

Final report on the
review of the profile, mission and tasks of the
International Association for Official Statistics
(IAOS / AISO)

Established by Mr. Carlo Malaguerra,
Chairman of the IAOS Review Committee

I. Background and aim of this report

1. On the occasion of the **General Assembly of the IAOS held in Istanbul on the 23rd of August 1997**, a number of members expressed their concern with the very broad role of the Association, as well as with the risks of duplication of tasks with other international institutions. The discussion clearly showed that the IAOS should proceed to a review of its current activities and functioning, and redefine its own role and tasks.
2. The General Assembly decided thus to set up a **Review Committee** which was requested to formulate proposals and recommendations in this sense. The members of this Committee are: Mr. Carlo Malaguerra (Switzerland, Chairman), Mr. Oladejo Ajayi (Nigeria), Mr. Paolo Garonna (Italy), Mr. Carlos Jarque (Mexico), Mr. René Padieu (France) and Mr. Edward Spar (USA). The Chairman invited Mr. Willem de Vries, President of IAOS, Mrs. Pilar Martín-Guzmán, President elect of IAOS, Mr. Jean-Louis Bodin, President elect of the ISI and former President of IAOS, and Mr. Raul Suarez de Miguel (Switzerland and Mexico) to attend the meetings of the Committee.
3. The Committee had its **first meeting on the 21st of May 1998 in Paris** and on this occasion it agreed to materialize its **terms of reference** through the execution of the following tasks:
 - i) to analyze and review the terms of reference of IAOS and, in particular, to evaluate the objectives and current activities of IAOS: on the one hand by analyzing its activities with respect to initial objectives and, on the other hand, by

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referring these objectives to the new political, organizational and technological basis of the international statistical co-operation;

ii) to propose adjustments of the initial objectives of IAOS and orientations for future activities;

iii) to propose appropriate organizational changes and to draw up a set of proposals aiming at redefining the terms of reference and the functioning rules of the association.

4. The Committee established a **Preliminary Report on the Review of the Profile, Mission and Tasks of the IAOS**, of 9 July 1998, that focused on tasks i) and ii). This report outlined a first set of findings and considerations of the Committee on the institutional profile and objectives of the IAOS as well as on its position and role within the existing structures of the international statistical co-operation. It highlighted some characteristics and potential strengths of IAOS and addressed the members of the Association with questions, ideas and proposals.

5. The Preliminary Report has been published through the Internet and it has been submitted for discussion in a special session of the **IAOS/IASS Conference hold in Aguascalientes, Mexico, in September 1998**. On that occasion several members of the Association expressed their views and proposals, but it appeared that a broader written consultation was needed in order for members to provide the Committee with sound advise and a more specific guidance. It was therefore decided that the Chairman of the Committee submits a questionnaire to all IAOS members, focusing on the main preliminary findings of the Review Committee.

6. **The consultation of IAOS' members** took place during winter 1998/99. A questionnaire has been both published through the Internet and sent by post to all members of the Association. The Chairman of the Committee received only 31 answers. The response rate was thus very low with regard to the total number of members (524 individuals and 35 institutional members), but the material collected was of a very good quality. Some respondents did not limit themselves to answer to the questionnaire, but they invested a particular effort in providing extensive comments and suggestions or in analyzing in detail the Preliminary Report.

7. **The Review Committee examined the results of the consultation in a meeting hold in New York, on 5 March 1999**. The Committee noticed that, as a general trend, the large majority of respondents supported the orientation of the review process and most of them expressed their satisfaction with the input given by the Preliminary Report. The answers to some questions clearly expressed a general acceptance or refusal of specific proposals of the Preliminary Report. However, the Committee noticed also that members expressed a broad diversity of opinions concerning a number of issues.

8. This **Final Report** has been established on the basis of the structure and themes of the Preliminary Report, but it mainly focus on the results of the consultation and it includes a number of recommendations of the Review Committee that are submitted, for adoption, to the **General Assembly of IAOS to be held in Helsinki on the 16th of August 1999**.

II. Current profile, mission and membership of IAOS

9. IAOS is an association founded in 1985. It is an international nongovernmental organization (NGO), which was born and developed as a specialized section of the International Statistical Institute (ISI)¹. It is thus an Association of physical and legal persons who have scientific or professional interest in the field of official statistics. An Executive Committee elected for a period of two years runs it.²

10. The general aim of IAOS is *"to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and related subjects and to foster the development of effective and efficient official statistical services through international contacts among individuals and organizations, including users of official statistics as well as research institutes"* (Statutes, article 2.1). IAOS thus encourages international contacts and professional co-operation among its members and in particular with those from developing countries. It organizes conferences and meetings focusing on multiple aspects and problems of official statistics. These activities are carried out by IAOS independently or in collaboration with other organizations. Most recent IAOS conferences were held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, in 1998 and in The Hague, in 1999. Next IAOS Conference will be held in Switzerland, on 4-8 September 2000.

11. IAOS has only one specialized subsection, SCORUS (International Association for Regional and Urban Statistics), which was dismantled as a separate ISI section in 1989 and was transformed into a "standing committee" of IAOS. The aim of SCORUS is to promote the international exchange of knowledge and experiences in the field of urban and regional statistics. It seeks to provide wide-world contacts with fellow statisticians, researchers and consultants via an information service, which operates on a consultative basis. One key objective of SCORUS is to improve the co-operation between the producers and users of statistics and, in this respect, the establishment of a continuous dialogue between official statisticians and researchers, consultants, organizations and networks engaged in urban research and regional studies. One of the main activities of SCORUS is to organize biennial conferences, the most recent of which were held in Madrid in 1996 and in Belfast in

¹. IAOS as such has neither legal personality, nor legal address. It legally exists only as a section of the ISI, which has legal personality and is registered under the law of the Netherlands, with address in Voorburg (the only section of ISI having legal personality is the IASS, which is registered under the French law in order to allow the functioning of its secretariat by INSEE). It is also important to note that IAOS as such is not accredited to any international organization within or outside the United Nations system. It can however attend and address the intergovernmental fora for statistical co-operation through the ISI, which is accredited to the Statistical Commission of the United Nations Organization, with status of permanent observer.

2. Officers for the 1997-1999 period are: W.R. de Vries (President, The Netherlands), P. Martfn-Guzm6n, President elect, Spain), F.W.H. Ho (Vice President, Hong Kong); H. Jeskanen-Sundstrom (Vice President, Finland); L. Diop (Vice President, Senegal); E.J. Spar (Vice President, USA), A. Manninen (SCORUS representative, Finland); M.P.R. van den Broecke (Executive director and Treasurer, ISI Permanent Office).

1998. Next SCORUS Conference will be held in Shenzhen, China, on 7-10 November 2000.

12. As of June 1998, the membership of IAOS totaled 524 individual members in more than 70 countries, and 35 institutional members. There is a very unbalanced representativity by region: 53% of individual members are European, 27% are from Asia and Oceania, 14% from North America and 6% from Africa. Latin America is nearly absent. Only 17% of individual members are women. Last but not least, data on age groups are lacunary but, in general terms, membership of IAOS seems to be characterized by far too many old and far too few young people.

13. In the course of the past ten years membership of IAOS remained just about stable around 500 individuals while, in the same period, the ISI membership has almost doubled, and the IASS membership has increased by about 50%. In this context, it is interesting to note that numerous official statisticians have been elected members of ISI but most of them never requested to become members of the IAOS (this would automatically be accepted without any supplementary fees) and some of them preferred to become IASS members. This seems to attest to the chronic lack of attractivity of IAOS.

III. An international association in a changing world

14. The Statutes and institutional profile of IAOS were established at a time when mechanisms of statistical co-operation reflected a particular situation of the international relations. Indeed, at that time the world was divided in two blocks and IAOS emerged as a framework for free and politically unburden professional exchanges. The Association developed thus as an unofficial alternative to rigid and bureaucratic mechanisms of intergovernmental statistical co-operation. It became a forum in which professionals met as individuals, exchanged their views on common professional experiences and strengthened ties on a strictly professional and personal basis. This probably constituted the main achievement of IAOS and any further development of the Association should build on it. However, since the foundation of the IAOS the international political context radically changed and the international statistical co-operation has now to face new trends and challenges. IAOS has thus to reconsider its original objectives and current tasks with regard to this new context and these new challenges.

15. Moreover, in the course of the last years the style, mechanisms and methods of the international statistical co-operation evolved considerably. The international and supranational organizations moved towards better co-ordination of programs and increased joint action. The professional co-operation among official statisticians also evolved and intensified, namely thanks to new communication tools such as electronic media that allow them to communicate frequently and efficiently. In other words, the international statistical co-operation entered into a new era. IAOS have thus to find its place and role within the renewed scene, mechanism and methods of co-operation.

16. Last but not least, in recent years the field of work of official statistics evolved fast, extending as to cover now many new complex areas requiring a large variety of scientific and professional skills. Today, the design, production, analysis and dissemination of official statistics are based on sound specialized knowledge in numerous fields and, at the same time, on increased synergy among specialists as well as on interdisciplinary approaches to the problems and to the methods of work. In this context, IAOS has to strengthen its own potential, position and role in promoting scientific exchanges, interdisciplinary work and joint action with other statistical and scientific international associations. In particular, as a part of the ISI family, IAOS has to review the ways and means for developing a more efficient co-operation and interaction with the work of the ISI and of its sections (IASS, IASC, etc.).

IV. Characteristics and potential strengths of IAOS

17. The current profile of IAOS appears as a very broad institutional framework for co-operation. In fact, the Association presents some characteristics that could be source of ambiguity and duplication with the work carried out by other international organizations. But IAOS also presents a number of current particular characteristics and potential strengths, which should serve as a basis for a renewed definition of its role and position within the scene of the international statistical co-operation. The Review Committee identified nine specific characteristics and areas of current weaknesses and potential strengths of the IAOS:

- The association is an NGO of a special character within the scene of the international statistical co-operation.
- It is a forum for informal exchanges, experimental work and professional co-operation among official statisticians.
- As a branch of the ISI family, it evolves within an institutional environment characterized both by scientific excellency and organizational complexity.
- It is an association aiming at gathering together producers and users of official statistics.
- Its activity is based on universally agreed conception of integrity, fundamental principles of official statistics and a code of professional ethics adopted by the ISI.
- Its membership extends to all the regions of the world and thus it has to serve and gather together official statisticians from the industrialized world as well as from less developed countries.
- Its membership includes not only individual members, but also institutional members, which provide substantial support to the organization of conferences and meetings.

- Spite current fast aging of its membership, many characteristics and potential strengths of the IAOS suggest that it could be attractive for junior, senior and chief statisticians (trans-generational and transhierarchical membership).
- Its areas of work cover all kind of fields and topics related directly or indirectly to the very broad area of "official statistics".

18. The questionnaire addressed to IAOS' members focused on specific issues related to most of the above mentioned characteristics and areas of potential strengths. Next chapters of this report summarize the results of the consultation and presents the recommendations of the Review Committee in the following way:

- The Report refers to the paragraph of the Preliminary Report concerning each specific characteristic or area of potential strength of IAOS (text in italics);
- It recalls the questions addressed to IAOS' members in the. framework of the consultation;
- It presents a synthesis of the responses of IAOS' members (general trends, particular relevant comments, suggestions, etc.);
- It formulates specific recommendations of the Review Committee to the General Assembly of the IAOS.

V. An NGO of a special character

Consideration and proposals of the Preliminary report:

19. (§ 16) IAOS constitutes a unique, special case of non-governmental cooperation within the international scene. Its field of work ("official statistics") consists of activities, which normally are carried out by "official" bodies belonging to governmental administrations. By way of consequence, most of current members of IAOS are either civil servants working within the framework of official statistical services, or the official statistical services as such (with status of "institutional members"). Of course, members of IAOS act and express themselves in their personal capacity. However, the fundamental ground of their interest and action in the IAOS framework lies in their professional, scientific or managerial role within official statistical bodies (and also, in many cases, in the commitment of their own official bodies within the international statistical co-operation).

Questions addresses to IAOS' members:

None

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

20. The Review Committee recommends maintaining the statutes and current profile of IAOS as an international NGO active in the field of official statistics.

VI. A forum for informal exchanges, experimental work and professional co-operation

Consideration and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

21. (§ 18) *There is a very positive aspect in the apparent ambiguity of the institutional profile and current membership of IAOS (an unofficial forum aiming at the advancement of official statistics). Such an ambiguity constitutes perhaps the key element, which could allow the Association to play a dynamic and innovative role within the scene of the international statistical co-operation. Indeed, as an "unofficial" forum, IAOS allows official statisticians to develop informal exchanges and free discussion on new challenges, emerging issues and new methods of work. In this sense, IAOS would have a natural vocation to act as an interface between, on the one side, the structures and programs of statistical co-operation developed within the framework of intergovernmental or supranational organizations and, on the other side, the need for flexible structures and methods of professional co-operation, experimental work and free scientific exchanges.*

Questions Addressed to IAOS' members:

None.

Recommendations of the Review Committee

22. The Review Committee recommends maintaining and strengthening this characteristic of IAOS, which constitutes one of the original and distinctive strengths of the Association within the international scene.

VII. IAOS as a branch of the ISI family

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report

23. (§18) *Obviously IAOS could play the above mentioned role (as a "forum for informal exchanges, experimental work and professional co-operation") only on the basis of effective co-operation with the other sections and, bodies of the ISI which work directly or indirectly relates to different aspects of official statistical activities. The Review Committee thus considers that a strengthened position and more coherent links of IAOS within the ISI family constitute essential preconditions for developing further the scientific potential and the scope of action of the Association within the scene of international statistical co-operation. The Committee stresses that there is an*

urgent need for better co-ordination of the existing structures, sections and bodies of the ISI. It noticed that if in theory numerous "standing committees" of the ISI are supposed to report to a given section, in practice most of them act by their own. Of course, the variety of ISI bodies reflects a large variety of statistical areas requiring specific approaches. Nevertheless, the work of all bodies of ISI family should aim not only at the advancement of knowledge in particular areas, but also at supporting and promoting effective scientific and professional co-operation between all branches and bodies of the ISI family. And this is particularly needed for the development of consistent and reliable work in the field of official statistics.

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

24. Q.1: What can IAOS do in order to improve the cooperation with other sections and bodies of ISI?
Q.2: Which concrete steps should be taken at the level of the ISI relevant bodies (i.e., Coordination Committee) in order to identify synergies and to ensure effective coordination within the ISI family?

Synthesis of responses:

25. Respondents massively stress the need for effective strengthened cooperation of IAOS with other sections and bodies of ISI. This however requires that the other ISI sections effectively recognize IAOS as a qualified partner. In this respect, in their extensive comments, L. Boeri de Cervetto and T. Toczynski recall the circumstances in which IAOS was born. At that time there was some concern on whether the creation of a new section based on the criterion of the "place of work" of its members (official statistical services) would lead to the disintegration of other sections which membership is based on specific professional interests. Moreover, "official statistics" was considered as a field of low scientific profile ("a matter of civil servants"). It is thus noted that if this is still the case, **IAOS has to work for strengthening within ISI the scientific/professional recognition of its mission** as a precondition for effective cooperation with other sections. It is also stated that official statistics are to be considered as a **scientific discipline** and acknowledge as such by ISI.

26. Most respondents indicate that IAOS should organize **joint actions, joint task forces and joint conferences** (in particular within ISI conferences). Some indicate that it would be opportune to invite members of other sections as speakers in IAOS sessions. It is stressed that IAOS could benefit from the specific expertness of other sections. In particular, it is suggested to approach USE to explore "appropriate ways for providing training to statisticians" (T. Toczynski, P.W. Digby) and to establish better operational links with IASC.

27. It is however noticed that **effective co-operation with other sections can only be developed if IAOS is able to attract their interest and to offer them specific services**. "IAOS should challenge other sections to contribute to the solution of well defined specific problems met in official statistics. It should offer its services to other sections in order to discuss which advances in their fields are relevant for official statistics" (E. Malinvaud).

28. Many respondents highlight the particular interest of **strengthening links between IAOS and IASS**, most of which activity is in the scope of official statistics. Some of them suggest organizing periodically joint meetings of the Executive Committees of both sections and, even, **to consider the feasibility and advisability of merging of the two sections** (J.-L. Bodin, W. de Vries, D. Defays).

29. Many answers to the questionnaire invite to consider **efficient information and consistent programming** of activities as major preconditions for increasing cooperation between ISI sections. In this respect, it is noticed that priority should be given to "themes and problems that are common across the various statistical domains (how to deal with falling response rates in household surveys, for example)" (P. Allin). It is also stressed that increased precision and focus of ISI activity programs (ISI sessions, satellite meetings, etc.) would allow to stress questions and problems raised within IAOS which are interesting for both official and non-official statisticians. Moreover, it is suggested that **ad-hoc programming should be minimized: a long-term list of joint topics** already considered at ISI sessions should be available for members of bodies programming new activities (J. Ceska).

30. It is noticed that, at the institutional level, two main fora could be used in order to improve the co-operation with other sections: the **ISI Program Co-ordinating Committee** (co-operation in establishing the scientific programs of the ISI session) and the **ISI Council** (where it would be possible to increase the links of IAOS with ISI and the other sections).

31. Most respondents agree with the Review Committee on the need to identify synergies and to ensure effective **coordination within the ISI family**. It is suggested **to review the comitology of ISI** and to incorporate some ISI Committees (for instance, the Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics) as standing IAOS Committees (as it today the case of SCORUS).

32. Last but not least, many respondents find that co-ordination within ISI family should be increased, but E. Malinvaud notes that it is important to correctly focus on the right meaning of this: "coordination is not the right word; it should rather be **cross-fertilization**, which hardly ever results from top-down procedures". Moreover, if the idea of a committee or a body in charge of identifying synergies and promoting co-operation looks a good one for many respondents (E. Hadjipanayotou suggests "the creation of a permanent inter-Sectional Committee"), J.-L. Bodin notes that "a specific co-ordination Committee would be overlapping with the task of the ISI Council where Presidents of the Sections are participating in. Before creating a new Committee, we have to be sure that the actual bodies in charge of that problem are working well and, if not, try to make their activities more effective."

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

33. The Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:

- i) To organize as a rule, within ISI sessions, joint meetings with other sections of the Institute.

- ii) To approve that IAOS and IASS Executive Committees start explorative talks on the feasibility and advisability of merging the two sections and on the modalities and organization of joint work between the secretariats of both associations within an unified section.
- iii) To incorporate the Irving Fisher Committee as a standing IAOS Committee.
- iv) To formally request the ISI Program *Co-ordinating Committee* to review its programming procedures in the light of the *conclusions of our report*.
- v) To request the ISI Council to set up appropriate mechanisms and measures aiming at effective identification of synergies and joint action between sections.
- vi) To encourage IAOS visibility and active participation (through the ISI secretariat) in the relevant fora of the international statistical co operation.

VII. An association of producers and users of official statistics

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

34 (§19) Membership of IAOS is not exclusively limited to " official statisticians ", as de iure it is open to any person or institution interested in issues related to official statistics. But unfortunately current membership of IAOS clearly shows that de facto the Association is a club of official statisticians. This was not the original aim of the founding fathers of the Association, who intended to develop tight links between producers and users of official statistics. The Review Committee considers that concrete steps should be taken in order to firmly orient the membership and activities of IAOS towards this objective. Indeed, one of the main roles of IAOS would consist in examining how official statistics are used and how the producers of information could effectively fulfill the needs of the professional users of official statistics (analysts, researchers, etc.). But the Association can only tackle these issues in collaboration with the users themselves (individuals and/or target international associations of users). In fact, in many industrialized countries links between producers and users of official statistics have been established at the national level by two means: on the one hand, users and producers gather together in Statistical Councils which are official advisory bodies, on the other hand, active and dynamic National Statistical Societies develop specific ties with different categories of users and lobby when the integrity of the official statistics is threatened (e.g., see the role of the Royal Statistical Society in the United Kingdom in the 80's). Of course, at the international level it is difficult to develop similar ties between users and producers of official statistics. International Statistical Councils only can exist within strong supranational institutions, such as the European Union, and ties between international statistical associations and international bodies or groups of users

apparently exist only on ad hoc or mere functional basis. Nevertheless, the Review Committee considers that IAOS should find appropriate ways and means to efficiently promote increased use of statistics, as well as accurate identification of user's needs. In other words, relations between users and producers of official statistics should be one of the priority areas of work of IAOS and, in this perspective, the Committee contemplates a number of possible concrete tasks.

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

35. Q.3: How could users and associations of users be associated to the activities of IAOS?
Q.4: Should some activities be oriented to specific target groups of users?
Q.5: How can users play an active role within IAOS?
Q.6: Should an advisory body of users be created within IAOS?

Synthesis of responses:

36. There are a variety of opinions concerning the participation of users to the activities of the IAOS. Some respondents consider an effective participation as "unrealistic" (J. Kelly, D. Trewin, etc.), others express some mitigated skepticism (J.K. Tonder, D. Thorburn, etc.) and others consider "absolutely necessary to involve users" (G. Szilagy, M. Sicron, etc.). The **difficulties of approaching users** are stressed by a number of respondents: users are a very broad and heterogeneous "group"; they are very often badly organized; normally they are interested only in a single specific issue or "product" and not in the whole of official statistics; few of them are real "international" counterparts to an international association; etc. However, despite those difficulties, many respondents consider that IAOS has to make an important place to the issue of relationship with users, among others because it is "the most challenging issue for the future of IAOS" (E. Malinvaud).

37. Many respondents stress that, if IAOS intends to develop further relationship with users, it is thus needed to know who they are and how to approach them. It is thus suggested to collect a comprehensive list of associations of users. Such a work should be carried out with the help of national statistical institutes. On the basis of this information, IAOS could systematically inform those associations on its purposes and activities and invite them for membership and participation.

38. It is also noticed that potential pools of "users members" are the **members of "national councils of statistics"** existing in many countries. It is thus suggested to ask to national chief statisticians to help IAOS in contacting those people and convincing them to become members.

39. In different forms many respondents tackle the issue of the **"interest" of users to be active members of IAOS**. The association should appear to them as a real center of interest and should provide them with some kind of "service". It is for instance suggested to develop a brochure setting out the uses of statistics for policy analysis (W. de Vries).

40. The question whether some IAOS activities should be oriented to specific **target groups of users** gives rise to mixed feelings. Some are enthusiastic ("yes!" from W. de Vries, who selects two main categories: government policy analysts and large businesses). Nevertheless, the general answer could be summarized as "maybe, but on a general level: the researchers, the media, the official planning institutions, the education sector" (J.-K. Tonder). It is suggested that IAOS activities are "probably not to be oriented to specific target groups of users on a permanent, institutionally crystallized, basis" (E. Malinvaud). It is noticed that the approach of target groups should mainly concern emerging issues of major importance for the development of the statistical work (N. Harada).

41. The natural and first general answer to the question on how can users play an **active role within IAOS** is, of course, "by becoming members", "by being attracted to attend IAOS meetings" and then "by being present in various IAOS committees and ISI program committee". A second type of answer to the question concerns the quality of the expected "active role": "we should always have a user's view on the agenda" (J.-K. Tonder). In this sense, it is suggested to "let users explain what use they make of statistics and how they assess their quality; let users explain what statistics they need that are generally not produced" (W. de Vries).

42. As concrete proposals, it is suggested: i) to organize "a conference specifically to discuss the interaction between users and producers" (P.W. Digby); and ii) to constitute "a **special ad hoc group**, involving as many users as producers of statistics", to elaborate further on the questions related to users (E. Malinvaud).

43. The idea to create an **advisory body of users** is clearly rejected by a large majority of respondents, who don't see the necessity for it or consider that such a proposal is at least premature. However, in this context it is suggested to consider some active role of IAOS as a clearing house of practices concerning the profile and activities of **national statistical councils**. "It would be interesting to do a review of country practices, and find for each country: does one council exist, who is on it, what power does it have, how many times has it met in the past 12 months" (P.W. Digby).

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

44. The Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:

- i) To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the promotion of relations with users and the analysis of country practices concerning national statistical councils, as major criteria in setting up programs of meetings;
- ii) To request the Executive Committee to examine the best ways and means to identify main groups and international associations of users, to inform those groups and associations on the activities of IAOS and to examine the appropriate modalities of collaboration or recruitment of some of them as institutional members of IAOS;

- iii) To request the Executive Committee to produce evaluative reports on forthcoming IAOS conferences involving users of official statistics (i.e., Conference on "statistics and human rights" in 2'000).

VII. Integrity and professional ethics

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

45. (§20) *The IAOS has a universal vocation. This not only means that membership is open to persons of all countries of the world, but also that the activity of IAOS is based on universally agreed conception and principles of official statistics. Indeed, all current members of IAOS endorse and promote universal ethical values and good practices as expressed in the Declaration on the Professional Ethics of the Statistician adopted by the ISI in 1985, as well as in the Chart of Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the Statistical Commission of the UNO in 1994. Moreover, as IAOS members are professionally active in all continents, the Association seems in a particularly good position for promoting and monitoring the implementation of such ethical values, fundamental principles and good practices all over the world. The Review Committee therefore recommends introducing a clear reference to these tasks in the " objectives " of the Association (Statutes, art. 2). The Committee however considers that there is a need for distinguishing two different operational frameworks for the implementation of 'these tasks. No doubt the promotion of good practices in official statistics constitutes a task which IAOS can and should carry out on its own, through specific actions and appropriate mechanisms. But the situation differs in the case of active defense of the professional autonomy of official statisticians and of the integrity of official statistics. This should be dealt with by the ISI family at large and, thus, be considered as a joint task of IAOS and ISI relevant bodies. Indeed, the long professional tradition, the greater visibility and the mark of freedom and impartiality of ISI could contribute to the success of the work in this area. Of course, IAOS has to take important initiatives (i.e., collecting information, monitoring and reporting on particular situations in which the integrity of official statistics is endangered), but the implementation of these initiatives should be organized in close connection with the relevant bodies of ISI. Moreover, the Committee considers that the position of the ISI as an NGO accredited to the UNO would strengthen its capacity to address the national statistical services, their governments or the public opinion when the professional ethics or the integrity of official statistics is endangered. The Committee strongly recommends the establishment of appropriate structures and methods of IAOS/ISI work in this area (i.e., a Committee on ethics and integrity of official statistics)*

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

46. Q.7: Which are the appropriate means IAOS can use for efficiently promoting good practices in official statistics?
Q.8: Which are the most suitable and practicable methods for ensuring consistent monitoring and efficient intervention of IAOS/ISI when the integrity of official statistics is endangered?

Synthesis of responses:

47. Many respondents indicate that the **Prague Group** (in which the presidentelect of ISI is already participating) is the right place for "promoting good practices". Nevertheless, a general trend of opinion is summarized by E. Malinvaud, who proposes that **IAOS adopt, as agreed policy, the promotion of good practices "as a major criterion in setting up programs of IAOS meetings, thanks to particular sessions and roundtables"**. In this sense, it is noticed that IAOS should concentrate on improving knowledge of good practices" (J. Kelly) and it is suggested to largely use the WEB site of IAOS for this purpose.

48. There are two groups of opinion concerning the role of IAOS concerning the **integrity of statistics** and the **professional ethics**. A first (minority) group clearly rejects that IAOS has a role to play in these matters (J. Kelly, B. McLennan, Tim Skinner and Dennis Trewin). The second (majority) group considers that, since the adoption of the Code of professional ethics by the ISI, these are matters inherent to the mission of all the ISI sections. But there are a large variety of considerations concerning the ways and means IAOS should use for assuming a particular role in the area of official statistics.

49. Many respondents agree that "IAOS should be a kind a "custody" of the Professional Ethics and the Fundamental Principles and agree on introducing such a reference into the statutes" (G. Szildgy). But, among them, some would like to limit the action of IAOS to general statements, publication of analysis of actual cases of breaching of integrity principles, and how they are treated by statistical offices, etc. Others consider that IAOS should play a more incisive role in terms of concrete action in cases when integrity is endangered (this is "certainly one of the major tasks of the IAOS/ISR": J.-L. Bodin). In this line, it is suggested that IAOS opens a **"reporting point" on the internet** (W. de Vries), that a **"watching network"** should be established (J.-L. Bodin) and even that "IAOS can work through its members, so the executive committee could ask members in particular country to clarify a situation which appears unsatisfactory, and if necessary could make a direct approach to the government statistician, or to the minister for statistics, drawing their attention to the matter of concern." (P.W. Digby). In this context, there is however a clear expression of support to the proposal of the Preliminary Report: ISI should be in the forefront and IAOS should request and support appropriate ISI action.

50. Last but not least, respondents do not object to the proposal of creation of an **ISI Committee of Integrity and Professional Ethics**, but few of them provided comments or specific suggestions concerning the constituency and action of such a Committee.

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

51. The Review Committee paid particular attention to the variety of views of IAOS members concerning these matters. It considered that differences of opinions were to be clearly reflected in this report, but it unanimously decided to maintain its fundamental option as well as the line of argumentation established in the preliminary report. It therefore recommends to the General Assembly:

- i) To acknowledge, as an "agreed policy" of IAOS, the promotion of good practices as a major criterion in setting up programs of meetings;
- ii) To modify the Statutes of IAOS, with the introduction of the following sentence: "the promotion and defense of professional ethics and the integrity of official statistics are inherent parts of the mission of IAOS";
- iii) To encourage analytical work and presentation of cases studies on the status of integrity and ethics, within the framework of IAOS conferences and meetings, as well as the development of monitoring and reporting services to be established and carried out on voluntary basis;
- iv) To express the official support of IAOS to the proposal of creation of an ISI Committee on Professional Ethics which is on the agenda of the ISI Council meeting to be held in August 1999;
- v) To request the ISI Council to establish a task force including the Executive Committee of IAOS in view to set up mechanisms and procedures for intervention in cases when the integrity of official statistics is endangered.

VII. Regional needs for co-operation

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

52. (§21) Universality of IAOS also means that the Association has to take into account the needs for professional co-operation of official statisticians from all the regions of the world, and in particular of the colleagues from less developed countries. But IAOS can't and shouldn't compensate for the gaps and weaknesses of statistical co-operation carried out by intergovernmental and supranational organizations. IAOS is not able to execute co-operation programs, or to organize specific actions at the regional level. Its role in this context could only consist in promoting and supporting the development of professional ties between statisticians from industrialized and from developing countries. In this respect, recent developments tend to attest that most appropriate means for identifying and fulfilling specific regional needs for professional co-operation can't be defined at the level of an international association, but should be established and developed by the statisticians of the concerned regions (i.e., creation of the Association of Balkan Statisticians). It is also interesting to note that, in order to promote increased transfer of expertise and mutual exchanges, some national statistical institutes are establishing bilateral links through twinning, aiming at ensuring long-term partnership between single experts and homologous units. The Review Committee considers that IAOS should welcome and encourage such kind of initiatives as well as any innovative proposal aiming at establishing or strengthening links of partnership or networking among its members in a given region of the world as well as between members of different regions. Moreover, the Committee considers that IAOS should strengthen its action at three levels: i) it should actively promote extended IAOS

membership in less developed countries; ii) it should actively support the establishment and action of national statistical associations in those countries; iii) it should actively encourage communication and scientific exchanges among official statisticians through electronic media (i.e., WEB forum).

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

53. Q.9: Which are the most suitable and practicable means for facilitating active participation of statisticians from less developing countries to the activities of IAOS?
Q.10: In which form IAOS (or a group of single IAOS members) could encourage and/or support the establishment of links of professional partnership between statisticians from the industrialized world and from the less developed countries?

Synthesis of responses:

54. The consultation of IAOS members provided the Review Committee with very few orientations concerning these issues. Respondents are seriously concerned with current impressive gaps on opportunities for professional exchanges and co-operation between official statisticians in the industrialized world and in developing countries. They generally insisted on obvious need for finding **substantial financial support** in order to allow colleagues from developing countries to attend IAOS conferences and meetings.

55. It is suggested to **encourage increased LAOS membership from developing countries** by means of reducing fees. It is also noticed that international organizations working with developing countries could contribute to pay the fees.

56. It is proposed to create **IAOS awards** for best papers by statisticians of developing countries, consisting in financing their attendance to IAOS Conferences where they can present their papers.

57. As a "policy element", many respondents stress that IAOS should organize **conferences in developing countries**. Some suggest that IAOS Conferences should give more room to problems and concerns of official statisticians in the developing world.

58. **Scarce Latin American membership** and usual absence of Latin-American statisticians in conferences and meetings of the Association seem to be due not only to lack of financial resources, but also to a linguistic barrier. Given the long tradition of official statistics in that sub-continent and the impressive professional qualities of many Latin-American statisticians, IAOS has to consider this situation as a major strategic challenge (M. Palma, R. Suarez de Miguel). It is thus suggested to develop a specific campaign of extension of membership in Latin-America in co-operation with national statistical institutes and international organizations currently involved in the statistical co-operation in that region. Moreover, it is suggested to try to find ad hoc solutions in major IAOS conferences (i.e., partial translation into Spanish) in order to attract official statisticians from Latin American countries.

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

59. The Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:
- i) To approve the creation of IAOS awards for authors of best papers from developing countries;
 - ii) To encourage the organization of at least one IAOS workshop in a developing country once a year;
 - iii) To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the consideration of problems and concerns of official statisticians in the developing world as a major criterion in setting up programs of meetings;
 - iv) To request the Executive Committee to design and implement a strategy aiming at increasing LAOS membership AND IAOS activities in Latin America.

VII. Institutional members of IAOS

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

60. (*§22*) *It is a matter of fact that co-operation in the field of official statistics can only exist on the basis of substantial commitment of national statistical institutes (NSIs) and international organizations. This is also the case of professional co operation developed within IAOS. Indeed, conferences and meetings of IAOS can only be organized thanks to direct or indirect financial contributions of NSIs (which host those meetings or pay the costs of attendance of their staff). The Review Committee thus strongly recommends maintaining the current status of NSIs and international organizations as " institutional members " of IAOS. It also recommends to actively promote extended membership of this category, aiming at attracting to LAOS not only agencies producing statistics, but also institutional users (organizations, associations, enterprises, etc.).*

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

None

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

61. As stated in the Preliminary Report, the Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:
- i) To maintain the current status of « institutional members » ;
 - ii) To encourage increasing membership of this category (including institutional producers and users of official statistics).

VII. Rejuvenation and trans-hierarchical membership of IAOS

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

62. (§23) NSIs and international agencies are based on hierarchical structures and a complex organization. The high hierarchical level of the staff who attends meetings and conferences usually reflects their commitment within the international statistical co-operation. This would be also the case of their involvement in the activities of IAOS and there is therefore a risk that, in fact, the Association remains a club of people of senior and top management levels. Thus IAOS meetings would simply add to other frequent meetings among the same people. Is this desirable for an Association that intends to promote dynamic and innovative professional cooperation? The Review Committee considers that IAOS has to make way for juniors. It notes not only that the Association itself urgently needs rejuvenation, but also that it is important that young statisticians have the opportunity to benefit from professional exchanges within a 'free thinking environment'. It also considers that transgenerational and trans-hierarchical communication is essential for ensuring the transmission of the knowledge, experience, values and concerns that constitute the culture of the statistical profession. It therefore recommends that IAOS actively encourage membership of young official statisticians as well as their involvement in the organization and implementation of the Association's activities.

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

63. Q.11 Should the statutes and functioning rules of IAOS include norms aiming at ensuring that the constituency of the Executive Committee and other bodies of IAOS clearly reflect trans-hierarchical and trans-generational membership of IAOS?
Q.12: Which concrete steps could IAOS take in order to effectively promote exchanges and professional co-operation between young statisticians, between young and senior statisticians and between senior statisticians?

Synthesis of responses:

64. Most of respondents seem to recognize that there is a real need for rejuvenation of IAOS, but they generally consider that such a rejuvenation could only result from an **increased support of national statistical institutes to active participation of their own young statisticians in the activities of the Association.**

65. As a general trend, there is an agreement on the **need for appointing younger people in the Executive Committee**, but respondents reject the idea of adopting norms aiming at ensuring this. It appears that "there is no need to change statutes and rules to promote this, if the Nomination Committee is instructed to propose to appoint young statisticians" (W. de Vries). But, of course, "an effort should be made to convince young statisticians to take some responsibilities" (M. Sicron). In other terms, the consultation shows that rejuvenation should be based on a **voluntaristic policy and practical steps** rather than in normative action.

66. Many respondents stress the need for inviting more young people to organize sessions and act as speakers/discussants. As proposed by I. Fellegi in the course of the IAOS Conference held in Aguascalientes, some respondents consider that the good format for invited papers meetings could consist in having **"junior speakers" and "senior discussants"**.

67. Some respondents express support to the considerations of the preliminary report concerning **"trans-hierarchical" membership** of IAOS. "What we need is to hear the voice of persons others than the leading executives of national statistical institutes. These institutes should be encouraged to help the participation of persons also from the lower levels of the hierarchy" (G. Szilagy).

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

68. The Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:
- i) To request the Executive Committee to develop an active campaign aiming at recruiting more young statisticians as IAOS members;
 - ii) To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the promotion of active commitment of young statisticians in the organization and conduct of the Association, as a major criterion in selecting candidates to the Executive Committee and other bodies;
 - iii) To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the promotion of invited papers meetings with "young speakers" and "senior discussants" as a major criterion in programming IAOS conferences.
 - iv) To encourage institutional members to actively support the development of programs of scholarships, on-the-job training and exchanges of junior statisticians, targeted to young members of IAOS.

VII. Areas of work of IAOS

Considerations and proposals of the Preliminary Report:

69. (§24) *On the basis of its current profile, IAOS organizes activities focusing indifferently on all kind of fields and topics related directly or indirectly to the very broad area of "official statistics". In some cases, issues and problems discussed in conferences and meetings of the Association are very similar to those discussed within the intergovernmental or supranational organizations (social statistics, use of administrative records, etc.). In other cases, IAOS appears as co-organizer of meetings on applied statistics where the papers and the debate have few or no relevance for official statistics. It happens that IAOS activities give rise to some overlapping with ISI activities and it also happens that activities of IAOS ignores the specific work carried out by other important associations (Le. IARIW). Of course, duplication does not necessarily mean that IAOS works in fields in which other organizations also work, but that there are no sensible differences of approach or*

level of discussion on identical topics between IAOS and other organizations. The Review Committee considers that there is a need for a clear definition of the areas of work of IAOS (what to do?), of the specific aim of this activity (why to do it?), of its relation with users, as well as of the scientific standards and the specific approach of issues and problems within the framework of the Association. The Committee considers that IAOS should mainly be "oriented towards the future". Its activity should focus mainly on new trends and challenges, on issues like the evolving mission of official statistics, the construction and integration of indicators, data management and applications of new information technologies in statistical activities. In other words, IAOS should privilege a prospective approach. The Association is not the right place to discuss on technical and mathematical issues.

Questions addressed to IAOS' members:

70. Q.13 How can we define the "specific" area of work of IAOS with regard to other sections of ISI?
Q.14: Do we need to define scientific standards within IAOS activities?
Q.15: Should we tackle this issue in "normative" terms - i.e. broad definition of standards - or in "institutional" terms - i.e. the establishment of a scientific committee that appreciates; case by case, the scientific and professional quality of the plans for LAOS activities?

Synthesis of responses:

71. The answers to the question on the "specific" areas of work of IAOS are of different natures: lists of wishes, topical approaches, general considerations, etc. A synthesis of such answers is an impossible exercise. We can observe however that in general terms respondents tend to support the outlines suggested by the preliminary report. There are however four major critical remarks: i) some comments of the Preliminary Report on the areas of work "seem to run counter the gist of the rest of the report... and give precisely the arguments required for helping those in favor of the "club" concept" (E. Malinvaud). ii) "The areas of work of the IAOS shouldn't be defined in a very strict manner. These depend on the development in the field of official statistics in general and the other organizational, scientific changes that are likely to occur in the future" (M. Sicron). iii) We are not "specific" but exciting because we are dealing with a broad rank of problems. iv) The report is "too categorical in excluding technical issues" (G. Szilagy)."

72. Respondents propose a large variety of "specific" areas of future IAOS work that cover five major areas of interest:

- i) **Institutional aspects of official statistics:** spheres of jurisdiction and responsibilities on NSIs; organizational models, internal relations and general functioning of national statistical systems; role of national statistical councils.

- ii) **Issues of statistical policy:** privatization of statistical functions vs public service; relationship with users; role of public information (information for the government vs information for the public); role of official statistics within the democratic process; the contribution of statistical methods to the measurement of Human Rights and the political violence.
- iii) **Challenges and strategic prospect:** future needs for statistics; trends and development in programs, in information technologies, in management and organization.
- iv) **Quality issues and quality policy**
- v) **Ethics and integrity of official statistics:** professional ethics, good practices, integrity of public statistics.

73. Last but not least, the consultation shows that there is a general refusal to define scientific standards within LAOS activities. The general trend on this issue is summarized by the comment of J.-L. Bodin: "Be pragmatic: let the Program Committees manage the scientific activities".

Recommendations of the Review Committee:

74. The Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:
- i) To request the Executive Committee to elaborate proposals for a flexible core program of future IAOS activities based on the five above mentioned areas of interest of IAOS members.
 - ii) To encourage Program Committees of future IAOS conferences and meetings to take into account the results of the consultation and the conclusions of the present report.

VII. Conclusive remarks

75. Today the activity of IAOS appears more as a collection of single events (ad hoc conferences and meetings) than as a program of work developing along long-term strategic lines. The Review Committee considers that there is a **need for more strategic and consistent programming, based on the potential strengths of the Association and focusing on some major areas of work.**

74. Both the results of the consultation of IAOS' members and the assessment established by the Review Committee suggest that, in the short run, it would be opportune to privilege six thematic areas as major criteria in programming: i) the relationship between producers and users of official statistics; ii) integrity, fundamental principles and professional ethics;

- iii) the profile and role of official statistics in modern democracies;
- iv) the effective integration of young statisticians within the international statistical community;
- v) the impact of new information technologies and their application in the production and dissemination of official statistics;
- vi) quality management and quality monitoring.

75. Last but not least, the Review Committee noticed that the results of the consultation of IAOS' members clearly indicate that there is a general reluctance to change the statutes and functioning rules of the Association. It therefore decided to abandon its original intention to suggest a review of the statutes. As a consequence of this, the follow-up of the review process should be conducted by the Executive Committee on the basis of voluntaristic policy and practical steps rather than through normative action. In this regard, the Review Committee would like to stress the importance of the leading role of the Executive Committee, as well as the need for a strong commitment of individual and institutional IAOS' members in supporting its action.

76. The Review Committee consider that this Final Report marks the conclusion of its work and it therefore request the General Assembly to be discharged of its task. On this occasion, it would like to express its warm thanks to all IAOS' members who supported its work and in particular to those who contributed with written comments and suggestions to the success of the review process.

Neuchatel, 4 August 1999

ANNEX:

Summary of the recommendations of the Review Committee to the IAOS General Assembly (Helsinki, 16 August 1999)

The Review Committee recommends to the General Assembly:

Issue: an NGO of a special character

1. Maintaining the statutes and current profile of IAOS as an international NGO active in the field of official statistics.

Issue: a forum for informal exchanges, experimental work and professional co-operation

2. Maintaining and strengthening this characteristic of IAOS, which constitutes one of the original and distinctive strengths of the Association within the international scene.

Issue: IAOS as a branch of the ISI family

3. To organize as a rule, within ISI sessions, joint meetings with other sections of the Institute.
4. To approve that **IAOS and IASS** Executive Committees start explorative talks on the feasibility and advisability of merging the two sections and on the modalities and organization of joint work between the secretariats of both associations within an unified section.
5. To incorporate the Irving Fisher Committee as a standing iAOS Committee.
6. To formally request the ISI Program Co-ordinating Committee to review its programming procedures in the light of the conclusions of our report.
7. To request the ISI Council to set up appropriate mechanisms and measures aiming at effective identification of synergies and joint action between sections.
 8. To encourage IAOS visibility and active participation (through the ISI secretariat) in the relevant fora of the international statistical co-operation.

Issue: an association of producers and users of official statistics

9. To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the promotion of relations with users and the analysis of country practices concerning national statistical councils, as major criteria in setting up programs of meetings;
10. To request the Executive Committee to examine the best ways and means to identify main groups and international associations of users, to inform those groups and associations on the activities of IAOS and to examine the appropriate modalities of collaboration or recruitment of some of them as institutional members of IAOS;
11. To request the Executive Committee to produce evaluative reports on forthcoming IAOS conferences involving users of official statistics (i.e., Conference on "statistics and human rights" in 2'000).

Issue: integrity and professional ethics

12. To acknowledge, as an "agreed policy" of IAOS, the promotion of good practices as a major criterion in setting up programs of meetings;
13. To modify the Statutes of IAOS, with the introduction of the following sentence: "the promotion and defense of professional ethics and the integrity of official statistics are inherent parts of the mission of IAOS";
14. To encourage analytical work and presentation of cases studies on the status of integrity and ethics, within the framework of **IAOS** conferences and meetings, as well as the development of monitoring and reporting services to be established and carried out on voluntary basis;
15. To express the official support of **IAOS** to the proposal of creation of an ISI Committee on Professional Ethics which is on the agenda of the ISI Council meeting to be held in August 1999;
16. To request the ISI Council to establish a task force including the Executive Committee of IAOS in view to set up mechanisms and procedures for intervention in cases when the integrity of official statistics is endangered.

Issue: regional needs for co-operation

17. To approve the creation of IAOS awards for authors of best papers from developing countries;
18. To encourage the organization of at least one **IAOS** workshop in a developing country once a year;

19. To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the consideration of problems and concerns of official statisticians in the developing world as a major criterion in setting up programs of meetings;
20. To request the Executive Committee to design and implement a strategy aiming at increasing IAOS membership AND IAOS activities in Latin America.

Issue: institutional members of IAOS

21. To maintain the current status of « institutional members »;
22. To encourage increasing membership of this category (including institutional producers and users of official statistics).

Issue: rejuvenation and trans-hierarchical membership

23. To request the Executive Committee to develop an active campaign aiming at recruiting more young statisticians as IAOS members;
24. To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of **IAOS**, the promotion of active commitment of young statisticians in the organization and conduct of the Association, as a major criterion in selecting candidates to the Executive Committee and other bodies;
25. To acknowledge, as an agreed policy of IAOS, the promotion of invited papers meetings with "young speakers" and "senior discussants" as a major criterion in programming IAOS conferences.
26. To encourage institutional members to actively support the development of programs of scholarships, on-the-job training and exchanges of junior statisticians, targeted to young members of IAOS.

Issue: Areas of work of IAOS

27. To request the Executive Committee to elaborate proposals for a flexible core program of future **IAOS** activities based on five major areas of interest of IAOS members:
 - i) institutional aspects of official statistics;
 - ii) issues of statistical policy;
 - iii) challenges and strategic prospects;
 - iv) quality issues and quality policy;
 - v) ethics and integrity of official statistics.

22. To encourage Program Committees of future IAOS conferences and meetings to take into account the results of the consultation and the conclusions of the present report.

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