UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**Meeting of the Expert Group on**
**International Statistical Classifications**
**New York, 6-8 September 2017**

**Final Report**

# Contents

## 1.    Introduction

1.    The meeting of the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications, organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), was held in New York from 6-8 September 2017.

2.    The meeting was attended by 28 experts from 20 countries and 8 international organisations.

3.    The meeting was chaired by Mr. Andrew Hancock of Statistics New Zealand.

4.    The meeting was opened with a statement from Mr. Ralf Becker on behalf of UNSD, who noted the extensive agenda for the meeting that reflected the changing scope and demands for the Expert Group. The diverse range of topics reinforced the importance of statistical classifications in supporting global official statistics.

5.    The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reiterated the comments from UNSD that the agenda for the meeting once again highlighted the broadening role the Expert Group has in providing direction and support for international classifications which underpin the vast amount of data that statistical agencies are now grappling with. Not only the increase in big data, but the need to provide policy and decision makers with appropriate information to enable achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals makes the need for consistent standards, concepts and classifications increasingly important.

6.    It was noted that it was important that the Expert Group take full opportunity of meeting together to discuss, share and resolve the issues and topics presented. There would be a wide range of topics covered over the three days with COICOP, ISIC and Status of Employment being the primary focus. In addition, there were discussions planned on the International Family of Statistical Classifications, gender identity, cultural satellite accounts and disaster risk. There were also a number of reports from different agencies prepared.

7.    Since the last meeting in 2015 the Chair noted with sadness the passing of Matthias Greulich from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, and also the retirement of Nobert Rainer of Statistics Austria. Both were long-serving members of the Expert Group whose contribution to the work of the Expert Group was significant.

8.    The Chair expressed his support of the role of the UN Statistics Division in the functioning of the Expert Group, recognizing the funding and resource constraints they face, both in providing a venue and location for the meeting, but also in their role as Secretariat to the Expert Group and its Bureau. Formal acknowledgement was made of the significant work and support both to the Bureau and the Expert Group itself from Mr. Ralf Becker, and his team at UNSD.

9.    The Chair also acknowledged and thanked the members of the Bureau: Ms. Alice Born (Statistics Canada), Ms. Ana Franco (Eurostat), Ms. Eva Castillo (INEGI Mexico) and Ms. Severa de Costo (Philippine Statistics Authority) for their sterling work and for ensuring that the Expert Group keeps momentum between its face-to-face meetings.

10.    The meeting was organized according to several thematic topics. For each topic, a number of papers on relevant, and often interconnected, issues were available, and the papers were introduced through short presentations at the beginning of each session that highlighted the main issues raised and questions posed to the Expert Group.

11.    In total, 69 papers and presentations were presented at the meeting. All papers and presentations are available on the meeting's website:

12.     Annex 1 shows a list of action items agreed at this meeting of the Expert Group.

## 2.     Main discussions and conclusions

13.     The Expert Group considered a wide range of topics during its meeting, including documents addressing the work within the Family of International Statistical Classifications, such as composition of the Family and an approval process for international statistical classifications to become a member of the Family. In addition, there were broader considerations of standards, and the review of development and revision work on a number of international classifications in cooperation with their respective custodians, updates on national and regional efforts to further progress with implementation of revised classifications, and new ways of using those classifications. Additional information items related to new topics such as gender identity, disaster-risk and a cultural satellite account. The main discussions and conclusions related to these different topics are presented below.

14.     The meeting agenda was adopted as presented and the Expert Group was given a brief report from the Chair on the work of the Bureau since the last Expert Group meeting. Most action items had been addressed, along with a significant number of additional ones since the 2015 meeting. A few action items have been made ongoing. Minutes and action items from the Bureau meetings continue to be circulated to Expert Group members to keep them informed of progress and work on any emerging issues.

15.     The Expert Group, through the Bureau, is being asked to partake in more things, particularly in reviewing classifications and often trying to find an appropriate member of the Expert Group to do this work. It was agreed that there was a need to document specific expertise within the Expert Group members. Many of the participants at the meeting weren't necessarily classification experts but could refer to these in their own agencies. It was also noted that the role of the Expert Group in many instances depended on whether it was being asked to provide advice on best practice or detailed expertise.

16.     Discussion focused on being clear about the scope of a particular review and whether there is ability to physically get a person to a face-to-face meeting, or whether there was another way for the Expert Group to contribute. This led to a discussion about getting the grading, best practice and approval process documentation into a format for sharing. Discussion also focused on how to use the expertise within the group, whether a CV was needed from each member and/or whether training materials should also be developed and supplied.

17.     The FAO Guidelines for Agricultural Statistics were put forward as a good approach or template for training material that the Expert Group could use. The issue of funding was raised and whether custodian agencies would be supportive of this or find it useful. It was also felt that creating a package of best practice, criteria and guidelines documentation for national statistical offices and users would help the visibility of the Expert Group, and that getting a list of expertise within the Expert Group members and/or National Statistical Offices should be undertaken.

18.     It was agreed to set up a working group comprising, FAO, ILO and Australia to commence this work.

19.     The Bureau will collaborate with the working group to pull together material into an easy-to-use form and make it available to agencies, either on the website, or as a document.

### 3.      Composition of the International Family of Statistical Classifications

20.      Discussion began on the scope and content of the International Family of Statistical Classifications and there were a series of questions posed to the Expert Group for comment or decision. In addition, discussion took place on an approval process document to enable the Expert Group to approve/endorse classifications prior to their presentation to the UN Statistical Commission.

21.      UNSD gave a presentation noting that the International Family of Statistical Classifications should cover international classifications from all statistical domains, classifications that were officially approved as standard classifications by the United Nations Statistical Commission (or a similar governing body), and other classifications that are internationally used and have become de-facto standards in their fields. The Expert Group was asked to discuss the operational criteria for this. This included the issue of international versus regional classifications and whether there was a need to involve more subject matter experts to get some operational perspective/criteria.

22.      An overview of the new classification website was given by UNSD but it did raise the issues around allocating a classification to a statistical domain, could there be a standard form of display and how should allocation to multiple domains be handled?

23.      Discussion focused on the fact that the Family presents current operational classifications but that previous versions may be useful. The Family is not intended to be a list of all classifications that ever existed so the Expert Group may need to provide operational criteria for this. However it was raised that there needed to be flexibility in the criteria.

24.      Further discussion raised issues around what to do where a statistical classification is deemed to be a de facto international standard but doesn't meet the basic criteria for inclusion, and how does the grading criteria get incorporated. The need for a statement about the quality of a classification may be useful and desirable, but also how does the Expert Group set up a process for a rigorous review. A weighting of criteria on the different aspects of the grading, whilst suggested as useful, was not endorsed.

25.      Consideration was given on the need to agree on a mechanism and plan to address this, noting that there is an element of overlap between the main documents of best practice, and criteria for inclusion.

26.      There was general agreement to allow classifications that don't fully meet the criteria to be on the website to enable discovery, but that caution needed to be exercised about having too many, and there was a need to have information on quality and/or maintenance processes as well. An example of flexibility could be with the ILO classifications that were embedded in the recommendations of the 19th ICLS. ILO offered to revise the third to last paragraph of the approval process document.

27.      The flow chart in the approval document was seen as an ideal and that a quality indicator was useful. Keeping the family small would make visibility better, but it was also important to recognize that implementation and maintenance were key issues in keeping the family manageable.

28.      It was felt that it was important to provide information about classifications that don't meet the criteria, describing why this was the case, but also ensuring there was clear documentation provided where a de facto standard was being used or promoted.

29.      It was agreed that the approval process would not be applied retrospectively, but that a field or flag of which mandatory criteria the classification has met would be included. It was also felt that

the website could have the option to sort or display classifications by custodian as well as by domain. This may assist with discovery, but also whether a tag system (as used by FAO) or like the versioning process as used by the Harmonized System was a useful option was also discussed. The issue with versioning however was that it may be preferable to leave a link to the old classification, as it was important to not imply these are what should be used or encouraged to be used in new statistical work going forward.

30.     A further issue raised was the conflicting goals of having only those classifications that have gone through due process and are approved/endorsed by the Expert Group versus those that are being used but which are not necessarily meeting the best practice requirements. What is the role of the Expert Group in resolving this conflict? It was unclear from the discussion whether the family can meet both requirements, nor whether the Expert Group can decide how to endorse those classifications not necessarily meeting best practice requirements.

31.     It was also suggested that training materials for the major classifications such as ISIC, CPC or ISCO could be added to the UN Classifications website.

32.     Statistics Canada advised that they were undertaking an assessment of the list of classifications in the International Family as part of a review of their use of international standards. They advised that the current list is reasonably exhaustive, but the issue was really whether the list has the right composition and should anything be added or removed, as well as obtaining feedback on the appropriate domains for the international standards.

33.     The use of the international questionnaire process from UNSD was queried as to whether it meets the needs and/or whether it should occur on a different timeframe e.g. every 3-4 years.

34.     Afristat noted the issue of every country using different classifications and not always the international one, and that this may be due to the size of the country/economy or the classification. Others are about having more detail in the classifications, such as regional variations, which raises the issue of how much detail is necessary and possible, and where to draw the line for international reporting for example with ISIC reporting the minimum level set by the UN Statistical Commission is the Division level . National Statistical Offices in Africa need to be encouraged to use updated classification versions of international standards as African countries seemed to generally have a low response rate to the UN International Classifications questionnaire.

35.     Afristat can be the focal point in the monitoring of the implementation of classifications in French speaking countries in Africa.

36.     It was agreed that each Expert Group member would provide comments on additions or corrections to the list of classifications to UNSD and that a working group be set up to look at the composition of the family, led by Statistics Canada.

## 4.     Assessment of implementation of international statistical classifications in national statistical systems

37.     The session began with a presentation from UNSD on ISIC, CPC etc., providing an update of the 2015 report and review of questionnaire and information obtained. This did lead to a discussion on how to obtain information from missing countries and identifying new contacts in some regions such as Central Asia, and getting better engagement within and across Africa.

38. The Expert Group recommended starting a new round of the survey of national classifications practices, as a sufficient number of changes may have taken place since the last round in 2012.

39. Ms. Valentina Ramaschiello (FAO) gave a presentation on Statistical Classifications in FAO which included an introduction of an overhauled statistics accountability framework, and the development and implementation of a corporate Quality Assurance Framework. The presentation also included a discussion of the FAO classification of agriculture statistics, fisheries classifications, and the classification of forest products. FAO asked the Expert Group to:

- Endorse the classifications as soon as the new criteria to become a member of the Family were approved;
- Provide comments on the draft of forest products classification definitions before it gets released;
- Provide its comments on the steps to be followed to submit FAO classifications to UNSC (2019).

40. The advice from the Expert Group would be provided outside of the meeting.

41. Ms. Eva Castillo Navarrete (INEGI Mexico) gave a summary presentation on the work being done to support Latin American and Caribbean nations in the use of international statistical classifications. It was noted that one of the biggest challenges were translating material into Spanish and the ability to understand and use the mixed nature of concepts. This led to a discussion on the issue of translating all classifications and the impact for the International Family. UNSD noted that all international statistical classifications should be in the official languages of the UN but that funding issues and changes in services and publication processes within the UN imposed difficulties and constraints.

42. Ms. Nilima Lal (SPC) reported on the use of regional classifications based off international standards with recent examples being the development of the Pacific Standard Classification of Occupations in collaboration with the Australian and Fijian Bureau of Statistics with peer review by ILO and Statistics New Zealand, the development of a Pacific Harmonized System classification and work on progressing a classification of international trade in goods for the Pacific region.

43. Mr. Tabo Symphorian Ndang (Afristat) gave an overview of Afristat work and classification development, particularly noting the desire of ILO and FAO to work with Afristat on classification development.

## 5. International Recommendations for a Framework for a cultural satellite account

44. Ms. Lydia Deloumeaux (UNESCO) gave a presentation outlining concepts, standards, recommendations and methodologies in cultural statistics, particularly in relation to development of a cultural satellite account (CSA). For the purposes of the cultural satellite account, culture encompasses domains, products - using ISIC and CPC, and expenditure – using GDP and economic transaction in foreign trade – using the HS, based on extensions of these classifications.

45. The purpose of the work is to enable development of a national statistical framework. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) is the lead agency, and has established a working group for the CSA that is coordinating the work, conducting consultations, and enabling partnership with key agencies such as UNSD.

46.	A complete draft of the CSA has been developed and is being put to the Technical Advisory Group and sent for global consultation, which will also involve national ministries of culture. It is planned to have a document ready by November 2018 for the 2019 UN Statistical Commission meeting.

47.	It is planned to commence a review of the international framework for cultural statistics in 2019.

48.	A key aspect is the need to define the concept of culture and get definitions for that, and to get a guide developed for the production of comparable statistics.

49.	UNESCO asks the Expert Group to inform UIS if the classification of products and industries needs further review in terms of the international classification principles; and to provide recommendations on how to align against these.

50.	The issue was referred to the Bureau to set up a working group to provide review of best practice for the framework.

## 6.	Gender Identity

51.	Ms. Alice Born (Statistics Canada) gave a summary report on legislative and other issues that are occurring in Canada, particularly around the designation for a third category 'X' being discussed by the Canadian government for use in Canadian passports.

52.	Ms. Kate Lamb (ABS) gave a summary report on work undertaken in Australia, particularly based off the Attorney-General guidelines for collecting information other than the binary concepts for sex and gender. There is the further issue of measuring sexual identity and sexual orientation.

53.	Mr. Andrew Hancock (Statistics NZ) gave an overview on work done since the last Expert Group meeting on implementing a Gender Identity Statistical Standard in New Zealand. There had been limited uptake of the standard at this point, but also testing had been undertaken for the 2018 New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings on whether questions on gender identity and sexual orientation could be included. Testing showed issues for respondents and the inability to obtain a satisfactory question module resulted in the topics not being included for 2018. However, sexual orientation was to be included in the 2018 General Social Survey. Additional work on a suite of standards to also include sexual identity was being progressed.

54.	The discussion then focused on the feasibility of producing an international standard recognizing that there were a number of difficulties associated with such as task, but also recognising that it was a positive action for the Expert Group to undertake. A number of comments from members in the Expert Group noted the difficulties that arise in terms of confidentiality, the ability to collect the information in sample surveys or administrative sources, that it was not about homosexuality but also the conflict between the concepts of gender and sex, and other issues such as mental health/well being

55.	UNSD noted that their Demographic Statistics unit was approached about the need and/or demand for an international standard and their response was that there is no intent of including such concepts in the recommendations for the upcoming census rounds. There were issues noted about how to frame a question, and how to capture all the variations. It may be more practical to take time to test options and see how that works before coming back to the idea of an international standard as there needs to be a solid basis for an international standard.

56.     UNODC noted that illegality shouldn't prevent collection and they were looking into these sorts of measures for hate crimes and sexual violence crimes, but that there was not at this point a need for an international standard. However, they would be interested in being involved in any work undertaken.

57.     Other comments noted the potential importance for an international standard in relation to the SDGs and the mantra of 'leaving no-one behind'.

58.     ILO noted that there was an ISO standard for sex which could be useful to investigate as part of any work.

59.     It was agreed that there was a need for a variety of test data from different countries and that the Expert Group, whilst acknowledging the presentations given and the innovative work undertaken, did not see the need to propose commencing work on developing an international standard at this time. The issue will be revisited at the next meeting of the Expert Group.

## 7.     International Classification for Crime Statistics

60.     Mr. Felix Reiterer (UNODC) gave an update on the implementation of the ICCS and work undertaken since the last EGM. An implementation manual was being developed for member countries, with the first draft due by the end of 2017 and finalization occurring in first half of 2018. Development of a virtual platform for the Technical Advisory Group to do its work in addition to face-to-face meetings was occurring. A number of national and regional workshops and presentations had also been undertaken.

61.     The UN Crime Trends Survey was also being used to implement ICCS, and avoid duplications of existing data collection instruments. UNODC was also developing correspondence tables to support national agencies in migrating to or reporting on an ICCS basis.

62.     Discussion focused on how UNODC was getting support and contact with regional organisations and whether they look to NSOs as their focal points for contact, whereas UNSD noted that for classifications they don't usually get the same support or levels of contacts.

## 8.     Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)

63.     A summary report on the background, outcomes and progress of work undertaken by the Technical Subgroup (TSG) was presented by the TSG Chair, Ms. Ana Franco (Eurostat).

64.     An overview of the major changes was given which included the introduction of a 4th level, an expansion for food and beverages in Division 01, better correspondences with other classifications such as ISCED, CPC and ICHA and a clearer distinction between goods and services, as appropriate, recognising that this wasn't possible in all situations.

65.     The Expert Group was invited to discuss:

- Feedback on the documents presented
- Plastic surgery: should it be classified in Division 06 (Health) or in Division 13 under Personal care?
- Whether Division 10 should cover also non-formal education?
- Where to classify GPS products?
- How the coordination of different existing alphabetical indexes could be used as a source for the elaboration of an index for the COICOP 2018?

66.     The Expert Group congratulated the TSG on the work that had been undertaken and completed. The need for an alphabetic index was endorsed and it was suggested that there needed to be alignment with work done by the World Bank (on expenditure surveys) and with the SDGs, and that guidelines to enable national statistical offices to implement the new COICOP be produced.

67.     The Expert Group agreed, after discussion on each bullet point above, that:

- Plastic surgery would be classified to Division 06 with definitional clarity to be supplied and that the same be applied to dental services.
- Leave Division 10 as is and provide clarity to category 10.5 along with clear exclusion and inclusion text.
- GPS devices would be classified in the appropriate areas of COICOP; that the class for 'Apps' be removed and that the definition for maps was expanded; make sure that the principles about GPS devices were described in the classification introduction; and to add a note in the introduction about the treatment of apps.
- Statistics Canada to supply its alphabetic index to the TSG and that other Expert Group members could send their household expenditure classification indexes to the TSG for compilation into a formal COICOP alphabetical index after the classification had been signed off.

68.     The Expert Group endorsed the classification in principle, pending additional changes as outlined earlier and editorial issues identified by UNSD, and recommends that the UN Statistical Commission approve COICOP as an international standard.

69.     Discussion then took place on the functional classifications of the SNA and whether these needed review as a result of the COICOP changes. It was agreed that the TSG-COICOP would further fulfil their original mandate to do an assessment of the impacts of the COICOP changes on the other functional classifications, that the TSG-COICOP would determine the usage of COPNI, COPP and COFOG to see if changes were warranted, and that the TSG would report its findings back to the Expert Group.

70.     UNSD noted that COICOP 2018 can first be published in a stand-alone PDF file and at a later point a decision be made as to how to address the hardcopy which currently includes the suite of functional classifications.

## 9.     International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev.4

71.     UNSD provided an overview presentation on issues for ISIC, which included the treatment of issues via the classifications hotline and the use, or lack of use, of the discussion forum to resolve issues. What was the best way to make use of determinations and/or the need for new classes? Was there a need for alterative aggregations and if so, how would these be done and what are the rules for creating them.

72.     It was noted that the review of the statistical units model could be a driver for a major review of ISIC, noting that a change from establishments to enterprises as the main unit would require a complete conceptual review of ISIC and would most likely result in major changes, including at structural level.

73.     The TSG-ISIC reported on the work on Factoryless Goods Production with the typology being developed based off the work done by the Eurostat Task Force. The issue paper on Factoryless Goods Producers (FGPs) will be presented to the Expert Group in early 2018 for advice and/or comment.

74.     In the meantime, countries were encouraged to provide input on FGPs to the TSG-ISIC.

75.     Mr. John Murphy (US Census Bureau) gave a presentation on intermediaries, which provided an overview of the logic for looking at these activities/arrangements to determine whether ISIC needs changes. An outline of guidance that could be used for resolving how to treat intermediaries was given.

76.     Discussion took place on the need for a category to address intermediaries, but the general perception was that a guidance document was the best way forward.

77.     The Expert Group then received an overview of work done on the 'sharing economy' by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and then an update from Mr. Herman Smith (UNSD) on the progress of work being undertaken to review the Statistical Units model.

78.     UNSD then proceeded to present on the need for alternative aggregations for ISIC. This raised a number of questions for the Expert Group including:

- When should they be done and when should they be allowed? For example, to meet specialized needs or enable standard alternative aggregations, and what about use of partial ISIC categories?
- Do all aggregations have to be approved by the Expert Group and what would be the appropriate distribution channel for them?

79.     After the discussion, it was agreed by the Expert Group that:

- There would be no review of ISIC at this point;
- The TSG-ISIC would review the issues (when they become available) from the work on FGPs and the Statistical Units model work to ascertain the impact for reviewing ISIC, and that the Bureau would clarify the scope and terms of the work;
- The guidance document developed by John Murphy be adopted as the formal guidance document for users when determining/classifying intermediaries;
- Alternative aggregations for ISIC would be reviewed by the TSG-ISIC on an ad-hoc basis.

## 10.     Central Product Classification

80.     The Expert Group noted that the potential ISIC changes may impact on CPC definitions, but an assessment cannot be made before an in-depth discussion of these changes and the just approved guidance has been made. It was also noted that these items may not constitute sufficient need for a CPC change, particularly with pending HS 2022 and SIEC revisions that may provide substantive input for a review/change of the goods part of the CPC. Therefore the Expert Group should wait until this information is available before recommending that a review occur.

81.     It was noted that the work done by FAO on agricultural products had been very useful and this approach of getting an expert area to review a particular area of the CPC might be a practical approach to consider. Further work is necessary to identify and engage suitable partners for this.

82.     FAO gave a summary overview of the work on fishery statistics and the need for expansion within CPC, recognizing that at the lower levels there was not much scope of adding content. The

presentation also discussed non-wood forest products and improving the boundaries between agriculture and forestry.

83.    How is forest to be defined and compared across CPC, ISIC, SEEA (land use), and was there a need to:

- Replace the term "wild" with "forest"?
- Add detail under CPC 032 (Non-wood forest products) and leave in Division 01 products that are predominantly grown in agriculture?
- Provide guidelines to countries on how to code information on Non-wood forest products?

84.    No agreement was reached at this point, as further discussions on the CPC grouping criteria need to be undertaken between UNSD and FAO before recommending any actions.

85.    It was agreed to look at getting the HS 2017 – CPC link completed now and that any other issues would be deferred to the TSG-CPC to investigate and make recommendations back to the Expert Group.

## 11.    Harmonized System (HS)

86.    Mr. Tom Beris (WCO) gave an overview of the HS2017 development and the agreed amendments. 84 of the 156 contracting parties to the HS were already applying HS 2017 since 1 January 2017 and a further 23 would be implementing it during 2017.

87.    WCO indicated that most material is available via the website but that explanatory notes and tools are not available for free, i.e. users need to subscribe to the HS database. The 2017 alphabetic index is available and it was noted that the HS-BEC correspondence is in progress.

88.    Work on HS2022 was halfway done and the WCO was discussing with FAO on agriculture, with the Basel Convention on e-waste, and also looking at classifying solar energy equipment, and changes in technology such as 3-D printers.

89.    Draft recommendations for HS 2022 need to be approved by the Council in June 2019 which gives 6 months for objections, then 2 years to do the correlation tables, and convert into third party languages etc. A finalised version would be released in January 2020.

90.    Proposals for change should come through contracting parties or national customs agencies, but can also be done by international agencies. WCO noted that the process and template used by FAO was the 'gold' standard in terms of how to submit a proposal.

91.    UNSD informed that there are discussions ongoing on submitting proposals to the HS for improved representation of energy products, but that some time will still be required to develop a common position among energy agencies and constituents.

## 12.    International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08)

92.    The Expert Group was presented with an overview of issues and background on ISCO-08 from Mr. David Hunter (ILO). No major progress has been made since the last meeting of the Expert Group, given the priority of focus for the ILO on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93). However, a working log of issues on ISCO-08 was being kept. Skill level issues remain the primary issue for ISCO, particularly the distinction between skill level 1 and skill level 2.

93.     UNESCO's work on technical and vocational education and training to identity a set of world reference levels to facilitate the international comparison and recognition of technical and vocational training qualifications was raised. Any ISCO revision would need to consider this. In addition, there are significant issues around health occupations in terms of coverage in the classification structure, and in terms of skill shortage measurement.

94.     Statistics New Zealand noted the convergence issues that were now occurring between ISCO major groups 3 and 7, and with major group 2, the issue of skill levels across the major groups, that skill levels generally had changed and that there were much more issues apparent since ILO presented at the 2015 Expert Group meeting. There was also the need to retain subsistence occupations for SDG measurement and review whether alignment with ISCED was still pertinent.

95.     Due to the 5-year cycle of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), any revision to ISCO needed to be ready for the 2023 ICLS. Having an expert group of occupation specialists, as well as classification experts was critical for any review.

96.     The Expert Group recommended that the 20th ICLS endorse a full revision of ISCO for presentation of a revised ISCO at its 2023 meeting, to enable implementation to begin in 2025 and in time for the global round of censuses in 2030.

## 13.     International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE)

97.     Mr. David Hunter (ILO) gave an overview of ICSE-93, the recommendations from the 19th ICLS and the impact of the recommended proposals on the classification. This had resulted in the introduction of a suite of classifications, and the creation of a working group to support the ILO. Regional consultations and testing had occurred from 2016 to 2018. There will be a Tripartite Meeting of Experts in February 2018 to review the proposed resolution regarding ICSE.

98.     New standards were proposed for a number of concepts and more detailed categories for status in employment were considered. Issues around the concept of dependent contractors and a proposed refinement to the definition of job were also considered.

99.     As the Tripartite Meeting of Experts, which was to meet by the end of November 2017, needed a draft resolution, advice from the Expert Group was sought. This advice would be provided by Statistics New Zealand.

100.    The Expert Group agreed that it needed to be involved in the discussions on ICSE and in providing advice back to ILO on the 7 issues listed in the paper presented to the Expert Group. However, at this point the Expert Group had no volunteer to represent it in the ongoing discussions on ICSE.

## 14.     Disaster Risk Reduction

101.    The session on Disaster Risk Reduction was unable to proceed due to technical issues with connecting to UN ESCAP. The Expert Group will review the questions raised in the paper and provide advice back as appropriate.

## 15.     Environmental accounting

102.    Ms. Alessandra Alfieri (UNSD) gave a presentation on the plans for three classifications related to the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), namely:

- the Classification of Environmental Activities (CEA), which covered the Classification of Environmental Protection Activities (CEPA) and the interim Classification of Resource Management Activities (CreMA). Eurostat is the custodian for this classification (CEA) and is taking the lead on reviewing the classification, with the main issue being the definition of resource management, as it only covers natural resources and not cultivated assets. A task force has been established by Eurostat to review and propose a uniform structure with its first meeting taking place on 14-15 September 2017. During the 2017/18 period, it will draw upon the country experiences with practical implementations of the classification, with a view to develop a revised classification by 2019.
- the classification of biodiversity expenditures, where the scope of the review is to overcome the differences in definitions and methodologies between the System of Economic and Environmental Accounting (SEEA), Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Sustainable Development Goal 15.
- the classification of ecosystem services, which related to the Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services (CICES), the US Final Ecosystem Goods and Services Classification System (FEGS-CS) and the National Ecosystem Services Classification System (NESCS).

103.    The driving factor for the revision of these classifications is the planned SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting in 2020.

104.    Discussion focused on at what stage to engage the Expert Group in the ongoing processes and discussions and it was agreed that the Expert Group should be involved now. Discussion took place on what mechanism of engagement would occur and it was decided that a single liaison (FAO) via the Bureau would be sufficient. FAO proposed a field on classifications to be included into the SDG template, with Statistics Canada supporting this and taking it through their national representative.

105.    The Expert Group would need to ensure that the classifications become part of the International Family of Classifications by taking them through the approval process and supporting the custodian to encourage their use.

## 16.    Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

106.    A report from the Philippine Statistics Authority on the International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was taken note of by the Expert Group for information purposes.

## 17.    Discussion on metadata standards and information models

107.    The High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics was set up by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2010 is coordinated by the UNECE. Revisions of both the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM) and the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) were underway with comments required by September 29th. Work was focusing on:

- developing quality indicators for GSBPM
- a glossary for statistical metadata
- a logical information model and GSIM annex on variables.
- undertaking a workshop on Geospatial Standards and Statistical Standards (Nov 2017)

108.    The SDMX working group work was presented, as was the work schedule on the global data structure definitions (DSD). The classification model (Neuchatel) within GSIM was to be reviewed in 2019. There was also some discussion on the relationship of SDMX code lists with international statistical classifications. The importance to check with the SDMX website on updates was stressed.

## 18.    Swiss Federal Statistical Office presentation on KUBB

109.    The Swiss Federal Statistical Office gave an overview presentation of their coding tool (KUBB).

## 19.    Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information Frameworks and Standards

110.    An update on progress on the framework since the last presentation to the Expert Group in 2015 was given. Five guiding principles were adopted at the very high level by the UN GGIM. These were: accessible and usable; statistical and geospatial interoperability; common geographies for dissemination of statistics; geocoded unit record data in a data management framework; use of fundamental geospatial infrastructures and geocoding.

111.    It was noted that there was a need to bridge data sets and integrate for SDGs and for the 2020 population census round.

## 20.    Big Data

112.    A report from the Philippine Statistics Authority on their Task Force on Big Data was taken note of by the Expert Group for information purposes.

## 21.    Future Work

113.    UNSD gave an overview talk on the Classifications Discussion Forum and whether it should continue or be taken down. Key issues were the limited use of the forum (primarily around ISIC and generally with the same participants using it and providing comment) and the upcoming discontinuation of support for the IT system used. There was also the issue of being able to disseminate decisions or make available any outcomes determined in the forum. The use of Unite Connections was proposed as a possible alternative. It was noted that Unite Connections had more complex issues with registration and passwords, but may have useful functionality that the Expert Group could benefit from.

114.    Of main concern to the Expert Group was that if the discussion forum was taken down, the case laws and information contained in it should be migrated to a new system or at least be documented in some way. UNSD confirmed that this was possible.

115.    The Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics New Zealand were facing similar issues with the usage of a joint database, and promulgating classification determinations for the regional classifications. Both agreed that there was a need to have something for the Expert Group and would advise back to the Expert Group on the outcomes of their solutions.

116.    China also noted the difficulty in finding the discussion forum and questioned whether there should be public access and/or have the forum opened up to a wider group. UNSD cautioned against this, since previous attempts at enlarging user feedback had led to a huge workload caused by spam and had to be cancelled.

117.     The Expert Group then discussed the issue of promoting the Expert Group and its role. This followed on from discussions that took place at the 2015 meeting. The issue of a side event at the UN Statistical Commission was again raised as an option to promote the work of the Expert Group but the continuing issue was who would represent the Expert Group at such a side event and undertake the promotion work. In addition, there was discussion around who was the intended audience for such a promotional event and it was agreed that whilst there are usually three target groups, the public, other working groups and national statisticians to be considered the focus needed to be on promotion to national statisticians. It was noted that the current revision processes for COICOP and ICSE – both very important – as well as highlighting the classifications use in the SDGs might be a good basis for a side event and the Bureau should investigate our options.

118.     The role of the Global Inventory of Statistical Standards was raised and it was confirmed that it was outdated, incomplete and not being properly maintained, and therefore should be taken down, as it caused confusion. It was suggested that the Expert Group take ownership of it, but this wasn't considered practical as its scope goes beyond statistical classifications.

119.     It was noted that the video presentation from the Philippines Statistical Authority that had been shown to the Expert Group earlier in the day was a good mechanism. It was also suggested that the website improvements needed promotion and that the feasibility of negotiating with Google around a classifications keyword strategy to improve search and discovery of major classifications be considered.

120.     Discussion moved to whether there was scope to further engage in promotion via the Sustainable Development Goals mechanisms. The importance of the SDGs as a mechanism, and the use of any templates, was stressed as an important avenue for the Expert Group to explore. It was noted that an option may be for the Expert Group representative from the Philippines to approach the National Statistician of the Philippine Statistics Authority, who is the current chair of the IAEG-SDG, to determine possibility for utilizing SDG events to assist in promoting the role and work of the Expert Group.

121.     The issue of increasing training or making training materials about classifications available was also proposed by a number of Expert Group members. An option may be to package the existing best practice and criteria documentation into something more user-friendly was proposed. UNSD noted that capacity building and workshops required funding and the issue was where that funding might need to come from, but it was important to show linkages between classifications to help visibility.

122.     The representative from Afristat offered to work more closely with his Director on the need for French-speaking countries to have greater engagement with the Expert Group and in the implementation of new classifications.

123.     The future work program for the period 2017 -2019 and beyond, along with the action items identified at the meeting would be circulated to the Expert Group members, once the minutes and final report of the meeting had been compiled.

## 22.     Election of the Bureau members and Chair

124.     The meeting was asked for nominations for the Bureau and Chair, but none were forthcoming. The existing Bureau members were able to continue in their roles, so the meeting agreed that this would be the decision.

125.     The Bureau therefore consists of:

- Andrew Hancock, New Zealand (Chair)
- Alice Born, Canada
- Ana Franco, Eurostat
- Eva Castillo, Mexico
- Severa de Costo, Philippines
- Ralf Becker, UNSD (ex-officio)

126.	It was noted that the representative from the Philippines would continue in a more limited capacity in supporting the Bureau if required.

127.	The meeting concluded with acknowledgement of the work of the Bureau and the meeting Chair.

## Annex 1: Action items

| | Existing Action Items | Responsibility | Comments | Date Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Establish a working group to identify EG expertise and promote visibility of EG | FAO/ILO/Australia | | |
| 2 | Bureau to work with EG to collate best practice documentation for agency use | Bureau | | |
| 3 | Expert Group members to supply a list of classifications used in their national agencies to UNSD | All | | |
| 4 | Establish a working group to look at the composition of the international Family of Classifications | Canada | | |
| 5 | Endorse the FAO classifications to become members of the family | Bureau | | |
| 6 | Provide comments on the draft of forest products classifications to FAO | All | | |
| 7 | Provide comments on the steps to be followed to submit FAO classifications to the UNSC | All | | |
| 8 | Establish a working group to provide a review against best practice principles for the Cultural satellite accounts framework and respond to UNESCO | Bureau | | |
| 9 | Supply alphabetic indexes for national COICOP or Household Expenditure classifications to the TSG-COICOP | All | | |
| 10 | TSG-COICOP to investigate use of COPNI, COPP and COFOG in national agencies to determine need for any review | TSG-COICOP | | |
| 11 | Assess the impacts of the changes on the functional classifications as a result of the COICOP review and report back to the Expert Group | TSG-COICOP | | |
| 12 | Provide information on FGPs to the TSG-ISIC | All | | |
| 13 | Review the issues from the work on FGPs and the Statistical units model and report to the Bureau | TSG-ISIC | | |
| 14 | Clarify scope and terms of work in relation to ISIC issues as noted in action item 12 | Bureau | | |
| 15 | HS2017-CPC correspondence to be completed | TSG-CPC | | |
| 16 | Investigate any other known issues and recommend an approach to the Expert Group | TSG-CPC | | |
| 17 | Provide list of wider issues for the ISCO review to ILO | New Zealand | | |
| 18 | Provide feedback on ICSE issues to ILO | Bureau | | |
| 19 | Review ICSE recommendations for Tripartite Meeting of Experts | New Zealand | | |
| 20 | Provide feedback on Disaster Risk Reduction issues | All | | |
| 21 | Put classifications into SDG template | FAO/Canada | | |
| 22 | Investigate use of UNITE Connections for use by the Expert Group | UNSD | | |
| 23 | Circulate future work program, meeting report and action items to Expert Group | Bureau | | |