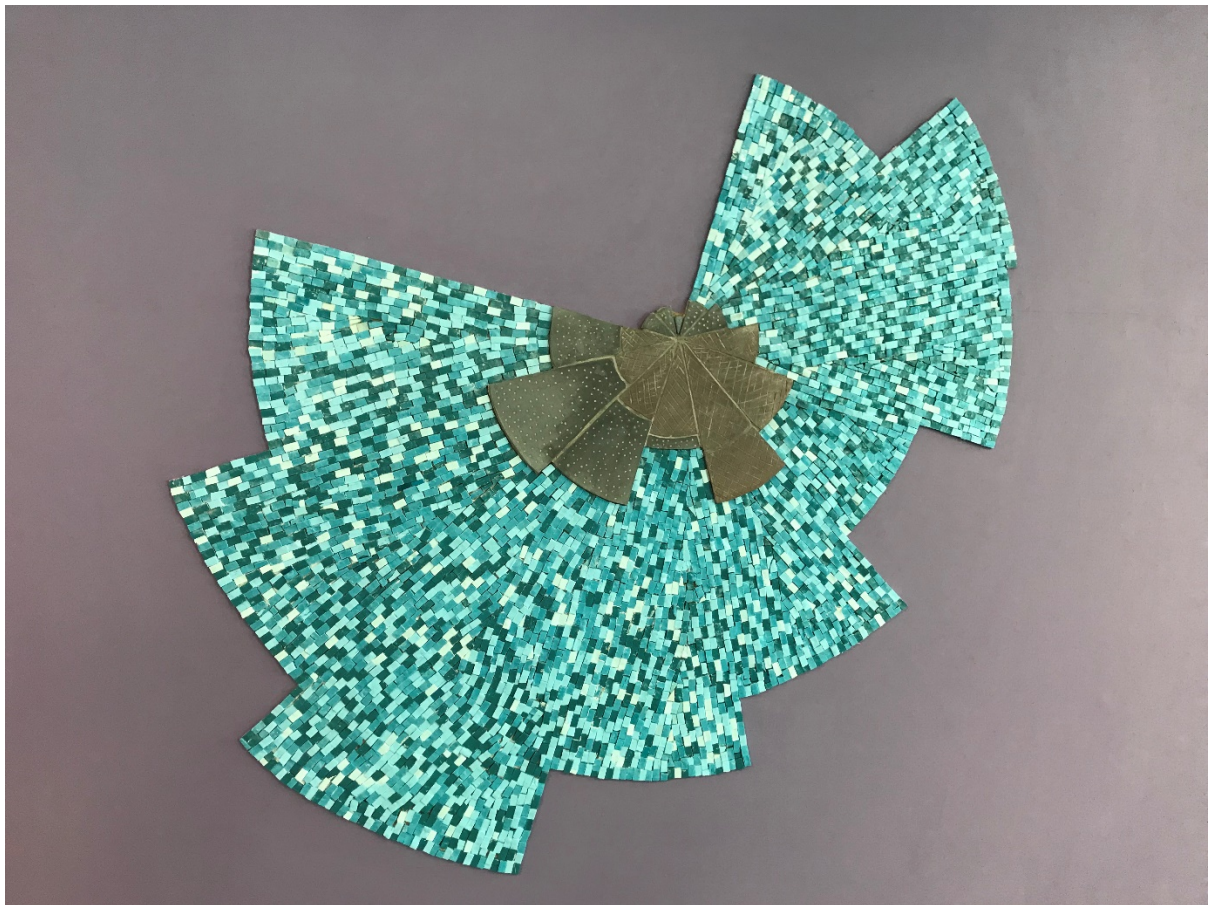




International Association for Official Statistics
2019-20
Annual Report



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Message from the President

Dear Friends

This is a critical time for our community. The need for trustworthy numbers to guide decision making is everywhere evident. The opportunities arising from new data sources, technologies and methods are tantalising. And our Association has a unique place, both in upholding the centrality of official statistics to effective democracy and in calling out those who seek to undermine it and seduce others to ignore evidence and instead rely on anecdote, whim or populist rhetoric. The global response to the Covid-19 pandemic has brought into even sharper focus the responsibility associated with the provision of high quality, trustworthy and valuable statistics that serve the public good.

Now is a time for us to find our voice.

At the World Statistics Congress in Kuala Lumpur in August 2019 (with IAOS EXCO member Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chair of the organising committee, a most wonderful host) there were many lively sessions organised by the IAOS and many other activities strongly linked to our interests, such as on statistical literacy. Our Journal (SJIAOS) has been thriving and developing fast in the hands of new Editor-in-Chief, Pieter Everaers and his impressive editorial team. The Young Statisticians Prizes for 2019 awarded at the closing ceremony of the World Statistics Congress showcased the emerging talent in our field.

We can look back on a successful year that has delivered on the strategy we adopted for 2017-2019. Particular thanks go to outgoing IAOS President, Mario Palma (and his team at INEGI, Mexico, especially Victoria Bonilla), to outgoing SJIAOS Editor-in-Chief, Kirsten West (and her assistant Greta Cherry), to Gemma Van Halderen (who has led our work on the Young Statisticians' Prize), to Nancy McBeth (special advisor to the President) and to Ada Van Krimpen and all her team at the ISI Permanent Office. It is their hard work that has ensured our success.

Our new strategy for 2019-2021 builds on this progress. The centrepiece of the strategy is our conference in Zambia, originally planned for May 2020 but delayed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The themes for the conference mirror the wider ambitions of the Association over the next decade: official statistics for better lives. Alongside the conference we will be enhancing yet further the Journal, Young Statisticians' Prize and other activities.

If you are not already a member of the Association, join us. Our voice is stronger with each new member.

1. Looking ahead - 2019-2021 Strategy

The strategy as reproduced here is dated January 2020 and is the outcome of work done during the second half of 2019. It therefore predates the Covid-19 pandemic. That said, the themes of the plan resonate well with the demands for better statistics that have arisen as governments, businesses and communities have tried to navigate through challenging times and make wise decisions related to public health as well as economic and social impacts. In implementing the strategy, we will be seeking to learn the lessons taught by the Covid-19 experience.

International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) Strategy 2019-21

Introduction

Initial ideas for a strategy for the IAOS for the period 2019-21 were discussed at the IAOS General Assembly in August 2019. Following that discussion, a draft strategy was made available for comments with a deadline of 30 November 2019. Comments received were incorporated and this revised version was ratified by the IAOS Executive Committee at its meeting in March 2020.

Background

Official statistics are fundamental to democracy. They provide governments, businesses and civil society with the information they need to make good decisions. And they give people and their representatives the tools to have informed debates, to make choices and to hold decision makers to account.

In 2019 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics which have been adopted by the United Nations to guide all nations in developing statistics that meet the test of practical utility

At the same time, developments in technology mean that it is possible to utilise statistical science to gain insights from data that were unimaginable only a few years ago. This means, as Brad Efron memorably said on receiving the International Prize in Statistics at the 2019 World Statistics Congress, that we are on the verge of a new golden age of statistics.

The IAOS is one of the seven associations of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). The ISI has a medium term vision for the period 2017-21 and the IAOS aligns itself with the ISI vision.

Context

IAOS [objectives](#) are:

- to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and related subjects.

- to foster the development of effective and efficient official statistical services, particularly in developing countries, through international contacts among individuals and organizations, including users of official statistics as well as research institutions.

The world of official statistics is changing fast:

- demands are extending in scope and are up in all fields – users need faster, more fine grained and relevant insight
- many new data sources are available but also many new providers of data services
- we have a challenge to demonstrate trustworthiness and the special value of official statistics in a complex data landscape

The IAOS has many strengths: a growing membership, a well respected journal (SJIAOS), good conferences, the young statisticians prize (YSP), an active community, and the ability to be “free-thinking”. However, we have limited reach and impact with decision makers, our “call to action” for our supporters is not well understood and work rests on few shoulders.

There are opportunities for us arising from the 25th anniversary of Fundamental Principles, World Statistics Day 2020, the 2020 Census round, data gaps in the indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and recent case studies in official statistics. At the same time, we face threats that are confronting institutions in many countries, in particular loss of political (“enough of experts”) and public (“your GDP not our GDP”) support.

These issues have already been recognised in the IAOS 2017-19 strategic plan which set out to:

- provide IAOS membership and producers of statistical information in general, with a forum for the analysis and discussion of the most relevant issues in official statistics
- be a recognised vehicle for spreading knowledge in official statistics
- increase and diversify IAOS membership
- invest in creating mutual beneficial partnerships
- strengthen communications with relevant actors related to official statistics
- contribute to the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics
- institutionalise IAOS functions
- strengthen links with the ISI family

The positive progress that has been made against the strategic plan is well set out in the 2018-19 annual report and the report on the 2018 IAOS conference.

Plan Themes for 2019-21

The strategy for 2019-21 builds on the existing plan and our current activities rather than develop new ones:

- the conference: for Zambia 2020 we should aim to build on success of Paris 2018 which attracted 323 attendees from 71 countries

- the journal: SJIAOS is in good health, proposals for the next two years are well advanced and our new discussion platform, launched at the World Statistics Congress, has been well received
- the young Statistician Prize: 2020 is the 10th year and the prize is now a well respected feature of our community. This anniversary year provides a basis for linking the prize with wider efforts to engage young statisticians and young people more generally

We can draw on our core principles: the Declaration on Professional Ethics for Statisticians adopted by the ISI in 2010 (succeeding to the 1985 one), as well as in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics published in 1994.

The unifying idea behind the IAOS and the principles on which we draw is that our central interest is our users: those who rely on us to provide a trustworthy guide for the domains we cover to what is going on in the world around them. What matters is the better use of official statistics in public debates, decision making and democratic accountability. We should focus our work in each of our activity areas on delivering an outcome where the IAOS is seen as a leading global advocate for official statistics with the result that:

- Parliaments and Governments recognise value of official statistics and invest in them through strong laws and adequate funding, with a particular attention to the capacity of Official Statistics to inform national and international decisions and to track progress in all the SDG domains.
- Commentators refer to official statistics as fundamental to democracy
- The impact of poorly supported official statistical systems on countries and citizens is widely understood and referenced

This implies five themes for our strategic plan:

1. **Focus on users** so that the value of official statistics is understood and recognised. This requires us to analyse the key users of official statistics and make sure we reach them. Leading figures outside official statistics acting as advocates, including politicians, central bankers and other public figures, could be highly effective champions (Outcome theme)
2. **Build on existing activities** rather than develop new ones: the conference, the journal, young statisticians prize each with a clear focus that supports our outcomes. (Output theme)
3. **Develop IAOS processes** to deliver activities focused on outcomes: EXCO agendas and actions designed to help those responsible for each activity area. Improved two-way communication to engage and enrol. (Process theme)
4. Increase resources by growing membership still further. We have had a growing membership in recent years. We could build on this progress and **recruit more members**, especially in Africa and other underrepresented regions and amongst younger people, to increase the breadth, depth and diversity of our community. Growing membership has not yet resulted in healthier finances. Indeed we have yet to cover the new levy raised on Association members by the ISI since 2018. EXCO has agreed new subscription rates

for 2020 that will cover this extra cost. The new rates are intended to be at a level that does not impact on membership but ensures our finances are sustainable. (Resources theme)

5. Enhance capability: build new **partnerships** with others who share our goals eg Parliaments, data ethics bodies, National Statistical Associations/Societies and organisations like PARIS21, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, open data/fact checking organisations and consumer groups. At the same time, we should deepen existing partnerships with the ISI and its Associations. Relationships with National Statistical Institutes (and other producers of official statistics including central banks and ministries) are especially important. Specifically, we should support the ISI strategic priority for capacity building, the ISI strategic plan for the Public Voice for Statistics and the new ISI Special Interest Group on Communicating Statistics and Data Science. IASE is another priority partnership for us given the imperative to build statistical literacy and capability. (Capability theme)

The strategic plan could become a call to action:

- Official statistics give people a voice in decisions that affect them, they make the invisible visible. Official statistics are fundamental to democracy, helping society to leave no one behind. The best known example of official statistics is a countries Population Census – often the largest civic engagement exercise undertaken
- the IAOS is the voice of official statistics
- with a fast growing membership, with acclaimed conferences, journal and young statistician prize, the IAOS is the place to come if you:
 - care about taking part in developing the future of democracy
 - recognise the importance of evidence in making good decisions
 - want to make a difference
- join us

2. Looking back - outcome of 2017-2019 Strategy

The IAOS strategic objectives for 2017-2019 built on the previous plan, a SWOT analysis and the new ISI Strategic Plan. They sought to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics, and to foster the development of effective and efficient official statistical services, particularly in developing countries, through international contacts among individuals and organizations, including users of official statistics as well as research institutions.

The following section presents the strategic objectives, targets and measures that were set and a brief assessment of the extent to which the aspirations of the strategy were met during the period.

Strategic objective 1: Provide IAOS membership and producers and users of statistical information in general, with a forum for the analysis and discussion of the most relevant issues of official statistics.

Targets

1.1 Be at the vanguard in the analysis and discussion of official statistics. Partly met: the IAOS activities, especially the 2018 Paris conference, raised the profile but there remains work to do for the Association to be at the vanguard

1.2 Align IAOS conference's themes to the most important issues of official statistics. Met. Feedback on the conference clearly demonstrated success on this target.

1.3 Increase IAOS member participation in the IAOS conference. Met. The numbers attending the 2018 conference were up.

1.4 Follow and participate in the development of the SDGs. Partly met. There were several activities where SDGs were followed up but more could be done.

1.5 Encourage the analysis of emerging issues. Met. The development of the interactive aspects of the Journal has been a step change in the capability of the IAOS to encourage the analysis of emerging issues.

Strategic objective 2: Be a recognised vehicle for spreading knowledge in official statistics.

IAOS aims to be the world-wide known vehicle to spread knowledge and innovation in official statistics. To this aim, the Statistical Journal of IAOS (SJIAOS) is a core element of our Association as it serves as a knowledge disseminator, exposing quality and relevant research to the statistical community. To complement this role, in August 2019, beyond the registered receivers of the printed version of the journal and the pre-press and on-line version, the SJIAOS website has been launched with pages on news, events and a discussion platform with every quarter a discussion on an issue of general interest for Official Statistics. Further, a twitter account has been opened and especially used for quick updates during conferences and important events. Via the links between the websites relevant for official statistics (IAOS, SJIAOS, IOS Press and ISI), the community of official statisticians has accurate, timely and coordinated access to all relevant information.

Targets

2.1 Increase the number of citations to articles published in SJIAOS.

The articles on the SJIAOS website attracted more than 1250 page views per month. The quality and relevance of the articles is also measured via the number of citations and the rate of cited documents. Since 2015 these numbers are steeply raising. A two years procedure for receiving an official impact-rating for the Journal (beyond the informal ratings) has been started.

Even so the SJIAOS discussion platform was often visited; however, the number of discussion contributions in the September (6) and December (10) issue are still expected to further increase. At the moment of drafting this text the contributions to the 2020 March and June discussions are not yet known, nevertheless, it is expected that the full open access of the 2020 March issue on Population and Housing censuses, will lead to many contributions to the Discussion platform.

2.2 Positioned SJIAOS in at least the third quartile for statistics, probability and uncertainty.

During 2019-2020 the SJIAOS has continued increasing its number of readers and the diversity of the manuscripts it publishes, keeping itself at the vanguard of the discussion of emerging issues in official statistics.

Circa 150 anonymous reviews of these manuscripts from this period were performed by over 70 reviewers. Around 40 manuscripts for the 4 issues for this period were actively solicited. The attractiveness for publishing via the Journal is also reflected in the number of non-solicited offered manuscripts. The rejection rate for these non-solicited manuscripts was over 40%.

2.3 Attract innovative researchers and new talent to publish in the SJIAOS.

During this period the SJIAOS published over 85 manuscripts (including articles and editorials), with contributions from over 180 authors. The authors represented a wide range of 37 nations; 60% from Europe (50% European Union countries and 10% non-EU countries), 20% from non European OECD countries and 20% from a range of African, Middle-East and South East Asian countries. The objective for the Journal is to achieve a globally more balanced distribution. The increase in rate of contributions from the category African, Middle-East and South East Asian countries to 20% (from circa 13% in the period 2017-2019) is a first step in this direction.

The 2020 IAOS Conference in Zambia was expected to result in a number of good contributions from official statisticians from the African continent and mark a milestone in official statistics for Africa. Based on these expectations, it was agreed with the IOS Press to publish an extra issue of the Journal in 2020 covering 'Official statistics in Africa'. Starting point would be around 25 manuscripts authored by African official statisticians and/or covering elements of official statistics in Africa. This special issue will be produced even when the conference is postponed to a later date.

2.4 Encourage the discussion of SDGs indicators and emerging issues in the SJIAOS.

Out of the 85 articles circa 10 directly focussed on discussing SDG indicators or SDG related issues. Also the first discussion platform topic concentrated on the SDG's. Emerging issues were at the core of the Journal with 9 articles in the sections on Data4Policy on the future role of Official Statistics (Governing by the numbers); on new methods for treating new data sources 9 article were dedicated to the theme 'Trusted Smart statistics'; a full special issue with 27 articles on the very important 2020 Population and Housing Census round as well as 2 separate articles in the other three issues.

Strategic Objective 3: Increase and diversify IAOS membership.

Targets

3.1 Increase the number of young people enrolled in the IAOS.

3.2 Increase the number of students enrolled in the IAOS.

3.3 Increase the number of institutional members enrolled in the IAOS.

3.4 Encourage the greater participation of existing IAOS members.

The information available does not enable the analysis needed to report against these targets.

Strategic objective 4: Invest in creating mutual beneficial Partnerships.

Targets

4.1 Increase the number of international, regional and national partners involved in the undergoing work of the IAOS. Met, and we have an active programme to go further.

4.2 Increase the IAOS presence among NSOs and other producers of statistical information. Met, and we have an active programme to go further.

4.3 Participate actively in international fora devoted to official statistics. Met. The past-President, President and President-elect have been active in many activities along with a substantial number of members of the Executive Committee and other Association members, including an impressive number of former Presidents. Former President, Shigeru Kawasaki has been elected as Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission for the period 2020-2022.

Strategic objective 5: Strengthen communications with relevant actors related to official statistics.

Targets

5.1 Enhance and improve communication with members. Partially met, however communication needs to be significantly improved.

5.2 Enhance and improve communication with the heads of NSOs and other statistical fora. Partially met, however communication needs to be significantly improved.

5.3 Overhaul and improve the IAOS website based on user's needs. Partially met, however the website has proved cumbersome to enhance and needs to be significantly improved.

5.4 Strengthen the links with academia. Not met. No specific initiatives completed.

5.5 Increase the presence of the IAOS in social networks. Not met. We need dedicated resource to assist with social media.

Strategic objective 6: Contribute to the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics.

Targets

6.1 Follow the trends in official statistics by regions. Met. The 2018 special conference session in Paris raised the IAOS profile.

6.2 Support the work of ISI in defending statistical integrity and ethical standards. Met. The IAOS played a strong role on this topic at the 2019 World Statistics Congress in Kuala Lumpur

6.3 Work with the ISI Ethics Committee to report successful cases and cases of violation of the fundamental principles. Partially met. The IAOS has been quite active on this but links with the ISI Ethics Committee could be further enhanced.

Strategic objective 7: Institutionalize IAOS functions.

Targets

7.1 Continue to elaborate written and well documented protocols related to IAOS's committees, functions of the IAOS president, functions of the IAOS president-elect, nomination of IAOS host countries, YSP competition, budgetary, reporting. Met. The outgoing President (Mario Palma) created a valuable set of documentation for future Presidents and office holders.

7.2 Establish sustainable financial model for IAOS. Met. Changes to the fee structure agreed for the year 2020 should place the Association on a sustainable footing.

Strategic objective 8: Strengthen links with the ISI family.

Targets

8.1 Actively support the ISI in the implementation of the ISI Strategy 2017 -2021: Partially met. There has been improving support for the ISI but there remains work to be done.

8.2 Enhance membership participation in the WSC and Regional Statistical Conferences. Met. Joint working with other members of the ISI family has noticeably increased during this period, including through preparation for the joint conference in Zambia in 2020.

3. IAOS 2020 conference

During the 2019-20 period, the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS), the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats) have been planning for a 2020 Conference: *Better Lives 2030: mobilising the power of data for Africa and the world. (Bringing together statisticians and all those in government, universities and education who care about the value of statistics to society.)*

We have selected seven themes:

1. Future of Statistics for Africa: statistics that leave no one behind
2. Skills for Africa in the era of data
3. Official statistics in society: they matter to all of us
4. Big data. Opportunities arising from the new data ecosystem.
5. Statistics making a difference: public health, prevent and cure
6. Statistics making a difference: environment and climate
7. Statistics making a difference: from data to progress

The conference programme has been designed to deliver:

- A forward looking prospectus for statistics to help improve decision making over the next 10 years
- An opportunity to bring together diverse communities to foster innovation and partnership
- A focus on Africa through Agenda 2063 and the SDGs
- Capacity building in Zambia and across the region

The Scientific Programme Committee issued a call for proposals: for a session, lasting 90 minutes in total and including three or four speakers plus a discussant; for a contributed individual paper, which will be organised in special topic sessions; for a contributed individual poster; and suggestions for pre-and post-conference workshops, events or meetings.

Strand 1: “Future of Statistics for Africa: statistics that leave no one behind”

Agenda 2063 sets out the vision for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. This strand will explore how statistics can help guide decision makers to realise this vision. Five years into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and with only ten years to go to 2030, how can relevant, comprehensive and disaggregated statistics assist in understanding who is getting left behind and what needs to be done to ensure that they are not?

Providing the necessary statistical information at a time of considerable change requires fundamental questions to be asked about the future of the census and other domains of official statistics and methodology.

Subthemes include:

- How can statistics help guide decision makers to realize the Agenda 2063 vision?
- How can statistics assist in understanding who is getting left behind and what needs to be done to ensure that they are not?
- How are we realizing the benefits of the data revolution? Are we prepared for future changes in the data ecosystem?
- The 2020 Census round is in full swing. The census is a once in a decade opportunity to ensure that all are counted. What is the future for the census?
- Where should we be going with surveys and use of administrative data? What is the future role of non-official sources of data? What new methods will we need?

Strand 2: “Skills for Africa in the era of data”

The data revolution has changed the supply and paradigms for how we access and use information and data. How can we develop competence for the young generations? How can we help professionals, leaders, politicians, journalists, engineers and officials to update their skills to fully benefit from modern data?

In addition to papers, this strand would consider opportunities for workshops, training courses and other engagement activities for young generations.

Sub-themes include

- Equipping our children to succeed in a data rich world. What are the skills they need and how can we ensure that they are developed?
- Statistical offices struggle to develop and retain junior staff. How can we ensure that the future of official statistics is safeguarded by bringing on the next generation of professional staff?
- How can we help leaders need to understand the potential of data and data analytics? Leaders in statistics increasingly need to have deep technical credibility, strong management competence and the ability to navigate a complex and hazardous political landscape. How can we support them in getting the skills they need?
- The public often receive official statistics through the medium of journalism. How can we support journalists to write better, more compelling (and accurate) stories about numbers?
- To be an effective citizen we need to be able to make sense of statistics and to be sceptical of statistical claims. How do we foster statistical literacy for all?

Strand 3: “Official statistics in society: they matter to all of us”

In a crowded space, how do we ensure that the message of official statistics cuts through and is understood by all, and that official statisticians listen and provide statistics that resonate and are relevant to people’s lives?

Sub-themes include

- How do we communicate the role of official statistics and engage with politicians, media and civil society? How do we address issues of autonomy, independence and relevance and protect the position of the national statistics office and its leaders?
- To help decision makers, statistics need to connect with politicians and be able to be used to hold them to account. What are the mechanisms that support this?
- For official statistics to truly serve democracy, good engagement is also needed with the media and civil society. How can we work together?
- How do we make the case for autonomy and independence for official statistics and find a voice that protects the position of the national statistics office and its leaders?

Strand 4: “Big data. Opportunities arising from the new data ecosystem.”

To succeed in the new data ecosystem there needs to be a strong partnership between official statistics and other actors, including in data science and artificial intelligence. How can we build such partnerships?

Sub-themes include

- How can we make a success of partnerships and coordination in the emerging data ecosystem?
- Capacity within the system is far below what is needed to respond to the agenda in front of us. How do we make the case for resources, develop new business models that better match demand and supply and find ways to enhance the capability of the system?
- The new ecosystem demands new rules. What part can statisticians play in areas like data ethics where we have both much to offer and much to learn if we are to navigate successfully and sustain public confidence?

Strand 5: “Statistics making a difference: public health, prevent and cure”

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development states Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 3. The aim is that we achieve each SDG target by 2030. Statistics plays a growing role in producing the analytical and operative tools to reach the goal. Progress in and use of statistics will save the lives of millions of people. Topics covered in this strand will address in particular Africa’s public health crisis, the world’s most acute one.

Strand 6: “Statistics making a difference: environment and climate”

Several SDGs point to the urgency to face the climate crises which we have produced ourselves:

- SDG 6 aims to achieve clean, accessible water for all
- SDG 7 calls for affordable and clean energy
- SDG 13 states that the world needs climate actions, because climate change is a global challenge that affects everyone, everywhere
- SDG 14 promotes a careful management of our oceans and of life under water, as a global resource for all
- SDG 15 is about life on land, and the importance to protect forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.

Statistics contributes fundamentally to all these goals with powerful methods and practical instruments for a sustainable future. Topics covered in this strand will describe how statistics helps to solve these challenges.

Strand 7: “Statistics making a difference: from data to progress”

Despite extraordinary advances in the collection of data and processing of information, much of the potential residing in contemporary data sources remains unexploited. Fulfilling the promise of the big data revolution, statistics and machine learning produce new methodologies and analytical tools to extract knowledge from complex data to deliver insight. There is a dramatic scope for industries, companies, public and private, and for nations to create value from employing novel ways of analysing complex data.

The digitalisation of African societies and economies is proceeding rapidly and we are preparing to exploit data for the benefit of its people. Innovation in all sectors of the African economy will benefit from statistical approaches. Topics covered in this strand will focus on exploiting data for progress and development and propose methods and algorithms which allow understanding and predicting systems and processes.

An important subtheme is statistical education and training of new generations, to deliver statistical competence and capacity for progress.

Impact of Covid-19

Following the advice of the Zambia Government, the conference, which was planned to take place 19-21 May 2020, has been postponed and will be rescheduled once the position with Covid-19 is clearer.

The Scientific Programme Committee has reviewed all proposals received and has selected 133 papers for inclusion in the programme with a good spread across all themes for the

conference. Alongside this the Local Organising Committee has arrangements in place with the venue and other local organisations and the conference has been well-supported by sponsors.

Once it is possible to set a date for the rescheduled conference we will resume registration and other preparations.

4. Statistical Journal of the IAOS

The content of the issues during 2019-2020

During 2019-2020 the SJIAOS published more than 85 manuscripts in four issues, covering almost 800 pages. These manuscripts (including articles and editorials), covered varied subjects, varying from articles on governance aspects of official statistics, the use and need for official statistics in policy making, pre-release, ethics and access to confidential data, the use of all sorts of new data sources, creating trusted smart statistics, on the Sustainable development Goal indicators, the 2020 round of Population and Housing censuses, and a variety of specific themes. Each issue was given a special theme, connected to the discussion item on the SJIAOS website discussion platform.

Volume 35, Issue 3, September 2019.

Special theme: **“Official Statistics using 'un-official' data, a threat or a challenge”?**

The theme of the issue relates to the increased use of statistics for evidence based decision making and beyond this, demands for example, for reliable indicators of progress in achieving the targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). These require more and better statistics in a wide variety of societal domains. This theme was introduced via the leading article by Steve McFeeley and Bogdan Nastav, 'You say you want a (data) revolution: A proposal to use unofficial statistics for the SDG Global Indicator Framework'. This article was also used as trigger and background for the first discussion on the discussion platform of the new website (see later) and as such presented in the very successful lunchtime discussion group meeting (LTDG) at the ISI World Statistics Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

The issue contained 16 manuscripts, 13 scientific contributions, an interview with Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski (Destatis, Germany), a conversation with Oliver Fischer (US Census Bureau) about international programs at the U.S. Census Bureau and a report from the Side event at the 50th UNSC on 'Servicing the Statistical Commission, past, present and future'.

Volume 35, Issue 4, December 2019.

Special themes: **Governing by the Numbers & Trusted Smart Statistics.**

This issue contains 20 manuscripts, 19 scientific contributions and one guest editorial. The issue is built on four sections. The first section with three articles on “The future role of Official Statistics in the informational ecosystem” deals with the leading topic for this issue and the item for the second discussion on the discussion platform: the special relation between official statistics, science and policy. The leading theme was introduced via the article of Walter Radermacher 'Governing by the Numbers/Statistical governance: Reflections on the future of official statistics in a digital and globalised world'. The second section of this issue published the winning manuscripts of three of the four prize winners of the Young Statistician Prize 2019. The third section, with nine articles, deals with the very current topic of 'Trusted Smart Statistics' stemming from papers presented at the European

Statistical System DGINS Conference in 2018 in Bucharest. Finally, the issue ends with four rather diverse articles.

Volume 36, Issue 1, March 2020.

Special theme: **Population and Housing census**

This issue contains 27 manuscripts, of which 25 scientific contributions and two guest editorials (by respectively the Guest editor for this issue, Jean-Michel Durr, (INSEE) and by Stefan Schweinfest, (UNSD) and a list of earlier in the Journal published articles concerning Population and Housing Censuses. Statements on the for example the actuality, methodology and organisation of Population and Housing censuses are also the theme for the third discussion on the SJIAOS discussion platform.

With countries all over the world already experiencing census field work for the 2020 Round and roughly a similar number still preparing, a Special issue of the Journal on this topic is indeed very timely. Studying the organisation, the methodologies and learning from the results of other censuses is for many countries an essential activity in preparing their own census methodology. This Special issue gives a broad and world wide overview of the many aspects of census taking. The length of the list, at the end of this issue, of articles published on this topic in this Journal since 1998 (Volumes 14-35) underlines the relevance of the Population Census discussions in the work of Official Statistics.

The March issue also includes the fourth manuscript that took the 2019 Young Statisticians Prize (YSP 2019). Congratulations to James Farnell and Peta Darby from the Australian Bureau of Statistics who contributed with an article on Administrative data informed donor imputation in the Australian Census of Population and Housing.

Volume 36, Issue 2, June 2020,

Special theme: **The ISI World Statistics Conference**

The issue contains 25 manuscripts of which many based on solicited papers from sessions from the 2019 ISI World Statistics Conference in Kuala Lumpur. The leading theme on 'Pre-release access to official statistics' by Andreas Georgiou also opens the fourth discussion on the SJIAOS discussion platform. It is followed by a set of manuscripts around the theme 'The future role of Official Statistics in the informational ecosystem'. This discussion on Data4Policy (D4P); the special relation between official statistics, science and policy, has been launched with three manuscripts in the December 2019 issue (Vol35 (2019), Nr. 4). Next is a set of articles on the boundaries and roles of official statistics. The issue ends with 10 articles on a variety of domain specific topics like household income, employment, GDP calculations.

Other activities of the SJIAOS team

International Engagement

SJIAOS has continued to be actively involved in international activities. In the period July 2019- June 2020, SJIAOS was represented at several conferences and events.

- The 2019 ISI WSC in supporting a session for measuring statistics for Indigenous peoples, and organising a special Lunch Time Discussion Group meeting on Official Statistics using 'un-official' data, a threat or a challenge”, launching the new SJIAOS website.
- The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) 2019 Annual conference, held in Dublin from 2-September 2019. SJIAOS was represented by emphasis editor John Dunne and Stephen Penneck.
- The International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS) VIII, held from 18-21 November in New Delhi, India. SJIAOS was represented by emphasis editor Linda Young.
- P21/UNSD conference on New Approaches to Capacity Development for Better Data, held in Paris from 12-14 January. SJIAOS was represented by Lisa Bersales and Pieter Everaers.
- The United Nations Statistical Committee meeting (and side meetings), from 3-6 March in New York, where SJIAOS was represented by Gemma van Halderen, Oliver Chinganya and John Pullinger.

The Covid-19 outbreak caused several conferences to be postponed.

- The IAOS Conference from 19-21 May 2020, in Livingstone, Zambia.
- The Quality in Statistics Conference, Q2020, from 10-12 June, in Budapest, Hungary.

The editorial team and the review and revision procedure

In times of digitisation publishing and preparing a journal like the Statistical Journal of the IAOS, is undergoing rapid changes. These developments have led to a changed set-up of the Journal and to a rethinking of the roles for the Editorial team emphasis editors and reviewers.

- An advisory board to the Editor in Chief has been set up.
- A restructuring of the team of emphasis editors has been completed on 1 January 2020; rejuvenating the team and adding some new roles and domains.
- The role of assistant to the Editor in Chief, Mrs Greta Cherry has been deleted.
- The implementation of a new Manuscript Tracking system with a more coordinated system of manuscript key-words, emphasis editors and reviewers has started.

The website and discussion platform

On the 22nd of August 2019, the Statistical Journal of the IAOS launched its new website 'Official Statistics (www.officialstatistics.com) as well as opened a twitter account. This website, technically owned by the IOS Press and managed by the Editor in Chief, Discussion Platform Editor and staff from the IOS Press contains a pages for news, a page for interviews and gives information about recent and upcoming events and links to the on-line platform for discussion on topics of significant relevance for Official Statistics (www.officialstatistics.com).

5. Young Statisticians Prize

The Young Statisticians Prize reached its tenth annual edition in 2020, adding another year of successful competition and promotion of official statistics among young statisticians to its records.

Two important changes occurred to the 2020 edition. The first was the introduction of a new prize category of an honourable mention for best paper from a developing country. The second was the bringing forward of the closing date by over two months to 30 November to accommodate a May 2020 IAOS Conference.

Submission numbers were low in 2020 as a result of a shortened submission timeframe (21 fewer than in 2019). The call for papers released on 4th September 2019 with a closing date of 30th November and the closing date was subsequently extended to 12th January 2020 with the kind support of the judging panel who worked tirelessly over the December-January period to assess papers. Outreach, including use of social media, was undertaken through the ISI and IAOS networks, to National Statistical Offices, to the Network of Chief Methodologists, and to the UN family.

A total of 23 submissions (from 30 authors/coauthors) were received in 2020, 21 fewer than in 2019. Of these, 21 met eligibility criteria.

Eligible submissions came from 16 countries (c.f. 22 in 2019). These papers were from Africa (3 in 2020, 7 in 2019), Asia (4 in 2020, 18 in 2019), Europe (12 in 2020, 6 in 2019), North America (1 in 2020, 1 in 2019), Oceania (1 in 2020, 3 in 2019) and South America (0 in 2019, 4 in 2019).

Fifteen (71%) of the eligible papers were sole-authored. Of the 27 authors/co-authors, 13 (48%) were female. The average age of the eligible authors was 29.2 years; 29.8 for females and 28.6 for males.

Approximately 57% of the eligible papers were from developing nations.

Ten eligible papers progressed to the second stage of the selection process, three from developing nations (1 from Africa, two from Asia) and were assessed for their scientific/strategic merit, originality, applicability in statistical offices and quality of exposition.

In 2020, the winning papers came from developed nations and comprised one female and three male authors (in 2019, there was two female and two male winning authors).

The three winning papers to be awarded prizes are:

1. Ms. Kenza Sallier (StatCan): *Toward More User-Centric Data Access Solutions: Producing Synthetic Data of High Analytical Value by Data Synthesis*
2. Mr. Johannes Gussenbauer and Mr. Gregor de Cillia (Statistik Austria): *The R-Package surveysd: Estimating standard errors for Complex Surveys with a Rotating Panel Design*
3. Mr. James Bailie (Australian Bureau of Statistics): *Big Data, Differential Privacy and National Statistical Organisations*

The inaugural special commendation for a paper from a developing nation was awarded to:

- Mr. Madi Mangan (The Gambia Bureau of Statistics): *Household Consumption Allocation and the Collective Household Model: Children Share of Household Resources in The Gambia*

6. Standing Committee on Regional and Urban Statistics

Activities of the IAOS Standing Committee on Regional and Urban Statistics (SCORUS) July 2019- May 2020

SCORUS 2020 Conference The conference was planned for 3-4 June 2020, taking place in Brussels. Due to the corona virus pandemic, the conference has been cancelled.

Promoting the use of harmonised territorial classification for the production of official statistics

Following up on the outcomes of previous conferences, SCORUS has for many years promoted the use of harmonised territorial classifications for the production of official statistics. A coalition of several international organisations, the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UN-Habitat and the World Bank, has developed two harmonized definitions of cities and rural areas: the *Degree of Urbanisation* and the *Functional Urban Area* definitions. These definitions are not intended to replace national definitions, but to complement them to facilitate international comparisons and support monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. SCORUS welcomed this work and promoted it for endorsement at several fora. This work has now been endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission, with the Degree of Urbanisation becoming a recommended method to delineate cities, urban and rural areas for international statistical comparisons.

The **SCORUS website** is available under <http://www.scorus.org>. The content of the website will be moved in the near future since the host organisation cannot maintain it any longer. We are currently looking for solutions. SCORUS is grateful for the work done in the last year by Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia and the support received in previous years.

SCORUS also maintains a **LinkedIn group** to gather people interested in SCORUS matters.

Management

SCORUS Management:

Chair: Teodora Brandmueller, e-mail: teodora.brandmueller@ec.europa.eu

Vice chair Jagdev Singh Virdee, email: jsvirdee@hotmail.com

Secretary: Wendy Thomas, e-mail: wlt@umn.edu

Members: Dominika Rogalinska, e-mail: D.Rogalinska@stat.gov.pl

Ari Jaakola, email: ari.jaakola@hel.fi

Stephen KC Leung, e-mail: kceliza@netvigator.com

7. Membership report

Membership numbers in recent years have been well above those of the period 2010 – 2013 although the figures for 2019 and 2020 (to date) are below the peak of 532 members recorded in 2018 after the highly successful Paris conference.

The recent pattern for membership numbers reflects the timing of conferences, with highs in conference years and dips afterwards. The current membership drive, linked to the Zambia conference, should help increase numbers again, but the timing will depend on when the conference can be rescheduled in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

IAOS Membership Interim Report at 12 March 2020		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
		12-03-2020	31-12-2019	07-12-2018	31/12/2017	29-12-2016	31-12-2015	30-10-2014	19-12-2013	31-12-2012	05-12-2011	31-12-2010
IAOS50	Developed Countries	61	62	81	81	80	100	80	78	74	75	76
IAOS51	Developing Countries	44	42	50	39	51	48	46	34	23	23	21
IAOS52	ISI Elected + IAOS Developed Countries	116	115	119	111	121	121	125	121	126	126	112
IAOS53	ISI Elected + IAOS Developed Countries - Retired	74	71	58	43	40	36	29	24	21	19	21
IAOS54	ISI Elected + IAOS Developing Countries	40	40	42	43	42	38	38	30	39	40	32
IAOS55	ISI Elected + IAOS Developing Countries - Retired	17	16	9	6	6	5	4	4	4	3	3
IAOS56	Free: Honorary Members, ISI Life, Exempt ***	9	9	11	12	12	12	17	18	18	16	14
IAOS561	Free: Prize Winners ***	21	21	18	7	8	4	3				
	Free: SJIAOS Authors ***	7	7	0	0	2	1	1				
IAOS563	IAOS Inst./Corporate - Developed/Developing	57	52	93	9	30						
IAOS564D	IAOS students - Developed	0	0	2	20	9						
IAOS564L	IAOS students - Developing	3	3	4								
Total Personal		449	438	487	371	401	365	343	309	305	302	279
IAOS58	Institutional	49	47	45	43	43	38	40	40	38	34	41
TOTAL		498	485	532	414	444	403	383	349	343	336	320
IAOS		11/03/2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
New members :		10	60	142	106	87	53	46	38	55	32	30
Cancelled members:		0	117	57	136	50	42	22	39	32	21	46
Reinstated		1	5	35	2	6	4	8	7	3	7	5
Net		11	-52	120	-28	43	15	32	6	26	18	-11
(Reinstated figure can include members from past years)												
New members incl. 2 Inst.												

8. Financial report

The finances of the Association remain healthy but the reduction in the overall balance from around E200,000 in the period to end 2014 to less than E150,000 is something we wish to address.

In 2018, finances were boosted by the success of the Paris conference and, had it not been for a poor investment performance, the Association would have been in surplus that year for the first time since 2014. However, the ISI levy on Associations, introduced in 2018, means that total ongoing Association costs are now substantially higher than before (notably for staff costs and website and webshop maintenance). A rise in membership fees agreed at the 2019 General Assembly is designed to rectify this problem but will not feed through until 2020.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IAOS								
INCOME	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Membership / contributions								
Individual members	5,619	6,539	5,630	5,985	5,220	5,192	5,045	4,983
Institutional members	11,840	15,485	8,233	12,392	10,950	13,330	11,412	8,441
Other income	120	28,845		240	240	515	110	
TOTAL INCOME	17,579	50,869	13,863	18,617	16,410	19,037	16,567	13,424
EXPENSES								
Organisation								
Travel and meetings	8,540	20,679	-1,445	3,081	3,954	2,886	-	1,304
Postage/ freight	132	116	49	93	90	118	95	89
Conference expenses	11,312			4,465	17,021	7,705		22,348
Other	6,497	9,052	19,996	14,957	15,554	799	16	94
Computer costs	2,152	2,080	2,130	2,344	2,233	1,833	2,141	2,145
Stationary and others	43	84	18	21	16	93	148	140
Telephone		15	22	22	26	232	1,184	24
Insurance (incl. extra liability insurance)	261	320	266	242	262	60	53	46
Office equipment		8	8	8	51		-	
Bank charges	1,030	1,631	598	922	508	746	671	545
Staff costs	5,150	6,900	2,171	2,442	2,186	1,910	1,822	1,684
Consultants	95			-	251	56	170	197
Website and webshop maintenance	1,879	2,571		58	263	304	80	433
Auditors	466	606	538	697	549	618	414	431
IAOS Prize money	6,304	3,000		3,000	3,000	6,121	6,977	5,161
Total organisation	43,861	47,062	24,351	32,352	45,964	23,481	13,771	34,641
Depreciation debtors	514	739	473	264	335	450	375	824
TOTAL EXPENSES	44,375	47,801	24,824	32,616	46,299	23,931	14,146	35,465
RESULT BEFORE FINANCIAL INCOME	-26,796	3,068	-10,961	-13,999	-29,889	-4,894	2,421	-22,041
Equity Interest	16,603	-5,761	3,343	2,749	4,573	6,056	5,938	7,409
RESULT OF THE YEAR	-10,193	-2,693	-7,618	-11,250	-25,316	1,162	8,359	-14,632
Equity Fund january 1	153,492	156,185	163,803	175,053	200,369	199,207	190,848	205,480
Year-end adjustments								
Result	-10,193	-2,693	-7,618	-11,250	-25,316	1,162	8,359	-14,632
Equity Fund december 31	143,299	153,492	156,185	163,803	175,053	200,369	199,207	190,848

Annex 1

IAOS Executive Committee 2017 – 2019:

President – Mr Mario Palmer - Americas

President-Elect – Mr John Pullinger – Europe

Regional representatives:

Mr Oliver Chinganya – Africa

Ms Gemma Van Halderen – Oceania

Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin – East Asia

Ms Hasnae Fdhil – Arab and Middle East Countries

Other members:

Ms Ada Van Krimpen – Director ISI, Ex officio

Ms Kirsten West – Editor-in-chief, SJIAOS

Ms Teodora Brandmueller – SCORUS Chair

Ms Nancy McBeth – Special advisor to the President

Mr Rolando Ocampo – IAOS representative to the ISI WSC

Special invitees:

Mr Ronald Jansen – UNSD

Mr Kees Zeelenberg – Chair of the SPC for IAOS-OECD 2018

Annex 2

IAOS Executive Committee 2019 – 2021:

President – Mr John Pullinger – United Kingdom

President-Elect – Mr Misha Belkindas – United States of America

Regional representatives:

Ms Gemma Van Halderen – Oceania

Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin – East Asia

Ms Hasnae Fdhil – Arab and Middle East Countries

Rev. Peter Popoola - Africa

Other members:

Ms Ada Van Krimpen – Director ISI, Ex officio

Mr Pieter Everaers – Editor-in-chief, SJIAOS

Mr Jan-Robert Suesser – Europe, IAOS representative to the ISI WSC

Ms Teodora Brandmueller – SCORUS Chair

Ms Nancy McBeth – Special advisor to the President

Mr Rolando Ocampo – Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms Ariunzaya Ayush – Conference advisor for Zambia 2020

Special invitees:

Mr Oliver Chinganya – Chair of the SPC for the 2020 Zambia conference

Mr Ronald Jansen – UNSD

Mr Kees Zeelenberg – Chair of the SPC for IAOS-OECD 2018

Annex 3

President's Messages

September 2019:

Dear IAOS Members

I feel very fortunate to have been elected as President of the International Association for Official Statistics for the period 2019-21.

I have the good fortune to be following Mario Palma, and his predecessors in the role. They have built the Association into what it is today and my task is made all the easier by their leadership over many years.

I also have the good fortune to be part of a brilliant and diverse newly elected Executive Committee (EXCO) team [<https://www.iaos-isi.org/index.php/latestnews/246-announcement-iaos-executive-committe-2019-2021>]. The IAOS is an entirely voluntary Association and the commitment of those who are elected to serve is testament to how much they care about the role of official statistics in serving the public good across the globe.

Finally, I have the good fortune to come into the role at a critical time for our community: the need for trustworthy numbers to guide decision making is everywhere evident; the opportunities arising from new data sources, technologies and methods are tantalising; and the IAOS has a unique place, both in upholding the centrality of official statistics to effective democracy and in calling out those who seek to undermine it and seduce others to ignore evidence and instead rely on anecdote, whim or populist rhetoric.

Now is a time for us to find our voice.

One month into the role I am greatly encouraged. The World Statistics Congress in Kuala Lumpur (with IAOS EXCO member Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin, Chair of the organising committee, a most wonderful host) included many sessions organised by the IAOS and many other sessions strongly linked to our interests, such as on statistical literacy.

I particularly enjoyed the passion displayed in the session on official statistics and Parliaments organised by our founding President, Jean-Louis Bodin (one of no less than eight IAOS Presidents present at the WSC). There are plenty of other highlights on YouTube. My thanks also to Rolando Ocampo, who was the IAOS representative on the WSC Scientific Committee.

Our new Executive Committee has got off to a great start and we have launched a consultation into the IAOS strategy for 2019-2021. Make sure you have your say. Plans are well advanced for our conference in Zambia (19-21 May 2020 - note for your diary) which promises to be an exciting celebration of all that we value as a professional community.

Our Journal is thriving and developing fast in the hands of new Editor-in-Chief, Pieter Everaers and his impressive editorial team. Do you have a paper or an article that could inspire others? Or a contribution to make to our online discussion platform? Register at www.officialstatistics.com and have your say! Our first discussion topic is based on the recently published article *"You say you want a [data] revolution": A proposal to use unofficial statistics for the SDG Global Indicator Framework* by Steve MacFeely and Bojan Nastav. It was a great joy for me to present the Young Statisticians Prizes for 2019 at the closing ceremony of the World Statistics Congress. Congratulations again to the 2019 winners. YSP 2020 is our tenth year. Do look out for good nominees. Applications for 2020 are now open <http://www.iaos-isi.org/index.php/statistics-prize> with a cash prize and a trip to Zambia on offer for the winners.

There are plenty of other opportunities too to contribute to the work of the IAOS. As well as the Conference, Journal and Young Statisticians Prize we are looking for people to help with communications, including engagement on social media and development of our website. Contact us to get involved at contactIAOS@gmail.com or at https://twitter.com/IAOS_stat. Our membership has been growing fast but with more members we can do even more: if you have not joined yet do so; if you are already a member get a friend (or maybe five or more...) to sign up <https://www.iaos-isi.org/index.php/about-us/join-us>]. We have had to increase the membership rates for 2020 to cover overhead charges levied on us by the ISI, but the new full member rate of E50 for the year remains great value and there are discounts for members in developing countries, students, individuals who work in an organisation who is an institutional member and Journal article contributors.

It is also important that we share experience and support each other. The case of Andreas Georgiou is an especially important one. The support given by Kathy Wallman and others in a recent letter to the Financial Times ([Brussels must assess Greek judicial reform efforts](#)) calling for an end to the persecution of Andreas will hopefully make a difference.

As for me, I will be out and about spreading the word. September's activities include the Bloomberg Data for Good Exchange [<https://www.bloomberg.com/lp/d4gx/>], the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data Board meeting [www.data4sdgs.org/], meetings with Director of the United Nations Statistics Division and his colleagues, and the Valuing Statistics conference.

If you have some other opportunities to spread the word about the IAOS, or have information to share with others interested in official statistics, contact me at contactIAOS@gmail.com

John Pullinger
IAOS President
November 2019:

Dear IAOS Members

I have been enjoying getting to know lots more people over the last month. The more I see, the more impressed I am with what is going on in our network. I can also more clearly see the potential for the official statistics community to have a stronger voice and greater impact for public good in countries around the world.

The [Young Statistician Prize 2020](#) is well underway. Please reach out to your networks and encourage submissions. This year we have introduced a new category of Honourable Mention for an author from a developing country. We have also brought the submission date forward to 30 November in order to make announcements ahead of the 2020 Conference in Zambia. So please, if you haven't put in a submission yet, get writing soon. We have also announced the call for papers for the 2020 conference. (<https://www.iaos-isi.org/index.php/conferences>)

The conference **Better Lives 2030: Mobilising the power of data for Africa and the world -17th IAOS Conference/ 1st ISI Regional Statistics Conference for Africa, Hosted by the Zambia Statistics Agency** will take place at the Avani Hotel, Livingstone, Zambia, 19-21 May 2020. Proposals for sessions, papers as well as events before and after the conference close on 31 December 2019.

Members will also be interested to read these attached two pieces about Andreas Georgiou. The first, from the American Statistical Association (<https://www.amstat.org/asa/News/Eight-Years-of-Government-Persecution-of-Greek-Statistician.aspx>), updates on eight years of persecution of Andreas and the second, by Miranda Xafa in World Economics (<https://www.worldeconomics.com/Files/Xafa.pdf>), gives a history of Andreas' plight. An event hosted by the ICAEW featuring Andreas (and Ed Humpherson from the UK) is also worth a look (<https://audioboom.com/posts/7379312-350m-truth-lies-and-numbers>).

In my last message I mentioned four events I was due to attend. The first, the Bloomberg Data for Good Exchange (DG4X) (<https://www.bloomberg.com/lp/d4gx/>), was an inspiring gathering of mainly private sector data scientists keen to work on public good projects. Michael Bloomberg's influence as former Mayor of New York was clear through a number of excellent project case studies featuring cities from around the world.

The second event was the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data Board meeting (www.data4sdgs.org). We discussed how best the Partnership can scale its impact now it has become well established. Learning from the very positive developments in official statistics in Ghana provided an excellent touch point for our discussion.

The third event was meetings with Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division and two of his Branch Heads Francesca Perucci and Ronald Jansen (Ronald is also an IAOS EXCO member). They are all keen to build links with our community and I discussed with them opportunities coming up, including through our conference next year.

The fourth event was the conference on Valuing Statistics hosted by the United Kingdom. This event was about taking the conclusions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) report (www.unece.org/index.php?id=51139) and turning them into concrete actions. I used the occasion to set out the important role played by the IAOS. As well as these events I met Roger Taylor, the Chief Executive of the United Kingdom's new Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation>). Roger was interested to explore the role of the National Statistical Office in an ethical data ecosystem.

Finally, I was a speaker at the PARIS21 Cross-Regional Forum (<https://paris21.org/news-center/events/cross-regional-forum-2019>) which has been focused on the issue of trust in Official Statistics. There was a super line up of speakers to help delegates get creative and inspired to act. PARIS21 launched their Trust Initiative at the event (<https://trustinitiative2020.paris21.org/>). Do consider whether you want to apply.

In the weeks ahead, following a meeting of EXCO, I will be visiting our colleagues at the Zambia CSO to help take forward planning for [our conference](#) and also attending the ISI/IFC meeting on Data Governance in Tunis.

If you have some other opportunities to spread the word about the IAOS, or have information to share with others interested in official statistics, contact me at contactIAOS@gmail.com

John Pullinger
IAOS President

January 2020:

Happy New Year to all members (and potential new members). If you have not done so yet, now is the time to renew (or take up membership) for the year ahead – [membership instructions can be accessed here](#). By doing so you will get reduced rates for our conference in Zambia and access to all other aspects of our network.

Since I last wrote, Jo Green and I have visited Zambia to see for ourselves the preparations for the Zambia conference. The conference venue in Livingstone will be perfect for us. The facilities are excellent and the management are looking forward to welcoming us. The location is spectacular within the game park and just a few minutes walk to Victoria Falls. We also spent some time with our colleagues at ZamStats. The Interim Secretary General, Mulenga Musepa, and his colleagues are getting everything prepared and leading a local organising committee that brings together a range of government agencies, universities and others. You can read the report of our visit [here](#). Alongside this, Oliver Chinganya, who is leading the Scientific Programme Committee for us, reports that there has been a high number of proposals for sessions and papers. More information about the conference will follow soon.

In parallel, we have been receiving submissions for the Young Statistician's Prize which is to be presented at the conference. Gemma Van Halderen and her team organising the Prize extended the deadline to help those who had trouble meeting the end December date because of the challenges of making a submission in that month in many countries.

Continuing the focus on Africa, I attended a meeting on [Data Governance in Tunis](#) organised by the International Statistical Institute, Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics, African Union and National Statistical Institute of Tunisia. The aim was to help develop innovative strategies for structuring improvements to statistical systems. Four themes were explored: data collection; data management, data dissemination and a final session, which I chaired, on better use of data for policy purposes. It was impressive to see a high level of interest from the press. This reflected the relevance and salience of the topic way beyond our community.

Key action areas arising from the Tunis meeting related to how best we can learn from each other. Development of south-south cooperation in general and specifically the creation of associations of statisticians at regional and national levels were seen as promising areas for progress. The IAOS is well placed to support such efforts and this question is under discussion with the Executive Committee.

In December I was a keynote speaker at the [4th International Conference on Administrative Data in Cardiff](#), Wales. It was an excellent event with a great diversity of presentations

reflecting the increasing maturity of administrative data as an essential part not just of official statistics but of academic research in a wide variety of disciplines. My focus was on questions of data quality and the necessity for those using these data sources to understand issues of bias and imprecision and to work effectively to attain respect from the public.

In the coming weeks I am hoping to join our friends in the Ghana Statistical Service for the launch of their national statistics strategy and to attend the United Nations Statistical Commission. I hope to see some of you there.

John Pullinger.
IAOS President.

April 2020

President's message

This is a great time of challenge for everyone, demonstrating just how connected we are across the world both in our vulnerability and in our strength.

The first priority at such a time is to keep safe and to continue to support our colleagues and their families. Despite the inability to travel, I have seen an upsurge in contact between IAOS members. Many are extremely busy in high pressure situations providing the evidence necessary for their governments and communities to make good decisions in the face of uncertainty and high risk to life as well as economic and social upheaval. The breadth and depth of our support network will be of critical importance in the weeks and months ahead.

A wide range of resources has been developed for use by official statisticians. The UN resource (<https://covid-19-response.unstatshub.org/>) provides a good way in to explore what is available alongside regional and local hubs such as the Africa UN knowledge hub for Covid-19 (<https://knowledge.uneca.org/covid19/>) and professional gateways such as the one developed by the ISI (<https://www.isi-web.org/index.php/covid-19>). A very challenging issue for many countries is how to proceed with census plans (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/census/COVID-19/>).

Whilst in some countries official statisticians are in high demand and actively engaged in supporting their governments (such as New Zealand and UK) in others the NSI is shut and there is a risk of gaps in critical data (such as CPI) as the crisis develops. The position in parts of Africa is especially difficult.

As far as the activities of the IAOS are concerned, despite the postponement of the Zambia conference (<https://iaos-isi.org/index.php/latestnews/265-2020-iaos-isi-conference-in-zambia-postponed>), we are proceeding with a special Africa issue of the Journal. The June issue will highlight the statistical response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have also started a discussion on official statistics in the context of the Covid-19 crisis (<https://officialstatistics.com/news-blog/crises-politics-and-statistics>). This discussion will help us gather ideas about the wider implications for official statistics in terms of the statistical service needed, use of emerging data sources and coordination at the international level. Encouragement for our community to step up has come from the United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed in her address to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data Board (<http://www.data4sdgs.org/news/un-deputy-secretary-general-participates-data4sdgs-meeting-board>).

Since my last message we have been able to continue our activities in one way or another. Our strategy for 2019-21 was agreed and published following consultation (<https://iaos-isi.org/index.php/about-us/strategy>); a moving tribute to Jorge Todesca, former Chief Statistician of Argentina, who died in February, was written by our founding President, Jean-Louis Bodin (<https://iaos-isi.org/index.php/latestnews/266-in-memoriam-dr-jorge-todesca>); and many IAOS members attended the United Nations Statistical Commission (one of the last meetings to take place before so many of us have been locked down). Former IAOS President, Shigeru Kawasaki was elected as Chair (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/bureau/>) and did a great job steering the meeting through a long and complex agenda. In addition, I had the opportunity in January to join Prof Samuel Annim and his team for the launch of the Ghana Statistical Service corporate plan (https://statsghana.gov.gh/gssmain/storage/img/GSS%20Corporate%20Plan%202020_2024.pdf)

IAOS friends will also be interested to see the attached report published on 20 March by the US State Department on human rights practices for Greece (<https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/greece/>) which helpfully highlights the still ongoing case of Andreas Georgiou in the section related to respect for the integrity of the person: denial of fair public trial. The American Statistical Association has also once again drawn attention to the continuing concerns about his case (<https://www.amstat.org/ASA/News/Appeal-Hearing-Delayed-for-Greeces-Andreas-Georgiou.aspx>).

We had hoped to showcase our Young Statisticians Prize winners at the Zambia conference. Along with so many other things, that opportunity is now delayed but I would like to take this opportunity to announce who they are and be the first to offer congratulations to the prize winners:

4. Ms. Kenza Sallier (StatCan): *Toward More User-Centric Data Access Solutions: Producing Synthetic Data of High Analytical Value by Data Synthesis*
5. Mr. Johannes Gussenbauer and Mr. Gregor de Cillia (Statistik Austria): *The R-Package surveysd: Estimating standard errors for Complex Surveys with a Rotating Panel Design*
6. Mr. James Bailie (Australian Bureau of Statistics): *Big Data, Differential Privacy and National Statistical Organisations*

Also, congratulations to the winner of the special commendation for a paper from a developing nation:

- Mr. Madi Mangan (The Gambia Bureau of Statistics): *Household Consumption Allocation and the Collective Household Model: Children Share of Household Resources in The Gambia*

Finally, a big Happy Birthday to Florence Nightingale who remains, 200 years since her birth, such an inspiration to all who work in nursing and in statistics.