



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2012

Original: English

Statistical Commission

Forty-fourth session

26 February-1 March 2013

Item 4 (i) of the provisional agenda*

Items for information: informal sector statistics

Report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics

Note by Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session (see E/2012/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2013/1.



Report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics

I. Background

1. The Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics, commonly known as the “Delhi Group”, was set up in 1997 as one of the city groups of the Statistical Commission to address various methodological issues involved in the treatment of the informal sector. The Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, is the Chair of the Delhi Group. Since its inception in 1997, the Delhi Group has provided an international forum for the exchange of country experiences in the estimation of informal sector employment; for measuring the contribution of the informal sector to gross domestic product; for addressing the statistical standards being used in different countries; and for working towards improvement, refinement and harmonization of the related statistical standards for facilitating international comparability.

2. A short report on the activities of the Delhi Group was submitted to the Statistical Commission at its forty-first session.

II. Measuring informality: a statistical manual on the informal sector and informal employment

3. The Delhi Group has had 11 meetings to date. The eleventh meeting was organized and hosted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) from 27 to 29 January 2010 in Geneva. At that meeting, the draft chapters of the manual, “Measuring informality: a statistical manual on the informal sector and informal employment”, were extensively discussed. The pre-edited version of the manual has since been put on the website of ILO¹ for the comments and suggestions of practitioners and stakeholders. The manual was jointly prepared by the Delhi Group and ILO, with contributions from the Institute de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), France; Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), Mexico; Développement, Institutions et Mondialisation (DIAL), France; Statistics Division, United Nations; Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Harvard University; National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), India; International Monetary Fund; Central Statistical Office (CSO), Mauritius; Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), Tokyo; and Statistics South Africa. The cost of preparation of the manual has been shared equally by the Government of India and ILO. After formal editing by ILO, the manual will be issued in English in both print and electronic forms. Consideration will also be given to having it translated in the other official languages of the United Nations.

4. The manual serves two primary objectives: first, to assist countries in planning a programme to produce statistics on the informal sector and informal employment on a comparable basis and in undertaking a review and analysis of their options; and second, to provide practical guidance on the technical issues involved in the development and administration of the surveys used to collect relevant information, as well as guidance on the compilation, tabulation and dissemination of statistics on

¹ See http://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS_182300/lang--en/index.htm.

the informal sector and informal employment. It also provides recommendations on best practices for implementing current international standards on informal sector and informal employment by presenting alternative measurement methodologies, as well as examples based on national experiences. The manual comprises the following eight chapters: chapter 1 (introduction); chapter 2 (concepts, definitions and subclassifications of the informal sector and informal employment); chapter 3 (measurement objectives and methods of data collection); chapter 4 (household surveys on informal sector employment and other types of informal employment); chapter 5 (establishment surveys and censuses); chapter 6 (mixed surveys); chapter 7 (tabulation, reporting and dissemination); chapter 8 (use of statistics on informal sector and informal employment for national accounts).

5. The completed manual supports one of the objectives of the Delhi Group, as identified in its terms of reference, which is to prepare guidelines directed at improving the international comparability of various aspects of informal sector statistics.

6. The Delhi Group requests the Statistical Commission to take note of the completion of the manual, "Measuring informality: a statistical manual on the informal sector and informal employment". The Delhi Group will continue to work, in collaboration with ILO, to prepare an inventory (a knowledge base) of existing country practices, including data collection, sample designs, benchmark adjustments, and processing, tabulation and dissemination practices, to advance the implementation of the recommendations contained in the manual. The Group will hold a meeting to identify its other areas of work on informal sector statistics and will report thereon to the Statistical Commission.
