FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY

October 2008

Eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Santo Domingo, 22-24 October 2008

DATABASE OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE UNECE REGION (DISA)

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA) is a compendium of information on statistical work carried out by international organizations in UNECE region. It is a very useful reference tool - a coherent catalogue of almost all work undertaken in international statistics in the current year.

2. The UNECE Statistical Division has been compiling the information following a request from the Conference of European Statisticians in 1991[1]. DISA started, in 1993, as a document called Integrated Presentation that covered the work of the three major international agencies active in statistics in Europe: Eurostat, UNECE and OECD. In subsequent years information about other international organizations was added step-by-step. Currently the database incorporates the statistical work programmes of more than 30 international agencies that have an impact on the statistical work in the UNECE region.

3. In 2004 the Integrated Presentation was converted into a database format: Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA). DISA is available on the web and can be consulted at http://unece.unog.ch/disa/ (Figure 1). An illustration of the information that can be retrieved from the database is shown in Annex I. Annex II presents information on meetings.

Figure 1. Introduction to DISA



[1] Report of the thirty-ninth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, 17-19 June 1991, ECE/CES/38

4. In 2005 the Secretariat conducted a survey to further improve the presentation of the database. The results from the survey showed that countries considered the database to be a useful reference material. The improved usability and clarity of the database were pointed out. It was proposed that the information on expert meetings is updated on a regular basis. The received feedback helped to improve the presentation of the database and certain tools were developed like “remote updating” in order to keep the information on meetings up-to-date.

II. PURPOSE

5. The database was set up with the aim of increasing efficiency and eliminating duplication of work in the statistical activities undertaken by the international organizations.

6. DISA is a unique database that has been crucial in the achievement of effective coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region. Its purpose is embedded in the terms of reference of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The database pursues the objectives agreed by the Conference in 1991 and reaffirmed in 2002, namely:

(a) Improve national statistics and their international comparability;

(b) Promote close coordination of the statistical activities of international organizations;

(c) Respond to any emerging need for international statistical cooperation arising out of transition, integration and other processes of cooperation both within the region and between the UNECE region and other regions;

(d) Adopt statistical standards in the UNECE region.

7. The key mission and responsibility of the Conference is to coordinate the statistically related work that international organizations undertake in the UNECE region. The database has been an important tool to facilitate the Conference and its Bureau in implementing this responsibility in an efficient and productive way.

III. USE OF DISA FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEWS SPECIFIC STATISTICAL AREAS

8. DISA is a helpful information resource with regard to the in-depth reviews of specific statistical areas that the CES Bureau reviews each year. The in-depth reviews is an important activity in coordinating the international statistical activities undertaken in the region and in addressing emerging issues in statistics. Every year the Bureau reviews in-depth 5-6 selected statistical areas where significant developments have taken place, coordinated action is needed or there is lack of activities at the international level. The review focuses on strategic issues and highlights concerns of statistical offices of both a conceptual and a coordinating nature. The information contained in DISA provides a starting point for the review and is used by the designated Rapporteurs (country or international organization) in preparing the issue paper. At its October 2008 meeting the CES Bureau will review the following statistical areas: agricultural statistics, Environment statistics, measurement of labour cost, culture statistics.

IV. CURRENT STRUCTURE OF DISA

9. The statistical activities are divided into five main subject statistical domains/areas:

(a) Demographic and social statistics;

(b) Economic statistics;

(c) Environment and multi-domain statistics;

(d) Methodology of data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis;

(e) Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics.

10. These are further refined and categorised under 55 sub-headings according to a classification adopted by the Bureau in October 2005 (Annex III). Under each statistical sub-heading, the activities are organized under three main components:

(a) Description of ongoing methodological work;

(b) Key priorities;

(c) Outputs and new work.

11. Finally, DISA provides information on the meetings planned by the international organizations for the year in the UNECE region. The information includes:

(a) Subject of the meeting or the conference;

(b) Name of the organizer;

(c) Dates and venue.

V. UPDATING PROCEDURE

12. DISA is mainly forward looking, concentrating on future work rather than past achievements. It is updated on an annual basis. Towards the end of each year the international organizations acting in statistics in the UNECE region are contacted by the UNECE secretariat and asked to submit their statistical work programs or planned statistical activities for the next year. For example, at the end of 2007, over 30 international organizations (including city groups) were contacted to obtain contributions for the 2008 issue. The UNECE secretariat received inputs from 33 international organisations - tree more agencies than in the previous year..

13. The information received by the UNECE is collated, classified and checked for consistency. Eurostat, OECD, UN Statistics Division, International Labour Organisation, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, UNICEF, FAO and World Health Organization are only some of the international organizations which participate in DISA every year.

14. In order to keep the information in DISA up-to-date, there is also the possibility to update the database “remotely”. This special feature allows the contributing organizations to update the information on their statistical activities in the database directly via Internet. Each organization is given a password that allows changing the information only on the activities related to its work. The feature is particularly useful for correcting information about meetings during the course of the year.

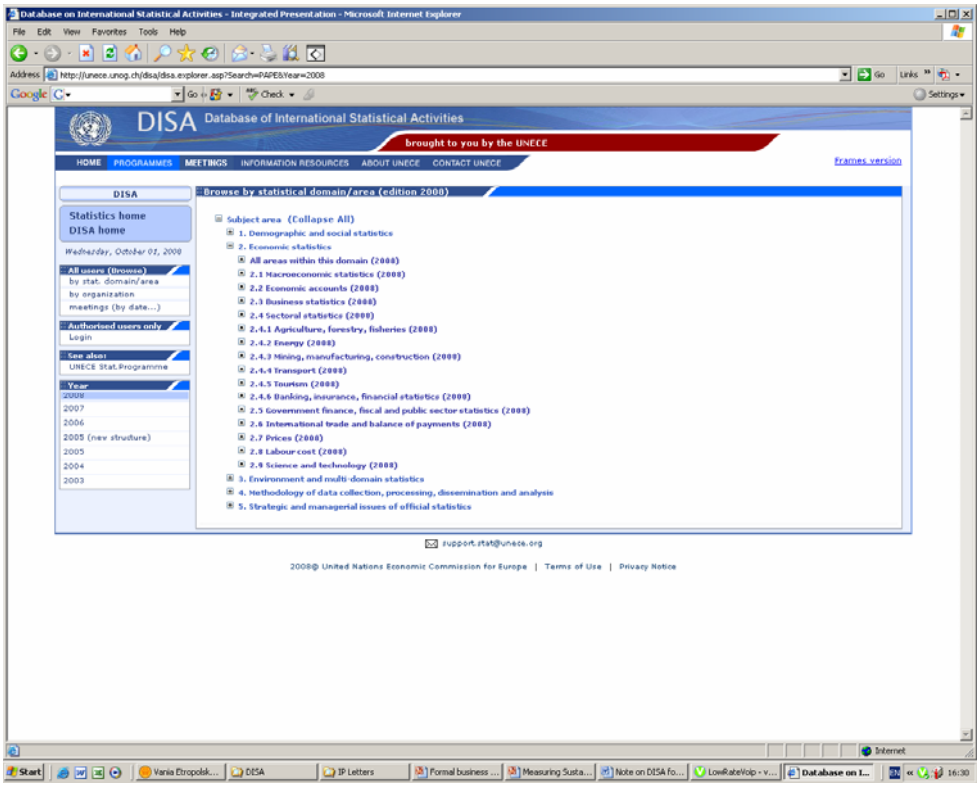
VI. FUNCTIONALITY

15. DISA is easy to use. There are various search functions that help the user to obtain information across statistical domains/areas and across international organizations. The user can also search for information through the years, starting from 2003 to 2008. This allows obtaining

a retrospective view in the development of the statistical programs of various institutions in a format that enables the goals and planned activities to be monitored and coordinated.

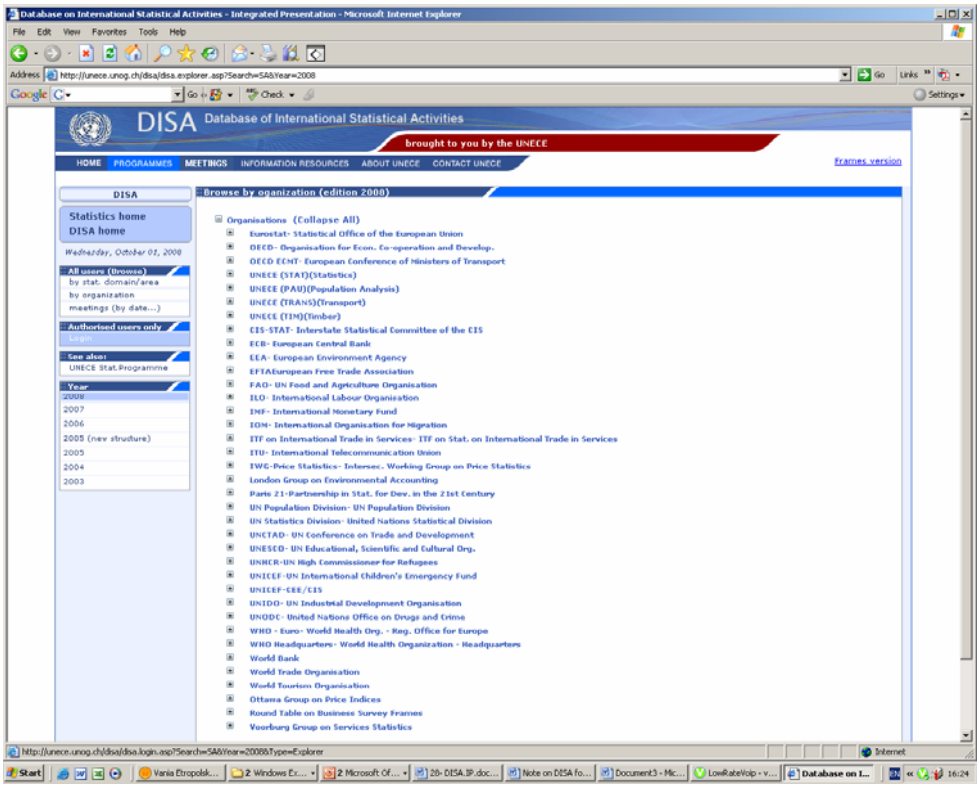
16. Figure 2 presents the search function by the statistical domains/areas and their sub-headings. This search function allows comparing the statistical activities across organizations in the same statistical area.

Figure 2. Search function by statistical areas



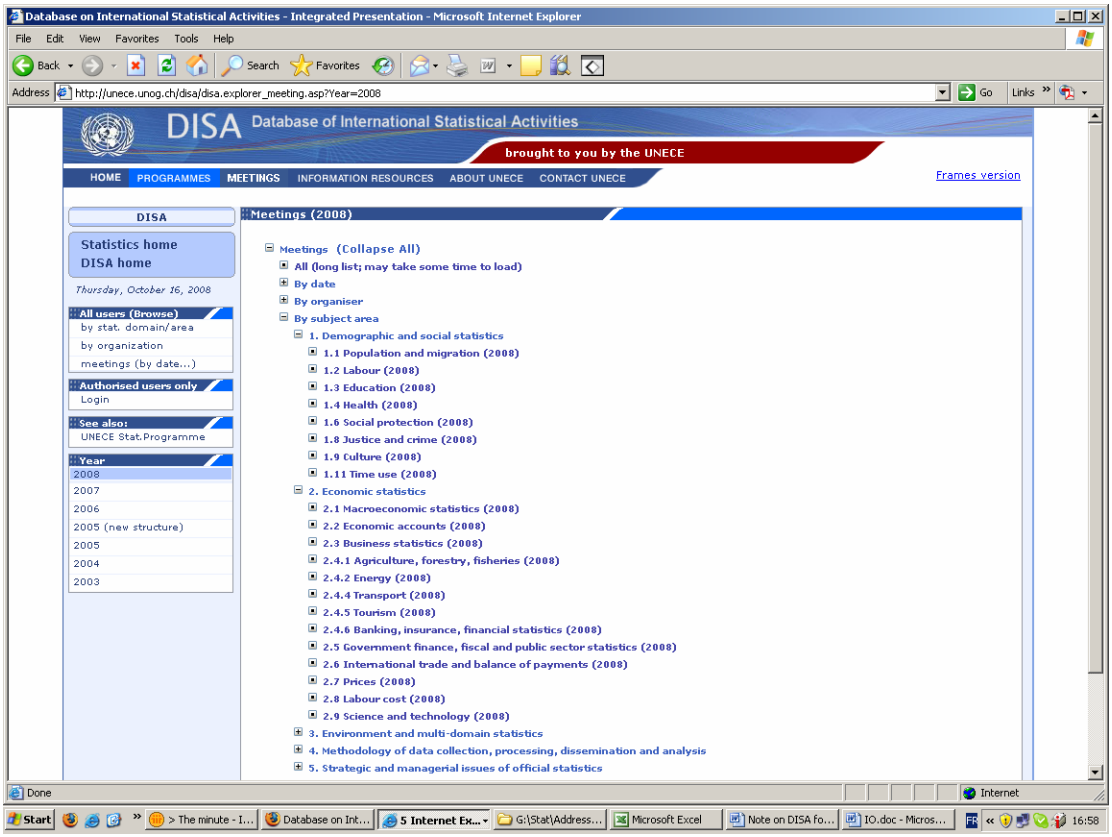
17. Figure 3 illustrates the search function by international organizations. This search function allows extracting information on the statistical program in all statistical areas for each organization separately.

Figure 3. Search function by international organizations



18. Figure 4 below illustrates search function for the meetings that are indicated in the database. Information can be extracted by date, by organiser (international organisation) or by subject area.

Figure 4. Search function for meetings.



ANNEX I

EXAMPLE OF DISA OUTPUT:
Statistical Area 3.3.6 on Sustainable development (edition 2008)

3.3.6.	Title	**Sustainable development (edition 2008)**
3.3.6:	Meetings	• **Eurostat :** Sustainable development indicators (Luxembourg, 7 - 8 April 2008) • **Eurostat :** Sustainable development indicators (Luxembourg, 30 - 31 October 2008) • **UNECE :** Fifth meeting of the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Working Group on Sustainable Development (Lisbonne, 5 - 6 March 2008)
3.3.6:	UNECE	**Sustainable development statistics** *(Activity 7.6 of the 2008 UNECE Statistical Programme)* **Summary description** Secretariat support to the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD) and its Steering Committee. The aim of the WGSSD is to identify good practices to assist national governments and international organizations in developing official statistics and designing indicator sets in the area of sustainable development. The UNECE secretariat ensures linking the work of the Group with the CES and its Bureau, and that the work on sustainable development statistics remains within the framework of official statistics as much as possible. **Purpose** Producing a report on a broad conceptual framework for measuring sustainable development including some best practices to assist national governments and international organizations in the design of sustainable development indicator sets and in the development of official statistics in the area. **Output expected at the end of 2008** • Preparation of the Eighth Meeting of the Steering Committee in spring 2008; • Preparation of the Fifth Meeting of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat WGSSD in spring 2008; • Contribution to the preparation of the progress reports of the WGSSD to the CES Bureau and the OECD Annual Meeting of Sustainable Development Experts; • Contribution to the interim report of the WGSSD that will be available by spring 2008 followed by a report to be presented for discussions and endorsement at the CES plenary session in June 2008. Maintenance of the UNECE website of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat WGSSD, including the password protected website of the Steering Committee.
3.3.6:	Eurostat	**Theme 5.02 Lisbon strategy and sustainable development** **1. Description** Key policy areas likely to shape the development of the European Union in the coming years include, among other things, two overarching and complementary strategies: whilst the goal of the Lisbon Strategy is for the EU to "become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion", the sustainable development strategy (SDS) concerns the continuous improvement of quality of life, both for current and for future generations, through reconciliation of economic development, social cohesion and protection of the environment. Eurostat produces and disseminates indicators to monitor these two strategies: (i) the structural indicators (SIs), for the Lisbon strategy, are used to underpin the Commission's analysis in the annual progress report to the European Council, and (ii) the sustainable development indicators (SDIs) range across the multiple factors affecting quality of life, including environmental, social, economic and governance issues, and underpin the biannual monitoring report on the sustainable development strategy. Those sets of indicators have been discussed and agreed at political level. Eurostat aims to continuously monitor, improve and review these indicators in order to be in

		line with evolving policy requirements. **2. Work Programme for 2008** **2.1 KEY PRIORITIES 2008** Eurostat will continue to maintain and improve the sets of SIs and SDIs, in terms of data availability and timeliness, in line with policy developments, with the support of the relevant Working Groups and other Commission departments. The already established SI set will be maintained to monitor the achievements of the evolving strategic objectives. As for the SDIs and following the 2007 review of the set of indicators, the main priority for 2008 will be to consolidate the new set, improving the availability and quality of the most relevant indicators. Eurostat will also investigate the possibility to develop new indicators, through work in the relevant technical working groups and the research community. Eurostat will also continue to improve dissemination of and communication on SIs and SDIs, in particular through the continuous improvement of the dedicated sections of the website, quality profiles, the preparation of the statistical contribution to the 2008 Lisbon annual progress report, and preliminary work on the 2009 SDS monitoring report. **2.2 OBJECTIVES 2008** **2.2.1. Ongoing work** • Maintain and improve the SI and SDI sets in terms of data availability and timeliness (quality profiles), in line with policy developments • Improve the user-friendliness of the SI and SDI dedicated sections on the Eurostat website and respond to users' requests, including further documentation of data quality • Prepare the statistical contribution to the Lisbon annual progress report • Begin work on the 2009 SDS monitoring report **2.2.2. New work** • Explore improvements of the SDI set in terms of framework and new indicators, including potential composite indicators (extension to SIs as appropriate)
3.3.6:	OECD	**<u>Statistics for Sustainable Development</u>** **Purpose** To identify good concepts and practices in order to assist national governments and international organizations in the design of sustainable development indicator sets and in the development of official statistics in the area. **Objectives and outputs** A joint working group of the OECD, Eurostat and the UNECE Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has been established in 2005. The working group should: i) articulate a broad conceptual framework for sustainable development measurement. While the starting point of this work should be the concept of capital, the group should also consider other approaches to the extent the capital approach is found insufficient from a conceptual standpoint; ii) identify the broad domains that good indicator sets should span; iii) develop a menu of good sustainable development indicators in order to help governments and international organizations when they are designing indicator sets; iv) identify a small set of indicators from the menu that might become the core for international comparisons; v) identify basic data systems necessary for a small set of indicators and identify their possible sources (existing or new statistical surveys, administrative records, information derived from environmental monitoring systems); vi) discuss the relationship between integrated environmental and economic accounts and sustainable development indicators. **Main Developments for 2008** **General aspects:** The final version of the recommendations on how to measure sustainable development will be prepared and discussed with national and international experts. After the approval of the report, the OECD will evaluate how the project should be continued.

3.3.6:	World Bank	**Sustainable Development** • The World Bank contributes to the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development (WGSSD). This group aims to develop a guidance document on developing asset-based approaches to measuring sustainable development. • The World Bank contributes to the update of the Indicators of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development Indicators taskforce. Indicators are now classified as core and non-core and provide methodology sheets and background information to support indicator efforts in countries.
3.3.6:	UN Statistics Division	**Sustainable development indicators** UNSD contributes to the methodological development of the CSD indicators of sustainable development • UNSD collaborates with UNEP and other concerned agencies of the UN system -- member of the IAEG sub-group on environment indicators-- on compiling and reporting sustainable development indicators within the framework of the environment goal and targets of the Millennium Declaration
3.3.6:	UNESCO	**Education for Sustainable Development** • UIS acts as a focal point in relation to all the statistical activities with respect to monitoring the UNESCO-led UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. As such, the UIS has been involved in a UN-ECE exercise to develop indicators for monitoring the implementation of the UN-ECE Strategy for ESD.

ANNEX II

EXAMPLE OF DISA OUTPUT ON MEETINGS:
Statistical Area 2.4.5. Tourism statistics (edition 2008)

Meetings in the field of Tourism (2.4.5, edition 2008):		
Venue & Dates	**Organiser(s)**	**Title & Agenda**
Antigua, Guatemala 3 Mar 2008 - 7 Mar 2008	World Tourism Organisation	Iberoamerican Encounter on the measurement and analysis of tourism
Madrid 13 Mar 2008 - 14 Mar 2008	World Tourism Organisation	UNWTO Committee on Statistics and Macroeconomic Analysis of Tourism
Vienna 1 Apr 2008 - 4 Apr 2008	World Tourism Organisation	Capacity-building Programme on Tourism Statistics for Europe
Luxembourg 21 Apr 2008 - 22 Apr 2008	Eurostat	Tourism statistics
Malaga *Jan 2008 (tentative)*	World Tourism Organisation	Conferencia Internacional: “El conocimiento como valor diferencial de los destinos turísticos”
Cebu, Philippines *Jan 2008 (tentative)*	World Tourism Organisation	Workshop on Tourism Statistics and TSA

ANNEX III

UNECE Classification of International Statistical Activities (Introduced in 2005)

Domain 1: Demographic and social statistics

1.1 Population and migration
1.2 Labour
1.3 Education
1.4 Health
1.5 Income and consumption
1.6 Social protection
1.7 Human settlements and housing
1.8 Justice and crime
1.9 Culture
1.10 Political and other community activities
1.11 Time-use

Domain 2: Economic statistics

2.1 Macroeconomic statistics
2.2 Economic accounts
2.3 Business statistics
2.4 Sectoral statistics
2.4.1 Agriculture, forestry, fisheries
2.4.2 Energy
2.4.3 Mining, manufacturing, construction
2.4.4 Transport
2.4.5 Tourism
2.4.6 Banking, insurance, financial statistics
2.5 Government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics
2.6 International trade and balance of payments
2.7 Prices
2.8 Labour cost
2.9 Science and technology

Domain 3: Environment and multi-domain statistics

3.1 Environment
3.2 Regional and small area statistics
3.3 Multi-domain statistics and indicators
3.3.1 Living conditions, poverty and cross-cutting social issues
3.3.2 Gender and special population groups
3.3.3 Information society
3.3.4 Globalisation
3.3.5 Indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals
3.3.6 Sustainable development
3.4 Yearbooks and similar compendia

Domain 4: Methodology of data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis

4.1 Metadata
4.2 Classifications
4.3 Data sources
4.3.1 Population and housing censuses; registers of population, dwellings and buildings
4.3.2 Business and agricultural censuses and registers
4.3.3 Household surveys
4.3.4 Business and agricultural surveys
4.3.5 Other administrative sources
4.4 Data editing and data linkage
4.5 Dissemination, data warehousing
4.6 Statistical confidentiality and disclosure protection
4.7 Data analysis

Domain 5: Strategic and managerial issues of official statistics

5.1 Institutional frameworks and principles; role and organisation of official statistics
5.2 Statistical programmes; coordination within statistical systems
5.3 Quality frameworks and measurement of performance of statistical systems and offices
5.4 Management and development of human resources
5.5 Management and development of technological resources (including standards for electronic data exchange and data sharing)
5.6 Coordination of international statistical work
5.7 Technical cooperation and capacity building

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