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SESSION 1: RECONSTRUCTING THE PAST

**THE PROBLEM OF CONSTRUCTING LONG TIME SERIES IN
NEWLY ESTABLISHED COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION -
THE CASE OF SLOVENIA**

Report submitted by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia *

Summary

1. There are several new countries in Europe which gained independence a short while ago and are rapidly changing their economic and political systems as well as adapting their statistical legislation. Until recently, those countries had only rare expert contacts with statistical institutions and sources, usually only indirectly through federal statistical offices. Therefore they did not develop enough statistical knowledge and could not use it in the transition process. Some of the new countries - including Slovenia - are preparing for membership in the European Union and at the same time follow UN standards and cooperate with other international organizations (UN, IMF, OECD, etc.). These organizations request data in SNA and different time frames.

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2. Users of the statistical services in Slovenia and other transition countries find that during the transition from the Material Product System to SNA only relatively short statistical time series can be used - because although definitions and classifications are seemingly similar they are different with regard to contents. During the last 80 years various changes in the territory of present-day Slovenia have further made it difficult to

prepare time series and internationally comparable statistical data. This paper describes events such as the transition and change of Slovenian territory from the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1918) to present-day independence (1991), the influence of the two world wars, the Slovenian transition from a capitalist system (until 1945) to a centrally planned one, mixed centrally planned, self-management and finally a capitalist system again. It is interesting how statistical classifications and definitions influenced the implementation of regulations, although usually it is the other way around.

3. Users of time series are for the most part not acquainted with their applicability and methodological limitations in the past. They also do not understand the context and methodological limitations of the new and relatively short time series and methods from 1991 and onwards.

4. This paper presents solutions which are important for Slovenia; it is necessary to gain enough common experience, to connect the old definitions and classifications with the new ones, to keep for some time (at least two years) parallel series, to ascertain mutual links and later produce new long and useful statistical time series comparable with regard to methodology and contents. For the correct use of statistical data it is essential to disseminate knowledge about the underlying methods.
