

# **Third Meeting of the United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians**

## **26 September 2023, Online**

### **Conclusions**

Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, opened the meeting. He underscored the role the Network could play to support the request at the ongoing 78<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly for better statistics and data to facilitate the monitoring of the sustainable development goals.

In his opening remarks, André Loranger, Co-Chair of the United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians and Assistant Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada, encouraged Network members to share their inputs on how the Network was doing and the topics of interest the Network should tackle in the future.

The meeting began with a keynote presentation on “The use of alternative data sources in business statistics in the Netherlands: experiences and lessons learned” before discussing the other topics in the agenda.

The members of the Network:

1. Expressed their appreciation for the work done by the Bureau in organizing the online meeting and preparing the interesting agenda.

#### **Keynote presentation**

2. Appreciated the keynote presentation which provided insights into the alternative data sources other than survey data that are used in business statistics in the Netherlands.
3. Observed that while using alternative data sources would reduce the reporting burden on respondents like households in the case of the consumer price index, time would be needed to build relationships and partnerships with scanner data providers in order to assure them that the confidentiality of the data they provided would be protected under statistical legislation.
4. Noted the potential for administrative data to replace often-costly surveys in compiling various types of statistics, but observed that, in some instances, there may be a need to seek public consent or conduct privacy impact assessments before the administrative data can be used.

#### **Recap of recent Network activities and sprints, as well as announcements on planned work by the Network**

5. Appreciated the thorough overview of recent Network activities, sprints and planned work.
6. Recommended that the Network bureau should consider organizing national-level events to enhance the visibility of the Network and clarify how its initiatives and activities are of relevance to policy makers.

7. Observed that while the use of technology can enhance the productivity of the routine work of economic statisticians, it may not be able to replace the normative and foundational work that they do.

**Follow-up on the discussion with Regional Commissions on the Priorities of the Global South and live poll**

8. Appreciated the initiative by the Network to organize the discussion with the relevant regional commissions on the priorities of the Global South collectively and to scope these priorities via a live poll.

9. Noted the results of the live poll which showed (a) leveraging on administrative and big data sources as a top priority in terms of statistical development, (b) economic growth and inequality as a top policy priority requiring data drive solutions and (c) facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration for mutual learning and development as the best way in which the Network could assist countries in achieving their goals.

10. Underscored the need to enhance the capacity of countries to integrate social, economic and environmental data to better assess the relationship between social and macroeconomic developments such as inflation and poverty.

11. Noted that some countries within particular regions such as Australia are already providing statistical assistance to neighbouring Global South countries<sup>1</sup> and that any initiative of the Network to provide statistical assistance to Global South should avoid duplication with these country-led initiatives.

12. Noted that the limited resources and expertise of the donor community would necessitate the need to encourage the countries that are asking for support to prioritize the assistance they need so they are able to absorb the support that they are being given.

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<sup>1</sup> Some Network bureau members also shared after the meeting that organizations such as ASEAN are also involved in similar initiatives.