

## EXPERIENCES WITH USER-PRODUCER DIALOGUES

### Note by IMF<sup>1</sup>

1. An international meeting entitled “Conference on Capital Flow and Debt Statistics: Can We Get Better Data Faster?” was hosted by the IMF on February 23-24, 2000 in cooperation with the Financial Stability Forum Working Group on Capital Flows. The Working Group had earlier proposed such a conference as a way to generate a dialogue between data users and compilers, discuss recent initiatives to improve data on capital flow and debt statistics, and identify priorities for further work in this area.
2. Approximately 120 senior-level data users, policymakers, and data compilers participated in the conference. They represented a wide range of institutions, including finance ministries, central banks, national statistical offices, private commercial and investment banks, and international organizations.
3. Data compilers warmly welcomed the opportunity to discuss data issues with users, noting how rare an event such as this was at the international level. Most data compilers felt pressured to produce more timely and comprehensive data, but many lacked the necessary additional resources to undertake this work. It was noted that, while policymakers and users have often called for more resources for statistical work at international conferences, these resources generally were not forthcoming in the domestic budget processes.
4. Although a consensus between data users and data compilers on the priorities for producing better data faster did not emerge, there was a flow of ideas that would be essential in working towards achieving such a consensus.
5. The conference was successful in being able to address most of the issues for discussion that were presented in the background paper prepared for the conference. In general, the participants found the documentation for the conference to be well organized. The background note contained a set of issues for discussion for each of four broad subject-matter areas covered in the conference.

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<sup>1</sup> This brief note was prepared by the Statistics Department of the International Monetary Fund at the request of participants in the Thirty-fourth Session of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (Washington, D.C., September 20-22, 2000).

6. The list of participants—speakers and discussants—was carefully chosen for each of the four broad subject matter areas and most were known to the Fund staff. Overall, most of the invitees accepted the Fund’s invitation to participate in the conference, notwithstanding the short lead-time. It was important to achieve a good mix of data compilers and data users, which provided a very useful exchange of views on the realities of adding additional data collections to the already very heavy work load of some of the compilers. In this regard, some useful compromises were achieved, which was an important objective of the conference.

7. The keynote speakers at the luncheon and dinner were very successful in setting the tone for the conference, reinforcing the themes set out in the background paper and, most importantly, reinforcing the need for good quality statistics and the consequent costs to countries when good data were not available.