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**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION STATISTICAL
OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
(EUROSTAT)**

**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Seminar on the Management
of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS)
Sofia, Bulgaria, 21-23 June 2006

INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. At the invitation of the Government of Bulgaria, the meeting will be held in Sofia, from 21 to 23 June 2006 hosted by the National Statistical Office of Bulgaria. It will start on 21 June at 9.30 a.m. at the Central Army Club, 7, Car Osvoboditel, Blvd.
2. The main objectives of the regular meetings on management of statistical information systems are the following:
 - To provide a forum for the exchange of experiences among informatics managers from National Statistical Offices and other government agencies and international organizations undertaking statistical activities;
 - To make recommendations in order to coordinate the activities of different international organizations in the area of statistical information processing;
 - To collect, discuss and make available practices in the management of statistical information processing, as well as to encourage the exchange of practices in all other particular areas included in Programme Activity 2 of the Integrated Presentation;
 - To assess the activities undertaken within all programme elements included in Programme Activity 2 of the Integrated Presentation, and to make recommendations on future directions of work within these programme elements to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians;

- To facilitate and encourage the implementation of standards and recommendations in the field of statistical computing among national statistical offices and other concerned agencies in the UNECE region.

3. The Meeting is primarily intended for: informatics managers from national statistical offices and other concerned national and international agencies; and statisticians and informaticians responsible for the coordination, planning and management of complex projects in the field of statistical information processing.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

4. The work programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:

- (i) Changes in statistical processes;
- (ii) Dissemination and client relations;
- (iii) Exploitation of IT Service Partnerships within statistical organizations (ISIs and NSIs);
- (iv) Review and follow-up to the activities of the Conference.

5. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature and expected outcomes of topics (i) to (iv) are provided in Section V of the Information Notice.

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

6. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization, have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Bulgaria in the country in which the participants reside, with a reference to the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems.

7. The statistical offices and international organizations are asked **to inform the UNECE secretariat before 24 February 2006** whether their organization intends to participate at the meeting and/or submit a contribution on the topics mentioned above. Please indicate the topic on which the paper will be as well as *participant(s) name(s) and their contact data*.

8. Participants should complete the registration form, which can be found on the last page, and return it to both the UNECE Secretariat and the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria **by 12 May 2006**.

IV. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

9. The documents and their summaries may be submitted in any of the official languages of the UNECE (English, French, Russian). The following deadlines and requirements apply:

- Authors must submit a two-page summary of their paper in one of these languages to the UNECE secretariat by **22 March 2006 at the latest** for translation into the other two languages. The secretariat cannot guarantee that summaries submitted after this deadline will be translated into the other languages.
- The full versions of papers, not exceeding 10 pages, should be sent to the UNECE secretariat **by 10 May 2006 at the latest**.
- Papers should be submitted in electronic format in **MS Word** by e-mail, diskette or CD-ROM to Ms. Diane Serikoff (diane.serikoff@unece.org).
- Templates in Word containing the header, and format will be made available on the website or may be requested by e-mail (diane.serikoff@unece.org).

10. The Steering Group preparing the meeting has asked selected countries to prepare invited papers and appointed discussants to lead the discussion on individual agenda items. The Discussants are indicated in the Explanatory Notes to the Agenda in Section V below. For each substantive item on the agenda, the discussants will invite 2-3 speakers to write an invited paper and to present them at the Meeting. All other participants are welcome to submit a supporting paper on any topic of the agenda.

11. Authors of invited papers will have about 20 minutes per paper for the presentation. Authors of supporting papers may be given (time permitting) about 5 minutes to highlight the main issues raised in their papers. Presenters may use PowerPoint presentations, Adobe Acrobat full screen presentations or A4/letter transparencies. The UNECE secretariat cannot provide translation of the presentations. The secretariat will post the presentations on the website after the meeting.

- PowerPoint and Adobe presentation should be sent to the UNECE secretariat **by 7 June 2006** at the latest, so that these may be installed on the presentation computer prior to the meeting.

12. Invited and supporting papers along with their summaries will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2006.06.msis.htm>

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

13. The official language of the meeting is English. However, in order to encourage the broader participation of experts from the National Statistical Offices of the CIS countries, the organizers will provide simultaneous interpretation from and into Russian.

V. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

Topic (i): Changes in statistical processes

(Discussant: Marton Vucsan (Statistics Netherlands), Tel: +31-70 337-5071; mvcn@cbs.nl)

14. In quite a few countries there are initiatives on a government and business level to integrate services and concepts using IT. As a consequence, electronic data is increasingly becoming available for statistical offices without doing surveys. This data from administrative sources mandates other processing methods and also raises questions in the methodological area and possible security issues. In this topic we would welcome papers on the following issues:

- Harmonization of concepts from an IT point of view. How are these harmonized concepts to become an operational reality and what measures or projects are being undertaken in this area?
- Linkage and privacy protection. With more administrative data present and linked in an agency, the possible effects of unauthorized access are becoming more and more serious. How is data linkage accomplished, what measures are being taken to secure the data and how is compliance with the legislation in this area accomplished?
- Any special issues such as handling large volumes of data, working across multiple jurisdictions with differing legislation, or complexities in dealing with non-governmental sources of administrative data.

15. Furthermore, this use of administrative sources and the way other government agencies are integrating them, are challenging the way the statistical production process is set up in business terms. NSIs are becoming increasingly involved in generalization and rationalization of the entire statistical production process. Therefore NSIs are also encouraged to report on:

- Efforts on producing an enterprise architecture and the possible benefits and effects on the statistical production process.
- Initiatives on integrated production facilities and quality management processes.

Topic (ii): Dissemination and client relations

(Discussant: Cathy Wright (IMF), Tel: +1-202 623-7516, cwright@imf.org)

16. Statistical agencies disseminating data and metadata to the public have increasingly made use of the Internet for this purpose while often reducing or eliminating print publications. Owing to increased accessibility to their data, agencies have found themselves assuming an ever-broadening role in determining how best to organize and present statistical information, how to market, how to provide adequate training and support, how to manage demand for additional services, and how to determine a pricing strategy. Some institutions benefit from separate organizational teams who focus on supporting users; others establish additional means for addressing these demands. Some organizations structure and charge for data based on their conventional print publications; others permit access to the data by theme or by individual series.

17. In this session, papers on the following questions are welcome:
- How does web dissemination of data impact the underlying production systems? What system changes have organizations had to make to accommodate electronic publication?
 - How have organizations designed their websites and decided what services to offer the user, e.g., charting, tables, tools for analysis etc. Has web content management facilitated or hindered dissemination of statistical information? What decisions have been taken on how to access the data, i.e., by publication, by theme, by individual series, by other means? How much metadata is sufficient to facilitate searching for data and elaboration of the results? How important is it that there be consistency of terminology, code lists, etc. with and across data disseminating sites?
 - What organizational arrangements have been put in place to fulfill the needs of users? How satisfactory are the arrangements to both the organization and the users and how is this measured? What factors lead to success or failure?
 - How do organizations respond to user demands for additional data, more timely data, microdata or data in other formats?
 - What decisions have been implemented on pricing policies? What are the pros and cons of charging for data? Does the statistical organization reap the benefits of the revenues or are they directed into an institutional pool and what are the consequences?

Topic (iii): Exploitation of IT Service Partnerships within statistical organizations (ISIs and NSIs)

(Discussant: Dayantha Joshua (Office for National Statistics, U.K.), Tel: ++44 20 7533 5601; dayantha.joshua@ons.gov.uk)

18. With increasing pressure on statistical organizations to provide greater flexibility and value for money from the IT capability and estate, organizations may need to consider exploiting external IT service providers as catalysts to enable technological/organizational change. In many cases the use of external service providers may be confined to "commodity" activities based on specific technology skill sets. At the other extreme, organizations could move to fully outsourced "partnership" relationships with the external suppliers providing managed service/business solutions. If external suppliers are integrated into the business areas, organizations need to consider critical issues such as securing confidentiality of information and retention of expertise within the organization.

19. In this topic we would welcome papers on the following questions:
- How should an organization approach key strategic decisions on those services that should be undertaken by internal and external resources?
 - Having made decisions to purchase services, what types of supplier management models should be employed (e.g. commodity supplier vs partnership strategies?) and why are these appropriate?
 - What steps should IT departments take in helping the business areas to appreciate and support the purpose and objectives of the external supplier relationship?
 - What management structures, relationship governance and development strategies should be employed to maximize the benefits of the external party to the organization?

- If an outsourcing strategy is adopted, what works well and what aspects are problematic? What have organizations learned from these experiences?
- Is there greater opportunity for service collaboration between ISI/NSIs and other governmental departments? (e.g. sharing web-based service orientated architecture components, shared infrastructure/hosting)?
- What pressures do organizations encounter when introducing these new IT service concepts?

Topic (iv): Review and follow-up to the activities of the Conference of European Statisticians

(Discussant: Juraj Riecan, Tel: +41 -22 917 -3328; juraj.riecon@unece.org)

20. Following the tradition established by the former UNECE Working Party on Electronic Data Processing, the Meeting is invited to review the activities in the field of statistical information processing in which the Conference is active and to make suggestions for its future work. Presently, the activities of the Conference in this field are focused on the following areas:

- Management of statistical information systems (jointly with OECD and Eurostat);
- Website on leading IT practices in national statistical offices;
- Statistical data confidentiality (jointly with Eurostat);
- Statistical data editing;
- Electronic data reporting (jointly with Eurostat);
- Statistical Metadata (jointly with Eurostat and OECD).

VI. ACCOMMODATION

21. Detailed information regarding hotel accommodation in Sofia will be provided in Information Notice no. 2 by the Bulgarian host authorities. Participants are reminded that they are responsible for making their own hotel reservations.

VII. FURTHER INFORMATION

22. For further information, please contact the following organizers:

NSI, Bulgaria (for matters of content):

Ms. Svetlana Ganeva

Head, Integrated Statistical Information Systems Division

National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria

2, rue du P. Volov

SOFIA 1504

Tel.: +359-2 985-7719

Fax: +359-2 985-7488

e-mail: SGaneva@nsi.bg

NSI, Bulgaria (for organizational matters):

Ms. Tania Lazarova
National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria
2, rue du P. Volov
SOFIA 1504

Tel.: +359-2 985-7626
Fax: +359-2 985-7488
e-mail: TLazarova@nsi.bg

UNECE:

Mr. Juraj Riecan
Chief, User Services Section
Statistical Division,
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
1211-GENEVA 10, Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 917 33 28
Fax: +41 22 917 00 40
e-mail: juraj.riecan@unece.org

Eurostat:

Mr. Georges Pongas
Statistical Office of the European Communities
Rue Alcide de Gasperi
L-2920 Luxembourg

Tel: +352 4301 33917
Fax: +352 4301 32999
e-mail: georges.pongas@cec.eu.int

OECD:

Mr. Lars Thygesen
Head of Division, Statistical Information Systems and Support
Statistics Directorate
OECD
2, rue André Pascal
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16
France

Tel. +331 4524 8402
e-mail: lars.thygesen@oecd.org

REGISTRATION FORM**for the Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems
(MSIS)**

(Sofia, Bulgaria, 21-23 June 2006)

This form should be completed in duplicate by each participant and returned **by 12 May 2006**

1 copy to: Ms. Diane Serikoff
 Tel: +4122 917-2241
 Fax: +4122 917-0040
 E-mail: diane.serikoff@unece.org

1 copy to: Ms. Tania Lazarova
 Tel: +359-2 985-7626
 Fax: +359-2 985-7488
 E-mail: TLazarova@nsi.bg

1. Surname (Family name):		Mr. ? Ms. ?	2. First name:
3. Representing (country or organization):			
4. Official function (in home country):			
5. Mailing address:			
6. Tel. No.:		7. Fax No.:	
8. E-mail address:			
9. Please indicate topic ((i)-(iii)) and title, if you intend to present a paper:			
10. Date and time of arrival in Sofia:		11. Date and time of departure from Sofia:	
12. Special requirements:			

Date_____

Signature_____