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FOC Group for broader measures of progress

Note on an informal meeting held back to back with the ECE conference Proposals for the FOC Group

An informal meeting was organised on Tuesday 11 June from 8.30 AM to 9.30 AM in Geneva, back to back with the Conference of European Statisticians of the European Commission for Europe, to take advantage of the presence of several members of the FOC Group (FG) and the UNSD Secretariat. Its purpose was to start discussing the terms of reference of the Group, its organisation and its deliverables, and to propose an agenda and first ideas for a work programme to all its members.

Four items of the UN resolution were particularly stressed :

- in order to develop broader measures of progress, significant work has already been done, many reports are available and should be used as important material for the group to take on board;
- the FG should very closely monitor the evolving SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda;
- statisticians should strive to be actively involved in the process of the formulation of targets and indicators of these two processes, providing professional advice, on existing data and their quality, on statistical capacity - or lack thereof - and the estimated cost of producing new indicators;
- there needs to be full transparency and openness within the group and outside.

Following these principles, it was envisaged to focus initially and strategically on working with the Open Working Group (OWG) of the UN General Assembly and propose to add

information on the state of the art measurements of social progress to the issue notes which are being prepared for each of its thematic meetings. In order to do so, the Co-Chairs of the FG would ask the Chairwoman of the UN Statistical Commission to contact the ECOSOC Secretariat and the Hungarian Co-Facilitator of the OWG. In addition, each member of the FG could reach out to their own ambassadors.

Accordingly, the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat suggest splitting the work programme of the FG into two for the next two years:

- from now on until next spring, focusing and accompanying as much as possible the OWG and other ongoing political processes in order to develop its dialogue with the statisticians;
- from next summer until the end of next year, completing what has been achieved with the OWG to provide a complete and autonomous framework to develop broader measures of progress, while maintaining a continuous interface between the political and the statistical spheres.

1- Accompanying the OWG.

- First, the OWG has set an agenda until February 2014 devoting one meeting a month to a particular theme (the next meeting planned on the 25-27 November 2013 deals with sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy questions). The FG will provide notes on statistics to the OWG in advance to feed its reflections on target setting.
- Secondly, the FG will look for volunteers in the group to lead thematic subgroups (health, education, climate etc.), each one responsible for providing a note on the statistical indicators available to monitor these dimensions. These notes will later contribute to the report which will be presented to the next Statistical Commission (February 2014). Finally, next year, the group will propose a complete programme to develop broader measures of progress (report planned for the statistical commission in February 2015).

2- The meeting was too short to discuss the second stage of the work programme of the FG, from spring 2014 on. The Co-Chairs and the Secretariat assume that a discussion will have to be organised shortly within the FG.

Apart from these two orientations, other considerations are worth taking into account:

3- The functioning of the FOC Group should be fully transparent, inside and outside. A page of the UNSD website will be dedicated to sharing information and fostering discussion between the members of the Group and will provide information to all users. Developing capacity building will be an important concern throughout the work of the Group, first by providing adequate indicators to the OWG in the first stage, as well as in the definition of a complete framework in the second stage.



4- The UN Statistical division will identify and load onto the website documents and references already produced by the different groups in charge of implementing RIO+20 and the post 2015 Development agenda or statistical reference reports (Report of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, Report from the Eurostat Sponsorship, Report on Measuring Sustainable Development from the task force UNECE / OECD / EUROSTAT). The Secretariat will also develop proposals on how to engage most effectively in the various ongoing processes identifying opportunities to participate in forthcoming events, such as the General Assembly High Level Event on MDGs on 25 September 2013 or the planned special meeting of the OWG in December dedicated to implementation, including monitoring and measurement. This could present a particular opportunity for a general discussion on the importance of statistics in the SDG process, particularly the need to ensure the ongoing sustainability of official statistical systems to underpin measurement going forward, with investments in this made accordingly. The recently completed Report of the High level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post 2015 Development agenda will be sent again to the members of this group, requesting specifically comments on its statistical recommendations and the proposed indicator framework in the Annex before the end of July. The co-chairs and the Secretariat will also welcome specific thematic interest from the members in order to start defining the sub-groups.

The Director for Methodology and Statistical and
International Coordination

Signé : Philippe Cuneo

List of participants of the informal meeting:

Australia, Brian Pink

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Germany, Bernd Stoertzbach,

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