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Statistics of human development

The Statistical Commission:

- (a) Welcomed the report of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission on statistics of human development and fully agreed with and endorsed its recommendations;
- (b) Took note of the report of Brazil, Morocco and South Africa on Member States' concerns with indicators released by United Nations agencies, fully endorsed the concerns expressed therein and strongly supported the conclusions contained in paragraph 25 of the report;
- (c) Took note of the report of the United Nations Development Programme on statistics of human development and of the additional informal background documents, and welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to provide explanations for its position;
- (d) Recognized that the *Human Development Report* is an important document that informs discussions on national and international development, and therefore expressed serious concern on the statistical sources and methods used for the *Human Development Report*;
- (e) Expressed deep regret and strong dissatisfaction that the *Human Development Report* Office did not respond adequately to the recommendations of the expert group on the Human Development Index with respect to the quality and availability of data for the chosen indicators, the use of non-official source data and the need to hold extensive consultation with the global statistical community prior to the release of the 2010 report, and noted further in this context the following issues:
 - (i) That some countries were omitted from the *Human Development Report* on the grounds of lack of data and that the national statistical offices were not informed prior to the decision to omit them;
 - (ii) That there were discrepancies between the data contained in the *Human Development Report* and the data available from national sources, as well as discrepancies between data published by different United Nations agencies; and
 - (iii) That non-official data were used, in which case the Commission emphasized that when official data are not available, non-official data should be used, but only after consultation on the quality and accuracy of the data has been undertaken with the respective national statistical offices and that detailed explanations of the sources and methodologies used should be provided;
- (f) Stressed the relevance of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and of the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities to the issue at hand, and urged the United Nations Development Programme to review the Principles and subscribe to them, and in this context encouraged the United Nations Development Programme, in order to improve coordination, to play an active role in forums such as the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities;
- (g) Recognized that while the choice of the theme and of the indicators for the *Human Development Report* is the prerogative of the United Nations Development Programme, the issue of data quality and adequacy falls within the purview of the Statistical Commission on behalf of the global statistical system and that prior consultation is necessary;
- (h) Reiterated the need for the United Nations Development Programme to be fully transparent in its methods of statistical work in preparing the *Human Development Report*, and called for consultation with all parties concerned;
- (i) Stressed the continuing role of the expert group on the Human Development Index established by the Statistical Commission, and mandated it to continue work in reviewing the issues arising from its first report;¹³
- (j) Requested the United Nations Development Programme to:
 - (i) Report to the Statistical Commission within three months on the issues raised in the present decision;
 - (ii) Establish a calendar for the various preparatory phases for the *Human Development Report*, and disseminate the calendar to national statistical offices or national coordinating agencies so that they are informed about the sources of statistical data and the methods used in the report and about ways to address potential concerns and facilitate their resolution;
 - (iii) Consult in advance with Member States when reviewing the statistical data required for the indicators to be used for the *Human Development Report*;
 - (iv) Establish a communication plan with national statistical offices on the use and adequacy of non-official national data, in cases where official national data are not available;
- (k) Urged the United Nations Statistics Division to take a central role to assist Member States in addressing issues of data discrepancies and consistency with international organizations, paying special attention to issues of consistency of data disseminated by United Nations agencies, in this context stressed the need for an authoritative agency in the United Nations system to coordinate statistical activities, asked relevant United Nations authorities to review the situation, and requested the United Nations Statistics Division to report to the Commission on this issue at its forty-third session.