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Nordic Statistical Conference in Turku - Knowledge for the future

The 23rd Nordic Statistical Conference is organised in Turku between 18 and 21 August 2004. The topic of the conference is knowledge for the future and it has over 300 participants from the Nordic and Baltic Countries. Corresponding extensive meetings are arranged every third year.

In the meeting the issues discussed include new needs of statistics and the conditions for information production and its future development. Separate sessions examine ever topical data collection, social and human capital of the statistical field, indicator society, role of official statistics, new ways of using statistics and research use of micro data.

In his speech at the opening session of the conference, Heinrich Brünger, Director of the Statistical Division of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, said he was concerned about the growing number of international statistical indicators.

- Users of statistics find it increasingly harder to know when it is a question of indicators based on official statistics, when of other matters. Professional statisticians have to make a clear distinction between the indicators based on official statistics and their production principles and the indicators defined by users themselves. Indicators that are produced according to the principles of official statistics should receive a clear status of spotlight indicators for general purposes with high visibility. On the other hand, the limited responsibility of statistical producers when disseminating user-defined indicators that deviate from the spotlight indicators has to be clearly indicated. Otherwise users of data – ordinary citizens, the media, experts and politicians – may get misled and smokescreened if the nature of indicators, and the respective responsibilities, are not spelt out clearly, says Brünger.

At the opening session of the conference speeches were also given by Author Jörn Donner on the topicality of Nordic thinking and by Max Arhippainen, Editor-in-Chief of the Hufvudstadsbladet, on the relationship of the media to statistics.

A course on index theory is also arranged in connection with the Nordic Statistical Conference. The lecturer is Professor Erwin Diewert from the University of British Columbia. The course provides the latest information about index theories and their application in different areas of statistics.

The Nordic Statistical Conference is this year arranged by Statistics Finland and the Finnish Statistical Society.

Further information: <http://www.stat.fi/abo2004/index.html>