Report of the 28th Session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

I. Introduction

1. The 28th session was held at the OECD Conference Center in Paris (France) from 29-30 September 2016. The session was chaired by the two Co-chairs of the Committee: Ms. Martine Durand, Chief Statistician and Director, OECD Statistics Directorate, and Mr. Pietro Gennari, Chief Statistician and Director, Statistics Division, of FAO. The agenda, documents presented and the list of participants of the present session are attached as Annexes I, II and III, respectively.

II. Work of the CCSA Session

A. Welcome and adoption of the agenda

2. Martine Durand and Pietro Gennari welcomed the Committee members to the 28th session.

3. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (SA/2016/8) without changes (see annex I).

B. OECD Statistics

4. Martine Durand (OECD) provided an overview of the statistical work carried out by the OECD. She highlighted as key institutional characteristics the close work with countries via the OECD Committee structure and the proximity to the analytical work carried out in other OECD directorates. Both are useful in anticipating and responding to demand by policy makers and analysts. The OECD not only has a bridge function between producers and users of statistics, it also has a bridge function between the European Statistical System and the NSIs of other developed countries. OECD’s statistics work evolves around three broad axes: data collection and harmonization, development of international statistical standards and development of indicators for analysis, including in new areas such as inclusive growth, global value chains or well-being. Building on this experience across a range of statistical domains, OECD has also developed a general Recommendation on Good Statistical Practice (approved by the OECD Council last year). It is the first OECD legal instrument specifically dedicated to statistics. Another example is a recent pilot study of how to compare OECD countries’ distances to the SDG targets.
C. Data and Capacity Building for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

(1) UN World Data Forum

5. UNSD briefed the Committee on the preparations for the first UN World Data Forum, which will be held 15-18 January 2017 in Cape Town (South Africa). A new website is now operational (undataforum.org). The main purpose of the Forum is to create a platform for dialogue among the diverse groups of data stakeholders – including both producers and users. Together with the host country conference capacities to accommodate over 1000 participants have been secured. The Forum is open to all interested stakeholders and pre-registration will open soon on the website. The programme committee (see http://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/partners/) is exploring various new modes to conduct the forum in order to ensure an interactive dialogue among participants. Following the model of the High Level Forums on Geospatial Information Management, one of the expected outcomes of the Forum is a declaration, which will be considered by the Commission in March. CCSA members are invited to attend the Forum and to encouraged to spread the information on it to interested stakeholders. Proposals for VIP participation and active participation in the programme design (for an event or a session) should be sent to the Forum Secretariat in UNSD.

(2) Global Action Plan

6. UNSD also briefed the Committee on the Global Action Plan, which is being finalized by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A first version of the Global Action Plan was published in a background document to the Statistical Commission 2016 (see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/BG-2016-3-update-high-level-group-for-partnership-E.pdf). It is expected that an updated version, together with a summary, of the Global Action Plan will be released shortly after the 6th meeting of the Group (Budapest, 29-30 SEP 2016). This draft is expected to make reference to existing more detailed regional plans. This draft will be subject to a global consultation and CCSA members are encouraged to provide inputs. Once the global consultation is launched the Chairs will reach out to the Committee to explore whether a consolidated CCSA position is desirable and feasible. If the global consultation leads to a quick consensus and the UN Statistical Commission (possibly through its Bureau) agrees, the Global Action Plan could be launched at the first World Data Forum in January 2017 and formally endorsed by the Commission in March 2017.

(3) Data reporting and sharing
7. UNSD introduced a document on “Elements of guidelines/principles of data reporting/data sharing for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda” (SA/2016/12). The document is based on discussions held at the Meeting of the Chief Statisticians of the UN System held the day before. That Meeting set up a task team to further work on these guidelines/principles. A first draft could be presented to the next IAEG-SDG meeting (20-21 October 2016) for initial feedback. This document would then form the basis for a discussion expected at the High Level Forum (6 March 2017). See also paras 16-17.

Conclusions:

8. The Committee took note of the updates provided regarding the UN World Data Forum and the Global Action Plan.

9. The World Bank and ESCAP will join the task team set up by the Meeting of the Chief Statisticians of the UN System to develop these guidelines/principles further. This task team will further develop the guidelines/principles based on the Committee’s discussion at this meeting. The document should be circulated well in advance of the next meeting in March 2017.

D. Revision of the Terms of Reference of CCSA

10. UNSD briefly recalled the history of the Committee, which had first met in 1967 as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Sub-Committee on Statistical Activities in the United Nations Context. The current Committee, which now has 45 members, held its first formal meeting in 2002 after the ACC structure had been abandoned. Eurostat as chair of the reflection group introduced the main recommendations from the group’s report (SA/2016/9). Members generally supported the recommendations made by the reflection group. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- The Committee is a meeting of professionals with shared managerial interests;
- Given their different institutional setting and mandate, members have different views on what coordination means and entails. There was agreement, however, that: a) providing a platform for information exchange, and discussion of common issues; and b) representing the point of view of International Agencies with a common voice at the UN Statistical Commission and other relevant statistical fora, were important raison d’être for this Committee;
- Membership should be inclusive. However, in view of the growing size and diverse membership, it may be necessary to establish/enforce some requirements in terms of participation and active commitment in the CCSA’s work in order to be accepted as member. At the same time, “participation” should be interpreted in the widest possible way to include, not only the regular attendance of physical meetings, but also the participation in task teams and participation in meetings via video- or audio link;
• An interactive online platform could facilitate work between sessions;
• Newer members confirmed the benefit of attending CCSA sessions for carrying out their own mandates, in particular for small statistical entities/units;
• Current co-chair arrangements were judged positive and should be maintained;
• The idea of establishing a Bureau was widely supported.

Conclusions:

11. The Committee thanked the reflection group for its excellent work. The Co-chairs will prepare a note with proposals for modified terms of reference taking into account the considerations and recommendations of the reflection group and the rich discussion during the session. The document will be distributed well in advance of the next session to allow members ample time to comment.

E. Capacity building and training centers

12. UNSD introduced a proposal to establish a global network of Regional Statistical Training Centers (contained in document SA/2016/13). UNESCAP presented the existing “Asia-Pacific Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training” (SA/2016/13/Add.1). During the discussion, the initiative received a lot of support. Some members shared their own training programmes (European Masters of Official Statistics, internships, training the trainers’ programmes and databases of experts and capacity building initiatives, respectively) and their experiences with duplication of training. It was also suggested to consider linking this network to the more academic networks through ISI. Eurostat offered to support the global network.

Conclusions

13. The Committee welcomed this initiative and encouraged UNSD and its partners to keep CCSA informed. UNSD will also share the updated inventory of training centers on the CCSA website.

F. Special session on “Cost-Benefit Structures and the Value of International Statistics”

14. The special session took stock of existing initiatives assessing the direct costs of producing statistics and putting costs in relation to the benefits for society that accrue from these statistics. The special session featured the following five presentations:

- “Eurostat initiative to harmonise cost structures and to measure key statistical products” - by Eurostat

- “OECD experience on measuring the costs for national accounts” - by OECD
Conclusions

15. While there is much interest in international comparisons of costs of statistics, the examples presented during the special session also showed that comparisons were difficult to establish and politically sensitive. The initiatives at the European level will provide valuable experience in this regard. Regarding the measurement of the benefits of official statistics, the Committee welcomed the work carried out under the CCSA and the case studies presented by Paris21. These showed that a monetary evaluation of the benefits of statistical projects is feasible and can be carried out in a rigorous manner. While such work necessarily has a relatively narrow focus, it is nonetheless instructive and helps communicating on the value of statistics. The Committee will consider this topic when drafting its multi-year programme (see paras. 20-21).

G. Communicating the Value of International Statistics

16. FAO introduced document SA/2016/11 entitled “Communicating the Value of International Statistics” suggesting steps for an awareness campaign to show how international statistics complements national statistics. During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Technical assistance should be added to the principles/guidelines document (see para 7);

- The proposed high-level seminar should not be set up to be perceived as defensive or confrontational.

- Rather than focusing the discussion at the seminar on the role of IOs in SDG reporting, a more general approach might be desirable. The question on reporting on the SDGs will almost certainly come up and panelists should be prepared. The issue can be handled in a constructive way if the debate is well-prepared;

- Thus, “Quality of data for measuring progress towards the SDGs”, “Use of international statistics” or “Use of official statistics” in general could be suitable broader topics for the seminar;

- Invited countries (for the HLF) could be from NSO or other government organization;
Conclusions:

17. The Committee welcomed the invitation by UNSD to use the High Level Forum, a UNSD signature side event during the Statistical Commission (to be held 6 March 2017, 3-6pm), as a suitable forum to engage with countries on the “value of international statistics”. Based on the discussion, the Co-chairs will prepare a concept note on how this High Level Forum could be organized. The concept note will be circulated to members in the coming weeks.

18. The Committee also decided to organize a session on this topic during the 61st World Statistics Congress to be held in Marrakech (Morocco) from 16 to 21 July 2017. The Committee welcomed Eurostat’s proposal to write a concept note for this session. Members are encouraged to volunteer to organize the session.

19. The Committee postponed a decision whether to invite countries to its 30th session (to be held in fall 2017). If countries were to be invited it should be around a special session, for example on data discrepancies.

H. Multi-Year-Programme

20. OECD introduced SA/2016/10 entitled “Multi-Year Programme of Work of the CCSA” on behalf of both Co-chairs. The Co-chairs thanked the members that had replied to the survey. Based on the survey results (presented in the annex of the document) the Co-chairs suggested considering the highest ranked topic in each of the five “topical categories” as presented in the document. Other aspects to consider when drafting the multi-year programme are whether topics are of a specific short term interest (information sharing/special session) or will be longer term projects that will lead to outputs such as recommendations.

Conclusions

21. The Committee agreed with the proposals outlined in the report. The Co-chairs will draft a concrete multi-year programme for the next 2-3 years based on the survey results and the discussion. This will be presented to the Committee at its next session.

I. Preparations of the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission

22. The Committee received a briefing by UNSD on the documents that will be considered by the UN Statistical Commission at its 48th session, which will take place 7-10 March 2017 in New York (SA/2016/15).
Conclusions

23. The Committee reaffirmed its past practice for joint statements. The following agenda items were considered possible candidates for joint statements at the upcoming 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission:

- Report of the Secretary-General on the transformative agenda for official statistics
- Report of the IAEG-SDG
- Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

24. The above list is not final. When the annotated UNSC agenda becomes available in late November, the Co-chairs will circulate it to Members to reconfirm the proposals of joint statements and ask for volunteers to draft them.

J. Other business

25. ECB introduced the publication “Special issue paper of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) Case studies: using non-official sources in international statistics” (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/accsub/2016docs-28th/E-publication.pdf), which has now been finalized.

Conclusions

26. The Committee thanked all members who contributed to this publication and in particular ECB for compiling the final publication. The publication will be made available on the public pages of the CCSA website under “Outputs”.

27. The Committee also thanked UNWTO for organizing the seventh CCSA conference/session on quality in international statistics on 3 June 2016 in Madrid (Spain) (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/accsub-public/cdqio-2016.htm). This session was part of the Q2016 European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Madrid, 31 May - 3 June 2016).

K. Dates and venues of the 2017 sessions of the Committee

28. The Committee reconfirmed that its next session will be held on 6 March 2017 (morning) in New York on the margins of the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission.

29. The Co-chairs informed the Committee that they had received the following three invitations to host the 30th session in fall 2017:
- Addis Ababa (hosted by ECA) in conjunction with the SMDX Global Conference 2017 (to be held during the first week of October 2017)
- Geneva (hosted by ECE)
- Muscat (hosted by GCC-Stat)

30. The Committee stressed the importance of making video-/audioconferencing available at the next fall sessions of the Committee.

Conclusions

31. The Committee thanked ECA, ECE and GCC-Stat for their invitations. The Committee will take a final decision on the venue of its 30th session at its 29th session on 6 March 2017.

L. Summary of follow up actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Agency</th>
<th>Participating Agencies</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Actions/Output</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Adoption of the agenda</td>
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<td>B. OECD Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. 2030 Agenda</td>
<td>UIS</td>
<td>UNSD, UNCTAD, ODC, WB, ESCAP</td>
<td>20-21 Oct 2016 (IAEG-SDG meeting)</td>
<td>Document on principles and guidelines of data reporting/sharing for the 2030 Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. TOR of CCSA</td>
<td>Co-chairs</td>
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<td>Jan 2017</td>
<td>Draft revised TOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Training centers</td>
<td>UNSD</td>
<td>ESCAP, Eurostat</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Keep CCSA informed on this initiative; Update relevant CCSA webpages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Special Session: Cost-Benefit</td>
<td>Co-chairs</td>
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<td>Feb 2017</td>
<td>Consider topic for multi-year programme (see H)</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Multi-year programme</td>
<td>Co-chairs</td>
<td>Eurostat (concept note)</td>
<td>Oct 2016 – July 2017</td>
<td>Organize session at the 61st ISI WSD (July 2017);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. 48th UNSC</td>
<td>Co-chairs</td>
<td>UNSD/Secretariat; all members</td>
<td>Nov 2016 – Feb 2017</td>
<td>Reconfirm agenda items for joint statements and find volunteers for drafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Other business</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>Publish publication on public CCSA webpages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Dates/venue for 2017 sessions</td>
<td>Co-chairs</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Mar 2017</td>
<td>“Evaluate” venues for the fall 2017 session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex I

Agenda

Thursday, 29 September 2016 (09:00 – 18:00)

1. Opening and adoption of agenda
2. Presentation by OECD
3. Data and capacity building for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (oral updates by UNSD)
   1) UN World Data Forum
   2) Global action plan
   3) Data reporting and sharing
4. Revision of the Terms of Reference of CCSA (document by the reflection group/co-chairs)
5. Capacity building and training centers (document by UNSD)
6. Special Session on "Cost-Benefit structures and the value of international statistics" (organized by OECD)

Friday, 30 September 2016 (09:00 – 12:30)

7. Communicating the value of international statistics (issue note by UNSD and co-chairs)
8. Multi-Year-Programme (document by the Co-chairs)
9. Preparation for the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission
10. Other business including date and venue for the next session
Annex II

List of Documents

SA/2016/8  Provisional agenda for the 28th session
SA/2016/9  Revision of the Terms of Reference of CCSA
SA/2016/10  Multi-Year-Programme of work of the CCSA
SA/2016/11  Communicating the value of international statistics
SA/2016/12  Data and capacity building for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
SA/2016/13  Capacity building and training centres
SA/2016/13/Add.1 Overview on Asia-Pacific Network for the Coordination of Statistical Training - Presentation by UNESCAP
SA/2016/14  OECD presentation: The OECD and its statistics
SA/2016/15  Preparation for the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission: List of documents

Special Session on "Costs and Benefits of International Statistics"

Agenda for the Special Session

Presentations:

- Eurostat initiative to harmonise cost structures and to measure key statistical products - by Eurostat
- OECD experience on measuring the costs for national accounts - by OECD
- Merits and costs procedure on European statistics provided by the ESCB - by ECB
- Value of official statistics - by UNECE
- Returns on investment in official statistics: Two methods and applications - by Paris21

Other documents

Unnumbered Special issue paper of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA): Case studies: using non-official sources in international statistics
### Annex III

**List of Participants**

*(In alphabetical order of the organization)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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