

Statistical Commission

Forty-ninth Session

6 - 9 March 2018

Item 3 (q) of the provisional agenda*

Items for discussion and decision: working methods of the Statistical Commission

STATEMENT OF TURKEY

Report of the Bureau on the working methods of the Statistical Commission: review of the city group mechanism

Turkey would like to state sincere appreciation to both city groups for their significant studies and also to Mr. Hermann Habermann for this comprehensive and excellent report.

In the report, the advantages and disadvantages of city groups are very well summarised in an explicit and comprehensive manner.

As mentioned in the Report, despite the initial advantages of city groups which was introduced as a new mechanism in order to complement the existing structures, some deficiencies and disadvantages have emerged in the operation of city groups in time.

As far as we are concerned, the most important issues regarding the operation of city groups are; the ambiguity in the relationship between the city groups and international actors, difficulties in integrating the methodological work of city groups into the international statistical system; the representation problem from various NSO's due to the financial and human resources reasons which is valid for UNSD as well.

We consider that there is a need for the Commission to improve its oversight function over the city groups by not hindering their flexibility in the operating methods. This could be done through loose supervising by requesting regular reporting from the groups.

As in the case of UNECE, where the Bureau meets twice a year and conducts in-depth reviews on two statistical topics at each meeting, members of the Statistical Commission might hold at least one meeting to review one or two of these groups before the sessions. Thus, Commission could carry out a comprehensive review of the work of two city groups each year.

Balanced participation is of crucial importance issue in city groups as well and has not well functioned in the last years. Providing financial resources for the participation in the group meetings would be good facilitator. However when considered the current economic realities of the international organizations this does not seen an easy solution.

Using modern technological tools could be tested in some of the meetings of these groups, in order to check the feasibility and enable participation of more countries. Virtual meetings that

are conducted via internet broadcast, videoconferencing, e-mail or a similar mode could prevent unbalanced participation causing of financial difficulties.

We consider that specific role of the city groups vis-a-vis other groups is to realise the development studies on certain statistical topics which sets the basis of the study and put it on the right track. This work then continues by the other regular Commission mechanisms.

The works and outputs of the city groups need to be better integrated into the global statistical system. Wider participation to the group studies by the various countries and UNSD itself would serve to this aim. On the other hand we know that due to the lack of human and financial resources this cannot be done easily. Electronic consultation method for the works of the city groups could also improve the integration of these studies into the global statistical system. This would be an easier way for both sides.

Regarding the situation of the city groups following the completion of their initial mandate, we think that it may depend on the case of each city groups. Group and Commission could jointly decide whether there is a need to continue the studies in a more formal and regular Commission mechanism or to terminate the group as the work is done. This decision might be taken at each case separately.

Having considered substantial issues about the city groups, we think that it would be very beneficial work of Bureau to review comprehensively the structure of the Commission mechanisms including all kind of groups, friends of chairs etc.

In line with this review, it might be considered to put an end to certain group mechanisms operating under the Commission. This would simplify the commission structures a little bit and could improve the efficiency of the remaining mechanisms. Within this context, city group mechanism may be terminated due to its mentioned difficulties or be formally restructured according to the emergent needs.