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Time use surveys**Revision of the International Classification of Activities for
Time Use Statistics – ICATUS****Note by the United Nations Statistics Division¹***Summary*

The trial version of the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS) is under revision taking into consideration the experiences from countries which adopted/adapted ICATUS for their data collection, tabulation and analysis. This revision will also ensure consistency of the classification with other classifications and international standards, such as the new framework for work statistics. The new ICATUS will be reviewed by the Expert Group on International Classifications before it is presented to the Statistical Commission for endorsement.

I. Background

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1. The Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session in 1995² recognized the importance of time-use statistics and requested the preparation of a draft classification of time-use activities by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The classification was also requested in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995³.
2. In 1997, a first draft classification was developed after an expert group meeting organized by UNSD on the topic. A revised version was developed taking into account the experiences from countries that adapted the first draft and the recommendations from the second expert group meeting organized in 2000, and published in the “Guide to Producing Statistics on Time Use: Measuring Paid and Unpaid Work” (United Nations, 2005) as the “Trial International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics” (ICATUS).
3. Although ICATUS is not an official international classification yet, several countries adapted it in their data collection⁴, tabulation and analysis, and the importance of its finalization has been widely requested in different forums, such as the Statistical Commission and the Global Forum on Gender Statistics.
4. In 2012, UNSD organized a third expert group meeting to revise and finalize the trial version of ICATUS. The version of ICATUS 2012 was published as a preliminary version in the report of the expert group meeting with the understanding that updates would be needed to reflect the new framework of work statistics developed by ILO and adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in October 2013.
5. Currently, UNSD is working on the final revision of ICATUS to reflect the new ICLS resolution. The final agreed classification will be presented to the UN Statistical Commission for endorsement, after been reviewed by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications

II. What is ICATUS?

6. ICATUS is a hierarchical classification of all activities that the general population may spend time on during the 24 hours of a day. Its main purpose is to provide a set of activity categories that can be utilized in producing meaningful statistics on time use. (United Nations, 2005)
7. The classification will also help obtain consistent statistics, which are comparable across countries, on the social and economic situation of populations including on their quality of life and general well-being, on time spent on unpaid work including for own-use production, on family/work balance – hence, the importance, relevance and usefulness of ICATUS for both developed and developing countries.
8. ICATUS alignment and consistency with other classifications and standards is critical. As such, the final version of ICATUS should still allow, to the extent possible, differentiation between economic and non-economic activities;

² *Report of the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission* accessed at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/95report.pdf>

³ *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* accessed at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

⁴ 85 countries (28 in developed and 57 in developing regions) have conducted a Time Use Survey since 1990 and around a quarter of “developing countries” have used the trial ICATUS as a basis for their classification of activities since 2000.

productive and non-productive activities; the measurement of all forms of work; and it should be aligned with the system of national accounts (SNA). In addition, the revision of ICATUS will reflect the new concepts contained in the *Resolution I: Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization* (ILO, 2013) adopted at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2013.

III. Revision process

9. An Expert Group Meeting to finalize ICATUS was organized on 11-13 June 2012 in New York with the following main objectives:

a) To take into account the feedback and many comments received from international experts and countries who adapted and used the classification since ICATUS was first proposed to countries as a trial classification;

b) To ensure ICATUS becomes an international classification for the production of time use statistics, which is meaningful for a broad range of objectives in both developed and developing countries and allows cross-national and cross-temporal comparison of time use.

10. Previous the expert group meeting, UNSD prepared a version of ICATUS taking into consideration the general principles for international classifications and other international standards such as SNA and ISIC. The draft also incorporated comments and feedback collected in workshops and received by email from experts. A very careful review of other regional classifications of activities such as HETUS and CAUTAL were also undertaken during this process.

11. The drafts proposal of the new classification was discussed with the participants of the expert groups meeting and modified according to the final agreements. That provisional version of ICATUS 2012 was disclosed in the final report of the meeting. Different aspects of that version are still under discussion. However, in order to ensure consistency with other international standards, the experts agreed to put its finalization on hold until the adoption of the resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) which was held in October 2013. In January 2014, ILO has provided specific comments on ICATUS 2012 which reflect the new framework for work statistics. UNSD is currently working with ILO to finalize their proposal.

IV. The impact of the new ILO framework for work statistics

12. As mentioned previously, ICATUS seeks to provide data that can be linked to the system of national accounts and labour statistics. This is especially critical where time use data are used in estimates of household production in satellite accounts that extend measurement of gross domestic product to include non-SNA production (United Nations, 2005). Therefore, the importance of identifying the following types of activities (which follow the framework of labour statistics):

- Activities within the SNA production boundary such as: employment, unpaid trainee work, volunteer work in households producing goods and own-use production work of goods
- Activities inside the SNA general production boundary, such as: own-use production work of services and volunteer work in households producing services

- Non-productive activities such as: personal activities (leisure, personal maintenance, etc).

13. This general structure is very similar to the first version of ICATUS and experts agreed to maintain it. This consistency enables ICATUS to serve two main purposes: providing statistics on time spent on all forms of work, including on caring and housework, as well as statistics on other major activities for studies on how people spend their time. In addition, maintaining a similar structure across different revisions of ICATUS will ensure consistency in statistics produced by countries that have adopted/adapted ICATUS over the years.

<i>Intended destination of production</i>	<i>for own final use</i>		<i>for use by others</i>				
	<i>Forms of work</i>	Own-use production work		Employment (work for pay or profit)	Unpaid trainee work	Other work activities	Volunteer work
of services		of goods	in market and non-market units				in households producing goods services
<i>Relation to 2008 SNA</i>	<i>Activities within the SNA production boundary</i>						
	<i>Activities inside the SNA General production boundary</i>						

Source: ILO (2013)

V. Other changes

14. Aside the changes in ICATUS 2012 due to the new framework of work statistics, some other aspects of the classification need to be finalized following the recommendations from the experts⁵:

- Terminology: some terms and definitions used in the classification are still under consultation with relevant international agencies
- Structure: experts agreed to keep 3 levels in the classification (major divisions, divisions, and groups) and allow room for national statistical offices to adapt and further develop lower levels.
- Metadata: experts recommended the development of extensive metadata on how to classify certain activities at the “borderlines”, for example, "gardening" and "bricolage" that could fall under "employment work", “own-use production work” or “personal activities”.
- Defining contextual variables: experts agreed that contextual information should systematically be collected to properly classified activities. Five essential contextual variables were identified:
 1. “For whom” the activity was done
 2. Whether the activity was “paid/unpaid”
 3. “With whom” the activity was undertaken
 4. The location

⁵ Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Revision of the United Nations Trial International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics (ICATUS) accessed at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/EGM%20June%202012/list_of_docs.htm

5. Whether an ICT device was used.

VI. Next steps

15. UNSD is working closely with ILO and other international agencies and experts on the finalization of ICATUS. Before it is presented to the UN Statistical Commission for endorsement, UNSD will ensure that ICATUS complies with all the desirable characteristics of an international classification⁶:

- The categories are exhaustive and mutually exclusive
- The classification is comparable to other related (national or international) standard classifications
- The categories are stable
- The categories are well described with a title in a standard format and backed up by explanatory notes, coding indexes, coders and correspondence tables to related classifications (including earlier versions of the same classification);
- The categories are well balanced within the limits set by the principles for the classification
- The categories reflect realities of the field (e.g. the society or economy) to which they relate
- The classification is backed up by availability of instructions, manuals, coding indexes, handbooks and training.

References

ILO (2013). *Resolution I: Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization*, Geneva accessed at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_230304.pdf

United Nations (2005). *Guide to producing statistics on time use: Measuring paid and unpaid work*, New York: Statistics Division.

⁶ *UN Glossary of Classification Terms* accessed at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class/family/glossary_short.asp