



## **The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics: Not just Governments ... getting inter alia the public and media involved**

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The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics seem to enjoy (near) universal acceptance and form an indispensable foundation for all National Statistical Systems. To produce valid and reliable statistics it is necessary that Governments provide the legal framework and adequate resources to the statistical system of their countries to allow statisticians to produce the required statistical information, without interference, using the best available methodology and techniques from the best suited sources of information. Respondents, be they individuals, enterprises or organisations are required to provide the required information truthfully and as complete as possible. While Governments can affect the professional independence and integrity of national statistical institutions, other actors can also affect the integrity and quality of statistical information. Well known is the case of donors or organisations that commission research. Official Statisticians and Statisticians in international organizations occasionally take short cuts or use inappropriate models that compromise the quality of the data. Graphical presentations of statistical data can convey inexact information because of inappropriate use of scales. These can be counteracted by proper statistical methodology and by strengthening the integrity of the research institute and quality researchers. Occasionally, the respondents provide deliberately false information either at his, or her, own initiative or through organized campaigns. To avoid or correct this requires continuous education of the public on the need of good statistics and the confidentiality of statistical information. Statistical education for policy makers and politicians, the media, and the public at large is a basic requirement. Statistical education in formal and informal setting should be encouraged. Via a series of exemplary cases, the case will be made for continuous statistical education to counteract most if not all improper interventions which deliberately or inadvertently aim to compromise the integrity of official statistics.

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