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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Fifty-sixth plenary session
Paris, 10-12 June 2008

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA
FOR THE FIFTY-SIXTH PLENARY SESSION¹**

To be held in the Conference Center
of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris²

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda.
2. Meetings of the parent bodies of the Conference of European Statisticians.
3. Coordination of international statistical work in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.
 - (a) Business statistics.
 - (b) Statistics on income, living conditions and poverty.
 - (c) Gender statistics.
 - (d) Culture statistics.
 - (e) Environment statistics.

¹ Documents for the meeting may be downloaded from the following website:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2008.06.ces.htm> Delegates are kindly asked to bring their own copies of documents with them, as no paper copies will be made available in the meeting room.

² The Conference Center is located at 2, rue André-Pascal, 75016 Paris.

4. Statistical metadata.
5. Report of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Sustainable Development Indicators.
6. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme and Work of the Conference's Teams of Specialists.
 - (a) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme: report on 2007 and plans for 2008.
 - (b) Progress report on the impact of globalisation on National Accounts.
 - (c) Progress reports on other Teams of Specialists working under the Conference of European Statisticians.
7. Seminar on strategic issues linked to the measurement of international transactions.
8. Seminar on measuring population movement and integration in a globalized world.
9. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2009 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians.
10. Other business.
11. Adoption of the report.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. The 2008 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) will continue to follow the format introduced in 2002 by the fiftieth session of the Conference. The plenary session includes a formal session and two seminars. The formal session will deal with the review of general issues such as the international statistical work in the region, while the two seminars will focus on foundational issues of statistical systems and on new emerging issues.

Item 1. Opening addresses and adoption of the agenda

2. Mr. M. Belka, the Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will address the Conference.
3. The proposed provisional agenda and timetable were agreed upon by the CES Bureau at its February 2008 meeting. The provisional agenda will be presented for the approval of the Conference.

Item 2. Meetings of the parent bodies of Conference of European Statisticians

4. Brief information on the outcome of the 2008 Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission will be presented to the Conference

Item 3. Coordination of international statistical work in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

5. This agenda item is concerned with the coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region and the decisions and recommendations that the Conference is expected to take on the respective issues.

6. The Conference will be informed about the regular in-depth review of selected statistical areas made by the CES Bureau. The review looks at strategic issues in statistics in the next five years or so and deals with issues of concern to statistical offices of a conceptual and coordinating nature.

(a) Business statistics

7. The Bureau made an in-depth review of business statistics in February 2007. The follow-up steps include setting up a small Task Force to deal with pending issues in business statistics and a proposal to organise a CES seminar on business statistics in 2009.

(b) Statistics on income, living conditions and poverty

8. The topic was reviewed in depth by the Bureau in October 2007. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the discussions and the decisions that the Bureau took concerning this area.

(c) Gender statistics

9. The topic was reviewed in depth by the Bureau in October 2007. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the discussions and the decisions that the Bureau took concerning this area. The Conference will also be informed about the outcome of the Global Forum on Gender Statistics (Rome, 10-12 December 2007).

(d) Culture statistics

10. The topic was reviewed in depth by the Bureau in February 2008. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the discussions and the decisions that the Bureau took concerning this area.

(e) Environment statistics

11. The topic was reviewed in depth by the Bureau in February 2008. The Conference will be informed about the outcome of the discussions and the decisions that the Bureau took concerning this area.

Item 4. Statistical metadata

12. The Bureau included statistical metadata on the agenda of the CES plenary session in order to draw the attention of the Heads of National Statistical Offices to the role of metadata in statistical production and dissemination. The presentation will deal with the importance of metadata both for internal management and for users of statistics.

Item 5. Report of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development: a framework for sustainable development indicators

13. The report is the result of the research work that the Joint Working Group has undertaken since 2006 following the Bureau decision to develop a broad conceptual framework for measuring sustainable development. The report will be presented to the Conference for discussion. The report will be distributed in advance of the meeting to allow countries to study it and to provide written comments to the UNECE secretariat by 20 May 2008. The comments will be summarised in a Room Paper and made available at the Conference.

Item 6. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical programme and work of the Conference's Teams of Specialists

(a) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme: report on 2007 and plans for 2008.

14. The UNECE Statistical Programme for 2008 and the report on the implementation of the 2007 Programme will be presented briefly for information.

(b) Progress report on the impact of globalisation on National Accounts

15. As a follow-up to the CES Seminar on globalisation in 2006, a Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Working Group on the Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts was set up in the second half of 2007. The Conference will be informed about the progress of work and future plans of the Working Group.

(c) Progress reports on other Teams of Specialists working under the Conference of European Statisticians

16. The progress reports of other Teams of Specialists (Steering Groups, Task Forces) working under the auspices of the CES, and the reports from experts' meetings held since June 2007, will be presented for information.

Item 7. Seminar on strategic issues linked to the measurement of international transactions

17. The Seminar is organized by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). It will be chaired by Mr. S. Landefeld (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis).

18. The seminar aims to draw the attention of the Heads of statistical offices to the contemporary policy issues related to international transactions and their statistical implications, and to the coordination issues that arise in most countries. The views and experiences of countries can be shared and opportunities for collaboration among countries can be identified.

19. The last two decades have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the cross-border movement of goods, services, income and financial flows. Coupled with the increasing sophistication of international financial markets and the growing complexity of financial instruments, statisticians face increasing challenges in responding to user demands.

20. In most countries, responsibilities for international accounts statistics are shared among the national statistics office, the central bank, the customs administration, and, in some cases, with regulatory authorities. Good coordination and cooperation are necessary if a coherent set of macroeconomic statistics is to be available.

Session I: Policy Drivers

Organizer: Mr. S. Landefeld, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and Mr. R. Edwards, International Monetary Fund

Chair: Mr. R. Edwards, International Monetary Fund

Keynote speakers: Policy Development and Review Department, International Monetary Fund, and Mr. N. Sheets, The Federal Reserve Board, United States

21. This session will deal with the contemporary policy and analytical interests in international economics from the perspective of an international organization and from the perspective of a country. Issues to be covered include global imbalances, globalization of businesses, outsourcing, financial interconnectedness among countries, debt relief, reserves accumulation, vulnerability analyses, remittances flows, and emerging issues with direct and portfolio investment.

22. The presentations are expected to consider how existing statistics inform on policy issues. They should also identify the information gaps and other statistical quality issues and the difficulties that these present for effective analysis and policy work.

Session II: Selected Measurement Issues

Organizer: Mr. R. Edwards, International Monetary Fund

23. This session will cover different topics of contemporary measurement interest. The session will be divided into two sub-sessions to better focus the discussion.

Sub-session II.a Some current account issues

Chair: Mr. J. Cadete de Matos, Banco de Portugal

Discussant: Mr. S. Yitzhaki, Israel

Invited papers: Hong Kong SAR, Eurostat

24. The revised SNA and *Balance of Payments Manual* introduce a new treatment of goods for processing and merchanting. This would change the way in which the physical movement of goods captured in merchandise trade statistics is reconciled with the international flows to be recorded in the Balance of Payments and National Accounts. Both issues are significant for the economy of Hong Kong, therefore its experience can be useful for other countries encountering similar problems.

25. Remittance flows are increasingly important in supporting economic growth in many countries. Substantial work has been undertaken on rethinking the conceptual basis for remittances statistics within the context of the United Nations Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Natural Persons and the revision of the IMF *Balance of Payments Manual*. Major practical measurement issues arise in compiling remittances statistics, which the Luxembourg Group is addressing with the upcoming Compilation Guide on Remittances. The session will deal with the pros and cons of alternative compilation approaches, including use of counterpart jurisdiction data on remittances.

Sub-session II.b Asymmetries in partner country data

Chair: Ms. A. Burgi-Schmelz, Switzerland
Discussant: Mr. S. Keuning, European Central Bank
Invited papers: Netherlands, United Kingdom

26. Foreign direct investment is becoming a crucial factor in the worldwide process of industrial restructuring and the development of global enterprises. Distinguishing whether direct investment occurs through mergers and acquisitions, or through “greenfields” investments is perceived to be important in assessing its economic impact. Direct investment through holding companies or special purpose vehicles (e.g. in international financial centers) may conceal the full economic impact upon the ultimate beneficiary countries.

Session III: Institutional arrangements for compilation of international accounts statistics

Organizer: Mr. R. Edwards, International Monetary Fund
Chair: Ms. I. Krizman, Slovenia
Discussant: Mr. H-P. Glaab, Deutsche Bundesbank
Invited papers: Austria, Canada, Russia, Switzerland

27. International accounts statistics comprise an integrated system of stocks and flows statistics compiled within the overarching framework of the United Nations System of National Accounts. In most countries, responsibilities for international accounts statistics reside with organizations (typically the central bank) which do not have responsibility for some of the underlying source data or for the national accounts. This session will explore conceptual links between the various datasets and good practices in cooperation among statistical offices, central banks, and other source data providers, including outside the economy.

Item 8. Seminar on measuring population movement and integration in a globalized world

28. The Seminar is organised by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and Eurostat. It will be chaired by Mr. W. Radermacher (President of the German Federal Statistical Office).

29. The Seminar will look at the challenges for statistics on measuring the population movement and integration. The UNECE region experiences large flows of population between the different sub-regions, and from other regions. This results in substantial changes in the composition of the population and has an effect on these more heterogeneous societies. Migration affects the demographic, economic and social situation in both the countries of destination and origin. It is important to describe population composition (stocks) and to measure the causes and effects of the population flows. It is also politically highly relevant to analyse the effects of both the population flows and of the composition of the population on the labour market, the income situation, pension schemes and sub-regional wealth.

Session 1: Demographic impact of migration

Session Chair: Mr. G. Brückner, Germany
Discussant: Mr. W. Haug, Switzerland
Invited papers: Austria, Spain, Poland (all to be confirmed)

30. The session will aim to identify key population groups and demographic indicators related to migration for inter-country comparisons. Information on citizenship and country of birth is frequently collected. However, this is not sufficient in many cases as the children of migrants may well be born in the destination country and may take the citizenship of that country.

31. The migrant population typically differs from the resident population with respect to many (socio-)demographic variables such as age, fertility and mortality rates, household size and composition. This may influence key demographic indicators in both the source and the destination country.

32. Migration may exert a favourable influence on the financial basis of social security systems (old age pensions, health care, assistance to those with disabilities) and on the relative share of the population in labour force participation age, thus on age dependency rates. Short term effects may differ from long term effects in these areas, however.

Session 2: Migration and labour markets

Session Chair: Mr. M. Glaude, Eurostat

Discussant: To be determined

Invited papers: Austria (to be confirmed), Canada, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

33. Migration influences the labour force of both the source and the destination country. The importance of these influences depends on the respective educational attainment and occupational qualifications of the migrants, as well as on the scale of the population movements concerned. Particular problems may arise when well-educated migrants from a developing country take up jobs in developed countries, resulting in a brain drain in their countries of origin. Thus migration contributes to solving the problems of one country by worsening the problems of another, often economically worse-off country. Some countries may be confronted with both aspects at the same time: they attract qualified professionals from third countries while simultaneously losing qualified nationals to other countries offering even more favourable working conditions.

Session 3: Migration and society

Session Chair: Ms. D. McGregor, New Zealand

Discussant: Mr. J-C. Dumont, OECD – to be confirmed

Invited papers: Germany, New Zealand, Oxford University

34. Migration brings together people of different origins, traditional values and cultural background. In the destination country, this requires mutual respect and the willingness of both the migrant and the native population to agree to common terms.

35. The traditional concept of integration – particularly in countries with a long history of immigration – has been one which expected immigrants and their children to adopt quite rapidly the language, culture and lifestyle of the destination country. In parallel, links to the countries of origin would normally weaken fairly quickly. In particular, the children of immigrants would identify themselves primarily as belonging to their country of birth and residence, rather than to

their parents' country of origin. There are questions now, however, as to whether this view of integration can be applied generally.

36. Measuring the cultural integration of the population cannot be accomplished simply by using traditional statistical variables such as citizenship or country of birth. Possible new indicators may relate to the main modes of communication and cultural activities (language(s) spoken at home, language of the newspapers read and of the TV-channels watched, membership and participation in local social, sporting, cultural or charitable organizations of the destination country).

37. Social integration of migrants may be difficult or impossible where cultural links remain primarily or exclusively focused on the country of origin. It may be important to know the discrepancies between different language groups with respect to variables considered 'crucial' from the point of view of integration (e.g. educational attainment).

Session 4: Emerging statistical needs

Session Chair: Mr. G. Lemaître, OECD

Discussant: To be determined

Invited papers: Eurostat, World Bank (to be confirmed), UNECE, Migration Policy Group

38. Migration is a phenomenon of ever-growing importance in the countries of UNECE. The interest in inter-country comparisons on the various aspects of migration requires common standards with respect to, among others, the definition of migrant populations and minimum data sets. These common standards will also facilitate the exchange of data between countries which can be an important approach to improving the availability of emigration statistics. Common statistical definitions relating to the key statistics on migration flow and foreign population stock variables have been defined in international recommendations and in European law. One challenge now is to encourage the more general application of these definitions.

39. A number of factors call into question whether the currently defined and recommended migration statistics – even if fully and correctly implemented – really respond to the changing needs for information. This is a more fundamental challenge to official statisticians. These changing needs for information are driven in many cases by developments related to globalisation through increased population mobility, greatly reduced barriers to communication and travel, and new, more flexible, ways of organising work and employment.

40. There is a need to examine how to adapt and supplement existing statistics to ensure that adequate information is available about the changing modes and patterns of migration and integration. Agreement is needed on the types of population movement and integration-related phenomena that can and should be measured. This is a pre-requisite to identifying appropriate statistical data sources and methods. Work is needed to define which statistics need to be modified, what modifications are to be implemented, what priorities are considered appropriate, which institutions may commit themselves to take responsibilities, and which procedures should be started to successfully accomplish the targets.

Item 9. Selection of topics for seminars to take place during the 2009 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians

41. A list of possible topics for seminars to take place during the 2008 plenary session will be distributed by the UNECE secretariat in advance of the plenary session to consult the CES member countries and international organizations. The Bureau will submit a proposal, taking into account the survey results, for discussion and approval by the Conference.

Item 10. Other business

42. Any additional issues that the Conference needs to be informed of can be taken up under this agenda item.

Item 11. Adoption of the report

43. The Conference is expected to adopt the report of the 2008 plenary session before it adjourns. The report will be limited as far as possible to decisions taken by the Conference during the course of the plenary session. The final report of the plenary session will be produced within two weeks or so after the plenary session and will be made available on the UNECE Web site.

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