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(Geneva, 11-13 June 2001)

**PROGRAMMES OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL
WORK IN THE ECE REGION, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003:
AN INTEGRATED PRESENTATION**

(Post-plenary session version)

**PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 2
TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

Introduction

1. The material presented in this document is part of the "Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work" which provides a summary overview of the statistically-related work that international organisations plan to carry out in the next two years that is likely to have an impact on ECE, EU and OECD countries. Information on the Integrated Presentation is presented by work area in six different addenda. The Integrated Presentation in its entirety consists of the following documents:

The Integrated Presentation: Introduction and overview (CES/2001/34)

Programme Activity 1: Organisation and Operation of statistical services (CES/2001/34/Add.1)

Programme Activity 2: Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues
(CES/2001/34/Add.2)

Programme Activity 3: Economic statistics (CES/2001/34/Add.3)

Programme Activity 4: Social and demographic statistics (CES/2001/34/Add.4)

Programme Activity 5: Environment statistics (CES/2001/34/Add.5)

Programme Activity 6: Dissemination and support for secretariat activities
(CES/2001/34/Add.6)

2. This version of the Integrated Presentation was prepared as the post-plenary session version of the Integrated Presentation and it contains the decisions that the Conference took in each work area

during the plenary session. The Conference uses the Integrated Presentation as an aid in carrying out its primary role of co-ordinating the international statistical work that is planned to be carried out in the next two years that is of relevance to ECE, EU and OECD countries. The Integrated Presentation is also used as a valuable tool for co-ordination at the national level, for countries are increasingly using it to assist them in deciding on their participation in different meetings convened by the various international organisations.

3. The information presented in this addendum refers to work area or “Programme Activity” 2 of the Integrated Presentation which is entitled “Technical infrastructure and other cross-cutting issues”, and that is sub-divided into eight “programme elements (PE) ” or fields of work.

2.1 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Problem Statement: To assist the managers of information technology in the smooth transfer of technology under the rapid changes in information and communication technologies (ICT), including: the development and implementation of pertinent strategies and policies for collection, processing of national statistics and their dissemination, especially via Internet; methods and techniques concerning statistical confidentiality; access to microdata; the impact of ICT on the organisation of statistical services and cost-effective management; the choice of appropriate interface standards, the development and implementation of standard tools, concepts, definitions and other meta-information, allowing a better integration of statistics with relevant administration and other national and international information systems; the user-friendly vehicles reflecting easier ways for users to access, search and retrieve statistical data; to define and check projects in fundamental and application R&D in statistics; strategy in training and re-qualification of statistical staff and users. This programme element also covers the IT-related activities in other programme elements of programme activity 2. Initially, emphasis should be placed on the following: re-engineering processes in the collection, processing and dissemination phase of statistical production as a consequence of the rapid proliferation of Internet services in statistical practice. Eurostat and ECB co-operate in the IT development. This holds in particular in the area of standardization of structured statistical messages and their implementation.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: For the ECE: a re-designed architecture for collection, processing and dissemination of statistical data under the rapid development in ICT with emphasis on the integration of data sources and data dissemination on both national and international levels; improved dissemination of official statistics via Internet; increased level of implementation of EDIFACT standards in transition countries.

For Eurostat: agreement on common architectures for statistical information services (production, reference, dissemination); adoption and integration of open-EDI technologies such as common exchange standards for documents, statistical reports, statistical data, classifications and metadata; agreement on common EDI messages and APIs to couple distributed statistical information services (e.g. locating, extracting and downloading relevant statistical data for a specific domain).

For the OECD: Further standardise and integrate statistical work in the Organisation with the view of creating a corporate data warehouse by: (i) creating a dynamic corporate data catalogue and a data dictionary outlining corporate statistical concepts; (ii) developing a metadata driven universal interface to the main statistical databases of the organisation; (iii) further co-ordinating statistical dissemination; and co-ordinating data collection activities across the Organisation and with other international organisations both in terms of content, timing and use of common technology (XML / Gesmes).

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The growing volume of users' demands to be given access to microdata resulting in increased concern about data confidentiality.

- The increased cooperation between NSIs, academia and research in the re-engineering of statistical production caused by rapid development of ICT.
- The recommendation by the ECE/Eurostat Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Technology (Geneva 14-16 February 2001) to develop a Website on best practices in statistical ICT applications and transfer of know-how in this area.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session:

The Conference approved the activities to be undertaken by the Conference in this programme element (See "Activities and Means" below).

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

ECE- EURORSTAT: Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems and related matters (April 2002)

ECE-EUROSTAT: Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Technology (February 2003)

ECE-EUROSTAT Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality (March 2003)

EUROSTAT Working Group: IT Steering Committee, 08-09 October 2001

Eurostat Working Group: IT Steering Committee, once a year in October

Rapporteur: ECE

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE:

- a) Joint ECE/Eurostat Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems and related matters (ISIS'2002) 2001/2002 to consider: (i) Application of web technology to integrate statistics; (ii) Secure communications and data confidentiality; (iii) Object oriented technologies, component architecture; (iv) Ways of making statistical information systems more responsive to users.
- b) Joint ECE/Eurostat Meeting on Management of Statistical Information Technology 2002/2003 to consider: (i) Measures for the improvement of quality on IT management level; (ii) The impact of technical measures and standards on data quality; (iii) Efficient management of increasing technical complexity.
- c) Joint ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality 2002/2003 to consider: (i) Assessment of statistical disclosure limitation methods and software (in conjunction with parallel sub-sessions on different approaches to measurement of disclosure risk and software tools for disclosure of microdata); (ii) Impact of confidentiality on new data release techniques (in conjunction with parallel sub-sessions on confidentiality for small area statistics and software tools for disclosure of tabular data; (iii) Guidelines for studies on respondent perception of confidentiality.
- d) Development of website on best applications of statistical information and communication technologies (2001-2003).
- e) Preparation of methodological material on "Business' Perception of Confidentiality" (2002-2003).

Secretariat resources: Substantial.

Activities of OECD:

Further standardise and integrate statistical work in the Organisation with the view of creating a corporate data warehouse by:

- (i) creating a dynamic corporate data catalogue and a data dictionary outlining corporate statistical concepts;

- (ii) developing a metadata driven universal interface to the main statistical databases of the organisation;
- (iii) further co-ordinating statistical dissemination on the Internet; and
- (iv) co-ordinating data collection activities across the Organisation and with other international organisations both in terms of content, timing and use of common technology (XML / Gesmes).

Activities of Eurostat: (*Themes 13 - Electronic data processing*):

Ongoing methodological work:

In 2001/2002 the measures to improve computer services and electronic data processing will be continued through:

- better definition and management of the services proposed;
- further development of the architecture of the statistical information systems;
- greater consistency and interoperability of the existing systems.
- maintaining the infrastructure and the present level of informatics service.
- continuing the rationalisation of the infrastructure based as far as possible on the services offered by the Commission's central informatics units.

New activities:

Electronic data processing

- Implementing a quality plan in the planning of informatics work, the co-ordination of sub-contracted developments, and management of equipment.
- Continuing the development of the common production environment modules.
- Development of the "metadata" part of the new statistical information systems architecture.
- New organisation of security.
- Implementation of the "e-Commission" (improvement of internal administration, relations with external partners, citizens and business)

Activities of other organizations:

The ILO:

- (i) The ILO statistical databases have been migrated from the UN/ICC mainframe to a server UNIX.
- (ii) Upgrade of the ILO Statistics LAN hardware and software configuration and necessary retraining of staff;
- (iii) Use of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) for the trilingual publications in the Sources & Methods: Labour Statistics series as well as for the reports prepared for meetings.

International Monetary fund (IMF):

- (i) Upgrade of the information technology architecture for data collection, management and dissemination, to increase the efficiency of its systems and to leverage proven technologies such as client/server5 computing, inter-and intranet technology, CD-ROM, browsers, and electronic data interchange (EDI).
- (ii) Encourage member country correspondents to use the GESMES/CB standard UN/EDIFACT message for electronic interchange of monetary, balance of payments, and other statistics from countries in the ECE region.

The World Bank

In 2001, the Development Data Group of the World Bank (Bank) has embarked on a 3-year project to develop a web-based statistical data collection and dissemination system for its own staff and for users in other countries

and institutions. The data delivery will be over the internet using secure protocols. The objective is to build an infrastructure that brings many of the statistical databases in the Bank under a data warehouse. Further, through arrangements with other participating organizations/member countries, data from their respective sources could also be made available to a user's query over the internet, provided the user were to have the necessary privileges to access that data. As a first step, socio-economic, external debt and trade indicators and other related Bank/IDA data will be included in this warehouse.

The proposed system will integrate and streamline time-series data management operations at the Bank, and will establish a comprehensive platform to support the statistical data collection and dissemination functions of the Bank. Also, the software thus developed will be provided to countries to further the goal of statistical capacity building in these countries. The software developed in this project could be installed in these countries for their *own* data retrieval, data maintenance and updating functions, provided they adhere to certain data and software standards.

The project, is planned for completion in 3 years. It will be delivered in stages so that as the system components get developed, these would support the new Bank-wide data initiatives such as the Global Development Gateway and the Global Development Network.

Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States:

Ongoing work: Improving standards for the electronic interchange of statistical data of CIS countries and co-ordinating work on establishing and keeping national registers of business activity in CIS countries.

Continuation of work on improving information technology within the framework of CIS-STAT and gradual replacement of obsolete work stations with more advanced systems; acquisition and installation of network software (operating systems); improvement of software tools for CIS-STAT data collection and storage, and training of staff for work in a distributed data-processing environment.

2.2 STATISTICAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

Problem Statement: To assist statistical agencies in increasing the use of information and communication technologies for statistical data collection; to promote electronic data reporting and technical integration of respondents and statistical systems including the use of electronic data interchange standards; to promote the use and sharing of efficient methodology and software in common collection and processing operations carried out by statistical agencies (e.g. sampling, data entry, editing, coding, estimation), best practices in data editing methods and techniques especially those allowing cost savings are to be identified and made available.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: For the ECE: progressive re-engineering in data collection for statistical surveys caused by the expansion of web services; increased use of electronic data reporting methods and techniques in data collection from enterprises, administration and other sources; better use of EDI standards for statistical data collection; recommendations on the best practices on the evaluation of the efficiency of the data editing process.

For EUROSTAT: Agreement on the use of EDI messages to specify the statistical requirements to the economic operators and their declarants; production of documentation on EDI projects for decision-makers, key partners in data collection, key technological players such as software houses, EDI providers, and standardization bodies, etc.

For the OECD: The OECD will continue its efforts to contribute to reducing the burden on national statistical agencies by further co-ordinating data collection activities across the Organisation and with other international organisations both in terms of content, timing and use of common technology (XML / Gesmes).

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The growing concern about issues of data privacy and confidentiality in NSIs.
- The growing conflict NSIs are facing between on the one hand their desire to increase their usage of administrative records so as to lessen the response burden on respondents and increase the coverage of the statistical product and on the other concerns about privacy and confidentiality.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session:

The Conference approved the activities to be undertaken by the Conference in this programme element (See "Activities and Means" below).

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

ECE/EUROSTAT : Work session on Electronic Data Reporting (February 2002)

ECE: Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (May 2002)

EUROSTAT: Committee on statistical confidentiality, 12 November 2001

Eurostat: Working Group: Metadata Workshop, once a year in May or June

Eurostat: Committee on statistical confidentiality, once a year in November .

Rapporteur: ECE

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE:

- a) Joint ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Electronic Data Reporting (February 2002) to consider:
(i) management, organisational and policy issues (ii) security, confidentiality and privacy issues ;
(iii) metadata standards and concept models; (iv) users experience with online modes.
- b) Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (May 2002) to consider: (i) planning and management of statistical data editing, (ii) measuring and evaluating data editing quality, (iii) editing of administrative data, (iv) impact of new technologies on statistical data editing.
- c) To prepare a methodological material "Good Practices on the Evaluation of Efficiency of Data Editing" (2002/2003)

Activities of OECD:

Co-ordinate data collection activities across the Organisation and with other international organisations both in terms of content, timing and use of common technology (XML / Gesmes).

Activities of Eurostat: (*Themes 14 - Information technologies (144), 15 -Reference databases, 25 - Data security and statistical confidentiality*):

Ongoing methodological work:

Promotion and assistance to Eurostat users in the implementation of monitored data exchange; follow-up and support of the corresponding systems (Stadium, EDIFLOW) in collaboration with the Member states.

The maintenance of standardised statistical EDI-messages will continue, including further implementation of standardised EDI-messages in the exchange of data within the European Statistical System.

Primary data collection:

Eurostat will continue its efforts to contribute to reducing the statistical burden on enterprises by a Work Program established and follow up by the CORD Task Force.

Primary data collection in the domain of Intra-Community Foreign Trade will be supported via the maintenance of IDEP/CN8, the corresponding support to the competent national administrations, and preparation and delivery of the DOS (till 2002 incl.) and Windows versions.

Reference databases

In 2001 it should be possible to continue and enhance the objectives set in previous years:

- Improving the services offered by the reference environment
 - user-friendliness of the tools developed
 - optimised information search process
 - quality of the metadata describing the data offered
- Follow-up of a working party/group for co-operation with the Member States and the applicant countries on the European reference environment and metadata.
- Optimisation of the functions of the data dictionary for managing all the specific classifications of the reference environment.
- Study on the probability indicators of the data, and reference input validation.
- Study on sophisticated quality-assurance indicators.
- Non-digital search method.
- Incorporation of statistical analysis and cartography tools in reference output.

Data security and statistical confidentiality

CO-ORDINATION

Statistical methods for the protection of aggregate and microdata outputs will be further developed. There will be an emphasis on refining methods that meet current or probable future needs of the European Statistical System. Software and interfaces to implement these methods will be developed and refined as necessary.

LEGAL ASPECTS

Implementation of the Commission Regulation on the conditions of access to confidential data for scientific purposes with regard to measures concerning contractual guarantees for access to confidential data. This implies intensive co-operation with the CSC.

Priority objective of the methodological work:

Completely revised user-friendly STADIUM software.

Use of STADIUM and GESMES for all relevant data flows. EDIFLOW available to external users via Internet.

Intrastat message INSTAT in XML format implemented.

GESMES and RDRMES XML versions developed.

Data security and statistical confidentiality

CO-ORDINATION

Development and refinement of rules and operational procedures for the Data Analysis Centre (DAC) This will include options for the confidentiality checking of results to be removed from the DAC, as well as the necessary research support and metadata to facilitate good quality research. A scientific conference on Statistical Confidentiality will be co-funded.

LEGAL ASPECTS

Commission Regulation on Access to Confidential Data for Scientific Research .

New activities:

Set up of a data collection (EDI and Stadium) central external help desk supporting the DSIS users outside of Eurostat.

The STADIUM system will be further developed (XML support, integrated data validation, internal workflow, etc.).

Further development of EDIFLOW depending on user needs.

Development and implementation of standardised messages based on XML.

Reference databases

- Implementation of workflow techniques in co-operation with producers with a view to better information for customers.
- Implementation of a new optimised production, internal and external reference and dissemination architecture for improved coverage of customer requirements.

Data security and statistical confidentiality

LEGAL ASPECTS

Implementation of (still in draft form) Regulation on the implementation of the Data Protection Directive within Eurostat.

Advice on the implementation of rules governing the access of the public to Commission documents.

Activities of other organizations:

The ILO:

The ILO will continue its gradual shift to electronic means of data collection for its dissemination programme. With the expected expansion of Internet in the years to come, ILO will increasingly rely on this strategy when collecting data from countries and territories. Two approaches are considered: direct feeding into ILO's databases by the national statistical offices, or entry by ILO of data received in electronic form through e-mail or on diskette, or even direct harvesting from Web sites. A gradual approach in this area is foreseen, starting with an examination of similar developments in other international and regional organizations, followed by a pilot collaborating experience with a limited number of both statistically advanced countries as well as developing ones. As regards data processing, a complete range of consistency tests has been developed and made operational for all the ILO statistical databases. These tests can be used not only for testing all new data entered but also applied retrospectively to the data already entered in the past.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- (i) Upgrade of the information technology architecture for data collection to increase the efficiency of its systems and to leverage proven technologies such as client/server computing, inter-and intranet technology, CD-ROM, browsers, and electronic data interchange (EDI).
- (iii) Encourage member country correspondents to use the GESMES/CB standard UN/EDIFACT message for electronic interchange of monetary, balance of payments, and other statistics from countries in the ECE region.

The World Bank

a) In the Russian Federation, following activities will be financed with the WB loan under the Development of the State Statistical System (STASYS) Project (Reorganization of Data Collection and processing subcomponent): (i) development of a systematic plan, with timetable, to complete the process of replacing regular censuses with sample surveys in real sector statistics; (ii) development of administrative and statistical

business registers (registers of enterprises and organizations; (iii) preparation of draft project of economic censuses in the Russian Federation; (iv) organization of all-Russia agricultural census in vie of FAO UN program, improvement of statistical observation of small enterprises; (v) development of public relations strategy for Goskomstat of Russia to be applied in the course of wide-scale statistical surveys (economic, agricultural censuses, surveys of small businesses, household surveys etc.) and its pilot testing; (vi) development of a system to support household sample surveys. These activities will be supported by procurement of the relevant it equipment for processing the survey data, including procurement of minicomputers to provide overall transition to electronic methods of data collection on prices.

b) The World Bank gathers macroeconomic data and projections at least once a year from its country teams in a process known as the Unified Survey. These data and projections are used for planning and evaluating Bank operations. They underlie work on creditworthiness and risk assessment and they are an important part of the Bank's external publications such as the World Development Indicators, the country and regional At-a-Glance tables, and Global Development Finance. These data are collected in a standardized way using the World Bank's country database system known as the Live Database (LDB). The LDB is an Excel based database which standardizes the management of macroeconomic information by organizing information into separate sheets by topic and utilizing indicator codes, common layouts, and a variety of formatting, calculation, and reporting tools.

c) The World Bank's Debt Reporting System (DRS) requires every member country which has received either an IBRD loan or an IDA credit to provide information on its external debt. The borrowing countries are required to report their long-term external debt on the following forms: (i) Form 1- Description of Individual External Public Debt and Private Debt Publicly Guaranteed which consists of information on each loan characteristics, such as commitment date, amount of loan commitment, loan purpose, interest rate, and terms and conditions of payments; (ii) Form 1A- Schedule of Drawings and Principal and Interest Payments for Individual External Public Debt and Private Debt Publicly Guaranteed, purpose of which is to enable the Bank to make projections of future payments of principal and interest for those loans that have irregular patterns of repayments; (iii) Form 2- Individual External Public Debts and Private Debts Publicly Guaranteed: Current Status and Transactions During Period. This form contains loan-by-loan information on debt stocks and debt flows during the reporting period; (iv) Form 3- To contain specific amendments to Forms 1 and 2; (v) Form 4-External Private Non-Guaranteed Debt to include aggregate stocks and flows data on long-term external private non-guaranteed debt.

d) The World Bank has also ongoing plans for worldwide web-based external debt data collection (Web-DRS).

Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States:

Ongoing work: Collection and exchange of statistical data between Commonwealth national statistical services and CIS-STAT at monthly and quarterly intervals using standardised tables (questionnaires) in Excel format (204 tables). Information is exchanged via the Internet with the statistical services of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. The exchange of information with the national statistical services of Armenia, Belarus and Uzbekistan is effected by e-mail over switched channels.

During the period 2001-2003, work will continue on standardising the electronic interchange of statistical information with national statistical services and international organisations and on improving the reference database with a view to increasing the range of services available to the various users (more comprehensive data coverage and the inclusion of harmonised classifications and a variety of catalogues and handbooks). An analysis of new technology will be made with a view to improving data protection and confidentiality.

2.3 DISSEMINATION AND INTERCHANGE OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Problem Statement: To build up an information and a technological infrastructure for dissemination of statistical data corresponding to the needs of different users groups; to disseminate statistical information through various electronic media that meet the clients' requirements; to draw attention to the marketing and pricing of statistical information (however, policy issues related to the marketing and pricing will be considered under the programme element 1.2); to promote the full use of electronic information highways, e-mail facilities and point-to-point connections to disseminate statistical products to end-users and to exchange structured statistical data between the producers of statistics; to build up a reference environment on the availability of statistical information at national and international levels (this requires emphasis on metadata architecture and designing and developing of methodologies for a standard description of statistical data and metadata); to create an efficient network among respondents disseminating data for statistical production and national and international statistical agencies.

Over the next two years, emphasis should be given in this programme element to the following: implementation of metainformation systems at national level and harmonization of metadata systems of international organizations; further spreading of use of Internet for dissemination of statistical data; implementation of EDIFACT standards for statistical data dissemination; dissemination of market-sensitive economic data to mass media.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: For the ECE: progress in re-engineering in data dissemination caused by expansion of Internet services; progress in the integration of metadata related to the dissemination of statistics by international organisations; preparation of a handbook on best practices in disseminating statistical data to the information media and on statistical offices' media relations; improved use of EDIFACT standards for EDI in transition countries;

For EUROSTAT: Agreement on concentrated efforts, investments and resources on DSIS 6 priorities (metadata, reference environment, raw data collection, design and integration of EDI technologies, multimedia and information highways, integration with networking technologies); agreement on use of standardized EDI messages as a corner to exchange data and metadata between reference environments; implementation of reference and dissemination environments conforming to common recommendations, requirements and memorandum of understanding (including access rights, copyrights, accounting practices); feasibility studies on how statistical information services can benefit from EDI and multimedia technologies.

For the OECD: Further improve the OECD Internet on-line dissemination database (SourceOECD) by integrating datasets, improving the descriptive metadata content, and improving the user interface.

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The outcome of the Work Session on Statistical Metadata (Washington, 28-30 November 2000) especially the proposal by IMF that the IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB) play the role of anchor for statistical metadata and that the common XML-based language for statistical metadata and data be developed.
- Growing pressure on NSIs to provide the public with access to a wide range of statistics on the Internet free of charge.
- The impact that the pressures for providing users with data on the Internet is having on pricing policies.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session:

The Conference approved the activities to be undertaken by the Conference in this programme element (See "Activities and Means" below).

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

Joint ECE /EUROSTAT: Work Session on Statistical Metadata (March 2002)
ECE: Work Session on Statistical Output for Dissemination to Information Media (November 2001)
EUROSTAT: Task Force Products and Services, September 2001
EUROSTAT: Working Group: Data Shop Network Meeting 01-02 October 2001
EUROSTAT: Working Group: STNE, 03 - 05 October 2001
EUROSTAT: Working Group: Dissemination of statistical Information, 22 - 23 October 2001
EUROSTAT: Working Group: STNE, twice a year in March and October
EUROSTAT: Task Force Products and Services, twice a year in March and September .
EUROSTAT: Working Group: Data Shop Network Meeting, twice a year in April and October.
EUROSTAT: Working Group: Dissemination of statistical Information, twice a year in April and October.

Rapporteur: ECE

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE:

- a) Preparation of the methodological material "Handbook on best practices for dealing with the media"(2001/2002)
- b) Work Session on Statistical Output for Dissemination to Information Media (2001/2002) to consider the draft of the "Handbook on best practices for dealing with the information media".
- c) Joint ECE/EUROSTAT Work Session on Statistical Metadata (March 2002) to consider: (i) infrastructure issues for statistical metadata, (ii) users and metadata, (iii) metadata and quality.
- d) Work Session on Statistical Output for Dissemination to Information Media (2002/2003) to consider: (pending recommendations of the Work Session on Statistical Output for Dissemination to Information Media, November 2001).
- e) Preparation of methodological material "Best practices in Statistical Web- site Design (2001)
- f) Preparation of methodological material " Recommendations on Formats for Downloading of Statistical Data from Internet" (2001).
- g) Participation in the Group EEG6 of the European Board for EDI Standardization). (2001/2002, 2002/2003).

Secretariat resources: Substantial

Activities of OECD:

- (i) Streamlining publication processes;
- (ii) Expanding the metadata content and functionality of statistical electronic products;
- (iii) Further improve the OECD Internet on-line dissemination database (SourceOECD) by integrating datasets, improving the descriptive metadata content, and improving the user interface.

Activities of Eurostat: (*Themes 14 - Information technologies (143), 16 - Information, 17 - Dissemination*)

Ongoing methodological work:

Telematic networks ESS

Administration of the Eurostat site of CIRCA, support to the corresponding interest groups, to the Steering and Technical Committee. Liaison with other bodies involved in CIRCA. Awareness on CIRCA in Eurostat.

Maintain the EURO-Indicators site containing a series of important national indicators to be shared by a series of privileged users.

Information

COMMUNICATION/PRESS

External communication will be improved by further euro indicators covered by news releases, the availability of specific complementary information for journalists and a more stable and complete calendar covering dissemination of news releases and updating of euro indicators, by the development and continuation of relations with media (press releases, lock-up or ad-hoc system, « Eurostat media services », meetings of groups of journalists...) and by training of Eurostat staff in press relations. Exchange of experiences and co-operation with member states and the consolidation of activity indicators will be also achieved.

Development of the Cybernews (Forum...) tool, and continuation of the actions to be conducted following the conclusions of the study on internal communication to be published in 2000.

SUMMARY PUBLICATIONS

Actions are foreseen in order to achieve the rationalisation of the summary publications, the use of various dissemination media and to look for partnerships to promote the development of products with added value. The program is: production of Yearbook 2001 (paper + electronic), Euro statistics, 6th edition of Europe in figures, review subcontracting policy, analysis of the market and revision of strategy, develop editorial function, review process and market for yearbook 2001.

Dissemination

PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

The work will be oriented to the use of various media for the production and management of a rational programme designed to answer to well defined user needs (collections), and to the consolidation of solutions involving desk top publishing tools in order to simplify and automate the production of manuscripts. The policy of collections introduced in 1998 will be reviewed.

The availability of the range of products produced in co-operation with member states under the marketing name of "Statistics Europe" and the evaluation of the version 2 of the Eurostat web site are foreseen.

The consolidation and evaluation of activity indicators will be essential.

DISSEMINATION POLICY

The management of subscriptions, right access, copyrights and contracts together with the management and development of a range of products/services based on the "electronic first, paper second" principle, is in the core of the activity. In this framework the evaluation in of the new tool for dissemination (EDEN) will be done.

Eurostat will look for partnerships with the European Statistical System (joint development of products and services under the "Statistics Europe" logo) and for co-operation between data producers and businesses in the information market .

The presence of Eurostat in the main events concerning information and statistics will be assured and promotional activities for the Eurostat products will be foreseen.

Eurostat will prepare a study on benchmarking for strategy on dissemination of statistical data. Monitoring of users will be fundamental to improve the offer and to adapt the dissemination policy. The consolidation and evaluation of activity indicators will be essential.

DISSEMINATION NETWORKS

The main activity will be the development, support and management of the Data Shop Network. The priority is given to the extent of the commitment to the quality charter for Data Shop and to improve the offer of training to the network, in order to have a better use of dissemination tools.

The new contract for the management of Data shop Brussels, Luxembourg and Madrid will be evaluated. In Brussels: Continuity of services towards European Parliament and other Institutions of SSE.

The consolidation of activity indicators and the follow-up of the quality charter are important elements of the management of the Data Shop Network.

EURO-SICS

The Euro-Indicators site supplies institutional users with time series, available at a high level of frequency and giving an overall picture of business cycle in Europe. The site covers areas of interest for **short-term analysis**, aims at consistency, contains long time series and comprehensive metadata. The site is supposed to consist in the end of about 350 indicators; most are fully harmonised, some others are national not fully harmonised or even country specific indicators.

STRUCTURAL INDICATORS

The Structural Indicators site supplies a limited number of key indicators (35 indicators) to a broad range of users. These indicators are related to the conclusions of the Lisbon Special European Council. On the base of these conclusions, an annual synthesis report will be prepared using those indicators that are related to employment, innovation, economic reform and social cohesion.

PRIORITY OF THE WORK

Release 3.0 of the Groupware tool CIRCA will be specified and developed early in 2001. Depending on the result of a market study a redesign of the software will be started in the second half of 2001. The new software would be available end 2002. The new software will be based on a more structured approach. It will interface to open platforms.

NEW ACTIVITIES

Telematic networks ESS

Activities of other organizations:

UN Statistics Division:

UN Economic and Social Information System (UNESIS): (i) design and implementation of systems to compile and disseminate Common Database and national accounts data electronically including use of Internet. (ii) implementation of standard data and metadata formats in the Common Database (CDB);(iii) extension of UNESIS standards to the demographic database and Monthly Bulletin of Statistics.

The ILO:

The ILO Bureau of Statistics' data dissemination Web-site (<http://www.laborsta.ilo.org>) will continue to be maintained and updated. This site gives users the access to a broad range of data contained in the ILO relevant statistical databases and makes it possible to view and download information free of charge. The updating of meta-information traditionally published in the Sources & Methods series will gradually be made available on the ILO LABORSTA Web-site in reduced form. The information disseminated in this way will be selective, and the printed publication will continue to be issued. The 2001 Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) database and publication will be available on CD-ROM and the Internet.

International Monetary Fund (IMF):

- (i) Encourage correspondents to use the GESMES/CB standard UN/EDIFACT message for electronic interchange of monetary, balance of payments, and other statistics from countries in the ECE region.
- (ii) Increased use of CD-ROM and the Internet for electronic dissemination of the IMF's statistical publications.
- (iii) Co-ordinate the development among SDDS subscribers and other international and regional organisations of an XML language for the open exchange of statistical data and metadata.

United Nations Industrial development Organization (UNIDO):

UNIDO will continue to disseminate its Industrial Statistics (INDSTAT) and Industrial Demand-Supply Balance (IDSB) Databases on CD-ROM. With regard to UNIDO country questionnaire, it is expected that requests of national statistical offices for its hard-copy version will gradually diminish as electronic data transmission becomes a common practice.

The World Bank

a) In the Russian Federation, reorganization and modernization of data dissemination and interchange of statistical information will be financed with the WB loan under the Development of the State Statistical System (STASYS). Project, with the implementation of the following activities: (i) generation of data bases and technology development to provide internet access to them; (ii) web sites design for Goskomstat of Russia; (iii) assessment of users demand in statistical data.

b) The Global Development Network (GDN) Initiative is to support and link research and policy institutes involved in the field of development. Its goal is to help research and policy institutions by fostering vibrant global, regional and electronic networking activities designed to ensure the sharing among the development community of the latest research, data, best practices and new ideas.

<http://www.gdnet.org/>

c) The Gateway initiative is envisioned as a portal website on development issues, from which users will be able to access information, resources, and tools, and into which they will be able to contribute their own

knowledge and experience. <http://www.worldbank.org/gateway/>

d) The World Bank has also plans ongoing plans for worldwide web-based external debt data collection (Web-DRS).

Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States:

Work will continue on broadening the electronic dissemination of statistical information, including on CD-ROMs, and access to CIS-STAT databases, as well as on monthly updating of the CIS-STAT home page (<http://www.cisstat.com>) and the dissemination of CIS-STAT press releases for government bodies of CIS countries, international organisations and major news agencies.

2.4 STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Problem Statement: Promote the implementation of international classifications and support the work of the United Nations Expert Group of International Economic and Social Classification. Establish link between statistical classifications and classifications that are used internally in businesses.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: To establish an inventory of implementation plans in different countries and current deviations from international classifications; to bring out greater convergence between NAICS (the North American Industrial Classification System) and NACE (Nomenclature Statistique des Activités Economique dans la Communauté Européenne); to monitor the program on CPC/CPA revisions, and the development of ESEC (European Socio-Economic Classification).

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The effort being undertaken by Canada, the United States and Eurostat to bring about a greater degree of convergence between ISIC/NASE and the North American Industrial Classification System.

- The need for link to be established between statistical classification and classification that are used internally in businesses (e.g. bar codes).
- The need to strengthen the integration of CPC and HS internationally.
- The development of new classifications, definitions and measurement indicators for the Information Communication technology (ICT) sector. Classification of ICT commodities, goods and services, electronic commerce, and the role of enterprises in the New Economy are the target tasks. The international co-operation among OECD, Eurostat, the Voorburg Group and other active players in this field is seen as important vehicle to accelerate progress in this development.
- The statistical community does not adapt sufficiently quickly to needs of updating and amending classifications. In such cases, international organisations that are recognised as having "responsibility" for given classifications should give consideration to the possibility of issuing "provisional or tentative" updated classifications that countries could use on an interim basis until such time as the new classification is adopted and approved in its final form.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session: None

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

EUROSTAT: Committee: SPC NACE/CPA – Nomenclatures, 5 - 7 September 2001

EUROSTAT: Committee: Customs Code Committee Nomenclature, 08 - 09 November 2001

EUROSTAT: Committee: SPC NACE/CPA – Nomenclatures, twice a year in January and September

EUROSTAT: Working Group: Nomenclatures, once a year in October

EUROSTAT: Task Force: Methodological Co-ordination, once a year in June

UN Statistics Division (UNSD): Expert Group meeting in 2002

UNSD: Expert Group meeting in 2003

UNSD: two Technical Subgroup meetings in 2002

UNSD: two Technical Subgroup meetings in 2003

Rapporteur: Eurostat

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE: None

Activities of OECD: The OECD is actively participating in the meetings of the Technical Sub-Group which has been set up to update ISIC and the CPC.

Activities of Eurostat: *Themes 11 - Classifications, 18 Statistical co-ordination):*

Ongoing methodological work:

CLASSIFICATIONS

The Classification Sector will focus in the year 2001 together with the Member States to adopt by Commission Regulation and publish the draft update of CPA and NACE ("Operation 2002" as decided by the SPC) in order to have, on 1 January 2002, an adopted and published updated CPA, with explanatory notes and conversion keys to CPA 96 and to latest CPC as well as to have, on 1 January 2002, an adopted and published updated NACE Rev.1, with explanatory notes and conversion keys.

At the same time the Classification Sector will finalise the work with UN and the sub-committee of the Voorburg group to have on 1 January 2002, an adopted and published updated CPC and ISIC.

The other main activity for 2001 is the methodological work together with USA, Canada and Mexico in preparing a possible convergence of their activity classifications for 2007.

The two projects will take all the classification resources of the Sector, and will lead to all other methodological work being put aside for 2001.

CLASSIFICATIONS FOR SOCIAL STATISTICS

The work on the harmonisation of a set of core variables, in which the social classifications are included, will further concentrate on the implementation of the recommended definitions and operationalisations of the variables in Member States statistical sources that started in 2000. A first version of the meta information system, informing users on the differences in definitions and operationalisations of the variables will be installed and there will be a first update. The classifications are linked to the core variables. The main existing classifications in social statistics are ISCED (education), ISCO-88 (COM) (occupation) and ICD (health). In the context of the work on Social Exclusion and Poverty the classification of Household Income will be elaborated in more detail. The new European Socio-economic Classification (E-SEC) will have to be implemented by the Member States.

CLASSIFICATIONS FOR TRADE IN GOODS STATISTICS

In 2001 the objectives set in previous years will continue to be pursued:

- optimising the availability of the Combined Nomenclature and related products by improving the dissemination process, computerising management and the extension of EDI in order to speed up the availability process of CN related products;
- continuing measures to strengthen contacts with the applicant countries and completing work to adapt the Combined Nomenclature to the Harmonised System, which should take effect from 1 January 2002;
- continuing the studies to enhance the tools for classifying goods in the CN.

Since the EDICOM Decision is due to expire in 1999, the work described in point 1 is partly based on the assumption that a new Decision will be adopted by the Parliament and the Council for the period 2001-2005.

Furthermore, in the framework of a better coherence of statistics on the trading of goods at international level, a comparison of the various geographical classifications used by different organisations (UN, IMF, WTO...) will be undertaken.

Other Activities of the European Commission:

CLASSIFICATIONS FOR TRADE IN GOODS STATISTICS

Work on the Combined Nomenclature should be conducted in close co-operation with the Customs Classification managed by the Taxation and Customs Union DG.

Priority objective of the methodological work

In the Edicom framework, priority should be given to the modelling of a common tool designed to facilitate automatic classification in the CN.

New activities:

Closely linked to the timetable established for enlargement of the EU with new members integration of new linguistic versions of the CN in various databases should be completed.

Activities of other organizations:

UN Statistics Division:

a) To publish and translate ISIC Rev.3.1 in all UN languages (pending decision of the 2002 session of the Statistical Commission).

- b) To publish and translate the Central Product Classification (CPC), Version 1.1 in all UN languages (pending decision of the 2002 session of the Statistical Commission).
- c) To continue the publication of a Classifications Newsletter.
- d) To continue maintaining the UN Classifications Website and Registry.
- e) To revise ISIC and CPC for 2007 (first drafts to be prepared in 2004)
- f) To publish training materials for the implementation and use of ISIC and CPC.
- g) To translate the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services in all UN languages.
- h) To translate the Classifications of Expenditure According to Purpose (ST/ESA/STAT/Ser.M/84) in the remaining UN languages.
- i) To update produced and non-produced assets in a separate asset classification (pending decision by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications in 2001)
- j) To reconcile together with ECE, Eurostat and FAO the commodity nomenclatures for the collection of industrial production statistics.

The ILO:

The ILO will continue to provide direct short-term advisory services to countries developing or revising a national classification of occupations on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-88) or other basis, through direct contacts with the custodians and users of such classifications as well as through the relevant ILO Web site. It will follow national development in this area and start work to update ISCO-88 in accordance with the advice provided by the 16th ICLS. A study on whether and in which direction ISCO-88 should be revised will be prepared for discussion at the 17th ICLS. Based on the 1997 review of national experiences with the use of classifications of status in employment work, National Statistical Offices will be invited to carry out small-scale in-depth studies according to a design provided by ILO. The ILO databases and the corresponding questionnaires are being redesigned to accommodate national statistics provided according to the revised classifications of industry, occupation, status in employment and education.

Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States:

Elaboration of model classification harmonised with their international counterparts and of recommendations for their use. Holding of consultations in the course of the universal introduction in the Commonwealth countries of classifications of types of activity on the basis of the third revised version of ISCED and the first revised version of NACE, of a statistical classifier for products on the basis of CPA and the PRODCOM list of the International Classification of Individual Expenditure by Purpose. Elaboration of conversion keys between the groups of the new harmonised classifications and those of their old counterparts. Maintenance of the base of problems arising in the introduction of the new classifications and notification of changes in that base to the Commonwealth's national statistical services. The base contains CIS-STAT recommendations for the resolution of the problems; those recommendations are examined at the annual meetings of the working party on statistical tools and standards and that body takes the final decision for applications by all the national statistical services in the Commonwealth. Those decisions provide the basis for the elaboration of CIS-STAT model classifications.

2.5 STATISTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Problem Statement: To promote an active program of research, technology development and transfer within the region on statistical and methodological issues that cut across other PEs in the Work programme (e.g. seasonal adjustment; data quality measurement: non-sampling error; sampling and estimating; questionnaire design; confidentiality protection; longitudinal surveys); to ensure that the results of this work are accessible to statistical offices throughout the region; to develop guidelines for

statistical agencies on policies and practices for managing data quality in statistical programs, including the definition, control and description of data quality, and its implication for data release.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: An active network of information exchange between interested member countries.

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The on-going importance of co-operative methodological and research work with member states and other organisations in relation to the harmonisation requirements of the new policies (monetary union, information society...), globalisation and the needs to reach a critical mass.
- The need of technology transfer. In 2001 a Eurostat project should start that will reinforce the dissemination, valorisation and transfer of research outcomes. A large number of suppliers and users from NSIs is expected to participate.
- The importance of solutions being developed through research and development programmes for the new concepts, methods and technologies that are needed in the field of statistics because of rapid development that are occurring in the field of ICT.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session: None

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

Eurostat meetings: (*Theme 22: Statistical research*):

Eurostat: Working Group: EPROS (DOSIS), 26 - 28 November 2001

Eurostat: Working Group: Assessment of quality of statistics, once a year in March .

Eurostat: Working Group: Seasonal Adjustment, once a year in February .

Eurostat: Working Group: Scientific Advisory Committee, once a year in June .

Eurostat: Working Group: EPROS (DOSIS), once a year in November .

Rapporteur: Eurostat

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE: None

Activities of Eurostat: (*Theme 22: Statistical research*):

Ongoing methodological work:

- To achieve assistance for implementation of internal quality reports. To continue assisting sectoral working groups for the implementation of new quality reports or the extension of existing ones. To co-ordinate the activities in the ESS for assessing quality of statistical output.
- To solve from a practical point of view main problems in quality measurement methodology.
- To assess methods for estimation of Business Cycle Statistics.
- to ensure the proper management of the on-going R&D projects (around 30 projects, from 3 previous calls),
- to ensure the dissemination and the transfer of results. In particular, support nodes, common infrastructure and best practice actions is implemented in co-operation with the JRC, in order to promote the transfer of technologies inside the ESS.
- to launch an additional call for proposals on topics not sufficiently covered so far and on new emerging areas, and to publicise the initiative, through appropriate channels and means,

- to give support to Eurostat for the development of methods for estimation and adjustment,
- to develop and implement the methodology for variance estimation in Eurostat and the member states,
- to co-ordinate seasonal adjustment activities in Eurostat (and in the ESS).

Other Activities of the European Commission: Dissemination and transfer of the results is supported by the JRC. The JRC also underpins Eurostat's effort on time series analysis with methodological studies on demand and by providing an on line help desk aimed at the practitioners of the ESS.

Priority objective of the methodological work

- To develop a methodology manual for estimations in Eurostat.
- To publish manuals of best practices in editing and imputation; to organise a TES course in editing and imputation.
- To implement best practices for seasonal adjustment.

New activities:

- to prepare the 6th Framework Research Programme, in co-operation with the other Commission's services, and the scientific and official statistical communities. In this context, Eurostat seeks to improve the co-ordination of the statistical dimension of the new research programme, both as regards the R&D in Statistics and the statistics in support of the R&D policy, in particular in the field of R&D indicators, Science and Technology statistics, and statistics for the new economy. To this aim, a larger co-operation inside the Commission department will be sought.
- To co-ordinate a development project of a complete European package on calculation of variances.
- To have a version of the software for seasonal adjustment that meets the users needs concerning different options/tools for adjustment and working platforms.
- Preparation for and operation of the Data Analysis Centre (DAC) as a secure environment where scientific researchers can work under licence on data too confidential for release. This is dependent on the acceptance of new legislation permitting such access for research, and on the proper development of rules and operational procedures as described under Theme 25.
- To develop a manual of best practices for European surveys, including best choice of weighting in the calculation of European averages.

Activities of other organizations:

UN Statistics Division:

UNSD has constituted a work unit on statistical development and analysis, which studies measurement issues. A technical report will be published in 2002 containing an analysis of operating characteristics of surveys in developing countries, including costs, design effects and response rates. In the preparation of this document an expert group will be called in early 2002. In order to support the collection of information in the area of disability statistics, another technical report will analyse census and survey design in support of disability statistics. A third area of research in which a technical paper is planned for 2002 is statistical indexes.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Work on a framework for assessing the quality of data is at an advanced stage. Information concerning staff work in progress is available on the IMF's Data Quality Reference Site on the Internet at <http://dsbb.imf.org>. General and data set specific frameworks (for balance of payments, national accounts, and analytical accounts of the central bank, producer prices, and government finance statistics)

have been developed. The frameworks are designed to be a flexible, comprehensive tool for assessing data quality that can be used by both statisticians and non-statisticians. The frameworks have been developed drawing on the growing literature on data quality, the IMF's practical experience in dealing with the statistical systems of both developed and developing countries, and the feedback from consultations with national compilers of statistics, international organisations, and others, as well as field-testing by IMF staff. In the coming period, the Statistics Department will carry out further testing of the frameworks and seek additional feedback from statisticians and non-statisticians. It is envisaged that further work will include the development of additional data set specific frameworks, possibly in collaboration with other international statistical organisations in cases where the data falls outside of the IMF's traditional macroeconomic focus.

2.6 GEOGRAPHICAL AND REGIONAL DATA

Problem Statement: To promote the development and integration of statistics for sub-national and supra-national regions. To improve the efficiency, quality and comparability of the geographic dimension of official statistics. To facilitate the measurement and reinforcement of economic and social cohesion of the European Union using high-quality statistical information on the European regions. To put at the disposal of users the necessary regional data for the definition, follow-up and evaluation of regional policies (both national and European Union) and the evaluation of the socio-economic situation and evolution of the region of Europe. To design and develop concepts and standards, new tools and technology (GIS), dissemination of geographical products and spatial analysis.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: For ECE, Work Sessions on Methodological Issues Involving the Integration of Statistics and Geography; preparation of guidelines on cartography for statistical purposes; presentation of the survey on the use of GIS in NSOs.

For Eurostat, statistical yearbook "REGIONS", complete classification of regions for the new member states, publication of methodology for regional household accounts, and first results of the screening exercise.

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The Joint ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Methodological Issues Involving the Integration of Statistics and Geography (Tallinn, September 2001).
- The improved co-ordination of statistics and geography that is occurring in the European Union between statisticians and cartographers, and their planned work aimed at investigating whether it is possible to define more homogeneous territorial building blocks at the European level that would complement (but not replace) the 'NUTS' approach.
- The growing demand for geographical and regional data.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session:

The Conference approved the activities to be undertaken by the Conference in this programme element (See "Activities and Means" below).

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Methodological Issues involving the integration on Statistics and Geography (September 2001)

ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Methodological Issues involving the integration on Statistics and Geography (April 2003)

Eurostat Working Group: Geographical Information Systems for Statistics 25 - 26 October 2001

Eurostat Working Group: Infra-regional information system and urban statistics, 19-20 Nov. 2001

Eurostat Working Group: Regional accounts, once a year in May .

Eurostat Working Group: Geographical Information Systems for Statistics, once a year in October .
Eurostat Working Group: Infra-regional information system and urban statistics, once a year in November .

OECD: Working Party on Territorial Indicators (February 2002)

OECD: Working Party on Territorial Indicators (February 2003)

Rapporteur: Eurostat.

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE:

- a) ECE/Eurostat Work Session on Methodological Issues Involving the Integration of Statistics and Geography September 2001, to consider: (i) New opportunities created by cooperation and partnership; (ii) New technological solutions, including those based on on-line data access; (iii) Spatial analysis; (iv) Standards and metadata.
- b) One-day training session on GIS implementation for interested countries back -to back to the Work Session.

Secretariat resources: Substantial

Activities of OECD:

Ongoing methodological work:

- Enlargement of the territorial data base towards social and environmental aspects.
- Development of a consistent regional typology in order to carry out comparative analysis and territorial benchmarking.
- Assessment of the performance and competitiveness of territories.
- Evaluation of territorial disparities. The analysis is multi-scalar, multi-dimensional and multi-methodological.

New activities:

- To provide new perspectives for international comparisons at sub-national levels, taking into account functional regions as units for the territorial analysis.
- To test simple models for spatio-economic analysis whereby theoretical situations can be simulated and held up against real ones.

Activities of Eurostat: (*Theme 72 - Regional and geographical information*):

Ongoing methodological work:

REGIONAL STATISTICS

Regular updating of the various domains of the REGIO database in New Cronos; dissemination of results in the form of an annual yearbook on paper and CD-ROM and of short publications (Statistics in Focus); preparation for the integration of new cohesion variables into the database, following the CEIES report; finalisation of a legal base for the regional classification NUTS; further integration of the candidate countries in the Community system of regional statistics.

Quality assessment of regional accounts and regional employment/ unemployment data; improved coverage of the "industry", "services" and "environment" regional statistics; continued construction of an information system on urban agglomerations, including the "Urban Audit" pilot project.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gradual transfer of GISCO geographical data to the new architecture of the reference base; co-ordination of the actions conducted by Commission departments concerning GI and GIS via the COGI

interdepartmental group; introduction of the strategy devised to develop a basic European GI infrastructure; extension of the use of the Internet for creating applications; participation in Commission initiatives which can supplement the content of the base (NATURA 2000, CORINE. Land Cover, etc.); communication with users (Web site, newsletter).

Expanding the content of the database by data acquisition; effective establishment of the basic European infrastructure for geographical information.

Other Activities of the European Commission:

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A number of Commission departments, in particular the Joint Research Centre and the Information Society DG, are conducting actions in the field of GI and GIS; they are co-ordinated as far as possible by the GISCO User Committee and the COGI interdepartmental group.

Priority objective of the methodological work:

For regional GDP and regional unemployment rates, some methodological changes may occur with the final results of the quality assessment project.

New activities:

Include the Candidates Countries in the quality assessment project on regional statistics, in the Community GIS and in our information system on local statistics (SIRE).

Development of regional social statistics, in particular assessment of the quality and improved usage of the Labour Force Survey, but this work might be delayed due to lack of resources.

Activities of other organisations:

UN Statistical Division:

With respect to Geographic Information System (GIS) UNSD is adopting a twofold approach: internal use within the Division and promotion and technical assistance to developing countries. For the next two years the development of a Statistical Map Server is planned: a GIS-based application, presenting statistical data and indicators through maps in a hierarchical design, allowing the user to visualise maps by region and by country. UNSD will also put emphasis on the promotion of the use of GIS technologies by developing countries, particularly with Census and Surveys, through the UN regional conferences and forums, publications (i.e. the Handbook on GIS and digital mapping for population and housing censuses) and training courses.

The World Bank

In the next two years, the World Bank will be increasingly involved with maintaining, documenting, and incorporating sub-national data into its databases. This includes internal as well as external systems. We will be augmenting the World Development Indicators CD-ROM product to support mapping and charting of sub-national data.

2.7 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Problem Statement: Training is a fundamental basis of building a harmonised, high quality statistical systems. The training aspect should in general be seen to be an important element of most meetings, involving exchange of information on tools, methods and best practises. However, joint international training courses should be promoted, taking into account specific needs for training due to changing methods, tools, staff requirements, and the needs for international harmonisation. The needs of countries with small internal resources for training should especially be considered. As the main systematic

contribution for training in the ECE area is provided by the Training programme of Eurostat (TES), it is important to ensure a good functioning of the programme.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: To ensure a well prepared training programme within the framework of TES, by analysing user requirements and by involving the countries in its preparation and execution; to ensure wide participation in this training programme by distributing information on the programme; To ensure improved co-ordination of training offered by international actors and NSIs by exchange of information, Eurostat being the centre for co-ordination. Joint information should be made available via the Eurostat Circa Interest group; to evaluate the training component in different working groups offered by Eurostat, OECD or ECE.

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The importance of achieving improved co-ordination in the field of statistical training. The Bureau considered that one way of achieving this might be by the exchange of information among countries.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session: None

Meetings from July 2001 to June 2003:

Eurostat Working Group and Task Force: Training of European Statisticians, April 2002

Rapporteur: Eurostat.

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE: None

Activities of Eurostat: (*Theme 12 - Statistical training*):

Ongoing methodological work:

The aim of statistical training is to draw up a general programme based on foreseeable training requirements taking into account the training needs and professional skills of its customers, the development and needs of European Statistical System and the needs of transition economies in statistics. Training is facing new challenges because of the enlargement of European Union, the implementation of new technologies in communication and data exchange and new sources of information and new agents in economic and social life.

The main objectives of statistical training are

- To help to raise the quality of European statistics
- To offer professional training, which has a dimension of surpassing national boundaries
- To enhance the use of new methods and tools
- To promote transfer of technology
- To contribute to the harmonisation and comparability of European statistics
- To support the co-operation and exchange in the ESS
- To promote integration of candidate countries into the ESS.

The main foreseeable user groups are management, statistical methodologists and the users of statistics. Mainly they come from the EU/EFTA countries, the Candidate countries and the Western Balkan Countries but in special cases also from other countries with which the Commission has assistance programmes and from the Commission. Supply of training courses will be based on statistics core programme, tailor made special programmes and management training.

The European statistical training programme is a programme of Eurostat (TES). Its financing and practical organisation is based on a framework contract from 2001 onwards. Funds for training will come from the Eurostat/EFTA budget and from various technical assistance budgets. A Working Group with EU/EFTA and CEC countries will be organised once a year. To create a common clearing house where all providers will inform about their training activities will be needed.

Statistical training is part of several technical assistance programmes of the Commission: Phare, Cards, Tacis and Medstat. These funds are in general managed by the Enlargement, the External Relations and the Development DGs, with sub-delegation in the case of Phare for candidate countries. The aim is to support the institution building and enlargement programmes. Countries assisted by Phare funds will take part in both regularly organised courses of the core programme and special courses. It is also foreseen to co-ordinate training activities in Phare.

Medstat will finance some special courses and the individual participation within courses of the core programmes.

Priority objective of the methodological work:

New activities:

Year 2001 will be the first one when the statistical training will be based on a framework contract. Priority is given to the establishment of the new procedures in order to ensure the continuity and quality of the training programme. A long-term planning for the years 2002 and 2003 will take place as well as further initiatives in the co-ordination of training activities within Europe.

Eurostat has the general management responsibilities. It defines the policy, organises tendering, defines together with the Working Group and the SPC the contents of the training and is responsible for the contracting.

The evaluation of the training programmes will be contracted out.

Training will be organised in the following fields:

- Training in official statistics, based on European methodology;
- Courses in IT applications and R&D;
- Courses in statistical management.

Activities of other organisations:

The ILO:

An ILO Training Compendium on Labour Statistics will be produced as a multi-part modular training tool in a joint project by the Bureau of Statistics and ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, and be available in 2000. This tool will be useful for international training courses in labour statistics undertaken by the Bureau at the Training Centre in Turin or workshops organised, upon request, on behalf of other international or regional agencies. It may also be made available to National Statistical Offices for in-house training. Bureau staff will serve as resource persons for training seminars and training components of other organisations, technical Cupertino projects in the regions and support other related training activities carried out by the Training Centre.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF):

(i) Annual six weeks training courses (in English, French or Spanish) at the IMF Institute in Washington on: (1) balance of payments; (2) government finance; (3) money and banking; and (4) national accounts (not in 2000; English only) statistics are offered.

The World Bank

The World Bank's Global Development Learning Network is to increase access to high quality, up dated, and cost effective training for public and private decision-makers, and improve in turn, their capacity to design, plan and

manage, economic, and social development policies. By reaching across geographic borders, time zones, and language barriers, our goal is to Provide the means to deliver cutting-edge knowledge to the development community on current issues, in real time, through virtual face-to-face events and activities.

2.8 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Problem Statement: Although countries call for good indicators to be developed there is much ambivalence as to how this is to be achieved. Currently there is no agreed set of international indicators for sustainable development. Indicators that are currently being used tend to be more relevant to developing countries rather than European countries.

The OECD has provided a motivating force behind ensuring that indicators do not focus exclusively upon economic and environmental issues. Some moves have been made towards putting together agri-environmental indicators, and towards conceptual thinking on production and consumption.

Statistics on sustainable development need to be produced in such a way as to ensure that they can be integrated across the social, economic and environmental spheres of sustainable development.

Strategic Medium-Term Goals: To produce a set of indicators for sustainable development that are relevant to both developed and developing countries – this will require close co-operation and co-ordination between international organisations in consultation with member countries and will build on current and future initiatives; to devise a theoretical framework to allow the integration of statistics which is rooted in practical considerations of what data is feasible to collect and how this links to policy that can make a difference on the ground – this framework should not be an academic set of measures, but should be closely linked to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy to be published in 2001 and to theoretical work being carried out by OECD.

Attention of the Conference was drawn to the following:

- The co-operation among OECD, Eurostat, European Environment Agency and other relevant international organisations on the development of indicators useful for monitoring sustainable development.
- The dichotomy between a practical approach whereby series of indicators for sustainable development are chosen from data sets generally available for most of the countries of interest and a more theoretical approach of deciding in principle what sort of indicators would be desirable. For the UN and World Bank, because their membership is so much larger and include so many countries with less extensive data bases, rather simpler indicators have been chosen initially based to a large extent on availability. In OECD and the EU there is greater consideration being given to a more theoretical framework in the hope that there will be sufficient political momentum behind the question to permit subsequent development of more focussed indicators.
- The OECD's next steps in work on sustainable development dealing with the preparation of a set of illustrative indicators and necessary supporting information on indicators on sustainable development.
- The urgent next task at the EU level is to add the environmental sustainability dimension to the structural indicators.

Decisions taken by the Conference at the 2001 plenary session: None

Rapporteur: OECD

Activities and means from July 2001 to June 2003:

Activities of ECE:

The UN/ECE Environment and Human Settlements Division plans the work related to the upcoming "Rio+10" conference.

Activities of OECD:

Ongoing methodological work:

A major three-year horizontal programme on sustainable development is underway in OECD due to culminate in mid-2001 with a report to Council of Ministers. One aspect of this work is the derivation of indicators to measure sustainable development. Our distinctive contribution will be to devise a framework which encompasses economic, environmental and social aspects of development in such a way that the interactions of these three areas are clear and trade-offs among the three of them can be examined. Constructing the framework will call on work underway in the London group on Environmental Accounting, the Canberra group on capital stocks and capital services, the Canberra group on Income Distribution. It is intended to incorporate clear links also to work within OECD on health and education statistics and also ongoing work on the measurement of human capital. Co-operation is ensured with other international organisations (Eurostat, European Environment Agency, World Bank and UN-CSD) and relevant institutes.

New activities:

Working jointly with the UN, World Bank and IMF to use the core set of 21 Indicators of Development Progress, as updated and agreed at a Forum on Development Progress in March 2000, to monitor progress mainly by developing and transition countries towards achieving the international development goals for 2015. The indicators, methodology sheets, progress charts and basic data are published on the web at www.oecd.org/dac/indicators. A joint publication by the four agencies—*A Better World for All: Progress towards the International Development Goals*—is published annually in June and presented to the G8 summit and UN Economic and Social Council. The OECD will continue to work with the World Bank and the UN High Commission for Human Rights and UN ECA to establish a set of qualitative indicators to measure "governance" in developing and transition countries.

Activities of Eurostat: (*Theme 71 - Environmental statistics and indicators (716)*):

The integration of environmental considerations in all relevant statistical domains has gained in importance. These influences the work on environment statistics as well as the statistics on transport, energy, agriculture, industry, tourism, regional policies and environment accounts linked to national accounts.

The sustainability issue is also tackled on the political scene in the wider context of economic, social and environmental sustainability. When the political priorities for EU sustainability policy are set, Eurostat will widen its approach, which at present is focused on using the UN CSD list of indicators to produce useful information to users.

Ongoing methodological work:

- Development and dissemination of sets of indicators on integration of environmental concerns into other policies, with emphasis on transport, agriculture and energy (see also under 3.4, 3.10, 3.12, 5.1)
- Environmental accounting (see also under 5.2)
- Sustainable development indicators: use of Eurostat data on the UNCSD list and methodological support. An indicator publication will be published spring 2001.

Priority objective of the methodological work:

- Continuous methodological work relating to integration indicators, resulting in methodological documents presented to meetings and manuals, when necessary
- Evaluation of experiences from 2001 publication on indicators of sustainable development, including proposals for changes in methodology.

New activities:

- Additional sets of indicators to be developed, e.g. indicators on integration of environment and sustainable development in enterprise policy, in tourism and in forestry.
- Sustainability issues will be further prioritised in the next 5 year Statistical Programme

Activities of other organisations:

WHO-Europe:

Major components include the development of and agreement on:

- core set on environmental health indicators, that can be used by the countries and at the same time represent significant trends in the European Region;
- basic structure of the system to allow harmonisation of data collection among the countries and acceptable level of the information exchange.
- Initially, a tentative list of environmental health indicators together with an information system general framework will be elaborated by a steering group of selected experts. The proposal will then be evaluated in countries in terms of feasibility and compatibility with the existing national monitoring systems. The result will be a core set of indicators including definitions, methodologies for data collection and computation, and a common system framework for information exchange. A WHO consultation will be convened to agree on it and to select the countries for the pilot implementation. The principal aim of the latter is to check whether the national objectives and international commitments are actually translated into concrete actions and whether the system can be promoted throughout the WHO European Region.

The World Bank:

a) The Little Green Data Book presents a number of environmental indicators based on the World Development Indicators and its accompanying CD-ROM. Under the headings of agriculture, forests, biodiversity, energy, emissions and pollution, water and sanitation, and 'greener' national accounts, the Little Green Data Book presents key indicators of the environment and its relationship to people for more than 200 countries.

b) The Bank is and will be contributing to the development of core environmental indicators for monitoring progress toward the international development goals adopted by the World Bank, United Nations, and the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. The development and expansion of an environmental database is on-going. Its coverage includes, among others, the ECE countries and it is annually updated from various sources inside and outside the World Bank. Being available to all World Bank staff, it is mainly utilized for the expanded Environmental section of the World Development Indicators. Also, a set of selected environmental indicators is being published annually by the Environment Department and the Development Data Group of the World Bank. The publication, organized by country, covers more than 150 countries and each country page presents more than 50 indicators.

c) The World Bank works closely with the UN Statistics Division in this area and continues to support initiatives in the field of environmental accounting primarily through the London Group. The Bank is contributing to the preparation of the revised SEEA dealing with the issues of valuation, as well as potential operational policy

relevance and use of the proposed manual in informing a wider range of management decisions. Work in this area is bolstered by the development of accompanying indicators of environmental change including estimation of "genuine savings" for more than 120 countries.
