



Towards A Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics in support of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Outcome of the Global Conference held at the United Nations, New York from 15 to 16 January 2015 jointly organised by UNSD and Eurostat

Side event, 46th session of the Statistical Commission, 2015



- **Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics**
 - jointly organised by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and held at the United Nations, New York from 15 to 16 January 2015
 - High-Level Forum of official statisticians to seek a broad initial consensus on the main thematic areas of work of a transformative agenda for official statistics for the consideration of the 46th Session of the Statistical Commission in March 2015



Drivers for a universal transformative agenda

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- Policy demand:
 - a universal and transformative post-2015 agenda with sustainable development at its core - improving economic and social well-being for all while protecting the environment
- Data revolution:
 - the need to reposition and modernize itself in the emerging knowledge and information society by embracing the new ICT developments, including the use of non-traditional data sources
- Integration:
 - an integrated statistics approach and a shared standard business architecture and information model allowing for efficiency gains to meet the new demands of the post-2015 development agenda



Proposed objectives of the transformative agenda

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- Overall objective
 - modernizing and strengthening the global, regional and national statistical systems in order to respond more effectively and efficiently to the new policy requirements, such as the Post-2015 Development Agenda
- Specific objectives
 - developing and implementing standards and principles
 - integrating statistics with national planning and development
 - supporting transparency and openness
 - promoting the use of new methods, technology and data.



Proposed thematic areas of the transformative agenda

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- The conference identified **5 thematic areas** of work to address the demands for more efficiently functioning national statistical systems:
 1. Coordination of the global statistical system
 2. Communication and advocacy
 3. Data collection, processing and dissemination through integrated statistics system
 4. Innovative methods, tools and IT infrastructure, including standards based production architecture
 5. Capacity building



- A coordinated single **Global Programme** to modernize statistics **is needed**, particularly in context of the new data demands arising from post-2015 development agenda.
- **Programmatic areas**: coordination; statistical standards and methods; data collection, production and dissemination; innovative methods techniques and IT infrastructure; communication/advocacy and resource mobilization; technical cooperation assistance and training.
- Coordination would be **governed by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC)**: strengthen the governance structure of global statistical system.
- Coordination **within national statistical systems** is also essential, and it is important to have a **regional approach to coordinate** and fully align regional and international work programmes.



- Communication and advocacy is needed to convincingly **articulate the value of official statistics**, and **its unique attributes** to brand official statistics.
- Common principles of the **methodological framework for valuation** of official statistics should include the cost of producing statistics, the measurements of benefits, and the impacts. This will assist in branding.
- **Comparative advantage of official statistics:** objectivity, quality, reliability, relevance of information, and adherence to confidentiality/privacy norms and as well as international norms and standards.
- Communication is **essential for mobilizing resources and investments, maintaining support** and commitment, and **coordinating** the work of statistical organizations.
- **How to communicate:** Tailor communication to meet concrete needs; establish common messages that are reinforced constantly; communication services can be outsourced, and civil society organizations can be approached as partners to reach out to specific constituents. International organizations should take a leading role.



Data collection, processing and dissemination through integrated statistical systems

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- **Modernization:** A more efficiently functioning national statistical systems can be achieved by organizing the production processes in a small number of subject-matter divisions and a number of specialized corporate services that assist the production processes.
- **Benefits:** Better integrated planning and management; promotion and use of new methods; technologies and standards; cost effective; improves the quality of the data; reduce response burden and increase collaboration.
- **Challenges:** Change in mind-set is difficult; human capital shortages; adopting new IT environments can be a challenge too.
- **Overcoming challenges:** legal mandates that mainstream standards and metadata; optimize use and multi-use of administrative data; develop modular IT applications; establish quality culture. Communication and advocacy is essential, and investing in low hanging fruits can help gain support.
- **Integrated household and business statistics programmes:** need for international programme on business statistics to complement the international programme on household statistics



- Official statistics could greatly **benefit from harnessing ICT and new innovations** in the statistical production processes for official statistics.
- **How to leverage innovative methods, techniques and IT infrastructure?**
 - Establishment of common national **data and metadata portals**; standards such as SDMX should be mainstreamed; explore use of **cloud computing** and **Big Data**, and outsourcing of statistical activities; and sharing common IT tools.
 - **Improve current institutional arrangements**, particularly increasing regular use of **administrative data** through **public-public partnerships** that allow for common identifier and classification systems.
- Work by UNECE High Level Group on Modernization of Statistics provides relevant insights; however, **implementing standards consistently across countries can be difficult.**



- Despite progress, production of official statistics in many countries is still limited. Several things can help improve the status quo

A) Coordination

- Coordination between international partners has to be strengthened.
- New entities could be created, but their relevance and value added need to be assessed by questioning: i) if they will solve existing problems or new ones; ii) if they will be linked to existing ones; iii) and if current entities can be adapted to achieve the same goals.
- Global coordination mechanism should be built on regional organization and management structure. Partnerships outside the statistical community are also important.

B) NSDS and national data compact

- NSDSs and national SD data compacts provide an opportunity for countries to highlight their priorities in context of the new data requirements and drive integration of national statistical systems



C) Partnerships

- Range of potential partners—both internal and external—bring unique opportunities.
- For example, partnerships with academia can be explored for training and capacity building, and partnerships with geospatial information community can provide detailed data required for policy making. Partnerships with civil society is also crucial, along with partnerships with the private sector, to mobilize resources.

D) Funding

- The statistical community has to be more proactive, should show more accountability in use of financial resources.
- Highlight returns on investments, and look towards modalities such as public private partnerships, and partnerships with universities and civil society.



- Bureau of the Statistical Commission, with the support of the Secretariat to:
 - conduct a mapping of the existing mechanisms and work streams with a view of identifying those areas that require priority action.
 - undertake a broader regional consultative process on the identified thematic areas in support of the strengthening of the regional and national statistical system as part of the formulation of the transformative agenda for official statistics.