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Thirty-seventh session
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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Background document
Available in English only

Working groups associated with the Statistical Commission

Prepared by the UN Statistics Division

This note has been prepared by the Secretariat as a first attempt to provide this type of information as a service to delegates. The content has been consulted with the respective groups, but has not been extensively reviewed. UNSD would appreciate comments on the usefulness of this listing, on its content, coverage and presentation. (please send to schweinfest@un.org).

Working Groups associated with the Statistical Commission

The present background note was prepared by the Secretariat to provide delegates with an overview of working groups that are currently active under the auspices of the Statistical Commission. All these groups have in common that their terms of reference have been approved (or at least reviewed) by the Statistical Commission and that they have been invited to report to the Commission periodically on the progress of their work. The groups, however, differ in their main purposes (methodological development, coordination), composition (country representatives, international agencies, individual experts) and expected length of operation.

This report provides a brief profile of those groups currently in existence. For the purpose of this report these groups are classified into (i) City groups (ii) Friends of the chair and (iii) Inter secretariat working groups.

I. City Groups

The main purpose of city groups is to contribute to methodological and conceptual development in specific statistical sectors, often so called 'critical issues'. Members of the city groups are experts primarily from national statistical agencies, with some participation from international agencies. Participation is voluntary. Some city groups, also called [roundtables](#), set their own working agendas while requiring precise terms of reference approved by the Statistical Commission. Some city groups set very specific targets, such as the preparation of a handbook, and intend to cease operation after the completion of the task. Others serve as a continuing forum for methodological debate and exchange and have been operating for many years. (For more information on city groups, see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/citygroup/index.htm>)

II. Friends of the Chair

The mechanism of a "Friends of the Chair" group serves the primary purpose to address a very specific issue - usually a concern identified during a Statistical Commission session, requiring in-depth review. A Friends of the Chair group consists exclusively of country representatives and generally is expected to complete a given task within one year, reporting back to the following session of the Statistical Commission.

III. Inter-secretariat working groups

Inter-secretariat working groups are usually established to coordinate the efforts and expertise of the major international organizations concerned with specific areas of statistics, such as prices, health, national accounts, etc., generally in the context of the formulation or revision of international standards. Membership is usually open to all interested international organizations such as International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, OECD, Eurostat, the UN Regional Commissions and UNSD, who are active in a particular field of statistics. A number of Inter-secretariat working groups have been operating for many years, coordinating not only methodological development activities, but also implementation activities. Some of the newer Inter-agency mechanisms (health, environmental accounting) have explicitly involved country experts in their meetings.

Annex I. City groups

†	<i>Name of the Group; Contact Person; Website</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Date of creation/ Terms of Reference</i>	<i>Comments Events</i>
L	Expert Group on the Measurement of Non-Financial Assets (Canberra II)				
	Peter Harper (Chair) Australian Bureau of Statistics Email: peter.harper@abs.gov.au Charles Aspden, OECD Email: charles.aspden@oecd.org	To undertake work on research agenda established by the original Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics (Canberra I) and to research into issues associated with the measurement of non-financial assets as part of the process of updating SNA 93	So far representatives from 14 countries, 6 international organizations and 6 individual expert advisers participated in the meetings	The Group met for the first time in 2003 to undertake work on research agenda established by the Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics (Canberra I)	The last meeting of Canberra II took place in Geneva, from 14 to 16 September 2005.
?	Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics				
	Secretary: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India Email: sempi@alpha.nic.in http://www.mospi.nic.in/mospi_informal_sector.htm	An international forum to exchange experience in the measurement of the informal sector, informal employment concept, document the data-collection practices, including definitions and survey methodologies followed by member countries, and recommend measures for improving the quality and comparability of informal sector statistics.	Experts from 24 national statistical offices, 5 international organizations and 8 other academic institutions participated in the meetings so far.	The Group agreed on the terms of reference at its first meeting in New Delhi, 20-22 May 1997.	Dates for the ninth meeting of the Group to be held in New Delhi, India have been tentatively decided as 2 nd or 3 rd week of April 2006.

	<i>Name of the Group; Contact Person; Website</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Date of creation/ Terms of Reference</i>	<i>Comments Events</i>
3	London Group on Environmental Accounting				
	Robert Smith Statistics Canada Email: robert.b.smith@statcan.ca http://www4.statcan.ca/citygrp/london/london.htm	To play a leadership role in defining international best practices in the theory and practice of environmental accounting within the framework of the System of National Accounts; to provide a forum for the sharing of national and international expertise in this field; and to encourage the adoption of best practices in the field.	Participation includes representatives from 20 national statistical offices and 4 international organizations.	Created in 1993 to provide an informed forum for practitioners to share experience of developing and implementing environmental satellite accounts linked to the economic accounts of the System of National Accounts.	Next meeting will be held in the 2 nd quarter of 2006, South Africa
4	Ottawa Group on Price Indexes				
	Keith Woolford Australian Bureau of Statistics Email: keith.woolford@abs.gov.au http://www.ottawagroup.org/	To provide a forum for specialists to share their experiences and discuss research on crucial problems of measuring price change	Specialists actively involved in the application of the principles relating to the topics under discussion are invited to the Group's meetings as active participants. Participants include experts from more than 26 countries and	Set up in 1994, provides a forum for specialists and practitioners to exchange experiences and thoughts on problems of measuring price change. The main focus of the Group is on applied research in the area of consumer price indices. The proceedings from the sessions are edited and diffused. The Group may also assemble and publish compendia of materials related to specific topics of price statistics.	Meetings scheduled: 14-16 May 2006, London 2007, Ottawa

			5 international organizations		
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‡	Paris Group on Labour and Compensation				
	<p>Olivier Marchand Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE), France Email : olivier.marchand@insee.fr</p> <p>Vivienne Avery Office for National Statistics, UK Email: vivienne.avery@ons.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Denis Ward OECD Email: denis.ward@oecd.org</p> <p>http://www.insee.fr/en/nom_de_f_met/colloques/citygroup/citygroup.htm</p>	<p>To examine, assess and reconcile the various sources of information used to measure labor market conditions and compensation, particularly in the context of the deregulation of labor markets and structural unemployment, and to contribute improving concepts and their implementation as well as construction of new indicators.</p>	<p>Participants are labour statisticians belonging to National Statistical Institutes of International organizations (OECD, ILO, Eurostat).</p> <p>Participants include experts from 23 national statistical offices and 3 international organizations</p>	<p>The Paris Group was created under the auspices of the United Nations at the beginning of 1997. Its broad topic of interest is “labour and compensation”. Since the end of 2002, activities of the group are coordinated by a bureau. The bureau associates representatives from two international organizations (OECD and Eurostat) and from four National Statistical Institutes (INSEE, ONS, Statistics Sweden, Hungarian Central Statistical Office). The secretary of this bureau is shared by INSEE, OECD and ONS.</p>	<p>Seventh meeting 15-17 May 2006, Budapest, hosted by the Hungarian Central Statistics Office</p>

4	<i>Name of the Group; Contact Person; Website</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Date of creation/ Terms of Reference</i>	<i>Comments/ Events</i>
5	Rio Group on Poverty Statistics				
	<p>Eduardo Pereira Nunes Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Brazil E-mail: epnunes@ibge.gov.br</p> <p>Mr. Pedro Sáinz IBGE Consultant Santiago, Chile E-mail: psainz@eclac.cl</p> <p>Mr. Juan Carlos Feres ECLAC E-mail: jferes@eclac.cl</p> <p>web site of the Rio Group at www.ibge.gov.br/poverty</p>	<p>To harness the experience and concerns of different groups and organizations in the world that are working on the measurement, interpretation and use of poverty statistics, especially when such work is being done by or in close contact with statistical offices.</p>	<p>22 Countries, 19 international agencies and other institutions.</p>	<p>The Rio Group was created in 1995 by the United Nations Statistical Commission to study the statistical consequences of the World Summits of the United Nations on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) and the conditions of Women (Beijing, 1995) and to make proposals on the use of statistical information to follow up and monitor the objectives and goals approved in those summits.</p> <p>The Goup is preparing a compendium of best practices on poverty measurement which will be finalized in December 2005.</p>	<p>Meetings 1st - Santiago, 7-9 May 1997 2nd - Rio de Janeiro, 13-15 May 1998 3rd - Lisbon, 22-24 Nov. 1999 4th - Rio de Janeiro, 15-17 Oct. 2001 5th - Rio de Janeiro, 13-15 Nov. 2002 6th - Rio de Janeiro, 12-14 Nov. 2003 7th - Rio de Janeiro, 6-8 Dec. 2004</p>
7	Roundtable on Business Survey Frames				
	<p>Paul Johanis Statistics Canada Email: paul.johanis@statcan.ca</p> <p>http://forum.europa.eu.int/irc/dsis/businesssurvey/info/data/links.htm</p>	<p>To provide a forum for the exchange of views and experience and the conduct of joint experiments related to the development, maintenance and use of business registers to support survey sampling and other statistical activities related to the production of business statistics.</p>	<p>17 countries and 3 international agencies participated in the meeting in 2005.</p>	<p>Established in 1986, the Roundtable on Business Survey Frames is an informal body which is part of the United Nations "City Groups". Its purpose is to provide a forum where officials from national and international statistical organisations can exchange views and experiences on topics related to the development, maintenance</p>	<p>Next meeting will be held in Germany in the fall of 2007.</p>

				and use of sampling frames for business surveys.	
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‡	Voorburg Group on Service Statistics				
	<p>Louis Marc Ducharme Statistics Canada</p> <p>Email: louisMarc.Ducharme@statcan.ca</p> <p>http://www4.statcan.ca/english/voorburg/</p>	<p>To address issues related to the production of services statistics, including service product outputs and inputs, the estimation of the real product of service activities, price indices of service products and industries, and their implications for product and industry classification (Central Product Classification (CPC) and International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC))</p>	<p>32 Countries and 6 international organizations</p>	<p>The Voorburg Group was established in 1986, after an initiative by Statistics Canada and the United National Statistical Office. This initiative came in response to the observation that service statistics were less developed than statistics on the other economic fields although services contributed already over half of the Gross Domestic Product in many countries. The Group's main purpose remains to be an informal forum for the exchange of views on services statistics, as a result of which countries, international organizations and EUROSTAT may be assisted in, or directed towards the solution of particular problems or the development of international guidelines or handbooks in the field of service statistics.</p>	

†	<i>Name of the Group; Contact Person; Website</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Date of creation/ Terms of Reference</i>	<i>Comments/ Events</i>
)	Washington Group on Disability Statistics				
	<p>Beth Rasch National Center for Health Statistics, USA Email: ERasch@cdc.gov</p> <p>Barbara Altman National Center for Health Statistics, USA Email: BAltman@cdc.gov</p> <p>Jennifer Madans National Center for Health Statistics, USA Email: JMadans@cdc.gov</p> <p>http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/citygroup.htm</p>	<p>The main purpose of the Washington Group is the promotion and coordination of international cooperation in the area of health statistics by focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and sample based national surveys to provide basic necessary information on disability. More specifically, to guide the development of a small set(s) of general disability measures, suitable for use in censuses, sample surveys, or other statistical formats; and to recommend one or more extended sets of survey items to measure disability or principles for their design, to be used as components of population surveys or as supplements to specialty surveys.</p>	<p>Representatives from 39 national statistical offices, 15 international organizations and non-governmental organizations</p>	<p>The mandate grew out of the initial work begun at the United Nations International Seminar on Measurement of Disability in New York on June 4-6, 2001, which brought together a broad array of experts from developed and developing countries. As a result of the seminar, the United Nations Statistical Division authorized the development of a City Group, which will focus on two to four topic areas associated with measurement of disability.</p>	<p>The first meeting was held in Washington D.C., 18-20 Feb 2002 followed by the meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 21-23 Sep. 2005. The next meeting is planned for September 2006, in Uganda. The Group organized two regional workshops on disability statistics: Nairobi, 20-22 June 2005; and Rio de Janeiro, 19-20 Sep. 2005.</p>
0	Oslo Group on Energy Statistics				
	<p>Chair: Statistics Norway Contact person: Olav Ljones</p> <p>Contact person at UNSD: Karoly Kovacs Tel 1-212-963-4748 Email: kovacs@un.org</p>	<p>To address methodological issues related to energy statistics and contribute to improved international standards and improved methods for official energy statistics by pooling expertise in the energy community.</p>	<p>Energy statistics experts from national statistical offices, energy ministries and other authorities, international organizations and</p>	<p>Recommended by the Ad-hoc Expert Working Group on Energy Statistics, convened upon the request of the Statistical Commission at its 36 session in 2005, and approved by the Bureau of the Statistical Commission in</p>	<p>First meeting: February 2006</p>

			academia.	August 2005. Terms of reference: see E/CN.3/2006/10.	
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Annex II. Friends of the Chair

#	<i>Name of the Group; Contact Person; Website</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Date of creation/ Terms of Reference</i>	<i>Comments/ Events</i>
Friends of the Chair group on indicators					
	<p>Chair: Mr. Dennis Trewin (Australia)</p> <p>Contact person/ Secretariat: Stefan Schweinfest UN Statistics Division Tel. 1.212.963-4849 schweinfest@un.org</p> <p>Website: none</p>	<p>To assist in the preparation of a report, assessing the abilities of countries to produce indicators.</p>	<p>14 countries: Australia, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Finland, Ghana, Iceland, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Russian Fed., South Africa, Thailand, USA.</p>	<p>Created at the 36th session of the Statistical Commission (2005) to: (a) Define the modalities of a report “on the ability of countries to produce individual indicators, not imputations by international agencies, and on how metadata should be presented to accompany indicators on all Millennium Development Goals”; (b) Develop suggestions “on processes that could be used to bridge the information gaps between users and producers of Millennium Development Goals and the lack of adequate data sources”.</p>	<p>Report prepared for 2006 Statistical Commission session: E/CN.3/2006/15 .</p>

Annex III. Inter-secretariat working Groups

Name of the Group; Contact Person; Website	Objective	Membership	Date of creation/ Terms of Reference	Comments/ Events
Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts				
<p>Chair: (rotating annually) 2005: World Bank</p> <p>Contact at UNSD: Ivo Havinga Tel: 1-212-963-4859 Email: havinga@un.org</p> <p>Website: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/iswgn.htm</p>	<p>Coordinate the implementation and methodological development of the System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA).</p>	<p>Eurostat, OECD, IMF UNSD, World Bank</p>	<p>Created in 1983 by the Statistical Commission with the original mandate to update and clarify the 1968 SNA and harmonize it with other international statistical standards.(E/CN.3/1983/30) Afterwards it was entrusted with planning, organizing and coordinating the implementation of the 1993 SNA and developing the 1993 SNA rev1. (E/CN.3/2003/34)</p>	<p>Implements the work programme (2004-2008) for the review and updating of the 1993 SNA. Reports on progress to the Statistical Commission annually.</p>
Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics				
<p>Convener: IMF</p> <p>Contact at UNSD: Magdolna Csizmadia Tel: 1-212-963-4819 email: csizmadia@un.org</p> <p>Website: http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/tegeipi/index.htm</p>	<p>Develop and document best practice guidelines on concepts and methods of price statistics.</p>	<p>IMF, ILO, Eurostat, OECD, UNECE, World Bank</p> <p>TEG-XMPI members: IMF, US-BLS, ABS, UK-ONS, Univ. of British Columbia and U. California</p>	<p>Created by the Statistical Commission in 1999 (E/CN.3/1999/29) with TOR to revise the Consumer Price Index Manual and develop the Producer Price Index Manual. After completing this work in 2004, it focuses on developing an export and import price index manual.</p>	<p>Technical expert group meeting on developing the export and import price index manual, TEG-XMPI, first half of 2005.</p>

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b	Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics				
	Contact person at UNSD: Eszter Horvath Tel: 1-212-963-4581 Email: horvath@un.org Website: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/coordination.htm	To firmly anchor environment statistics as part of official statistics by enhancing, coordinating and harmonizing (1) the development of methodological practices, (2) data collection and dissemination (3) training and capacity building programmes, thus improving and strengthening basic environmental data both at the national and international levels.	Organizations/agencies with international programmes on environment statistics. The current members are: UNSD, UNECE, UNEP, OECD, FAO and Eurostat.	Called for by the Statistical Commission at its 34 th session in March 2003. Terms of reference: please see E/CN.3/2004/20, approved by the Statistical Commission at its 35 th session in March 2004 (E/CN.3/2004/33).	<u>Meetings:</u> December 2003 October 2004 June 2005 November 2005 December 2005 <u>Joint event:</u> International Work Session on Water Statistics, June 2005.
f	Inter-secretariat Working Group on Health Statistics				
	Chair: WHO Contact at UNSD: Francesca Perucci Tel: 1-212-963-0212 Email: perucci@un.org		WHO, and other agencies involved in the production of health statistics and national statistical offices from various countries	Called for by the Statistical Commission in 2004 (E/CN.3/2004/33) to develop a coordinated and integrated agenda for the production of health statistics and agree on standard definitions, classifications and methodologies in health statistics, taking advantage of existing mechanisms wherever possible, and involving the community of official statistics at all stages.	

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5	Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics				
	<p>Chair: WTO tfimts@wto.org</p> <p>Contact person at UNSD: Ronald Jansen, jansen1@un.org</p> <p>Website: http://imts.wto.org</p>	<p>The objectives of the Task Force are to improve the availability and quality of international merchandise trade statistics, in particular of the UN Comtrade database, and to update methodology of international merchandise statistics in view of new developments in world trade and country compilation practices .</p>	<p>The Task Force consists of members of the EUROSTAT, FAO, IMF, ITC, OECD, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNSD, WTO and the UN regional commissions.</p>	<p>The Task Force was formed at the request of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to the Statistical Commission in 1991. The work of the Task Force focuses, at present, on the maintenance of Common data set, preparation of a Supplement to the Compilers Manual on IMTS and reviewing related methodological and technical issues.</p>	<p>TF meeting, 3-5 April 2006, Santiago de Chile</p>
5	Task Force on Finance Statistics				
	<p>Chair: IMF</p> <p>Contact at UNSD: Ivo Havinga Tel: 1-212-963-4859 Email: havinga@un.org</p> <p>Website: http://www.imf.org/external/np/sta/ed/ed.htm</p>	<p>Coordinate work to improve the methodological soundness, transparency, timeliness and availability of external debt statistics.</p>	<p>IMF, Bank for International Settlements, the Commonwealth Secretariat, European Central Bank, Eurostat, OECD, Paris Club secretariat, UNCTAD, World Bank.</p>	<p>Established in 1992 and endorsed by the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/1993/27) as mechanism for developing more integrated work programme among international organizations in financial statistics; serve as a forum for addressing issues pertaining to external debt statistics, develop guidelines on the compilation and use of external debt statistics and continue to develop the joint BIS-IMF-OECD-World Bank statistics on external debt.</p>	<p>Report on progress to the Statistical Commission in 2007.</p>

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7	Interagency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services				
	<p>Chair: OECD, STD.Servstat@oecd.org</p> <p>Contact at UNSD: Vladimir Markhonko, markhonko@un.org</p> <p>Website: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/taskforce.htm</p>	<p>The objectives of the Task Force include development of methodological recommendations for compilation of international trade in services focusing on the statistical requirements of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), Balance of Payments statistics and National Accounts.</p>	<p>The Task Force consists of members of the EUROSTAT, IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, UNSD, and WTO.</p>	<p>The Task Force was formed at the request of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and UNCTAD to the Statistical Commission in 1994.</p> <p>Until 2002, the work of Task Force focused on the development of the <i>Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS)</i>, which was approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2002. The current work of the Task Force focuses on the promotion of the implementation of the Manual through various means, its revision and development of compilation guidance documents.</p>	<p>TF meeting, 21-22 February 2006, New York</p>

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}	Interagency and Expert Group Meeting on MDG Indicators				
	<p>Coordinator: UNSD</p> <p>Contact at UNSD: Francesca Perucci Tel: 1-212-963-0212 Email: perucci@un.org</p> <p>Website: millenniumindicators.un.org</p>			<p>Formed in 2002</p> <p>To produce the data and analysis to monitor progress towards the MDGs; review methodologies and technical issues in relation to the indicators; and support countries in data collection, analysis and reporting for MDG indicators.</p>	<p>Inter-agency and Expert Meeting on MDG Indicators New York, 25-27 January 2005; and Rome, 24-27 October 2005.</p>
)	Task Force to Establish Standards on data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX)				
	<p>Chair - OECD: Mr. Enrico Giovanini Secretariate - BIS Mr. Stuart Feder Stuart.Feder@bis.org Contact at UNSD: Mr. Stefan Schweinfest - Schweinfest@un.org; Mr. Zoltan Nagy - Nagy@un.org 1-212-963-4519</p> <p>http://www.sdmx.org/</p>	<p>The goal of the SDMX initiative is to explore common e-standards and ongoing standardization activities that could allow national and international organizations to gain efficiencies and avoid duplication of work by taking advantage of existing and emerging exchange protocols, dissemination formats and e-standards.</p>	<p>The initiative is sponsored by the Bank for International Settlements, the European Central Bank, the Eurostat, IMF, OECD, UN and the World Bank. Date of creation: 2001</p>	<p>Terms of reference: (a) Minimize the duplication of data and metadata collections; (b) Maximize the coherence of data sets disseminated by various international organizations on the same subject matter; (c) Improve the accessibility and interpretability of statistics disseminated by international organizations; (d) Automate the data exchange processes and gain efficiency from the use of up-to-date ICT tools.</p>	<p>SDMX Seminar: March 9, 2006 During the 37th session of the Statistical commission</p>

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10	Committee on Environmental-Economic Accounting				
	Contact at UNSD: Alessandra Alfieri Tel: 1-212-963-4590 email: alfieri@un.org	Strategic technical body whose objectives are: (a) to mainstream environmental-economic accounting and related statistics; (b) to elevate the System of integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting to an international statistical standard; and (c) to advance the implementation of the SEEA at the country level. Coordinate the further development of the accounting framework, ensure its successful implementation and promote environmental accounting among users.	To be formed.	Creation endorsed by the Statistical Commission in 2005 (E/CN.3/2005/27). The TORs have been approved by the Bureau of the Statistical Commission in 2005.	Preliminary meeting second half of 2005.
4	Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics				
	Chair: biennial rotation Contact person at UNSD: Karoly Kovacs Tel: 1-212-963-4748 Email: kovacs@un.org	To enhance coordination of international energy statistics and collaboration of international (global, regional and sectoral) organizations with a view to improving the availability and quality of international energy statistics without increasing the response burden on countries and by making best use of resources.	Major producers and users of international energy statistics	Recommended by the Ad-hoc Expert Working Group on Energy Statistics, convened upon the request of the Statistical Commission at its 36 session in 2005, and approved by the Bureau of the Statistical Commission in August 2005. Terms of reference: please see E/CN.3/2006/10.	Preparatory meeting: November 2005

