

**Concept note**  
**Seminar on the Implementation of the**  
**System of National Accounts 2008 in the Western Asia Region**  
**23 to 26 May 2010, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman**

**Background**

1. The Implementation Programme for the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) and supporting statistics represents a global statistical initiative, which was mandated by the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session following the adoption of the 2008 SNA as the international standard for the compilation and dissemination of national accounts.
2. With the 2008 SNA being flexible to accommodate all countries and economies, regardless of their level of statistical development, each country has to review with its users the relevant changes from the 1993 SNA to the 2008 SNA that are applicable to the country and consider its adoption. At the same time, user consultation should revisit the scope, detail and quality of the accounts and supporting economic statistics by taking a view on which socio-economic and financial policies have to be informed by the structural and short-term economic statistics, including annual and quarterly national accounts.
3. Three distinct stages are identified for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics through a multi-year programme, irrespective of the level of statistical development, as follows:
  - (a) Stage I. Review of strategic framework and detailing of national and regional implementation programmes;
  - (b) Stage II. Adaptation of classification frameworks, business registers and frames, surveys, administrative data sources and information technology infrastructure; and
  - (c) Stage III. Application of adapted frameworks and source data, backcasting and changeover to 2008 SNA.
4. The efficiency and sustainability of the implementation of the 2008 SNA rest on the agreed principles of the implementation strategy, namely: (a) strategic planning, (b) coordination, monitoring and reporting; and (c) improving statistical systems. The strategy takes as a starting point the different levels of implementation of the SNA in various countries. It acknowledges the need for coordinated action, not only at the international level but also at regional and sub-regional levels and emphasizes the need for close cooperation with regional commissions and sub-regional organisations.
5. ESCWA, in collaboration with UNSD and the Gulf Cooperation Council, is organising a seminar to develop a programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the ESCWA region from 23 to 26 May 2010, hosted by the Ministry of National Economy of Oman. The organizers will also meet on 27 May to plan the way forward and a follow up meeting.

## **Purpose**

6. The purpose of the seminar is to initiate the formulation of an implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics with the objective of developing comparable economic statistics for member states in the ESCWA region as a whole to monitor the integration of their economies. It is expected that this initiative would lead to a multi-year programme to move the countries over to the 2008 SNA and to establish a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics.

## **Organizers of the seminar**

7. This seminar will be jointly organized by ESCWA, UNSD/DESA and the Gulf Cooperation Council and hosted by the Ministry of National Economy of Oman.

## **Participants**

8. Senior managers of economic statistics and national accounts programmes from national statistical offices of the ESCWA region, able to express a view on the regional and national implementation programmes; senior managers of national accounts and balance of payments programmes from central banks; and representatives from international organizations, such as IMF, OIC, IDB and AITRS.

## **Organization of the programme**

Apart from the introduction to the main objectives of the seminar the programme of the seminar will be organised around eight themes: i) An overview of developments since adoption of the 2008 SNA by the UNSC. ii) Overview of main changes from the 1993 SNA to the 2008 SNA. iii) An assessment of the status of National Accounts compilation in the region and initiatives for improving the scope, detail and quality of the national accounts and supporting economic statistics in the region. iv) The role of regional partners and information structures for the 2008 SNA implementation. v) The Arabic translation of the 2008 SNA. vi) Country plans for the implementation of the 2008 SNA. vii) The financial crisis and statistical initiatives to meet the challenge. viii) High frequency indicators.

## **Expected outcome**

9. Consensus among participants on a regional programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the ESCWA region to be submitted to the next Session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee in October 2010, which include:

- a comprehensive, region-wide assessment of countries' current capacity and needs to produce the basic economic statistics and national accounts for policy and decision making;
- a region-wide roadmap to enhance the scope and quality of basic economic statistics and national accounts for improved policy and decision making;
- a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics; and
- a mechanism to coordinate activities and to build capacity in economic statistics and national accounts.