

49/107 Big data for official statistics

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Congratulated the Global Working Group (GWG) on Big Data for official statistics on the progress made;⁸
- (b) Appreciated the products delivered by the GWG so far in the form of handbooks, methods and training materials;
- (c) Urged the GWG to make all its products and services easily available ensuring that the quality of each of these products is vetted by an appropriate advisory group whose membership might include experts from national statistical agencies, academia, scientific and technical partners, and other communities as appropriate;
- (d) Confirmed that the use of Big Data and other new data sources is essential for the modernisation of national statistical institutions so that they remain relevant in a fast-moving data landscape;
- (e) Highlighted the opportunity for Big Data to fill gaps, to make statistical operations more cost effective, to enable the replacement of surveys, and to provide more granularity in outputs;
- (f) Encouraged the GWG to build on the success so far, by delivering practical products and services for the global statistical system to support the production of statistics and indicators including the SDG indicators;
- (g) Commended the GWG conferences on Big Data for Official Statistics for showcasing the latest developments, specifically commended the most recent, well organized and graciously hosted conference in Bogota, Colombia, which included hands-on training;
- (h) Supported the Bogota Declaration which gives direction on the envisioned way forward in this area;
- (i) Supported the GWG plans to establish global data collaboratives and data services where the statistical community will work in partnership with technology companies, data providers and academia, including work to formulate standards and guidelines for data governance and information management;
- (j) Emphasized the need to carefully address societal challenges of trust, ethics, privacy, confidentiality and security of data;
- (k) Endorsed the GWG proposal to further develop a global platform as a collaborative research and development environment for trusted data, services and applications using exemplars from the GWG task teams to drive the development of a proof of concept based on a federated architecture of data hubs;
- (l) Agreed that the proof of concept phase for the UN GWG Global Platform should run from now until March 2020, reiterated the need to present the platform's business case and requested that work on the legal, ethical and funding considerations are initiated during this phase and also to take steps to enable access of SIDS to big data;
- (m) Underlined the importance of capacity development activities, especially for developing countries, in the use of satellite data, mobile phone data and other new data sources, such as data from e-commerce platforms;

- (n) Requested that the GWG links its work closely with initiatives ongoing at regional level, paying attention to different user needs and circumstances and trying to avoid duplication of efforts;
- (o) Took note of the interest expressed by Rwanda to host the fifth conference on big data in official statistics in 2019 and the Republic of Korea to host the sixth conference;
- (p) Welcomed the keen interest of countries to join the GWG and its task teams.

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Regional statistical development

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the report of the Economic Commission for Africa on Regional Statistical Development;⁹
- (b) Commended significant work undertaken by African countries, pan-African institutions and other development partners in supporting statistical development in Africa;
- (c) Expressed appreciation for the leading role of the ECA, AfDB and the African Union Commission in support of statistical development and commended in particular the work in taking advantages of the many opportunities offered by the data revolution;
- (d) Supported the call on partners to scale up support to statistics particularly in Africa;
- (e) Stressed the need to allocate adequate financial resources and technical assistance for the implementation of national statistical programmes;
- (f) Welcomed the work by ECA in support of data for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063.

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National accounts

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts¹⁰ and expressed its appreciation for the activities undertaken by the members of the Working Group, the regional commissions, other regional organizations and countries to facilitate the implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 and supporting statistics, and endorsed the programmes of work for 2018 of the Working Group and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts;
- (b) Welcomed the initiative by the Working group to address important conceptual issues, some of which may extend beyond the 2008 SNA, and requested the Working

⁸ E/CN.3/2018/8.

⁹ E/CN.3/2018/9.

¹⁰ E/CN.3/2018/10.