

**Report of the 10th Meeting of the
Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities**

I. Introduction

1. The tenth meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) was held in Madrid, at the United Nations World Tourism Organization, from 10 - 11 September 2007. The Director of the Statistics Division of UNWTO, Mr. Antonio Massieu welcomed the participants. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Sylvester Young, Director of the Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Organization. The list of documents and participants presented are attached as annex II and III respectively.

II. Work of the CCSA Meeting

A. Adoption of the agenda and other issues

2. The Committee agreed to delete item 2 from the agenda, since the UNDP paper on "*Inconsistencies in international data sources*" (SA/2007/10) had not been issued. The Committee also agreed to include a report by OECD on the Istanbul Forum on Indicators under Other Business. The revised agenda was adopted. (See Annex I)

B. Use of population estimates

3. The Committee took note of the paper "*Use of population estimates in the computation of indicators*" (Document SA/2007/9), prepared by ESCAP and discussed the proposal of including this item for more extensive discussion at the next session of the Committee and forming a Task team to review the problems and report to the Committee.

4. The discussion focused mainly on the underlying reasons for the discrepancies among different sets of data used by agencies—linked in general to the original sources of information and definitions used—and on whether the agency responsible for the production of the Population estimates and projection (the UN Population Division) should engage in a more extensive consultation with countries.

5. The Committee agreed to establish a task team with the following tasks: 1) review and recommend ways to improve the consultation with countries in the process of producing national estimates; 2) indicate to agencies how to factor in changes in the population figures from one revision to the next; 3) discuss ways to address the concern that there are no internationally agreed standards for annual population statistics. The following international organizations will be part of the new task team: the World Bank, UIS, UNFPA, UNSD, AfDB, ECE, ECA, ESCAP,

WHO and the UN Population Division. The task team will present a paper to the September 2008 session of the Committee.

C. Data imputations by international agencies

6. The Committee took note of the paper prepared by ECE “*Imputations in Databases of International Official Statistics*” (Document SA/2007/11), presenting a review of issues and concerns related to the use of imputations of missing national values in international data series compiled by the relevant international agencies and ways to implement the recommendation contained in the ECOSOC resolution 2006/9 dealing with the use of imputations and calling for “avoiding imputation unless specific country data are available for reliable imputations following consultations with concerned countries and through transparent methodologies”.

7. The Committee reviewed and discussed the proposals put forward in the paper on how to implement the ECOSOC resolution and agreed on the following: 1) the issue of imputation of country data should be included in the quality assurance framework for international statistics; 2) imputations should be clearly flagged out in the database; 3) full transparency of the process and methods of estimation should be ensured; 4) consultations with national statistical authority should always be carried out and seen as part of the process to ensure transparency; 5) the existing CCSA task team on international quality assurance frameworks, will review ways to integrate this issues into the frameworks. However, given that the group has completed its task, other agencies will then have to volunteer to carry the work forward, if needed.

D. Modalities of data sharing between international organizations

8. The Committee took note of document SA/2007/12, “*Modalities of data sharing between organizations: towards more compatibility with good dissemination practices of national statistical offices*”, presented by ECE and reviewed the current limitations and problems existing when exchanging data sets among international agencies.

9. The Committee agreed that currently the exchange of data among agencies is working relatively well. In particular, it was noted that progress had been made to limit the burden to countries avoiding sending similar requests by different agencies. However, some issues and limitations still exist, especially in connection to the extent to which data provided by a partner agency can then be re-used in other statistical outputs. The Committee agreed that UNECE, in consultation with the World Bank and ECB would prepare a paper to outline good practices for data exchange among international agencies. The paper would be presented to CCSA in September 2008. The Committee further agreed that the CCSA Secretariat would carry out some research of past documentations and reports by ACC/Sub-committee in Statistics on the subject and share with members any useful information found.

E. SDMX and costs and benefits of its adoption

10. The Committee took note of document SA/2007/13, “*Going forward with the adoption of SDMX: an overview of benefits and costs*”, presented by the SDMX sponsors, illustrating the benefits to countries and international agencies of adopting SDMX, and the costs associated with

its implementation—mainly for technology development and work on the subject matter domains.

11. The Committee agreed with the conclusions of the paper: that the costs for the implementation of SDMX in itself are minor, but that it will be critical to foster the capacity of countries to adopt these standards and be able to use them. It was agreed that SDMX would be put forward to the UN Statistical Commission for its consideration, presenting the SDMX as a standard that has been adopted by CCSA and stressing the importance of assisting developing countries to develop their capacity to adopt these standards.

F. Special session on the implementation of quality assurance frameworks

12. In conjunction with its 10th session, CCSA held a special session on “Implementation of quality assurance frameworks”. The following presentations were made to the committee for consideration and discussion:

- an overview of the project carried out by the CCSA Task Team, presented by Eurostat;
- examples of ways and procedures to implement and monitor the implementation of the quality assurance frameworks by different agencies, including Eurostat, UN ECE, and ECB;
- the draft guidelines for the Implementation of Quality Assurance Frameworks for International Organizations Compiling Statistics (SA/2007/14/Add.4), for the Committee to be considered and accepted by the Committee;
- examples of experiences in piloting quality assessment checklist, including by Eurostat and FAO.

13. The Committee thanked and expressed appreciation for the excellent work done by the Task Team. It also welcomed the efforts and commitment by individual agencies to study and pilot the recommendations and guidelines prepared by the team. The Committee also discussed whether it would be appropriate to issue a document or flyer to be circulated at the time of the UN Statistical Commission. It was agreed that issuing a separate document would be premature at this stage and that rather the Statistical Commission paper would contain a statement on the agreed quality guidelines.

14. In connection with the implementation of the quality assurance frameworks, the Committee also discussed plans for the next CCSA Conference on Quality for International Agencies, to be held, in Rome in July 2008, back-to-back, as usual, with the corresponding Eurostat conference for national statistical offices. Eurostat proposed that now that the Task team has completed its tasks, some other agencies should take the lead and take the work forward. Issues discussed included whether or not the participation should continue to be at the director level or rather middle level managers should get involved so that the discussion could move to a more practical level, including some training. It was agreed that UNSD, assisted by FAO would take the lead for the organization of the conference. UNSD, FAO, ECB, Eurostat, ILO and OECD will jointly prepare a draft of the TORs for the new team.

G. Special session on Statistical Capacity Building

15. The Committee also held a special session on Statistical Capacity Building. At its 8th Session, the Committee had agreed to form four Task Teams to further the work on some specific areas of interest, as follows:

Task Team 1 – Reporting mechanisms on statistical capacity building activities, led by Paris 21 (ECE, Eurostat, World Tourism Organization, World Bank, Paho)

Task Team 2 – Capacity building through regional training initiatives for national statisticians (and regional training centers), led by UNSD (ILO, FAO, Paris21)

Task Team 3 – Review of modalities for coordination of technical cooperation programmes at the sub-regional level, led by the World Bank (USND, Eurostat, ESCWA, African Development Bank, World Tourism Organization)

Task Team 4 – Assessment of the effectiveness of capacity building activities in Africa, led by UNSD (WHO, Paris21, World Bank, African Development Bank)

16. The teams each presented the results of the work over the past year and some points for consideration and decision by the Committee. Regarding the presentation by Task Team 1 (convened by PARIS21), the Committee expressed appreciation for the work done by the Team. The Committee noted that the work done so far was largely based on the PARIS21 light reporting mechanism. It requested that the report for the February session of CCSA present the Task Team's progress with respect to all of its TORS, taking into consideration appropriate mechanisms for coordination within CCSA and related activities such as in the forthcoming Steering Committee meeting of PARIS21 and progress in the pilot phase in Africa.

17. UNSD, the lead agency of Task Team 2, presented an inventory of training activities and centers. Given that activities by international agencies would be normally reported by Task Team 1 and other regional initiatives would be covered by Task Team 3, the Committee agreed this Task Team would focus only on training centers with a regional reach. This would include regional centers as well as national centers that provide training to official statisticians outside the country. The task team will also co-ordinate its activities with those of Paris21 Task Team on Training. It was further agreed that the information collected would be posted on the CCSA website. Finally, it was clarified that the objective of the work by all task teams is not only to provide an inventory of existing activities, but to also explore ways for CCSA members to improve coordination and effectiveness of their initiatives.

18. In connection with this agenda item, other agencies presented their initiatives for the development of training tools. In particular, the World Bank presented an update of its project for the development of an e-learning course on "Investing in statistical capacity". The course is intended for those who have responsibility for the management of statistical capacity building activities in developing countries. Eurostat also introduced its "Guide to Statistics in EC Development Cooperation", developed to support the European Commission staff in using statistics and indicators in their development programmes, identifying and designing activities for statistical capacity building and in understanding statistics for policy making.

19. Task Team 3 reported that progress had not been made on agreeing on a set of recommendations for good practices in the design and management of technical cooperation programmes to be put forward for consideration by CCSA. The reason for this was that the first of their term of reference was part of the mandate of Task Team 1, which needed to be completed before this team could commence its work. The Committee agreed that Task Team 3 would continue to work separately from the other team and would prepare a brief report for the February 2008 session and a more extensive one for the September 2008 session.

20. Finally, Task Team 4 presented the results of the first phase of their work. The lead agency compiled a list of areas and related elements to monitor statistical capacity by both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The Committee agreed that the number of areas considered in the assessment was too large and that the focus should be on quantitative indicators only. Given the work already being undertaken by the African Development Bank in this area, the committee agreed that they will take the lead to continue the work of this task team, together with ECA, and will present a report at the September 2008 session of the Committee. It was further noted that the existing work on capacity building indicators, such as that carried out by the World Bank, should be also built in.

H. Review of CCSA functions

21. The Committee took note of document SA/2007/19, “*Review of CCSA functions*”, prepared by the chair, ILO, and the secretariat, UNSD, and outlining the main functions and ways of operating of CCSA and proposing some alternative arrangements to the Committee, for its consideration and decision. The proposals to the committee were organized in five areas as follows:

Membership and level of representation

22. The Committee discussed whether membership should be extended to any agency/organization with statistical activities and all members should have equal status and to what level the agency should be represented in the Committee. It was agreed that the current list of members should be maintained and that requests for new memberships could be assessed on the basis of the new TORs and objective of CCSA, to be redrafted and approved later. Members will be free to opt for an observer status. The level of representation should be maintained, and strongly encouraged, to be at the director level.

Activities and meetings

23. The Committee reviewed issues related to the organization of its meetings and side events. It agreed that side events will have to be limited in number and will have to be organized by the relevant agencies with no assistance by the secretariat. On the presentation of items during the regular sessions, the Committee agreed that there should be a clear distinction between items for discussion and items for information and that there should be no fixed time limit for the presentation and discussion. The Committee also agreed that in between sessions, the Secretariat should remind members of their commitments to produce outputs and reports, as agreed at the CCSA meetings.

Decision mechanisms

24. The Committee agreed that consensus will be determined by the chair as reported in the minutes of the meeting. A suggestion was also made to include a list of actions by members or task teams, agreed by the Committee at each session.

Reporting

25. The discussion focused on whether CCSA should report to other entities—such as UNSC or CEB and on whether or not the Committee should have an identity as a body. There was agreement that CCSA should not be formally accountable to the UNSC. However, it was agreed that CCSA should report back to the Commission to communicate important decisions and key issues and should get recognition of its work and decisions. It was also agreed that there is a need for the Committee to be more visible. In this respect it was agreed that all members should give the chair special recognition at events they organize.

Management and organization

26. The Committee reviewed and discussed the current way of operating of the chair and secretariat and agreed on the proposal of a two-chair system. It further agreed that there would be no financial assistance to the secretariat, but that on an ad hoc basis the secretariat could seek the assistance of other members. The task teams will continue to operate as they currently are and the outputs they produce will remain property of the task team's members only. Finally, the Committee agreed that the secretariat and two co-chairs would redraft the TORs and include both a mission statement and a vision statement. The new draft will be circulated to the members for their written suggestions and corrections. The new TORs would then be adopted at the February 2008 session.

I. Other business

27. The Committee took note of the presentation by OECD of the outcome of the Istanbul Conference on Indicators.

28. The Committee reviewed the new preamble to the “Principles governing international statistical activities” and agreed that with the revised version of the preamble the principles could now be disseminated.

J. Nomination of the chairman for 2007/2009

29. The Committee agreed that the two co-chairs for the next two-year term would be Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division and Pieters Everaers, Director of Statistical Cooperation of Eurostat.

K. Dates and venues of 2008 sessions

30. The Committee agreed to hold the 11th Session in New York in the morning of 25 February 2008, back-to-back with the 38th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The Committee was also pleased to accept the offer by the African Development Bank to host the 12th Session at its headquarters, in Tunis, Tunisia, from 11-12 September 2008.

L. Actions to be taken by the committee

Action	Lead agency	Participating agencies	Deadline	Output
Task team on Population estimates to review issues and make recommendations to the Committee	UN Population Division	World Bank, UIS, UNFPA, UNSD, AfDB, ECE, ECA, WHO and UN Population Division	September 2008	Report by the Task Team
Research of past documentations and reports by ACC/Sub-committee in Statistics on data sharing	CCSA Secretariat		Before the February 2008 session	Information available to be shared electronically with members
Prepare the TORs for the Rome Conference on Quality Assurance	UNSD	UNSD, FAO, Eurostat, ILO and OECD	By the end of November	TORs to be circulated electronically to members
Capacity building - Task Team 1 on reporting mechanisms	Paris 21	ECE, Eurostat, World Tourism Organization, World Bank, Paho	February 2008 session	New report based on the TORs of the Task Team
Capacity building - Task Team 2 on regional training centers	UNSD	ILO, FAO, Paris21	February 2008	New report focusing on recommendations to improve effectiveness of training centers
Capacity building - Task Team 3 on coordination at the sub-regional level	World Bank	WHO, Paris21, World Bank, African Development Bank	February 2008 September 2008	Brief report More extensive report
Capacity building - Task Team 4 on effectiveness of capacity building programmes	African Development Bank and ECA	WHO, Paris21, World Bank, UNSD	September 2008	New report focusing on quantitative indicators
Redraft TORs of the Committee	Secretariat	Two co-chairs	End of November February 2008	First draft of new TORs to be circulated to members for written comments Revised draft

Annex I

Revised agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda (UNSD: *Document SA/2007/8*)
2. Issues in the compilation of international data series
 - a. Use of population estimates in the computation of indicators (ESCAP: *Document SA/2007/9*)
3. Data imputations by international agencies (ECE: *Document SA/2007/11*)
4. Modalities of data sharing between international organizations (ECE: *Document SA/2007/12*)
5. SDMX and cost and benefits of its adoption by countries and international agencies (OECD: *Document SA/2007/13*)
6. Special Session on “Implementation of quality assurance frameworks” (Eurostat: *Document SA/2007/14*)
7. Special Session on “Coordination of capacity building activities” (Reports of the Task Teams - Paris 21: *Document SA/2007/15*; UNSD: *Document SA/2007/16*; World Bank: *Document SA/2007/17*); and UNSD: *Document SA/2007/18*)
8. Review of CCSA functions (CCSA Chairman and UNSD: *Document SA/2007/19*)
9. Other business
10. Agenda, time and venue of 2008 sessions

Annotated agenda

Monday, 10 September 2007

Morning session 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

1. Adoption of the agenda (UNSD: *Document SA/2007/8*)
2. Issues in the compilation of international data series
 - a. Use of population estimates in the computation of indicators (ESCAP: *Document SA/2007/9*)
3. Data imputations by international agencies (ECE: *Document SA/2007/11*)
4. Modalities of data sharing between international organizations (Information Item, ECE: *Document SA/2007/12*)

Monday, 10 September 2007

Afternoon session 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm

5. SDMX and cost and benefits of its adoption by countries and international agencies (OECD: *Document SA/2007/13*)
6. Special Session on “Implementation of quality assurance frameworks” (Eurostat: *Document SA/2007/14*).

Tuesday, 11 September 2007

Morning session 9:30 am – 1:00 pm

7. Special Session on “Coordination of capacity building activities” (Reports of the Task Teams - Paris 21: *Document SA/2007/15*; UNSD: *Document SA/2007/16*; World Bank: *Document SA/2007/17*; and UNSD: *Document SA/2007/18*)

Tuesday, 11 September 2007

Afternoon session 2:30 pm – 6:00 pm

8. Review of CCSA functions (CCSA Chairman and UNSD: *Document SA/2007/19*)
9. Other business
10. Agenda, time and venue of 2008 sessions

Annex II

List of Documents

SA/2007/7	Report of the 9th session, New York, 26 February 2007
SA/2007/8	Provisional agenda
SA/2007/9	Use of population estimates in the computation of indicators
SA/2007/10	Inconsistencies in international data sources (not issued)
SA/2007/11	Imputation in Databases of International Official Statistics: Proposals for the Interpretation of the Relevant Parts of ECOSOC Resolution 2006/9 on Strengthening Statistical Capacity
SA/2007/12	Modalities of data sharing between international organizations: towards more compatibility with good dissemination practices of national official statistics
SA/2007/13	Going forward with adoption of SDMX: an overview of benefits and costs

Special session on Implementation of quality assurance frameworks

Un-numbered	Agenda of the special session on Implementation of quality assurance frameworks
SA/2007/14	A quality assurance framework for Eurostat and Powerpoint presentation
SA/2007/14/Add.1	UNECE quality improvement strategy
SA/2007/14/Add.2	Eurostat experience of piloting the checklist for quality assessment of statistics and Powerpoint presentation
SA/2007/14/Add.3	Checklist for quality assessment of statistics compiled by international and supranational organizations (Version 3)
SA/2007/14/Add.4	Implementation of quality assurance frameworks for international organizations compiling statistics (Draft version) and Powerpoint presentation
SA/2007/14/Add.5	ECB statistical function's quality assurance procedures: an overview and The ESCB's governance structure as applied to ESCB statistics (Background document)
SA/2007/14/Add.6	European Statistical System Peer Reviews (Powerpoint presentation)

Special session on Statistical Capacity Building

- SA/2007/15 Partner reporting system on statistical development: Progress report of Task Team 1 - Report by Paris 21
- SA/2007/16 Discussion note on regional statistical training, Task Team 2: Report by UNSD
- SA/2007/16/Add.1 Update on development of an e-learning course on investing in statistical capacity
- SA/2007/16/Add.2 Guide to Statistics in EC Development Cooperation (Powerpoint presentation)
- SA/2007/17 Improving the coordination of technical cooperation programs in statistics at the sub-regional level, Task Team 3 - Report by the World Bank
- SA/2007/18 Indicators for assessing statistical capacity in Africa, Task Team 4: Report by UNSD
- SA/2007/19 Review of CCSA functions

Other documents

Principles governing international statistical activities (Revised version)

Annex III

List of participants

United Nations entities programmes and funds		
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