

ECE/CES/70

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Report of the fifty-fourth plenary session

(Paris, 13-15 June 2006)



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Geneva 2006**

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Attendance

1. The Conference of European Statisticians held its fifty-fourth plenary session in Paris at L'Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer-Patrimoine (UICP). It was attended by representatives from Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Montenegro, Republic of San Marino, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States.
2. The Conference was attended by representatives of the European Commission (Eurostat).
3. Representatives of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the following specialised agencies and intergovernmental organizations attended: European Free Trade Association (EFTA); Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Bank for International Settlements (BIS); International Labour Office (ILO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); and The World Bank.
4. Ms. Katherine Wallman (United States) chaired the Conference.
5. Mr. Dennis Trewin (Australia), Ms. Heli Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland), Mr. Luigi Biggeri (Italy), Ms. Aija Zigure (Latvia), Mr. Vladimir Sokolin (Russian Federation), and Ms. Irena Krizman (Slovenia) served as Vice-Chairpersons.

B. Agenda and procedure

6. The provisional agenda (ECE/CES/69 and Add.1) was adopted.

C. Opening statements

7. Ms. Wallman, Chairman of the Conference, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the 54th plenary session of the Conference. A special welcome was addressed to the Heads of the national statistical offices of Chile and Peru who were participating for the first time in the Conference. Mr. Belka, Executive Secretary of the UNECE, addressed the meeting on 15 June 2006, expressing pride in the global reach of the Conference. Mr. Belka highlighted the great importance that the UNECE member countries attach to the work of the sub-programme on Statistics and the Conference of European Statisticians, and emphasised the potential contributions of statisticians to elaboration and possible re-examination of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicators.

II. MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE'S PARENT BODIES

A. February 2006 session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/1

8. The Conference took note of the matters arising from the February 2006 Session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe and of the follow-up required. The Conference:

- (i) took note of the UNECE reform, the new governance structure of the UNECE and the role of the Executive Committee, and their implications on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and the UNECE Statistical Division;
- (ii) noted that the reduction of the human resources of the UNECE Statistical Division will have consequences for the UNECE Statistical Programme 2006, especially concerning the work on the macroeconomic database;
- (iii) welcomed the external evaluation of the macroeconomic and gender databases of the UNECE Statistical Division;
- (iv) stressed the importance of continuing the good cooperation between the UNECE, Eurostat, OECD, and other international organizations; and
- (v) stressed the need to continue to reinforce cooperation with subregional country groupings and with other international organizations in providing technical assistance.

B. March 2006 session of the UN Statistical Commission

9. Mr. Stefan Schweinfest (UN Statistics Division) informed the Conference about the main outcomes of the March 2006 session of the UN Statistical Commission. He drew attention to the following:

- adoption of the resolution on strengthening statistical capacity, especially with regard to monitoring the MDGs and other development goals;
- programme review of industrial statistics;
- adoption of the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 4 and the Central Product Classification (CPC), Version 2; and
- the set of principles governing the work of international statistical organizations.

10. The next session of the UN Statistical Commission will take place on 27 February – 2 March 2007, when the Commission will celebrate its 60th anniversary. Mr. Schweinfest noted that a special event will take place the afternoon of Monday, February 26, 2007, to mark the Commission's anniversary.

III. COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK IN THE UNECE REGION

A. *Issues and problems and Rapporteur Reports*

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/2, ECE/CES/2006/2/Add.1, ECE/CES/2006/2/Add.2, and ECE/CES/2006/2/Add.3

11. The Conference took note of the Rapporteur Reports prepared on the following topics:

- quality frameworks and the link with institutional frameworks and principles – report by Sweden;
- statistics on globalization – report by Canada and the United Kingdom;
- health statistics – report by the United States and the OECD.

12. The attention of the Conference was drawn to the issues raised and proposals made in the Rapporteur Reports. The following comments were made:

- Globalisation: there is a need for a body to coordinate work on globalisation statistics; the importance of globalisation statistics in relation to economic indicators was emphasised;
- Quality frameworks: there is a need for a focal point to coordinate the numerous international activities going on in this area;
- Health statistics:
 - in the update of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), health occupations are one of the priorities; however, there are also problems with the correspondence between other statistical classifications and medical classifications that the revised ISCO classification should try to resolve;
 - the role of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics and coordination of its work with other groups working on health statistics (e.g., the CES Task Force on Measuring Health Status, that is, the so-called Budapest initiative) needs to be clarified.

13. The Conference considered it necessary to review periodically the high priority statistical areas where considerable work is ongoing. The Rapporteur Reports should be more action oriented and include actionable recommendations for further steps to be taken by the Conference.

Action taken by the Conference

14. The Bureau will review health statistics coordination activities and will discuss the need for setting up a body to coordinate work on globalisation statistics at its future meeting.

B. Procedures for developing and adopting standards and recommendations by the Conference and the Bureau

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/37 Rev.1

Action taken by the Conference

15. The Conference approved the procedure for the preparation and adoption of the various products (e.g., standards, recommendations, handbooks, best practices) as described in the document ECE/CES/2006/37 Rev. 1.

C. Technical cooperation

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/3

16. The Conference took note of the proposals for coordination of technical cooperation in the UNECE region prepared by the UNECE secretariat in cooperation with Eurostat and the CIS Statistical Committee, approved by the CES Bureau in February 2006. An amendment was made to para 7(i) to add France, Norway, and EFTA to the list of international donors.

Action taken by the Conference

17. The Conference approved the strategy for coordinating technical cooperation in the UNECE region as described in document ECE/CES/2006/3, including the amendment in 7(i).

D. In-depth review of crime statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/5 and ECE/CES/2006/7

18. The Conference considered statistical activities in the area of justice and crime based on Rapporteur Reports prepared by Italy and the Netherlands. The discussion was focused on finding ways to resolve the identified problems and to propose follow-up actions to improve international work on crime statistics.

19. During the discussion, the participants:

- welcomed the work of the UNECE-UNODC Task Force on victimization surveys and the coordination between UNECE, UNODC, and Eurostat;
- discussed the relevance of considering crime as a social phenomenon and the integration of crime statistics into the general framework of social statistics;
- recognized that the harmonization of victimization surveys at international level may be achieved in a shorter time than the harmonization of data based on administrative records that are not under the control of statisticians. The victimization surveys have the advantage of measuring unreported crimes. These surveys are based on frameworks that are different from the judicial system, and consider acts of violence that are not recognized by the legal system (e.g., domestic violence). On the other hand, they do not include certain types of crimes recognised by the legal system (e.g., organised crime);

- recognized the policy relevance of data based on administrative records that cannot be collected through surveys (e.g., data on offenders), and the benefits of sharing methodological experiences;
- discussed the possibility of developing a common analytical framework where statistics could be harmonized through a common analysis even when they are based on different definitions; and
- highlighted the fact that the development of standards on some crime areas may be outside the responsibility of statisticians (such as the definition of categories for organized crime).

20. The Conference asked the UNECE-UNODC Task Force on Victimization Surveys:

- to continue its work toward the harmonization of victimization surveys; and
- to work towards harmonizing selected statistics based on administrative records and the promotion of cooperation and exchange of practices on conceptual frameworks, definitions, and methods.

IV. PROGRESS REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

A. Progress reports on the Teams of Specialists working under CES

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/4

21. The progress reports of Teams of Specialists (Steering Groups, Task Forces, Organising Committees) working under the auspices of the Conference were presented for information.

B. UNECE Statistical Programme: report on 2005 and plans for 2006

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/38

22. A short report covering the work undertaken by the UNECE Statistical Division in 2005 and plans for 2006 was presented. The major challenges for 2006 include implementing the decisions of the UNECE reform in statistics, namely strengthening the international statistical coordination activities, methodological work, and technical cooperation. An external review of the UNECE online macroeconomic and gender statistics databases will be carried out as required by the reforms.

C. Follow-up to decisions taken by the CES and its Bureau

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/39

23. Attention of the Conference was drawn to the document summarising the main decisions taken by the Bureau and the Conference where work is in progress. Under each decision, the action to be taken is indicated. The note permits the identification of possible delays and facilitates taking decisions for further action. It also improves transparency of the work of the Conference and its Bureau.

D. 2006 issue of the Database of International Statistical Activities (formerly called Integrated Presentation)

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/40

24. The UNECE secretariat provided brief information on the 2006 version of the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA/IP). The Database includes information on current statistical activities of all major international organizations active in the UNECE region and is available on the Internet (<http://unece.unog.ch/IntPres/default.asp>).

V. GUIDELINES AND CORE PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING CONFIDENTIALITY AND MICRODATA ACCESS

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/6

25. The Conference considered the Interim Guidelines and Core Principles on Managing Confidentiality and Microdata Access. The document was prepared by a Task Force chaired by Dennis Trewin as a follow-up to the CES Seminar on Confidentiality and Microdata that was held in 2003. Countries and international organizations commented extensively on the subsequent drafts of the document that were presented at the CES 2004 and 2005 plenary sessions. The Bureau endorsed the Interim Guidelines at its February 2006 meeting.

26. The following points were made during the discussion:

- countries and international organizations are facing increasing requests for microdata and the Guidelines are very welcome in this respect;
- the Guidelines present some innovative approaches for giving access to microdata that are useful for countries; and
- it is important to take into account the costs and resources that are involved in making microdata available as a statistical product.

27. Several countries informed the Conference about new work in improving access to microdata and brought examples of activities where the Guidelines were used (e.g., Brazil and Switzerland). Eurostat informed the meeting about a forthcoming seminar to be organised in collaboration with the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom and the UNECE to reinforce the Guidelines and to exchange experience in their implementation.

28. The Conference supported the adoption of the Guidelines. The latest written comments received on the Interim Guidelines from Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States will be taken into account when amending the text. The additional case studies proposed by Australia, Brazil, and the Netherlands will be included in the document after consideration by the Task Force.

29. The Conference welcomed the suggestions that a Task Force be appointed to examine the concerns related to integrated data sets and consider the development of common principles.

30. Participants were unanimous in congratulating Dennis Trewin for finalising this important work and considered the Guidelines as extremely valuable for harmonising approaches to micro-data

access across countries and improving arrangements for providing access to micro-data. Ms. Wallman thanked Dennis Trewin, the members of the Task Force, and other people involved for this excellent work.

Action taken by the Conference

31. The Conference adopted the Guidelines subject to the inclusion of modifications to address the latest comments received from Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Bureau will approve the amended text before the adopted Guidelines are posted on the UNECE website.

VI. SEMINAR ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES

32. This seminar was organised by the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses. Ms. Karen Dunnell (United Kingdom) chaired the seminar.

Session 1: The role and use of censuses

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/20, 23, and 32; supporting papers: ECE/CES/2006/SP/3, 7, 15, 16, and 18.

33. The session was organised by Mr. Jean-Michel Charpin (France). Mr. Hermann Habermann (U.S. Census Bureau) served as the Discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Australia, Kazakhstan, and Norway, and supporting papers by Hungary, FAO, ILO, OECD, and UNECE.

34. The session dealt with the functions of the census in national statistical systems with the objective of clarifying its unique and important contributions. The analysis of the role and use of censuses helps in understanding how they may evolve over time and what alternative sources and approaches in terms of census content, definitions, and methodology can be used to better respond to the demands for census data.

35. In the discussion, the following points were made:

- the role and uses of censuses are evolving in many countries to adapt to the changing societies, to respond to new demands from users and respondents, and to increase the efficiency of the census for the whole statistical system. This evolution in many countries is characterised by the introduction of innovative census methodologies;
- in order to respond to demand for up-to-date population data, an increasing number of countries adopt census methodologies that allow the production of such data on an annual basis, such as censuses based on registers, rolling censuses, or decennial counting with annual updates based on large sample surveys;
- the main driver for the population census remains the total counting of the population that provides the benchmark for the population estimates that in many countries are updated on an annual basis. These data are used, for example, for apportionment of funds, electoral planning, and other official purposes;
- other main drivers of the census are production of data on small geographic areas and small population groups, and benchmarking for specialized surveys;

- in some countries, census taking is regarded as a national celebration event, where citizens participate together to provide the data needed to draw an accurate picture of the society; and
- in countries where data collection for the census is based on registers or spread over time, the dissemination of major census results can be used as an opportunity to increase the visibility of the census.

Session 2: Design and essential features of censuses

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/24, 27, 28, and 36; supporting papers: ECE/CES/2006/SP/4, 5, and 10

36. The session was organised by Mr. Jay Keller (U.S. Census Bureau). Mr. Jean-Claude Milleron (France) served as the Discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Albania, France, the Netherlands, and the United States, and supporting papers by Finland, Germany, and Latvia.

37. The session considered the emerging methodologies for census taking and the essential features of a census in this regard. The invited papers for this session presented the various approaches used by the countries in the UNECE region, including traditional, register-based, and rolling censuses. During the discussion, various questions were addressed, such as the difference between a census and other data collection activities; the kinds of data collection activities that could be labelled as ‘census’; the conditions that need to be in place in order to adopt new methodologies and move away from a traditional census; and the advantages and disadvantages of new and traditional methods.

38. In the discussion, the following points were made:

- an increasing number of countries in the region are moving towards the use of administrative registers to derive census data. This approach has various advantages; for example, the census data can be produced more frequently and there is no need to collect information from respondents. The latter is important in countries where public participation in censuses is decreasing or where there is public opposition. The disadvantages concern the difference between statistical and administrative concepts and the fact that the derived variables can be based only on what is available in registers;
- the register approach can be a cost effective solution, in particular in countries where a register system is already in place. Building up one statistical register based on different administrative registers that can be used for different subject-matter statistics can be an efficient solution for the whole statistical office;
- in countries where a register system does not exist, creating a new one for the exclusive purpose of the census may be too costly or currently unacceptable from a privacy perspective. If registers are created for purposes other than statistics, their use for censuses may be a cost saving strategy, especially in the long term;
- in the case of register-based censuses and the rolling censuses, costs are distributed evenly across time. On one hand, this may help to reduce costs through use of the same methods and technology. On the other hand, it may prove more difficult to secure funding;
- in addition to register-based censuses, several other innovative census methodologies emerged in the last years as alternatives to the traditional census. These methodologies are in general based on the combined use of registers, sample surveys, or on the so-called “rolling census”;

- a significant number of countries will continue to conduct traditional censuses, for a number of reasons. For example, in some countries the establishment of a unique identification number and the matching of administrative records based on personal identification number, even if it were limited to official statistics, is not widely accepted by the public or permitted by law.

Session 3: Challenges in managing and implementing censuses

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/26, 29, 33, and 35; supporting papers: ECE/CES/2006/SP/2, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 17

39. The session was organised by Mr. Peter Scrimgeour (United Kingdom). Ms. Nancy McBeth (New Zealand) served as the Discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Canada, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and supporting papers by Azerbaijan, Brazil, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, and Spain.

40. The session discussed the wide range of challenges in delivering censuses successfully. The problems that countries face relate to the uses of census data, the coordination and funding of the census, as well as the practicalities of capturing comprehensive and accurate information. Some of the challenges are being met by introducing a range of new census-taking technologies and methodologies, such as using the Internet or hand-held devices for data capture, and making use of existing address lists or administrative registers. In other cases, countries are looking to outsource some or all activities related to data processing and other aspects of census-taking. The session also discussed the implications of quality control and confidentiality.

41. In the discussion, the following points were made:

- the increased mobility of the population is an additional challenge to the conducting of population censuses. The definition of the population and the different migrant populations, including illegal migrants, affect population counting and intercensal population estimates. Collaboration between countries could help to improve capture of data on migration;
- quality is an important factor of the census regardless of the methods used. Evaluation of coverage is one of the key aspects. For register-based censuses, the methods of quality control have to be redefined (e.g., defining coverage errors in terms of non-response may not be appropriate);
- the use of technology can help to address some of the challenges in the new census round. The use of the Internet for data collection has proven to be a valid tool in some countries to improve quality, although there is still no evidence that it can improve the coverage; and
- countries increasingly involve the private sector in certain tasks of conducting the population census. This may provide more cost-effective solutions; however, the selection of tasks that can be outsourced and the long-term implications of outsourcing versus internal development should be carefully evaluated.

Concluding remarks

42. In conclusion, Ms. Karen Dunnell highlighted some of the key points of the seminar:

- there is a long list of drivers for the census, but its main aim is to provide the official counting of the population and to measure the size and structure of the population. These data are used, among other things, for apportionment of funds, electoral purposes, and public planning. Therefore, the census is a public good that has a wider relevance than statistics;
- the census is the main basis for population estimates. In this context, challenges are posed by the increasing demand for more frequently updated data and for data at small area levels;
- the census should be considered as part of a statistical system and not as a separate entity, especially because of the links with administrative and statistical registers, other surveys, and sample frames for surveys. The quality of administrative registers, as well as their coverage of needed data elements, is an issue. A statistical register based on all available administrative sources that can be used for different statistical purposes can be useful;
- there is no one “ideal” approach to census taking, the choice of methods depends on the circumstances in countries;
- given the different innovative approaches to censuses being developed in many countries, international requirements should focus both on census output and on methods;
- migration and mobility make population estimation difficult; methods should be developed for capturing migration and mobility in and between censuses;
- making efficient use of technology for censuses is a continuous learning process; and
- the success of a census is also linked to the image of the national statistical office, its integrity, and public trust. The statistical office’s pledge of confidentiality and the importance of the census for good governance should be communicated to the public.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE CES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2010 CENSUSES OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

Documentation: CES/AC.6/2005/2/Add.1/Rev.1

43. This session was chaired by Katherine Wallman, Chairman of the Conference. Ms. Rosemary Bender (Canada), Chairman of the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, presented the draft CES Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing. The recommendations resulted from the work of the Steering Group and a number of Task Forces composed of experts from national statistical offices and international organizations.

44. The Conference recognised the two main objectives of the CES Recommendations: to guide countries in the planning and conducting of their population and housing census, and to improve the comparability of the data through the selection of a core set of census topics and the harmonization of definitions and classifications. It was stressed that there is a lot of work ahead to implement the new recommendations.

45. The Conference expressed great appreciation for the excellent work done by over 100 experts in the 11 Task Forces that were led by a Steering Group chaired by Statistics Canada, and particular thanks to Rosemary Bender for her outstanding leadership of this effort. Furthermore, appreciation was expressed to the UNECE secretariat and Eurostat for coordinating the work.

Action taken by the Conference

46. The Conference adopted the CES Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing.

VIII. SEMINAR ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING

47. The seminar was organised by the Czech Republic. Mr. Jan Fischer (Czech Republic) chaired the seminar.

Session 1: Human resources as a main element of the modern statistical office; vocational training of employees

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, and 30; supporting paper ECE/CES/2006/SP/14

48. The session was organised by Mr. Ivan Fellegi (Canada). Mr. Jan Plovsing (Denmark), Mr. Luigi Biggeri (Italy), and Ms. Irena Krizman (Slovenia) served as the Discussants. The session was based on invited papers by Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine, and a supporting paper by Japan.

49. The Conference discussed the management and development of human resources and the integration of human resources work in the overall development of statistical organizations. Different strategies for the development of human resources in national statistical offices were considered, as regards general and job-specific capabilities, and formal versus informal learning processes. The Conference also addressed issues related to the development of the learning organization, human and organisational competencies, and the evaluation of the work on human resources. The session was divided into three segments, focusing on how to select the right employees, how to retain and develop staff, and vocational training.

50. The following points were made in the discussion:

- human resources are the most important single factor of production in the national statistical offices; therefore, investment in human resources is critically important. Hence, the development of human resources should be the main priority of the management, and this should be signalled to staff;
- it is important to integrate human resources work into the corporate and strategic plan. The staff should be involved in the discussion in order to make the process transparent and to obtain their commitment;
- to recruit the best candidates, human resources policy needs to take into account the changing environment. The statistical office is competing with other public and private institutions to attract a limited supply of qualified staff;
- career development can be managed using different approaches, such as human resource pools, individual career paths, an internal labour market, etc.;
- the required capabilities and competences need to be identified both at the individual and organisational level in order to define the needs for training;

- human resources development consists of both formal and informal training; the largest part of competence development occurs during daily work;
- human resources development should aim at increasing flexibility and adaptability while at the same time ensuring the development of specialised skills. There has to be a mix of skills and a balance between generalists and highly specialised experts;
- the development of the learning organization and the support of a culture of learning is imperative to human resources management, and can also help to attract employees;
- it is important to evaluate the effect of activities on human resources by, for example, measuring the results of the activities and gathering feedback on human resources work (e.g., monitoring staff morale);
- some national statistical offices may not have the legal possibility to work out a human resource policy that takes into account the requirements of official statistics;
- the transition countries experience increased needs for training because of the rapid changes in the society and economy and the need to reorganise statistics. There are plans to set up a South-Caucasus training centre for statisticians;
- there is a need to agree on a set of minimal core competencies of statisticians; and
- international cooperation would be useful to exchange experience in managing human resources in official statistics.

51. In concluding the first session, Mr. Ivan Fellegi highlighted the following key points:

- investment in human resources is critical for the whole office, and cannot be based on cost-benefit considerations only. One should keep in mind whether one can afford *not* to invest in human resources;
- integrating the human resources management into the corporate plan is vitally important;
- direct responsibility for human resources rests with the management. Their activities should be supported by the human resource departments. Tools need to be put in place to allow line managers to acquire *direct* responsibility for the management and development of human resources;
- statistical programs have to adapt to changing societies. Therefore, flexibility and adaptability of human resources within official statistics should be leading principles. This requires that most professionals should be generalists (managers of statistical surveys and processes), while a smaller but still crucial proportion should be specialists;
- in recruiting new staff, national statistical offices should always aim at selecting the best individuals and give them opportunities to develop;
- retention of staff is as important as recruitment. There are many ways to encourage staff to stay in the office, such as offering training opportunities, job satisfaction, healthy working environment, work-life balance, being part of a learning organization, etc.;
- national statistical offices should strive to create a culture of continuous learning, based on different forms of training, career guidance, mobility and rotation of staff;
- teamwork should have an essential role, both within the statistical office and with outside partners. All training and development activities should put emphasis on teamwork;
- measurement of performance of human resources management is important, including benchmarking, evaluation and corresponding adjustments; and
- the leadership in human resources management has to come from the head of the office. There should be consistent and unwavering support for human resources policies and practices.

Session 2: The role that the statistical office has to play in educating the public, in preparing future producers and users of statistics

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/15, 19, and 25; supporting papers ECE/CES/2006/SP/1 and 13

52. The session was organised by Ms. Heli Jeskanen-Sundström (Finland). Mr. Dennis Trewin (Australia) served as the Discussant. The session was based on invited papers by Estonia, the United States, and Eurostat, and supporting papers by Finland and Poland.

53. The session considered the education and training of current as well as prospective statistical data providers and users, with particular attention to the needs of different groups of users and their likely benefits. New forms of education, such as e-learning and web-schools, and visual communication of data were also discussed.

54. In the discussion, the following points were made:

- the provision of statistical education resources to schools is important for educating the future users of statistics; interaction with teachers and ministries of education, aligning statistical materials with school curricula, can be an efficient way to target schools;
- education materials should be focused on particular user groups. Eye catchers and story lines may be used, a website “school corner” offers additional possibilities;
- working with university level users can be beneficial for statistical offices to obtain constructive criticism; having students use statistical offices’ data also works as a marketing tool;
- libraries can also play a role in reaching out to potential users;
- engaging the media facilitates outreach to wide audiences and helps to improve the statistical offices’ visibility. The key for success is to present materials in a media-friendly way; and
- there is scope for international cooperation in sharing statistical teaching materials and jointly developing learning environments.

Session 3: Statistical training at international level for higher quality of statistics and of training activities

Documentation: ECE/CES/2006/31 and 34; supporting paper: ECE/CES/2006/SP/6

55. The session was organised by Eurostat and chaired by Ms. Marie Bohatá. Mr. Richard Laux (United Kingdom) served as the Discussant. The session was based on invited papers by the IMF and Eurostat, and a supporting paper by Japan.

56. The session considered the importance of statistical training at the international level and the role of international organizations in statistical training. An important issue is better coordination in providing training and technical assistance to countries to avoid duplication of effort. The session emphasised the importance of international exchange of best practices and transfer of experience in the area of statistical training. The United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP) informed the Conference about the statistical training activities for government statisticians from developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

57. In the discussions during the session, the following points were made:

- training is a vital investment. Therefore, the statistical community could work together to make a stronger case for appropriate resources to be made available for training;
- organizations need to make more use of the potential of the Internet for training;
- coordination of international training should be improved, e.g., by sharing and translating training materials and organizing training for trainers;
- a proposal was made to establish a network of statistical trainers, and a set of core competencies for statisticians working in official statistics;
- there should be a link between the technical assistance projects and training; and
- it is important to specify a common quality framework and quality standards for international training.

Conclusions of the seminar on human resources and training

58. In concluding the seminar, Mr. Jan Fischer highlighted some key points:

- the importance of a healthy work environment in attracting highly qualified human resources;
- the need to find the right balance between different forms of training, such as formal and informal training, general and tailored training, e-learning, etc.;
- the importance of promoting the role of universities and media as partners and not as competitors; and
- the need for partnership with international organizations and international training programs.

Action taken by the Conference

- UNECE will publish the proceedings of the seminar in the form of “best practices.”
- There is a need to continue the exchange of experience in the area of human resources and training; Mr. Jan Fischer, the chair of the seminar, will formulate proposals for follow-up work to be considered by the CES Bureau in October 2006.

IX. SELECTION OF TOPICS FOR SEMINARS FOR THE NEXT PLENARY SESSION

59. Based on the results of the survey conducted electronically by the UNECE secretariat in May 2006 and the recommendations of the Bureau, the Conference selected the following topics for the seminars in 2007:

- **For the seminar on foundational issues of statistical systems:**

Ways to increase the productivity of the statistical office and to conduct statistical programs more efficiently and effectively.

The possibility of combining it with the topic of official/non-official statistics could be explored.

Seminar organizer: to be decided by the CES Bureau.

Contributors: Finland, Israel, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

- **For the seminar on emerging issues:**

Measurement of capital - beyond the traditional measures

Seminar organizer: the Netherlands

Sessions:

- 1) policy drivers;
 - 2) capital boundaries in the revision of the System of National Accounts 1993 (possible organizer: IMF);
 - 3) measurement of human capital (possible organizer: Australia);
 - 4) measurement of social capital (possible organizers: the United Kingdom, Finland);
- Contributors: Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Eurostat.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

60. The 2007 Plenary session of the Conference will take place during the week of 11-15 June in Geneva.

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