**International Association for Official Statistics**

**2023 General Assembly Meeting**

Monday, 17th July 2023, 18:10 pm – 19:50 pm (CEST)

Format: Hybrid meeting

Apologies: Lisa Bersales, Gemma Van Halderen

**Introduction:**

Misha Belkindas, IAOS President, welcomed participants to the IAOS General Assembly (GA).

1. **Minutes of 2022 General Assembly: for agreement**

Minutes of the 2022 General Assembly were agreed with no comments or objections.

1. **IAOS Annual Report 2022-2023: for agreement**

Misha briefly went through the annual report highlighting key issues. First, he noted that the IAOS organized two conferences in Krakow, Poland in 2022 and Livingstone, Zambia in 2023. The ExCo was brave to commit to two conferences. The Krakow conference was a big success. It was the first face-to-face conference since the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference, organized together with the Polish Statistical Association, brought together around 600 delegates from both groups (IAOS and Polish Statistical Association). The conference was organized at the time of the flare-up between Russia and Ukraine and in the city of Krakow, which is located closely to the border of Ukraine. So, this situation affected the number of people attending the conference. Despite this, the conference went really well. All the meeting materials can be accessed on the IAOS website. Second, Misha acknowledged the conference organized in Livingstone, Zambia in April 2023. He noted that, while the conference was different from the Krakow conference, it was an extremely good conference. Over 300 delegates attended the conference. The conference report prepared by the ZamStats was published on the IAOS website.

Then, Misha noted that the IAOS was very active in organizing webinars in the last one year and a half. The cornerstone topic of the webinars was the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS). 2024 will mark 30 years since the FPOS were adopted. The UN will celebrate the FPOS. Misha noted that a discussion with founding fathers of the FPOS was also organized during the Krakow conference. He mentioned that one of the founding fathers, Jean-Loius Bodin, is present at the GA meeting. A few webinars were organized with participation of Jean-Louis and others. Misha also acknowledged an event organized during the UN Statistical Commission, which brought together a few chief statisticians to discuss FPOS. Another webinar on the FPOS was organized in collaboration with ECLAC. A full list of webinars is provided in the IAOS Annual Report 2021-2023. Misha concluded that the IAOS did quite a lot in terms of the webinars organized during the reporting period and all the webinars were well received. Some of the webinars were attended by around 100 people from all the continents.

Misha noted that the IAOS is growing, both in terms of bringing in new membership and establishing new groups. These groups include the Krakow Working Group created in Krakow in 2022 and another group, which is currently being organized together with the UNSD, that will comprise of former chief statisticians and other senior statisticians from international organizations, NSOs. The group will be titled Friends of Official Statistics. Misha mentioned that many of those attending the GA were invited to join the group, but the word should be spread out, so that more members, who are interested and eligible, can join the group. The group will function through the UN’s Yammer account. The group is scheduled to meet during the WSC on 18th July 2023 at 1 pm. He concluded that the group is supported by the IAOS and the incoming IAOS President. Hence, the group will be reflected in the IAOS Statutes.

1. **Review of the IAOS Statutes to be compliant with the Act on Management and Supervision of Legal Entities**

Nancy McBeth, heading a group at the IAOS that is tasked to update the IAOS Statutes, reminded that the Statutes set up a legal framework of how the IAOS operates. The last update of the Statutes was done by Stephen Penneck in 2013. Nancy outlined the reasons why the Statutes need to be updated. First, the IAOS as part of the ISI family has to comply with the changes in the Dutch legal framework, including a new Act on Management and Supervision of Legal Entities (MSLE). Second, the IAOS got some changes in the way it operates, including some changes in IAOS activities Misha has mentioned (Krakow Working Group, Friends of Official Statistics Group), as well as a Group set up by IAOS members from Nigeria. Nancy noted that the Statutes have to reflect where we are now and where we are going. Next, Nancy provided details of a roadmap for the Statute update, shared the progress and next step made in implementing the roadmap. She noted that the roadmap was driven by a few things. First, it is driven by a revision process set up in the current Statutes and it sets out a particular role for the GA meeting that takes place during the WSC. New Statutes can be formally adopted only during the WSC, not by GA meetings held as part of IAOS conferences. Next, Nancy reiterated changes in the Dutch legislation and noted the experience from the 2013 revision of the IAOS Statutes. All of these have shaped the roadmap. Finally, she explained the timeline for next steps in the review process (see presentation slides for the details). Nancy also clarified that several rounds of formal and informal consultations for the Statutes review process will be organized before the revised Statutes will be put up for the formal voting.

1. **Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS)**

Misha emphasized that 2023 was an interesting year for the SJIAOS as the IAOS bids farewell to the outgoing Editor in Chief Pieter Everaers and welcomes the incoming Editor in Chief Pietro Gennari. Pieter thanked for the support he received during his tenure as SJIAOS Editor in Chief. He noted that it was both a pleasure and a challenge to work on the Journal. Before proceeding with the review of SJIAOS activities completed in 2022, he informed the GA of the Special Invited Paper session to be held on 20th July 2024. The session will focus on the challenges for the SJIAOS in the context of the challenges that science publishing confronts. This session will also be a handover session, where Pietro can get some ideas from Pieter as to how the publication could develop. Next, Pieter provided an overview of SJIAOS activities held in 2022. He provided statistics on articles published, rejection rate, number of (co-)authors, as well as the analysis of the online engagement of audience with the SJIAOS in 2022 compared to 2020-2021. Pieter emphasized the inclusiveness of the Journal in terms of its geographical coverage. Pieter highlighted main themes covered in the Journal and website discussions in 2022 and first half of 2023 (for more details see the IAOS Annual Report 2021-2023). Pieter concluded that the 2022 was a good year for the Journal, but some improvements are still possible. As to the number of manuscripts, he noted that 120 manuscripts is more or less the maximum number the SJIAOS can handle. He emphasized that keeping the balance between the quality and the number of manuscripts is challenging, this is also linked to the rejection rate and the quality criteria. He mentioned that the issue of inclusiveness and the quality of accepted manuscripts was discussed by the Advisory Board headed by Steve Macfeely. He mentioned that the Journal facilitated coaching sessions for authors from less developed countries. This allowed to improve the quality of a few manuscripts and they were accepted for publication.

Next, Pieter covered the content of the Journal. He described in detail all SJIAOS issues published in 2022 and first half of 2023. It was noted that more than 70% of manuscripts published in 2022 were open access. Pieter mentioned that discussions around the open access matter are ongoing. Furthermore, he provided information on the SJIAOS discussion platform. He noted that the platform is not as popular as it was at the beginning, so it is also a challenge to see how the IAOS can motivate more people to react to statements made on the discussion platform. There were seven statements on the website in 2022.

Furthermore, Pieter clarified the role of the Advisory Board. He noted that the Advisory Board consisting of six members, is aimed to provide support on difficult manuscripts or difficult authors. It serves as a support system for the Editor in Chief to decide on complex issues related to manuscripts/authors and determine next steps. The Advisory Board also advises on the SJIAOS Strategy before it goes to the ExCo. He also recognized 40 Emphasis Editors supporting the SJIAOS. He provided an update on incoming and outgoing Emphasis Editors. Pieter added that Pietro would look into the list of Emphasis Editors to see whether there is any gap in certain expertise, in particular in the field of machine learning as this area is evolving fast.

Finally, Pieter shared information on the new manuscript tracking system. It replaces the old system which served for the last 15-16 years. Pieter described the benefits of the new system.

Pieter wrapped up his speech by noting that he will step down as SJIAOS Editor in Chief after four years of his tenure. He noted that he is leaving for retirement. Pieter expressed his happiness on Pietro’s readiness to take over from him. The handover process started a few months ago. Pieter expressed his gratitude to all authors and readers of the Journal, whose number exceeds 1000 people. He also thanked Emphasis Editors for the great work done in reviewing specific manuscripts and reviewers behind the Emphasis Editors. Yearly, the SJIAOS uses around 200-250 reviewers, who volunteer to read and assess the manuscripts. Pieter also thanked the ExCo for their confidence in his work. He thanked three IAOS Presidents, including Mario, John and Misha, for their leadership, trust and support. Finally, Pieter thanked iOS Press, the publisher of the Journal. He added that Pietro will also look at the Agreement between the iOS Press and SJIAOS during his term. Pieter invited the audience to visit the SJIAOS stand at the third floor of the WSC venue to get select manuscripts from the last four years and other issues from the last year for free. He was also hopeful that GA participants were subscribed to the online access to the Journal.

Next, Pietro Gennari thanked Misha and the ExCo for their trust in appointing him as a new SJIAOS Editor in Chief. He also thanked Pieter for the excellent work he has done during his tenure in increasing the quality of the Journal and expanding its visibility and the audience. He appreciated Pieter’s help during the handover period. Pietro presented the SJIAOS strategy and planned activities for 2023-2025 (see presentation slides for the details). The key idea is to continue and reinforce successful initiatives taken up by Pieter. Pietro plans to work very closely with incoming President of the IAOS and the ExCo. The overall objective is to make the Journal as a source of knowledge and reference for official statisticians around the world and build statistical literacy for non-expert users. Pietro shared his plans on how to achieve strategic plans and overall objective for the Journal. Finally, Pietro provided a brief overview of the next issue of the SJIAOS to be published in September 2023 and topics for special issues.

1. **Young Statisticians Prize**

Misha expressed his satisfaction with the Young Statistician Prize (YSP). He noted that this is a very elaborate process on par with the SJIAOS. Misha recognized Gary Dunnet, who was shadowing Gemma Van Halderen as the head of the YSP, for taking over this role.

Gary thanked Gemma for the work she has done for the YSP. He went on by saying that YSP revealed some great topics and really broad areas of interest that young statisticians have written about over the past few years. Gary provided details of the 2022 and 2023 YSP winners and the topics they have covered in their YSP submissions (see YSP presentation slides for the details). Gary emphasized the important role of the IAOS in encouraging young statisticians from developing countries to participate in the YSP. He thanked all entrants for their interest in the YSP. He also recognized the role of supervisors and institutions, who stand behind those young statisticians participating in the Prize, in the success of the YSP. He emphasized the importance of the encouragement for young statisticians to participate in the YSP and put their way forward on the international arena. He also expressed appreciation to the YSP Judging Panel.

However, Gary also mentioned some negative aspects the YSP is confronted with, including the low number of submissions. Submissions in 2022 and 2023 were half of the submission numbers pre-COVID-19. Gary requested the GA to reach out to their networks to spread the word about the YSP when the announcement is out and encourage eligible people to participate. The IAOS also encourages community members to become a mentor or a coach for young statisticians – it can be quite satisfying to see your protégé; the person you’ve mentored succeed. Gary concluded that the IAOS needs GA’s support to keep the YSP running.

1. **Krakow Working Group**

Misha expressed the pride of having the Krakow Working Group (KWG) and how the work on the KWG is progressing. He invited Jean Robert Suesser, co-chair of the Group, to share an update of the work accomplished by the KWG.

Jean Robert concurred with Misha to be proud to be the first co-chair of the KWG together with Martine Durand. The KWG was officially created in April 2022. It took around nine months to bring together some members to draft the ToRs for the KWG and to submit the ToRs to the IAOS ExCo. In early 2023, the ToRs were approved. Thanks to ExCo colleagues, in particular Pieter, it was decided to keep the ToRs not very ambitious and have two themes for the KWG. However, the sub-themes may still be too ambitious. Jean Robert described the two themes (see presentation slides for the details). The KWG held three debates in 2023. First two meetings were held in April-May. The third debate took place three weeks ago. The three meetings were open to all IAOS members and beyond. Jean Robert noted that the first meeting was well attended. But the attendance of the last two meetings was much lower than expected. He provided details of the meetings. He also described a three-fold approach for the KWG and considerations behind the approach. Next, Jean Robert shared preliminary recommendations produced based on the meeting discussions. He emphasized that these recommendations might be more ambitious than KWG members can actually do (see presentation slides for the details of the recommendations). Jean Robert welcomed feedback from the GA, so that the team can move forward with the KWG. Given participation in KWG meetings was only partial, the team is ready to take as many inputs as it can digest. Finally, Jean Robert shared next steps for the KWG work. He concluded that there are many fora, specially inside the official statistics world, that deal with this kind of issues. Misha and the team had an idea that the IAOS will be a unique place as a special value-added can come from this group. In particularly, because the IAOS is not seated inside an institution, but institutions are with the IAOS. First meetings and discussions with other communities, which claim that they contribute to the public good through the data, reveal that the IAOS can foster two-way inputs, which can be translated in a proper way when the IAOS goes back to the institution framework, which looks from the official statistics point of view on how to interact with others. Jan Robert reiterated that the challenge for the KWG is as big as the data in our societies, the KWG team is not numerous, the agenda is quite ambitious, but Jan Robert expressed hope that together we can take this work forward. Misha added that KWG issues will not be discussed today, but there will be a few meetings in the future, both face-to-face and webinars. Misha added that the KWG builds a link to other ISI activities, which are the work of the Advisory Board on Ethics. He emphasized that being linked and working with other parts of the ISI is very important.

1. **IAOS Membership**

Misha reported that the IAOS membership is growing. As of July 2023, IAOS had 813 members. When this ExCo assumed its functions, we inherited 611 members; so the membership has grown over 200 members in two-years’ time. Nonetheless, Misha noted that we need to make a push to bring more institutional members to the IAOS. During Misha’s presidency the IAOS managed to recruit one or two institutional members from the private sector, which is very important as members of the IAOS are not just NSOs, international statistical offices and institutions, but we also need to have the private sector as our members.

1. **Financial Report**

Misha highlighted that after the COVID-19 pandemic the IAOS expenses and liabilities have increased, as travel resumed and the IAOS started organizing face-to-face conferences. Misha noted that the incoming ExCo will have to think about the IAOS fee structure and look into the quite complicated fee formula between the ISI and the Associations. This needs to be discussed within the ExCo and between the IAOS and ISI.

1. **SCORUS**

Teodora Brandmueller reported on the SCORUS progress since the last GA meeting held in Krakow in 2023. The committee organised five webinars jointly with Eurostat, providing platform to overall 20 speakers and attracting in average 80 participants per webinar. She outlined the topics those webinars covered (see presentation slides for the details). Teodora also shared information about a SCORUS session titled “Leaving No Place Behind – Measuring Sustainable Development Goals In Cities, Towns And Rural Areas” organized as part of the WSC on 18th July 2023. She noted that Pietro will also speak at the session.

Teodora thanked Statistics Poland for hosting the SCORUS website. The website was redesigned and it is accessible at the following address: http://www.scorus.org. All documentation and materials from SCORUS webinars are available on the website. Those interested in SCORUS activities can also join the SCROUS group on LinkedIn.

Misha added that the rich WSC programme reflects a very big representation of the IAOS. He noted that the IAOS representative to ISI is Steve Macfeely. Misha also acknowledged very good relationship the IAOS maintains with the UN agencies. Two members on the ExCo are from UNSD (Ronald Jansen) and ECLAC (Rolando Ocampo). Rolando expressed his happiness to work with all the colleagues. He shared about regular meetings and important topics discussed during those meetings, including region-specific issues.

1. **Formal introduction of new IAOS President and Executive Committee 2023-2025**

Misha formally introduced the incoming IAOS President, Dominik Rozkrut and the new [ExCo](https://iaos-isi.org/who-is-who/).

1. **IAOS Strategic Plan 2023-2025**

Dominik Rozkrut shared his vision of the IAOS Strategic Plan for 2023-2025. He noted that strategically no changes are expected. He believes that strategically the IAOS needs to further increase the recognition of official statistics as a source of reliable information because that is something that goes in line with the Krakow Group and, secondly, to further support the international community of official statisticians in their day-to-day endeavors as they face a lot of challenges and we need to help each other. Dominik expressed hope that the KWG will provide the guidance on how to achieve those outcomes through the transformation of official statistics and to adapt to the new era of new data ecosystems and information environments. He concluded that there are a lot of challenges out there and the IAOS should know how to deal with them.

On the operational level, Dominik highlighted four points. First, it is not what he wants, but it is what the ExCo wants. Second, it is not just what the ExCo wants, it is what the IAOS community wants, we have to engage the community. Third, it is not just what the community wants, but it is how we implement it. Fourth, it is not just who and how, but what it is all about. Then Dominik elaborated on each of the four points made. First, Dominik would like to continue with regular meetings as it was during Misha’s time. Dominik also shared that he is aware of ISI plans to intensify meetings of all the Presidents of the Associations within the ISI platform; hence, Dominik will discuss with the ExCo issues raised during those ISI meetings. Second, as for reaching out to the community, Dominik would like to continue the trend set by Misha to organize webinars, seminars, if possible; the IAOS should also consider organizing sessions in conferences other than the WSC, UNWDF. Dominik reiterated on the role of the KWG as well as noted the role of the Friends of Official Statistics Group. One of the priorities Dominik stressed for himself is to be inclusive to all the regions not just regular suspects. He highlighted that those underrepresented countries have fantastic people and great abilities to be more present. He acknowledged that it will not be an easy task to do. Next, Dominik mentioned the need to further develop internal communication to increase engagement and sense of ownership of the IAOS members. He noted that he will try to maintain and improve the membership numbers. Dominik will also think of doing newsletters, forums, polls, SJIAOS website discussions and other tools of engagements with the community. In terms of external communications, efforts will be made to maintain a Twitter and LinkedIn accounts for the IAOS and have a communication officer. Dominik shared his plan to have a series of monthly IAOS webinars. More promotion will be given to the YSP and the SJIAOS. Dominik will also focus on the further increase of the IAOS membership numbers, including institutional members and the private sector. Dominik also reassured support from Statistics Poland in hosting IAOS and SCORUS webpages.

Finally, Dominik shared his plan to have the first ten monthly webinars towards the IAOS conference in Mexico in May 2024. The webinars are expected to focus on FPOS in the new context. Dominik noted that these webinars will be organized in a new, more challenging and more attractive format. The discussions are expected to be more engaging.

Also, Dominik mentioned that he will follow up with the KWG on strategic developments and recommendations for the community, which will be discussed during those webinars. He also added that such topics for webinars as challenges posed by new data sources and new legislative environments are of special interest to him. Dominik concluded that as IAOS President he would like to explore possible partnerships between ISI Associations. This goes for the SJIAOS as well - to have joint issues of the SJIAOS with other journals. This will help to increase IAOS visibility. Dominik emphasized the important role of the journals in the statistical community. The overall goal will be to make the Journal open access fully. Dominik clarified why this is important for the SJIAOS and the community. He mentioned that the SJIAOS matters have already been discussed with Pietro and he will share more on this.

Lastly, Dominik shared his expectations for the IAOS Mexico conference. He noted that the Mexico team is already working on the conference arrangements.

Finally, Dominik thanked Misha for all the job he has done as IAOS President.

1. **IAOS conference plans**

Misha reminded the GA that IAOS Mexico conference will take place in Mexico City on 15th-17th May 2024. The Mexico team provided a brief update on the conference progress. The call for papers will be released and the conference website will open for registrations shortly.

1. **Other business**

Misha mentioned that online Q&A box has a question from a GA attendee from Nigeria regarding his submission to the SJIAOS. It was agreed that the question will be reviewed and responded by Pietro via email.

Misha thanked Nancy and Lilia for their support during his tenure. He also appreciated good relationship with the ISI and expressed his hope that it will continue in the future. Misha acknowledged the ISI President Elect Fabrizio Ruggeri for dedicating his time to the IAOS GA meeting today. He noted that his appreciation for the ExCo will be shared separately during the forthcoming ExCo meeting. Finally, Misha presented a token of appreciation to Pieter Everaers for his outstanding transformational leadership of the SJIAOS for the past four years.

Dominik thanked Misha for doing so much for the IAOS community over the past two years. He noted that whatever Misha did it was all brilliant. He noted that it was a great pleasure to work with Misha both on a professional and personal level.