any comments on it (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

h) Relations between statisticians working in the field of official statistics and academics

78. The Bureau agreed that Paolo Garonna should ask Pilar Martin-Guzman, as President of the IAOS, for an updated report on this subject (**Action by Paolo Garonna**).

i) International statistical work in South East Europe

79. The Bureau agreed that it should consider at its next meeting whether this subject warrants being discussed at the 2001 plenary session. To facilitate deciding that, the Bureau asked Eurostat to prepare a short note covering both this subject and assistance for Candidate Countries, for the Bureau to consider at its next meeting (**Action by Eurostat**).

j) 50th anniversary of the Conference of European Statisticians

80. The Bureau discussed several possibilities for planning the Conference of European Statistician's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary session, which will take place in June of 2002. They included using the "seminar" session as an occasion to "celebrate" the CES; reviewing the Fundamental Principles; focussing on "best practices" of the CES, and how it has come to serve as a model of things that work well; and issuing a book or publication to mark the event.

81. The Bureau agreed that at its next meeting it should designate a group of people who could serve as "Organiser", "Resource Persons" etc. in planning the event (**Action by the ECE secretariat**).

k) The international Conference on Statistics, Development and Human Rights

82. The Bureau agreed that the attention of the Conference should be called to this meeting. Attention of the Conference should also be called to national and international statistical offices could assist NGOs in working in the field of statistics, development and human rights. The Bureau agreed that it would be useful if Paolo Garonna would ask Carlos Malaguerra to prepare a short paper on the meeting, for distribution as a document for the 2001 plenary session (**Action by Paolo Garonna**).

### VIII. Dates and venue of the next Bureau meeting

83. The Bureau agreed that its next meeting should be held from 31 January to 1 February 2001. The meeting will be held in Geneva, and will start at 1:00. (**Note by the secretariat**: In earlier years, the February Bureau meeting has usually been preceded by an ECE-Eurostat-OECD Joint Programme

Review meeting. The three organisations have not yet initiated discussions on whether to convene a JPR on this occasion, but given past practise, it is possible that a JPR meeting will precede the 31 January 2001 meeting of the Bureau).

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