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Item 5 (f) of the provisional agenda*

Items for information: price statistics

Ottawa Group on Price Indices

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2024/312 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of Ottawa Group on Price Indices, which is submitted to the Commission for information.

* [E/CN.3/2025/1](#).



Report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indices

I. Introduction

1. The International Working Group on Price Indices, known as the “Ottawa Group on Price Indices”, was formed in 1994 to provide a forum for specialist academics and practitioners to share their experiences and knowledge and discuss research on crucial problems relating to the measurement of price change. While theoretical issues are covered in the discussions, the Group focuses primarily on applied research, in particular, but not exclusively, in the area of consumer price indices. The Group examines concepts, methods and procedures in the context of realistic operational environments, supported by examples whenever possible. Participants are specialists and practitioners who work for or advise statistical agencies in countries or international organizations. The Group meets every second year, alternating with the biennial meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices, jointly organized with the International Labour Organization.

2. The Steering Committee of the Ottawa Group ensures the continuity and evolution of the Group’s activities. The Committee coordinates with other international groups and activities on price statistics, such as the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics and the ECE Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices. The Committee currently comprises representatives of national statistical offices, international organizations, academics and independent experts on price statistics. The membership of the Committee is reviewed periodically to ensure broad regional representation and continuity of work. Statistics Poland currently serves as the Executive Secretary of the Group.

3. The Ottawa Group benefits from the active participation of experts and practitioners from statistical offices and leading researchers, facilitating the progress to be made in both the academic and practitioner communities. The Group encourages the participation of experts from statistical offices around the world to facilitate broad regional participation. This allows countries with less developed statistical systems the opportunity to interact with and learn from more statistically developed countries, enabling them to improve the statistical systems in their region. The Group’s meetings have representation from countries in North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa.

4. The proceedings of the Ottawa Group meetings and additional information about the Group are available from the Group’s website.¹

II. Recent activities and meetings

5. Since its previous report to the Statistical Commission ([E/CN.3/2023/18](#)) the Ottawa Group held its regular meeting in May 2024 in Ottawa.

A. Ottawa Group meeting in May 2024, Ottawa

6. The Ottawa Group met from 13 to 15 May 2024, in Ottawa. The Group has now met 18 times, with the most recent meeting jointly hosted by Statistics Canada and the Bank of Canada.

¹ <https://stats.unece.org/ottawagroup/>.

7. The 2024 meeting was organized as a hybrid meeting. Presenters and speakers were to attend the meeting in-person. However, participants could observe the meeting virtually and could ask questions via the meeting's online chat. More than 60 people attended in person, and more than 135 people enrolled for virtual participation. The hybrid format was successful and increased participation through the online option, while also benefitting from meeting in-person.

8. Similar to previous meetings, fundamental challenges in price measurement remained the focus of the 2024 meeting. The topics considered in papers and presentations included the following: alternate data sources and index number formulas; the treatment of housing in the consumer price index, including rent, owner-occupied housing and utilities; challenging areas of price measurement, including digitalization; shared economy services; quality adjustment methods with alternative data sources; index number theory and practice; price statistics that meet multiple user needs, including considerations for domestic or national consumer price index; and analytical or complementary measures of inflation.

9. Discussions focused on the theoretical and methodological considerations of each topic and the practical implementation of theories and methods in the context of national statistical offices. In total, there were 30 presentations, including two presentations by David Fenwick and Erwin Diewert, on the thirtieth anniversary of the creation of the Ottawa Group. In addition, 11 papers were presented in a poster session that offered the opportunity to learn about the findings from all papers not selected for the plenary sessions due to time constraints. Finally, the meeting also marked 30 years since the Ottawa Group was formed, in 1994. The celebration of that important milestone included a special panel discussion on the state of research, the practice of consumer price index methodology and the challenges ahead.

10. As a general theme, the emphasis of the meeting continued to be the use of new data sources and the possibilities and challenges that they present to index compilation methods and procedures in national statistical offices. The Ottawa Group focuses on taking forward state-of-the-art ideas, and the meeting participants presented practical and theoretical ways to overcome the challenges. New and innovative ideas discussed included compiling indices using web-scraped data and transaction (scanner) data. The full report of the meeting includes a summary of the key points that emerged from each session and feedback from the participants. It is available as a background document and on the Group's website.²

11. The proceedings of the meeting in Ottawa and earlier meetings of the Group can also be found on the Group's website.³

B. Next meeting of the Ottawa Group

12. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Warsaw in 2026. It will be hosted by Statistics Poland. The Steering Committee will consult with the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics and the ECE Group of Experts on Consumer Prices Indices to ensure the appropriate coordination of meeting agendas.

² https://stats.unece.org/ottawagroup/download/Ottawa_Group_meeting_2024_report.pdf.

³ <https://stats.unece.org/ottawagroup/meetings>.

III. Contact point

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IV. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

14. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.
