
**DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES
IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Prepared by UNSD

The international and supra-national organizations compiling and disseminating international statistics,

Bearing in mind that statistics are essential for sustainable economic and social development;
Bearing in mind the citizens' entitlement to public information;
Bearing also in mind that public trust in statistics is anchored in professional independence and impartiality of statisticians, their use of scientific and transparent methods and equal access for all to statistical information;
Recalling the efforts of the United Nations Statistical Commission and the Coordination Committee for Statistical Activities to coordinate and improve the international statistical system;
Recalling, finally, the adoption by the United Nations Statistical Commission, in its Special Session of 11-15 April 1994, of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and of the Declaration of Good Practices in Technical Cooperation in Statistics in its 30th Session of 1-5 March 1999;

Have agreed on the following principles and practices for their work and cooperation:

Principle 1: Relevant and impartially produced international statistics, equally accessible for all, are an important element of global information systems.

This includes:

- Regular consultations with internal and external users to ascertain that their needs are met
- Periodic review of statistical programs to ensure their relevance
- Compilation and dissemination of statistics based on impartiality
- Equal access to statistics for all users
- Easy and free accessibility of key statistics on the Internet.

Principle 2: The trust in statistics is based on the perception that their production is free from conflicts of interest and that professional standards are strictly adhered to.

This includes:

- Using professional considerations for decisions on methodology and terminology
- Continuous endeavors to introduce methodological improvements and systems to manage and improve the quality of statistics

- Making a clear distinction, in statistical publications, between statistical and analytical comments on the one hand and policy-prescriptive and advocacy comments on the other
- Enhancing the professional level of staff by encouraging them staff to attend training courses, to do analytical work, to publish scientific papers and to participate in seminars and conferences.

Principle 3: Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of statistics are chosen to meet scientific standards and are made transparent for the users.

This includes:

- Documenting the concepts, definitions, classifications and data collection and processing procedures used and the quality assessments carried out and making this information publicly accessible
- Giving credit, in the dissemination of statistics, to the original source, using agreed quotation standards, when re-using statistics originally collected by others
- Working towards agreement on which series to consider as authoritative for each important set of statistics.

Principle 4: The organizations shall be entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

This includes:

- Responding to perceived erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics
- Enhancing the use of statistics by developing educational material for important user groups.

Principle 5: For data collection from countries, the organizations shall choose the most appropriate sources and methods, with due regard to timeliness and other aspects of quality, costs, and the reporting burden for departments of national governments.

This includes:

- Working systematically on the improvement of the timeliness of statistics
- Sharing collected data with other organizations free of charge
- Developing methods that facilitate the provision of data by countries
- Being transparent about editing mechanisms that are applied to country data
- Ensuring that national organizations for official statistics are duly involved and advocating that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are applied when data are collected in countries.

Principle 6: In case the organizations handle individual data, either about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, these data are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

This includes:

- Putting measures in place to prevent the direct or indirect disclosure of data of persons, households, businesses and other individual respondents
- Developing methods and procedures to provide sets of anonymous micro-data for further analysis by bona fide researchers, while maintaining the requirements of confidentiality.

Principle 7: The organizations shall inform the public about the mandates for their statistical work.

This includes:

- Making decisions about statistical work programs publicly available, as well as documentation on how data are to be collected, processed and disseminated
- Making documents for and reports of statistical meetings publicly available.

Principle 8: Coordination of international statistical programs is an essential element in strengthening the quality and coherence of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work.

This includes:

- Designation of one or more statistical units to implement statistical programs, including one unit that coordinates the statistical work of the organization, is the main contact point for statistics and represents the organization in international statistical meetings
- Participating in international statistical meetings and bilateral and multilateral consultations whenever necessary
- Contributing to an integrated presentation of statistical programs, including data collection plans, thereby making gaps or overlaps clearly visible
- Working systematically on achieving agreements about common concepts, classifications, standards and methods
- Coordinating technical cooperation activities with countries between donors and between different organizations in the national statistical system to avoid duplication of effort and encourage complementarities and synergy.

Principle 9: Organizations shall develop standards that are relevant for national and international statistics, ensuring that such standards are professionally sound, but also meet the test of practical utility and feasibility.

This includes:

- Systematically involving national statistical offices, statistical units of government departments and other relevant national institutions in the development of international statistical programs, including the development and promulgation of methods, standards and good practices
- Advising countries on implementation issues concerning international standards
- Monitoring the implementation of agreed standards
- Making officially agreed standards publicly and free of charge available on the Internet.

Principle 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.

This includes:

- Cooperating and sharing knowledge with countries and regions to further develop national and regional statistical systems
- Basing cooperation projects on user requirements, promoting full participation of all the main stakeholders, taking account of local situations 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 and work program for national development of official statistics.