

Statistical Commission

Fifty-second session

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Item 3(k) of the provisional agenda

Items for discussion and decision: International statistical classifications

Background document

Available in English only

**Mandate and governance of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International
Statistical Classifications (UN CEISC)**

Prepared by the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications

Mandate and governance of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UN CEISC)

Draft submitted to the Statistical Commission at its 52nd session

A. Mandate

1. The Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications was mandated by the Statistical Commission at its thirtieth session, held from 1 to 5 March 1999, with improving cooperation on international classifications and ensuring harmonization and convergence among classifications in the International Family of Statistical Classifications (E/1999/24, chap. VII).
2. The International Family of Statistical Classifications is comprised of those classifications that play a role as standard classifications in individual or multiple statistical domains and have been reviewed and approved as guidelines by the Statistical Commission or another competent intergovernmental body on such matters as economics, demographics, labour, health, education, social welfare, geography, environment and tourism.
3. Pursuant to the Statistical Commission decision 51/125 and the exercise of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics to explore ways to streamline the current arrangement of groups in order to achieve more coordinated and coherent working methods for the Statistical Commission (see E/CN.3/2020/27), the Expert Group updated its mandate and its operational functions to reflect the new terminology, structures and frameworks in 2021. This document represents the new mandate and governance of the Expert Group which is now renamed as the “Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications”.
3. The Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications is the central coordination body for the work on international statistical classifications that are the responsibility of the Statistics Division, and for the coordination and review of other international statistical classifications that are the responsibility of other international organizations and that have been proposed for adoption by the Statistical Commission.
4. The Committee works towards ensuring harmonization and convergence in the development of the classifications within the International Family of Statistical Classifications. To ensure coordinated revisions within the Family, the Committee continues to develop and progress strategies for the coordination and timing of revisions within the Family. Where an international statistical classification has changed, the Committee will encourage and assist custodians of other classifications to adopt the changes that reflect those made in the standard classification.
5. The Committee will establish long-term strategies for the further development of international statistical classifications. It will be concerned primarily with requirements imposed on classifications arising from statistical applications but may also take into consideration the requirements arising from non-statistical applications of the classifications. These applications include censuses, surveys and administrative activities in areas applicable to these classifications, analytical work requiring linkages between classifications, as well as requirements for policy decisions.
6. Key functions of the Committee are to assist and advise the Statistical Commission in:

- (a) Promoting the adoption of best practices in the development of international statistical classifications;
- (b) Coordinating work on those classifications that are members of the International Family of Statistical Classifications, including examining changes to classifications and clarifying their relationship to other international statistical classifications;
- (c) Promoting the adoption of the classifications of the International Family of Statistical Classifications within regional and national statistical systems to improve the international comparability of data;
- (d) Assessing the appropriateness of requests for inclusion of classifications into the International Family of Statistical Classifications;
- (e) Ensuring that international statistical classifications are suitable for use in statistical and data activities in which they are to be applied and that they promote conceptual and methodological coherence, and best practice in the statistical system, as well as reflecting practical considerations in data collection and compilation;
- (f) Developing a strategic approach towards the future development of the International Family of Statistical Classifications.

5. In elaborating its work programme, the Committee shall identify the most appropriate mechanism to promote the uptake and use of international statistical classifications, in order to increase the quality and relevance of official statistics and data with respect to the needs of users.

6. The Committee will coordinate its activities and findings with existing or new Committees of experts/groups related to economic, social, demographic, geospatial, environmental and multi-domain statistics.

7. Within its mandate, the Committee will regularly provide a detailed report on its workplan and progress of work, for the consideration of the Statistical Commission.

B. Governance

8. The major elements of the governance arrangements are shown in the diagram below. The description of the governance, as presented in the diagram covers the managerial functions, roles and responsibilities of the various groups and organizations involved. The boxes within the shaded large box represent the bodies of the Committee or projects under the Committee's responsibility. Expert committees and city groups are shown outside the shaded box, when they were established by bodies other than the Committee and have their own governance and reporting structure. Nevertheless, when their programmes of work overlap, the Committee may coordinate with these external expert committees and city groups as mandated by the Statistical Commission.

United Nations Statistical Commission

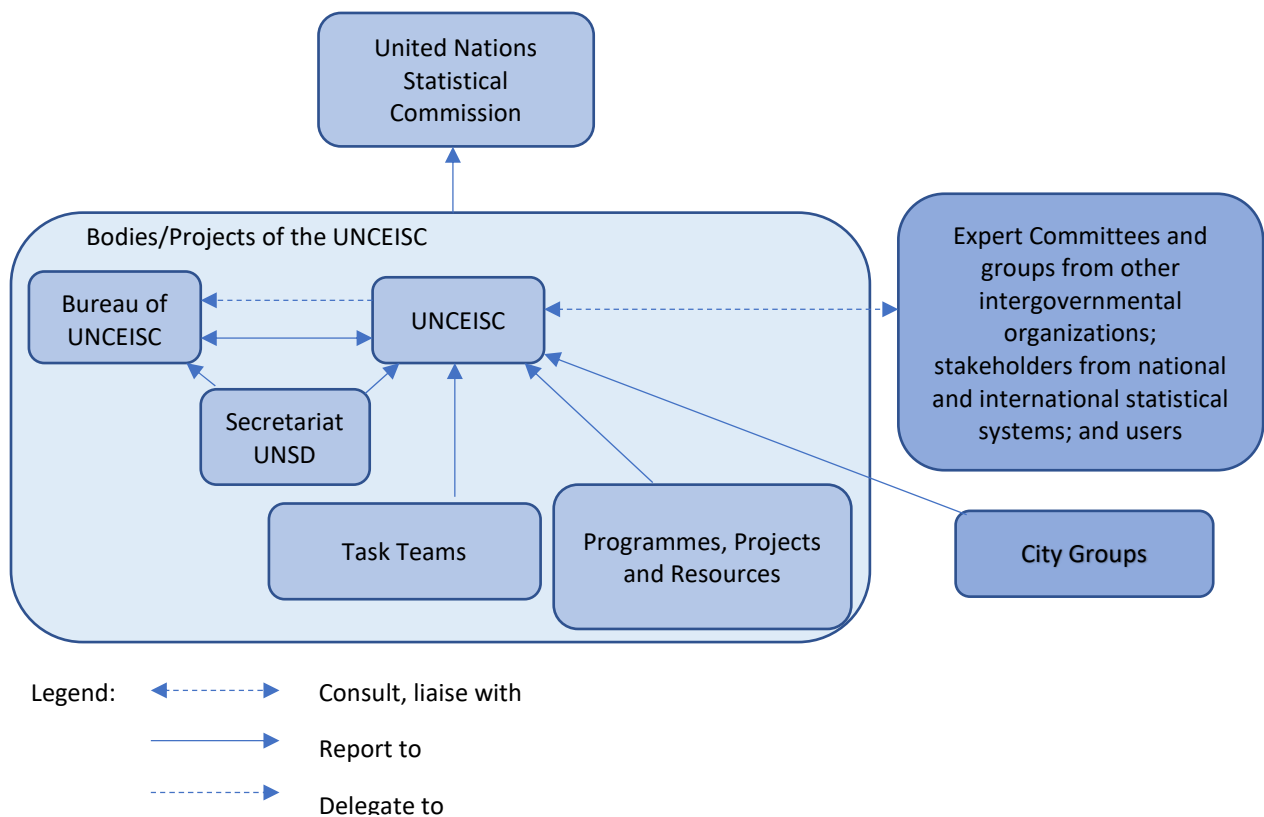
9. The United Nations Statistical Commission is the apex entity that provides the mandate of the Committee, approves its work programme and monitors its progress of work. The mandate of the Committee will be periodically reviewed by the Committee itself. The proposed amendments will be submitted to the Statistical Commission for endorsement.

United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications

10. The Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UN CEISC) is a country-led intergovernmental body, comprising senior experts with proven experience in international classifications from Member States and international organizations, which is responsible for carrying out the mandate outlined in section A above.

11. Within each area of its work programme, the Committee will undertake specific activities by establishing task teams, as needed, engaging with existing Expert Committees, city groups and/or other expert groups to carry out its activities.

Governance structure of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UN CEISC)



12. The Committee will undertake the following tasks in respect of the programmes under its responsibility:

- (a) Strategic planning, programming and monitoring: develop and monitor a strategic multi-year and annual work programme of the Committee that reflect its ongoing priorities and objectives, including: providing strategic direction for its activities; advocating best practice in the development and maintenance of international statistical classifications; ensuring the complementarity and proper coordination of its activities; agreeing on governance arrangements; formulating the workplans of task teams and projects, including communication strategies and budgets; assigning or negotiating the tasks of the task teams and groups from other intergovernmental organizations; tracking progress; and ensuring adequate and effective review of technical matters;

- (b) Reporting: reporting to the Statistical Commission on the workplans and projects within its mandate; receiving regular reports from the task teams; and liaising with stakeholders, including managing their expectations and gaining their support;
- (c) Resource mobilization: ensuring that workplans and projects are adequately resourced; raising funds from external sources, as needed, for example in the case of special projects; recommending staffing for the projects; and monitoring cash and in-kind budgets.

13. High-level representation will be necessary to ensure the strategic role of the Committee in setting priorities, bringing forward a research agenda, advancing an innovative approach in taking decisions on standards, and developing a strategic vision.

14. Members of the Committee will comprise high-level representatives from national Governments and international and regional organizations with expertise in international statistical classifications. In addition, members will be selected so as to ensure equitable regional country and agency representation.

15. Depending on the topics on its agenda, additional subject matter experts from Member States and international organizations may be invited to participate in task teams and projects of the Committee.

16. Members are appointed to the Committee for an initial period of three (3) years, which may be renewed.

17. The Committee will meet at least once a year. In special circumstances, in-between meetings may be organized. For in-between meetings, conference calls will be the preferred method of conducting consultations.

Chair

18. The Committee will elect, from among its members, a Chair for a period of three years, renewable for one term. The role of the Chair is to develop, in close cooperation with the Bureau and the secretariat, a multi-year strategic framework and an annual programme of work for the Committee, monitor progress of the various components of the programme and set the agenda for the meetings.

19. The Chair will represent the Committee at international meetings and will play a key role in promoting and communicating the work of the statistical community with other communities, namely the scientific, academic, business and policymaking community. The Chair will engage with the various stakeholders and seek support for Committee projects.

Bureau

20. The Bureau is established under the delegated authority from the Committee, to assist the Committee with the day-to-day management of its programme of work and the projects under its responsibility. The activities and tasks of the Committee are carried out by task teams and members of the Bureau will be assigned as leads of the task teams. Decisions taken by the Bureau, under the delegated authority of the Committee, will be reported to the Committee.

21. The Bureau will carry out the activities and tasks in relation to coordination, methodological development, statistical capacity-building, promotion and statistical response on emerging issues, in line with the workplans and projects within its mandate.

22. The Bureau of the Committee will consist of members of the Committee who lead the Committee's task teams, and international and regional organizations the Chair and the secretariat. The Chair may also

invite other experts, chairs of the city and other Committees/expert groups to participate in the meetings of the Bureau.

Secretariat

23. The secretariat of the Committee and its Bureau will be the United Nations Statistics Division. The secretariat, which will be the main source of logistical and administrative support for the Committee, will receive guidance regarding such support from the Committee and its Bureau. Among the substantive and administrative tasks that the secretariat will undertake are the following:

- (a) Consultation with countries and/or regional and other expert meetings on major substantive aspects of its programme of work;
- (b) Management of the Committee's website;
- (c) Preparation and dissemination of the correspondence with the members of the Statistical Commission and national statistical offices;
- (d) Preparation and dissemination of reports to the Statistical Commission on behalf of the Committee and its Bureau;
- (e) Provision of other substantive and administrative support to the Committee and its Bureau, as appropriate.

Task teams

24. The UN CEISC will convene task teams to carry out its work programme and/or in support of specific projects, for which specific and time-bound terms of references (ToRs) will be prepared. Such groups will be bodies of the Committee and, as such, will fall under its overall management and coordination. Task teams, which will be created by the Committee to address specific topics with a limited lifetime (generally, 2 years), will comprise members of the Committee who express interest in being part of the task teams and will meet on a regular intervals to ensure the timely completion of the assigned tasks.

25. The task teams may include experts in international statistical classifications who are not members of the Committee. These experts will be appointed by the Bureau of the Committee. Appropriate balanced regional representation must be considered in the member composition of these task teams.

City groups

26. Existing city groups may be invited to collaborate on specific programmes and projects under the responsibility of the Committee. The Committee, while respecting the character and mandate of these groups, will coordinate, within its mandate, its programme of work with those groups, as mandated by the Statistical Commission.

27. Specific tasks and responsibilities of these groups will be agreed upon between these groups and the Committee. The terms of reference for the tasks related to the programmes and projects will be formulated in coordination with every group. They will include specifications on deliverables, timelines and work arrangements for monitoring the technical discussions and for reporting recommendations to the Committee. The city groups will report to the Committee on the tasks and responsibilities agreed with the Committee.

Committees of experts and other groups/bodies from intergovernmental organizations

28. The Committee will liaise with other relevant expert committees from other intergovernmental organizations that are already in existence and have their own mandate, governance and reporting structure. These groups¹ include, but are not limited to:

- i. the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts and the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts
- ii. the UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics
- iii. the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting
- iv. the UN Committee of Experts on Agricultural and Rural Statistics (forthcoming)
- v. the UN Committee of Experts on Price Statistics (forthcoming)
- vi. the UN Committee of Experts on Energy Statistics (forthcoming)
- vii. the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (forthcoming)
- viii. the IMF committees for balance of payments statistics, government finance statistics and money and finance statistics
- ix. the OECD committees on national accounts, financial and related economic statistics
- x. the ILO International Conference of Labor Statisticians

29. For areas in the programmes of work of the aforementioned expert committees that fall within its scope of work, the Committee will initiate liaison with such groups in order to ensure complementarity between the programmes and to advance an integrated statistics approach in the broader area of economic statistics.

30. Formal collaboration with other expert groups/committees of the system of statistics relevant for international statistical classifications is envisaged through membership in other committees and/or the establishment of (joint) Task teams.

¹ Following the forthcoming recommendations of the Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics, the names of the expert groups working within the scope of the system of economic statistics have been aligned.