
Review of CCSA functions

Paper prepared by ILO and UNSD, as Chair and Secretariat

1. The history of CCSA

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 a subcommittee of the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) called the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (ACC/SSA). The ACC/SSA 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. In October 2001, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination, which replaced the ACC, established in 1946, decided to abolish all the formal subcommittees as part of the reform of its working methods. Coordination would be pursued through more informal and flexible mechanisms. See Annex 1 for full details on the CEB and the ACC/SSA.

2. Establishment of CCSA

The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) was established in September 2002, to ensure coordination of statistical activities at the international level, which used to be the function of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities. This was 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”. It was also in 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 CCSA was established at a meeting held in New York from 17 to 19 September 2002, hosted by the UN Statistics Division, and attended by statistical managers of 21 organizations. 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 committee¹. 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.

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).

3. CCSA Objectives

The objectives of the Committee on Coordination of Statistical Activities remain as stated in its Terms of Reference, as follows:

(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.

4. Meetings, side events and special sessions (time, duration, venue)

The Committee functions on a task oriented basis and usually meets twice a year:

- One brief meeting of the duration of up to half a day, at the occasion of the Statistical Commission session in New York in February/March. At this brief meeting, the Committee normally reviews progress on the main topics where work is being done, discusses any other issues that need to be considered urgently and reviews the proposed agenda and plans for the fall Committee's session.
- The second and more comprehensive meeting of the Committee normally held in September. At this meeting, the Committee devotes longer span of time to each of the items, reviews progress, holds side/special events and also allows time for the members to hold their bilateral consultations. The decision on the exact duration of the fall meeting is normally driven by the number of substantive items to be reviewed and discussed, but usually between 2½ and 3 days.

As formal Committee meetings provide an excellent opportunity for bilateral and multilateral discussions and networking, sufficient time is usually set aside in the meeting schedule for these activities.

Side meetings are organized to cover topics not directly related to the agenda items of the Committee but which are of interest to some members.

Special sessions are devoted to topics of special importance to the Committee or one of its task forces, allowing for a more in-depth exchange and presentation of technical papers and contributions by members. Special sessions normally have a duration of ½ a day.

Coordination of activities between meetings, for instance through electronic discussion groups and follow-up to decisions made at meetings, are also considered an important and integral part of the work of the Committee.

The Committee sponsors a biennial Conference on Data Quality for International Organizations, back-to-back with the European Conference on European Conference on Quality in Statistics.

5. Structure of the discussion (information and discussion items)

Topics in the agenda are distinguished as “decision” and “information items”. The chair of the CCSA and Secretariat determine the category of each agenda item based on written proposals from members. Decision items are presented and discussed whilst information items are not presented and discussion is optional.

6. Functions of the chair, rotation, length of term and election of chair

The Committee elects a Chairman who serves for a two year period and is eligible for reelection for a second two year term.

The functions of the chair are to:

- (a) ‘approve’ agenda items as proposed by the Secretariat, based on decisions taken at the previous session of the Committee and subsequent e-consultations with members;
- (b) direct the sessions of the Committee, including summarizing the discussion of each agenda item as basis for preparing the report of the session;
- (c) ‘approve’ the final report as prepared by the Secretariat;
- (d) ‘assume’ responsibility for decisions on behalf of the Committee in-between sessions.

7. Functions of the CCSA secretariat

The UNSD is the permanent Secretariat of the CCSA. In direct collaboration with the chair, it prepares the agenda for the meetings of the Committee and ensures that all the documentation received and approved by the chair, as well as the necessary information are made available to its members. It is also responsible for the organization of the Committee’s meetings or for the coordination with the agreed host of a given Committee’s meeting.

The Secretariat is also responsible for liaising with the chair of the Committee and preparing the draft of the report of each session. As per ad hoc request of the Committee, the process of submitting any document to the CEB is arranged by the Secretariat, in cooperation with the chair and the author(s) of the document. New members also have to submit candidacy to the secretariat, which consults with the chair and other members in arriving at a decision.

The Secretariat also hosts the website of the Committee.

Interaction between the chair and the secretariat is on an informal basis and mostly initiated at the behest of the Secretariat.

8. Role of special Task Teams

Endorsed by the CCSA, special Task Teams can be created with specific TORs and are led by an appointed member organization of the CCSA. The Task Team can establish the most appropriate working arrangement, holding meetings if necessary, without financial implications to the CCSA secretariat. The Task Team reports its ongoing work and results to the Committee on a need basis.

9. Membership (criteria for admittance of new members, difference between members and observers, expected level of representatives)

Representation in the Committee is required to be at the level of Director of an organization's statistical service or equivalent. In the case of absence of such a person at a session of the Committee, the designated representative must be entitled to make decisions on behalf of the member. Participation at the highest statistical level is considered indispensable for the effectiveness of the Committee's work.

The members of the Committee comprise all members and observers of the former ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities including the UN Statistics Division, the statistics divisions of the regional UN Economic Commissions, the specialized agencies and related organizations, certain non-UN intergovernmental organizations, regional development banks and the International Statistical Institutes. Other organizations can participate by invitation.

The complete list of members can be found in Annex 3.

10. Decision mechanism and follow-up procedures outside CCSA

The decisions of the Committee are reached by consensus. Any necessary formal procedures in between CCSA sessions are carried out by the CCSA Secretariat in consultation with the chair and, if necessary, the implicated members.

11. Reporting

A decisions-and-actions-only report is prepared for adoption at the end of each meeting. The report specifies the lead agencies which are responsible for any action and follow-up. Notes on ongoing Committee activities which have occurred in the inter-meeting period are also presented at the following meeting, as deemed necessary.

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).

12. Issues for discussion/decision

12.1 Membership and level of representation

- Should agency membership be limited to supra and international agencies that have statistics units which are statistics producers as defined by Bruengger²?
- The ACC/SSA as an organ of the ACC, which in turn was created by the Secretary-General at the request of ECOSOC, limited full membership to UN and UN-related agencies. Other agencies participated as observers. Given that CCSA was auto-created, do we need to continue with this distinction between membership statuses? Should all members in it not be on an equal footing with equal rights such as being elected as chair?
- How should the level of representation (currently the Director of the Statistical Unit/Office) be enforced?

12.2 Activities & meetings

- What consideration should be given to the organization of side-events, decisions about having these and involvement of the Secretariat in planning for them?
- As a time management measure, should the allowed time for each agenda item be as follows:

Presentation and discussion of Decision items should be allowed a maximum of 45 minutes. Introductory comments should be very brief and focus on key issues for discussion and decision. Focus should also be on relevant additional material that has been developed since the submission and posting of documentation on the CCSA protected website.

Information items should not be presented. Any discussion of them should not be longer than 10 minutes?

12.3 Decision mechanism

- Should consensus be as determined by the chair? Should members be required as much as possible to implement these decisions or explain to the Committee the reasons why their agency would not be able to do so or do so as yet?

12.4 Reporting

- Should key decisions of the CCSA, such as the adoption of the ‘Principles and practices for international statistics’, be reported to (a) UNSC as the voice of national statistical agencies; (b) CEB, as the collectivity of heads of UN and UN-related agencies; (c) governing structures of other member agencies not represented at the CEB? This would require some form of formal recognition of CCSA by UNSC, CEB and these governing structures. What should be the purpose of reporting: information, seeking input; requesting approval?

12.5 Management and Organization

² Document (SA/2003/9, 16 August 2003) presented by Heinrich Bruengger, Director of the ECE Statistical Division, at the second session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), held in Geneva, 8-10 September 2003. The definition proposed is as follows: a) A statistical producer within the UN system is an organization which engages in at least one of the following types of statistical activities on a regular basis: i) disseminating statistical products containing documented reference series in whatever form (including electronically) to the public, based on data collected from national or international sources (with emphasis on official statistics) and systematic checks/processing for consistency and international comparability; ii) setting conceptual standards in the broad sense (including definitions of good practices) for national official statistics, and monitoring the implementation of these standards; iii) providing technical assistance to national producers of official statistics and capacity building in national systems of official statistics; iv) developing standardised methodologies for statistical data collection, notably through statistical surveys, and for related processing at the national level, and assisting countries in implementing them..

- Should the CCSA have a Bureau? If so, what should be its size, composition and lifetime? What should the functions be?
- Should the CCSA have two chairs? UNSD could be a permanent chair to represent the UN and a second chair, chosen from the other agencies, could be rotating on a two-year period.
- Should CCSA have dealings (direct or otherwise) with other institutions and structures, giving that it is a coordination mechanism among many different organizations? If so, in order to reinforce the identity, independence and visibility of the Committee who should represent CCSA in these? The chair(s) or the secretariat?
- UNSD as the permanent Secretariat presently bears all the direct costs for running the secretariat. Other agencies, singly or in groups, pick up the costs for some of the other activities of the CCSA on an ad hoc basis. Should the possibility not exist for UNSD to request financial support to implement some decisions of the CCSA, if necessary?
- Should CCSA not have an interagency technical advisory sub-system to provide collective advice to it on technical issues of common interest such as quality frameworks, imputations, treatment of metadata, classifications, etc.? Is the present system of doing so through the heads of units with iterative interactions between the agencies sufficient?

Annex 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.

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.

CEB members:

- United Nations (UN)
- 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)
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- World Trade Organization (WTO)
- 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 Office on Drugs Crime (UNODC)
- 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).

Annex 3

List of members of the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities

United Nations entities and programmes

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
 United Nations Statistics Division
 United Nations Population Division
Economic Commission for Europe
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Economic Commission for Africa
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Environment Programme
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
United Nations Population Fund

Specialized agencies and related organizations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
International Labour Organization
International Monetary Fund
International Telecommunication Union
PAHO/World Health Organization
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Bank
World Health Organizations
World Tourism Organization
World Trade Organization

Other international and non-governmental organizations

African Development Bank
Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics
Asian Development Bank
Bank for International Settlements
Caribbean Community Secretariat
European Central Bank
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
PARIS 21
Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat)
Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC)