

United Nations Statistical Commission

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Item 3 (j) of the provisional agenda

Items for discussion and decision: big data

Document E/CN.3/2021/14 – Report of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics

Statement provided by:

Finland

Deputy Director General of Statistics Finland, Ms. Johanna Laiho-Kauranne on behalf of Director General of Statistics Finland.

Statement:

Finland appreciates the work carried out by the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics. The group has brought our Big Data related methodological capabilities to an entirely new level. We will continue to support the work by assigning our experts to that work.

However, in addition to the methodological development and funding arrangements as anticipated in the report, statistical institutions would also need support to access better Big Data. We consider that the statistical legislation and procedures should support trusted and secure access to privately held data to ensure the modernization of the statistical systems and to maintain the privacy of the data providers.

One way of doing this would be to reflect better the emerging new data sources in our statutes, like the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

For example, Principle 5, Data for statistical purposes, as it stands now, only refers to surveys and administrative data. We propose that the scope of the principle should be extended to cover also the emerging new data sources like data held by platform operators and other private enterprises. We suggest that the work to revise the Fundamental Principles in this respect should be initiated within the UN statistical system.

Submitted on:

3/2/2021