

The Case for Communication Between National Statistical Councils

Richard Alldritt*

United Kingdom Statistics Authority, London, United Kingdom

richard.alldritt@statistics.gsi.gov.uk

The number, variety and importance of statistical council bodies have continued to grow over the ten years since this trend was recognised in the United Nations Handbook of Statistical Organization in 2003. Whilst their precise role and status will necessarily vary depending on the national context, we can ask if there is some essential core, some set of fundamental characteristics that a national statistical council needs to have in order to be credible and relevant internationally.

This paper offers some tentative suggestions about those core characteristics. But more than that, it invites debate in the international statistical community, including among all those groups and organisations that have an interest in maintaining the highest standards of statistical practice. And within that framework, it proposes that statistical council bodies should exchange information about their roles and practices - to inform and stimulate this discussion and ultimately to help support and guide the work of such bodies. With these considerations in mind, the paper asks whether the United Nations or another international body might take on the challenge of stimulating and facilitating the exchange of information between national statistical councils.

Key Words: Official Statistics, Statistical Councils, International Framework, United Nations Handbook