

United Nations  Nations Unies

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
STATISTICS DIVISION (UNSD)
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
TWO UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, DC2-1670, NEW YORK, NY 10017
TELEPHONE NO: 1 (917) 367-4130; FAX NO: 1 (212) 963-4569
Internet location: unstats.un.org/unsd

REFERENCE: STAT 151 (49)

16 October 2017

Dear Ambassador Angell-Hansen,

It is my pleasure to write to you today from one Commission to a sister Commission. As you will be aware, earlier this year, the 48th Session of the Statistical Commission discussed a Report of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on an international roadmap to improve drug statistics as part of its multiannual work plan.

As already outlined by Mr. Georges-Simon Ulrich, vice chair of the Statistical Commission, in his video message to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 17 March 2017, the Statistical Commission recognizes the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the UN policy making body on drug control matters. I am writing today to transmit to you the final report of the Statistical Commission's 48th session.

Please allow me to highlight some of the Statistical Commission's decisions regarding statistics on drugs and drug use. The Commission recognized the statistical merit of the roadmap and commended it to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its consideration to ensure harmonization with its policy directions. The Statistical Commission, furthermore, encouraged the collaboration between our two Commissions within the UN System.

In this context I wish to reassure you that the Statistical Commission's role is to define statistical measures of already agreed policy directions. It does neither discuss nor define policy directions. Our work on the SDG indicator framework is an excellent example of this. Indeed, the work of the Statistical Commission is rooted in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics endorsed by the General Assembly in January 2014, so its aspiration is to be based only on professional statistical considerations.

.../

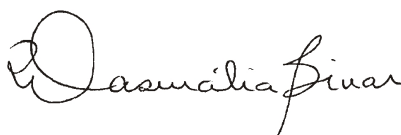
Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen
Chair, United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Improving the availability and quality of statistics on drugs and drug use requires two types of expertise: statistical expertise and substantive knowledge of the drug problem. It requires our two Commissions to work together under the umbrella of the Economic and Social Council. As with other thematic areas, the Statistical Commission will continue to maintain on its agenda the topic of statistics on drugs and drug use in line with its multi-year programme and emerging needs. The main constituencies of the Statistical Commission are National Statistical Offices as producers of official statistics, who, generally, also act as national coordinators of statistics produced by other government entities such as line ministries. Indeed, the Statistical Commission covers a broad spectrum of statistical areas, not only those that are typically managed by national statistical offices, with the aim of applying the same statistical rigor across all themes. In this regard I hope that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs finds in the Statistical Commission a source of expertise to improve the quality and availability of drug statistics. The Statistical Commission is ready to bring what official statisticians do best: statistical competence, impartiality, scientific rigor and full transparency.

Between its annual sessions, the Statistical Commission operates through subsidiary groups, such as expert groups and city groups, to name a few. The Statistical Commission is ready to work with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs through one of these or other mechanisms that you find appropriate.

I am looking forward to a fruitful cooperation of our Commissions.

Yours sincerely,



Wasmália Socorro Barata Bivar
Chair, United Nations Statistical Commission