

The text of the report includes all the changes made on Friday, 2 March under agenda item 7 and is approved by the Rapporteur. It is subject to editing by the United Nations editors.

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Thirty-eighth session
27 February - 2 March 2007
Agenda item 7

2 March 2007

DRAFT REPORT

Decision 1: Programme review: education statistics (Item 3a)

The Commission:

- (a) Welcomed with appreciation the report on education statistics by Statistics Canada, took note of the recommendations contained therein and requested Statistics Canada to provide the full report to all members and observers of the Commission;
- (b) Agreed to set up a Task Force on Education Statistics consisting of interested countries and agencies and asked the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) to be the Task Force convener;
- (c) Requested UNSD, in collaboration with UIS, interested countries and agencies, to prepare draft Terms of Reference of the Task Force and submit them to the Bureau of the Commission for approval; the Terms of Reference could include the following tasks:
 - (i) further reviewing and analyzing the accumulated experience of countries and various agencies;
 - (ii) developing a conceptual framework for education statistics which would build on what currently exists and which would suit the needs of developed and developing countries;
 - (iii) reviewing coordination mechanism among relevant agencies and proposing new arrangements, if necessary, to avoid duplication of tasks and to reduce country response burden.

(d) Welcomed the proposal by UIS to organize a working session of interested countries and organizations on education statistics as soon as possible in 2007 to provide input to the work plan of the Task Force;

(e) Requested the Task Force to develop its work plan, begin its implementation and submit a progress report to the Commission in 2008.

Decision 2: Population and housing censuses (Item 3b)

The Commission:

(a) Welcomed and adopted the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2* and encouraged countries to begin their implementation.

(b) Requested that the text of the revised guidelines be released in all official United Nations languages as soon as possible.

(c) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division and other international agencies to increase their technical assistance to national statistical offices to strengthen national capacity for the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses.

(d) Recognized with appreciation the support being given to countries to implement the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Decision 3: Disability measurement (Item 3c)

The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report and noted its appreciation for the work carried out by the Washington Group;

- (b) Acknowledged the progress made towards the elaboration of a set of census questions on disability, based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)
- (c) Endorsed the work plan for 2007 as set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report, with particular reference to:
 - (i) Finalizing the analysis of the test data and short set of questions for use in the population census;
 - (ii) Addressing “upper body functioning” in the set of questions;
 - (iii) Providing a fully elaborated set of questions to be used in sample surveys;
- (d) Encouraged the Washington Group, as part of its follow up activities, to assist countries with their implementation of recommended questions for the measurement of disability through censuses and surveys.
- (e) Requested the Washington Group to collaborate with WHO (in the context of the application of the ICF) and with the Budapest Group (on the development of health status) to enhance coordination and avoid duplication of resources.

Decision 4: Information and communication technology (ICT) statistics (Item 3d)

The Commission:

- (a) Endorsed the core list of ICT indicators as contained in Annex II of document E/CN.3/2007/5.
- (b) Congratulated the work of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Development and recognized the leadership of UNCTAD in initiating the Partnership which has become an example of successful cooperation of international organizations.

- (c) Encouraged countries to use this core list of indicators in their data collection programmes.
- (d) Recognized that Information and Communication Technology is a rapidly evolving area, and encouraged the Partnership to continue work to improve and update the list of indicators, especially in view of measuring use of ICT in education, in government, the contribution of ICT to economic growth and social development, and barriers to use of ICT.
- (e) Encouraged the Partnership to assist countries in their capacity building efforts for the collection of data for the ICT indicators.

Decision 5: Agricultural statistics (Item 3e)

The Commission:

- (a) Took note with appreciation of the report and the recommendations presented by FAO.
- (b) Commended the work of FAO on the FAOSTAT, CountrySTAT and RegionSTAT databases and encouraged FAO to further improve these databases, especially with respect to metadata, transparency of data sources and coordination with regional entities who already collect data in this field.
- (c) Endorsed the efforts to explore ways in which the various national census activities, including Agricultural and Population censuses, can be coordinated to create greater synergy, efficiency and value added between those large statistical exercises.
- (d) Supported the view that agricultural statistics needs to be further integrated with other statistical areas, in particular with economic and environment statistics, focusing thereby on outcomes.
- (e) Welcomed the FAO's efforts to keep National Statistical Offices informed and involved in the compilation of agricultural statistics;

(f) Expressed appreciation for the technical assistance on agricultural statistics provided by FAO to countries, and encouraged FAO to continue to provide such assistance.

(g) Endorsed the creation of a City Group on statistics on rural development and agriculture household income and welcomed the proposal of UK to host the first meeting in Wye.

(h) Agreed with FAO's assessment of the consultation mechanism on agricultural statistics and the replacement of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Agricultural Statistics by FAO's International Advisory Group.

Decision 6: National accounts (Item 3f)

The Commission:

(a) Commended the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) for completing the recommendations of the 44 issues identified for the update in a transparent manner, involving the global statistical community in accordance with the agreed time table.

(b) Adopted the package of ISWGNA recommendations on the update of the 1993 SNA presented by the ISWGNA to the Commission as set out in the background document *Full Set of Consolidated Recommendations* with additional considerations on five issues as set out in the Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts in section III.C and III.D and its supplementary report.

(c) Emphasized the need to establish guidelines on when to recognize pension entitlements in the core set of accounts, the need for additional research on the estimation of research and development as capital formation, provide guidelines taking into consideration the impact of the treatment of goods for processing on input-output analysis and the recording of international trade and elaborate on the guidelines on the integrated measurement of the informal sector within the national accounts.

- (d) Reiterated its request to the ISWGNA to submit a strategy for the implementation of the SNA to the Commission in 2008, based on regional consultations in 2007, reflecting user perspectives and taking into account the different levels of SNA implementation across countries.
- (e) Took note that this update retains the framework of the 1993 SNA and therefore encourage countries to continue with the implementation of the 1993 SNA.
- (f) Requested the ISWGNA to act on the concerns raised by the Commission to support countries in establishing a basic data collection strategy for the implementation of the SNA, the integration of the informal sector in the national accounts and the need for capacity building to implement the strategy and recommendations.
- (g) Underlined the importance of preparing handbooks and manuals with implementation guidance and to enhance capacity building through training and technical assistance.
- (h) Took note of the proposal by the ISWGNA to present the draft of the update of the 1993 SNA in two volumes to the Commission; in 2008 volume one, comprising a full set of chapters that represents the SNA framework in terms of accounting conventions, the accounts, and the integration of the accounts and incorporates the adopted recommendations on the 44 issues; and in 2009 volume two, comprising interpretations of the accounts and extensions such as satellite accounts.
- (i) Requested the ISWGNA to continue reporting to the Commission the progress on the implementation of the SNA by countries, focusing on scope, coverage and quality.
- (j) Supported the formation of a high-level group to examine long-term implications of SNA and possible future changes, taking into consideration rapid changes of the global economy; the need to balance users' needs, theory and the ability to collect primary data, the choice between

imputed versus observable transactions, and the role of satellite accounts vis-à-vis the core accounts; Requested the ISWGNA to establish this high-level group and ensure a broad country representation in it.

Decision 7: Integrated economic statistics (Item 3g)

The Commission took note of the report of the Secretary-General on Integrated Economic Statistics (E/CN.3/2007/8).

Decision 8: Environmental accounting (Item 3h)

The Commission:

- (a) Commended the work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEAA) and stressed the importance of the work of the Committee in the elevation of the handbook *Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting 2003*, commonly referred to as SEEA-2003, to the level of an international statistical standard based on an agreed issues list and taking into consideration consistency with the 1993 SNA Rev.1 and other revised macro-economic standards;
- (b) Adopted Part 1 of the *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water* (SEEAW) as an interim international statistical standard recognizing significant demand from the users' community and encouraged its implementation in countries;
- (c) Requested that the SEEAW be re-evaluated by the Commission at the time the revised SEEA is submitted to the Commission for adoption as international statistical standard;
- (d) Requested the UNSD to develop and submit to the next Statistical Commission an implementation strategy for SEEAW, taking into account the fact that countries are at different stages of development of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting;

- (e) Called upon countries and international agencies to allocate sufficient resources to the revision of the SEEA-2003 in their work programme in view of the urgency of revising the SEEA-2003;
- (f) Requested the UNCEEA to develop and submit to the next Statistical Commission a Project Management Framework for the revision of SEEA 2003 and to report on progress;
- (g) Called upon the UNCEEA to continue, within its mandate, coordination with the city groups and other expert groups working in environmental-economic accounting and related statistics;
- (h) Encouraged UNSD and the UNCEEA to continue organizing user-producer conferences building on the success of the User-Producer Conference on Water Accounting for Integrated Water Resources Management;
- (i) Took note of the results of Phase I of the Global Assessment of Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting, confirmed its application for assessing the present and planned scope of implementation of SEEA in countries and welcomed Phase II of the Global Assessment in 2007, with a focus on specific subject areas identified by countries in Phase I.

Decision 9: International economic and social classifications (Item 3i)

The Commission:

- (a) Agreed with the implementation process for ISIC and CPC as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, especially regarding the development of user guides and correspondence tables and the provision of technical assistance to countries;
- (b) Requested that the timeline presented in paragraph 25 of the report be reviewed recognizing at the same time the need for flexibility and the wish of advancing the suggested implementation target dates;

- (c) Requested that correspondence tables between the revised classifications and previous versions be made available as soon as possible;
- (d) Encouraged countries to share experiences in the implementation of the revised classifications and noted the interest expressed by India and Japan in assisting other countries in the implementation process of the revised classifications and encouraged other countries to offer their assistance;
- (e) Agreed with the draft structure of ISCO presented in the background document as a suitable standard for internationally comparable statistics;
- (f) Noted the need for draft definitions of the proposed ISCO categories when the tripartite meeting considers the structure in late 2007, and the need for language versions of the classification as important prerequisites for successful implementation;
- (g) Took note of the next steps in the formal process to approve ISCO;
- (h) Requested the ILO to report back to the Commission in 2008.

Decision 10: Management issues in national statistical offices: access to microdata (Item 3j)

The Commission:

- (a) Welcomed with appreciation the report prepared by Australian Bureau of Statistics laying out principles and guidelines for managing statistical confidentiality and microdata access;
- (b) Approved the proposed set of principles and guidelines, underlining the extreme importance of ensuring confidentiality and maintaining public trust;
- (c) Recognized the need of NSOs to find a proper balance between the importance of access to microdata for statistical analysis and the protection of confidentiality, and further recognized the need for specific training in this respect;

- (d) Recognized that success in managing statistical confidentiality and microdata access depends on the size of a country's population, maturity of a country's statistical system, the existence of legal arrangements that protect privacy and provide rules governing access to data, and whether this is culturally acceptable so as not to negatively affect cooperation in statistical data collection;
- (e) Noting that a number of international agencies and other institutions are serving as data depositories:
- (i) emphasized that countries retain ownership of their submitted data and control over its access,
 - (ii) underscored the need for greater transparency in policies governing the release of data by the depositories, and
 - (iii) encouraged adequate consultation between countries and the depositories on granting access to data.
- (f) Requested UNSD to collect and make available best practices relating to managing statistical confidentiality and microdata access, and to assist with capacity building on microdata access practices, as well as with strengthening NSO's institutionally to conduct some research in-house and where applicable in collaboration with the research community.

Decision 11: Development indicators (Item 3k)

The Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the work carried out by the IAEG as well as the improvements made with respect to the MDGs Indicators website and database, including their presentation and structure;

- (b) Recognized the need for continuous improvement in the statistics needed to track progress towards the MDGs;
- (c) Stressed the need to regionalize some of the global activities so that countries can share their experiences at the regional level;
- (d) Requested UNSD, regional commissions and other international agencies to assist countries in two main areas:
 - (i) enabling them to have the necessary data and methodologies to monitor achievements at the country level towards the MDGs; and
 - (ii) facilitating the development of a coordinated reporting mechanism so that a consolidated data set is provided to users and international agencies;
- (e) Reiterated the concern on the need to improve communication between countries and international agencies as well as within the national statistical systems on the compilation of indicators;
- (f) Encouraged international organizations to use national statistical data more extensively and to produce estimates only when national data are not available; Requested international agencies to ensure that consultation with countries has taken place prior to dissemination of international MDGs figures especially with respect to imputations of missing data.

Decision 12: Statistical capacity-building (Item 3l)

The Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the report and agreed with its recommendations on future steps;
- (b) Recognized that donor coordination is of importance and that the coordination should be further enhanced by making full use of existing mechanisms already in place to coordinate international assistance initiatives;
- (c) Requested CCSA and PARIS21 to examine whether a new mechanism is required to further enhance coordination to gain maximum effectiveness and advocacy for government funding of statistics;
- (d) Stressed that capacity building activities of international agencies at the country level should be demand-driven rather than supply-driven, and that any assistance provided to countries should have a long term perspective of building their capacity to produce necessary data in a sustainable way rather than an ad-hoc approach limited to finding short-term solutions;
- (e) Requested that all stakeholders particularly international organizations give due consideration to ECOSOC resolution 2006/6 on Strengthening Statistical Capacity.
- (f) Re-emphasized the urgency to assist countries in establishing a mechanism for coordination within the national statistical system, and requested UNSD to propose guidelines for improved coordination;
- (g) Welcomed the broad recognition by the donor community at the Third Round Table on Managing for Development Results of the urgent need to increase financing for the development of statistics;

(h) Welcomed the ongoing initiatives of the United Nations Statistics Division, regional commissions and other international agencies to achieve greater coordination in operational activities at the country level.

Decision 13: International Comparison Programme (Item 3m)

The Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the considerable progress in the current round of the International Comparison Programme; commended the World Bank Global Office, the regional coordinators and other institutions involved for their joint efforts as they approach the completion of the 2005 round of global purchasing power parity comparisons based on improved methodology and data quality.

(b) Welcomed the high level cooperation of 144 countries and the respective regional coordinators participating in the project.

(c) Took note of the release dates September 2007 for price level data for household consumption data and December 2007 for the full GDP results.

(d) Urged the World Bank to derive maximum benefit from the global results by actively engaging users to increase their understanding of the results, thereby raising their awareness of the richness of data produced by the project and promoting the variety of analytical and policy uses of ICP data.

(e) Took note of the concern that the next round should proceed reasonably quickly so that the investment in the current round would not be lost and that the ICP be aligned with the CPI data collection to the maximum extent possible.

(f) Agreed to the creation of a Friends of the Chair group to evaluate the current ICP programme with respect to its scope and activities, and to make a proposal on desirability of a

new round of the ICP programme taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the evaluation and report back to the Commission in 2008.

(g) Encouraged the World Bank and its international partners to actively seek funding to be able to maintain a core capacity as developed during the current round of the ICP.

Decision 14: Information items (4a to 4j)

The Commission took note of the following reports:

Report of the Secretary-General on migration statistics

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics

Report of the Secretary-General on industrial statistics

Report of the Secretary-General on distributive trade statistics

Report of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

Report of the International Monetary Fund on the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Committee on the Coordination of Statistical Activities

Report of the Steering Committee on the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the twenty-first Century

Report on an initiative to foster common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata

Note by the Secretary-General on policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Commission

Decision 15: Programme questions United Nations Statistics Division (Item 5)

The Commission took note of the oral report presented by the Director of the UN Statistics Division concerning current work and future plans and priorities. The Commission also approved the following changes to the 2006/7 work programme:

- (i) replacing the UNSD newsletter with multiple newsletters focusing on different substantive areas, providing more targeted information to colleagues throughout the world.
- (ii) deferring the Manual on Waste Statistics to the 2008-09 programme cycle.

Decision 16: Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-ninth session of the Commission (Item 6)

The Commission approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its thirty-ninth session as contained in document E/CN.3/2007/L.2 and as orally amended and asked its Bureau to streamline and finalize it. The Commission also approved its multi-year programme of work for 2007-2010 as contained in document E/CN.3/2007/29 and as orally amended. The Commission recommended that its thirty-ninth session be held in New York from 26-29 February 2008.