



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 December 2019

Original: English

Statistical Commission

Fifty-first session

3–6 March 2020

Item 3 (o) of the provisional agenda*

Items for discussion and decision: governance, peace and security statistics

Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2019/210 and past practice, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. In accordance with the agreed terms of reference, the Praia Group is expected to report to the Statistical Commission at its sessions held in 2016, 2018 and 2020. In the present report, the progress made in the implementation of the activities in the 2016–2020 road map is described. In addition, information pertaining to the recently completed handbook on governance statistics is provided. The handbook has two main parts. Cross-cutting issues applicable to all or most dimensions of governance statistics are addressed in part A, which provides an overarching framework with common analytical underpinnings informed by international human rights norms and principles that are applicable to all the dimensions. In part B, details are provided on each of the eight dimensions of governance, including a conceptualization of the dimension, a discussion of its relevance, a presentation of data and best practices that currently exist, recommended key indicators (including but not limited to indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals) and a suggested way forward to achieve international statistical standards in the context of the dimension. The handbook provides key insights about the current state of play and a call for action on the way forward in the field of governance statistics, in particular with regard to methodological development, data production and use, engaging new actors and exploring new data sources. The Commission is invited to endorse the handbook and to support the continuation of the Praia Group and its work under the revised terms of reference.

* E/CN.3/2020/1.



Report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

I. Background

1. The report of Cabo Verde on governance, peace and security statistics (E/CN.3/2015/17), submitted to the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session, contained a proposal to establish the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. At that session, the Commission endorsed the creation of the Group (see E/2015/24, decision 46/111). The Group has subsequently submitted reports to the Commission at its forty-seventh (2016) and forty-ninth (2018) sessions. The present report is for submission to the Commission at its fifty-first session, to be held in 2020.

2. At its forty-seventh session, the Commission (see E/2016/24) expressed its appreciation to the Praia Group for its report (E/CN.3/2016/16). In that report, the Praia Group set out its 2016–2020 road map, including priority activities and rough deadlines for the development of a handbook on governance statistics for national statistical offices, which is the longer-term task of the Group. The Commission welcomed and expressed its support for the proposed road map. At its forty-ninth session (see E/2018/24), the Commission took note of the report of the Praia Group (E/CN.3/2018/34). In that report, the Praia Group described the progress made in the implementation of the activities in the 2016–2020 road map and the actions taken to develop the handbook on governance statistics.

3. In the present report, the Group outlines the progress made in the implementation of the activities in the 2016–2020 road map and provides information on the recently completed handbook on governance statistics, which is to be submitted as a background document to the Commission at its fifty-first session. The Group also recommends that its work be continued on the basis of the proposed revised terms of reference set out in the annex to the report.

II. Implementation of the 2016–2020 road map

4. The implementation of actions contained in the 2016–2020 road map has been taken forward with annual workplans approved by the steering committee of the Praia Group. The workplans for 2018 and 2019 have focused on the development of the handbook on governance statistics, with activities geared towards the coordination of inputs from across the membership of the Praia Group. The workplans have also focused on the Group's continued support for Sustainable Development Goal 16.

5. The secretariat of the Praia Group invited members to organize into working groups to advance the mapping, research and drafting of the different chapters of the handbook. The working groups were led by one or two members who coordinated inputs received from across the Praia membership. The working groups held three meetings during 2018 and 2019, two of which were hosted by Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, in September 2018 and in June 2019. The third meeting, held in November 2019, was hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

A. Support of the Praia Group for Goal 16 (main activity of section V of the road map)

6. Several indicators for Goal 16 have been reclassified from tier III to tier II by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

since the previous report submitted by the Praia Group ([E/CN.3/2018/34](#)). These include:

- **Indicator 16.1.2:** Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause
- **Indicator 16.4.1:** Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)
- **Indicator 16.5.1:** Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official, who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by these public officials, during the previous 12 months
- **Indicator 16.6.2:** Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services
- **Indicator 16.7.2:** Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group
- **Indicator 16.10.1:** Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months
- **Indicator 16.b.1:** Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

7. The Praia Group was also involved in the deliberations and proposal regarding the development of a global indicator on access to justice (indicator 16.3.3), which was endorsed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group at its meeting in October 2019 for inclusion in the indicator framework for the Goals. Target 16.3 of the Goals calls on countries to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all. The focus of the two global indicators for target 16.3, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/313](#), was exclusively on criminal justice, leaving out the everyday civil justice needs experienced by most of the population, especially the groups most at risk of being left behind. The additional indicator closes that gap.

B. Promote the Praia Group and its products and facilitate communication among the institutes working on governance statistics (main activity of section VI of the road map)

8. Towards the latter part of 2019, several members of the Praia Group participated in an initiative, coordinated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OHCHR, to support all Member States in reporting on the survey-based global indicators for Goal 16. The overall objective of the initiative is to develop and test a quality tool that will enable the collection of nationally representative and internationally comparable statistics for monitoring progress on Goal 16. Specifically, the aim is to develop, test and, on the basis of the test results, finalize a survey module that can be included by national statistical offices in ongoing household surveys for regular reporting on the indicators for Goal 16.

9. The Praia Group participated in the Sustainable Development Goal Sixteen Plus Forum held in Dili in November 2019. The event, the third of its kind, serves to showcase Goal 16 and brought together a diverse group of Sixteen Plus practitioners, policymakers and thought leaders involved in that context to learn, exchange and

share best practices across stakeholders and contexts. The Praia Group took part in sessions and discussions on data and statistics related to the Goal.

10. The Praia Group participated in a workshop on the theme “African regional workshop on effective governance for sustainable development: putting principles into practice”, held in Pretoria in October 2019. At the workshop, the Group discussed the linkage between the handbook on governance statistics and the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

11. The Praia Group participated in the expert group meeting hosted jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the International Development Law Organization and held in Rome, in May 2019, as part of the preparations for the review of Goal 16 at the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development. The Group also jointly organized a session in conjunction with the Global Alliance for Reporting on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies regarding reporting on Goal 16, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities for addressing data gaps to effectively measure, monitor and report on the Goal.

12. Together with the Government of Cabo Verde, UNDP and the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development, the Praia Group also jointly hosted a side event at the 2019 high-level political forum to showcase and highlight important initiatives to measure and monitor Goal 16. With its mandate to contribute to establishing international standards and methods for the compilation of statistics on the major dimensions of governance, the Praia Group shared reflections and experiences on the state of official statistics on governance, peace and security; the role of such statistics for measuring and monitoring Goal 16; and the future challenges and opportunities for statistics in these domains. Through case studies and specific examples, the side event explored innovative measurement and monitoring methodologies that enable civic participation in decision-making processes.

13. The Praia Group participated in the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held in April 2019, as part of the ongoing dialogue in linking indicators on governance with the Committee’s operationalization of the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development.

14. In partnership with UNDP, the Praia Group hosted a side event during the fiftieth session of the Statistical Commission, held in March 2019. The event brought together the Praia Group and other entities to provide an update on its ongoing work.

15. At the first meeting of the Titchfield Group on Ageing and Age-disaggregated Statistics, held in Chichester, England, in June 2019, the Praia Group shared lessons learned and best practices on implementing the objectives of a city group.

16. The Praia Group attended the fourth International Conference on Governance, Crime and Justice Statistics, held in Lima in June 2018. The Conference brought together more than 400 academic experts, decision makers and staff of national statistical offices to learn about methodologies and research and to exchange experiences on different topics related to governance, crime and justice while discussing strategies to disseminate in a more adequate manner the data and information available. The Praia Group presented its framework for the handbook on governance statistics.

17. In partnership with UNDP, the Praia Group hosted a side event during the forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission, held in March 2018. The event brought together the Praia Group and other entities to present the framework for the handbook on governance statistics.

III. Presentation of the handbook on governance statistics (main activity of section IV of the road map)

18. In accordance with the 2016–2020 road map, the Praia Group has completed work on the handbook on governance statistics, which is to be submitted as a background document to Commission at its fifty-first session.

19. The purpose of the handbook is to provide a foundation for the development of international statistical guidance and standards in all areas of governance statistics. To that end, it serves to conceptualize and systematize the various dimensions of governance statistics, take stock of and qualify existing practices in governance data collection, highlight the most important metrics in each dimension of governance statistics and discuss the way forward to achieve international statistical standards in each dimension. It is intended to be used as a guide for those wishing to understand, produce and analyse governance statistics, in particular national statistical agencies. While the handbook is aimed at contributing to the development of international standards on governance statistics, its purpose is not to promulgate such standards. Likewise, the key indicators recommended therein do not constitute or imply a reporting obligation for national statistical systems.

20. The production of the handbook was a collaborative effort of national statistical offices, international organizations and civil society organizations.

21. The handbook is based on a framework for governance statistics that includes eight dimensions of governance:

(a) **Non-discrimination and equality.** This dimension focuses on any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference or other differential treatment based on grounds such as colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, disability or other status that has the intention or effect of nullifying or impairing human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(b) **Participation.** This dimension focuses on the ways in which individuals take part in the conduct of political and public affairs, including by registering to vote, voting or standing as a candidate in elections; being members of legislative, executive and judicial bodies at all levels of government; accessing positions in the public service; and engaging, individually or as members of political parties and other non-governmental organizations, in political activities;

(c) **Openness.** This dimension focuses on the extent to which public institutions provide access to information and are transparent in their decision-making and policymaking processes. More specifically, the dimension covers access to information, open government provisions, freedom of expression and media pluralism;

(d) **Access to and quality of justice.** This dimension focuses on the ability of people to defend and enforce their rights and obtain just resolution of justiciable problems, if necessary, through impartial formal or informal institutions of justice and with appropriate legal support;

(e) **Responsiveness.** This dimension focuses on whether people have a say in what government does and whether they are satisfied with its performance;

(f) **Absence of corruption.** This dimension focuses on levels of intolerance to corruption; the levels and patterns of observable corrupt practices; and the State response to corruption;

(g) **Trust.** This dimension focuses on people's trust in institutions as well as in other people, with a primary focus on the former, such as the parliament, the national government and the justice system;

(h) **Safety and security.** This dimension focuses on levels and patterns of crime, perceptions of safety, measurement of casualties directly provoked by armed operations, and the quality of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions.

22. The handbook has two main parts. Cross-cutting issues applicable to all or most dimensions of governance statistics are addressed in part A, which provides an overarching framework with common analytical underpinnings informed by international human rights norms and principles that are applicable to all of the eight dimensions on governance. In part B details are provided on each of the dimensions, including with regard to conceptualization of the dimension; discussion of its relevance; presentation of data and best practices that currently exist; recommended key indicators, including but not limited to indicators for the Goals; and a suggested way forward to achieve international statistical standards in the context of the dimension.

23. The handbook provides key insights about the current state of play and a call for action on the way forward in the field of governance statistics, in particular with regard to methodological development, data production and use, engaging new actors and exploring new data sources.

24. In collaboration with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the handbook was presented at a global consultation of national statistical offices in November 2019 with a view to informing its content and prioritizing further work.

IV. Future activities of the Praia Group

25. With the submission of the handbook on governance statistics, the Praia Group has successfully delivered the core long-term task assigned to it for the period 2016–2020. However, ample challenges and work remain in the emerging field of governance. The international statistical community is still far from achieving the overarching aims identified at the first meeting of the Praia Group, namely, harmonization and universality in measuring governance and full integration of governance statistics into official statistical systems (see E/CN.3/2016/16). While the handbook is intended to contribute to the development of international guidelines, recommendations and standards on governance statistics, its purpose is not to promulgate such guidance and standards. Such methodological development is a more substantial endeavour that requires extensive testing and in-depth examination of the validity and reliability of proposed standardized methodologies across time and space, and as such will unfold over a longer time frame. Beyond methodological development, ample further work on promoting governance statistics is needed. This includes providing a forum to share and develop expertise, raising awareness about the handbook, promoting its uptake and keeping it updated in the rapidly developing context of governance statistics.

26. The Praia Group therefore recommends a continuation of its activities over the period 2020–2025. The revised terms of reference for 2020–2025, which reflect an adjusted set of core tasks following the delivery of the handbook, are proposed in the annex to the present report. These include the following activities:

(a) To provide a forum for national and international statistical organizations, international agencies, academia, research groups and civil society organizations to share and develop expertise in governance statistics;

- (b) To facilitate awareness among the full Praia membership of national, regional and global initiatives in the area of governance statistics;
- (c) To disseminate the Praia Group's activities and products through relevant channels including the Group's website;
- (d) To disseminate and promote uptake in the use of the handbook on governance statistics, including by supporting capacity-building and training;
- (e) To undertake, every two years, a broad-based consultation to review whether it is necessary to update the handbook;
- (f) To supplement the handbook with the development of methodological and practical guidelines for the improved gathering and compilation of governance statistics at all levels, including covering issues of concept definition, data sources and the harmonization of governance indicators and drawing on internationally agreed governance and human rights standards. This work will be undertaken through the establishment of task teams;
- (g) To document sound practices and provide inputs for the development of indicators supporting the measurement of the 2030 Agenda, including its pledges that no one should be left behind and that the 2030 Agenda should be implemented in a manner consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law.

27. In addition to the continuation of the Praia Group and its work, the creation of a complementary expert group on governance statistics (or on a specific related theme) may be advisable in order to provide a targeted and narrowly focused mechanism for the development of international recommendations. However, the Group considers that it is too early to create such an expert group immediately after the release of the handbook. The thematic focus and composition of such an expert group should be informed by the uptake of and feedback from the use of the handbook. The Praia Group therefore does not recommend the creation of an expert group at the present time and proposes to report on the issue to the Statistical Commission at its next session in 2021 in consultation with the Bureau.

V. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

28. **The Commission is invited:**

- (a) **To take note of the present report;**
- (b) **To endorse the handbook on governance statistics submitted as a background document to it at its fifty-first session;**
- (c) **To support the continuation of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics and its work under the proposed revised terms of reference;**
- (d) **To express its views regarding the proposed revised terms of reference contained in the annex to the present report.**

Annex

Proposed revised terms of reference for the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

1. The Praia Group on Governance Statistics was created by the Statistical Commission to contribute to establishing international standards and methods for the compilation of statistics on the major dimensions of governance, and to collaborate with United Nations bodies and other organizations concerned with specific aspects of governance statistics. The overall objective of the proposed Praia Group is to encourage countries to produce governance statistics that are based on sound and documented methodologies. The original terms of reference for the Praia Group are contained in the annex to the report of Cabo Verde on governance, peace and security statistics of 9 December 2014 (E/CN.3/2015/17). The agreed terms of reference for the Praia Group expire in March 2020.

2. It is proposed that the Praia Group be extended for a five-year period, from 2020 to 2025, and continue its work in line with the following updated terms of reference:

(a) To provide a forum for national and international statistical organizations, international agencies, academia, research groups and civil society organizations to share and develop expertise in governance statistics;

(b) To facilitate awareness among the full Praia membership of national, regional and global initiatives in the area of governance statistics;

(c) To disseminate the Praia Group's activities and products through relevant channels, including the Group's website;

(d) To disseminate and promote uptake in the use of the Praia handbook on governance statistics, including by supporting capacity-building and training;

(e) To undertake, every two years, a broad-based consultation to review whether it is necessary to update the handbook;

(f) To supplement the handbook with the development of methodological and practical guidelines for the improved gathering and compilation of governance statistics at all levels, including covering issues of concept definition, data sources and the harmonization of governance indicators and drawing on internationally agreed governance and human rights standards. This work will be undertaken through the establishment of task teams;

(g) To document sound practices and provide inputs for the development of indicators supporting the measurement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its pledges that no one should be left behind and that the 2030 Agenda should be implemented in a manner consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law.

3. The presidency of the Praia Group secretariat will continue to be assumed by the National Institute of Statistics of Cabo Verde (INECV). The secretariat for the Group will continue to be provided by the Institute, allowing for a review and potential rotation to another Praia member in 2022. A steering committee will provide strategic orientations to the secretariat, will assist in the coordination of the technical work produced by the Group, and will support the Group's activities, including the development and implementation of a communication strategy and a resource mobilization strategy.

4. The Praia Group will carry out its work through:
 - (a) Face-to-face meetings with technical sessions (at least once a year);
 - (b) Task team meetings and electronic discussion forums on specific themes, with designated Group members;
 - (c) Commissioned documents;
 - (d) Representation and information-sharing at governance-related conferences and proceedings.
 5. The United Nations Development Programme will continue to facilitate technical and financial support to the Praia Group. Other specialized agencies of the United Nations system as well as international and regional organizations are invited to provide support in their areas of expertise.
 6. The Praia Group will operate for another five-year period, from 2020 to 2025, after which time a review will be carried out to assess whether the Group is still needed.
 7. The Praia Group will report to the Statistical Commission in consultation with the Bureau and according to a multi-year programme.
-