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CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2023/2025 Bureau
Cardiff, UK, 9-10 October 2023

Item III (g) of the Provisional Agenda

HAZARDOUS EVENTS AND DISASTERS: PROGRESS REPORT, UPDATED WORK PLAN AND EXTENSION OF MANDATE

Prepared by the Task Force

In June 2023 the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) endorsed the 'Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators'. CES supported the continuation of work to develop practical implementation guidelines and to contribute to the global efforts on the statistical operationalization of terms, definitions and classifications used in disaster risk management.

The Bureau reviewed the updated work plan and approved an extension of the mandate of the Task Force until 2026 *(updated TOR are provided in ECE/CES/BUR/2023/OCT/12/Add.1).*

I. BACKGROUND

1. In February 2020 the Bureau approved the mandate of the Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters to: (a) provide guidance for the practical implementation of the *CES Recommendations on the role of official statistics in measuring hazardous events and disasters (2019)*; (b) support the statistical operationalisation of terms, definitions and classifications used in disaster risk management; (c) develop a set of core statistics and indicators; and (d) support the establishment of a community of practice.

2. From March 2020 on the work was strongly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic (a biological disaster). Therefore, in 2020 the Task Force had to refocus its activities on providing immediate support to guide statistical offices in dealing with the pandemic (e.g. via a wiki platform and webinars).

3. In 2021 the Task Force turned back to the implementation of the work plan according to the originally set priorities. The first completed activity was organizing the First Global Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics in cooperation with all five UN regional commissions, UNSD and UNDRR in June 2021. The work on reviewing the hazard classification and set of indicators and statistics was restarted.

4. In October 2021 the CES Bureau reviewed a progress report and approved the revised workplan of the Task Force until June 2024.

5. In June 2023, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) endorsed the 'Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators', subject to minor amendments. CES furthermore supported

the continuation of work to develop practical implementation guidelines and contribute to the global efforts on the statistical operationalization of terms, definitions and classifications used in disaster risk management.

6. The Task Force currently includes members from eight countries (Belgium, Italy, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Mexico, New Zealand, Türkiye and the United Kingdom), six international organisations (ECLAC, ESCAP, IMF, OECD, UNDRR and WMO) and one research organisation (University of Extremadura). The Chair of the UN Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications (also representing New Zealand) is a member of the Task Force. Angela Ferruzza from the Italian National Statistics Institute (ISTAT) is the Chair of the Task Force.

II. PROGRESS OF WORK SINCE SEPTEMBER 2021

7. This section presents the progress of work made since the previous progress report in September 2021 (ECE/CES/BUR/2021/OCT/10).

8. By the beginning of 2021, the Task Force decided to fade out the immediate COVID-19 response and to review its original work plan. Task Force members could again dedicate more time to the initial Task Force's activities.

9. The following three task teams were set up in January 2021 to work in parallel:

(a) Organisation of expert meetings

(b) Development of a set of core statistics and indicators

(c) Statistical review of the hazard classification and definition

A. Organisation of expert fora

10. The Task Force together with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics (IAEG-DRS, set up by the UN Statistical Commission in 2019[1]) organized the first global Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics as an online meeting on 7, 8 and 10 June 2021. More than 300 participants from various expert communities (statistics, disaster-risk management, research, NGOs, international organizations, etc.) attended the Expert Forum.

11. One of the outcomes of that meeting was the recommendation to organize annually a global meeting on this topic, hosted in turn by different UN Regional Commissions. Papers, presentations and the meeting report can be found at https://unece.org/statistics/events/first-expert-forum-producers-and-users-disaster-related-statistics-online.

12. The second Expert Forum was held on 6-8 September 2022 as a hybrid meeting. It was hosted by ESCWA in Beirut (Lebanon) and co-organized by the UNECE Task Force. More than 400 experts participated either in-person or online. Documentation for the meeting is available at https://www.unescwa.org/events/producers-and-users-disaster-related-statistics.

13. The third Expert Forum was held as a combined in-person and online meeting from 5-9 June 2023 in Bangkok (Thailand), hosted by ESCAP. The UNECE Task Force co-organized the meeting and held the workshop "Building resilience through disaster-risk-related statistics and indicators: A Workshop on operationalizing the ESCAP Disaster Related Statistics Framework". This workshop provided useful feedback from countries of different regions of the world on the

[1] Report of the 50th session, Decision 50/116

proposed "Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators" which was endorsed by CES in the same month. Documentation for the meeting is available at https://www.unescap.org/events/2023/third-expert-forum-producers-and-users-disaster-related-statistics.

B. Development of a set of core statistics and indicators

14. An important focus of work throughout 2022 was the finalization of the selection of a set of core disaster-risk-related indicators, which was finally endorsed by CES in June 2023 as a "Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators" requiring further testing and refinement.

15. The main purposes of the pilot set of indicators are to

(a) Become a recommended set to all NSSs in CES member countries for regular production and dissemination;

(b) Provide the big picture of disaster risk in an internationally comparable way, i.e. help to understand the disaster risk situation in a given area (ideally all dimensions of risk);

(c) Support monitoring and reporting of international policy agreements (SDGs, Sendai, Paris, etc.);

(d) Be complementary with the *CES Set of Core Climate Change-related Statistics and Indicators*.

16. The indicator framework developed by the Task Force has three main dimensions:

(a) Types of hazard (following the UNDRR/ISC Hazard classification)[2];

(b) Elements of the ESCAP Disaster-related Statistics Framework (DRSF): (i) frequency and dimension of hazardous events; (ii) disaster-risk elements exposure, vulnerability and coping capacity; (iii) disaster-risk reduction activities; and (iv) disaster impacts;

(c) Elements at risk, including people, housing, basic services, economic activity, food security, water security, health care, cultural heritage, governance, etc.

17. This framework is seen by experts from NSOs and Disaster-risk Management Authorities as very useful for measuring and understanding disaster-risk in an internationally comparable way, as evidenced from the feedback from the e-consultation carried out in spring 2023 as well as comments from participants of the Third Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics (Bangkok, June 2023). The work of the UNECE Task Force provides important conceptual and substantive input also for the development of a global Framework on Disaster-related Statistics by IAEG-DRS.

18. The Task Force proposed a total of 52 core indicators, based on the selection criteria "relevance", "soundness of the calculation methodology" and "data availability". In the selection process, priority was given to indicators already being used in existing global and regional indicator frameworks (such as SDG indicators, Sendai Framework Indicators, CES set of core climate change-related indicators, etc.). The indicators are presented in the form of the above-mentioned framework.

C. Statistical review of the hazard classification

19. In May 2019, UNDRR and ISC established a technical working group to identify the full scope of hazards relevant to the Sendai Framework as a basis for countries to review and strengthen their risk reduction policies and operational risk management practices. The report of

[2] https://www.undrr.org/publication/hazard-definition-and-classification-review-technical-report

the technical working group Hazard definition and classification review presents the first results of this international collaborative effort.

20. Key elements of the report are the 302 "Hazard Information Profiles" (HIPs)[3] which describe each hazard with a brief primary definition, a scientific definition, metrics, numerical limits or defined guidelines, and essential annotations.

21. The reviewed hazard classification and its HIPs now provide a common set of hazard definitions for monitoring and reviewing implementation of the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It is recommended to governments and their NSOs to use the classification for monitoring and reporting on DRR, and to gradually implement in databases and reporting systems.

22. Noting that the HIPs provided a common set of hazard definitions for monitoring and reviewing implementation of the Sendai Framework, the Task Force started to explore if the HIPs could be used as a basis for government databases and reporting systems including statistical methodologies. Subsequently, in December 2021 a task team was set up to facilitate the review of the HIPs and explore the applicability in National Statistical Systems. The task team includes members of the UNECE Task Force, and collaborates closely with UK Health Security Agency and their network of academia colleagues. Results of this work are also reported back to IAEG-DRS.

23. The task team set the following objectives:

(a) Explore the conceptual and logistical challenges countries face when reporting statistically on the impacts of hazardous events and disasters.

(b) Clarify the potential benefits of implementing the HIPs and how they might support standardised reporting on the impacts of hazardous events and disasters.

(c) Identify conceptual and practical challenges that might affect successful incorporation of the HIPs into national systems, with a view to see how these challenges might be best mitigated.

24. This ongoing activity utilises a mixed methods approach including:

(a) Literature review to understand the gaps and good practices from an academic perspective;

(b) Analysing survey responses from 47 countries to identify strengths and challenges of data collection methods based on existing definitions and data systems;

(c) In-depth expert focus groups to gather feedback from experts operating in the field of statistics;

(d) In-country focus groups in Canada, Georgia and Mexico to gather feedback from national level experts who operate statistical databases on hazards and disasters; and

(e) Three data organisation focus groups to gather feedback from experts who operate global and regional databases.

25. This activity has identified a series of recommendations to improve DRS and the current data collection methods. The findings are expected to be published in a short report before the end of 2023. They will be key for the further development of HIPs and related practical guidance for using them in national disaster-related statistics and international reporting.

[3] https://www.undrr.org/publication/hazard-information-profiles-hips

III. PLAN FOR THE REMAINING WORK

26. Given the broad scope and increasing importance of measuring hazardous events and disasters the Task Force is **asking for an extension of its mandate for two years** (until June 2026) which will allow for the following:

(a) Implement the decisions and suggestions made by CES in June 2023:

i. Amend the *Pilot set of core disaster-risk-related indicators* as presented in ECE/CES/2023/4/Add.1;

ii. Develop practical implementation guidelines, including guidance on data sources and on using indicators, and collect more case examples;

iii. Continue to contribute to the global efforts of statistical operationalization of terms, definitions and classifications used in disaster risk management.

(b) Pilot-testing and a further refinement of the set of core indicators, and the development of a related core set of statistics;

(c) Continue the statistical review of the Hazard Information Profiles prepared by UNDRR and ISC in 2021 and 2022;

(d) Contribute to the organization of annual Expert Fora for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics with regional inputs in 2024 and 2025;

(e) Provide additional ad-hoc contributions to other international initiatives to improve the statistical operationalization of Sendai Framework terminology and indicator methodologies.

IV. REQUEST TO THE BUREAU

27. **The Bureau is invited to:**

(a) **Comment on the updated work plan and timetable (Sections III and IV);**

(b) **Extend the mandate of the Task Force by two years (until 2026) and approve the updated Terms of Reference (ECE/CES/BUR/2023/OCT/12/Add.1).**

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