

Report of the 9th Meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, 26 February 2007)

I. Introduction

1. The ninth meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) was held in New York, on 26 February 2007. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Sylvester Young, Director of the Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Organization. The agenda, documents presented and list of participants are attached as annex 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

II. Work of the CCSA Meeting

A. Adoption of the agenda and other issues

2. The Committee adopted the draft agenda. The chair also reviewed issues that were pending since the previous meeting in Montreal, September 2006. In particular, he urged UNSD to circulate to members a revised version of the preamble to the “Principles governing International Statistical Activities” and asked Eurostat to provide an update on the status of their questionnaire on the self-assessment by agencies and timing for its circulation. The chair also mentioned that the Committee had agreed to review CCSA functions and that this would be an item for extensive discussion at the next meeting in September 2007.

B. Update by the task team on SDMX

3. The Committee took note of the “*Report on Common Open Standards for the Exchange and Sharing of Socio-economic Data and Metadata: the SDMX initiative* (Document SA/2007/2), presented by OECD, on behalf of the SDMX sponsoring institutions. The presenter also updated the Committee on initiatives and events that occurred after the report was prepared, including: the SDMX conference in Washington in January 2007, attended by over two-hundred participants; the work initiated by UNESCO, Eurostat and OECD to establish a hub on education statistics, using SDMX; and other initiatives by agencies on SDMX, such as the Eurostat “SDMX Open Data Interchange” (SODI). He further informed the committee that the sponsors have formalized their co-operation on SDMX in a Memorandum of Understanding.

4. The Committee adopted SDMX as standard for data and metadata exchange and requested the sponsors to further examine the implications in terms of resources needed as well as benefits for countries and international agencies that decide to implement it. The sponsors will conduct a cost-benefit assessment based on countries’ and agencies’ experience, and present the results to the Committee at its next session in September 2007.

5. The Committee also discussed the timing and modalities to present a proposal on the endorsement and implementation of SDMX to the 39th Session of the Statistical Commission in 2008. A decision in this respect will be made after the Committee will have reviewed the assessment of the countries' and agencies' costs and benefits to be presented at the next CCSA session.

C. Update on the work of the IAEG on the implementation of the ECOSOC Resolution

6. The Committee took note of the paper prepared by UNSD on "*Note on progress in the implementation of the recommendations by the Friends of the Chair on MDG Indicators and the ECOSOC resolution on Statistical Capacity Building*" (Document SA/2007/3), presenting a brief review of the work done to improve the compilation of the indicators and countries' reporting, and to strengthen the coordination of capacity building activities to assist countries in the production of the necessary data. The Committee commended the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG) and expressed appreciation for the initiative of including a large number of countries in the process.

7. The Committee urged all CCSA agencies members of IAEG, within the context of their mandates and resource availability, to comply with the recommendations made by the Friends of the Chair in their report and those contained in the ECOSOC resolution. The Committee also urged its members to comply with the "Principles governing International Statistical Activities". The representative of ECE also offered to prepare a paper on statistical imputations, as a follow-up to the 2003 report by Tim Holt on "Aggregation of National Data to Regional and Global Estimates", to be discussed at the CCSA meeting in September 2007.

D. Report of the task team on quality assurance

8. The Committee took note of document SA/2007/4, "*Note on the project on the use and convergence of international quality assurance frameworks*", prepared by Eurostat and providing a summary of recent developments in the project. In particular, the committee was informed that the questionnaire/checklist for quality assurance was revised based on comments by the members of the task team and that the revised version would be circulated shortly. The committee was also informed that the guidelines for quality assurance frameworks will be circulated in April. The Committee was asked to comment on different options for the sharing of information on peer reviews. It was agreed that UNSD would host the webpage for the exchanging of information on peer reviews, providing links to the various sites. Each international agency would be responsible for its review and for the maintenance of its own site that would be linked to the main webpage.

E. Report of the task team on training for staff of international agencies

9. The Committee took note of document SA/2007/5, "*Note on progress with the proposed action plan on training in statistics for staff of the international agencies*", presented by the IMF. The Committee was informed of the CCSA Training Website and the ongoing work to make an inventory of the existing e-learning initiatives. The representative of the World Bank also updated the committee on their ongoing work for the development of their e-learning course,

including 12 modules. Members were encouraged to provide their comments on the two modules being developed by external consultants, which will be circulated in about two months.

F. Update of the work by the Task Teams on Coordination of Statistical Capacity Building

10. The Committee took note of document SA/2007/6 “*Reporting System on Partner Support to Statistical Development*” prepared by Paris21, which presents the work done by Task Team 1 on “Reporting Mechanisms” and a plan for the design and development of the reporting system. The committee also was informed that the World Bank had initiated some consultations with team members on Task Team 3, “Modalities for Coordination of Technical Cooperation Programmes at the Sub-regional Level” and UNSD has initiated consultations with members of Task Team 4, “Assessment of the Effectiveness of Capacity Building Activities in Africa”. The terms of reference for Task Team 2, under the coordination of UNSD have not been circulated yet.

11. The Committee urged UNSD to expedite work on Task Team 2 and expressed concern that the work on the two Task Teams under its responsibility should be accelerated otherwise the final reports would not be ready for the substantive discussion in Madrid, in September 2007.

12. The Committee agreed that all reports should be ready by the end of May to allow time to review them and structure the agenda and framework for discussion for the special session on “Statistical Capacity Building”.

13. The Committee also discussed the need to revise the classification of statistical activities. It was agreed that UNSD, assisted by the regional commissions and OECD, will propose a revised classification, based on the old classification adopted by the UN Statistical Commission and taking into account the new one prepared by ECE, and trying, to the extent possible, to reconcile the two.

G. Agenda for the tenth session of the Committee

14. The Committee discussed plans for the September 2007 to be held in Madrid, from 10-12 September and agreed on the following items and related preparations:

- i) Review of CCSA functions: CCSA secretariat, UNSD and chairman, ILO, will prepare a background paper on CCSA functions and proposal for modalities of operation.
- ii) Special Session on Coordination of capacity building activities: UNSD, Eurostat, Paris21 and the World Bank, will work together to structure the discussion, based on the content and findings presented in the reports of the Task Teams.
- iii) Imputations by international agencies: ECE will prepare a background paper.
- iv) SDMX and cost and benefits of its adoption by countries and international agencies.
- v) Special Session on Implementation of quality assurance frameworks.

Annex 1

Provisional agenda

Monday 26 February 2007

Morning session, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm.

1. Adoption of the agenda (UNSD; *Document SA/2007/1*)
2. Note on update by the task team on SDMX (OECD; *Document SA/2007/2*)
3. Note on progress in the implementation of the recommendations by the Friends of the Chair on MDG Indicators and the ECOSOC resolution on Statistical Capacity Building (UNSD; *Document SA/2007/3*)
4. Note on update by the task team on quality assurance (Eurostat; *Document SA/2007/4*)
5. Note on update by the task team on training (IMF; *Document SA/2007/5*)
6. Note on update of the work by the Task Teams on Coordination of Statistical Capacity Building (UNSD, World Bank and Paris 21; *Document SA/2007/6*)
7. Agenda for the tenth session of the Committee in September 2007
8. Other business

Annex 2

List of documents

Document SA/2007/1, *Provisional agenda*

Document SA/2007/2, *Report on Common Open Standards for the Exchange and Sharing of Socio-economic Data and Metadata: the SDMX initiative*

Document SA/2007/3, *Note on progress in the implementation of the recommendations by the Friends of the Chair on MDG Indicators and the ECOSOC resolution on Statistical Capacity Building*

Document SA/2007/4, *Note on the project on the use and convergence of international quality assurance frameworks*

Document SA/2007/5, *Note on progress with the proposed action plan on training in statistics for staff of the international agencies*

Document SA/2007/6, *Reporting System on Partner Support to Statistical Development*

Annex 3

List of participants

United Nations entities programmes and funds		
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