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**SIENA GROUP ON SOCIAL STATISTICS**

Prepared by Statistics Netherlands

## SIENA GROUP on SOCIAL STATISTICS

*Summary Report of the 11<sup>th</sup> and Final Meeting of the Siena Group on Social Statistics to the Thirty-sixth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, 1-4 March 2005\**

1. The Siena Group on Social Statistics held its **Final Meeting** in Helsinki, Finland on 9-11 February 2005. The Meeting was organized by Statistics Finland in collaboration with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI) and was attended by representatives of national statistical offices and international organizations, by social policy makers and by academic researchers.
2. The Siena Group discussed the following **topics** at its Meeting<sup>†</sup>:
  - (i) *Statistics on crime, justice and safety;*
  - (ii) *Statistics on international migration;*
  - (iii) *Record linking techniques for social statistics;*
  - (iv) *Measurement of social capital;*
  - (v) *International statistical co-operation.*
3. The Siena Group reviewed its position as a **UN City Group**. The 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (New York, 2-5 March 2004) has made the following recommendations:

*“The Commission:*

  - a) *Took note of the report submitted by the Siena Group and requested the Siena Group to focus on key issues:*
    - (i) *Consult with the expert group [on critical issues related to planning the next round of population and housing censuses] while taking into account the goals and priorities established by the Statistical Commission for social statistics;*
    - (ii) *Consider the possibility of developing model survey modules for social statistics, provided that the appropriate methodological work has been undertaken;*
    - (iii) *Contribute to the activities of the United Nations Statistical Commission by identifying a clear list of deliverable outputs and lead members;*
  - b) *Took note of the inadequate participation of developing countries in meetings of the Siena Group.”*
4. The Siena Group reviewed its activities over the past eleven years having regard to its original mandate and the direction now being set by the Commission. In regard to the former, it was

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\* Prepared by the Secretariat of the Siena Group on Social Statistics.

† The full programme of the meeting and the papers presented are available on the following website:  
[www.stat.fi/sienagroup2005](http://www.stat.fi/sienagroup2005).

stressed that the role of the Siena Group should be **evaluated in a positive way**, as it has clearly contributed to a better state of social statistics both at a national level and at an international level. In particular, the exchange of information on social statistics developments in various countries has played an important role in avoiding duplication of effort and identifying potential efficiencies in social statistics programs. However, it does not consider that the Group's structure, membership and resources enable it to respond in an effective manner to the direction now being set by the Commission. In these circumstances it has reluctantly concluded that it should disband as a UN City Group.

5. The participants in the 2005 Siena Group meeting still emphasized the continuing need for an (informal) international network at this level to act as an independent, focused, flexible and forward-looking think tank for the strategic development of social statistics at local, national and international level. In this context it welcomed the **proposal made by Eurostat and UNECE** to the Bureau of the Conference European Statisticians to organize, possibly back-to-back with the annual European Meetings of Directors of Social Statistics, regular meetings on social statistics which will be organized by Eurostat, OECD and UNECE and which will be open to social statistics directors from both within and outside the European Union.
6. It is expected that these **seminar type meetings on social statistics** will appeal to the needs of the more statistically advanced countries to develop new methods and approaches to address emerging social issues and that the outcomes will be the development of common methodologies that the participating countries will be willing to adopt.
7. The members of the Siena Group would like to stress that the **success** of the above-mentioned meetings on social statistics will depend on proper agreements on:
  - the objectives of the meetings focused on the key drivers of social statistics;
  - the ownership of the agenda and the continuity in the topics discussed;
  - the frequency of the meetings in order to keep the momentum;
  - a broad enough participation of national and international statistical offices, national and international policy makers, researchers and other key users.
8. The Siena Group will finalize its work on **social capital** by producing an Internet publication covering issues such as the definition and policy relevance of social capital, methodological questions related to its measurement and national experiences with measuring social capital by means of household surveys.
9. The Siena Group on Social Statistics will organize **no further meetings**.

### **Siena Group on Social Statistics**

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