

Work Session on Statistical Metadata  
(Geneva, Switzerland, 18-20 February 1998)

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**COMMENTS ON  
“STANDARDS FOR STATISTICAL METADATA ON INTERNET**

Submitted by Latvia <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Karlis Zeila.

While looking through the material "Standards for statistical metadata on Internet" at the CSB of Latvia which you prepared for the plenary session, we came up with the following conclusions:

1. The Bureau of the Conference, in accordance with the requirements and recommendations worked out by the work groups (Canada, Sweden, OECD) has done a lot of work to produce the above-mentioned document.
2. The structure of the document corresponds with the objectives set; however, individual items could be discussed from our point of view.
3. Item 2 could be shortened because it is discussed in detail in item 3.
4. Item 3, together with the sub-items, describes user and metadata categories; however, several issues arise:
 

We think that this is excellent: therefore, it would be reasonable to base the minimum metadata requirements on the needs of "standard" users. This means that we should list metadata which enable the finding of/access to useful statistical data and to understand what these data mean (the availability and content dimensions in UN/ECE, 1995).  
Metadata on accuracy/reliability seem to be less interesting for a majority of the users."
5. Item 3.2: from our point of view it would be advisable to improve metadata standards for Internet in sections: (i) first for the use of "standard users" which mainly includes metadata for metadata for macro data; (ii) then the requirements by the "sophisticated" users to insert metadata for microdata in Internet simultaneously, guaranteeing confidentiality of the micro data. The amount of micro data is sufficiently large in most cases and they are not used for access via Internet.
6. Item 3.3: this item could be more detailed overall with a separate row and terminology explanation (e.g. a description of dimensions/cross classifying variables). It would be advisable to add information to item 3.3 to describe the level of confidentiality of micro data according to the type of data, since this differs from country to country.
7. Item 3.4.: it will be very difficult to implement this item, and various points made therein, for countries in transition.
8. Item 3.5: we have no further additions concerning the rest of the items; to our minds they are sufficiently precise.
9. Overall, the material produced is very necessary and it will assist in the harmonisation the WWW pages of the National Statistics Institutes.