2nd Meeting of the Friends of the Chair on Economic Statistics

UNHQ, New York, USA

2-4 December 2019

Agenda

The 50st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission established a Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics with a two-year mandate. The Commission requested that the Friends of the Chair Group convenes meetings and user consultations to assess whether the current planned updates of the standards of the system of economic statistics adequately consider the priority areas for sustainable and equitable development as set out by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or whether gaps exists.

The Commission also asked the Friend of the Chair Group to assess the current national and global governance and the statistical operations and infrastructure supporting the system of economic statistics to determine if the system requires modification to become more responsive to the ever-changing global dynamic, more cohesive to reduce duplication and further integrated to address horizontal issues. The Friends of the Chair has been asked to report back at the 51st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2020.

This second meeting will be used to: evaluate the feedback received from various fora via the global user consultation of statistical groups; define the system of economic statistics; articulate any changes needed to the governance arrangements and statistical operations and infrastructure of the system; tasks and responsibilities for 2020 and agree on the content of the report to the 51st session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Dec 2: 10 – 6 pm

1. **Welcome** (Moderator Anil Arora)
   (10am – 10:15am)

2. **Discussion with Economists (the 'why')** (Moderator Tabo Symphorien)
   (10:15am – 12pm)

This session is intended to continue the dialogue with the economics community as requested by UNSC. Helping ensure that FOCG discussions and activities remain focused on meeting policy needs and articulating <u>why</u> (the drivers) we are undertaking these initiatives.

a) Economic policy making for SDGs update on recent developments from UN Network of Economists (Elliott Harris to provide)

b) Recent developments economic policy priorities from multilateral development bank (Economists from World Bank or regional development banks)

3. **Discussion on Results of Consultation Activities (the 'who')** (Moderator Stefan Schweinfest)
   (1:30pm – 3:30pm)

This session will present, for discussion, the results of the regional and working group consultation process. The desired outcome is ensuring we have heard from a broad range of stakeholders and can take their views into consideration in the following discussions.

   a) Findings from consultation with economic statistics working groups (Statistics Canada to provide)

   b) Findings from regional consultation seminars (FOCG members and UNSD who attended regional seminars invited to provide their perspectives verbally)

   c) Group discussion on the results of the consultation process

4. **The system of economic statistics (the 'what')** (Moderator David Kalisch)
   (4pm – 6pm)

This session will describe the current system of economic statistics as well as articulate gaps that have been identified and what changes to the system may be required. Discussion of the system will include: domains (labour, trade, finance, etc.); attributes (timeliness, coverage etc.); and the statistical operations and infrastructure and an overarching conceptual umbrella framework. The desired outcome is an agreement on the scope and priorities for an articulated system of economic statistics, i.e. that we have described <u>what</u> the current system is and what the future system could look like to address thematic issues such as globalization, digitization, and well-being and sustainability related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

   a) Description of the present and future state of the system of economic statistics (incl. linking to SDGs) (Canada to provide – action item arising from 1st meeting)

   b) Discussion on the framework including links to SDGs, gaps, priorities and changes needed

5. **Recap and reflections from Day 1** (Moderator Anil Arora)
   (10am – 11am)

This session provides an opportunity to review the discussion from day 1, to further elaborate on the key discussion points, and provide an opportunity for additional debate following overnight reflections.

   a) Secretariat to provide document capturing key points, 'parked' issues etc. from day 1

6. **Potential improvements to the system of economic statistics? (the 'how')** (Moderator Jorgen Elmeskov)
   (11am – 1pm)

This session will build on session four (which described what the system of economic statistics is and its future state) with a discussion on <u>how</u> we can better deliver this system and serve to our users through changes to the institutional settings that: e.g. increase responsiveness, increase multi-country collaboration, and increase concerted experimentation. The desired outcome is an agreement on a set of recommendations for improving the agility of the system of economic statistics.

   a) Ideas for improving the flexibility and responsiveness of international standard setting (Australia to provide from a national perspective, Eurostat and UNSD from an international perspective)

   b) Ideas for improving and scaling in-country and multi-country collaboration on statistical infrastructure (systems, registers, platforms) (United Kingdom and Denmark from a national perspective, OECD and UNECA from an international perspective)

   c) Ideas for increasing concerted experimentation on the broadening of the umbrella framework, statistical operations and statistical infrastructure (new data, methods and framework) (Malaysia and Saudi Arabia from a national perspective, World Bank and AfDB from an international perspective)

   d) Discussion on recommendations to take forward

7. **Governance of the system of economic statistics** (Moderator Mariana Kotzeva)
   (3pm – 6pm)

This session will: discuss current governance arrangements; develop/agree to a set of principles which could be used to inform the assessment of current governance arrangements; agree whether changes are required; and what these changes may look like - i.e. evolution (incremental) or transformational (system-wide). The desired outcome is an agreed position on what the road-map for changes to the governance of the enhanced system of economic statistics could look like with possible options (including whether changes are required).

   a) Current inventory working groups (and the like) including reporting lines and links between the groups (Statistics Canada to provide – action item arising from 1st meeting)

b) Principles for guiding governance arrangements (Austria and USA to provide papers from national perspective; IMF and UNSD from international perspective)

c) Pathfinder governance projects (2) which would demonstrate different governance mechanisms as options for members to react to (Statistics Canada to provide)

d) Discussion on possible changes to the governance

Dec 4: 9 – 1pm

8. **Review of day 2 discussion and further reflections** (Moderator Anil Arora)
(9am – 10am)

This session provides an opportunity to review the discussion from day 2, to further elaborate on the key discussion points, and provide an opportunity for additional discussion following overnight reflections.

a) Secretariat to provide document capturing key points, 'parked' issues etc. from day 2

9. **FOCG Work Program** (Moderator Anil Arora)
(10am – 1pm)

This session will be used to develop agreement on next steps for the Group, and to finalise the UNSC report.

a) Reporting to the 51st UNSC (UNSD to provide first draft of report)

b) Main topics, contributions and dates for the 3rd meeting

c) Broader user consultation through UN Global Forum on Economic Statistics (in 2020)