

Item 3a (iii): Data in support of the post-2015 development agenda - Big data

Switzerland would like to express its thanks for this excellent report of the Global Working group on Big Data for official statistics.

Switzerland welcomes the proposed terms of reference and mandate of the Global Working Group on Big Data for official statistics and the other proposed measures: (ii) the proposed task teams of the GWG and corresponding deliverables; (iii) the results of the UNSD/UNECE survey and the plans to extend this to a global survey; (iv) the pilot projects, which GWG intends to conduct in collaboration with the regional working groups to consolidate and accelerate progress in the use of Big Data for official statistics.

Switzerland has created a Big Data working group whose purpose is to prepare the use of these new data sources by federal statistics. In particular the group is responsible for:

- Following and coordinating Big Data pilot projects in order to gain experience in this area;
- Taking an active part and finding out about international and European efforts in the area of "Big Data"; and
- Compiling an inventory of "Big Data" sources that are of interest to Swiss official statistics.

Switzerland is in touch with the UNECE and will take part in the NTTS 2015 conference, where projects for 2015 in the area of Big Data will be discussed.

Furthermore, Switzerland would like to underline two major challenges with regard to the use of Big Data datasets by official statistics. One is the unrealistic expectations that may be created by the possibility of using these data and the other is the difficulty of using these datasets while respecting official statistics quality standards.

For this reason, Switzerland recommends:

- Avoiding the start-up of pilot projects whose results cannot be at least partially validated by existing statistics;
- Conducting comparable pilot projects in several countries (same data, same aims) in order to facilitate the exchange of experiences and to validate the results by going beyond specific national characteristics;

- Conducting pilot projects with no obligation to produce results insofar as their success cannot be guaranteed at the present time. Indeed, when publishing results on an unknown subject, there is a real danger of damaging the image of official statistics, if it should emerge that the validity and reliability of the data had not been or could not be investigated.

Thank you Madam Chair