
A note on CCSA history and current functions

Prepared by UNSD

In September 2002, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) was established to ensure coordination of statistical activities at the international level. This function had previously been performed by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities.

1. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination

The United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination - formerly the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) - furthers coordination and cooperation on a whole range of substantive and management issues facing United Nations system organizations. CEB brings together on a regular basis the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system. Chaired by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Board meets twice annually. It is composed of the Executive Heads of the member organizations and is assisted by two high level committees, the **High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)**, responsible for substantive programme areas; and the **High Level Committee on Management (HLCM)**, responsible for the strategic management of the organizations.

CEB is the successor body to ACC. ACC was established by the Secretary-General in 1946 at the request of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in Resolution 13 (III). The main purpose of the Committee was to supervise the implementation of the agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Since then, its mandate has grown to encompass the promotion of cooperation within the UN family in the pursuit of the common goals of Member States across a wide range of substantive and management issues.

From its original four members (UN, ILO, FAO and UNESCO), CEB today comprises twenty-eight member organizations, including UN funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies, WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions. (See Annex 1)

2. The Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities

Until October 2001, when CEB decided, as part of the reform of its working methods, that coordination should be pursued through more informal and flexible mechanisms rather than formal subsidiary bodies, the **Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities** constituted a forum for consultations and coordination between entities with mandates in statistical activities on those aspects of their activities that were of mutual concern.

The **ACC Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities (ACC/SSA)** was established in 1966. Its membership included UN system organizations with statistical programmes or major users of statistics or agencies funding statistical activities and projects, as well as observers from several non-UN organizations. Its mandate was to promote co-ordination, integration and complementarity among the statistical programmes of the international organizations and to

provide coordinated preparations for the treatment of statistical issues in meetings of intergovernmental bodies and coordinated follow-up of decisions of intergovernmental bodies.

In order to carry out this mandate, ACC/SSA members collaborated inter alia on:

- Policies and practices in disseminating statistics;
- Statistical data collection from countries;
- Technical cooperation activities;
- Development of indicators for monitoring the achievement of social goals;
- Development of statistical methods;
- Monitoring implementation of recommended statistical recommendations in countries;
- Preparation of tools to promote coordination, including an integrated presentation of planned outputs in statistical methodology by the international organizations;
- Preparations for and follow-up to the decisions of the Statistical Commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and its Working Group.

ACC/SSA met once a year and its reports were made available to the Statistical Commission of ECOSOC. The Chair rotated among participants.

3. The establishment of CCSA

In September 2002, the UN Statistics Division called an inter-agency meeting in response to the request of the UN Statistical Commission at its 33rd session in 2002, that international organizations “develop a new system for effective coordination given that the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities had been disbanded as of December 2001”. The meeting was also the response to the strong interest expressed by several international organizations and by the High Level Committee on Programmes for the continuation of the coordination of international statistical work. The interest was especially focused on the need to coordinate work on emerging issues and following-up with decisions to ensure appropriate actions by the relevant organizations.

The meeting, attended by statistical managers of 21 organizations, was held in New York, from 17 to 19 September 2002. Participants agreed to establish the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) as the future format of inter-agency coordination in the area of statistics and discussed the proposed terms of reference for the newly formed committee.¹ CCSA held its first formal meeting and adopted its terms of references (attached to this note as Annex 2) on 3 March 2003 in New York.

The **objectives** of the Committee are the following:

- (a) Promote coordination, integration and complementarity among the statistical programmes of the international organizations, including the avoidance of duplication and reduction in reporting burdens on Member States and to promote coordination and consistency in statistical practices and development;

¹ UNSD, “Report of the Inter-agency Meeting on Coordination of Statistical Activities”, New York, September 2002, available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/acccsub/inter-agency2002.htm> (password protected).

(b) Provide coordinated preparations for the treatment of statistical issues in intergovernmental meetings, including the Statistical Commission and coordinated follow-up of decisions of the intergovernmental bodies, thus providing a responsive focus for addressing the needs of Member States.

(c) Achieve through the coordination activity an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics by promoting the coordination of the international official statistical system including technical cooperation in statistics. It also aims to facilitate the use in Member States of internationally agreed concepts, definitions, recommendations and classifications of different international organizations by coordinating the work on methodological development and promoting harmonization of the methodologies in various fields of statistics.

(d) Foster good practices in the structuring and programming of statistical activities in the international organizations; within the above framework the Committee focuses on emerging issues requiring coordination, takes a proactive approach and follows up on decisions to ensure action is taken.

An annual report on on-going Committee activities is made available to the United Nations Statistical Commission and if necessary or desirable the report can be brought to the attention of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for coordination (CEB).

The **chairmanship** is rotating with the chairperson serving a two-year term, and the **secretariat** for the Committee is provided by the United Nations Statistics Division.

4. Work of the Committee

The emphasis of the work of the Committee has generally been on strategic issues that are of interest to all members and for which coordination is needed to facilitate the use by Member States of data and internationally agreed standards and recommendations. A considerable part of the work is also devoted to ensuring a coordinated follow up to decisions made at the inter-governmental level. A brief summary of the major decisions and follow-up activities of CCSA over these first three years of existence is presented in the table below.

In principle a large component of the work of the Committee is supposed to take place between meetings, through electronic exchange and discussions and specific activities undertaken by lead agencies to follow up on decisions made at the yearly meetings.

The yearly meetings also provide an opportunity for side events on specific topics and for other inter-agency mechanisms and groups on specific statistical projects and programmes to meet.

Decisions and follow-up activities of CCSA, 2003-2006

Standards	Tourism Statistics	<p>The Development of Standards on Tourism Statistics was initiated with a report by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (SA/2003/16), followed by a report of the WTO to the Statistical Commission in March 2004 (E/CN.3/2004/13).</p> <p>In March 2004, the CCSA chair invited WTO and OECD to present a joint note for discussion at CCSA, which should identify the issues of concern and contain proposals for the effective cooperation and division of labour among the organizations involved. In September 2004, UNSD proposed to form the inter-agency coordination group (ISWG) on tourism statistics. In February 2005 a report was presented by WTO, and CCSA decided there was no need at that point for its action.</p>
Standards	International Guidelines for Reporting and Presentation of Statistical Data and Metadata	<p>By initiative of OECD (SA/2003/11), a <i>Handbook/ Manual of International Guidelines for Reporting and Presentation of Statistical Data and Metadata</i> was developed. A draft was circulated to the members of CCSA and eventually to the Statistical Commission and a report presented in its 36th session 2005 (E/CN.3/2005/21), when final comments and guidance were sought.</p>
Standards	SDMX: Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange	<p>The SDMX initiative was first chaired by IMF, followed by OECD. SDMX version 1.0 on the web for comments was announced in September 2004 and work on the pilot project on external debt statistics was continued. In September 2004, UNESCO expressed its interest in exploring with the SDMX members the possibility of the participation with its social statistics data sets. In March 2006, the database package DEVInfo had incorporated data and metadata formats and registry based architecture from SDMX, DDI standards (metadata in the social sector) and Geographic Information from the UN Geographic Information Working Group. At the March 2006 CCSA session, it was announced that SDMX version 2 of the technical standards (task team led by OECD) would be submitted to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for approval.</p> <p>Also in March 2006, CCSA members agreed to adopt SDMX in principle. An Implementation Plan will be developed by OECD and other six partner agencies. CCSA also agreed to seek endorsement of the SDMX initiative by the 2007 session of the Statistical Commission, while some members expressed reservations on the ability of countries to use SDMX due to implicated costs, availability of human resources, and technical capacity.</p>
Standards	Aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates	<p>At the half-day technical seminar held at the occasion of the second CCSA meeting in September 2003, the Committee considered Mr. Tim Holt's paper, commissioned by ILO, WB, Unicef, UNESCO, HDR and UNDP, with suggestions on need for good documentation on MDG indicators, accessibility of microdata, clear time attribution, uniform regional country classification, principles and techniques of data imputations and aggregation. CCSA found that further work was needed in order to decide on a specific set of recommendations, technical or strategic. UNSD and Mr. Tim Holt were asked to work on this, also together with the IAEG on MDGs. In September 2004, several issues were raised on the aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates.</p>
Standards	Statistics at the Sub-national Level	<p>In September 2004, a report on its work to develop statistics at the subnational level was presented by UNHabitat (SA/2004/8). The UN Population Division informed CCSA of ongoing work on <i>World Urbanization Prospects</i>. The CCSA agreed that it would be desirable to keep this issue under review, and that more training would be required for countries to strengthen their production of sub-national data.</p>

Standards	Harmonization of Base Years for Index Numbers	Based on a proposal to rebase index numbers to 2000 by 2005, UNCTAD sent out a questionnaire to agencies on the status of the rebasing process and presented a report to CCSA in September 2004 showing that most of the rebasing actions announced in 2003 had been completed or were in progress of completion and a large number of the index numbers would be rebased by the end of 2004 and the rest, with a few exceptions, by the end of 2005.
Standards	ICT Statistics	In September 2004, the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology Indicators (ICT) for Development _ the coordination mechanism put in place by agencies and regional commissions_ presented its planned activities which included the development of a core list of ICT indicators, regional meetings, preparation of training courses, ICT measurement guidebook and ICT statistics database. The location of database should be considered carefully in the light of the different dissemination policies of international agencies and SDMX standards should be used. ILO invited the Partnership to contribute to the ongoing work on the classification of occupational groups to better identify the ICT sector.
Standards	International Household Survey Network (IHSN)	In order to strengthen national statistical systems, CCSA observed that censuses, surveys and administrative records needed to be developed jointly and encouraged IHSN, created in September 2004, to maintain links to international work to develop all data sources. CCSA emphasized the usefulness of developing “model modules” and supported the development of a survey data dissemination tool kit, a joint survey metadata repository, the involvement of National Statistical Offices (NSO) as well as addressing issues such as microdata confidentiality.
Standards	Classification of statistical activities	UNECE presented its process to revise its classification of statistical activities with the paper “Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work” (SA/2005/11), in September 2005. CCSA will await the adoption of the classification by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) before exploring the possibility of adapting the UNECE classification to the needs of other international agencies.
Standards	Service Statistics	The Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Service Statistics presented a report prepared by OECD to the Statistical Commission in March 2006 (E/CN.3/2006/22) highlighting the concerns expressed and the possible opportunities perceived for this group.
Standards	Country grouping	The World Trade Organization proposed in March 2006 that CCSA consider the issue of regional country grouping and coding. UNSD and WTO would prepare a paper on the work already done, including the MDG country grouping and the classifications used on Trade Statistics.
Standards	Strengthening Governance of Statistical Systems - Data Revisions Policy	IMF presented the paper entitled “Revisions policy for official statistics: a matter of governance” (SA/2003/13) which contains a set of eight good practices related to data revision policies. The Committee made a number of suggestions for additional aspects to be incorporated into the document, such as (i) incorporating issues pertaining to social and demographic statistics, (ii) addressing explicitly the international perspective of regional and global aggregates, (iii) emphasizing the need for proper archiving of old series and (iv) analyzing the financial and legal implications of revisions.

Coordination and Standards	Implementation of Good Statistical Practices in International Organizations – Quality Assurance Framework	<p>The project on Quality Assurance Framework was elaborated and posted on the CCSA website (SA/2005/13). Technical standards, as part of quality assurance have been developed under SDMX. Eurostat was mandated to further the process and six task teams were formed around key areas: Quality frameworks, Systems for reviews, Quality reporting, Labeling of statistical information, Q2006, and Implementation. In March 2006, the “Progress report on the task team on the use and convergence of international quality assurance frameworks” was submitted by Eurostat (SA/2006/3).</p> <p>Two events were organized by UNSD in connection with Eurostat Conferences: Wiesbaden, Germany, 27-28 May 2004- Q2004 Satellite Conference on Quality Management for International Statistics; Newport, UK, 27-28 April 2006- Q2006 Conference on Data Quality for International Organizations.</p>
Coordination	Coordination and Integration of Statistical Programmes, Task Forces and Inter-Secretariat Working Groups	<p>CCSA sessions have provided agencies with a regular forum for sharing major initiatives and upcoming outputs, updates on the work of working groups, review of cooperation arrangements (ex. Eurostat), new work programmes (ex. UNODC).</p> <p>An analysis of the 2004-2005 outputs for member organizations of the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs can be seen in a report by UNSD and UNECE entitled “UN proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005” (SA/2003/4).</p>
Coordination	Coordination of data sets disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter	<p>At its second session in September 2003, CCSA members emphasized that the issue of coordination of data sets disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter had to be seen in the larger context of developing an improved international statistical system of shared data management. Three specific areas were proposed for future attention of the Committee: consumer price indices, human rights statistics and energy use indicators.</p>
Coordination	Indicators for Follow up to UN Conferences MDGs Report of the SG	<p>UNSD, in its capacity as coordinating agency of the Inter-agency and expert group on MDG Indicators (IAEG), has kept CCSA abreast of the work and developments on MDG Indicators. CCSA has recommended IAEG to include among IAEG’s tasks, a review of issues such as: frequency of reporting, relation between national and international MDG reports, coordination of emerging programmes of statistical capacity building programmes at the country level, etc. CCSA member agencies also discussed ways to respond to the various issues raised by the Friends of the Chair group on MDG Indicators.</p>
Coordination	Health Statistics	<p>WHO (expected to take the lead role), assisted by UNSD, would work to identify health issues which require attention and explore ways in which the inter-secretariat working group (ISWG) on Health Statistics would be most effective and efficient.</p> <p>At the March 2006 session, Eurostat raised concern on the work undertaken by the ISWG, in particular its membership and terms of reference.</p>
Coordination	Statistical Software	<p>An inventory of statistical software was prepared by UNSD, and CCSA asked that it be extended to information on licensing and cost of transfer. The inventory should be put in the CCSA website with relevant links and further sharing of information on software among agencies and NSOs was encouraged.</p>

Coordination	Coordination of technical cooperation activities/Information sharing on Statistical Capacity Projects	A document prepared by PARIS21 initiated the discussion and UNSD in collaboration with ECLAC, IMF, OECD and WTO/OMT prepared an issue paper on how CCSA can most effectively assume its coordination responsibility in the area of technical cooperation. In March 2006, PARIS21 presented the Light Reporting Exercise and related report entitled: "Review of support to statistical capacity building in Sub-Saharan Africa: From reporting to collaboration". CCSA then agreed to include a half-day special session to discuss coordination and approaches to strategic planning for capacity building activities. The Committee also took note of a suggestion that a forum be organized on coordination of support to statistical capacity building.
Coordination	Training of Statisticians in International Agencies	A network of representatives from agencies to exchange information and materials and explore possible new activities was proposed in September 2005, led by IMF. IMF prepared an assessment of training initiatives in international agencies for their staff and presented a proposed action plan for future work (SA/2006/4). A special webpage under the CCSA website is under development, to host relevant information under this topic.
Principles and Coordination	Towards a statistical system	Starting from a report presented by UNECE towards an international statistical system (SA/2003/9), CCSA developed the <i>Principles Governing International Statistical Activities</i> (E/CN.3/2006/13), eventually endorsed by the Statistical Commission in March 2006. CCSA decided that agencies should review their current practices in relation to these principles and disseminate the result of the review. Also under the topic of an international statistical system, CCSA identified the following areas of work to further strengthen cooperation and coordination of the statistical activities carried out by international organizations: (1) quality assurance framework, (2) SDMX and (3) training activities for staff of international organizations.
Principles	Good Practices in Citation in the Outputs of International Statistical Offices	Initiated by a paper presented by UNESCO (SA/2003/12), CCSA members were encouraged to develop citation policies and ensure their implementation, especially to web-disseminated databases. CCSA encouraged UNESCO to integrate the Citation Good Practices with the <i>Handbook/ Manual of International Guidelines for Reporting and Presentation of Statistical Data and Metadata</i> and to include relevant materials in UNSD's Good Practices website.
Others	Professional Association of International Statisticians	The establishment of a Professional Association of International Statisticians, based on individual membership was proposed in September 2005 by the UNDP representative and CCSA offered its support to the process of creating the association. A paper would be circulated shortly by UNESCAP.

Annex 1

Members of CEB

United Nations and specialized agencies:

United Nations
International Labour Organization (ILO)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
World Health Organization (WHO)
World Bank
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Universal Postal Union (UPU)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
International Maritime Organization (IMO)
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Other agencies:

International Atomic Energy Agency
World Trade Organization (WTO)

United Nations funds and programmes:

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
World Food Programme (WFP)
United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Annex 2

Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities

Terms of Reference

1. The Inter-agency Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities was established on 19 September 2002 by the Interagency Meeting on Coordination of Statistical Activities. Its objectives, which it takes over from the former ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities ((a), (b) and (c) below, modified by (d) below) are:

- (a) to promote coordination, integration and complementarity among the statistical programmes of the international organizations, including the avoidance of duplication and reduction in reporting burdens on Member States and to promote coordination and consistency in statistical practices and development;
- (b) to provide coordinated preparations for the treatment of statistical issues in intergovernmental meetings, including the Statistical Commission and coordinated follow-up of decisions of the intergovernmental bodies, thus providing a responsive focus for addressing the needs of Member States.
- (c) to achieve through the coordination activity an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics by promoting the coordination of the international official statistical system including technical cooperation in statistics. It also aims to facilitate the use in Member States of internationally agreed concepts, definitions, recommendations and classifications of different international organizations by coordinating the work on methodological development and promoting harmonization of the methodologies in various fields of statistics.
- (d) to foster good practices in the structuring and programming of statistical activities in the international organizations; within the above framework the Committee focuses on emerging issues requiring coordination, takes a proactive approach and follows up on decisions to ensure action is taken.

2. The members of the Committee comprise all members and observers of the former ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, namely United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and other divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) the Regional Commissions, the UN Programmes and Funds, the specialized agencies and related organizations, certain non-UN intergovernmental organizations (OECD, EUROSTAT, Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization), regional development banks and the International Statistical Institute. Other organizations can participate by invitation.

3. Representation in the Committee is normally at the level of Director of an organization's statistical service or equivalent. Participation at the highest statistical level is considered indispensable for the effectiveness of the Committee's work.

4. The Committee functions on a task oriented basis using lead agency arrangements. The Committee meets on an ad hoc basis as required by circumstances, usually for two and half days, but the decision to hold meetings and their length is driven by substance and needs. In principle it is expected that there will be annual meetings, but advantage will be taken of the Statistical Commission session each year to bring the Committee together to take up any issues that need to be considered at that time and to review the proposed agenda and need for the next scheduled

Committee session. As formal Committee meetings provide an excellent opportunity for bilateral and multilateral discussions and networking, sufficient time should always be set aside in the meeting schedule for these activities. Coordination of activities between meetings, for instance through electronic discussion groups and follow-up to decisions made at meetings are an important and integral part of the work of the Committee.

5. The Committee elects a Chairman who serves for a two year period and is eligible for reelection for a second two year term. The UNSD is the permanent Secretariat.

6. A decisions-and-actions-only report is prepared for adoption at the end of each meeting. The report should specify the lead agencies which are responsible for any action and follow-up. There should also be a report on ongoing Committee activities which have occurred in the inter-meeting period. An annual report is made available to the United Nations Statistical Commission and if necessary or desirable the report is referred to the High Level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations Chief Executives Board on Coordination (CEB).