I. ON THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES AND STRUCTURE OF ITS BODIES

A. Composition of the Commonwealth of Independent States (slide 1)

1. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) established on 8 December 1991, consists of 12 sovereign states; it is based on the principles of the equality of all its members, and does not possess supranational powers.

B. Structure of the CIS bodies (slide 2)

2. Interaction in the framework of the Commonwealth is carried out through its charter bodies: Council of the Heads of States (CHS)- the superior body of the Commonwealth; Council of the Heads of Governments (CHG); Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM); Inter-Parliamentary Assembly; Economic Court; and Economic Council.

3. The Economic Council is the main executive body which provides for the execution of the agreements adopted in the framework of the CIS, decisions of CHS and CHG on the questions of socio-economic cooperation. The Economic Council consists of the deputies of the heads of governments of the member states of the Commonwealth.

4. Under its auspices, the Commission on Economic Questions functions on a permanent basis. This Commission consists of plenipotentiary representatives of the Commonwealth states. It provides for comprehensive development and consideration of draft documents prepared by the Executive Committee of the CIS and branch bodies of socio-economic direction, as well as coordination of the positions of the states.

5. Similar to the Commission on Economic Questions is the Council of Plenipotentiary Representatives of the Countries, which is closely connected with the Council of Foreign Ministers.

6. On the basis of the agreements of the states, several bodies of the branch cooperation were also created.
7. The permanent executive, administrative and coordinating body of the Commonwealth is the Executive Committee of the CIS, with its headquarters in the city of Minsk and its branch office in Moscow.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE INTERSTATE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

8. The Statistical Committee of the member states of the Commonwealth (CIS-STAT) was one of the first branch bodies of the CIS, created on 30 December 1991 through the decision of the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth for coordination of statistical activities in the Commonwealth countries. In accordance with its approved Statute, CIS-STAT is subordinate to the Council of the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth and carries out its activities in close interaction with national statistical services of the Commonwealth countries, Council of the Heads of these services and other interstate bodies.

9. According to the Decision of the Council of the Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth adopted on 10 February 1995, CIS-STAT officially received the status of an Interstate body and, through the decision of 26 May 1995, it was renamed the Interstate Statistical Committee.

A. Structure of CIS-STAT (slide 3)

10. CIS-STAT is composed of 4 departments including 11 divisions. The total number of its personnel comprises 73 persons.

11. In its activities, CIS-STAT follows the Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States, interstate (intergovernmental) agreements adopted within the framework of the Commonwealth, decisions of the Council of the Heads of States and the Council of the Heads of Governments as well as the Statute of the Committee.

12. The general questions of the development of statistics in the countries of the Commonwealth are discussed by the Council of the Heads of Statistical Services of the Member States of the Commonwealth, while scientific and methodological questions are discussed at the Scientific Council under CIS-STAT.

13. CIS-STAT is an independent legal entity, possessing its own property, its own settlement and other accounts in banks in Russia and abroad and other attributes of a legal entity.

B. Main tasks and directions of work of CIS-STAT (slide 4):

   (a) Coordination of the activities of national statistical services of the Commonwealth on most important aspects of statistics;

   (b) Promoting the reforming of statistics in the conditions of transition to market economy;

   (c) Development of common recommendations and standards on the problems of methodology and organization of statistics;
(d) Provision of common information and statistical space and organization of interstate information exchange;

(e) Analysis of socio-economic processes in the Commonwealth of Independents States.

C. **Main functions of CIS-STAT** (slide 5):

(a) Provision of the state governing bodies of the CIS member countries and CIS bodies with internationally comparable information on socio-economic processes in the CIS countries, as well as in the world economy for adopting by them the decisions on the problems of forming economic policy and improvement of economic cooperation;

(b) Provision with internationally comparable information of other users: representatives of business circles, scientific organizations, trade unions and other social organizations, broad public and international organizations;

(c) Development of recommendations on the use in the CIS member states of coordinated methodology based on the corresponding international standards;

(d) Interstate exchange of statistical information, publishing of statistical abstracts and statistical information bulletin, as well as other information materials;

(e) Creation, functioning and systematic updating of general statistical base of the CIS member states containing main socio-economic indicators;

(f) Preparation of analytic and information materials on the dynamics and trends of economic cooperation of the CIS member states;

(g) Development of short and middle-term forecasts of the dynamics of most important macro-economic indicators.

D. **Execution of functions**

14. In order to carry out its functions, CIS-STAT:

(a) Carries out the collection from the CIS member states of statistical information with the help of the system of questionnaires on different fields of economic and social statistics;

(b) Organizes meetings of CIS statistical specialists to discuss methodological questions and documents prepared by CIS-STAT;

(c) Creates in necessary cases working groups on selected projects and organizes meetings on the problems related to its terms of reference;

(d) Gives proposals in the established order on the questions which need the decisions of the Council of the Heads of States and the Council of the Heads of Governments of the CIS, of the Economic Council and other bodies of the Commonwealth.
15. CIS-STAT doesn’t collect and process the primary information on enterprises and population.

III. ON THE ACTIVITIES OF CIS-STAT

A. Reform of statistics in the CIS countries required

16. The reform of statistics of CIS countries at the beginning of the 90’s require the adoption of state programmes of transformation of statistics and accounting in accordance with international standards. This involved the assistance of CIS-STAT to the national statistical services to solve the following questions (slide 6):

(a) Legal regulation of the organization of statistics on the principles practiced in the world; development of model law on statistics;

(b) Transition of economic and social statistics to the international standards;

(c) Implementation of international classifications;

(d) Broader use of sample, expert and other methods of statistical observation applied in the conditions of market economy;

(e) Adequate organization and structural changes in the system of statistical bodies;

(f) Improvement of the primary sources of information, reforming of the reporting of enterprises and organizations;

(g) Application of modern information technologies in statistical activities.

17. By present time national laws on statistics (ratified by legislative bodies of the Commonwealth member states) have been adopted by all 12 countries.

B. Development of coordinated statistical methodology

18. Based on the corresponding international rules and standards (recommended by such international and regional organizations as UN, UN ECE, Eurostat, OECD, ILO, IMF, the World Bank and others), this is one of the most important functions of CIS-STAT, aimed at the reforming of statistics, securing comparability and succession of statistical elaborations.

19. Considerable attention was given by the Committee to helping the CIS countries in the implementation in their regular statistical practice of the international standard on national accounts – SNA 1993, approved by the UN Statistical Commission. In this connection, CIS-STAT prepared and recommended to the national statistical services for practical use a number of methodological documents on the problems of compilation of key SNA accounts and computation of the most important aggregates.

20. On the basis of the SNA concepts, methodological recommendations were issued for making estimates of the non-observed economy, including the shadow economy and the informal sector, illegal (criminal) activity (slide 7).
21. On the basis of international standards, CIS-STAT has also prepared the documents on financial statistics and government finance statistics, in particular, on finance statistics of enterprises and on price statistics.

22. In the field of external economic relations statistics, the CIS statistical services widely use corresponding methodological recommendations developed by CIS-STAT on the basis of international standards and adapted to the peculiarities of the CIS countries' economy.

23. Regarding statistics of production and entrepreneurship, CIS-STAT prepared, on the basis of international standards, recommendations on the calculation of the most important indicators of statistics of industry, agriculture and other branches of the economy; volume indices of retail turnover; indices of prices for machinery and equipment in the composition of capital investments; provision of population with durable goods and selected goods of light industry; and yield capacity of agricultural crops.

24. Principles of the conduct of economic censuses were developed in the CIS countries, as well as recommendations on the conduct of agricultural censuses, etc.

25. Considerable methodological work was also carried out to secure international comparability of labour statistics indicators on the basis of the conventions and recommendations of ILO and other international organizations on the problems of employment, wages and salaries, strikes, labour cost and conditions, etc.

C. Transition to market economy

26. In the conditions of the transition to a market economy, CIS-STAT paid much attention to the study of new phenomena and improvement of socio-demographic statistics.

27. In particular, a Model set of social indicators of living standards of population was prepared on the basis of minimum set of social indicators recommended by the UN Statistical Commission.

28. Since 1993, CIS-STAT has been carrying out a complex of organization and methodological works connected with the conduct of national population censuses in the member states of the Commonwealth in the framework of the World Programme.

29. Just before the start of the 2000 round of population censuses, a number of methodological documents were prepared, based on the international UN and Eurostat recommendations, which took into account national peculiarities of the countries. During the period 1997-1999 in Moscow, international seminars were conducted jointly with UN ECE and UNDP to discuss the results of the pilot censuses in the CIS countries and to generalize their experience. Analytical materials on the progress of the preparation for and conduct of the censuses were prepared on a systematic basis and, after receipt of the preliminary results, they have been published since 2001. In 2006, general results of the 2000 round of population censuses in the CIS countries were issued.

30. Beginning in 2004, CIS-STAT has carried out preparatory methodological work for conducting the next 2010 round of population censuses approved by the Council of the Heads of States of the Commonwealth. The most complex methodological issues are discussed at the Coordinating Council, which was set up under the auspices of CIS-STAT;
the Council is composed of the qualified representatives of national statistical services of the CIS countries.

D. Development and promoting general principles of building up the system of economic classifications (slide 8)

31. This, in coordination with international standards, is an important direction in the field of statistical methodology in the framework of the Commonwealth. A great deal of work has been done by CIS-STAT to prepare model classifications which are based on international recommendations and which reflect national peculiarities of the Commonwealth countries. For the period 1992 through 2008, the following model classifications were developed: types of ownership and organizational and juridical forms of economic activities (based on national laws on statistics of the Commonwealth countries); functions of the general government and individual consumption by purpose. Special attention was paid to the development and implementation of the model statistical classification of kinds of economic activities as well as classification of products goods and services. These model classifications were used in the CIS countries for the development of their own national classifications.

32. In 2008, the work on the model statistical classification of kinds of economic activities based on European NACE, Rev. 2 was completed. In 2009, it is planned to work on the model statistical classification of products (goods and services) on the basis of CPA, Rev. 2008. CIS-STAT continues to work on improving these model classifications, introducing some corrections and adjustments which reflect changes in European classifications as well as comments and suggestions from the national statistical services of the CIS countries.

33. In 2006, in accordance with the decisions of the Councils of the Heads of States and Governments of the CIS countries, CIS-STAT was entrusted with a new function to forecast the most important macro-economic indicators on a short- and mid-term basis. CIS-STAT has developed methodological approaches to forecast the rates of growth of key macro-economic indicators and the results of these forecasts are published on a regular basis.

E. Common statistical database called “Statistics of the CIS” (slide 9)

34. This database was set up on the basis of data collected by CIS-STAT from the CIS countries. In addition to series data on key statistical indicators from 1992, this database also contains information on main indicators of social and economic cooperation. The database contains about 400 thousand indicators which are grouped into 24 major sections of statistics.

F. Official disseminator of information (slide 10)

35. As an official disseminator of statistical information on the CIS countries, the Committee systematically prepares reports, compendiums and press releases on the most important socio-economic activities in the CIS countries, both in Russian and English, and disseminates them to a wide circle of users.

36. Statistical information compiled by CIS-STAT is used by superior governing and economic bodies of the CIS countries, interstate bodies of the Commonwealth, ministries
and agencies, various international organizations, scientific and research organizations, social organizations, representatives of business, mass-media and other users.

37. Different methods of dissemination of information among the users are employed: publications, electronic products such as CDs, and electronic mail. Between 1992 and 2008, CIS-STAT has released 164 statistical yearbooks and compendiums, 438 statistical bulletins, more than 1000 reports and analytic notes, and 550 press-releases.

G. CIS-STAT on Internet (slide 11)

38. To facilitate wider use of information, the CIS-STAT website on Internet was set up in Russian and English by the Committee. It contains information on major activities of the Committee, the list of its publications and electronic products, systematically updated database containing monthly, quarterly and annual data, results of international comparisons, analytic materials and reports.

IV. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF CIS-STAT

39. From the beginning of its existence and during almost 17 years, CIS-STAT has cooperated with the statistical services of international organizations and a number of foreign countries. The main objectives of this cooperation are to introduce international standards into the statistical practices of the Committee and national statistical services of the CIS countries, to exchange experience and data, and to exchange statistical publications (slide 12).

40. Cooperation has continued to expand over recent years with statistical services of the United Nations, its regional economic commissions and specialized agencies with statistical services of the European Union, OECD, IMF, the World bank, Consortium “Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st century”, International Statistical Institute, and with the statistical offices of many countries.

41. Interaction with international organizations is carried out on the basis of signed agreements and memoranda of understanding. The latter were signed with UN Statistics Division, Eurostat and the World Bank in connection with participation of the CIS countries in the global international comparison of the GDP for 2005.

42. There is an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Census on mutual exchange of publications.

43. Together with international organizations, methodological assistance to the statistical services of the CIS was rendered on a regular basis on the questions of organization of statistical observation, calculation of statistical indicators, development of national accounts, systems of classifications and their introduction into statistical practice, etc.

44. During the period 1992 to 2008, CIS-STAT participated in about 300 events (sessions, conferences, seminars, workshops) organized by the organizations belonging to the UN system and by other international organizations and national statistical services. In cooperation with international organizations, CIS-STAT organized about 60 seminars for experts from CIS countries; it received about 400 foreign delegations.
45. CIS-STAT attaches great importance to cooperating with international organizations in rendering technical assistance to the CIS statistical services and it participated in many meetings convened on this matter. Particular attention in this context is paid to the coordination of actions with Eurostat and UNECE. In the opinion of CIS-STAT, this coordination should be more efficient in order to avoid duplication in actions and to achieve better results.

46. The representatives of CIS-STAT participated in the sessions of the UN Statistical Commission, in the meetings of the Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities, the plenary sessions of the Conference of European Statisticians, ESCAP Committee on Statistics, meetings of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, meetings of the Executive Board of ICP, meetings of regional coordinators of the ICP, and meetings of the OECD Committee on Statistics.

47. The cooperation of CIS-STAT with OECD and a number of other international organizations (UN, IMF, Eurostat) on the introduction of the SNA 93 into regular statistical practices of the CIS countries was particularly important. In this connection, a considerable number of seminars and consultations were jointly organized and carried out. As a result of these joint actions, it was possible to transit from the material product system (MPS), which was used in the former USSR, to the SNA in a relatively short period of time. In this context, mention should also be made of the cooperation of CIS-STAT with some international organizations (OECD, Eurostat, ILO, UN ECE) on the preparation of the Handbook on Measuring Non-observed Economy. A number of joint seminars were held in order to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of this Handbook. The importance of the international cooperation in this area increases in connection with the forthcoming implementation of the SNA 2008 in the CIS region. The cooperation of CIS-STAT with the ILO in connection with the implementation in the CIS region of the latest Handbook on CPI should also be mentioned.

48. At present, CIS-STAT and Eurostat are finalising the preparation of the next joint compendium “European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States” (Statistical comparison). This publication, in Russian and English, will be released shortly and contains a great deal of statistical information on the most important indicators of economic and social statistics.

49. Of great importance was the interaction of CIS-STAT with international organizations in the field of international comparisons of GDP. CIS-STAT was actively involved in the implementation of the European Comparison Program (ECP). Thus, CIS-STAT participated in the international comparison of GDP of CIS countries for 2000, which was carried out in the framework of the ECP. CIS-STAT cooperated closely with Rosstat of Russia and OECD in the organization of this work.

50. An important landmark in the work on this subject was the realization of the UN International Comparison Programme in the framework of which was conducted the global comparison of GDP for 2005 with the participation of 146 countries. 10 CIS countries, representing this regions of the world, participated in this comparison. The role of the coordinators of the comparison in the CIS region was carried out by CIS-STAT jointly with Rosstat.
V. FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE WORK OF CIS-STAT (slide 13)

51. The project on recommendations for statistical services of the CIS countries with respect to implementation of provisions of the SNA 2008 will require several years and will establish priorities in the selection of the most appropriate topics, taking into account the peculiarities in the organization of the economy and statistics in the CIS countries, the stage of development of national accounts, as well as close interaction with the international organizations.

52. One of the important directions of future work is the improvement of methodology of compilation of the CPI on the basis of international standards.

53. CIS-STAT will continue the work in the field of international comparisons of GDP and PPPs within the framework of the next round of global comparisons, which is likely to be organized for 2011.

54. Expanding analysis of socio-demographic processes is another important direction for the future work. Special attention will be paid to studying international migration.

55. It is intended to continue preparation for the next 2010 round of population censuses. This work will be carried out in accordance with the decision of the Council of the Heads of States to entrust the preparatory work on the methodology and the organizational matters to the Council of the Heads of Statistical Services of the CIS countries and CIS-STAT. It is intended to provide assistance to the CIS countries during the censuses and to ensure standardization of the results of the censuses.

56. A number of recommendations on implementation in statistical practice of the CIS countries of the revised versions of international economic classifications need to be prepared and, above all, statistical classifications of all kinds of economic activities and products.

57. There should be further improvement of the methods of forecasting.

58. International cooperation with statistical services of the international organizations and a number of foreign countries needs to be further developed in order to facilitate implementation of modern methodology of statistics and international standards.

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