

Statistical Commission  
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26-29 February 2008  
Item 4(p) of the provisional agenda  
**Implementation of principles governing  
international statistical activities**

Background document  
Available in English only

### **Agency experiences in the implementation of the principles**

Note prepared by the members of CCSA,  
Compiled by UNSD

In order to prepare the Statistical Commission document on the implementation of the principles governing international statistical activities (E/CN.3/2008/31), UNSD invited the members of CCSA in December 2007 to prepare short summary notes, describing the situation related to the implementation of the Principles in the various institutions. Contributors were encouraged to structure the note around the following 3 points:

- Principles that have already been implemented?
- Areas that might require attention in the near future?
- Examples of recent actions taken to implement the principles?

The attached information note reflects 14 agency contributions, as received by UNSD by 1 February 2008. The CCSA will discuss in its February 2008 meeting, how to improve and possibly standardize the agency reporting on the implementation of the principles.

## WHO

WHO is implementing all ten principles. Some are very prominent in its work (e.g. 1, 2, 4 and 5), but all are part and parcel of WHO's statistical work in one way or another. There are no major obstacles towards implementing the principles. It has to be acknowledged however that health statistics involve a very wide range of actors in specific programmes and also other agencies. Another key issue is that resource constraints hamper WHO's ability actively participate in all statistical activities in all regions or take its capacity building efforts to all countries.

It is also noted that Health Metrics Network, an international partnership on health information, works very closely with WHO, and also supports the implementation of the principles.

Two examples of WHO's work related to the principles:

1 A framework for the production of health statistics by WHO was developed, including data generation, data compilation, production of estimates and dissemination. The framework specifies the different roles and responsibilities of WHO in health statistics at global, regional and country levels. A four-step clearance process for the production of health statistics is now operational and all disease programmes have to adhere to this: storing basic data and documentation for deriving statistics in a database, applying peer-reviewed methods to generate derived measures, review by an external expert group and clearance to ensure consistency with numbers from all diseases. In addition, countries are consulted on all statistics.

2 The World Health Assembly adopted a Resolution on strengthening of health information systems in May 2007, which had been passed by the Executive Board in January 2007. The Resolution includes a specific section requesting the Director General to strengthen WHO's work in the field of health statistics. It also emphasizes the need for collaboration between health and statistical communities. These developments are expected to help WHO strengthen its work along the lines of the Principles

2. CALLS UPON the health information and statistical communities, other international organizations, including global health initiatives and funds, the private sector, civil society and other concerned stakeholders to provide strong, sustained support for strengthening of information systems including using the standards and guiding principles set out in the framework of the Health Metrics Network, and covering the spectrum of health statistics, including health determinants; health resources, expenditures and system functioning; service access, coverage and quality; health outcomes and health status; and according particular attention to information on poverty and inequity in health;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to strengthen the information and evidence culture of the Organization and to ensure the use of accurate and timely health statistics to generate evidence for major policy decisions and recommendations within WHO;
- (2) to increase WHO's activities in health statistics at global, regional and country levels and provide support to Member States to build capacities for development of health information systems and generation, analysis, dissemination and use of data;
- (3) to promote better access to health statistics, encourage information dissemination to all stakeholders in appropriate and accessible formats, and foster transparency in data analysis, synthesis and evaluation, including peer review;

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(4) to promote improved alignment, harmonization and coordination of health information activities, bearing in mind the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability (2005) and the Best Practice Principles for Global Health Partnership Activities at country level;<sup>1</sup>

(5) to undertake regular reviews of country experiences, to provide support for updating the framework of the Health Metrics Network in line with lessons learnt and evolving methodologies, and to report on progress as from the Sixty-second World Health Assembly.

Fourth meeting, 30 May 2006  
EB118/SR/4

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## CIS-STAT

The Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) is guided in its activities by major “ Principles Governing International Statistical Activities” approved by the UN Statistical Commission. Most of these principles have been implemented in the context of major aspects of the work which refer to preparation of recommendations on methodology of key socio-economic aggregates for statistical services of the CIS countries, collection and dissemination of data.

The following principles are considered to have been implemented :

- High quality international statistics, accessible for all.

To implement this principle CIS-STAT formulates its program of work on the basis of careful analysis of the demand on data from the major users – governments of the countries, CIS bodies, international organizations, research institutions . The program of work is periodically reviewed and approved by the Council of Heads of Statistical Services of the CIS Countries. The major blocks of the data are available for public in the form of publications and on the web site.

- To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards.

To implement this principle CIS-STAT is guided, in the context of preparation of recommendations on the methodology, by purely scientific considerations, by relying on the best practices and international standards.

- Concepts, definitions, classifications, methods and procedures are chosen to meet professional scientific standards, and their description are made transparent for the users.

The recommendations of CIS-STAT on the methodology are consistent with the concepts, definitions and classifications suggested in the relevant documents worked out by international organizations; the description of these categories is provided in the publications released by CIS-STAT.

- Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics.

CIS-STAT cooperates actively with other international organizations in a number of ways, such as joint organization of seminars and workshops, sharing statistical information, participation in the work of UN statistical bodies. CISSTAT signed memorandums of understanding with Eurostat and OECD.

- Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality.

The recommendations of CIS-STAT on this matter are based on the careful analysis of the existing system of reports submitted by enterprises to statistical offices, sample

surveys, statistical registers. CIS-STAT releases periodically recommendations on improvement of these sources, on their adaptations to the requirements of compilation of socio-economic statistics.

- Individual data or small aggregates are subject to national confidentiality rules.

In the interaction with statistical services of the CIS countries the CIS-STAT is guided by the national rules and legislation in this area. For example, in order to be consistent with national rules CIS-STAT did not collect individual price observations in the context of the ICP for 2005. As a rule, CIS-STAT does not collect individual data.

CIS-STAT intends to continue implementing the principles of official statistics defined by the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities. The major objectives in this context are as follows: i) facilitation of implementation of international standards in statistics of the CIS countries, especially in the field of government finance statistics, updated SNA- 93, CPI; ii) expanding cooperation with international organizations and iii) careful analysis of changing demands of data users.

## UNECE

### *A) Activities of the Statistical Division of UNECE*

**Principle 1:** We are fully compatible with the good practices mentioned for this principle. We have a regular review of the statistical programme by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians. There are no statistical activities carried out that are not mentioned in the programme. In addition, the programme is publicly available on the website.

Compilation and dissemination of international statistics is based on the principle of impartiality, with free of charge access to all users on the website. 4 years ago, the macroeconomic database was for internal use by analysts only, and the change to a multi-user official statistics approach with public access had many implications, notably on the metadata and transparency requirements. A thorough external review of the data activities of the division took place in 2006, with recommendations to be implemented gradually. One of these recommendations refers to regular user surveys, the first of which has just been completed.

**Principle 2:** The first and third practices mentioned for this principle are fully adhered to. The only code of conduct for staff of the division is the quality framework for data work introduced at the beginning of 2007. Our opinion is that at least for small units like the Statistical division of UNECE, a quality framework is the only code that needs to be tailored to the organization; for the other principles, the set of good practices from the international principles can be directly applied.

**Principle 3:** All documents concerning UNECE meetings, and the decisions by the Conference and its Bureau, are accessible to the public through the website.

**Principle 4:** With the partial exception of the second bullet, all good practices mentioned for this principle are followed by the division. However, staff of the division does not have enough time to engage in analytical work over and above the analysis that is necessary to determine the quality of the data collected and of the statistics to be disseminated. In the UNECE statistics database, all sources are given credit, and users are given methodological explanations when source data are adjusted or imputed by the division, or do not correspond to international standards.

**Principle 5:** The good practices are followed, but they sometimes involve trade-off situations concerning the choice of the source (Timeliness is better when data are directly taken from country sources, but this is less cost-effective compared to international sources with reduced timeliness for some countries). Response burden for countries is always considered before sending out a questionnaire, and it has to be demonstrated that the information is not available e.g. on national websites. As a consequence, questionnaires are only used for selected countries, or for obtaining methodological

information, but not for regular data collection across all 56 UNECE Member States. For EU and EFTA countries, EUROSTAT is the main data source.

The UNECE Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA/IP) is a model for an integrated presentation across international agencies with activities relevant for the region. It is publicly accessible through the website, and can be searched by many criteria. Since the Fundamental Principles originated and were adopted at the political level in UNECE, we are a strong advocate and source of advice for countries facing problems of implementation.

**Principle 6:** not applicable to the Statistical Division, since we do not collect, either directly or indirectly, confidential data.

**Principle 7:** is only partially applied. We do not have the resources to follow systematically the use of statistics, and are therefore unlikely to detect erroneous interpretations and misuse of statistics made by a third party. On the other hand, we are developing tools for marketing our products and services that are targeted towards specific user groups.

**Principle 8:** With the partial exception of the third and fourth good practices, we are fully in line with this principle. Since all work is carried out under the umbrella of the Conference, NSIs are systematically associated to all methodological work. However, there are some old UNECE standards in areas where we have stopped methodological work (e.g. environment statistics), where we are unable to give advice to countries on implementation issues. Monitoring of agreed UNECE standards takes place when there is an explicit mandate to do so by the Bureau, and of global UN standards through the regional commissions when there is such an initiative from Headquarters.

**Principle 9:** We are fully in line with the good practices related to this principle, with some qualification for the first. Mandated by the Bureau, we are carrying out regularly a donor survey for technical assistance to Central Asian countries, and provide answers to similar surveys carried out by EUROSTAT concerning our activities for other countries of our region. We only publish statistics considered as authoritative and comparable, and all normative recommendations on standards have to be endorsed by the Conference or its Bureau.

The Statistical Division carries out 80% of the statistical activities of the ECE. The remaining 20% of activities are carried out by other divisions. Their activities are included in the statistical programmes. The director of the Statistical Division represents the whole of UNECE statistics at international meetings. The Conference of European Statisticians has a mandate for coordination of statistics within the whole of UNECE, but implementation of this mandate is presently only partial.

Concerning regular data work carried out by other division, one of them has started to use the dissemination platform of the Statistical Division, but we have not been able so far to export the quality framework used in the division (mainly because we wanted to first assess the practical feasibility for our own data work). Concerning the methodological work taking place outside the division, coordination is satisfactory in the case of transport

statistics, but should be improved for the other domains (environment; timber). A special case is the generations and gender programme of the population unit (see below under B)

**Principle 10:** We fully adhere to the good practices mentioned here.

### ***B) Statistical Activities of Other Divisions***

Before the EC-ESA principles endorsed, in October 2008, the principles governing international statistical activities for all activities in their responsibility, only the activities in the responsibility of the Statistical Division were covered by the pledge of the director the Statistical Division to follow the principles. This will now have to change.

Presently, we do not have an overview about the extent to which these principles are followed by other divisions. However, there are clear signs that compliance is not at the same level as for the Statistical Division: not all data are publicly disseminated, and if they are, it is with some important delays compared to either internal or selected government users in Member countries; not all statistics released are adequately documented with metadata; there is no clear separation of statistical and policy-prescriptive comments, since these activities are sometimes very closely related to policy advocacy. Furthermore, the generations and gender programme (GGP) of the population unit involves forthcoming survey activities at the national level, with processing of confidential data, and, in the absence of a binding legal framework in the UN for the treatment of such data, these principles offer the only benchmark to be applicable for this activity.

### **Examples of recent actions taken by the Statistical Division**

1. Introduction of a quality framework at the beginning of 2007
2. Introduction of the Russian language for database navigation in 2006, in view of the fact that the main value added of the UNECE database is in putting CIS and Balkan countries' data alongside EU, US and Canada
3. Survey of database users as from autumn 2007



## ESCWA

**In a letter to UNSD Director on 11 November 2005, ESCWA Statistics Division endorsed the 10 Principles Governing International Statistical Activities expressing professional commitment and upholding and applying the principles into their daily work in addition to advocating their practice with member countries. The Statistics Division has endeavored to apply the principles as follows:**

### **Principle 1: Relevance, impartiality and equal access**

**High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems**

The Commission has long recognized the need for regular consultation with their main clients in the region and outside the region. New consultative machineries and initiatives were added to maintain a continuous consultative process with key users and represent user's interests. Three main machineries are now active:

- a. The Statistical Committee, established by UN-ESCWA resolution 179 (XVI) of September 1992; meets every two years and is attended by the heads of the national statistical offices with invitations extended to regional and international partners to assist the Commission in formulating its statistics work programme, review the progress of work, discuss special studies and assessments made on special topics;
- b. The Working Group for the Statistical Committee, established upon the recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Statistical Committee held in 2006, meets every other year when the Statistical Committee is not meeting, and attended mainly by the national statistical offices and selected partners to discuss emerging issues and needs
- c. The Bureau of the Statistical Committee meets or discusses by electronic mail the yearly organization of both the Statistical Committee and Working Group meetings.

In addition, to the above mentioned user's consultative machineries, the following mechanisms are also employed by the Statistics Division at ESCWA to provide further information to user's such as:

- d. Circulate yearly calendar of activities to ESCWA NSOs, LAS, AITRS, GCC, AGFUND, Medstat, OIC, UNSD, OECD, ECA, ECE, ...and the regional sister agencies at the beginning of each year to update users and producers of statistics on the Division's activities and receive feedback. A calendar of activities is also shared over the internet to target a wider scope of interested users and partners.

- e. Conduct periodical satisfaction surveys of users on the quality of the statistical yearbook and selected outputs
- f. Perusal of a new dissemination policy by the Statistics Division in providing free access to its key publications on the Division's Homepage for wider dissemination of key statistics in addition to disseminating its databases free of charge.
- g. Post on the Division's Homepage the catalogue of publications produced, in addition to the Commission's hard copy.

**Principle 2: Professional standards and ethics**

**To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards**

The Statistics Division endeavors to maintain the trust in its statistics through:

- a. Review of key publications' methodologies, terminologies and data content and structure. As an example the Population and Vital Statistics Bulletin questionnaire, content, concepts and methodologies have been reviewed thoroughly this year. The Bulletin on Trade Statistics will undergo a self-assessment exercise by external panel of experts.
- b. Include statistical analysis in key publications and avoiding making any policy related analysis or advocacy comments.
- c. Hire skilled and qualified staff with statistical background in related areas with analytical and information technology capabilities in both working languages of the Commission.
- d. The Division's staff are governed by the United Nations ethics and standards for code of conduct.

**Principle 3: Accountability and transparency**

**The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organizations**

The Statistics Division has several mechanisms in informing the public on the mandates of the statistical work of the organization through:

- a. Circulating the Work Programme and posting it on the Division's Homepage
- b. Posting all the training materials and documentation for workshops and meetings on the site (practiced was followed since the 1<sup>st</sup> International Migration Statistics in the ESCWA Region in 2005)
- c. Providing training materials and documentation on cds

- d. Distributing the final reports of the meetings to participants and other users my mail and posting it on the Division's Homepage.
- e. Making press releases of the activities implemented by the Division and posting it on the Commission's internet

**Principle 4: Prevention of misuse**

**Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users**

The Statistics Division actively pursues user education and systematically makes revisions of its publications with proper referencing, as the following examples:

- a. As a standard practice in the ESCWA Statistics Division a systematic review of methodologies employed are being undertaken during the preparation of publications;
- b. Most of the key publications include a section to the concepts and methodologies employed in the use and calculation of indicators.
- c. All publications, whether recurrent or non recurrent make reference to the sources of its data giving credit thus to national and international sources.
- d. All publications and presentations made refer to the data collection processes used and sources sought.
- e. Two assessment exercises were conducted by the Statistics Division. The first is Assessment of the Statistical Offices in the Region, to investigate the needs for statistical capacity buildings. The second on the extent of national MDG monitoring and reporting based on UNSD database to improve future compilation of data. Both reports were presented and discussed in the 7<sup>th</sup> Statistical Committee meetings and posted on the Homepage for wider use and dissemination.
- f. The Statistics Division comment on inconsistency of data and seek from the national source explanation and confirmation before publishing any misleading or erroneous data.
- g. The Statistics Division is implementing Statistical Literacy Project in selected member countries to enable the national statistical offices to educate the users and improve their statistical literacy to prevent misinterpretation, in addition to specialized workshops and training courses.
- h. Development of a virtual library on selected themes to provide the users with user-friendly homepages and educate them by providing them with resourceful materials, best practices and databases and links to further sites free of access

- i. Staff are expected to have a substantive input and prepare a presentation for meetings they attend.
- j. Provide free access to international concepts, standards and classifications in various fields of statistics and make them easily and directly accessible on the Statistics Division's Homepage.

**Principle 5: Sources of official statistics**

**Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimize the reporting burden for data providers**

The Statistics Division endeavors to minimize the reporting burden and implement quality management programmes to achieve the quality and timeliness required by users of their statistics through:

- a. Maintaining the Economic and Social Information System (ESIS) database hosted on the Statistics Division's homepage and the Commission's main page to provide users with latest national statistics and time series of its member countries. In addition, the Statistics Division also maintains several specialized databases with key indicators for free public access.
- b. Working systematically on the improvement of the timeliness of international statistics and employing new technologies to collect and release data through electronic mail, web, and cds which enhances timeliness
- c. Working systematically on compiling data from published national sources to lessen the burden of reporting by the countries
- d. Ensuring quality requires periodic review of statistics outputs which may involve external experts. A self assessment exercise will be undertaken on the Bulletin on Trade Statistics
- e. Sharing collected data with UNSD in certain fields of statistics thereby lessening the burden of reporting by countries and making gaps or overlaps clearly visible
- f. Advocating the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in all its activities and pursuing with the national statistical offices as one of the Division's strategic objectives to adopt and apply those Principles.

**Principle 6: Confidentiality**

**Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly**

**confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation**

- a. The Statistics Division will be implementing the Paris21/World Bank Accelerated Data Programme (ADP) in two pilot countries during 2008. The Division will ensure that access to micro data from official statistics will be anonymous for individual non-aggregated information.
- b. In addition, the Division, has been, and will continue to maintain confidentiality protection in disclosing identifiable individual data collected from the national statistical offices sought to improve the statistical activities and working procedures.

**Principle 7: Regulations and Measures**

**Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed**

To avoid the erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics the Division provides informative guides targeting different types of users, this included:

- a. The preparation of information booklets for enhancing the use of statistics. Many booklets have been prepared for gender statistics users, the latest of which is on Gender in MDGs: An Information Guide for Arab MDG Reports
- b. The translation of a number of manuals into Arabic language the latest on Indicators for Policy Management

**Principle 8: Regional coordination**

**Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility**

- a. Official statistics are compiled only from the national statistical offices by the Statistics Division at ESCWA as the official source of data at the national level
- b. The Statistics Division actively involves the national statistical offices with the development of its regional programme of work and of methods and standards through the Statistical Committee forum and circulation of annual work planes.
- c. Compiling regional best practices and share information through common platform on the Statistics Division Homepage virtual library
- d. The Division also provides technical assistance on the implementation of international standards and monitors their implementation at the regional level in cooperation with UNSD such as workshops on international classifications and vital registration

- e. In addition, the work of the Division is also shared with the regional agencies for their collaboration in training the national statistical offices on new methodologies and standards through the annual meetings of the Regional Coordination Group (RCG).

**Principle 9: Use of international standards**

**Coordination of international statistical programmes is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work**

- a. Participate regularly in the Statistical Commission, IAEG meeting on MDGs and specialized Task Force meetings by its designated relevant officers to coordinate the implementation of the statistical programme and consult on joint activities
- b. Advocate systematically and provide training on the use of international standards, concepts, classifications, and methods in different areas of statistics
- c. Working systematically towards compiling national MDG indicators, and developing regional frameworks in specialized areas such as “G IS IN” Framework for monitoring and reporting on gender related and gender sensitive indicators for the MDGS and BPfA
- d. Act as the lead agency and focal point for implementing technical cooperation activities, such as the International Comparison Programme and Accelerated Data Programme with the World Bank, MDG related projects with UNDG and UNICEF, and by coordinating joint collaboration with other agencies through RCG meetings on MDGs in particular to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage complementarities and synergy

**Principle 10: International cooperation**

**Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organizations and in countries**

- a. Cooperate and share knowledge with international organizations and regions to further develop national and regional statistical systems through common platform on the Statistics Division Homepage virtual library
- b. Encourage countries to take ownership of projects by expressing willingness to join a project such as the Statistical Literacy Project and the Accelerated Data Programme as a solid base for meeting user requirements, promoting full participation of the main stakeholders, taking account of local circumstances and stage of statistical development

- c. Empowering recipient national statistical systems and governments to take the lead in implementing projects as partners in international cooperation to contribute to professional growth and improvement of statistics
- d. Advocating the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in countries through the design and implementation of national statistical development strategies and adherence to the Principles by monitoring their compliance and reporting on it
- e. Setting cooperation projects within a balanced overall strategic framework for national development of official statistics in accordance with the Statistics Division Programme of Work for 2008-2009 expected accomplishment (a) Strengthened capacity of member countries to improve national statistical institutional framework.

## Eurostat

With the adoption of the Recommendation on the independence, integrity and accountability of the national and Community statistical authorities of 25 May 2005 (COM 2005 (217)), the Commission has committed itself to ensuring that the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice are respected by Eurostat. Thus, this contribution focuses on the Eurostat implementation path of the Code of Practice, outlining some milestones and giving a broad overview on its compliance status. Paragraph 3 briefly refers to items from the UN principles governing international statistical activities that are not explicitly covered by the CoP.

### *C) Eurostat milestones towards the implementation of the Code of Practice*

- During the end of 2005/beginning 2006 Eurostat carried out a comprehensive self-assessment against the principles and indicators of the European Statistics Code of Practice using a questionnaire commonly agreed across the European Statistical System (ESS). To this end an internal Task Force has been created which reported its findings to Eurostat top management. A summary has been published on the Eurostat website.
- As part of this self-assessment exercise which led to the identification of main strengths and weaknesses in the area relevant to the Code, Eurostat adopted a list of improvement actions towards full compliance with the Code.
- During 24-26 October 2007 Eurostat was subject to a peer review, chaired by Rob Edwards, IMF. It covered the Eurostat institutional environment and dissemination practices in line with the common ESS methodology. The peer review report will be published on the Eurostat website.
- Establishment of a European Statistical Governance Advisory Board to steer the monitoring of the implementation of the Code by Eurostat and to advise in promoting the implementation of the Code for the European Statistical System as whole.
- Further implementation steps include projects at various levels to enhance process and product quality, including the promotion of ESS good practices, the organisation of the European Conference on Quality in 2006 and 2008 and a co-operation project with other international organisations led by Eurostat on the use and convergence of international quality assurance frameworks. In addition, compliance monitoring established by Eurostat in the area of statistics will allow addressing quality issues at the level of statistical domains. Some areas of the Code have been specified in more detailed protocols.



- As a basis for further communication about the Code to users of European Statistics, Eurostat has dedicated a section on its website to the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#)<sup>1</sup> and issued a brochure in three languages.
- In 2008 Eurostat will report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of the Code of Practice in the ESS.

#### **D) Eurostat compliance status with the Code of Practice**

##### **a. Institutional environment**

As a pre-requisite for delivering high quality output and for it to be recognized by users, the Code of Practice assigns high importance to the institutional environment covering the following 6 principles: Professional independence, Mandate for Data Collection, Adequacy of Resources, Quality Commitment, Statistical Confidentiality and Impartiality and Objectivity.

With regard to its institutional environment, Eurostat seems to be well covered for many of the Code's indicators. In particular its confidentiality regime in place and its mandate for data collection seem to be in line with the benchmarking indicators suggested by the Code. Improvements seem to be needed in the area of adequacy of Eurostat human resources and with regard to some specific issues related to Commission provisions and Eurostat practices to reinforce independence and impartiality. Furthermore Eurostat's strong quality commitment will need to be supplemented by a more process-oriented approach systematically involving external users. These findings were broadly supported by the Eurostat peer review:

##### **b. Statistical processes**

In line with the concept of total quality management, the Code of Practice sets out standards and good practices for the processes underpinning the production of statistics covering the following principles:

Sound Methodology, Appropriate Statistical Procedures, Non-Excessive Burden on Respondents, Cost Effectiveness

With regard to statistical processes employed in Eurostat, the self-assessment exercise did not reveal any major problems with regard to the quality of the production processes of the various domains. However, their sheer heterogeneity within Eurostat has been identified repeatedly as a potential for improvement with a view to realising efficiency gains, better coping with high proportions of non-permanent staff in some domains and applying office-wide quality standards. Given the role of Eurostat, generally not collecting data itself, some indicators of the Code of Practice Questionnaire do not apply.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/quality>

### **c. Statistical output**

Compliance with European standards on quality in statistics is covered by the third part of the Code of Practice dealing with the statistical output. The following principles are included:

Relevance, Accuracy and Reliability, Timeliness and Punctuality, Coherence and Comparability, Accessibility and Clarity

Once more the picture gained from the self-assessment exercise points to a high diversity within Eurostat. Information on output quality seems to be varying with the degree of harmonisation of a statistical area and whether or not it is subject to European legislation. Ad hoc exercises rather than a systematic approach for Eurostat prevail in selected domains with regard to the exploitation of Eurostat wealth of data through means of cross-checking and other ways to improve coherence. With regard to the questions on accessibility and clarity of its output, Eurostat features very well in the self-assessment of which the free dissemination of Eurostat data is only one aspect. In this area, however, the peer review called for more user-friendliness and improvements with regard to responding to needs for supplementary data analysis. While no major additional shortcomings have been flagged in the replies to the questions on output quality, this part of the questionnaire to some extent overlaps with other parts. Thus, the needs to improve timeliness as well as to consult users of statistics on a systematic basis are repeated under this heading.

### ***E) The European Statistics Code of Practice and the CCSA Principles***

Some items from the UN principles governing international statistical activities are not covered by the Code. They are all, in one way or another, already implemented. Some are, given the existence of the ESS, irrelevant or redundant (like advising countries on implementing issues or developing and using professional codes of conduct) or going slightly beyond what is requested by the CoP (like ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics).

They are listed below:

- *Ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics*
- *Developing and using professional codes of conduct*
- *Giving credit, in the dissemination of international statistics, to the original source and using agreed quotation standards when re-using statistics originally collected by others*
- *Making decisions about statistical work programmes publicly available*
- *Ensuring that national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics are duly involved and advocating that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are applied when data are collected in countries*
- *Advising countries on implementation issues concerning international standards*

- *Designating one or more statistical units to implement statistical programmes, including one unit that coordinates the statistical work of the organisation and represents the organisation in international statistical meetings.*
- *Working systematically towards agreement on which series to consider as authoritative for each important set of statistics*

Others refer to activities not directly related to the production of statistics like:

- *Coordinating technical cooperation activities with countries between donors and between different organisations in the national statistical system to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage complementarities and synergy*
- *Basing cooperation projects on user requirements, promoting full participation of the main stakeholders, taking account of local circumstances and stage of statistical development*
- *Empowering recipient national statistical systems and governments to take the lead*
- *Setting cooperation projects within a balanced overall strategic framework for national development of official statistics*
- *Enhancing the use of statistics by developing educational material for important user groups*

## FAO

The Statistics Division of FAO is committed to the implementation of all the 10 principles and related good practices through its work in the international arena. The Director of Statistics, FAO, [endorsed](#) the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities on behalf of FAO on 23 November 2005. Apart from providing guidelines and standards to the member countries, the implementation of these principles is built in the direct technical assistance programme for the countries, though varying in coverage from country to country.

A few examples of this commitment, as reflected in the work carried out by FAO in the last two years, are mentioned below:

- The continued collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of agricultural statistics as mandated by article I of the FAO constitution. {Principles 1}
- The complete documentation of important regional meetings is disseminated through the website of the Division. {Principle 3}
- The questionnaires seeking agricultural data for international comparison from countries have been reviewed to avoid duplication and reduce the burden of response {Principle 5}
- In the technical assistance to survey programme in countries efforts are made to document the micro-data using the frame work of International Household Survey Network, e.g. in Niger {Principle 6}
- The World Programme of Census of Agriculture 2010 provides an integrated framework for agricultural surveys {Principles 8 and 9}
- FAO has not only contributed to the revision and update of international classifications like CPC, ISIC, ISCO and HS, but also come up with indicative classifications on crops, livestock and machinery used in agricultural surveys. These classifications are harmonized with CPC and HS. {Principle 9}

On the basis on experience of working with countries, it is felt that the Principle-7 viz., “*Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed*” is an area where greater attention is needed. Most of the programmes for statistical development are usually focused towards production of good quality statistics. Capacitating data users is often neglected by the international statistical community and the national governments. Availability of basic educational material for data users coming from diverse academic backgrounds is often limited. The FAO Statistics Division tries to encourage analysis and use of data in the projects implemented by it wherever possible.

## ILO

The website of the ILO Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.ilo.org/stat>, includes a clear statement on its mandate, which is in full conformity with the ILO Convention No. 160 on labour statistics, and on its activities. An updated version of this website will be available as from 01 January 2008. It will greatly facilitate user access to information about the Bureau as well as on technical issues relating to labour statistics.

The activities of the ILO Bureau of Statistics fall within three related areas: (i) collection and dissemination of labour statistics; (ii) development of international recommendations and guidelines for the effective collection of labour statistics; and (iii) provision of technical assistance to national data producers and users.

### **Data collection and dissemination.**

The ILO Bureau of Statistics gathers a wide range of labour statistics and associated metadata from national data producers and disseminates them in various ways for the use of both inside and outside clients. In doing this, the ILO is fully committed and engaged in continuously introducing methodological improvements and systems to manage and improve the quality and transparency of the labour statistics that are disseminated.

All ILO official statistical publications contain only official national statistics as reported to the ILO. Other ILO publications, containing estimates and projections, always include definitions and detailed explanations of the methods used. In the publication and dissemination of these statistics, the ILO always gives due credit to their original source and use agreed quotation standards when re-using statistics originally collected by others.

In order to ascertain that users' needs are met, the Bureau organises regular consultations with key users through meetings, user surveys and other forms of contact, including the use of Internet facilities. The most recent initiative is the *User Satisfaction Survey* (<http://laborsta.ilo.org/User%20Laborsta%20Form.htm>) being implemented on its LABORSTA website.

The Bureau strives to facilitate the provision of data by countries through both periodic review of its data collection programme and introduction of modern means of data collection, including directly from the relevant Web sites of key national data producers.

During the past two years, the ILO Bureau of Statistics has enhanced its data collection and dissemination tools and capacities thereby providing better and easier access to its databases for a wide range of users, as well as ensuring free public accessibility to the great majority of the statistical series available and to their meta-data.

Also, the ILO Bureau of Statistics collaborates with other international organisations on joint data collection. For example, the Bureau and EUROSTAT have recently started sending a common questionnaire to countries to collect statistics on occupational injuries. The Bureau is also working with OECD and EUROSTAT to develop the use of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) for labour statistics.

The Bureau actively participates in and supports both regional and international initiatives on coordination of international statistical programmes geared towards reducing response burden, avoiding duplication of work and resulting in the economy of scales in such areas as data collection and dissemination, as well as technical advice and assistance. The ILO's continued contribution to the UNECE Database of International Statistical Activities is a good example of the above commitment. Also the Bureau contributes to the work of PARIS21 and participates in various meetings organised by international organisations and the ILO Field Structure.

The above has made it possible to achieve notable cost-efficiency in the data collection and dissemination procedures in a way that minimizes the burden on countries and gives maximum exposure to its statistics.

#### *Standard setting activities*

The development of international recommendations and guidelines for the effective collection of labour statistics by member States is one of the major responsibilities of the ILO. These statistical standards are intended to reflect "best practices" in the respective areas, while at the same time being flexible enough to accommodate the circumstances of countries which are at very different levels of statistical development.

They are developed through extensive consultations with member States and other international agencies using bilateral contacts, meetings of experts, technical expert groups, web forums, etc. The main instruments embodying such standards are the resolutions adopted by the *International Conferences of Labour Statisticians* (ICLS) which are attended by participants from national statistical offices, ministries responsible for labour and other stakeholders. As such, the standards are decisions of the collectivity of statistical expertise in countries.

#### **Technical assistance and training**

The main emphasis of ILO technical assistance is on the promotion and implementation of the international recommendations in the field of labour statistics, and ILO Convention No. 160. The means by which these are delivered are through publication of manuals and guidelines, advisory missions, training activities and bi-lateral e-contacts and correspondence. Recently, the Bureau has developed both FAQs and webpages on specific topics on its website to give further guidance to countries.

The Bureau assists countries, to the extent possible, in organising training of important user groups on concepts, definitions and analysis of labour statistics.

As mentioned above, the ILO also works with international partner agencies to promote capacity building for labour statistics through activities implemented jointly with PARIS 21 and the International Household Survey Network (IHSN).

### **Staffing and structure**

Staff of the Bureau, both professional and general service, regularly attend relevant training courses and are encouraged to publish methodological papers both in in-house publications and international professional journals. The professional staff members are regularly engaged in the preparation of and lecturing at various technical workshops and seminars, as well as participate as resources persons at international conferences.

The ILO has instituted a training policy under which 2% of staff costs are earmarked each biennium for staff training. This has facilitated the development of the human resources of the Bureau.

### **Areas that might require attention in the future**

*Effective coordination of statistical activities internally within ILO as well as coordination of labour statistics in the wider international community are areas that continue to be challenging. The ILO is addressing the issue of internal coordination by instituting the recent external audit of its statistical activities. Coordination at the international level is one of the terms of reference of the review of labour statistics being implemented by the UK Office of National Statistics at the request of the UN Statistical Commission.*

*Although the ILO has procedures in place for assessing the quality of the statistics it disseminates, there is as yet no full-fledged quality assessment framework for its activities.*

*Adequate courses, inadequate staff numbers and time availability are limiting the development of human resources of the Bureau.*

## OECD

In 2003, the OECD developed its “Quality Framework and Guidelines for OECD Statistics”. In the first part of the Framework the following text is included:

“The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted initially by the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations, and subsequently endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in April 1994 (refer Annex 1), provide a set of principles through which many of the quality dimensions outlined in the previous Section of this document are applied. The actual implementation of the quality dimensions and the UN Principles is undertaken through the guidelines and procedures provided for all OECD statistical activities.”

The OECD is reviewing its Quality Framework to make also reference to the Principles for International Organisations prepared by CCSA.

The main principles of OECD statistical activities included in the current Quality Framework are:

- OECD statistics are compiled and made available on an impartial basis. OECD statistics are produced according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics with regard to methods and procedures used for the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of statistical data.
- The OECD presents statistical information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods, and procedures adopted to produce its statistics.
- Individual data collected by the OECD for statistical compilation are considered to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes. Specific measures are taken to ensure the full protection of confidential data from any potential disclosure.
- Internal rules and measures under which the OECD statistical system operates are made public.
- The OECD is committed to carrying out its statistical activities in co-ordination with national statistical agencies and with other international organisations.
- The OECD is committed to developing bilateral and multilateral co-operation in statistics in order to contribute to the development of systems of official statistics in all countries.



- Within the constraints of resource availability, OECD data products are of the best possible overall quality in terms of each of the seven quality dimensions outlined in the Organization’s Quality Framework. Effort involved in assuring quality is commensurate with the scale of the statistical activity, the purpose of the activity and its frequency (i.e. whether it is intended to be repeated regularly or occasionally, or is one-off)”.

Additional principles are covering data and metadata collection, management and dissemination.

The Quality framework is made public on the OECD web site (see [www.oecd.org/statistics/qualityframework](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/qualityframework)).

Since 2003, the OECD launched a system of Quality Reviews to evaluate how the principles and guidelines are implemented in individual statistical activities. The Committee on Statistics oversees the Quality Reviews and the actions identified by them to improve the existing situation.

As explained above, the principles for international organizations are already well observed throughout the statistical work of the OECD, and efforts are in place regarding each of the principles.

In particular, at this stage, OECD is engaged in reducing the burden on countries and increasing data sharing between international organizations, by implementation of SDMX data sharing arrangements.

## UNCTAD

The 'Principles Governing International Statistical Activities', presented to UNCTAD senior management in March 2006, are an essential component of the UNCTAD statistics plan of action endorsed by the Secretary General.

Principle 4 is a guiding benchmark during the development and implementation of a new statistical information system. Methodologies and procedures to process statistics and to calculate derived indicators are systematically reviewed. Sources, concepts, definitions, classifications and processes are documented and made available to the secretariat. Great attention was given to provide metadata at all levels, from the cell level to the dataset. External dissemination enhancements are scheduled for 2008 and 2009.

UNCTAD data collection, designated as ICT and FDI, is coordinated with partner agencies. The 2007 Statistical Commission congratulated the UNCTAD initiative 'Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development' as "an example of successful cooperation among international organizations." (Principles 9 and 10)

## **ECB**

In May 2007, the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) comprising the ECB and all European Union National Central Banks (NCBs) established the [Public commitment with respect to the ESCB's statistical function](#).

The public commitment covers all principles included in the Principles governing international statistical activities. It provides a summary of the institutional environment of the ECB statistical function and sets out the quality standards and procedures guiding the production of ECB statistics. More concretely, the public commitment states that the ECB:

- takes into consideration the quality standards set out in the UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics for the development, collection, production and dissemination of ECB statistics;
- is committed to use internationally agreed standards, guidelines and good practices (where applicable);
- aims to perform its tasks effectively and use resources efficiently;
- aims to limit the response burden to a minimum;
- guarantees the protection of the confidential statistical information provided by respondents, NCBs, Eurostat and national statistical institutes (NSIs).

The public commitment also recalls the legal mandate of the ECB to collect data and the cooperation of the ESCB with the European Statistical System.

Finally, the public commitment defines the following guiding principles for the collection, production and dissemination of ECB statistics: *impartiality, scientific independence, cost-effectiveness, statistical confidentiality, non-excessive burden on respondents and high output quality*.

As a follow-up to the publication of the public commitment, the ECB is currently developing a quality framework for its statistical function that aims at elaborating in more detail on the principles governing the production of ECB statistics. This framework will refer to the adherence of the ECB to the Principles governing international statistical activities. It will be also accompanied by a comprehensive depository of the quality assurance procedures implemented by the ECB Statistics Department to guarantee the integrity and the quality of ECB statistics.

## IMF

### Selected Practices of the Statistics Department of the International Monetary Fund According to the Data Quality Assessment Framework

The Statistics Department (STA) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) developed the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) in the early 2000s in response to calls from the international statistical community to bring together a structure and common language for internationally accepted good practices for governance in statistical systems, statistical processes, and statistical products. The DQAF is in turn rooted in the United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*. While the context of the DQAF reflects the circumstances of national agencies producing statistics, STA has applied the Framework to its own statistical work.

#### **0. Prerequisites of quality**

**0.1 Legal and institutional environment.** The IMF is an international organization, comprising 185 member countries, whose scope of operations is determined through a charter entitled the Articles of Agreement. Article IV, Section 3, assigns to the Fund surveillance over exchange arrangements, and Article VIII, Section 5, sets out member countries' obligations to provide to the Fund such information as it deems necessary for its activities. The Articles of Agreement determine the operations of the IMF and how these operations evolve, including the activities of STA. Within this institutional setting, and consistent with its mission statement "that the availability of high-quality statistics is an essential prerequisite for the formulation of appropriate macroeconomic and financial policies," STA strives for the IMF and member countries to adopt practices that are consistent with the spirit of the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*.

**0.2 Resources.** STA's activities encompass macroeconomic data management and publications, standards for data dissemination, support of surveillance and program monitoring, statistical methodologies, capacity building and training, and international statistical coordination and cooperation. STA is also responsible for maintaining the IMF's central macroeconomic databases of country, regional, and global statistics that cover about 300 countries and regional groupings. In January 2007, the Statistical Information Management Division (SI) was created to further improve STA's data management functions while streamlining the use of resources.

**0.3 Relevance.** Over the last few years, STA's work program has been adapted to ensure consistency with the IMF priorities on enhancing statistical services to support the IMF's global, regional, and country-based surveillance, including work on globalization,

financial account issues, financial soundness indicators, and balance sheet positions. The IMF has conducted intensive user consultation on its electronic and paper publications; in light of those assessments, major upgrades are being made to its disseminated products (see dimension 5—Accessibility).

STA responds to statistical needs as they emerge, such as the need to compile financial soundness indicators to assess financial strength and vulnerabilities of a country's financial sector; and the need for data for the "balance sheet approach" to facilitate the identification and analysis of vulnerabilities in sectoral balance sheets. Another example is that, in response to the growing data needs of policymakers and other users of statistics for comprehensive and comparable data on foreign direct investment, STA is now proceeding with a Coordinated Direct Investment Survey that will provide bilateral direct investment positions data (as of end-2009).

**0.4 Other quality management.** STA works on two broad fronts in developing data quality: with its member countries and, internally, in seeking to improve its own statistical operations. With its member countries, STA is engaged in three interrelated initiatives.

First, the data dissemination initiatives. The Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), established in March 1996 is intended to guide member countries that have, or might seek, access to international capital markets in providing their economic and financial data to the public that are consistent with international methodological standards; the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), established in December 1997 (in collaboration with the World Bank, particularly on sociodemographic data categories), is intended to guide member countries in the preparation of strategic plans on how to make improvements in their statistical systems. STA closely cooperates with the World Bank and with PARIS21, notably in workshops to promote countries' participation in the GDDS. In addition, STA works with organizations such as the Arab Monetary Fund, the Central Bank of West African States, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, and the Economic Commission for Africa to conduct training seminars for officials from countries interested in participating in the IMF's GDDS. Technical assistance is provided to implement strategies as laid out in countries' GDDS "Plans for Improvement" or to meet SDDS requirements. There are currently 64 SDDS subscribers and 90 GDDS participants—a total of about 82 percent of Fund membership.

Second, the DQAF was devised to encourage member countries in improving their data quality. The DQAF methodology helps to identify and document in a systematic manner countries' practices in statistical production, ranging from their institutional arrangements to data collection, compilation, and dissemination.

Third, the data module of the Report on Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs) provides countries with an expert and externally based assessment of their macroeconomic statistics. As of February 2008, 112 data module ROSCs had been completed, including updates and reassessments. This framework helps identify deviations from internationally accepted good practices and ways to improve the quality of statistical products and institutions.

STA also uses the DQAF for the promotion of quality in its own statistical operations. For instance, STA reformatted the SDDS and the GDDS metadata into the structure of the DQAF with the aim of streamlining STA's work in data standards, technical assistance delivery, and the data module ROSC.

## **1. Assurances of integrity**

**1.1 Professionalism.** STA is actively involved in developing statistical guidelines in macroeconomic statistics that are decided on purely professional scientific grounds (see below dimension 2, Methodological soundness). It also plays an active role collaborating with a number of multilateral organizations engaged in promoting sound statistical practices. This includes STA's role in the work of four interagency task forces—finance statistics, statistics of international trade in services, international (merchandise) trade statistics, and public sector accounting, and two intersecretariat working groups—national accounts and prices—and participates in the Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics. In addition, STA participates in meetings of the UN Statistical Commission, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, the UN regional statistical commissions, the OECD Committee on Statistics, the ECB, the BIS, UNCTAD, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board.

**1.2 Transparency.** STA produces an annual publication *Recent Developments and Current Initiatives* that is sent to all national statistical offices, central banks and international organizations. The publication provides an overview of STA's work program to assist countries more effectively in developing their statistical capacity and strengthening collaboration. This is consistent with STA's business plan that is also included in the pamphlet.

**1.3 Ethical standards.** The staff is bound by IMF general professional standards and code of conduct.

## **2. Methodological soundness**

STA is also actively engaged in developing statistical methodologies that encourage international comparability, support the efficient use of statistical resources, and promote the analytical usefulness of statistics. The IMF's expertise is primarily in the national accounts, prices, government finance, monetary and financial statistics, financial soundness indicators, balance of payments, international investment position, external debt, and international reserves statistics. STA also collaborates with the World Bank on the methodology of the International Comparison Program (ICP) and contributes a representative to the Program's Technical Advisory Group. The methodological frameworks are documented in manuals and are reflected in STA's statistical publications.

### **3. Accuracy and reliability**

STA uses only datasets produced by countries and validated by them, as relevant. The business model is to encourage member countries to produce data according to international standards. To help data producing agencies develop their statistical capacities, STA offers advice in the topical areas of national accounts and price statistics, government finance, monetary and financial statistics, financial soundness indicators, balance of payments, international investment position, and external debt statistics. During fiscal year 2007, STA fielded 451 technical assistance missions to 128 countries. Training courses offered by STA generally consist of a series of lectures, discussions, practical exercises, and case studies with focus on the relevant statistical methodology. An increasing share of the funding for technical assistance comes from external donors.

Based on a recent survey of data providers, a number of new features to streamline data reporting have been implemented in the Integrated Correspondence System (ICS). The ICS is a web-based data reporting system developed by STA for use by country data reporters. The ICS provides data reporters with an efficient method of sending data to STA in a secure Internet environment using Excel.

### **4. Serviceability**

**4.1 Periodicity and timeliness.** The IMF's four main statistical publications are *International Financial Statistics (IFS)*, monthly, *Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook (BOPSY)*, *Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS)*, annual, and *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook (GFSY)*. More recently, the *IFS Supplement on Monetary and Financial Statistics* has been produced on a quarterly basis. STA is also involved in a number of other data releases such as the results of the Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey and of the Coordinated Compilation Exercise for Financial Soundness Indicators, as well as quarterly data on the Currency Composition of Foreign Exchange Reserves.

**4.2 Consistency.** STA strives for consistency of data by presenting the statistics according to the IMF statistical manuals, which are harmonized with the principles of the *System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA)*.

## 5. Accessibility

The statistical products are available in hard and electronic versions. Assistance to users is provided on an ongoing basis.

Recent development work on the IMF's economic data warehouse, IMF.Stat, has resulted in a pilot release internally within the IMF of the warehouse containing both STA databases, selected databases managed in other departments, and databases provided by other external and commercial organizations. IMF.Stat introduces a new collaborative approach in the design and development of common tools to support data management.<sup>2</sup> The initiative represents a fresh perspective on the organization and management of data and metadata to improve the way data are collected, stored, documented, managed, and disseminated. IMF.Stat brings together the IMF's key economic statistics and related metadata to enhance access to and communication about the data. IMF.Stat will be the foundation of new effort to develop an IMF statistical portal.

STA participates, together with the BIS, the ECB, Eurostat, the OECD, the UN, and the World Bank, in the SDMX initiative to facilitate exchange of statistical information among national and international agencies.

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<sup>2</sup> The software supporting IMF.Stat data and metadata has resulted from collaboration with the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). STA is appreciative of the support provided by the OECD in this endeavor.



## **World Bank**

The World Bank fully supports the *Principles Governing International Statistical Activities* and is committed to applying those principles to the work of the World Bank. The Development Data Group (DECDG) is the statistics department of the World Bank and applies principles as follows:

### **Principle 1: Relevance, impartiality and equal access**

#### **High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems**

DECDG has an ongoing relationship with users of its data both within the World Bank and outside. This is accomplished in several ways:

- Through focus groups, regular meetings, and cooperative work with sector specialists, thematic groups, and operational users.
- There is an ongoing review of all of DECDG's statistical programs which depends on user feedback and needs.
- Through its data help desk which provides support for all data products and tools to all internal and external users.
- World Bank data is available to users in many formats, including:
  - A series of annual publications which includes the World Development Indicators, Global Development Finance, and others.
  - The World Bank databases are available online, on CD-ROM, in pre-formatted tables based on topic or country, and through user-defined queries.
  - The World Bank disseminates key data free of charge to users in different formats such as searchable databases, pre-formatted tables, and print publications.
  - Sectoral data (gender, education, and health, nutrition and population) is available through dedicated websites.

### **Principle 2: Professional standards and ethics**

#### **To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards**

DECDG has published a set of "Principles and values" which guide the statistical work. Professionalism and ethics are two of the main principles and are evidenced by:

- The ongoing review of methodologies, terminologies and data content and structure for all publications and databases.
- The hiring of skilled and qualified staff with strong statistical backgrounds in related areas with analytical and information technology capabilities.
- In disseminating our data, we observe best practices in a number of areas including: supplementing data with extensive documentation; following a regular data release schedule and data revision standards; and identifying sources of data and acknowledging data partners and producers.

### **Principle 3: Accountability and transparency**

#### **The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organizations**

DECDG develops and uses objective and transparent methods to deliver reliable and trustworthy statistics and other products, based on professional principles and best practices. Concepts, definitions, classifications, methods and procedures are chosen to meet professional scientific standards, and these are made transparent for the users. The methodologies are consistent with the concepts, definitions and classifications as accepted and agreed by international organizations.

DECDG has several mechanisms to inform the public of the mandates of the statistical work of the organization through:

- Circulating the DECDG work program and posting it on the Data Homepage.
- Providing user support through a dedicated data help desk, training on data methodology and tools, and extensive documentation.
- Producing brochures on new initiatives such as the release of a new data product or services. These include the new Accelerated Data Program, the International Household Survey Network, and a new Trust Fund to support statistical capacity building projects.

### **Principle 4: Prevention of misuse**

#### **Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users**

In DECDG databases, all sources are given full credit, and users are given detailed explanations of the methodologies of source. Users are advised if data are adjusted or imputed. The production of data publications includes:

- A “systematic review of methodologies employed” are being undertaken during the preparation of publications.
- The key publications (such as the *World Development Indicators*) include a discussion of the concepts and methodologies employed in the use and calculation of indicators.
- All publications include citation of the data sources (both national and international sources).
- A full review of data by regional, sectoral, and operational staff before publication to ensure consistency of data or to solicit comments on any misleading or questionable data.
- DECDG supports an extensive program to improve statistical capacity in developing countries. Support is provided in the form of grants, loans, and technical assistance. Improved statistical capacity helps prevent misinterpretation.
- Data exchange with other international organizations to maintain up-to-date information on sources and methodology.

#### **Principle 5: Sources of official statistics**

**Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimize the reporting burden for data providers**

The Bank works to:

- Maintain the World Development Indicators (WDI) database to provide users with latest national statistics and time series on development. In addition, DECDG maintains several specialized databases with key indicators for free public access.
- Systematically improve the timeliness of international statistics and employ new technologies to collect and release data from published national sources.
- Increase partnerships with key data providing agencies for active and efficient data exchange to avoid duplication of efforts and reduce countries' reporting burden.

#### **Principle 6: Confidentiality**

**Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation.**

The World Bank and many of its partners sponsor surveys, and use and publish data from these surveys. This is of course the case with the WB (CWIQ, LSMS, PETS, ICS, ICP, and other types of surveys), but also with UNICEF (MICS), FAO (agricultural censuses), WHO (WHS and others), AfDB and ADB (ICP), and others.

International agencies are often "de facto" depositors of non-anonymized microdata. In most cases, these data are for their internal use only. But the external demand for access to these datasets is high and growing. Disseminating these data more widely would add value to these expensive resources. It is therefore important to establish more formal procedures for the storage and sharing of these datasets, and to develop tools and guidelines for their preservation, anonymization and dissemination. At the World Bank, efforts are being made to centralize the warehousing of microdata, in a secure environment. But more importantly, the World Bank is working with the International Household Survey Network on the development and implementation of various tools for microdata documentation, anonymization and dissemination, to be used by data producers in developing countries. These tools and guidelines are based on international good practices and on the UN-ECE's *"Managing Statistical Confidentiality and Microdata Access - Principles and Guidelines of Good Practices"*

The 2005 Round of the International Comparison Program (ICP) is another example. The Bank followed and implemented the data confidentiality policy set out by the Executive Board of the ICP and agreed to by the participating countries and agencies. The policy respects the access rules of all participating countries while facilitating public access.

### **Principle 7: Regulations and Measures**

**Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed**

- DECDG provides detailed explanations and metadata to support published data and better inform all users.
- DECDG routinely reports any errors detected in data publications by issuing errata notices.

### **Principle 8: Use of international standards**

**Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility**

- The World Bank contributes to the development and dissemination of international metadata standards. More specifically, the World Bank participated in the development of SDMX, and is an active member of the DDI Alliance (metadata standard for the documentation of microdata).
- The World Bank is a member of ISWGNA and is actively contributing to the process of SNA 93 Revisions.
- The ICP program worked with participating countries, partner agencies, and others to develop and establish internationally agreed standards for conducting and analyzing these types of surveys including the selection and definition of products to be priced and data validation.

### **Principle 9: Regional coordination**

**Coordination of international statistical programs is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work**

The director of DECDG represents the World Bank at international meetings. The group:

- Participates regularly in the Statistical Commission, IAEG meeting on MDGs and specialized Task Force meetings to coordinate the implementation of the statistical program and consult on joint activities.
- Provides training on the use of international standards, concepts, classifications, and methods in different areas of statistics.
- Compiles international MDG indicators, and develop monitoring and reporting frameworks for various sets of indicators such as the MDGs or IDA.

- Coordinates international statistical efforts such as the International Comparison Program and the Accelerated Data Program, MDG related projects with various partners, and the International Household Survey Network.
- Works with UNICEF and WHO to produce harmonized estimates of infant, under-5, and maternal mortality rates.
- Cooperates with UNSD and UNFPA to set-up and launch IAEG on gender statistics to avoid duplication of work, share best practices, and to improve quality.

### **Principle 10: International cooperation**

#### **Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organizations and in countries**

The World Bank cooperates and shares knowledge with international organizations and regions to further develop national and regional statistical systems.

- The World Bank coordinates the activities of the International Household Survey Network in close cooperation with the PARIS21 Secretariat.
- The World Bank has also initiated the Accelerated Data Program (ADP), which is being implemented in a growing number of countries in partnership with multiple international and bilateral partners. Countries are encouraged to take ownership of these projects and work to establish a solid base for meeting user requirements, promoting full participation of the main stakeholders, taking account of local circumstances and stage of statistical development.
- These and other activities based on the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) are funded by the Bank's Development Grant Facility which was established to foster cooperation with external partners.
- The Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB) has been established to strengthen the capacity of statistical systems in developing countries. It is a multi-donor fund, administered by the World Bank, which provides grants at national, regional and global levels.
- A lending program STATCAP was approved by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors. The loans support large programs to build statistical capacity in developing countries
- The Bank cooperates with IMF on General Data Dissemination System (GDSD), purpose of which is to support and provide a framework for developing the capacity of national statistical systems in developing countries

## UNESCO-UIS

The CCSA principles reflect the core of the UIS mandate. The following text will provide a brief synopsis on how the principles are implemented in the UIS programme of activities.

### **Principle 1: Relevance, impartiality and equal access**

**High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems.**

UIS data are available to all users free of charge on the Institute's website. In addition, all UIS publications, questionnaires, guidelines and standards are available on the website (often in multiple language versions).

The challenge lies in effectively reaching different audiences (potential data users) by disseminating the data in appropriate formats. In response, the UIS has recently launched an electronic Data Centre on its website, which offers a variety of tools to facilitate data use. This is an on-going project, with the next phase focused on improving metadata available on-line.

### **Principle 2: Professional standards and ethics**

**To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards.**

For the UIS, the strength of a statistical institute rests on the confidence that users have in the quality of its data. The UIS is constantly seeking to improve its data quality through a range of activities – from the periodic review of its survey designs to the development of new indicators and the comparative use of other data sources (namely household surveys), especially in the field of education.

### **Principle 3: Accountability and transparency**

**The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organizations.**

The UIS website contains a range of documents on the Institute's mandate, mission, activities, independent evaluation and strategy.

#### **Principle 4: Prevention of misuse**

**Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users.**

All UIS publications clearly identify the definitions, standards and methodologies used to collect the data. Furthermore, the UIS produces technical papers to introduce new approaches or to revise existing methodologies, which are all available free of charge on the website.

The UIS is currently in the process of codifying its operating procedures as part of its focus on improving data quality and transparency.

The UIS also takes a proactive approach to possible misinterpretation of data through its capacity-building activities – which range from regional workshops for national statisticians and policy-planners to on-site technical assistance projects.

This proactive approach is further reinforced by the production of analytical publications, primarily in the field of education. The UIS is also a major data source for other organizations, which produce their own analysis, often based on input from UIS staff. A key example is the Education for All Global Monitoring report.

At the individual level, the UIS provides detailed information when responding to data requests from the general public.

All of these activities aim to reduce the risk of misinterpretation and promote the use of evidence-based policymaking. But this is clearly an on-going concern for any statistical organization, especially in the international arena.

#### **Principle 5: Sources of official statistics**

**Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimize the reporting burden for data providers.**

As previously explained, the UIS regularly reviews its survey instruments to reduce the reporting burden. Furthermore, the Institute uses pilot questionnaires to test the availability of information before launching new surveys.



The UIS also works closely with other organizations, such as Eurostat and the OECD, to jointly collect data, especially in the fields of education as well as science and technology. In addition, the UIS is an active partner in the development of SDMX to facilitate the sharing of data among organizations.

#### **Principle 6: Confidentiality**

**Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation.**

The UIS does not generally collect confidential data. But as part of a recent survey on conditions in primary schools (through the World Education Indicators Programme), the UIS signed agreements with the participating countries to ensure respect of national legislation concerning confidentiality of statistical information.

#### **Principle 7: Regulations and Measures**

**Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed.**

See Principle 4.

#### **Principle 8: Regional coordination**

**Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility.**

The UIS works in close partnership with national statistical offices as well as regional and international statistical organizations to develop and revise standards for the collection of internationally comparable data. This principle applies to all UIS data collections – from the annual education survey to the instruments developed for the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP), which is an ambitious initiative to provide countries at all stages of development with a complete diagnostic of a range of literacy skills.

Another example is the current review of the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED), which is based on extensive consultations with Member States as well as key international stakeholders. A similar process is underway to revise the 1986 Framework for Cultural Statistics. Broad consultations are essential to produce a

pragmatic but universal framework that reflects the contexts and conditions of developing countries.

Similar issues arise in the field of science and technology (S&T). Indeed many S&T instruments were developed for industrialized countries and are therefore difficult to implement globally. The UIS therefore regularly organizes regional workshops or consultations to develop guidelines for adapting and applying these instruments. The resulting documents are generally published as annexes in OECD publications.

The World Education Indicators (WEI) Programme represents another approach to improving regional coordination. Based firmly on the principle of South-South cooperation, the programme serves as a laboratory to develop and test new survey instruments and indicator frameworks which reflect critical policy issues in developing and middle-income countries. This collaboration benefits the international community at large by producing more policy-relevant information, which can be compared across diverse countries.

There is a clear need to reinforce regional coordination in order to improve data quality globally. The UIS is therefore seeking to expand its network of regional statistical advisors, who are currently based in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Instead of exclusively focusing on technical assistance projects, these advisors will reinforce links with the UIS to ministries and regional organizations in order to improve the coverage and scope of the global databases, especially in the field of education and literacy.

#### **Principle 9: Use of international standards**

**Coordination of international statistical programmers is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work.**

The UIS actively participates in the UN Statistical Commission while working with a range of international and regional organizations such as the OECD, Eurostat, Paris21, ADEA, RICYT, etc.

#### **Principle 10: International cooperation**

**Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organizations and in countries.**

There is a tendency to see national and regional statistical organizations as data producers, rather than users. This limited view ultimately hinders attempts to improve data quality and to promote the use of evidence-based policymaking.

The previous sections have outlined key elements and projects aimed at bridging this gap. However, more needs to be done. In particular, the UIS is exploring ways of facilitating the use of internationally comparable data for national planning and policymaking purposes.

## UNSD

The following provides a short summary of general UNSD actions and practices related to the 10 principles.

### **1). High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems**

The United Nations has been collecting statistical information from member States over the past decades on a variety of topics. These statistical data in the past are stored in proprietary databases, each with unique dissemination and access policies. As a result, users are often unaware of the full array of statistical information that the UN system has in its data libraries. Also, the users were required to move from database to database to access the information desired. To reduce the level of fragmentation and to bring the data resources of the UN system to the public in its entirety, the UNSD, in fulfilling its mandate as coordinator of UN statistical activities, has developed a portal ([data.un.org](http://data.un.org)) which pools all major UN databases into one single environment. This innovative design allows a user to search easily all UN databases for the necessary statistical information by country of subject (12 data domains containing over 55 million data points). The search system provides free access to the world's information for free since May 2007. The main features of the UNdata are (i) accessing different data sources through one interface; (ii) searching data with keywords and browsing the available series; (iii) refining search results through the application of filters; (iv) customizing tables with features such as sorting, column selection and pivoting.

Apart from the new UNdata portal, UNSD widely disseminates specialized data through its various sectoral database websites, such as COMTRADE, SNA Aggregates, and Demographic Yearbook System

UNSD periodically reviews its statistical programmes of work in consultation with the member states and with approval of the United Nations Statistical Commission with the objective of strengthening global statistical system. UNSD promotes active participation by countries in its activities and increased collaboration among international organizations.

**2). To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards**

The UNSD's monthly and annual publications (yearbooks, bulletins, etc) contain references to methodology, terminology of the data presented which were considered and recommended by the Statistical Commission. Feedback from member states are regularly sought and acted upon. The launch of the UNdata, for example, involved prior consultation of all the NSOs and 5000 regular users of UN statistics.

**3). The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organizations**

The UNSD's programme of work for each biennium is approved by the General Assembly of the UN; all documents relating to Programme Planning, Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation are in the public domain. Substantively, UNSD's programme of work, including detailed information on outputs, is contained in a bi-annual report to the Statistical Commission, which is posted on the UNSD website.

**4). Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users**

The data collected, processed and disseminated by the UNSD has clear indication about their methodology. UNSD does not publish adjusted data. The decision on the publication of official data, reported by countries, is based on extensive discussions with the national data providers, where possible questions about the data collection methodology at the source are addressed. Credit is always given to the original source in UNSD's statistical publications. Information on the original sources of the data disseminated as well as the sources' concepts, definitions, classifications, methods and procedures are made available in the technical notes. Agreed quotation standards are adopted when re-using statistics originally collected by others.

**5). Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimize the reporting burden for data providers**

Collected data are shared with other organizations, e.g. data received in the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics questionnaires are shared with ILO and ESCAP; ESCAP re-disseminates data from the UN-Common Data Base (CDB). The dissemination of country data in the Statistical Yearbook, CDB and Pocketbook does not require collection of data from countries since data already collected by agencies are used.

In other areas, such as trade statistics and national accounts, UNSD has explicit data sharing agreements with partner international organizations (e.g.OECD, UNCTAD) to avoid sending of duplicate questionnaires to countries.

With respect to promoting the Fundamental principles of Official Statistics, UNSD conducted a global review of the implementation of the Fundamental Principles in 2004 and reported the results to the Statistical Commission. The Commission “welcomed the fact that the review of the implementation of the Fundamental principles of Official Statistics had shown considerable progress in their implementation while revealing some of the barriers to their fuller implementation; considered that it was important to obtain information of implementation in countries that had not responded to the survey; reaffirmed that the Fundamental Principles should be broadly applied by all national statistical systems and considered that a compendium of best practices for their implementation would be helpful; and considered that more advocacy efforts were needed to promote implementation, especially in the developing countries”.

In addition, UNSD maintains the Good Practices Database, established in 2000, which provides reference material from Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, in particular examples of policies and practices of the national statistical systems for implementing the Principles.

**6). Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislation**

UNSD does not collect individual non-aggregated information. We advise countries on the best practices in handling micro-level data.

**7). Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed**

UNSD actively engages the media to address erroneous interpretation of data and trends. Notable examples concern the interpretation of MDG trends.

**8). Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility**

UNSD has an extensive programme in supporting the development in of international standards in a number of statistical fields, such as national accounts and census taking. The development of standards is done through extensive consultative processes, involving experts from national as well as international statistical offices. These consultative processes usually lead to the broad consensus, which forms the basis for adoption of the standards at the UN Statistical Commission.

Implementation of international standards is actively supported through UNSD's technical assistance programme, including advisory services to the countries.

**9). Coordination of international statistical programmes is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work**

UNSD acts as the permanent secretary to the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), which was established in 2002 in order to continue coordination in the statistical sector, which has been done by ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities prior to 2002. An annual report on ongoing Committee activities is made available to the Statistical Commission and if necessary or desirable the report is referred to the High Level Committee of Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

**10). Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organizations and in countries**

The UNSD provides technical assistance and advisory services to the countries through various mechanisms. As a part of these activities a Handbook on statistical organization was published and disseminated advocating the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. UNSD's website is acknowledged as the knowledge center on official statistics by member states.