Final Report of the Expert Group Meeting
on the Scope and Content of Social Statistics

New York, 9-12 September 2008

Prepared by
United Nations Statistics Division

Final Report of the Expert Group Meeting*

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   Background and objective of the meeting

1.   The United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Scope and Content of Social Statistics was convened in New York from 9 to 12 September 2008. The meeting was organized by the Social and Housing Statistics Section of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The Expert Group Meeting was planned as a follow up activity to the *Seminar on New Directions in Social Statistics*, held on 22 February 2008 in New York[1] and which focused on national practices of collecting, processing and disseminating social statistics, and the *Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics*, held 6-9 May 2003 in New York[2].

2.   The meeting aimed at attaining three objectives: i) to identify the scope and content of contemporary social statistics in order to establish areas that need to be addressed by an international action plan; ii) to provide critical input towards the development of this international action plan for improving social statistics by pointing out areas in need of international guidelines and to address related issues such as coordination among various agencies and institutions regarding social statistics at both the national and international levels; and iii) to discuss the draft terms of reference for the proposed city group for social statistics or some other organizational arrangement such as a task force or friends of the chair. For an elaborated statement of the objectives of the Expert Group Meeting, see meeting announcement attached as Annex I.

3.   The meeting brought together national, regional and international experts on social statistics. Participants included experts from national statistical offices of 20 countries – Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Mexico, Mozambique, Norway, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden and United States; representatives of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); as well as representatives from two United Nations specialized agencies – the International Labour Office (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (See Annex II for the list of participants.)

B.   Opening session

4.   The expert group meeting opened with a statement by Mr. Paul Cheung, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The statement was read by Mr. Jeremiah Banda, Chief of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch, on behalf of the Director. In his statement, the Director pointed out that the social environment was complex, dynamic and constantly changing. As a result, developing accurate and meaningful ways for measuring the stocks and flows in various social phenomena remained a key challenge for official statisticians.

5.   In his statement, Mr. Cheung identified three expectations for the meeting, namely:

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[1] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/new_directions_seminar.htm.
[2] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/default.htm.

i) To lay a foundation for future work on international standards for concepts, definitions, classifications, recommended tabulations, periodicity and sources of data pertaining to social statistics that allow international data comparability;

ii) To develop an international action plan to guide the further development of social statistics as well as address the issue of coordination among agencies at the national and international levels; and

iii) To discuss the draft terms of reference for a proposed city group or other mechanism (such as friends of the chair) to advance future international work on social statistics.

6. Mr. Cheung expressed hope that the outcome of the meeting would send a strong message to the United Nations Statistical Commission and the international statistical community regarding the necessity to re-focus efforts on improving, fine-tuning and developing statistical instruments for measuring universally pertinent social phenomena.

7. In her opening remarks, the chairperson of the meeting, Ms. Katherine Wallman, Chief Statistician, United States Office of Management and Budget, reminded participants that initiatives to advance social statistics had been attempted several times before in the past by both the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the United Nations Statistical Commission as well as by other agencies. She pointed out that the meeting had two tasks before it: (i) to review on-going work in the area of social statistics; and (ii) to discuss future work in advancing social statistics. In this regard, Ms. Wallman urged the participants to deliberate on the question of whether an international action plan was necessary, and if determined to be needed, what accompanying institutional arrangements would be required for implementing such a plan.

C. Organization of the meeting

8. The meeting was conducted according to the Organization of Work (see Annex III). A number of papers were submitted for discussion under each topic (see Appendix IV for the list of papers), focusing on one social concern and elaborating on concepts and definitions, standards, topics, tabulations, classifications, units of enumeration, metadata and the characteristics of statistical data collection. In addition, some of the papers also covered issues related to sources of data, best practices in data collection, and emerging challenges. The discussion on each social concern was led by reviewers who brought out the main issues and challenges covered in the papers. The presentations by the reviewers were followed by open discussions and exchanges of national experiences. All the papers contributed by the participants are available on the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) website [3].

9. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Katherine Wallman. The Rapporteur for the meeting was Ms. Mariana Kotzeva of Bulgaria.

II. SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

10. To set the scope for the deliberations of the meeting, two presentations were made on: i) past and current approaches to social statistics in the United Nations system; and ii) the wellbeing framework for social statistics developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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[3] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/social_stat_2008.htm

11.   The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) presented a paper on the past and current efforts toward a systematic development of social statistics. In this descriptive paper on the history of the development of social statistics within the United Nations system, it was emphasized that the experiences of the past need to be taken into consideration to help define the next steps in developing concepts and methods in social statistics. The paper reviewed some of the numerous past initiatives that attempted to develop a comprehensive and overarching system of social statistics, drawing attention to their major strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned.

12.   The initiatives reviewed in the presentation included: i) the groundbreaking report entitled "International definition and measurement of standards and levels of living", which advocated the "component approach" aimed at measuring levels of living including physical well-being, related material elements such as consumption, and "non-material" factors such as the satisfaction of cultural or educational needs (1950s); ii) the System of Social and Demographic Statistics (SSDS), developed out of an attempt to establish, in the demographic arena, a framework parallel to the system of national accounts and to link information on stocks and flows of individuals and groups of individuals to economic information and in particular the provision of services (1970s); and iii) the Framework for Social and Demographic Statistics (FSDS), a simplified version of the SSDS, which advocated the identification of a number of fields of statistics, unified through common classifications in a manner that sets forth the scope and desirable priority areas (late 1970s). The work on the FSDS led to a number of initiatives aimed at improving the standardization of social statistics methodology and the quality of social indicators.

13.   It was noted that the past two decades had witnessed a movement towards identifying a priority minimum set of social indicators. This represented a shift in focus from complex and overarching systems of social statistics towards policy-driven indicators. The Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS) indicators was developed in 1995 for national and international reporting and monitoring of progress toward the goals of major United Nations conferences. The Common Country Assessment (CCA) indicators framework included a list of 50 qualitative and quantitative indicators on a range of demographic, social, environmental and economic issues as well as human rights and governance. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework – consisting of eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indictors – was devised in order to harmonize reporting on the Millennium Declaration commitments adopted in 2000. The call for statistics to measure the MDGs has led to the development in some countries of otherwise unavailable data or indicators due to the political pressure to provide the indicators.

14.   The presentation by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) raised a number of important questions for deliberation: How could a balance between the needs of producers and users of social statistics be achieved? How could statisticians – who often strive to achieve a more integrated outlook on social statistics by building upon sound methodological foundations, consistent definitions, classifications, etc – reconcile their objectives with those of policymakers, who were more concerned with obtaining statistical information relating to a set of concrete and immediate policy needs? What actions need to be undertaken to ensure that the two perspectives are reconciled? Keeping in mind past developments in the area of social statistics – the lack of progress in further developing the SSDS and the increasing attention paid to the development of social indicator lists – was the pursuit to establish a conceptual framework of social statistics proper and feasible?

15.   The second presentation, aimed at providing an overview of the progress being made in the development of frameworks for social statistics at the national level, focused on the wellbeing framework for social statistics developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Published in 2001, *Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics[4]* laid out a systematic approach towards social statistics by focusing on wellbeing as a central organizing principle and then relating this to areas of social concern, population groups and social transactions. At the broad level, the framework comprised three interacting components: (i) areas of social concern, consisting of population, family and community, health, education and training, work, economic resources, housing, crime and justice, and culture and leisure; (ii) population groups: children and youth, older persons and retirees, women, unemployed persons, indigenous people and people living in remote areas; and (iii) transactions which referred to social exchanges between individuals and other entities in their social environment. Within each area of concern, the wellbeing framework presented specific frameworks that reflect social arrangements, underpin conceptual development and guide statistical activity in that domain. For example, within the work domain there were separate frameworks for economic and non-economic work.

16.   There had been ongoing developments since the wellbeing framework was first published, including enhancements to relate the basic framework to individual and community resources, and development of new frameworks in collaboration with stakeholders in some areas of concern such as learning, social capital and the family. Other emerging issues under consideration for inclusion in the wellbeing framework for social statistics included the social impact of increased use of information and communications technology, and lifestyle changes in response to environmental concern. Another ongoing development was work on the concept of social inclusion for addressing economic and social disadvantages. Enhancement of the wellbeing framework was anticipated to result in more transparent linkages among areas of social concern and a greater focus on measuring the wellbeing of social entities.

17.   On the basis of the presentations made and discussions conducted in all the sessions of the expert group meeting, the major issues and challenges that emerged as well as the understandings and conclusions reached by the experts are summarized in the following paragraphs, organized by topic. The recommendations made by the expert group meeting with respect to activities to be undertaken as part of an international action plan for social statistics are provided separately in section III of this report.

A.   General framework for social statistics

18.   Having taken stock of some of the major past and current attempts to develop comprehensive frameworks for social statistics, the experts concluded that it was a considerable advantage to have a well-developed, coherent and homogenous framework for social statistics that would apply, essentially, a bottom-up approach to the spectrum of social phenomena, starting from specific and well-defined social concerns that were universally pertinent – such as population, family and communities, health, education and training, work, economic resources, housing, crime and justice, and culture and leisure – and then moving to

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[4] Dennis Trewin (2001), *Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics,* Australian Bureau of Statistics (cat. no. 4160.0).

the elaboration of emerging and complex social concerns that were of growing relevance to public policy.

19.   In essence, such a framework would have for each social concern an accompanying statistical data collection system that includes relevant concepts and definitions, international standards, recommended topics and tabulations, defined periodicity, and sources of data. Collected data would also need to be disaggregated by population groups that were of particular interest to public policy (children, youth, older persons and women, to name a few) and by geographical levels, thus allowing analysis at the national and sub-national levels.

20.   Ultimately, each of the components of social statistics should be clearly and unambiguously described in terms of: (1) the social concern it addresses (e.g., health, housing, education and learning); (2) sources of statistics (administrative records, population and housing censuses, household and other surveys); (3) statistical data collection and its components (existence and applicability of international standards: definitions and concepts, recommended topics and core questions, recommended tabulations, classifications, and periodicity); (4) characteristics of population groups of interest to the social concern (population groups defined in terms of age, sex, socio-economic characteristics, ethnicity and disability status); and (5) geographical levels of presentation of statistics. Such a framework, therefore, might be described as clusters of social statistics unified through common methodologies (see Figure 1 for a graphical representation).

Figure 1. Components of social statistics
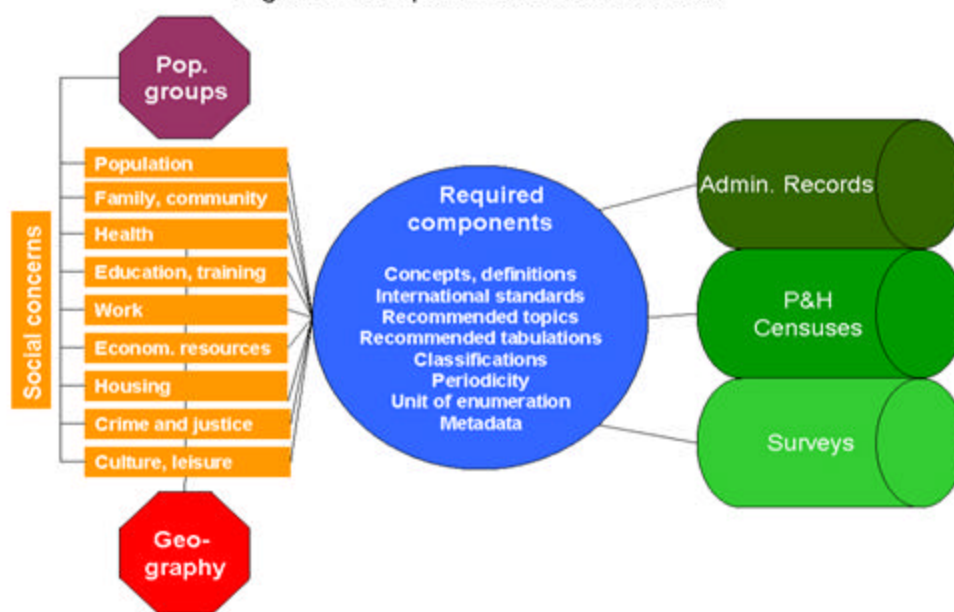
21.   It was recognized that producing such a framework together with an inventory of existing international standards and classifications would allow a purview of the breadth and depth of social statistics, facilitate the development of strategic responses to identified gaps in concepts and data, and assist the further development of the framework on the basis of emerging social trends and public policy requirements.

22.   The experts underscored the need to address issues related to the quality of data and their various dimensions. In addition to the issues of relevance, validity, reliability and timeliness, a more comprehensive view of data quality should be adopted covering a broader range of dimensions such as potential for disaggregation, international comparability and efficient use of resources (see Figure 2). With the increasing importance of social indicators to monitor progress, greater attention had to be paid to data quality and to ensuring that statistical evidence is robust.

Figure 2. Dimensions of data quality

Efficient use of resources   Validity and reliability

Consistency over time,   Relevance to policy
space and across sources

                                                Clarity and transparency
Accessibility and
affordability
                                                Interpretability

Comparability through
standards   Timeliness and
                                                punctuality

Potential for
disaggregation   Coherence across sources

23.   The meeting acknowledged that addressing policy and decision-making needs in a timely and accurate fashion was a *sine qua non* of official statistics in general, and social statistics in particular, given a host of social issues that were of concern of policy makers at all levels. The pressure from policy makers in terms of their needs for monitoring and quantifying social phenomena needed to be anticipated well in advance, if meeting these needs was to be successfully achieved. Thus, there was a need to monitor emerging trends and substantial developments in various areas of the social universe.

24.   It was stressed that indicators, defined as derived values as opposed to data elements (variables), represented a particularly important component in the process of establishing successful social statistics, especially in the phase of data dissemination. Ensuring the availability of timely and reliable indicators would significantly increase the relevance of collected statistics, as would the existence of analytic measures.

25.   It was noted that the systematic measurement and monitoring of well-being in several countries illustrated the feasibility of such approaches at the national level. Yet, it had to be noted that in developing systems and frameworks, the complexity and applicability of universal concepts, definitions and classifications remained a particular concern; similarly, undertaking development of a social statistics framework within a national statistical office needed to be assessed from the point of view of how such a development might transform the office itself in terms of staff, organizational structure and resource requirements.

26.   The experts acknowledged that achieving a functioning and universally applicable framework for social statistics at the international level was not yet considered feasible because there were significant differences in social constructs and diversity in social arrangements among the various societies of the world. As a result, the experts concluded that the appropriate approach in developing a framework for social statistics at the international level should be based on a template of clusters of social concerns/statistics as presented above.

B. Population, migration, and family

27.   The experts noted that, from the methodological perspective, the measurement of population did not appear to contain any significant deficiencies. In this regard the significant role played by the international standards contained in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses[5], developed by the United Nations Statistics Division, was acknowledged. It was pointed out that sources of statistics for population were now well defined consisting of the traditional population and housing census as well as alternative approaches such as register-based methods and combined-techniques which combine population census results with population estimates and projections. In spite of the above developments, however, it was observed that national practices were documenting difficulties in the measurement of population. Some of these challenges pertained to i) definitional inconsistencies regarding resident/non-resident status and service populations; and ii) population census data quality problems such as undercounting, overcounting and omissions in counting of categories of population difficult to enumerate such as nomads, residents temporarily absent and refugees.

28.   Similarly, it was noted that due to the increasing mobility of populations, issues related to migration, both documented and undocumented, tended to hamper the accuracy of population counts. These difficulties were amplified by differences in definitions regarding short-term, temporary, and long-term migrants, as well as the changing status of migrants between study and work. The meeting considered that censuses should include people who meet the census criteria regardless of their migration status and recommended that the question on legality of stay should not be incorporated in the census. The inclusion of migration topics in censuses should be ensured as the census is the only source that covers all residents and because this would allow countries to make comparisons on census data against administrative data.

29.   Issues related to the definition of "place of usual residence" were also cited as a significant challenge to the international comparability of estimated resident populations. Difficulties mentioned included temporary absence of residents, non-registration of movers, emerging issues related to elderly migrants with multiple homes (snow birds), couples living apart, and children who live with both parents in a shared custody arrangement. The meeting concluded that there was a need to provide a clearer and more specific definition of place of usual residence indicating the duration of stay and how to treat special population groups such as students or workers living away from their household.

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[5] United Nations (2008), *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2* (Sales no. E.07.XVII.8).

30.   It was acknowledged that changing social and economic conditions were resulting in changing social structures and arrangements of families and households, giving rise to the need for reconsidering existing concepts, definitions and methods. Contemporary life was becoming more complex with the appearance of new and diverse forms of families (such as blended families and same sex relationships) and living arrangements (such as co-habitation and living-apart-together). As a consequence of changes in family structures and functions, there was a need to re-visit the definition of statistical constructs such as households. Taking into account the implications of the changing social conditions and issues, the topics for inclusion in national data collection systems, including the forthcoming 2010 census round, should consider key topics such as families, international migration, aging, maternal mortality, and human functioning, to name a few. Steps should also be taken to gather baseline data on the issues and factors impacting the development of the individual within the family and the community.

31.   The importance of population statistics as the basis for other social statistics was emphasized. In particular, the population and housing census represented one of the pillars for data collection on the number and characteristics of the population of a country. Experts emphasized the role of population censuses in national statistical systems and in the operation of other censuses, surveys, registers and administrative data collection systems. For small geographical areas or sub-populations, the census might represent the only source of information for certain social, demographic and economic characteristics. Experts agreed that there was a clear need for international standards to ensure comparability on how and what to count. It was further suggested that international methodological guidelines be developed on complementing census data with data from vital statistics. Other challenging areas in the measurement of population that were highlighted included: timeliness, availability and accuracy of data; harmonizing differences in concepts and definitions; exploiting the potential of administrative records to update estimates; addressing issues related to privacy and confidentiality, including in the release of micro-data for research purposes; focus on lower geographical levels of disaggregation; and ensuring international classifications are relevant to diverse national contexts.

C. Economic resources

34.   The experts noted that the measurement of household economic resources – particularly income and wealth – was one of the most sensitive and difficult endeavours in social statistics. Other related topics which were critical for the analysis of household economic wellbeing such as consumption, poverty and inequality were also equally difficult to measure. To enhance the comparability of measurements of household economic resources across countries with different income levels and different institutional and structural setups, it was essential to have a common conceptual basis for the measurement of income and the analysis of economic wellbeing. However, finding practical ways of measuring economic resources was an on-going challenge. Underlining the significance of common concepts and classifications for achieving an acceptable level of international comparability, the experts agreed that guidelines for measuring economic resources should use a common "framework" approach rather than a common "survey" approach.

35.   The experts pointed out the existence of two systems of household income measurement: the "macro" approach, anchored in national accounts, and the "micro" approach, rooted in microeconomics, in particular, the study of poverty and its impact on

various groups of society. Since both approaches attempt to measure household income, it was important to reconcile the macro aggregate of household income and micro income statistics estimated for the total population. This was critical for quality assurance and to check one estimate against the other. Where this was not possible, explanation on the discrepancies should be provided. Furthermore, reconciliation of the two approaches would enhance the use of the datasets for multiple purposes as well as help avoid different implications for public policy.

36. The experts recognized that the International Expert Group on Household Income Statistics – known as the Canberra Group – had produced useful outputs and recommendations and has played a critical role in improving comparative work on household income distribution. Although most of the recommendations had withstood the test of time, some concepts need to be revised in order to accommodate non-standard households and irregular income flows. The experts agreed on the need to build on the fundamentals of the conceptual framework contained in the 2001 report of the Canberra Group by looking more closely at ways of incorporating household expenditure, consumption and wealth into the analysis. It was also underscored that it was useful to explore the ways in which coordination and cooperation could be improved among the various organizations and working groups, such as the Luxembourg Income Study Group, active in this area.

37. It was agreed that one of the most substantial challenges lying ahead was the need to move beyond household income as the measure of household economic resources. This was especially important for those countries where it was difficult to collect information on income and where measurement of consumption or expenditure was the preferred tool for measuring poverty. To obtain a comprehensive assessment of household economic resources, especially to understand the scale, severity and drivers of poverty, it was important to expand the scope of economic resources to include non-cash income flows, household wealth and in-kind public services conferring personal benefits to users. Caution was raised, however, on the difficulties of valuation of non-cash based benefits. Including these expanded forms of economic resources in the analysis would improve measurement of inequality in the distribution of economic resources, identification of population groups and regions most affected by economic disadvantages, and formulation of public policies to reduce the risk of poverty. It was also stressed that the measurement of economic wellbeing should also utilize direct measurements of household consumption expenditures. In this regard, the following components should be considered: measures of actual consumption expenditures; measures of access to critical consumption items and activities (extent of deprivation); and, measures of family and community support provided in times of greater need (inter-household transfers).

38. It was noted that the availability and quality of data were two of the major constraints in the analysis of the distribution of economic resources. It was a significant challenge to produce credible data consistently over time. The analysis of poverty, which required multiple data sources, suffered from these data constraints. It issue of using absolute versus relative poverty measures was also raised. There were some reservations regarding the use of cut-offs (such as 50 per cent of the median) to define poverty. It was observed that the most commonly used sources for measuring poverty were income and expenditure surveys, household budget surveys and other general household surveys, although population censuses could be used for poverty mapping and existing administrative records (such as income tax and social benefit records) were good potential sources, especially for small area estimates (if concerns of confidentiality are addressed). Each type of source had its own limitations and usually did not provide sufficient information on all components of income needed for a

comprehensive ana lysis. Furthermore, income was not always clearly defined. For example, there were differing practices regarding the treatment of non-cash income, subsidies, non-regular income, etc.

39.   It was further noted that there was an increasing policy interest in various social groups and small areas/regions because these subgroups or sub-regions were usually disadvantaged and require d special government attention or support. Collecting statistics on small areas and subpopulations was relatively expensive and therefore it was essential to rely on small area estimation techniques and better exploitation of administrative data sources.

D.   Culture and leisure

40.   The experts acknowledged that there was no consensus on the concept and definition of culture at the international level. Even at the national level, the concept of culture was not always clearly defined due to the diversity of population groups. Several approaches to measuring cultural outputs and consumption had been suggested over the years, some applicable only for certain types of societies and others for a broad range of groups. It was underscored that since culture was often a reflection of certain shared beliefs or values and was often very closely related to ethnic, national and social identities, it was not possible to measure such beliefs or values in a systematic or comparable fashion. Yet, it was important to compare certain dimensions of culture across cultures and countries. In this regard the experts appreciated the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s pragmatic approach to measuring culture which aimed to identify culture through the behaviour and activities resulting from shared beliefs and values. The "2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics", a draft conceptual framework, offered an opportunity to enhance its reach and relevance to the production of cultural statistics. It was noted that the draft took into account the increasing use of ICT, globalization and a wider vision of what culture meant. Further enhancements to UNESCO's framework were expe cted to include the development of an associated statistical framework and the addressing of the needs of developing countries with limited data sources.

41.   It was observed that, for the purpose of measurement, UNESCO's approach identified culture as a broad concept consisting of a set of economic activities (production of cultural goods and services) and social activities (participation and attendance in cultural activities) as well as non-formal and amateur activities. However, along with leisure, certain economic (e.g. advertising) and social (e.g. sports) activities which were not universally accepted as forming part of culture were treated as non-core, peripheral cultural activities. The framework, without providing a single proscriptive definition of cultural activities, presented domains of activities from which statistical authorities might consider and select those activities they deemed to be central to their culture. This provided a way for countries to collect cultural statistics to meet their own needs while at the same time allowing international comparison on culture statistics.

42.   The framework, which utilized an indirect measurement based on culturally related economic activities, was built upon the most commonly used international statistical standards – the Central Product Classification (CPC), the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) – thus making it possible for cultural data to be internationally comparable across the same domain. The experts noted that UNESCO's framework exploited the potential for using

existing surveys to measure cultural activities. This made it more feasible to measure cultural activities, especially for developing countries who had limited resources for conducting special surveys for measuring participation in certain cultural activities and consumption of cultural goods.

43.   It was pointed out that the indirect measurement adopted by the UNESCO framework did not fully incorporate various activities such as intangible expressions of heritage and amateur cultural activities. Some culture-related areas such as traditional knowledge, crafts, intangible heritage, etc were particularly difficult to conceptualize and measure. Experts felt that it was necessary to develop an international standard for core areas of interest, which would help countries to meet their own needs and to produce internationally comparable statistics.

44.   It was noted that different data sources were used in various countries to collect statistics on culture including administrative records from culture agencies, economic census, time-use survey, business survey, household expenditure survey and other household surveys. It was acknowledged that the capacities of countries for collecting statistics on culture varied, depending on policy priorities, statistical expertise, and human and financial resources. UNESCO's framework would allow countries with fewer resources to use the basic fundamental structure of the ISIC and ISCO classifications to measure cultural activities through standard economic statistics, and household surveys such as labour force surveys and censuses. Countries with more resources would be able to collect more elaborate statistics using the Central Product Classification (CPC) and more finely tuned, or dedicated, statistical instruments. It was observed that statistics derived from economic data, household or visitor surveys, and valuation of cultural assets could be brought together to present a holistic view of culture that would allow some international comparability in certain 'core' domains. However, due to the wide scope of culture/leisure activities, it was not always easy to collect data on all aspects of culture in a country. It was felt that data collection activities generally lagged behind the development of frameworks.

45.   A concern was raised on the grouping of culture and leisure together as well as on whether art and culture were separable and distinguishable. On the one hand, some leisure activities interacted with cultural activity consumption and were part of the economic cycle of production and consumption. On the other hand, some other leisure activities - such as sport activities - were less closely linked to the cultural economic cycle. Also, some cultural products were consumed as part of leisure activities. As a result culture and leisure activities appeared to be inter-related. It was suggested however that the two areas be measured separately, with clear definition of the exact activities included in each domain in order to avoid duplications. Moreover, it was suggested that due to differences in the concept of leisure across cultures and societies, especially from the point of view of distinguishing paid and un-paid work, there was still a need to address pertinent methodological issues in time-use surveys intended to capture leisure.

46.   Furthermore, there was a question on what contribution to cultural statistics could be made by national labour force surveys, especially in collecting data on amateur and voluntary works in the cultural arena which may be considered as secondary occupations. It was pointed out that cultural activities were often the result of part-time or amateur production and that in many developing countries cultural productions or activities were an important supplement to agricultural and basic manual occupations. It was suggested that although

secondary occupations were not commonly measured, their inclusion in theoretical frameworks might yield useful information.

E. Crime and justice

47.   It was observed that crime was an area of increasing concern all over the world as criminals adopted new techniques and networks that transcended national boundaries. The advents of globalization and cyberspace had added new dimensions to crime. Large-scale social and economic changes had focused attention on issues of crime and justice systems. However, statistical methods to measure crime accurately and routinely showed considerable room for improvement. There was currently no international classification of criminal offences and the experts agreed that it would be extremely difficult to develop one. The lack of an international classification of crimes had had an adverse impact in establishing more elaborated international statistical guidelines and standards. The diversity of the legal systems across the world made this objective difficult to achieve.

48.   It was noted that much of the raw data for crime statistics was generated within the operational justice system (i.e., police agencies, courts, prisons) which was primarily designed to monitor the operation of the various components of the criminal justice system. As a result, they did not always contain the kinds of information necessary for the effective measurement of the incidences of crime. They also did not provide sufficient information to obtain a comprehensive overview of the scope, trends and pattern of crime in society in the context of demographic, social and economic realities. Hence there was a need for alternative data sources and statistical instruments, such as victimization surveys, to complement those data available from administrative records maintained by the various justice operational systems.

49.   It had been recognized that a sizable portion of criminal events were never reported to the police and were therefore not included in police statistics. "Hidden criminality" had prompted researchers to look beyond the instruments of traditional criminal justice statistics for ways of assessing it. In this regard crime victimization surveys had evolved as a valuable complementary data source to police statistics. For example, this was especially valid in attempting to measure violence against women. There was a clear necessity to develop methodological guidelines to assist countries in measuring topics such as violence against women and children and to provide an accurate rendering of these phenomena. Victimization surveys had been useful in validating crime data and analyzing incidence, prevalence, subjective indicators such as fear and reporting behaviour. It was pointed out that victimization surveys were still a relatively new method, although experience in conducting them had grown in recent years. Some attempts had been made to conduct internationally comparable surveys in several countries, for example: the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS), International Violence against Women Survey (IVAWS), and the Domestic Violence and Health Survey. These surveys tended to be donor driven in developing countries, so attention should be given to developing national capacity to conduct such surveys.

50.   The experts recognized the complexity and difficulty of collecting crime and criminal justice statistics which required the participation and cooperation of many components of the system. Crime and justice data were extracted from administrative records that were kept by the various agencies in the justice system. It was observed that those who kept records for operational purposes might not pay sufficient attention to the non-operational uses of those

records. As a result, there was a significant need to raise the awareness of the various agencies involved in the justice system on the importance of statistics in their domains in order to enhance their commitment, participation and cooperation with national statistical offices, which often faced several challenges ranging from lack of authority over classification, data processing and control of data to confidentiality rules and uneven geographic coverage. National statistical offices must play an effective role in providing training and technical cooperation as well as in the development and use of common concepts and classifications, both within and across components of the criminal justice system and, as much as possible, between criminal justice and outside agencies. They should also provide training and technical cooperation. Towards this objective, a proper legislative framework was necessary to establish the legal authority and responsibilities of the components of the justice system.

51. The experts recognized that the readiness to develop a system of criminal justice statistics varied markedly from country to country. Countries developed data-collection instruments appropriate to their own situation, reflecting the specific characteristics of their criminal justice system and the level of available resources. However, the importance, at the international level, of coordination and harmonization of concepts, definitions, classifications, methods and procedures was highlighted. There was a strong need to develop basic statistical instruments to ensure that national approaches to data collection were more internationally comparable and were capable of providing inputs for policy and strategies to tackle new and emerging forms of crimes as well as provide protection of the vulnerable groups.

52. The experts emphasized that wherever possible data should be collected on criminal incidents, victims, offenders, circumstances, processes, dispositions and decisions. Data collection should include the characteristics of persons processed through the system, such as age, sex, marital status, socio-economic characteristics as well as family history and data on the community. It was also emphasized that advancement could be made if the relationship between perpetrator and victim in the case of homicide and assault could be collected, especially in cases involving domestic violence. Other areas identified by the experts for further development include: collection of data on violence against women and children, human trafficking and human rights violations. Disposal and efficiency of the operations of the criminal justice system, including information on case loads and flows handled by the different components of the criminal justice system were important for monitoring performance of the justice system. There was also a need to ensure criminal justice statistics assist in policy and research and meets the needs of users and producers.

F. Education

53. It was observed that the scope and content of education statistics were changing markedly. With respect to measuring progress in education, the experts observed a shift in focus from measures of quantity to those of quality and from those of 'schooling' towards 'learning'. Such a shift entailed going beyond collecting information about education systems and their resources and inputs to individual learning outcomes and characteristics of education providers and instructional settings as well as home environments. Recently there had been an increase in the number of national, regional and international studies of student

learning achievement. Although their conceptual frameworks and measurement definitions were still relatively undeveloped, several national and multinational studies and surveys [6] had collected information on learning outcomes and education quality. However, linking school-related resources to individual outputs and outcomes had remained a methodological challenge. The experts noted that data collection in education statistics – which was so far mainly conducted at the macro level focusing on education systems, inputs and resources – would increasingly shift towards collection at the micro level focusing on individual learning outcomes.

54.   Another recent development the experts highlighted was the expanding range of policy issues requiring methodological attention.   Alternative mechanisms of learning (including early childhood education, home schooling, vocational training and life-long learning) provided at the boundaries of the formal education system and educational certification outside the formal education system (for instance, certification by private companies in the IT sector) were posing challenges since they were not covered by traditional measures of education statistics. Because of the diversity in approaches and the non-formal nature of the provision of education in these new fields of interest, consensus on the development of conceptual frameworks and definitions had been slow to reach at the international level. Education indicators, anchored in suitable frameworks and concepts, should be identified to monitor progress on emerging and unaddressed existing policy issues.

55.   It was observed that the monitoring of progress in education had received increasing attention. The growing recognition of the central role of education in promoting individual and societal development, as reflected particularly in international efforts such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All, had spawned large-scale monitoring exercises and increased the use of indicators for tracking progress. However, these had the unfortunate consequence of focusing attention on a small number of indicators that did not fully capture the many different dimensions of educational progress and did not reflect the full range of potential data sources. It was essential that policymakers and stakeholders endorse a broader view of education indicators, integrating information from a wide range of data sources.

56.   While most indicators used for monitoring education systems were derived from administrative data collections, it was pointed out that surveys were playing an increasingly important role. Efforts to augment the sources of data on education statistics had benefited from multi-purpose surveys containing short modules on education. Harmonized measures of educational participation and attainment in household surveys and censuses had been applied in a growing number of less developed countries. Further efforts were needed to improve education measures and raise survey standards. Achieving comparability and harmonization of measurement concepts and standards at the international level and establishing coherence across different data sources were important challenges requiring further efforts and a high-level of coordination between national statistical agencies and regional and international organizations.

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[6] These include: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), the Program on the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC) and the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE).

57.   The experts identified four areas in need of further elaboration with regard to measuring and monitoring progress in education, as listed below. In this respect, the development of a broad vision that addressed the full scope of data quality, together with national and international stakeholders in a joint, coordinated and systematic manner, was highlighted. The key issues to be addressed in furthering the development of education statistics included: a) improving comparability and transparency through the application of international standards, especially the International Statistical Classification of Education (ISCED) and related classifications, in household surveys; b) methodological development, especially in terms of improving existing and developing new data collections to address priority policy issues; c) stronger efforts to support statistical infrastructure and skills, especially in less developed countries; and d) promoting a demand-driven culture of data use and seeking innovative ways to turn data into information and to communicate results to policymakers and other stakeholders.

G.   Work

58.   There was a strong recognition among the experts that considerable progress had been achieved in developing international standards for work statistics. This had resulted in significant progress in achieving comparability of concepts, definitions, classifications and methods for data collection for work statistics, enabling the analysis of labour markets over an extended period of time. It was noted that work statistics – traditionally referred to as labour statistics – in general had received a high level of attention from politicians and the media. As a result, data on the size, structure and characteristics of the employed and unemployed population were available for most countries of the world.

59.   Despite the success of the framework for work statistics, several limitations were highlighted. During the discussions a question was raised as to the ability of statistics currently produced according to international standards for labour statistics to provide adequate information for the purposes of both economic and social analysis. It was noted that the approach in which the population in an economy was rigidly divided into three mutually exclusive broad groups – the employed, the unemployed, and the economically inactive – had posed difficulty in the analysis of social issues and policy interests. In particular, it was pointed out that the analysis of poverty – which required the identification and close study of the employment related characteristics of certain population groups such as the underemployed, those in informal/casual employment and low wage earners – was hampered by the rigid classification of productive activities into these three broad groups.

60.   Another limitation of the framework of international standards for work statistics which was pointed out by the experts was the way in which the concept of work was effectively equated with the concept of employment. This had the effect of excluding a wide variety of activities such as unpaid work and voluntary service from national accounts and limiting the study of several phenomena such as under utilization of labour.

61.   The experts suggested that due to changing circumstances in economies and evolving policy needs, additional measures were required on updating existing standards and furthering data development in the field of work statistics. One such area identified by the experts was the measurement of underutilization of labour and its three components: people who are employed but work for fewer hours than they desire; people who hold lower skilled and lower paying jobs than they are qualified for; and people who are so discouraged they

have stopped looking for work. Other areas identified as requiring further development include the measurement of: new forms of employment related to job outsourcing and subcontracting, unpaid work in households and voluntary service (to be measured separately from employment), decent work, overwork, and underemployment.

62.   It was emphasized that recognition had to be given to the fact that different economies were at varying levels of development and that different statistical systems were also at different points in their evolution. As a result, priorities had to be identified in furthering data development in the field of work statistics, in a manner that takes into account the financial and human capital of countries. One suggestion was to produce more information based on what was already available from surveys, censuses and administrative records, integrating information sources. This approach of making greater use of existing information had the advantage of avoiding the cost of collecting more data. It was also underscored that there was a need for alternative ways of looking at available information and developing analytical tools for examining both longstanding and emerging issues in national and local labour markets.

63.   It was noted that existing measurements did not fully capture the dynamic nature of today's labour markets. Measuring labour dynamics required a new focus on flows to complement the traditional focus on stocks. Fully adequate statistical instruments in that regard need to be fine-tuned and tested, taking into account the major difficulties with available information. Available information often did not provide adequate detail, were not available longitudinally and could not illuminate crosscutting issues. As a result there was a strong need for new approaches that take advantage of existing, already-collected administrative data to provide important information to improve decision making and address the concerns and needs of users and producers of labour market statistics.

H.   Coordination of social statistics at national, regional, and international levels

64.   Taking into account the growing demand for social statistics and its current state – which could be described as fragmented and existing in the form of many clusters/domains – the experts emphasized the need for coordination at all levels of data collection, processing, dissemination and analysis. There was a clear need for coordination at both the national and international levels. At the national level, there were many producers of social statistics such as the line ministries besides the national statistical office (NSO). In some countries the NSO had a strong delegated authority to coordinate the production of statistics, while in others there were no effective coordination mechanisms. It was noted that the degree and effectiveness of coordination at the national level varied widely among countries. It was emphasized that when talking about improving coordination, it was important to keep in mind the challenges and limitations faced by NSOs as both producers and coordinators of social statistics. When promoting the implementation of international standards at the national level there was a need to take national institutional structures into consideration; it was important to understand how NSOs functioned and what mechanisms were in place to coordinate activities on social statistics.

65.   It was pointed out that due to the large number of institutions involved in social statistics, various ministries and institutions generated data with little consultation with each other, leading to deficiencies in setting standards for social statistics. It was emphasized that, particularly where decentralized statistical systems were involved, the national statistical

office should be given the mandate to coordinate activities pertaining to social statistics, develop and promote national standards and classifications for social statistics, conduct research and training, promote communication and consultation among the various producers and major users of data.

66. It was important to keep in mind that there was a wealth of best practices on, and approaches to, coordination at the national, regional and international levels, particularly for specific domains. For the purpose of knowledge management, improving coordination and developing future work programmes, it would be beneficial for countries to document the status and general operating environment of their national statistical systems, detailing all forms of coordination mechanisms among the NSO, line ministries and other producers of social statistics. It was acknowledged that there were many regional experiences in coordination which could be examined for their applicability at the international level. There was ample evidence of positive outcomes from regional cooperation such as those established by CARICOM on social indicators, ECLAC's project to harmonize social statistics instruments, and the Andean Countries Community's effort on coordinating the statistical work within the community through ANDESTAT, an agency created with extensive support from EUROSTAT. These pointed to opportunities for south-south technical cooperation and training.

67. At the international level, a large number of international agencies were involved in social statistics, sometimes with conflicting or overlapping standards for social statistics data collection and dissemination. Experts noted the need for increased coordination and harmonization of statistical activities by international organizations. It was noted that there were too many uncoordinated and unplanned data requests from international organizations. Related to the number of data requests, the point was made that often member countries did not have the data that was being requested and they spent a lot of time completing questionnaires for which they had no complete dataset but had to give some information. International data requests and other statistical activities often did not involve NSOs since some international organizations dealt directly with the line ministries. Beyond harmonization of concepts and data sharing, coordination at the international level should also focus on data quality assurance. In this regard the IMF initiative for an economic data quality assurance framework was mentioned as a useful practice to learn from. It was suggested that a similar data quality assurance programme for social statistics could be developed.

I. International action plan for social statistics

68. Preceding the deliberations on the development of a possible international action plan for social statistics, the meeting was briefed on: i) the work of the United Nations Statistics Division on social statistics in the past 5 years; and ii) the strategies and projects pursued by Eurostat for the development of social statistics within the European Statistical System.

69. In 2003, the United Nations Statistics Division conducted an expert group meeting on setting the scope of social statistics. The briefing reviewed the salient points and recommendations of that meeting. The United Nations Statistical Commission underlined in 2004 the importance of population and housing censuses as a pillar for social statistics and endorsed activities for the 2010 global population and housing censuses programme. In recent years, in addition to support for the 2010 census programme, the United Nations

Statistics Division had also been active in gender statistics, disability statistics, poverty statistics and, to some extent, time use statistics. A one-day seminar entitled "New directions in social statistics" was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division in February 2008. The seminar provided an opportunity for the exchange of national experiences and ideas, and highlighted the need for a group of statisticians to plan the way forward for social statistics. The briefing by the United Nations Statistics Division concluded by seeking direction from the expert group on proposals pertaining to: compilation of an inventory on the current state of social statistics, the development/adoption of a framework for social statistics, creation of a website to house existing international standards on social statistics, and the need for a city group for social statistics.

70.   The briefing by Eurostat explained that the drive behind the new strategy for the development of social statistics in the European Statistical System (ESS) emanated from: i) the need to respond to the rapidly growing demand for social statistics which required better understanding and monitoring of the impact of radical changes (such as ageing, globalisation, the emergence of information society, and the enlargement of the European Union) that had occurred in Europe over the past few decades; and ii) the need to improve: the quality of statistics by making use of methodological improvements and better access to administrative sources of data; and the efficiency and cost effectiveness of data collection systems. The essence of the strategy entailed matching up the available statistical tools such as administrative records, surveys, accounts, etc., against the statistical demands. Some of the most important basic principles that would be followed in this strategy include: anticipation of policy needs; cooperation within the ESS and with international organizations and other stakeholders; exploitation of the potential of administrative records; enhancing comparability through harmonization; improving data analysis and data quality; and assessing the cost and benefit of statistics to better prioritize demand.

71.   The meeting was informed of the current state of art for social statistics in the EU states, noting that efforts to harmonize main data collections were being put in place. This was true of the majority of ongoing surveys notably the LFS, EU-SILC, SES and others. The meeting was also briefed about the "Core Social Variables" project which would be implemented in every EU household survey by 2010. The aim was to be able to produce information in different social areas for ad hoc subgroups of the population by collecting the required background information. Currently 16 demographic, economic and geographical variables had been selected for inclusion in all EU household surveys. Another project was the new "European Household Survey", a system of household survey modules that would allow flexibility both on the demand side (EU and policy maker needs) and in terms of national implementation.

72.   In the ensuing discussion, it was stressed that, in defining an international action plan for social statistics, consideration should be given to what was urgently needed. As there were many areas which could be further developed (ie, crime, work, education, culture), it was necessary to prioritize the work. It was emphasized that in developing an international action plan it was important not to be too ambitious and to develop a manageable plan. There should be clarity on the question of whether to pursue the development of a full spectrum framework of social statistics or to prioritize work on specific topics or areas. Policy requirements need to be reconciled with the perspectives of national and international data users and producers. Critical components of an international action plan included: pragmatic, short term tangible realistic deliverables; member countries have to take an active role; active engagement of international organizations; well defined roles for stakeholders. It was

suggested that such a plan should give due consideration to the promotion of international cooperation and exchange of information, experience and technical knowledge. The need for guidance on exploiting the potential of administrative sources for producing social statistics was identified as one prime area for cooperation.

73.	There was wide recognition that frameworks with varying degrees of comprehensiveness and maturity already existed for some of the individual domains of social statistics and that a lot of work had been, and was being, done within the specific areas with the support of international agencies. There seemed to be little interest on an overall framework for social statistics, as such general framework would be very broad and too difficult to define. Some experts expressed that what was needed was a body that could consolidate all the work that had been done in the different areas. The experts underlined the need for harmonization of standards (concepts, definitions) across domains and data sources. Otherwise comparability could not be achieved and quality of outputs assured. It was also pointed out that fragmentation happens when there is no coordination. There was a need to foster integration across domains and this was what was currently lacking in many countries.

74.	There was wide support for the compilation of an inventory. As the discussion progressed, suggestions for an inventory expanded from one focusing on methodological standards (concepts, definitions, classifications) to a broader one encompassing ongoing activities. Other suggested components of the inventory were best practices and analytical methods. Experts underlined that the inventory should be more inclusive than just covering international organizations' work, as a lot more activities were taking place in the regions (for example task forces on specific social statistics topics in ECE) and there were some significant work already done or going on in individual NSOs that may be relevant to all. Much of this information could be collected through networking. In compiling the inventory consultation and coordination should play an important role. The resulting inventory would be valuable in identifying the next steps. Experts suggested that proposals for further activities would spring from the findings of the inventory exercise, which would identify gaps in standards, methods, analysis and other information. There was agreement that a well organized website would be an appropriate medium of dissemination of the inventory on standards and of activities.

75.	Some experts noted that there had been some progress in recent years with regard to the visibility and priority accorded to social statistics, and some credited the need to monitor progress towards the MDGs as an important factor. The urgent need to monitor the MDGs had led in many cases to a strong commitment by Governments to produce the data required. In this sense, social statistics (such as in the areas of poverty and education) had moved up the priority ladder. There was some interest in the development of a core set of variables for social statistics although the expert group did not come to a conclusion on it. One expert suggested identifying core variables for each domain, and another thought that such a set would help focus the work within social statistics. A suggested approach was to have three tiers: a core set, which was a minimum international set; a larger set that included regional requirements; and then a third set which countries could further supplement according to their specific statistical needs.

76.	The experts were not clear on the need for a city group or some other mechanism to move forward the work on social statistics. The group felt that until it was known exactly what was to be tackled, it was premature to decide on the mechanism. There was a tacit agreement to wait until the proposed inventory was completed before deciding on the

subsequent work. Nevertheless, there was discussion on the various mechanisms and modes of expert international interaction on social statistics. The pros and cons of forming a city group that met regularly were discussed. The pros were that it was a good opportunity for networking and sharing of ideas. The cons were that unless the purpose was focused there was the risk of accomplishing nothing tangible, as happened to the Siena Group. A possible task for a city group might be to tackle a specific emerging issue like crime statistics or culture statistics. Another mechanism to advance specific work in social statistics was through task forces (such as those of ECE on new types of families and on volunteer work). Interactive meetings or e-meetings were proposed by an expert as an inexpensive way to exchange opinions and stay connected.

III.   RECOMMENDATIONS

77.   The expert group meeting recommended the following activities as part of an international action plan for social statistics.

78.   Produce as exhaustive as possible inventory of:
   i) Currently existing international methodological standards and guidelines in each area of social statistics;
   ii) Availability of social statistics at the global level, including measures of quality;
   iii) On-going statistical and methodological activities in social statistics at the international, regional, sub-regional, and national levels;

79.   This three-pronged inventory exercise is a crucial first step in addressing a number of pressing issues in a coordinated and coherent manner. Understanding the complexity of the assignment, the Expert Group requests the United Nations Statistics Division to closely engage and rely on the extensive and comprehensive achievements of international organizations at the global level such as the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation for Development, to name a few, as well as regional institutions, e.g., the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians and their respective task forces and working groups, and to build on existing work from other networks and the broader statistical community.

80.   The existence of the inventory will also allow work by expert groups with specific terms of reference on identifying and assigning core variables for particular clusters of social statistics that would provide significantly enhanced capacities to monitor and quantify social phenomena in a more coherent manner.

81.   The inventory will result in identifying gaps in all three of the above-listed areas: existing methodology, data availability, and on-going development of statistical instruments to tackle emerging issues. The resulting follow-up activities could consist of:

   i) Filling some gaps in the existence of international standards by developing handbooks and manuals and by establishing training programs aiming at improving national capacities to collect and process relevant and reliable social statistics;

ii) Initiating data collection in some of the different clusters of social statistics where gaps in the availability of international statistics are identified, including measures of quality, e.g., housing, time use, migration, disability, victimization;

iii) Supporting and, if necessary initiating, the work of various institutions in developing instruments to capture social statistics and make them more accessible;

iv) Addressing emerging issues, some of which are identified as follows (in alphabetical order):

> Child poverty
> Classification of crimes
> Deprivation
> Economic disadvantage
> Family
> Migration
> Human trafficking
> Quality of education
> Social transactions in kind
> Social exclusion
> Violence against women

82.   The Expert Group endorsed the introduction of a web-site that would reflect the activities mentioned above. The website is expected to take advantage of contemporary technology in terms of creating on-line facilities to exchange opinion, expertise and knowledge among a broad group of statisticians. The Expert Group also recognized the importance of using information and communication technology as part of the social statistics process, rather than considering it solely as a tool.

83.   The Expert Group discussed at some length whether the creation of an institutional arrangement was needed to act as a champion (in the form of a "city group" or some other mechanism such as "friends of the chair") for social statistics within the global statistical system and/or to oversee the activities that would be undertaken as a result of the work recommended above. It concluded that such a proposal would be premature in light of the significant time and effort that is first needed to create the inventory of existing standards and ongoing activities and to identify the gaps and recommend priorities for targeted work by expert groups with specific terms of reference.

Expert Group Meeting on the Scope and Content of Social Statistics
New York, 9-12 September 2008

Presentation on the meeting's goals and draft programme of work

The meeting will attempt to reach three major goals. First, it aims at identifying the scope and content of contemporary social statistics in order to identify areas that need to be addressed by an international plan of action. This framing of contemporary social statistic s will draw from the proceedings of the *Seminar on New Directions in Social Statistics,* held on 22 February 2008 in New York[7] and on national practices of collecting, processing and disseminating social statistics. It will also build on the proceedings and conclusions of the Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics, organized and hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division in New York, 6 – 9 May 2003[8].

In essence, for each social concern there needs to be an accompanying statistical data collection that requires relevant concepts and definitions, international standards, recommended topics, recommended tabulations, defined periodicity, and sources of data. Collected data would also need to be disaggregated by population groups (young, elderly, and women, to name a few) and by geographical levels.

Ultimately, each of the components of social statistics should be clearly and unambiguously described in terms of : (1) social concern it addresses (e.g. health, housing, learning and education and so forth), (2) sources of statistics (administrative records, population and housing census, household surveys), (3) statistical data collection and its components (existence and applicability of international standards in terms of the statistical method, definitions and concepts, recommended topics, recommended tabulations, classifications, periodicity), (4) different population groups (elderly, young, women, men, minorities and so forth), and (5) geographical level of presentation of statistics. This framework, therefore, may be described as clusters of social statistics unified through common methodologies.

To achieve this goal, the first step refers to defining major social phenomena. These can be grouped in the following nine categories:

- Population: size, structure and distribution of the population, fertility, mortality, and migration
- Family and community
- Economic resources, e.g. distribution of income, consumption
- Housing
- Culture and leisure
- Education and training
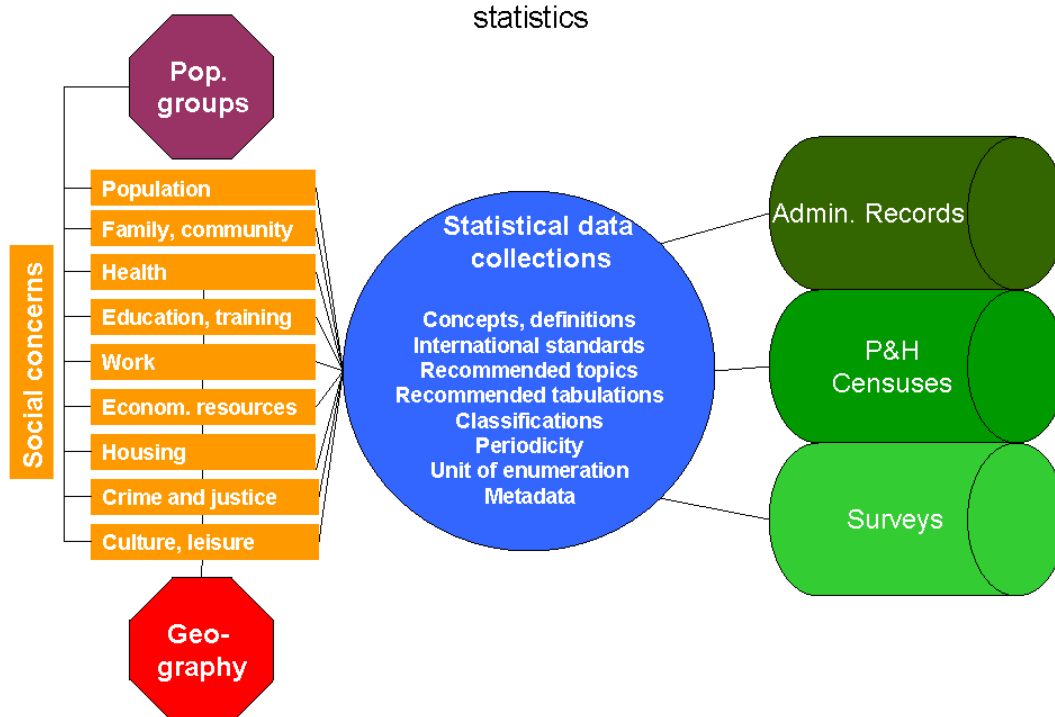- Work
- Health
- Crime and justice

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[7] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/new_directions_seminar.htm.
[8] Please see: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/default.htm

The scheme below illustrates this concept and is also designed to be used as an outline for the background papers that would stimulate discussion of component areas of social statistics. Consequently, each paper will focus on one social concern, would elaborate on the characteristics of the statistical data collection; that is, on concepts and definitions, standards, variables/topics, tabulations, classification and periodicity, unit(s) of enumeration, metadata and then pinpoint to the sources of data emphasizing obstacles and best practices. It will also include a brief overview of emerging issues on the social concern being addressed. Reviewers of these papers will lead the discussion at the sessions.

Graph 1. Complete scheme and components of social statistics

Pop. groups

Population
Family, community
Health
Education, training
Work
Econom. resources
Housing
Crime and justice
Culture, leisure

Social concerns

Statistical data collections

Concepts, definitions
International standards
Recommended topics
Recommended tabulations
Classifications
Periodicity
Unit of enumeration
Metadata

Admin. Records

P&H Censuses

Surveys

Geo- graphy

The second goal of the meeting will address the issue of an international action plan for improving social statistics, pertaining to areas that require additional work, as well as on related issues such as coordination among various agencies and institutions regarding social statistics at both the national and international levels. This draft action plan, if deemed necessary, would mandate the United Nations Statistics Division to continue conducting a thorough review and assessment of social statistics and point to the necessary developmental work on international standards.

The meeting is expected to provide critical input in developing this international plan of action by pointing out areas in need of international guidelines; emphasizing the value of training in social statistics; pointing to the need for documenting the roles and statistical activities of various international organizations, to name a few of expected inputs. The meeting is allotting a day and a half to this agenda item, including deliberations on national and international cooperation in social statistics.

Finally, the third goal of the meeting is expected to discuss the draft terms of reference for the proposed city group, or some other organizational arrangement, such as a task force or friends of the chair, if the need is clearly identified.

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Tuesday, 9 September 2008

Registration of participants (9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.)

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

10:00 – 10:30

Opening

Opening statement (UNSD)
Administrative matters

10:30 – 1:00

1. **General framework for social statistics – past, present and future**
    - Overview of past approaches (by United Nations Statistics Division)
    - Frameworks of Social Statistics at National Level: Case of Australia (by Australian Bureau of Statistics)
    - General discussion

2. **Statistics on major social concerns: Population, family and community**
    - Presentation by reviewers
    - General discussion

Lunch break (1.00 – 3:00)

Afternoon session (3:00 – 6:00)

3. **Statistics on major social concerns: Economic resources**
    - Presentation by reviewers
    - General discussion

4. **Statistics on major social concerns: Culture and leisure**
    - Presentation by reviewers
    - General discussion

5. **Statistics on major social concerns: Crime and justice**
    - Presentation by reviewers
    - General discussion

Reception (6:00 – 7:00)

Wednesday, 10 September 2008

Morning session (10:00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

6. Statistics on major social concerns: Education and training
- Presentation by reviewers
- General discussion

7. Statistics on major social concerns: Work
- Presentation by reviewers
- General discussion

Lunch break (1.00– 3:00)

Afternoon session (3:00 – 6:00)

8. Coordination of social statistics at national and international levels
- Presentation by reviewers
- General discussion

Thursday, 11 September 2008

Morning session (10:00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.)

9. International action plan for social statistics
- European Statistical System (by EUROSTAT)
- Global (by UNSD)
- General discussion

Lunch break (1.00– 3:00)

Afternoon session (3:00 – 6:00)

10. International action plan for social statistics (continued)
- Roundtable general discussion

Friday, 12 September 2008

Morning session (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

10:00 – 12:00

11. New city group for social statistics?
- General discussion

12:00 – 12:45

12. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

13. Closing

Annex IV: List of documents

ESA/STAT/AC.161/L.1   **Organization of work**

ESA/STAT/AC.161/L.2   **List of participants**

ESA/STAT/AC.161/L.3   **List of documents**

PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

General framework for Social Statistics

ESA/STAT/AC.161/1   Past and current efforts towards a systematic development of Social Statistics. *United Nations Statistics Division.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/2   Measuring wellbeing - the Australian Bureau of Statistics' framework for Social Statistics. *Andrew Webster, Garth Bode Horst Posselt, Australian Bureau of Statistics.*

Population, family and community

ESA/STAT/AC.161/3   Population: Size, structure and distribution. *Pnina Zadka, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/4   Migration processes in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Countries. *Ilya Kuznetsov, Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/5   Family and Community: The Jamaican Situation. *Sonia M. Jackson, Statistical Institute of Jamaica.*

Economic resources

ESA/STAT/AC.161/6   Economics Resources Statistics in Bulgaria: Current State and Challenges. *Mariana Kotzeva and Ivan Balev, National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/Ec.1   Social statistics on economics resources: a user perspective. *Marco mira d' Ercole, OECD.*

Culture and leisure

ESA/STAT/AC.161/8   Statistics on Culture and Leisure: Activities at Statistics Norway. *Asle Rolland, Statistics Norway.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/9   Culture and Leisure Statistics. *Pnina Zadka, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/Cl.1   Review on Culture and Leisure Statistics. *Liu Wei, Xin Jia, National Bureau of Statistics of China.*

Crime and justice

ESA/STAT/AC.161/10   Crime Statistics in Jordan: Overview of results. *Haidar Fraihat, Department of Statistics, Jordan.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/11   New developments on crime statistics concerning population survey in Italy. *Maria Giuseppina Muratore and Linda Laura Sabbadini, National Institute of Statistics, Italy.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/12   Crime and Justice Statistics in Ireland. *Siobhan Carey, Central Statistics Office, Ireland.*

ESA/STAT/AC.161/Cj.1   Review of papers on Crime and Justice Statistics. *Jogeswar Dash, Ministry of*

Statistics and Programme Implementation, India.

Education and training

ESA/STAT/AC.161/13	Education Statistics: The Case of Mozambique. *Maria de Fátima Fernando Zacarias, National Statistics Institute, Mozambique.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/14	Education in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Countries. *Ilya Kuznetsov, Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/Ed.1	Monitoring Education Progress and Data Quality. *Albert Motivans, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Canada.*

Work

ESA/STAT/AC.161/15	National Employment Survey and Statistics on the Labor Force in Chile. *Alexandra Rueda Restrepo, National Statistics Institute of Chile.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/16	Labour Statistics. *Victor Alfredo De La Tijera Bustos, National Institute of Statistics Geography and Informatics (INEGI), Mexico. (English)*
	Estadísticas del Trabajo. *Victor Alfredo De La Tijera Bustos, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), Mexico. (Spanish)*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/17	Labour statistics in Bulgaria: Current State and Challenges. *Mariana Kotzeva and Ivan Balev, National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/Wrk.1	International labour statistics and their place in defining the scop e, content and overall framework for social statistics. *David Hunter, Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Organization.*

Coordination of social statistics at national and international levels

ESA/STAT/AC.161/18	Social Statistics in China. *Liu Wei and Xin Jia, National Bureau of Statistics of China.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/19	Improving Social Statistics in the Philippines through Effective Coordination. *Lina V. Castro, National Statistical Coordination Board, Philippines.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/20	Coordination mechanisms, Good practices, Areas requiring improvement. *Jogeswar Dash, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/Co.1	Coordination of social statistics at national and international levels. *Rosemary Bender, Statistics Ca nada.*

International action plan for social statistics

ESA/STAT/AC.161/21	The development of Social Statistics in the European Statistical System. *Michel Glaude, EUROSTAT.*
ESA/STAT/AC.161/22	United Nations Statistics Division Work Programme on Social Statistics from 2003 Onwards. *United Nations Statistics Division.*

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report of the Secretary-General on Social Statistics (programme review) (E/CN.3/2004/2)

Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics , New York, 6-9 May 2003

Demographic and social statistics in the United Nations Demographic Yearbook