United Nations Statistical Commission
Fifty-third session
1–3 and 5 March 2022
Item 3 (u) of the provisional agenda
Items for discussion and decision: Big Data Statistics

Document E/CN.3/2022/25 – Report of the Secretary-Big Data Statistics

Statement provided by: Stats NZ
Overview: The report of the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics. Pursuant to Statistical Commission decision 52/112, the Committee of Experts addresses the issues raised and invites the Commission to express its views on the proposed future direction of its work. The Committee proposes to mainstream the use of big data and data science into the work programmes of national statistical offices by promoting increased collaboration of the Committee task teams with subject-matter expert groups, by including training in big data and data science into the training curricula of national statistical offices and by maintaining an active communication platform for experts of the Committee and the wider community of official statistics. Other proposals include setting priorities for new activities based on policy considerations, creating a forum of leaders of data science centres and regional hubs for big data, developing a more strategic approach for engagement with the private sector and strengthening the collaboration with the geospatial community. The proposal for the future direction of capacity development in big data and data science includes, among other things, empowering the regional hubs as points of training and project implementation for national statistical offices of each region.

Action Taken by the Statistical Commission:
 <mark>The Commission is invited to:</mark>
 	
    (a)   Acknowledge and express its support for the work done by the task teams, the United Nations Global Platform and the regional hubs;
 	
    (b)   Support the proposed direction of future work of the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, including by: (i) Mainstreaming big data and data science in the daily work of national statistical offices and incorporating related courses into the regular training curricula of national statistical offices; (ii) Prioritizing case studies, projects, activities, methods and applications based on strategic considerations related to main policy agendas or emerging issues; (iii) Creating a network consisting of leaders of data science areas of national statistical offices and of the regional hubs; (iv) Developing a strategic approach for engagement with the private sector around common purpose, benefits for social good and the use of open-source tools; (v) Strengthening the collaboration with the geospatial community;
 	
    (c)   Support the direction of the capacity development programme for big data and data science, including by: (i) Creating a global network of data science trainers within the statistical community; (ii) Enlarging the international data science mentoring programme by drawing on all task team experts; (iii) Empowering the regional hubs in providing training, mentorship, coaching, partnerships and support for the implementation of joint projects to national statistical offices;

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(d) Support the creation of a sector hub of Artificial Intelligence for Environment and Sustainability (ARIES) for the System of Environmental Economic Accounting in support of the Global Platform, as a means to advance the interoperability of data and models in the domain of environmental economic accounting and sustainability, and to provide capacity-building and training for researchers, statisticians and data scientists in this area under the guidance of the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics and the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting;

(e) Support the creation of the United Nations Privacy-enhancing Technologies Lab to demonstrate the value of the use of privacy-preserving techniques for official statistics, to understand practical challenges and to build privacy technology literacy.

Statement:

Stats NZ commends the work done by the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics. We have been involved in consulting on this work and are supportive of the committee's upcoming initiatives. We acknowledge and express our support for the work done by the task teams, the United Nations Global Platform, and the regional hubs.

Stats NZ supports the proposed direction of future work of the Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics, particularly around mainstreaming big data and data science in the daily work of national statistical offices and incorporating related courses into the regular training curricula of national statistical offices; prioritizing case studies, projects, activities, methods and applications based on strategic considerations related to main policy agendas or emerging issues and creating a network consisting of leaders of data science areas of national statistical offices and of the regional hubs.

Stats NZ supports the direction of the capacity development programme for big data and data science, including by creating a global network of data science trainers within the statistical community. We support work by Pacific countries, including through the Pacific Statistical Methods Board, in considering the opportunity that big data and data science offers.

| Submitted on: | 2/25/2021 |