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## Statistical Commission

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Item 3 (e) of the provisional agenda\*

### Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## Work for the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2024/312 and past practices, contains a description of the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contains a description of: (a) the work carried out to prepare the annual report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals ([A/79/79-E/2024/54](#)); and (b) the work to update the database on the global Sustainable Development Goals indicators, the new UNdata portal and related efforts.

In addition, the report contains updates on: (a) the Data for Now initiative and additional capacity-building efforts; (b) the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes; (c) advocacy efforts for capacity-building for data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals; (d) the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training; (e) the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians; (f) the work on citizen generated data.

The Commission is invited to take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division in cooperation with the United Nations system and its proposed programme of work, and to express its views on the Data for Now initiative, the work of the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, the progress of work of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, the work of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians; and the work on citizen data including the revised Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data and its implementation road map. Action to be taken by the Commission is set out in paragraph 59 of the present report.

\* [E/CN.3/2025/1](#).



## I. Introduction

1. In its decision 55/117, the Statistical Commission expressed its appreciation for the work of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations system, in support of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023*, the regular update of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, the support for data exchange, and the establishment of platforms for improved Goal data and information access. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the Data for Now initiative to strengthen capacity to utilize innovative data sources and methods to enhance production of statistics prioritized by country, and encouraged its further extension and the inclusion of additional countries. It supported the work of the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes and expressed its appreciation for its overall work and achievements. It welcomed the efforts and achievements of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training and expressed its appreciation for the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians. It welcomed the work of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys on survey coordination, methodology and advocacy for improving national capacity in this area and supported the planned revision of the United Nations handbooks on household surveys. The Commission expressed its support for the work on citizen data by the Statistics Division, recognized the potential of citizen data to address data demands and bridge data gaps for Goal monitoring while acknowledging associated challenges. It welcomed the draft Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data and requested the Statistics Division and the collaborative on citizen data to provide practical guidance. The Commission recognized the vital role of national statistical offices in gaining access to data quality and promoting greater accessibility and utilization of citizen data, and stressed the inclusivity of the collaborative by welcoming members from diverse countries and stakeholder groups.

## II. Sustainable Development Goals progress reports for 2024

2. In 2024, the Statistics Division produced a series of reports and publications reviewing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including: (a) the report of the Secretary-General, entitled “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals” (A/79/79-E/2024/54); (b) *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*;<sup>1</sup> (c) *The Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart*; (d) *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024*;<sup>2</sup> and (e) the extended *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024* platform.<sup>3</sup>

3. In his report on progress towards the Goals, the Secretary-General indicates that the global progress towards the 2030 Agenda is severely off track, with only 17 per cent of targets currently on track. Multiple crises have hindered progress, including the lingering effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, increasing conflicts, climate change and economic challenges. These have led to concerning setbacks: millions more people living in extreme poverty and hunger, record-high greenhouse gas concentrations and an unprecedented 120 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. However, some positive developments exist in areas such as child mortality reduction, combating HIV and improving access to basic services. To get back on track, the Secretary-General emphasizes three critical actions: achieving

<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024>.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/gender-snapshot/2024>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/extended-report>.

peace and ending conflicts; securing better financing for developing countries through a more equitable international financial system; and accelerating transformative progress in areas such as energy, food and digital connectivity transitions, all while addressing gender inequality and climate change.

4. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024* is presented in an interactive platform on the website of the Statistics Division using appealing visual storytelling, to make the data on progress towards the Goals more accessible and understandable to a wider audience. It provides an in-depth analysis of selected indicators, both globally and across regions, supported by an array of charts and maps. It also includes *The Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart*, which presents a comprehensive overview of global progress for the targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Among the assessable targets, only 17 per cent display progress sufficient for achievement by 2030. Nearly half (48 per cent) exhibit moderate to severe deviations from the desired trajectory. Alarming, 18 per cent indicate stagnation and 17 per cent regression below the 2015 baseline levels. Both the aforementioned reports and the progress chart informed the discussion at the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

5. Due to the United Nations liquidity challenges, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024* was produced in English only with a reduced format (from 68 pages to 52 pages), skipping the entire infographic section. Member States using the language versions of the report may be affected.

6. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024* was prepared jointly by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Statistics Division. The report includes the latest evidence on gender equality across all 17 Goals, indicating that, despite some progress, achieving the gender equality objectives of the 2030 Agenda remains challenging. None of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 indicators, on gender equality, has been fully met. In the report, it is stressed that, with the right policies and investments, progress is possible and gender disparities can be redressed. The report includes an outline of six key investment paths that policymakers must prioritize to ensure the full and equal participation of women and girls in every aspect of society.

7. In addition to *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*, a platform for the extended report was set up to provide more detailed storylines and information and additional resources for each indicator, prepared by custodian agencies.

### III. Database

8. The above-mentioned reports are accompanied by a comprehensive statistical annex<sup>4</sup> and supplemented by the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database.<sup>5</sup> The Database contains the data on the global indicators used in the reports and includes both country-level data and regional and global aggregates. As at 1 November 2024, it included data for 229 of the 231 unique indicators and 2.9 million data records. In comparison to 2020, the Database includes data for 29 additional indicators and more than double the number of data records. An accompanying metadata repository<sup>6</sup> provides the metadata for the indicators. Access

<sup>4</sup> Available at [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2024/E\\_2024\\_54\\_Statistical\\_Annex\\_I\\_and\\_II.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2024/E_2024_54_Statistical_Annex_I_and_II.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata>.

to the country-level data and the metadata ensures transparency with regard to the data and methodologies used for global reporting.

9. The Database and metadata repository are maintained by the Statistics Division and updated with data and metadata provided by international agencies and entities, which are referred to as custodian agencies, in accordance with their mandates. For each observation value, the custodian agency is also requested to indicate whether the national data were adjusted, estimated, modelled or the result of global monitoring.<sup>7</sup> For example, national data may be adjusted for international comparability or, where data are missing, estimated. Since 2019, a more frequent update cycle has been implemented for the Database to provide users with access to more timely data. One update takes place in conjunction with the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals Report in June or July. In addition, the latest available data and metadata are provided towards the end of March, October and December.

## **A. Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Data Platform**

10. The Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database is one of the several components of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Data Platform, which was launched in September 2021. The Statistics Division continues to maintain and improve the Platform and has released improved versions of it in March 2022 and March 2024. Besides the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, the Platform provides country profiles and a Goal analytics module that allows, among other analysis, a detailed assessment of data availability, including for disaggregated data. As part of its advanced access options, the Platform provides access to the Sustainable Development Goals indicators data via two application programming interfaces.<sup>8</sup> The Goal metadata is available in machine-readable format via a database interface and a Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange application programming interface.<sup>9</sup> The Platform enables the user to explore the Exchange metadata application programming interface and formulate queries that return metadata for specific indicators and metadata concepts.

## **B. Work on data and metadata exchange**

11. The Working Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators continued its work on the maintenance and further

<sup>7</sup> The nature of the data is determined as follows: (a) country data: produced and disseminated by the country (including data adjusted by the country to meet international standards); (b) adjusted country data: produced and provided by the country, but adjusted by the international agency for international comparability to comply with internationally agreed standards, definitions and classifications; (c) estimated data: estimated on the basis of national data, such as surveys or administrative records, or other sources but on the same variable being estimated, produced by the international agency when country data for one or more years are not available, when multiple sources exist or when there are data quality issues; (d) modelled data: modelled by the agency on the basis of other covariates when there is a complete lack of data on the variable being estimated; and (e) global monitoring data: produced on a regular basis by the designated agency for global monitoring, based on country data. There is no corresponding figure at the country level.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/sdmx-working-group/> (SDMX application programming interface) and <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDGAPIV5/swagger/> (Swagger application programming interface).

<sup>9</sup> The metadata application programming interface is available at [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/SDMX\\_SDG\\_METADATA\\_API\\_MANUAL.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/SDMX_SDG_METADATA_API_MANUAL.pdf).

development of the Sustainable Development Goals data exchange<sup>10</sup> by holding regular virtual meetings and annual meetings in the margins of global events on the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange. Training on the Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators was provided to custodian agencies in January and February 2023, and a significant increase in Exchange data transmissions was registered following the training. As at the end of 2024, over 40 per cent of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database was transmitted through the Exchange. Voluntary provision of Sustainable Development Goals data sets by the Member States has continued, and data exchange has been established with about 40 countries.

12. As part of the UNdata modernization project, the Statistics Division, partnering with Google Data Commons, launched “UNdata Commons for the SDGs” platform.<sup>11</sup> The new platform integrates authoritative data on the Goals and insights from across the United Nations system into a public knowledge graph with advanced natural language search functionality and interactive, user-friendly visualizations. It is aimed at putting high-quality data sets and digital public goods at users’ fingertips, allowing for seamless exploration of diverse statistical data sets, the annual global report on the Goals, and analytics, to ultimately facilitate informed, data-driven decisions. The platform also incorporates data stories and infographics.

13. The reports, data platforms and metadata repository are hosted on the Sustainable Development Goals indicators website,<sup>12</sup> which is maintained by the Statistics Division. The website also contains information on the work and activities of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the website contains rich resources related to Sustainable Development Goals monitoring and reporting, including a good practices wiki page containing country examples of good practices in Sustainable Development Goals monitoring on data platforms, data disaggregation and the use of non-traditional data sources; a toolkit on using small area estimation for the Goals; a toolkit on data storytelling for voluntary national reviews and Goals reporting and data visualization; a practical guide for evidence-based voluntary national reviews; and a Goals monitoring and reporting toolkit for United Nations country teams.

#### **IV. Work programme of the inter-agency working group on the global Sustainable Development Goals review**

14. More than 50 international agencies and organizations contributed data and analysis to the progress reports and to the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database and metadata repository. In order to provide a working mechanism for the United Nations system to prepare the report, as mandated in the 2030 Agenda, the Statistics Division has been convening meetings and teleconferences with the entities that provide data and analysis for the preparation of the annual progress reports and the regular updating of the Database. The group met on 16 January, 19 September and 10 December 2024.

15. The inter-agency working group:

<sup>10</sup> The latest available data structure definition is available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/sdmx-working-group>. The first official metadata structure definition for Goal indicators was published in February 2022 and is available at <https://registry.sdmx.org/metadata/metadatasstructure.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/undatacommons/sdgs>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs>.

- (a) Reviews and discusses plans for the production of the annual progress report of the Secretary-General and the complementary annual *Sustainable Development Goals Report*;
- (b) Agrees on the structure, scope and coverage of the annual reports and related contributions by the relevant organizations;
- (c) Contributes to the regular updating of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, including by providing updates and refinements to the metadata, as needed;
- (d) Exchanges information and updates on capacity-development activities relating to statistics and indicators for the 2030 Agenda;
- (e) Reports annually to the Commission as part of the present report.

## V. Data for Now initiative

16. The Data for Now initiative<sup>13</sup> supports countries in the use of innovative data sources, technologies and methods for the streamlined production and dissemination of better, more timely and disaggregated data on key areas related to specific Sustainable Development Goals to inform decision-making. The initiative is co-led by the Statistics Division, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, in close coordination with members of the national statistical systems in participating countries and partners from across the United Nations system, the private sector, academia, civil society and the development community at large. The initiative emphasizes country ownership, sustainability and scalability of data challenges and solutions as the key guiding principles for the design and execution of activities. The activities are explicitly intended to avoid creating parallel data production processes at the country level.

17. Over the past year, Data for Now activities expanded in breadth and scope, with core partners deepening the work in participating countries after having secured additional funding to support the work. The activities involved obtaining high-level support and coordination among various government partners with national statistical offices in the lead, engaging with key providers, including those from the private sector, and furthering the work in capacity development by generating statistics and data visualization for increased data uptake by decision-makers.

18. In 2024, the Statistics Division continued to support countries under the Data for Now initiative with funding from the Governments of Ireland, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Priority areas of work were set based on the needs identified by each country. For example, in Tunisia, the work focused on measuring environmental indicators using geospatial information and gaining insights into internal migration through the use of mobile phone data. The work on mobile phone data in Tunisia was also supported by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and the World Bank's Global Data Facility. In Viet Nam, the focus was on disaggregating child poverty and food security indicators using small area estimation techniques. Modernization of the information technology architecture to support the implementation of innovative approaches continued to be a key cross-cutting area of support. Substantial contributions were also made on other cross-cutting themes, including the development of the conceptual

<sup>13</sup> The Data for Now initiative was launched by the Deputy Secretary-General on the margins of the session of the General Assembly in September 2019. See <https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/data-for-now>.

framework for citizen data and the road map for its implementation, training on data visualization and communication in collaboration with UNDP to increase data uptake, enhancing collaboration with national statistical offices and academia together with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the development of metadata guidance in collaboration with the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, and the creation of training materials to make open data available. As detailed in section VI below, the collaboration between the Statistics Division and the small island developing States unit of the Division of Sustainable Development Goals in fundraising for the “Data for SIDS” project was successful, with the Government of Ireland agreeing to provide financial support to engage with three small island developing States under the umbrella of the Data for Now project. To further enhance the efficient implementation of the Data for Now initiative, the Statistics Division is also seeking to establish a trust fund.

19. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data has led multiple initiatives in supporting government partners in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve their data agenda. The Africa Climate and Health Data Capacity Accelerator Network programme finalized the second cohort of training in data science skills for climate and health response, where 29 countries received a three-month training course followed by the hiring of 10 data science fellows who will support the country and partners in their data and capacity needs for a period of six months. The Global Partnership also initiated a training workshop on land degradation neutrality. This workshop brought together partners from three countries – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana and Nigeria – to provide training on the land degradation neutrality toolbox, facilitate sharing of information on various aspects of land degradation and exchange on country specific information about land degradation, land use decisions and environment. Working with partners in Botswana, Costa Rica, Kenya and Uruguay, the Global Partnership strengthened conversations around access to privately held mobile network operator data through partnerships, trainings and data-sharing agreements. In Paraguay, the Global Partnership supported the National Institute of Statistics (INE) and other partners to create a system for sharing data from many sources and institutions to improve water resource management and access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

20. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network initiated a knowledge exchange initiative between Ghana and Sierra Leone on innovative approaches to collecting and mapping marine litter data for Sustainable Development Goals reporting, which fostered collaborations among national statistical offices, ministries of the environment, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. This helped to develop partnerships that support knowledge transfer, methodological development and data production and sharing. The efforts resulted in the publication of reports, a multi-stakeholder meeting on the sidelines of the Statistical Commission, and follow-up workshops to continue support. In Rwanda, the Network co-organized workshops in five districts to establish the most effective way for the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) to distribute its census data, facilitating improved decision-making and advocacy at the grass-roots level. The workshops aimed to enhance understanding of census data and the resources offered by NISR for local district officials. This fostered ongoing dialogue among NISR, community leaders and local civil society networks to boost user engagement and disseminate census data, empowering local leaders to leverage this data for decision-making and advocacy initiatives. In addition, in close collaboration with the Statistics Division, the Network is developing partnerships between universities and national statistical offices involved in the Data for Now initiative to bridge the gap between academia and the statistical community. This effort includes identifying opportunities for academics to support data and statistical agendas and facilitating training and student engagement in the data priorities of national statistical offices. This effort also



supports countries with training in global information system integration, which was provided by the Network.

21. The World Bank has continued to strengthen its partnership with private companies to leverage non-traditional data and develop methodologies and code packages to address data gaps when traditional data are unavailable. For example, it has created Python and R code packages to analyse night-time lights, which inform economic activity, urbanization trends, energy consumption patterns and impacts of disasters. These methodologies and code repositories will help guide countries on how to leverage non-traditional data on their own.

22. UNDP, as a new core partner, continues to expand its investment in data innovation for decision intelligence to countries through its Data Futures Exchange. For example, it collaborated with the Statistics Division to develop statistical capacity and enable stakeholders to use statistics by fostering high-level engagement in Sierra Leone. In addition, UNDP jointly with the Statistics Division has provided direct capacity-building support through joint data visualization training to enable national statistical offices to communicate data insights to other national stakeholders.

23. The Data for Now initiative also benefited greatly from the direct involvement and support of many partners. For instance, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme supported work on indicators under Goal 11 in several countries, and Digital Earth Africa supported the work on measuring environmental indicators using geospatial information in Tunisia. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations supported the improvement of the indicator on the proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture (Goal 2.4.1) in Viet Nam. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia contributed to the work on the Goal 11 indicators in Jordan. The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis provided technical advice on the use of citizen science data to measure marine litter in Sierra Leone.

24. In the coming year, the partners will continue strategic discussions and work together actively in meeting demands of countries under the Data for Now umbrella. More information on the initiative and projects can be found on the Data for Now web pages and in the background document for the present report.<sup>14</sup>

## VI. Data for small island developing States

25. Small island developing States are facing a unique set of challenges. These are well documented and are underlined in the recent Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity, as well as in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

26. A large majority of small island developing States are highlighting that they have substantial needs for support in strengthening their data and statistics capacities. The Statistics Division has therefore in recent years collaborated with the small island developing States unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the goal to fundraise for increased support. This has led to substantial results in 2024, as outlined below.

27. The “Data for SIDS” project was developed jointly by the Statistics Division and the small island developing States unit in 2022. It includes four interconnected components: (a) national data governance and coordination; (b) national data

<sup>14</sup> The background document is entitled “Data for Now initiative: Filling priority information needs through collaboration and innovation”.



production and availability; (c) national data dissemination and reporting; and (d) collaboration between small island developing States and experience-exchange. After a long period of conversations with donors, conducted mainly by the interregional adviser of the small island developing States unit, the Government of Ireland showed strong interest in the proposal and, in November 2024, an agreement was signed for the funding of support under components (a) to (c) for Comoros, Jamaica and a third country in the Pacific region for two years. The work will be led by the Statistics Division following the Data for Now approach, while also remaining true to the design of the “Data for SIDS” project proposal.

28. In parallel, the small island developing States unit secured funds to initiate a project that focuses on component four of the “Data for SIDS” project. The project title is “Fostering Caribbean SIDS-SIDS Peer Learning and Cooperation on Data Solutions for Nature to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework”, and the project is funded by the Governments of the Republic of Korea and Spain. The project is a direct response to the call for action by the SIDS Coalition for Nature made at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in 2022. In phase 1, a regional peer learning workshop between small island developing States was held in Belize City, Belize, in May 2024 for 14 Caribbean small island developing States. It was co-organized by the small island developing States unit, the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) secretariat, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the resident coordinator’s office for Belize. The majority of small island developing States participated, with representatives from both national statistical offices and environmental ministries or agencies. The capacity development workshop focused on environmental data management mechanisms illustrated by small island developing States in the region, some of which reflect unique applications of international statistical frameworks and tools, especially the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics and its Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool. The participatory nature of the workshop was helpful in drawing out issues and solutions from attendees in the form of best practices in data solutions for nature, and it contributed to facilitating peer-to-peer connections among Caribbean small island developing States. Depending on funding availability and capacity, a phase 2 may be implemented to support further concrete experience exchange between small island developing States, also linking with the to-be-established centre of excellence for small island developing States.

29. For the seventeenth tranche of the Development Account programme, the Statistics Division collaborates with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on a four-year project for Caribbean small island developing States. Considering the escalating climate change challenges in the Caribbean region, marked by an urgent need for robust data-driven climate policies, the project is designed to enhance capacities in small island developing States by delivering training in fundamental data science skills. Through the integration of geospatial information and new data sources, the initiative seeks to empower four small island developing States in the Caribbean with the capabilities necessary to accurately monitor maritime transport, tourism, trade and fishery and ecosystem services, analyse related carbon dioxide emissions and monitor ecosystem services in coastal areas, in order to understand their contribution to the blue economy through the compilation of ocean accounts using the System for Environmental and Economic Accounting and to foster the development of System for Environmental and Economic Accounting accounts. The project will also provide analytical diagnostic studies on sources and levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and marine ecosystem services. Throughout the project, CARICOM and ECLAC will provide regional coordination and guidance on policy implementation.

## **VII. Fourteenth tranche of the Development Account: resilient and agile national statistical systems**

30. Since its inception in late 2022, the fourteenth tranche of the Development Account project has been implemented by the Statistics Division jointly with the five Regional Commissions, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in collaboration with other bilateral and multilateral donors. This initiative has contributed significantly to strengthening the resilience and agility of national statistical systems. It focuses on enhancing governance frameworks, fostering innovation and leveraging modern technologies to address emerging economic, social and environmental data needs, all in alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The project is expected to conclude by the end of 2025. The project has engaged over 50 beneficiary countries, with 16 target countries selected for more hands-on country-level interventions. These target countries – Bhutan, Burundi, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Namibia, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Tunisia and the State of Palestine – represent diverse contexts and priorities, enabling tailored support to address their specific needs. Efforts have centred on climate change and disaster-related statistics, economic disparity monitoring and gender-based violence data.

31. In 2024, the project featured two key regional events targeting small island developing States. The regional thematic conference in Fiji in July, co-organized by the Statistics Division, the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Fiji Bureau of Statistics and the Pacific Community, convened chief statisticians and senior managers to explore innovative approaches, such as leveraging novel data sources and advanced technologies, to produce granular, timely and high-quality statistics. Similarly, the capacity-building workshop for Caribbean small island developing States held in Jamaica in December, co-organized by the Statistics Division, the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), the CARICOM secretariat and the Statistics Division of ECLAC, focused on data ethics, governance and quality in a rapidly changing data ecosystem. These events underscored the project's commitment to addressing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by developing countries, particularly small island developing States, in a fast-changing data landscape, equipping them to modernize their statistical systems and meet current and emerging demands for high-quality data and statistics.

## **VIII. Strengthening capacity for the use of administrative data for statistical purposes**

32. The collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes was initiated in May 2020 in response to the urgent need for more timely and disaggregated data to inform the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to respond to the pandemic and its socioeconomic effects. The collaborative is co-convened by the Statistics Division and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. In 2024, it had a membership of over 30 countries and 25 regional and international agencies.

33. The collaborative takes a cross-cutting approach, focusing on the process of making use of administrative data sources, from access to and engagement with administrative data holders, to data quality and interoperability considerations, to information technology and other related matters. In order to help ensure that the work does not overlap with other more thematically focused activities, an inventory

of resources has been created that provides over 100 different materials, including recommendations, guidelines, courses, tools and practical case studies from countries. The collaborative also organizes webinars and expert meetings on selected topics. Practically oriented materials also continue to be developed, such as guidance and a template on how to develop data-sharing agreements, and a data quality assessment toolkit, which is already available online. In 2024, the group has focused on the development of an advocacy toolkit, metadata guidance and practical materials on data linking. All materials, once finalized, can be found on the homepage of the collaborative.<sup>15</sup> The background document on the work of the collaborative provides more details on the progress made and materials developed.<sup>16</sup>

34. In 2021, a project under the thirteenth tranche of the Development Account was initiated, on administrative data for disaggregated Sustainable Development Goal indicators in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America. It is closely linked to the work of the collaborative. The work was led by the Statistics Division and carried out in close collaboration with regional commissions and resident coordinator offices. The project provided support to Bhutan, Cameroon, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Maldives,<sup>17</sup> Namibia, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania in their work to increase the use of administrative data for the production of statistics and ran until December 2024. For each country, two or three thematic areas were chosen to ensure a specific scope, but with an overall focus on the processes for the successful engagement with and use of data from administrative data owners. The project benefited from the exchange of experiences through the collaborative and provided learning opportunities and materials that benefit the collaborative over time.

35. In 2024, practical-level work continued and many of the countries achieved results. In the Dominican Republic, a data-sharing agreement was signed with the administrative data holder, and new statistics were published on disaster risk reduction. In Chile, many activities were carried out around alignment of metadata and data linking towards a statistical population register. In Maldives and Namibia, with remote and in-person support respectively, a new information technology infrastructure was set up that made it easier to gain access to and process administrative data. In Maldives, a workshop and high-level event on migration statistics also took place involving calculating migration statistics on the basis of administrative and other data sources. In Cameroon, work progressed for the calculation of intentional homicide. In Sri Lanka, the statistical legal framework was finalized and is ready for external review. The United Republic of Tanzania developed its vital statistics report, with Zanzibar publishing its first birth registration reports on the basis of civil registration records. Work in almost all countries has been carried out in partnership with colleagues from other international and regional agencies. Activities are described in more detail in the background document of the collaborative.

## **IX. Advocacy efforts for capacity-building for data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators**

36. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its report (E/CN.3/2025/7), provides information on the renewal of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group

<sup>15</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/admin-data>.

<sup>16</sup> The background document is entitled “The collaborative on administrative data: practical experience exchange and tool developments”.

<sup>17</sup> Maldives replaced Ecuador in 2023.

on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, in its report (E/CN.3/2025/6), provides information on its work to implement the global indicator framework, such as methodological work on the indicators, and the efforts of its working groups and task team (the Working Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the working group on geospatial information and the task team on sustainable tourism). A comprehensive overview of the activities of the Statistics Division related to technical capacity-building, including those related to the implementation of the Goal indicators, was provided in the report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity development to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session (E/CN.3/2023/14).

37. The High-level Group also agreed to take a leading role in the efforts to strengthen the language around data and statistics in the outcome document of the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. There is an initiative for data and statistics to become a cross-cutting issue in its own right, as it is key for informed decision-making across sectors and interest areas, in addition to being a tool for monitoring and evaluation. Further information is provided in the report of the High-level Group.

## **X. Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training**

38. The Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, established to address the data demands of the 2030 Agenda and the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, continued its work to foster training in key areas of official statistics. The Network currently has 33 members from international agencies, regional training institutes and national statistical offices that provide training beyond their own borders. The Network is managed by a board consisting of a Chair, the task team leaders and the secretariat. In addition, a stakeholder advisory group provides input and guidance on the direction and focus of work.

39. At its seventh annual meeting, held remotely on the margins of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission, the Network agreed that good progress had been made in the different task teams. As more work is needed related to task team 1, on addressing specific demands from national statistical offices, and task team 3, on statistical literacy and the translation group, the Network decided to continue those groups. As task team 2 has met its objectives, it was agreed to discontinue the work of that group. The Network also agreed to emphasize continued work on communication and fundraising as part of its general work.

40. In 2024, task team 1 continued its work on sustainable statistical training programmes at the national level. The statistical training needs assessment tool was officially launched at an open in-person side event during the fifty-fifth session of the Commission, which created much interest from Member States. The main presenters were members of the Network who had a key role in developing the tool, along with Colombia and Ghana, which piloted the tool. Following the session, Colombia and Ghana continued their implementation, taking full ownership of the process. Four new countries started making use of the tool: India, Kenya, Morocco and Seychelles, with support from the Statistics Division, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and other members of the Network. Additional countries are planning to implement the assessment tool in 2025. Regional webinars conducted by ESCAP and ECA helped spread information about the tool to additional countries. The experiences in Colombia and Ghana led the task team to set up a subgroup that focuses on learning culture. The group has already met a few times in 2024 to define its scope, and the board of the Network proposes that the team becomes a new task team 2 in 2025.

41. Task team 2, on an e-learning community of practice and an online gateway, was formally dissolved in the first half of 2024 as it had successfully set up and populated the “UN SDG:Learn” landing page for courses on statistics<sup>18</sup> and developed a number of practical tools on remote learning and course certification. The UN SDG:Learn community page – formerly known as the landing page – gives an overview of available learning materials and provides links to mostly online courses offered by the various agencies. The work was carried out in partnership with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which encourages custodian agencies to add their learning materials to make it easier for countries and other partners to find all learning materials in one place. Task team 1 has taken over the stewardship of UN SDG:Learn community page and is the process of mapping the demand from the statistical training needs assessment tool versus the supply of courses on UN SDG:Learn to identify gaps, bring in new partners and encourage existing partners to co-develop needed courses.

42. Task team 3 discussed various approaches for improving literacy among user groups, continuing work on guidance on statistical literacy for official statistics. A webinar series called “GROW” was established to create more awareness of statistical literacy activities, with two webinars taking place in 2024. The team also continued to add materials to the statistical literacy inventory, with support from the International Statistical Literacy Project.

43. The group on the translation of training materials to languages other than English continued engaging and focused on translating the statistical training needs assessment tool materials. With the support of Morocco, the French version is almost finalized. Colombia and Mexico have played a key role in the translation into Spanish, and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics is taking the lead in the translation into Arabic. Having the assessment tool in more languages will allow additional countries to benefit.

44. The Network continued its general engagement and outreach work, published two newsletters in 2024 and engaged in meetings and conferences. Information on the current membership, outputs and plans of the Network can be found on its homepage.<sup>19</sup> The background document on the work of the Network provides more details on the progress made and materials developed.

## **XI. Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians**

45. The Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians<sup>20</sup> was established by the United Nations Statistics Division on 20 October 2020. Over the past four years, it has played a key role in enhancing coordination within and among national statistical systems, United Nations country teams and international and regional organizations. As a thriving online professional network, the Network serves as a vital platform for knowledge exchange designed to assist national Governments in developing effective and resilient data and information systems to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

46. In July 2024, the Network conducted an online satisfaction survey among its members. The survey received 272 responses from members based in 96 countries. When asked how satisfied they were with the Network on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being “very dissatisfied” and 10 being “very satisfied”), the mean score from the respondents was 7.50 (a slight improvement from a mean score of 7.41 from the 2023

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.unsdglearn.org/>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/GIST>.

<sup>20</sup> See [www.yammer.com/unstats](http://www.yammer.com/unstats).

survey). Respondents reported that the three most valuable contributions of the Network were: (a) the opportunity to learn about United Nations work on statistics, data and geospatial information; (b) resources for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring and reporting; and (c) access to a community of experts from whom they can seek advice on technical issues.

47. With its innovative approach of an open and inclusive membership, the Network has become a vital platform for the global statistical community for collaboration on Sustainable Development Goal monitoring and beyond. The Network had 3,100 members as of November 2024, approximately half of them from national statistical systems and the other half from the United Nations system, other international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. In addition to the main network, 17 groups have been created on specialized topics: household surveys, administrative data, machine learning, nowcasting and forecasting, environment statistics, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, geospatial data, tourism statistics, transport statistics, economic statistics, population and housing censuses, core values of official statistics, the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange, quality assurance for official statistics, resilient and agile national statistical systems, collaborative on citizen data, and the United Nations Datathon.

48. In the past 12 months, over 700 messages were posted on the Network, which have been read more than 50,000 times. The Network continues to hold its regular flagship webinars and organized 14 webinars on various topics in the past year, attracting more than 1,200 participants. The webinar series has become a successful platform for members to share the newest developments in data collection, processing and dissemination.

## **XII. Finalising and implementing the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data**

49. In 2024, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the steering committee of the collaborative on citizen data,<sup>21</sup> advanced its work on citizen data based on the programme agreed upon by the Commission and in line with decision 55/117 (see E/CN.3/2024/36). This included piloting, refining and implementing the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data. Since October 2024, the collaborative has been co-chaired by the Statistics Division and the International Civil Society Centre, which replaced the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) as the second co-chair. The Statistics Division also serves as the secretariat for the collaborative, with support from Open Data Watch.

50. On 18 and 19 July 2024, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the steering committee of the collaborative on citizen data, convened the third expert group meeting on citizen data in New York. The meeting addressed three key areas: (a) revising the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data; (b) ensuring quality assurance for citizen data; and (c) implementing the Copenhagen Framework.<sup>22</sup> The Framework has been revised on the basis of feedback and comments from the expert group, as well as inputs from consultations with diverse stakeholders via forums, webinars and open consultations.

51. The revised framework, Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data 1.0, is presented to the Commission as a background document for endorsement. This

<sup>21</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizen-data/>.

<sup>22</sup> The report of the Expert Group Meeting is available at <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizenData/events/United-Nations-Expert-Group-Meeting-Report-on-Citizen-Data-July2024FINAL.pdf>.

updated framework adopts a more flexible and inclusive definition of citizen data while emphasizing the importance of maximizing citizen participation. It also introduces a dedicated section on the role of national statistical offices and includes a revised road map for the collaborative on citizen data to support its implementation. In addition, a case study template<sup>23</sup> has been developed to guide the piloting and implementation of the Framework.

52. Recognizing that citizen data can also be qualitative in nature, the collaborative conducted a desk review to explore how national statistical offices and other stakeholders are utilizing qualitative data. This review provides an initial overview of best practices, benefits, challenges and opportunities for integrating qualitative data into official statistics. It also includes recommendations to support those efforts. Case studies from national statistical offices and other stakeholders will be included in the final version of the review, scheduled for release in mid-2025.

53. Other areas of work of the collaborative on citizen data cover: (a) member onboarding; (b) training and capacity-building; (c) advocacy for citizen data initiatives; and (d) resource mobilization.

54. The collaborative has extended invitations to over 100 organizations, including national statistical offices, civil society organizations, national human rights institutes, academic institutions and regional and international organizations. Members are expected to contribute to methodological development, provide expertise and innovative ideas, disseminate information and share experiences within their networks. Member engagement is facilitated through an online community of practice platform, as well as webinars, meetings and newsletters. The steering committee of the collaborative is also exploring options for a mechanism to engage advisors from a broader range of representatives, including national statistical offices, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions, academia and development partners, to support its work.

55. In 2024, the collaborative organized several training opportunities, including a one-day workshop on citizen data held on 17 July 2024, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals learning, training and practice sessions during the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In addition, two in-country workshops are scheduled to take place in Malawi and Nepal in December 2024.

56. Advocacy for citizen data and the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data has been advanced through sessions at various forums, including the Statistical Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations World Data Forum, the Statistics Canada International Methodology Symposium, and the International Association of Official Statistics (IAOS) and the International Statistical Institute (ISI) Conference, held in Mexico in 2024.

57. The collaborative has actively engaged in resource mobilization, including organizing two donor meetings to attract interest and secure financial support from development partners. Those efforts have proven successful, resulting in funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Google.org to support the collaborative's global initiatives. Open Data Watch assists the Secretariat in supporting the collaborative, while also managing the administration of the two grants. The collaborative is also grateful for support from other development partners, such as Eurostat, the Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom through the Data for Now initiative, the Government of Italy through UN-Women, the World Bank Chief Statistician's Office and other steering committee members of the collaborative.

<sup>23</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizen-data/>.



58. In 2025, the collaborative will continue to advance the implementation of the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data through various global initiatives. These efforts will include: (a) producing knowledge products and tools on data quality, formalizing national partnerships, intersectionality and other key areas, building on existing resources and training materials, and assessing support needs; (b) curating and synthesizing experiences, impact stories and lessons learned from ongoing citizen data initiatives; (c) facilitating knowledge-sharing and exchange; (d) developing a proof of concept for a citizen data portal; (e) setting the global agenda by convening experts and collaborative members at the fourth expert group meeting; (f) advocating for citizen data initiatives; (g) mobilizing resources to enhance support for citizen data efforts; and (h) strengthening the capacity of stakeholders in various countries to localize implementation of the Copenhagen Framework.

### **XIII. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission**

59. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in cooperation with the United Nations system and its proposed programme of work and to comment on the progress of work;**

(b) **To express its views on the Data for Now initiative;**

(c) **To express its views on the work of the collaborative on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes;**

(d) **To express its views on the progress of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training;**

(e) **To express its views on the progress of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians;**

(f) **To express its views on the work on citizen data by the Statistics Division and the collaborative on citizen data and its workplan for 2025;**

(g) **To express its views and endorse the revised “Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data” and its implementation road map (as contained in the background document).**