

Does International Statistics belong
to a special branch of statistics

Discussion

Overview

- The question may be weird. Why would international statistics be different from other official statistics?
- Our panelists presented different aspects of international statistics. From these approaches, can we answer the questions?
- I propose to look at the specificities of international statistics:
 - Specific role of international statistics?
 - Specific skills ?
 - Specific recent trend?
 - Specific challenges?
 - Specific opportunities?
- And to try a conclusion

Specific role of International Statistics?

- Compilation of national statistics and dissemination vs direct production for national statistics (including editing...)
- Harmonization, Elaboration of statistical standard:
 - Harmonization may be less a national concern
 - National statistics face national political demand/ international statistics must satisfy a pluralistic political environment
 - Regulation (Eurostat)
- Technical assistance

Specific Skills?

- More expertise for international stat vs more operational skills for national stat
- Statistical skills to handle global heterogenic statistics (AM)
- Analytical skills to describe transnational phenomena (migration, organized crime...) (AM)
- Broader view to take into consideration different cultures and levels of development (EB)
- Addressing basic needs to build capacity of national statistical systems in developing countries (EB)
- Assisting developed countries require higher standards (AM)
- But the Principles of International Statistics adopted in 2005 are directly inspired from the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics 1994

Specific recent trend?

- International stats
 - Less need for compendium as data are available online? (HH)
 - Increasing skills required from international agencies to cope with more complex problems (EG)
 - More recognition from national statisticians of the importance of harmonization: role of UNSC, participation of NSOs in the Commission
 - From raw data to analytical ones, more demand for policy making (MDGs). Pressure from politician (AM)
 - Emerging global and transnational issues: environment, well-being
- National stats:
 - Increasing demand /Decreasing budgets (HH)
 - More scepticism/less participation (HH)
 - Increasing doubts about national statistics
 - Delays in responding to emerging needs

Specific Challenges?

- More credibility to be recognized by national statisticians as peers and leader for improving statistics on emerging global issues. Clean the house (HH)
- Overcoming political interference (EG)
- Overcoming national resistance (EG)
- Differences in level of development hamper harmonization
- Dissemination of international statistics is still a challenge (OECD, WB, UNSD)
- Certification of national statistics-peer reviews (HH)
- But timeliness is a challenge for both: politician and statisticians clocks are not the same (HH)

Specific opportunities?

- Increase recognition and visibility of international statistics and statisticians (EB)
- Support evidence based policy making, especially in developing countries (EB)
- Political pressure to tackle new issues (EG)
- More open-minded approach (EG)
- More synergies with private researchers (EG)
- Certification of international statistics (HH)
- Alternate careers national/international
- More ambition in dealing with new topics (EG)
- Partnership with national statistical institution (AM)

Conclusion

- Similarities/Differences/Complementarities
- Specific cases: Eurostat and its regulation role
- Specificities for international statistics but highly linked to national statistics as part of Official Statistics