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OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy", Istanbul, 27-30 June 2007

Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician, OECD

The OECD World Forum on "Measuring and Fostering the progress of Societies" reached a successful conclusion, delivering a number of declarations and initiatives that will allow us all to build on its success and move forward in tackling the key issues related to the measurement of how societies are changing. The overwhelming view of the Forum was that is was a catalyst for a global movement - bringing together experts who have for too long been working in isolation and creating a place to foster the kind of collaborative action that can bring about great change.

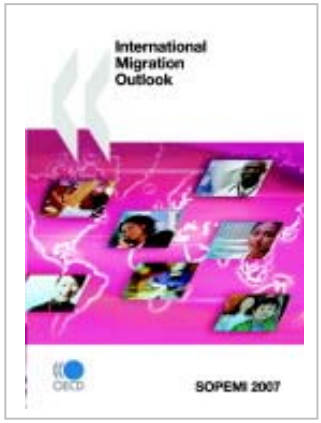
1200 participants from 130+ countries attended the Forum and hundreds followed the event via Internet (all plenary sessions have been video recorded and are accessible at www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum). Participants especially valued the opportunity to network with experts from all over the globe, each bringing her/his own professional and cultural experiences, but all with the common goal to better measure the progress of our societies. Many Forum attendees were positively surprised by the convergence already emerging all over the world towards common concepts and practices, much in thanks to globalisation and the Internet.

Angel Gurria, the Secretary General of the OECD, recognised that the development of such indicators, understood and known by society as a whole can provide "a unique opportunity to improve the ways in which our policies are made and breathe new life into the democratic processes" (see the box below for a full extract of Mr. Gurria's speech).

Of course, I was particularly pleased with the level of support we received in favour of the proposal of launching a Global Project to "Measure the progress of societies". We were delighted to have, during the final session, official pledges of support to work on the Project with us from the Spanish Government, the Korean government (extending an invitation to host the next World Forum in 2009 in Seoul), the UNDP, the Inter American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the Boston Foundation, research institutions/networks and the European Commission. Some large companies are also considering the possibility of sponsoring the Project.

Over the next few months we and our partners will be establishing this Global Project. International organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme and representatives from OECD countries and from African, Asian, Latin American and Middle-Eastern countries expressed their commitment to join in this endeavour. More details on the next steps for the project will appear on the dedicated Forum website (www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum). But there are already some concrete steps that can be taken to strengthen and even enlarge the community of practice we built in Istanbul.

In this Issue



Closing remarks by Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General

Ladies and Gentlemen, these four days have been immensely stimulating. We have learned a great deal from the speakers and panellists and the intense interaction outside the sessions added another dimension to the Forum. On the opening day we discussed why measuring progress makes such a big difference to policy making and democracy, and raised a number of questions that should be answered. I asked if we need a detonator, a catalyst for this work. Something that brings together the many initiatives and the thousands of people working on them. A rallying point which would help us develop and share best practices, and openly discuss issues of common concern. I asked if there is a need to assist those who lack the resources and know-how to develop their own sets of progress measures. I asked whether we need a single global platform where citizens can easily find reliable and trusted data on their progress and compare themselves with others. And, last but not least, I asked what are the next steps.

Three days later we have some answers. This conference has built some solid foundations for a global initiative to take this work forward. First, around the world there are indeed thousands of people working to measure progress. They need a place (be it real or virtual) in which they can develop and share best practices, and discuss issues of common concern. We can provide it. We must provide it.

Second, this work is clearly important to both developed and developing countries. But some societies lack the resources and know-how to undertake this work. And that is why, organisations like Paris Twenty One – the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st century – work hard to help countries to build statistical capacity. I'm sure Paris Twenty One would agree that developing a core set of progress measures can strengthen the dialogue between those who use and those who produce statistics. And it is just this type of dialogue that is advocated by the many National Strategies for the Development of Statistics.

And third, I think we should begin to work together to build a single platform to monitor progress. A system that would allow each and every citizen to see the progress in his or her society and compare themselves with others. This has the power to make quite radical changes to the world's democratic processes.

But how do we go about achieving this? That of course is the subject of this closing session. You have seen this morning the Istanbul Declaration, which the OECD promoted and I have agreed with representatives from the European Commission, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations, the UNDP, and the World Bank. It constitutes an important first step towards a global initiative. We are ready to work with partners all over the world to take this forward.

What practical steps should we take? Several ideas come to mind: I believe that we should encourage each nation or region to design its own sets of progress measures, taking into account good practices developed around the world. But at the same time we should work to maximise comparability of indicators between societies through internationally agreed statistical standards. Of course, this is not easy, but this balance needs to be struck. We must develop better ways to bring indicators to the public. Hans Rosling has just shown us some ways to do that. We need to work with his foundation and with others to develop the tools that will engage citizens. Indicators of progress can tell some fascinating stories; they increase accountability; build knowledge, change behaviour and underpin democratic governance. We will promote research on some of the new and complex areas that are clearly relevant for progress, like social cohesion, subjective well-being, good governance and others. We will produce a handbook to measure progress that will bring together the world's best practices and provide a tool-kit for those wishing to embark on a project; And we are ready to work with others to build a website – using the interactive philosophy of Web two point zero - that will allow people to undertake and share their own analyses of progress with the rest of the world. A "Wikipedia", or a "YouTube", for progress.

We will foster the creation of regional groups so that those working on this can discuss with others in their region – be they in Latin America, Africa, Asia, or OECD member countries. Such exchanges will not only enrich the knowledge of the respective region but will also flow – via the global project – to benefit the whole world. Inclusiveness is the name of the game.

I stress that we are not trying to enforce one single view of progress in the world. We should celebrate the differences in history and culture that give rise to our different notions of progress. But listening to the debate here, I am struck by the overwhelming similarity in what we all consider as progress, from Bhutan to the United States, from Nigeria to New Zealand. Indeed this process could turn out to be an invaluable point of reference in the run up to 2015, when the existing set of Millennium Development Goals will be reviewed.

It is vitally important for all our societies to develop a broader understanding of progress provided we can measure it. It is a unique opportunity to improve the ways in which our policies are made and it can breathe new life into democratic processes. These are worthy, ambitious goals but they are achievable, so long as all of you – each and everyone one of you – participate.

So, welcome to this exciting, far reaching joint endeavour to measure progress and wellbeing and in so doing to achieve progress and wellbeing for all.

Thank you.

ISTANBUL DECLARATION

We, the representatives of the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank,

recognise that while our societies have become more complex, they are more closely linked than ever. Yet they retain differences in history, culture, and in economic and social development.

We are encouraged that initiatives to measure societal progress through statistical indicators have been launched in several countries and on all continents. Although these initiatives are based on different methodologies, cultural and intellectual paradigms, and degrees of involvement of key stakeholders, they reveal an emerging consensus on the need to undertake the measurement of societal progress in every country, going beyond conventional economic measures such as GDP per capita. Indeed, the United Nation's system of indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a step in that direction.

A culture of evidence-based decision making has to be promoted at all levels, to increase the welfare of societies. And in the "information age," welfare depends in part on transparent and accountable public policy making. The availability of statistical indicators of economic, social, and environmental outcomes and their dissemination to citizens can contribute to promoting good governance and the improvement of democratic processes. It can strengthen citizens' capacity to influence the goals of the societies they live in through debate and consensus building, and increase the accountability of public policies.

We affirm our commitment to measuring and fostering the progress of societies in all their dimensions and to supporting initiatives at the country level. We urge statistical offices, public and private organisations, and academic experts to work alongside representatives of their communities to produce high-quality, facts-based information that can be used by all of society to form a shared view of societal well-being and its evolution over time.

Official statistics are a key "public good" that foster the progress of societies. The development of indicators of societal progress offers an opportunity to reinforce the role of national statistical authorities as key providers of relevant, reliable, timely and comparable data and the indicators required for national and international reporting. We encourage governments to invest resources to develop reliable data and indicators according to the "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics" adopted by the United Nations in 1994.

To take this work forward we need to:

- encourage communities to consider for themselves what "progress" means in the 21st century;
- share best practices on the measurement of societal progress and increase the awareness of the need to do so using sound and reliable methodologies;
- stimulate international debate, based on solid statistical data and indicators, on both global issues of societal progress and comparisons of such progress;
- produce a broader, shared, public understanding of changing conditions, while highlighting areas of significant change or inadequate knowledge;
- advocate appropriate investment in building statistical capacity, especially in developing countries, to improve the availability of data and indicators needed to guide development programs and report on progress toward international goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

Much work remains to be done, and the commitment of all partners is essential if we are to meet the demand that is emerging from our societies. We recognise that efforts will be commensurate with the capacity of countries at different levels of development. We invite both public and private organisations to contribute to this ambitious effort to foster the world's progress and we welcome initiatives at the local, regional, national and international levels.

We would like to thank the Government of Turkey for hosting this second OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy." We also wish to thank all those from around the world who have contributed to, or attended, this World Forum, or followed the discussions over the Internet.

Istanbul, 30 June 2007

The key statement in this regard is the Istanbul declaration, shown in the box above. As part of this declaration, the OECD and other international organisations and partners will work together to develop a new approach to measuring how societies are changing, using high quality, reliable statistics to assess progress in a range of areas affecting citizens' quality of life. Key indicators to assess progress would look at such factors as health, education and the environment, as well as economic factors such as employment, productivity and purchasing power.

Among various ideas under study, the OECD is thinking of creating an Internet site based on Web 2.0 "wiki" technologies for the presentation and discussion of international, national and local initiatives aimed at developing indicators of societal progress. By making indicators accessible to citizens all over the world through dynamic graphics and other analytical tools, this initiative would aim to stimulate discussion based on solid and comparable statistical information about what progress actually means.

By strengthening individual citizens' capacity of understanding the social and economic context in which they live, the proposed Project has the potential to improve national and international policy making, thereby strengthening democratic institutions and processes while respecting historical and cultural differences between societies. Among other things, it can contribute to international discussions in the run-up to the review in 2015 of the current set of Millennium Development Goals and Indicators.

The second Forum debated a wide variety of issues, from ageing populations to new technology and from climate change to immigration. For papers and presentations see: www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum.

Meeting of the OECD Committee on Statistics, Geneva, 13-14 June 2007, Main conclusions

Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician, OECD

The Dissemination of OECD Statistics

The Committee was very pleased with the progress to date of the statistics dissemination project, especially with the dissemination of data via OECD.Stat.

The Committee was very interested in the new opportunities offered by web 2.0 technologies (such as Swivel). The OECD was congratulated for the attention paid to these new developments. However, some members remain conservative because of the opportunities offered by these technologies to uninformed users, who could misuse the data, while others were more of the opinion that it is going to happen anyway and that statistical offices should play a more proactive role.

Use of Microdata for International Research: Draft report from the OECD project

The Committee was supportive and quite positive with the proposals contained in the draft report, although the remote access to confidential microdata stored in national statistical offices remain almost impossible at this stage.

OECD and Eurostat should continue to explore options that can reduce the administrative burden on both institutions. The Committee left to the Secretariat the decision whether a central microdata management unit is to be established.

The Committee approved the proposal that OECD should explore the remote access option launching one or two pilot studies. The use of household data (instead of business data) would certainly favour the participation by some statistical offices, given the lower probability of unintentional disclosure.

Quality reviews: International Trade

The Committee welcomed and appreciated the review and agreed to the creation of the Working Party on International Trade in Goods and Trade in Services Statistics.

The Committee also discussed the comparability between OECD/United Nations data and Eurostat data. The Committee asked the Secretariat to report back to CSTAT next year with a report on this issue.

OECD World Forum on "Statistics Knowledge and Policy"

The Committee discussed the content of the Global Project to be launched at the end of the Istanbul Forum. Some countries expressed support for the Project, while others expressed some concerns about its wide scope and the amount of resources needed to implement it.

The Committee concluded that the Project is important and useful as a way to highlight the importance of the statistics behind the indicators being used.

Continuing the role that NSOs perform in their own countries, a subset of Bureau members will participate in the Project in the role of expert advisors and not as drivers or owners of the Project.

The Committee also agreed on the establishment of the expert group on measuring societal progress.

OECD "Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences (PIAAC)"

The Committee showed significant interest in this project and many considered PIAAC a key item that

should feature regularly on the CSTAT agenda.

It was suggested that NSOs should play a key role in the design of the survey and that their views should feed into the work of the PIAAC Board of participating countries.

A joint letter from STD/EDU/ELS should go to the PIAAC Board mentioning the availability of NSOs to support the technical work.

SDMX Developments

The Committee expressed its support for the "vision" of data and metadata exchange proposed by the Secretariat, based on SDMX.

CSTAT also welcomed the proposal to establish a "hub" on education statistics, in co-operation with Eurostat and UNESCO. It also took note of the ILO's proposal to work with the OECD and Eurostat to create a hub for labour statistics.

Measuring Democracy and Human Rights: Contribution to Official Statistics

The Committee welcomed the presentation on the interesting work that the Metagora, an OECD/PARIS21 based project, has been carrying out and noted the progress made.

SNA Review Process: The Way Forward

Following the agreement made at the Statistical Commission in March 2007 to create a high level group on the future of national accounts, the Committee discussed the way forward. In particular, the creation of a group composed of the five Organisations (part of the ISWGNA members) and five country chief statisticians was discussed. This group would review lessons learned from the problems that have arisen in the latest SNA revision.

The Committee had a detailed discussion about the possible mandate of the high level group. The Committee agreed on the proposal to organise a meeting between CSTAT and the Economic Policy Committee to have a discussion between providers and users of national accounts.

The Committee asked the ISWGNA to prepare a proposal to be submitted to the next UN Statistical Commission (March 2008) based on the CSTAT discussion. In the meantime, countries should reflect on their wish to participate in the high level group.

International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional and Multicultural Contexts

25-29 June 2008, Berlin

Call for papers

The call for contributed papers for the 2008 International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional and Multicultural Contexts closes on 15 September 2007.

Further details can be found at:
www.gesis.org/en/research/eccs/csdi/

The relationships between the OECD, other international organisations and non-member economies in the context of the Organisation's global role

The Committee agreed that no changes are required to the OECD statistics strategy in the light of the outcome of the recent ministerial meeting in respect to OECD enlargement.
CSTAT also agreed that the Statistics Directorate should extend its bilateral cooperation with other international organisations and individual countries that already have programmes in place with countries that are now opening discussions on accession with the OECD (Chile, Estonia, Israel, the Russian Federation and Slovenia), as well as those countries which now have an enhanced engagement programme with the OECD (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa).

Within this cooperation, the Statistics Directorate will try to expand the coverage and range of key indicators for these 10 non member countries, using the OECD Factbook as a framework.

OECD Health Data 2007 database

Gaetan Lafortune, OECD

The OECD released on 18 July 2007 the 2007 edition of OECD Health Data, which is available online and on CD-ROM.

OECD Health Data is the most comprehensive source of comparable statistics on health and health systems across the 30 OECD countries. Covering the period 1960 to 2005, it provides striking evidence of variations across OECD countries in health status, and in the costs, inputs and outputs of their health systems.

This interactive database can be used for comparative analyses on:

- Health status
- Health care resources
- Health care utilisation
- Expenditure on health
- Financing of health care
- Social protection (including public health coverage and private health insurance)
- Pharmaceutical market
- Non-medical determinants of health (including smoking and obesity)

The 2007 edition of OECD Health Data provides more complete data on health expenditure and financing, and new information on the medical workforce, including the number of new medical and nursing graduates as well as doctors' specialisation and their remuneration levels.

Information from OECD Health Data 2007 sheds light on a range of health policy issues:

Health spending is growing faster than the economy as a whole: Health spending per capita increased by more than 50% in real terms between 1995 and 2005 on average in OECD countries, outpacing the 30% growth in GDP per capita during that period. This is resulting in a growing share of the economy devoted to health. In 1970, on average, health spending accounted for just 5% of GDP. Today, it has climbed to 9%.

One in four OECD countries now spends more than 10% of its income on health. With a 15.3% share, the United States leads by a wide margin, followed by Switzerland (11.6%), France (11.1%) and Germany (10.7%).

Financing ever-increasing health spending is putting pressure on public finances and on patients: Government has traditionally been the dominant source of health financing in OECD countries, and it continues to be so.

The average public share in total health spending has been relatively stable, dropping just 1 percentage point from 73.4% in 1990 to 72.5% in 2005, but the average hides a converging trend. Countries like Hungary and Poland, with historically high public shares, saw a notable decrease in this share over the past fifteen years; and conversely, countries with a relatively low public share, such as the United States, Mexico and Korea, saw an increase.

As for private health financing, out-of-pocket payments account for the bulk of private expenditure in the vast majority of OECD countries, with the exceptions of the United States, the Netherlands and France, where private health insurance accounts for a greater share. As long as health spending continues to outpace economic growth, governments will either need to raise taxes or social security contributions, reduce spending in other areas or make people pay more out of their own pockets for health goods and services.

More doctors will be needed in many countries: Population ageing will boost the demand for health care, at a time when health care professionals are themselves ageing. Current training efforts will be insufficient to meet the expected increase in demand in many countries. There is a need to reverse the trend of declining medical graduation rates observed over the past twenty years in most OECD countries.

In 2005, the graduation rate from medical schools was 35 per 1000 practising doctors on average across OECD countries, with large variations across countries. If training rates do not increase, there is a risk that OECD countries rely increasingly on foreign-trained doctors, raising concerns about a "brain drain" from lower-income to higher income countries.

OECD Health Data 2007 is available online to subscribers of SourceOECD, the OECD online library. It is also available on CD-ROM (in single-user or network installations). The database can be queried in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Japanese and Russian are available exclusively in the online version. For information, please contact sales@oecd.org or the OECD Online Bookshop (www.oecd.org/bookshop), or go to www.oecd.org/health/healthdata.

Implementing a statistical data warehouse: the case for a strong partnership

Cathy Wright, Patrick Hinderdael, IMF; Lars Thygesen, Douglas Paterson, OECD

The OECD and the IMF are intensifying their cooperation in statistics, developing a partnership for sharing data as well as data warehouse technology. This development takes place on the basis of a long-standing cooperation of data exchange and standardisation between the two organisations.

OECD

The OECD established its statistical data warehouse, OECD.Stat, in 2004 to provide internal access to the institution's wealth of diverse data sources in a central environment. OECD.Stat is part of the OECD Statistical Information System, which covers the full life cycle of statistical data. It also encompasses a data production environment StatWorks, a metadata management system, MetaStore, and a data dissemination environment, which presents the data in the warehouse for different media. An important part of the dissemination environment is the web browser, allowing internal and external users to search and browse across datasets, view data and export in multiple formats, including SDMX-ML. Direct links from analytical software tools such as FAME, Excel and SAS are being developed to facilitate use of the warehouse for data sharing.

In 2005, access to the data warehouse was extended to organisations participating in the OECD's extranet for government officials (OLIS), and selected parts of the data warehouse, i.e. the data that can be made freely available to the public according to OECD dissemination policy, were made publicly available on the OECD web site in 2006. It is planned in

2007-2008 to make OECD.Stat the unique platform for all dissemination, including the OECD commercial web site SourceOECD.

The data warehouse covers almost all statistics of the OECD, and work is ongoing to include the rest. The system includes recommendations and guidelines on quality, metadata, and governance for the whole organisation. Functionality of the data warehouse and its web browser is also being continually improved according to users' needs.

IMF

The concept of developing an economic data warehouse was born in the winter of 2005 with the new Director of the Statistics Department, Rob Edwards, who had overseen the introduction and benefits of a data warehouse at the Australian Bureau of Statistics prior to coming to the IMF. Inspired by his experience, a small project got under way with a fairly modest agenda:

- to gain a better understanding of data warehouses, especially those containing economic data,
- to learn about data models and the role of metadata,
- to begin to gather user requirements, and
- to build a prototype warehouse.

The early days of the project were enormously challenging. Researching the institutions that had introduced data warehouse and learning of their experiences was an especially important aspect of the work as no one at the IMF possessed first-hand knowledge or experience with such an environment.

With the benefit of a brief consultancy from Margaret Salmon of the ABS, a prototype data warehouse was developed. The prototype, while not operational, provided a platform from which one could demonstrate the features and potential benefits that a data warehouse could bring to the IMF. It was determined that certain features would be paramount to the success of the data warehouse at the IMF:

- Searching across databases for a particular country or concept, being able to return results to the questions "What data are available for Mexico?" or "What data are available for foreign direct investment in the WEO and IFS databases"?
- Introducing a metadata-driven environment that permits the use of structural and/or referential metadata to search for and elaborate data results.
- Building an environment that conforms to the emerging SDMX standards.
- Providing a foundation from which publications and electronic data products can be disseminated.
- Following a mission to visit the OECD, ECB, BIS, and Eurostat in the spring of 2006, the OECD graciously offered to share its technology with the IMF and the IMF accepted. Upon further discussion by the directors of the Statistics and IT departments, work began in earnest in June 2006.

The Business Perspective

The Statistics Directorates of the OECD and the IMF are engaged in fundamentally the same business. Both aim to provide timely, high-quality, internationally comparable and understandable data to their internal and external clients. While the content of the databases and the production and dissemination environments differ to a greater or lesser extent, the underlying business processes, drivers, and outcomes are identical.

Core tenants of our business environments are to: minimize the reporting burden on member countries, enhance coherence of data between countries over time and between domains, eliminate obstacles to data access, and communicate effectively with data provided to users.

As the data needs of the two organisations overlap in many domains, data sharing has been going on between them for a long period of time. Because of incompatibility of technical platforms, the data sharing was originally carried out in archaic forms, involving considerable resource spending and loss of timeliness.

In 2006, an SDMX based mechanism was set up between the databases of the two organisations to allow for easy and quick exchange. While SDMX can be used to interlink databases of different designs, a more intensive data sharing could be conceived if database systems were also shared.

The roles of statistical departments of both organisations are much the same. They conduct certain basic statistical activities themselves and have a role of coordinating the whole spectrum of statistical activities across their organisations. They coordinate with their information technology department (OECD Information Technology and Network Services [ITN] and IMF Technical and General Services Department [TGS]) to design and deliver the necessary tools, as well as with their public facing bodies (OECD Publications and Communications Directorate [PAC] and IMF External Relations Department [EXR]) to implement data flows to external communities of users.

Both organizations are among the seven international institutions sponsoring the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative. Thus, it became apparent early in our discussions that a solid business case could be made for collaboration, first by setting the stage on the technology front but with a clear view to enhancing the data sharing across both organizations.

This clearly has merit in its own right but becomes especially important during times of budget constraints faced by both organizations. The ultimate vision is to explore the feasibility of creating joint databases and products.

The Technology Perspective

Since both organizations have been involved in much the same business for many years, with regard to statistical information management, it is not surprising that they have developed IT systems in parallel that share many of the same requirements. With the advent of SDMX as an international standard along with a maturing of the underlying technology platforms, it became apparent that an opportunity existed to lower costs and shorten development time while maintaining a greater level of support and capabilities by close collaboration between the IMF and the OECD.

To this end it was determined that installing and using a software system that was already developed by the OECD could potentially lead to a faster ramp up time for the IMF's data warehouse endeavour. Moving forward, future development costs could also be lowered and software quality enhanced through shared development between the organizations, which will eventually lead to a stronger platform to integrate with various publication and analysis systems.

The key to leveraging this collaboration is the alignment of goals and standards between the organizations covering all of the following:

Governance Models – both organizations see the data warehouse as an "Enterprise" system that touches almost all of the functional areas of each organization.

Business Processes – at a high level both organizations have similar statistical production business processes; and the specific facets where they do differ do not present an insurmountable complexity so that they cannot be managed differently at each organization.

Satellite Account on Nonprofit Institutions in New Zealand

As part of the Johns Hopkins UN Nonprofit Institutions Handbook Project, Statistics New Zealand is working with statistical agencies throughout the world to stimulate the production of regular statistics on the scope and structure of the civil society sector and volunteering in a systematic, comparative way. The present report brings to 10 the number of countries that have released such reports (see www.jhu.edu/ccss/unhandbook).

There were 97,000 non-profit institutions operating in New Zealand in 2005. The largest number were in culture, sport and recreation (45 percent), followed by social services (12 percent) and religion (10 percent).

The majority (90 percent) of non-profit institutions did not employ paid staff.

Volunteers outnumbered paid employees by approximately four to one. Non-profit institutions employed 105,340 paid employees, and enlisted the help of over 436,500 volunteers.

The greatest number of paid employees were involved in social services (30 percent), followed by education (19 percent) and culture, sport and recreation (16 percent). Health services employed the greatest number of paid staff per non-profit institution.

A more detailed report, *Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account* is due on 28 August 2007. The report will measure the contribution of non-profit institutions to the New Zealand economy and include a valuation of volunteer labour given to non-profit organisations.

For example, the OECD leaves data owners responsible for filtering, formatting, and loading data into the data warehouse whereas the IMF has left this responsibility to the IT and Statistical departments. This difference in policy does not negate the effectiveness or efficiencies gained in implementing the same system at each organization. Another example is that the OECD has organised data in a number of multidimensional datasets (cubes), each related to a specific domain and with a specific set of relevant dimensions; whereas the Fund has taken a different approach in terms of mapping all data sets to a common set of dimensions using its existing Catalog of Economic Time Series although it remains to be seen whether it will be able to maintain that approach as the scope of the data warehouse increases.

Technical Implementations and Processes – It was found that both organizations use much the same development/integration platform and almost identical runtime environments including: MS Windows Server and Clients, MS SQL Server, MS .Net Framework, and MS Office suite of applications. XML and Web services are seen as the "glue" supporting development of modular applications.

Utilization of the collaboration tools available in this framework, namely MS Team Foundation Server, has already proved to be an invaluable mechanism to perform joint development between the two continents. Team Foundation Server facilitates the sharing of the source code between the two organisations, with separate branches that can evolve in parallel and be re-synchronized when appropriate. It provides a rich collaborative environment (MS Sharepoint) that greatly enhances communication and sharing of information between the teams as well as providing the basis for an "industry quality" collaborative software development process. It also includes automated build and test facilities to ensure software quality.

Communications Model - While the semi-informal arrangements between the technical teams in both organizations has served all well so far, it is expected that a more refined approach will be necessary when and if more partner organizations become involved.

It is recommended that we attempt to not only align the code-base but also functional requirements, use of development resources, deployment schedules, and data resources to maximise the efficiency gains and so that any new partners have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities while also maintaining the ability to manage overall expectations of the software system among partner organizations. At the same time, the collaborative model must allow each team the flexibility to respond rapidly and effectively to evolving internal functional requirements.

The Outcome to data: risks, costs and benefits

After many months of discussion and exchange of software, in December 2006 OECD staff from the business and IT directorates came to IMF to determine whether the full collaborative endeavour could work and, if so, how the arrangement would work in practice. Aside from technical matters, decisions would need to be taken about the exact nature of the collaboration, resource commitments, communications, timing, etc.

These elements are being embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in June 2007.

To date IMF have implemented and deployed the majority of the functionality of the OECD.Stat system along with two limited versions of time series from the World Economic Outlook (WEO) and the International Financial Statistics (IFS) data management environments.

While there is still much work to be done to operationalize the rest of the system, we believe that the currently available features are already able to demonstrate the value of a data warehouse to Fund end users. The short term plans call for completing the deployment and configuration of all the systems features along with continued mapping and loading of data determined to be most valuable to Fund users. This will probably also include REO (Regional Economic Outlook) data, data from external service providers (e.g., Haver, DataInsight, Bloomberg) and data from desk economists/area departments.

The OECD has been following closely the implementation work in the Fund, with a staff member on site for a month at the outset of the project and advice provided as required. Teleconferences to discuss progress are held on a weekly basis. Wish-lists from the Fund of future enhancements have been discussed and have proved to fit well with OECD's own needs. As mentioned above, the systems are already working in production mode at OECD with a large number of internal and external users. Feed back from those users as well as ideas from IMF lead to continued enhancement of the system and its components. In accordance with the MoU, OECD informs IMF about and discusses planned and realised advances.

Both parties are now looking forward to the formal decision by the IMF to put the system in production. It should pave the way for enhancing the data sharing. In addition, it is expected that the two parties (and others who might wish to join in) maintain a joint development plan, where each party can contribute in domains of special interest, while keeping the coherence of the system.

Beyond GDP

Measuring progress, true wealth and well-being of nations

Brussels, 19-20 November 2007

GDP is the best-recognised measure of economic performance in the world, often used as a generic indicator of progress. However, the relationship between economic growth as measured by GDP and other dimensions of societal progress is not straightforward. Effectively measuring progress, wealth and well-being requires indices that are as clear and appealing as GDP but more inclusive than GDP - ones that incorporate social and environmental issues.

The European Commission, European Parliament, Club of Rome, OECD and WWF will host a high-level conference with the objectives of clarifying which indices are most appropriate to measure progress, and how these can best be integrated into the decision-making process and taken up by public debate. The conference will bring together high-level experts and policy makers to address these critical issues. Over 300 people from economic, social and environmental spheres will attend.

Preceding the main political conference, an expert workshop will be held, where leading practitioners will consider progress in the development and policy application of indicators of progress, true wealth, and well-being.

Participation is by invitation only. If you would like to request an invitation, please send an email to contact@beyond-gdp.eu.

www.beyond-gdp.eu

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

All OECD publications can be ordered on line at: www.oecd.org/bookshop

▲OECD Communications Outlook 2007

The OECD Communications Outlook 2007 presents the most recent comparable data on communication sector performance and provides information on policy frameworks in OECD countries.

The report also provides detailed time series data of up to 10 years for a number of key indicators.

In addition, for the first time, the 2007 edition includes analysis of the communication sector in five large non-OECD countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Further information is available on the OECD website at: www.oecd.org/document/17/0,3343,en_2649_33703_38876369_1_1_1_1,00.html

▲OECD Employment Outlook 2007

As ageing populations put more downward pressure on economic growth in the coming decades, it is essential that OECD countries improve labour market performance. This edition of OECD's annual report on labour markets brings the reader not only detailed information on recent labour market developments, but also in-depth analysis of the effects of various policy measures and prospects through 2007. The analysis includes coverage of labour markets in OECD Countries as well as in Brazil, China, India and Russia; labour market policies and productivity; the vulnerability of OECD workers in the global economy, and the employment effect of financing social protection.

Further information is available on the OECD website at: www.oecd.org/els/employmentoutlook/2007

▲OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2007-2016

This is the 13th edition of the Agricultural Outlook and the third time it has been prepared jointly by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). Based on the commodity, policy and country expertise of both organisations, this report forecasts market trends for the world's main agricultural products for the period 2007 to 2016 and includes an evaluation of recent developments and emerging issues.

Further information is available on the OECD website at: www.oecd.org/document/38/0,3343,en_2649_33727_38891878_1_1_1_1,00.html

▲OECD Regions at a Glance: 2007 Edition

National economic performance is often compared across countries, and such comparisons are frequently used to highlight countries whose national policies appear to promote growth and development more successfully. However, national averages can hide wide regional differences in economic conditions and performances. OECD Regions at a Glance therefore presents a set of regional indicators - mainly in the form of graphs and maps - in order to identify those regions that outperform their country as a whole or the OECD area and those that lag behind. The patterns of development may differ widely in urban and rural areas, for example, and some areas may lag behind even when the national economy is performing well.

Further information is available on the OECD website at: www.oecd.org/regional/regionsataglance

▲Oil Information: 2007 Edition

The International Energy Agency's annual reference book on world oil markets.

A comprehensive statistical coverage is provided from 1973 onwards on supply, consumption, prices, and trade of crude and various petroleum products. In addition, information is provided on CO2 emissions, use of biofuels, refinery output, oil ports, the tanker fleet, and tanker freight rates.

Further information is available on the IEA website at: http://www.iea.org/w/bookshop/add.aspx?id=32

OUT SOON

▲Infrastructure to 2030 (Vol.2): Mapping Policy for Electricity, Water and Transport

Infrastructure systems play a vital role in economic and social development. Increasingly interdependent, they are a means towards ensuring the delivery of goods and services that promote economic prosperity and growth and contribute to quality of life. Demand for infrastructure is set to continue to expand significantly in the decades ahead, driven by major factors of change such as global economic growth, technological progress, climate change, urbanisation and growing congestion. However, challenges abound: many parts of infrastructure systems in OECD countries are ageing rapidly, public finances are becoming increasingly tight and infrastructure financing is becoming more complex.

This book is the second of two publications on the future of infrastructure development. It follows *Infrastructure 2030: Telecom, Land Transport, Water and Electricity* published in 2006.

Forthcoming OECD Meetings

N.B. Unless otherwise indicated attendance at OECD meetings and Working Parties is by invitation only

2007	
17 September	TDPC Workshop on Effectiveness of Performance Indicators Systems in Regional Development Policies, Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV), Paris, France
17-18 September	8th OECD International Trade Statistics Expert Meeting (ITS), Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France (www.oecd.org/std/trade-goods/its2007)
18-19 September	OECD-Eurostat Meeting of Experts in Trade in Services Statistics (TIS), Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France (www.oecd.org/std/trade-services/tis2007)
20-21 September	Expert Meeting on Government Indicators, Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV), Paris, France
25-28 September	OECD-NBS Workshop on National Accounts, Beijing, China.
01-03 October	Workshop on International Investment Statistics, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs (DAF), Paris, France
02-03 October	Conference on Patent Statistics for Policy Decision-making. Co-organised by the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI) and the European Patent Office (EPO), Venice, Italy
02-05 October	Working party on Financial statistics and working party on National Accounts, Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France
17-19 October	INES Network B - Indicators on the Socio-Economic Outcomes of Education, Directorate for Education (EDU), Vienna, Austria
13-15 November	Meeting of Working Party No2 on Tax Policy Analysis and Statistics, Centre for Tax Policy and Administration (CTP), Paris, France
19-20 November	High Growth Seminar and Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme, Statistics Directorate (STD), Paris, France
26 November	Working Party on Territorial Indicators - 15th Session, Public Governance and Territorial Development (GOV), Paris, France

Other Statistics Meetings

2007	
22-29 August	56th Biennial Session of the International Statistical Institute, Lisbon, Portugal (www.isi2007.com.pt/)
18-21 September	IARIW/NBS International Conference on Experiences and Challenges in Measuring National Income and Wealth in Transition Economies, Friendship Hotel, Beijing, China
26 September	Joint UNECE/UNICEF/UNDP/OECD Regional Workshop for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia on "Developing Capacity for Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Statistics, Knowledge and Policy", Moscow, Russia (www.unece.org/stats/documents/2007.09.social.htm)
20-21 October	Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C., United States

Ask the economists

Statistics: separating facts from fiction

Can we trust official statistics? Do they give us a true picture of how societies are changing?

Questions and answers from the online debate that took place on Thursday 12 July 2007 with Enrico Giovannini, the OECD's Chief Statistician.

Question: How come the numbers proposed by organizations such as the OECD don't reflect "reality": ex. Inflation is supposedly going down, but prices seem to be going up? Heather Malley, US

Answer: "The irony of the Information Age is that it has given new respectability to uninformed opinion" (John Lawton). This sentence was said in 1995 and it is more true now than ever. The paradox is that statistics was invented to go beyond what individuals can observe, and now it is under attack because it does not reflect what people "perceive" the reality is.

Look at what happened in Europe after the Euro changeover. Official figures about the inflation rate in 2002 were around 2-3%, but a large majority of people felt that inflation was much higher (10%, 20%, even 100%). Several studies have been carried out to explain this difference and nobody has been able to demonstrate, on a scientific basis, that official figures were biased. Anyway, in several countries people still believe that the reality was very different and that this event (and not other factors, such as a long stagnation of the economy or changes in income distribution) has largely determined, in some countries, a worsening in the economic conditions of the middle-class.

Read more **Q & A** on the OECD's website at:

www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_33715_38915538_1_1_1_1,00.html

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Readers are invited to send their articles or comments to the above email address

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