

UNECE (STAT) - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Statistics)

1. Demographic and social statistics (UNECE STAT)

1.1 Population and migration (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- In **migration statistics**, UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration data in the member countries, in response to the strong demand for more and better data on migration. In 2013, subject to the approval of the CES Bureau, UNECE will start new work on the measurement of circular migration, with the aim to agree on the international statistical definition of this phenomenon and the harmonisation of its measurement. The topic has high policy relevance as the Global Forum on Migration and Development sees the promotion of circular migration as one of the keys to international migration's contribution to development.
- Two existing Task Forces are scheduled to complete their work in 2013: on improving migration and migrant data using household surveys and other sources, and on measuring the socio-economic conditions of migrants. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data among countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, UNECE will continue to improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics. A full-scale update will be carried out in 2013.

1.2 Labour (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- UNECE has been leading the work on measuring **quality of employment** jointly with Eurostat and ILO to respond to the demands for data on the qualitative aspects of employment from the workers' perspective, beyond traditional labour force statistics. UNECE published in 2010 the report on *Potential indicators for measurement of quality of employment* which provided the underlying concepts and structure for the quality of employment indicators. In February 2012, the CES Bureau established a new Task Force on Measuring Quality of Employment to review the conceptual structure of measuring quality of employment; revise the set of indicators; and to develop operational definitions and guidelines. In 2013, the Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment will meet to discuss the first part of the draft report.

1.4 Health (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

Meetings to be organized in 2013:

1.8 Justice and crime (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- Crime statistics is an area where international comparability is very difficult to achieve, because data are collected mainly for national purposes and depend largely on the legislation and the justice systems of the different countries. To overcome these difficulties, UNECE works in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Commission. The UNECE Task Force on Crime Classification has developed the principles and framework for an international classification of crimes for statistical purposes. In 2013, it will further elaborate case studies of defining and classifying selected offences with a view to developing a full international classification of crimes for statistical purposes.

1.11 Time use (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- Time-use surveys provide indispensable data on quality of life and well-being and shed light on unpaid work, living conditions and gender equality. Time-use statistics have a particularly important role in current international efforts to enhance the measurement of social progress beyond the use of GDP. The need for better harmonisation and timeliness of time-use statistics has led to the establishment of a Task Force on Time-use Surveys. In 2013, the Task Force will complete its work on guidelines for harmonising time-use surveys and improving comparability of time-use statistics.

2. Economic statistics (UNECE STAT)

2.1 Macroeconomic statistics (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

Meetings to be organized in 2013:

2.2 Economic accounts (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

• The UNECE promotes the implementation of **the new global standard: 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA)** which provides a comprehensive framework for producing economic accounts adapted to the new policy needs and the fast changes in the global economy. This work is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by the UN Statistical Commission. The work is undertaken in consultation with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts which coordinates globally the implementation of the standard. In 2013, UNECE will continue to support the implementation of 2008 SNA in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia by providing methodological guidance and training workshops. In addition, the preparations for the biennial Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts in 2014 will begin.

2.3 Business statistics (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

Meetings to be organized in 2013:

2.7 Prices (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

• UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners promotes the implementation of international standards and recommendations on **Consumer Price Indices (CPI)**. The biennial meeting of the Expert Group on Consumer Price Indices in June 2012 confirmed the needs for a revision of the existing CPI Manual (2004) to reflect technical and methodological developments over the previous decade, for example on calculation practices and the use of and developments in electronic data collection methods. The revision of the CPI Manual will be undertaken under the auspices of the UN Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, of which UNECE is a member, and be discussed at the CPI Expert Group meeting in 2014. UNECE will continue its work on other **short-term economic statistics**, such as compilation of industrial production statistics and supporting the practical implementation of seasonal adjustment in national statistical offices.

3. Environment and multi-domain statistics (UNECE STAT)

3.1 Environment (UNECE STAT)

Environmental indicators

(Joint activity with the UNECE Environment, Housing and Land Management Division)

Description and objectives

• Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics to strengthen environmental monitoring. In response, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the Conference of European Statisticians launched in 2009 a Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators. The objective is to improve environmental data production and promote comparability of **environmental statistics** in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. In 2013, the joint Task Force will continue to review methodologies and produce time series of selected environmental indicators from the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The work is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency. In 2013, the Statistical Division will also promote the implementation of the newly adopted standard, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in the region and will evaluate the data availability and capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data.

• Under a UN Development Account project, capacity building will be undertaken in the East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries in 2012-2013 to support the implementation of international recommendations and good practices in producing indicators on **environmental sustainability**. In 2013, a desk study on the state of environmental statistics in specific areas, e.g. waste statistics and air-environment statistics, will be completed, and priority issues will be addressed in the planned two workshops. The activities will be coordinated with the UNSD, European Environment Agency and Eurostat.

3.3 Multi-domain statistics and indicators (UNECE STAT)

Statistics related to climate change

Description and objectives

Meeting to be organized in 2013:

3.3.1 Living conditions, poverty and cross-cutting social issues (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

Meetings to be organized in 2013:

3.3.2 Gender and special population groups (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- Many major policy documents, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration, emphasise the importance gender equality, which requires measurement of progress towards this goal as well as measurement of women's and men's different roles and different access and control of resources. UNECE work on **gender statistics** includes sharing knowledge and experience at biennial work sessions, developing guidelines and indicators, collecting and disseminating data and building capacity in member countries. In 2013, the Task Force on Indicators of Gender Equality will complete its work on a set of indicators to describe gender inequalities and to monitor gender-relevant policies.
- This set of indicators serves as the regional framework in the capacity-building project on gender statistics that UNECE is carrying out together with two other regional commissions and UNSD in 2012/2014. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of and links between producers and users of statistics to monitor, measure and analyse progress in achieving gender equality. The activities in 2013 include: a sub-regional workshop, national level stakeholder consultations to formulate national action plans; and pilot national data collection that addresses selected data gaps using common instruments.
- In this context, UNECE will continue promoting the use of its major outputs in gender statistics: the *Manual on gender statistics*, multimedia training tools and the survey module on violence against women.

Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. The corresponding statistics thus cut across a broad range of topics and are in high demand by policymakers; however, they remain dispersed and have gaps and inconsistencies. Subject to the approval of the CES Bureau, a joint Task Force of statisticians and policymakers will start to work in 2013 to develop recommendations to statistical offices for improving and harmonising the collection and dissemination of ageing-related data. This will lead to a dashboard of indicators recommended to statistical offices for regular production of data based on existing data collection mechanisms.

3.3.4 Globalisation (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- **Globalization**, in terms of growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services, has a significant impact on the economy and poses challenges to the compilers of statistics in all countries. In 2011, the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the guide *The Impact of Globalisation on National Accounts*. In accordance with the priority areas for future research highlighted by *the Guide* a new Task Force was established at the end of 2011 to work on the conceptual and measurement challenges posed by global production. The Task Force will address the unresolved conceptual issues arising from 2008 SNA and the Balance of Payments Manual revision 6 (BPM6) in relation to global production and develop further guidance on implementation aspects. The Task Force plans to prepare a draft report by October 2013. **3.3.5 Indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (UNECE STAT)**

Description and objectives

- UNECE will provide support to its member countries in measuring progress towards the **Millennium Development Goals (MDG)**. The work will be conducted in close collaboration with the regional commissions and UNSD. In 2013, UNECE will organise a sub-regional workshop and advisory missions on the monitoring of MDGs. The UNECE database of MDG indicators will be further developed as a tool for resolving discrepancies of data from different sources. Specific attention will be given to the persistent data gaps, insufficient use of official national data, and discrepancies among indicator values compiled by national, regional and international agencies. The results will feed into the development and monitoring of post-2015 development goals and other work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on MDG Indicators. **3.3.6 Sustainable development (UNECE STAT)**

Description and objectives

- The second seminar of the Conference in 2013 will deal with **challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development in follow-up to Rio+20**. The newly adopted standard SEEA allows to understand the linkages between economy and environment and to provide data for economic policy making taking into account the environmental concerns. Its implementation in the conditions of budget restrictions poses many challenges related to coordination across many different organizations in a country, data availability, lack of standards, etc. The Rio+20 Summit resulted in growing policy attention to sustainable development and reiterated the need for its monitoring, in particular in the context of the discussion on post-2015 development goals. The seminar will provide a forum for top managers of statistical offices to discuss the activities related to Rio+20 follow-up.
- A Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force is working towards harmonising the approaches to measuring sustainable development. The work follows up from a conceptual framework based on the capital approach (published in 2009) which focuses on monitoring the economic, environmental, human and social capital left for future generations. The framework is extended to cover the issues of current well-being, quality of life and the international aspect of sustainable development. A thorough analysis of available data and indicators helps to identify indicators that have a sound conceptual basis and are relevant for monitoring the implementation of national sustainable development strategies. The resulting report is expected to be finalized in 2013. Furthermore, UNECE will promote the application of the framework for measuring sustainable development, taking into account the follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference and the development of the post-2015 development goals. This work will have a particular focus on countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

3.4 Yearbooks and similar compendia (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- The UNECE provides a **unique statistical database** offering a wide range of information on member countries via free on-line English and Russian interfaces. This database provides the source data for the popular *UNECE Countries in Figures* publication, as well as regular short articles on the economic and social development of the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2013.

4. Methodology of data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis (UNECE STAT)

4.1 Metadata (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- A Steering Group on **statistical metadata** is developing a set of standards and good practices in the form of a Common Metadata Framework. The efficient management and use of statistical metadata – the information that describes and defines statistical data – is recognised as an important topic by the CES. As well as organising an expert group meeting in spring 2013, the main tasks will be to further enhance the documentation of metadata standards and good practices. The Common Metadata Framework is a living reference tool, mostly published only in electronic format, so that it can be rapidly updated to reflect new ideas and technologies. It includes the **Generic Statistical Business Process Model**, an important tool for standardisation and benchmarking of statistical production that has rapidly become a global standard, and has been adopted by the major partners of UNECE.

4.3 Data sources (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

Meeting to be organized in 2013:

4.3.1 Population and housing censuses and registers of population, dwellings and buildings (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

4.4 Data editing and data linkage (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- **Statistical data editing** is currently a very resource-intensive activity for national statistical organizations. It includes the validation and correction of incoming data, and methods to deal with missing data. In line with the vision for industrialising statistical production, an electronic knowledge-base has been created, which will be further expanded and updated during 2013.

4.5 Dissemination, data warehousing (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- A Steering Group on **statistical dissemination and communication** will organise an expert meeting in summer 2013 to mark the completion of the four-part *Making Data Meaningful* series. Other topics for discussion include possible guidelines for the use of social media, and the communication implications of the streamlining and modernisation of official statistics.

5. Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics (UNECE STAT)

5.4 Management and development of human resources (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- UNECE promotes sharing experience and good practices on **human resources management and training** in national statistical offices. Based on the outcome of an international workshop on this topic in September 2012, a compilation of best practices will be produced in 2013. An interactive wiki has been established for distribution of experiences and training materials to draw attention to initiatives for better human resources management.

5.5 Technological resources (including standards for electronic data exchange and data sharing) (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- In response to demands from heads of national and international statistical organisations, the UNECE established a High-level Group on Business Architecture in Statistics in 2010. Subject to the decision of the Bureau, this group will have a renewed mandate to oversee and coordinate international work in the rapidly changing areas of statistical production and dissemination to ensure the continued relevance and efficiency of official statistics. The Group coordinates the activities of relevant expert groups in the UNECE region to ensure that they are working towards common goals. This coordination is based on a vision for **industrialising the future production and products of official statistics**, which was endorsed by the CES in June 2011, and a strategy to implement that vision, endorsed by the CES in June 2012.

- The technological part of this work is driven by expert groups on **software sharing** and on the **management of statistical information systems**. A wiki platform contains an inventory of statistical software and other materials available for sharing to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences between statistical organizations. The aim is to encourage more efficient and sustainable national statistical production systems.

Topics to be considered during 2013 include the impact of the “open data” movement, and the practical implementation of the Generic Statistical Information Model, which is due to be released at the end of 2012.

5.6 Co-ordination of international statistical work (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- UNECE provides the secretariat for the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). **Promoting coordination of the international statistical work in the region** is one of the key tasks of the CES. Efficient coordination is important for avoiding duplication of work, finding synergies, using resources efficiently and reducing burden on national statistical offices and other international organizations. Furthermore, international cooperation enshrined in the Fundamental Principles of official statistics[1] is an important factor contributing to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.
- The CES is composed of the Heads of the national statistical organizations in the UNECE region and includes in addition Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and South Africa. The major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region also participate in the work, such as the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS-Stat), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, etc.
- The Conference and its Bureau provide **a platform for coordination of international statistical work**. There are several mechanisms to ensure the coordination in practice: the regular meetings of the Conference and its Bureau, the CES seminars exploring foundational issues of statistical systems and emerging topics, in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, and the Database of International Statistical Activities. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the Conference, as well as undertakes substantive work mandated by the Conference and its Bureau.

In-depth reviews of statistical areas

- The CES Bureau will meet twice in 2013 to **steer** the programme of work of the Conference and ensure that it reflects the priorities of member countries. The Bureau will review in-depth three areas of international statistical work in 2013. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities, identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues. The first topic, **entrepreneurship**, is gaining increasing political attention given the role of entrepreneurs in stimulating economic growth. This calls for development of statistical methodology for measuring entrepreneurship which crosses the boundaries of statistical areas and requires combining data on business demography and performance with characteristics of individuals and households.
- The second topic to be reviewed in-depth is **open data**. The topic was selected for a review in response to the exponentially growing availability of data from different sources, such as government data, administrative registers, web databases, etc. Making use of the increased data supply is an opportunity but also a challenge for official statistics. It raises strategic issues such as how to respond to the competition from private sector and research organisations, and how to deal with methodological issues related to confidentiality, processing, linking and managing large data sets.
- The third in-depth review will be about **political and other community activities, including volunteering**. This area is increasing in importance in societies. Apart from the ILO manual on the *Measurement of Volunteer Work*, many scattered initiatives exist. None of them brings together the measurement of community activities, the role of third sector, volunteering, good governance and social capital.
- In addition, the three in-depth reviews carried out at the end of 2012 on **population ageing; banking, insurance and financial statistics; and poverty statistics** will lead to follow-up work in 2013.

Database of International Statistical Activities

- The UNECE Statistical Division maintains an annually updated **Database of International Statistical Activities** (DISA) as a tool for coordination. The database is a compendium of the annual statistical programmes of international organizations within the UNECE region. The 2013 issue will be available online to be used by countries and international organizations to foster cooperation and avoid duplication of effort.

[1] Decision no. C(47) of the Economic Commission for Europe, 1992.

Meetings to be organized in 2013:

5.7 Technical cooperation and capacity building programmes (UNECE STAT)

Description and objectives

- The UNECE aims to **enhance the capacity of national statistical systems** of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe to implement international standards and guidelines. Particular attention is paid to promoting the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that provide basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems.

- The UNECE capacity building activities include:

- **Training workshops.**

- **Global assessments** of national statistical systems.

- **Advisory services** provided by the UNECE experts to address country specific needs.

- The capacity building activities are carried out in coordination and in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, EFTA, OECD, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PARIS21, the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), the World Bank, IMF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

Global assessments of national statistical systems

- The UNECE, together with Eurostat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), conducts **global assessments (GA) of national statistical systems** of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. The purpose is to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. This helps the national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and the international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. GAs recently conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine are expected to result in action plans to improve national statistics according to the recommendations. In 2013, the partner organisations (EFTA, Eurostat and UNECE) will organise a major event for East and South-East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries, including Turkey, to discuss how to support, monitor and coordinate the implementation of the recommendations provided in the GAs.

- The UNECE capacity building activities are planned based on the findings of global assessments and the needs of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. In 2013, UNECE will organise sub-regional workshops and advisory services to **address current challenges** in economic, social and environment statistics, streamlining statistical production and improving the indicators for monitoring the achievement of MDGs. The capacity building will be supported by promoting the exchange of national good practices at sub-regional level, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of networks of experts.

UN SPECA

- The Programme Working Group on Statistics of the **UN Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)**^[1] meets annually to discuss needs for capacity building and coordinate donor activities. The UNECE will work in 2013 on the development and fund-raising of three **capacity building programmes**: on economic statistics, including the implementation of the 2008 SNA; regional migration statistics; and streamlining statistical production of SPECA countries. These projects would complement the on-going capacity building activities in the region.

[1] Member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
