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To: Members of the Executive Board
From: The Associate Secretary
Subject: The Data Dissemination Standards - Update

Attached for the information of Executive Directors is an update on the data dissemination standards.

Ms. Montanjees (ext. 38130) or Mr. O. Evans (ext. 37183) is available to answer technical or factual questions relating to this paper.

Att: (1)

**Other Distribution:
Department Heads**

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

The Data Dissemination Standards--Update

Prepared by the Statistics Department and the
Policy Development and Review Department

Approved by John B. McLenaghan and Jack Boorman

June 24, 1996

In March 1996, the Executive Board approved the establishment of the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and opened subscription to members. At its April 22, 1996 meeting, the Interim Committee welcomed the opening of the SDDS for subscription. As discussed in the paper for the April 12 Executive Board meeting, the associated electronic bulletin board is slated to open on the Internet at the end of August 1996. In response to requests from a number of Directors' offices, this note provides a brief update on developments since the recent Interim Committee meeting and sketches the staff's work program leading up to the next meeting.

The first module of the *Guide to the Data Dissemination Standards* was sent to all Fund Governors and members in May. The purposes of this first module are to provide a basis for countries to evaluate their dissemination practices with a view to reaching a decision on whether to subscribe to the SDDS and, if they decide to subscribe or have already done so, to guide them in the preparation of metadata and other materials to support their subscription. A second module, which is planned to be ready shortly after the Executive Board's consideration of the staff's proposals for the General Data Dissemination Standard, will discuss that standard. A third module, to be prepared early in 1997, will deal more comprehensively with those dimensions of the two standards that are the same, providing further elaboration and examples of practices that will fulfill the standards.

A series of three regional seminar workshops about the SDDS, using the *Guide* as a framework, will take place in June and July. They will include presentations on all aspects of the standard, small group discussions, and one-on-one consultations with countries in order to assist them in the preparation of the metadata. The week-long seminar workshops are being conducted in association with United Nations regional commissions: Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva, June 24-28; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok, July 8-12; and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Santiago, July 8-12. (Attachment I presents the generic program for all three.) Invitations were extended to members that had shown interest in subscribing to the SDDS either immediately or over the transition period.

Responses to the Managing Director's invitation to subscribe are continuing to be received. ^{1/} The breadth of countries' interest in the SDDS and their seriousness of purpose in preparing metadata are evident in their plans to participate in the seminar workshops series. For example, as of this date, about 30 countries, including a mix of European transition and G-10 countries, have indicated that they wish to send representatives to the seminar in Geneva. These representatives--as many as three from some several countries--are from statistical offices, central banks, and Ministries of Finance. A number of countries have already indicated their participation in the seminar workshops in Bangkok and Santiago, for which the dates and venues were pinned down more recently.

Work on the electronic bulletin board, known as the Dissemination Standard Bulletin Board (DSBB), is progressing toward the testing stage within the Fund before opening to the public. Exploration continues on several questions to be dealt with after the initial opening, including electronic linking of the metadata on the DSBB to actual country data sites on the Internet.

In anticipation of a heavy workload in readying the metadata for the DSBB, the staff will not be able to assure members that metadata submitted after August 9 can be readied in time for the country to be on the DSBB for its scheduled opening on August 31. For metadata received after August 9, the staff will, of course, make every effort so that countries could be on the DSBB as soon as possible thereafter.

For the General Data Dissemination Standard (GDDS), staff has inventoried the issues that are likely to arise in developing the GDDS, focusing on the coverage, periodicity, and timeliness of the data and on the associated resources for technical assistance. On this basis, the staff has established a strategy of consultations with other international organizations and representative member countries. Given the large number of countries and their diversity, a variety of ways to obtain information on country practice and data users' needs will be required.

^{1/} To date, about 30 countries have either indicated their intention to subscribe (at the April 1996 Interim Committee meeting or via Executive Directors at Board meetings) or have responded positively to the Managing Director's April 12, 1996 letter of invitation to subscribe. The Board had agreed earlier that the opening of the electronic bulletin board would constitute the public identification of members that subscribed.

Seminar/Workshop on The Special Data Dissemination Standard

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM-part 1 9:00 to 10:30		Coverage, periodicity, and timeliness: financial and external sector data	Access, integrity, and quality dimensions-- further elaboration (con't)	Process/materials for metadata preparation; hyperlinked metadata pages--dissemination format and release calendars	Hyperlinked metadata pages-- summary methodologies and summary of observance/plan pages (con't)
AM-part 2 11:00 to 12:30 <u>1/</u>	Introductions Overview, Internet bulletin board, transition period, and country plans for any adjustment	Small group discussion: coverage, periodicity, and timeliness	Small group discussion: access, integrity, and quality dimensions	Small group discussion: metadata preparation and dissemination formats and release calendar pages	Small group discussion: summary methodologies and summary of observance/plan pages
Lunch					
PM-part 1 2:00 to 3:30	Small group discussion: bulletin board, transition period, plans	Scope of dissemination; access, integrity, and quality dimensions	Country consultations	Country consultations	Observance of the standard, schedules, etc.
PM-part 2 4:00 to 5:30	Coverage, periodicity, and timeliness: real and fiscal sector data	Country consultations	Country consultations	Country consultations	As needed, plenary or country consultations

1/ Except Monday; on Monday, 10:30-12:30

