



December 14th, 2009

Professor Juan C. Abril
President Sociedad Argentina de Estadística
Institute of Statistics
University of Tucuman
Casilla de Correo 209
4000 Tucuman
Argentina

Dear Professor Abril,

The President and the Executive Committee of the International Statistical Institute have received information about the actions of the Government of Argentina interfering with the compilation of the consumer price index (CPI) by the National Directorate for Statistics. We have studied the relevant documentation with great concern.

Interfering with the compilation of a country's CPI and indeed with the professional conduct of official statistics with the aim of influencing the outcomes of statistical measurements violates international statistical and ethical principles and codes of conduct as well as international agreements and commitments. These principles, codes and commitments have been established in order to ensure that official statistics are carried out in a professional, transparent and impartial manner and to prevent misconduct and misuse of statistics for political purposes. In this connection, reference is in particular made to the United Nations' Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics, which were adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 1994, and to the International Statistical Institute's Declaration of Professional Ethics, adopted in 1985.

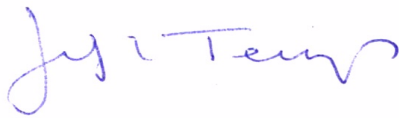
The UN Fundamental Principles are in the main based on two notions outlined in their preamble: a) that "official statistical information is an essential basis for development in the economic, demographic, social and environmental fields"; and b) that "the essential trust of the public in official statistical information depends to a large extent on respect for the fundamental values and principles which are the basis of any society which seeks to understand itself and to respect the rights of its members". In the case discussed here, three of the UN Principles may in particular be emphasized:

- The first Principle states that "official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation".
- The third Principle states: "To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data."
- The sixth Principles states the cardinal rule of confidentiality as follows: "Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes."

From the documentation provided it seems clear that the interference in the CPI in Argentina directly violates these three principles. Furthermore and as shown in your documentation, the distorted CPI measurements in their turn produce distortions in several derived aggregates and outcomes leading to misinformation and undermining trust in the official statistics by stakeholders in the country as well as international institutions.

The President and the Executive Committee of the International Statistical Institute are deeply concerned about these violations of the professional conduct of official statistics and the principles upon which it is based. We endorse your efforts to uphold these principles and safeguard the integrity of official statistics in your country.

Yours sincerely,



Jef Teugels
ISI President