



This is the first in a bi-annual series of brochures with information on the ongoing activities of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) in the international arena. This first brochure provides background and general information on these activities, with emphasis on their importance and on the frameworks in which they are conducted.

What Are We Doing in the International Arena?

The activities of the ICBS in the international arena aim to enhance its professional capacities. These activities enable the ICBS to implement the best practices for producing statistical data on various aspects of life, and contribute to improving the quality of Israel's official statistics. They also provide a basis for conducting international comparisons, and enable the ICBS to make better use of the data that are produced.

As such, these activities improve the status of the ICBS in Israel and abroad and they focus on three main areas:

1. Transmission and accessibility of statistical data. The ICBS transmits information on Israeli society and on Israel's economy to international organizations on an ongoing basis by means of questionnaires, files, Internet databases and other computerized tools. The ICBS also consolidates and compiles statistical information that is transmitted by other governmental agencies to international organizations.

2. Sharing of experience and professional knowledge. The staff of the ICBS participates in activities conducted throughout the world, in which professionals share their accumulated knowledge and experience in order to learn and to impart information. In that way, they empower the ICBS as an organization and themselves as individuals. In the same vein, activities aimed at international cooperation are conducted at the ICBS in Israel, where subject-matter specialists provide guidance and advice. These activities enable ICBS staff to establish direct contact with international experts and benefit from their knowledge. Experts from abroad also visit the ICBS in order to extend their own knowledge and apply it in their home countries.

3. Review and monitoring. Representatives of international organizations assess the quality of statistics that are produced in Israel and sent to them. In this process, they can confirm the reliability of the information and reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the national statistical system.

In addition, "casual visitors" are interested in the activities conducted in the ICBS and in statistical information about Israel.



Official Tanzanian Delegation visit to CBS

Why is This Important?

National statistical systems throughout the world play an essential role in decision-making processes at the national and international levels. Information is required by a broad international forum, which is led by organizations that were established primarily in response to needs that emerged after World War II. Information needs have intensified in light of the present-day challenges. Therefore, reliable and comparable information is essential for effective functioning on the basis of a known and shared system of values.

The ICBS, which is the central organization for producing official statistics in Israel, actively participates in the production of information essential to decision-making processes. The completeness and quality of information provided by the ICBS is of national interest, because it is used by policy-makers in Israel and by foreign entities dealing decision-making about Israel.

Over the past two decades, there has been a rapid increase in the scope and diversity of activities conducted by the ICBS in international forums and at the domestic level. These activities involve extensive human, physical, and social capital. Therefore, the aim to be an integral part of this system is a strategic decision made by the State of Israel and the ICBS. The uncompromising professionalism of the staff of the ICBS is an essential condition for achieving this goal, and international collaboration is a vital enabler.

Links to international organization websites



[OECD](#) -

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development



[EU](#) -

European Union



[MEDSTAT](#)



[UNSD](#) -

United Nations Statistics Division

[UNECE](#) -

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



[IMF](#) -

International Monetary Fund



[The World Bank](#)



[ILO](#) -

International Labor Organization

What International Organizations Does the ICBS Work With?

The ICBS maintains contact with a broad, complex, and challenging network of international organizations. This network consists of three main organizations: The United Nations, which Israel has been a member of since 1949; The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which Israel has been a member of since 2010; and the European Union (EU). In addition, Israel has connections with a few smaller organizations that focus on specific topics, such as the World Cocoa Organization and the World Grain Organization.

These organizations run specific statistical programs in various configurations:

The system in the **European Union** is centralized, and Eurostat is the main statistical unit of the organization.

The **United Nations** system is decentralized. Statistical units are found in numerous organizations that operate under the umbrella of the UN, as well as in autonomous organizations that use the UN administrative mechanisms. For example, the central statistical unit of the UN is in New York (UNSD), but the statistical system of the UN includes, *inter alia*, statistical units in the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in the International Labor Organization (ILO), and in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as in organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The statistical system of the **OECD** is partially decentralized. The OECD has a statistics directorate (STD), but other directorates also produce statistical data in coordination with the STD.

Israel is a member of the UN and the OECD, and the activities of the ICBS are defined in the statistical work plans of those organizations. In the European Union, Israel is part of the group of countries that was delineated in the framework of European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), and the ICBS is particularly active in the MEDSTAT program.

In the first half of 2011, staff members of the ICBS participated in 45 different activities of international organizations.

In the first half of 2011, staff members of the ICBS produced thousands of information items in response to 114 questionnaires sent to international organizations.

Links to international organization websites (cont.)



WHO -
World Health Organization



UNESCO -
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



FAO -
Food and Agriculture Organization



ITU -
International Telecommunication Union

Additional links

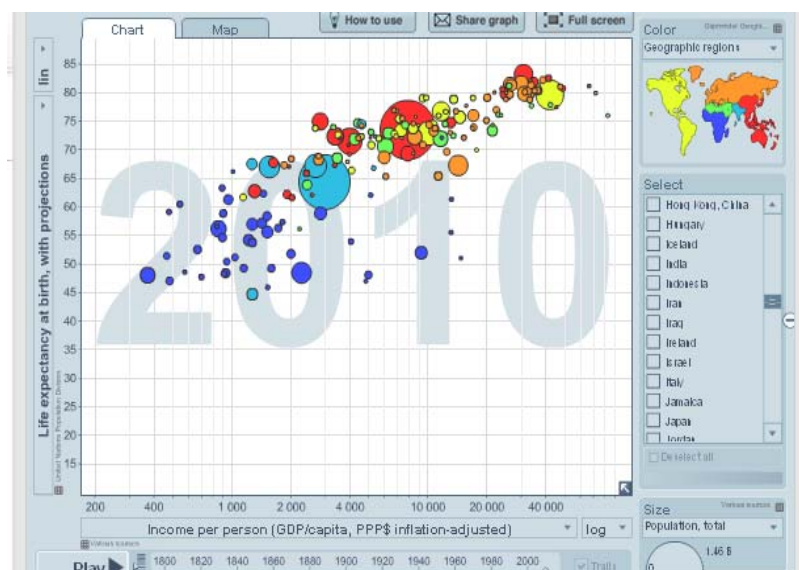
[Israel Statistical Profile in OECD](#)

A View of the World – Gapminder

The Gapminder site was established in 2005, and has been defined as an Internet "museum" which shows just how amazing statistical series can be. The site includes data from various sources and on various topics, which are presented with interactive animated tools that are used for comparisons of countries over time. The Gapminder tool is updated frequently. It is accessible to the public at no cost, and aims to promote an evidence-based approach. For further information, see

<http://www.gapminder.org/world/>

Life Expectancy at Birth, by Income



For comments and questions, please contact Sigalit Mazeh: sigalit@cbs.gov.il.