International Statistical Programs

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February 2005
Outline

• General structure of international statistical programs
• The top-down view (UN to country)
• International treaty organizations
• National statistical institutes
• Comparability and standards
General Structure of International Statistical Programs

• Data are collected by national statistical institutes, not the international agency

• The international agency promulgates standards and definitions, which are adopted (or not) by the national statistical institutes (e.g., U.S. Census Bureau)

• The international agency prepares compendia of statistical data and reports
The Top-down View

- United Nations (UN)
- World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- International Labor Organization (ILO)
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and (OECD)
- Eurostat
- National statistical institutes (e.g., INSEE)
The United Nations Statistical Office

- Worldwide coverage
- Main site: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm
- Public use products
  - Millenium indicators: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp
    - Sources: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_sources_list.asp
- Licensed products
  - Cornell documentation: http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/modelun.html
  - Cornell library gateway: same as above from cornell.edu

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Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

• Covers 30 member countries representing the developed economies of the world:
  http://www.oecd.org/document/58/0,2340,en_2649_201185_1889402_1_1_1_1,00.html

• Prepares standardized statistics from these countries using input data from official national sources:
  http://www.oecd.org/statsportal/0,2639,en_2825_293564_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

• Public use products in print and pdf format

• Licensed products are available in Economist Intelligence Unit CountryData:
  http://countrydata.bvdep.com/cgi/template.dll?product=101&user=ipaddress (from cornell.edu)

• Many statistics available on CDROM from OECD but not online. (see university-based data archives)
World Bank/IMF

- Historical data distributed by the ICPSR in the US
Comparability and Standards

• Must review each source specifically
• In general, OECD, Eurostat data will be quite comparable
• UN data are less comparable due to differences in the quality of the national statistical institutes gathering the data