



## Principle 7: legislation

*“The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public”*

### **A TALE OF NECESSITY, SIGNIFICANCE AND MODERNIZATION**

**Contributed by the Republic of Armenia**

The two brutal World Wars of the 20th century forced people and states to make the goal of peaceful coexistence a priority; and to achieve it, after World War II, to establish the United Nations, in which a Statistical Commission has been functioning since February 1947.

The mission of global statistics is unique in shaping global perceptions. It aims to reduce uncertainty, one of the main causes of confrontation. And for that, it is necessary that the situation in the whole world, in all countries, be evaluated in a single language, the language of statistics. All, by law, apply the same statistical principles, standards, the same definitions and classifications that characterize phenomena, using similar sources of information, and so on. This ensures a high degree of comparability, confidence in the accuracy of information, and a perception that the information describes an objective reality. And the objective reality must be anchored exclusively in evidence-based statistics.

A key role in achieving this has been played by the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics which have, over the past 30 years since their adoption, defined the behaviour of states and the scope of actions in the field of official statistics.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGISLATION**

The official statistical systems of countries (states) in the modern world (in the context of modern ideas of the state) can be formed and act exclusively by mandate given by law and regulations defined by other legal acts, other instruments, especially statistical programmes, etc., which must be public.

It is no secret that in order to make the official statistics of economic, demographic, social and environmental phenomena of any country available to the country's society and the international community, it is first necessary to create authorized bodies for producing official statistics. Then it is necessary to define clearly a range of aspects relating to these bodies: their position in the system of public administration; their mandate to collect information from state and local government bodies, economic entities, non-governmental and other organizations, households and individuals; their relations with international organizations; the nature and scope of principles, standards, and other tools that will be used in all processes of development, production, and dissemination of official statistics.

This is possible only by establishing all of these definitions in law. That is why the 7th UN Fundamental Principle of Official Statistics, on legislation, is of crucial importance.

## **MODEL LAWS**

This is the reason why the relevant UN agencies are constantly striving to assist countries, to develop and approve the laws of the Official Statistical System. For this purpose they have developed model laws in line with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

The most recent and best example of this is the [Generic Law on Official Statistics](#) for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, developed jointly by UNECE the UN Statistics Division, EFTA, Eurostat and experts from several countries.

### **ARMENIAN LAW**

On March 21, 2018, the Armenian Parliament adopted the new [Law of Armenia on Official Statistics](#), developed based on this model law. The new Law regulates all the relations of the Official Statistical System in Armenia, anchored on the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, in contrast to the previous law, which regulated only the activities of the Statistical Service of Armenia.

The importance of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, including the principle of legislation, is specifically emphasized in the Armenian law: in particular, in the definition of official statistics set out in Article 3. “Official statistics are statistics developed, produced and disseminated in accordance with the requirements of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, exclusively reflected in statistical programmes that are the numerical expression of the essential phenomena of public life.”

The same law stipulates that the Authorized Body of Official Statistics in Armenia, Armstat, is independent in carrying out its tasks, and is governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, international treaties of the Republic of Armenia, the present Law and other legal acts (Article 7, part 1).

Armstat “is a state body that is radically different from state institutions with certain political orientation. The guarantees for not involving official statistics in conflicts between political, administrative and departmental interests are defined by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics” (Article 7, part 2), and the principles are set out in Chapter 2 of the Law.