

Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

Terms of Reference

September 2008

Mission statement

1. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities promotes inter-agency coordination and cooperation on statistical programmes and consistency in statistical practices and development.
2. As a forum of committed members, the Committee fosters good practices in the statistical activities of international organizations,^a in accordance with the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities, and within the constraints of their own governance arrangements and resource envelopes.
3. The members of the Committee are committed to contributing actively to the development of a coordinated global statistical system producing and disseminating high-quality statistics, for example, by facilitating the development of well-functioning regional and national statistical systems.

Key activities and functions

4. The key activities and functions of the Committee are summarized along the following six main lines:
 - **Efficient functioning of the statistical system.** The Committee contributes to the coordination of statistical activities of international organizations in order to promote good statistical practices and the mutual consistency of disseminated data, minimize duplication and reduce the reporting and meetings burdens on countries; the Committee promotes coordination of statistical actions required from international organizations by intergovernmental meetings, including the Statistical Commission.
 - **Common standards and platforms.** The Committee promotes the development, adoption and use by international organizations of common standards and platforms for the production of data and metadata, with the aim of creating a coordinated, global and high-quality statistical system.
 - **Development of methodologies.** The Committee contributes to the coordination of the work on methodological development in statistics, aiming at ensuring internationally agreed standards for official statistics and facilitating their use in countries and international organizations.

^a The term “international organizations” includes supranational organizations.

- **Inter-institutional support.** The Committee provides a forum for its members to share experiences and best practices and provides guidance and suggestions on how to address challenges related to international statistical activities, including the availability, quality and interchange of data and organizational aspects.
 - **Outreach.** The Committee promotes and contributes to the coordination of the design and delivery of the capacity-building services of its members in official statistics. It shares experiences in all statistical fields, including training and technological tools, involving in its work, where appropriate, other stakeholders in the global statistical system, such as national statisticians and policymakers.
 - **Advocacy for statistics.** The Committee shares experiences about ways to promote and gain recognition for the role of statistics within international organizations, for the implementation of the Principles Governing Statistical Activities and for maintaining and improving the suitability of governance arrangements that are supportive to that function.
5. The work of the Committee is organized under the working modalities established by the Committee, as outlined in appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Working modalities of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

A. Membership and level of representation

1. The members of the Committee comprise international and supranational organizations, whose mandate includes the provision of international official statistics in the context of the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities, and which have a permanent embedded statistical service in their organization and regular contacts with countries, as listed in appendix 2.
2. Prospective members should apply to the secretariat. New members of the Committee need the approval of two thirds of the current members. Any such application for membership implies acceptance of the Committee mandate and a commitment to contribute to its work and to attend meetings on a regular basis.
3. Membership in the Committee may be terminated for any organization which, in the view of at least two thirds of current members, shows insufficient commitment to the work of the Committee or which breaches the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities.
4. Representation in the Committee should be at the level of Director of an organization's statistical service or equivalent. Participation at the highest statistical level is considered indispensable for the effectiveness of the Committee's work.

B. Management and organization

Chairs

5. The Committee elects two Co-Chairs, taking into account the diversity of its membership. They will serve for a two- year period and are each eligible for reelection for a second two- year term.

Functions of the Co-Chairs

6. The functions are to:
 - (a) Decide on the draft agenda items as proposed by the secretariat, based on decisions taken at the previous session of the Committee and on subsequent requests by members;

- (b) Direct the sessions of the Committee, including summarizing the discussion of each agenda item as a basis for preparing the report of the session;
- (c) Propose draft minutes of the meetings, as prepared by the secretariat, to be approved by written procedure by all the members who attended the meeting;
- (d) Represent the Committee whenever its members consider it necessary;
- (e) Invite, on a proposal from one or more of the members, observers to participate in the work of Committee.

Secretariat

- 7. The secretariat of the Committee is situated at the United Nations Statistics Division. It receives no financial assistance but may, on an ad hoc basis, seek the assistance of other members.
- 8. In direct collaboration with the Co-Chairs, and following consultation with members, the secretariat prepares the draft agenda for the meetings of the Committee and ensures that all documentation received and approved by the Co-Chairs, along with all other necessary information, is made available to its members. It is also responsible for organizing Committee's meetings and for coordinating with the agreed host of a given Committee meeting.
- 9. Between sessions, the secretariat reminds members, especially those responsible for leading task teams, of their commitments to produce outputs and reports, as agreed at Committee meetings.
- 10. The secretariat is also responsible for liaising with the Co-Chairs of the Committee and preparing the draft report of each session. As per an ad hoc request from the Committee, the process of submitting any document to the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations Chief Executives Board on Coordination is arranged by the secretariat, in cooperation with the Co-Chairs and the author(s) of the document.
- 11. The secretariat keeps the Committee website up-to-date, including its task teams. The website is hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division.
- 12. The secretariat prepares the draft annual report to the Statistical Commission for approval by the Co-Chairs.

C. Meetings

Regular meetings

13. The Committee holds an official meeting at least once a year. The exact timing and length of the meetings are dictated by substance and needs. In principle, it is expected that there will be one annual meeting of two to three days' duration in September. An additional meeting is also expected, in conjunction with each session of the Statistical Commission, for taking up any issues that need to be considered at that time and to review the proposed agenda and need for the next scheduled Committee session.
14. Side events may also be held in conjunction with the main session of the Committee. These will be limited in number and will be organized by the relevant agencies, with no assistance from the secretariat. Also, since formal Committee meetings provide an excellent opportunity for bilateral and multilateral discussions and networking, some time can be set aside in the meetings schedule for such activities.

Special sessions

15. Special sessions are devoted to topics of special importance to the Committee or one of its task teams, allowing for a more in-depth exchange and for the presentation of technical papers and contributions by members. Special sessions normally have a duration of half a day.

Agenda of the meetings

16. Topics on the agenda are distinguished as “decision” and “information” items. The Co-Chairs of the Committee and its secretariat determine the category of each agenda item based on written proposals from members. Decision items are presented and discussed, while information items are not presented and discussion on them is optional.
17. Coordination of activities between meetings, for example, through electronic discussion groups and follow-up to decisions taken at meetings, is an important and integral part of the work of the Committee.
18. Papers for meetings should be made available to members at least three weeks prior to meetings.

D. Ways of operating

19. Consensus during sessions is determined by the Co-Chairs and reported in the minutes of the meeting. A report on decisions and actions only is prepared for adoption at the end of each Committee meeting. The report should specify the lead agencies responsible for any action and follow-up.

20. An annual report is also made available to the Statistical Commission for communicating important decisions and key issues and for ensuring recognition of its work and decisions.
21. The Committee can decide at its meeting whether to refer a report on a specific issue to the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination.
22. The Committee functions on a task-oriented basis, using lead agency arrangements. When agreed by members of the Committee, and based on a written mandate that includes a sunset clause, task teams can be created to address specific topics. Their terms of reference are approved by the Committee, and the task teams are led by one or more appointed members of the Committee. Task teams can establish the most appropriate working arrangements and hold their own meetings, if necessary, with no financial implications for the Committee secretariat. Task teams report on progress and results to the Committee at its regular sessions.

Appendix 2

Membership of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, as at 21 February 2011

United Nations Statistics Division
United Nations Population Division
Economic Commission for Europe
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Economic Commission for Africa
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Environment Programme
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
United Nations Population Fund
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
International Labour Organization
International Monetary Fund
International Telecommunication Union
World Health Organization (including Pan American Health Organization, Health Metrics Network)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
World Trade Organization
World Bank
African Development Bank
Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics
Asian Development Bank
Bank for International Settlements
Caribbean Community Secretariat
European Central Bank
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century
Statistical Office of the European Communities
Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries
Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa
World Tourism Organization
International Atomic Energy Agency
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees