



UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Statistical Commission

Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics

GWG Bureau meeting

Thirty-first meeting – 20 June 2019, 09:00 EST

By video conferencing

Minutes

Participants

Canada	Gordon Reichert
Colombia	Raul Ospina
Netherlands	Matjaz Jug
UAE	Latifa Al-Shehhi
UK	Heather Savory, Mark Craddock, Gavin Phillips
African Dev. Bank	Momar Kouta
UNSD	Ronald Jansen

Agenda

- Agenda item (1)** Minutes of Meetings 29 and 30
- Agenda item (2)** Visit of Heather Savory to UNSD
- Agenda item (3)** Working Methods
- Agenda item (4)** Symposium on Data Science and Official Statistics, 15-17 Aug 2019, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Agenda item (5)** Other Business

Action Points

- ⇒ Finalizing the program of the GWG Symposium on Big Data in Kuala Lumpur (August 2019)
- ⇒ Working on the content of a promo video (including Switzerland, Denmark and Canada)
- ⇒ Switzerland to follow up on the organization of the WDF and the inclusion of a session for the UN Global Working Group on Big Data

- ⇒ UNSD will make a compilation of the outstanding action items, and present these in a separate document
- ⇒ Heather will circulate a slide deck of this proposed governance structure to all Bureau members
- ⇒ Ask GWG Bureau members and Conference organizers to submit an estimate of the resources invested into the platform over the years.

Minutes

AGENDA ITEM (1) – MINUTES OF MEETINGS 29 AND 30

No Comments on the minutes.

As a general observation, we need to keep track of the action items and follow-up on those, which have not yet been executed.

UNSD will make a compilation of the outstanding action items, and present these in a separate document.

The Technical Delivery Board of the Global Platform has been looking into a “customer management” tool called Zoho. That application can also help the GWG Bureau keeping track of the action items, which will be logged as outstanding tasks in Zoho.

AGENDA ITEM (2) – VISIT OF HEATHER SAVORY TO UNSD

The visit of Heather Savory, as co-chair of the GWG and lead of the UN Global Platform, included meetings with, Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD, the Trade Statistics team of UNSD, the Data Innovation team of UNSD, and the two of our stakeholders: UN Global Pulse and UNICEF.

The meeting with Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD was important to ensure full support from UNSD for the activities of the GWG, and especially for creating the UN Global Platform Institute. UNSD backs the governance structure, in which

- The overall governance resides with the UN Statistical Commission with delegated authority to the GWG and its bureau
- The Global Platform consists of a main technical hub (UK) and several regional hubs and the task teams

A slide deck of this proposal, which was discussed with UNSD, will be circulated to all Bureau members.

Meeting with Trade Statistics team

Trade data as received by UNSD are public data and can therefore easily be shared on the platform.

The administrative data from Customs administrations contain sensitive information, which need to be treated with protection of confidentiality. Small island countries, like St Lucia could tremendously benefit from the technology infrastructure of the UN Global Platform, and the processing of protected Customs data on the platform could be an interesting use case to show the power and the privacy protecting techniques of the platform.

AIS data can be accessed on the platform are another use case. The recently formed Task Team on AIS data is looking into setting up some projects in this regard.

Meeting with the Data Innovation team

Zendesk is the tool, which was chosen, for the helpdesk support on the platform. Staff of the UNSD Data Innovation team will use it to help in the on-boarding of users and the answering of questions / replying to problems.

Zoho is a customer management tool. It will keep track of potential users, the contact owners, and the activities and tasks, which need to be executed. Mark indicated that we currently have around 600 contacts. However, the contact information needs to be populated shortly. Having all the contacts in one place is helpful especially when talking to cloud and other service providers on the scale of the platform.

Meeting with Stakeholders

Finally, meetings were held with UN Global Pulse and UNICEF. UN Global Pulse is a strategically important partner for the GWG and the UN Global Platform. They help initiate data innovation projects with the wider stakeholder community around official statistics. Robert Kirkpatrick (Director) and Miguel Luengo-Oroz (Chief Data Scientist) expressed clear interest to work with the GWG and its partners.

Large development organizations, like UNICEF, are good partners in the kind of work that we are undertaking. Manuel Herranz and two of his colleagues explained about their Magic box application, which could potentially be relevant for the UN Global Platform.

Prospectus

It would be informative to know how much effort the GWG collectively has put into the work of the GWG, including the development of the UN Global Platform. Therefore, we will ask all GWG members, especially those who have been supporting the GWG from early on and those who have organized the international conference to submit an estimate of the resources invested into the platform over the years. This means getting estimates from time and money spent on the conferences in China, UAE, Ireland, Colombia and Rwanda. The brochure also needs more use cases.

AGENDA ITEM (3) – WORKING METHODS

This period is a fairly crucial time for the GWG. We have to deliver a solid UN Global Platform plan by November, which is convincing towards the UN Statistical Commission. Fortunately, various initiatives are progressing well: (a) the UN-China Centre on Big Data is moving forward with the signing of a Letter of Intent between UN/DESA and the Chinese Government; (b) the UN Global Platform Institute in the UK is being prepared; (c) the Government of Rwanda is on record to create a UN-Africa Centre on Big Data; and we are investigating if UAE has similar ambitions.

This is also a good time to review the Working Methods of the GWG and the GWG Bureau. This review would consist of:

- Write to the GWG bureau members to re-define the work, issues and decision-making powers of the bureau
- Review the TORs of the Task Teams
- Create an Advisory Board to advise on the agreements between UN-hubs and between the hubs (letters of intent and MOUs)

AGENDA ITEM (4) – SYMPOSIUM ON DATA SCIENCE AND OFFICIAL STATISTICS, 15-17 AUG 2019, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

We are moving ahead on the organizational side of the Symposium as well as with the agenda. UNSD is financing 10 countries to attend symposium as well as the ISI, UNESCAP is helping as well.

The deadline of registration for the Symposium is 15 July 2019. We are expecting about 100 people to attend. The program will become available also on the GWG website, see <https://unstats.un.org/bigdata/events/2019/isi-wsc/default.asp>

AGENDA ITEM (5) – OTHER BUSINESS

Two points: (1) we need to more explicitly work on the Data Policy of the UN Global Platform, and (2) we can use Zoho to link the GWG Bureau to the decision time line. This will allow stricter auditing of the decision making of the bureau.