Expert Group Meeting on the Scope and Content of Social Statistics
New York, 9-12 September 2008

Presentation on the meeting's goals and draft programme of work

The meeting will attempt to reach three major goals. First, it aims at identifying the scope and content of contemporary social statistics in order to identify areas that need to be addressed by an international plan of action. This framing of contemporary social statistics will draw from the proceedings of the *Seminar on New Directions in Social Statistics,* held on 22 February 2008 in New York[1] and on national practices of collecting, processing and disseminating social statistics. It will also build on the proceedings and conclusions of the Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics, organized and hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division in New York, 6 – 9 May 2003[2].

In essence, for each social concern there needs to be an accompanying statistical data collection that requires relevant concepts and definitions, international standards, recommended topics, recommended tabulations, defined periodicity, and sources of data. Collected data would also need to be disaggregated by population groups (young, elderly, and women, to name a few) and by geographical levels.

Ultimately, each of the components of social statistics should be clearly and unambiguously described in terms of : (1) social concern it addresses (e.g. health, housing, learning and education and so forth), (2) sources of statistics (administrative records, population and housing census, household surveys), (3) statistical data collection and its components (existence and applicability of international standards in terms of the statistical method, definitions and concepts, recommended topics, recommended tabulations, classifications, periodicity), (4) different population groups (elderly, young, women, men, minorities and so forth), and (5) geographical level of presentation of statistics. This framework, therefore, may be described as clusters of social statistics unified through common methodologies.

To achieve this goal, the first step refers to defining major social phenomena. These can be grouped in the following nine categories:

- Population: size, structure and distribution of the population, fertility, mortality, and migration
- Family and community
- Economic resources, e.g. distribution of income, consumption
- Housing
- Culture and leisure
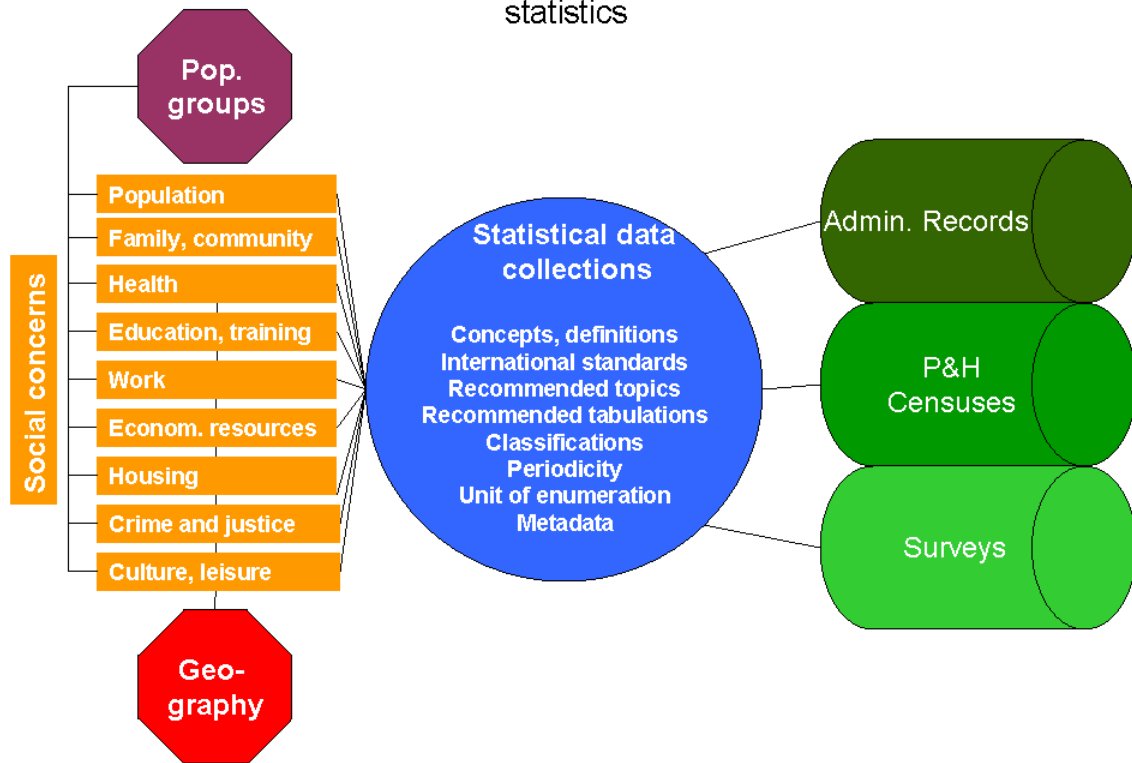- Education and training
- Work

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[1] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/new_directions_seminar.htm
[2] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/default.htm

- Health
- Crime and justice

The scheme below illustrates this concept and is also designed to be used as an outline for the background papers that would stimulate discussion of component areas of social statistics. Consequently, each paper will focus on one social concern, would elaborate on the characteristics of the statistical data collection; that is, on concepts and definitions, standards, variables/topics, tabulations, classification and periodicity, unit(s) of enumeration, metadata and then pinpoint to the sources of data emphasizing obstacles and best practices. It will also include a brief overview of emerging issues on the social concern being addressed. Reviewers of these papers will lead the discussion at the sessions.

Graph 1. Complete scheme and components of social statistics

The second goal of the meeting will address the issue of an international action plan for improving social statistics, pertaining to areas that require additional work, as well as on related issues such as coordination among various agencies and institutions regarding social statistics at both the national and international levels. This draft action plan, if deemed necessary, would mandate the United Nations Statistics Division to continue conducting a thorough review and assessment of social statistics and point to the necessary developmental work on international standards.

The meeting is expected to provide critical input in developing this international plan of action by pointing out areas in need of international guidelines; emphasizing the value of training in social statistics; pointing to the need for documenting the roles and statistical activities of various international organizations, to name a few of expected inputs. The meeting is allotting a day and a half to this agenda item, including deliberations on national and international cooperation in social statistics.

Finally, the third goal of the meeting is expected to discuss the draft terms of reference for the proposed city group, or some other organizational arrangement, such as a task force or friends of the chair, if the need is clearly identified.

United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Scope and Content of Social Statistics
9 – 12 September 2008
United Nations, New York

Organization of work (Draft, Revision 2)

Tuesday, 9 September 2008

Registration of participants (9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.)

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

10:00 – 10:30
   Opening

   Opening statement (UNSD)
   Selection of Chair and Rapporteur for the meeting
   Administrative matters

10:30 – 1:00

1.   **General framework for social statistics – past, present and future**

   - Overview of past approaches (by United Nations Statistics Division)
   - Frameworks of Social Statistics at National Level: Case of Australia (by Australian Bureau of Statistics)
   - General discussion

2.   **Statistics on major social concerns: Population, family and community**

   - Presentation by reviewers (2)
   - General discussion

Lunch break (1.00 – 3:00)

Afternoon session (3:00 – 6:00)

3.   **Statistics on major social concerns: Economic resources**

   - Presentation by reviewers (2)

- General discussion

4. Statistics on major social concerns: Culture and leisure

- Presentation by reviewers (2)
- General discussion

5. Statistics on major social concerns: Crime and justice

- Presentation by reviewers (2)
- General discussion

Reception (6:00 – 7:00)

Morning session (10:00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

6. Statistics on major social concerns: Education and training

- Presentation by reviewers (2)
- General discussion

7. Statistics on major social concerns: Work

- Presentation by reviewers (2)
- General discussion

Lunch break (1.00 – 3:00)

Afternoon session (3:00 – 6:00)

8. Coordination of social statistics at national and international levels

- Presentation by reviewers (2)
- General discussion

Morning session (10:00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

9. International action plan for social statistics

- Global (by UNSD)
- Regional (by regional commissions)
- General discussion

Lunch break (1.00 – 3:00)

Afternoon session (3:00 – 6:00)

10.   International action plan for social statistics (continued)

- Roundtable general discussion

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

10:00 – 12:00

11.   New city group for social statistics?

- General discussion

12:00 – 12:45

12.   Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

13.   Closing