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**STATISTICAL COMMISSION and UNITED
NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE (UNECE)
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN
STATISTICIANS**

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
(UNCTAD)**

**INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION
UNION (ITU)**

**UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR
STATISTICS (UIS)**

**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)**

**STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
(Eurostat)**

**Joint UNECE/UNCTAD/UIS/ITU/OECD/EUROSTAT Statistical Workshop:
Monitoring the Information Society: Data, Measurement and Methods
(Geneva, 8-9 December 2003)**

INFORMATION NOTICE NUMBER 1

The workshop will be held in the Palais des Nations, starting at 10:00
Geneva, Switzerland, 8-9 December 2003

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

1. In view of the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (10-12 December 2003) and the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action that will result, there will be a need to monitor the progress made towards the goals stated in Geneva (2003) by the next Summit in Tunis (2005) and beyond. In light of this, it is fundamental that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) data be brought into the realm of official statistics, so that current global gaps in the data can be identified and closed.
2. The first step in making this happen is a fundamental stock-taking exercise. This workshop will comprise a variety of themes surrounding ICTs, including (i) the role of ICTs

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in economic and societal transformations, (ii) individual and household use of ICTs, (iii) business usage of ICTs, and (iv) measuring social implications of ICTs (see preliminary programme attached to this information notice). Within each theme, some basic questions will be asked. Can critical data or indicators that currently do not exist but are desirable be identified? Are these even measurable? How is it possible to encourage countries that don't currently collect the relevant data to do so within their official statistics programmes?

3. The main participants of the Workshop will be representatives from national statistical offices, policy makers and analysts in the ICT area. The key message of the Workshop will be the need for official statistics to be a central player in shaping the information society from the point of view of (i) independent information as a basic condition for democracy and other aspects of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and (ii) statistical monitoring with the view to obtain international benchmarking and to assess ICT trends from a core set of internationally agreed indicators.

4. Each session of the Workshop will produce conclusions and recommendations concerning what has been done up to now, how it was done and how we go from here. They will also include discussions on relevant ICT indicators and have suggestions for internationally agreed core set of indicators at the closing session of the Workshop. The closing session will also summarize the previous seven sessions and thereafter agree on conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop. These conclusions will be brought to the attention of the World Summit on the Information Society.

5. Other important issues to be addressed by the Workshop will be: include (i) statistical capacity building – bringing ICT statistics into the realm of official statistics; (ii) classification issues; (iii) harmonizing data; (iv) importance of household surveys; (v) importance of having a centralized place for knowledge and data from each of the organizations; and (v) data priorities, including a possible suggestion of basic indicators (a minimum list) that countries should collect to aid international comparisons.

II. ORGANIZERS

6. The Workshop is organized jointly by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT).

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

7. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. All participants attending the meeting are

requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the participants reside, with reference to the joint UNECE/UNCTAD/UIS/ITU/OECD/EUROSTAT Workshop on Monitoring the Information Society.

8. Representatives from national statistical offices, government agencies and other relevant offices, and international organizations who wish to participate should complete the attached registration form and return it to the UNECE secretariat.

IV. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

9. The working languages of the Workshop are English, French and Russian and most likely also Arabic, Chinese and Spanish. Confirmation concerning the last three mentioned languages to be made in Information Notice No 2. The documentation for the Workshop will consist of information notices, keynote papers, supporting papers and background documentation supplied by countries and organizations. Documents may be submitted in any of the official languages of the UNECE (English, French, Russian) and possibly also in Arabic, Chinese and Spanish (to be confirmed). Translation will be made of keynote papers provided that they are submitted before **15 September 2003**. Supporting papers, which will be made available in the original language only, should be submitted before **25 November 2003**.

10. Simultaneous interpretation for the languages mentioned above will be available.

11. For each session there will be a discussant and 2-3 speakers presenting invited papers. All other participants are welcome to submit a supporting paper to any of the sessions. The supporting papers will be distributed to the delegates. They will be summarized by the discussants and the issues raised in them will also be discussed.

12. Invited and supporting papers and all other documents for the Workshop will be made available on the website of the UNECE Secretariat at the following location:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.12.wsis.htm>

Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the meeting. Documents posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

V. FURTHER INFORMATION

13. Further information, including updates of the programme, can be obtained from the following website:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.12.wsis.htm>

14. Should you wish to have more detailed information, please contact:

Mr. Jan Karlsson
Statistical Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
CH-11211-GENEVA 10, Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 917 32 85; Fax: +41 22 917 00 40
e-mail: jan.karlsson@unece.org

VI. PROGRAMME

Chairperson: Ms. Dr. Adelheid Bürgi-Schmelz
Director General
Swiss Federal Statistical Office

On 8 December Ms. Dr. Adelheid Bürgi-Schmelz will be replaced by

Mr. Heinz Gilomen
Director Society and Education Statistics
Swiss Federal Statistical Office

Vice chairperson: Mr. Eduardo Pereira Nunes
President
Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

Opening session:

Session I: The Role of ICTs in Economic and Societal Transformations

Session organizers: OECD (Contact: george.sciadas@rogers.com)

15. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are having a profound impact on the functioning of the economy, as well as on people's lives. In addition, the link of ICTs to economic development has generated all kinds of questions. Statistical measurements are indispensable for an informed understanding of the implications of all transformations underway.

16. This session will explore what needs to be measured, why and how. It will present an overview of the work that has been done so far and it will outline what lies ahead. As well, it will underscore the particular importance of internationally harmonized concepts, definitions and indicators in this area. Particular emphasis will be placed on the significance of the ICT sector and the macro impacts of ICTs on aggregate measures, particularly productivity. The importance of the access to and the actual use of ICTs by people will also be assessed (Digital Divide). The need for a framework that would guide measurements for international comparability will be stressed and a list of indicators will be suggested.

Sessions II and III: People in the Information Society: Individual and household use and penetration of ICTs

Session organizers: EUROSTAT (Contact: martii.lumio@cec.eu.int) and ITU
(Contact: minges@itu.int)

17. The theme of the double session is measuring access to ICTs by individuals and households. Data needs for policy purposes will also be highlighted. Results from recent

surveys in Europe will be presented. The scope is then widened to the globe, tying the indicators into the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and bringing a case from outside Europe into the picture. Problems related to the digital divide between various population groups and regions will be discussed.

18. The second part of the session will be dedicated to methods. Alternative vehicles for data collection will be presented and evaluated. Are dedicated ICT surveys preferable to adding questions to omnibus surveys? In the absence of interview surveys, how can access to ICTs be measured? What are the main problems encountered in the surveys already carried out?

19. The session will end with a summary of the preceding presentations and proposals for conclusions and recommendations to be put forward to the closing session and further to the main event.

Session IV: The Age of Electronic Business (1): current status of statistical measurements

Session organizers: UNCTAD (Contact: susan.teltscher@unctad.org) and OECD
(Contact: george.sciadas@rogers.com)

20. The rapid and widespread penetration of ICTs, particularly of the Internet, among businesses continues to change the way business is conducted. With the digital economy growing, the role of ICTs in general and e-commerce in particular is receiving increasing attention in national strategies of competitiveness and economic development.

21. This session will present statistical measurements of ICT usage among enterprises that have been undertaken to date by statistical offices and international forums, including recent experiences in measuring e-commerce. The scope, methodology, challenges and results obtained from such efforts will be clearly addressed and their analytical usefulness will be highlighted. Moreover, the issue of how national information needs in this area are met in conjunction with the need for international comparability of statistics will be discussed.

Session V: The Age of Electronic Business (2): ICT indicators for Development

Session organizers: UNCTAD (Contact: susan.teltscher@unctad.org) and OECD
(Contact: george.sciadas@rogers.com)

22. Recognizing the important role of ICT for development and economic growth, an increasing number of developing countries are directing their attention towards developing national ICT strategies. In this context, monitoring and evaluating the developments of the digital economy has become a key element of national ICT policy making.

23. This session will present experiences, efforts under way and prospects for the measurement of business use of ICTs and e-commerce in developing countries. ICT-induced

changes in the global economy will be linked to country-specific contexts. The critical aspects of capacity building and knowledge generation, transmission and absorption will be addressed. Furthermore, the coordination of initiatives will be discussed with the aim to arrive at a roadmap that would help bridge severe informational gaps at the international level. The session will also make suggestions for concrete activities that could be carried out in this area until the second meeting of the WSIS in Tunis in 2005.

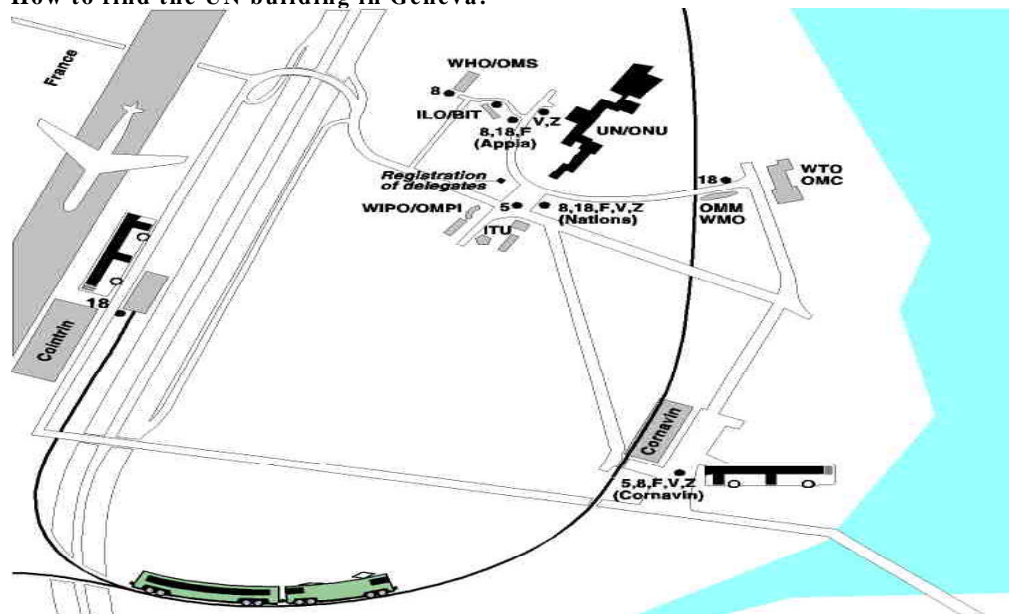
Session VI: ICTs and Society: Measuring Social Implications of ICTs

Session organizer: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Contact: d.stukel@unesco.org)

24. ICTs have far-reaching implications not just for economic sectors, but also for societies as a whole. The uses of ICTs have extended into the everyday lives of many but not all around the globe. There is a widely held view that access to and use of ICTs should be viewed as a means towards the improvement of quality of life, and not be considered an end into itself. Thus, it is important to explore the ways in which the use of ICTs can benefit the disadvantaged and advantaged of the world alike, and to measure the related impacts.

25. This session will explore a variety of topics such as the use and benefits of ICTs in the field of education, as well as issues of access to and exclusion from ICTs in general, with particular emphasis on gender. Within each theme, the current statistics and indicators that are available will be identified, as well as those that are desired but don't currently exist. The barriers that prevent such data collections from taking place, such as conceptual problems, competing priorities, lack of resources, and the need for capacity building, will be discussed, along with suggested remedial actions.

How to find the UN building in Geneva:



Where to obtain the entry pass (Security Identification Office, Villa les Feuillantines, 13 avenue de la Paix):



Note: a valid photo ID is needed to obtain the ground pass and to gain the entry to the UN premises.

Please send this form by fax to the UNECE Statistical Division: +4122 917 0040
 (For meetings included in the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians)



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

Conference Registration Form

Please print

Date _____

Title of the Conference

Joint ECE/UNCTAD/UIS/ITU/OECD/EUROSTAT Workshop on Monitoring the Information Society (Geneva, 8-9 December 2003)

Delegation/Participant of Country, Organization or Agency

Participant

Mr. ☐

Family Name

First Name

Mrs. ☐

Ms. ☐

Participation Category

Delegation Member

☐
☐

Observer Country

☐

Observer Organization

☐

NGO

☐

Other (Please Specify Below)

☐

...

Participating From / Until

From

Until

Official Occupation (in own country)

Passport or ID Number

Valid Until

Official Telephone N°.

Fax N°.

E-mail Address

Permanent Official Address

Address in Geneva

Accompanied by Spouse

Yes

☐

No

☐

Family Name (Spouse)

First Name (Spouse)

On Issue of ID Card

Participant Signature

Spouse Signature

Date

Security Use Only

Card N°. Issued

Initials, UN Official