

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION
and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

**Report
of the forty-sixth plenary session**

(Paris, 18-20 May 1998)



**UNITED NATIONS
1998**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Attendance

1. The Conference of European Statisticians held its forty-sixth plenary session in Paris at the invitation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It was attended by representatives of Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

2. The session was attended by representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat).

3. Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and South Africa participated under Article 11 of the terms of reference of the ECE.

4. Representatives of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (UN Statistics Division), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the following specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations attended: Bank for International Settlements (BIS); International Monetary Fund (IMF); World Trade Organization (WTO); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS STAT); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the OECD; and the European Free Trade Organization (EFTA).

5. The following non-governmental organization in consultative status with ECOSOC was represented: International Statistical Institute (ISI).

6. Mr. P. Garonna (Italy) chaired the session. Messrs. A. Abrahamse (Netherlands), S. Longva (Norway), D. Murphy (Ireland), E. Outrata (Czech Republic) and R. Veetousme (Estonia) served as Vice-Chairmen.

Agenda and procedure

7. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/53) was adopted. The Conference recalled the procedures for improving the efficiency of plenary sessions (CES/821) that the Conference adopted at its 1994 plenary session.

Opening statements

8. Opening addresses were delivered by Messrs. Y. Berthelot, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, L. Kincannon, Director of the Statistical Directorate of OECD on behalf of the Secretary General of the OECD and P. Garonna, Chairman of the Conference.

II. IMPLICATIONS OF MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE'S PARENT BODIES

A. February 1998 meeting of the UN Statistical Commission's Working group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination

Documentation: CES/1997/16

9. The Conference confirmed its agreement with the conclusion of the Working Group of the UNSC (the text is given below),

PROSPECTS FOR THE 2000 ROUND OF CENSUSES IN COUNTRIES IN GREATEST NEED

The Working Group expressed its deep concern about the prospects for the 2000 round of Population Censuses in many countries. While acknowledging the efforts already being made by governments and international institutions, the Working Group concluded that the Population Censuses are being accorded insufficient priority at this crucial stage in their preparation.

Many countries, including many newly independent states, have experienced very large internal and external migration flows and very large changes in fertility and mortality. In most of these countries, because of the economic and social conditions, there is a critical risk that Censuses will not be undertaken even though they are in the greatest need.

Up-to-date Census information is necessary for decision making over a wide range of important policy issues in government and elsewhere, but the Population Census is the largest and most expensive single activity that National Statistical Offices ever undertake and cannot be undertaken without the allocation of substantial extra resources over a number of years.

The Working group therefore calls on governments and international institutions to give high priority to the next Population census especially in those countries which have experienced the greatest population changes and where the need for a Population Census is therefore the most urgent.

10. The Conference, in addition, called attention to the important responsibilities of national governments in this regard. In particular the Conference stressed that population censuses are absolutely essential for policy decision making, and the primary responsibility for undertaking and funding them rests with national governments. Any assistance from external donors can only be seen as being complementary to the basic funding provided by the governments themselves.

11. The Conference also noted the discussion that had taken place at the Working Group's meeting on indicators and minimum national social data sets. The Conference concluded that further work is necessary with regard to

indicators, and in particular with the minimum national social data sets that had been endorsed by the Statistical Commission and reviewed by the Working Group. It recognized that although most of the indicators are widely applicable, some of them need to be adapted to regional conditions and information requirements.

B. April 1998 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: CES/1997/15

12. The Conference noted that its methods of work and its operating procedures are already largely aligned with the recommended practices called for at the Commission session and in Commission decision A(53).

13. The Conference thanked Eurostat for facilitating the participation of representatives of central and east European countries and of CIS countries in the annual plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians and in selected other high priority meetings in the Conference's work programme, by permitting representatives of the statistical offices of these countries to use the European Commission's PHARE and TACIS funds to finance their participation in these meetings.

14. The Conference welcomed the back-up support that the ECE Statistical Division is providing to Eurostat to assist it in implementing its MEDSTAT Migration Statistics Project.

15. The Conference asked the Bureau of the Conference at its autumn 1998 meeting to look more closely into the approach that the Bureau has recommended the Conference to take in prioritising its work programme (see CES/1998/9), in the light of the stipulations called for both in the Plan of Action and in the decision taken by the Commission concerning this matter at its April 1998 session, particularly with reference to subparagraphs (d) and (e) of para. 6 of CES/1998/15.

16. The Conference asked the Secretariat of the Statistical Division to review in 1998/99, together with the Bureau of the Conference, on behalf of the Conference, the three recurrent publications (Trends in Europe and North America, Statistical Journal of the UN/ECE and World Industrial Robots) in the Conference's work programme, in order to determine whether their continued publication is merited, and to communicate the results of the review to the ECE's Office of the Executive Secretary for transmittal to the UN's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

17. The Conference agreed that the ECE Statistical Division is already collaborating closely and in a partnership relationship with Eurostat, OECD, the UN Statistical Division and other international organizations in carrying out the Conference's programme of work and also in the secretariats' collection of statistics from ECE member countries. Joint data collection was also discussed under item 4 of the agenda (see section IV of this report).

III. INTEGRATED PRESENTATION AND COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK IN THE ECE REGION

Documentation: CES/1998/10 and addenda 1-7; CES/1998/11 and addenda 1 and 2; CES/1998/12, 13 and 14.

a) Introduction

18. The Conference agreed to review the integrated presentation in the manner suggested by the Bureau, namely to review four topics in greater depth, and to review the remaining 40 or so programme elements more quickly on the basis of the detailed recommendations made by the Bureau.

19. The following four topics were the ones which were reviewed in greater depth: (a) Financial statistics and indicators in the light of the Asian economic crisis and the growing importance of statistical information to the financial stability of countries (part of PE 3.2); (b) Countries in transition in the ECE region (part of PE 1.3); (c) Preparations for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses (part of PE 4.5); and (d) Education and training statistics (PE 4.8). The Bureau used the following criteria for selecting these topics: (i) expressed interest of National Statistical Offices; (ii) the strategic importance of the topics for the future; and (iii) whether the topics have a topical or urgent character.

b) Financial statistics and indicators in the light of the Asian economic crisis and the growing importance of statistical information to the financial stability of countries (Documentation: CES/1998/11 and addenda 1 and 2)

20. Ms. C. Carson of the IMF contributed the paper (CES/1998/11) which served as the basis of discussion for this topic. Mr. J. Pecha of the National Bank of France, Mr. R. Widera of the Bank of International Settlements and Ms. J. Saint-Sernin of OECD served as Discussants.

21. An overview of the financial crises in the East Asian region was presented and the role of financial statistics in the crises was highlighted. It was noted that data on official international reserves and external debt are not sufficiently reliable, comprehensive, and/or timely. On the other hand, collecting additional statistical data, such as those needed for external debt, also results in increasing the reporting burden on those who report the data. A recommendation was made that the requirements for new data should be backed up by strong reasons.

22. Two areas noted as requiring improvement were data on external liabilities of the private sector and off balance sheet commitments of central banks. In this context it was recognized that a major problem is that reserve-related liabilities is not a well-defined statistical term.

23. The participants noted that although existing systems that yield external debt statistics differ with respect to coverage, there are still some degree of consistency and harmonization between them. The background

document presented at the session showed how the work of four different organisations was coordinated.

24. During the discussion the issue of transparency was raised. While on one hand the lack of transparency was pointed out as being a major problem, some countries have reservations on how far to pursue this issue, for instance for reasons of not providing too much information to speculators.

25. As concerns the issue of timeliness of data it was emphasised that the publishing of financial statistics with a time lag of six months or more hardly constitutes an early warning system. In this context the questions of whether new statistics are really needed was also raised. In fact, some of the information that might have helped foresee the Asian crises was already available but was not sufficiently used by the market. The optimal solution might therefore lie in improving the existing statistical systems and focusing on their dissemination instead of creating new ones.

26. It was suggested that the international organisations that deal with financial issues should develop consistent recommendations for use by the NSOs on what kind of information should be collected, so that changing "fashions" in data requirements do not affect the collection of data. It was emphasized that these recommendations be made available in languages other than English, so that they can be used more easily by transition countries.

c) Countries in transition in the ECE region (Documentation: CES/1998/12 and addendum 1)

27. Mr. E. Outrata, President of the Czech Statistical Office, contributed the main paper (CES/1998/12) and Mr. T. Katona, President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, provided a supporting paper and served as Discussant (CES/1998/12 Addendum 1). The two papers they provided served as the basis of discussion for this topic.

28. Both papers were concerned with regional statistics and the calculation of macro-economic indicators, especially GDP per capita at the regional level. There is need for such indicators in all transition countries and those countries which are applying for membership in the EU are under some pressure to compile them as soon as possible.

29. Regional GDP may be calculated using either: the "top-down method" in which GDP for the country as a whole is distributed among regions using various indicators, such as employment by region; or the "bottom-up method" in which the regional figures are estimated directly from detailed statistics compiled at the regional level. For the moment the Czech Republic relies mainly on the top-down method but plans to use the bottom-up method from 2000 onwards while Hungary has been using a mixture of both methods. The results for the Czech Republic show that the per capita GDP for Prague is much higher than in the surrounding regions and this reflects the concentration of service industries in the capital with other regions more dependent on industry and agriculture.

30. In the discussion, it was recognised that even small countries like Estonia needed to produce regional statistics, but that this was difficult because there are problems to find indicators to disaggregate GDP by regions.

31. The delegate of the Netherlands pointed out that GDP per capita sometimes yields surprising or unexpected results. He cited the example of one region in his country that has a very high GDP per capita because of natural gas without this leading to correspondingly high incomes for the residents of that region. He suggested that disposable household income may sometimes give very different results and be a better indicator of the prosperity of a region.

32. The Chairman concluded the discussion by reminding participants that transition countries must remain a high priority for the Conference. Their economic circumstances can be very different, but there are now encouraging signs of economic growth in many transition countries. He noted that it is also important to monitor the effectiveness of technical assistance. In this context, the delegate of the Netherlands reminded the Conference that comments would be welcome on the draft guidelines on good practices for technical cooperation in statistics which the Netherlands and the United Kingdom had prepared with the assistance of experts from a number of other countries.

d) Preparations for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses
(Documentation: CES/1998/13)

33. Mr. C. Malaguerra and Mr. W. Haug of the Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland contributed Paper CES/1998/13 which served as the basis for discussion on this subject. Several speakers noted that paper CES/1998/26 that the Central Statistical Service of the Republic of South Africa had prepared as a contribution to agenda item 5 (Relations between Statistical Offices and Governments) was also very relevant to this subject. Ms. K. Wallman of the United States served as Discussant.

34. There was agreement among delegates: that censuses were absolutely crucial as a basis of most forms of economic, social and demographic statistical data; that in most countries there is so far no feasible alternative to censuses as a source of data; and that in spite of relatively small contributions from the international community by way of training and minor equipment, the burden of the cost of the census is borne by national governments.

35. The cost of conventional censuses is large. Although the benefits greatly exceed the cost (and the costs may be spread over a considerable period of time), the benefits are often intangible and difficult to identify.

36. There was agreement, therefore, that for reasons of high cost and for other reasons (for example under-reporting of certain groups), possible alternatives are being sought and evaluated.

37. The use of population registers combined with sample surveys (as in the Nordic states) and in some cases with imputation, was frequently mentioned as a potential alternative. It was clear however that in the majority of countries where registers are not well established or may be incomplete in terms of coverage of certain crucial groups, much further research and testing are required.

38. Nonetheless, some member states of the Conference are now committed to conducting research into possible alternatives to traditional forms of the census as part of a strategy of change.

39. It was also agreed that for all censuses the public (broadly defined to include the media, political circles and the like) should be fully informed. Public suspicion of the possible impingement of censuses on privacy need to be overcome in some countries, whereas almost the opposite is the case in others. For example, large sections of previously excluded groups of population in South Africa were anxious to be fully included in census operations and in subsequent applications of the data for the first time.

40. The need for close international cooperation was mentioned for example in relation to data on migrants, but also in the exchange of technical information among NSOs. Delegates from the ESCAP region asked to be kept informed of new technical developments in Europe.

e) Education and training statistics (Documentation: CES/1998/14)

41. Mr. G. Nascimento of UNESCO contributed the paper (CES/1998/14) which served as the basis of discussion for this topic. Mr. Longva of Statistics Norway served as Discussant. Mr. Nascimento explained that the present Division of Statistics at UNESCO would soon be replaced by a newly formed UNESCO Institute of Statistics. He noted the stages that had led to this development and its implementation.

42. Speakers urged coordination of the work of the new Institute with that of other international organisations, and notably with OECD and EUROSTAT in the European context. They further asked that in data selection and compilation the differences be respected between the requirements of Europe and other regions, that compilation of data be supplemented with work of a conceptual and analytic nature, and that as part of conceptual work the relation of education to other sectors, such as employment or, simply, good citizenship be examined.

f) Other programme elements in the integrated presentation

(i) Programme Activity 1: Organization and operation of statistical services (Documentation: CES/1998/10/Add.1)

43. The Conference approved the comments of the Bureau on work done in 1997/98 and on ongoing activities in this programme activity.

44. Subject to the qualifications specified below the Conference accepted the Bureau's recommendations for decisions on the planned activities in the programme elements in this programme activity (see CES/1998/34/Add.1).

P.E. (Programme Element) 1.2: Managerial and policy issues of direct concern for presidents of national statistical offices

45. The Conference selected the topic "Performance indicators for statistical offices" as the topic for substantive discussion for the 1999 plenary session. At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Tim Holt (United Kingdom) agreed to organize and chair the session.

46. The Conference accepted the invitation of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office to convene its 1999 plenary session in Neuchatel, Switzerland, as a one-time exception to the current practice of holding the plenary sessions in alternate years in Geneva and at the OECD in Paris. The delegation of Switzerland thanked the Conference for accepting its invitation.

(ii) Programme Activity 2: Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues (Documentation: CES/1998/10/Add.2, CES/1998/10/Add.7 and CES/1998/32)

47. The Conference approved the comments of the Bureau on work done in 1997/98 and on ongoing activities in this programme activity.

48. Subject to the qualifications specified below the Conference accepted the Bureau's recommendations for decisions on the planned activities in the programme elements in this programme activity (see CES/1998/34/Add.2).

PE 2.3: Dissemination and interchange of statistics information

49. The Conference thanked Statistics Norway for preparing, with the assistance of a Group of Experts from Canada, the United States, Eurostat, OECD, EFTA, and the UNSD and ECE secretariats, draft "Guidelines for Statistical Metadata on the Internet" (CES/1998/32); and encouraged NSOs of ECE and other interested countries to experiment in using them in the course of the next year or two and to inform Statistics Norway on the results achieved in using them.

50. The Conference noted that IMF is preparing new proposals for the Special Data Dissemination Standards (SDDS) so as to strengthen the SDDS specifications on data coverage in selected areas. It agreed that the Bureau should consider how these standards could be more integrated into the practice of National Statistical Offices.

PE 2.4: Statistical classifications

51. The Conference changed the title of this programme element from what it was previously called (Industry, commodity and occupation classifications) to "Statistical classifications".

52. The Conference noted that the final draft versions of the functional classifications COICOP, COPNI and COFOG are being circulated and will be submitted to the Statistical Commission in March 1999.

(iii) Programme Activity 3: Economic statistics (Documentation:
CES/1998/10/Add.3 and CES/1998/10/Add.7)

53. The Conference approved the comments of the Bureau on work done in 1997/98 and on ongoing activities in this programme activity.

54. Subject to the qualifications specified below the Conference accepted the Bureau's recommendations for decisions on the planned activities in the programme elements in this programme activity (see CES/1998/34/Add.3).

PE 3.6: International trade in services

55. The Conference was informed about the OECD's plan to convene an expert meeting in the coming months to review its draft manual on international trade in services, and to submit the amended draft of the to the UN Statistical Commission in March 1999.

PE 3.9: Price statistics

56. The Conference referred to the work carried out by the Ottawa Group in the area of quality adjustment of price indices.

57. The Conference asked the Bureau to take a closer look at PPPs and their limitations and to review the methodology vis-à-vis its objectives.

58. Eurostat informed the Conference about the proposed new organization of work of the European Comparison Programme (ECP), in which the 29 countries (the European Economic Area, plus EU candidate countries) will be divided into four regional groups. For the calculation of GDP per head on a regional basis (used inter alia as a criterion for regional aid), the possibility of using regional PPPs will be investigated. However, it was recognized that the costs of such an approach are high.

PE 3.11: Industrial statistics

59. The Conference noted that a forthcoming OECD workshop on the management of intangible investments was being planned and organized without sufficient consultation with NSOs. It asked the Bureau to look into this matter in collaboration with the OECD.

PE 3.13: Science and technology statistics

60. Attention of the Conference was drawn to the development of a conceptual framework in the field of science and technology statistics by Statistics Canada that can guide the systematic development of statistical knowledge in this field, and for the setting of priorities. Statistics Canada offered to send a copy of this framework to countries interested in receiving one.

(iv) **Programme Activity 4: Social and demographic statistics** (Documentation:
CES/1998/10/Add.4 and CES/1998/10/Add.7)

61. The Conference approved the comments of the Bureau on work done in 1997/98 and on ongoing activities in this programme activity.

62. Subject to the qualifications specified below the Conference accepted the Bureau's recommendations for decisions on the planned activities in the programme elements in this programme activity (see CES/1998/34/Add.4).

PE 4.1: Social indicators and frameworks

63. The participants called for increased efforts in cooperation and coordination in work carried out by Eurostat and by the Canberra Group on Household Income in the field of poverty indicators.

PE 4.2: Gender Statistics

64. The UN Statistics Division (UNSD) accepted the invitation of the Conference to serve as the Rapporteur for this programme element.

65. The attention of the Conference was also drawn to the recent meeting on monitoring progress towards gender equity which had been held in Ottawa. Statistics Canada offered to circulate proceedings of the meeting to interested NSOs.

PE 4.8: Education and training statistics

66. The participants stressed the importance of having closer coordination in the development of classifications in the field of education statistics by UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat.

PE 4.11: Demographic statistics

67. The Conference accepted the invitation of Hungary to host the December 1998 Regional Population Meeting to be jointly organized by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, ECE/CES and the UNFPA to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and Recommendations of the 1993 European Population Conference. The Conference noted that this meeting was intended to be an intergovernmental technical one that would be attended by government representatives including statisticians, population experts and other specialists.

(v) **Programme Activity 5: Environment statistics** (Documentation:
CES/1998/10/Add.5)

68. The Conference approved the comments of the Bureau on work done in 1997/98 and on ongoing activities in this programme activity.

69. The Conference accepted the Bureau's recommendations for decisions on the planned activities in the programme elements in this programme activity (see CES/1998/34/Add.5).

(vi) Programme Activity 6: Dissemination and support for Secretariat activities (Documentation: CES/1998/10/Add.6)

70. The Conference approved the comments of the Bureau on work done in 1997/98 and on ongoing activities in this programme activity.

71. Subject to the qualifications specified below the Conference accepted the Bureau's recommendations for decisions on the planned activities in the programme elements in this programme activity (see CES/1998/34/Add.6).

72. In order to minimize the response burden on countries, it was agreed that international organizations should obtain data that they need, whenever possible, from data sets that NSOs make available on the Internet. The Conference noted that in order to access the data in this way from all ECE member countries, international organizations need the permission of NSOs to obtain without charge data which is sometimes made available to the public only for payment. The ECE secretariat thanked those countries which have already agreed to provide it with access to this type of information free of charge.

g) Approved programme of work of the Conference, 1998/99 and 1999/2000

73. The approved programme of work of the Conference for 1998/99 and 1999/2000 is shown in CES/1998/34 and Adda. 1-6, which also constitutes Annex I of ECE/CES/54. It also approved the calendar of meetings planned for these two years (see Annex III of ECE/CES/54).

h) Prioritisation in the CES work programme (Documentation: CES/1998/9 and CES/1998/15)

Documentation: CES/1998/9

74. The Conference noted that the approach that the Bureau had recommended that the Conference take in prioritising its work programme (see CES/1998/9) appears to be generally aligned with the Guidelines for the prioritisation of the work of the PSBs that the Commission had approved at its April 1998 session. Therefore, it approved the Bureau's proposals for priority ranking of its programme elements shown in CES/1998/9.

75. However, in view of the outcome of the discussion on the Guidelines that took place at the Commission session, the Conference asked the Bureau of the Conference to look more closely into this matter at its autumn 1998 meeting, in the light of the stipulations called for both in the Plan of Action and in the decision taken by the Commission concerning this matter at its April 1998 session, particularly with reference to subparagraphs (d) and (e) of para. 6 of CES/1998/15.

IV. JOINT DATA COLLECTION BY ECE, EUROSTAT, OECD AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Documentation: CES/1998/17

76. The Conference considered the report on joint data collection and noted the importance of avoiding overlap and redundancy. The Conference asked all international agencies to continue to work together in the interests of their own efficiency, to minimise the collection burden on national statistical offices and to report again on progress at the next plenary session.

V. RELATIONS BETWEEN STATISTICAL OFFICES AND GOVERNMENTS

Documentation: CES/1998/18 - 31 and 33

Introduction:

77. The session was organized and chaired by Mr. Hallgrimur Snorrason, Iceland, who had chosen four themes to cover the topic of this year's seminar:

- The relationship between governments and NSOs valued in terms of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
- Constraints caused by the administrative use of statistics;
- The role of international agencies, heads of national statistical offices and the community of official statisticians in promoting and monitoring good practices at the national level; and
- International statistical agencies and the Fundamental Principles

78. All these themes were covered in the following five invited papers:

- Relations between statistical offices and governments: the implications for statistics of administrative use and needs, by Mr. Henning Christophersen (Consultant to Eurostat) (CES/1998/18);
- The relationship between government and the national statistical institute, by Mr. Tadeusz Toczyński (Poland) (CES/1998/19);
- The Fundamental Principles and the impact of using statistics for administrative purposes, by Mr. Tim Holt (United Kingdom) (CES/1998/20);
- The relationship between government and the national statistical institute: fostering the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, by Ms Carol Carson (IMF) (CES/1998/21);
- International principles governing official statistics at the national level: are they relevant for the statistical work of the international organisations as well?, by Messrs. Heinrich Brüngger (Switzerland) and Svein Longva (Norway) (CES/1998/22).

In addition, nine countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Finland, France, Hungary, Slovenia, South Africa, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, contributed supporting papers which served as an additional basis of discussion, and they threw additional light on the often complex relationship. The invited papers were presented by their author while the supporting papers were introduced by the session organizer, Mr. Snorrason.

I. Relationship between governments and NSOs valued in terms of the Fundamental Principles

79. The keynote speaker, Mr. Christophersen, talked about the complex relationship which exists between statistical offices and the government and gave illustrations of how difficult it can be to combine political needs with the independence and professional freedom of a statistical service. Because part of the work of a statistical office serves a political purpose, even definitions, nomenclatures and methodologies sometimes have to be adjusted to meet policy requirements. He concluded, however, that in spite of these well-known constraints it was still possible for statistical offices to maintain professional independence and public credibility.

80. Mr. Christophersen considered that the statistical services of every country should be an independent administrative body that is outside direct control of the government. The independence should be enshrined in the national statistical legislation and safeguarded the same way as the independence of the judicial system and the central bank. He proposed that one way of resisting political pressure would be to have heads of the national statistical offices appointed by the government for an unrenovable term of 8-10 years. The achievement and maintenance of the status of a statistical office is dependent on the professional quality of its products and on the integrity of its management, both of which he felt could be strengthened by having regular evaluations by a scientific council of the office's work programme. He also discussed the need for financial independence of statistical offices and suggested that in order to ensure independence and stability regular appropriations to the statistical office might be fixed in relation to some independent aggregate, such as GDP or total budget outlays. Finally, to further ensure the independence of statistical services, in case of dispute with the government, they should be able to settle their dispute in the judiciary system.

81. Mr. Toczyński addressed the same theme, but from the viewpoint of a country undergoing social, political and economic transition. Among the questions he raised was whether their statistical laws are able to provide sufficient support for official statistics to allow them to provide objective and reliable information, respect data confidentiality and give all users equal access simultaneously to all users as required by the law. He also discussed the major hazards and preconditions which underlie the transformation of statistics in transition countries and described the social context, notably the statistical education which is needed and the creation of a category of professional statisticians as opposed to government statisticians. In his conclusions, he queried whether countries which are in a period of social and economic transition can be expected to implement the full scope of the *Fundamental Principles*. He therefore proposed that it may be useful to make them operational at particular stages of statistical development and that outside assistance should be given to these countries in transforming their official statistics so that they fully become part of the democratic information system.

82. In introducing the supporting papers, the chairperson mentioned that many of the papers from the newly independent countries described their new

statistical independence and in doing so stressed the importance of the statistical laws which had been introduced as a result of their statistical reform process. He concluded though that despite such legislation and all the hard work to reform, the overall picture could be illusionary and that the practical reality could still be lagging behind.

83. A vivid discussion on what constituted independence for a statistical office followed and there was general agreement that the legislative dimension was far from being sufficient. Other essential pillars were "externalisation/transparency" of the statistical process, including the ways it is practised; "standing" in form of scientific and personal integrity of the head and the service; and finally the "administrative arrangement" and environment the office operates under.

84. These were seen as the four main pillars from which a statistical office draws its authority and independence. It was further mentioned that "independence" is more a cultural arrangement than a legalistic one and that it is something one needs to continually work at and earn. It was also recognized that to achieve absolute credibility, a statistical office needs to release data simultaneously to government and the public according to a pre-published schedule.

85. At the same time, it was generally accepted that the independence of statistical offices is not absolute. Every office operates within an administrative arrangement which is culturally dependent and every office is constrained by political and legislative considerations. Moreover, as it was pointed out with government being the main statistical client as well as having influence on the financial resources of the statistical office, some agreement has to be worked out which can be accepted by both sides.

86. The greater importance of the legal status for countries which have not historically been democracies was discussed. It was said that the low image of the civil service in some transition countries have forced them to depend more than other countries on having a legal framework to operate within. Everyone is dependent on the circumstances they live under and, as the UK representative reminded the meeting, once the office is in system which functions well and everyone works within it, there seems to be no need of having it anymore.

87. From what was said in the discussion, it can be concluded that the independence of statistical services may be enshrined in the national statistical legislation, but that it also is culturally related and that practical independence has more dimensions to it which are earned through hard work, integrity, transparency and accountability.

II. Constraints caused by the administrative use of statistics

88. The impact of using statistics for administrative purposes was particularly discussed in Mr. Holt's paper. In presenting his paper, Mr. Holt reminded the meeting that governments use statistics in two main ways: (i) to inform, monitor and evaluate public policy and, (ii) the direct use of

statistics for administrative purposes. He emphasized that while it was up to the policy makers to decide on how to use the statistics, it was the role of the statistical office to ensure that the statistics provided were of impartial and high quality. Unfortunately, the public does not always distinguish between the two processes and the statistical output is often seen as the direct cause of the policy action. Hence, when the public is disenchanted with a particular administrative process, the statisticians, as producers of the data, are often criticized.

89. Several other speakers noted the administrative use of statistics and mentioned examples of uses such as the use of population statistics for allocation of resources between regions, electoral boundaries, economic convergence criteria for entering the EMU, price indices for pensions, etc. Although the administrative use of statistics need not always give rise to tension, it was observed that because of the political impact of these type of statistics, the temptation for interference is higher and the statistical office needs to draw heavily on factors strengthening their statistical integrity and pay even more attention than usual to the quality of the data they produce. Therefore, when compiling such statistics, statistical offices should try to externalise any problem encountered and endeavour to engage users, experts and the statistical community as much as possible. Special reference was made to the CPI because of the high political interest concerned with its use. It was agreed that international collaboration and support among CPI statisticians could help maintain the statistical integrity of national consumer price indices in case of political interference.

90. The discussion also underlined that the administrative use of statistics can give rise to difficult borderlines between what affects the individual and what is for the public good. For example, with the aim of promoting greater public accountability and educational choice school league tables are produced in the UK which identify individual institutions. This would normally not be an acceptable use of confidential administrative data, but in this case the tables were prepared with the agreement of the schools for the benefit of the public.

III. The role of international agencies, heads of NSOs and the community of official statisticians in promoting and monitoring good practices at the national level

91. No one disputed that the *Fundamental Principles*, which the Conference of European Statisticians adopted in 1991, are still valid and up-to-date, but the discussion revealed that some felt that it would be useful to make them more operational and to transform the ideals into institutional realities. Perhaps, as it was suggested by Mr. Toczyński, they should also be adapted to different stages of development and some monitoring mechanism should be worked out for them.

92. In presenting her paper, Ms Carson of the IMF, thought it important that the fostering of the *Fundamental Principles* be done in a global context and all producers of statistics be included, not only national statistical offices. This view was supported by many speakers. As examples of their use by various international bodies she mentioned Eurostat's Basic Regulation,

IMF's data dissemination standards and OECD's use of the Fundamental Principles to assess the statistical systems of countries applying for membership.

93. Ms Carson also made a number of proposals for how the principles could be promoted. The suggestion of creating an Internet-based Fundamental Principles Reference Site received a lot of support. Currently meetings are the only vehicles for offices to share experiences, whereas an Internet site would be globally accessible for everyone working in statistics. United Nations Statistical Division came out as a strong supporter of this and wanted as many countries as well as regional commissions involved in the discussion of what are good practices. The meeting was reminded that a similar process had been used for the Guidelines on Technical Cooperation. It was further suggested that this Internet site should be linked to the World Electronic Statistical Platform (WESP) currently being set-up by the UNSD and that it should be managed by the UN/ECE.

94. The Irish representative informed the meeting that although they had practised the individual principles for close to half a century, they were not complacent about them and had distributed the *Fundamental Principles* widely in the office as well as putting them on their Web site. They are also published in some of their publications in an Annex.

95. There was agreement, though, that it was not sufficient to publicise the principles for statisticians. Ministries, politicians, central banks and others concerned with statistics need to be even more informed and convinced of the importance of statistical integrity.

96. Another proposal made by Ms. Carson concerned the monitoring of how the principles were practised at the national level. A process leading to accrediting national offices was outlined. The process was similar to the peer review system used in a several ECE countries for the accreditation of universities and other educational institutions.

IV. International statistical agencies and the Fundamental Principles

97. The topic of whether the Fundamental Principles are relevant for the statistical work of international organisations was discussed in the paper by Brüngger and Longva. Mr. Brüngger told the meeting that although international organisations do not usually collect personal data, confidential information of another type is still sometimes collected for the work of the secretariat and the collective product is only released with the agreement of countries. Moreover, due to the substantial amount of value added to some data, it is arguable whether certain international organisation can be considered as mere re-disseminators of national figures rather than as producers of data. It is also a fact that there is a growing demand for internationally comparable data for decision making, and therefore the products of international organisations have a far greater impact today than when they started their work.

98. Mr. Brüngger further pointed out that if the production and dissemination process of international comparable statistics increasingly will be seen as a separate product line, which national and international actors contribute to, then clearly, there ought to be an overall quality and credibility label attached to such products. Consequently, national and international actors have to adhere to the same basic principles as regards quality and integrity, which is not currently always the case.

99. In concluding, he argued that the operational framework of the national and international organisations needs to be brought closer together. He therefore made some practical proposals to move this forward and pointed out the risk of taking no action, which, he said, would be the disappearance of the notion of "official statistics" and statistical compartmentalisation at the international level.

100. The meeting recognized that the paper raised several fundamental questions which deserved to be answered but which could not be given justice in the remaining time.

101. Mr. Habermann pointed out that data collection, production and dissemination are only one part of the work of an international statistical office. The statistical improvement work that is done is as important and, moreover, is an activity which can only be done by international offices.

102. Illustrating it with an example of how several international agencies had entered the local debate about the quality of statistical indicators in South Africa, Mr. Orkin suggested that considerations of statistical accountability, transparency and professionalism - as embodied in the Fundamental Principles - should also be developed for activities of the international organisations. This would ensure the separation of responsibilities for description and analysis from the policy activities they undertake. He therefore suggested that a consultative process in the international statistical community, similar to that which yielded the Fundamental Principles, should be undertaken and that it might yield some additional principles concerning the international organisations.

103. In concluding the discussion, Mr. Snorrason reminded the meeting that at the beginning when the Fundamental Principles were drafted, they were mainly seen as being for the newly independent countries. This attitude, he said, had changed as it has become apparent that the *Fundamental Principles* have fostered a common understanding and raised consciousness, even in the well-established countries, about the importance of statistical integrity, transparency and independence. There was general recognition that the Fundamental Principles had been much more valuable than could have been foreseen back in 1991.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

104. The Conference noted that the discussion which it had had in the seminar portion of the plenary session on the topic "Relations between Statistical Offices and Governments" dealt with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and in particular with such issues as integrity,

professionalism and competence that affect both national and international statistical services. It was the sense of the Conference that a critical determinant of the professional integrity of international statistical organizations - and indirectly of the international statistical system - is the professional competence of the heads and of the staff of these organizations. The Conference therefore asked the Bureau to communicate to the Executive Secretary of the ECE the importance that the Conference attaches to the professional competence of the Director and staff of the ECE Statistical Division, and to the process which is used to appoint them. The Conference also asked the Bureau to communicate the same views - in the name of OECD member countries participating in the 1998 plenary session of the Conference - to the Secretary General of the OECD with respect to the Director and staff of the Statistics Directorate of the OECD.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

105. The Conference adopted the report of the plenary session at its closing session, on 20 May 1998.

ANNEX I

INTEGRATED PRESENTATION OF PROGRAMMES OF INTERNATIONAL
STATISTICAL WORK IN THE ECE REGION, 1998/99 AND 1999/2000

Note

The Integrated Presentation of the statistical work programmes of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the European Communities (EC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other international organizations working in the ECE region is presented in documents CES/1998/34 and Addenda 1-6, as indicated below. The Integrated Presentation shown in these documents, which collectively constitute Annex I of the report of the plenary session, is too large to issue as part of this report or as a single document.

CES/1998/34: Programmes of international statistical work in the UN/ECE region, 1998/99 and 1999/2000: An Integrated Presentation - Introduction and overview

CES/1998/34/Add.1: Programme Activity 1: Organization and operation of statistical services

CES/1998/34/Add.2: Programme Activity 2: Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues

CES/1998/34/Add.3: Programme Activity 3: Economic statistics

CES/1998/34/Add.4: Programme Activity 4: Social and demographic statistics

CES/1998/34/Add.5: Programme Activity 5: Environment statistics

CES/1998/34/Add.6: Programme Activity 6: Dissemination and support for secretariat activities.

ANNEX II

Priority Menu of the CES for 1998/99 and 1999/2000

a) Mid-May 1998 - June 1999

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS PRIORITY MENU FOR 1998/1999			
Programme element	Substantive action required of the ECE secretariat	Major coordination required	Output for the plenary session 1999
1.1 Promotion and coordination of multilateral statistical work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of integrated presentation of international statistical work programmes - Various intersecretariat working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, World Bank, Specialized Agencies, etc. - various organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Integrated presentation
1.2 Managerial and policy issues of direct concern to presidents of national statistical offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of CES plenary session - Organization of substantive discussion - Organization of Bureau meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All international agencies active in the region - - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, World Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CES Annual Report - Discussion papers - Bureau's reports; minutes of meetings
1.3 Transition countries in the ECE region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking full account of the needs of countries in transition in the CES work programme, provision of guidance and advice to transition countries by the Regional Adviser - Participate in inter-agency coordination activities - To manage, as the executing agency, the UNDP and UNFPA regional projects for the development of social and demographic statistics in transition countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, World Bank, ILO, etc. - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, IWG.COORD, CIS - UNDP, Eurostat, UNSD, CIS-STAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress report, when required - Progress reports, when required - Progress report, when required
1.4 Relations with countries outside the ECE region (including in the Mediterranean region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation and provision of relevant CES documents to the Statistical Commission, UNSD and the Regional Commissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSD, Regional Commissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress reports, when required
2.1 Management of information technology infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of ISIS'98 - Organization of the Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Technology - Organization of the ECE/Eurostat work session on statistical confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EUROSTAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report - Report - Conclusions of the work session
2.2 Statistical data collection and processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of methodological materials and publication on statistical data editing - Organization of the work session on statistical data editing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methodological materials and publication - Conclusions of the work session

Programme element	Substantive action required of the ECE secretariat	Major coordination required	Output for the plenary session 1999
2.3 Dissemination and interchange of statistical information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work session on dissemination to inf. Media - Preparation of methodological materials on statistical metadata - Participation in the development of EDISTAT (European Board for EDI Standardization - group EEG6) 	- EUROSTAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report - Methodological materials - Progress report
2.6 Geographical and regional data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of the work session on GIS - Preparation of methodological materials on implementation of GIS 	- EUROSTAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conclusions of the work session - Methodological materials
3.1 National accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparations of an ECE special session for transition countries at the OECD national accounts meeting (25 September 1998) 	- OECD	- Report
3.9 Price statistics, including PPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparations of the ECE-Eurostat-OECD-ACSO Consultation on the European Comparison Programme within Group II (3-5 June 1998) - Preparation of the ECE-ILO Work Session on Consumer Price Statistics (11-12 February 1999) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACSO, Eurostat, OECD - ILO, Eurostat, Ottawa Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report - Report
3.10 Agricultural statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preparations of the ECE-Eurostat-FAO-OECD Seminar on agricultural statistics for CIS (St. Petersburg, (29 June-3 July 1998) -Preparations of the ECE-Eurostat-FAO-OECD meeting on Food and Agricultural Statistics (23-25 June 1999) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -IWG.AGRI - IWG.AGRI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report - Report
3.14 Business registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preparations of the ECE-Eurostat work session on business registers (June 1999) 	-Eurostat	- Report
4.4 Registers and administrative records in social and demographic statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the ECE -Eurostat joint work session 	Eurostat	- Report
4.5 Population and housing censuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the ECE-Eurostat joint work session 	- Eurostat	- Report
4.6 Health statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the work session (jointly with WHO/Europe) 	- WHO and WHO/Europe	- Report
4.11 Demographic statistics (including projections, migration and fertility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of the annual migration matrices - Preparation of the work session on projections (jointly with Eurostat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurostat, UNSD - Eurostat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matrices - Report

Programme element	Substantive action required of the ECE secretariat	Major coordination required	Output for the plenary session 1999
5.1 Sectorial concepts, definitions and classifications	- Organization of the joint ECE/Eurostat work session on methodological issues of environment statistics	- Eurostat	- Report
6.1 Coordination of international data collection	- Annual collection in the field of energy. - Preparation of Trends in Europe and North America (the UN/ECE Statistical Yearbook) - Preparation of the UN/ECE Statistical Journal	- Eurostat, OECD/IEA as required - UNSD -	- - Annual publication - 4 issues of Statistical Journal per year
6.2 Other statistically-related activities of the ECE secretariat	- Preparation of statistical tables and analysis as required - Collection of macroeconomic data from transition countries - Maintenance of the database on macroeconomic statistics for transition countries	- Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, CIS STAT, other ECE PSBs - OECD, ILO, IMF, UNIDO, UNSD, CIS STAT -	- Progress report (to the CES Bureau) - Progress report (to the CES Bureau) -

b) July 1999 - June 2000

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS PRIORITY MENU FOR 1999/2000			
Programme element	Substantive action required of the ECE secretariat	Major coordination required	Output for the plenary session 2000
1.1 Promotion and coordination of multilateral statistical work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of integrated presentation of international statistical work programmes - Participation in various intersecretariat working group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, World Bank, Specialized Agencies, etc. - Various organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Integrated presentation
1.2 Managerial and policy issues of direct concern to presidents of national statistical offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of CES plenary session - Organization of substantive discussion - Organization of Bureau meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All international agencies active in the region - - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, World Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CES Annual Report - Discussion papers - Bureau's reports; minutes of meetings
1.3 Transition countries in the ECE region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking full account of the needs of countries in transition in the CES work programme, provision of guidance and advice to transition countries by the Regional Adviser - Participate in inter-agency coordination activities - To manage, as the executing agency, the UNDP and UNFPA regional projects for the development of social and demographic statistics in transition countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, World Bank, ILO, etc. - Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, IMF, IWG.COORD, CIS - UNDP, Eurostat, UNSD, CIS-STAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress report, when required - Progress reports, when required - Progress report, when required
1.4 Relations with countries outside the ECE region (including in the Mediterranean region)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation and provision of relevant CES documents to the Statistical Commission, UNSD and the Regional Commissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSD, Regional Commissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress reports, when required
2.1 Management of statistical information technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of ISIS 2000 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report
2.2 Statistical data collection and processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of methodological materials and publication on statistical data editing - Organization of the work session on statistical metadata 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methodological materials and publication - Conclusions of the work session
2.3 Dissemination and interchange of statistical information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of the work session on statistical output for dissemination to information media - Participation in the development of EDISTAT (European Board for EDI Standardization - group EEG6) - Organization of the work session on statistical metadata 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EUROSTAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conclusion of the work session - Progress report - Conclusions of the work session
2.6 Geographical and regional data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of the work session on GIS - Preparation of methodological materials on implementation of GIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EUROSTAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conclusions of the work session - Methodological materials
Programme element	Substantive action required of the ECE secretariat	Major coordination required	Output for the plenary session 2000

3.9 Price statistics, including PPP	-Preparations of the ECE-ILO meeting on consumer price statistics (3-5 November 1999)	-ILO	- Report
3.12 Energy statistics	-Preparation of the ECE-Eurostat-OECD/IEA meeting of the energy statistics Working Group (November 1999)	- IWG.EN	- Report
3.14 Business registers	-Preparations of the ECE-Eurostat work session on statistical units in business registers (June 2000)	- Eurostat	- Report
4.2 Gender statistics	- Preparation of the work session (jointly with INSTRAW and UNSD)	- INSTRAW and UNSD	- Report
4.9 Culture statistics	- Preparation of the work session (jointly with Eurostat and UNESCO)	- UNESCO, Eurostat	- Report
4.11 Demographic statistics (projections, migration and fertility)	- Preparation of the annual migration matrices	- Eurostat, UNSD	- Matrices
5.1 Sectorial concepts, definitions and classifications	- Organization of the joint ECE/Eurostat work session on methodological issues of environment statistics	- Eurostat	- Report
6.1 Coordination of international data collection	- Annual collections in the field of energy. - Preparation of Trends in Europe and North America (the UN/ECE Statistical Yearbook) - Preparation of the UN/ECE Statistical Journal	- Eurostat, OECD/IEA as required - UNSD -	- - Annual publication - 4 issues of Statistical Journal per year
6.2 Other statistically-related activities of the ECE secretariat	- Preparation of statistical tables and analysis as required - Collection of macroeconomic data from transition countries - Maintenance of the database on macroeconomic statistics for transition countries	- Eurostat, OECD, UNSD, CIS STAT, other ECE PSBs - OECD, ILO, IMF, UNIDO, UNSD, CIS STAT -	- Progress report (to the CES Bureau) - Progress report (to the CES Bureau)

c) Projects inactive in 1998/99 and 1999/2000

**Work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians
Projects that will be inactive in 1998/99 and 1999/2000**

- 2.4 Statistical classifications
- 2.5 Statistical research and development
- 2.7 Human resource development

- 3.2 Money and banking, government finance, and balance of payments
- 3.3 International trade in goods
- 3.4 Transport statistics
- 3.5 Distributive trade
- 3.6 International trade in services
- 3.7 Tourism
- 3.8 Other marketed services and non-marketed services
- 3.11 Industrial statistics
- 3.13 Science and technology statistics

- 4.1 Social indicators and frameworks
- 4.3 Multi-purpose social surveys
- 4.7 Crime and criminal justice statistics
- 4.8 Education and training statistics
- 4.10 Labour statistics
- 4.12 Human settlements and housing statistics
- 4.13 Statistics of household income and expenditures, of the welfare of the population, and the poverty income statistics
- 4.14 Statistics on population groups of special interest

- 5.2 Environmental accounting
- 5.3 Environmental database and reporting

ANNEX III

CES CALENDAR OF MEETINGS, 1998/99 and 1999/2000

1998/99*

Programme Element	Meeting	Date of meeting
2.1	ISIS'98 (Geneva, Switzerland)	27-29 May 1998
3.9	ECE-Eurostat-OECD and Austrian CSO Joint Consultation on the ECP within Group II (Vienna)	3-5 June 1998
2.3	Work session on statistical output for dissemination to the information media (Cork, Ireland)	22-25 June 1998
3.10	ECE-Eurostat-FAO-OECD seminar on agricultural statistics for Central and East European countries (St. Petersburg)	29 June-3 July 1998
5.1	ECE-Eurostat work session on methodological issues of environment statistics (Wiesbaden, Germany)	14-17 September 1998
3.1	ECE's special session for transition countries at the OECD meeting on national accounts (Paris)	25 September 1998
2.6	Work session on GIS (Ottawa, Canada)	5-7 October 1998
4.6	ECE-WHO/Europe meeting on health statistics (Rome)	14-16 October 1998
1.2	CES Bureau Meeting (Rome)	2-3 November 1998
4.5	ECE-Eurostat work session on population and housing censuses (Dublin)	9-11 November 1998
4.11	ECE(PAU)-UNFPA regional population meeting (Budapest)	7-9 December 1998
4.11	ECE-Eurostat work session on demographic projections (Italy)	18-21 January 1999
3.9	ECE-ILO work session on consumer price statistics	11 (p.m.)-12 February 1999
1.2	CES Bureau Meeting	February 1999
2.1	Meeting on the management of statistics information technology	15-17 February 1999
4.11	ECE-Eurostat work session on registers and administrative records in social and demographic statistics	1-3 March 1999
2.1	ECE-Eurostat work session on statistical confidentiality (Thessaloniki, Greece)	8-10 March 1999
2.3	Work session on statistical output for dissemination to the information media	17-19 May 1999
2.2	Work session on statistical data editing (Rome)	2-4 June 1999
3.14	ECE-Eurostat work session on business registers (Luxembourg)	early June 1999
1.2	47th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Neuchatel, Switzerland)	14-16 June 1999

* Note: **Meetings shown in bold letters** are ones for which documentation for the meeting is usually translated and where there will generally be English, French and/or Russian interpretation available at the meeting.

1999/2000*

Programme Element	Meeting	Date of meeting
3.10	ECE-Eurostat-FAO-OECD meeting on food and agricultural statistics in Europe	23-25 June 1999
2.3	Work session on statistical metadata	29 September - 1 October 1999
1.2	CES Bureau meeting	Autumn 1999
3.12	ECE-Eurostat-OECD(IEA) meeting on energy statistics	18-19 November 1999
5.1	ECE-Eurostat work session on methodological issues in environment statistics (Jerusalem, Israel)	11-14 October 1999
3.9	ECE-ILO meeting on consumer price indices	3-5 November 1999
4.9	ECE-Eurostat-UNESCO work session on cultural statistics	15-17 November 1999
1.2	CES Bureau meeting	Spring, 2000
4.2	ECE-INSTRAW work session on gender statistics	22-24 May 2000
2.1	Seminar on integrated statistical information systems (ISIS 2000)	29-31 May 2000
3.14	ECE-Eurostat work session on business registers	8-9 June 2000
1.2	48th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians	12-14 June 2000
2.6	Work session on GIS	16-20 February 2000

* Note: **Meetings shown in bold letters** are ones for which documentation for the meeting is usually translated and where there will generally be English, French and/or Russian interpretation available at the meeting.