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SEMINAR ON BALANCING PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY WITH THE MANDATE TO PRODUCE POLICY RELEVANT DATA

SESSION I: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATISTICIANS AND POLICY MAKERS:
MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE WHILE ADDRESSING DEMANDS

**ENSURING PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE STATE STATISTICAL
AUTHORITIES OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

Note by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Kyrgyz Republic became a sovereign state in 1991. Since then, the state statistical system, like all the other areas of society and government life, has had to follow the sometimes difficult path of reforms and development. Today, the statistical information system is meeting the requirements of market economy and provides the government and society with the necessary information about the social, economic, demographic and ecological situation of the state. The system uses new methods of statistical surveys, processing and dissemination in accordance with international rules and standards.

2. The successful implementation of four state programs of reform and development of statistics in the years between 1992-2006 contributed to the state of statistics in the Kyrgyz Republic as it is today. Currently, the fifth such program is coming to an end and the next one,

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designed for 2010-2014, is in the process of development. This program is based on the Strategic Master Plan (SMP) of the state statistical information system in the Kyrgyz Republic (STATCAP), which was developed jointly with the World Bank but, unfortunately, has not been fully implemented for a variety of reasons. It is also closely linked with the Strategy of Country Development (SCD) for 2009-2012.

3. During the reforms, great attention was paid to creating an appropriate legal foundation for the state statistics. In January 1994, the law “On national statistics” of the Kyrgyz Republic was adopted, which is of great importance for official statistical accounting. This law was the first of its kind in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries; it established the trend of development towards professional independence; it provided principles of independence and autonomy for national statistical offices. Most importantly, the national statistical office was removed from the executive branch of Government and the state statistical agency was reorganized as the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

4. Furthermore, the laws on population and agriculture censuses of the Kyrgyz Republic were adopted. In April 2008, the law “On population and housing census” was put into force, and resulted in the successful implementation of the population and housing census in the Kyrgyz Republic, carried out between 24 March and 2 April 2009.

5. In terms of further improvement of the legislative base, in March 2007 the new law “On national statistics” of the Kyrgyz Republic was adopted, taking into account the recommendations of the European Commission on independence, integrity, accountability of statistical offices, Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the United Nations Statistical Commission, and other requirements.

6. The new law strengthened the legal basis for the implementation of an integrated national policy in official statistics as a component of the socio-economic policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. It permitted the provision of statistical information on the basis of common scientifically approved methodology and international comparability.

7. Under this law, the new Regulation on National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic was passed (Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on July 2007).

8. According to this Law and Regulation, the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic is a state agency which carries out state statistical activities based on principles of independence and autonomy, and monitors the statistical activities for the whole territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.

9. The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic is accountable to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

10. The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the regional statistical offices and the local statistical offices compose the united system of the State’s national statistical offices. The structure of this system corresponds to the political division of the Kyrgyz Republic, which consists of oblast (big territorial entity), city, rayon (small territorial entity) and municipal (aiyl-okrug / rural territorial entity) levels.

11. The current legal foundation provides for the professional independence of state statistical bodies.

12. The law “On state statistics” (article 6) states that intervention in national statistical activity by government agencies, local government agencies, public citizen unions, officials and other persons is prohibited.

13. As a result, the state statistical offices have the following authorities and rights:

(a) To take decisions in terms of their competence in issues of statistics, counting and accountability, obligatory for execution by all subjects, as defined by the law of the Kyrgyz Republic on national statistics;

(b) To obtain free of charge statistical data and information of restricted access from all respondents, including central and local executive authorities, local authorities, commercial banks and individuals;

(c) To study the condition of the primary and statistical accounting, to check the validity of statistical data obtained from respondents, and also to verify the validity of statistical data at local levels;

(d) To request respondents to revise their statistical reports and other statistical forms in case of errors in statistical data, and to correct such reports independently without further notification of respondents. In cases of non-fulfillment of this requirement within the deadlines set, the state statistical offices can:

(e) Comment on the incorrect use or interpretation of the statistical information;

(f) Develop and adopt state classifications; and

(g) Deal directly with administrative offences and impose an administrative penalty or fine in accordance with the law of Kyrgyz Republic on administrative responsibility.

14. The National Statistical Committee independently develops the forms of statistical reporting and indicates how to complete them; compiles the program of statistical work together with ministries and departments, and presents it to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for approval; and coordinates official statistical methodology, which is created and endorsed by the subjects of official statistical accounting. State statistical offices also independently decide about sources of statistical information, taking into account quality and timeliness of information provided, expenses for obtaining and processing information, responsibilities of respondents and other related issues.

15. The legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic gives full independence to state statistical offices in the composition of their staff. According to the law on “State statistics” (article 15), the Chairman of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic appoints and releases heads of oblast (big territorial entity), city, rayon (small territorial entity) and municipal (aiylokrug / rural territorial entity) state statistical offices without needing to consult with heads

of local state administrations and local self-government authorities (at the level of ministries and departments, such agreement is provided). Other staff of state statistical offices are appointed on the basis of competitive results in accordance with law on “State statistics”.

16. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the statistical activities are also financially independent. The Republic’s budget supports all state statistical offices. In addition, other resources can be directed for the development of statistical agencies (e.g. from international organizations) according to Kyrgyz legislation.

17. State statistical offices carry a high responsibility towards the users of statistical information and effective coordination among partners. That is why so much attention is paid to dissemination of results of statistical activities. In 2008, a dissemination policy was agreed, resulting in the transparency of statistical information and its free access. This also includes access to the statistical methodology, and publications, provided through newspapers, mass media and web-sites. During recent years, there has been ongoing work to improve the web-site of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic; the format has been changed, the time-series of statistical indicators since 1990 have been included, and the search menu has been expanded.

18. Much attention is also paid to monitoring the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are included in the State Development Strategy. Currently, the National Statistical Committee monitors 37 of the 48 indicators of MDGs, and is working to develop the remaining 11 indicators to be relevant to the situation in the country.

19. The strong observance of parameters of coverage, periodicity, timeliness, accessibility, relevance and quality of disseminated data means that the Kyrgyz Republic became in February 2004 the 57th country to sign up to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund.

20. It is important for us to further increase effective dissemination of statistical data in order to demonstrate the relevance of state statistics to decision making and to obtain an assessment of the quality of this information from users.

21. The needs of statistical information users will be further studied through discussion with individual focus groups and the creation of different user groups that can be regularly contacted to discuss user demands.

22. The Statistical Council of the Kyrgyz Republic was created to monitor the implementation of state policy in statistics, to coordinate decisions in this area and to support the state statistical offices, in accordance with the statistical Law adopted in 2007. Regulation of the Council and its structure is confirmed by the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, the Council is not yet fully operational for several reasons.

23. This report considers only some questions related to ensuring the professional independence of state statistical offices based on the example of the Kyrgyz Republic. Professional independence of statistical offices is only one of the conditions to fulfill the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in statistical production and dissemination. To

achieve this main goal, a whole series of measures must be taken. We expect to have a lot of work in this area in future. We are confident that the discussion of this question at the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) will contribute to the better organization of future activities in this area.

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