

Recent work of the Conference of European Statisticians

1. Third Joint Meeting on Labour Force Statistics (Geneva, 4–7 February 1991)

The Conference convened this meeting jointly with the ILO. The meeting reviewed progress made in recent years in developing a Labour Accounting System and work being undertaken by the ILO on the revision of the classification of status in employment. The participants also discussed statistics on labour turnover, groups on the fringe of the labour market and multiple job holders, and considered the requirements for the development of labour statistics in Central and Eastern European countries (Report of the meeting: CES/AC.51/48).

2. Consultation on the development of standards for the representation of statistical data and metadata (Geneva, 25 February 1991)

The consultation discussed a possible harmonization of activities in the field of standardization of statistical computing going on within the Message Development Group MD6 of the Western European EDIFACT Board (WE/EB/MD6) and within the programme of work of the Conference of European Statisticians. Main objectives have been reported by the groups and a broad and constructive dialogue resulted into a clear division of labour. For future work, possible means of co-operation have been clarified.

3. Working Party on Electronic Data Processing (Geneva, 26 February–1 March 1991)

At its 22nd session the Working Party was informed about the development of standards for electronic data interchange of statistical data and discussed how that could best be supported by the work of the Conference of European Statisticians. The Working Party notified new techniques used in the whole statistical production cycle. Furthermore, it reviewed papers of the status on the development and implementation of statistical databases. The ECE secretariat informed about the main outputs of the joint work within the SCP-2. It has prepared a List of Products of the SCP-2 which can be ordered from the secretariat. Lastly, the Working Party

reassessed the sub-programme 12.2 "Statistical Information Technology" and submitted its proposal to the Conference for approval at its 1991 plenary session (Report of the meeting: CES/WP.9/288).

4. Seminar on the provision of statistical services (Budapest, 11–15 March 1991)

Upon an invitation by the Government of the Republic of Hungary, heads of the statistical offices in Europe and North America met in Budapest to discuss basic orientations of the work of their offices. Experiences were exchanged on services required by different user groups of statistics, on the adaptation of statistical services to new requirements, and on the marketing of statistical services. The Seminar was also used for consideration of the role of the Conference of European Statisticians in the network of international co-operation (Report of the Seminar: CES/SEM.29/3).

5. Meeting on statistics of services (Geneva, 18–21 March 1991)

The meeting considered questions related to the development of a methodological manual of statistics on service enterprises, implementation of pilot surveys in service sectors, application of the Central Product Classification and other questions. The meeting recommended to include the following substantive items in the programme of work of the Conference of European Statisticians: development of a statistical system of measuring non-market services; development of a system of short-term statistics for service enterprises; and study of matching problems between intermediate service consumption and the Central Product Classification (Report of the meeting: CES/AC.67/12).

6. Work session on fertility and family surveys (Geneva, 29–30 April 1991)

The Conference convened this meeting to review work underway in the ECE's Population Activities Unit on a project aimed at developing a framework for internationally comparable fertility and family surveys for countries in the ECE region. The participants reviewed the draft core questionnaire which has been developed for these surveys and the Unit's planned future work in this project (Report of the work session: CES/692).

7. Workshop on business registers (Geneva, 7–8 May 1991)

The workshop was convened jointly by the ECE secretariat and by Eurostat. It considered the draft text of the harmonisation of business registers for statistical purposes in the European Community. The workshop provided for an occasion of

making suggestions for the improvement of the draft from the side of interested non-Community countries in Europe (Report of the workshop: CES/689).

8. Meeting of the Group of Rapporteurs on costing aspects of population and housing censuses (Geneva, 29 May 1991)

This meeting was held for the four countries which comprise the Group of Rapporteurs: France, Hungary, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The participants agreed to use information on costing aspects of their most recent population and housing censuses as the basis for the preparation of four case studies which could be used as a reference by other statistical offices as an aid in planning their future censuses. The Group also agreed on the planned content and structure of the four case studies, which are to be completed over the course of the next two or three years and made available at a future plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Report of the meeting: CES/691).

9. Work session on statistics of fauna, flora and habitat statistics (Geneva, 3–5 June 1991)

The meeting discussed possibilities of developing a system of habitat statistics. A broad structure for a classification as well as a set of related statistical variables were proposed. The meeting also dealt with the on-going review of status categories and categories of area protection at the international level and some other topical issues of fauna and flora statistics. As to the future work, it was decided to convene a meeting in 1993 to revise the draft ECE framework of fauna, flora and habitat statistics.

10. Ninth Task Force of the Statistical Computing Project Phase 2 (SCP-2) (Geneva, 13–14 June 1991)

The meeting considered progress of work in the Joint Groups on Implementation Strategy, on Data Editing, and on Software Evaluation. It discussed all issues dealing with finalising the activities, including outreach activities until the last (fifth) meeting of the Steering Committee (Bratislava, CSFR, 13–15 November 1991). Furthermore, it studied the proposal of the Transition Project on Applied Statistical Computing for the fifth UNDP programming cycle and made recommendations for further steps in its preparation.

11. Work session on specific methodological issues in environment statistics (Ottawa, Canada, 14–17 May 1991)

The main topic for the discussion was linkage of environment statistics and economic statistics. This was approached from various aspects such as environment

related household surveys, delimitation of areas of ecological hazard, surveys of environmental investments and costs, and environmental accounting. Other topics of the meeting included presentation and dissemination of environment statistics and air quality statistics.

12. Thirty-ninth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians
(Geneva, 17–21 June 1991)

The Conference met to review the results of its work during 1990/91 and to determine priorities for activities in 1991–1993. The coordination of international statistical cooperation and the development of environmental accounting systems were discussed in detail. Finally, a draft resolution in fundamental principles and guidelines for official statistics were agreed and forwarded to the Economic Commission for Europe (Report of the session: ECE/CES/37)

13. Seminar on statistics of household income (Geneva, 1–5 July 1991)

The Seminar analysed different income concepts; consumption units (equivalence scales) suitable for income distribution studies together with their classifications; procedures for dealing with adjustments for gaps resulting from non-response and under-reporting; conceptual and methodological interrelationships between statistics of income distribution and national accounts, especially the social accounting matrix; optimal use of all available data sources such as administrative records and household surveys. The Seminar identified the development of regional guidelines on statistics of the distribution of income, consumption and accumulation of households as the most urgent item for future work of the ECE secretariat in that area. The elaboration of conceptual foundations for poverty statistics was seen as a second substantive item. It was also stressed that papers be needed on national experiences in the following issues: reconciliation of household income statistics obtained from different sources; selection of methods for compiling household income statistics in various contexts; preservation of confidentiality of individual data, when administrative records and surveys are used in combination for the production of household income statistics; estimation of household income statistics for small areas; socio-economic accounting.

14. Study group on food and agricultural statistics (Geneva, July 1991), joint meeting with FAO and the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems

The meeting considered supply and demand of agricultural statistics; quality control of agricultural statistics; the use of computer technology in agricultural statistics; monitoring developments in remote sensing; and statistics on agriculture-related problems and determined priorities related to transition countries. Further work in each of the topics was also discussed.