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**PLANS FOR UNDERTAKING WORK ON STATISTICS ON CLIMATE
CHANGE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN
STATISTICIANS**

Paper prepared by the UNECE secretariat

(for information)

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Meeting of UNCEEA

New York, 24-26 June 2009

Agenda item 8

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Note by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. In recent years, the statistical community has increasingly recognized the need for undertaking work related to statistics on climate change. Climate change has become a main global issue with social, economic and environment impacts and, therefore, official statisticians have an important role to play in contributing to the production and dissemination of relevant climate change statistics. At the same time, it should also be acknowledged that climate change statistics is a new area and the work should be approached with caution as countries are at different levels of statistical development and have different national governance arrangements with respect to the production of climate change statistics.

II. CARRYING OUT WORK UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS (CES)

2. Following the call for new data and for the improvement of currently available data in the area of climate change, the Bureau of the CES discussed, at its February 2009 meeting, its possible involvement in work related to climate change statistics, taking into account the outcome of the conferences in Oslo and Seoul and in view of the discussions that took place at the United Nations Statistical Commission. In particular, work on GHG emission inventories under the UNFCCC has been considered an area where official statistics can add significant value.

3. Furthermore, climate change mitigation and adaptation has been one of the main topics discussed at the 63rd Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) that was held in Geneva on 30 March-1 April 2009. This Session stressed that statistics could play a very useful role in the climate policy debate and can help to direct more efficient and effective national policies to reduce emissions. In this context, Ms. Heli Jeskanen-Sundstrom, the Chair of the CES, made a presentation on “*Climate Change and Official Statistics*”, where she stressed the role of statistics in

providing a basis for decision-making and in contributing to the production and dissemination of relevant climate change statistics. Moreover, Ms. Heli Jeskanen-Sundstrom strongly emphasized the urgent need for **authoritative, robust, timely and comparable** climate change statistics.

4. The UNECE Commission Session gave its support to UNECE to undertake work on statistics on climate change. More recently, at its plenary session on 8-10 June 2009, the CES reviewed the matters arising from the 63rd Commission of the UNECE and endorsed the possible involvement of the UNECE secretariat in this area.

III. UNECE WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE STATISTICS

5. As a first step, the Bureau of the CES requested the UNECE Statistical Division to explore the degree to which national statistical offices are involved in climate change related work and in compiling the GHG inventories, and to recognize the common concerns that can be dealt with at international level. In this regard, the UNECE secretariat is planning to conduct a survey on climate change statistics activities of the national statistical offices in the UNECE region. The survey will help in the making of an inventory of climate change activities and in identifying needs to be addressed at the international level. Statistics Finland and Eurostat will provide some guidance on the formulation of the questionnaire.

6. Furthermore, the CES is envisaging work to explore the possibilities to contribute to the UNECE climate change activities in areas like transport, energy, forestry and housing. The UNECE Statistical Division was requested to look at opportunities to combine the statistical activities related to climate change with those of other UNECE Sectoral Committees. Any future CES work in this area will take into account the activities of IPCC, UNFCCC, and other institutions dealing with related data (e.g. Århus Convention), and will fully respect the framework of official statistics as enshrined in the UNECE Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. A paper with proposals for possible intersectoral work will be prepared for the next CES Bureau meeting.

7. The Bureau will discuss the future CES work on climate change at its next meeting on 15-16 October 2009.

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