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Progress report of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange sponsors

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-third session (see E/2012/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the progress report of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange sponsors, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.



Progress report of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange sponsors

I. Introduction

1. The present document illustrates the progress made on the statistical and technical standards of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) and on SDMX information technology applications (including the SDMX Global Registry). Using sophisticated SDMX standards, SDMX is now being implemented in several statistical domains (such as national accounts and balance of payments). Implementation action is leading to greater harmonization among data structures for international data exchange. In addition, the SDMX Global Registry will be put in place in 2013, and preparations for the SDMX global conference in 2013 are under way.

II. Background

2. In 2001, the Bank for International Settlements, the European Central Bank, Eurostat, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations joined to develop more efficient processes and standards for exchanging and sharing data and metadata. The World Bank joined the initial group of sponsor organizations in 2003.

3. The aim of the SDMX initiative is to create and maintain technical and statistical standards and guidelines, together with an information technology architecture and information technology tools, to be used and implemented by the SDMX sponsors and other organizations dealing with statistical data and metadata exchange. Combined with modern information technology, the SDMX standards and guidelines should improve efficiency when managing statistical business processes. After more than 10 years of SDMX experience, the SDMX standards and guidelines are mature enough to be implemented broadly in statistical domains and globally by statistical organizations.

4. The Statistical Commission has received SDMX progress reports since 2002. In 2008, the Commission recognized and supported the SDMX standards and guidelines as “the preferred standard for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata”, requesting the SDMX sponsors to continue their work and encouraging national and international statistical organizations to increase the use and implementation of SDMX.

5. The present report provides an overview of the progress made by the SDMX sponsors since the previous report submitted to the Commission in February 2012.

III. Technical and statistical standards of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange

6. The SDMX Technical Working Group and Statistical Working Group are mainly responsible for the management and enhancement of the SDMX technical and statistical standards and the related SDMX information technology applications.

7. The work of the SDMX Technical Working Group has focused on the following main deliverables: documentation of SDMX information technology tools; technical preparation of the SDMX Global Registry; and preparation of an SDMX information technology tool strategy and of SDMX security guidelines. Steady progress was achieved in a number of work areas, in particular on the SDMX Global Registry.

8. The work of the SDMX Statistical Working Group has focused on the following main deliverables: guidelines for the creation of data structure definitions and standard code lists; enhancement of the SDMX content-oriented guidelines, in particular in the annex to the standard code lists; and the relationship of SDMX to other technical standards.

9. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee 154 has accepted the SDMX Technical Specification (TS) (version 2.1) for approval as international standard ISO 17369, revising ISO/TS 17369:2005 (SDMX 1.0).

IV. The Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange Global Registry

10. The SDMX sponsors have identified the implementation of a top-level SDMX registry, the SDMX Global Registry, as a strategic deliverable of the SDMX initiative. In September 2012, they decided that SDMX artefacts (such as data structure definitions or SDMX code lists), which are used for national and international data and metadata exchange by SDMX sponsors and other organizations, would be made available to the public and for use in information technology applications through the SDMX Global Registry. This will facilitate data and reference metadata dissemination by implementing the data-sharing vision of SDMX. The SDMX Global Registry will be established and financed as a joint effort by the SDMX sponsors, who will also ensure the maintenance of its content and of the information technology application itself. The SDMX Global Registry should be fully operational by mid-2013.

11. The SDMX secretariat also drafted governance rules for SDMX artefacts developed under the auspices of the SDMX sponsors. The rules define the role and obligation of maintenance agencies, the change management of the SDMX artefacts and other important rules needed for day-to-day management.

V. Implementation of Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange in statistical domains

12. The SDMX sponsors mandated that the European Central Bank, Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund implement SDMX in balance-of-payments statistics according to BPM6 and that the European Central Bank, Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development implement SDMX in national accounts according to the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008. Both global SDMX implementation actions progressed well in 2011-2012. The organizations agreed to common data structures, to harmonized structural metadata, to data structure definitions and finally to SDMX-based pilot data exchanges. All actions in the critical SDMX implementation projects are broadly communicated to the SDMX sponsors and to the respective constituencies, which are regularly

consulted on the progress of work and about participation in the pilot implementation actions.

13. SDMX will also be implemented in additional statistical domains, including health statistics, research and development statistics, education statistics, short-term business statistics and international trade statistics. For many of these domains, several SDMX sponsors and other international organizations are steering the SDMX implementation work. The latter will often be organized similarly to the global SDMX implementation in national accounts and balance-of-payment statistics (namely, analysis of the data structures, harmonization of metadata, creation of data structure definitions and pilot data exchange).

VI. Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange Global Conference 2013

14. The SDMX Global Conference 2013 will be jointly hosted by the Bank for International Settlements, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Eurostat in Paris on 11 and 12 September 2013. On 13 September 2013, the SDMX sponsors will organize a capacity-building day.

15. The programme of the SDMX Global Conference 2013 is currently under preparation. The programme will put more emphasis on the further development of SDMX statistical standards since the technical standards and the information technology applications have progressed considerably in recent years.
