

# **Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts Management Group Meeting**

**12 November 2019, Teleconference**

## **Summary Record**

Present: Gallo Gueye (Chair) and Nicola Maserelli (Eurostat); Louis Marc Ducharme and Gabriel Quiros (IMF); Paul Schreyer and Peter Van De Ven (OECD); Stefan Schweinfest, Ivo Havinga and Herman Smith (UNSD), Haishan Fu and Eric Metreau (World Bank).

### **1. Briefing on the 13th AEG Meeting**

#### **1.1 Progress with the SNA research agenda**

The ISWGNA: MG welcomed the progress with resolving the priority issues on the SNA research agenda and supported the drafting of guidance notes on these issues. These guidance notes will present options and recommendations through clarifications on the existing SNA recommendations, extensions of the current system, and in some cases proposals to update its fundamental principles. The guidance notes will also provide practical guidance for countries to experiment and test the compilation of the statistics related to these priority issues.

The ISWGNA: MG emphasized the importance of coordination of the research work with other relevant statistical domains (e.g. BOPCOM, UNCEBTS, UNCEEA, etc.). Common priority areas should be addressed with the involvement of experts from all concerned domains, to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure the coherence and consistency between the different manuals through joint workstreams.

#### **1.2 Updating the SNA**

The ISWGNA: MG agreed with the approach of combining the ‘incremental work’ with periodic ‘major update’ of the system. This approach provides the necessary agility in the response to user needs and supports continuous research on the SNA update. The ISWGNA: MG also stressed that a deliberate effort is made by the ISWGNA in supporting developing countries in testing the new recommended solutions for their applicability and feasibility of implementation in different national contexts. At the same time, the criteria to determine conceptual compliance with the SNA recommendations should be reviewed, taking into account the relevance of the latest recommendations for countries.

#### **1.3 User consultation**

The ISWGNA: MG emphasized to step-up the user consultation on the overall update of the 2008 SNA, the priority areas of the present SNA research agenda to identify possible gaps,

and on feedback for the proposed solutions. It was agreed that user consultations should focus on conceptual and practical issues and tailored to specific groups of users.

The ISWGNA: MG considered using different channels for user consultation, including existing meetings, written consultations, national, regional and international events, and webinars. The use of digital channels should be explored as they may prove to be the most cost-effective means of consultation, particularly in the case of developing countries.

The ISWGNA: MG welcomed the proposed sessions on the SNA update for the upcoming IARIW conference and the broader consultations on the update of the overall system of economic statistics through the international high-level conference in Europe in 2020 proposed by Eurostat and UNSD as well as consultations of the Friends of the Chair on Economic Statistics.

#### **1.4 Communication**

The ISWGNA: MG agreed with the AEG recommendation to create a fourth sub-group of the research agenda task force to work on the communication strategy for the update of the SNA and welcomed the IMF and the World Bank as joint secretaries. It was agreed that the communication strategy is to cover various elements, including the branding of the SNA, a more user-friendly terminology, communication on revisions, a digital version of the SNA, updating the current SNA website hosted by UNSD, and an assessment of the required financial resources for consideration by the ISWGNA: MG. UNSD welcomed the advice for the update of the SNA website.

As for the communication strategy for the SNA, the MG supported seeking external services of a professional communication company, building also on the positive experience with the communication strategy for the SEEA.

## **2. Outline and main messages of the ISWGNA report to the 2020 Statistical Commission**

The ISWGNA: MG agreed that the key messages in the report to the upcoming session of the Statistical Commission in 2020 include the progress with resolving issues on globalization, digitalization, and wellbeing and sustainability; the key milestones of the outputs of the work of the subgroups; and the finalization of the consolidated research agenda. It should also elaborate on the overarching strategy towards the major update of the 2008 SNA as an incremental update of the SNA poses risks for its coherence and international comparability; the preparation of the guidance notes on research issues to be made available on an incremental basis for experimentation and testing by countries, including developing countries; ways to consult users; and the establishment of the fourth sub-group that works on the communication strategy on the update of the SNA.

The MG agreed that the timetable for the update of the SNA needs further consideration. It saw the merits of including a timetable in the 2020 UNSC report, however more detailed work plans for the individual guidance notes are needed, including governance for cross-domain issues. The MG recognised that date stamping of the SNA has benefits, e.g. for

communication with users, and suggested that the issue is also addressed by the communication sub-group.

### **3. New AEG Members**

The ISWGNA:MG took note of the current members of the AEG and agreed to invite Celestino Girón from the ECB to join the AEG following the resignation of Tjeerd Jellema.

### **4. Transfer of the ISWGNA chair**

UNSD is next in line to chair the ISWGNA in accordance with the normal rotation policy.

### **5. Next meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be decided in due course.