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THE NEW UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL DIVISION WEB SITES

This document was prepared by William De Vries, Deputy Director of the United Nations Statistical Division. The opinions expressed in this document, which has been reproduced without formal editing, are those of the author and do not necessarily coincide with those of the Organization.

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It is my pleasure to briefly inform the Conference about some web sites that the UN Statistics Division has developed, namely

1. the ***UNESIS Common Database for Global Statistics***
2. a ***web site on methodology*** and
3. a ***web site on good practices in official statistics***.

In addition, I will say a few words about the UNSD ***web site for city groups***.

The UNESIS Common Database for global statistics is now on-line for UN Headquarters, the regional commissions, UN Information Centers and UN resident coordinators' offices. Passwords for Internet access are available to national statistical services from the UN Statistics Division on request. Subscriptions will be made available to the public in mid-March.

This first comprehensive version of the UN Common Database features data as well as the underlying meta-data from all the important statistics producing agencies in the UN system, including IMF and World Bank. Most time series go back to 1970 or 1980. The database is searchable by source or topic. UNESIS also offers country profiles, i.e. summary data sets and basic graphs per individual country. In addition to viewing data in HTML format, data can also be downloaded as Excel files. The database is being updated continuously by the Statistics Division as new data become available. New series will be added on the basis of user suggestions.

Coming now to the web sites on methodology and on good practices: these two web sites are based on decisions made by the Statistical Commission during its 30th session, in March 1999. (*Ref.: Report of that session (E/1999/24), in particular page 23, point 116, sub-points d, e, f and g , as well as to the underlying documents E/CN.3/1999/20, 23, 24, 25 and 26.*)

The Commission in 1999 endorsed several recommendations of an ad hoc group set up to explore new approaches to its structure and operation. As a result, it requested the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) to proceed with its database of the work plans in statistical methodology of the international organizations, and requested all organizations to participate in that endeavor.

This request has been implemented through the ***UNSD methodology web site***.

This site serves two main purposes:

- It is a reference site for all information about agreed international statistical standards, definitions and classifications
- It is a management tool for the planning and review of new and ongoing international methodological work in statistics

The web site contains a searchable database of both ongoing and completed international statistical methodological work. The part on ongoing methodological work was inspired by the so-called Integrated Presentation that was developed years ago by the Statistical Division of UN/ECE for the Conference of European Statisticians. To keep it up-to-date, contact persons of various international organizations have

been enabled to update their parts of the database when necessary. This work arrangement was agreed on during the last meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistics. We would like to thank the international organizations for their cooperation.

Closely related to the web site on methodology is the ***web site on city groups*** that we created several years ago. It provides links to the web sites of individual city groups, where ongoing and planned activities of these city groups are described.

The Commission in 1999 also took note of reports on expert group meetings on good practices in official statistics that were held in Prague (1998) and Singapore (1999). These meetings had recommended the promulgation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics by means of creating access to good country practices. In this regard, the Commission endorsed plans of UNSD to develop a searchable database on good practices, as a referral system for relevant country practices.

This database, on the ***UNSD web site on good practices in official statistics***, now contains hundreds of country documents (and some international documents), as well as –where appropriate- links to web sites of national statistical offices and international organizations. We would like to thank countries and international organizations for their cooperation in this effort. However, many countries are still not represented, even though we think they may have interesting documents to share.

A room document (*in the back of the room*) provides help for the delegates who may wish to have a look at these various databases on one of the terminals near this meeting room. UNSD is looking forward to your comments and of course also very much welcomes additional country contributions to the good practices web site.