

## United Nations Statistical Commission

### Fifty-second session

1–3 and 5 March 2021

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda

### Items for discussion and decision: economic statistics

## Document E/CN.3/2021/7 – Report of the Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics

***Statement provided by:***

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

***Statement:***

1. The ABS welcomes the report from the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics. We acknowledge and commend the work of the group over the past two years. Australia is pleased to have been a member of this group since its inception.
2. We further note our appreciation of the consultative way the group has functioned and the challenges it has faced in building a broad-based consensus position - at both conceptual and practical levels – across a very wide variety of national, regional and international entities within and outside the official statistic community.
3. The ABS agrees to the Recommendations in the report for the future of economic statistics, and looks forward to continuing to collaborate with international colleagues on implementing these recommendations.
4. In providing our support for the recommendations Australia notes the following:
  - (a) The four key outcomes (Section IV of the report) form a strong basis to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the system of economic statistics.
  - (b) The group advises that “global actions should adopt a problem-driven approach”. Within the current prevailing global conditions Australia emphasizes the need to focus on solutions to real and complex problems. In this regard the thematic based approach, rather than a domain based approach, to the system of economic statistics is supported.
  - (c) The guidance on new mechanisms to transform collaboration amongst national statistical offices and international organizations advocates an approach that is somewhat akin to how the High Level Group on Modernization of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS), which is under the auspice of the ECE region, functions. Australia encourages that future work in developing better national data solutions have regard to what can be learned from the inclusive, collaborative and practical approaches taken to this sort of work by HLG-MOS.
  - (d) While the ambitions outlined in Section V.B are substantial they are worth pursuing, particularly in the areas of common data acquisition and access and data-sharing.
  - (e) That while the establishment of a network of economic statistics is supported, this network should have a clearer mandate to drive coordination amongst existing groups of statistical experts than is revealed in the report. Only through having a more defined and influential role will the goal of accelerating innovation and increasing agility be realized. Additionally, further and more determined steps should be taken to review the mandate and governance of existing groups, including assessments of their current fitness for purpose.
  - (f) The recommendation to develop a broader framework for measuring the relationship between the economy and society, in addition to further advancing the implementation and update of both SNA and SEEA, is highly ambitious and exceedingly broad in scope. Australia advocates that as the feasibility of establishing a committee of experts on population and well-being is undertaken due consideration is given as to whether the

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assigned task is feasible and even desirable. This feasibility work should be undertaken in a spirit of willingness to explore quickly and abandon the approach if it is not believed that rapid and real progress can be made.

- (g) Australia applauds the intention to speed up the development of statistical standards through continuous and iterative updates and experimenting with methodological changes and also emphasizes that such experimentation and iteration needs to culminate in regular formal updates to the standards. We further note that this approach is only viable on a global scale if developing countries and regions are able to access the findings and products of experimental work.

5. The ABS agrees to the dissolution of the Friends of the Chair group on economic statistics.

Submitted on:

2/19/2021