

Report of the 5th Meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, 28 February 2005)

I. Introduction

1. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) held its fifth meeting in New York on 28 February 2005. 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. Sylvester Young, Director of the Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Organization.

II. Work of the CCSA Meeting

A. Adoption of the agenda and informal session

2. The Committee adopted the agenda of the meeting as presented in Annex 1.

B. Declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations

3. Under agenda item 2, the Committee took note of document SA/2005/2, “Draft declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations”, prepared by UNSD. The Committee agreed that the text should be redrafted without legally binding wording and with a focus on practices. The document will not be separately presented to the UN Statistical Commission. It was also suggested that agencies could post the document on their respective website, describing how the guidelines relate to their practices. A drafting group was formed, consisting of Mr. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, Mr. Robert Edwards, Director of the Statistical Division of IMF, Mr. Sylvester Young, Director of the ILO Bureau of Statistics and Mr. Heinrich Bruengger, Director of the Statistics Division of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

4. The Committee also had no objections to the proposed new title for the document, “Principles and good practices identified by CCSA for statistical activities’ in member agencies”. The new text will be submitted by the drafting group to the next CCSA meeting.

C. Issues related to the implementation of good statistical practices in international organizations

5. The Committee took note of document SA/2005/3, “Some proposals to promote the implementation of principles for international statistics”, prepared by OECD and of the oral presentation by the representative of IMF.

6. Participants agreed that the development of new *technical standards* under the auspices of the Standards for Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative would be an important step towards an agreed set of rules for data collection and would make data and metadata exchange more efficient.

7. The Committee discussed the idea of moving towards the development of a *quality assurance framework*. The framework would be based on the good practices identified in the document discussed above. It was suggested that the description of the framework could be posted on the UNSD CCSA website. The Committee also took note of the suggestion to organize a second meeting on “Quality for International Organisations” to be held along with the next Eurostat Q2006 conference on data quality, similarly to what done in 2004. Planning would be in co-operation with Eurostat.

8. The Committee discussed the idea of assessing the needs and reviewing existing initiatives on training of statisticians within international organizations. Members of CCSA would report to IMF on their existing training initiatives and on their assessment of needs.

9. The Committee agreed to form small Task Teams to prepare papers on the three above mentioned initiatives: OECD will lead the preparation of a paper on SDMX; Eurostat will coordinate the preparation of the paper on quality assurance; and IMF will take responsibility for the preparation of the report on training programmes for statisticians in international organizations.

D. Tourism statistics

10. The Committee took note of the report on tourism statistics prepared by the World Tourism Organization. It welcomed the advances made by the Intersecretariat Working group on tourism statistics (ISWG); The Committee encouraged the ISWG to continue its work as outlined in the document and decided that there was at this point no need for action by the Committee.

E. Strategic issues related to Millennium Development Goal indicators

11. The Committee took note of UNSD’s oral report on the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators. The UNSD representative explained that the focus of the group over the last few months—since the last CCSA meeting—has been on the preparation of the outputs to be issued in connection with the Millennium Summit in September 2005. She explained that the preparation of the “glossy” report on MDGs, to be launched in May, has progressed according to schedule and that the data and analysis prepared by IAEG had been provided to the Secretary-General’s office for the preparation of its annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium declaration. The web publication on Progress toward the Millennium Development Goals 1990-2005 will be posted on the UNSD website in June.

12. The Committee also took note of the IAEG plans for the rest of the year, including the next IAEG meeting to be held in Rome, hosted by FAO, in October 2005. The meeting, with an expected participation of a large number of national statistical experts, will review the MDG reporting process; discuss the methodological and procedural issues related to the compilation of data series and regional aggregates by the agencies; review the proposals of the thematic sub-groups for the modification of the indicators, and discuss initiatives in statistical capacity building, in relation to MDG and development indicators.

F. Information sharing on statistical capacity projects

13. The Committee took note of the document prepared by Paris21 and accepted the offer by UNSD to take the lead in the preparation of an issue paper on how CCSA can most effectively assume its coordination responsibility in the area of technical cooperation. It noted offers by IMF, WTO/OMT, OECD and ECLAC to participate in a brainstorming subgroup to support the preparation of the issue paper. It was suggested that the paper focus on generic issues, such as human resources and development of basic data; it should build on and draw from existing materials, such as the note on technical cooperation prepared by Eurostat for the CES Bureau meeting and the analysis on the implementation of the SNA prepared by UNSD for the Statistical Commission,

G. Statistical software

14. The Committee welcomed the inventory of statistical software prepared by UNSD. It asked that the inventory be extended to include information on licensing and cost of transfer. It agreed to put the inventory on the CCSA website, including links to relevant websites with information on applications used by committee member agencies. It also suggested that future committee sessions could include short demonstrations of specific software in order to encourage further sharing of applications among committee member agencies. It also noted, that the sharing of information on software could be extended to include countries.

H. Agenda, dates and venue for the sixth session of the Committee in September 2005

15. The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held in Rome, hosted by FAO, from 12-14 September 2005. It agreed that the Secretariat, in close consultation with the Chair, would circulate a proposed agenda for comments. The agenda should include the following specific elements: Declaration of Principles (Draft Team – UNSD); Reports of the task teams on SDMX (OECD), quality assurance (Eurostat) and training (IMF); Technical cooperation (UNSD); Household survey network (World Bank); Classification of Statistical Activities (ECE).

Annex I

Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations.
3. Tourism statistics.
4. Strategic issues related to Millennium Development Goal indicators.
5. Information sharing on statistical capacity projects.
6. Statistical software.
7. Agenda, dates and venue for the sixth session of the Committee in September 2005.
8. Other business.

Annex II

List of participants

United Nations entities and programmes		
Department of Economic and Social Affairs		
United Nations Statistics Division	Paul Cheung Mary Chamie Ivo Havinga Eszter Horvath Vladimir Markhonko Stefan Schweinfest (Secretary) Zoltan Nagy Francesca Perucci	paul.cheung@un.org mchamie@un.org havinga@un.org horvath@un.org markhonko@un.org schweinfest@un.org nagy@un.org perucci@un.org
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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Ahmed Hussein	hussein@un.org
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Henri Laurencin	henri.laurencin@unctad.org
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Specialized agencies and related organizations		
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Other international and non-governmental organizations		
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Annex III

List of documents

<i>Document No.</i>	<i>Agenda item(s)</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
SA/2005/1	1	Adoption of the Agenda
SA/2005/2	2	Declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations – Prepared by UNSD
SA/2005/3	2	Some proposals to promote the implementation of principles for international statistics – Prepared by OECD
SA/2005/4	3	Tourism statistics – Prepared by World Tourism Organization
SA/2005/5	5	Information sharing on statistical capacity projects – Prepared by PARIS 21
SA/2005/6	6	Statistical software – Prepared by UNSD