
Report of the 3rd Meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, 1 March 2004)

I. Introduction

1. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) held its third meeting in New York on 1 March 2004. The agenda is contained in annex I below, the list of participants in annex II and the list of documents in annex III. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Andrew Flatt, Director of the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP).

II. Work of the CCSA Meeting

A. Adoption of the agenda

2. The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in annex I.

B. Harmonization of the base year for index numbers

3. Several members of the Committee provided oral updates on their current efforts to implement the CCSA recommendation to rebase all index numbers using 2000 as base year and to complete this process by the end of 2005. UNCTAD volunteered to send out a questionnaire in June 2004 in order to request information on the status of this rebasing of indexes from all Committee members and to report to the Committee at its September meeting.

C. Draft declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations

4. The UN Statistics Division (UNSD) of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) provided an oral update on the status of the draft declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations. A first draft had been circulated to the drafting group in November 2003. Extensive comments had been received. The main discussion in the drafting group currently focused on the degree of detail to be included and on whether a two tier approach (for users and for statisticians) should be taken.

UNSD will circulate a revised version to the drafting group. The objective is to present a text for final amendments and adoption at the September meeting of the CCSA.

D. Strategic issues related to Millennium Development Goal indicators

5. UNSD presented the Committee with an oral update on its work towards the preparation of the MDG reports in 2004 and 2005¹. It also briefed the Committee on the Marrakech Action Plan for Improving Development Statistics. Some members of the Committee recalled that as a consequence of the CCSA discussion of the Tim Holt report² in September 2003, a number of strategic issues had been identified, such as the frequency of producing data, the corresponding development of data sources (surveys and administrative sources) and the resource allocation between national and international reporting³. The Committee asked UNSD to prepare a written report for its next session, listing these and other strategic issues related to MDG indicators, and identifying whether and to what extent these issues had been addressed by either the interagency and expert group on MDG indicators and/or the Marrakech Action Plan. The objective of the report is to facilitate discussion by the Committee at its next session, which would critically assess how the work of the international organizations in supporting countries to produce data needed for the MDG indicators could be improved. In this context the Committee took note of the offer of the possibility that the World Bank might finance further work by Tim Holt and invited UNSD and the World Bank to cooperate on the formulation of Terms of Reference. The Committee also agreed that it was important to stay informed on the activities of the Millennium Project in particular with respect to their use of data.

E. Q2004 satellite conference on data quality

6. UNSD briefed the Committee on the call for papers, which had been sent to Committee members, for the planned satellite conference on "Data quality for international organizations" in Germany 27/28 May. Some Committee members recalled that one of the objectives of the conference was to share existing practices. The Committee welcomed the intention of various organizations to contribute papers. The deadline for submission of brief outlines of proposed papers was set for 20 March 2004, with papers due by end-April.

F. WHO Friends of the Chair report to the Statistical Commission and its implications for the Committee

7. The representative of WHO briefed the Committee on recent activities of WHO including the establishment of the Health Metrics Network. WHO emphasized its commitment to cooperation both with the Statistical Commission as well as with partner agencies through the CCSA. The representative of PAHO stressed in particular the importance of cooperation at the regional level and pointed to the development of a health indicator framework for Latin America and work on classifications. The Committee welcomed the progress made in improving cooperation both at the global and regional levels.

G. Other business

8. UNCTAD briefed the Committee on recent cooperative activities with various organizations including OECD, ITU and the Regional Commissions to develop a core list of ICT indicators and to assist countries in improving their capacities to develop ICT related statistics. The Committee accepted UNCTAD's proposal to add this issue to the agenda of the next CCSA session and welcomed UNCTAD's offer to prepare a paper.
9. The Committee took note of the discussion between OECD and WTO/OMT on appropriate mechanisms of cooperation in the area of tourism statistics. The Chair invited both organizations to present a joint note for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee, which should identify the issues of concern and contain proposals for an effective cooperation and division of labour among the organizations involved.
10. The Committee took note of EUROSTAT's current review of existing cooperation arrangements and its invitation to other agencies to provide appropriate inputs, including suggestions for new areas of cooperation.
11. The Committee also took note of the new work programme of the statistics unit of the Office on Drugs and Crime. In this context the Committee welcomed further involvement in CCSA of statisticians from specialized UN offices not currently active in the CCSA.
12. The Committee noted the offer of UNESCO to hold a future CCSA meeting in Montreal.

H. Agenda, dates and venue for the Fourth Session of the Committee in September 2004

13. The Committee decided to hold its fourth meeting in New York from 1-3 September 2004. The Committee also agreed with the proposal to make the discussion of the draft declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations its main theme. In addition to the topics included in the preliminary agenda (SA/2004/2), the Committee agreed to include in its agenda "ICT indicators" (UNCTAD), "Tourism statistics" (WTO/OMT, OECD), "Data/metadata presentation" (OECD), "SDMX" (OECD), "Revision policies" (IMF) and "Long time series" (OECD). The Committee also noted the offer of PAHO and UNESCO to contribute to the proposed agenda item 5 "Statistics at sub-national level". The Committee reiterated its request that authors should provide annotations for the various agenda items, so that a clear distinction should be made between agenda items that were for decision, such as the adoption of guidelines or best practices, agenda items that were for discussion and agenda items that primarily serve the purpose of information exchange between agencies. The Committee asked the Secretariat to circulate a revised agenda for the fourth session of the CCSA, to request annotations, and to follow up preparations for the fourth session vigorously. The deadline for submission of documents was set at mid-July.

Action table

Action	Para.	Who	When
Send questionnaire on rebasing of index numbers	3	UNCTAD	June 2004
Send revised draft declaration of principles to drafting group	4	UNSD	April 2004
Prepare TOR for Tim Holt to formulate recommendations on strategic issues related to MDG indicators	5	World Bank/UNSD	April 2004
Send abstracts of papers for quality conference	6	ALL	20 March
Prepare paper on ICT indicators	8	UNCTAD	Mid-July
Prepare paper on coordination mechanisms for tourism statistics	9	WTO/OMT, OECD	Mid-July
Circulate revised agenda for September meeting requesting annotations from authors	13	UNSD	April
Prepare documents for fourth CCSA session	13	Author organizations	Mid-July

Notes:

¹ See also Statistical Commission report E/CN.3/2004/23 "Indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals".

² SA/2003/8 "Aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates", report by Tim Holt (ILO consultant).

³ See also "Report of the second meeting of the CCSA, Geneva, 8-10 September 2003", SA/2003/19 para. 9

Annex I

Provisional Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Harmonization of the base year for index numbers
3. Draft declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations
4. Strategic issues related to Millennium Development Goal indicators
5. Q2004 satellite conference on data quality
6. WHO Friends of the Chair report to the Statistical Commission and its implications for the Committee
7. Other business
8. Agenda, dates and venue for the Fourth Session of the Committee in September 2004

Annex II

List of participants

United Nations entities and Programmes

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Statistics Division	Willem F. M. De Vries Robert Johnston Stefan Schweinfest (Secretary)	devries@un.org johnstonr@un.org schweinfest@un.org
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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Hubert Escaith	hescaith@eclac.cl
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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Mariam Al Awadhi	alawadhi@un.org zoubeida.ziadeh
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United Nations Population Fund	Kourtoum Nacro	nacro@unfpa.org
United Nations Children' Fund	Trevor Croft	tcroft@unicef.org
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Melissa Tullis	melissa.tullis@unodc.org

Specialized agencies and related organizations

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Ernesto Fernandez Polcuch	e.fernandez-polcuch@unesco.
World Health Organizations	Carla Abou-Zahr	abouzahrc@who.int
Pan American Health Organization	Carlos Castillo-Salgado Margaret Hazlewood	castillc@paho.org hazlewoa@paho.org
World Bank	Shaida Badiie	sbadiie@worldbank.org
International Monetary Fund	Carol Carson	ccarson@imf.org
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Other international and non-governmental organizations		
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Statistical Office of the European Communities	James Whitworth Marco Lancetti	james.whitworth@cec.eu.int marco.lancetti@cec.eu.int
World Trade Organization	Guy Karsenty	guy.karsenty@wto.org
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	Mikhail Korolev	korolev@cisstat.org cisstat@online.ru
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Annex III

List of documents

<i>Document No.</i>	<i>Agenda item(s)</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
SA/2004/1	1	Provisional agenda
SA/2004/2	8	Proposed agenda for the fourth meeting of the CCSA, New York, 1-3 September 2004

Unnumbered		List of participants
		CCSA Quality Conference Announcement 27/28 May 2004