

ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES
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INVENTORY OF ALL INDICATORS
PRODUCED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Note by the UNSD

1. At the request of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) reviewed the "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" to investigate if and how it could be utilized to meet the needs that were intended to be met by the "Inventory of all indicators produced by the United Nations system" presented by UNSD during the meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities held in Geneva from 16-18 September 1997 (SA/1997/10).

2. The "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" has been analyzed in comparison with the model proposed for the "Inventory of all indicators produced by the United Nations system". The two Inventories have been reviewed in terms of their purpose, content, and structure. The conclusions that can be drawn are the following:

(i) Purpose:

3. While the Inventories share a goal to facilitate coordination among different UN organizations and agencies in the field of data collection, they serve two specific purposes. The "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" has been developed mainly to avoid duplication and overlap in the requests by international organizations for data from countries, while the "Inventory of all indicators" has been proposed to monitor the development and use of statistical indicators by the UN system and therefore focuses more on duplication in the production of statistics by the international organizations.

4. The "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" can be used as a tool to plan in a more efficient way, and avoid duplication in the distribution of the collection of data among the international organizations while the "Inventory of all indicators" can be used to plan in a more efficient way and avoid inconsistency in the publication and production of statistics within the UN system.

(ii) Content:

5. To serve the main purpose of identifying overlap in the collection of country data by the international organizations, the "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" includes detailed information on the mode of collection (type of questionnaire, timing, national organization involved) and only general and not structured information on the content of the inquiry. On the other hand, the "Inventory of all indicators" has been designed to keep information on statistics published by the international organizations (type of dissemination tool, year of reference, breakdown variables, definition, methodology, unit of measurement, number of countries covered). These statistics may come either from questionnaires from countries, whose information is included in the "Inventory of statistical data collection activities", estimated by the organizations, or based on other national/international sources.

(iii) Structure:

6. Both Inventories are designed in a database format. The "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" has been developed in Paradox and the "Inventory of all indicators" in Access, but they can both be converted in either Paradox or Access.

7. From the above described analysis, it can be concluded that although both Inventories have been designed to increase coordination among the UN organizations in data collection, they focus on different issues and therefore cannot meet the same needs. The "Inventory of statistical data collection activities" for example can be used as a tool for planning new data collection activities, or reorganizing already existing data collection activities. Instead, the "Inventory of all indicators" can be used for example to identify a core set of indicators available in international sources in certain areas, or to efficiently plan the distribution and the production of statistical data among the UN organizations.
