

United Nations Statistical Commission

Fifty-second session

1–3 and 5 March 2021

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:

UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) on behalf of the National Statistician

Statement:

The United Kingdom commends the work and progress as shown in the report of the Global Working Group on Big Data and Official Statistics activities. We acknowledge the work of the Task Teams and support the promotion and use of the UN Global Platform and Regional Hubs for big data training, and as a platform to support analysis and statistics using big data. The UK endorses the community model for UN Global Platform funding; the development of a global program of Big Data training; and the name change of the Global Working Group to the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics.

The UK commends the achievements of the Platform since its handover to the UN community in June 2020. We welcome the progress by the Task Teams and GWG members on using the global shipping AIS data for analysis and statistics; the availability and use of this data source for the global statistics community clearly demonstrates the benefit of the Global Platform.

The UK stresses the importance of the global nature of platform and regional support of the Hubs. We see a clear public benefit to wide availability of datasets across all regions and to all members of the global statistics community. The UK believes that to deliver on this, datasets and outputs should be made available to all UN members where possible.

The UK also welcomes greater transparency on the security of data held within the Platform and considerations made towards data governance (incl. risk management, good data practices and ethics). Given the crosscutting nature of data governance specifically, and the proposed new Task Team on data from commercial sources, it may be an appropriate topic for a special task team or programme.

Focus on the least developed countries and small island developing States mentioned within the Report is also welcome. The UK encourages further engagement with these users, including for example greater involvement in the Global Working Group and Global Platform governance groups. Likewise, we encourage closer working between the regional economic commissions and their respective hubs to realise local synergies.

Submitted on:

2/23/2021