

Meeting of UN entities on Statistical Programmes
New York, 27 February 2009
2 UN Plaza, DC2-1684 -UNSD Conference Room
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

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Minutes

Attendance:

1. The meeting was attended by representatives from UNSD, UN Population Division, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UNDP, UNODC, ILO, WHO, UNIDO, and UNESCO.

Mutual briefing on recent or planned system-wide cross cutting activities:

2. The Director of UNSD welcomed the representatives from the Statistical Programmes of the various UN entities. Mr. Cheung informed the participants about the ongoing statistical coordination issues at country and global level, in particular about UNSD's intention to focus more on "Data Dissemination", aiming thereby in particular at enhancing countries' capacities for making their statistical information more accessible to users. UNSD will work with all stakeholders on this initiative, especially the UN Regional Commissions and other sub-regional entities. This Data Dissemination programme will be linked to the UNData Portal for achieving improved scope and data quality. Furthermore, planned 2009 flagship events will focus on the financial crisis, timeliness and quality of economic indicators, as well as basic economic statistics and the 2008 SNA.
3. The UN entities supported the UNSD initiatives and expressed interest to be actively involved. In particular the Regional Commissions offered to play the role of focal points for regional coordination and identify countries and ongoing projects related to data dissemination in their respective regions. The meeting requested UNSD to circulate the project proposal as soon as it is ready, so the UN entities will be able to decide on how best they can contribute.

Follow-up actions on decisions of the UN Statistical Commission:

4. The Director of UNSD briefed the meeting that the feedbacks received from participants in the just concluded 40th session of the UN Statistical Commission indicated that the recent practice of conducting side events and learning centers was being received very positively. UNIDO and UNDP announced their interest

to participate in the Thursday Dialog on Statistical Development with International Agencies, while the UN Population Division agreed to organize a learning center on population projection. The Director of UNSD called upon UN entities to provide feedbacks and advices on how the organization of Statistical Commission session and its side events could be further improved.

Reporting of Technical Cooperation Activities and Budgets

5. The meeting extensively discussed the Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS) initiative of PARIS21. In principle, the UN entities considered the PRESS a useful initiative, aiming at improved coordination of development partners; however, a number of specific and serious concerns were expressed regarding the questionnaire form and, thus, the completeness and presentation of data, especially budgetary data. There was a general consensus that the UN entities should, in principle, participate in PRESS but they should argue for a different approach to capture the contribution of UN System entities in the area of technical cooperation. The elaboration of one or more case studies by PARIS21 could also facilitate the response to the PRESS questionnaire. Concerning the financial part of the questionnaire, the meeting will request PARIS21 to revise the questionnaire form and adapt the methodology to the practice of UN agencies. The group agreed to take up this issue again at its future meetings.

UN-Data (project briefing by UNSD):

6. UNSD informed the meeting that since the public launch of the UN-Data portal, the division had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from users, however, some concerns about the frequency of data updates, data quality and validations have also been expressed. The recent development of the “Update calendar” was one of the most important improvements of the portal, providing crucial information to users about the last/next updates of databases by source and addressing part of these concerns. The meeting acknowledged that keeping live databases fully up-to-date and ‘in synch’ will always remain a challenge and emphasized in this context the importance of the Data Managers Group. The meeting agreed that it is in our mutual interest is to have well informed users and that UN entities should work towards standardizing their metadata. A proposal was made to hold a special meeting among UN entities, focusing on issues of data reconciliation.

Other business:

7. The group agreed to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the 14th session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) in Bangkok, Thailand (9-11 September 2009).

Annex 1: Agenda

1. Mutual briefing on recent or planned system-wide cross cutting activities
2. Follow-up actions on decisions of the UN Statistical Commission
3. Reporting of Technical Cooperation Activities and Budgets
4. UN-Data (project briefing by UNSD)
5. Other business (September 2009 meeting)